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Photo by Michael Cooney

## Testing the waters

Andy Koschmann heads out Saturday morning onto Lake Winnebago at Menominee Park as one of the anglers participating in the Otter Street Fishing Club's annual fishery. "The ice stiffened up really good overnight," club vice president Bob Hable said. "They're really good today." Many anglers like Koschmann used ATVs but some drove trucks onto the ice. Saturday's event was a prelude to Battle on Bago coming Feb. 14 and 15. "I went through the ice once in my truck," Koschmann said. "No more of that."

## Online views tied to board members

### School district policy found not in violation

By Jonathan Richie  
OSHKOSH HERALD

Two members of the Oshkosh Area Board of Education admitted to using fake Facebook profiles that encouraged voting against the upcoming facilities referendum, according to a school district investigation obtained by the Herald.

School board members Kelly DeWitt and Tim Hess admitted to using the profiles but OASD legal counsel determined there was insufficient evidence to find they violated board policy.



DeWitt

DeWitt and Hess did not participate in the investigation, instead allowing their attorneys to provide a statement in which they said they have nothing to hide.



Hess

"Speaking on behalf of the board members, their legal counsel noted that neither board member had anything to hide and acknowledged that the Facebook pages with the alias 'Mike Melter' belonged to Dr. Hess and the Facebook page with the alias 'Missy Green' belonged to Ms. DeWitt," the investigation states.

OASD legal counsel James Macy of von

SEE Facebook posts ON PAGE 16

## Menominee Park amusement train repairs approved

By Jonathan Richie  
OSHKOSH HERALD

After an outcry from residents, the long-running amusement train at Menominee Park could be coming back this summer.

The Common Council voted to move \$50,000 to the Parks Department budget to fix the train. The council will need to approve another amendment to the budget to add salaries for the train if it reopens this year.

The \$50,000 will come from interest earned from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

The train was closed last year due to construction on Pratt Trail and has been losing money for the city in recent years due to several factors, including the train engine being about 70 years old and replacement parts not being readily available.

In the last few weeks, a flurry of news stories circulated regarding the pending closure of the train that many in the community have ties to



Maurer

from riding when they were children or taking their children.

The Herald and Oshkosh Northwestern published articles regarding the train shutting down that led to an outpouring of opinions on social media about its importance and the nostalgia tied to the ride. Last week council member Paul Esslinger joined those in favor of keeping the train for the tradition.

"I hate to see family traditions go away. (The train) is certainly a family tradition, I know I took my kids there many, many years ago," Esslinger said. "It's a good clean fun thing for families."

Esslinger suggested the city look to purchase a new or slightly used train engine to avoid future funding issues.

A GoFundMe page was created to keep the train operating for 2025. The crowdfunding attempt had raised about \$2,750 as of last week.

Parks director Ray Maurer told the Herald the \$50,000 would be used to fix the train, replace a lean-to-storage shed and other track maintenance. He explained that the larger issue is staffing train operations during the summer.

SEE Park train ON PAGE 16

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# Website provides referendum information

Oshkosh Herald

Oshkosh Area School District officials have continued to say the upcoming facilities referendum is needed to improve student safety and services, save money on operations through building consolidation and deal with aging buildings and ADA access across the district. A new website is highlighting the needs and gives background on what is included in the proposed referendum.



The Board of Education approved a referendum question to be placed on the April 1 ballot with a cost of \$197.8 million. The district plans to build a new middle school, renovate Franklin, Carl Traeger and Oakwood elementary schools to accommodate more students, add an auditorium to Oshkosh North High School, and install air conditioning at Emmeline Cook, Lakeside and Read elementary schools.

The plan calls for closing South Park Middle School along with Roosevelt and Shapiro elementary schools. Perry Tipler Middle School will be converted into a pre-kindergarten center and become the new home of the Oshkosh Recreation Department.

The district will hold informational sessions for district residents to get an overview of the referendum. Upcoming information sessions:

- 6:30 p.m. Tuesday – Oshkosh North High School Auditorium
- Feb. 21 at 8:30 a.m. – South Park Middle School gym
- March 3 at 6:30 p.m. – Oakwood Elementary School cafeteria
- March 13 at 6:30 p.m. – South Park Middle School gym
- March 18 at 6:30 p.m. – Franklin Elementary School cafeteria
- March 26 at 10:30 a.m. – Public Library lower-level A/B room

There will also be four Q&A sessions for residents to ask administrators about the building plans. There will be no formal

presentation at these sessions and each will be an hour.

- Feb. 17 at 8:30 a.m. – Caramel Crisp Corner, 200 City Center
- Feb. 28 at 10 a.m. – Seniors Center's Willow Room south building, 200 N. Campbell Road
- March 12 at 7:30 a.m. – Elsewhere Market, 531 N. Main St.
- March 24 at 7:30 a.m. – Delta Family Restaurant, 515 N. Sawyer St.

Superintendent Bryan Davis will be available at all of the Q&A sessions to answer questions.

The district is planning to be present at the Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce Expo on March 19 at the Oshkosh Convention Center. There will also be a strategic plan update at Vel Phillips Middle School on March 20.

The referendum website includes project details, a timeline of events, taxpayer impacts, voting information, FAQs and informational sessions.

Information can be found at [oshkosh.k12.wi.us/referendum-2025](http://oshkosh.k12.wi.us/referendum-2025).

## Free tax preparation assistance options offered

Oshkosh Herald

Wisconsin tax filers have a new tool for the 2025 tax season with the Internal Revenue Service's new Direct File system, free software that sends tax returns directly to the IRS.

Wisconsin is one of 25 states participating in Direct File using its filing software WisTax to link with the Direct File website at [directfile.irs.gov](http://directfile.irs.gov), which details which tax credits people are eligible for.

In 2021, 20 percent of eligible Wisconsinites didn't claim the Earned Income Tax Credit, a tax break for people with low-to-moderate incomes.

Those ineligible for Direct File include people earning more than \$200,000 a year and those claiming itemized deductions.

TurboTax and its parent company Intuit have been lobbying Congress for years against

creating a free, direct tax filing service.

Other free tax preparation services are being offered in the community for retired and low- or moderate-income residents.

Volunteers trained by the IRS and Wisconsin Department of Revenue will prepare basic income tax returns for free for working people and those with families who call 920-424-1454 and leave contact information. Appointments are being scheduled through March 21.

The Oshkosh AARP Foundation is offering tax preparation services by appointment for retired and low- to medium-income people at United Methodist Church, 1174 Algoma Blvd., during the day Tuesdays and Fridays through March 28. Call 920-385-6756 between 8 a.m. and noon weekdays to schedule.

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## Back in the Day



Oshkosh history by the Winnebago County Historical Society

### Feb. 3, 1950

#### Used Car Lot Will Replace City

**Landmark:** One more city landmark is being torn down today to make room for a more modern characteristic – a used car lot. The two-story building at 28 Waugoo St. at the corner of State Street was the former

home of the old Oshkosh City Times newspaper, which ceased publication on May 24, 1905. The Oshkosh Democrat newspaper plant was destroyed by fire in 1866, but the paper reorganized and with a change in ownership became the Oshkosh City Times, a daily morning and Sunday newspaper. The brick building is to be torn down immediately and the property then will be filled and surfaced for use as a used car lot according to J. H. Markel, president of Markel Motors, Inc.

Source: Oshkosh Northwestern, Feb. 3, 1950

# Sawyer-Oshkosh Ave. intersection redesign approved

By Jonathan Richie  
OSHKOSH HERALD

The city is moving forward with plans to redesign a northside intersection that has caused headaches for drivers in that part of Oshkosh for years.

The Oshkosh Avenue and North Sawyer Street intersection is scheduled to be redesigned in 2028. It will no longer be two traffic lights intersections but a single four-way connection that will incorporate Rainbow Drive.

The city worked with Strand Associates on the design options and the company estimates the project will cost about \$4 million. Funds from the Oshkosh Avenue tax district will fund a portion of the project.

Initial renderings approved by the council show traffic on Sawyer and Rainbow Drive will have two lanes at the intersection with one devoted to left turns only and the other for traffic going through the intersection and vehicles turning right onto Oshkosh Avenue.

For motorists on Oshkosh Avenue, there will be left-turn-only lanes for turning onto Rainbow Drive and North Sawyer. The left lane turning off Oshkosh Avenue onto Rainbow will be large enough to hold two vehicles towing boats traveling to the Rainbow Park boat launch.

The intersection will include a median to divide traffic on Oshkosh Avenue and there will be a pedestrian refuge island for walkers crossing the intersection for a place to stand as they wait for the traffic signal to change.

Strand presented the city with eight options – two included plans for a roundabout at the intersection and the remain-

ing six including signal-controlled options for the difficult interchange.

Roundabout options were dismissed early in the discussions with Strand and city staff due to issues that could arise if the Oshkosh Avenue bridge is up and the roundabout becomes locked with cars waiting for the bridge to lower.

Public Works director James Rabe told the Herald a roundabout would also pose potential safety hazards for pedestrians and nonmotorized vehicles often have issues navigating through roundabouts

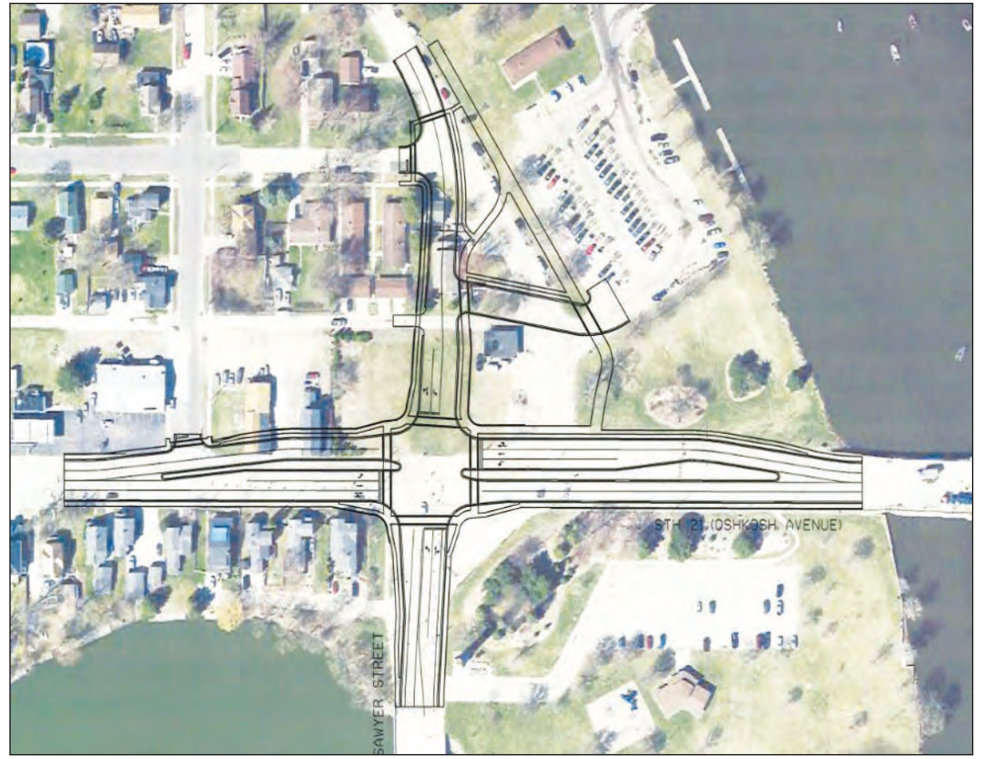
Other options for signal intersections included different-sized medians and slightly different variations on the design approved by Common Council last week. The designs were also reviewed by the city's Transportation Committee, which recommended the approved intersection earlier this month.

The city has been acquiring land in the vicinity of the intersection for about 10 years, with seven properties that were a combination of empty and blighted lots. Some of the lots were purchased after the owner approached the city.

None of the properties was acquired by eminent domain. The city spent about \$1.3 million for the acquisitions in the 1200 block of Oshkosh Avenue and one property on Rainbow Drive.

Transportation director Jim Collins reported in a memo to the council that two more properties would need to be purchased to allow for the intersection redesign.

Oshkosh's capital improvement project list currently has \$6 million earmarked for the project that includes funds for acquiring properties.



City of Oshkosh

The headache that is the Sawyer Street/Oshkosh Avenue intersection is set to be redesigned into a standard four-way intersection with a single traffic light. The city plans to have the intersection reconstructed in 2028.



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Photo: Alden Frautschy



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FEB 8	<p><b>EAA Winter Flight Fest</b>                  Indoor excitement, family-friendly activities, a skiplane fly-in &amp; more.  <b>EAA Museum</b>                  8:00 AM to 4:00 PM</p>
FEB 8	<p><b>Fall in LOVE with Handmade Urban Craft Fair</b>                  40+ vendors of handmade arts and crafts, with live music. A portion of the booth fees will benefit the Oshkosh Area Humane Society.  <b>becket's</b>                  10:00 AM to 2:00 PM</p>
FEB 8	<p><b>Oshkosh Farmer's Market</b>                  Oshkosh Arena                  9:00 AM to 12:30 PM</p>

  
[DiscoverOshkosh.com](http://DiscoverOshkosh.com)

# Council members disagree on meeting procedures

By Jonathan Richie  
OSHKOSH HERALD

A few verbal sparks flew as the Common Council had a lengthy discussion about holding a meeting to explain what happened with Oshkosh residents' tax bills going up.

