

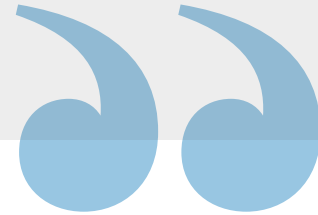
2024

# Annual Report

FROM EVERY CORNER: TRUSTED JOURNALISM  
FOR WISCONSIN'S COMMUNITIES

# A letter from the CEO

By listening closely to underserved communities and responding to their needs, we aim to cover not just problems but *potential solutions*.



Dear reader,

I watched local news thrive in the late '90s when I served on the board of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. We had strong advertising revenue, deep community ties and a central role in public life. Then the internet reshaped everything – Craigslist killed classifieds, Amazon wiped out local retailers, and most local newspapers, including ours, were sold off to out-of-state chains focused on cutting costs.

These technological shifts and the collapse of local advertising devastated the business model that once sustained local journalism. Once-thriving newspapers across Wisconsin have been hollowed out, losing the resources and local knowledge necessary to provide meaningful coverage. This loss isn't just an industry trend; it's a democratic crisis.

Historically, local journalism helped citizens understand pressing issues, hold officials accountable and engage in civic life. With most communities now lacking local reporters, critical stories go unreported, and public meetings go unobserved, eroding the foundation of informed decision-making and effective self-governance.

In response, Wisconsin Watch is stepping in to rebuild this essential infrastructure. Our in-depth reporting team continues to investigate urgent issues wherever they arise, and our statehouse bureau fills gaps left by media cutbacks, ensuring residents know what elected officials are doing. We are expanding local newsrooms in Milwaukee and northeast Wisconsin – notably we merged with Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service in July 2024 and are continuing our collaborative efforts with the NEW News Lab initiative – covering essential beats like education, criminal justice, health and housing, guided by community input.

By listening closely to underserved communities and responding to their needs, we aim to cover not just problems but potential solutions. Our impact is already visible: Investigative stories have influenced public decisions, like halting the privatization of nursing homes, and our regional collaborations are bridging the gaps left by traditional media.



CEO George Stanley talks with Richard Brown, Chief of Growth and Innovation for Wisconsin Watch and Neighborhood News Service. (Narayan Mahon for Wisconsin Watch)

Looking forward, our vision at Wisconsin Watch is both ambitious and urgent. Through new funding and strategic partnerships, we are establishing a statewide network of local journalism hubs capable of informing and empowering citizens in every region. Our model is driven by listening, community engagement, collaboration and a commitment to telling the stories that matter most to ordinary people. As a battleground state drowning in disinformation, Wisconsin stands at a critical crossroads. **Rebuilding local journalism here could serve as a national blueprint for restoring the vital link between a free press and a functioning democracy.**

THANK YOU.

George Stanley  
Chief Executive Officer



Wisconsin Watch and Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service staff are photographed during an all-staff meeting on Feb. 6, 2025, in Madison, Wisconsin. (Narayan Mahon for Wisconsin Watch)

## Who we are

Wisconsin Watch is a nonprofit organization dedicated to using journalism to make the communities of Wisconsin strong, informed and connected. As a locally based nonprofit news organization, we expose wrongdoing, listen to the everyday problems in our communities, shine a light on issues that merit public attention and explore best practices for improving public policies. Every story we publish is rigorously fact-checked to ensure accuracy and fairness.

## We don't just report the news — we engage and connect communities.

By collaborating with news organizations across Wisconsin and beyond, we expand the reach of our reporting, ensuring critical stories reach the people who need them most. Our multimedia reports are distributed freely through our sites, newsletters, social networks and hundreds of print and broadcast outlets statewide.

Wisconsin Watch is home to **two newsrooms and a regional initiative** that work together to strengthen local journalism and amplify underrepresented voices.



Our statewide investigative newsroom uncovers systemic issues affecting communities across Wisconsin, putting local challenges into broader context.



Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service (NNS), a community-based newsroom in Milwaukee for 14 years and now - as of July 1, 2024 - an independent division of Wisconsin Watch, delivers deeply rooted, community-driven reporting on issues that matter to Milwaukee's central city and communities of color.



The NEW News Lab in northeast Wisconsin fills local news gaps through collaboration with six for-profit and nonprofit news organizations.

By exposing the truth, we spark change that improves communities across Wisconsin. Explore the stories in this report and learn more about our mission at [wisconsinwatch.org](https://wisconsinwatch.org) or scan the QR code.



# Newsrooms & Initiatives

FACT BRIEFS

STATEHOUSE BUREAU

MILWAUKEE NEIGHBORHOOD  
NEWS SERVICE

NEW NEWS LAB

NEWS414

PROPUBLICA



NO.

## Fact briefs

In 2024, Wisconsin Watch produced 181 fact briefs in partnership with Gigafact. The bite-sized 150-word fact checks are aimed at fighting misinformation using a “yes/no” format to answer questions. The fact briefs are some of the most-read stories on our website, drawing new audiences from around the world.

In 2024, Wisconsin Watch hired veteran fact checker Tom Kertscher full-time and multimedia journalist Trisha Young, who turns our fact briefs into audio clips for radio stations and video shorts for sharing on social media channels, serving audiences this vital information wasn’t reaching before.

This work was made possible with support from the International Fact-Checking Network, the Jampart Charitable Trust, the Horizon Charitable Foundation and Wisconsin Watch member supporters.

NO.

Yes.



Matthew DeFour, Wisconsin Watch’s state bureau chief, photographed on Feb. 6, 2025, in Madison, Wis. (Narayan Mahon for Wisconsin Watch)

## Statehouse bureau

Wisconsin Watch’s statehouse team emerged as a leader during a chaotic election season in which the eyes of the nation were on our state. State Bureau Chief Matthew DeFour organized Wisconsin Media Row at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee. National conventions are expensive television spectacles that can be cost-prohibitive for local news organizations to attend, but [DeFour brought together a consortium of 24 media organizations](#) that worked with the RNC on a discounted rate for desks and internet access during the four-day event. It was the first time a national political convention had accommodated a consortium of local reporters. Partly for his efforts, DeFour was named an Institute for Nonprofit News Newcomer of the Year finalist. Statehouse reporter Jack Kelly also affirmed his reporting prowess among the Capitol press corps, breaking the story of a



Spectators in the crowd cheer on Ohio U.S. Sen. JD Vance after he was nominated as the Republican vice presidential candidate during the Republican National Convention on July 15, 2024, at Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



Hallie Claffin, Wisconsin Watch statehouse reporting intern, right, interviews former Gov. Scott Walker following a WisPolitics and Marquette University Law School political discussion during the Republican National Convention on July 16, 2024, at the Marquette Law School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)

draft of a Wisconsin Supreme Court opinion, [which led the chief justice to call for a police investigation into this unprecedented “ostensible leak.”](#)

The statehouse team also produced a first-of-its-kind voter guide, previewing all 132 state legislative, eight congressional and U.S. Senate races. The guide allowed voters to type in their home address and not only find out more about the candidates, but also link to Wisconsin Watch and trusted partner news coverage of those elections.

