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MORE INSIDE...

In the discussion about the importance of start-ups to Wisconsin's economy, have you considered the importance of scale-ups?

Wisconsin's migration patterns are changing.

The high school experience is different than it was 20 years ago—read why that's a good thing.



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HAPPY SPRING!



SUZANNE KELLEY

President & CEO
Waukesha County Business
Alliance, Inc.

Spring in Wisconsin this year means the weather is getting warmer (we hope!) and state policy makers are deliberating what many consider the most important piece of legislation for the year—the biennial state budget bill.

Governor Tony Evers introduced his 2019-2021 budget earlier this year. The budget is now in the hands of the state legislature, which by statute has until the start of the new fiscal year on July 1 to review, amend and pass its version of the budget before sending it back to the Governor. However, unlike the federal government, if the Governor and legislature fail to agree on a budget, the state does not shut down. Instead, the state continues to operate under the old budget until an agreement is reached.

Given the current political climate, it's unclear when a new budget will be in place. In the meantime, the Alliance is monitoring the process and the issues that matter most to our member businesses, such as economic development, education, infrastructure and workforce development.

For years, advocacy has been a core focus of the Alliance as we work to provide a clear and persuasive voice for the business community and advocate for business-friendly legislation at the local, state and federal levels.

As the Alliance heads in to our 101st year in 2019, we're excited to announce the continued growth and expansion of our advocacy efforts on behalf of Waukesha County businesses. The Alliance has registered to lobby in the state of Wisconsin, giving our staff the ability to communicate regularly with legislators on important issues and policy areas that have been identified by our policy board and policy committees.

The Alliance has long been proud to serve as the voice of business in Waukesha County and beyond, keeping our more than 1,200 members informed about important issues that impact your organizations. Know that we're constantly working behind the scenes on your behalf to ensure a business-friendly climate in Wisconsin.

Suzanne Kelley

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Construction companies come together through the Alliance

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Start-up AND scale up: **ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS CENTRAL TO JOB CREATION**



DON SCHLIDT

CEO

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To be clear, I am a big fan of Wisconsin as a place for entrepreneurs to do business. Wisconsin has done a lot to make the business environment more advantageous for start-ups. As an evolving tech-based economy, Wisconsin has developed some really smart ideas about how to make it easier to be an entrepreneur.

In addition, more than one hundred state-based venture capital (VC) firms drive steady start-up investments. Many of them began their firms in other parts of the country and then opted to capitalize on all the Midwest has to offer in terms of family lifestyle and moderate cost of living.

There is no question that a lot of today's rhetoric is centered on the power of start-ups as job creators, as they certainly are. But we need to remember established firms have an equally critical role to play in fueling growth in employment with their ability to scale.

The proof is in the numbers. Today in Wisconsin, according to statistics from both the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, approximately 90 percent of jobs created come from existing, entrepreneurial companies (scale-ups) that are driving steady, continued growth. This is not a new concept, but it is one that does not seem to get nearly as much press or attention as start-ups and mega-deals.

One of the best-known advocates for the concept of scale-up growth was Andy Grove, former CEO and chairman of Intel Corporation.

Upon surveying the Bay Area's ecosystem of start-ups, he pointed out that there was a critical need to ensure that public funding and grants directed at start-ups, perhaps aiming for one to three new jobs over a two-year period, would be matched with similar funds directed to scale-up firms poised to grow from three jobs to 300.

If one of Wisconsin's important economic messages is that we help entrepreneurs create jobs, we must not lose sight of that entrepreneur until he or she has scaled their company and grown their job base to a sustainable level. The scale-up process relies on an entirely different set of skills and resources than new business ventures in start-up mode.

I am not advocating pulling resources from start-ups, but rather a balanced approach to economic development. "Balance" means we begin at the start-up, invest in it and shore it up for greater growth. We also balance those investments



by making similar investments in established companies already prepped to scale, protecting and accelerating their opportunities as well.

If one of our goals here in Wisconsin is to attract and retain talent, we need to understand

and embrace these dynamics – and appropriately balance our investments in start-ups as well as scale-ups. We will attract a more diverse talent base, protect our early investments and generate a broader variety of the types and levels of jobs available to our residents. This

is a smart, pay-it-forward strategy that not only values the business contribution of entrepreneurs but also recognizes that economic development comes from our established community of businesses growing the employment base throughout the state of Wisconsin. •



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JOHN KOSKINEN
Chief Economist
Wisconsin Department of Revenue

WISCONSIN'S CHANGING POPULATION MIGRATION PATTERN

Wisconsin has a full employment economy. To keep growing, Wisconsin must expand its workforce. Against the backdrop of worker shortages and challenging recruitment, employers, trade associations and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation have initiated efforts to recruit workers from out-of-state.

