

Rep. Jim Edming 87th Assembly District Update

## Financial literacy and streamlining licensing

The State Assembly was in session on Tuesday and approved several legislative proposals. Among the bills approved was a proposal aimed at increasing financial literacy and several others focused on streamlining the licensing procedures at the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DPS).

Unfortunately, far too many people in today's world are living paycheck to paycheck. Many of our young people incur significant student loan or credit card debt without understanding what it will take for them to pay that debt off. That is why I was proud to support Assembly Bill (AB) 109 which would require one-half credit of personal financial literacy for high school graduation. Wisconsin would become the 20th state to require personal finance instruction in high school. I am pleased to share that AB 109 was approved with wide bipartisan support in the Assembly and now advances to the State Senate for their consideration.

In addition, the Assembly also took action on several bills that were recommended by last session's Study Committee on Occupational Licenses.

As you are likely aware, Wisconsin is facing a workforce shortage. In some fields that require governmental licenses, this shortage has been made even worse due to unnecessary delays caused by government agencies. In Wisconsin, many of the professional licenses are issued by DPS. Over the past couple of years, my office has assisted many individuals who faced delays in getting their license paperwork processed and approved by DPS. The package of bills that was approved by the Assembly will reform DPS in a number of ways including:

- Reforming the department's procedures to ensure a renewal doesn't compromise a professional's continuity of work;
- Extending the renewal periods of certain licenses from two to four years;
- Allowing out-of-state license holders in certain professions to practice while permanent licensing is being processed;
- Increases efficiency for certain background check processes; and
- Requires DPS to supply processing data to

the legislature.

This package of legislation also moves on to the State Senate for further consideration.

On Thursday, I testified before the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities in support of my bill, Assembly Bill (AB) 91. This legislation reduces the financial burden on veterans and service members who would like to attend one of our state's public technical colleges or universities by waiving the application fee. While the cost of a college application fee may not seem like a big deal, for a veteran or service member struggling financially, it could be what keeps them from applying to the educational institution they really want to attend or from applying for college at all. I am grateful to the committee for hearing this bill and look forward to it continuing to work through the legislative process in the weeks ahead.

*The 87th Assembly District includes all or portions of Marathon, Rusk, Sawyer, and Taylor Counties.*

## Letters

### Says former president has shown no concern, respect for safekeeping of military

I've been wrong before. I'll begin with that admission so you won't feel like you have to respond to this letter just to tell me that. If you want to use logic and show me where I'm wrong, go for it. But let's keep it to apples and apples.

In what seems like lifetimes ago, Donald Trump first ran for President (pre-Hillary) and I thought that maybe he could be the one to bring our country together. When he didn't make it through the Primary, I moved on.

When he ran again, and his lesser qualities began to exhibit themselves: bigot, racist, anti-Veteran, misogynist, prevaricator, etc. (?), I thought that the Republican party had to have someone more qualified, who could better represent our country on the world stage. It was wrong.

When it turned out that the GOP didn't seem to want a better candidate, and it came down to Hillary and the Donald, I went with the Libertarian, Bill Weld. However, the people had spoken, and like it or not, Bill Weld and his third string partner were not to be the people's choice. And while I couldn't understand the logic of many of my friends or relatives, I knew our country could make it through the next four years. We'd done it before, and we could do it again. I should have, but I didn't realize just how wrong I could be.

Watching the two opposing "news" channels over the past few days, one can't help but be infuriated over talking heads laughing gleefully at the position our

country is in over the ALLEGED actions of former president Trump (MSNBC). Unfortunately, it's almost as galling and maddening to watch Trump's defenders/apologists denigrate and ridicule the current president (FOX).

I spent 6 years (69-75) in the military working for NSA as an intelligence analyst. As it was laid out in the indictment that was made public last week: "The National Security Agency (NSA) is a combat support agency within DoD (Department of Defense) and a member of theUSIC (US Intelligence Community) responsible for foreign signals intelligence and cybersecurity. This includes collecting, processing, and disseminating to United States policymakers and military leaders, foreign intelligence derived from communications and information systems; protecting national security systems; and enabling computer network operations." I'm not defending the CIA, the FBI, or DOJ. As the indictment states: NSA supports our soldiers in vulnerable places in real time, based on intercept and analysis.