The idea was brought up by council member Paul Esslinger to hold a separate meeting to meet with residents to explain what happened with the taxes and why property taxes went up this year.

Mayor Matt Mugerauer believes that the best way to influence change on the council is to go to the meetings and speak directly to its members.

"This is the avenue that people have to tell us that they don't like something we're doing or something that is going on in this community or something they want to see changed. And that is a strong avenue," Mugerauer said of people coming to the bimonthly meetings.

He said the council would not be holding a council-initiated open forum to discuss tax bills because it did not receive the majority of council members' support.

"This body has spoken and said we do not want to have a public meeting," Mugerauer said.

He was then cut off by Esslinger.

"Well that's nice, but I'm an elected official and if I'm going to have a meeting to talk with people that represent me and vote for me, I'm going to let them know," Esslinger said. "And I'm going to do it from this dais."

Mugerauer said council members are encouraged to meet with the public but the city would not be sending out a public meeting notice. Meeting laws allow



Oshkosh Media

Council member Paul Esslinger proposed a meeting to discuss tax bills with residents that was challenged by Mayor Matt Mugerauer as an inappropriate option to regular council meetings.

Esslinger to hold a meeting or listening session by himself with residents but if three council members attend and discuss potential board-related topics they could become a walking quorum and if not properly noticed as a meeting the members could be in violation of open meeting laws.

"I'm embarrassed and I'm sad for the residents of this city, to have them watch seven council members discuss whether we should have a meeting explaining why we're raising their taxes and all the elements that went into it," Esslinger said.

Mugerauer suggested Esslinger was overstating his case for a separate public meeting.

"That's a high soap box over there on the end of the council member," he said.

"Yeah, it is; you should climb on it once," Esslinger responded.

## Oshkosh tax bills

The story of why city property taxes went up is linked to many things the Herald has reported over the last eight months when the city first announced a property reassessment underway.

State statute requires all municipalities to have commercial and residential properties assessed within 10% of the equalized value set by the state. Oshkosh was not in compliance and notified that a reassessment would need to be done.

Officials and former city assessor Jodi St. Charles told residents that even if their assessments go up it did not mean their taxes will go up. Some even mentioned taxes could go down. St. Charles led the city through one assessment but records show she no longer works for the city, which is hiring a new assessor.

After the reassessment, homeowners saw property values rise an average of 75%. Those reassessments were handled by staff in the assessor's office. Residential assessments met the state threshold by being 100.98% of the equalized value, according to the state.

The other side of the reassessment pro-

cess is commercial properties, which saw an average increase of 30%. Those reassessments were done by Tyler Technologies and were only 85% of the equalized value and did not meet the state-required 10% threshold.

The city must do a reassessment of all commercial and residential properties this year to be in compliance. City officials reported that Oshkosh is among the majority of the state not in compliance with state law of equalized value in 2023.

In October, the budget process started with initial proposals from staff calling for a levy increase. But when the news of the reassessment process occurred the council voted to approve the 2025 budget with a reduced tax levy and tax rate. The council also approved moving \$3.6 million from the general fund, which Rohloff said in December would make the 2026 budget process more difficult.

Taxpayers have been reporting their tax bills rising since they were sent out in December. Esslinger suggested holding a meeting to explain what happened with the budget.

Over the weekend, Esslinger, Floam and Kris Larson announced they will be holding office hours for residents to discuss the recent tax bills at 1:30 and 6 p.m. Feb. 17 at Becket's restaurant.

"This meeting is intended to have elected officials listen to their constituents regarding the increases and is also intended to inform and explain the factors that have led to a lot of confusion," the council members stated.

"All pertinent issues that surround the city of Oshkosh tax bill will be discussed."

## Meeting with state officials

Another argument was sparked at last week's meeting after Esslinger sought to have a meeting with state representatives. Floam said the session would act as a town hall meeting with elected officials at the state level. Assembly representatives Lori Palmeri and Nate Gustafson were invited.

Esslinger said when he was mayor 15 years ago, these meetings were held regularly. He had the idea to hold the meeting in Oshkosh and council member Kris Larson said his Becket's restaurant could hold it.

If the meeting includes council members and other elected officials, it would need to be noticed as a public forum. The meeting was proposed to be held Feb. 10 and the agenda included property taxes, a local gas tax funding road projects and moving council elections from April to November.

After a lengthy discussion, Esslinger decided it would not be a council-sanctioned meeting but one he would hold by himself with state officials and members of the public invited.

Open meeting laws state that any meeting with three council members becomes a walking quorum and if not properly noticed the council would be in violation.



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# Federal funding halt leaves groups looking for path forward

Oshkosh Herald

While legal experts are trying to offer assurances to non-U.S. citizens about their status in the country if properly registered amid the Trump administration's general crackdown on immigration, a sudden freeze on federal funding is impacting refugee assistance organizations nationwide.

A "temporary pause" on federal grants and loans sent shockwaves through programs such as World Relief that use the funding to support to immigrants and refugees in the Fox Valley and around the country.

World Relief-Wisconsin, which has offices in Oshkosh and Appleton, began to furlough its staff last week in the wake of a stop-work order for reception and placement of refugees from different countries while being owed millions from the federal government for work already completed.

Molly Norton Smiltneek, a contracted attorney with World Relief-Wisconsin's Oshkosh office, expressed her shock with the sweeping move from the new administration.

"Yesterday, 18 of my colleagues and friends were furloughed. There is simply no money," she said in an email.

"So many of the people we serve were left without the support they deserve. No one to teach them how to ride the bus, how to control the heat in their home, to make doctors appointments with them, to help them apply for their green cards ... to apply for Social Security cards, to sit with them, to share their sorrows and their joys."

The nonprofit group, one of many that relies on federal grants for much of its

efforts, would need to rely more on community partners and the public to help continue their work if that funding stays frozen.

The nonprofit group, one of many that relies on federal grants for community efforts that were frozen, will need to shift some of its relief work to the general public and other community partners. SEPO, a local advocacy organization that advances racial equity and advocacy through its literacy program and other assistance, is one of the partners trying to fill the void.

SEPO organizers posted on Facebook that they will be working to put together assistance packages for families and build up a community resource supply at its SEPO Center when it opens. Potential donors can reach out to mushe@sepoishope.org about dropping off listed items.

"Call your legislators ASAP and tell them to restart these funds. The refugees suffering from this are already here," one World Relief volunteer posted on Facebook. "They rely on this assistance for a few months to find their place in a new country."

The Fox Valley took in about 200 of the estimated 1,000 refugees from Afghanistan who were placed statewide after they were forced to leave that country after the American departure in 2021 when military operations ended there.

Lawyers like Smiltneek were brought on to help World Relief, Catholic Charities USA and other resettlement groups, with support from the State Bar of Wisconsin and American Immigration Lawyers Association, to deal with the specific

legal challenges of extending and securing legal immigration status that can qualify Afghan evacuees for a permanent resident green card.

The Oshkosh Area School District, UW Oshkosh and Fox Valley Technical College have been adding or expanding their multicultural services in recent years to take on the need for helping refugees from Afghanistan and other countries become welcome additions to the community.

"There are at least 90 of our most recently settled immigrants here in the Fox Valley that World Relief is being told it cannot provide services to," Smiltneek posted on Facebook. "We are gutted. In every way."

This disruption is occurring as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has increased its arrests and launched targeted operations in major cities that decline to formally coordinate on immigration enforcement. ICE officials have been directed to aggressively ramp up the number of people they arrest, from a few hundred a day to at least 1,200 to 1,500.

Geoffrey A. Lacy, an attorney with Renning, Lewis & Lacy in Oshkosh, offered some clarification of the Jan. 20 executive order to offer guidance on registration requirements for non-citizens who are not under refugee status.

"The clear intent of the order was to force those present without authorization in the United States to affirmatively identify themselves or face prosecution for failing to do so. This applies to any person in the U.S. who has not been registered, i.e. has never been fingerprinted and had their personally identifiable information placed on file with U.S. authorities," Lacy said in an email. "For some circumstances, that is easy to identify. In others, it is not so easy."

He said any person who applied for parole, asylum, or any other form of benefit for which they had to file forms with personal information and be fingerprinted have presumably been registered.

"Persons in the U.S. pursuant to a visa admission do not need to be concerned about the registration requirement," he said. "Similarly, it is unlikely that travelers using the (Visa Waiver Program) or other visa-exempt persons are presently the target of these enforcement initiatives but may consider registering through one of the Trusted Travel Programs to be certain."

Other individuals employed through the H-1B program, L-1 program, F-1 students or other nonimmigrant classifications through which the individual has obtained a visa would also be considered registered, according to Lacy.

## Developers panel to discuss local projects

Oshkosh Herald

The West Side Association (WSA) presents its annual Developers Panel from 7:30 to 9 a.m. Feb. 20 at Oshkosh Corp. Headquarters where local developers, construction and real estate representatives will talk about new private sector projects in the community.

Moderated by Karen Schneider, publisher

of the Oshkosh Herald, Neenah News and Winneconne News, panelists will include representatives from TJ Rodger's design/build team, The CommonWealth Companies and its Main Street project, XGolf's and its new location in Oshkosh, The Wit apartments and The Grand Oshkosh.

Preregistration for the event is required at oshkoshchamber.com.



Oshkosh Herald

## Crash damages building

A two-vehicle collision at the intersection of Oregon Street and 9th Avenue on Thursday morning pushed one of the vehicles into a storefront on Oregon Street, shutting down north-south traffic until emergency personnel could clear the area. There were no reports of injuries.

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# County executive candidates discuss issues at forum

## Sales tax, transparency among mix of topics

By Bethanie Gengler  
OSHKOSH HERALD

The three candidates for Winnebago County executive participated in a public forum last week, giving voters a clearer view of their priorities and plans for the future of the county.

The event, hosted by the League of Women Voters of Winnebago County, highlighted some of the key issues affecting residents. The county executive is the top elected leader in charge of county departments, policies, programs and services.

Incumbent Jon Doemel will face challengers Gordon Hintz and John Matz in the primary Feb. 18, which will narrow the field to two. In-person absentee voting for the primary began Tuesday.

Doemel is a former restaurant owner, making his second run at public office after ousting 16-year incumbent Mark Harris in the 2020 election.

"When you run a restaurant, you are HR, you are marketing, you are payroll, you're also customer service and labor and the dishwasher and the server and the cook," he said during his opening statement. "So it translated to the multiple facets of county government really well and figuring out organizational structure and how it should work."

Hintz most recently represented Oshkosh and parts of Winnebago County for 16 years in the Wisconsin Assembly.

"I believe government has a positive role to play in creating opportunity in people's lives and I am running for Winnebago County executive to help create a stronger and more prosperous Winnebago County," he said. "I am running specifically to improve communication and accountability."

Matz is the current Winnebago County sheriff, a position he has held for 14 years.

"In county government, I was involved – even as a lieutenant – with the county board and with committees, and then as a captain, and then obviously as the sheriff," he said. "So I have an open and trusted relationship with the board and with the committees already."

One key topic at the forum was the county's response to the sudden federal funding cuts for newly arrived refugees.

Matz stated that some of the federal funding has been restored, adding that collaborating with nonprofits and utilizing county resources could assist refugees.

Doemel described the county's quick action in response to the funding cuts, including exploring options for emergency housing at Park View Health Center,

Sunnyview Expo Center or in dorms at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. He said the county also collaborated with the non-profit organization World Relief.

"I'm not about to have refugees be on the street in the middle of winter in Wisconsin," he said.

Hintz said the county will need to continue to work to build relationships and figure out how to best take care of the community, "because these people are now a part of our community."

"This area, especially in the Oshkosh community, almost all of the population growth has come from the refugee population – that's how we're growing, that's how we're filling jobs, that's how we're meeting workforce needs," he said.

Transparency in government was another focal point, with the candidates discussing improving public access to information.

Doemel highlighted the county's efforts to "open the books" for the general public and build trust with municipalities.

"County government is easier to follow now than it's ever been before," he said. "Our meetings are recorded, our agendas are accurate, we have agenda item reports, we have draft resolutions, and none of those things existed before I got here; it was kind of government winging it as we went."

Hintz emphasized the importance of promoting meeting agendas, providing meeting recaps and informing the public of decisions made. He also raised issue with the transparency of the county's 2025 budget.

"In past budgets, the county would show what the proposed dollar amount was for a certain program and then it would show what was ultimately decided. This budget, they decided not to do that," he said. "And so that was a decision that took something – that if the public wanted to see what agencies were actually proposing – was something that was less transparent than the last budget."

Matz pointed to the Sheriff's Department's annual report, which provides data on use-of-force incidents and internal investigations. He said he would like the county to do both program budgeting and line-item budgeting. He also mentioned

the transparency of studies conducted by the county, noting they should be provided to the public.