Historically, a drain on the Wisconsin economy has been the talent exit—persons leaving the state to pursue opportunities in other states. As recently as 2015, Wisconsin lost population to net out-migration—a poor dynamic to grow population, labor force and the economy. Any effort to reverse that pattern is welcome and necessary. Still, switching that momentum does not happen immediately. It is more akin to steering a battleship than to driving a sports car. Further, any direct evidence along the lines of “this recruitment program brought in that many workers” would be nice but doesn’t exist.

Having said all that, there are encouraging signs that those recruitment efforts are paying off. The migration dynamic has shifted.

First, Wisconsin has experienced a net in-migration of population in 2017 and 2018. By 2018, Wisconsin had nearly stopped the net out-migration to other states. Paired with international migration, net migration has reversed from roughly -7,000 out to +7,000 in between 2015 and 2018.

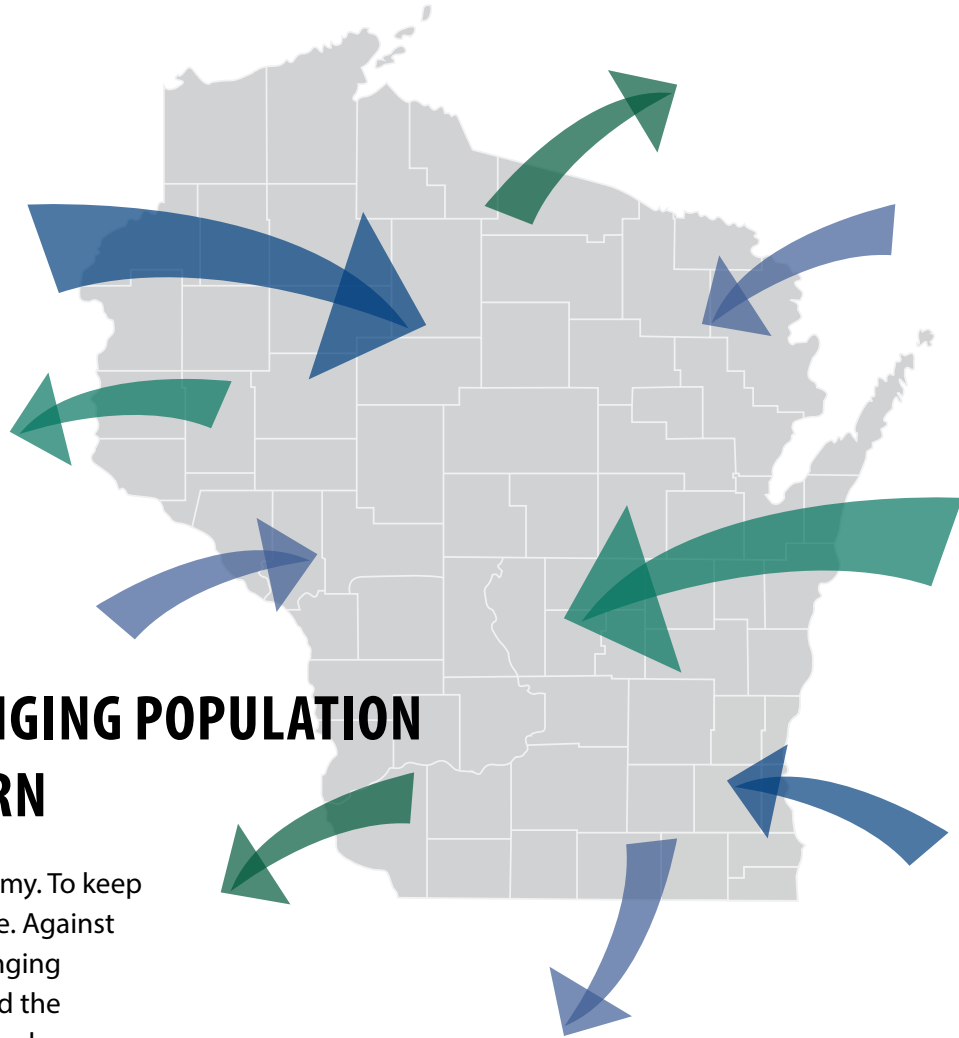


Table 1
Wisconsin Net Migration

Year	International	Domestic	Total
2015	8,569	-15,568	-6,999
2016	7,990	-12,395	-4,405
2017	8,268	-2,086	6,182
2018	8,051	-1,011	7,040

Source: Estimates of the Component of Resident Population Change, U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division

Second, consider the state’s overall domestic migration pattern. The Census Bureau’s American Community Survey reports Wisconsin’s biggest source of net out-migration is population lost to Florida and Arizona. I will go out on a limb and speculate that has more to do with average January temperatures and the newly retired than it does job opportunities among prime-working age adults. In contrast, Wisconsin’s largest source of in-migration is from our surrounding states: Illinois, Iowa and Michigan.

