



Workers install solar panels at Pewaukee City Hall, W240-N3065 Pewaukee Road.

Photos courtesy of Nick Fuchs

## Pewaukee City Hall powered by solar panels

CITY OF PEWAUKEE — When the lights are turned on at Pewaukee City Hall, they are not being run by traditional electricity, but instead are being powered by the sun.

The solar panels were installed in a field adjacent to City Hall, W240-N3065 Pewaukee Road, and began fueling the building on Dec. 30. City Planner and Community Development Director Nick Fuchs said about 90% of the building is operating off solar power.

“We are excited to see it,” Fuchs said.

The project was done as part of the city’s Propelling Pewaukee Sustainability Plan, which was completed with the assistance of UW-Milwaukee and the Waukesha County and Pewaukee Green Team.

More than 30% of the project cost was covered by the Investment Tax Credit provided by the Inflation



Solar panels installed next to Pewaukee City Hall will provide about 90% of the power needed to run the building.

Reduction Act and the Focus on Energy Business Customer PV Incentive.

Fuchs said it cost about \$697,000 to complete the solar array project and the break-even point is estimated to be approximately 12 years. The life expectancy for the project is about 25 to 30 years, and while the panels and batteries may last longer, they may lose some efficiency, Fuchs said.

“The city is always looking at long-

term savings; really anything that may help with the budget in future years,” Fuchs said. “We did the sustainability plan and looked at recommendations from that.”

There is a possibility that the Department of Public Works building may also get solar panels in the future.

Wauwatosa-based Current Electric was hired for the project.

“This is a fantastic investment for

Pewaukee,” said Chuck Smith, president of Current Electric. “The system will pay for itself in just over a decade and will generate enough power to lower the We Energies bill to almost zero. Pewaukee is my hometown so I love doing the right thing for the community. It’s an investment that protects taxpayers against the rising cost of electricity and protects the environment at the same time.”

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# Waukesha County Board supervisor recovering after kidney donation

## Crowley donated his kidney to a stranger

**By Karen Pilarski**  
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262-513-2657

WAUKESHA — Waukesha County Supervisor Mike Crowley is recuperating after several hours of surgery to donate one of his kidneys to a stranger.

On Jan. 8 after the surgery at UW Health University Hospital, Crowley posted, “Dang! I did it! Up walking same day, even going twice as far as they asked. Hoping to be a good patient,” he said.

Not only is Crowley a good patient, but he is also a good human being.

Crowley has spent the past four years as CEO of the National Kidney Foundation of Wisconsin. The nonprofit strives to prevent kidney diseases, support affected families and increase organ donation awareness. Crowley was inspired to donate one of his kidneys after a visit to several dialysis clinics. This past March he dropped off care bags to three different dialysis clinics for patients, which is one of the programs offered through the nonprofit.

“I saw the hopelessness and helplessness on their faces. When you are going through dialysis ... it is a horrible way to live,” Crowley said.

“What better way to celebrate 60 years on this earth, being grateful for not having kidney disease or major medical issues, a way to give back for my 60th birthday,” Crowley said.

Crowley decided to apply to be an altruistic donor. A non-directed kidney donor is a person who wishes to donate a kidney to a person with advanced kidney disease who the person doesn’t know. He was connected with the UW Health Transplant Clinic and they began a basic medical screening. He also needed to complete a financial consultation, a psychological evaluation and extensive medical tests. After the



Courtesy of Mike Crowley

Waukesha County Supervisor Mike Crowley is recuperating after several hours of surgery to donate one of his kidneys to a stranger. Crowley has spent the past four years as CEO of the National Kidney Foundation of Wisconsin. The nonprofit strives to prevent kidney diseases, supports affected families and increases organ donation awareness. Crowley was inspired to donate one of his kidneys after a visit to several dialysis clinics.

all-clear, Crowley made the appointment for his surgery.

Because of his donation, Crowley will start a chain: a Never Ending Altruistic Donor chain.

“A NEAD chain (Never Ending Altruistic Donor chain) begins with one non-directed (altruistic) potential donor. In this program, the non-directed donor gives to a person waiting for a transplant, and that recipient’s willing — but incompatible — donor gives

to another person waiting, and so on. Each living donor in this system gives to a stranger, and the chain of donors is kept going as long as possible,” according to the National Kidney Foundation website.

Crowley is donating to a stranger; the stranger already has a donor, but they weren’t a match. The other donor agreed to donate to someone else once their recipient gets their transplant.