This is the first time I've felt like I could talk about what I did during the 1960's and 1970's; and those who do the same today. Why? Because I, and those others who worked and still work in military intelligence, had to sign documents swearing that we would not divulge, under penalty of indictment, trial, and probably incarceration what we knew and had access to. Disclosure of this information was deemed to put

"at RISK the national security of the United States, foreign relations, the SAFETY of the US military and human sources, and the continued viability of sensitive collection methods."

Am I concerned that Donald Trump ridicules third world countries; mimics the handicapped; mocks minorities and the less fortunate; disparages women; or lies every time he opens his mouth? Of course; but if you've been paying attention, it's what we've come to expect. And if you aren't concerned or insulted by any of this, that's not my problem.

My problem is that he has shown no concern or respect for the safekeeping of our military in the field. Sharing battle plans, military and nuclear capabilities, US vulnerabilities, planning and activities of the US and our allies; all derived from sensitive collection methods and sharing it with too many who have no "need-to-know," who have never been vetted for any security clearance, and like him, have never served in the military.

We now have a former president of the UNITED STATES who has done just that. He has put the safety of our military and those who have dedicated their lives to protecting our country at risk.

This time, I'm NOT wrong. And neither are those whose security just got a little less secure and more uncertain.

**Marty Reynolds, VFW Life Member  
Ladysmith**

### Believes a local taxi service would be a wonderful addition to the community

I believe it would be a wonderful addition, well needed if we had a taxi service. I hear a lot of people say they are tired of waiting for the bus, but yet grateful there is something. For the elderly or those in town of any age you need a lift. Rural area makes up for lot of people.

We do have that here but we need to call ahead and it helps. Keep it YES. However it

would be an added benefit if there was a place for people to get a ride home.

I went to hospital no way home. None. Not everyone has friends available or a large family. No one will help I found. Finally a stranger a stranger helped. His wife and he said Bruce isn't that far we will take you home.

Not only me, I hear this from others. I have

people call me and ask me to drive them. It is sad. I know where there at. We need it for the community.

Ladysmith is not a large city nor is Bruce. We still are here, we are still here, as an aging population, it makes sense if it Can or Will happen.

**Jill Forster  
Bruce**

## Know Your legal Rights

### What Wisconsin residents should know about pot legalization elsewhere

By Michael A. Forella III

Over the last decade, laws regarding recreational marijuana possession and consumption have changed drastically nationwide. Prior to 2012, recreational marijuana possession or consumption was illegal across all 50 states. As of the writing of this article, 23 states have fully legalized recreational marijuana, most recently neighboring Minnesota.

#### Wisconsin marijuana history

In Wisconsin, possession, consumption, and the sale of marijuana, even for medicinal purposes, is illegal. Cannabidiol oils, better known as "CBD," are legal in Wisconsin for medicinal purposes so long as they are "Low-THC" products.

Low-THC products are products with no more than 0.3% delta-9-THC. Delta-9-THC is the psycho-active ingredient in marijuana. Although some cities in Wisconsin have decriminalized marijuana, state laws trump those local ordinances. For example, in Milwaukee, the first possession of a small amount of marijuana, which is 25 grams or less, results in a fine of \$1.

#### Potential penalties

In Wisconsin, the first possession of any amount of marijuana is treated as a misdemeanor, punishable by up to six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine. A law enforcement officer or district attorney has the discretion to issue an ordinance violation for the possession of marijuana rather than a criminal charge. The punishment for an ordinance violation includes a monetary fine and does not result in a criminal conviction.