Third, consider the children. The only way for a state to gain children after they are born is for children to move into the state. I think it is safe to say that children move into a state only if they accompany their parents. If there are more children, there are more parents moving,

too. Table 2 gives Wisconsin's child population by five-year age groups in 2012 and then ages those same groups by five years to 2017. Comparing 2012 and 2017, Wisconsin gained over 15,000 children, a reasonable indicator that it gained working-age parents, too.

Table 2
Wisconsin's Children: 2012 Population 0-14 and 2017 Population 5-19

<u>2012 Cohort</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>2017 Cohort</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>5 Yr Change</u>
0-4 years	355,308	5-9 years	361,656	6,348
5-9 years	366,652	10-14 years	370,200	3,548
10 to 14 years	376,608	15-19 years	382,117	5,509
		Total		15,405

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Overall, the change in Wisconsin's migration pattern has changed the trajectory of our population growth. In 2015, Wisconsin added 11,905 people—only the 32nd highest gain among all states. By 2018, Wisconsin added 21,517—now the 20th highest gain among all states.

Wisconsin has a lot going for it with a great educational system, full employment, a moderate cost-of-living, world-class health care and a good quality-of-life overall. A great educational system is the foundation

on which all of this is possible. Governor Evers' budget invests an additional \$1.4 billion in K-12 education, boosts the UW System by \$150 million and calls for an extra \$18 million in the Wisconsin Technical College System. Providing high-quality education for children, young adults and Wisconsinites of any age is critical to retaining current residents and attracting new ones. Our efforts to sell the state are starting to pay off. Let's keep it up. •

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LAKE COUNTRY CUSTOM CABINETS

  *When one cabinet closes, another one opens*

Throughout his years in the field doing residential and commercial cabinetry, Tom Dahms has built up a large list of clients. From dentist offices across the state, to car dealerships, banks and dance studios, Tom has just about done it all. And with over 30 years of experience, Tom can now add business owner to his resume.

While working at O.H. Ewert, a cabinet manufacturing company in Menomonee Falls, Tom began dreaming of owning his own business. After discussing it with Robert Schiebe, then-owner of O.H.

Ewert, Robert offered to sell the company to Tom. After the deal was made, plans of renaming and transitioning O.H. Ewert into the company as it exists today, Lake Country Custom Cabinets LLC, began.

There was a lot to be done, but with the help of the Waukesha County Center for Growth, Tom was on the right path. By assisting Tom in writing out a business plan, the Center for Growth gave Tom general business strategies and helped him form a vision for the future of Lake Country Custom Cabinets. The Center for Growth also helped

Tom with figuring out his financials. By introducing him to a new bank, he was able to get the funding he needed to get things running.

Although Tom will continue to serve his commercial clients, he plans to expand his residential base as well. This will better balance his client mix. Ideally, his mix of clients is 75 percent commercial and 25 percent residential. Tom looks forward to building a great relationship and reputation for his company with business customers and homeowners alike.

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In the future, Tom plans to hire a full-time marketing and sales person. In the past, O.H Ewert did not implement any marketing campaigns or do any advertising. All its clients were either repeat business or from word of mouth. Tom plans to invest in a website, marketing activities and advertising promotions. The benefits of doing this will expand his client base even more and incentivize existing customers to provide referrals.

On top of entering the world of marketing, Lake Country Custom Cabinets will also make a few more upgrades including new, more efficient equipment and software that will offer helpful services to its customers.

"Without the help and guidance of the Waukesha County Center for Growth, I'm not sure I would have had the same results," said Tom. "I plan to continue using their services to take my business to the next level. I strongly encourage any small business looking to either start a business or grow their current business to use the services that the Waukesha County Center for Growth has to offer."

With the cabinetry tools Tom has in his tool box and the business plan he put together, Lake Country Custom Cabinets has a very promising future. •



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A+

Today's high schools may not be what you remember

You may remember high school as a 900-square-foot classroom, with five rows of student desks and about 30 students per classroom. You may remember the school bell rang about every 45 minutes, signaling the need for students to head to their locker, get materials for the next class and head off to another classroom where content was shared through a lecture style. Content was available from the teacher—the content expert. You may remember the days where textbooks served as the primary source of information. Most likely, you once had to memorize the Preamble to the United States Constitution. Your source was the back of your U.S. History book.

Today, you can “Google it” and have access to written, spoken and video sources in .56 seconds. As access to content has become ubiquitous, schools are shifting to focus on how students consume and create. Using feedback from regional employers, schools are also focusing on teaching success skills like communication, collaboration, time management and many others.

