



## Bills push past gridlock for job growth

### Agenda boosts sustainable careers

How do we get Wisconsin public officials off their butts and working on a Good Jobs Agenda?

That does seem to be the problem. It sure isn't a lack of good ideas. There's clearly willingness, even desperation among workers to change and learn. Enterprise and productivity? We've never lacked it. None of this can be drowned out by the noise of partisan gridlock and the foolish trivialities.

You will also find a consensus on all sides of the divide, a common belief that it isn't enough to have held off the worst disasters in the American economy. (I mean, great, that government action prevented 25% unemployment but that doesn't make 10% feels much better.) But now the consensus is we have to move faster on the most elusive part of economic recovery, growing job and helping families. But we can't undo a decade of neglect in a few months.

We've always known it will take three to four years to recover what has been lost, yet we have to gallop to the task this minute and stop just talking about it - even in a political year where everyone seems more concerned about caution over progress. And what America needs is progress.

The good news? There are actually funding streams and there is actually legislation on the books, though those officials are supposed to do their jobs and get the details worked out and start pulling on the same oars. It's a hard slow pull but it's actually more than just putting chronic unemployed to work or restoring jobs. It's recognizing new possibilities in industry and manufacturing to renew America and its exports while adding to the service economy in ways that truly help families.

Here are just some of the projects and programs that need everyone to pull the trigger or speed into use:

**Consider the state AFL-CIO's Good Jobs Agenda,**



Phil Neuenfeldt spearheads the state AFL-CIO support of the Sustainable Jobs Agenda, echoing a national movement. This is not just some fancy wish list. Legislation actually exists and has bipartisan support to tune up the three prongs: Creating a green economy of good jobs; supporting, expanding and renewing the manufacturing sector, and strengthening all the public services that Wisconsin has come to rely on.

A number of the pieces are in place. That's why a coalition of worker groups and bipartisan backers joined the state AFL-CIO in early February to support the Wisconsin Sustainable Jobs Act introduced by Rep. Cory Mason in Madison.

The legislation involves public agencies and financial incentives for the private sector to build career pathways to quickly add hundreds of workers and potentially employ thousands more in weatherization jobs. Mason is at pains to point out that the key word is "sustainability" - jobs in a broadening technological industry that will endure.

The bill sets up specific measures to create high-quality jobs throughout the state, allow homes and companies to make critically important investments in energy conservation and provide training avenues.

It will leverage stimulus dollars for residential energy efficiency but also private capital and profit for retrofit projects in commercial and industrial locations.

**Agenda continued Page 8**

### Mass transit would spur more work for our region

By Dominique Paul Noth  
Editor, Labor Press

Perhaps its the new awareness that a struggling economy has devastated all income levels and families, but something has changed after a decade of delay and nitpicking. Now the call for action echoes across a spectrum of labor and management, Democrats and Republicans, city and rural dwellers, coalescing around the only legislation in Madison that provides dedicated mass transit funding for local bus systems, which over the years would become part of an umbrella Southeast Regional Transit Authority (a SERTA if you like acronyms).

The roster of businesses backing this legislation ought to move the entire US Chamber of Commerce into support, but instead you will probably hear over the next few weeks from the naysayers, how it will cost money (everything good does) and how many interlocking pieces will be needed to fully recharge the area's commerce.



Kim Winters, assistant legislative director for ATU Local 998, explains to the February meeting of the MALC delegates the jobs saved and created under the mass transit bill.

That may be the media and political spin. But the reality is that legislation is in place to finally put jobs, strong commerce and business success just around the corner - and it uses money efficiently that has long lain dormant or pushes opportunities long wasted.

And while the whole region benefits, Milwaukee County is the locomotive on the fastest track.

ATU Local 998's assistant

legislative director, Kim Winters, laid out the real gains in a February talk at the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, urging delegates to get their legislators to work.

Milwaukee County residents could see relief by next year on their property tax. The bill would also rescue the county bus routes that are facing an unavoidable one-third cut in the upcoming county budgets, a huge immediate concern to Local 998, not even mentioning the expanded jobs the bill opens to both professional bus and rail operators and in construction jobs.

