

Lauderdale Lakes BREEZE

SPRING 2025 • First Edition

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A new past time



The fast-rising water sport of foilboarding is gaining popularity on Lauderdale Lakes. It involves riding a board equipped with a hydrofoil, allowing riders to glide effortlessly above the water.

JACK CRUGER Lauderdale Lakes Breeze

Delayed again: Routt hearing pushed back to May 28

Missed scheduling, musical courtrooms lead to postponement

BY **Jennifer Eisenbart** • EDITOR

What was expected to be a motion hearing April 25 in the lead up to a double homicide trial at the end of June instead turned into a frustrating wash.

When the hearing for Thomas Routt Jr. was supposed to start at 3 p.m., Routt was not online via zoom through the Walworth County Courthouse and Judge Kristine Drettwan's courtroom.

Routt, who is currently at Fox Lake Correctional facility, finally came into the Zoom call around 3:15 p.m., but he and the potential expert witness could not hear anything on their end.

The hearing was then moved to Judge David Reddy's courtroom, with proceedings finally starting around 3:30 p.m.

When the hearing resumed, Drettwan said that Fox Lake Correctional said Routt could only be on the zoom call through 4



Thomas Routt

p.m. With both Walworth County District Attorney Zeke Wiedenfeld and Routt attorney Russell Jones agreeing the hearing would need more time (roughly two hours), the decision was made to postpone the hearing until 2 p.m. on Wednesday, May 28.

Drettwan appeared to be frustrated by the delay Friday, saying, "the system's worked all week. I don't know what's wrong now."

When Drettwan was finally able to get everyone on the line in the second courtroom, she explained the time constraints to everyone in attendance.

"I apologize, but given the time constraints, especially given the delay, I don't think we have any choice," she said.

Routt is scheduled for a jury trial starting June 23 in the shooting deaths of Emerson and

Gina Weingart at the Sports Page Barr in Elkhorn Feb. 1 of 2024.

Gina, tending bar that night with her husband keeping her company, was allegedly shot by Routt. Routt then allegedly shot Gina's husband, Emerson, before firing at a witness and fleeing the scene.

Routt was charged roughly two weeks later, and allegedly confessed to shooting the couple while robbing the bar. The families asked for expediency in the trial – purposely worded to allow for the trial to move as quickly as possible but with all the evidence to support the charges.

Family members voiced frustration in December when the trial was postponed due to a delay in processing of evidence from the Wisconsin State Crime Lab.

Many of those same family members were in attendance Friday, and the same frustration was again evident.

Jeff Weingart, Emerson's father, said simply, "I've got nothing to say. This one's on the court."

Wiedenfeld clarified after the hearing that the reason for the delay in starting Friday was on the jail's end, not Walworth County's.

Case against Wilson Farm Meats dismissed

An animal cruelty case brought against a local meat processor was dismissed in November.

Judge Estee Scholtz dismissed, without prejudice, the felony mistreatment of animals, causing death case against Wilson Farm Meats Nov. 1.

The Felony G charge was brought – more than a year after the incident – by a pair of animal rights organizations, Animal Equality and Animal Partisan.

The two groups urged Walworth County District Attorney Zeke Wiedenfeld to pursue charges against Wilson Farm Meats for an incident that occurred March 9, 2022.

On that day, a United States Department of Agriculture inspector took issue with how Corman handled the slaughter of a steer, with the steer's tail being twisted – allegedly to the point where it was broken.

The USDA temporarily suspended operations until corrections were made at Wilson Farm Meats, and Corman has since gone on the record to explain the steer's tail was broken by a door shutting on it, not during the process of getting it into the slaughter cage.

While Corman said he was pleased to see the case dismissed, he expects to be back in court with the case again.

"At this point ... they're going to try to find a way to bring it back again," Corman said of the animal rights groups. "They have an agenda at this point."

"I'm just accepting that this is going to be a natural part of doing business," he added.

As of April, the case had not reappeared in the Wisconsin Circuit Court Access network.