In October, Wisconsin Watch published a six-part series, [“Change is on the Air,”](#) documenting the changing landscape of talk radio in the state. The series was produced by DeFour’s UW-Madison investigative journalism class with photography by Wisconsin Watch photographer Joe Timmerman.



PrincessSafiya Byers knows that showing up in the community is the only way to authentically tell the stories of residents. (Photo provided by the Institute for Nonprofit News)



# Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service

Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service (NNS) delivers high-quality, fact-based news about Milwaukee neighborhoods to Milwaukee residents. With a more localized approach to reporting, NNS engages communities throughout the city, deepening our connections to them and expanding the range of stories we report.

We work to provide reader-centric reporting that:

- **Celebrates** the ordinary people who do extraordinary things in the city to balance out the overemphasis of trauma and drama in communities of color.
- **Educates** the community about resources that are available to help them navigate the complexities of life.
- **Illuminates** through watchdog reporting and explanatory journalism significant issues of interest for and in our communities.
- **Innovates** through the use of technology such as texting, videos, audio, etc., that elevates our storytelling to engage and meet residents where they are.



## NEW News Lab

NEW News Lab is a local news collaboration in northeast Wisconsin advancing in-depth local reporting. In addition to Wisconsin Watch, the collaboration includes FoxValley365, The Post-Crescent, Green Bay Press-Gazette, The Press Times, and Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR).



Traffic passes on the Leo Frigo Memorial Bridge, running over the Fox River and large coal piles, at Metro Boat Launch in Green Bay, Wis., on Oct. 3, 2024. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)

The Lab’s mission is to “identify and fill information gaps to help residents explore ways to improve their communities and lives – and strengthen democracy.” Mary Snapp, vice president of Microsoft Philanthropy, said the NEW News Lab has been by far the best example of collaborative journalism of all the regional projects Microsoft has helped seed. “It’s a model we hope can be studied and replicated across the country,” Snapp said.



From left, Third Space Green Bay founders Ivy McGee, Sarah Titus and Jasmine Gordon pose for a portrait outside Kavarna Cafe on Dec. 16, 2024, in Green Bay, Wis. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



Founder Paula Jolly stands on the sidewalk outside of Amanda's House. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



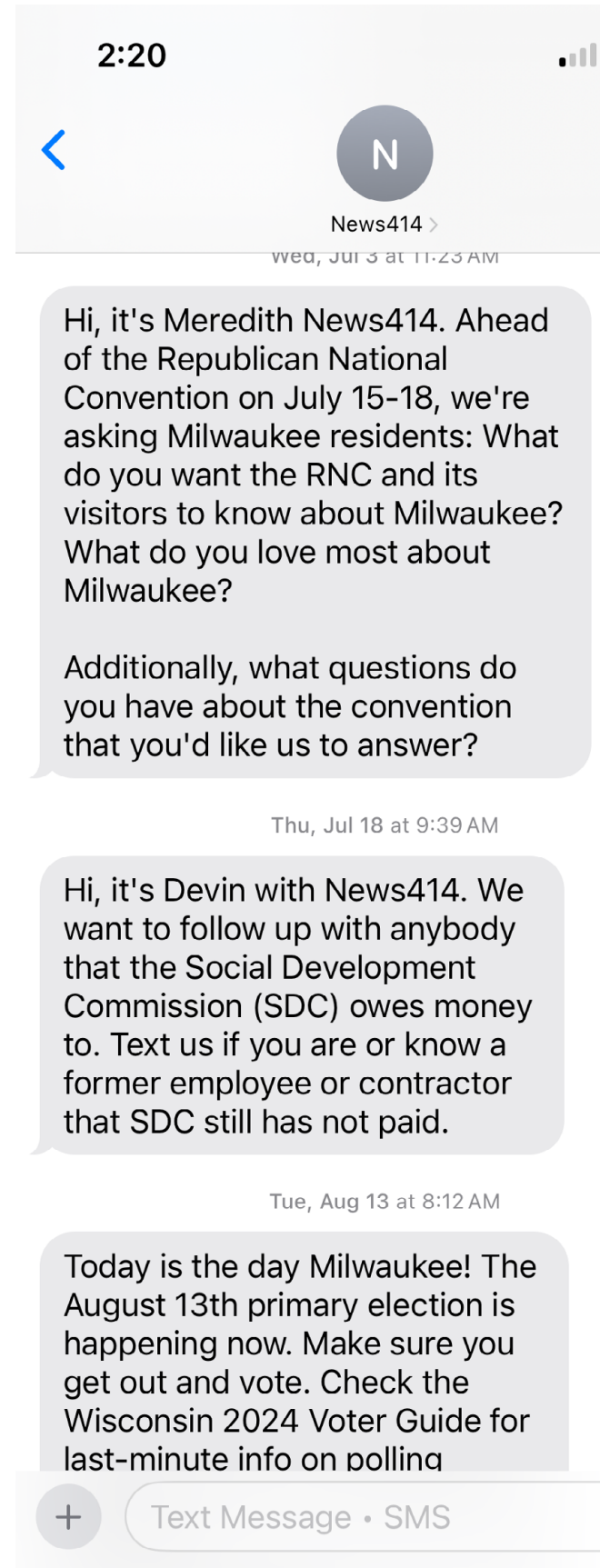
# News414: Listening first, reporting with purpose

In 2024, News414 continued to serve as a powerful engagement tool supporting the journalism of Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service and, at times, Wisconsin Watch. This initiative helps us gather community insight, share vital information and elevate the voices of Milwaukee residents, especially in historically underserved neighborhoods.

We do this by building relationships and having two-way conversations through text messages, phone calls, social media, email, and in-person interactions. These conversations help inform our newsroom priorities and shape reporting that responds directly to what residents say they need to know.

We're routinely texting to 1,400 subscribers in English and Spanish and interacting with roughly 2,000 members of our Facebook groups, ensuring that our reporting stays deeply connected to the lived experiences of our readers.

While News414 doesn't publish stories, it plays a critical behind-the-scenes role in sourcing, listening and surfacing issues that NNS and Wisconsin Watch reporters go on to cover.



Phoebe Petrovic is photographed during an all-staff meeting on Feb. 6, 2025, in Madison, Wis. (Narayan Mahon for Wisconsin Watch)



## ProPublica

Wisconsin Watch became the first news outlet in Wisconsin to partner with ProPublica's Local Reporting Network. The Pulitzer Prize-winning national news organization selected investigative reporter Phoebe Petrovic to write stories about extremism in the run-up to the 2024 election. Her work has already received national reporting accolades, including a finalist distinction for the prestigious Toner Prize for National Political Reporting.

