



RANWW

Realtors® Association of
Northwestern Wisconsin

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The GAD Report

THE PANDEMIC AND POLITICS—RPAC EDITION PHASE TWO

It's July!

As I am writing this report, many counties in our jurisdiction are reporting higher numbers of cases of COVID-19, and some restrictions may again go in to effect if the spread is not slowed down. The first quarter of July will also feature something we have not felt around here in an extended period..hot and humid weather. Highs are expected in the upper 80s and 90s with high dewpoints and afternoon thunderstorms.

If you have been either a member of the Large Donor Council or a Direct Giver, you will receive a letter from WRA and signed by this year's RPAC chair, Amy Curler asking you to repeat your investment. While everything seems to be quarantined, raising money for vetted candidates and incumbents knows no such quarantine. WRA and our trustees will be interviewing candidates for the open 29th and 75th Assembly seats later this month. I will also be raising Direct Giver dollars for a number of incumbents thru mid-month, all with 100% voting records on our issues, and all worthy of your investment. Your Direct Giver investment will be critical to the future success of WRA, the protection of private property rights and land use issues. We have a number of workforce housing bills waiting to be passed, and we need members of the Assembly and Senate that will support those initiatives. I will be reaching out to everyone that has a current fund balance over the next two weeks about using your balance to support legislators that support what you do.

WRA's Joe Murray has an excellent analysis of fundraising in the current pandemic on Page 5.

Happy 4th of July, stay safe and healthy, and we'll talk soon.

Bruce

It is very Important for you to stay up-to-date on the latest orders from the county health departments in our jurisdiction:

www.ranww.org

You will find updates at the local, state and national level regarding the coronavirus.

I'll continue to update the GADabouts Facebook page with new information from WRA and NAR as it occurs.

Stay safe, and stay informed with your Association.

Bruce King, C2EX, AHWD, e-PRO®

Government Affairs Director

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Politics In A Pandemic.....	1
Hi-Crush To File Chapter 11	2
Capitol Insights Podcast	3
My Vote Wisconsin Primary	4
Politics and COVID-19with WRA's Joe Murray	5
My Legislators	7

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Investment Needed!!
- August Primary
- WRA Podcast
- Tools You Can Use
- Politics and COVID-19
- Contact My Legislator

NAR SAYS PENDING HOME SALES INCREASED A RECORD 44.3% IN MAY

The National Association of REALTORS® reported that the index of pending home sales increased by a record 44.3% for May, after two straight months of decline.

Lawrence Yun, chief economist for NAR stated “This bounce back speaks to how the housing industry could lead the way for a broader economic recovery.”

According to NAR, the number

suggest that buyers are eager to re-enter the housing market to take advantage of record low interest rates and to try to beat continued increases in home prices and shortages of availability in many markets.



“Just Because You Do Not Take An Interest In Politics, Doesn’t Mean That Politics Won’t Take An Interest In You.” —Pericles (430 B.C)

HI-CRUSH LOOKING AT BANKRUPTCY FILING SOON, DEVALUES TWO MINES AND REDUCES WORKFORCE

The company reports that they have lost \$147 million in the first quarter of 2020 and with oil prices hovering around \$40 a barrel, a glut of oil already in stockpiles in the United States, and reductions from OPEC on global production, it will take some time to get prices and inventory to make fracing profitable.

The company has closed plants in Whitehall, Blair and Augusta and running another in Wyeville at reduced capacity.

WISCONSIN TO MAIL OUT POSTCARDS TO RESIDENTS WHO MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE

The State of Wisconsin is in the process of mailing out 198,600 postcards to state residents who appear to be eligible to vote but who are not currently registered to vote in the state.

A spokesperson for the Wisconsin Elections Commission states that with Wisconsin being a huge battleground state for both major political parties, residents will be seeing plenty of mail. The Commission wants residents to know that voters can trust the the postcard they send will have accurate, non-partisan information about how and when they can register to vote in Wisconsin.

This postcard is not the same as a mailing that the Commission approved last month in which 2.64 million Wisconsin voters will receive a mailer with information about voting on November 3rd, either in person, in-person absentee at their clerk’s office or by requesting an absentee ballot by mail.

As of June 1st, there were 3,395,382 people actively registered to vote in the state.. To find out who is on your ballot in November, go to:





Learn about the responsibilities and challenges from the leader of the state's regulatory body for real estate licensees. Curious about the most common consumer complaint or how COVID-19 has impacted the profession? Chairman of the Real Estate Examining Board (REEB) and RANWW REALTOR® Tom Richie will provide a glimpse of what it is like to be on the REEB and regulate the real estate profession.