The two organizations went a circuitous route to get charges filed.

Animal Equality and Animal Partisan were heard in court July 24, 2024, on a John Doe case related to the charges.

Claire Roberson of Animal Equality issued a press release Aug. 1, 2024, saying a Wisconsin judge found probable cause to pursue animal cruelty charges, and attached the criminal complaint that had been privately pursued, signed by Judge Jason Rossell of Kenosha County.

According to court documents, Walworth County District Attorney Zeke Wiedenfeld declined to file a criminal complaint. The complaint has been listed as "filed only" in the circuit court system.

Wiedenfeld explained on Nov. 4, 2024, that statutes allow anyone to pursue a criminal complaint, and that Rossell's ruling was that there was probable cause.

In the court record of the case, the state made note that there is no law enforcement investigation into the incident, and the court does not believe it has the authority to appoint a special prosecutor.

Corman said he is working to correct the USDA report on record, which he said does not reflect the information that was found out afterward – that the steer had broken its tail before being led into the slaughter room.

He also said he had not heard from either animal rights organization in an attempt to find out what happened.

"They haven't reached out to me," Corman said. "They don't have any interest that there might be another side to the story."

Corman said the case has affected Wilson's business negatively, but most people appear to realize there are two different stories being shared about what happened in the slaughter room that day.

"We've had an absolute ton of support," Corman said, adding that many wrote letters to the court in support of the business and also showed up in support of Wilson Farm Meats at its court hearings.

On its website, Wilson Farm Meats has stated the following: "Wilson Farm Meats became a USDA-inspected facility in 2018. Being a USDA-inspected facility, we have many procedures in place throughout the entire facility, some of which include: humane handling of animals, HACCP (a system designed to reduce the occurrence of pathogenic microorganisms on meat), retail guidance, food safety assessments, recall processes, labeling and sanitation performance standards."

Animal Equality and Animal Partisan have not issued any updates regarding the court case.

Lauderdale Lakes
BREEZE

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CONSTRUCTION NOTICE

US 12: County P to WIS 20/WIS 67

Walworth County

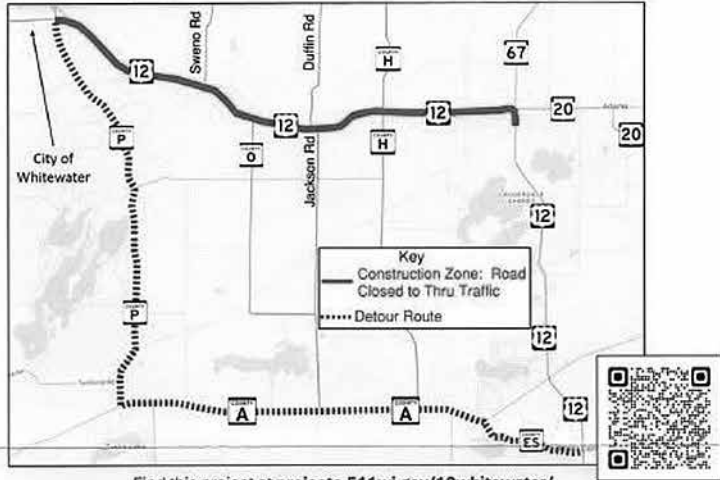
The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) will begin construction work along US 12 in mid-March, from County P to WIS 20/WIS 67. The project is scheduled to be completed by late summer.

Start: March 2025

Overview

The US 12 project will improve approximately 7.6 miles of roadway. Improvements include:

- Resurfacing pavement within project limits
- Upgrading traffic signal equipment at the US 12 and County P intersection.
- Replacing several cross culverts and one cattle pass/culvert.
- Replace beam guard as needed.



Find this project at projects.511wi.gov/12whitewater/

Traffic Impacts and Detours


US 12 will be closed from County P to WIS 20/WIS 67, from approximately mid-March to late summer.

- A detour will be posted utilizing County P, County A, and County ES.
- Access to local residences and businesses will be maintained.

