

## Community News

**SAUKVILLE** Officials get first look at American Orthodontics facility. **7B**

**GRAFTON** Woman charged with scamming couple out of \$40,000. **6B**

**FREDONIA** School Board OKs \$192K in raises as district faces financial woes. **5B**

**BELGIUM** School Board takes first step toward creating district nature center. **9B**

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## INSIDE:

Port High sophomore selected to play for triple-A hockey team, has sights set on college career.

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Section B

# Land buy-up sparks fear in Town of Port

By **BILL SCHANEN IV**  
Ozaukee Press staff

A company is negotiating with scores of landowners to purchase more than 1,000 acres of mostly farmland in the Town of Port Washington for what officials and residents have heard would be a sprawling microchip manufacturing campus so large it could be similar in size to the Foxconn site in Mount Pleasant.

Town officials and residents confirmed this week that Jeff Hoffman, a principal with the Milwaukee commercial real estate company Cushman & Wakefield/Boerke and a Port Washington High School graduate, is aggressively pursuing land purchase

■ *Officials, residents say unknown buyer is working to secure more than 1,000 acres of mostly farmland; believe it could be for sprawling high-tech manufacturing complex*

contracts with multiple town property owners on behalf of the potential buyer for amounts that are considerably higher than what the land is worth — enough to make farmers who own hundreds of acres instant millionaires.

“A couple of families could net \$20 million to \$30 million,” Town Supr. Greg Welton said. “And 85% to 90% (of the land targeted by the buyer) may be under con-

tract already.”

Town Chairman Mike Didier, who is a real estate agent, said, “It’s safe to say that offers are being written, and I believe a lot of land is already under contract.”

Didier said he has been told that landowners are being offered \$40,000 per acre for property in an area that extends north from Knellsville at the town’s border with the City of Port Washington to roughly

Dixie Road and is west of I-43 and east of the Ozaukee Interurban Trail.

“Everybody is being offered the same deal, about four times what the land is worth,” he said. “It’s a lot of money, a lot more than the land is worth.”

Town resident Paul Krauska said Hoffman offered him \$42,000 an acre for his five-acre parcel.

Didier said based on what he has heard, the potential buyer is seeking about 1,000 acres. Welton said he believes it could be 1,200 to 1,800 acres.

While it is clear land deals are being made, Ozaukee Press has not confirmed  
*See Land buy-up on page 2B*



**THE OZAUKEE COUNTY RESCUE BOAT** towed a sinking vessel into the Port Washington marina in 2017. The county boat has been launched for the season and is standing by in the marina (below).  
*Press file photo*

## Standing by for rescues big and small

■ *The Ozaukee County Rescue Boat saves lives when needed but also does what other agencies don’t by offering a helping hand on the water when problems arise*

By **DAN BENSON**  
Ozaukee Press staff

Warm weather is here and the Port Washington marina is a beehive of activity and the steady presence of the Ozaukee County Rescue Boat continues, as it has for more than half a century.

“We’re there every Saturday, training or doing maintenance on the boat,” Ozaukee County Emergency Management Director Scott Ziegler, who oversees the rescue boat operations, said.

The boat itself is a sort of tourist attraction in its own right as people walk by, curious about the boat and its crew, Ziegler said.

“Any time we are down at the dock, we’re willing to talk to anybody,” he said.

But if a call comes, the 16 volunteer members of the rescue boat are ready to respond.

The 42-foot rescue boat wasn’t put in

the water until April 29, but its crew saw action before that when on April 3 a 24-foot powerboat named Reel Blessed filled with water and sank in the marina.

“We have the ability with the crew to respond with specialty equipment all year round so we can lend assistance where needed,” Ziegler said.

In that instance, the crew used large pumps to get water out of the boat while Port Washington Fire Department divers attached ropes to bring the boat to the surface.

No one was aboard the boat, which sank overnight, but the rescue boat has done plenty of lifesaving since it was created in 1952.

Calls for help range from the mundane — people out of gas — to the humorous — a father and daughter blown out to open water inside an inflatable ball marked “for  
*See Rescue boat on page 4B*



*Photo by Sam Arendt*

## Port officials grapple with \$35M cost of safety center

■ *With several expensive projects looming, aldermen nervous about impact of facility on city’s debt limit*

By **KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM**  
Ozaukee Press staff

**PORT WASHINGTON** - Port Washington aldermen, who are still grappling with the estimated \$35 million cost for a proposed public safety building to house the city’s police and fire departments, met Monday to look at three financing scenarios for not just the safety building but also other major projects in the coming decade.

Officials are still wrestling with the price tag for the new facility, several officials said, but not the need for the building.

Ald. John Sigwart said he believes the cost is still a concern for the city.

“I think the council is not pleased with \$35 million,” he said. “It knocked people back on their heels a bit. But I think it’s ridiculous to think we’re going to get it down to \$20 million.”

“The only thing that seems to be consistent among council members is that public safety is the No. 1 (priority).”

Ald. Jonathan Pleitner, chairman of the General Government and Finance Committee, said, “I am still somewhat in a state of disbelief (over the cost). The shock may have worn off a little, but the reality is setting in about how we pay for it.”

But the price of the facility, which caused aldermen to delay action on a recommendation to hire Bray Architects to complete design work on the public safety building, wasn’t the main topic of Monday’s work session for the Finance Committee, which was attended by the full Common Council.

Financing was, especially since aldermen  
*See Safety building on page 7B*

# Port to receive another coat of paint this year

■ *Students get to work on retaining wall; three other murals planned for city as part of Paint on Port initiative*

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM  
Ozaukee Press staff

PORT WASHINGTON – Port Washington is getting a lot more colorful.

Not only are students in the Port Washington-Saukville School District and St. John XXIII Catholic School working on their mural for Port Main Street’s Paint on Port program, but plans for three other murals in the city are being finalized in preparation for Paint Week from June 21 to 28.

Those murals will be on the north end of the building at 1000 N. Wisconsin St., across from Dollar General, the wall on the southeast end of Duluth Trading Co. and the pump house in front of the Newport Shores building.

The students’ art will be this year’s Community Wall and grace 1,000 feet of the retaining wall on Jackson Street west of Franklin Street. It is a landscape scene titled “Branching Out.”

Students have been working on the mural for some time, Paint on Port Project Manager Eileen Grace said. Every Wednesday through mid-June, weather permitting, students are on site to work on the scene.

When the painting is done, animals created by students in their classrooms will be installed, with a mosaic tree added in mid to late June, Grace said. Adults will grout it after it’s installed, she said.

“Our goal is to have it all completed by the 28th of June,” she said. “It’s really beautiful.”

The wall, created with the help of lead artist Sherri Kultgen, a retired Thomas Jefferson Middle School art teacher, will be dedicated on Saturday, June 29.

“The kids can come and show mom and dad the work they put in,” Grace said. “The schools were great to support us and make this happen.”

Last year’s three murals followed the theme of the flora and fauna of the area.

“This year it’s a little of the same, but it’s focused more on the lake, at least for two of the murals,” Grace said.

The exceptions are the student’s work and the pump house at Newport Shores, which will follow a historical theme, she said, leading into the 2025 project that will focus on history.

The pump house mural, which will wrap around all four sides of the structure, will be created by students from the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design.

This year’s Paint on Port will also have a bit of an international theme. Grace said the Wisconsin Street mural will be done by an artist from Australia and the Duluth Trading Co. wall will be painted by an artist from Mexico.

The international theme wasn’t “inten-



**RETIRED ART TEACHER** Sherri Kultgen, the lead artist for Port Washington’s Community Wall project, held a rendering showing what the retaining wall just north of the Port Police Station will look like when it is completed.

Press file photo

tional. It just happened that way,” Grace said, noting the design committee reviewed designs submitted by artists from last year as well as a small group of new submittals.

The Duluth Trading Co. mural will have another unique touch. The mural, on a 12-by-16-foot wall, will feature an augmented reality piece, Grace said.

After the wall is completed, a QR code will be installed that will create an interactive experience that will show aspects of the mural moving.

Paint on Port Week will kick off with music at Heart of the Harbor on June 20 and end on June 29 with a street festival and dedication of the community mural.

Artists will be working on their pieces throughout the week, and there will also be a number of other activities, such as paint-and-sip events, art-inspired food and drink specials at downtown restaurants and sidewalk sales.

This is the second year of the three-year Paint on Port program, sponsored by Port Main Street and the City of Port.

# Land buy-up: ‘Huge impact on town’ feared

FROM PAGE 1B

who the potential buyer is or its plans for the land.

Town officials said the buyer has not contacted the town, and what they know about a project that is shrouded in secrecy — landowners who have agreed to sell their land have had to sign non-disclosure agreements — has been gleaned from landowners, some of whom have agreed to sell their property and others who haven’t made a decision yet.

“Anyone who knows anything isn’t saying anything,” Welton said.

Town officials may, in fact, have very little to say about the project, which almost certainly would hinge on the town land being annexed into the City of Port Washington.

When asked Tuesday if the city has been approached about a possible annexation for the project, Mayor Ted Neitzke said, “At this time, I don’t have any comment. I don’t know enough to comment.”

But there is plenty of talk in the town about the potential buyer, who residents and officials suspect is a high-tech manufacturer, perhaps a maker of semiconductors — the microchips that are the critical components of electronic devices that range from smartphones and computers to advanced medical diagnostic equipment — that was drawn to the town by its abundance of open farmland and a water source in Lake Michigan that is key to the manufacturing of semiconductors. Microchip manufacturers use millions of gallons of water a day to cool equipment and ensure chips are free of contaminants.