"If you don't agree with something in a study, then you have to make your case," he said. "You have to say this is why you don't agree with it."

The candidates also delved into the ongoing mental health and addiction crisis in the region, with Hintz stating the county is fortunate to have quality staff in the public health and human services departments and emphasized the need to use evidence-based policies and remove programs that are not working effectively.

Matz detailed the success of the county's STAR (sobriety treatment assisted recovery) program in the county jail, which has seen "phenomenal results" among those struggling with substance abuse and has reduced recidivism rates.

Doemel stressed the importance of discussing topics to "get rid of the stigma," and taking a compassionate approach to issues. He also commented on the STAR program and his efforts to get the County Board to reconsider accepting a grant for vending machines in Neenah and Oshkosh that dispense the overdose-reversing medication Narcan.

On the topic of implementing a county-wide sales tax, the candidates provided differing answers.

Doemel cautiously supported implementing a sales tax if it was used to help the county tackle its capital improvement plan and for property tax relief.

"I think government needs to know that taxes aren't always the answer and sometimes the tax relief is what people need," he said, "but I am very much interested in evaluating it. I don't think we need it at this time, but it's definitely not off the table."

Hintz said Winnebago is one of only two counties in the state that doesn't impose a sales tax, "so other counties are getting out-of-county residents spending the money and we're not," adding that it's a regressive tax that hits lower income people harder.

Matz said he's not in favor of implementing a county sales tax to balance the operational budget, adding that the county missed an opportunity with ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds that could have been used to develop cities, villages and townships for new construction.

When asked about the county administration's increased spending over the past four years, Hintz said he doesn't think the public has seen the value of the investment from the county executive's office. He added that when there's an issue with the County Board or something not being done, the county executive would ask for more staff.

"Somehow the previous executive, with pretty thin staff, was able to run the coun-

ty, you know, with the same kind of deficits and the same kind of fund balance, even if those budgets were ... largely the same, without some of the issues that exist," he said.

Matz said he was in favor of creating one new county administrative position when Doemel took office, "however, it went far beyond one position, and no, I don't believe we have seen the benefit of those positions and seen what the need for all of those positions (is)," adding the positions are "extremely expensive."

Doemel disagreed, listing off things his staff has done, including a facility condition assessment, strategic plan, centralizing finance, re-slotting county employees and figuring out paid time off.

"So I would very much disagree that you haven't gotten the return for your investment for getting our staff to finally be professional government," he said.

The candidates were asked how they would create a budget that doesn't rely on the county's shrinking undesignated fund for structural, ongoing programs.

Doemel said that finding the truth and accurately examining the county's finances is crucial to creating a sustainable budget.

"So let's make sure that we're maximizing some of those revenues, that we're coding things correctly, that we're not putting tax levy into things that we could be getting reimbursement back (from)," he said.

Hintz noted that the budget deficits the county has been experiencing haven't just been occurring recently but have been an ongoing issue, adding that the budget could be used as both a planning document and an evaluation tool to better understand where the county's revenue has historically been coming from.

Matz said he would find ways for the county to save money and suggested offering county employees incentives as an alternative to benefits.

"When you look at a 21-year-old employee who has a very good health care plan provided by the county, that may not be what they really want," he said. "Maybe a week's vacation and a more catastrophic type health care plan would be more appropriate; and that health care plan is much cheaper for the county, so we save money."

As the forum came to a close, each of the candidates was given an opportunity to share why they are most qualified for the position.

"I am going to be able to start day one with expectations to the department heads and evaluation of the programs that will start immediately, and we will then be right in the middle of the budget, which I have prepared 14 budgets," Matz said.

"I've done four years of really pulling us closer to truth, getting us to agenda item reports, getting us to fiscal responsibility, getting us to what the numbers actually say, and getting our departments out there ...," Doemel said.

"My values have always been about opportunity, fairness, equality and accountability," Hintz concluded. "I mentioned that I'm someone who believes in communication and transparency and I think those are strengths of mine that I bring to the office that I always held in my other public roles that I've had."

The two county executive candidates with the most votes in the Feb. 18 primary will move on to the April 1 general election.

The League of Women Voters of Winnebago County will host an additional forum for the two county executive candidates advancing from the primary at 6 p.m. March 13 at Oshkosh City Hall.



Doemel



Hintz



Matz

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# Ice arena transfer headed for vote by Board of Supervisors

## County's ownership would go to nonprofit

By Bethanie Gengler  
OSHKOSH HERALD

The Winnebago County Board of Supervisors is considering turning over ownership of Tri-County Ice Arena in Fox Crossing to the nonprofit organization that operates it about four years ahead of schedule.

Appleton Ice launched a fundraising campaign in November to raise an estimated \$5 million for improvements to Tri-County Ice Arena and Appleton Family Ice Center in Memorial Park, which are both in need of repairs.

Board member Tommy Wroblewski said Appleton Ice has now narrowed in on the budget and made significant progress on a \$4.1 million capital campaign to fund renovations at both facilities. The fundraising campaign has already raised \$925,000 and Wroblewski said Appleton Ice believes that taking over ownership of Tri-County will help secure additional financial commitments from donors.

The facility was constructed in 1974 at 700 Shady Lane and named Tri-County because it was intended to be owned by Winnebago, Outagamie and Calumet counties. Calumet County backed out on the arrangement and Outagamie County sold its share to Winnebago County for \$1 in 2012.

Winnebago County entered into an agreement with Appleton Ice in 2014 for the nonprofit to lease Tri-County for \$1 per year. As part of the agreement, if Appleton Ice maintains the building at its expense and continues operating it as an ice arena, the county will transfer ownership to Appleton Ice in 2029.

County executive assistant Ethan Holtenberger, who gave a presentation on the agreement at a county board meeting earlier this month, said "it was a terrible deal for Appleton Ice, but they wanted to keep ice and hockey in the Fox Valley."

With Appleton Ice agreeing to handle all major capital and operational needs of the 50-year-old building, the proposed renovations at the Fox Crossing facility are expected to cost about \$2.25 million and include replacing the ice surfaces of both rinks, improving insulation for energy efficiency and upgrading the boiler system. Similar improvements estimated at just under \$2 million are also planned for the Appleton facility, including a new roof and floor.

At a committee meeting in December, facilities director Mike Elder said Appleton Ice is running into difficulty with funding the renovations at Tri-County because the nonprofit doesn't own title to the property.

"They have been operating it as the owner for the last 10 years," he said. "We have not put any money into that project. We have assisted them a little bit with some parking lot repairs and some snow plowing, but other than that they have been solely on their own and they have kept it operational for 10 years."

Appleton Ice general manager Kevin Grater said that the early ownership transfer would allow Appleton Ice to offer long-term naming rights and other financial incentives.

"One side of having transfer of ownership today is the financing and being able to go to the bank to have some collateral if we do fall slightly short of our fundraising goals," he said. "The second is to be able to look at our donors and go, 'We have control of this facility, we can guarantee what we're selling, which is a 25-year naming

right on the rink and the facility itself."

Grater said Appleton Ice has a significant donor lined up who is willing to buy naming rights to Tri-County for a six-figure contribution but has concerns over ownership.

"If we make the improvements we're looking to make, we can guarantee our sponsors, our donors, (and) our members that we'll have a 25-year facility at minimum," he said.

Issues brought up by supervisors at a January County Board meeting included complaints that Appleton Ice hasn't maintained the building and would turn around and sell it, with supervisor Steve Binder requesting a balance sheet and business plan from Appleton Ice.

"I think you need to go there, contract in hand, and make sure they're living up to the contract that you signed," he said. "The building, that it is maintained properly, and if it's not maintained properly, they need to bring it up to the standard or we can take the building back."

Elder said the county is aware of the issues at Tri-County and the ice floor has been heaving since before 2010. He said Appleton Ice has maintained the building in the same state that it was in when the county turned it over to them 10 years ago and it has not deteriorated much.

"We could hang on to this building and they will still get the building in 2029," he said. "What they would like to do is improve the facility so that there is more ice in the valley for the high schools, the colleges, the leagues to be able to do it."

While some supervisors criticized the plan, several others expressed support for transferring Tri-County to Appleton



Oshkosh Herald

Winnebago County supervisors will decide whether to relinquish ownership of the arena to a nonprofit sports organization.

Ice including Tom Egan, who noted that if something happens to the building the county isn't going to take it back and spend \$2 million improving it.

Supervisor Doug Nelson said Tri-County was built so that there would be an ice arena in the area.

"This group is willing to take over what could be a huge headache for us and continue to have an ice arena there," he said. "I guess a no-brainer is what comes to my mind and I appreciate the due diligence you've put in to make sure they have the funding to continue it forward."

Supervisor John Hinz added, "It's not like we're turning over a mini gold mine for a dollar."

Wroblewski said Appleton Ice has no intention of doing anything with Tri-County other than operate it as an ice sports arena for as long as possible.

"Significant investments are being made into the ice surface and into the buildings for hockey and hockey only," he said. "We're making commitments again to this.

This money that's been pledged, these people are expecting us to deliver on a long term, decades long capital campaign that's going to put ice sports in a position to stay in that building for a long time."

The Facilities & Property Management Committee voted in favor of turning over ownership of Tri-County to Appleton Ice ahead of schedule contingent on Appleton Ice securing the funds for rehabilitation. The County Board will take up a resolution authorizing execution of an agreement to transfer the property at a meeting this month or next.

Wroblewski said construction at the Appleton location will begin in April and wrap up by October, with work in Fox Crossing set to begin in the summer of 2026.

Appleton Ice set a target to meet its fundraising goal by this summer. Wroblewski encouraged the community to follow Appleton Ice Inc. on Facebook and visit appletonice.org to support the capital campaign.

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# School district's strategic plan helps shape our future

As your superintendent, I'm excited to launch this monthly column to keep our community informed about and engaged with the Oshkosh Area School District. Today, I want to share our district's strategic plan – the foundational roadmap that guides all our decisions and investments in ensuring every student thrives.

This plan focuses on four core areas needed to keep our district healthy:

**Learning and academics:** This is our core purpose. We are committed to providing a high-quality education that prepares all students for success after graduation, whether they pursue college, a career or active community involvement. This means providing rigorous academics, diverse learning opportunities and support for every student's unique needs.

**Finance and operations:** We are committed to responsible stewardship of district resources. This involves sound financial management and ensuring our facilities and technology support our high academic expectations while reflecting our funding realities. We will continue to invest in modernizing our schools and providing students and teachers with the tools they need to succeed.

**Safe and healthy schools:** We know students cannot learn effectively if they



**Bryan Davis**

OASD  
superintendent

do not feel safe and supported. We are dedicated to maintaining secure learning environments and fostering the physical, mental and social-emotional well-being of all students. This includes everything from physical safety measures to providing access to mental health resources and promoting a positive school climate.

**Engagement and communication:** We believe in the power of strong relationships and open communication. We are dedicated to fostering a sense of belonging in our schools and building positive relationships with all partners – parents, families, community members and staff. This means actively seeking your input, communicating clearly and transparently, and being responsive to your feedback.

In addition to these districtwide priorities, each school has identified three areas of focus for their individual strategic plans:

- Reading: We are committed to

strengthening literacy skills across all grade levels, ensuring every student grows in becoming a more skilled reader.

- Social emotional learning: We recognize the importance of developing students' social-emotional skills to help them navigate challenges, build relationships, and succeed in school and life.

- Staff engagement: We value our dedicated staff and are committed to supporting their professional growth, well-being and engagement in the school community.

We invite all community members to join us for a Community Strategic Plan Update on Thursday, March 20, at Vel Phillips Middle School. This is your opportunity to:

- Learn more about the district and school strategic plans.
- Talk with district administrators and school principals.

## Overdose prevention awareness event set

Oshkosh Herald

The Oshkosh Area School District is expanding its emergency preparedness resources with installation of Overdose Aid Kits (O.A.K.s) in all middle and high schools in partnership with the Clinton Global Initiative Overdose Response Network and Start Healing Now.

The district will host a community event at 1 p.m. Friday at Vel Phillips Middle School featuring state and school leaders, national prevention organizations, and community partners and individuals impacted by the opioid crisis.

The kits contain a naloxone nasal spray commonly known as Narcan, CPR breathing barriers, drug administration instructions, fentanyl testing strips and information about treatment and recovery support. Naloxone works in minutes to reverse the effects of opioid overdose.

"This initiative reflects our comprehensive approach to emergency preparedness," said Julie Conrad, assistant superintendent of operations. "While our schools have not seen an increase in drug-related incidents, we recognize that today's realities require us to be prepared for any emergency. Just as we maintain AED devices and conduct emergency drills, these kits represent another layer in our safety planning."

The Overdose Response Network has installed more than 3,500 kits nationwide, including 955 in Wisconsin.

The forum will include remarks from

## Amcor announces technical school scholarship

Global packaging specialist Amcor has established an Amcor Technical School Scholarship Program for high school seniors or graduates seeking full-time undergraduate study at an accredited two-year college or vocational technical school.

