

New members since July 1

Citizens for a Safe Wisconsin, Inc.
Davis & Kuelthau, SC
Gonzalez Saggio & Harlan LLP
Greendale School District
Managed Health Services
Mary Roberts
VJS Construction Services, Inc.
Stifel, Nicolaus & Company
Wesolowski, Reidenbach & Fleming, SC

Search for new Forum president progresses

The search committee formed to hire a new Forum president to replace Jeff Browne, who will step down on April 1, has identified a large pool of candidates for the position. It has since narrowed the field and is beginning interviews. The plan is to have the new president on board by March.

Property tax poster proves popular addition

This year, the Forum complemented its Research Brief, "Property tax levy rises 4.6% in SE Wisconsin," with a poster ranking each of the 147 municipalities in southeastern Wisconsin on 2006 property value, 2006 per capita property value, 5-year change in property value, 2007 gross tax levy, 5-year change in tax levy, and 2007 net tax rate. In addition, the poster lists the top-10 municipalities in each of the following categories: largest property values, highest tax rates, and largest increases in property value.

The poster has been extremely popular with real estate agents in the region. Poster funders were Cook & Franke SC, Robert W. Baird & Co. Inc., and the Greater Milwaukee Association of Realtors.

You can access the poster on the Forum Website, www.publicpolicyforum.org.

Mark your calendar

The next Viewpoint luncheon will be held on Wednesday, October 31, featuring workforce development, specifically the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board (formerly the Private Industry Council). Check Forum Web site for details.

Nonprofit organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Milwaukee, WI
Permit No. 267

Forum wins GRA research award

The Forum took home the Governmental Research Association's (GRA) first place award in the Outstanding Policy Achievement category for its research on economic development in the Milwaukee region. The award was presented to Research Director Anneliese Dickman and Senior Researcher Ryan Horton at the 94th annual GRA conference in Denver in August.

The research included studies that were part of the Forum's "One Region, One Future" project that ran for three years and emphasized the need for cooperation among the seven counties of southeastern Wisconsin. Included in the winning entry were studies on tax increment financing (TIF) by the city of Milwaukee and a controversial evaluation of economic development expenditures, particularly for workforce development, by the city of Milwaukee.

Two years after launching the "One Region, One Future" research, the Milwaukee 7 (M7) was created by southeastern Wisconsin businesses partnering with governmental entities to present a unified economic development approach. Subsequent to the TIF study, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett issued a directive doubling TIF authorizations. And the report evaluating the city's economic development expenditures accelerated Milwaukee's creation of a

citywide economic development plan – a major recommendation of the Forum's report.

"Receiving the award was gratifying because it comes from peer organizations which are engaged in the same kinds of work as the Forum," says Forum President Jeff Browne. "I'm also pleased that the research that led to the award resulted in substantive change. We made a difference."

The GRA was established in 1914 and is the national organization of individuals professionally engaged in governmental research.

Johnson Controls back on board

Charles A. Harvey, vice president - diversity and public affairs, Johnson Controls, has agreed to serve on the Forum's board of trustees. Mr. Harvey joined Johnson Controls in 1977 as a technical recruiter. He held positions of greater responsibility before becoming group vice president of human resources – worldwide, for Automotive Experience, supervising the company's regional human resources leaders in Asia, Europe, North America, and South America. Mr. Harvey was named to his current position in January 2006. His responsibilities include workforce and supplier diversity initiatives, community relations, public affairs, and the Johnson Controls Foundation.



Footnotes (published quarterly)

President: Jeffrey C. Browne
Research Director: Anneliese M. Dickman, J.D.
Senior Researcher: Ryan J. Horton, M.U.P.
Researcher: Jeffrey K. Schmidt
Communications & Development Director: Jerry Slaske
Office Manager: Catherine A. Crother

633 West Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 406 Phone: 414-276-8240
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53203 Fax: 414-276-9962
www.publicpolicyforum.org

Forum board meeting

Milwaukee County Executive lays out regional transit plan

At the Forum's board of trustees meeting on September 7, Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker – the meeting's featured speaker – discussed his SMART (Suburban & Milwaukee Advanced Rapid Transit) transit plan for the region.

Walker's plan involves using latest technology, high-capacity buses because of their flexibility in adjusting routes to meet traffic demand and because of their lower capital and operational costs. The tagline for his transit system would be "Think Rail, Use Buses."

The SMART pilot project would initially begin with two routes: the Green Line and Blue Line. The Green Line – about 17 miles long – would run from Bayshore Towne Center in Glendale to the NML office complex in Franklin. It would include about 65 stops/stations and service every 6-10 minutes. The Blue Line – about 10 miles long – would run from UWM to downtown and west along Wisconsin Avenue to the Regional Medical Center Complex in Wauwatosa. Forty stops/stations would be included.

Phase 2 of his plan would add a Silver Line along Fond du Lac and National avenues. Phase 3 would incorporate extensions to existing lines.

In addition to utilizing the latest in bus technology, Walker envisions off-bus automated ticketing at expanded, modern shelters/stations and increased stop spacing to improve efficiency and speed so that more frequent service could be offered.