That long delayed rail service connecting Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee, linking to Chicago (the KRM), also opens millions of dollars in new speedy hauling of people to jobs.

Other counties are authorized through local control to add their own funded cars to this Milwaukee locomotive by whatever means they decide (vehicle tax, property tax, whatever). The concept adds interlocking (or interim) regional transit authorities in Racine, Kenosha, Waukesha, Washington and Ozaukee counties, through actions of local governments. At least three are needed to join into the area-wide SERTA.

But the legislation doesn't require Milwaukee County to wait. It's first in line. Its citizens in an advisory vote approved a 0.5% sales tax for transit (plus an additional 0.5% tax for parks and even county cultural institutions). While many local officials would like to see the full weight of that honored, they will not stand in the way of a nickel for every \$10 in sales dedicated solely to mass



While committed funding to local bus systems is the main beneficiary, TransitNow uses this map to point out the bill also supports the KRM rail route.

**Transit continued Page 7**



More than 260 families, business groups and guests joined machinists' District 10 in January at its lavish induction dinner at the Wyndham Hotel. The table at right includes many of the district's leaders. Bill Christanson, who represents the machinists on the MALC board, is seen at left chatting with guests while veteran Scott Parr (far right) provided hosting duties for the drawings.



**RIGHT:** It was mainly veteran members of Local 0003 of AFGE, the workers at the veterans center, who turned up at the end of January for the holiday meet and greet featuring table chat below and Serb Hall's buffet dinner. The local has grown in a few years from a few hundred members to some 900, so expect the parties to get even bigger as the work rolls along. Another AFGE local, No. 2144, became the MALC's most recent affiliate at the start of 2010, representing federal workers at HUD, the Small Business Administration and Defense. Most of its workers are at Milwaukee's Henry Reuss Federal Plaza, 310 West Wisconsin Ave. Local 2144's president is Deborah Slakes



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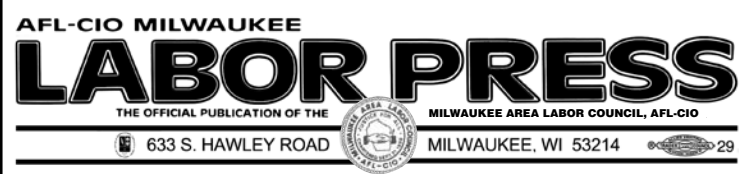


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# Election year crucial for retirees

By Barbara J. Easterling  
Special to Labor Press

The 2010 national convention of the Alliance for Retired Americans will be held April 5-8 in Las Vegas around the theme of Building Retiree Power.

It will offer a wide array of education and training opportunities to improve skills as a grassroots activist and as a leader of a local or state retiree group.

It may be a new year, but many of last year's challenges -- health care, retirement security, and a lingering recession -- remain as great as ever. The future of our retirement, and what will be there for the generations that follow us, will be dramatically affected by what our leaders do this year.

I've heard experts say that in this coming November elections older voters will make up over one-third of the turnout. If the health care debate has been any indication, retirees will be the object of a lot of attention -- and a lot of misinformation. We must do our homework on the candidates and the issues, and educate our neighbors so they will be able to separate fact from

fiction come election time.

The Alliance convention will feature noted speakers and training workshops on topics such as health care reform, Social Security, community organizing, fund-raising, and using new on-line communications tools such as Facebook to reach more retirees in your area.

For more information about the Alliance for Retired Americans national convention,

## Feedback on payday lending

The Social Development Commission (SDC) wants the public to have its say on the issue of payday lending, so it is offering a public hearing from 4:30-8 p.m. Tuesday, March 9, at the Washington Park Senior Center. The testimony will be taken to officials in Madison to consider with the pending payday lending legislation.

As the SDC notes, Wisconsin is the only state that doesn't have existing legislation. The commission says that in 1995, Wisconsin had 17 payday lenders. By 2009, that number had grown to 542. The average interest rate on a payday loan is more than 542% and the average

income of borrowers is less than \$19,000 a year. The goal of the public hearing is for community residents to speak on this issue while various bills are debated.

