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Racine County's Daily Newspaper

# The Journal Times®

## From 'well qualified' to 'an embarrassment'

Robin Vos' 180-degree reversal on Michael Gableman **STATE, PAGE A5**

## The craziest State Fair Foods

Where and when to get them **GET OUT & ABOUT, INSIDE**



## High school football preview

Waterford will again try to succeed with lean numbers **SPORTS, PAGE C1**



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## Michels wins nomination

Trump-endorsed candidate to face-off with Evers; Kleefisch backs Michels

**MITCHELL SCHMIDT**  
Lee Newspapers

Self-proclaimed political outsider Tim Michels will face Democratic Gov. Tony Evers in November after defeating his primary challenger Rebecca Kleefisch in Wisconsin's heated GOP gubernatorial primary Tuesday.

Despite entering the race in late April, more than six months after former Lt. Gov. Kleefisch, Michels rode a surging campaign into Tuesday's primary thanks in part to an endorsement from former President Donald Trump, who held a rally supporting Michels in Waukesha County on Friday. Michels, the millionaire co-owner of Brownsville-based construction company Michels Corp., also pumped more than \$12 million — the most a gubernatorial candidate has spent in state history — into his campaign in a little over three months, including millions on television and online ads.

"Thanks to you, we took on the Madison Establishment and won," Michels said in a statement. "Tonight we celebrate, but then, first thing tomorrow, let's get to work."

The Associated Press called the race for Michels at about 10:30 p.m., with Michels leading Kleefisch by about 4%, or about 22,000 votes, with almost 80% of votes counted. Votes are unofficial until formally canvassed.

Like the rest of the state, Racine County voted for Michels. According to the unofficial tally,

Please see **GOVERNOR**, Page A4



**ADAM ROGAN, ADAM.ROGAN@JOURNALTIMES.COM**

Akil Ajmeri, right, douses state Sen. Van Wanggaard, center, and Assembly Speaker Robin Vos in champagne as they celebrate victories in their primary elections Tuesday night at Staybridge Suites, 7430 Washington Ave., Mount Pleasant.

# Vos hangs on

Says 'Gableman is an embarrassment' after former justice backed Steen, who hasn't conceded

**ADAM ROGAN**  
[adam.rogan@journaltimes.com](mailto:adam.rogan@journaltimes.com)

**MOUNT PLEASANT** — In the closest election he has ever faced in state politics, Assembly Speaker Robin Vos staved

off a challenge from the right in the form of Adam Steen. With the victory, Vos staved off a surge in efforts to decertify the 2020 presidential election.

Steen, a newcomer to District 63, focused much of his campaign on decertification and was endorsed by former President Donald Trump.

Vos fell out of Trump's favor as Vos has refused to support efforts to decertify the 2020 election — something Vos, election law experts and the legislature's own attorneys say

is a legal impossibility, despite Trump's continued baseless claims he won in 2020.

According to unofficial results tallied Tuesday night, Vos received 5,084 votes to Steen's 4,824 in the primary election.

Please see **VOS**, Page A3

**SEE:** From smiles to bowed heads, Adam Steen's election night watch party in 6 photos and 2 videos **NEWSVU**

## Toney edges Jarchow in Republican AG primary

**LUCAS ROBINSON**  
Lee Newspapers

Fond du Lac County District Attorney Eric Toney defeated former state lawmaker Adam Jarchow in the Republican primary for Attorney General, a race where he was far outspent and often attacked for not being conservative enough.

Jarchow conceded on Twitter at 1:07 a.m. Wednesday.

Toney had 37.5% of the votes to Jarchow's 36.9%, with 98.7% of the votes counted as of 2:40 a.m.

Lawyer Karen Mueller, who has boosted fringe theories about the 2020 election and COVID-19 vaccines, won a shocking 25.6% of the vote, potentially splitting hardline conservative voters that might have otherwise supported Jarchow.

Jarchow could seek a recount if the final difference between him and Toney is less than 1 percentage point. But Jarchow did not discuss that option in his statement blasting Democratic Attorney General Josh Kaul

and saying that Toney has the "political fortitude to right the ship" and "has my full support."

