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TMS projects, volunteer recognized at WEDC's Main Street Awards North for the 4th T-shirt fundraiser, Bradley mural revitalization, Joan Laabs honored

BY JALEN MAKI
TOMAHAWK LEADER
EDITOR

GREEN BAY – Two projects spearheaded by Tomahawk Main Street Inc. (TMS), as well as one TMS volunteer, were recognized during the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)'s 33rd annual Wisconsin Main Street Awards ceremony.

The ceremony, celebrating the best downtown revitalization projects of 2023, was held at Gather on Broadway in Green Bay on Friday, April 19.

TMS' North for the 4th T-shirt fundraiser, the revitalization of a downtown mural of Tomahawk founder William H. Bradley and TMS volunteer Joan Laabs were honored.

TMS Executive Director Jennifer Turkiewicz, TMS board member Andrea Krueger, artist Andy Goretski and Laabs were on hand to celebrate TMS's accomplishments.

"As Main Street goes, so goes Wisconsin's economy, its well-being, our way of life in the Badger State," said Missy Hughes, WEDC Secretary and CEO. "And these awards prove once again Wisconsin communities are



Pictured is Turkiewicz holding a certificate recognizing the North for the 4th T-shirt fundraiser's Honorable Mention in the Best Promotional Marketing Campaign category.

thriving. Congratulations to the winners. We salute and celebrate you, our partners in creating an economy and improving the quality of life for the betterment and benefit of all."

On behalf of Secretary Hughes, WEDC Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer Sam Rikkers recognized the winners at the ceremony.

"With many of these Main Street projects, we are preserving history and making history, leading by example in maintaining what sets Wisconsin apart," Rikkers stated during the ceremony.



Andy Goretski of Custom Murals was honored for his work in restoring a mural of Tomahawk founder William H. Bradley.

"While these projects in the heart of your communities are vital to local commerce and cultural activities today, they are part of our Badger State legacy we must preserve for future generations to enjoy."

Other WEDC leaders also joined in the celebration of successful projects and initiatives executed by Main Street and Connect Communities programs around the state.

A release from WEDC said recognized projects included business and community development initia-

tives, building renovations, community celebrations and revitalization success stories from across Wisconsin.

Projects in Marshfield, Three Lakes, Wausau and numerous other communities were honored.

"Showcasing the variety of success stories from communities large and small is always inspirational," said Mike Ward, WEDC Vice President of Business and Community Development. "The Main Street Awards ceremony celebrates the hard work, vision and dedication of those who are



TMS volunteer Joan Laabs was among the recipients of the Community Champion award.

working tirelessly behind the scenes each day to preserve and promote their downtowns."

Wisconsin Main Street is a community development program administered by WEDC that targets Wisconsin's historic commercial districts. WEDC said it provides technical support and training to the 34 Main Street communities to help them revitalize their business districts based on guidelines developed by the National Main Street Center.

Since the program's inception in 1987, Wisconsin

Main Street community efforts have resulted in the creation of more than 3,300 new businesses and nearly 17,000 net new jobs, and over \$2.6 billion in public and private investment has occurred in these districts, according to the release.

"During fiscal year 2023 alone, Wisconsin Main Street communities added 112 new businesses and 287 net new jobs," WEDC said. "None of this activity would be possible without the nearly 30,000 volunteer hours that were dedicated to the Main Street effort by passionate individuals from each community."

Also represented at the event were members of WEDC's Connect Communities Program, a companion program to Wisconsin Main Street created in 2013 to provide access to resources and training to help communities pursue revitalization and redevelopment efforts. According to the release, over the past decade, 138 participating communities have added more than 870 net new businesses and attracted nearly \$4.6 billion in public and private investment.

Awards
CONTINUES ON PAGE 2

Daigle Brothers, Foley's receive USDA grants to install solar electric arrays

FOR THE TOMAHAWK LEADER

TOMAHAWK – Federal grant funding will help a pair of Tomahawk businesses improve their energy efficiency.

On Wednesday, April 24, Rural Development Wisconsin State Director Julie Lassa announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is funding 19 clean energy projects to lower energy bills, expand access to domestic biofuels and create jobs and new market opportunities for Wisconsin farmers, small business owners and agricultural producers.

The funding comes from USDA's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).

A release from USDA said REAP "helps agricultural producers and rural small business owners expand their use of wind, solar, geothermal and small hydropower energy and make energy efficiency improvements."

"These innovations help them increase their income, grow their businesses, address climate change and lower energy costs for American families," the release

Solar CONTINUES ON PAGE 3



School board reapportionment committee endorses '3-3-3' model Petition signatures to be gathered; district residents would vote during September annual meeting

BY JALEN MAKI
TOMAHAWK LEADER EDITOR

TOMAHAWK – A special committee looking into rebalancing representation on the School District of Tomahawk Board of Education has endorsed a proposed model.

Since August of last year, the Reapportionment Subcommittee, made up of board members Kay Kissinger Wolf, Shar Kirsch and Dave Long; Lincoln County Clerk Chris Marlowe; and community members Marguerite Lyskawa, Ken Schulz and Jon Long, has been exploring ways to alter how the board is composed to better reflect the district's population distribution.

During the board's meeting on Tuesday, April 9, the committee said it backs a "3-3-3" representation model.

Current representation model; why reapportionment is being considered

The board currently utilizes a "4-3-1-1" representation model. Under this model, the board is composed of a total of nine members representing four designated areas within the district for three-year terms.

Four members represent the City of Tomahawk; three represent the apportioned area covering the Towns of Birch, Bradley, Rock Falls, Skanawan and Tomahawk; one represents the apportioned area that includes the Towns

of Little Rice, Nokomis and Wilson; and one represents the apportioned area encompassing the Towns of Harrison and King.

These areas of representation have been in place since April 1972.

In February, the committee provided the board with a presentation explaining why reapportionment is being considered. Due to population shifts over the last several decades, some apportioned areas are overrepresented on the board, while others are underrepresented, the committee explained.

For example, according to U.S. Census data, the City of Tomahawk went from having 49% of the district's population down to 33.1% between 1960 and 2020, yet the area continues to be represented by four board members.

Meanwhile, two of the district's three rural apportioned areas have seen their populations grow over that time while still having less board representation than the City of Tomahawk has.

Committee endorses '3-3-3' model

The committee provided numerous potential board makeup options in February and ultimately backed the implementation of a "3-3-3" model, offering several ways this model could shape up.

Earlier this month, the committee endorsed a specific 3-3-3 model, under which representation would be divided into three apportioned areas: The City of Tomahawk; the Towns of Birch,

Bradley, Rock Falls, Skanawan and Tomahawk; and the Towns of Harrison, King, Little Rice, Nokomis and Wilson.

Each area would have three representatives on the board, allowing the board to remain at its current nine-person membership.

One seat from each area would be up for election in each election cycle, allowing for residents in each apportioned area to run for a three-year term in each election year.

In endorsing this model, the committee pointed to its balanced populations – each area has between roughly 32% and 34% of the district's population – as well as its state-required contiguous areas.

Next steps

With the committee and the board supporting the proposed 3-3-3 model, the committee will circulate a petition in an effort to gather enough signatures to formally present the reapportionment proposal during the board's annual meeting in September.

The proposal would be voted on by district residents during the meeting.

If annual meeting voters give their stamp of approval to the reapportionment proposal, the new makeup of the board would be put in place over the course of three years. As current terms expire in 2025, 2026 and 2027, one seat in each newly-designated area would be up for election in each of those years.

The new model would be fully implemented after the April 2027 election.

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