“It sets off a chain. The chain world record is 100. I’m told I will be a chain starter, and it could be several people to a dozen or more. That is how many lives I will change because I decided to be an altruistic kidney donor,” he said.

Crowley is happy the person he donated to was provided with relief.

“Can you imagine how that recipient feels knowing they may

have a Christmas next year and will to see another year? There is someone who wants to donate a kidney to them. I just break down in tears. It’s so emotional when you start to put yourself in their shoes,” Crowley said.

Visit <https://www.kidneywi.org/> for more information on kidney health, becoming a donor and more on programs offered.



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# Ice Age Trail proves 'addictive' for many

# National Scenic Trail continues to see many hikers after COVID

**By Katherine Beck**  
kbeck@conleynet.com

TOWN OF DELAFIELD — Lapham Peak may be one of the better-known and more frequented spots on Wisconsin's Ice Age Trail, but there are many beautiful segments around the state — from the Minnesota border to Door County. These scenic trails that traverse hills, kettles, wooded forests and prairies have proven to be “pretty addictive” for many hikers, said Melissa Pierick, director of marketing and community relations for the Ice Trail Alliance.

A 2024 study conducted by the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater showed that about 4.65 million people traverse the trail annually. That amounts to \$431 million in annual economic output, according to the study. In 2019, prior to the COVID pandemic, a survey showed closer to 2.3 million users.

"We got a bump out of COVID. Everything in the outdoor world did," Pierick said.

Luke Kloberdanz, executive director and CEO of the Ice Age Trail Alliance, agreed that the popularity of the trail only continues to grow.

"More people than ever before are getting out on the trail," he said.

Pierick said that often hikers will do a portion of a trail and enjoy it so much they look for other portions to hike. And with so much of the trail being close to where people live, it's easy for them to get to.

"You just want to see them all," she said.

She also heard from one woman recently who bought a guide book because her husband retired and they figured it was a good time to begin exploring the 123 segments that make up about 1,200 miles of trail. The trail also provides a reason for people to go to a different part of the state they may never have thought to go to before, such as Milton or Friendship.

Of the 1,200 miles of trail, 702.6 miles are completed. Some 45.4 miles are located in Waukesha County alone, which is also where the trail got started in the southern unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest.

Some of the most popular areas of the trail are in Waukeshas County, Pierick said, meaning that you will often come across other hikers. Even so, 60% of Wisconsin residents live within 20 miles of the trail.

The trail is a National Scenic Trail and is overseen by the Ice Age Trail Alliance, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the National Park Service.

There is still plenty of work to be done on the trail to complete the last couple of hundred miles, a lot of which is a matter of getting funds from the state. Volunteers, however, regularly work on the trail. In 2024, volunteers logged 103,439 service hours on trail-related activities, which was a new record. The previous record was 100,666 hours. However, it'll probably take about 50 years to see the trail completely finished, Pierick said. The final trail building project of 2024 focused on the Alliance-owned Muir Preserve in Marquette County, where volunteers constructed 800 feet of boardwalk.

"Everybody should realize how lucky we are to have this trail in the state and to have it so close to people," Pierick said. "We are so lucky to literally have it in our backyard."

And while we may be experiencing winter in Wisconsin, she said winter is one of the best times to go for a hike.

"People can just go out for a couple of miles and have an amazing experience," Pierick said.



Photo courtesy of John Painter

Hikers hike along the Scuppernong Segment of the Ice Age Trail in Waukesha County.



Photo courtesy of Douglas Richter

Hikers trek along the Lapham Peak Segment of the Ice Age Trail in Waukesha County.



Photo courtesy of Taylor Kokinos

A bridge stretches over a snow-covered Hartland Segment of the Ice Age Trail in Waukesha County.



Photo courtesy of Michael Arts

The Ice Age Trail passes through Lapham Peak Unit in the Kettle Moraine State Forest in the Town of Delafield.



Photo courtesy of Wisconsin DNR

Two of the most common off-highway vehicle crash contributors are weak ice and impaired operation. The DNR encourages citizens to be safe on the trails this season.

# DNR reminds snowmobilers to operate safely

MADISON — Snowmobile season is officially underway in Wisconsin, and with it, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources recently sent out a reminder to be safe on the trails.

According to a recent release from the DNR, as with any dangerous hobbies, safety is key. To help keep riders safe this season, the release offered some safety reminders for people to take with them on the trails this winter:

- Avoid riding on lakes and rivers when possible and wear a life jacket over your outer clothing if you must ride on ice. Stay off ice with moving water near or under it; no ice is 100% safe, but ice in these areas may be especially thin and weak.