“If you look north from Milwaukee on Google Maps you pretty quickly come to the Town of Port and say, ‘Look at all that open land,’” Didier said. “It’s flat and clear-cut from back in the day, and if you’re a manufacturer, it’s relatively close to your source of employees and things like an airport in Milwaukee.”

The manufacturing campus could be sprawling, consisting of multiple factories and requiring a massive investment in infrastructure to support it — everything from new roads and freeway access to electrical substations and the extension of services such as water and sewer from the City of Port Washington, although the city’s current water plant would not have nearly enough capacity to support a semiconductor operation.

“It’s so massive and would require so



**AN INTEL CORP.** rendering shows its massive \$20 billion microchip manufacturing hub that is being built in Licking County, Ohio.

much water that they would have to have their own water plant,” Welton said. “The size of this is just insane. It could be the largest project in the country.”

Word of a possible mega-development in the town comes at a time when President Joe Biden and chip-makers like Intel are making it a priority to increase domestic semiconductor production and create thousands of high-tech, high-paying jobs.

The White House announced last month that it has reached a preliminary deal that would give Intel \$8.5 billion, plus another \$11 billion in loans, to build and expand chip-making facilities in Arizona, Ohio, New Mexico and Oregon.

Wisconsin, in fact, at one time courted Intel, hoping the company would buy land at the Foxconn site for the construction of a semiconductor facility. Foxconn owns 1,200 acres in the Village of Mount Pleasant in Racine County, but much of the land is vacant and it was hoped some of it would be sold to Intel. That deal, however, fell through when Intel chose to build its \$20 billion chip-making hub in Ohio, a project that was lauded by Biden in his State of the Union address.

State Rep. Rob Brooks, R-Saukville, said although he has heard nothing about plans for a high-tech manufacturing facility in the Town of Port Washington, it wouldn’t surprise him.

“Across the state we are getting a lot of interest (from technology companies)

because of projects like Foxconn and Microsoft,” he said, referring to Microsoft’s plan to purchase more than 1,000 acres originally intended for Foxconn to build at least four data centers. “This is especially true in communities that have access to Lake Michigan because of the need for water, so it wouldn’t surprise me in the least to see something like this in the town.”

While high-tech manufacturing plants that create hundreds if not thousands of high-paying jobs are sought by communities like Mount Pleasant, concern is growing in the Town of Port Washington even before plans have been announced because of the impact a manufacturing complex the size of the one envisioned would have on everything from the rural character of northern Ozaukee County and the future of farming there to property values.

“I’m sure the people who are selling their land are all for this,” Didier said. “Probably everyone else in the town is against it.”

Welton said, “It may bring a lot of jobs and wealth to the area, but we are going to be left with something like two major farms. We won’t be a rural community any more. We’ll just be a suburb of Milwaukee.”

“Actually, it really sucks for the town.”

Didier said a 1,000-acre manufacturing facility would eliminate one-tenth of the town’s agricultural land.

“It would have a huge impact on the town,” he said.

It will also have an impact on homeown-

ers in the development zone who decide not to sell their land.

Krauska, whose home and several out-buildings are on five acres on Highway LL immediately south of Dixie Road, said he rejected Hoffman’s offer of \$42,000 an acre for his land.

“He came to my property with a high-pressure pitch and a low-ball offer,” Krauska said. “I was insulted by his offer and told him, ‘You have to sharpen your pencil, and you have to sharpen your pencil a lot before you come back.’”

“And the best part was that I’d have to pay him 4% commission for taking my land. That’s just not fair.”

Krauska said his house is designed to accommodate his son, who is disabled, and he uses his property to support his business, Eddie’s Service in Saukville. The money he was offered, he said, wouldn’t come close to covering the cost of buying five acres elsewhere and building another house to suit his family’s needs.

“I built this house. My wife designed it and I still owe money on it,” he said. “I planned on dying in this house.”

Krauska said that after he rejected the offer for his land, Hoffman told him the buyer was no longer interested in his property.

“He said they would build a big berm around my land and plant trees that my wife could pick out,” he said.

So now, Krauska said, he is faced with the prospect of living in the shadow of a sprawling manufacturing facility or being forced to sell his land if the buyer changes its mind.

“So what will happen is they’ll devalue my property and then use eminent domain to take my land if they want it,” he said.

Krauska said Hoffman would not discuss the buyer or plans for the land it acquires.

“He said he couldn’t tell me who is buying the properties, that it would become known when the land is annexed to the city,” he said.

Krauska said he was told landowners have until the end of the month to sign contracts to sell their land. Welton said he was shown a document that suggested sellers would be informed by Sept. 1 if the buyer intended to close on the purchases.

“But I was told (by someone who was offered a land deal) that other documents make it sound like it would be sooner, maybe a lot sooner,” Welton said. “And he was very confident this would happen.”

# Town of Port not only site being eyed by chip maker

By **BILL SCHANEN IV**  
Ozaukee Press staff

A semiconductor manufacturer working to secure options to buy about 1,000 acres of mostly farmland in the Town of Port Washington is also considering two alternative sites outside of Wisconsin for a microchip facility, according to documents obtained by Ozaukee Press.

Those sites are in Indiana and Ohio, according to information provided to landowners by Jeff Hoffman, a principal with the Milwaukee commercial real estate company Cushman & Wakefield/Boerke who is aggressively pursuing land contracts with multiple Town of Port Washington property owners on behalf of the potential buyer.

Hoffman initially told landowners that he has until May 31 to secure accepted offers on roughly 1,000 acres if the Town of Port Washington is to make the “finalist cut” with the company, although it is believed

■ *Semiconductor firm also considering locations in Ohio, Indiana for sprawling plant; decision expected in September*

the deadline may have been extended.

“We do believe that we have enough landowners (in the Town of Port Washington) that have expressed some interest to hit this threshold,” he wrote to landowners.

According to the timeline Hoffman provided potential sellers, the buyer will compare and evaluate the three potential sites for its facility from July through August.

In addition to the availability of adequate land, factors it will consider include the cost of the infrastructure needed to support the facility, conversations with local, state and federal agencies that will need to approve the project and a review of the existing labor force as well as the likelihood of attracting workers to the area.

The company is expected to announce the

intended location of the facility in September.

Hoffman described the four months from September to December as a “critical” period during which the company will submit plans for its facility and public hearings will be held locally.

At the same time, the company will begin seeking environmental permits from state and federal agencies.

“Within this time frame we should have a pretty good idea of whether or not the project will receive the support that it will need to get across the finish line,” Hoffman wrote.

The company plans to secure final approvals in June 2025 and buy land at the location it chooses by the end of July.

Construction could begin in late summer 2025 or in spring 2026.

The identity of the semiconductor manufacturer is unknown, but a landowner who asked not to be identified said Hoffman described it as a U.S. company currently making semiconductors overseas.

That is important because at least one farmer has said he will not sell his land to a Chinese company, the landowner said.

While some landowners have already committed to selling their land, others have not and do not plan to, the landowner said.

Hoffman is offering \$42,000 per acre plus additional money for improvements on properties that are believed to be in an area that extends north from Knellsville at the town’s border with the City of Port Washington to roughly Dixie Road and from I-43 west to the Ozaukee Interurban Trail.

“A couple of families could net \$20 million to \$30 million,” Town Supr. Greg Welton said last week.

See **Town land** on page 4B



**A FLIGHT FOR LIFE** helicopter landed on Meadowlark Road in the Town of Fredonia Saturday to take a farm employee who was seriously injured when the skid loader he was operating tipped over to Froedtert Hospital in Wauwatosa. The 52-year-old Belgium, who suffered chest and arm injuries, is recovering and was scheduled to undergo surgery this week.

Photo by Sam Arendt

## Farmhand injured in skid loader accident

■ *Flight for Life called after worker suffers chest injury in Town of Fredonia*

By **DAN BENSON**  
Ozaukee Press staff

A 52-year-old Village of Belgium man suffered injuries to his chest and arm on Saturday morning after the skid loader he was operating tipped over, causing him to fall out, according to the Ozaukee County Sheriff’s Office.

The man was transported by a Flight for Life helicopter to Froedtert Hospital in Wauwatosa.

According to a Sheriff’s Office press release, an emergency call came in at 10:51 a.m. on Saturday that an accident had occurred on the farm at W2828 Meadowlark Road in the Town of Fredonia. The farm is owned by Mike and Lori Paulus.

According to the Sheriff’s Office, Nicholas Romero Olivier was attempting to feed cows using a bucket that was larger than the recommended size and weight for the skid loader. The oversized bucket and

load caused the skid loader to tip and the operator to fall out.

“The operator experienced traumatic injuries to his chest and arm,” the press release said.

Lori Paulus said Tuesday that Olivier suffered a broken clavicle and fractured ribs and was “doing well,” with surgery scheduled Tuesday.

Assisting at the scene were the Fredonia and Waubeka fire departments.

## City to return two-way traffic to block of Main Street

By **KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM**  
Ozaukee Press staff

**PORT WASHINGTON** - The 100 block of West Main Street in downtown Port Washington is about to do a flip-flop.

The street, which is currently one-way heading east, will once again become a two-way road as of July 1.

The Common Council on Tuesday approved the change, adopting a recommendation from the city’s Traffic Safety Committee.

The street runs in front of the Ozaukee County Administration Center and Historic Courthouse, and county officials did not oppose the change, officials said.

The street had been a two-way road until about 2010, when county officials asked for the change to allow for more parking.