A second state conviction for marijuana possession, regardless of amount, or coupled with a previous drug conviction, regardless of the type, is a felony in Wisconsin, punishable by up to 3 1/2 years imprisonment

and a \$10,000 fine. Depending on the amount of marijuana and other circumstances, possession of marijuana can turn into possession with intent to distribute, which is a felony also punishable by up to 3 1/2 years imprisonment and a fine of up to \$10,000.

#### Recreational marijuana laws in neighboring states

A recent analysis from the Wisconsin Policy Forum called "Changing Midwest Marijuana Landscape Impacts Wisconsin" found that half of all Wisconsinites over 21 can drive an hour and half from their homes to legally purchase recreational marijuana in a nearby state. The states adjacent to Wisconsin with recreational marijuana include Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota.

Illinois: Adult out-of-state residents, age 21 and over, may purchase 15 grams of marijuana, 2 1/2 grams of marijuana concentrates, and 250 milligrams of marijuana-infused products for recreational use while visiting the state. (Residents may purchase up to two times these amounts.) Marijuana may only be consumed on private property where no bystanders can observe. It is illegal to use marijuana in public places like parks; federally owned properties; within a vehicle, even if parked, and in front of a minor (under 21).

Michigan: Recreational marijuana is legal and available for purchase by out-of-state residents age 21 or older. It is legal to possess up to 2.5 ounces in public and up to 15 grams of marijuana concentrate. Michigan laws require marijuana consumption to occur in a private residence or the home of someone, with resident permission. It's illegal to consume marijuana on federal property, in a vehicle, or in public or in public view, with an exception for some designated locations within some municipalities.

Minnesota: Minnesota recently legalized recreational marijuana on May 30, 2023. As of August 1, 2023, Minnesota residents will be permitted to consume and grow marijuana in their homes. Possession of marijuana will be limited to 2 pounds, or approxi-

mately 70.5 ounces, at their residence and 2 ounces, or approximately 56 grams, in public. Marijuana will be permitted to be at Minnesotan's private residence, another's private property who permits it, and businesses or events licensed for on-site consumption. Such consumption will be prohibited on federal property, within a vehicle, or public places, including private residences in public view such as balconies or patios of apartment and condo buildings.

#### Legal Takeaways

Fines are possible: It is important to remember that, even within states with legal marijuana, the violation of marijuana consumption or possession laws can lead to additional fines and other possible criminal sanctions.

Driving: The operation of a motor vehicle after consuming marijuana is illegal in all states and can lead to charges like operating while intoxicated or with a restricted controlled substance, which ranges in penalties from fines to prison sentences with mandatory minimum periods of incarceration.

Transporting marijuana: If you purchased marijuana legally in another state, it is illegal to transport it across state lines - even if you are crossing into another state where marijuana is legal. It is a federal crime to transport marijuana across state lines.

Marijuana is classified as a Schedule I drug, according to the Controlled Substances Act, a federal law that, in part, prohibits the possession or consumption of marijuana, which trumps any state laws that say otherwise. Though federal law may apply, it may not be enforced, especially in states in which marijuana is legal.

*Michael A. Forella III is owner of Forella Law Offices in Kenosha. He specializes in criminal defense, vehicle accidents, wrongful death, family law, civil litigation, and landlord-tenant law. He is a member of the State Bar of Wisconsin Lawyer Referral and information Service, which connects Wisconsin residents with lawyers throughout the state.*

## Opinion

### Editorial

## City doing the telling, not the listening

A proposed new historic landmark ordinance for Ladysmith that could set new draconian limits on what people can and can't do with properties they own drew sharp criticism from a vocal contingent of county leaders and local citizens during a city council public hearing this week.

But instead of listening to the public, which is supposed to be what a public hearing is all about, some city officials elected to conduct a trial on those who were in the audience, including a local newspaper reporter who wrote an advance story to make the public aware of an important topic that was scheduled to be heard on and voted on in the same night.

A side-issue in the debate over property owners' rights is how the proposal could be seen as a covert effort by the city to block the county from following through with its action last month to raze the former Rusk County Memorial Hospital. The county owns the property, but city leaders have been equally vocal at county meetings and on social media in an effort to save the structure.