All work is weather dependent. The project team thanks you for your patience and cooperation throughout this project!

Project Contacts

Brad Bowe Project Leader (414) 659-1544 bradb@jt-engineering.com	Stephen Pales Project Manager (414) 750-5343 Stephen.pales@dot.wi.gov
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Find WisDOT's 'In This Together' guide for tips, tools, and resources to help businesses plan for highway construction at wisconsin.dot.gov/together

Portion of Highway 12 to close for construction

Construction on the next section of Highway 12 in Walworth County will involve repairs and closure of a 7.5-mile section from Highways 12/67 and 20 to Highway P.

Work is expected to be completed by early fall.

Last summer, a section of 12 closed for construction shut down traffic to several businesses just outside of Elkhorn.

For the current project,

the road will be closed just past Lauderdale Lakes and extend almost to the City of Whitewater.

A posted detour will use Highways ES, A and P, with roads north of the detour open up to Highway 12.

Work on the project will include:

- Resurfacing pavement within the project limits.
- Upgrading traffic signal equipment at the Highway 12 and P intersection.

- Replacing several cross culverts and one cattle pass/culvert.
- Replacing beam guards as needed.

All work is weather dependent. Project contacts for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation are Brad Bowe, who can be reached at 414-659-1544, and Stephen Pales, 414-750-5343.

More information can also be found online by visiting projects.511wi.gov.

Nora's Café survives year of construction

Family restaurant thankful for support from loyal customers

BY **Jennifer Eisenbart** • EDITOR

For a family run business like Nora's Café, located at the corner of highways 12 and ES, the secret of success is often in a loyal customer base.

That loyalty has been critical to the restaurant over the last year, as the construction on both highways made it difficult for traffic to even reach Nora's.

"The road construction has impacted us tremendously but the loyalty from our customers has kept us going," said Steve Ahmedi, who owns and operates the restaurant with his family.

Like many small diners and family restaurants, Nora's offers only breakfast and lunch hours, from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday.

The breakfast items menu feature almost all of the standard staples, while the lunch menu includes open-faced sandwiches, burgers and what Nora's calls "Crispers" – hot sandwiches on hoagie rolls with sautéed peppers, onions, tomatoes and mushrooms.

He serves as a cook along with wife Ceflije and son Ismail, Ismail's wife

Endrita is a hostess and Steve's daughter Nora is the manager.

Between all of them, they keep Nora's Café in the business and on people's minds.

"I truly believe that it's our home-cooked meals, our portions, friendly atmosphere and our customers are our family," Steve explained about why Nora's remains a destination.

In addition to the breakfast staples of waffles, pancakes, French toast and three-egg omelets, Nora's also offers breakfast sandwiches, egg meals and kids' breakfast specials – and of course, the Midwestern specialty of biscuits and gravy.

For those looking to try out the daily specials, there is the fan favorite Bavarian cream-stuffed French toasted (topped with a fruit of your choice) plus items like the Gypsy omelet, the meat lover's skillet, and eggs benedict.

The open-faced sandwiches available for lunch feature house-made mashed potatoes and scratch gravy, with the options of beef, turkey, breaded pork tenderloin or hamburger.

The Crispers come in roast beef, turkey, corned beef and chicken, while other sandwiches range from a ribeye steak on a hoagie roll or Philly cheesesteak to grilled cheese and chicken

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

OBITUARIES

JOHN THOMAS GIESE

John Thomas Giese, 76, of Elkhorn, passed away on Monday, April 7, 2025, surrounded by his loving family.

John was born on June 3, 1948, in Racine, the son of the late Ralph and Carolyn (Gibson) Giese. John married the love of his life, Sue (Murn) Giese, on Aug. 27, 1983, at the First Congregational Church in Elkhorn. He proudly served in the United States Marine Corps and was awarded a Purple Heart for his service in Vietnam. John was a proud member of VFW Post 6375 and was a local and state VFW Commander.