Changing the street back to a two-way road will result in the loss of five to seven parking spots, officials said, but it will also

make the street a more usable roadway.

Last year, Ald. Deb Postl, a member of the Traffic Safety Committee, said several business owners told her the current configuration hinders people from parking on the street and in the county-owned parking lot on the north side of Main Street.

That’s because most people try to access the street from Wisconsin Street but can’t because it’s one-way heading east, not west, she said.

“It does everything possible to deter people from finding parking spots,” Postl said.

The problem is particularly acute during events such as the farmers market, which is held on the 100 block of East Main Street, and festivals.

Allowing two-way traffic on the street has been studied by the Traffic Safety Committee for much of the last year, with the idea gaining momentum after the city conducted a parking survey that showed

there is adequate parking in the area even with the loss of some spaces.

“We didn’t find a day it (the street and adjoining county parking lot) was parked full,” Public Works Director Rob Vanden Noven said, even on days when the County Board meets and in summer.

“We feel very confident the benefit of returning it to a two-way street outweighs the loss of parking spaces,” he said.

Mayor Ted Neitzke said some business owners had asked if there was a way to restore the street to accommodate two-way traffic without losing any parking.

No, Vanden Noven said.

The ordinance approved unanimously Tuesday won’t take effect until July, giving the city time to restripe the street to eliminate the angle parking on the north side and replace it with parallel parking spots. The city will also add a stop sign at the intersection with Milwaukee Street.

## D.A. Gerol said to be only applicant for Ozaukee judge

■ *Evers spokesman says appointment of Malloy’s replacement could come as early as next week*

By **DAN BENSON**  
Ozaukee Press staff

Ozaukee County District Attorney Adam Gerol is the lone applicant to fill the vacancy on the Ozaukee County Circuit Court created by the retirement of Branch 1 Judge Paul Malloy, which becomes official on July 1, new Ozaukee County Presiding Judge Sandy Williams told the Public Safety Committee on Tuesday.

A spokesman from Gov. Tony Evers’ office on Tuesday did not confirm that Gerol is the only applicant but did say that the governor is expected to announce his appointment soon, perhaps in the next week. The spokesman also did not say whether Evers is allowed to appoint someone who had not filed an official application by the deadline.

The deadline to submit an application to replace Malloy passed on April 26.

Williams was recently appointed presiding judge of the Ozaukee County Circuit Court by Waukesha County Circuit Court Judge Paul Bugenhagen Jr., who is the chief judge of Judicial District 3, of which the Ozaukee court is part.

Gerol said Tuesday that he has filed a notice of noncandidacy and will not appear on the ballot for district attorney in the November election.

Gerol said he expects Gov. Tony Evers to make an appointment to replace Malloy by July 1.

Gerol has worked in the Ozaukee County District Attorney’s office for more than three decades, first as an assistant prosecutor when he was hired by then-District Attorney Williams in 1992, then as district attorney since 2009 with a one-year hiatus during which he worked as a prosecutor in the Milwaukee County District Attorney’s Office.

Gerol earned a bachelor’s degree in anthropology from the University of Iowa in 1985 and his law degree from Drake University Law School in Des Moines in 1988. He lives in Cedarburg.

Ozaukee County prosecutor Ben Lindsay announced in March that he will run in November to succeed Gerol. Lindsay, 39, has been an assistant district attorney since 2015.

See **Judge** on page 4B



LAKESIDE ALLIANCE CHURCH, under construction on the Lake Michigan bluff south of downtown Port Washington, will begin holding worship services in the new facility on Sunday, March 26. In preparation for the opening, Lead Pastor Jon Vallier (standing in photo at left) led a training session on Saturday for church volunteers.

Photos by Sam Arendt

# New church on Port bluff land set to open

■ *Lakeside Alliance in Prairie’s Edge subdivision to hold opening services May 26*

Port Washington’s newest church is ready to open on one of the city’s most visible locations.

Lakeside Alliance Church, located in the Prairie’s Edge subdivision on the Lake Michigan bluff south of downtown, will have its “grand opening” worship services at 9 and 10:45 a.m. on Sunday, May 26.

The day before, the community will be invited to check out the new building at 1091 Shieling Lane, just off South Wisconsin Street, during an open house from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 25.

Visitors to the open house will be able to get a tour of the new, highly visible bluff-top building as well as enjoy food and beverages. There also will be games and activities for children.

Lead Pastor Jon Vallier and other church leaders will be on hand to answer questions.

Since the beginning of the year, Lakeside Alliance had been gathering at the Lepanto Ballroom adjoining the Holiday Inn and Suites hotel on the city’s north side.

Vallier said the level of excitement to be moving in to the new building is palpable

among the church membership.

“Lakeside as a whole church has been greatly anticipating our move into a more permanent home, and I’m beyond thrilled to finally be here,” Vallier said.

“This journey has certainly involved a lot of hard work and sacrifice from the church’s leadership team to orchestrate the countless details involved in this process, but we feel as if it has all been worth it. Especially because we sense God has been directing our steps to be in the building and in the area as we minister to our neighbors and city.”

The church is a tenant in the building built by Black Cap Halcyon, which is developing Prairie’s Edge. The church will occupy about 5,400 square feet of the building with a business occupying the other 1,000 square feet.

The church sanctuary can accommodate seating for 165 people. The building also includes classroom space, restrooms and a coffee bar/kitchenette area.

Vallier said the lease agreement with Black Cap Halcyon was a godsend, as developer Tony Polston was looking for a church to make its home in the development just as Lakeside Alliance was looking for a home.

“This has been a unique opportunity to work with a developer as we lease this facility,” Vallier said. “As a new church, we

didn’t have the means to purchase land and build a new facility, but thankfully this partnership has been mutually beneficial. With such a spectacular location, we’re happily looking forward to calling Prairie’s Edge our new home.”

Lakeside Alliance Church is an offshoot of Alliance Bible Church in Mequon and is affiliated with the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held at 11 a.m. during the open house with officials from Alliance Bible Church, the Christian and Missionary Alliance district office in Appleton and Black Cap Halcyon Development in attendance.

In addition to programs and classes for adults, Lakeside Alliance also offers children’s programming using Lifeway’s Gospel Project, a chronological, Jesus-centered curriculum that emphasizes the gospel in every biblical account.

“These really are exciting times for us as a church,” Vallier said. “God has blessed us with a growing congregation, and with this new facility our hope is to do an even better job of teaching, counseling and serving people.”

Past sermons and other information about Lakeside Alliance are available on the church website at [www.lakesidealliance-church.com](http://www.lakesidealliance-church.com).

## Town land: Impact on rural area feared

FROM PAGE 3B

Town Chairman Mike Didier, whom is a real estate agent, said, “It’s a lot of money, a lot more than the land is worth.”

The contract Hoffman is offering land-owners requires them not to discuss terms of the deal and pay him a 4% commission.

The possibility of a sprawling semiconductor facility that could be on a scale similar to the Foxconn site in Mount Pleasant is the talk of the town. In fact, town residents say, about the only people not talking about it are those who have signed a contract to sell their property for the project.

It is all but certain that if the project proceeds on what is now Town of Port Washington land, the property would be annexed into the City of Port Washington and the character of the town and the future of farming there would be forever changed.

“I’m sure the people who are selling their land are all for this,” Didier said. “Probably everyone else in the town is against it.”

Welton said, “It may bring a lot of jobs and wealth to the area, but we are going to be left with something like two major farms. We won’t be a rural community any more. We’ll just be a suburb of Milwaukee.”

“Actually, it really sucks for the town.”

Didier said a 1,000-acre manufacturing facility would eliminate one-tenth of the town’s agricultural land.

“It would have a huge impact on the town,” he said.

## Judge: Lindsay aims to succeed Gerol

FROM PAGE 3B

attorney in the county since 2018. He also serves as the juvenile justice prosecutor.

Lindsay began his career as a prosecutor in Milwaukee County in 2012. He has a bachelor’s degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School.

He lives in Cedarburg.

Both Gerol and Lindsay are Republicans. Evers is a Democrat.

Steven Cain is the other Circuit Court judge in Ozaukee County. Malloy served as a judge in Ozaukee County for 22 years.

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Community News

**FREDONIA** Saukville dance studio plans move to new facility in industrial park. **5B**

**SAUKVILLE** Concert series to bring mix of music to park starting next week. **6B**

**GRAFTON** Manager tells police she embezzled \$65K from grocery store. **7B**

**BELGIUM** Chairman says town will deal with short-term rental issues this month. **8B**

Ozaukee  
PRESS

Published in Port Washington

INSIDE:



November election to bring three new leaders to county offices.

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www.ozaukeePress.com

Thursday, June 6, 2024

Section B

Residents tell officials to fight microchip plant

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM  
Ozaukee Press staff

PORT WASHINGTON - A crowd of about 20 residents from the Town of Port Washington and surrounding area asked town officials Monday what they and the town can do to stop a semiconductor manufacturer from buying up vast swaths of land in the town to build a sprawling semiconductor manufacturing facility.

“Are there plans to have a town meeting for citizens to get more direction, to come up with a game plan?” asked Matt Gaulke, 3185 Green Bay Rd. “Can we make it hard-

■ *They say semiconductor facility would destroy Town of Port but officials caution they may be helpless to stop project*

er for them? It will change what we are. “It’s not just going to be that 1,000 acres (affected). It’s going to be to the north, the south, the east and west — it will affect everyone. Are we worried the town won’t really be the town anymore?”

A woman asked if the town officials have the power to fight a facility like this.

“Are we talking to the right people to object to this?” she asked. “This is going on a

month already, and you’re just letting it fly by.”