Phoebe's stories revealed the national influence of [a Milwaukee area anti-abortion extremist](#), [the origins of Christian nationalism](#) and how groups that denied the results of the 2020 election were [recruiting poll workers](#) ahead of the 2024 election. In January 2025 she unveiled [the horrific connection](#) between school shooters in Madison, Wisconsin, and Nashville, Tennessee.

A photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. The water is calm, reflecting the colors of the sky. In the foreground, a person is rowing a boat, leaving a wake behind them. The trees on the right are silhouetted against the bright sky.

# Investigations & Impact



ST. CROIX COUNTY, WI

## Report reveals ongoing manure spill issues at Wisconsin dairy farm, sparking calls for greater oversight

In August 2024, Wisconsin Watch reporter Bennet Goldstein investigated the environmental concerns surrounding Breeze Dairy in St. Croix County, a large dairy farm recently acquired by Breeze Dairy Group. Goldstein's report highlighted the farm's history of manure spills and the community's skepticism about the new ownership's commitment to environmental stewardship. Despite assurances from Breeze Dairy Group's CEO, Gregg Wolf, that the company aims to build trust and improve operations, residents remained wary due to past environmental violations.

Goldstein's reporting is crucial as it brings attention to the potential environmental risks associated with large-scale agricultural operations and the importance of holding such entities accountable. By shedding light on these issues, Goldstein's work empowers residents to advocate for their communities and ensures that environmental concerns are not overlooked in the pursuit of agricultural expansion.



Cows feed in a freestall barn at Croix Breeze Dairy on June 11, 2024, in Emerald, Wisconsin. The farm was recently acquired by an Appleton company that operates for other dairies in Wisconsin. (Ben Brewer for Wisconsin Watch)



Gregg Wolf, CEO of Breeze Dairy Group, stands in a freestall barn at Croix Breeze Dairy on June 11, 2024, in Emerald, Wisconsin. The 2,400 cows at the dairy are milked three times per day for 10 months of the year. Breeze Dairy Group, based in Appleton, Wisconsin, owns five dairies across the state. (Ben Brewer for Wisconsin Watch)



This aerial view shows the Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake schools, the state's youth prison in Irma in northern Wisconsin. (Google Earth)



IRMA, WI

## Uncovering soaring youth prison costs, spotlighting government waste and the broken justice system

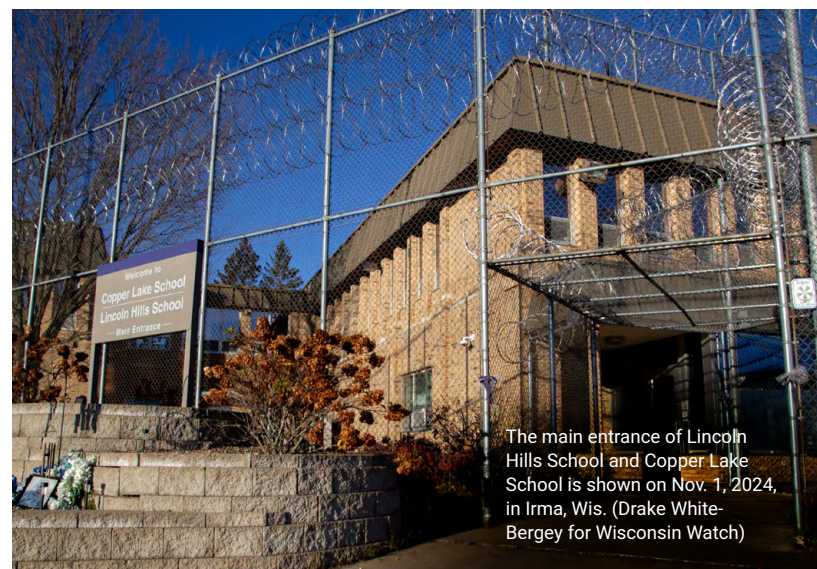
An investigation led by Mario Koran, Wisconsin Watch, and Devin Blake, Milwaukee NNS, revealed that the state spends nearly \$463,000 annually to incarcerate each youth at the Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake juvenile facilities – a cost projected to rise to \$862,000 per child if a new Department of Corrections budget request is approved. This surge in spending comes as the number of incarcerated youths has declined sharply, driven by demographic shifts, a move toward smaller regional facilities, and a series of scandals that have made judges reluctant to send teens to these institutions. Despite a 2017 legislative mandate to close the troubled complex, political gridlock between

Republican lawmakers and Democratic Gov. Tony Evers has stalled progress, leaving the costly facilities operational.

This type of investigative reporting exposes significant government inefficiencies and systemic failures, highlighting how taxpayer dollars are being funneled into outdated and underutilized institutions instead of being invested in preventive measures or community-based alternatives. By bringing these issues to light, such journalism holds public officials accountable and fosters informed discussions on the need for reforms in Wisconsin's juvenile justice system.



Rep. Darrin Madison, D-Milwaukee, speaks during a press conference on Sept. 10, 2024, at the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison, Wis. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



The main entrance of Lincoln Hills School and Copper Lake School is shown on Nov. 1, 2024, in Irma, Wis. (Drake White-Berger for Wisconsin Watch)



**PORTAGE COUNTY, WI**

## Wisconsin Watch reporting spurs action as counties weigh nursing home sales

In an article by Addie Costello for Wisconsin Watch, it is reported that over the past three decades, 22 Wisconsin counties lost public nursing homes to sales or closures over the past three decades, with three counties – Lincoln, Portage and Sauk – in the process of selling. This trend is largely driven by the financial challenges counties face in operating these facilities, especially during periods of economic downturn and inflation. For example, Iowa County closed its nursing home in 2022 after failing to find a buyer, and Washington County’s facility was taken over by a private chain in July 2024.

County-owned nursing homes in Wisconsin are noted for better staffing, higher quality care and fewer complaints than privately owned facilities. However, residents and advocates express concerns that

privatization may lead to diminished care quality. In Lincoln County, residents like 86-year-old Arlene Meyer fear that selling Pine Crest Nursing Home could negatively impact the care they receive. Meyer states, “We own it. It’s our place.” Despite these concerns, financial pressures continue to prompt counties to consider privatization as a viable option.

Addie’s reporting inspired action and impact. This coverage has galvanized Portage County residents to actively oppose the sale of their 5-star-rated county nursing home. Community members have organized grassroots campaigns, including social media initiatives, yard signs and petitions, to preserve public ownership. Their efforts exemplify the power of local journalism in fostering informed citizen activism and influencing public policy.