Interested students can apply for a scholarship at [learnmore.scholarsapply.org/amcortech](http://learnmore.scholarsapply.org/amcortech).

Twenty \$2,500 grants will be given each academic year.

Applicants must be a high school senior

## Veterans Prohibition Ball features jazz, dancing

The Fox Valley Veterans Council is hosting its annual Veterans Prohibition Ball on March 7 at Venue 404 with a Roaring Twenties theme of live jazz, dancing and an atmosphere reminiscent of a swanky speakeasy.

The event is a major fundraiser to support the Veterans Council's mission to assist, connect and honor veterans through emergency funding for basic needs. In the

- Explore volunteer opportunities to support our schools and students.

As many of you know, we recently announced an upcoming April referendum that aligns with our strategic priorities, particularly in maintaining safe, healthy schools and responsible use of district resources.

Through this monthly column, I'll continue sharing updates about both our strategic plan implementation and important district initiatives.

I encourage you to stay informed by visiting our district website at [oshkosh.k12.wi.us](http://oshkosh.k12.wi.us) or reaching out to me directly at 920-424-0160 with any questions.

We believe that by working together, we can create a thriving learning environment where every student in the Oshkosh Area School District reaches their full potential. We look forward to seeing you on March 20.



Submitted photo

Members of the Oshkosh Public Museum Auxiliary are shown in 1994.

## Museum auxiliary to mark its centennial

Oshkosh Herald

The Oshkosh Public Museum Auxiliary is celebrating its 100th anniversary with a special event from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Feb. 15 at the museum.

The auxiliary's history, contributions, commitment and support of the museum will be highlighted with panel displays and a video presentation. It will be a day of free

admission to the museum, which is featuring exhibits such as Nature as Muse, Tiffany treasures from the Richard H. Driehaus Museum and an encore presentation of the Helen Farnsworth Mears exhibition.

The Galena Room in the lower level will host a reception with refreshments made by auxiliary members, and there will be drawings for gift baskets.

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## Public library calendar

Some events require registration. Visit [oshkoshlibrary.org](http://oshkoshlibrary.org) to register or call 920-236-5203.

- Feb. 5**  
Baby/Toddler Storytime, 9:30-10:15 a.m.  
Baby/Toddler Storytime, 10:15-11 a.m.  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.  
Job Search Assistance, 1-4 p.m., teens and adults
- Feb. 6**  
Baby/Toddler Storytime, 10:15 a.m.  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.  
Chess Club, 5-7 p.m., all ages
- Feb. 7**  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-5 p.m.  
Preteen Book Club, 4:30 p.m.  
Teen Book Club, 4:30 p.m.
- Feb. 8**  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
- Feb. 9**  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, 1-4 p.m.
- Feb. 10**  
Preschool Storytime, 9:30 a.m.  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.  
Read to a Dog, 4-5 p.m., ages 5-12
- Feb. 11**  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.  
Adult DIY, 6-7 p.m.  
Stitch Together, 6:30 p.m., Adults
- Feb. 12**  
Baby/Toddler Storytime, 9:30-10:15 a.m.  
Baby/Toddler Storytime, 10:15-11 a.m.  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.  
Career Ready, 12:30-1:30 p.m., adults and teens  
Job Search Assistance, 1-4 p.m., adults and teens
- Feb. 13**  
Baby/Toddler Storytime 10:15-11 a.m.  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.  
Second Thursday Book Group, 1-3 p.m., adults  
Cozy Crafts and Cocoa, 4-5 p.m., teens  
Chess Club, 5-7 p.m.  
Genealogy and Local History Acquisitions 2025, 6-7:30 p.m., adults
- Feb. 14**  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-5 p.m.  
Elementary Book Club, 4:30 p.m.  
Young Adult Book Club, 4:30 p.m.
- Feb. 15**  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, 9-4 p.m.  
Read to a Dog, 10-11 a.m., ages 5-12  
Hack Club, 1-3 p.m.

- Feb. 16**  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, 1-4 p.m.
- Feb. 17**  
Preschool Storytime, 9:30 a.m.  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.  
Read to a Dog, 4-5 p.m., ages 5-12
- Feb. 18**  
Statewide Election Voting  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.  
Banned Book Club, 6:30 p.m., adults
- Feb. 19**  
Baby/Toddler Storytime, 9:30-10:15 a.m.  
Baby/Toddler Storytime, 10:15-11 a.m.  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.  
Job Search Assistance, 1-4 p.m., adults and teens
- Feb. 20**  
Baby/Toddler Storytime, 10:15-11 a.m.  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.  
Chess Club, 5-7 p.m., all ages  
Wonderlab, 5:30 p.m., ages K-2  
Not Your Classic Book Club, 6 p.m., adults
- Feb. 21**  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-5 p.m.  
Preteen STEAM, 4:30 p.m.
- Feb. 22**  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, 9-4 p.m.
- Feb. 23**  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, 1-4 p.m.
- Feb. 24**  
Preschool Storytime, 9:30 a.m.  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.  
Read to a Dog, 4-5 p.m., all ages
- Feb. 25**  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.  
Winnebago Free Legal Assistance Clinic, 4:30-6:30 p.m.
- Feb. 26**  
Baby/Toddler Storytime, 9:30-10:15 a.m.  
Baby/Toddler Storytime, 10:15-11 a.m.  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.  
Job Search Assistance, 1-4 p.m., teens and adults
- Feb. 27**  
Baby/Toddler Storytime, 10:15-11 a.m.  
LEGO Wall Open Build for Kids, noon-7 p.m.  
Chess Club, 5-7 p.m., all ages
- Feb. 28**  
Library closed: staff in-service day

# Lake Winnebago survey reveals key fisheries trends

By Angelo Cozzola  
DNR WINNEBAGO SYSTEM GAMEFISH BIOLOGIST

The Lake Winnebago bottom trawl survey remains one of the most insightful fisheries assessments on the system, providing crucial data on fish populations and species abundance.

Established in its modern capacity in 1986, the survey offers a nearly four-decade, longtime series, allowing for comparisons of past and present species abundance while providing insights into future population trends.

The primary objectives of the survey include assessing year class strength, relative abundance and general population trends across multiple species. Year class strength is determined by the catch rates of young-of-year (YOY) fish – those hatched in the spring before the fall survey – which serves as an indicator of the spawning success for multiple species.

The 2024 survey saw a surge in volunteer interest, with 46 participants signing up in less than 48 hours. Fisheries management and operations staff, alongside these dedicated volunteers, completed the trawl survey by following standardized methods that have remained consistent for the past 39 years.

The process involves 138 net pulls, distributed across three sampling periods in August, September and October. Each sampling day consists of 10 to 12 net pulls, totaling approximately eight hours on the lake.

A 27-foot-wide trawl net is deployed and dragged along the lake bottom at four

miles per hour for five minutes, covering roughly an acre per pull. Once retrieved, the fish are emptied onto a counting table where the crew identifies, measures and records each species. Gamefish are separated, measured and released back into the lake.

A total of 158,886 fish were captured in the 2024 survey, representing 22 different species. The YOY catch totaled 136,459 individuals from 12 species, with several significant findings:

- Strong walleye and yellow perch year classes.
- Highest white bass catch in over a decade.
- Record-breaking trout perch catch.
- A small but observable sauger year class.
- The eighth consecutive year of low gizzard shad catch.

The adult fish catch totaled 22,427, comprising 21 species. Key observations included:

- A relatively high catch of age 2+ walleye.
- A significant decrease in yellow perch numbers.
- Record-low catches of white bass and freshwater drum.
- A measurable presence of sauger.

The long-term dataset from the Lake Winnebago survey provides fisheries managers and anglers with critical insights into population trends and ecological shifts. The full report is available on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources website.

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# Beer drinkers look to healthy options going into new year

One year ago, Wife and Husband, the authors of this column, participated in Dry January, an increasingly popular annual challenge to restrict or limit alcohol intake. We found it to be somewhat enlightening and actually quite fun because we tried many alternative beverages we never would have otherwise, including non-alcoholic beer, which we wrote about here in Neenah News.

While Dry January is a relatively recent phenomenon, New Year's resolutions are nothing new. Many people are regularly inspired by a calendar flip to make a change or two to improve physical, mental or spiritual health. Eating healthier, exercising more, quitting smoking, traveling more. These are all worthy goals entering a new year.

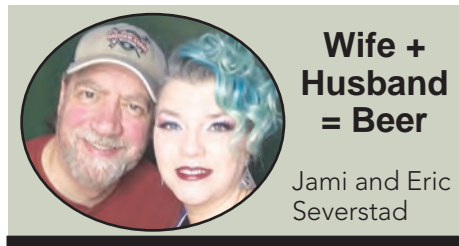
As beer lovers, how can we – or even should we – moderate our drinking habits as 2025 gets rolling? While Wife and Husband don't have answers for everyone, join us as we explore how beer affects health, and it starts with some recent headlines.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a landmark advisory statement that was powerful enough to affect the stock values of large brewing companies (more on that later). "Alcohol and Cancer Risk" is a 22-page report that contains statistics, research findings and recommended actions, many of which surprised us. While we wish we could offer counter claims or rebuttals, science is real, and we health-conscious beer drinkers should listen.

Husband: Let's start with stats. One or more drinks containing alcohol are consumed each week by 72% of Americans, yet fewer than half of U.S. adults (45%) are aware of the relationship between alcohol consumption and cancer.

Wife: That's quite the discrepancy. Personally, I've seen more articles hinting at the link between alcohol and cancer, but nothing quite so unavoidably pointed as this. It's not on the level of secondhand smoke causing cancer, but still.

Husband: Alcohol use contributes to



nearly 100,000 cancer cases and 20,000 cancer deaths each year. It's the third leading preventable cause of cancer, behind tobacco and obesity.

Wife: That's an unexpected gut-punch of a number. What types of cancer are we talking about? Liver seems obvious.

Husband: The U.S. Surgeon General advisory states seven types of cancer: liver, mouth, throat, voice box, esophagus, breast, colon/rectum. It gives examples. For people who consume one drink daily compared with those who don't drink, the odds of mouth cancer increased by 40%, and the risk of breast cancer in women increased by 10%.

Wife: I don't have words for this. I'm well read and consider myself an informed person. This seems too important and far-reaching for me to have missed all this completely. Are they just processing the data? What other observations did they make? For instance, are some types of alcohol more harmful than others?

Husband: I did see the advisory specify that the increased cancer risk is not associated with a particular type of alcohol, such as beer, wine or liquor. That surprised me a bit. I would've guessed that certain types would be more harmful than others.

Wife: We've discussed other alcohol-related issues in this column, too, like alcohol-related traffic deaths. How do those numbers compare?

Husband: The number of annual alcohol-associated traffic crash fatalities is 13,500. So, the cancer numbers are quite a bit higher at 20,000 per year.

Wife: That's shocking. Is the government going to embark on a publicity campaign to educate people? Are they going to go the way of tobacco products with warning labels?

Husband: The U.S. Surgeon General is saying that alcoholic beverage labels should include a statement about the connection of alcohol consumption and cancer. So, yes, a warning like on cigarette labels.

Wife: Well, that isn't groundbreaking, at least. We have labels on alcohol already. It impairs your ability to drive a car. Pregnant women shouldn't drink alcohol. This feels like a natural progression, actually.

Husband: Right. This should be no surprise, but the advisory simply states, "Cancer risk increases as you drink more alcohol."

Wife: Moderation, right? We're supporters of that.

Husband: With only 45% of adults aware of alcohol's connection to cancer, and the death numbers being so high, having warning labels on alcohol packaging will increase awareness.

Wife: A revised warning label seems logical, yet if people will actually read it is debatable.

Husband: The advisory actually addresses this! It claims that health warning labels are "well-established and effective approaches to increasing awareness of health hazards and fostering behavior change."

Wife: I don't know the stats on that, but people do need constant reminding. You mentioned stock prices dropping.

Husband: The day after the advisory was released, stock prices of major alcohol producers dropped: Sam Adams by 3.83%, Molson Coors by 3.3% and Jack Daniel's by 2.5%. That's not the bottom dropping out, but it signals a concern.

Wife: OK, beyond a new label on packaging that could happen, what immediate health improvements can beer drinkers make for 2025?

Husband: We should each evaluate our alcohol consumption and how that relates to health. Other than drinking fewer beers, or no beer as in Dry January, what else is there?

Wife: What about NA beers? I heard that's the biggest trend in the industry right now. We covered that last year, but it continues to grow.

Husband: It does. We tasted some good ones, and now there are even more. Neenah's Lion's Tail Brewing hosted an N/A Night last week, with 14 different non-alcoholic beers to try, including two on tap: the brewery's hop water, and Athletic's Run Wild IPA, both of which were fine. I like how refreshing a good hop water is.

Wife: Will Lion's Tail have an NA beer on tap all the time now?