She noted that a facility like the one residents believe could be built would change the town immeasurably.

“This is pollution. It’s the light — from my farm, I can see Charter Steel’s lights,” she said, adding there’s also noise pollution. “I do live in the country, and I want it to stay this way.”

If the semiconductor manufacturer buys the land but doesn’t build the plant, it will still make that area vulnerable to other development, another woman pointed out.

“The opening will be there,” she said.

“Will you and the board show any resistance to this?” one man asked Town Chairman Mike Didier.

“Right now, I think there would be resistance,” Didier said.

But, he cautioned, that doesn’t mean the town can stop the development.

See **Semiconductors** on page 4B



STAFF MEMBERS OF OZAUKEE COUNTY’S Adult Protective Services office gathered on Grand Avenue Monday with a collection of colorful pinwheels to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15. Each pinwheel represents one of the 435 elder abuse referrals received by their office in 2023, up 20% from 2022. Pictured (from left) are Sabrina Gleason, Lauren Peterson, Julie Schlehle and Katie McCormick.

Photo by Sam Arendt

Elder abuse referrals jump 20%

■ *County with one of the oldest populations in state shines light on problem that in more than half the cases is the result of self neglect; financial exploitation also a concern*

By DAN BENSON  
Ozaukee Press staff

It’s no secret that Ozaukee County is aging. And with that, elder abuse is increasing, figures show.

The county is already one of the state’s oldest, with 20% of the county population already over 65. And it’s getting older.

Julie Schlehle, Ozaukee County’s adult protective services supervisor in the county’s Human Services Department said the number of elder abuse referrals increased to 435 in 2023, a 20% jump in just one year.

“It’s been going up every year for some time,” she said.

In recognition of June 15 being World Elder Abuse Recognition Day, she and

her staff mounted 435 pinwheels in the planter wall on Grand Avenue in downtown Port Washington next to the county Administration Center’s parking lot.

And those referrals only include individuals who live at home. Abuse cases in nursing homes and other facilities are followed up by the state, not the county.

Elder abuse takes many forms, she said.

“Over 50% is self-neglect. Individuals who perhaps because of mental or physical changes are struggling to take care of themselves,” she said.

Another common, and growing, problem is financial exploitation of seniors, accounting for about 20% of her office’s cases.

“Sometimes those cases are related to

someone the individual trusts, like a family member or a friend, but we’re also seeing more scams online, romance scams, crypto currency, those kinds of things,” she said.

In all, she said \$2.5 million in scams of local seniors were reported to her office.

“We had an outrageous year last year with financial scams just reported to Adult Protective Services,” she said.

“I’m sure law enforcement had many more cases that we didn’t hear about.”

Seniors are a prime target of scam artists, she said.

“They’re very good at their job. They prey directly on seniors and then they sell their information and people don’t always recognize they’ve been scammed.”

See **Elder abuse** on page 15B

Split council decides to proceed with \$35M safety building

■ *Some aldermen say cost of combined police, fire station too high to foist on Port taxpayers*

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM  
Ozaukee Press staff

PORT WASHINGTON - By a narrow vote Tuesday, the Port Washington Common Council decided to move ahead with plans to build a \$35 million public safety building on the city’s west side.

Aldermen voted 4-2-1 to approve a contract with Bray Architects of Sheboygan to proceed with final design of the building. Aldermen Deb Postl, Paul Neumyer, Jonathan Pleitner and Dan Benning voted to approve the contract while aldermen Pat Tearney and Mike Gasper voted against the contract and Ald. John Sigwart abstained.

Aldermen then voted 6-1, with Sigwart abstaining, to hire CD Smith of Milwaukee as construction manager for the project.

Aldermen approved the project without a clear sense of the impact of the cost to taxpayers.

“Are we going to have a discussion of the tax implications tonight?” Sigwart asked, noting he was “knocked back on my heels” by the \$35 million cost estimate.

“It seems to me we should have had a better idea (of the impact) in mind,” he added.

City Administrator Melissa Pingel said, “We can’t have that until we have better numbers.”

Mayor Ted Neitzke noted that having an owner’s representative will reduce the cost, adding, “Once there’s a final dollar See **Safety building** on page 2B

# Semiconductors: *Land would likely be annexed*

FROM PAGE 1B

If someone wants to sell their property to a developer, government can't step in and stop it, Didier said.

The Town of Port, he said, would be appealing to a company like a microchip manufacturer.

"There's a lot of water. There's a lot of land, and it's near a lot of people," Didier said, noting many microchip makers hire about 300 people.

"That's like Simplicity opening up again," he said. "I think the city could handle that."

The potential development pointed out an issue with the town's zoning laws, which require homes in the agricultural districts to be on 35-acre lots.

"That's why there's all this land available," Didier said. "There are big parcels out here."

While the town controls the zoning of property within its borders, a company can get around it if it seeks to annex land to the City of Port, and there's little the town can do to prevent an annexation, he added.

Years ago, the town sought to incorporate as a village to prevent annexations, and the state Department of Administration turned down the request, Didier noted.

Even if the land were to remain in the town, Didier said, it is likely that there would be state backing for a microchip manufacturing facility and the Legislature could pass a bill that would pave the way for the project.

"Only municipalities can change the zoning — but that's not to say there won't be a bill passed," Didier said.

"Realistically, they are going to annex to

the city."

When asked his personal feeling about the potential development, Didier said, "I don't know enough to make an opinion."

Several residents asked what town officials knew of the situation and whether they stood to gain from it, since the semiconductor manufacturer is offering \$42,000 per acre.

"Do you have skin in the game?" Susan Waldhuetter, 1856 Dixie Rd., Town of Belgium, asked.

Didier and town supervisors Gary Schlenvogt and Greg Welton said they are not among those choosing to sell their property.

Although town officials have not been approached about the proposed development, Didier said, city and county officials may have been.

He said he has not talked to Port Mayor Ted Neitzke about the proposal, but at the urging of the audience agreed to reach out to him.

Paul Krauska, 4836 Hwy. LL, told the board he has been told that the company has agreements with landowners to buy 1,899 acres of land.

The residents need information and direction "so as constituents, as a group, we can stop it or slow it down so it can't happen," he said.

The company is looking for land in an area that extends north from Knellsville at the town's border with the City of Port Washington to roughly Dixie Road and from I-43 west to the Ozaukee Interurban Trail.

Town officials said they first learned of the potential land purchases from Krauska, who told Ozaukee Press he was approached by Jeff Hoffman, a principal with the



**RESIDENTS TOLD** officials Monday that they are afraid a massive semiconductor facility would destroy the rural character of the Town of Port Washington, which is depicted on a sign outside Town Hall.

Press file photo

Milwaukee commercial real estate company Cushman & Wakefield/Boerke, who wanted to buy his land for the company.

The manufacturer is also looking at communities in Ohio and Indiana as potential sites for its plant, according to information provided to landowners by Hoffman.

Hoffman initially told landowners that he had until May 31 to secure accepted offers on roughly 1,000 acres if the Town of Port Washington is to make the "finalist cut" with the company, although the deadline may have been extended.

According to the timeline Hoffman provided potential sellers, the buyer will compare and evaluate the three potential sites for its facility from July through August.

The identity of the semiconductor manufacturer is unknown, but a landowner who asked not to be identified told Ozaukee Press that Hoffman described it as a U.S. company currently making semiconductors overseas.

In addition to the availability of adequate land, factors it will consider include the cost of the infrastructure needed to support the

facility, conversations with local, state and federal agencies that will need to approve the project and a review of the existing labor force as well as the likelihood of attracting workers to the area.

The company is expected to announce the intended location of the facility in September.

Hoffman described the four months from September to December as a "critical" period during which the company will submit plans for its facility and public hearings will be held locally.

At the same time, the company will begin seeking environmental permits from state and federal agencies.

"Within this time frame we should have a pretty good idea of whether or not the project will receive the support that it will need to get across the finish line," Hoffman wrote.

The company plans to secure final approvals in June 2025 and buy land at the location it chooses by the end of July.

Construction could begin in late summer 2025 or in spring 2026.

## Center: *Clinic building no longer interests city*

FROM PAGE 3B

a proposal that has been endorsed by a number of seniors in the community.

Neitzke said earlier this year that he and the city staff members would talk to officials from Aurora to see "if they're willing to work with us so we can study the property and see if it will fit the needs for a community center."

The former clinic at 1777 W. Grand Ave. is 16,000 square feet on 4.2 acres and was built in 1992.

The fact the building is one floor, has ample parking and is off a main street were among the attractions for seniors, who have long complained of a lack of parking at the current senior center, which is located in a renovated church with multiple floors.

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## Community News

**FREDONIA** New Ozaukee High School principal relishes return to small school. **6B**

**SAUKVILLE** First apartments in Northern Gateway to open this month. **6B**

**GRAFTON** Review Board votes 3-1 to OK TID focused on dilapidated foundry. **7B**

**BELGIUM** Slaughterhouse gets permit but can only process 100 animals a day. **8B**

# Ozaukee PRESS

Published in Port Washington



## INSIDE:

Parade, food, entertainment and idyllic weather draw crowds to Port Fish Days.

See page 5B

www.ozaukeepress.com

Thursday, July 25, 2024

Section B

# City secretly prepping for possible microchip plant

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM  
Ozaukee Press staff

PORT WASHINGTON - The City of Port Washington has hired two law firms and a financial adviser to guide it through a “large economic development project” that could entail the annexation of land and creation of a tax incremental financing district — a project that fits the description of one being considered by a semiconductor manufacturer in the Town of Port Washington — according to documents obtained by Ozaukee Press this week.

