

**March 17, 2023**



**Dear friends,**

**Happy St. Patrick's Day to all my Irish friends. In the United States, modern St. Patrick's Day celebrations are characterized by green clothes, green beer and parades. However, the recognition actually dates back to 1631 when the Catholic Church established a Feast Day honoring St. Patrick. Patrick had been the Patron Saint of Ireland and had died around the fifth century. Very little is known about who he actually was. He supposedly had a lot of "luck" converting the Druid culture into Christians; that supposed luck is the root of the themed merchandise for modern St. Patrick's Day. Whether Irish or not, I hope you have the luck of the Irish this St. Patrick's Day.**

**Sincerely,**

*Bob*

## small business **SPOTLIGHT**

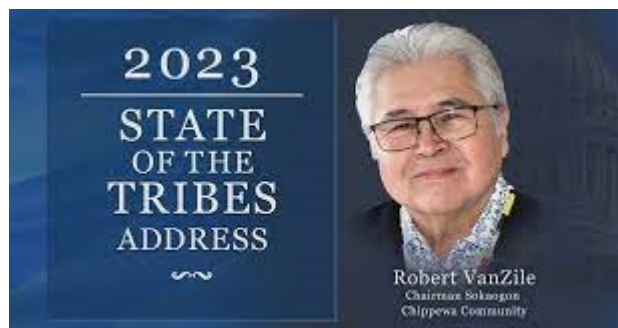


### ***Community Members Step Up After Woman Suffers Injury on Downtown Kenosha Sidewalk***

Kenosha again proved why it's a great place to live and work as owners and employees of BLAK Coffee came to the aid of a woman who had fallen and suffered a serious injury on the sidewalk outside their establishment.

Kristi Wilson of Kenosha was coming out of a nearby shop when she tripped and fell, hitting her face on the bumper of her car. An employee of BLAK Coffee rushed out to assist her. As it became apparent that the injury was more serious than first thought, an owner came to her assistance, as well. It was a Saturday, and the shop was very busy, but the owner and employee called both 911 and her husband and made sure she was okay until help arrived. That is the true spirit of community.

### **In Case You Missed It**



### ***Annual “State of the Tribes” Event Held at State Capitol***

One of the most special events in the State Capitol each year is the State of the Tribes Address. Each year, a leader from one of Wisconsin's 11 federally recognized tribes is selected to deliver the address before both houses of the Legislature. This year's speaker was Robert VanZile, Chair of the Sokaogon Chippewa Community. Among the topics covered in the speech were a need to crack down on illegal gambling; the importance of protections for the environment and

natural resources; the continued use by some school districts of race-based mascots; and a request to expand K-12 curriculum to include more instruction on Native American heritage. The annual State of the Tribes Address started in 2005, and this was the 19<sup>th</sup>. The address is a chance for the tribes to be heard by state officials and to correct misconceptions about tribal communities.



### ***Kenosha’s Own Youth of the Year Visits the State Capitol***

Last issue, we told you about Erica Dolly, a sophomore at Tremper High School who was honored by the Boys & Girls Club of Wisconsin as a “Youth of the Year”. I was delighted on Tuesday of this week when Erica stopped by my office, along with Tara Panasewicz, Kenosha Boys & Girls Club CEO, and Nicole Washpun, their Director of Teen Services. They just so happened to stop by at the same time as Kenosha Mayor John Antaramian. We had a wonderful visit.

## RACINE BUDGET LISTENING SESSION

WITH REP. GRETA NEUBAUER,  
REP. TIP MCGUIRE,  
AND SEN. BOB WIRCH

**TUESDAY, MARCH 28TH**  
6:00 - 7:30 PM  
GATEWAY TECH COLLEGE, RACINE CAMPUS  
QUAD LAKES ROOM





## Budget Listening Session

WEDNESDAY  
**MARCH 29TH**  
at the Kenosha Northside  
Neighborhood Library in  
Community Room A  
from 6pm - 7pm

You are invited to a budget  
listening session with Rep.  
Tip McGuire, Rep. Tod  
Ohnstad, and Sen. Bob Wirth

We want to hear from you  
about your thoughts on  
Governor Evers' 2023-25  
budget proposal.



