

THE DUNN COUNTY NEWS

Dunn County
4-H'ers busy
with activities

PAGE A11



UW-Stout packaging
program ranks among
top 10 in national listings

PAGE A8

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026 | dunnconnect.com | Covering Dunn County since 1860 | \$3.00

Burger King franchiser with local stores committed more than 1,600 child labor law violations, Wisconsin alleges

KIMBERLY WETHAL
kwethal@madison.com

The state Department of Workforce Development has ordered the operator of more than 100 Burger King franchises in Wisconsin to pay more than \$1 million in fees and unpaid wages to resolve 1,656 alleged child labor violations.

The allegations against Cave Enterprises involve more than 600 children ages 14 and 15 over two years. They include allegations of 627 children working six hours or more without a meal break mandated by

state law and 593 children working without a child labor permit, according to Gov. Tony Evers' office.

Additionally, hundreds of minor employees were working more hours and later than state law allows them to, the DWD said. On school days, state law restricts 14- and 15-year-olds to working a maximum of three hours a day no later than 7 p.m.; on days when school is not in session, children are allowed to work up to eight hours a day.

The two-year investigation began after

the department received nearly three dozen child labor and wage complaints against Burger King franchises between 2020 and 2023.

The department is offering to resolve the issue with Cave Enterprises through the payment of penalties, rather than taking the case to court, Evers said in a statement. DWD is levying \$500 per violation, based on the department's previous enforcement actions against the company and the number of infractions, bringing the punitive fines to \$828,000.

The department is also requiring the operator to pay more than \$237,000 in back pay to its minor employees.

Both fees would need to be paid in 20 days to avoid court action. Should the company not choose to settle on the punitive damages, Evers' statement said, a judge could levy fees up to twice as high, or more than \$1.6 million, as the fine for violating child labor laws ranges between \$25 and \$1,000.

Please see **BURGER KING**, Page A2

SHORTER WINTERS



GAVIN MICHAELSON, RIVER VALLEY MEDIA GROUP FILE PHOTO

Briston Dezelske and Jade Rush-Vareka enjoy a conversation at Riverside Park in La Crosse as record-high temperatures reached the area in January 2025.

Study: Great Lakes region's cold season declines by 2 weeks

CAITLIN LOOBY
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

A new study puts more scientific teeth behind everything from having white Christmases to how long ski hills stay open: Winters on the Great Lakes are shrinking.

Since 1995, winter has shortened by about 14 days — and in some spots close to three weeks, according to the recent study published in Environmental Research Letters. The study adds to mounting evidence that winter is the most rapidly changing season in the Great Lakes region, growing warmer and

wetter with less snow.

Most prior research has been done on land. When it comes to what is going on in the lakes themselves, "winter is quite the blind spot" for scientists, said Craig Stow, researcher at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab and co-author on the study. That's because so far, most scientific research has occurred after ice off, when the last bit of ice melts and research vessels can get out on the water, he said.

The study adds another piece

to the puzzle, contributing to the ever-evolving understanding of what occurs in lakes during the winter months, Stow said.

Here are four takeaways about the importance of this new study, and how winter out on the lakes doesn't look the same as it used to.

When lake water 'mixes' is key to understanding seasons

Most of the information

Please see **WINTER**, Page A2

League of Women Voters-Greater Chippewa Valley offering voter registration training

FOR THE DUNN COUNTY NEWS
editor@dunnconnect.com

A free voter registration training will be offered March 9 from 6 to 8 p.m. on Zoom by the League of Women Voters-Greater Chippewa Valley.

The information is geared for people who want to learn about voting in Wisconsin, so they may help guide others through the voter registration process. Presenters will role-play common voter registration scenarios, provide handouts and answer questions. The goal of the training is for participants to feel comfortably knowledgeable in helping others register to vote and to know how to access expert resources.

Topics include registration methods (by mail, in person or online through MyVote.wi.gov), registration deadlines, eligibility requirements and required documents.

In addition, participants will learn how to direct voters to the following practical information:

- Their municipal clerk or their polling place;
- The next election dates;
- What's on the ballot;
- Their voting activity history;
- How to request an absentee ballot.

Recent changes to the Wisconsin voting process will be covered, as needed.

This free training is open to the public and to League members.

Registration is required and can be completed online at the LWV-GCV website (<https://www.lwv-gcv.org>); then click on the Calendar tab and the event title on March 9). A confirmation and Zoom link will be sent after you register.

For more information or help in registering for this training, contact Lori Miller, LWV-GCV member, at lbmiller492@gmail.com.

Note: A new training for volunteers experienced in voter registration will be offered this fall.

LWV-GCV is a local chapter of the League of Women Voters — a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization founded in 1920 that provides voter information and encourages voter registration.

Touting tradition

New Leinenkugel's president promises to continue innovation

RICARDO TORRES
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Katie Leinenkugel is the sixth-generation family member to lead the Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Company, and she has received praise from beer fans online.

Before joining Molson Coors, which owns Leinenkugel's, the 36-year-old was a first grade teacher and elementary school principal, but the family business kept calling her back.

As president of Leinenkugel's, she'll be leading the brand, overseeing sales, marketing, distributor relationships, supply chain,



Leinenkugel

Leinenkugel:

How do you feel about carrying on the family legacy?

I have a lot of pride in it. We have

innovation strategy at its pilot breweries at the Leinie Lodge in Chippewa Falls and the Barrel Yard inside American Family Field.

Here is an email Q&A with

a long history in the state of Wisconsin, and I'm truly honored to carry on that legacy. I think of the five generations of family members that came before me, and taking my place at the company feels like an important responsibility that I'm excited for.

Why did you decide to stick with this industry?

I obviously grew up around the beer industry, so it's always felt like home. I initially worked in

Please see **LEINENKUGEL**, Page A2



AUDREY KORTE, RIVER VALLEY MEDIA GROUP FILE PHOTO

The Leinenkugel's brewery and bottle house at the Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Co. in Chippewa Falls is seen in January 2025.

ON THE WEB

■ For more sports and local news, go to our website at www.dunnconnect.com — and get the latest updates at the Dunn County News' Facebook page: facebook.com/DunnCountyNews.

OBITUARIES A2 CLASSIFIEDS A10
PUZZLES A10 LEGALS A11