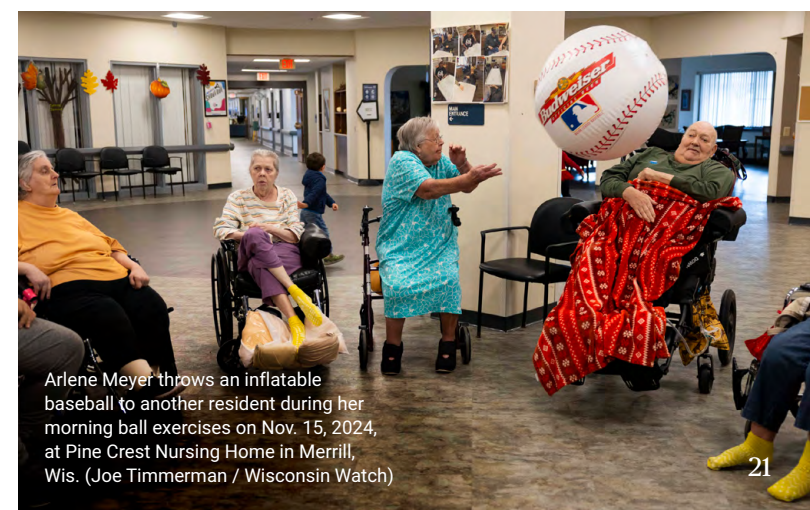
Arlene Meyer, 86, of Gleason, right, smiles as Paula Streich, a certified nursing assistant, left, opens a chocolate bar she brought for Meyer on Nov. 15, 2024, at Pine Crest Nursing Home in Merrill, Wis. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



Mary Ann Leszewski reads a Wisconsin Watch story about privatizing nursing homes, reprinted by the Stevens Point Journal, during public comments on selling the Portage County Health Care Center. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



County-owned nursing home advocates walk past the Wisconsin State Capitol to a meeting with state officials, Jan. 9, 2025, in Madison, Wis. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



Arlene Meyer throws an inflatable baseball to another resident during her morning ball exercises on Nov. 15, 2024, at Pine Crest Nursing Home in Merrill, Wis. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



Joel Pennycamp, an employee at Hoffman Construction, cuts a log with a chainsaw while building a series of artificial beaver dams on Jim Hoffman's wooded property on Oct. 25, 2024, in Alma Center, Wis. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



A pair of beavers swims across a pond on the property of Jim Hoffman, CEO of Hoffman Construction, as the sun sets, Oct. 25, 2024, in Alma Center, Wis. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



## ALMA CENTER, WI

# Shining a light on solutions: mock beaver dams to restore Wisconsin wetlands

In an article by Bennet Goldstein, he highlights the innovative efforts of Jim Hoffman, a cranberry farmer from Alma Center, Wisconsin, who is constructing artificial beaver dams to restore wetlands on his property. These structures, known as beaver dam analogs (BDAs), aim to replicate the ecological benefits of natural beaver dams, such as reducing flooding, enhancing wildlife habitats and improving water quality. The initiative addresses the significant loss of wetlands in Wisconsin, where half of the state's historic wetlands have disappeared, partly due to declining beaver populations. The absence of beavers has led to disconnected streams, warmer waters, lowered water tables, and diminished plant life. By implementing BDAs, Hoffman seeks to mitigate these environmental challenges and rejuvenate the local ecosystem.

Wisconsin Watch's in-depth reporting on Hoffman's project underscores the potential of local journalism to spotlight innovative environmental solutions. By bringing attention to such initiatives, the organization fosters community awareness and dialogue around ecological restoration and climate change mitigation. This coverage not only informs the public about practical conservation strategies but also encourages other landowners and policymakers to consider similar approaches. Such journalism plays a crucial role in disseminating knowledge about sustainable practices, ultimately contributing to broader efforts in environmental preservation and climate resilience.



## SHELL LAKE, WI

# From tip to story: reporting on the hidden struggles of rural homeless families

In late 2024, Hallie Clafin, a Wisconsin Watch statehouse intern, reported on the growing issue of rural homelessness in Wisconsin. The article, which stemmed from a tip about Eric Zieroth's struggles with health issues, low-wage work and unaffordable housing, followed him and his family as they lived in their car in Shell Lake. This investigation highlighted how rural homelessness is often hidden and underreported, with communities facing unique challenges compared to urban areas. As homelessness increased in rural Wisconsin, the report revealed that while Milwaukee had made some progress, much of the state lacked sufficient shelter resources, especially in smaller counties outside major urban centers.

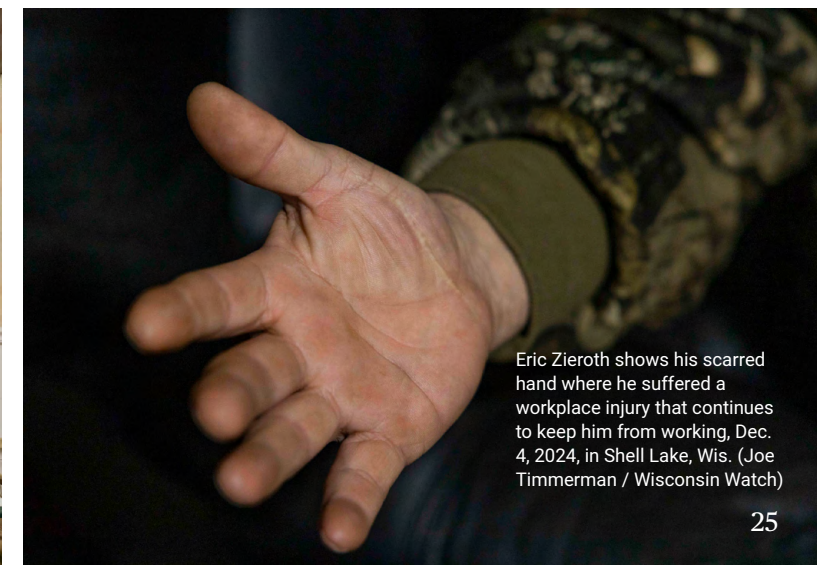
The story deeply moved readers, with one noting how it shattered common misconceptions: "It's quite literally just the system failing them. And they're some of the most resilient and compassionate people I've ever met." This response reflects the powerful impact of Clafin's work, which shines a light on the struggles of rural communities and the systemic failures contributing to homelessness. The investigation exemplifies how Wisconsin Watch transforms reader tips into compelling journalism that not only informs but also challenges assumptions and calls for change on critical state issues.



Eric Zieroth, left, and his daughter, Christina Hubbell, right, pose Dec. 4, 2024, in Shell Lake, Wis., for a portrait at a public boat landing on Long Lake where they spent many nights sleeping in their car over the last year. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



Christina Hubbell, 21, left, shows her step-father, Eric Zieroth, how she is running the laundromat's hot water to melt their frozen laundry detergent after picking up their winter clothes from a storage unit they share, on Dec. 3, 2024, in Shell Lake, Wis. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



Eric Zieroth shows his scarred hand where he suffered a workplace injury that continues to keep him from working, Dec. 4, 2024, in Shell Lake, Wis. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)

# A letter from Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service



Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service has seen tremendous growth since we became a division of Wisconsin Watch in July 2024.