Husband: They don't plan on it, al-

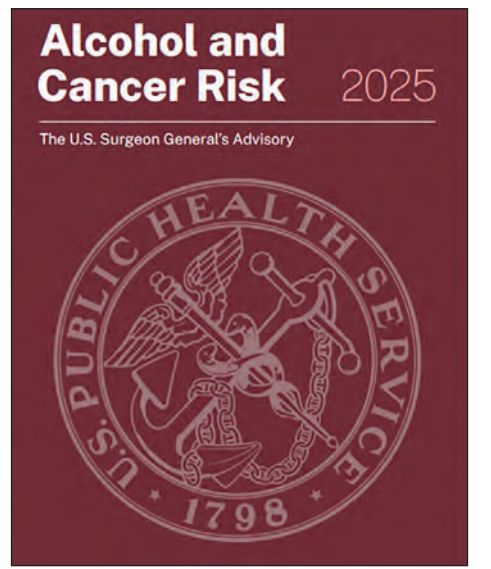


Image from Office of the Surgeon General  
The U.S. Surgeon General released a 22-page advisory this month explaining how alcohol can increase the risk of seven types of cancer.

though the can selection is extensive and will remain that way. They said if the hop water sells well, they'll make more. That's much easier to make than an NA beer.

Wife: Unless the beer is a rich and flavorful porter or stout, or a really fruity New England IPA, I often think of beer as a source of empty calories. In other words, calories that don't provide many nutrients.

Husband: Yes, one gram of alcohol contains about 7 calories.

Wife: A low-calorie and low-carb beer could be an option for me if it tastes decent. It's flavor or nothing for me.

Husband: I keep hearing how the brewing industry is developing beers that save on calories but don't sacrifice on taste. I'm just not finding ones I like.

Wife: Let's keep exploring, for our own health. Well, this article isn't the most positive way to begin the year, is it?

Husband: I know! Even when I did find an article that claims that beer consumed in moderation has health benefits, it tricked me.

Wife: I've read those articles for years, too. Phenolic compounds have antioxidants that can reduce the risk of cancer. How did you get tricked?

Husband: The source! The "expert" quoted in this article is a "specialist in botanical brewing" and leads Lena Brewing, a craft brewery in Lena, Illinois. He's definitely a biased source.

Wife: Yes, always check your sources.

Husband: Happy New Year, everyone. Enjoy your dry month or NA brew or full-strength beer. It's your choice.

Wife: To your health! Stay safe out there.

What beer-related topic should we tackle next? Let us know: wife.husband.beer@gmail.com.

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<p><b>8.99 lb</b> Fresh Farm-Raised Tilapia Fillets</p>	<p><b>7.99</b> 12 oz Select Ma Baensch Herring</p>	<p><b>4.49</b> 12-14 oz Select Hillshire Farm Lit'l Smokies</p>	<p><b>7.99</b> 22-24 oz Select Johnsonville Italian Meatballs or Sausage Slices</p>

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<p><b>12.99 ea</b> 12 Inch Message Cookie</p>	<p><b>6.99</b> 16 oz Father's Table Cheesecakes</p>	<p><b>1.99 ea</b> Valentine's Day Mega Cupcake</p>	<p><b>3.99</b> 3 ct Fresh Baked Filled Croissants</p>

# Calendar of events

## Thursday, Feb. 6

Author Mike McCabe: "Miracles Along County Q" 5:30 p.m., Caramel Crisp Bookstore, 200 City Center

History Buffs Book Club, 6:30 p.m., Morgan House

Kenny James and Rev. Fish, 6 p.m., Corner Bar, 2090 W. 9th Ave.

## Friday, Feb. 7

Fox Cities Golf Expo, 1 p.m., Sunnyview Expo Center

Morgan House tours, 6 p.m., 234 Church Ave.

## Saturday, Feb. 8

Oshkosh Farmers Market, 9 a.m., Oshkosh Arena

EAA Winter Flight Fest, 8 a.m., EAA Aviation Museum

Vintage Valentine Event, 11 a.m., Morgan House, 234 Church St.

Fall in Love urban craft fair, 10 a.m., Becket's, 1 City Center

Fox Cities Golf Expo, 10 a.m., Sunnyview Expo Center

"Godzilla Minus One," 7 p.m., Time Community Theater, 445 N. Main St.

## Sunday, Feb. 9

Fox Cities Golf Expo, 10 a.m., Sunnyview Expo Center

## Wednesday, Feb. 12

Father Joe Mattern: "The World Will Be Saved By Beauty," 6:30 p.m., Jesuit Retreat House, 4800 Fahrwald Road

## Thursday, Feb. 13

"Catch Me If You Can" by Oshkosh North, 7 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

## Friday, Feb. 14

Battle on Bago fishing tournament, 6 a.m., Millers Bay at Menominee Park

"Valentine's Vendetta," mystery dinner

theater, 6 p.m., Oshkosh Arena

"Catch Me If You Can" by Oshkosh North, 7 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

## Saturday, Feb. 15

Battle on Bago fishing tournament, 6 a.m., Millers Bay at Menominee Park  
Oshkosh Farmers Market, 9 a.m., Oshkosh Arena

Museum Auxiliary 100th anniversary, 10 a.m., Oshkosh Public Museum

Downtown Oshkosh Chocolate Stroll, 1 p.m., downtown businesses

Spaghetti dinner, 1 p.m., Winnebago Detachment 357 Marine Corps League Clubhouse, 4715 Sherman Road

"Catch Me If You Can" by Oshkosh North, 7 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

## Sunday, Feb. 16

Wisconsin Coin Expos annual convention and show, 9 a.m., Oshkosh Convention Center

"Catch Me If You Can" by Oshkosh North, 2 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

## Thursday, Feb. 20

EAA Speaker Series: Flying the A-6 Intruder, 7 p.m., EAA Aviation Museum

Wisconsin Herd vs. Capitol City Go-Go, 6 p.m., Oshkosh Arena

## Friday, Feb. 21

Crystal Gayle, 8 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

"February," 7 p.m., Time Community Theater, 445 N. Main St.

## Saturday, Feb. 22

Echoes of the Past Historical Trade Fair, 9 a.m., Sunnyview Expo Center

Wisconsin Herd vs. Motor City Cruise, 7 p.m., Oshkosh Arena

Good Co, 7 p.m., The Grand Oshkosh

## Sunday, Feb. 23

Echoes of the Past Historical Trade Fair, 9 a.m., Sunnyview Expo Center

OAC Art Supply Swap & Donation, noon, Oshkosh Food Co-op, 155 Jackson St.

Bridging Past and Present: Exploring Native American Cultural Heritage, 2 p.m., Oshkosh Convention Center



Submitted photo

Art show juror Pat Reiher from Fond du Lac is shown at a previous WRAP exhibition.

## WRAP art program coming to The Waters

Oshkosh Herald

The Wisconsin Regional Art Program (WRAP) is seeking nonprofessional, student and emerging artists to register for a local WRAP exhibition and workshop in their area, including one set from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. April 12 at The Waters in Oshkosh.

WRAP originated as an outreach program of the University of Wisconsin but is now administered by the Association of Wisconsin Artists. Its educational workshop presentations and critique sessions inspire participants to develop their abilities and grow as an artist.

Award winners from local exhibits will have their work shown at the annual state exhibit and are eligible for monetary awards. Registration is underway with entry and payment due April 1 with a three-piece limit.

Artwork is due between 8:30 and 9 a.m. on the day of the workshop at The Waters, 1393 Washington Ave. Contact local coordinator Kathy Murphy at murphk2003@yahoo.com or 920-509-1818 for registration information.

State WRAP liaison is Rebecca Herb and be contacted at wrap@wiscartists.org or 608-467-8594.

## Police recognize retirements, new employees

Oshkosh Herald

The Oshkosh Police Department recognized recent retirements in the department as well as new employees joining the force.

Sgt. Kari Pettit retired after 30 years serving the department as a patrol officer, K9 officer, school resource officer, detective and patrol sergeant. She helped develop the first OPD K9 unit in 1999 and served as a co-coordinator of the Mental Health Resiliency Committee. She was actively involved in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Bigs with Badges program and the Kiwanis-sponsored Cops 'N' Kids reading program.

Officer Troy Brandl retired from the department after nearly 29 years. He was a patrol officer, patrol sergeant, vice and narcotics unit investigator and a Lake Winnebago Area Metropolitan Enforcement Group (MEG) investigator for the past

four years. He served as a former member of the SWAT, Mobile Field Force and Honor Guard teams, a firearms instructor, field training officer, defense technology chemical instructor and a professional communication instructor.

Capt. Becky Kaiser also retired after serving for nearly 29 years, seven as a captain. She started as a community service officer and was a telecommunications clerk before becoming an officer. She also was a patrol officer, school resource officer, detective, patrol sergeant, criminal investigation sergeant, criminal investigation and professional standards division lieutenant, captain of administration, operations bureau captain, and criminal investigation division captain.

New community service officers are Evelyn Hoetschl and Mitchell Gonnering, and part-time telecommunications clerk Aspyn Rafac-Escobar.

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# Wisconsin tax burden hits new record low in 2024

Wisconsin Public Radio

The amount Wisconsinites pay in state and local taxes relative to their incomes hit its lowest level since at least 1972 last year, according to a new report from Wisconsin Policy Forum.

The “tax burden” is the ratio of what residents pay in state and local taxes relative to their income. The report found that number fell from 9.92% in 2023 to 9.62% in 2024.

The report noted several reasons for the decline, but it said the decrease is partly due to, “continued growth in incomes in the state, plus aggressive efforts by the state to hold down local property taxes.”

Last year, local and state tax collections also grew at their slowest rate in the past seven years, according to the research.

Tyler Byrnes, the report’s lead author, said the tax burden in Wisconsin was at 14.74% in 1972. But it has been declining for years.

“Each year, incomes do tend to grow,” Byrnes said. “And so as incomes have been growing, and there’s been pressure to keep tax revenues from growing, this burden has trended downward over time.”

Kevin Rich, the chair of the accounting department at Marquette University, called the numbers “good news.”

“A lower tax burden means that citizens have more money to fill their priorities, and arguably, they’re able to put that money into the economy and elicit economic growth,” Rich said.

Jerry Deschane, the executive director

of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, said the state has been going in the right direction.

“This is one of those things you don’t want to be at the top of the list, but you sure don’t want to be at the bottom either,” Deschane said.

“I think we have done a good job of balancing the demand for excellent services with keeping the price tag affordable,” he added. “I think there is always a danger that that can get out of balance.”

Another recent Wisconsin Policy Forum report found Wisconsin ranked 35th in the nation for its size of tax burden. That’s down from 25 years ago when Wisconsin ranked third.

The latest report found state and local tax revenues grew by 1.9% last year, from \$36.2 billion in 2023 to \$36.9 billion in 2024. But that didn’t keep up with the rate of inflation and was also the smallest increase since 2017, according to the report.

“Meanwhile, income growth easily outstripped the growth in tax collections, as personal income in calendar year 2023 grew by 5.2% double the increase seen the previous year,” the report said.

The report found sales tax collections in the state, which increased by 1.8% in 2024, were the “slowest year-over-year growth rate since 2010.”

“The modest rise was largely due to the fact that inflation is now receding after several straight years in which it drove up sales tax revenues rapidly,” the report said.

repair problems.

“Even if we found the solution on the money side with repairs and money side of operations, it doesn’t mean we can hire to put people in that space for folks to use (the train),” he said. “It’s time for us for us to move on from this activity.”

During the council meeting last week, Maurer was asked how much the department would need to get the train operational for 2025. Maurer said he did not know the number but is set to come back to the council for an amendment to the Parks Department budget for operating funds such as salaries for seasonal employees.

The train opens around Memorial Day and over the last couple of years has only operated Friday through Sunday. Up until the pandemic the train was open four days a week in 2021.

Over the last five years the amusement center has lost \$11,579 despite rider fee revenue, and included a loss of \$13,000 reported in 2023.

Despite the space losing money, the train has remained popular, with the Parks Department reporting almost 11,000 rides annually since 2019.

Maurer told the Herald the train was meant to be a self-supporting operation that would fund repairs with rider fees, which are currently at \$1.50 per ride.

The council approved the budget amendment with one opposing vote from Mugerauer.

Byrnes said efforts from state lawmakers have also helped keep the tax burden down. Democratic Gov. Tony Evers and Wisconsin Republicans have argued over tax cuts in recent years.

“We’ve had pretty tight limits to how much property taxes could go up over the past 15 years, and then there has been efforts by state leaders to lower our income taxes,” Byrnes said.

The report didn’t take into account new sales taxes in the city and county of Mil-

waukee because of how data was gathered for the report. Milwaukee was able to raise its sales tax in 2024 due to Act 12, a bipartisan law to overhaul local government funding. The Wisconsin Policy Forum said that data will be included in next year’s report.

Byrnes said it’s tough to say if the tax burden will go up in Wisconsin next year.

“I would also say that the number of referendum, school referendum, municipal referendum, that go onto the property tax levy might also have an impact there,” he said.

## Facebook posts

FROM PAGE 1

Briesen & Roper wrote the investigation report obtained last week.