Forum presents at early childhood education conference

Forum Research Director Anneliese Dickman led a workshop on early childhood education during the recent Embracing Diversity for Children & Families Conference at the Midwest Airlines Convention Center. The theme of the two-hour workshop was "Toward High Quality Early Childhood Education: An Imperative for the Regional Economy." Dickman not only talked about the comprehensive research the Forum is conducting on the subject, but she used the audience – which was primarily educators – as a sounding board for the surveys the Forum soon will be putting in the field as part of the research.

The Forum's three-year research project will measure the economic benefits in southeastern Wisconsin of a quality early childhood education system.

Featured speakers at the conference included the nationally syndicated newspaper columnist Leonard Pitts who writes on race, politics, and culture, and Dr. Rosita Lopez, a faculty member of Northern Illinois University who has done extensive work with non-traditional parents and has provided leadership on education reform issues.

Eventually Walker would like to see SMART subsumed into a Regional Transit Authority that would include the Waukesha Metro Transit System, the Belle Urban System in Racine, and the City of Kenosha Transit System.

To fund his plan, Walker wants to utilize the 2009-2011 increase in the sales tax currently collected on vehicle-related sales. He estimated that the increase during those three years would be approximately \$103.5 million. Half of that would go for the SMART; the other half for transit statewide.

Walker said persuading the state to allocate those funds for transit would be difficult, but not as difficult as levying another tax or increasing the current sales tax to fund the system. He also reminded the audience that most states already allocate vehicle and vehicle-related sales tax money for transit. Wisconsin is one of the few states in which that money is put into the general fund and used for just about anything.

Walker cautioned that if the status quo is allowed to continue, i.e., state aid only increases 2% annually, federal capital maintenance funds continue to disappear, and the county tax levy remains flat, that by 2010, the hours of the Milwaukee County bus system would have to be reduced by 35%.

4th Street Forum taps Forum on transit

Forum Senior Researcher Ryan Horton (in white shirt) recently appeared on Milwaukee Public Television's 4th Street Forum in a panel discussion on the myriad transit issues facing southeastern

Wisconsin. The program, "Mass Transit: Solutions and Roadblocks," also included (from left) Rosemary Potter, executive director of Transit Now; Tyrone Dumas, a community activist currently with Milwaukee Public Schools; and Alan Horowitz, director of UWM's Center for Urban Transportation Studies.

Ryan emphasized that before something can be done about transit there needs to be a definition of transit and what it includes. He also said that the problem should be dealt with on a regional basis, not city by city or county by county. He suggested that doing something on a piecemeal basis is simply continuing the status quo. He then pointed to the situation in Denver where a \$4 billion referendum recently was passed to tackle transit throughout the region.



It ain't broke, but still needs some fixin'

The Forum's Viewpoint on September 26 took advantage of a hot topic, infrastructure, to discuss southeastern Wisconsin's needs. **(6)** The panel included: Marc Levine, director, UWM's Center for Economic Development; Brian Swenson, vice president with HNTB and vice chair of the Forum board, moderating the discussion; John Goetter, chairman, American Society of Civil Engineers-Wisconsin Section committee on Wisconsin infrastructure report card; and W. Martin "Wally" Morics, comptroller, city of Milwaukee. **(4)** Goetter gave a brief summary of the state of Wisconsin infrastructure in categories ranging from bridges (a grade of C which equaled fair performance) to public schools (C) to transit (C+). Roads got the lowest grade (D+) and Energy received the highest grade (B). **(2)** Levine called for a Milwaukee economic development strategy fueled by an increase in infrastructure maintenance and reconstruction, although he called the chances for that slim because of a lack of leadership. He cited Boston and Dublin, Ireland as having benefited greatly from huge increases in infrastructure expenditures, virtually turning them from economic basket cases to shining stars. He called infrastructure spending, the "big bang" of economic stimuli. **(1)** Morics compared city of Milwaukee revenues and expenditures with those of peer cities, showing Milwaukee to be an efficiently run and relatively low-tax city. He said there wasn't enough money or manpower to keep up all of the city's infrastructure needs, but that the city is doing a good job of prioritizing to meet its most pressing needs first. **(3)** Unfortunately, there were more questions from the audience than time to answer them. **(5)** About 100 people attended the Viewpoint discussion held at the Italian Community Center.



Viewpoint sponsored by:



Forum article about Milwaukee's next police chief creates buzz

An op-ed written by Forum Communications & Development Director Jerry Slaske about Milwaukee's next police chief received attention from bloggers and talk radio. The article, "Choosing Milwaukee's next top cop: Roughed-up Milwaukee needs results from its next police chief," first appeared in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's Crossroads section on Sunday, August 18 and then was talked about by Charlie Sykes on his WTMJ radio program and posted on his blog. Also, Paul Soglin, former mayor of Madison, discussed it in his blog, "Waxing America." The article said that the primary criterion in selecting the next chief should be how much that person was able to reduce crime in his/her previous law enforcement job. It referenced a recent story in Governing magazine about the crime-reduction track records of protégés of William Bratton, former New York City police chief, who is credited with cleaning up the Big Apple.