Several school districts in southeast Wisconsin are working together to create unique and powerful learning opportunities for high school students that are directly connected to the needs of our regional economy. Educators in Elmbrook, Pewaukee, Oconomowoc, New Berlin, Kettle Moraine,



MARK HANSEN
Superintendent
Elmbrook School District

Wauwatosa and Mukwonago are collaborating to offer students the opportunity to work directly with area business and industry partners on authentic projects that benefit not only the students but the businesses as well. This regional effort to rethink and enhance the high school experience, especially for juniors and seniors, is already making a significant impact in the area.

Milwaukee Tool, GE Healthcare, Harley Davidson, Kohl's, Marquette and Concordia Universities and

ProHealth Care are just a few of the partners who are helping give students real-world experiences in areas such as global business, business analytics, biomedical solutions, computer science, medicine and health care, manufacturing, engineering and education. Students in participating school districts work in teams on projects provided by the partners.

Milwaukee Tool recently sponsored a project challenge for Elmbrook students involved in the district's Launch program that gave them the opportunity to present their ideas for product development, marketing and sales to the company's leadership team through a competitive challenge.

Students in the Pewaukee School District's Insight program are also engaging in real-world learning through partnerships with business and industry in areas such as Elements of Healthcare and Medicine, Pathways to Teaching and Business Innovation.

Not only are these school districts working together to innovate and rethink the end of high school experience for students, they are also joining forces to provide training for teachers in areas such as project management, design-thinking, strengths-based teams and giving and receiving high-quality feedback. Educators working with students in participating school districts are finding the need to learn new concepts, skills and approaches so they can successfully coach and guide students through their project work with business and industry.

Area universities are taking notice of these unique and innovative high school programs



Elmbrook students from the Launch program present their idea for a tool rental program to a large audience of Milwaukee Tool executives and community leaders.



Pewaukee students involved in Insight prepare to give a presentation to a local business on strategies to recruit and retain talented employees.

and are working with districts to create pathways to post-secondary options in the region for students. Marquette University is partnering with Elmbrook School District's Future Teachers strand, a program within Launch that helps students understand career pathways within teaching, and is creating ways for students to receive college credit for coursework completed while in high school.

As our region continues to face workforce shortages, equipping and preparing our students with authentic learning opportunities will best position them to have the best life chances. Today's high school looks a lot different than the one you may remember, and it's something that we as educators know is the right thing for our students. •

CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES COME TOGETHER THROUGH THE ALLIANCE

BY: SUZANNE KELLEY, PRESIDENT & CEO, WAUKESHA COUNTY BUSINESS ALLIANCE

The Waukesha County Business Alliance has launched the Construction Alliance, a platform for construction and skilled trades companies to share ideas, encourage innovation and target new talent.

The Construction Alliance initially formed as a committee to address the labor shortage in the construction industry. The industry was hit particularly hard in terms of labor during the Great Recession, and its workforce is not bouncing back as quickly as other industries. The lack of labor drives up construction costs, which in turn raises the prices of homes, commercial buildings, repair services and more. In a survey the Alliance conducted in 2017, 87 percent of construction/skilled trades companies indicated having difficulty attracting and/or retaining employees.

The Construction Alliance grew to encompass other industry needs, such as human resources roundtable discussions and other best practice sharing sessions, in addition to targeting new talent for the industry.

We've heard from our member construction companies that the Construction Alliance is an important development for the industry in southeast Wisconsin. There's no other place quite like the Construction Alliance where such a broad variety of perspectives is brought together to grapple with the problems the industry is facing as a whole.

Here are some programs of the Construction Alliance:

- Construction Executive Council – The Construction Executive Council is comprised of construction and skilled trades leaders who set the strategic direction for the Construction Alliance. This group meets quarterly.
- HREx Program Series – HR Excellence (HREx) programs give construction HR professionals the opportunity to hear from a guest speaker, participate in facilitated roundtable discussions and share best practices on issues relating to safety, quality improvement, workforce development, security and more. This group meets four times per year.

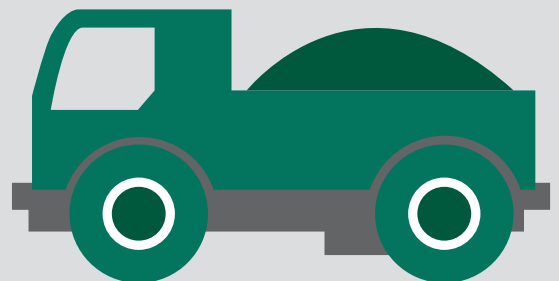


- Kids Building Wisconsin – Kids Building Wisconsin is a nonprofit organization that hosts construction career expos in Madison and Waukesha. Middle school students participate in interactive activities run by construction and skilled trades companies to learn about careers in the industry. More than 800 students attended the first Kids Building Wisconsin – Waukesha Expo on January 24, 2019.
- Careers Uncovered – Careers Uncovered helps Waukesha County educators learn more about career pathways. Educators tour a local company, have a roundtable discussion with company leadership and put together an action plan to improve the academic and career planning process for their students.
- The Construction Alliance is also forming strategic partnerships with other organizations such as Mindful Staffing and the Veterans Chamber of Commerce to help people enter or re-enter the workforce.
- The Construction Alliance continues to support Waukesha County Technical College with dual

enrollment and youth apprenticeship opportunities while also collaborating with NARI Milwaukee and the Metropolitan Builders Association on the specific needs of the industry.

