

The 8 candidates expected onstage in Milwaukee tonight ▶ 3A



WAUKESHA COUNTY



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A Busy Beekeeper

Local man turns hobby into full-time business



Katherine Beck/Freeman Staff

Sam Pickens inspects the activity in one of the 50 honeybee hives on his Village of Waukesha property.

By Katherine Beck
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Passion doesn't seem like a strong enough word to describe Sam Pickens' affection for the honeybee. His devotion to his 100 hives and their thousands of occupants has turned a hobby into a full-time business, Buzzy Bees Honey: Fresh From The Hive. "Beekeeping is my place of peace," Pickens said, adding that if he is having a hard day and feels the weight of the world upon his shoulders, stopping to watch the bees fly and hearing them buzz helps to soothe his soul. "It's my Zen moment. A place of tranquility."

Becoming a full-time beekeeper may seem like an unlikely career choice for a man who grew up in the inner city of Milwaukee, but Pickens recalls going to a nearby open field with his sister and catching bees and other bugs in a Mason jar to be released later in the day.

It was when his wife gave him a copy of "Beekeeping for Dummies" that Pickens realized he was going to become a beekeeper. Both honey and bees have long filled Pickens with wonder. Two facts in particular have fascinated Pickens: honey

never goes bad and honeybees are the only insect that makes something humans eat.

Now, in addition to tending his 100 hives that are located around Waukesha County, including 50 on his two-acre property in the Village of Waukesha, you'll find Pickens selling jars of honey at the Waukesha and Pewaukee farmers markets, as well as other events. In addition to raw honey, Pickens sells products like lip balm and bees wax candles. Honey products include creamed honey with an extra velvety texture that Pickens prefers to eat spread on bread with peanut butter to hot honey that is great on biscuits and chicken.

More than a hobby

When Pickens began beekeeping in 2016, he had only a couple of hives and was giving away his honey. After people insisted that they pay for his goods, he decided to start selling it, and thus began Buzzy Bees. He opted for a happy bee logo for his products to help with bees' reputation, but it also reflects the outgoing, cheerful nature of Pickens himself.

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Sam Pickens stands in front of the Buzzy Bees Honey stand on his Village of Waukesha property, which is a little south of Minooka Park on Racine Avenue.



Creamed honey and hot honey are two of the products sold by Buzzy Bees Honey: Fresh From The Hive.

"Beekeeping is my place of peace."

— Sam Pickens
beekeeper

Waukesha County Food Pantry names new executive director

Lyndsay Johnson will succeed Karen Tredwell, who retired

By Karen Pilarski
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WAUKESHA — The Waukesha County Food Pantry has named Lyndsay Johnson as its new executive director. Her start date is Sept. 18.

Johnson began her relationship with the Waukesha County Food Pantry 14 years ago as a volunteer. One day while working in county government, Johnson mentioned while chatting with one of her co-workers that she was interested in finding a place where she could volunteer. She was told the Waukesha County Food Pantry was always looking for volunteers and she might want to check it out.

"I was warmly greeted by the organization. The food pantry in Waukesha County is a welcoming place to volunteer. The staff is just outstanding. They are just incredibly dedicated to their overall mission of serving their clients by providing food with dignity, so it was just a great place to volunteer," Johnson said.

The executive director position arose when Tredwell announced she was retiring after 26 years.

"When this position became open, I wanted to reach out because this is an organization that is really near and dear to my heart," Johnson said.

Johnson has worked for Waukesha County for 17 years in different capacities. In 2006 she started as a budget analyst for the Department of Administration. After three years in that role, she was hired by the Waukesha County Sheriff's Department as their business manager.

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Johnson

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WEATHER



Tomorrow:
Sunny
High 93 / Low 75

See complete forecast on Page 8A



Spicy shrimp tostadas

▶ Page 8B, Food

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Coming up in The FREEMAN UNDERSEA ADVENTURER



To the Ends of the Earth



Dressed in beekeeping gear, Sam Pickens prepares the smoker before checking his 50 hives on his Village of Waukesha property.



Photos by Katherine Beck/Freeman Staff

Sam Pickens inspects the activity in one of the 50 honeybee hives on his Village of Waukesha property.

