

Plale/Larson debate Sept. 2 in Humboldt Park

The Bay View Neighborhood Association will host a debate between the Democratic candidates for Wisconsin's Seventh State Senate District, incumbent Senator Jeff Plale and challenger and local County Supervisor Chris Larson.

The debate is Thursday, Sept. 2 at 7pm at the Humboldt Park Pavilion, 3000 S. Howell Ave. Open to the public, the debate will be moderated by Bob Schneider, BVNA president. Those in attendance will be encouraged to submit questions for the candidates.

U.S. Export-Import Bank turnaround

Bucyrus International Inc. is world-renowned in the design and manufacture of mining equipment. The South Milwaukee-based company employs thousands of people nationwide and does business on six continents.

Recently, Bucyrus was expecting nearly \$600 million in sales to a coal power plant in India that is currently under construction. In order to complete this sale, the plant, owned by Reliance Power, Inc., needs a loan guarantee from the U.S. Export-Import Bank. The ExIm Bank is responsible for overseeing loan guarantees of this sort and ensuring that projects meet established environmental standards. It is also responsible for promoting the export of American products,

like the equipment made by Bucyrus.

The power plant in India meets all of the bank's environmental standards, as well as international environmental criteria. Despite this fact and the ExIm Bank's obligation to promote export of American products, in late June it denied the loan guarantee. Without the guarantee, Bucyrus would lose that \$600 million sale and roughly 300 jobs in South Milwaukee and along the supply chain would be put in jeopardy. It is even more frustrating that the ExIm Bank would not initially comment on or justify the loan denial. The plant will still be built, the coal will still be mined. The bank's loan denial merely ensured that those Bucyrus manufacturing jobs were sent to other countries.

The ExIm Bank's decision was simply unacceptable. An enormous outcry erupted from Wisconsin citizens and elected officials, including me, calling on the bank to reconsider the loan guarantee. The pressure was tremendous and officials at the ExIm Bank did choose to reconsider. A compromise offer was made to Reliance to approve the loan guarantee if the power company agreed to increase its renewable power projects in India.

There are still a few steps that must be taken to finalize the deal, but it is clear that this partnership between the private sector and public officials was strong enough to effectively save hundreds of jobs in South Milwaukee. Bucyrus is a cornerstone of our economy in southeastern Wisconsin. We must move forward with green energy initiatives and technology, but, in doing so, we need to protect and create family-supporting jobs in our state.

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School of Freshwater Sciences

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) has solidified development plans for the expansion of existing and creation of new facilities for its School of Freshwater Sciences (SFS).

Milwaukee is already considered a global hub for freshwater research largely due to the foundation laid by the Center for Great Lakes Studies and the Great Lakes WATER (Wisconsin Aquatic Technology and Environmental Research) Institute. UWM built the SFS upon that foundation and, with the help of the Milwaukee Water Council, now hosts the only graduate program in the United States dedicated solely to the study of freshwater.

I authored and passed legislation that included about \$50 million in funding from the state of Wisconsin for expansion of the SFS. This investment to further develop such a globally unique and increasingly in-demand academic program in Milwaukee will create job growth, innovative research, advancements in science and technology, and attract academic minds to the community. Not only will the SFS be an enormous draw for new business, but existing Milwaukee businesses such as Johnson Controls and Badger Meter will also be able to take advantage of the latest freshwater research developed at SFS to advance their own technology and boost business.

UWM worked with the city of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Water Council, and private investors to choose two locations for the SFS. The existing Great Lakes WATER Institute building, 600 E. Greenfield Ave., will be expanded and house most of the

classrooms and labs. A second new building will house the school's headquarters and additional applied water research labs with a focus on engineering. This new building will be constructed at the Reed Street Yards, across the Menomonee River from the Harley-Davidson Museum and just south of MMSD's headquarters, a location chosen partly to facilitate plans for a nearby industrial park targeting water-technology companies.

The SFS project is not just expansion for the sake of expansion. It is an integral investment in Milwaukee. The school and program are a great recruiting tool for educators, researchers, and students. Our higher education system will have much more to offer, while our community may better understand the Great Lakes, our greatest natural resource. Private investors and businesses are eager to work in partnership with the SFS to advance research that will propel their businesses and our city into the future.

