

))business

briefs

STAWICKI SELECTED CHAIR OF WPPI ENERGY BOARD



Jim Stawicki, general manager of Sturgeon Bay Utilities and chair of the WPPI Energy board of directors.

Committee, which oversees WPPI Energy's operations and programs. He's now serving on the WPPI Energy Policy & Communications Leadership Council.

Sturgeon Bay Utilities General Manager Jim Stawicki has been elected chair of the WPPI Energy board of directors after serving as its vice chair for the past 11 years. WPPI Energy is a member-owned not-for-profit that serves 51 locally owned electric utilities. The 51-member board and its committees oversee the implementation of WPPI initiatives.

Stawicki has represented Sturgeon Bay on the WPPI board since 2004 and has served since 2006 on its 11-member Executive

WEBINAR ON ROUND TWO OF GRANTS UP TO \$10 MILLION

A free Workforce Innovation Grant Program webinar is available to learn more about the next round of applications. The session aired Feb. 15, but it was recorded and posted for viewing.

The program will fund nonprofit and governmental entities that design and implement collaborative, innovative plans to tackle their communities' workforce challenges and work to create better, higher-quality and more family-sustaining careers. Grants will be available in amounts ranging from \$250,000 to \$10 million, funded under the federal American Recovery Plan Act.

The program's goal is to help businesses find workers and help workers connect to jobs. Grant funds can be used to meet workforce needs such as child care, transportation, upskilling and reskilling workers, and career counseling.

The application deadline for this second grant round is April 15, and the application portal will open Feb. 22. Find out more at wedc.org.

GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR EXPORT PRODUCTS

The Door County Economic Development Corporation has been selected for a second time for the Collaborative Market Access Grant program through the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. The program is a great tool for businesses seeking to export products to international markets. Find out more from Laura Vlies Wotachek at laura@doorcountybusiness.com or 920.304.2046.



The former home of Doc Eames will eventually become a bed-and-breakfast. The building was moved to the property from Eames Farms on the hill east of the village in the 1990s. Photo by Rachel Lukas.

New Owners Still Discovering at Cupola House

by MYLES DANNHAUSEN JR.
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Greg and Melissa Bieker have had their sights set on running a bed-and-breakfast in Door County for at least 10 years, but they didn't think that dream would come true in the form of one of the most historical properties in Egg Harbor.

The new owners of the Cupola House property, which includes the old Doc Eames house in the middle of the village, are still figuring out what the future will hold for the building that was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

"We bought the property more for the old Doc Eames house," Greg Bieker said.

Their vision is to operate the old Eames house as a bed-and-breakfast.

"We want it to look like a boutique hotel mixed with a B&B," he said.

For now, the house will be a short-term vacation rental as the Biekers transition from their lives in Green Bay, where Greg has managed call centers for 30 years and Melissa is a hospice nurse.

Though the five-bedroom Eames house is what they were attracted to, Bieker said they've come to learn that the Cupola House holds a special sway over residents and visitors.

"The Cupola House has so much history, so much character," Bieker said. "We thought we'd sell it, but we can't let this go. It has been a surprising joy we weren't really planning on, but we're really enjoying it."

Built in 1871 by Levi Thorp, the Cupola House is one of the oldest and most recognizable buildings

in the village. For 38 years, Gloria Hansen operated a gallery and retail store in the building until retiring and putting the property up for sale in 2019. The 4,500-square-foot property has been vacant since then, but Bieker said it's in good shape and that they're now working on a long-term plan for the entire property.

"I get more questions about the Cupola than anything else," he said. "We know we want to keep it historic and as close to original as we can. Keep it true to the origins – that's a piece that's nonnegotiable. We would like to rent it as some form of retail space, but we're particular about what goes into it because we want it to complement the rest of the property."

))perspectives

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome." ANNE BRADSTREET

EDITOR'S NOTE

Confessions of an Ex-non-collector

by DEBRA FITZGERALD
debra.fitz@ppulse.com



Winter is a time for inside projects. That's been difficult here because, for the first time in my life, we bought a house that didn't need a ton of interior work. It hardly needed any at all. Switch up some drawer pulls, add a barn door, refinish some of the doorway framing – these things are not a winter's worth of work.

Casting about, I landed on my overstuffed T-shirt drawer. This is a drawer that multiplies. It multiplies so much that I have a bag on a top shelf of my closet that also contains T-shirts. Cleaning out the drawer, I simply transferred the overflow to this bag.

And then I realized what I was doing and, stunned, sat back on my heels.

I'm a minimalist. I abhor collections, remember? I could start a business helping people clean out closets if I didn't already do it for free, remember?

My T-shirt fetish was so deeply hidden in my closet that I didn't even know

about it. There was only one thing to do: prune the collection.

Easier said than done. Can I really give up that Led Zeppelin concert T-shirt from the Boston Garden – an event that happened so long ago it feels like it happened to a different person? Can I really toss that T-shirt from Greece from my first overseas trip? Or that really cute T-shirt, a midriff printed with one of my favorite symbols, even though I'm more likely to colonize Mars than wear a midriff T-shirt again?