Testimony will be on a first come basis and limited to three minutes per person. Written testimony will be accepted at and after the public hearing by mailing it to SDC, David Celata, 4041 N. Richards Street, Milwaukee, WI 53212, contact 414-906-2718.

WisCOSH reschedules  
On February 11 bad weather and illness forced WisCOSH to cancel its annual dinner and meeting at Amalgamated Transit Union Hall. Details are being worked out to move activities to the similar dinner and discussion as part of the Workers Memorial Day remembrance, April 28.

## Delegates readied for hygiene drive



With the need for health and hygiene products more crucial this year to defray the operating costs of Milwaukee's shelters for homeless families, the Milwaukee Area Labor Council will kick off its annual drive with special imperatives for collection and giving at the March delegate meeting, Wednesday, March 3, at Serb Hall. Previewing the campaign at the February delegate meeting was Vice President Annie Wacker, flanked by President Willie D. Ellis and Secretary-Treasurer Sheila D. Cochran. Wacker spelled out the growing need in the community and the expectation that the labor community must reach even deeper this year to provide.

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# Money = human rights? A scary precedent

By Michael B. Keegan  
Special to Labor Press

A recent Supreme Court decision may mark a turning point for our democracy.

The decision on Citizens United vs. Federal Elections Commission could have been relatively limited. When it first arrived at the Supreme Court, it only required the court to decide whether feature-length films on pay-per-view were subject to the provisions of campaign finance regulations.

But the Supreme Court, over many months, expanded the scope of the case to radically transform not just politics, but the democratic system itself.

Instead of ruling on the limited question that the case actually raised, the court, led by relatively new Chief Justice John Roberts, demolished a premise that is more than a century old: that Congress has the lawful authority to restrict corporate spending in elections. In a 5-4

## Comment

decision, the court ruled that corporations have the same free-speech rights as human beings, and that it's unconstitutional for Congress to regulate their independent expenditures in elections. Put in plain English, that means enormous corporations can pour unlimited amounts of money into supporting-or defeating-particular candidates.

The amount of money that could be unleashed is mind-boggling. Exxon Mobil earned \$45.2 billion in profits in 2008. Just 2% would be more than the combined costs of the McCain and Obama presidential campaigns. If Exxon Mobil decided to spend just that small sliver of its profits on behalf of one candidate, it could upend the election.

Of course, Exxon Mobil doesn't need to spend that much money to have an impact on our country. The ability to spend it is enough. Imagine that our senators faced a decision on whether

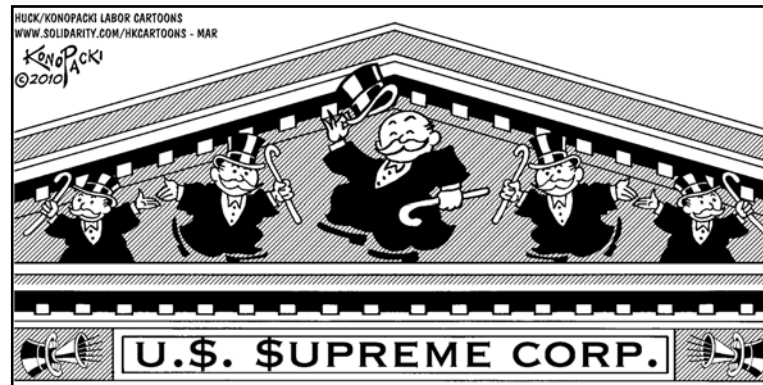
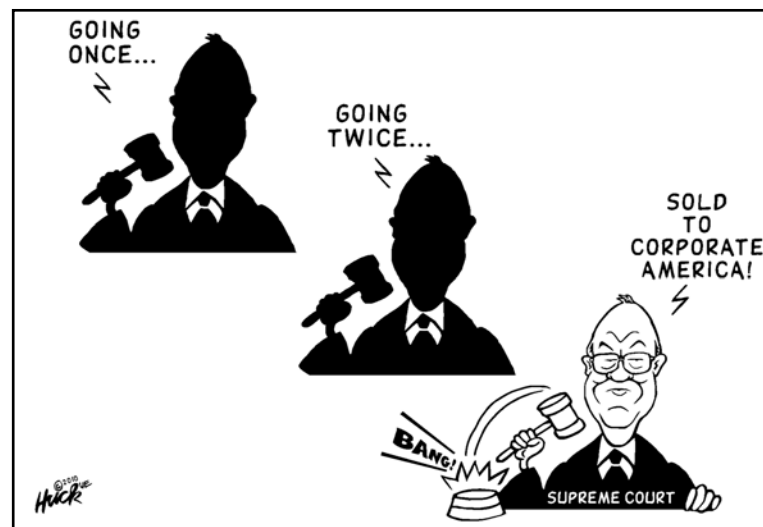
to sponsor climate change legislation in the next few months. The legislation might be good for their constituents, but bad for Big Oil. If they fail to sponsor it, they'll get some angry phone calls from constituents who care about the environment. But if they do sponsor it, they could easily face tens of millions of dollars' worth of attack ads. Which do we think they'll choose? The legislation will go unsponsored and Exxon Mobil won't have to spend a dime.

