

December 16, 2022



Dear friends,

Chanukah, the Jewish faith’s eight-day “festival of lights” begins this Sunday, December 18, and ends on Monday, December 26. The Hebrew word “Chanukah” (also spelled “Hanukkah” or some variation) means “dedication”; the festival is given this name as it celebrates the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem following a great battle; you can read the full story of Chanukah at chabad.org. Chanukah is traditionally celebrated with a nightly menorah lighting and special prayers and foods. One reason wintertime is so special and magical to so many is that a number of different faiths and cultures have holidays or celebrations taking place. Christmas, Kwanzaa, the Winter Solstice and the New Year celebration are some other examples. Whatever and however you celebrate, please do so safely.

Until next time, stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Bob

small business SPOTLIGHT



Annie's Country Pantry Opens Up in West Racine

In need of some last minute Christmas gifts? Want to stock up on food and snacks for your holiday visitors? Stop in to Annie's Country Pantry, now open at 3212 Washington Ave. in West Racine, next to Nissi's Cake Room in the former home of Molbeck's Health & Spice Shop. Annie's Country Pantry is a labor of love for owner Ann Muller, who says it's a tribute to her country upbringing. She searches out the best fruits and vegetables to make her own unique brand of canned goods, salsas and jams. You will also find incredible, special meat sticks like alligator, kangaroo, ostrich, elk and much more. Looking for stocking stuffers you won't find anywhere else? Annie's has you covered. Ann and her husband, Ronald, give back to the community in numerous ways, so you can feel good about shopping here. Annie's will be open from 10-4 on Christmas Day for any unexpected needs. Visit <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100057192200640> to find regular store hours and more.

In Case You Missed It



Dec. 17 UAW “Solidarity Day” to Support Striking CNH Workers

Nearly 700 UAW Local 180 workers at Case New Holland (CNH) in Mount Pleasant have been on strike since May 2. The many months without work have been difficult for the employees and their families. To support members of UAW Local 180, December 17 has been designated “Solidarity Day”, with an event being held at the Local 180 office, 3323 Kearney Ave. in Racine. A rally will be held at 2 pm, with picket line support taking place at 3 pm. Donations of non-perishable foods, gifts for children, gift cards, and/or household necessities will be collected between 2 and 3 pm; items collected will be distributed to the families of striking workers. Local 180 is also in need of hand and foot warmers to help keep the workers warm as they walk the picket lines. For more information, call (262)631-5980 or visit <https://tinyurl.com/StrikeSolidarityInfo>.



Governor Evers Visits Kenosha for First Budget Listening Session

Governor Tony Evers visited the Kenosha Civil War Museum on Tuesday, December 13, as the first stop on his “Doing the Right Thing” budget listening session tour. A large crowd estimated at 150 gathered to discuss not only the state budget but various other issues with a number of cabinet secretaries, including Department of Revenue Secretary Peter Barca, and a number of local elected officials. I was happy to be in attendance and sat in on the “criminal justice reform” discussion group. It was an honor to have the Governor choose Kenosha for his first listening session and shows the importance and value of Kenosha to the entire state.



Biden Signs “Respect for Marriage Act” into Law

This week, President Joe Biden held a signing ceremony at the White House where he signed the “Respect for Marriage” Act into law. The new law, which was passed through the hard work of Wisconsin’s own Sen. Tammy Baldwin, provides important protections for people in same-sex and/or interracial marriages.



Wisconsin State Building Commission Approves Funding for Projects at Parkside, Bong

The State of Wisconsin Building Commission is an eight-member board consisting of the Governor, who chairs the board; three members of both the State Senate and State Assembly; one citizen member appointed by the Governor; and three non-voting advisory members from

the Department of Administration (DOA). The Building Commission is tasked with developing and implementing the state building program, as well as issuing bonds for the state.

At its December 14 meeting, the Building Commission gave approval to several local projects, one related to the Bong Recreational Area and a couple of upgrades on the UW-Parkside campus.