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Support for Drexel interchange

In the past few columns, I covered topics relating to local job creation and economic recovery. This month, I'd like to share the latest news on the construction of an interchange at Drexel Avenue, a development projected to bring billions of

dollars in investment to southeastern Wisconsin.

For the past four years, I have worked with Representatives Mark Honadel and Jeff Stone, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT), and the cities of Oak Creek and Franklin to move forward on a plan for an interchange at Drexel Avenue.

The southern parts of Milwaukee County have seen dramatic expansion over the last few years, and with that expansion comes the opportunity for important economic growth. Traffic congestion and inadequate transportation infrastructure, however, remain a critical concern and are hindering commercial development. The addition of an interchange on Interstate 94 at Drexel Avenue will facilitate business growth and economic development-even more important now than when we began exploring the idea of an interchange four years ago. Not only are the possibilities for new business exciting, but such an investment will also breathe new life into existing spaces such as the now-vacant Delphi plant.

Typically, DOT provides half of the funding for interchanges in Wisconsin and requires that local governments come together to provide the remaining money to finance a project. In late April and on May 1, just shy of DOT's deadline, Oak Creek and Franklin respectively committed to the funding necessary to move forward. Northwestern Mutual has also offered to contribute \$1.6 million of its own money toward the local governments' part of the funding because the new interchange will so greatly improve access to their Franklin campus. In addition to the interchange, Oak Creek and Franklin will benefit locally from improvements to 27th Street included in the proposal.

Delaying construction further would have increased the project's overall cost and pushed it further out of our reach. I am pleased that state and local governments worked collaboratively to meet such important, shared goals. The economic results will positively impact southeastern Wisconsin

as a whole.

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Growing educational infrastructure

During these tough economic times, Milwaukee continues to weather the storm. In this month's column I will highlight growth and evolution at two of Milwaukee's higher education institutions. Investments in education lead to job creation and a highly skilled workforce. It is important to ensure that Wisconsin's young people have quality educational opportunities to make them marketable and competitive in the rapidly expanding global economy.

On March 5, Marquette University officially broke ground on its new Discovery Learning Complex. This 115,000-square-foot facility will foster engineering education at Marquette as well as the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Milwaukee School of Engineering. It will include a Discovery Learning Laboratory, an engineering materials and structural testing laboratory, teaching and research laboratories, common areas for students, and office space. The Discovery Learning Complex will facilitate the development and expansion of existing science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) research and education among college students and young

people in the community.

The Discovery Learning Complex, between 16th and 17th streets on Wisconsin Avenue, is part of a larger \$35 million project and was made possible in part by a \$5 million grant from the state of Wisconsin. It will ultimately be linked to a new 150,000-square-foot building that can accommodate a new curriculum rooted in discovery learning to better develop students as innovative problem solvers at the forefront of modern engineering.

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee is also undergoing substantial growth. On April 13, the Wisconsin State Senate passed a bill I authored, Senate Bill 514, which includes three projects from the UWM Master Plan Initiative. SB 514 authorizes over \$125 million in funding for the construction of the Freshwater Sciences Initiative Research Building, the Kenwood Integrated Research Complex, and the acquisition and redevelopment of Columbia-St. Mary's Columbia Campus medical facilities. The construction of these projects will create over 1,500 jobs in our area. The UWM Master Plan will cement UWM's reputation as a top-notch research institution while teaching and training students.

Growth at Marquette and UWM will bring jobs to Milwaukee and promote economic development in the region. These important projects exemplify the ingenuity and dedication necessary for Wisconsin to grow and prosper.

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Adding industrial jobs

Recently, Milwaukee received a series of positive job announcements, all of which highlight the hard work that Milwaukee and the state of Wisconsin have done to attract new jobs and cultivate a business-friendly environment.