Beekeeper

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In the world of beekeeping, Pickens explains that there are three categories: hobbyist, sideliner and commercial. With more than 25 hives, Pickens falls into the sideliner category.

In addition to the farmers markets, Pickens has sold his honey products in a stand on his property, which is located a little south of Minooka Park at W220-S3306 Racine Ave. At first, the stand consisted of a 6-foot-long table. Now it's a lit hutch with shelves holding the products, as well as a cooler with eggs that are collected from the Pickens' family chickens.

The process of making honey is more than just collecting it from the hives. It must be removed from the boards that make up the hives, which is done in a round machine that uses centrifugal force to separate the two, causing the honey to drip down into a collection container. Pickens also uses a separate machine to combine the bits of beeswax to be transformed into other products, such as whimsical bear-shaped candles.

With so much work to be done, Pickens doesn't do all of it himself. He said his sister helps with the bath and body products while his wife, who doesn't do well with bee stings, prepares labels and bottles.

Just the facts

Pickens' deep affection for his honeybees begins when he opens up the hive to inspect the progress of insects. He greets them like friends and then tells them that he will only be a short while.

Get him talking about bees and he will fill you in on lots of facts, such as how each bee only produces 1/8 of a teaspoon of honey in their life and that 60,000 to 80,000 bees live in one hive. In that hive, a queen will lay 1,500 to 2,000 eggs per day.

By sharing his information, Pickens wants "people to go 'wow' and have an

Watch the video

To watch a video of Sam Pickens checking some of his hives, go to <https://bit.ly/3E94gXo>.

appreciation for the bees and the honey." Very little work of the bee goes to waste by Pickens who finds uses for the honey, wax and even the bee glue, which is used by people who follow holistic lives.

Describing honeybees as "docile," Pickens doesn't fear getting stung. He wears beekeeping equipment that includes a jacket, veiled hat and gloves when working with the hives, but if he does get stung, he said it mainly itches for him.

Business buzz

As summer begins to wind down, Pickens said he will switch his focus to winter markets and online sales. He will also tend to his equipment so it's ready to be used again in the spring. He also hopes to reach out to more businesses for them to carry Buzzy Bees products. They are already sold in Chef Pam's Kitchen, Burlap and Lace and MKE Pizza Co. in Waukesha, Vintage Grounds in Muskego and The Roost Mercantile in City of Pewaukee. Another option for purchasing Buzzy Bees products is online at <https://buybuzzys.com>.

You can also try some of Pickens' honey, but as an addition to ice cream. Frozen Frog Ice Cream in Muskego uses Pickens' honey in some of its ice cream flavors such as Honey Vanilla.

Pickens will also consider to mentor others and share his knowledge through his role as vice president of the Milwaukee Waukesha Beekeepers Association, a place where his outgoing and enthusiastic attitude will surely help to encourage more people to join the industry.

Johnson

From Page 1A

She served the sheriff's department for about nine years. Then she was promoted to business services manager for the Department of Business Administration and has been employed there for the past four years.

"The county is an outstanding employer. They're very supportive of their staff. They're also very interested in doing things. You know their slogan is 'leading the way.' They've very interested in supporting their employees to create an environment where change is acceptable and encouraged," she said.

Johnson said if employees see that something is not working they are encouraged to suggest changes to make their jobs and community better. That has been something she has really enjoyed about working with the county.

Experience with food pantry

During Johnson's time as food service volunteer she has had the opportunity to work with clients. She helped clients shop for what they needed for the week or the next few weeks. Johnson said she really enjoyed doing this because she had the opportunity to talk with the individuals and get to know some of them.

"You get see how you're able to impact someone's life. So you're able to see the people that you are serving," Johnson said.

The past 14 years have also given Johnson an education into the changing needs of clients.

"I think what sort of surprised me as a volunteer was a lot of folks were coming through the doors who had worked all day and unfortunately because of bills or financial circumstances were still needing assistance. That was something that was a little bit of a surprise," she said.

Johnson added it's also important to understand those you are serving, which are the vulnerable and elderly populations.

"It's something to just be aware of as a community is that there are groups of folks out there that are in need of services and I'm grateful that there are nonprofit organizations such as the food pantry serving Waukesha County that meet those needs," she said.

Johnson will be starting her new role on Sept. 18. She said Tredwell has set up the organization very well.