- Stay on the trail unless otherwise designated.
- Watch the weather and monitor ice conditions by asking the local experts like outfitters, bait shops and fishing clubs. The DNR does not monitor ice conditions.
- Never ride alone.
- Always wear a DOT-approved helmet and facemask and layer clothing to keep yourself warm and dry.

Also, the department emphasized that it is important never to drive or ride impaired. Alcohol and drugs are a leading cause in Wisconsin snowmobile fatalities, especially during the holiday season. Drinking alcohol before snowmobiling or riding slows reaction time, impairs judgment and is a leading contributor to snowmobiling deaths. Last winter, alcohol was involved in 70% of the 23 snowmobiling fatalities.

Join the DNR in the “international zero alcohol campaign” that urges every snowmobiler to take personal responsibility for reducing alcohol-related crashes. Wisconsin conservation wardens will be handing out zero-alcohol stickers to snowmobilers and asking that they display it for others to see.

Citizens can learn more about how to keep safe on Wisconsin's snowmobile trails online on the DNR's snowmobile safety page on its website at [tinyurl.com/386nwb4r](http://tinyurl.com/386nwb4r).



Emily Musil photo

## Boese sworn in as district attorney

WAUKESHA — District Attorney Lesli Boese, left, raises her right hand as she takes the oath of office before Waukesha County Circuit Judge Jennifer Dorow in Boese's office on Jan. 6, the first day of Boese's term as district attorney. She won the primary election for the spot over former colleague Mike Thurston last August but had no challenger declared in November. The term of office is four years. Boese is planning to have a public swearing-in ceremony Jan. 16.

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NEWSMAKER Q&A: Edward Kranick

Town Chairman Kranick discusses how Town of Delafield has changed

TOWN OF DELAFIELD — Before Town Chairman **Edward Kranick** became a local government official, he spent time observing and learning about town meetings to find out what was happening in his community. He has served 10 years on the Town of Delafield Plan Commission and 10 years on the Town Board. Kranick ran unopposed in 2023 for town chairman after former Town Chairman Ron Troy chose not to seek re-election.

The Freeman recently asked Kranick questions about what is happening in the town.

Here are his responses:

**The FREEMAN:** What types of developments, initiatives, or other things are going on in the Town of Delafield?

**EDWARD KRANICK:** Welshire Farms by Neumann Developments, a residential subdivision with single-family homes and condos located along Golf Road between Elmhurst and Glen Cove is currently under construction.

**FREEMAN:** Why is Delafield a good place to live, work and play?

**KRANICK:** The town motto is “Residential, Recreational, and Responsible.” We are a residential community that has an abundance of nature and recreational opportunities with close proximity to

Biography

**Who:** Edward T. Kranick  
**What:** Town of Delafield chairman  
**Age:** 49  
**Work experience:** Business analyst/project management  
**Education:** University of Wisconsin – Madison, BS International Relations and Political Science  
**Family:** Wife, Sheri, son, Evan, daughter, Elise

major corridors for entertainment and commerce.

**FREEMAN:** How has Delafield changed over the years?

**KRANICK:** Farm fields have become subdivisions north of I-94 as people have moved to the town for the low taxes, great schools, nature, and recreational activities.

**FREEMAN:** How did you get into local government?

**KRANICK:** Before live streaming of local meetings was available, the only way to know what was happening in the community was to attend the town meetings. I spent my time learning and observing the town meetings for several years. Then, I had the opportunity to serve on the town Plan Commission, and when the supervisor position became open, I ran for the position.



Edward Kranick

**FREEMAN:** What do you find rewarding and challenging?

**KRANICK:** Most rewarding is when I receive positive feedback around an interaction that an individual or

group had with the town government. Most challenging is when I have to make a decision that is for the overall good of the town, but upsets a specific neighborhood or constituency.

Get to know ...

Edward Kranick

**My greatest achievement is:** My kids  
**My favorite TV show is:** “The West Wing”  
**My favorite movie is:** “The American President”  
**The person I most admire is:** My grandfather  
**The food I like best is:** Mac and cheese  
**My favorite hobby is:** Music  
**My favorite music group is:** Jimmy Buffett  
**My favorite vacation place is:** Anywhere with good friends, family and great food.  
**The favorite vehicle I ever had was:** Jeep Wrangler  
**On my desk is:** Pictures of my family, kids’ art work, and Post-it notes  
**My favorite custard flavor is:** Mint Chocolate Chip  
**My goals for the year are:** Take time to reflect and enjoy life because life is short.

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