Elected officials will swiftly become answerable to giant corporations instead of to ordinary voters. The point isn't that it will hurt progressives or conservatives. Regardless of whether you approve of the decisions your elected officials make, those decisions won't be made to please you -- they'll be made to further corporate interests.

Already various legislative solutions have been proposed, and they should be considered seriously. But there are only two ways to completely fix the damage done by this decision: change the Supreme Court or change the Constitution. We need to do both.

In the coming years, justices will leave and presidents will nominate replacements. It's crucial that, whoever the president, Americans demand justices who put the rights of individual Americans above the rights of corporations.

Supporters say fears about the ruling are exaggerated. Opponents, including the prominent editorial cartoonists below, say the American public should be very afraid. So does this writer.



And because of the potentially cataclysmic impact of the decision, we need to move forward with a constitutional amendment restoring Congress' ability to limit corporate influence on elections.

As the leader of an organization dedicated to defending the Constitution and, especially, the First Amendment, I don't think this is a solution that we should embrace lightly. But the disastrous decision requires an appropriate response.

The ruling isn't a vindication of the First Amendment, it's

a perversion. It has established a situation in which the free speech rights of individuals are rendered meaningless by the speech of corporations -- even though corporations are not people and are only constructed for economic purposes.

The decision did great harm to our Constitution. And it will take a bold effort to undo that. But together, it's a challenge we can undoubtedly overcome.

The author is president of People For the American Way, [www.pfaw.org](http://www.pfaw.org).

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## Workers group honors company

Among the handful of US companies honored for "Partnerships That Work" by American Rights at Work at its awards presentations in D.C. was New Berlin based Wisconsin Vision.

The optical eye care company with 130 union employees at 27 Midwest outlets was honored as part of a coalition of entrepreneurs and businesses owners working for meaningful labor law reform.

D.C. honorees included Wisconsin Vision's president and CEO, Darren Horndasch, who has also represented business industries in panels supporting the Employee Free Choice Act. Wisconsin residents have long known of the company's commitment to the community since its founding in 1978. For the last 15 years it has provided free eyeglasses to displaced families. It has supported majority sign-up for its workers to join the United



Darren Horndasch, CEO of Wisconsin Vision

Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW).

Partnerships That Work is a project of the American Rights at Work Education Fund to select socially responsible companies that play by the rules and support worker rights. The program is detailed at americanrightsatwork.org.

# Teaching labor in schools

Years of efforts to teach labor history, warts and all, in Wisconsin's public high schools bore no fruit until last year when the legislature approved and Gov. Doyle signed a historic law including such basic education as part of the public school curriculum.

But what will that be and how is it voluntarily implemented? The Wisconsin Labor History Society, an organization devoted to making the law a reality, will dedicate its 29th Annual Conference to discuss how teachers and the community can direct effective efforts.

The conference, 8:45 a.m. to

3 p.m., Saturday, April 17, will be held at the IBEW Joint Apprenticeship Training Center in Wauwatosa, 11001 W. Plank Court. Entitled "Linking Students to Labor's History," the conference explores how educators, labor and community members can implement the law.