The Construction Alliance is modeled after our Manufacturing Alliance, which was formed in 2010. The Manufacturing Alliance serves as a platform for manufacturers to share ideas, encourage innovation, transform the image of manufacturing and target talent. We are also working on building a health care collaborative.

Learn more at waukesha.org/construction. •





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Mark Afable previously served as chief legal officer for American Family Insurance in Madison, where he has worked since 1994.

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EMILIE AMUNDSON

Department of Children and Families Secretary

Emilie Amundson previously served as chief of staff at the Department of Public Instruction, which was headed by Tony Evers as the state schools superintendent.

(608) 267-9685, emilie.amundson@wisconsin.gov

www.dcf.wi.gov

PETER BARCA

Department of Revenue Secretary

Peter Barca (D-Kenosha) served in the Assembly from 1985 to 1993, when he was elected to Congress in a special election for one term. He re-joined the Assembly in 2009. He served as minority leader from 2011 to 2017.

(608) 266-6466, peter.barca@wisconsin.gov

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KATHY KOLTIN BLUMENFELD

Department of Financial Institutions Secretary

Kathy Koltin Blumenfeld previously served as the executive vice president of special operations at Total Administration Services Corp. (TASC), a benefits administration company based in Madison. Before joining TASC, she worked for CUNA Mutual Group for 25 years, most recently as vice president of lending and payment security. Blumenfeld also worked for State Sen. Joe Strohl.

(608) 267-1719, kathy.blumenfeld@dfi.wisconsin.gov

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JOEL BRENNAN

Department of Administration Secretary

Joel Brennan previously served as chief executive officer of Discovery World in Milwaukee for 11 years. Brennan also previously served as executive director of the Redevelopment Authority of Milwaukee and managed one of the gubernatorial campaigns and a mayoral campaign for Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett.

(608) 266-1741, joel.brennan@wisconsin.gov

www.doa.wi.gov

KEVIN CARR

Department of Corrections Secretary

Kevin Carr previously worked in the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Department for 30 years before becoming a U.S. marshal for the eastern district, which includes Milwaukee, in 2010. He was also a onetime top aide to former Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke. He is a member of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives.

(608) 240-5055, kevin.carr@wisconsin.gov

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PRESTON COLE

Department of Natural Resources Secretary

Preston Cole previously served as Milwaukee commissioner of neighborhood services. Prior to that, he served as director of operations for the City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works and as the parks superintendent in St. Louis. Cole has been a member of the state's Natural Resources Board, the board that advises the DNR, since 2007. He is also on the board for the Water Council and has a degree in forest management.

(608) 266-2252, preston.cole@wisconsin.gov

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DAWN CRIM

Safety and Professional Services Secretary

Dawn Crim previously served under Tony Evers as assistant state superintendent for student and school success. Prior to that, Crim worked for two decades at the University of Wisconsin System in various roles, including assistant coach for women's basketball and director of community relations for UW-Madison.

(608) 266-2112, dawn.crim1@wisconsin.gov
www.dsps.wi.gov

CALEB FROSTMAN

Department of Workforce Development Secretary

Caleb Frostman (D-Sturgeon Bay) was elected state senator in a special election in spring 2017, but was defeated in his re-election bid in November 2018. Prior to that, he was an economic development official in Door County.

(608) 267-1410, caleb.frostman@dwd.wisconsin.gov
www.dwd.wi.gov

MAGGIE GAU

Chief of Staff

Maggie Gau served as Governor Evers' campaign manager during his campaign to be governor. Before that, she worked in the state legislature for nearly 10 years. She is from Wausau.

(608) 266-1212, maggie.gau@wisconsin.gov

SARAH GODLEWSKI

State Treasurer

An Eau Claire native, Sarah Godlewski owns an investment business focused on socially responsible investing, worked for the U.S. Department of Defense as a watchdog and co-chairs UNICEF USA's Advocacy Leadership Group.

(608) 266-1714, sarah.godlewski@wisconsin.gov
www.statetreasury.wisconsin.gov

JOSH KAUL

Attorney General

Josh Kaul grew up in Oshkosh and Fond du Lac. He served as a federal prosecutor in Baltimore before moving back to Wisconsin and joining the law firm Perkins Coie in Madison. Josh attended Stanford Law School, where he served as President of the Stanford Law Review.

