

THE GAD REPORT

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT QUILTS

Only two months removed from a spring election that saw four incumbents lose their seats on the Eau Claire City Council, Council President Kerry Kincaid abruptly resigned her seat with 18 months left in her three year term.

Kincaid has had clashes with some council members, and determined that in the interest of the city, she should step aside, stating: *“It has become impossible to govern in a manner befitting a city that works, and to which the public has become accustomed.”*

Members of the council noted that, with Kincaid’s departure, a wealth of experience was gone. Kincaid had been on the council for



fourteen years, nine as President. Newly elected members will look to other council veterans and city staff to get up to speed on city matters as they settle into their roles.

Next question: Who will lead the council, and how will Kincaid’s seat be filled.

For the time being,

council Vice-President Andrew Werthmann will be acting President and will run council meetings.

The Eau Claire City Council declined to appoint anyone to the seat, meaning a special election will be held in April of 2019 to fill the unexpired term. Whoever wins that race will have to run again in one year to serve a full three year term as council President.

Next spring, the five at large council seats will be up. Having just lost a combined 50 years of council experience, it will be worth watching to see if the current council members run again, or if new faces will join an already “fresh faced” council.

SOARING LUMBER PRICES HURT NEW HOME CONSTRUCTION

Since President Trump levied tariffs on lumber produced and sent from Canada to the United States, framing lumber prices are up 59% from 2017, according to the National Association of Home Builders.

That cost translates to an

additional cost of over \$2000 to the price of a newly constructed apartment and over \$7000 to the cost of a typical new home.

And while new home construction is picking up across the country, so is the costs. Higher prices for

most materials, including lumber, along with some shortages in the labor market in the construction fields are pinching profits for builders, housing starts are up over eight percent this year and are expected to continue strong.



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BURNETT COUNTY ZONING ADMINISTRATOR EXCEEDS AUTHORITY

The Whitetail Wilderness Campground was abruptly closed on June 1st, not by the county health department, but by Jason Towne, county zoning administrator.

Reports of water not being property drained from campers and park model homes were received by the zoning office.

The office has received other complaints regarding current zoning code viola-

tions, the size of storage structures and a smaller than required sewage system for the number of units that stay at the campground.

At issue is the fact that Towne acquired a court order, went to the sheriff's office late on a Friday afternoon, had two deputies accompany him to the campground and advise all of the campers that

they had to vacate at once. Only when Sheriff Ron Wilhelm notified was the evictions immediately stopped. The Sheriff has declined to enforce the court order.

Outgoing Representative Adam Jarchow (R-Balsam Lake), who is an attorney has asked the Burnett county board to immediately fire Towne for overstepping his authority.

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY MULLS WHEEL TAX

It's been done around the state, most notably in Chippewa County. Now, the Eau Claire County Board is discussing a \$30 annual wheel tax that is expected to raise \$2.6 million a year that will be designated to repairing over 100 miles of county roads that are falling into disrepair. The tax is designed to save millions in finance charges over the next 20 years

when bond loans come due. The \$30 tax would only apply to passenger vehicles and light trucks under 8000GVW. Large trucks, semis and the like would be exempt.

The tax would be the same amount as Milwaukee, which has the highest tax in the state (St. Croix and Chippewa Counties have a \$10 per vehicle tax). The tax would be included in your annual vehi-

cle registration renewal and, if passed, would begin in January of 2019.

While there is a large contingent of support among supervisors for the tax, there are a number of supervisors that want either a smaller fee or no fee at all raising concerns about the elderly and low income people having to pay an additional tax every year.

HAYWARD COUNCIL CREATES DISTRICT

The Hayward City Council has created a special tax district for increased economic development.

The Tax Incremental District is designed to encourage development and expand the city's tax base.

The City of Hayward is looking to attract mixed-use

due to their being several zoning districts in the TID. 35% of the district is assigned for residential housing.

The city would have 15 years to make expenditures and up to 12 years to recover the tax dollars.

Costs to the city to establish the TID are around \$17,200.

Councilmembers are cautious not to lavish infrastructure improvements in the district in hopes someone will build there. They want to attract business first, assess their needs for building the road improvements, then have a plan ready to meet those needs which will keep the city's exposure limited.