Look no further than the statement made by City Administrator Alan Christianson, Jr., who criticized the newspaper reporter during the meeting for framing the ordinance against the backdrop of the hospital and then heralded the story for bringing up "a decent idea that you could include the hospital in a historic register if one was made."

But, city leaders didn't stop there. They questioned why county board members were there.

They questioned if the county leaders were violating public meeting laws.

They rattled off city email after city email as proof the city is not trying to stand in the way of the county razing the hospital.

They questioned where a news reporter was getting information and why the newspaper was writing stories about it.

What city leaders ignored through all of this effort at the hearing to put down people in the audience instead of listen to what they had to say is a May 26 email from the news reporter explicitly asking the city administrator, "Is that historical preservation ordinance an attempt to block the razing of the former hospital?"

It was very likely the easiest question for the city administrator to answer out of about a half-dozen emails from the news reporter almost two weeks ago, but it was also the only one not answered. Without an answer, one can only speculate the city's intention with its landmarks and historic preservation ordinance proposal.

Fortunately, state law requires printing of municipal public hearing legal notices in local newspapers. Those narrow columns of small print sometimes overlooked in the back

pages might appear dull and boring, but they contain valuable insight into how local government functions on behalf of its citizens. A steadfast reader might find here proposals to hike water and sewer rates, change zoning codes and list meeting minutes describing the activities of elected officials.

Fortunately, the local newspaper reporter also wrote a news story to coincide with that legal notice that indicated mainly the date, time and location of the hearing in case the public might want to attend.

Fortunately, the public did show up to question what the city council and its administrative staff were up to when it passed around a draft of the proposal a couple weeks ago with no debate. One alderman even said at the hearing he knew nothing about the proposal and didn't know he would be voting on it until he showed up for the meeting.

Reading the 8-page proposal — a copy of which is available for free on the Ladysmith News website — lists a multitude of ways city officials could block property owners from use of their property. Onemight say the devil is in the details, and generally in politics if elected leaders want something to happen they find a way to make sure it happens.

The list of how city leaders make it happen starts through this proposal with the mayor appointing and then the city council confirming members to a new 5-person historic property commission. The proposal then calls for the city council to act as judge of any appeals of commission rulings.

At this point it is logical to ask just what chance does a property owner stand against a commission and the council that voted to appoint its members. Reporting on local government sometimes involves connecting the dots, especially now when city and county leaders are at odds on many matters, including what to do with the former hospital property. One also only has to follow social media, where the city administrator is prepared to argue with every foil available on any topic imaginable. One also has to ask why city leaders were choosing to take on the public this week, instead of the other way around.

After all the public hearing notice in the newspaper clearly states, "The public is invited to attend this hearing" and "At the hearing, all interested persons will be afforded a reasonable opportunity to obtain information and present their view about the subject of the hearing."

The city council and its administrative staff are the ones who should be doing the listening at a public hearing, not the other way around.

*Ladysmith News editorials are written by news staff.*

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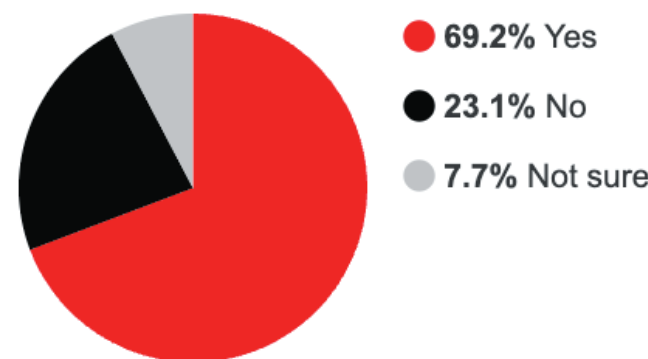
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## On-line poll

(Last week's question and result)

### Have you ever been to the Rusk County Historical Museum?



To vote on this week's new poll question:

*Do you know anyone who operates a dairy farm?*

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