Andrew Kersten, from the history department at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, will give the keynote address on the critical needs to teach labor history. A panel discussion will follow on "Linking Teachers and Students with Labor History," including representatives of the state DPI and the Wisconsin Historical Society, as well as classroom teachers.

State AFL-CIO President David Newby will open an afternoon discussion on "Making the Labor History in the Schools Work," with a focus on how labor history education can help build the labor movement. Leaders expected to participate include Mary Bell, president of WEAC, Jim Cavanaugh, South Central Federation of Labor, Sheila Cochran, Secretary-Treasurer of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, and Bryan Kennedy, president of AFT - Wisconsin.

The conference will include the annual awards ceremony, including high school students who won the annual essay contest, the Zeidler Awards for graduate and undergraduate college students for papers on Wisconsin labor history, and the Lifetime Achievement award.

Lunch will be provided. The conference fee is \$25, which includes lunch, or \$10 for students or unemployed persons. To sign up, contact the society at 6333 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee 53213, or call (414) 771-0700, extension 20. You can also visit wisconsinlaborhistory.org.

## Official notice

United Steelworkers Local 2-232 is notifying members that an election during the March 21 meeting will fill either the Briggs & Stratton or Strattec Grievance Representative position expected to left vacant after the March 5 president's election.

The Sunday March 21 membership meeting is at 9:30 a.m. at Frank Monreal's El Matador, 9155 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee.

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GUTTER RATS	69	71
PIN PALS	59	81
CRAZY 8'S	57	83

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DON WIEDMANN	596
GREG MARTIN	553
GARY GUENTHER	528
DEL GROSS	506
JESSE CORTEZ	489

### IND. HIGH GAME OVER 175

DAN LAACK	235
DON WIEDMANN	216
GEORGE BARAK	213
GREG MARTIN	210
GARY GUENTHER	204
JESSE CORTEZ	193
GENE HERRICK	192

### IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 445

RAE MATOWSKI	487
JOYCE KNIPPEL	467
PHYLLIS NAVARRETE	462
EILEEN WESTERFIELD	448

### IND. HIGH GAME OVER 150

RAE MATOWSKI	199
PHYLLIS NAVARRETE	182
JOYCE KNIPPEL	167
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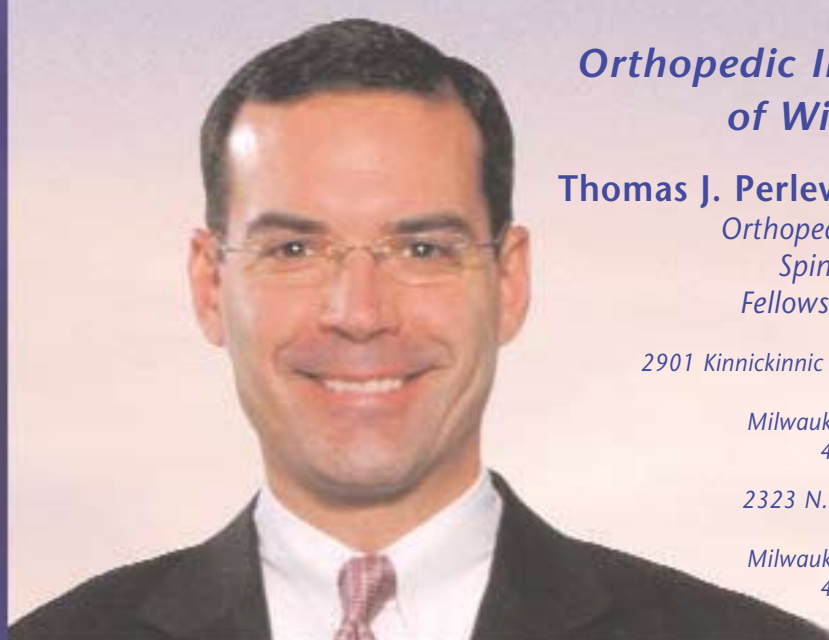
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# Political races will ride transit bill into city

By **Dominique Paul Noth**  
Editor, Labor Press

The immediate political concern takes place in Madison - to get the legislation passed. Several legislators, in preparing the main story on the opposite page, told Labor Press they are waiting to see whether there will be merely lip service for the bill or real lobbying by manufactures and other big businesses, which have longed for a regional approach to transit funding but also have traditionally been slow to recognize the need for modest and controlled taxes to pay for even necessary expansion.