WRA LEGISLATIVE SUCCESS: 68 REALTOR® VICTORIES



The 2015-2016 Legislative session saw 49 out of 50 bills put forward by WRA pass the Legislatures and be signed into law.

This session was even better. WRA was able to pass a record 68 REALTOR® victories at the state capitol on a wide array of issues that affect the real estate industry, and the pocketbooks of both REALTORS® and consumers.

High points include making home and property ownership more affordable by reducing state property taxes and caps levy limits, but allows increases for new construction, a number of measures for protecting private property rights including right to rent, conditional use permits, substandard lots and riprap permit exemptions.

Also, legislation to remove hurdles to successful real estate transactions, making necessary infrastructure investments in broadband, transportation, K-12 funding and historic rehab tax credits.

Legislation was passed that removes regulatory barriers to residential and commercial development and making ownership of rental property less onerous.

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SUPREME COURT FAILS TO ACT ON GERRYMANDERING

After a nine month wait for a decision, the United States Supreme Court decided...not to decide.

Instead, the high court returned on a unanimous vote, both Wisconsin and Maryland's cases citing that the plaintiffs in both cases lacked the legal right to bring the case before the court. Seven of the justices remand-

ed the cases back to district courts to allow another chance to establish standing.

Each of the plaintiffs will now be allowed to show the lower court how they were personally impacted by the gerrymandered maps in the districts in which they live. The presentation before SCOTUS in October, presented the plaintiffs representing all voters and there-

fore, all voters were damaged in some way by the redrawn maps. The lower courts will take time to hear arguments and work the case back up to the high court, so the current maps will be in force for the mid-term elections on November 6th. With the retirement of Justice Kennedy, if the case returns to SCOTUS, the outcome may be very different.

ASHLAND APPROVES LEVY BALLOT QUESTION

The Ashland County Board have approved a question for the August 14th primary ballot that would, if passed, raise the county's operating levy by \$1 million dollars.

The vote was 15 to 3. The dollars would go to law enforcement and health and human services. The levy

would increase the current levy by 83 cents per thousand dollars of equalized valuation.

Much of the extra money that the health and human services department would receive is to combat the growing substance abuse problem facing Ashland County. In partnership with law enforcement, the

department wants to implement preventative programs and make them available countywide.

The board will undertake an intensive information campaign in the weeks leading up to the election so residents know exactly what the dollars will be used for.



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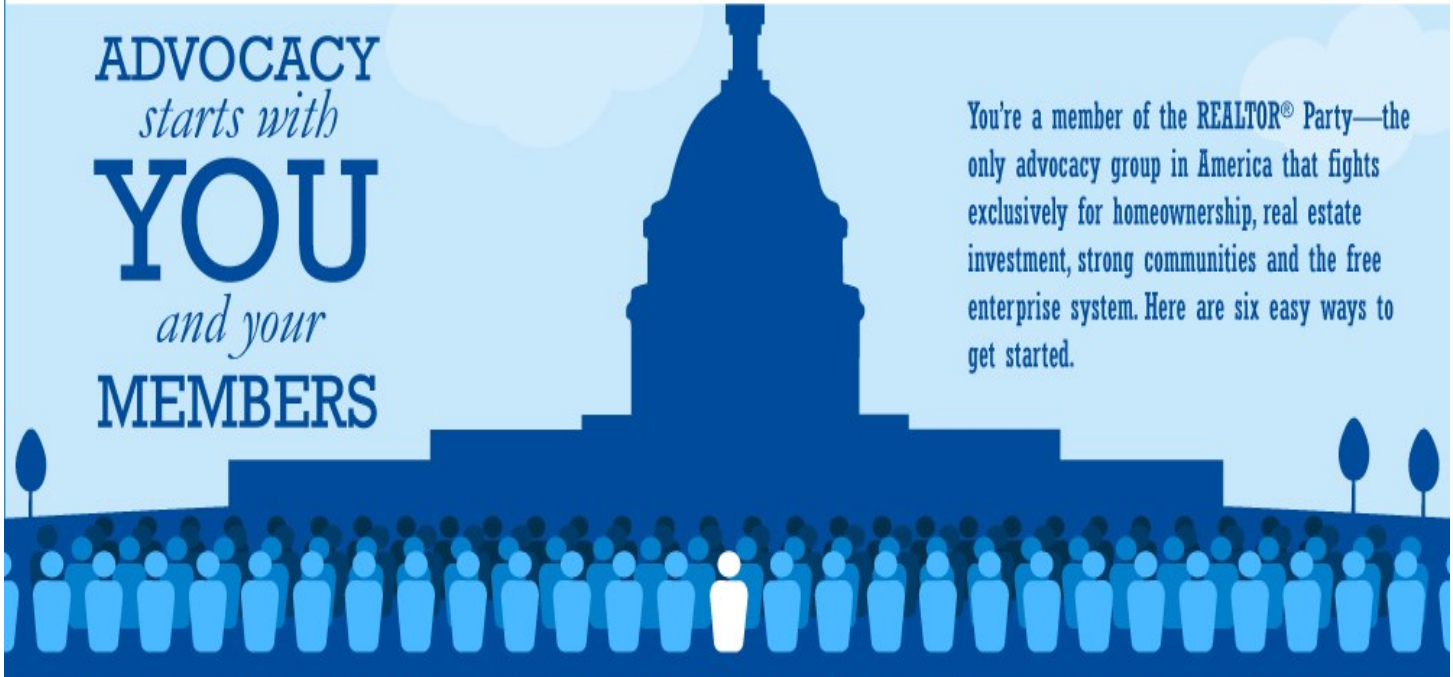
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RANWW

