

# Executive Update

Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker's Weekly Newsletter

October 5, 2007

## Message from County Executive Walker

*The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) is asking for more money from the taxpayers. Chicago has a full 1% sales tax for transit and now they want to go to 1.25%. On top of that, the CTA is talking about pushing fares up to \$2.50.*

*In other words, if you don't address the costs of the system, a sales tax isn't enough.*

*We do not have agreement on a regional system for transit because three of us don't believe it should include a massive increase in our overall tax burden. Doing what the others want would increase taxes in the region by almost \$30 million each year.*

*Ironically, the real reason so many of the transit systems face challenges is not because of the property taxes but because the percentage of state aid has fallen well below inflation since 2000. Since most of the systems are heavily dependent on state aid (Milwaukee historically received nearly 70% from the state), any decline of this size leads to service adjustments or fare increases.*

*Signing off on creating a new sales tax ignores the two biggest challenges to the transit system: costs and state aid.*

*I have a plan – the Metropolitan Area Transit (MAT) system - that drives down costs by consolidating overhead and reducing wages and employee benefit costs; and that addresses a stable source of state aid through the growth in the existing sales tax collected on vehicle related purchases (over \$103 million in this biennium). Sure, it may take more work since passing a sales tax is easy, but Chicago shows us that enacting a sales tax is no guarantee for the future.*

*I am committed to a regional transportation system that works – for riders and for taxpayers.*

Scott



## Historic Bridges reopen



(L-R) Laremy Sacia – general contractor Lunda Construction, Joe Gallamore – project design -Ayers Associates, Amy Squitieri – historical services – Mead & Hunt, County Exec. Walker, Parks Director Sue Black, Reggie Newson – Wisc. DOT, and Supervisor Jim “Luigi” Schmitt

County Executive Walker held a grand opening ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the reconstruction of two historic bridges on Honey Creek Parkway in Wauwatosa. Due to the historical significance of the Wellauer and Kavanaugh bridges, originally constructed in 1933 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), state law required that the new bridges match as closely as possible to the original structures. Approximately \$1.5 million for the reconstruction was funded under the State of Wisc. Local Bridge Rehabilitation and Replacement Program.



County Executive Walker joined the MSOE Executive Motorcycle Club final ride of the season leading up to their grand opening of the Grohmann Museum on campus later this month.

## Walker Addresses NAMI



Dr. Michael Bell – Milwaukee Health Services, Brad Montgomery – Acting Director NAMI Greater Milwaukee, Brenda Wesley – ASK Facilitator, Walker, Hattie Daniels-Rush – leader at Holy Redeemer Church, and Dr. Pat McManus – Black Health Coalition

County Executive Walker joined with NAMI Greater Milwaukee (National Alliance on Mental Illness) for their announcement of a new outreach program to the African American community – ASK (Access, Support & Knowledge). Mental illness affects about 1 in every 17 people and 1 in every 5 families. They highlighted the special needs of the African American community during Mental Health Awareness Week, focusing on the human side of mental illness and the professional health care resources the ASK program will provide in addition to the cultural reliance on family and religious groups.

The county executive's proposed 2008 budget supports mental health treatment with more than \$1.7 million for inpatient care, \$1 million for the construction of housing for individuals with mental illness, creation of a new Housing Division, and funding for support services at the United Christian Church/Cardinal Capital development, Continuum of Care coalition of agencies, and the Supportive Housing Development Committee. Please call NAMI at (414) 344-0447 or visit [www.namigrm.org](http://www.namigrm.org) to take advantage of this worthwhile outreach effort and sign up your church, school or organization for a free session.

## Party for the Parks



County Executive Walker drew the raffle winners during a break in the Love Monkeys performance at the Party for the Parks at the Washington Park bandshell. Attendees enjoyed three bands, light-show stage lighting and activities throughout the day.

## Community Milestones



County Executive Walker presented proclamations at the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration at Building Services Incorporated (above), and the Rogers Memorial Hospital Centennial luncheon. Rogers Memorial Hospital has a West Allis location and featured Bart Starr as the speaker at their event.