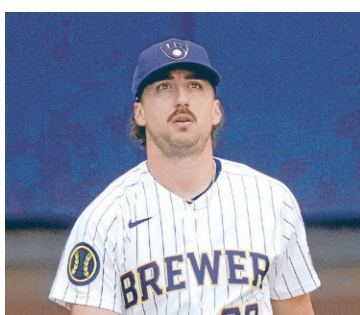


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## SPLASHING GOOD TIME



JOHN GITTINGS, DELLS EVENTS

Mini Mammoth's Cove, the kids' pool area at Wild WaterDome water park at Wilderness Resort, will receive new slides and be revamped to give parents a better view of their kids from anywhere on the pool deck. The area will be renamed Coral Cove.

### Wilderness Resort waterpark getting big revamp

JOHN GITTINGS  
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The largest waterpark at one of the major Wisconsin Dells resorts is making some significant changes.

Wild WaterDome at Wilderness Resort is preparing for a major renovation, with work on a new water slide starting in July, among other updates that include revamping the kiddie pool area and replacing the roof and floors.

Half of the two-slide Dueling Mammoth ride, which many guests use for racing, is being replaced, while the other will have the same design but new colors and a new name, Paradise Falls.

The new slide, Volcano Vortex, will feature a clear tube that wraps around a reddish-orange center, resembling a

volcano. It will be nearly 300 feet long. Paradise Falls will stay the same, but be light blue and yellow. Both Paradise Falls and Volcano Vortex will be raft rides.

Wild WaterDome's transparent roof is being replaced after 18 years, along with flooring on the pool decks and the bottom of each pool. New signs and tropical-themed paint colors will be added. The upgrades likely will be finished in mid-October, according to Wilderness officials.

"Whenever we can, we like to refresh the product as much as possible," Wilderness Chief Operating Officer Joe Eck said. "This is our chance, when we take the dome down, to put in the Volcano Vortex, put in the new pool area and just do the revamp. We're super excited to bring new life to this whole new area of the resort. We're going

to go fast." Volcano Vortex will start inside, twist outside and then finish back inside. The outdoor portion will be done in July before the roof is removed.

Eck described Volcano Vortex's speed as "Formula One on water."

"It is kind of a high-speed family raft ride," he said. "It's got a lot of twists and turns. The cool part about this slide is it is see-through, so when they (slide) outside, they're actually going to be able to see the trees, the pond, the villas, Field's restaurant. You kind of look like you are spinning around in a volcano."

"The anticipation of that ride is going to be great," he said.

Please see WATERPARK, Page A3

### Lawyer: Ex-Portage cop 'torn up' over drunk driving charges

Johnson resigned after UTV accident last May that injured one of his passengers

ANNIE PULLEY  
The Badger Project

A former detective sergeant for the Portage Police Department resigned from the force a day after he was arrested for crashing a UTV and injuring one of his three passengers in May 2025. A breath test at the time of his arrest had that officer, Brian



Johnson

Johnson, at about double the legal driving limit for alcohol, according to the criminal complaint. Johnson had more than 20 years of law enforcement experience before he resigned May 12, 2025. His final hourly wage was about \$42, according to the City of Portage. He has since chosen to leave law enforcement entirely, said Chris Van Wagner, his defense attorney.

"He has no plans to go back into police work," Van Wagner said. "He's done with that."

Johnson still faces two felony charges — injury by intoxicated use of a vehicle and injury by use of a vehicle with a prohibited alcohol concentration — and a misdemeanor for resisting or obstructing an officer.

"In reviewing the complaint, it looks like he was charged with obstructing because he told the dispatcher that there was no emergency and tried to stop law enforcement from responding while his passenger

was severely injured," Marquette County Assistant District Attorney Veronica Isherwood wrote in an email to The Badger Project.

As an officer in Portage, Johnson worked in Columbia County, and he was previously a deputy for the county. Because of this, the district attorney in neighboring Marquette County was assigned as the special prosecutor in the case, a common practice in the state to avoid conflicts of interest.

Please see UTV, Page A3

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LEGALS	C6-10	SPORTS	C1



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