(608) 266-1221
www.doj.state.wi.us

MARY KOLAR

Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary

Mary Kolar previously served as Dane County Supervisor for the first district. She was elected in 2013 and is serving her third term as a director on the Wisconsin Counties Association Board of Directors. She is a retired U.S. Navy Captain who served twenty-eight years on active duty and chaired the Dane County Veterans Service Commission. Kolar has also served as the vice president of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation Board of Directors. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and graduate degrees from the U.S. Naval War College and the University of Rhode Island.

(608) 266-1315, mary.kolar@dva.wisconsin.gov
www.dva.state.wi.us

SARA MEANEY

Department of Tourism Secretary

Sara Meaney previously served as the chief marketing and development officer for Milwaukee Film. Prior to that, she worked as managing director at BVK in Glendale and has a total of more than 20 years of marketing experience.

(608) 266-2345, SMeaney@travelwisconsin.com
www.industry.travelwisconsin.com

BRIAN PAHNKE

Budget Director

Brian Pahnke previously served as the assistant state superintendent for finance and management at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). He has held numerous budget and finance positions at several state agencies during his 28 years of state service, including nearly five years in the state budget office during the Thompson administration. He received his undergraduate degree from Miami University in Oxford, OH and his master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

(608) 266-1035, briand.pahnke@wisconsin.gov

ANDREA PALM

Department of Health Services Secretary

Andrea Palm was a senior counselor to the secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under President Barack Obama from 2014 to 2017, where she worked on the rollout of the Affordable Care Act. Before that, she worked five years as a health policy adviser for former U.S. Sen. Hillary Clinton.

(608) 266-9622, andrea.palm@dhs.wisconsin.gov

www.dhs.wi.gov

BRAD PFAFF

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Secretary

Brad Pfaff worked as deputy chief of staff for U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-La Crosse) since 2017 and worked in former President Obama's administration as executive director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency. He was born and raised on a dairy farm in La Crosse County.

(608) 224-5012, bradley.pfaff@wisconsin.gov

www.datcp.wi.gov

Editor's note: At the time this magazine went to print, a number of department heads were still awaiting Senate confirmation.

CAROLYN STANFORD TAYLOR

Department of Public Instruction Superintendent

Carolyn Stanford Taylor most recently served as the assistant state superintendent for the division for learning support under then-State Superintendent Tony Evers. She has almost four decades of public education experience.

(800) 441-4563, carolyn.stanford.taylor@dpi.wi.gov

www.dpi.wi.gov

CRAIG THOMPSON

Department of Transportation Secretary

Craig Thompson previously led the Wisconsin Transportation Development Association. Prior to that, he served as the legislative director for the Wisconsin Counties Association, managing legislative initiatives at the state and federal levels.

(608) 266-1114, craigm.thompson@dot.wi.gov

www.dot.wi.gov

REBECCA CAMERON VALCQ

Public Service Commission Chairwoman

Rebecca Cameron Valcq previously worked as an attorney and partner for Quarles & Brady in Milwaukee, where she specialized in regulatory law. Prior to that, she worked as a regulatory attorney for We Energies for 15 years.

(608) 266-5481, Rebecca.valcq@wisconsin.gov



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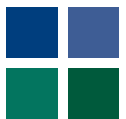
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Special thanks to Meijer Foods for their support of UPAF's Waukesha Initiative.

Susan Gartell of Milwaukee Ballet Photo by Rachel Malehorn and Timothy O'Donnell;
Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra Photo by Ron Oshima;
Christina Hall (Mrs. Lovett) and Andrew Varela (Sweeney Todd) in Skylight Music Theatre's *Sweeney Todd*

SPOTLIGHT ON THE TRADES



TIM BURRIE

Welder-fitter for Weldall Manufacturing
Waukesha West High School graduate

Tell us a little bit about yourself.

I have lived in Waukesha my entire life and I like it here. I have three older brothers, one older sister and one younger brother. I have a large tropical aquarium with several different kinds of fish. I like to ride dirt bikes, rock climb and mountain bike in my free time. My parents own a small metal finishing business here in Waukesha so I have been around manufacturing my entire life. I grew up with my older brothers welding on their trucks and building projects in the garage and outside in the driveway at home.

What led you to your current career path at Weldall?

I started taking welding classes at Waukesha West High School my sophomore year. I thought that welding would be a good skill to have for building projects and fixing things.

In December of 2011, during my junior year at West, my welding class went on a tour of Weldall Manufacturing. This was the first time I had ever been in a large production shop and it was very exciting. I started working there part-time after school in February 2012 and

continued throughout my junior and senior years of high school.

I ended up going on one of the Waukesha County Business Alliance's Schools2Skills™ tours during my senior year, and we visited Weldall (I had already worked there for a year). I started a four-year Wisconsin State Welder/Fabricator Apprenticeship as soon as I graduated high school and completed it as a journeyman in the beginning of 2017.