Unlike the rest of the state, Racine County voted for Jarchow over Toney, while Mueller still had strong support. According to the unofficial tally, Toney received 8,043 votes in Racine County, with Jarchow receiving 8,475. Mueller received 5,411.

Toney was resoundingly endorsed by conservative Racine County officials, including

Please see **TONEY**, Page A3

# Racine voters reject referendum

Public doesn't approve tax bump to hire more cops

**DEE HÖLZEL AND ADAM ROGAN**  
The Journal Times

**RACINE** — City of Racine voters resoundingly rejected

an increase in taxes by \$2 million cumulatively in order to hire more police.

The referendum would have funded 11 positions at the Racine Police Department in 2020. The city administration says the eliminations were due to budget restraints and consistently decreasing

support from the state, while critics say it was due to poor fiscal management.

The referendum would also have provided around \$500,000 for other crime prevention initiatives and would have allowed an additional \$150,000 per year, every year afterward, to cover increases in salaries

and benefits.

Had the referendum passed, for a homeowner with a home assessed at \$135,000, the tax increase would have represented approximately \$71.55 per year. 2,846 Racine voters cast ballots in favor of the

Please see **REFERENDUM**, Page A4



**MARK HERTZBERG, SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL TIMES**

The Racine Police Department conducts an investigation on the 1300 block of Villa Street April 24.

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CLASSIFIED	B6	MONEY	B2	PUZZLES	B6
COMICS	B9	OBITUARIES	B3	SERVICE DIRECTORY	B8
LEGALS	B7-8	OPINION	B5	STATE	A4-5, B2, B4





SEC. OF STATE, TREASURER RACES

# La Follette victorious

Racine native wins GOP primary

CHRIS RICKERT  
Lee Newspapers

Wisconsin's secretary of state since 1983 won his primary Tuesday and will face a current state legislator from Clinton in the November election.

Doug La Follette beat Alexia Sabor in the Democratic primary. Sabor is chair of the Dane County Democratic Party who left her job as a project manager with a tech company to run full-time for the position.

And La Follette did it by spending just \$86 on his campaign, WisPolitics.com reported.

On the Republican side, state Rep. Amy Loudenberg was declared the winner by the Associated Press over Jay Schroeder — who was supported by those seeking to overturn the 2020 election — and Justin Schmidtko.

Unlike in many other states, Wisconsin's secretary of state has no control over elections, or any sub-



Leiber Richardson Loudenberg La Follette

stantive duties at all. But all three Republican candidates proposed returning administration to the office after criticizing decisions made by the state's Republican-created Elections Commission in the 2020 presidential election, when Donald Trump lost Wisconsin. All three have echoed Trump's false claims that fraud cost him the election.

In the race for state treasurer — another constitutional office whose major duties have been transferred over the years to unelected but expert government agencies — Cottage Grove attorney John Leiber, a Republican and Racine native, will face current Fitchburg Mayor Aaron Richardson, who won a narrow victory over Wausau radiologist

Gillian Battino on the Democratic side.

Leiber has said his two goals for the office are to keep its budget as small as possible and protect and increase the \$1.4 billion in state trust funds the office oversees, including for education needs. He opposes expanding the office.

Richardson has said he would promote financial literacy and look to increase homeownership by bringing a rent-to-own program Fitchburg has piloted to the entire state.

The current treasurer, first-term Democrat Sarah Godlewski, did not run for reelection so she could run for U.S. Senate. She dropped out of that race on July 29.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.



MARK HOFFMAN, MILWAUKEE JOURNAL-SENTINEL VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tim Michels claims victory in the Republican primary for governor late Tuesday at Tuscan Hall Venue and Catering in Waukesha. At left, is his wife, Barbara Michels.



MIKE DE SISTI, MILWAUKEE JOURNAL-SENTINEL VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rebecca Kleefisch speaks to supporters at the Cornerstone Sports Pub in Oconomowoc Tuesday night.

## Referendum

From A1

referendum, according to Tuesday's unofficial count, compared to 3,695 voting against the referendum.

Mayor Cory Mason said the feedback he received from the public was conflicted. Generally, people wanted more policing, but they did not want their property taxes increased.

