

Election 2026

Secretary of State Sarah Godlewski announces her bid to become Wisconsin's next lieutenant governor

LOCAL&STATE. A3

Area high school football teams enter

season with lofty goals

SPORTS, B1

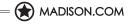
resignation over alleged mortgage fraud

NATION&WORLD. A8

National Guard

Vance, Hegseth visit with troops at Washington's main train station

NATION&WORLD. A8



Thursday, August 21, 2025

MADISON | LEADERSHIP

New city clerk appointed

WHERE **YOUR STORY** LIVES

McComas officially begins on Sept. 29

MITCHELL SCHMIDT mschmidt@madison.com

Four months after Madison's or's office. embattled city clerk resigned in ballots cast in the city's Novemthe city's next top election official. office."

Lydia McComas, who previ-County in Minnesota, will of-Sept. 29, according to the may-

CARDINAL

uphold the values of accountber 2024 election, Mayor Satya ability, accuracy, and accessi-Rhodes-Conway has appointed bility that are essential to this bipartisan agency ordered de- city clerk's office found the first

ously served as voter engagement office just days after the Wiscondivision manager with Hennepin sin Elections Commission ordered the city to pursue changes to how ficially take on the new role on it tracks, processes and maintains absentee ballots, including updated pre-election procedures, McComas said in a statement new polling place practices, and the wake of nearly 200 uncounted she plans to "work every day to updates to the post-election and resulted in 193 absentee ballots reconciliation process.

The new policies, which the spite concerns raised by the city's set of uncounted ballots, 67 of

agency has the power to enforce the new rules, come after a commission-led probe found a "confluence of errors" and "complete lack of leadership" in the clerk's office — led at the time by City Clerk Maribeth Witzel-Behl going uncounted.

A week after the election, the tion.

McComas comes to the clerk's acting clerk over whether the them from Ward 65 and one from Ward 68, but waited until Dec. 18 to alert the commission. Several weeks later, the clerk's office found the other 125 uncounted ballots, from Ward 56, in sealed absentee carrier envelopes while going through the reconciliation process to compare ballot counts and determine voter participa-

> **ELECTION 2026** REDISTRICTING

Texas

House

OKs its

Please see CLERK, Page A6

UW-MILWAUKEE | 2 BRANCH CAMPUSES CLOSED



JOHN HART, STATE JOURNAL

Street signs on the campus of UW-Milwaukee at Washington County greet visitors to the campus in West Bend. The 200,000-square-foot campus building sits on 80 acres that the county maintains, and Ozaukee Christian School has emerged as the site's top buyer.

roposed revivals emerge

SABINE MARTIN

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The future of UW-Milwaukee's branch campuses that coming into focus. After the closure of the univer-

sity's two-year branch campuses plummeting enrollment. in Washington and Waukesha respectively, one of the proper-

buyer, and the other has several lowed the same trend, reporting interested developers.

The Universities of Wisconsin cluding a 65% drop since 2014. shuttered in the last two years is has attributed the closure of the two branch campuses — among announced this June it's shutsix total closures since 2023 — to

UW-Milwaukee at Washcounties, in 2024 and this June, ington County saw a 55% drop School makes offer in enrollment since 2018. The

steep enrollment declines, in-

ting down its Fox Cities branch campus in Menasha.

Ozaukee Christian School has

ties last week gained a potential Waukesha branch campus fol- emerged as UW-Milwaukee at Washington's top buyer.

The 200,000-square-foot campus building sits on an UW-Oshkosh most recently 80-acre property that the county maintains. The county has 74% ownership the campus and West Bend has

Please see **uw-milwaukee**, Page A6

JIM VERTUNO and NICHOLAS RICCARDI **Associated Press**

AUSTIN, Texas - Texas Republicans on Wednesday took the first step toward approving new congressional maps that would give their party as many as five new seats in the House of Representatives, spurring what's likely to be a national battle over redistricting.

new map

The approval by the Texas House of Representatives came at the urging of President Donald Trump, who pushed for the extraordinary mid-decade revision of congressional maps to give his party a better chance at holding onto the U.S. House of Representatives in the 2026 midterm elections. The maps need to be approved by the GOP-controlled state Senate and signed by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott before they become official.

But the Texas House presented the best chance for Democrats to derail the redraw.

Texas state legislative Democrats delayed the vote by two weeks by fleeing the state earlier this month in protest, and were assigned round-the-clock police monitoring upon their return to ensure they attended Wednesday's session.

The approval of the Texas maps on an 88-52 party-line vote is likely to prompt Cal-Democratic-conifornia's trolled state Legislature last week to approve of a new House map creating five new Democratic-leaning districts.

Please see TEXAS, Page A2

GOP demands action from Canada on wildfires

TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

The sternly worded state-

"Instead of enjoying family ments and letters are filled vacations at Michigan's beauwith indignation and outrage: tiful lakes and campgrounds, Republican U.S. lawmak- for the third summer in a row, ers say Canada has done too Michiganders are forced to little to contain wildfires breathe hazardous air as a result and smoke that have fouled of Canada's failure to prevent est thinning, prescribed burns

Wisconsin.

They've demanded more for-

Weather

FORECAST • A12

Partly sunny, nice

High 78 • Low 58

the air in several states this and control wildfires," read a re- and other measures to prevent cent statement from the state's fires from starting. They've GOP congressional delegation, warned the smoke is hurting echoing similar missives from relations between the coun-Republicans in Iowa, New York, tries and suggested the U.S. North Dakota, Minnesota and could make it an issue in tariff

Please see WILDFIRES, Page A6

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