Why/when did you decide to become a welder?

When I started my apprenticeship, I did not really know what I wanted to end up doing. As I learned about all of the different jobs throughout the company, I decided that I wanted to be a welder-fitter because of the challenges and complexity of the weldments Weldall builds. Several of the large weldments are one-of-a-kind jobs weighing up to 200,000 pounds. These jobs require a lot of foresight and planning as you go since no one has ever built one before and does not know how it will turn out.

What is the hardest part about being a welder? What's your favorite part about your job?

The hardest part of my job is the complexity and meeting tolerances on the large weldments that I build. But my favorite part as a welder-fitter is that I am usually building something huge—bigger than most other shops ever build. Also, it is different every month, so it stays interesting. It is challenging and not repetitive. Seeing the weldments assembled once they are complete is satisfying.

What would you say to someone who wants to be a welder?

To be a welder-fitter you need to have good math and spatial orientational skills. It is a very hands-on job that involves walking, climbing and crawling. But seeing the finished product is so satisfying!

Where do you see yourself going in the future?

In the future I plan on staying in manufacturing and moving to be an estimator, scheduler or working in management. •

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Walking along the South Wharf area on the Yarra River in Melbourne, Australia.



Visiting a customer's manufacturing facility just outside of Tokyo in Japan.



WEDC German trade mission group photo in Dusseldorf while touring the city center.



BOB GROSS

Founder & CEO
Gross Automation

Back in early 2015, if you had asked me about global growth, I probably would not have had much of an answer for you. Yet in only a few short years, my manufacturing company has surpassed all my expectations and continues to grow. Last year, Gross Automation set records for both domestic and international sales. Wisconsin is one of the best states, if not *the* best state, to grow an electrical and automation controls business.

Gross Automation, LLC is a growth-obsessed electrical and automation controls distributor with

multiple value-added services that include supplemental engineering and UL certified panel assistance.

In mid-2015, Gross Automation was recruited and then accepted into Scalerator 3, a business growth training program sponsored by the Greater Milwaukee Committee and taught by faculty from Babson College. It was seven day-and-a-half sessions over a six-month period that included substantial homework and multiple small group meetings. The entire senior management team of Gross Automation was involved and obsessive growth was the theme.

Part of the Scalerator program included guest speakers. Roxanne Baumann, global engagement

director for the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP), presented on the benefits of exporting. Conversations ensued and once again, Gross Automation was recruited and then accepted into the Wisconsin ExporTech program of the WMEP in mid-2016.

Expotech is a three-day program designed to help create the "why" for exporting. We developed and presented on a customized solution designed during this program. The German market was selected for our first market entry and I headed off to Germany that fall to test the waters at the 2016 SPS Show in Nuremberg.

GENERATING GLOBAL GROWTH FOR A LOCAL MANUFACTURER

Well, the sales results were less than spectacular. In retrospect, I went by myself with some minimal language skills and without having fully articulated “why” doing business with German companies was important to Gross Automation.

By completing ExporTech, Gross Automation was exposed to the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and its sponsored global trade ventures and missions.

The next global trade mission was to Dubai in the United Arab Emirates and Doha in Qatar in early 2017. We applied for it and were accepted; I was off to the Middle East!

Wisconsin has on-the-ground trade representation in the region to assist. They helped find and qualify prospects on our behalf, set the appointments appropriate to each company in the delegation, hired drivers, translators and body guards as needed, made overnight accommodations and even included some cultural visits. They were basically there to support delegates in whatever was needed to make the mission a success. I added a day trip to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates for additional opportunities.

Next on the program was a global trade venture with then-

Governor Walker in September of 2017 to Tokyo, Japan and Seoul, South Korea. Again, the Wisconsin trade representative literally took care of everything. All I had to do was show up and present to potential customers. I added a day trip to Busan in South Korea for additional activity. With my daughter Katy, who



WEDC Israeli trade venture group photo in Jerusalem overlooking the Western Wall.

also works at Gross Automation, we built a relationship with a father/daughter Korean company that continues to grow today.

Being on a venture with the governor changed things. Accompanying our head of state, the delegation was invited to see a country’s different political and economic aspects that we never would have without his involvement. He opened doors and broke down cultural barriers for participants. By being with our governor, we had additional credibility which translated into additional business.

October of 2017 saw Gross Automation participating in a global trade venture to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in Israel along with Governor Walker. Then in June of 2018, it was back to Germany (Dusseldorf and Stuttgart) along with side trips up into the Netherlands and over to Strasbourg, France. November

of 2018 included a global trade mission to Sydney and Melbourne with a side trip to Adelaide, Australia. Each of these global trade missions and ventures resulted in both immediate increased sales and multiple potential ongoing projects for Gross Automation. Three different companies from

three different countries we met on these trips have come to visit Gross Automation in Brookfield.