If the business support, including companies able to create jobs bigtime and in desperate need of faster, more efficient, modernized transit, puts muscle behind the bill, its passage could be larger than the modest and sometimes divisive Democratic control of both Madison houses. Everyone expects and many even welcome weeks of refinement, debate and polish - or so they say. With further lobbying and community support, passage is quite possible.

## Comment

If that happens, the intriguing political game shifts to Milwaukee. And what a game that is shaping up to be!

The legislation requires a vote on the Milwaukee County Board that is strong enough (13 members) to override an expected veto of the sales tax by County Executive Scott Walker. A preliminary survey suggests those votes exist.

There's considerable irony here behind the scenes. The likely, indeed only, Democratic candidate for governor, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, has actually been more willing to go to the mat for Milwaukee County's bus service than County Executive Scott Walker, who is seeking the Republican nomination for governor in his party's primary.

Barrett is largely credited with coming up with the plan and formula that freed long gridlocked federal money to develop mass transit connectivity to the KRM line. In doing so, he fashioned a split between his ideas for downtown streetcars and bus-

ses with sending some \$36 million to the county for its expansion of its bus transit.

Walker has already proposed ways to use that money for rubber tires -- though he has not exactly bought into Barrett's efforts for downtown and the inner city -- and he also accepted the federal recovery money that basically saved county bus transit from huge slashes in this year's budget.

But such a one-year federal rescue will not be possible in Walker's next budget, where bus transit can't escape an enormous reduction in its already depleted county funding. That is, unless the voters get the 0.5% sales tax they approved to help the county -- in other words, the bill backed by Doyle, Barrett and so many business groups, which also invites regional cooperation.

Obviously, while Walker has debunked government help to preserve his reputation as a "no new tax" advocate in his political race, he has always accepted the higher taxing levies approved in each budget by the County Board and relied on the fixes and

enhancements by the County Board to protect the safety nets of county service.

But whatever those realities, politics are different. However carefully measured this transit sales tax, despite the bill's locked-in guarantees that it will take current transit costs off the property tax rolls and will run commuter rail only in proportion to proven county ridership, Walker has traditionally opposed both light rail and a sales tax. Members of his own party are urging him to moderate his resistance. At a minimum they are working to delay action on this mass transit bill until after the

September primary or the November election.

Democrats want movement on the bill - not only to meet the rising need but to force Walker to take an anti-job and anti-mass transit stance, which should help voters decide who really has their economic interest at heart.

The conflicting pressure may actually determine whether a bill with broad support will actually move quickly through the system or face more of the roadblocks that Wisconsin voters have become painfully accustomed to.

## Calendar

For updated master list of events, visit [www.milwaukeeelabor.org](http://www.milwaukeeelabor.org)

**Wednesday, February 24**  
**MALC Executive Council**  
2 p.m., 633 S. Hawley Rd.

**Wednesday, March 3**  
**Monthly Delegate Meeting**  
Also serves as kick-off to annual Health & Hygiene Drive for Homeless Shelters  
6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

**Tuesday, March 9**  
**Payday Lending Public Testimony**  
Sponsored by SDC  
4:30-8 p.m., Washington Park Senior Center

**Saturday, April 17**  
**Labor History Conference**  
"Linking Students to Labor's History," Wisconsin's historic new law. Panels involving labor leaders and historians, plus award ceremonies, luncheon. Wisconsin Labor History Society annual conference fee \$25, \$10 for students or unemployed.  
8:45 a.m. to 3 p.m., IBEW Joint Apprenticeship Training Center in Wauwatosa.

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Among the political ironies: Barrett seems more aboard the county bus system than Walker.

## Transit

From Page 1

transit, as outlined in Gov. Doyle's legislation.