— **RON “RONSHINE” SMITH**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MILWAUKEE NNS

At a time when other media outlets are shrinking, the NNS newsroom is growing. We started in 2011, with six part-time reporters and editors. By the end of this summer, we will have nine full-time reporters and editors, including our first full-time photographer and our first education reporter, who will focus on providing solutions and not just covering problems.

With the help of the entire business team and newsrooms, we are outlining our vision to give Milwaukee the newsroom it deserves and to give our newsroom the newsroom they deserve as well.

The NNS team is the reason my job is a joy. They are dedicated to our editorial mission

to celebrate the ordinary people who do extraordinary things; to educate our neighbors by providing resources to help them navigate their lives; and to illuminate issues of importance to the communities we serve.

As we further integrate into Wisconsin Watch, we are already seeing gains in fundraising; improvements on the back end - including our refreshed website - and continued collaboration with the Wisconsin Watch newsroom to super-serve Milwaukee and all of Wisconsin.

Now we can. And we are doing it all in real time. Proceeding until apprehended.



**Ron “Ronshine” Smith**  
Executive Director  
Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service





MILWAUKEE, WI

## Persistent reporting by Milwaukee NNS exposes Social Development Commission's collapse – and its impact on residents in need

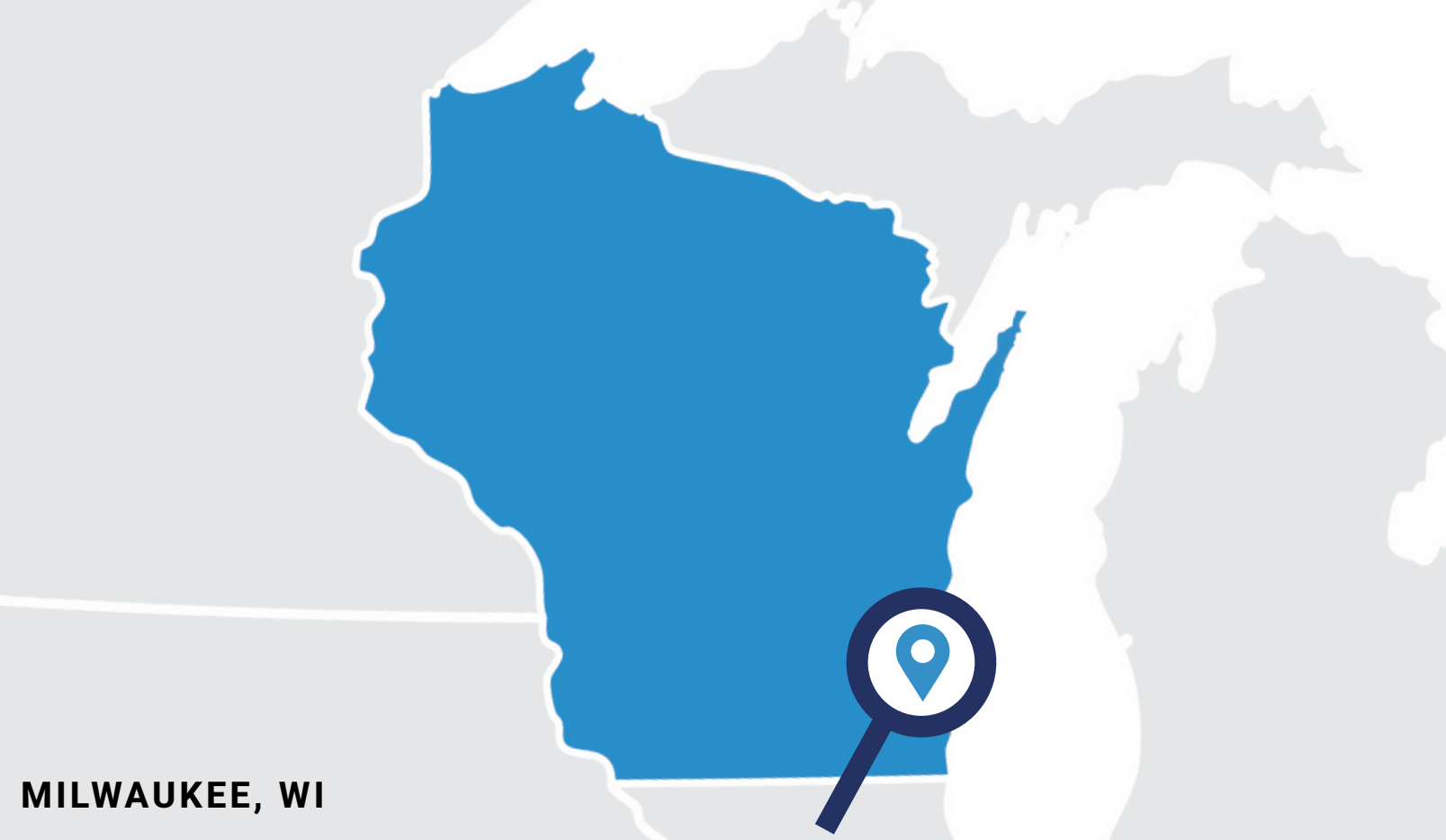
Throughout 2024, Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service reporter Meredith Melland provided persistent, in-depth coverage of the collapse and uncertain recovery of the Social Development Commission (SDC), long after many other news outlets had moved on. Her reporting revealed how the agency's sudden shutdown left thousands of Milwaukee residents without access to essential services like energy assistance, job training and reentry support. Melland documented the breakdown in leadership and financial oversight that led to the crisis, holding the agency accountable while elevating the voices of frustrated residents who were left in the dark during a time of urgent need.

As the SDC began to reopen in late 2024, Melland continued to report on the agency's slow and uneven recovery, highlighting ongoing service gaps and sharing insights from elected leaders and impacted community members. Her tenacious reporting helped ensure the public stayed informed about which services were returning and when, giving residents a clearer path to the benefits they rely on. Melland's sustained focus on this issue shows the vital role of local journalism in exposing systemic failures and advocating for the everyday needs of the community.