Roxanne Baumann asked a question back in 2016: “Currently, you get some global business by accident. What if you actually tried?” Gross Automation has grown our international business from less than five percent in 2016 to just shy of 15 percent in 2018. ISO 9001:2015 is pending later this year with the assistance of the WMEP team. Just imagine what 2019 and 2020 will look like! •



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Thank you to everyone who joined us for our 10th annual Savor the Flavor of Waukesha County event on Saturday, March 16! 400 people joined us at The Legend at Brandybrook to sample select Waukesha County restaurants' finest dishes, connect with other Alliance members and support the Alliance's efforts to drive economic growth in Waukesha County.



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MARK MOHR

President and CEO, First Bank Financial Centre

Describe your company.

First Bank Financial Centre is a community bank headquartered in Oconomowoc, and we are celebrating our 160th anniversary in 2019. We're the oldest bank chartered in southeast Wisconsin.

What has been your company's biggest challenge?

Like many industries, technology has radically changed banking, and it's imperative that we adapt our business to the current needs and preferences of our customers. Many banking functions, like checking balances, paying bills and depositing checks, can now be done from the phones in our customers' pockets.

Yet at the end of the day, banking is still all about people. When our customers have important questions about saving for the future, buying a home or starting a business, they still want to talk to a live person. We ensure that everyone in each of our 14 locations is ready to help.

Our bank's mission statement is to "Make Lives Better." We've been doing just that for 160 years, but the way we do it today has evolved.

What is the most important lesson you've learned in your career?

Throughout my career I've tried to live by the words of Harry S. Truman: "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit." I find this idea to be as true today as when I started my career. I have a great team around me, and the credit for our success truly goes to each of them.

What is your personal key to success?

Each day, no matter what challenges may arise, I keep a positive attitude. A culture of positivity leads to a more productive workplace.

What's the first job you ever had?

I worked at a grocery store as a teenager. It was there that I first learned the value of speaking with customers and treating each of them with respect.

What's your dream job?

When I began my career, I wanted to work with great people and make a positive difference in people's lives. I'm so fortunate that my current position allows me to achieve those goals.

What book are you currently reading or would you recommend?

I love presidential history, and just read *Three Days In Moscow* by Bret Baier. It's a fascinating look at Ronald Reagan and the impact his role in ending the Cold War had, and is still having, on our country.

What is something unique about you?

I believe I'm the only local CEO with his own bobblehead featured on Facebook. Check out our company's page every Wednesday to see where in the world my tiny likeness has travelled.

What is your favorite pastime?

Like my bobblehead, I love to travel. Each winter I head south with my wife to catch some sun, warm up and recharge. It's something we both look forward to each year! •

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

The Alliance is happy to welcome the following companies as new members during the first quarter of 2019:

Absolute Payroll Inc Germantown	Bookkeeping by Mike LLC Dousman	David Glazer Real Estate LLC Wauwatosa	Master Z's Brookfield	Selig Leasing West Allis
ADP Milwaukee	Burton & Mayer Inc Menomonee Falls	DBA Marketing Communications Delafield	Millennian LLC Milwaukee	Spring City Corner Clubhouse Waukesha
AFFIRM Agency Pewaukee	Capital Data Inc Brookfield	Dezign2Think, LLC Muskego	Next Level Planning and Wealth Management Brookfield	Stewart Title Company Mount Pleasant
Alpha Industries Brookfield	CBD American Shaman Waukesha Pewaukee	Elm Grove Travel Elm Grove	Noble Diagnostics Inc Brookfield	Strive Chiropractic Brookfield
Automation Arts Milwaukee	Chick-fil-A Pewaukee	FacilityNow Inc Milwaukee	North Point Chiropractic Brookfield	The Contracts Department LLC Dousman
B2B CFO Mukwonago	CLA Milwaukee	Henricksen Brookfield	Northwestern Mutual Waukesha	Thompson Project Management Racine
Bear Construction Company Milwaukee	Colonial Tree Service Waukesha	Joy Delivered New Berlin	Octavian Technology Group LLC Brookfield	Vantage Pointe Financial Group Brookfield
Becker Ritter Funeral Home & Cremation Services Brookfield	Corporate Contractors Inc Delafield	Kelley Communications Inc West Allis	Old National Bank Brookfield	VIBE Health & Fitness Waukesha
Bell Ambulance Pewaukee	Cottingham & Butler Madison	Logical Green Solutions LLC Waukesha	ProMedicis Advisors Corp Pewaukee	Vital Insurance Services Waukesha
Ben Revak Mortgage Team at Cross Country Mortgage Wauwatosa	Crescendo Trade Risk Grafton	Lutheran Social Services West Allis	REV Group Milwaukee	VS Consults LLC Brookfield
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