This bill in Madison, RTA Bill - SB-511, was sponsored Feb. 2 in the Senate (by Lehman, its go-to steering chairman, Plale, Taylor and Coggs) and by key figures in the Assembly (Barca, Grigsby, Turner, Sinicki, Zepnick, Kessler, Toles, Young, Pasch and Fields), but there is a growing rush of business and community interests recognizing it's past time for action.

Several local officials told Labor Press that the proposed legislation has too many parts (which legislators can adjust), but they like that Milwaukee can get moving without waiting on the rest of the region. They and local businesses call this Regional Transit and Jobs Investment Act, as it is formally known, the first sensible mechanism to draw unified support and revitalize mass transit in the region. The need to surge ahead is a key to economic success and really the central piece in so many efforts to recharge the economy. To wait around until

everyone agrees is akin to madness in the current polarized environment.

**K**erry Thomas, executive director of Transit NOW, a successful coalition of interests leading the charge for transit reform, agrees that some will oppose the bill on the grounds of complexity, but she points out the profound change that is pushing it forward.

The breadth of cooperation among often diverse parties is truly astounding. In addition to

## Detail outline of the bill

**T**he Regional Transit and Jobs Investment Act actually emphasizes local transit, such as busses, and improvements in routes and service, but it would integrate the KRM commuter rail line and create a pathway to regional transit cooperation and connectivity.

Milwaukee County can shift the local funding source from the property tax to 0.5% sales tax.

Local governments in each of the surrounding counties (Racine, Kenosha, Waukesha, Washington and Ozaukee) can vote to form their own Interim Regional Transit Authority (IRTA) similar to Milwaukee County's.

But any non-Milwaukee County IRTA, with the agreement of all the created municipal governments, can fund transit by a variety of means such as vehicle registration fee, the property tax or hotel tax revenue.

A local sales tax could be used as well -- but only if it is voted on and approved by referendum and then by the governing bodies of each community.

As in Milwaukee County, if a sales tax is used as the funding mechanism, the working rules require that 100% of local transit costs be removed from the property tax.

Once three such IRTAs have been created under the rules

unions, mayors and legislators, the businesses and leaders that have lined up in full-throated support include Roundy's, S.C. Johnson, Bucyrus International, AT&T, Northwestern Mutual, Greater Milwaukee Committee President Julia Taylor and MMAC's Pete Beitzel.

"Everyone agrees that dedicated public funding is needed and now mutual interests have gathered around the only workable way to get there," said Thomas.

within six years, that's considered umbrella enough to fold them into a Southeast Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority (SERTA).

The legislation requires integrating the proposed KRM commuter rail line with local bus service through SERTA.

It also boosts competitiveness for applications for federal construction aid on the KRM commuter rail line.

The rules set bus funding and ridership levels in each county before locally raised revenues can apply to KRM operation costs.

Though a separate piece of federal legislation, the \$823 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding for a Milwaukee to Madison rail line dovetails with the regional legislation.

She also attended the delegate meeting, providing literature and background information and urging support for the issue.

Here's how you can help save hundreds of jobs and create thousands of new ones by supporting the legislation:

Contact State Senators and Representatives to support Regional Transit Authorities and SB-511 by calling the legislative hotline at 800-362-9472

Contact Penny Sikora, the ATU Local 998 legislative director at 414-342-4300; Jeff Van Koningsveld of IBEW Local 430, 262-994-5393, or jeffibew@hotmail.com;

or Kerry Thomas, at Transit NOW, 262-246-6151, kthomas@transitnow.org.

Also www.transitnow.org and www.southeasternrta.wordpress.com

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# Agenda

From Page 1

The legislation provides revolving loan models that "will ensure the long-term growth of this new industry, creating a greener Wisconsin and putting Wisconsin residents to work for years to come in high-quality weatherization jobs," Mason said.

One reason for the bill's instant support from the labor community and local officials was the vision of weatherization as not just some feeble fix-up here and there, or using green jobs as a slogan, but the development of an entire new industry of jobs focused on energy efficiency that will attract a

range of businesses and residents into understanding the innovation and the environmental and economic advantages.

Detailed legalization must pay "attention to the needs of unemployed Wisconsin residents," noted Phil Neuenfeldt, the state AFL-CIO's secretary-treasurer and legislative expert in supporting the Mason bill.