The documents signed by the city and

■ *Port hires law firms, financial adviser for single large project that may entail annexation and TIF district, documents indicate*

three firms after the Common Council emerged tight-lipped from a closed session last week, which were provided by the city pursuant to an open records request made by the Press, describe a single, large project in contrast to comments made by Mayor Ted Neitzke, who said last week the city is seeking guidance as it weighs a number of development proposals.

The breadth of services outlined in letters

from the law firm von Briesen and Roper and financial advisers Quarles and Brady and Ehlers includes advice on everything from the annexation of land and drafting a development agreement to the creation of a tax incremental financing district and extension of public utilities and roads.

Ehlers’ letter noted that it is being hired to “assist the client with evaluating the financial feasibility of a potential develop-

ment project that is expected to require creation of a tax incremental financing district as well as extension of public utilities and roadways.”

Landowners in the Town of Port Washington have told Ozaukee Press that a commercial real estate agent is offering \$42,000 per acre in an effort to obtain the rights to buy between 1,000 and 2,000 acres of mostly farmland in the town for a sprawling semiconductor manufacturing facility.

The Town of Port site is said to be one of three being considered by the manufacturer. See **Project** on page 11B



**WISCONSIN GOV. TONY EVERS** (in blue shirt) last week visited Tendick Nature Park in the Town of Saukville to see how state funds have been used to restore natural habitat there. Joining Evers were Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Director Andrew Struck (in black shirt), state Department of Administration Secretary Kathy Blumenfeld (in white jacket) and state Rep. Deb Andraca (left).

Photo by Sam Arendt

# A poster child for preservation

■ *Governor visits Ozaukee County’s Tendick Nature Park in the Town of Saukville to highlight how state funding is being used to protect Wisconsin’s coastal areas*

By DAN BENSON  
Ozaukee Press staff

Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers visited Tendick Nature Park in the Town of Saukville last week to highlight how state funding is helping to protect and restore state coastal areas.

Evers took a walking tour through the park on Wednesday, July 17, as part of a tour of projects that have received funding from the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program, or WCMP.

Evers was joined by state Department of Administration Secretary Kathy Blumenfeld, as well as by Ozaukee County

Planning and Parks Director Andrew Struck.

The Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Department received a \$93,333 grant through WCMP, the governor’s office said in a press release. The county is in the process of using those and other funds to complete stream, wetland and habitat restoration on Tendick Creek and other areas in the park.

The project will support activities to re-meander and restore a 905-foot stretch of degraded stream channel and restore 1.12 acres of wetlands.

Work at Tendick reviewed by Evers is the latest of several efforts undertaken

at Tendick in recent years, including a bluebird box trail, which has received statewide recognition.

Other projects include tree planting and native prairie restoration, which has taken place since 2007, with support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pheasants Forever, American Transmission Co., Bird City Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, We Energies and Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trust.

The 125-acre park includes a disc-golf course and boat and kayak launch on the Milwaukee River.

# County gets \$3.2 million to restore fish habitat

■ *Federal money will fund Sucker Brook work that includes flood mitigation*

By DAN BENSON  
Ozaukee Press staff

Ozaukee County has received \$3.2 million from the federal government to restore fish habitat along Sucker Brook in northern Ozaukee County and help reduce the impacts of flooding.

“We are extremely excited about this transformational funding to make a large, positive impact on Sucker Brook and Ozaukee County,” Ozaukee County Planning and Parks Director Andrew Struck said. “This is excellent news.”

Struck said the funds will be used to restore “several miles” of Sucker Brook, which extends south from Sheboygan County through the Town of Belgium and empties into Lake Michigan in the Town of Port Washington.

The federal funds are in addition to several hundred thousand dollars already spent by the county to improve fish passage along the stream.

The grant announcement was made in a press release last week issued by Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis.

The funding comes from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act.

“Across Wisconsin, communities are struggling to deal with increased flooding events that cause millions in damages and wipe out infrastructure that families rely on to get to work, school, and our main street businesses,” Baldwin said in the press release.

“This investment for Ozaukee County will not only improve the health of our Great Lakes, but also protect our communities from flooding and the infrastructure families and businesses rely on.”

According to the press release, Ozaukee See **Grant** on page 2B

## Glenn David Holtz

Glenn David Holtz, 58, of Fond du Lac, Wis., passed away Tuesday, July 9, 2024, after a short but hard-fought battle with cancer.

Glenn passed away in Port Washington, Wis., while being cared for and surrounded by his friends and family.

Glenn was born in Milwaukee, Wis., on March 10, 1966, to Norman and Donna (Sattler) Holtz.

Glenn graduated from Grafton High School in 1985, where he played football.

Glenn began his career in the parts department at Schmit Brothers Ford in Saukville, Wis. In 1996, he moved to Fond du Lac, Wis., working for Service Motors.

In 2012, Glenn transferred with many of the Service Motors staff to Holiday Automotive Ford, where he worked until February of this year.

Glenn will be remembered for being a loving son, grandson, nephew, brother, cousin, proud uncle and great friend. He had a phenomenal sense of humor and loved playing guitar.

Glenn also enjoyed playing pool, trap-shooting, golfing, bowling and playing softball.

Survivors include his three sisters, Kristin Rupnow, Kelly Baumann and Gina Rammes; three nephews, Dylan (Rebecca), Liam and Ethan; five nieces, Heidi (Gio), Sarah (Jon), Madison, Michaela, and Sophia Kate; and many close friends; co-workers; and family.

Glenn was preceded in death by his parents, Norman and Donna (Sattler) Holtz.

Visitation was held from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, July 20, 2024, at Uecker-Witt



Funeral Home in Fond du Lac, Wis.

The funeral service followed at 3 p.m. Burial took place at 11 a.m. Monday, July 22, 2024, at the “New” St. Mary’s Cemetery in Port Washington, Wis.

The family wishes to thank Sandy Duel, Hospice RN, from SSM Health at Home Hospice, for the care and comfort she gave Glenn during these past months in addition to his family, friends, and work family at Holiday Ford for their support and encouragement during this difficult time.

Services are in the care of Uecker-Witt Funeral Home, 524 North Park Ave., Fond du Lac, WI, 54935.

Additional information and a guestbook can be found at ueckerwitt.com.

## Terence R. Wiebe

Terence R. Wiebe of Port Washington passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, July 13, 2024. He was 60 years old.

He was born on May 28, 1964, in Port Washington and attended Grafton High School.

He worked for Lueder’s Lawn Seeding & Trucking Inc. for many years.

Terry will be remembered for his talents as a passionate cook, obtaining numerous successful entries into chili cook-offs at the R&R Bar. His skills brought him much pride, winning time after time in these competitions and creating special memories with his daughter.

During the warmer months, Terry’s family would look forward to his outdoor barbecues and bonfires. In the winter, he could often be found on his snowmobile.

Terry was an avid Wisconsin sports fan. He enjoyed watching the Packers, Brewers and the Bucks, rarely missing a game.

Some of Terry’s favorite things included driving his classic car, going to classic car shows, bowling, listening to the blues and singing karaoke at family parties.

Those left to cherish his memory are his daughter Kimberly Wiebe; granddaughter Cadence Peil; half brothers Roger “Butch” Wiebe Jr., Brian Wiebe and Sgt. Derek Lastovich; and nephews John Smith and Stanton Frank. He is further survived by many other relatives and friends.



Terence was preceded in death by his mother Sharon (Templeman) Lastovich (2017) and sister Jennifer (Wiebe) Kitzman (2010).

“Bye, see you, love you.”  
A celebration of life will take place at a later date.

Eernisse Funeral Home of Port Washington is assisting the family with arrangements.

Online condolences may be left at [www.eernissefuneralhome.com](http://www.eernissefuneralhome.com).

View obituaries from past issues at [ozaukeekeepress.com](http://ozaukeekeepress.com)

# Project: City won’t pay fees unless Port selected

FROM PAGE 1B

turer. The others are said to be in Ohio and Indiana.

If the Port site is selected, the land would likely be annexed to the City of Port.

Neitzke offered no specifics about the proposed development after the closed session, and other aldermen deferred comment to him.

The Press has also requested a number of other records related to the closed session, including communications the city may have received or sent to the entity responsible for the potential development project or its representatives.

In a letter to City Administrator Melissa Pingel, the Press also expressed concern about the closed session, which was listed as being for the purpose of obtaining “advice regarding a potential economic development project involving the City of Port Washington.”

The notice was vague, the Press states, and did not give the public “a reasonable idea of what the council was discussing in closed session.

“Please understand that we consider the ‘potential economic development project’ to be a critically important issue, one that the public has every right

to know about,” the Press’ letter states.

The letter from von Briesen and Roper to the city notes that the city asked the firm to offer “development advice, assistance with annexation of land, creation of a (tax incremental financing district, land acquisition, drafting of relevant documents, including a development agreement, and interpretation of financial pro formas related to the project” in the case the third party proceeds with the project.

The letter from Quarles specifies that it will participate in meetings and calls about the project, advise the city as to its options as to financing costs associated with the project and advise the city regarding the creation of a TIF district.

Ehlers’ letter states that it would prepare preliminary TIF projections and a cash flow analysis to determine if the costs can be supported and, if the project proceeds, recommend deal structure and measures to mitigate city risk associated with any “financing it may undertake or other requested public participation in the project,” and provide technical services related to the creation of a TIF district.

Each of the letters notes that the city will not be responsible for the fees unless the third party moves forward with the project.