“Our guiding principle as a district is unequivocally, ‘Students first.’ The board is deeply disappointed that board member behavior has diverted attention and efforts away from our core mission of education and the betterment of our district’s future,” board president Beth Wyman said in statement. “Any deviation from this focus diminishes the educational opportunities available to our children.”

A Jan. 22 story in the Herald reported an investigation was opened regarding board members’ activities. The complaint alleged DeWitt and Hess were using the fake profiles to undermine the district and Board of Education, and that the members violated board policy po0144.5, which relates to board member behavior, communications and code of conduct.

When DeWitt was first contacted by the Herald she said, “I have nothing for you.”

“As board members, we must uphold the highest standards of professionalism and ethical behavior. It is our duty to ensure that trust is placed in our guidance and leadership,” Wyman said. “We remain steadfast in our dedication to creating an atmosphere where educational excellence thrives, and where every student is given the opportunity to succeed. In doing so, we pave the way for a brighter future for generations to come.”

If the investigation found a policy violation it’s possible DeWitt and Hess could have been formally censured or possibly removed from committee assignments.

Even though the investigation did not show any policy violation, it raises questions about why an elected official would use a fake profile to share information on the district and board if they have the support of voters.

“Once a public forum or limited public forum is created by an elected official, certain liabilities occur if certain First Amendment rights are violated in the prohibition of certain participation and/or content,” the investigation states. “Creating aliases does not cure the potential liability for elected officials.”

The profiles for Green and Melter were taken down shortly DeWitt and Hess were contacted for comment. DeWitt and Hess

responded to the investigation after the district announced there was no policy violation. The two believe the complaint is a partisan attempt to cause division on the board.

The joint statement did not address the fake accounts but spoke to differences of opinions and protecting free speech, stating, “We take the attempt to curtail our constitutionally protected freedom of speech very seriously and will resist with all our strength should it ever resurface again.”

Wyman countered with, “This matter has never been about limiting speech or partisan politics. It is, and always has been, about maintaining the fundamental integrity that our community expects and deserves from their elected officials. Our students, families and staff deserve better than leadership that hides behind fake accounts while claiming to advocate for transparency.”

Hess, as Melter, posted several negative posts going after the district, school board and city staff, including former City Manager Mark Rohloff. DeWitt posting as Green has written about the negative impacts of Title IX regulations.

Hess appears to have used the Melter profile to boost his own profile in the community. In a post from April before being elected, Hess as Melter reposted a paid ad endorsing Hess for school board.

“This is what I want from our local leaders! I voted for only one school board member. I voted for Timothy Hess for Oshkosh Board of Education,” Hess wrote about himself.

Throughout December before the page was deleted, Melter was sharing posts from the Vote No -Oshkosh School Referendum 2025 page.

Melter’s first post was sharing a video to promote saving Merrill Elementary School in July 2022. After that almost every post was regarding the district and school board.

In January, when the school board voted to move forward with the \$197.8 million referendum, DeWitt and Hess were the only opposing votes.

The investigation stated, “Using aliases to create social media pages, or in fact simply creating social media pages as elected officials, can create liabilities for elected officials depending upon how the site is developed, what is created and what is allowed for posting on the site by other individuals.”

## Park train

FROM PAGE 1

State law requires anyone who operates an amusement ride must be at least 18 years old. Three people operate the train during the summer along with a supervisor.

Maurer said for continued support a public-private partnership would need to be created and that train engine costs will continue to rise for parts.

Council members spoke in favor of the budget amendment to get the train operational for the summer. Joe Stephenson commented on its special status.

“It’s uniquely Oshkosh,” Stephenson said. “It’s something worth saving.”

He added that a long-term funding solution will need to be worked out.

Council member Karl Buelow said he expects this year to be the biggest for the train based on the feedback the city has received in response.

Mayor Matt Mugerauer said the emotional response from residents is about trying to hold onto the past.

“This is a partial solution and I’m not into half measures,” he said. “This is only to pay for repairs and that doesn’t solve the problem that we had. It wasn’t just this thing was broken and we can’t find parts and it’s old. We also can’t find part-time staff.”

Mugerauer said he would support the measure if it solved the staffing and train

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# Spartans spoil Patriots upset bid with strong second half

By Steve Clark  
OSHKOSH HERALD

Oshkosh North boys basketball coach Brad Weber felt like last Friday's 76-50 win over Appleton East lacked the normal signature Spartan run.

That's not to say there wasn't a decisive stretch for North. It just hit a bit different than a normal Spartan tide-turning outburst.

"Usually, you feel our runs and this time, I think it was just us digging in on the defensive end, getting stops, playing through some physicality and finding ways to make it happen," Weber said. "It was just us getting stops. All of sudden you look up and we're up 20."

The Spartans actually had a pair of key stretches in the highly physical contest.

North closed the first half with a 15-4 run that put the Spartans ahead for good. Xzavion Mitchell had six points in the stretch in which North held the Patriots to just one field goal in the final 4:08 of the half. Stefan Stolicovic's 3-pointer with two seconds left in the half capped the run and sent the Spartans into intermission with a 33-24 lead.

"That gave us momentum going into halftime and we carried that through the rest of the game," Mitchell said. "That's what we needed but we need to start the game like that."

Appleton East opened the second half with a surge of its own and pulled to within 38-35 but North fired back with a 17-4 outburst to break the game open.

Owen Weber hit a basket and a 3-pointer to start the surge while a Jon Coleman 3-pointer and a Mitchell basket finished off the run with North taking a 55-39 lead with 5:35 remaining.

Coleman hit two 3-pointers in the sec-

## North Athletic Hall of Fame to enshrine two

Oshkosh North will induct two new members into its Athletic Hall of Fame during halftime of Friday's varsity boys basketball game against Neenah.

John Cameron was an assistant football and basketball coach at Oshkosh North for 40 years and helped the Spartans to seven boys basketball state tournament appearances and a state championship in 2018 and two football state final appearances and a 2000 state championship.

Cameron was a member of the class of 1975.

Rashid Coulibaly earned six varsity letters in diving and track and field in his athletic career at North. He placed second in the pole vault as a junior and won the state title as a senior and still owns the school record for the pole vault. He competed at Madison in the pole vault from 2016-18.

Coulibaly is a member of the class of 2016.

ond half and scored eight of his 10 points after intermission to give North a boost.

"I have to always be ready to shoot," said Coleman, who is shooting 51 percent from the field and 47 percent from 3-point range. "(Making a 3-pointer) is a big boost. The team gets hyped. The bench gets hyped. Then, it's back on defense. De-

SEE **North boys** ON PAGE 20



Photo by Jim Koepnick

Oshkosh North's Jackson Anderson goes up for a shot against Appleton East on Friday.

## Mitchell becomes FVA's all-time scoring leader

By Steve Clark  
OSHKOSH HERALD

Oshkosh North's Xzavion Mitchell moved into exclusive company Tuesday night.

The Spartan senior scored 32 points to become the all-time leading scorer in Fox Valley Association history, passing the mark held by Kaukauna's Jordan McCabe.

Mitchell said he was not aware of where he stood on the all-FVA scoring list prior to the game.

"I grew up watching FVA basketball, watching Jordan McCabe and Tyrese and all of the great players come through the FVA," said Mitchell, who stands at 2,490 points after Friday's win over Appleton East. "It's a great honor."

McCabe had set the mark at 2,442 points for his career, which stretched from 2015-18.

Mitchell has scored 672 points through 18 games this season, surpassing his previous high point total for a season that was 669 set last year. He has scored at least 50 points four times this season and ended the week averaging 37.2 points per game.

He passed Stevie Clark as North's all-time leading scorer earlier this season.

"I think it's a testament just who he is as a player," North head coach Brad Weber said. "I know this conference tough and has produced some really good players. We thought he was going to be viewed in that stratosphere but getting to see that on paper."

Mitchell has also moved into the top 10 on the state's all-time scoring list this season according to the Wisconsin Basketball Coaches Association, recently passing former Pius star Jaquan Johnson for eighth place.



Photo by Jim Koepnick

Oshkosh North senior Xzavion Mitchell passed Jordan McCabe to become the all-time leading scorer in the Fox Valley Association.

He now trails Sheboygan Lutheran's Jacob Ognacevic by 11 points, while also within 100 points of Cassville star Sam Okey (2,539) and former Badger Sam Dekker (2,593) who also played at Sheboygan Lutheran.

Anthony Pieper, who played at Wausaukee High School and collegiately for Marquette, leads the state scoring list with 3,391 career points.

"To see where he could climb, there are some iconic names on that list. It's almost surreal," Weber said. "All great things he'll enjoy afterwards. But for him, right now, he's where his feet are at. He'll enjoy those things when he is done."

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# Prep sports roundup

## BOYS WRESTLING

### Wildcats notch dual meet win over Papermakers

Oshkosh West won the final two matches to break a tie score and collect a 42-30 win over Kimberly in the final Fox Valley Association dual meet of the season last Thursday.

With the score tied at 30, Jaiden Fronczak stuck Kimberly's Brady Fonder in 3:40 at 165 pounds to give West the lead and Ryland Schneider followed with a pin of Reed Beck in 1:25 at 175 pounds to close out the match.

Xavier Vang (113), Preston Schneider (126), Jaxen Lloyd (144) and Nelson Fournier (215) also won by pin for the Wildcats.

Eskander Koko (150) and Zach Bartels (190) each earned decision wins for West.

## GIRLS BASKETBALL

### Wildcats top Lightning in OT to extend streak

Oshkosh West outscored Appleton North 10-2 in overtime to pull out a 57-49 win over the Lightning in a Fox Valley Association girls basketball game on Friday night.

It was the fourth straight win for the Wildcats, who improved to 10-9 overall and 7-6 in the FVA.

Maddie Rasmussen led the Wildcats with 14 points, while Rowan Tigert also reached double figures with 10 points in the win. Samantha Panske and Kamryn Stauffacher chipped in nine and eight points, respectively.

West used a big advantage at the free-throw line to key the win, finishing 23-of-33 from the charity stripe, while North was just 6-of-10. The Wildcats also hit seven 3-pointers in the game, including three by Panske.

Earlier in the week, West collected a 55-46 nonconference win on the road over Westosha Central.

Rasmussen with 14 points and Tigert with 11 points paced the victory, while Stauffacher finished with eight. Kinslee Nelson and Ava Strasser each finished with seven points.

### Spartans can't overcome rough first half in loss

Oshkosh North was held to only nine points in the first half and fell to Appleton East, 65-24, on Friday night.

Awut Alic finished with nine points and eight rebounds to lead the Spartans.

Promise Shehi was the next highest



Photo by Jim Koepnick

Oshkosh North's Andrew Brockman fights to get away from his opponent during the 175-pound match in last Thursday's dual meet. The Spartans beat Fond du Lac in the final dual meet of the regular season, 45-28.

scorer for the Spartans with five points.

### Knights post pair of wins in busy week

Lourdes Academy capped off a busy week with a 58-32 win over Dodgeand in a Trailways East game on Friday.

Delaney Ruedinger matched her season-high with 26 points in the win, finishing 10-of-19 from the field and 5-of-6 from the free-throw line.

Hailee Bauer hit three 3-pointers and finished with 11 points and five assists, while Hannah McDowell chipped in eight points. Sabur Machiros led the team with 11 rebounds.

Lourdes Academy led 24-8 at halftime en route to the win.

On Wednesday, the Knights fell to the Milwaukee Academy of Science, 97-56, despite 21 points and eight rebounds.

Ruedinger and Machiros added eight and seven points, respectively.

Lourdes Academy did pick up a win over St. Mary's Springs, 45-40, on Monday.

Bauer hits six 3-pointers and finished with 20 points in the win, while Ruedinger added nine points, seven rebounds, six assists and five steals.

### Valley Christian has win streak stopped

The Warriors dropped a nonconference

contest to Wild Rose, 71-32, last week.

Valley Christian had won three straight games and four of its last five before the loss.

## BOYS BASKETBALL

### Spartans cruise to nonconference victory

Xzavion Mitchell finished with 32 points, eight rebounds and four steals as Oshkosh North dispatched Beaver Dam, 75-44, in a nonconference game last week.

Jon Coleman added 15 points in the win, while Owen Weber finished with eight.

Jackson Anderson led the team with eight assists.

### Wildcats can't overcome first-half deficit

Oshkosh West fell behind Appleton North 41-14 at halftime on Friday and couldn't recover in a 71-44 loss to the Lightning.

Joey Ware finished with nine points, while Malachi Herlihy chipped in eight.

Earlier in the week the Wildcats dominated Ripon in a 72-37 nonconference win.

Sam Benesh led the team with 17 points, followed by Ware with 12 and Brayden Kufel with 11.

### Knights drop pair of conference games

Lourdes Academy lost Trailways East games on back-to-back nights, losing to Horicon on Thursday followed by a loss on the road at Dodgeand on Friday.

Harlan Kuehn led the Knights with 15

points in the 94-61 loss to Horicon. Jackson Buttke added 11 and Braden Studinski finished with 10 for the Knights.

The Knights then fell, 51-38, to Dodgeand.