John was a dedicated police officer with the Elkhorn Police Department for 31 years, retiring as Police Chief of 22 years in 2002. After retirement, John continued his service to his community by serving on the City Council, as Mayor of Elkhorn, and as a teacher's assistant with the Elkhorn Middle School. John loved his family, riding his Harley, camping and hunting, and



playing the bagpipes. He was a member of the Celtic Nations Bagpipe Band, in which he was a piper alongside his son Jim. John was well known for his sense of humor and was a master joke teller until the end. He was a profound role model for so many. Of all of his great achievements, he was the most proud to be a husband, father and grandfather. He will be deeply missed.

John is survived by his loving wife Sue; children, John Jr. "JT" (Claudia) Giese, James "Jim" (Carla) Giese, Rachel (Robert) Loveday and Ashley (Phil) Zurkowski; sisters, Patricia Blasi, Candace Bethards and Deborah Vartanian; grandchildren, Hannah, Charlie, Thomas, Alexandra, Ashley and Liam, and his furry companion, Lucas.

John is preceded in death by his parents, Ralph

and Carolyn Giese; sisters, Pamela Kenworthy and Suzanne Carpenter; and brothers-in-law David Vartanian, Larry Bethards and Wayne Carpenter.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to VFW Post 6375, 16 S. Broad St., Elkhorn, WI, 53121, or Lakeland Animal Shelter, P.O. Box 1000, Elkhorn, WI, 53121, or www.lakelandanimalshelter.org/donate.

Visitation took place on Wednesday, April 16, 2025, from 2 until 6 p.m. at St. John's Lutheran Church, 104 S. Broad St., Elkhorn, and on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at the church from 10 a.m. until the time of the funeral service at 11 a.m. A private burial with Military Honors took place at Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery. Haase-Lockwood & Associates Funeral Homes and Crematory of Elkhorn was honored to serve the Giese family.

Online condolences can be made at www.haase-lockwoodfhs.com.

CHERYL A. KUNKEL

Cheryl A. Kunkel, 80, of Elkhorn, died peacefully surrounded by family on Monday, Jan. 27, 2025, at The Gardens at Ridgestone in Elkhorn.

Cheryl was born Oct. 27, 1944, in Milwaukee, the daughter of the late Louis and Kathryn (Rowlee) Karbowski. She was united in marriage to the love of her life, Donald Kunkel, on Oct. 28, 1972, in Elkhorn. Together, they were devoted parents to six children, Laurie Kunkel-Jordan, Susan (Gary) Wagner, Donald Joseph Ryan, Michael Kunkel, Jennifer (Jeff) Carlson, and Andrew (Jessica) Kunkel. Cheryl was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. In a word, Cheryl was a nurturer. She was a dedicated homemaker who took great pride in keeping an immaculately clean home, cooking delicious meals, and baking favorite desserts for her family. She was an avid gardener, evident by the numerous flowerbeds bursting with blooms that she fastidiously tended at the "Pharm," spring, summer, and fall. She met her children's needs by way of pet chickens, endless patience for the dismantling of perfectly good bicycles and lawnmowers, and a comforting touch and encouragement in just the right moments. Cheryl happily carted her children and their friends to and from the Sunset Park pool, sports



practice and games, Alpine Valley, and numerous other social activities. As many will attest, family and friends were always welcome in the Kunkel home and "taxi."

Cheryl graduated from Elkhorn Area High School with the Class of 1962. She was a member of the Elkhorn Garden Club and served as a General Leader of the Elkhorn 4-H Club. She fully enjoyed her many years waiting tables and hostessing in the Sterlingworth and Evergreen dining rooms, where she made life-long friends. She owned First Choice Produce, a company she successfully launched in partnership with her brother and sustained with the dedicated hands-on help of her daughter, Susan. For 15 years, she lovingly managed the office of Kunkel HealthCare in McHenry, Illinois. Cheryl was a member of St. Patrick Catholic Church of Elkhorn. There, she taught catechism, delivered readings at Mass, and renewed her faith through the warm embrace of her "Chirp" sisters. She pursued higher education late in life and was very proud of her time as student at Alverno College in Milwaukee. No surprise to her family, her kind nature attracted many much

younger and disadvantaged Alverno student peers, who sincerely appreciated her motherly support.