As I went through the pile and met with no after no of answers, I realized

these material "things" were not thing-like to me. They embodied times and places in my life, past states of mind, body and spirit. They were like some kind of T-shirtly cuneiform. If I laid them out in chronological order, side by side, I could read a shorthand story of myself: places I've gone and lived, things I've liked or discovered or wanted to achieve or hoped or disliked or felt or needed.

Who can part with that, I told myself, and, satisfied with the justification, stuffed the bag back in the closet.

Honoring Essential Supermarket Employees

by KAAREN NORTHROP

One of the proud owners of the Main Street Market in Egg Harbor

February 22 has been designated Supermarket Employees Day by FMI, The Food Industry Association, and this year marks the second annual celebration.

Last year we were in the midst of the pandemic, and as "essential" workers, the industry thought this group of employees

should be officially recognized. Before the pandemic, supermarket employees did not often get credit for the high amount of intelligence, common sense and hard work necessary to excel in this industry. The country figured that out very quickly!

I can tell you that the staff members of the Main Street Market are extremely deserving of this accolade. This is nothing new, but it was certainly illuminated during the past two years. When the whole world seemed to be on the verge

of falling apart, we made sure you had food and other essentials necessary to get you through the day. Our employees used their brains, experience, ingenuity and spirit to figure out the logistics of serving you.

This was done with a strong sense of purpose: There is nothing worse than the potential end of the world and a pantry devoid of sustenance! And not just the dregs from the depths of the pantry, but delicious meals planned with care and creativity to occupy some of the many hours that needed to be filled during those endless days.

Our staff shopped for you. We deciphered lists, found substitutes for the many items that were unavailable and called you if we absolutely could not figure something out. We walked miles every day, up and down the aisles in endless circles, with hourly breaks to wash our hands. We divided up the tasks each day to spread out the workload. Ultimately, everyone fell into the tasks they were really good at, and we became incredibly efficient.

It takes many people to operate a grocery store. Placing orders, working with vendors, unloading trucks, preparing products, stocking shelves – there is a lot of coordination and work done behind the scenes to fill the shelves. On any given day, we receive 10-20 deliveries, some of them truckloads of pallets of groceries piled high. Everything that comes through the back door is

touched by multiple people before it ends up in your cart. It also takes an impressive team effort to get those groceries through the checkout, out the door quickly and in the same condition in which you put them in your cart.

Grocery stores are open every day. We do not close for months, weeks or even days. We do not work Monday-Friday, 9-5. Weekends? Open. Holidays? Open and working. Remote work from anywhere with an internet connection? Nope. We are here in person every day.

The past two years have been hard for supermarket employees. I think we have all gained a measure of respect for doing our jobs every day in communities throughout the country. Food is essential, and especially in rural areas, grocery stores are hubs of a community. People can talk to people, socialize if they choose and find out what's going on in their community. The pandemic was lonely for many people; we were happy to be their connection to something outside their homes.

Although the official recognition is nice, we don't really need it to do our jobs well. I believe our customers know that we are intelligent, kind, hard-working individuals who, together, try our best to provide them with a positive and enjoyable shopping experience.

On Tuesday, Feb. 22, we will celebrate Supermarket Employees Day. You know where we'll be!



letters to the editor

Voice Your Support for Restoring Potawatomi State Park Tower

There's still time to voice your support for restoring the Potawatomi State Park Tower - before it's too late.

The 75-foot tower was built in 1931. During the years before it was closed in 2017, we took friends and families up to catch the incredible views of Sawyer Harbor, the Sturgeon Bay ship canal and the bay of Green Bay several times each year. It was a highlight for anyone visiting Sturgeon Bay.

We were encouraged when the Eagle Tower at Peninsula State Park was reopened last year, after it was rebuilt with its long and gradual ramp that allows people with disabilities to enjoy it as well. But the Potawatomi State Park Tower is unique.

The Sturgeon Bay Historical Society Foundation worked to successfully get the tower listed on the National Register of Historic Places because it was the first tower of its kind in the state to be built solely for recreation. This means it can be restored without the requirements of costly ramps or elevators.

Although I support all efforts to accommodate people with disabilities, it would be a shame if the tower had to be demolished for lack of funds to support a project as ambitious as Eagle Tower. With the completion of the Door County Maritime Museum Tower last year, we now have two excellent options for people of all abilities to access fantastic views in Door County.

The Historical Society Foundation also invited an expert on wood engineering here to examine the tower, and in 2019, Dr. Daniel Tingley of Wood Research and Development prepared a report that indicates the tower can be restored to a safe condition for about \$300,000. The report has since been certified by a Wisconsin engineering firm. Still, the tower restoration is stuck in state bureaucracy and is at risk of being torn down.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is taking public comments through Feb. 22. Go to the DNR website or email melissa.vanlanduyt@wisconsin.gov.

Margaret LeBrun
Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin

Dumbing Down and Deskill Kids

During the 1990s, when I first heard that standardized tests "dumb down and deskill kids," I thought that was ridiculous. They were one of the tools I used to diagnose the needs of youth in two prisons and K-12 public schools. I was wrong.