### Valley Christian adds another victory

The Warriors finished with four players in double figures and picked up their third win in the last four games with a 69-53 victory over Rio on Friday.

Mathias Behling and Brady Patterson each scored 17 points in the win, while Patterson added five assists and four steals.

Kaleb Richardson scored 11 points and Derek Wallace chipped in 10 points for the Warriors.

The Warriors were coming off a close 66-62 loss to Wayland Academy on Thursday.

Patterson paced Valley Christian with 18 points and eight rebounds, while Behling also scored 18 points and Richardson finished with 15.

The Warriors hit 11 3-pointers in the game, with Patterson knocking down six to lead the way.

## SWIMMING

### Bergin, Crowe pace West's win over Fondy

Caleb Bergin and Carter Crowe each won a pair of individual events as Oshkosh West scored a 109-66 win over Fond du Lac last week.

Bergin won both the 200-yard freestyle and the 100-yard backstroke at the meet, while Crowe's wins came in the 100-yard

SEE **Prep roundup** ON PAGE 20

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# Oshkosh's Ford embraces challenges of daring sport

By Tim Froberg  
HERALD CONTRIBUTOR

Gymnastics is not for the meek, the weak or the easily freaked.

It is a demanding, highly technical sport that takes a fearless, adventurous approach.

Add athleticism, energy and enthusiasm and you get Ja'niyah Ford.

Ford – a three-year letter winner and a 2024 WIAA state meet qualifier for the Oshkosh co-op squad – is one of the area's top returning gymnasts.

Ford is an all-around competitor, participating in the floor exercise, balance beam, vault and uneven parallel bars. The Oshkosh West senior finished 12th in the all-around (30.4750) at the team's WIAA Division 1 sectional and qualified for state in the vault with a fifth-place sectional showing. She placed 28th at the state meet in Wisconsin Rapids with a vault score of 8.2333.

"Ja'niyah is a joy to have on the team and is a natural leader," said West/North gymnastics coach Wendy Schlies. "She is always willing to step up to a new challenge and has continued to learn new skills."

The vault is perhaps her best event, but Ford is a fan of all four.

"I would say my favorite would be the beam, but I love the floor, too," Ford said. "It allows me to show off my personality and sassiness with music and dancing. It's really fun. I enjoy all of them."

Fun is the word that Ford uses regularly to describe gymnastics.

"It can be a little nerve wracking sometimes, especially in the big meets, but I really, really like this sport," she said. "It's just so much fun. There is just something about flipping your body in the air – being upside down and just letting loose. It calms you. It takes everything out of your body."

Confidence, courage and a competitive nature are essential traits of a high-level gymnast like Ford, a team leader who inspires her teammates with her work ethic, dedication and bring-it-on mentality.

"The mentality you need is really important," said Ford. "You have to tell yourself that you can do it. Even if there is fear in your body, you have to force yourself to do it. You have to trust your coaches, trust your body, trust your ability and then go for it and hope for the best. Most of the time it works out well."

"I really enjoy being able to spend time with all the girls and I love to compete."

Ford has been involved in gymnastics since the age of six, joining her older brother, Ja'siah, who competed briefly at

## Senior Spotlight

a Junior Olympic level.

"When I was younger, I did a lot of different sports," said Ford. "I did dance, soccer, softball and volleyball. Nothing really stuck with me until I started doing gymnastics."

"I stopped for a little bit, but have been doing it continuously since sixth grade. Just seeing my brother flip in the air, getting that high and having success really inspired me."

Ford also draws inspiration from watching her favorite gymnast, the iconic Simone Biles, compete.

"Simone has accomplished so many things - won so many medals at the Olympics," said Ford. "I find her to be really inspiring and motivating."

Part of Ford's success involves her coachability and positive nature.

"Ja'niyah is extremely coachable," said Schlies. "She is always willing to entertain new ideas with a positive attitude. She works extremely hard and can light up the gym with her smile."

Gymnastics isn't Ford's lone sport. She's a track star as well: a sprinter who competes in the 100 and 200-meter dashes along with the long jump. Ford has also been a member of 400 and 800-meter relays. She was a sectional qualifier in the 100 last season and hopes to become a first-time state meet competitor in 2025.

"Track and gymnastics are very different and involve different skills, but the mentality is similar," Ford said. "In both sports, you need to be in that zone and focus on yourself – and not worry about other people's times or scores."

Gymnasts also can't worry about the possibilities of injuries, resulting from putting their bodies in vulnerable positions.

"I've had a couple of back issues, but no broken bones or anything, nothing serious," said Ford. "Thank God."

Ford is a high-honors student at West with a GPA in 3.7-3.8 range. She plans to attend college next year and would be open to competing in college gymnastics if given an opportunity.

"I'm not sure yet exactly where I'm going, but would like to go to college out of state," Ford said. "My brother goes to school at Arizona and that's a possibility. As far as majors, architecture, interior design and real estate really interest me. I would like to do all three, but that's impossible. I'll narrow it down to one."

SEE **Senior Spotlight** ON PAGE 20



Photo by Kelly Grace

Oshkosh West's Ja'niyah Ford is a three-year letterwinner for the Oshkosh co-op gymnastics team and hopes to return to the state meet later this spring.

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# Prep roundup

FROM PAGE 18

backstroke and the 50-yard freestyle. His win in the 50-yard freestyle headlined a sweep of the top three places for West, with Evan Booms taking second and George Suwalski finishing third.

Booms also picked up a first place for West in the 100-yard freestyle, while Eddie Tornow was first in diving.

Sam Roblee in the 200-yard individual medley, Alex Fanshaw in the 100-yard butterfly and Suwalski in the 500-yard freestyle also earned second-place finishes.

West also won two of the three relays with Booms, Crowe, Robell and Bergin making up the winning 200-yard freestyle relay team, while Bergin, Booms, Suwalski and Crowe finished first in the 400-yard freestyle relay.

The Wildcats took second in the 200-yard medley relay.

## North/Lourdes drops dual meet to Neenah

Oshkosh North/Lourdes Academy posted a pair of wins but fell to Neenah 129-51 in a Fox Valley Association dual meet last week.

River Reeves in diving and Trip Kujawa in the 100-yard butterfly were the only

first-place finishers on the day for North/Lourdes.

Everix Blessant finished second in diving.

## GIRLS WRESTLING

### Ketola takes third Marshfield invite

Oshkosh North's Maddy Ketola finished 3-1 to take third place at 132 pounds at the Marshfield Queen of the Mat tournament.

Ketola needed just 19 seconds to score a pin in her opening match before picking up a decision win in the quarterfinals.

After falling in the semifinals, Ketola bounced back to pin Adams/Friendship's Valencia de la Torre in 4:38 to take third.

Ketola is now 16-8 on the season.

### Klinger leads West finishers at Shawano

Lauren Klinger went 3-3 to finish in sixth place at 107 pounds to lead Oshkosh West at the third annual Shawano Girls Invitational.

Klinger notched all three of her wins by pin, including two in the first period.

Samantha Bryant also picked up three wins at 132 pounds but did not place. She scored all of her wins by pin.

the state meet will be held March 7-8 at Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln High School.

"I'm hoping to make it back to state in the vault again and hopefully the beam and maybe the floor," she said. "I was close to making state in the beam last year. I've been learning some new skills this year which should push my scores up even higher."

# Senior Spotlight

FROM PAGE 19

Until that happens, Ford is staying focused on her winter goal of returning to the WIAA state gymnastics meet for the second and final time. The WIAA gymnastics sectionals start Feb. 27 and



Photo by Jim Koepnick

Oshkosh North's Dalton Clark makes a pass around an Appleton East defender to Owen Weber on Friday night.

## North hoops

FROM PAGE 17

fense gets the first energy, offense is second."

Coleman was one of four Spartans to finish in double figures in the game, with Mitchell leading the way with a hard-earned 22 points. That was Mitchell's lowest output of the season as he dealt with a myriad of Patriot defenders who all played physical against the North standout.

"When they are all over me and chasing me around, obviously it's going to wear on me at some point, so it definitely changes the game," Mitchell said. "I had a solid game the first time around so I knew they were going to come out and be physical. It was one of those games where both sides were physical and that's what the FVA is all about."

Stolijovic finished with 13 points with Jackson Anderson joining Coleman with 10 points. Anderson also finished with 10 assists in the game, while not committing a turnover.

"We have very capable guys and I think a lot of this journey for us is for guys just finding their spots and their times and getting comfortable with it," Weber said. "As the season has gone on, you're starting to see the individual pieces fit and see guys starting to understand their fit in the offense and then the confidence starts to grow."

Weber was pleased with the offense in

the win, but he was more impressed by North's efforts on the defensive end.

The Spartans have held four of their last five opponents to 50 points or less and are finding their rhythm on that side of the court as well.

"Offense hasn't been our problem, it's been our defensive focus. We look good at times and other times we don't execute or finish plays," Weber said. "We needed a game like this. A physical game where we had to stop looking for somebody else to finish it for us with a whistle and just finish it ourselves. I felt the second part of the first half and in the second half, we did those things."

The Spartans also got a boost with the return of junior Bryce Ott.

The junior finished with four points and five rebounds in limited minutes in his first action of the season after suffering an injury in football and his No. 10 jersey was a welcome sight back on the floor.

"Bryce will have a big impact for us," Coleman said.

Mitchell said that he and Ott spent a lot of time working together in the offseason so he was glad to see him get some minutes and believes his return definitely had an effect.

"It hurt my heart when he got injured," Mitchell said. "Having Bryce back because of his length and the way he is able to move, I'm so happy. I'm grateful he's back and I think that was a big reason as to why our defense was so good tonight."

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# Obituaries

## Karen S. Rees

Karen S. Rees, passed away peacefully at Ascension Mercy Hospital, on Saturday, January 25th, 2025, after a brief illness.



She was born on July 31, 1938, to Russell & Gertrude (Kulibert) Rees. In 1948, at the tender age of 10, her father Russell, suddenly passed away. In 1951, her mother married Harley Stromme.

Karen was a life-long citizen of Oshkosh and a life-long member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. She graduated from Oshkosh High School in 1956 and worked for Guernsey Dairy, Oshkosh News, and retired from SNC Manufacturing and La Sure's catering.

She played recreational volleyball, loved to golf, was a member of the first women's softball team in Oshkosh, playing for the Billy Club. She was a board member of the Womens' Division Oshkosh, for many years.

Karen bowled in many leagues and was also on the Board of Directors of the Oshkosh Bowling Association. In 1994, she was awarded the Doris Kieckhafer award and was inducted into the Bowling Hall of

Fame.

In her younger years, Karen loved to travel and looked forward to displaying her large Christmas village each fall. As she aged, she enjoyed playing Bingo, reading, and watching TV. (Especially food/cooking shows and various sports).

Karen is survived by her brother, Mark Stromme, special sisters-in-law, Janet Rees & Terry Stromme. Aunt Jane Kulibert. Nephews and nieces, Rick (Lori) Rees, LeRoy, IL; Michelle Powell, Bloomington, IL; Wendy (Eric) Gruber, Cleveland, TN; Patrick (Michelle) Stromme, Wisc. Rapids, WI; & Annah Stromme, Oshkosh, as well as many cousins and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; Russell Rees and Gertrude Rees-Stromme & her step-father, Harley Stromme, her brother Tom Rees, aunts & uncles Leona (Adam) Hanneman, Lydia (Dan) Farry, Elmer (Loretta) Kulibert, Duaine (Carol) Kulibert, Al (Marge) Kulibert, Marvin Kulibert, Norm (Evie) Kulibert, Jessie (Dan) Fell.

As per Karen's wishes, cremation has taken place, and a small service will be held at a later date. We'll miss you, Karen. Sleep in Heavenly peace.



## Janet Kay Putzer

Janet K. Putzer, age 79, of Oshkosh, passed away, surrounded by her family on January 31, 2025.



She was born on July 13, 1945 in Oshkosh, the daughter of James and Joan "Bea" (Wright) Rand. Jan attended St. Vincent grade school and went on to graduate from Oshkosh High School in 1963. After high school she began working in the pharmacy at Mercy Hospital so she could pay to attend the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, where she graduated with a degree in Medical Technology. Jan married Gregory Putzer on May 15, 1971 at St. Vincent Catholic Church. She would go on to work as a Medical Technologist (now more commonly known as a Medical Laboratory Scientist), at the Oshkosh Clinic, UW-Oshkosh Health Center and for many years at Aurora Medical Center, both in Oshkosh and Neenah.



Besides working in the laboratory, Jan led a very busy life. While working a full-time job she also managed to help in the office at Putzer's Big and Tall, and if that wasn't enough, she became a Master Gardener and started and ran the very first Oshkosh Farmer's Market. Her love of classical music led to her working with and eventually becoming the president of the Oshkosh Symphony League where she co-founded the very successful and popular gift show known as Yule Faire at the Oshkosh Convention Center. She also volunteered as a docent at the Paine Art Center and Gardens.