IN BRIEF

The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents recently named former 4-term Governor and Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson as interim President of the system, replacing Ray Cross who is retiring, but staying on for 90 days to aid in the transition.

Thompson's appointment is likely for a year or a little more as Regents will start the process once again to find a permanent President. They have stated publicly that the process will not begin until at least the summer of 2021.

Thompson was selected, in part because of his legacy of bringing people together and finding common ground.

JCAP Construction has made changes to one of its projects for downtown Eau Claire, changing the project from senior housing to apartments for everyone. Most will be studios and one bedroom apartments, but there will be 32 will be two bedroom in the double 4 story buildings on Wilson Square. Parking for residents will be a combination of surface and underground. The buildings will have a total of 115 units.

RPAC AND YOU

Did you know that you can make your RPAC investment securely online using your Visa, Mastercard and now American Express card?

Go to <https://www.wra.org/dgcontribution/>

If REALTORS® do not speak out, get involved and help shape the discussion, someone else will.

Nobody knows a community better than a REALTOR®. You are on the front line as defenders of real estate issues.

Investing in RPAC assures you a seat at the table when critical decisions are made for homeowners and private property owners.

Supporting vetted candidates and incumbents at all levels of elective governance is part of what RPAC is about.

Now more than ever, we need your financial investment in RPAC thru the Large Donor Council or Direct Giver.



FIND OUT WHO IS ON YOUR BALLOT

There will be a primary in the 3rd Congressional district on both the Democratic and Republican tickets, a primary for the 29th Assembly seat and a Republican primary for the 10th Senate seat. Those will happen on August 11th, then its on to the general election in November.

You will get an application for an absentee ballot in September if you do not want to go to the polls.

What is important is to know the positions of each candidate, and who is on your ballot. Check with MyVote Wisconsin 21 days prior to an election to know.



[Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies.](#) - Groucho Marx

TOOLS YOU CAN USE IN YOUR BUSINESS

If you have been thinking about adding tools to your toolbox, NAR offers two excellent certificate programs that do not take a lot of time to complete and will complement your current skill set.

First is e-PRO®. The current pandemic has rushed technology to the forefront in a way not seen before. Zoom, Microsoft and Webex meetings are happening hourly.

With many members still at home, and many that will stay there after the pandemic eases, having a heightened understanding of marketing strategies and how to make technology work for you with those strategies will give you an edge.



The second is At Home With Diversity. This course addresses issues of diversity, fair housing and cultural differences and how these dynamics influence you as a real estate professional.

Do you know how easy it is to make an RPAC investment?

Go to www.wra.org/dgcontribution, fill in your information and credit/debit card number (Visa, Mastercard and American Express) and enter a one-time amount or set up monthly payments.

No corporate cards allowed, but LLCs are permitted.

CAMPAIGNS IN THE AGE OF COVID-19-BY JOE MURRAY, WRA

On June 1, all candidates running for office at the federal, state and local level in Wisconsin must file their nomination papers to have their names qualify for the November 3 election ballot. The process of running for office begins long before Election Day, starting months in advance with candidates collecting signatures to qualify for the ballot, fundraising and building grassroots political organizations to get their names and messages out to voters.

But this year, candidates face a very significant challenge. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed almost everything. In the age of social distancing, political campaigns will have to adapt to the restriction on face-to-face interactions with voters while campaigning at every level. Events that feature large crowds have been canceled, and the most common task of the grassroots campaign — knocking on doors — is taboo for now.

In spite of all this, the elections to be held on November 3 are underway. Three political factors will ultimately influence the final results, perhaps significantly, one way or another:

1. The 20 state legislative seats with no incumbent running.
2. The incredible surge in absentee voting.

THE BIG QUESTION OF HOW VOTERS WILL RESPOND TO THE COVID-19 “SAFER AT HOME” SHUTDOWN THAT HAS PRODUCED THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED WORKERS IN WISCONSIN SINCE THE GREAT DEPRESSION.

OPEN LEGISLATIVE SEATS

The 2020 legislative election cycle includes 20 open state legislative districts. These are districts where the incumbent has decided to retire or possibly run for a different office. In the state Senate, there are seven open seats; in the state Assembly, 13 districts are open. This is an average number of open seats over the last 10 years.