Darrol Gibson is the executive director of the Sherman Park Housing Advancement Cooperative. The group studies other cities' housing cooperatives to see what collective thinking could bring for Milwaukee. (PrincessSafiya Byers / Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service)



MILWAUKEE, WI



Homes in the Sherman Park neighborhood along 51st Street. (NNS file photo by Sue Vliet)

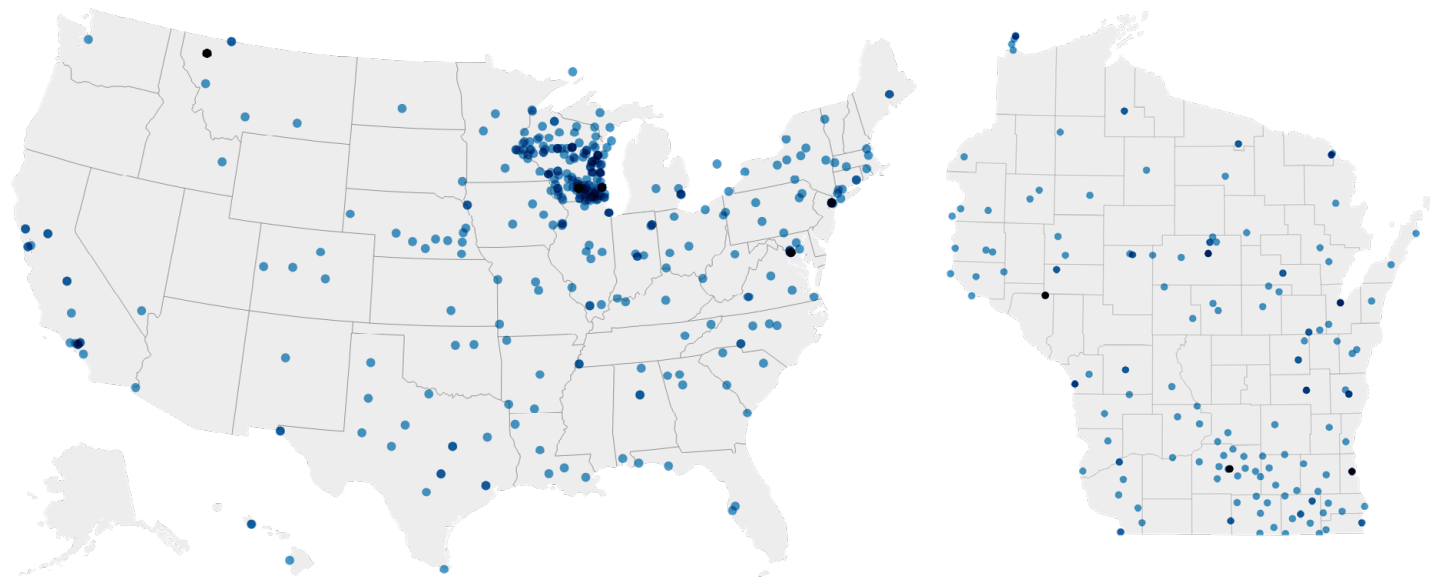
## Award-winning NNS investigation exposes how out-of-state landlord is reshaping Milwaukee's housing market

In 2024, Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service reporter PrincessSafiya Byers investigated VineBrook Homes Trust Inc., a Texas-based real estate investment firm that quietly acquired around 1,000 single-family homes on Milwaukee's North Side. Her reporting, in collaboration with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, shed light on the lack of transparency surrounding these acquisitions and raised concerns about the potential displacement of longtime residents and the broader impact on housing affordability and neighborhood stability.

Byers' work not only sparked critical conversations about housing justice but also earned national recognition – she was honored with the prestigious 2024 Gerald Loeb Award, known as the Pulitzer Prize of business reporting, for her collaborative coverage of landlord-tenant issues, underscoring the power of local journalism to expose systemic issues and advocate for change.

# Our audience

“I subscribe to many news services, but Wisconsin Watch always covers the stories that others miss. Important stories. I always vote. Your stories bring things to our attention!” – Wisconsin Watch reader



**407** NEWS ORGANIZATIONS PUBLISHED OR CITED OUR WORK

**222** IN WISCONSIN

**+43%** INCREASE IN NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS

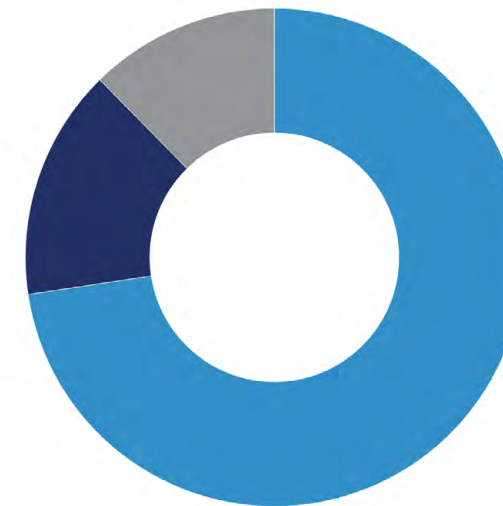
**+69%** INCREASE IN TOTAL VISITORS

**200** ORIGINAL REPORTS

# Financials

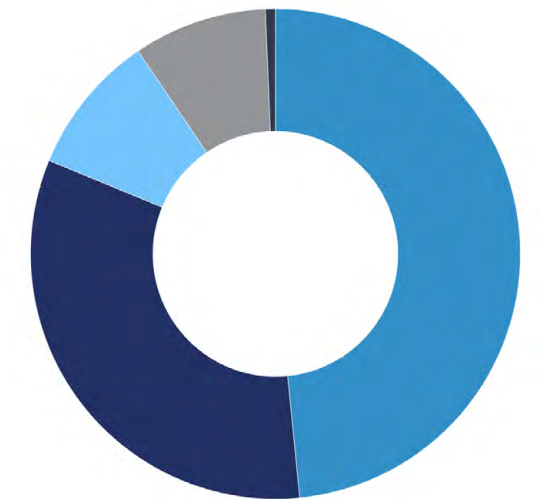
Wisconsin Watch is committed to transparency in its financial reporting. To view our full financial documents, visit [wisconsinwatch.org/about](https://wisconsinwatch.org/about).

2024 Total Expenses (\$2,856,506)



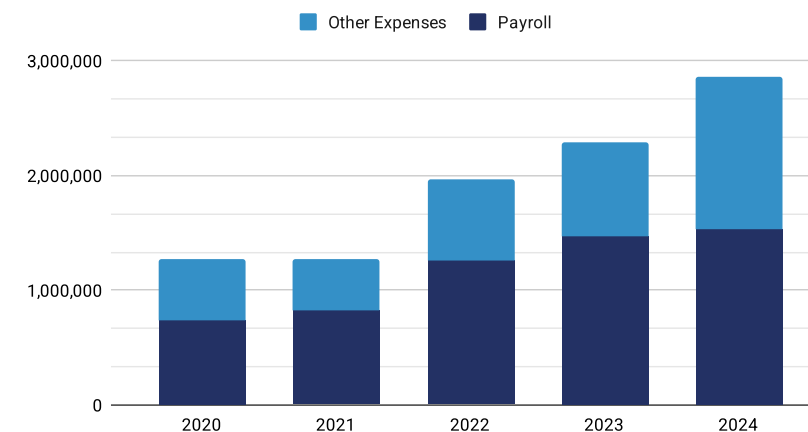
Editorial (73%)  
Fund Development (15%)  
General & Admin (12%)

2024 Total Revenue (\$4,271,574)



Foundations & Grants (used in 2024) (48%)  
Foundations & Grants (restricted for future use) (33%)  
Membership (9%)  
In-kind Revenue (9%)  
Miscellaneous (0.7%)

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET



2024 marked a pivotal year of growth for Wisconsin Watch, highlighted by our merger with longtime partner newsroom Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service on July 1. This strategic step deepens our statewide impact and strengthens our commitment to community-centered journalism. Our 2024 financials reflect this momentum, incorporating six months of Milwaukee NNS operational expenses and revenue. The increase in revenue includes both restricted funds related to the merger and new multi-year support that positions us for continued growth in the years ahead.