Ingeteam, a Spanish manufacturer of wind-turbine generators, recently announced that it is opening a \$15 million plant in the Menomonee Valley. New job opportunities in construction will begin with the plant's groundbreaking in April of this year. Manufacturing operations will begin by January 2011, and Ingeteam plans to hire roughly 270 workers by 2015. Ingeteam was awarded \$1.6 million in federal clean-tech manufacturing tax credits to make the wind turbine generators and power converter and control systems in Milwaukee. Though Ingeteam has existing operations in seven countries, this will be its first manufacturing plant in North America. Ingeteam executives noted that they chose to locate in Milwaukee because of its highly skilled electrical manufacturing labor pool and the nearby universities with quality engineering programs that offer courses in renewable energy.

Another Spanish company, Talgo Inc., chose Milwaukee as the site of its train manufacturing facility in Wisconsin. The plant, eventually to be located at the former Tower Automotive facility, is expected initially to create 80 jobs. The state purchased two high-speed train sets from Talgo with federal money and asked that those trains be manufactured in Wisconsin. Talgo will use its new Wisconsin facility to build several additional trains for the state of Oregon, which is also purchasing trains from the \$8 billion federal high-speed rail initiative.

Reco Cement Products LLC, a start-up business that makes “green” cement, plans to spend \$7 million to build a new facility in Milwaukee. Initially, the plant will create 30 jobs; plans for expansion could create around 100 jobs in all. Conventional cement-making is one of the largest producers of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. Reco would use recycled materials such as crushed glass and coal fly ash to manufacture cement, much like the new CalStar facility, which uses coal fly ash to manufacture bricks.

If you have any comments or questions regarding this or any other state matter, please contact my office.

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Help the census

Every decade, the United States conducts a census, a constitutionally mandated population count. In March, you will receive a 2010 census form. It is important that you participate in this year’s census for your quality of life and your community.

The census gathers information about populations, a task that sounds very general. However, the information is used for purposes that directly affect you as an individual in the state of Wisconsin.

Our population determines how many congressional seats we get. If numbers decrease enough, we lose a congressional seat and have one less Wisconsin voice in the House of Representatives. Conversely, substantial population growth could result in an additional seat and increase Wisconsin's presence in Washington.

The information is also used to determine how billions of dollars are distributed by the government for programs based on demographics and populations. Greater participation provides more accurate data that is used to make decisions about schools, roads, and other local services. Your participation will ensure that you are considered when public health issues arise, when companies seek skilled labor populations, when businesses are making decisions about whether to locate in your community, and when decisions are made regarding emergency services.

The U.S. Census Bureau is hiring 48,000 people in Wisconsin alone. Most of these limited-term positions are census takers in field operations and pay \$11.50 to \$15 per hour. Each household receives a census questionnaire. Census workers will be sent to residences who fail to return the form.

Applicants must be at least 18 years old, have a valid Social Security number, and pass a background check. Many of the positions involve going door to door, which requires a vehicle. Employees will be reimbursed for mileage and expenses. Applicants must complete a 30-minute basic skills test. Bilingual candidates are encouraged to apply, and materials will be provided in several languages.

Please pass on the word about census jobs and the importance of the census to others in the community. If you would like more information regarding positions with the Census Bureau call 1 (866) 861-2010, or visit 2010censusjobs.gov.

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Making bricks from coal fly ash

In last month's column, I discussed the CORE Jobs Act and the state of Wisconsin's focus on expanding local businesses and helping new ones establish themselves in our state. There are many success stories. In January, the spotlight was on CalStar, a California-based company that opened a new plant in Caledonia, Wis.

The plant will recycle coal fly ash—a byproduct produced at the We Energies power plant in Oak Creek—into bricks used for construction. Tens of thousands of tons of otherwise unused coal fly ash will be put to beneficial use. Forty percent of each brick will be made with recycled material. Because CalStar's bricks will be steamed instead of fired as most traditional clay bricks are, their production will require 85 percent less energy.

I had the pleasure of meeting with the chief operating officer of CalStar in December, and I attended CalStar's grand opening. Their innovative business, at 2825 4 Mile Rd., is an example of how we can harness the demand for "green" products and turn that demand into job creation. In our meeting, CalStar noted that they established themselves in Wisconsin because of our friendly business and regulatory climate. The

plant will make 40 million bricks a year, ship to about five Midwestern states, and plans to employ 35 people in its Caledonia plant by 2011.