"Their fiscal concerns outweighed their public safety concerns," he said.

### Opposition

One of the people who voted "no" on the referendum was Alderman Henry Perez, who is a retired Miami police officer and wants to see the RPD better-funded, but not with an increase in property taxes.

He said he wanted to see the council prioritize public safety in the budget.

Perez was also critical of the way the city used federal American Rescue Plan Act funds. He said the city used the money for "feel good projects" when it should have gone to necessary spending, such as public safety.

However, ARPA funds could not have been used to permanently fund the 11 positions eliminated in 2020, since it was temporary money, but it could have been used to strengthen public safety. Perez said the money could have been used for a task force, as one option.

### Fiscal

Alderman CJ Rouse described the voters he interacted with as "angry and appalled" that the city was asking to raise their property taxes.

He said his district has a lot of people who are on fixed incomes as well as people who are struggling financially. Neither group felt they could afford an increase in property taxes at this time, he continued.

He also said even the folks living in apartment buildings were concerned about what an increase in property taxes could do to rent.

Rouse said voters also expressed concern that if the



Mason Perez Rouse West

funds from the increased taxes were not used, that money would be rolled over into general government spending.

He also heard from some voters who intended to vote against the referendum because they do not support law enforcement. He stressed, though, that those were few, and the majority of comments he heard expressed concern about the increase in property taxes.

### Alternatives

There are alternatives to funding the 11 positions that were eliminated.

Mason pointed out the state is sitting on a historic budget surplus, which could be used to increase aid to municipalities in order to shore up law enforcement budgets during a time when there has been an increase in crime.

The surplus is projected to be \$3.8 billion.

He said for those in the legislature who purport to support police, here was the opportunity to do something meaningful and "walk the walk, not just talk the talk."

Efforts by Gov. Tony Evers to use the surplus — for education and to send refund checks to voters — have been rejected by the Wisconsin Legislature, which is firmly in GOP control. Republicans plan to build a plan to spend the money next year, and hope to do that with a Republican governor instead of Evers.

### Polls

Relatively few Racine residents voted in the election.

In a community with approximately 77,000 people, only 35,285 people are registered to vote, and only 6,541 voted in the referendum — just 8.5% of the population.

"It hurts my heart to see it," Rouse said of the low voter turnout; though, he acknowledged it was part of the trend of people disengaging themselves from

civic activities.

Alderman Marcus West admitted he missed many a primary as a young man because he did not understand how local and state elections impacted the community.

West noted that communities of color are more likely to vote in national elections and then skip local and state elections.

"If we want change in the state, we have to go to the polls, and vote for people who match our ideology," he said. "It is important for us to get out in primaries and make our voices heard."

West added the black community has a vision for itself, but in order for that vision to come to fruition, in order for change to come, they had to show up and vote in all the elections.

### Forward

Rouse said the way forward to increase civic engagement should start in small ways, including the way officials interact with the public.

As an example, he pointed out if a member of the council assisted a resident with reporting a burned-out streetlight, and then the streetlight was fixed, that person has engaged with the city in a positive way and might be open to more interactions.

Rouse said he was currently on a mission to get more people to public meetings where their voices could be heard — with particular reference to public comments — and perhaps down the road with a run for an elected position.

"The main thing I want is to see people engaged," he said.

### Future

Mason indicated prior to Tuesday's vote that the referendum being rejected could lead to cuts to services next year or in the years to follow.

Due to state legislation that ties property tax increases to net new construction, the city is limited in its ability to raise revenue because it has so little net new construction.

Mason called referendums "one of our only paths forward for additional resources, outside of net new construction."

This was the second failed City of Racine referendum in two years. In November 2020, a similar referendum aiming to raise taxes in order to fund public services failed by a vote of 19,106 to 10,198.

## Governor

From A1

he received 12,223 votes in Racine County, with Kleefisch receiving 11,043. State Rep. Tim Ramthun was a distant third, receiving 1,203 votes. Two other candidates on the ballot, one of whom dropped out of the race prior to Election Day, still received more than 1,000 votes combined. Kevin Nicholson, the preferred candidate of GOP megadonor and area business owner Dick Uhlein, received 861 votes and Adam J. Fischer received 221.