# Top Photos

2024



Beverly Cooley, volunteer poll worker, center, cheers after helping Ariel Hill, 19, left, vote for her first time during Election Day on Nov. 5, 2024, at the Clinton & Bernice Rose Senior Center in Milwaukee. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., said passing the Women's Health Protection Act is one of her top priorities. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



Henry Nehls-Lowe, Southern Wisconsin Trout Unlimited board secretary, nets a brown trout he caught while fly fishing in Big Spring Branch, a Class 1 trout stream, Oct. 7, 2024, in Grant County, Wis. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



Hundreds of community members gathered for a candlelit vigil at the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison, Wis., on the evening of Dec. 17, 2024, one day after a school shooting killed three at Abundant Life Christian School. (Julius Shieh / Wisconsin Watch)



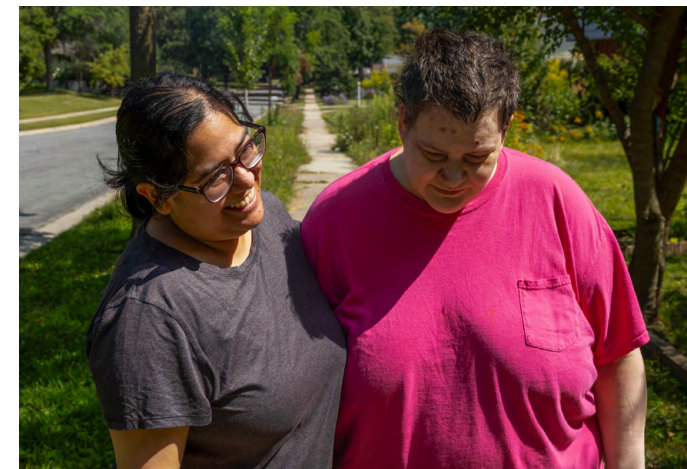
President Donald Trump appears behind a large American flag at a campaign rally at the Waukesha expo center May 1, 2024. (Jeffrey Phelps for Wisconsin Watch)



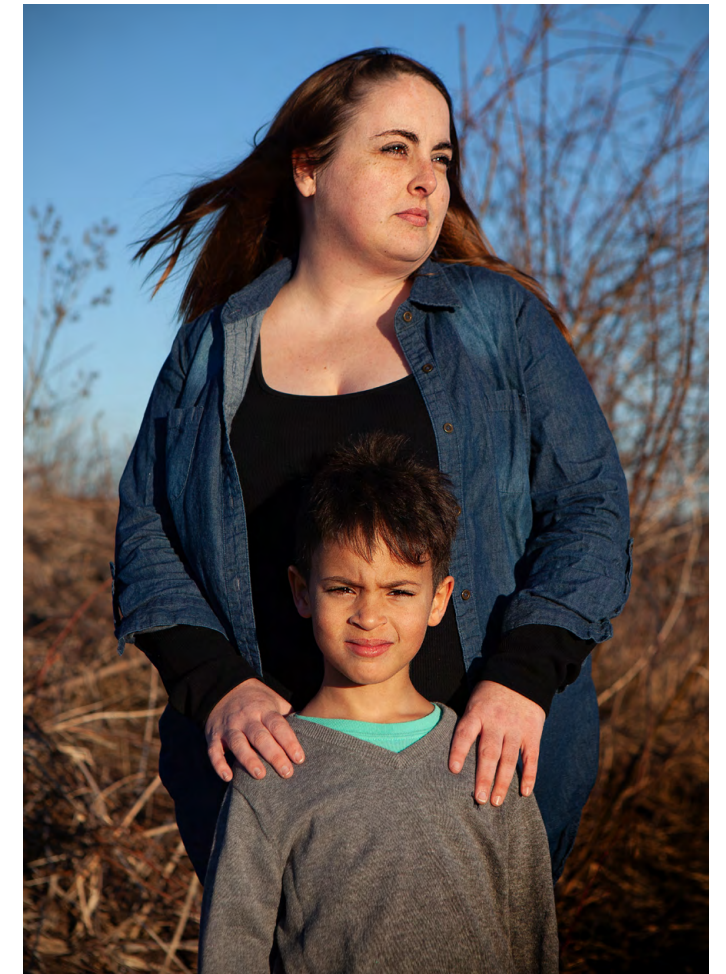
A beaver lodge is seen alongside trees in a pond on Katie McCullough's property as a train rumbles down the track nearby, Oct. 23, 2024, in Rio, Wis. McCullough installed a pond leveler on her property after discovering an active beaver lodge and dam. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



Nate Hagan lets his neighbor's pet buck lick his hand Sept. 10, 2024, in Lakewood, Wis. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



Rosa Landa, owner of Good Hand Care AFH assisted living facility, left, laughs with resident Belette Gaus upon finishing a walk around the neighborhood on Aug. 23, 2024, in Madison, Wis. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



Emily Schmit, 37, and her son, Armoni Meyers, 6, stand together in a field in Mt. Horeb, Wis., their hometown, on Feb. 22, 2024. Schmit is an advocate for mothers in the state's BadgerCare Plus Medicaid program to receive medical care for a full year after giving birth, something she didn't have after Armoni was born three months premature in 2018. "Back to the drawing board we go," Schmit said after learning the state's Assembly adjourned for the year without passing the legislation. "I don't know how much more we can stomp and scream and yell." (Brad Horn for Wisconsin Watch)



Arthur Kohl-Riggs watches the sunset and practices handstands on an oak tree in this double exposure photograph on Nov. 12, 2024, at James Madison Park in Madison, Wis. Kohl-Riggs has lived an eclectic life that includes running in the 2012 Republican gubernatorial primary as a protest candidate against Scott Walker. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)



Protest organizers deliver speeches within "sight and sound" of Milwaukee's Fiserv Forum as roughly 1,000 gathered on July 15, 2024, to protest the Republican National Convention. (Julius Shieh / Wisconsin Watch)