Cheryl is survived by her six children; 11 grandchildren, Joey, Matthew, Whitney, Mackenzie, Donald Joseph Jr., Joshua, Hay'Lee, Nathan, Megan, Rawley and Millie; 12 great-grandchildren, Ava, Luna, Olive, Caden, Audrey, Madilyn, Grayer, Brooks, Georgia, Remi, Elle, and Steven; and her brother Dennis (Deanna) Karbowski. She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, Donald, grandsons, Dylan and Louis, and brother, Doran Karbowski.

A Memorial Mass was held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 8, 2025, at St. Patrick Catholic Church, 107 W. Walworth St., Elkhorn. Visitation was held at the Church, from 10 a.m. until Mass begins.

In lieu of flowers, the family will appreciate your consideration of a gift to the Alverno College School of Nursing Dean's Fund. Gifts can be made online at www.alverno.edu/donate or mailed to Advancement Office, Alverno College, P.O. Box 343922, Milwaukee, WI 53234-3922. Please designate your gift as Cheryl Kunkel Memorial or School of Nursing Dean's Fund.

Haase-Lockwood & Associates Funeral Homes have completed arrangements for the Kunkel Family. Online guest book is available at www.haaselockwoodfhs.com.

GERALD PETERSON

Gerald Peterson, 89, formerly of Elkhorn, passed away at home with family by his side. Gerald was born in Dekalb, Illinois on March 16, 1935, to Hank and Lois (Elliott) Peterson. He graduated from Dekalb High School. He married his beloved wife, Patti Momenteller, in 1954, and they enjoyed 68 years of marital bliss, until her passing on Nov. 5, 2022. Gerald was a butcher for much of his life. He owned and operated Peterson Market Basket in Elkhorn.



Gerald is survived by his two daughters, Tanya Peterson and Sherri Griffin; grand children, Cassandra (Scott) Maier and Trisha (Andrew) Week; great-granddaughter Olivia Sholar; sister Janet Peterson, and brother Bob (Juanita) Peterson.

He is preceded in death by his parents, wife Patti, sister Marjorie Heffner, and

nephew Jimmy Bender.

A visitation was held from 10 until 11 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 11, 2024, at Holy Cross Catholic Church in Stockton, Illinois. Funeral service followed at 11 a.m. Father Michael Morrissey will officiate the services.

Interment will take place at Ladies Union Cemetery in Stockton, Illinois, followed by a luncheon at the church.

A memorial has been established in his memory. Condolences may be sent to the family at www.leamonfh.com.



The Southern Wakes United Ski Team provides shows on several area lakes throughout the summer, including Lauderdale Lakes.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Lauderdale Lakes Breeze

CALENDAR

Lauderdale Lakes Yacht Club

Cocktails with the Commodore, Saturday, May 31, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. – Cheers to 72 years. This event is open to all, you do not need to be a member of the LLYC to attend. Cost is \$40 before May 25. Go to www.llyc.com to register or buy tickets under “Calendar of Events.”

Member Appreciation Event, Saturday, June 14, noon to 3 p.m. – Join in a fun, free and festive celebration sponsored by the yacht club.

Fireworks, Saturday, July 5, 9:30 p.m. – The show will be at Don Jean Bay.

LLYC Cardboard Boat Regatta, Saturday, July 12, 1 to 3 p.m. Start at the Lauderdale Landings, W5625 Westshore Dr., Elkhorn.

The Lauderdale Lakes Yacht Club was established in 1953. The club has provided a variety of educational and entertaining activities throughout the years, with more than 200 current members from the area. Annual events include the Cocktails With the Commodore, Taste of the Lakes, House Walk, Pig Roast and more.

For more information, visit llyclub.com.