"It is critical that we hire within the state, train people properly, and make sure that they can support their families."

In an interview Neuenfeldt discussed organized labor's deep support of the legislation largely focused on weatherization, which right now is dominated by pre-vaillingly low wages that discourage union entry and relies on



Rep. Gwen Moore

temporary one-time help from government grants. It will have to be about more than the current wage standards and entry level appeal, he points out.

"There is a mentality in this country right now that any job is a good job and a welcome thing, but that's really not true," he said.

"The intention has to be family supporting jobs, jobs that last and grow, that allow unions to become the building ladders for low income workers to enter and become part of a better process. The economy actually needs jobs that will stay, that we can sustain. And this legislation builds in the understanding of that sort of permanence" - the value and skill reflected in investment in weatherization.

Dovetailing with the Sustainable Jobs Agenda was the unveiling in February of another green jobs breakthrough, announced by US officials, Rep. Gwen Moore (D-Wis.), Gov. Doyle and other dignitaries - that Wisconsin will be receiving \$823 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to build high-speed passenger rail service between Milwaukee and Madison, with a million dollars

## What should a new economy look like?

Columnist Bob Herbert took a recent stab at it in the New York Times:

"A new, saner, more sustainable economy will have to be more export-oriented, powered by cleaner fuels, bolstered by innovation that comes from a renewed focus on research and development, and committed to delivering a better-educated, more highly skilled work force."

Intriguing how every one of those elements is addressed in the new legislation and stimulus concepts underway in Wisconsin.

set aside to plan the Twin Cities leg.

The estimate is that between construction and operation, the project will create an estimated 13,000 high-quality jobs through high-speed passenger rail service between Milwaukee and Madison, with stops throughout Waukesha County (having two depots in Madison is still under discussion).

The jobs include construction of track, passenger stations, signaling and related infrastructure, as well as crossover track funding between Chicago and Milwaukee.

Along with the family-wage construction jobs that will put a lot of skilled workers back on their feet and add professional union rail operators into the mix, Neuenfeldt noted the deals that will help make Wisconsin a "leader in high-speed rail manufacturing," thanks to efforts of the Obama and Doyle administration and local officials.

Pointing out that Congress is actively looking at even more revenue sources for the expansion of a nationwide rail network, Moore noted that currently "transportation dollars are replenished by the gas tax" and other familiar forms of taxation.

Now, Moore said, we have

to look at "cap-and-trade and other types of emissions regulations as another revenue stream." Under cap-and-trade systems, companies and utilities that emit pollutants pay for the ability to emit beyond a limit set by the government.

(Not so coincidentally and certainly related to developing Wisconsin as a vital beneficiary in regional mass transit involving rail and rubber tires, a mass transit bill now before the Madison legislature would provide dedicated funding for busses and rail in southeast Wisconsin, including the KRM via a regional transit authority. See companion story on Page 1.)

In January, another related stream of preparation, training and funding expanded Wisconsin apprenticeship programs to help nearly 3,000 unemployed workers get training for green jobs ranging from wastewater treatment plant operators to energy auditors.

The state has received \$6 million in funding for such state-wide clean energy job training, part of a nationwide \$190 million effort to train 2,950 people in energy and related fields.

In Wisconsin, the targeted groups include veterans, workers laid off from the auto industry's cutbacks and other unemployed workers. The state Department of Workforce Development's apprenticeship program will be expanded to make sure trained workers are in the pipeline for weatherization and green jobs expansion being pushed on so many development fronts, and the state will also expand apprenticeship programs for the electric power industry.

Partners include the Wisconsin Technical College System, the Milwaukee Building and Construction Trades Council, Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP), and the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board now operated out of Mayor Tom Barrett's administration.

Training in Wisconsin will be focused on energy-efficient building construction and retrofitting, assessment, renewable energy and green manufacturing innovations, and deeper development of smart grid utilities.

Milwaukee had already been allocated \$1,075,000 in green jobs training funding from the US Department of Labor as part of a national grant program provided by federal stimulus legislation.

-- Dominique Paul Noth





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