

The family and friends of Jesse Cortez brought him to the theater with a blindfold to surprise him for his 70th birthday. They put him in the Barbie box before he could take off the blindfold.



Colette Poree, left, and Hailey Cherone pose for a selfie in front of a Barbie display, Hailey took the night off from the Majestic to attend the premiere with her friend.



BROOKFIELD — The Marcus Majestic Cinema celebrated the premiere of the movie "Barbie" on July 19 with a Barbie Blowout Party.

Photos by Mary Catanese, Special to The Freeman



Juan Estrada, left, and Elijah Humpa dressed as Ken and Barbie for the premiere party at the Marcus Majestic Cinema of Brookfield on July 19.



Tateiona Watson had the night off and went as Cowboy Barbie to the Barbie Blowout Party at the Marcus Majestic Cinema of Brookfield on July 19.

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NASA scientist speaks to students about space

BROOKFIELD - Senior NASA Scientist and Senior Research Scientist for the Space Science Institute Dr. Michael Wolff spoke to over 450 students at the Brookfield Central Library for a summer school event hosted by Elmbrook Library Services on July 14.

Wolff, a Brookfield resident, spoke at three morning sessions and used visual aids to discuss Mars, space exploration and more. His work began in 1996 with the Mars Global

Wolff has contributed to many projects since, including the 2020 Mars Perseverance Rover.



Senior NASA Scientist and Senior Research Scientist for the Space Science Institute Dr. Michael Wolff speaks to students about space on July 14.



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Boston Store Furniture Gallery site BROOKFIELD — Better Cowork LLC building's lounges, meeting rooms, cafes, has entered into an agreement to purchase the former Boston Store Furniture suites.

Better Cowork eyes former

Gallery building, 18615 W. Bluemound Road in Brookfield. The 3.16-acre and 55,000-square-foot building has been empty for more than eight years.

Better Cowork is owned by M. Alex Simic, a local developer, who owns two businesses located in Brookfield.

Better Cowork plans to only change the south exterior elevations to add windows. The plan is to modify the interior floor plan with offices, gym, lounges, collaboration and presentation spaces, and training rooms, according to submitted city

The company would be the only tenant in the building but would offer the public to purchase memberships to access the building for the day or month. Memberships would be available to individuals and businesses.

Depending on the tier of the memberships, customers would have access to the the building.

designated desks, private offices and team

Each space would be fully furnished with high-speed internet. Meeting spaces would have the latest AV equipment.

Better Cowork is requesting approval through the city of Brookfield to allow members to access the building without having to register as tenants. There will be no lease to sign as well as no person items can be kept in the spaces, the documents said.

There will be two full-time employees on site from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. Members will have 24/7 access, but the company expects customers will use it at staggered times. There will be security cameras and key fob access to monitor the office building and maintain a record of people coming and going.

Better Cowork wants to offer outdoor seating in front of the main entrance of

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Study looks at housing affordability challenges in Waukesha County

By Karen Pilarski kpilarski@conleynet.com 262-513-2657

It is difficult to buy an affordable home in Waukesha County and renting also has its challenges for low-to moderate-income people, according to a recently released study from the Wisconsin Policy Forum.

The study, "Building Blocks: Understanding and responding to Waukesha County's housing affordability," said houses are hard to find and rent prices continue to increase.

Economic challenges related to the pandemic and other factors have worsened the housing affordability challenges in Waukesha County. The cost of renting, buying, and building a home have increased sharply, the study said.

"High housing costs are already out of reach for many and rising faster than incomes," the study said.

The median value of homes in the county was the highest in Wisconsin in 2021, while the county's median rent was only exceeded in Dane County. Rent burden affects 43.4% of renter households in the county, which is higher than the statewide rate. The study said occupations such as teaching and firefighting don't pay enough to afford owning a home in the county

The median home sale price in Waukesha County has increased by

the study said.

Limited housing production was found to be behind the county's increasing home prices.

The number of homes listed for sale in Waukesha County has declined for several years, while the vacancy rate in the owner-occupied market was just 0.2% in 2021," the study said.

The study also found there has been very little affordable rental housing built in the last decade.

Other conclusions from the study include that zoning regulations limit different types of housing that can be produced and impact housing costs. Public opposition poses a major hurdle to affordable and workforce housing development, the study said.

Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow said the county has been working on solutions. In 2017 they convened a group to talk about how to make workforce housing or the first generation of housing — that 1,500-square-foot first-time homebuyer home.

Farrow said the challenge they see in Waukesha County, and across the rest of the country, is limited inventory and in Waukesha County, limited green space to be built upon.