Lauderdale Lakes Improvement Association

Annual Membership Meeting, Saturday, June 14, 8:30 to 11:15 a.m. – This event will be held at Lutherdale Camp. The meeting starts with registration and social time at 9 a.m., with a chance to join the LLIA for 2024. The meeting will run from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.

The objective of the LLIA is to encourage and assist in the general

work of protecting, improving and adorning the Lauderdale Lakes, as well as the bank and shores of the lakes. Rich Siok is the current president of the organization.

For more information, go to llia.org.

Southern Wakes United Ski Team

Show dates this year are on Whitewater Lake at the Scenic Ridge Campground, and at Lauderdale Landing on Lauderdale Lakes.

Whitewater Lake

Scenic Ridge Campground
All shows 7 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

- Saturday, June 7
- Saturday, Aug. 2
- Saturday, Aug. 23

Lauderdale Lakes

Lauderdale Landing, Elkhorn
All shows at 6 p.m.

- Friday, May 30
- Friday, June 13
- Friday, July 4
- Friday, July 25
- Friday, Aug. 8
- Friday, Aug. 29

Turtle Lake

Turtle Lake Tap & Grill
• Saturday, May 24, 6 p.m.

Elkhorn Lake

Babe Mann Park, Elkhorn
All shows at 6 p.m.

- Saturday, June 21
- Saturday, June 28

- Sunday, July 12
- Sunday, Aug. 16 (Alumni Show)

The Southern Wakes United Water Ski show team is Walworth County’s only water ski show team. SWU is a merger of the Lauderdale Aqua Skiers and the Whitewater Lake Sports Club (Minneiska). The group is a non-profit whose purpose is to give all a chance to build confidence in their abilities, learn new skills and promote leadership, water safety education and sportsmanship.

For more information, go to southernwakesunited.com.

OTHER EVENTS

Spring Food Truck Festival 2023, Saturday, May 18, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. – Held in Veterans Park, 100 W. Walworth St. in Elkhorn, the festival features a wide variety of food from sweet to savory, with a number of local favorites coming to the area. There will also be craft and commercial vendors in the park.

Elkhorn Antique Flea Market at the Walworth County Fairgrounds, 411 E. Court St., Highway 11, Elkhorn, Sunday, May 18 – Gates open at 7 a.m., with admission \$5 per person. Free parking is available on site, with food and drink for sale. Pets are not allowed at the event.

Live Music Duesterbeck’s Brewing Company, N5543 Highway O, Elkhorn – Duesterbeck’s has live music most weekends at its location, as well as weekday events. For more information, call 262-729-9771 or go to dbcbrewery.com.

The Vinery, 218 Elkhorn Rd., Whitewater – Classes are available throughout the summer at varying times, to teach fused glass techniques. Register at The Vinery by calling 262-458-2209.

Providing final rest for the deceased

Local citizens try to solve mystery of buried dead in unmarked graves

BY **Susan Steele** • CORRESPONDENT

Aurora Lakeland Medical Center’s smokestack is all that remains of the Walworth County Poor Farm and Insane Asylum.

Its dark, stained brick material looks as formidable from a distance now as it must have been when impoverished, mentally and physically disabled individuals were dropped off and abandoned there between the years 1827 and 1931.

A white picket fencing surrounds a plot of land behind Lakeland School of Walworth County lists the names of 200 unclaimed bodies on a plaque – the last bit of evidence of forgotten people prescribed work to occupy their minds and create structures until Walworth County purchased for \$50 a 25.9 x 136.2-foot plot at Hazel Ridge cemetery “to be more respectful,” said John Gunyon, its Board President.

Now, how many people are buried, how to recognize them and how to pay for the effort is a matter of contention between various parties.

Originally, Hazel Ridge believed the County only buried 74 individuals with names inscribed on tombstones until Gunyon asked the University of Wisconsin’s Geology Department to help him locate the remains of the “Culvert Girl.”

The female was found in 1928 wrapped in a blanket stuffed inside a culvert by a Walworth County Public Works employee when he was grading on what was then known as Bay Road. Her unsolved murder is the basis of a book by Erik Voss, a retired Detective Sergeant with the Town of Delavan Police Department, “Murder Made Casual.”