The Bong project involves construction of a 90'x50' building to be used for the daily operations and maintenance activities of fisheries and wildlife management. Construction of the new building is expected to provide cost savings due to reduction or elimination of lost staff time, truck mileage and wear and tear of equipment.

Approved renovations to the Parkside campus include replacement of wooden stairs, railings, balconies and walkways at the University Apartments and replacement of two heating and chilling plant boilers.



Scams to Avoid this Holiday Season

The state Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has released details on various scams to be on the lookout for this holiday season. These include:

- **Delivery notification/shipping scams:** Fake shipping may send consumers messages alerting them to a delivery and threatening to delay unless the consumers “verify” private information. Sometimes there is an attachment to download, usually containing a virus. Do not open these messages or provide any personal information. Contact the company directly using a verified customer service phone number or email address for a shipping status update.
- **Giveaway scams:** Consumers may receive messages claiming they have won a prize such as a gift card to a major retailer. The catch: consumers are asked to pay a small “processing fee” to complete a survey, or to provide some personal data before they can claim it. Prizes do not require fees. Never engage with someone offering gift cards or other goods for “free” but with strings attached.
- **Online marketplace scams:** Social media platforms and other online marketplaces offer the option to buy and sell directly with other users. Scammers may pose as buyers or sellers and have a variety of strategies they use to fool consumers. Be wary of buyers overpaying with checks – this is a sure sign of fraud; do not refund them. Do not pay for items unless the seller can be confirmed as legitimate. Do not give personal information or move the conversation to an off-site channel.

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Toll-Free Office Hotline: 1-888-769-4724

Email: Sen.Wirch@legis.state.wi.us • Website: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senate/sen22/news> • Fax: (608) 267-0984
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- **Pet scams:** Pets are a popular holiday gift, but consumers should use caution when buying one online. Scammers will advertise pets, and when contacted claim the pets were already sold but that they know a faraway second seller with more options. Ask for the name and location of the pet’s veterinarian. Contact the vet using publicly available information to confirm the pet really exists. Never pay up-front for pets sold online.
- **Ticket scams:** Tickets to popular events can be expensive and in short supply. While many unofficial sellers and third-party websites are legitimate, watch for unreasonable prices and fake ticket sales. Purchase tickets from official vendors that have established policies for cancellations and refunds.

For more information and consumer protection resources or to file a complaint, visit DATCP’s Consumer Protection webpage, ConsumerProtection.wi.gov. If you have questions or think you might be the victim of a scam, report it by contacting DATCP’s Consumer Protection Hotline by phone at (800)422-7128 or email at DATCPHotline@wi.gov.



Downtown Racine Corporation Seeking Nominations for 2022 Achievement Awards

The Downtown Racine Corporation is seeking nominations for its 2022 Achievement Awards. The Achievement Awards recognize businesses, individuals and organizations that contribute to a diverse, vital downtown. The awards feature the following categories:

- **Downtown Showcase Award:** This is described as “an event, person or organization that has helped attract visitors and/or residents and helped to improve the overall image of downtown as a dynamic, happening place”
- **Corporate Citizenship Award:** “An individual who has been a catalyst in improving downtown; has provided service to the downtown community and has worked tirelessly to promote downtown”
- **Best New Small Business Award:** “A new retail shop, gallery or restaurant that has captured the attention of the marketplace and helped enhance downtown”
- **Downtown Champion Award:** “A business or organization that is the ultimate citizen, supporting downtown through employment, facilities and sponsorship”
- **CPR Award:** “The redevelopment of a downtown building or property that has helped enhance the overall downtown neighborhood and revitalize the area”

Nominations, along with a description of why you feel they deserve the award, can be emailed to kkruse@racinedowntown.com and are due by January 3. The awards will be handed out at the Downtown Racine Corporation State of the Downtown event, January 17, 5:30 pm at the Red Onion Café, 555 Main St. The event is free and open to the public. Guests are encouraged to RSVP by January 4 to events@racinedowntown.com or by calling (262)634-6002.



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 2022 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>.