Those fees could be substantial. Christopher Smith of von Briesen and Roper noted that the firm’s attorneys and paralegals bill at a rate of \$175 to \$530 an hour. He noted he is the primary attorney to handle the matter and said his rate is \$415 an hour.

Bridget Keating of Quarles and Brady said she would handle the bulk of the city work at a rate of \$675 an hour, while Ehlers noted its billing rate is \$350 an hour, adding that it expects its initial work before the company makes a commitment to Port would not exceed \$5,950.

## Ride: Sanctuary center would be coup for county

FROM PAGE 3B

“I’ve been interested in a bike campground for the Ozaukee Interurban Trail, so thought I might get ideas,” he wrote. “It was very nice, complete with sites, picnic tables, fire pits and a nature trail (with signage) talking about native trees in the area.”

Raising awareness for the shipwreck sanctuary and the nascent Shipwreck Coast Friends group is critical right now as Struck and other local advocates position the area to be the home to the proposed administrative center.

And there’s a lot at stake.

Last year’s facilities study calls for spending \$380,500 to improve the Port lighthouse and 1860 Light Station museum, including improving the stairway to the bluff overlooking the harbor, and \$380,000 to improve the Port Washington Historical Society’s Resource Center downtown, including facilitating educational programs.

But the biggest piece is \$8.33 million for the marine research and administrative center that would attract researchers from around the country.

The sanctuary is expected to be a national attraction, and the center would likely

include a housing component for researchers, the facilities study stated.

Capturing the center would be a major coup, officials say. And they believe they can make a strong case.


Those reasons include a deeper harbor for research vessels than available at the other communities, the nearness of its downtown to the lakefront, available land at Coal Dock Park and Port’s proximity to the airports and population centers of Milwaukee and Chicago, making it ideal as a gateway to the sanctuary for researchers and tourists.

People can donate through Struck’s GoFundMe page at [www.gofundme.com/f/conserving-public-access-to-lake-michigan](http://www.gofundme.com/f/conserving-public-access-to-lake-michigan).

Other ways to donate include:  
■ Writing a check made out to the “Ozaukee County Historical Society, Inc.” with a note “Andrew’s Ride of Lake Huron.”

■ Donating to the Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast Friends on their website at [shipwreck-coastfriends.org](http://shipwreck-coastfriends.org) with a note “Andrew’s Ride of Lake Huron.”

■ Donating on the Planning and Parks Department website at [ozaukeecounty.gov/540/Planning-Parks](http://ozaukeecounty.gov/540/Planning-Parks) and scrolling down to “Donate to Our Causes.”



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## Community News

**FREDONIA** Duration of EMS tax hike is referendum question for village officials. **6B**

**SAUKVILLE** Town to shuffle funds to pay for its share of crumbling bridge. **6B**

**GRAFTON** Parent group pulls off \$150,000 fundraiser for playground. **7B**

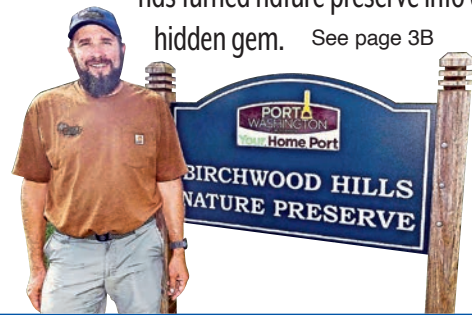
**BELGIUM** Residents pack meeting to debate controversial short-term rentals. **8B**

# Ozaukee PRESS

Published in Port Washington

## INSIDE:

With years of work and \$150K in grants, Port has turned nature preserve into a hidden gem. See page 3B



www.ozaukeepress.com

Thursday, August 8, 2024

Section B

# Officials signed microchip plant secrecy deal

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM  
Ozaukee Press staff

PORT WASHINGTON - Port Washington aldermen have signed nondisclosure agreements promising not to tell their constituents or anyone else about a proposed microchip production facility possibly slated for land that would be annexed to the city.

Ald. John Sigwart confirmed this week that he and the other aldermen signed the agreements in order to learn more about the project, which officials have guarded with secrecy. In fact, they have not even

■ *Alderman confirms that Port council members promised company they would not publicly discuss proposed facility*

acknowledged that they have discussed the proposed semiconductor fabrication facility, which the city referred to as "a potential economic development project" on a notice for a July 16 closed session of the Common Council.

"We wouldn't be able to meet with the representatives and find out what's going on," Sigwart said, adding the nondisclosure agreement (NDA) was required by the microchip maker.

That is the only reason he signed the agreement, Sigwart said.

"It wasn't because I thought it was a good idea," he said.

Other aldermen contacted by Ozaukee Press were not as forthcoming.

"I can't respond to that," Ald. Pat Tearney said. "I just can't. At some point, maybe I can. Right now, I can't."

Ald. Jonathan Pleitner said, "I can't comment on that at this time. I'm not going to comment or deny it. There's nothing to say right now."

"No comment," Ald. Mike Gasper said.

Ald. Paul Neumyer said aldermen signed "something" but were advised by City Attorney Eric Eberhardt not to say anything "at all."

Neitzke also declined to comment, saying he was waiting for an official statement to be prepared in response to questions about the NDA.

See **Agreement** on page 11B

## 'It was hard to be on the sidelines'

■ *Avid golfer who suffered debilitating neurologic event is back on links thanks to a special cart that a Grafton man is working to have at all courses in county*

By DAN BENSON  
Ozaukee Press staff

Hope Kittel was an accomplished high school golfer until just over a year ago when she suddenly lost the ability to walk, move her arms and legs, read, speak or breathe normally.

But now she is back on the golf course with the help of a device designed for people like her.

"It is hard to be on the sidelines watching others do things you desperately want to," Kittel wrote in an email.

The VertaCat cart allows people like Kittel to stand up again and participate in outdoor recreational activities and sports.

Grafton resident Todd Landfried, who also is disabled, is trying to get a VertaCat placed at every golf course in Ozaukee County through the Stand Up and Play Wisconsin Foundation.

Landfried is the director of the Eastern Wisconsin Chapter of the nonprofit group whose goal is to change "the lives of the mobility challenged veterans and other wheelchair users."

Landfried is an avid golfer who was injured in a snowmobile accident in 2022. With the help of Grafton-based Mel's Charities and other local businesses and charities, he was able to acquire his own VertaCat, which sells for about \$30,000.

"My wife Dina and I always golfed once a week" before the crash, he said. "My goal this summer was to get back to doing the things we had done together. I started doing my research and educated myself" about the VertaCat and the foundation.

Then he discovered Kittel.

"Through The United Training Foundation at Adapt and Conquer in Cedarburg, I met Hope, an incredible young lady who is determined and an inspiration to anyone that meets her," he said.

Kittel, the daughter of Eric and Jodi Kittel, began golfing when she was 7 years old.

"Growing up, I played a lot of golf with my dad and friends," she said.

In high school, she played on the varsity golf team in her freshman and sophomore years and went to state in her sophomore season.

But her life changed in March 2023. See **Recovery** on page 2B



HOPE KITTEL, 18, OF CEDARBURG, followed through on a swing at Mee-Kwon Park Golf Course in Mequon last week with the help of a VertaCat cart. An accomplished golfer in high school, Kittel was struck in 2023 by a condition that took away her ability to walk, speak or move her arms and legs.

Photo by Sam Arendt

## Man charged with homicide in Grafton overdose death

■ *Convicted drug dealer accused of selling fentanyl to man found in his car outside apartment in May*

By BILL SCHANEN IV  
Ozaukee Press staff

A 46-year-old man who has been convicted of dealing drugs in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties was charged last week in Ozaukee County Circuit Court with selling fentanyl to a Grafton man who overdosed on the drug and died in May.

Milwaukee resident Tavares D. Kimbrough faces one count of first-degree reckless homicide, three counts of delivering cocaine and one count of delivering fentanyl.

He is being held in the county jail in lieu of \$250,000 bail.

According to a criminal complaint, officers were called to an apartment complex on Fourth Avenue in Grafton at 3:15 p.m. Wednesday, May 22, and found a man in the driver's seat of a gray Audi who was not breathing.

Officer Chris Cheek, however, noticed the man was still warm, so he pulled him from the car onto the pavement of the parking lot and began performing chest compressions. A Grafton ambulance crew arrived a short time later and was able to restore the man's heartbeat. He was taken to Aurora Medical Center in Grafton but later died.

The man's roommate, who had found him in the car and called 911, told officers that at about 3 p.m. Tuesday, May 21, the victim called "T," who authorities later identified as Kimbrough, to arrange the purchase of \$100 worth of cocaine.

The man said he went with the victim to a McDonald's on West Fond du Lac Avenue in Milwaukee, where they met Kimbrough and paid him \$100 for cocaine, the complaint states.

Kimbrough then showed them a folded piece of paper containing a brown, sponge-like substance, saying, "This is what else I See **Overdose** on page 4B

## Audrey Michalowski

Mrs. Audrey Michalowski of Port Washington, formerly of Milwaukee and South Milwaukee, passed away at Lawlis Family Hospice Center in Mequon on July 24, 2024. She was 96 years old.

Audrey was born to Frank and Florence (nee LePine) Leu in Chicago, Ill., on March 24, 1928.

She grew up in Fond du Lac and attended local schools. The family later moved out east, where Audrey met the love of her life at a basketball game in Massachusetts.

On July 9, 1946, she was united in marriage with Frederick Michalowski in Worcester, Mass.

