

April 21, 2023



Dear friends,

The 5th Annual Parkside Day is being held on Wednesday, April 26. Students, alumni, staff and faculty and other community members are invited to participate in service and celebration, with a range of activities taking place during the week of April 23. Parkside Day is held to celebrate Parkside Ranger spirit AND raise funds for the university. The very first Parkside Day involved 3,612 individual participants; 2,327 donors and more than \$549,000 raised; and 520 volunteers donating 802 hours of service, and it has only grown from there. As a proud Parkside alum, I encourage you all to check out the list of events – found at www.uwp.edu/parkside-day - and take part in celebrating our great university and community cornerstone.

Sincerely,

Bob

small business
SPOTLIGHT 



Luigi's Pizza Kitchen Celebrates 60th Anniversary

Iconic Kenosha restaurant Luigi's Pizza Kitchen (7531 39th Ave.) turned 60 years old last week. Luigi's first opened its doors on April 13, 1963, founded by Luigi and Innocenza Zicarelli. Here's to another 60 years of delicious, classic Italian food from Luigi's.

In Case You Missed It



Republicans Deny Funding for Historic Conservation Project

Republicans on the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee (JFC) voted this week to block funding for what would have been the largest land conservation effort in state history. The vote came months after a Republican JFC member used a loophole in committee rules to put an anonymous hold on the project.

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 owners who agree to allow public access. This would also 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. Republicans on JFC abused a committee rule to anonymously object to the funding request until public pressure forced them to hold a public hearing and vote. The committee then voted along party lines to kill the funding.

The Pelican River Forest aids the climate by storing carbon emissions equivalent to those released by 4 million cars each year. Protecting the block of forestland would also preserve vital habitats for endangered and threatened species. The project has the support of conservation, wildlife, and hunting and outdoor recreation groups. It isn't lost on me that Republicans held this vote just days before Earth Day, founded by Wisconsin's own Gaylord Nelson. The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program is named for former Wisconsin Governors Warren Knowles (Republican) and Nelson (Democrat) to show the bipartisan spirit of the program.



Celebrating Earth Day

As mentioned above, Wisconsin has a special connection to Earth Day, as former Governor and Senator Gaylord Nelson is credited as its founder. In 1969, Nelson witnessed the effects of a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California, and in response, issued a call to action for all Americans to stand up for the environment. Today, Earth Day is recognized worldwide, and with the growing threat of climate change, is as important and relevant as ever.

Gateway Technical College will be hosting a “Celebrate Earth Day” event from 10 am to 1 pm on Saturday. It will include displays, workshops and hands-on activities for people of all ages. Find out more at <https://www.gtc.edu/business-community/additional-information/community-events/celebrate-earth-day>.



Governor Evers Honors Earth Day with New Commission on Clean Energy

Just in time for Earth Day, Governor Tony Evers signed an Executive Order this week creating the Green Ribbon Commission on Clean Energy and Environmental Innovation. The Commission will advise on creating the state's first-ever Green Innovation Fund, which will leverage public and private financing to invest in projects that provide environmental and clean energy solutions to businesses, reduce pollution, lower energy costs for families, and expand access to clean, affordable energy options.

The Commission will consist of members appointed by the Governor, including representatives from the state Department of Administration, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, and relevant stakeholders. The Executive Order builds on the significant investments in clean energy innovation and workforce development that Governor Evers has included in his 2023-2025 budget proposal.



Legislative Democrats to Hold Virtual Budget Listening Session

If you want to provide input on the 2023-2025 state budget but haven't been able to make it one of the Joint Finance Committee's budget listening sessions, you can take part in a virtual listening session with Legislative Democrats. The session will be held on Monday, May 1, at 7 pm. You will find more information [here](#).



“Money Smart Wisconsin Week” Shines Spotlight on Financial Literacy

Governor Tony Evers has declared the week of April 15-21, 2023, Money Smart Wisconsin Week. The week is meant to raise awareness about the importance of financial literacy education and financial wellness. The Money Smart Wisconsin campaign builds on the Governor’s 2023-2025 state budget proposal to create a new “Do the Math” personal finance initiative, allocating \$2.5 million per year to help schools start or improve programs around financial literacy curriculum and innovative instruction practices. “Do the Math” will help ensure kids have the skills and tools to make smart budgeting and financial decisions to set them up for the future. For more information, contact the state Department of Financial Institution’s [Office of Financial Literacy](#).



Racine County Board Signs Off on Deal with Microsoft

The Racine County Board met on Tuesday night, where an official with Microsoft spoke before the Board voted, 18-1, to approve the deal to bring a \$1 billion data center to Mount Pleasant. Paul Englis, Director of Global Community Research and Engagement for Microsoft, expressed the company’s commitment to transparency and community involvement. The first phase of construction is expected to begin by July 2026.



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](#) 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. 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>.