

# Executive Update

Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker's Weekly Newsletter

March 20, 2009

## Message from County Executive Walker

*What to do about the economy is at the top of everyone's list these days. Last month, I introduced our Blueprint for Economic Prosperity. The plan included tax incentives for job growth and creation – as well as a series of economic development projects throughout the county. We are working hard to keep and grow businesses here in Milwaukee County.*

*At the same time, the state government is making it harder to keep and grow businesses – here and across Wisconsin. A week ago, one of the co-chairs of the M7 (the regional economic development group in southeastern Wisconsin) asked the Governor why he supported combined reporting legislation when it will have such a negative impact on businesses in the region.*

*Today, the head of the Wisconsin Restaurant Association is raising similar concerns on behalf of small businesses. His column in the newspaper (<http://www.jsonline.com/news/opinion/41530522.html>) raises legitimate concerns about the future of jobs here in Milwaukee County and across the state.*

*Saying that you are for a strong economy does not work if you do things that make it more difficult for people to keep and create jobs. Now more than ever, we need leaders who are truly dedicated to keeping and growing jobs.*

Scott



## Women Putting their Stamp on Metro Milwaukee



County Executive Walker gave remarks at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual "Women Putting Their Stamp on Metro Milwaukee" Awards luncheon at the Italian Community Center. Fifteen women were honored for their outstanding achievements and to show appreciation for their serving as role models and leaders of our community through volunteerism and support of public and private sector initiatives and events.

Several award winners have ties with Milwaukee County government: keynote speaker Janine Geske served as interim County Executive in 2002, Beth Bishop Perrigo works as a Deputy District Court Administrator in Circuit Court, and Sr. Lucina Halbur has served on the Aging Commission.

## Subscribers to E-Update

Beginning April 3, the Executive Update from County Executive Scott Walker will be emailed through the E-Notify system on the website server the county shares with the City of Milwaukee. Subscribers will receive the email from MilwaukeeEnotify@milwaukee.gov.

## Board opposes plan to save taxpayer dollars

County Executive Walker testified at the Health & Human Needs committee this week on the benefits of moving the Behavioral Health Division to the St. Michael Hospital site. The board voted against the measure, necessitating that the county move forward with a plan to consolidate the mental health complex at the current site, and seek to redirect capital project funds to remodel the structure so as to insure ongoing patient and staff safety.

In light of the action of the County Board, this is the only option for the county in the foreseeable future. Milwaukee County can not afford to build a \$100 million building, and will now have to make repairs to the existing building on the county grounds. It is unfortunate that the majority of members of the County Board were not interested in a state-of-the-art facility that taxpayers could afford.

## Pension obligation bond proposal passes

The County Board approved the sale of pension obligation bonds this week. County Executive Walker has long pressed for the issuance of pension obligation bonds to relieve some of the impact of the rapidly growing pension payouts.

The pension obligation bonds will allow the county to cover the debt at a lower interest rate, thereby reducing the impact on county taxpayers and services. The conservative structure of this option spreads the savings throughout the life of the issue while establishing a reserve fund to protect the county against market changes.

## Park happenings



New this year and sure to be a hit is the **Beach Party at the Domes!** The final “Music Under Glass” performance scheduled for Thursday, March 26 will feature the **Bikini Beachcombers**. The performance runs from 6:30pm – 8:30pm, and includes a special light show of the new LED lighting set to music. Visitors will have a chance to compete in the limbo contest, learn the Hula, and see who can build the best sand castle. The party will be complete with all the necessary props: sand, beach umbrellas and lifeguard chairs. Bring your beach towel or beach gear and receive \$1 off admission. The Show Dome will be undergoing its changeover between displays, allowing people to see part of the transition effort.

County Executive Walker will formally open the county **golf courses** next week, but the recent warm weather brought many out to practice their game at Oakwood, Grant, Lincoln, Hansen and Currie Golf Courses.

The Parks Department, Betty Brinn’s Children Museum and the U.S. Forest Service are pleased to host a new exhibit, “**Smokey Bear and Woodsey Owl: Home Sweet Home,**” through May 31 at the children’s museum. This exhibit is sponsored locally by **National City** and allows children to learn about the natural resources that sustain our world and how to care for them.

The **Friends of Boerner Botanical Gardens** will have a booth at the 2009 Home & Garden Show at the Exposition Center at State Fair Park March 20 – 29. Get tips from experts on gardening and new ideas to spruce up the yard as spring gets underway.