The couple settled in Milwaukee and began their family of six children. They later moved to South Milwaukee before moving to Port Washington in 2000.

Frederick preceded Audrey in death in 2010.

Mrs. Michalowski was a valued employee of Catholic Knights Insurance Co. in Milwaukee for many years.

Audrey was very involved with her children's events at St. Agnes Grade School, where she helped as an adult leader for Boy Scouts, was the cheerleading coach and helped produce the school musicals.

As a member of Divine Mercy Parish in South Milwaukee, Audrey helped with liturgical planning and bible groups. She sat on the City of Festivals Parade Board for many years, as well as the Catholic Knights Board.

After moving to Port Washington, Audrey became a member St. Mary's Catholic Church, presently St. John XXIII Parish. Always a social butterfly, she joined both the Port Washington and the Grafton chapters of the Red Hat Society. Mrs. Michalowski was a member of the Port Washington Woman's Club, where she served on the scholarship committee, and the Port Washington Senior Center, where she enjoyed singing.

Audrey loved the art of clowning and took on the character of Snookie the clown for 10 years.

She is survived by her sons Bruce (Beth), Kim (Yolanda), Kevin (Cheri), Brian and Keith (Sherri) Michalowski; daughter Kathy (the late Tom) Lieburn; 15 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren; and one



great-great-grandson.

Audrey is further survived by brother Richard (Nancy) Leu, sister-in law Mary (the late Marvin) Leu, nieces, nephews, other family members and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband Frederick, infant grandson Matthew James, sister Ruth (the late Joseph) Beagen and brothers Donald (the late Mary Ann), Marvin and Frank Leu.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 6 p.m. Friday, Aug. 16, at St. John XXIII Catholic Parish, St. Peter of Alcantara Church, 1800 N. Wisconsin St., Port Washington. Father Patrick Wendt will preside.

Audrey will be laid to rest beside her husband at Forest Hill Memorial Park in Oak Creek the following day.

The family will receive visitors at St. John XXIII Parish, St. Peter of Alcantara Church, on Friday, Aug. 16, from 4 p.m. until Mass begins at 6 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorials are suggested in her name to the Port Washington Woman's Club Scholarship Fund.

Eernisse Funeral Home is assisting the family with arrangements.

Online condolences may be left at [www.eernissefuneralhome.com](http://www.eernissefuneralhome.com).

## Agreement: Lawyer calls signing of NDAs by officials 'a poor choice'

FROM PAGE 1B

Ozaukee Press has made a public records request seeking copies of the NDA signed by aldermen and other city officials.

The Press has also requested a number of other records related to a closed session regarding the project held last month, including communications the city may have received or sent to the entity responsible for the potential development project or its representatives.

Port Washington attorney Tom Kamenick of the Wisconsin Transparency Project said Tuesday that the document should be public.

Kamenick said officials are within their rights to sign NDAs, but "my personal opinion is the public is usually not well served by that type of secrecy.

"Even if it's within what's allowed legally, it's a poor choice to agree not to share this information. I don't think it benefits the public."

There is a conflict in signing NDAs because officials then agree to conduct the public's business in private, Kamenick said.

"I do think there's a conflict," he said. "Their primary responsibility is to the public."

Sigwart said it was that concern that made him pause before signing the agreement.

"Sure it concerns me," he said. "I almost didn't sign it because of that. But I was kind of stuck. I did it just so I could learn about the project."

He's told constituents that once the NDA is lifted he wants their opinions.

At Monday's Port Washington Town Board meeting, resident Paul Krauska questioned why officials would sign such a document.

"How can a company ask public officials who work for the people, who represent the people, to sign an NDA?" Krauska asked.

Town Chairman Mike Didier noted anyone can ask for anything.

"I think the question is why would a public official sign an NDA?" Didier said.

Port city officials have been loath to say anything about the proposed semiconductor fabrication development, even after meeting in closed session last month and then hiring a financial advisor and two law firms to help officials "provide advice regarding a potential economic development project involving the City of Port Washington."

Landowners in the Town of Port Washington have told Ozaukee Press that a commercial real estate agent has helped a semiconductor manufacturer obtain the right to buy between 1,000 and 2,000 acres of mostly farmland in the town for \$42,000 an acre.

The manufacturer is said to be considering not only the Town of Port land — which would be annexed to the City of Port if the deal goes through — but also sites in Indiana and Ohio.

If the Port site is selected, the land would be annexed to the City of Port.

An informal discussion about the proposed microchip factory was held at the town meeting after Krauska questioned town officials about it.

"Is it true they're looking for 1,000 to 2,000 acres?" town resident Katherine "Kitchie" Allen asked. "That's worrisome."

Town Clerk Heather Krueger asked if there is anything the town can do to prevent the land from being annexed to the city.

"Is there anything the town could do to tempt this company to stay in the town?" she asked, noting the huge loss of town land if the properties were annexed to the city.

The town can lodge an objection with the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Didier said, but the department usually sides with the municipality.

He also noted that if Port is selected for the plant, a significant amount of work could likely move ahead without any local approvals.

"They could buy the land, do surveys, site planning, engineering, raze houses, move dirt," he said.

View obituaries from past issues at  
[ozaukeekeepress.com](http://ozaukeekeepress.com)

## EMS: Failed referendums could further complicate joint service

FROM PAGE 2B

departments received \$640,000.

ARPA money needs to be earmarked by the end of 2024 and spent by the end of 2026, and once it runs out municipalities are on their own when it comes to paying for EMS services.

The villages of Belgium and Fredonia have reached consensus that they will hold referendums in November to fund the service, and both towns plan to hold elector meetings for the same purpose. If any of those votes fail, the municipalities still must find a way to fund the program through 2027.

The Village of Fredonia, which has the only municipal fire department serving any of the communities — Belgium's and Waubeka's departments are independent — is running the service and contracting with the other three communities.

The formula for how to pay for the service takes into account population, call volume and equalized value of property improvement.

The Join Fire/EMS Committee has an agreement in place but has been working on the language for a longer-term agreement that all four municipal boards would have to approve.

Leider said four sections of the Town of Fredonia are served by the Random Lake Fire Department and shouldn't be included in the funding formula.

Belgium Clerk Vickie Boehnlein on Tuesday said she couldn't find population data broken out by section, but she found equalized value levels and removed that portion from the next draft of the agreement.

Belgium Town Chairman Tom Winker said the town has a couple of sections covered by Random Lake as well, and

Boehnlein said those aren't included.

In addition, since the county grant money will run out before 2026 to fund 24/7 paramedic service — round-the-clock coverage has been the committee's goal from the start — all four municipalities will have to pay for the service through a separate agreement. The committee has to determine if it wants to offset the repayment costs with billing revenue from paramedics the program earns from 2023 through 2025.

Revenue will be factored into the formula for the long-term agreement.

Leider also wants the Village of Fredonia to drop its paramedic intercept fee it charges the Waubeka Fire Department, which serves the Town of Fredonia. The town, he said, gets charged twice since it's already being charged through the formula in the ALS paramedic level services agreement.

"Why do you have to rub salt in the wound between two departments? To me it's a ridiculous charge because in 2026 you're taking it off anyhow," Leider said.

"I think you need to put your common sense hat on and what would happen if that was me?" Winker said. "You wouldn't be too happy."

Fredonia Village President Dan Gehrke said, "I agree it sounds funny."

Boehnlein said the town and village can figure out the issue themselves since it's not part of the agreement, but said if the charge remains it would be counted as revenue and offset the expenses.

Fredonia Town Attorney Nate Jung asked that the opt-out language in the agreement be clarified, along with other wording.

The committee will meet at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 21, to fine tune the agreement's language.



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## Community News

**SAUKVILLE** Town takes over care of tiny cemeteries with long histories. **5B**

**GRAFTON** Culture of giving, inclusion fuels parish celebrating 175 years. **6B**

**FREDONIA** Waubeka Fire Department to celebrate 125th anniversary Saturday. **5B**

**BELGIUM** Village will ask voters to raise tax levy by \$150K a year for EMS. **8B**

# Ozaukee PRESS

Published in Port Washington

## INSIDE:



Family Sharing Food Pantry partners with area farm to turn expired food into rich soil to grow more to eat. **Page 3B**

www.ozaukeepress.com

Thursday, August 15, 2024

Section B



**A NUMBER OF** mooring buoys dotted the deck of the Coast Guard buoy tender Spar, which for the last week has been placing them near 19 shipwrecks in the Wisconsin Shipwreck National Marine Sanctuary — including three sites near Port Washington. Crew members use sophisticated equipment to place one of the mooring buoys, tracking them on a screen (farm right in lower photo) to ensure they are located near a wreck, not on top of it.