Gov. Tony Evers takes questions from reporters after hosting the annual Capitol Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony on Dec. 5, 2024, at the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison, Wis. (Joe Timmerman / Wisconsin Watch)

# Awards

American Society of Magazine Editors:  
Best Illustrated Story finalist, Phoebe Petrovic, Wisconsin Watch

Gerald Loeb Awards, Local Category,  
PrincessSafiya Byers, NNS

Institute for Nonprofit News: 2024 Service  
to Nonprofit News Award, Andy & Dee  
Hall, Wisconsin Watch

Milwaukee Press Club, Hall of Fame  
Induction, Ron Smith, NNS

National Press Photographer's Association,  
Best of Photojournalism: 3rd Place, Joe  
Timmerman, Wisconsin Watch

Religion News Association: 1st Place Online  
Category, Phoebe Petrovic, Wisconsin  
Watch

Toner Prize: Finalist, Phoebe Petrovic,  
Wisconsin Watch

Wilbur Awards: Award of Excellence,  
Phoebe Petrovic, Wisconsin Watch

Wisconsin Newspaper Association, Hall  
of Fame Induction, George Stanley,  
Wisconsin Watch



Andy and Dee Hall accept the Service to Nonprofit News Award from the Institute for Nonprofit News in Atlanta on Sept. 18, 2024. (Krys Alex / Institute for Nonprofit News)



PrincessSafiya Byers (far right) celebrates winning the Gerald Loeb Award with (from left) the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's Daphne Chen, investigations editor, and Executive Editor Greg Borowski. (PrincessSafiya Byers / Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service)

# Major funders

We are honored to thank and acknowledge the over 1,100 donors, foundations and organizations that generously supported Wisconsin Watch during 2024.

The Watchdog Club and Leadership Circle are made up of Wisconsin Watch's most committed and loyal members who support our important mission. They help Wisconsin Watch excel and innovate while fostering an informed citizenry and strengthening democracy. For more information about supporting Wisconsin Watch, please visit [wisconsinwatch.org/watchdog-club](https://wisconsinwatch.org/watchdog-club).

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# Legacy Society

The Legacy Society was established to recognize, honor and celebrate extraordinary individuals who remember Wisconsin Watch in their estate or financial plans. Their visionary commitment will build our newsroom's legacy of journalistic integrity, innovation and public service to Wisconsin and democracy.

Learn more about ways to join the Legacy Society at [wisconsinwatch.org/legacy-society](https://wisconsinwatch.org/legacy-society).

Founding members of the Legacy Society:

- **Barbara Johnson**
- **Renie Schapiro**
- **Carol T. Toussaint**
- **Peter Livingston and Sharon Stark**

If you have already included Wisconsin Watch in your estate plan, thank you, and we want to hear from you so we can acknowledge your generosity!

**WE WANT  
TO HEAR  
FROM YOU!**

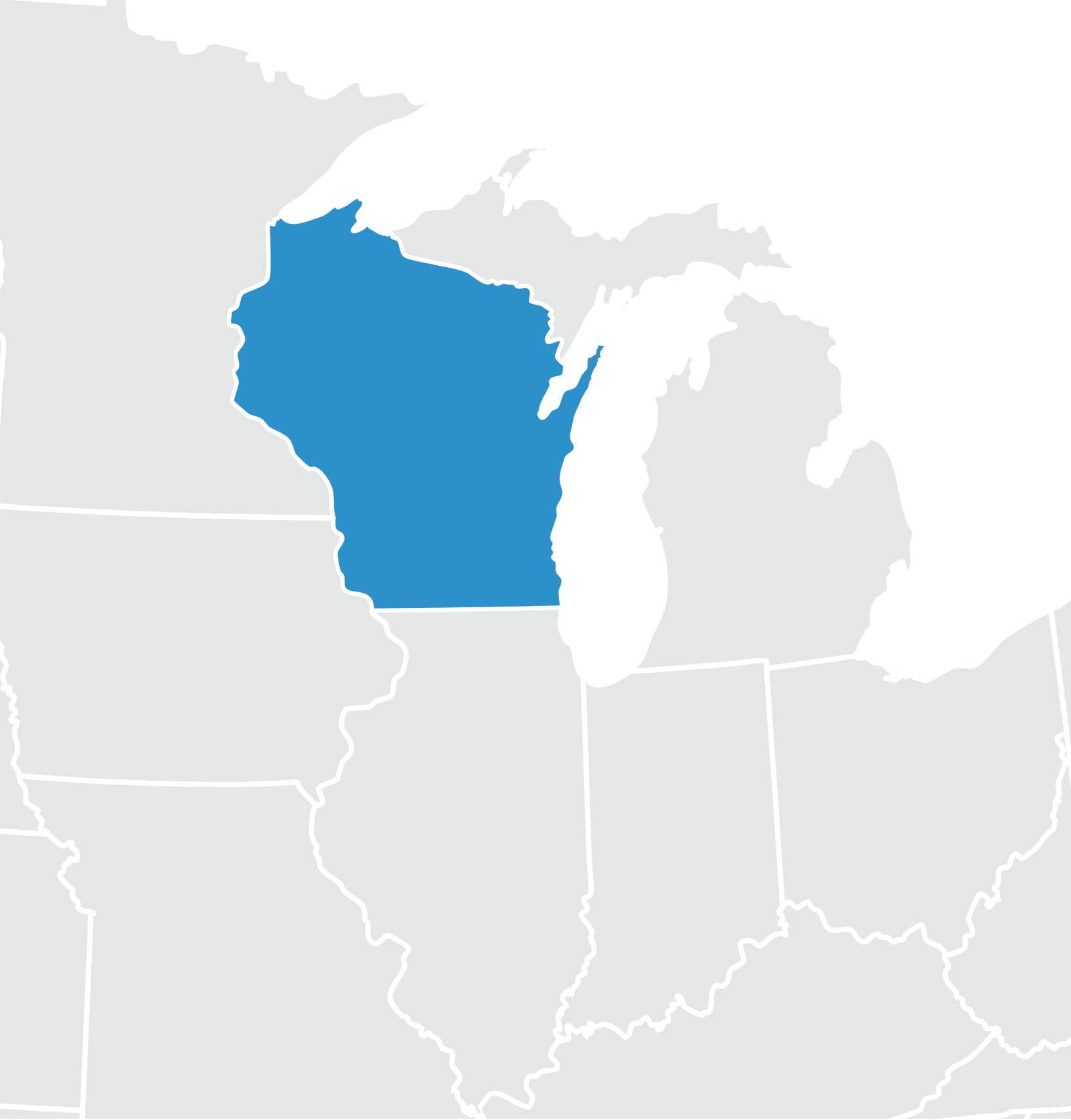
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