"She (Tredwell) helped build connections throughout the community that I hope to continue and build on," she said.

Johnson said Tredwell and her team have done a ton of work to make sure the pantry is a well-respected nonprofit organization in Waukesha County.

"It's humbling to be able to take on this role and continue this leadership," Johnson said.

Get to know ... Lyndsay Johnson

Favorite sport: Curling. I started curling in high school and I've been a member of the Kettle Moraine Curling Club since 2012.

Favorite vacation spot: Any location where I can hike. I've been to nearly 20 national parks so far.

The person I admire most: My grandmother. She became a volunteer EMT for her community when she was in her 60s and was still going on ambulance runs in her 80s. She always believed in serving her community.

August 24-26

Rivers Crossing Park | 3703 Rivers Crossing Dr.

HOURS

Thursday/Friday: 5:00-9:00 pm | Saturday: 3:00-9:00 pm

8/24: The Biermen

8/25: Bruce Humphries & the Rockabilly Rebels

8/26: Ed Hause Band / Saturday June Band

FIVE-DAY FORECAST

TONIGHT
Mostly Clear
74

TOMORROW
Sunny
93/75

FRIDAY
Partly Cloudy
92/62

SATURDAY
Partly Cloudy
74/56

SUNDAY
Sunny
72/53

REGIONAL FORECAST

Superior	79/61	Ashland	77/59	Florence	79/62
Eau Claire	89/72	Wausau	88/66	Green Bay	81/67
La Crosse	93/76	Oshkosh	86/69	Appleton	87/68
Beaver Dam	90/72	West Bend	91/69	Milwaukee	92/71
Chicago	99/81	Madison	94/78	Waukesha	93/74
Rockford	98/78				

COMFORT INDEX
2
What the air will feel like tomorrow, based on the temperature, humidity and wind speed.
1 poor; 10 excellent.

HEAT INDEX TOMORROW
8 a.m. 88
Noon 93
4 p.m. 97
8 p.m. 82

COOLING DEGREE
An index of energy consumption indicating how many degrees the day's mean temperature was above 65 degrees.
Yesterday 9
Month to date 198
Season to date 644
Normal season to date 618

ALMANAC
Statistics for Yesterday
High/Low, Waukesha 81/63
High/Low 78/69
Normal High/Low 80/64
Last year's high for date 79
Last year's low for date 65
Precipitation, Waukesha 0.00"
Precip. month to date 2.49"
Normal month to date 2.62"
Precip. year to date 22.11"
Normal year to date 23.48"

Aug. 24 Aug. 30 Sep. 6 Sep. 14
First Full Last New

Sunset today 7:42 p.m.
Sunrise tomorrow 6:08 a.m.

Moonsrise tomorrow 2:39 p.m.
Moonsset tomorrow 11:29 p.m.

NATIONAL FORECAST

Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN
Tonight: Mostly clear. A 20 percent chance of light showers and thunderstorms through around midnight. Lows in the lower 70s. Southwest winds up to 15 mph. Highest heat index readings 101 to 106 through around midnight.

MARINE FORECAST
Lake Michigan near shore forecast:
Tonight: SW wind 5 to 15 kt. A slight chance of showers and thunderstorms before 1am. Waves around 1 ft. Thursday: NW wind 5 to 15 kt. Mostly sunny. Waves 1 to 2 ft.
Lake Michigan water temperature is 85 degrees.

ULTRAVIOLET INDEX FORECAST
The UVi forecast for Thursday is 8
UV scale and warnings on possible skin damage: 0-2 low risk, 3-5 moderate risk, 6-7 high risk, 8-10 very high risk, 11-over extreme risk.

TRAVEL ADVISORY FOR TOMORROW

ATLANTA High: 95 Low: 72	CHICAGO High: 99 Low: 81	DALLAS High: 108 Low: 85
DENVER High: 92 Low: 65	LOS ANGELES High: 82 Low: 64	MIAMI High: 89 Low: 81
MINNEAPOLIS High: 89 Low: 71	NEW YORK High: 75 Low: 64	PHOENIX High: 100 Low: 83
SEATTLE High: 77 Low: 55	ST. LOUIS High: 103 Low: 79	WASHINGTON High: 85 Low: 68

COMING SOON!

Undersea adventurer

To the Ends of the Earth

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