“During a survey to locate (her remains),” explained Gunyon, “Hazel Ridge found at least 13 unmarked graves used by Walworth County,” and two more rows of unmarked graves under the marked tombstones, leading him to believe the county buried over 180 individuals at Hazel Ridge.

Gunyon contacted the county in 2023 for assistance, obtaining ownership documents, agreements, and burial data. The parties began to disagree on various issues.

The county said it last used the Hazel Ridge Cemetery for a burial in 2000. Michael Cotter, Walworth County Corporation Counsel, Director, Walworth County Land Use and Resource Management Department, speaking on behalf of the County, stated the decedent was a baby boy whose grave was paid for by the City of Elkhorn Police Officers, the Walworth County Sheriff’s Office deputies, and employees from the City of Elkhorn Light and Water Department.

Gunyon says, “the last ones buried at Hazel Ridge is 10 years ago.”

In an email to Cotter dated February 23, 2023, Gunyon asked for “an agreement and plot or map of the area (Potter’s Field) so that we (Hazel Ridge) can mutually better define the area that has been and could be used.”

Cotter agreed to speak to the County Board about asking the Walworth County Surveyor to research and prepare a plat, even though a cemetery plat is the responsibility of the cemetery authority under section 157.07 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

“To be extremely clear,” said Cotter, “creating this cemetery plat is not Walworth County’s responsibility.”

The county agreed to expend county resources to have this cemetery plat completed, at no expense to Hazel Ridge, despite the fact that the cemetery plat is the responsibility of Hazel Ridge.

Gunyon argued that when the county purchased the sections, it became the “cemetery authority” and was responsible for laying out the gravesites (the plat) and transferring ownership of the individual graves to the appropriate family.

On June 17, 2024, the Walworth County Executive Committee discussed this issue and authorized Cotter to contact the Walworth County Surveyor to begin work on the cemetery plat.

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission agreed to do this work under the County’s current contract. The surveyor started his job and almost immediately requested that Cotter conduct more research on the ownership issue.

Cotter asked the Walworth County Clerk’s Office for assistance. They located a December 7, 1932, receipt showing Walworth County purchased land from the Cemetery. The receipt also included a legal description.

As the county surveyor began his work, he requested Cotter to search for other transactions or deeds showing other land purchases by the County.

Walworth County also hired a local title company to conduct a title search, which revealed Walworth County purchased another section of Hazel Ridge Cemetery for \$1,000 on April 24, 1953.

The search also found the original deeds from May 2, 1874.

All information is now with the county surveyor.

Hazel Ridge’s final request are financial in nature.

Compensation for Hazel Ridge Cemetery’s maintenance, care and upkeep of all (+/- 200) graves in Hazel Ridge’s Potters Field since 1932 and compensation for any burials on land not owned by Walworth County.

Cotter suggests Hazel Ridge write to the Walworth County Board to revisit the issues to ascertain if they wish to revisit the issue.

NORA’S CAFÉ • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

or tuna salad.

Burgers can be topped with everything from cheese to bacon to mushrooms and a fried egg, while salad offerings include Julianne and Catalina options.

Homemade soups of the day are also on the menu, as are simpler kids menu items such as hot dogs, grilled cheese, a chicken tender basket and a hamburger or cheeseburger.

In short, it’s a place to take the family and easily find something to satisfy everyone.

Having the family at Nora’s for the last five years, Steve said he has also enjoyed putting his 30 years of restaurant experience to work.

“Seeing the cars go by makes the town feel alive,” Steve explained. “Our customers have been very supportive throughout the whole construction process. We cannot thank them enough.

“We hope to be in this community for as long as we can,” he added. “We appreciate every moment we have with everyone!”



from the left: The Ahmedi family – Nora, Steve, Ceflije, Ismail and Endrita – has kept Nora’s Café on Highway 12 north of Elkhorn running in spite of a lengthy road construction project. They’re thankful for loyal customers who have continued to support them when even getting to the restaurant was a challenge.

