

Civilian oversight

Members of board overseeing the city’s independent monitor defend her following altercation with police

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REACHING POTENTIAL

Packers RB MarShawn Lloyd shaking off injury history with strong training camp

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Broadcast regulations

FCC votes to rescind rule barring station owners from reaching wider audience

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Oval Office

Presidents signs pair of executive orders to curtail birthright citizenship

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Friday, August 7, 2026

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MADISON | \$11M BUDGET DEFICIT

Agencies eye \$8.6M in cuts

City services such as ambulance units, traffic patrols, bus system likely impacted

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Madison agency leaders identified nearly \$8.6 million in potential cuts ahead of the 2027 budget cycle, as a looming deficit and the

possibility that the city could lose state aid for exceeding spending limits forced departments to curtail expenses next year.

Earlier this summer, Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway directed city staff to identify cuts equal to 2% of their departmental budgets. The reductions are intended to help close an estimated \$11 million deficit next year and lower spending by roughly \$7 million so the city can qualify for state aid. Some agencies met the target,

while others proposed cutting more than requested. A few fell short, and one submitted no reduction plan at all.

Many of the city’s smaller departments proposed reducing program spending, ending contracts or cutting vacant positions. Madison’s largest public safety agencies, however, outlined reductions that could directly affect emergency response, policing and other city services. The Fire Department proposed

eliminating one of its 10 ambulance units and reducing the number of CARES teams from three to two. The cuts would eliminate 11 full-time positions and remove nearly \$1.6 million from the department’s budget.

The Police Department proposed eliminating most of its community outreach team, an investigative services unit and its daytime Traffic Safety and Enforcement Team. The reductions would eliminate 12 police

officer positions, three sergeants, one captain and one lieutenant, 17 positions in all, and cut just over \$2 million from the department’s budget.

Metro Transit, the third-largest city-funded agency, proposed no cuts to filled or vacant positions. Instead, it would reduce early-morning and late-night trips on some fixed routes and scale back service on holidays.

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VETERINARIANS | GROWING NEED IN RURAL AREAS



JOHN HART, STATE JOURNAL

William “BJ” Jones, owner of Center Hill Veterinary clinic in Darlington, pictured at his family’s cattle farm, is thinking about retirement. But he’s struggling to find someone to take over.

Help for willing movers

Law aims to draw grads to underserved parts of state with grants to repay student loans

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DARLINGTON — On a Friday last month, William “BJ” Jones, a large animal vet who co-owns Center Hill Veterinary Clinic in Darlington, started his morning at 7 a.m. to drive nearly an hour southeast to a farm and transfer 20 embryos into cattle.

That night, a client called him at 8:30 p.m. for an emergency assist with a pig’s labor.

“It seems like the nature of the business is that there are fewer veterinarians and we are all traveling further,” Jones said. “When I started in 2001, it was 15 to 20 minutes. We’ve increased from there.”

There used to be multiple veterinary practices with large-animal specialists in Darlington. Now, including Jones, three veterinarians serve farms in the area.

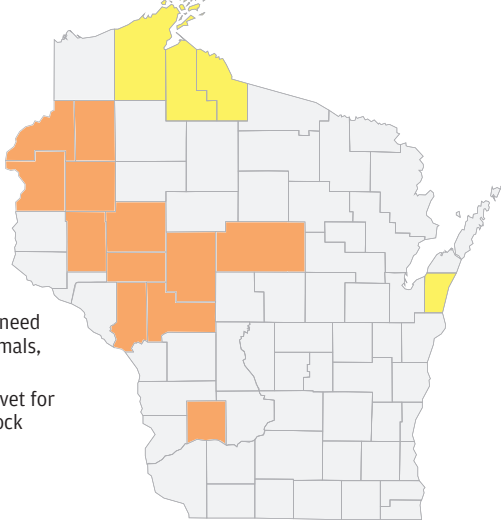
In 2025, the USDA reported that there were 243 rural veterinary shortage areas across 46 states, a record. Wisconsin has more than a dozen counties with shortages of veterinarians who care for large or farm animals.

Wisconsin’s rural veterinary shortage

State officials say more than a dozen counties have a shortage of vets who care for large or farm animals.

SHORTAGE TYPES

- Type 1: Generally in need of a vet for farm animals, livestock care
- Type 2: In need of a vet for farm animals, livestock care for rural areas
- No shortage



Large animal vets who work in rural areas have to be mobile, drive long distances and are typically paid less than those in urban areas.

But a new Wisconsin bill that went into effect on April 4 is giving rural veterinarians like Jones some hope that young veterinarians can be enticed into moving

to rural areas.

The law gives recently graduated veterinarians a \$25,000, income-tax-exempt grant to repay their student loans for each year that they practice in a rural county, for up to four years. Recipients are required to spend at least 25% of their time treating farm animals.

“These older veterinarians are retiring, hoping someone would take over for them, and, basically, they can’t find anybody,” Jones said. “So they retire, and the other vet clinics absorb their clients.”

There’s work to do, however, before the program can be implemented. The Wisconsin Legislature will have to appropriate funding for the program during the next biennial budget process, though the amount remains undisclosed, according to a fiscal analysis from the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau.

Sen. Rachael Cabral-Guevara, R-Fox Valley, and Rep. Joel Kitchens, R-Sturgeon Bay, a former large animal veterinarian, sponsored the legislation.

“In talking to veterinarians around the state, it is a pretty big deal,” Kitchens said. “They’re having such a hard time getting young vets to go into these areas, and it’s just critically important.”

Kitchens said he’s confident the Legislature will support funding the program.

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GOVERNOR’S RACE FRANCESCA HONG

Trump seizes on past remarks

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President Donald Trump on Wednesday took time out of a speech focused on the economy to attack Wisconsin gubernatorial candidate Francesca Hong, a democratic socialist who is leading in statewide polls heading into the battleground state’s partisan primary on Tuesday.

Trump, who saw his average approval rating sitting at just 39% at the close of July, focused his criticisms on progressive candidates like Hong, who is trying to stave off a last-minute push by Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley for the party’s gubernatorial nomination, and Abdul El-Sayed, who won the

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■ **Inside:** Crowley makes last-ditch push to win over undecided primary voters. A11

CAPITOL HILL COVID-19

Panel votes to hold Fauci in contempt

Dems call Paul’s move to bypass full Senate vote unprecedented

AHMED ABOULENEIN
Reuters

WASHINGTON — Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., said Thursday he will ask the Justice Department to prosecute Dr. Anthony Fauci for refusing to answer questions about the COVID-19 pandemic after a Senate committee voted to hold the former top infectious disease official in contempt of Congress.

The Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which Paul chairs, approved

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Weather

Mostly sunny & humid
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