We have a market that is driving the prices up. When you talk to developers or builders they say they could build a house at \$300,000 but the mar-

the median income only rose 15%, plus. It's a hard challenge," Farrow complexes in areas where they

The county will continue to work with ideas and the communities. Farrow said there has been legislation passed by Gov. Tony Evers to look at new loan initiatives, not only for developers but for first-time buyers.

"When you look at the report, the single-income people, a lot of information they have is if there is a firefighter looking to buy a house they could afford (because they make around \$100,000) the going rate of \$300,000 plus is the average price of a house in Waukesha County," he said.

What the study didn't talk about. according to Farrow, was income perunit per household. In Waukesha County, the average income per household is about \$96,000.

"It gets them closer but it is still a challenge that has to deal with the inventory that is out there and the competition and the way the market is driving," he said.

Farrow said there has been a considerable amount of growth with apartment units throughout the

"There is still a challenge with people who question having an apartment within their region. People are like 'not in my backyard,' thinking it has a detrimental effect," Farrow

He added municipalities in the county such as Waukesha have done

enhance and don't reduce the areas' values

Waukesha Mayor Shawn Reilly said housing affordability is not just a local problem but a state, regional and national issue.

"It's not just Waukesha County. Most of the nation has a housing shortage. The shortage has the largest financial impact on lowerincome families and young adults. Because one, they tend to rent and the number of rentals that are available is very low and that drives up the price. If you own something that is in high demand, you can increase your price easily," Reilly said.

Another issue Reilly pointed out was that building or home owners can pick and choose who they rent to. People might rent only to those with perfect credit, no evictions or no legal issues.

'Lower-income people and newer families have a real problem finding housing," he said.

Waukesha has more housing options than anywhere else in the county, such as houses for rent or sale. There are a bunch of apartments with 1-4 units built around the city, according to the mayor.

The one- or two-bedroom apartments are great for single people who pay less in rent than someone in a four-unit rental. But the city still has its share of challenges, such as rents

"Waukesha has tried to address the issue. We've got funds that we have used — both ARPA dollars and TIF dollars to create programs that provide assistance. We partner with those who are constructing affordable housing such as Habitat for Humanity. We also have programs that provide loans, income-based, to property owners who want to fix up their existing homes. For Waukesha, we have a lot of homes that are over 100 years old. Those homes need maintenance such as roofs and windows. We have funds to help with those issues," Reilly said.

He said the point is not to allow housing to decrease but to increase by taking care of those issues.

There are also loan programs for landlords who offer to rent to incomerestricted people. The loans help keep their property in good shape.

"We will continue to take action to create more affordable housing and

more housing itself," Reilly said. The number of people wanting to live in Waukesha County is outpacing the number of units available.

'This is something has been a long time in the making and will take quite a while to make it so there is a better balance between supply and demand," he said.

To read the study, go to the Wisconsin Policy Forum's website at https://wispolicyforum.org.



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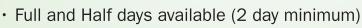


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Quality furniture endures

The furniture of past generations often stands out in stark contrast to many pieces manufactured today. Early furniture makers prioritized longevity, but it also made moving more of a task. In past years this was not a great issue as extended families never moved from the homestead. Today function might be altered, but these items remain timeless in an increasingly mobile society.

1.) Cedar-lined wardrobe

The unique design of this wardrobe offers alternate

not a high priority in our great-grandparents' homes,

options for storage. When moving, caution is important to

protect the stepped-top cornice. Large bedroom closets were



BARBARA **EASH**

Antiques

though it did become commonplace for furniture to be placed in hallways. Value: \$1,500

2.) Valet chair

Mid-Century Modern style continues to start conversations and is often sought out by collectors. The peak of this chair might hold a bathrobe, jacket or be home base for a ball cap. **Value:** \$300

3.) Vintage seating

These four barstools have a timeless style. This set is of unusually good condition; all still have their frames, cushions and footrests. Most examples found today are worn or broken from years of diner misuse. **Value:** \$350

4.) Countertop thread cabinet

In the early 20th century, the thread industry developed a new strategy to sell prewound spool thread. Beautiful cabinets were offered to mercantiles with one condition; shops had to agree to place the cabinets near the front door. Shoppers loved clean thread and the thread industry loved the sales! Value: \$175

Hint of the month

Honor inherited items by documenting their history for future reference.

To schedule an appraisal appointment at the Waukesha Antique Mall (or at your location), email Barbara J. Eash at beappraisals@gmail.com (fees vary).