Realtors® Association of Northwestern Wisconsin



**REALTORS® ASSOCIATION
OF NORTHWESTERN
WISCONSIN**

3460 Mall Drive
Suite 5A
Eau Claire, WI 54701

Phone: 715-828-1976 home office/text
Phone: 715-835-0923 board office
E-mail: bruce@ranww.org

Bruce King
Government Affairs Director

WWW.RANWW.ORG

“OUR MISSION IS TO HELP OUR
MEMBERS BE MORE SUCCESSFUL IN
REAL ESTATE”

The REALTORS® Association of Northwestern Wisconsin is the largest association in terms of area, stretching from Millston, Whitehall and Fountain City to the south all the way to central Bayfield and southern Ashland county to the north. We are the fourth largest of the 19 Associations in terms of membership. Your Association covers 375 units of local government, monitoring a wide variety of issues that can and do affect you. In addition to local government, your GAD also monitor issues at the state and national level that will have a direct or indirect impact on housing and the industry, as well as legislation that can affect the consumer. Your Government Affairs Director works with members and affiliates to raise investment dollars for RPAC that help to support elected officials that support your business. RANWW is one of only three REALTOR® Association’s in Wisconsin that have their own PAC, which was started 39 years ago to support candidates at the local and state level. We maintain a Facebook page, called “The GADabouts”, that aims to keep you up to date on political issues that will affect your business. Your GAD also produces a periodic government affairs program posted on our YouTube channel, RANWWTV!!



MY THOUGHTS—BY BRUCE KING

Gerrymander.

I’ve heard that term for the entire 13 1/2 years that I have been your GAD. Based on the decision of the Supreme Court, we are all going to hear it for a while longer.

I’ve worked with legislators on both sides of the aisle, some who tell me that “he who has the power rules”, while others say that the way the maps are currently drawn, they have no chance of losing, while others who decry the maps swear they will never run for office again as long as the maps are the way they are

(three of those people are running for office this year).

Everyone expected SCOTUS to do something to finally put an end to the maps.

They did, they said that the plaintiffs lacked standing to bring the case before them, send their respective cases back to district court, told them to demonstrate how they are each individually harmed in their own districts by the maps, and work the case back up thru the system.

Problem is, that “something” was not what many people, including those who want an independent

group to draw the legislative lines, wanted or expected.

That means that the 2018 mid-term map, and quite possible the 2020 map in Wisconsin may be the same map, the census, from which the legislative lines are redrawn will not be in effect until the 2022 elections.

With a few short weeks to go before the August 14th primary, those candidates who will be on that ballot are working the doors, working the fairs and working the phones. If you live in an area that will have a primary, get to know the people running, know where they stand on real estate and land use issues, and vote.



Commemorating 50 Years
of the Fair Housing Act