

Executive Update

Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker's Weekly Newsletter

May 9, 2008

Message from County Executive Walker

There has been much talk about the \$91.5 million in federal funds that still remain for improvements to the transit in Milwaukee County. The dollar amount was much larger when first approved some 17 years ago, but much of the funding was spent on projects in the City of Milwaukee - like building the 6th Street Viaduct and the demolition of the Park East Freeway. Now it is time to spend it on improving the bus system in the county.

County Board leaders and I agree that the funds should be spent to improve and upgrade the bus system and not be used to create a new system that would compete with the bus system for federal and state transit funds. A review by the staff of the Milwaukee County Transit System shows that a new streetcar system proposed by Mayor Tom Barrett would cost the bus system \$3 million annually in lost state and federal aid.

At a time when we need to protect the bus system, an idea that will take funding away from buses is not in the interest of people who depend on the bus system to get to and from work or school each day. A recent report by the Public Policy Forum suggests that spending the \$91.5 million on a Bus Rapid Transit system (like the one I proposed last year) would provide relief for the bus system.

Watch for more details on our growing plan to improve and upgrade our transit system through Bus Rapid Transit and for our funding solution for transit that does not involve a tax or fee increase.

Scott.



Opening of the US Bank Gathering Place



The Zoological Society of Milwaukee and the Milwaukee County Zoo officially opened the US Bank Gathering Place on Thursday night. County Executive Scott Walker accepted the facility at the event and thanked the society leadership (Bert Davis, Karen Peck Katz and Gil Boese), capital campaign chair Jack McKeithan, the zoo staff and Bill Bertha and US Bank.

The project provides a spectacular new entrance to the zoo and is the final project in the \$30 million New Zoo II capital campaign. The Zoological Society and the county split the capital campaign that gives a major face-lift to our national treasure.

Also, US Bank will once again host its concert series in the parks during the last week of June (at Boerner Botanical, Veteran's Park and Washington Park). The final concert of the series with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra will be held at the US Bank Gathering Place on Sunday, June 29th. Everyone is welcome.

Prairie Apartments Groundbreaking



County Executive Scott Walker took part in the groundbreaking of the Prairie Apartments project at 12th and Highland in Milwaukee. The project will create 24 units of permanent housing for people who are homeless and struggling with mental illness.

The project is a joint effort of the Guest House of Milwaukee and Heartland Housing of Chicago. It came about after the joint efforts of the Mayor and County Executive to create action on permanent supportive housing. The project involved a collaboration of the county, city, state (through WHEDA) and the federal government (through HUD funds obtained with the help of the Continuum of Care as well as many other community based organizations).

60th Anniversary of Israel

As part of the observance of the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel, County Executive Scott Walker attended a memorial service for the fallen soldiers and the victims of terror since May 1948. The ceremony was held at the Jewish Community Center and included music, readings, lighting of torches and actual footage from ceremonies in Israel.

Thrivent continues Habitat work

“Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity Event” with County Executive Scott Walker. The event was hosted by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity.



Brown Deer Citizen of the Year



County Executive Scott Walker visited the Brown Deer Senior Citizen's Club to present a proclamation to the Citizen of the Year Richard Goehre and bring greetings to the active club. Goehre is very involved in the club, his church and in the Village of Brown Deer. He is an Army veteran and he and his wife will be celebrating their 55th anniversary this year.

Correction

In the story about the enhanced 911 services last week, it should have noted that County Executive Scott Walker and Sheriff David Clarke did not ask to continue the current surcharge on cellular bills to pay for 911 services. They did, however, respond to the Mayor's call to ask lawmakers to continue the surcharge and use it to fund other city services. Walker and Clarke said that if it did continue, it should only be used to enhance 911 coverage.