Kleefisch conceded to Michels a little less than three hours after polls closed Tuesday, offering brief comments to her supporters.

"I could not be more grateful," Kleefisch said. "You left it all on the field."

As is often the case, Wisconsin's WOW counties of Waukesha, Ozaukee and Washington, which wrap around Milwaukee, played a major role in Tuesday's primary. While Kleefisch won Waukesha and Ozaukee counties, her margins weren't enough to counter Michels' gains in many of the state's more rural counties.

Tuesday's primary served as the latest proxy between Trump-backed Michels and Kleefisch, who was endorsed by former Vice President Mike Pence. Once allies, Trump and Pence are mulling potential 2024 presidential runs.

"Congratulations to Tim Michels on his win against a wonderful and highly-competitive opponent, Rebecca Kleefisch," Trump said on his Truth Social social media account. "I know both sides will come together and defeat one of the worst Governors in the Country, Tony Evers."

While stumping for Michels in Waukesha County on Friday, Trump described Kleefisch as "the hand-picked candidate of the failed establishment, the 'RINOs.'" "RINO" is an acronym for "Republican in name only," a derogatory

term for party members deemed insufficiently loyal. Michels is slated to face Evers, who is seeking a second term this fall, in a high-stakes midterm for both major parties that could play an increased role in the battleground state's 2024 presidential election. Independent Joan Beglinger is also running in the Nov. 8 election.

Michels will be paired on the ticket with state Sen. Roger Roth, who came out on top of a packed field of GOP candidates for lieutenant governor. Evers, meanwhile, will be paired with state Rep. Sara Rodriguez, who won the Democratic nomination Tuesday.

Evers' campaign manager Cassi Fenili issued a statement shortly after Michels declared victory blasting what she called a "scorched earth primary that's seen constant attacks and a dizzying race to the radical right."

"The Republican Party has chosen the most extreme and divisive nominee possible, one that will tell Donald Trump anything just to keep his endorsement," Fenili said. "From abortion and voting rights, to gun safety and public education — Tim Michels has staked out the most extreme positions possible, with the goal of dividing our state and pitting neighbors against one another."

The race for governor could drastically impact state policy for the next four years, including election practices for the 2024 presidential election.

Evers has maintained the role of goalie since taking office in early 2019, vetoing more than 100 bills passed by the Republican-led Legislature, including GOP-authored bills to limit abortions and alter state election processes — measures his Republican gubernatorial challengers have said they likely would sign if elected.

Michels last week said "everything will be on the table" when asked if he would consider decertifying the election, marking a shift from his comments a week earlier that decertifi-

cation was "not a priority." Legal experts, nonpartisan lawyers and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle, including Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, R-Rochester, have said decertification cannot happen under state law or the U.S. Constitution. Despite saying the 2020 election was "rigged," Kleefisch has also affirmed that decertification is impossible.

A recount, court decisions and multiple reviews have affirmed that Biden defeated Trump in Wisconsin by almost 21,000 votes.

Both Kleefisch and Ramthun have called for dismantling the state's six-member Elections Commission, which was created by Legislative Republicans six years ago. Ramthun has said he wants to put election responsibilities under the secretary of state, while Kleefisch has proposed an agency within the state Department of Justice.

Michels wants to replace the Wisconsin Elections Commission with what he's called "WEC 2.0," an agency made up of appointees from each of the state's eight congressional districts. Michels has not provided specifics on who would appoint the new agency's members.

Reproductive health will also be a factor in the Nov. 8 election. Experts have predicted the 2022 midterms will be bleak for liberal candidates, but Democrats, including Evers, have made abortion rights a key campaign talking point. Marquette Law School polls conducted between September 2012 and last October found that six in 10 Wisconsinites say abortion should be legal in most or all cases.

Michels has said he supports the state's 1849 abortion ban following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision overturning Roe v. Wade. The state's 173-year-old abortion ban only provides exceptions to protect the life of the mother.

Adam Rogan of The Journal Times contributed to this report.

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