*Photos courtesy of the Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary*

## Buoyming mission to protect wrecks

■ *Coast Guard, NOAA place mooring buoys near shipwrecks in national marine sanctuary off Port to save sunken treasures from anchors, guide divers*

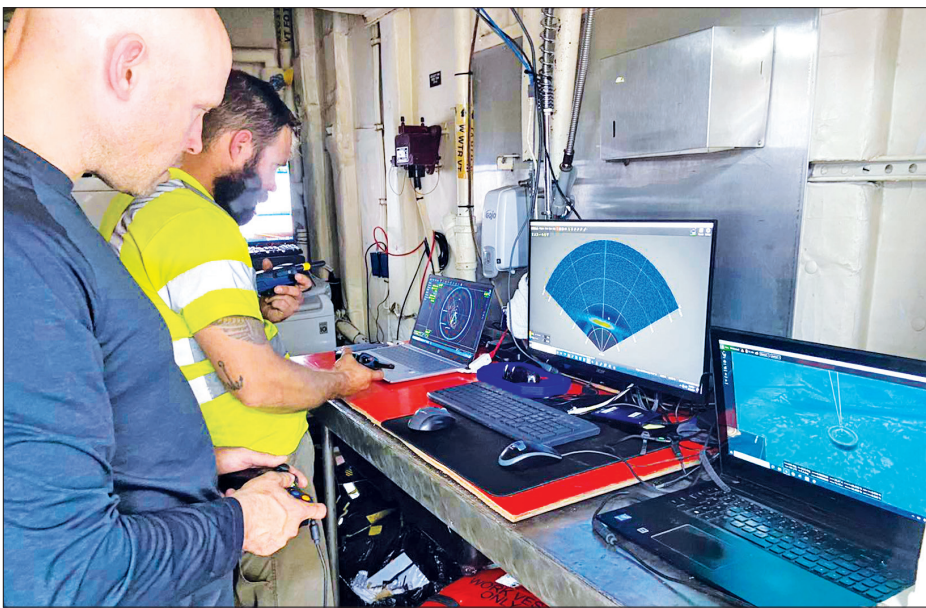
By **KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM**  
Ozaukee Press staff

**PORT WASHINGTON** - In one of the first tangible signs of the Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary, the Coast Guard vessel Spar spent several days last week off Port Washington placing mooring buoys at three area shipwrecks.

The buoys were placed at the sites of the Niagara, Northerner and Mahoning, Russ Green, superintendent of the sanctuary, said Monday.

It's all part of a two-week project expected to wrap up this week that will place mooring buoys at the sites of 19 shipwrecks in the sanctuary, which runs from Port to Two Rivers, he said.

The 225-foot-long Spar, a Coast Guard buoy tender, is being used to do the work in See **Buoys** on page 2B



## No reply to request for microchip plant secrecy agreement

■ *Tight-lipped city has yet to disclose deal signed by officials pledging not to divulge details of possible facility*

By **KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM**  
Ozaukee Press staff

**PORT WASHINGTON** - The City of Port Washington has yet to release a non-disclosure agreement aldermen signed promising not to publicly discuss details of a possible microchip fabrication facility.

Ozaukee Press requested a copy of the agreement under Wisconsin's Public Records Law on Aug. 6, and City Clerk Susan Westerbeke said this week the request is being reviewed by the city's legal counsel. The Press had not received a response as of Wednesday morning.

Mayor Ted Neitzke, who last week declined to comment on the agreement, saying he was waiting for an official statement to be prepared in response to questions about the agreement, has not issued that response yet.

The agreement was signed by aldermen who promise not to tell their constituents or anyone else about a proposed microchip production facility possibly slated for land that would be annexed to the city.

Ald. John Sigwart last week confirmed that officials signed the documents in order to learn more about the project, which has been shrouded in secrecy.

Aldermen have not even acknowledged they discussed the proposed semiconductor facility, which the city referred to as a "potential economic development project" on a notice for the July 16 closed session of the See **Microchip** on page 4B

## Ozaukee Central Fire Department ushers in new era

By **MICHAEL BABCOCK**  
Ozaukee Press staff

An agreement to merge the Grafton and Saukville fire departments into one — the Ozaukee Central Fire Department — is receiving final approval from the villages and towns of Grafton and Saukville this week.

On Tuesday, the Grafton Village Board approved an agreement that creates a Fire Board of Directors and a Commission, each composed of members from the four municipalities, to oversee the new joint department.

The agreement splits the cost of the de-

■ *Grafton OKs agreement with Saukville, towns to create joint department intended to improve service, save money*

partment according to three equally weighted factors — the municipalities' population, equalized value and call volume — resulting in an estimated \$3 million share for the Village of Grafton, \$935,000 for the Town of Grafton, \$926,000 for the Village of Saukville and \$380,000 for the Town of Saukville.

"These numbers still need to be refined, but they are very, very close to the final,"

Grafton Village Administrator Jesse Thyges said.

Because the village incurs the brunt of the cost, Thyges said, it receives "tie-breaking" representation on the new committees.

The Village of Grafton gets three seats on the Board of Directors, which oversees the department's budget and policy, compared to two for the Town of Grafton, two for the Village of Saukville and one for the Town of Saukville.

On the Fire Commission, which oversees hiring and disciplinary action, the Village of Grafton receives two seats, compared to one from each of the other municipalities.

Fire Board members will be appointed by their municipality and serve two-year terms. Commission members will also be appointed by their municipality but serve staggered five-year terms.

The Grafton Village Board appointed Trustees Mary Pat Fenton and Andrew Schwartz to the Fire Board on Monday. The third seat will be filled by a resident See **OCFD** on page 6B

# Microchip: Officials say town is essentially helpless

FROM PAGE 1B

Common Council.  
The Press has also made a public records request for a number of other records related to that closed session, including communications the city may have received or sent to the entity responsible for the project or its representatives.  
Port Washington attorney Tom Kamenick of the Wisconsin Transparency Project said that the nondisclosure agreement should be public.

“I can’t think of a good reason to deny it,” he said of the Press’ request.  
An unfortunate part of the public records law, he said is that there are no strict deadlines for a response.  
Instead, officials are directed to produce the documents as soon as practicable and without delay, Kamenick said.  
Asked whether officials should err on the side of disclosing the records, he said, “I’d love them to do that.”  
City officials have been reluctant to say

anything about the proposed semiconductor fabrication development, even after meeting in closed session last month and then hiring a financial advisor and two law firms to help officials “provide advice regarding a potential economic development project involving the City of Port Washington.”  
Landowners in the Town of Port Washington have told Ozaukee Press that a commercial real estate agent has helped a semiconductor manufacturer obtain the right to buy between 1,000 and 2,000 acres of mostly farmland in the town for \$42,000 an acre.  
The manufacturer is said to be considering not only the Town of Port land — which would be annexed to the City of Port if the deal goes through — but also sites in Indiana and Ohio.

More importantly, he said, would be the impact on the community.  
“I like my little town, and I like our city just the way it is,” Schlenvogt said. “I like the peace and quiet and traditions here. It would definitely be a big change if it happens.”  
Supr. Greg Welton said he has mixed feelings.  
“I would hate for the city, for the whole area, to grow too much too fast,” he said. “We’re going to lose some of our small-town charm.”  
But, he said, an increased number of good jobs, as well as ancillary developments, could benefit the area.

## Drugs: Gun found with drugs in car stopped in Saukville

FROM PAGE 2B

tained suspected marijuana oil or wax, a marijuana vape device and mail addressed to McNeal.  
While searching the vehicle, Zilke noticed a child sleeping in the back seat who was not in a car seat or wearing a seatbelt. Adams told the deputy that the boy was McNeal’s 3-year-old son.  
In a purple tote bag that the boy was using as a pillow Zilke found three sandwich bags, two of which contained a combined 116 grams of methamphetamine and another that contained 29 grams of cocaine, according to the complaint.  
Both McNeal and Adams said they didn’t know the methamphetamine and cocaine were in the vehicle and they did not belong to them, although McNeal admitted the marijuana bag from the dispensary was his, the complaint states.  
Zilke then searched the center console of the vehicle and immediately found a .40 caliber bullet.  
Also found in a large compartment un-

der the cup holders in the console were four packages of marijuana and two receipts from a dispensary with McNeal’s name on them, a digital scale and a Glock 23 handgun with clip that contained 11 rounds of ammunition next to it, according to the complaint.  
In addition, a single ecstasy pill was found in the compartment.  
McNeal denied knowing about the gun but said the marijuana found in the console and ecstasy pill were his, the complaint states.  
Adams said the gun was his, and when pressed by Zilke about how he obtained it, Adams said he found it.  
Although McNeal said the marijuana in the vehicle belonged to him, Adams told authorities that it was his.  
During an Aug. 6 court hearing, Ozaukee County Circuit Judge Steve Cain set McNeal’s bail at \$50,000 and Adams’ at \$35,000 and ordered both men not to leave the state or possess guns or other weapons if they post bail.

If the Port site is selected, the land would be annexed to the City of Port.  
In June, a number of town residents appealed to the Town Board to oppose the microchip facility, saying it will irreparably change the town and surrounding areas.  
Town officials have not officially weighed in on the project, despite the fact the land under consideration is in the township.  
“I hope it doesn’t happen,” Supr. Gary Schlenvogt said. “We don’t need it. The town would lose thousands of acres of tax base. We’d have less tax money to do needed projects.”

Town Chairman Mike Didier said he’s waiting to find out more about the proposal before passing judgment.  
“I wouldn’t say on its face I’m opposed to it,” Didier said, noting much will depend on the size of the facility and impact on the surrounding area. “The bigger it is, the less appealing it is.”  
He compared it to Charter Steel in Saukville.  
“If that was proposed today, I suspect people would object to it,” he said. “Is Charter Steel bad for the village, for the region? No.”  
Town officials said there may be little they can do if the town decides to oppose the facility, given the fact it’s likely to benefit from federal funds and state backing.  
“Right now, we just have to wait and see,” he said.

## Food Alliance to host community meal

The Ozaukee Food Alliance will host a community meal Saturday, Aug. 17, at its facility in Saukville.  
In-person dining will be from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. with take-out meals available from 12:30 to 1 p.m.

The meal, provided by Lumen Christi Parish in Mequon, will include pulled pork sandwiches, roasted potatoes, baked beans, sweet corn and dessert bars.  
The Food Alliance is at 100 E. Green Bay Ave.

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