The Caledonia plant is one of eight Wisconsin businesses to receive money through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act in the form of tax credits for clean energy manufacturing projects. It is the only business in the nation that makes coal fly ash bricks.

Historically, Wisconsin has been a leader in green job investment and in promoting businesses that sell green products. Green construction products, such as CalStar's bricks, are an attractive concept to builders who want to be part of the rapidly growing market for green building materials. While construction overall has decreased during the economic downturn, green construction continues to grow. Wisconsin is benefiting from that new market and is at the forefront of a movement that will significantly reshape our economy in the future.

If you have any comments or questions regarding any state matter, please contact my office.

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Attracting and retaining private sector jobs

Lately in Wisconsin, we've seen some promising signs of economic recovery, but we won't have true stability until there is substantial job growth across our state. In order for this job creation to occur, investment in the private sector is necessary. State government can help facilitate that investment through targeted credits that promote promising businesses and worker education programs. That concept is at the center of the CORE Jobs Act, Senate Bill 409, which was recently introduced by my colleagues Senators Julie Lassa (D-Stevens Point) and Pat Kreitlow (D-Chippewa Falls). I am a proud cosponsor of this legislation.

CORE stands for Connecting Opportunity, Research, and Entrepreneurship. The plan will create jobs by increasing assistance to schools and local services that strengthen communities, investing in research and development, and making Wisconsin more business-friendly through changes to our regulatory and tax code.

Recent announcements statewide demonstrate how Wisconsin is attracting new business, largely due to successful programs that the CORE Jobs Act bolsters. For example, A&E Inc. is moving its Texas operations to Wisconsin. They will receive a worker training grant and tax credits from the state and bring 28 new jobs with them to Racine. At its current location in Minnesota, VitalMedix is unable to secure funding, and therefore is moving to Wisconsin to take advantage of our angel tax credit program. Locally, Rexnord Industries is using a state Department of Commerce Major Economic Development Award to create 90 new jobs in Cudahy, and Republic Airways announced it will take advantage of Wisconsin enterprise zone tax credits to keep 800 jobs here and move 800 more to Milwaukee.

Success stories like these illustrate the positive business climate in Wisconsin and highlight the benefits of programs the CORE Jobs Act will help sustain. On Dec. 15, SB 409 passed out of the Senate Committee on Economic Development on a unanimous vote. I am hopeful this bill will come before the full legislature when we reconvene in January.

If you have questions on the CORE Jobs Act, or any other state matter, please contact my office. I look forward to hearing from you.

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Allowing youth workers and Cudahy dev.

On Nov. 5, the state Senate passed several pieces of legislation I authored including Senate Bill 349 (SB 349) and Assembly Bill 174 (AB 174). While very different in scope, both bills make it easier for our communities to work together to address shared concerns.

Earlier this year, the Cudahy-St. Francis Interfaith organization informed me that certain work regulations could prevent youth from participating in essential snow removal and basic yard work programs for the elderly. Current Wisconsin law prohibits the employment of minors under the age of 14, but the success of these programs is largely due to the

involvement of the 12- and 13-year-olds who do the shoveling and yard work.

SB 349 allows a minor to be employed by a nonprofit organization in and around the home of an elderly person or a person with a disability to assist with snow shoveling or yard maintenance. This change in law allows ongoing, well-intentioned community programs to continue, benefiting those who cannot do the work themselves.

Clearing Way for Retail Development

The other piece of legislation, AB 174, was signed into law by Governor Doyle Nov. 12. It will facilitate crucial economic development in the city of Cudahy and across Wisconsin.

Cudahy needed the new law so it could transfer \$2.1 million of excess property tax revenue from an existing environmental remediation tax incremental district (ETID), generated from the Cudahy Connection Condominiums near Buckhorn and Ramsey avenues, to a new ETID in Cudahy that did not have the adequate funding to undergo required environmental remediation. Without remediation, the land cannot be developed. AB 174 allowed for the transfer of that revenue.