## *Area Legislators Hosting Local Budget Listening Sessions*

I'll be holding budget listening sessions in both Racine and Kenosha in the following weeks. On March 28 in the Quad Lakes Room of Gateway's Racine campus from 6 to 7:30 pm, I'll be joined by my Assembly colleagues Minority Leader Greta Neubauer (D-Racine) and Rep. Tip McGuire (D-Kenosha), who sits on the powerful Joint Finance Committee (JFC).

Reps. McGuire and Tod Ohnstad (D-Kenosha) will join me for a budget listening session in Kenosha the following day, March 29, from 6 to 7 pm at the Northside Library. Both are open to the public.



## *Kenosha Rocks! Aims to Bring a Little Joy and Kindness into your Day*

Life can be difficult; we all have bad days now and then. A group of Kenosha area residents is looking to brighten things up. The group is called Kenosha Rocks! and was first established as a Facebook group about 7 years ago; it is now up to more 19,600 members on Facebook. Members paint small rocks with clever and creative designs of all kinds and hide them in public places around town. Those who find the rocks are encouraged to take a picture and share it on social media and can then either choose to keep the rock or re-hide it for someone else to find. The thought of knowing someone took their time and creative energy to make this little hidden treasure has brought joy to many. The activity has gotten to popular that Indian Trail Academy has its own rock painting club that participates in Kenosha Rocks! Thank you to the members of

this group for bringing some kindness and joy into our lives. Check the group out on Facebook.  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/558110387717584>



## *March 14 was Equal Pay Day 2023*

It's no secret that women are paid less than men, on average, in America. Equal Pay Day is an approximate measure of how long into the new year a woman would have to work to earn what her male counterpart earned in the previous year, and this year that day was March 14. Put into real world terms, if a man and woman started doing the same job on January 1, 2022, it would take the woman until March 14, 2023, to earn what the man had earned as of December 31, 2022. The wage gap is even larger for women of color. Wisconsin had some recent success in shrinking the gender pay gap. In 2009, in fact, Wisconsin became a leader in the pay equity movement with enactment of the Equal Pay Enforcement Act, of which I was a co-sponsor. At the time, Democrats had control of both houses of the Legislature and the Governor's office, and the bill was passed along party-line votes. The Equal Pay Enforcement Act allowed women who had experienced wage discrimination could bring claims in state courts; previous law had allowed for claims to be made only in federal courts, which are more strained and move more slowly. In the year following enactment, Wisconsin jumped from 36<sup>th</sup> in terms of gender equity in wages to 24<sup>th</sup>. This didn't stop Republicans from repealing the law once they took control of state government in 2011. We have been trying to restore the Equal Pay Enforcement Act ever since.



## ***State Health Officials Investigating Fake Texts Linked to FoodShare Benefits Scam***

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is warning FoodShare recipients of a scam using text messages to steal their benefits. DHS has received a number of complaints from FoodShare recipients who have gotten fake text messages telling them their benefits would be locked if they didn't call a phone number to confirm their account numbers and PINs. If they called the fake line and provided the information, the scammers used it to access and steal their FoodShare benefits. Officials say that emails and texts from DHS will never ask members for personal information. DHS sends official FoodShare texts from 94347 (WIDHS) and emails from [dhs@info.wisconsin.gov](mailto:dhs@info.wisconsin.gov).



## ***Wisconsin Families Can Now Get Ten (10) Free Covid Tests Each Month***

Wisconsin residents can now get up to 10 free Covid-19 testing kits sent straight to their doors each month as part of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' Say Yes! Covid Test Program. Since starting in September 2022, the [Say Yes! Covid Test](https://www.wisconsin.gov/sayyes) program has delivered more than 1.6 million free test kits throughout Wisconsin. Households were previously limited to one free test kit (5 tests) per month but can now receive two, containing 10 tests. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has extended the shelf life for several Covid tests, including iHealth, which are delivered through the Say Yes! Covid Test program; tests are now good for up to one year. To order the test kits online, visit [sayyescovidhometest.org](https://www.sayyescovidhometest.org). Those without reliable internet access or who have questions about ordering can dial 211 or 877-947-2211 for assistance.



## *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>.

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