Janet was preceded in death by her parents, James and Joan "Bea" (Wright) Rand. She is survived by her husband of nearly 54 years, Gregory; her son, Andrew Putzer; her daughter, Janna Putzer; sisters, Kathleen (Gary) Nordhaus, Peggy Rand and Jacqueline (Robert) Kossel; brother, James (Sande) Rand; brother-in-law, Gerald (Judy) Putzer; sister-in-law, Beatriz (Kenneth) Putzer; along with numerous nieces and nephews.

One of Jan's passions at home was knitting, which she put to good use making countless baby sweaters and hats that she donated to the Aurora Medical Center Gift Shop where she also volunteered for many years after retiring. When Jan wasn't knitting, she was reading, which is why our bookshelves looked like a branch of the Oshkosh Public Library. While Jan loved spending time at their longtime home on Lake Winnebago, she and Greg also loved to travel throughout the U.S., visiting nearly every state more than once. They also made numerous trips outside the U.S. going to England, Ireland and central Europe.

Of all the things that Jan was involved with, her main love was for her family, her children, Andy and Janna, and her sisters and their families. Family always came first. Our house was often the main hub for enormous family get-togethers on the 4th of July and Christmas because of how much Jan enjoyed being surrounded by those she loved.

Jan is survived by her husband of nearly 54 years, Gregory; her son, Andrew Putzer; her daughter, Janna Putzer; sisters, Kathleen (Gary) Nordhaus, Peggy Rand and Jacqueline (Robert) Kossel; brother, James (Sande) Rand; brother-in-law, Gerald (Judy) Putzer; sister-in-law, Beatriz (Kenneth) Putzer; along with numerous nieces and nephews.

A funeral mass for Jan will be held Saturday, February 8, 2025 at St. Raphael Archangel Catholic Church, 830 S. Westhaven Dr, Oshkosh, at 11:00am, with Fr. Tom Long officiating. Visitation will begin at 9:00am and go until the time of the mass. The burial service will take place at Sacred Heart Cemetery at 1:30pm. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Paine Art Center and Gardens.



## Michael Morrissey

Michael Morrissey, age 72, passed away peacefully on Friday, January 31, 2025.



Born on December 17, 1952, in Waukau, Wisconsin, to the late Lawrence and June (Lord) Morrissey, Mike grew up in Omro, where he built lifelong friendships that he treasured throughout his

life. On June 7, 1975, he married his best friend and soulmate, Sandy (Bednarek). Together, they created a warm and loving home in Oshkosh, where they raised their two children, Travis and Kyra, and made countless cherished memories filled with laughter, love, and joy.

Mike had a successful career in accounting, eventually becoming a co-founder and partner at a technology company. However, his greatest happiness came from life's simple pleasures—weekends spent fishing, lively holiday gatherings with family, classic Wisconsin supper club dinners with friends, and long, thoughtful conversations that ranged from the profound to the lighthearted. Whether cruising in his Mustang convertible or relaxing at home, the music of The Beatles, The Moody Blues, and The Rolling Stones was always playing—the perfect soundtrack to a life well lived.

Above all, Mike was a devoted husband, father, father-in-law, and grandfather. He took immense pride in his chil-

dren's accomplishments and adventures in Chicago, celebrating every milestone along the way. In 2018, he embraced his most treasured role yet—"Grandude"—a name lovingly given to him by his granddaughter, Alexandra, inspired by Paul McCartney's *Hey Grandude!* His warmth, humor, and unwavering love will be deeply missed, but his spirit will live on in the music he adored, the stories he shared, and the many lives he touched.

Mike is survived by his beloved wife of 49 years, Sandy; his son, Travis (Julie); his daughter, Kyra; his granddaughter, Alexandra; his sister, Kathy Daggett; his mother-in-law, Rosemary Bednarek; and his in-laws, Joby & Tim McKeag and Lori & Jim Bednarek, and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Lawrence and June Morrissey; his brother-in-law, Dave Daggett; and his father-in-law, Robert Bednarek.

A memorial service to celebrate Mike's life will be held on Saturday, February 8, 2025, at 3:00 PM at Konrad Behlman Funeral Home, 100 Lake Pointe Drive. Visitation will take place from 1:00 PM until the time of service.

The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to Compassus Hospice, especially Casey and Chris, for their compassionate care, as well as to the many friends and family who visited, called, and sent messages of love and support.



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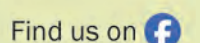
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# Obituaries

## Terry L. Wohler

Terry L. Wohler, age 76, of Oshkosh, passed away unexpectedly on January 25, 2025 at Aurora Medical Center. He was born on February 25, 1948 in Oshkosh a son of the late Walter and Violet Wohler. Terry had worked for and retired from PH Glatfelter Paper Co. Terry was very active and involved in the Oshkosh Community throughout his life having been a member of the Laker's Club, Hank's Club, he served on the Board of Directors for the Winnebago Community Credit Union, and served on the City of Oshkosh Parks Board.

Terry had owned and operated Champs Food and Spirits with his lifelong friend Greg Seibold. Terry will be remembered for being an avid golfer having won the City Championship at Muni Golf Course. He greatly enjoyed bowling having

bowled his first "300" game at the T&O. Terry loved cooking and assisted Robbins Restaurant over the years with food prep for the Country USA events. Time spent with his father-in-law at the family cabin in Tigerton was also special to him. Terry was a longtime member of the Oshkosh Elks Lodge #292. Finally his greatest love was that of the Otter Street Fishing Club having been a member since age 18 and serving as Treasurer, enjoying the camaraderie and many projects there. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him.

Terry is survived by and his memory will be cherished by his wife, Kathy; a son, Scott Wohler, a daughter, Amy (Shannon) Gonia, all of Oshkosh; granddaughter, Alyssa Wohler and a grandson, Zachary Wohler; twin great-grandsons, Owen and Hayden. He is further survived by other relatives and many very dear friends.

A time of sharing memories and celebrating his life will be held on Saturday, March 8, 2025 at the Oshkosh Elks Lodge #292, 175 W. Fernau Ave. in Oshkosh be-

ginning from 3 pm until 8 pm with a Elks Service to be held at 4 pm. In lieu of floral expressions please, memorials in his name to the Otter Street Fishing Club would be

appreciated.

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## Ulrich H. Boss

Ulrich H. "Rick" Boss, age 85, of Oshkosh, passed away on Friday, January 24, 2025, at Aurora Hospital, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. He was born in Oshkosh on January 17, 1940, to Ulrich S. and Eleanor (Jacobs) Boss.

He enjoyed country dancing, country music, traveling and gambling.

Rick is survived by two daughters, Christina (Andy) Sonnleitner and Sabina (Jim Rothe) Schiessl; three grandchildren, Nick (Crystal) Sonnleitner and Kevin (friend, Beth) Sonnleitner, Maggie (friend, Josh) Schiessl; two brothers, Jay (Mary Palmer)

Boss and Wayne (Mary) Boss.

Along with his parents, Rick was also preceded in death by his girlfriend, Wanda LaRoche; infant sister, Kalen Jo Boss; and sister-in-law, Barbara Boss.

Private services will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, please play a couple of hands of Mississippi Stud in memory of Rick.

A special thank you to his guardian angel, Teresa Ellis for her friendship, love and kindness. Thank you to Jim for the road trip home.

And remember... "it's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game." (credit-G. Rice)

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# Obituaries

## Kathleen R. Sina

Kathleen Rosemary Sina, a beloved sister, partner, and friend, left this world on



January 29, 2025, at the age of 68. Born on October 27, 1956, in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Kathleen lived a life full of warmth, creativity, and generosity. She was a proud member of her community and dedicated

her free time to many passions, from crafting beautiful knitted and crocheted pieces to leading her local Kountry Kidz 4-H Club with enthusiasm and care.

Kathleen found joy in life's simple pleasures-bingo nights with friends, camping

trips with loved ones, and sharing delicious baked goods, especially her famous cakes and tortes. She was always ready to lend a hand in the garden or to help canning with her life partner, Kirk "Digger" Versteegh. Her kind spirit and compassionate heart touched all who had the privilege of knowing her.

Kathleen enjoyed a fulfilling career, working at various local businesses including Oshkosh B'Gosh, SNC Manufacturing, Kwik Trip, Kobussen and most recently, AMCOR, where she was known for her hard work and friendly demeanor. She cultivated lasting friendships with colleagues and brought her cheerful nature to every job.

She is survived by her sister Roxane Schmidt (Donald) and their children, Nikayla and Shantaya; her life partner,

Kirk; his children, Jessica Bennett (Tony) and grandchildren, Kelsey & Catarina Bennett, along with Emma & Brianna Versteegh and great-granddaughter Hadley Hanan. Kathleen will also be missed by Claire, Carleen and Linda Kleinschmit sister in laws and by her nieces and nephews, including Cindy (Scott - preceded) Collier and their daughter Cassandra; Gary (Sherri) Durkee and their children, Kyle, Carissa, Chad; Tammy (Steve - preceded) Stark and their children, Steve, Justin & Nathan; Duwayne, Shelly, Billie Jo; Brian, Scott, John, Jeff, Jerry, and Autumn; as well as special friend, Toddy.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Norman and Jane Kleinschmit; Kirk's son Michael, and siblings, Norma (Harlan) Durkee, Julia Kienast-Stapleton; Rose-

mary Ramminger; Russell, John, Robert and George Kleinschmit; as well as Kirks mother Louise Versteegh.

Family and friends are invited to gather to celebrate Kathleen's life on February 6, 2025. Visitation will be held at the Konrad-Behlman Funeral Home - Westside (100 Lake Pointe Dr) starting at 11:00 a.m., followed by a heartfelt funeral service at 1:00 p.m., with burial at Lake View Memorial Park to follow. We cherish the memories she has given us and look forward to honoring her generous spirit.

Kathleen's legacy of love and compassion will continue to inspire all who knew her. She'll be deeply missed by her friends and family.



## Jerry P. Lang

Jerry P. Lang, age 77, passed away at home after a brief illness on Tuesday, January 28. He was born in Woodbury, NJ on November 14, 1947, to Fred and Dorothy (Peters) Lang. He earned a bachelor's degree in history from Franklin and Marshall College and a second bachelor's degree in criminal justice/political science from Columbus College while serving in the U.S. Air Force stationed at Fort Benning, GA. He earned a master's degree in the administration of justice from American University.



He married Diane Appleton on July 14, 1979, on Long Beach Island, NJ. He was employed with the states of South Dakota,

where he worked with the Rosebud Sioux Tribal Council, and later, Wisconsin, as a District Court Administrator.

Jerry loved all living things, and volunteered for the Oshkosh Zoo Society, the Oshkosh Area Humane Society, Learning in Retirement, the ACLU, and local literacy councils, among others. His natural curiosity, open-mindedness, and passion for learning were always leading him to new interests: languages, horticulture, music, archery, woodworking, book editing, fencing, and above all, avid reading. In his younger years, he was a wild child on a motorcycle. He enjoyed sailing, biking the local trails, and lake kayaking. He embraced country life and was often found driving his tractor or maintaining the diverse orchards and pine groves that he planted. He was dedicated to feeding birds and local wildlife

and enjoyed pointing out a new visiting species. His thoughtfulness and quiet wisdom made him seem prepared for anything. He was a patient teacher, loving friend, and devoted husband, father and son, selfless, kind, and full of humor to the last.

He is survived by his wife, Diane; two daughters, Darcy (Steve) and Cassie (Kel-

lie); and two grandchildren, Graysen and Maddi. He was preceded in death by his parents; and his brother, Barry Lang.

Please consider a donation to the Oshkosh Food Pantry or the Neenah Animal Shelter in his name.



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## Legal Notice

STATE OF WISCONSIN, CIRCUIT COURT WINNEBAGO COUNTY IN THE MATTER OF THE NAME CHANGE OF:

Taya Savannah PedahEl

By (Petitioner) ERICKA CHRISTIAN RAYBERN By (Co-Petitioner) DION GARY RAYBERN

Notice and Order for Name Change Hearing Case No. 2025CV000023

**NOTICE IS GIVEN:** A Petition was filed asking to change the name of the person listed above: From: Taya Savannah PedahEl To: Taya Savannah Raybern Birth Certificate: Taya Savannah PedahEl

**IT IS ORDERED:** This Petition will be heard in the Circuit Court of Winnebago County, State of Wisconsin: Judge's Name: Hon. Michael D. Rust Place: Winnebago County Courthouse Room 410 415 Jackson Street, Oshkosh, WI 54901 Date: February 10, 2025 Time: 3:30 pm

If you require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to participate in the court process, please call 920-236-4811 prior to the scheduled court date. Please note that the court does not provide transportation.

**IT IS FURTHER ORDERED:** Notice of this hearing shall be given by publication as a Class 3 notice for three (3) weeks in a row prior to the date of the hearing in the Oshkosh Herald a newspaper published in Winnebago County, State of Wisconsin.

**BY THE COURT:** DATE SIGNED: January 9, 2025 /s/ Hon. Michael D. Rust

Winnebago County Circuit Court Judge, Branch I Runs: January 22, 2025, January 29, 2025 and February 5, 2025

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