After looking closely at the voting history of all 20 open seats, one conclusion is pretty clear: only six of the 20 districts (30.0%) will be or could be highly contested between the two major parties. The other 14 seats are either strong Democrat or Republican districts and will remain in the same party hands after the elections on November 3.

Why are open legislative seats important to political insiders? Because open seats in any election cycle, depending on where they are located, offer the best possibility to flip from one party to the other. Based on historical voting numbers, only six open seats fall into competitive territory this year, and this means that additional “opportunity” seats will be in districts with incumbents running for reelection, and incumbents are generally more difficult to defeat.

ABSENTEE VOTING WILL CONTINUE TO SKYROCKET IN WISCONSIN

Badger State voters have a long-held tradition of turning out to vote in big numbers. Wisconsin voter turnout is always near the top compared to most states, and political prognosticators believe that November 2020 voter turnout could break all previous records in the state.

Even with the COVID-19 pandemic, many believe turnout will surge, in large part due to absentee early voting. Prognosticators point to the recent election for state Supreme Court between liberal Jill Karofsky and conservative Dan Kelly. In the April 7 election, 71% of all votes cast were absentee. This represents a dramatic increase over all previous elections. For example, in the November 2016 election and 2018 midterms, fewer than 30% of all votes were cast absentee. Fear of the pandemic drove Wisconsin voters to vote absentee, “essentially turning the voting pattern in Wisconsin upside down, from being mostly in-person to mostly by mail,” according to UW-Madison political science professor Barry Burden.

Assuming absentee voting surges, how will this impact final results? Donald Trump carried Wisconsin by approximately 22,000 votes in 2016, one of the narrowest margins in the country. Will the November absentee surge prove to be an advantage for Trump or Biden? And how will this surge affect down-ballot elections for Congress and state Legislature? Research has suggested that down-ballot races could be most impacted by higher turnout driven by absentee voting. That may influence the outcome in highly competitive districts where the two parties spend the bulk of their time and resources.

CAMPAIGNS IN THE AGE OF COVID-19— CONTINUED

HOW WILL THE COVID-19 SHUTDOWN IMPACT NOVEMBER ELECTIONS IN WISCONSIN?

On March 25, Gov. Tony Evers issued his first “Safer at Home” order, prohibiting social gatherings, shuttering thousands of businesses, and restricting movement for everyone except “essential” service providers. On April 15, Evers directed the state Department of Health Services to extend the order for an additional four weeks.

The original order to stay “safer at home” was issued by Gov. Evers with no input from legislative Republicans who control both houses of the Wisconsin Legislature. When the governor had his Health Services Secretary Andrea Palm extend the order until May 26, GOP leaders were again not consulted. From a political standpoint, this means Gov. Evers will receive either the credit or the blame from voters for this shutdown.

With Evers in support of the extended shelter orders and Republicans arguing for a gradual but faster opening of the economy, the COVID-19 pandemic response may be viewed in a classic Democrat versus Republican political frame this November. If that happens, it's an open question: which side will benefit politically?

Today, it's difficult to predict. Will Wisconsin voters hold Gov. Evers responsible for the economic fallout from his order to shut down and punish down-ballot Democrats this November, or will voters hold President Trump responsible for the medical and economic fallout and punish Republicans at the polls? It was, after all, governors who were responsible for orders to shelter in place, while the Trump administration struggled for an effective response to the pandemic.

On the one hand, opinion polls show the shelter orders were popular in Wisconsin; but on the other hand, there were several protests in Wisconsin and elsewhere objecting to the ongoing quarantine. It's unclear how this will play out in November. The quarantine may have been necessary to slow the rapid spread of COVID-19, but it created a large, diverse and growing segment of economic losers. Those economic losers do not fall neatly into partisan columns.

We will have to wait until November to get the answer.

Joe Murray is Director of Political and Governmental Affairs for the WRA.



To make an investment in Direct giver, go to www.wra.org/dgcontribution and enter your card information for a one-time or monthly investment in RPAC. Thanks!!

Representatives in the Wisconsin Legislature

29th Assembly

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67th Assembly

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25th Senate

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31st Senate

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OUR MISSION:

“RANWW/
NWWMLS UNITE
TO ADVOCATE FOR
REAL PROPERTY
RIGHTS, ADVANCE
PROFESSIONALISM
AND CONNECT MEM-
BERS WITH OUR
COMMUNITIES.”

RANWW GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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 385 units of local government, monitoring a wide variety of issues that can and do affect you. In addition to local government, your GAD also monitors 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 41 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!!



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