The constitution defines education as a state/local issue. After the turn of the century, most states adopted national curricula cleverly designed by segregationists after schools were integrated. The curricula were marketed using the carrot-and-stick approach, in which the percentage of "right" answers on nationally mandated standardized tests define excellence. Schools with test improvement are blue ribbon and awarded small national grants. Tests are used to compare, not diagnose.

Like snowflakes, no two children are alike, but each is beautiful. Kids are gifted and talented in many ways. Before schooling was standardized, our job as adults and teachers was to encourage children to become the best that they could be and value differences when negotiating problem resolution.

Standardized education limits knowledge to information that can be tested. Teachers who improve test scores are "effective." Kids value being right, better than others and entitled. Students with other talents too often develop low self-concepts.

Many adults are unaware that their conversation is limited by highly intelligent authoritarian think tanks that promote ignorance to erode constitutional democracy. Think tanks use the divide-to-conquer strategy. Adults join like-minded groups and fight for their right to be right. For example, some parents threaten and make unreasonable demands on teachers, board members and administrators, but they have poor problem-solving skills for discussing options to resolve differences.

Some adults are representatives who pass laws that privilege greedy donors and allow the sale and use of private data, promote unfair voter rights and unequal tax benefits. They believe "right" decisions are more important than making decisions based on HDR fundamental values: Human rights as defined by the UN; constitutional democracy in a government of, by and for all people; and preserving critical resources of air, water and land.

Maybe standardized education does more than just dumb down and deskill kids?

Carole Vande Walle
Fish Creek, Wisconsin

Reasonable Motives Drove Republican Actions

A recent letter to the *Peninsula Pulse* suggested that because Republicans did not support the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), they don't want to invest in their communities. My purpose in writing is not to debate the merits of those two items as it sounds like the money went for worthy causes.

However, the main reason Republicans were not in favor of ARPA was because of inflation concerns. Anyone notice that their dollar doesn't go as far? Inflation remains at a 40-year high and impacts the less fortunate more than anyone else. Many have pointed to ARPA as one of the contributing factors.

Before casting stones, consider that there may have been a reasonable motive behind their actions. Let's talk about investment in our communities. I would venture that many charitable and major gifts given to nonprofits were given by someone who voted Republican. Government is not the only avenue to invest in our communities.

Scott Johnson
Green Bay, Wisconsin

Time to Step Up to Save Potawatomi State Park Observation Tower

On Jan. 27, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources held a public virtual meeting and comment period regarding plans for the Potawatomi State Park Observation Tower.

During this meeting, I felt that the majority of contributors, including state Sen. André Jacque and state Assembly Rep. Joel Kitchens, were in favor of trying to save the tower, which, according to a study performed by Wood Research and Development (a company that specializes in the restoration of wood products) on behalf of the Sturgeon Bay Historical Society Foundation, could be completed at a cost of approximately \$300,000 (but no more than \$500,000).

My hopes would be that Gov. Tony Evers can find a grant award through the Tourism Capital Investment Grant Program, similar to the way he did for Peninsula State Park's Eagle Tower and the Door County Maritime Museum Tower.

Such a grant would be advantageous in providing the cost of restoration of the tower, thereby providing access for Door County residents, Ice Age Trail hikers and the many visitors and campers to the park who have certainly been denied viewing the surrounding beauty the tower offers since its closure.

The public is encouraged to submit written comments regarding the observation tower by Feb. 22 using the survey link at surveyMonkey.com/r/potawatomitower, emailing melissa.vanlanduyt@wisconsin.gov, or mailing a letter to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, c/o Missy VanLanduyt, 101 S. Webster St., P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707.

It's time to step up, give your input and save the tower.

R. Peter Jackson
Naseauapee, Wisconsin

Who Should Decide What to Do with Wisconsin's Budget Surplus?

Last week, Gov. Evers unveiled his budget plan, calling for giving taxpayers a break and refunding some of the largest budget surplus in Wisconsin's history, on track to be \$3.8 billion at the end of 2023. His proposal calls for spending less than half of that amount, \$1.7 billion, by sending every Wisconsinite \$150, restoring the state's funding to two-thirds of the public-school budget for the first time in two decades, defraying child care costs and adding further to his already historic investments to provide rural areas and small businesses with high-speed broadband. These measures are aimed at promoting the common good and better ensuring a more equitable, prosperous Wisconsin.

Evers' plan must be approved by the members of the Republican-controlled legislature, and they've already expressed their opposition. They want to hold on to the surplus, and I believe it's with the hope that they'll win the governorship and be able to do whatever they want with the money in 2023.

They're saying they want to use it to reduce taxes, but let's remember what total Republican control of state government gets us: business subsidies and giveaways. Let's remember how we were Foxconned by Gov. Scott Walker and state Republicans with promises of 13,000 high-paying manufacturing jobs. They agreed to pay an average of \$230,769 in tax incentives for each job Foxconn created, and the Republicans of Racine County and Mount Pleasant threw 100-plus families out of their homes and spent more than \$600 million

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Award-winning
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