Enactment of AB 174 means Cudahy can develop the 32-acre parcel of land at the southwest corner of Layton and Pennsylvania avenues, formerly used for three municipal landfills, which has remained unused for nearly 30 years due to the high cost of clean-up. Cudahy and the potential developer, Cobalt Partners of Milwaukee, now have the financial means to move forward with plans for a retail development on the site. Cudahy will finally be able to turn an unproductive piece of land into a tax-producing asset for the community.

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Wind siting bill signed into Law

On Sept. 30, Governor Doyle signed a bill I authored, Senate Bill 185, into law. Now known as 2009 Wisconsin Act 40, this bill creates uniformity standards for wind energy projects across the state. Until now, Wisconsin has had a patchwork of wind siting regulations that varied widely from one municipality to another. The creation of consistent siting standards is an important step for the advancement of renewable energy in Wisconsin.

Across the country, there is increasing support and demand for the expansion of green energy and the creation of green jobs. Currently, over 600 megawatts of proposed wind projects are stalled in Wisconsin due to the absence of clear, predictable regulations. This figure does not include potential projects that have not been pursued by developers at all. Lack of clear regulations has killed jobs and drained investment from our state. Act 40 makes Wisconsin a more viable option for the placement of wind farms so that we may take advantage of new investment opportunities.

Currently, over 600 megawatts of proposed wind projects are stalled in Wisconsin due to the absence of clear, predictable regulations. This figure does not include potential projects that have not been pursued by developers at all.

Under 2005 Act 141, Wisconsin electric providers must produce

10 percent of their energy from renewable resources by 2015. This goal is unattainable without wind energy. There are no practical remaining options for dams and Wisconsin is not a good candidate for solar power. Without the uniformity provided by Act 40, we would face great difficulty in developing enough wind power to meet Wisconsin's renewable energy goals.

I am appreciative of all of the hard work and pragmatism of my colleagues who worked on this legislation. Throughout the legislative process, members of both houses reached across party lines to get this bill done. As you may know, I introduced similar legislation in 2008, but it did not pass that session. I am pleased with the wide margin of support this time around. The bill passed the Senate 23-9 and the Assembly 65-31.

Act 40 paves the road for the development of alternative energy projects in Wisconsin, and I am eager to watch our state take advantage of these new technologies and opportunities.

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October legislative agenda

On Sept. 15., the Wisconsin Senate resumed its 2009-10 legislative session. Here's an update on four important bills I've authored to help Wisconsin workers and families. Over the

next few weeks I hope that these initiatives will move forward through the legislative process.

- **Teacher Tax Credit (SB 111):** A growing number of teachers are spending money out of their own pockets to pay for classroom supplies. This bill creates an individual income tax deduction of up to \$500 for public and private school educators for educational materials and supplies they have purchased on their own for use in school.

- **The Family Justice Bill (SB 203):** Currently in Wisconsin, a parent does not have the right to recover damages for an adult child who dies as a result of medical malpractice, nor can an adult child recover damages for the loss of a widowed, single, or divorced parent who dies as the result of medical malpractice. This bill will change Wisconsin law to allow these grieving family members some recourse in the face of overwhelming tragedy.

- **Renewable Resource Credits (SB 273):** Act 141, Wisconsin's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) requires Wisconsin utilities to obtain 10 percent of their energy from renewable sources by 2015. Currently, the law does not allow direct-use renewable energy sources-for example, certain systems that capture solar and geothermal power-to apply to RPS. SB 273 would change that. It maximizes use of renewable energy, saves Wisconsin ratepayers money, and creates "green" manufacturing jobs across the state.

- **Capital Gains Tax:** In the 2009-11 budget (Act 28), the state capital gains tax exemption in Wisconsin was trimmed back from 60 percent to 30 percent in order to help offset the state budget deficit. Representative Peter Barca (D-Kenosha) and I have coauthored legislation to alter these changes. Our bill creates a better balance between addressing the budget deficit and encouraging individual savings and investment.

These are just a few of my priorities as we move forward in

the legislative session. If you have any questions regarding these or any other state initiatives, please contact my office.

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