

January 13, 2023



Dear friends,

The annual observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day takes place this year on Monday, January 16. It is a time that we celebrate, commemorate and honor the life, legacy and impact of Dr. King. This year, 2023, also marks the 60th anniversary of the famous, “I Have a Dream” speech. Dr. King’s work and messages are as important and relevant today as they have ever been. We are encouraged to use the day to “reflect on the principles of racial equality and nonviolent social change espoused by Dr. King.”

Until next time, stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Bob

small business **SPOTLIGHT**



PAIELLI'S

Paielli's Bakery Hits the Century Mark

Iconic Kenosha bakery Paielli's will reach its 100th anniversary on Saturday, January 14, 2023. The bakery will hold a celebration from 7 am to 4 pm with new merchandise, wonderful deals and a special prize for the 100th customer of the day. Stop in and see what they've got. Paielli's is iconic for a reason; it was even awarded Best Doughnut Shop in Wisconsin by Travelocity in 2018. Learn more [here](#).

In Case You Missed It



Wirsch Office Hours Saturday at Northside Library

This Saturday, January 14, from 1 to 2 pm, I'll be holding an "Office Hours" listening session in Activity Room A of Kenosha's Northside Library, 1500 27th Ave. Stop in to share your thoughts on the happenings in our state.



Sen. Wirch, Reps. Neubauer, Ohnstad and McGuire Meet with Governor to Discuss Budget Priorities

On Thursday, January 12, I was happy to join my Assembly colleagues, Minority Leader Greta Neubauer of Racine and Reps. Tod Ohnstad and Tip McGuire of Kenosha, as we met with Governor Tony Evers to discuss state budget priorities for our districts. I want to thank Governor Evers and his staff for meeting with us and look forward to poring through his budget proposal when it's released February 15.



Kenosha Kindness Week Begins, with Events Throughout the Week

The 27th Annual Kenosha Kindness Week kicks off today, Friday, January 13, and runs through 21. The theme for this year is "Kindness Begins with Me" and will feature a variety of events throughout Kenosha. For a complete list of events, visit <https://kenoshaiskind.weebly.com/>.

Kindness Week was first organized in 1997 through the efforts of the late Pastor Olen Arrington, Jr., to commemorate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and is an opportunity to promote kindness and acts of service. The Annual Community Unity Breakfast & Awards Ceremony, which is one of the key parts of Kindness Week, will be held on Saturday, January

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14, starting at 8:30 am at Indian Trail High School, 6800 60th St. in Kenosha. The event is free and open to the public.



Republican Obstruction, Abuse of Rules Threaten Massive Conservation Effort

Republicans on the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee (JFC) are stretching procedural rules and abusing their power to delay, and possibly kills, a project that has been called "the largest land conservation effort in state history". In 2021, the Conservation Fund purchased a 70,000 acre reserve in northern Wisconsin known as the Pelican River Forest in order to safeguard what the group says is "the largest remaining unprotected block of privately owned forested land in the state". The organization planned to secure conservation easements and then re-sell the land in small blocks to buyers who agree to allow public access. This would ensure that the land remains on the property tax rolls. Last fall, the state Natural Resources Board approved a \$15.5 million conservation easement to preserve more than 56,000 acres of the forest. The DNR had signed off on use of around \$4 million in Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program funds to cover a portion of the cost of the easement. This needed first to go through JFC's "14 day passive review" process, whereby during those 14 days, any member of the committee can submit an anonymous objection to the plan for any reason or for no reason at all. The funding is then held up until JFC holds a hearing on the plan. However, state statute provides no timeline for when the hearing must be held; Republicans on the committee have been using that loophole to delay Stewardship projects indefinitely. Senator Mary Felzkowski (R-Irma) has come forward to say she objected to the project but that other Republican committee members had problems with it, as well. The Pelican River Forest aids the climate by storing the equivalent of carbon emissions released by 4 million cars each year. Protecting that block of forestland would also preserve vital habitats for endangered and threatened species. It would also greatly benefit the tourism industry of the area and the state.



Due to Security Concerns, Evers Bans TikTok on State Devices

Following discussions with state and federal law enforcement, intelligence, security and IT experts, Governor Tony Evers has issued a ban on the popular TikTok app on state-issued devices. A growing number of states are instituting similar prohibitions that began in November when FBI Director Christopher Wray said that it poses national security risks, citing the threat that the Chinese government could harness the app to influence users or control their devices. TikTok is owned by a giant Chinese internet company, ByteDance, and has more than 1 billion users worldwide. Late last year, TikTok fired four high ranking employees when it was revealed they had accessed data on two journalists and other American citizens while attempting to track down a company leak.



Wisconsin Families Can Get 5 Free Covid Tests Each Month

Wisconsin residents can now get Covid-19 tests sent to them free of charge from the state. The Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services (DHS) says that the [Say Yes! Covid Test website](#) is now live and operational. The site allows households to order five rapid tests for free **each month**.

Households can still get up to eight rapid Covid tests per month through their insurance providers, as well.



Take My Legislative Survey

It's very important to me as a legislator to hear what you think about the important issues of the day. I've put together a survey on a variety of topics that I am hoping you will take the time to complete. You can find an online version of the survey at <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/22/wirch/surveys-and-petitions/2022-legislative-survey>.