SUBMITTED PHOTO Lauderdale Lakes Breeze

Area woman’s request to suppress cell data denied by court

BY **Jennifer Eisenbart** • EDITOR

A motion to suppress information from a woman’s cell phone was denied in a case involving the death of a prominent Elkhorn woman.

Brianna C. Laas, of Silver Lake, was originally scheduled to go on trial for the death of Barbara Fischer this month on a homicide by negligent use of a vehicle charge.

However, at the pre-trial conference Jan. 8, Walworth County Circuit Court Judge Daniel Johnson heard arguments on the cell phone issue.

The final pre-trial hearing for the case is scheduled for June 20, in Judge Johnson’s courtroom, with a jury trial scheduled to start June 30.

According to the criminal complaint, witnesses to the crash stated Laas was driving eastbound on Highway 12 at about 85 miles per hour when she lost control of her vehicle on Dec. 21, 2022, striking the driver’s side of Fischer’s vehicle with her passenger side.

As a result, Fischer’s vehicle rolled into the wood line, landing on its driver’s side.

Fischer was pronounced dead on the scene from a broken neck suffered in the crash, the report stated.

Laas told the officer on the scene that she was traveling about 75 mph and was “zoning out and not paying attention,” when she left the roadway and overcorrected, crossing the right lane, hitting

Fischer. She then stated she called her mother about the crash, after her vehicle came to a rest in the roadway.

Laas’ phone was sitting in a cupholder of the center console. She denied using her phone before she crashed. She said she plays music through her phone but was not manipulating any of its features at the time of the crash.

Police confiscated her phone for analysis, which revealed that at the time leading up to the crash, Laas was searching “Starbucks Coffee Company,” its cold drinks and “strawberry acai lemonade, Starbucks Refreshers Beverages.”

The safe driver app located on the phone reported the crash at 10:11 a.m. At 10:12 a.m., Laas made the phone call to her mother, Christine.

Laas was 17 at the time of the crash. Fischer, a long-time clerk and treasurer for the Town of LaFayette and a member of the Elkhorn Area School board, was returning home from running Christmas-related errands the day of the crash.

Both Christine and Brianna Laas have also been named in a civil suit brought forth by members of Fischer’s family.

The suit, which was filed in August of 2024, names Brianna, Christine and Phillip Laas, as well as American Family Mutual Insurance Company.

A motion hearing in that civil case is set for June 10 in Judge David M. Reddy’s court at 9 a.m.



Family, farm and faith

The Nicholas D. Sergi Foundation held its annual Family, Farm and Faith fundraiser Sept. 28 at A+ Power Sports in Elkhorn. The event featured food, drink, live music, a petting zoo, activities for children and a silent auction with numerous trips and sporting events. All told, the event raised roughly \$200,000 – exceeding the goal of \$175,000. Above: Among the outdoor activities was a children’s petting zoo.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Lauderdale Lakes Breeze*

City to add two Flock cams

Local business owner pledges continued support

BY **Kellen Olshefski**
CORRESPONDENT

At its March 17 meeting, the City of Elkhorn common council voted 5-0 in favor of increasing the Elkhorn Police Department budget by \$6,300 for software maintenance services this year to obtain two additional Flock cameras, a purchase made possible thanks to the continued partnership and donation of a local business.

In his memo to the council, Captain Alvin Brandl explained the business owner wanted to continue its partnership and provide \$6,000 in 2025 and 2026 to the camera program, essentially paying for two of the city’s four Flock cameras, located at the Highway 67 and I-43 interchange.

Brandl said the city had budgeted \$13,000 to continue the system’s operation in the event the business owner no longer supported the program. As a result of the generous \$6,000 donation however, the department wanted to add two cameras to the system, which would allow the department to deploy cameras in other strategic locations.

With the budget adjusted to \$19,300 for 2025 and the \$6,000 donation, the net effect this year would be \$300, according to Brandl.

A motion to approve by Alderman

Scott McClory was seconded by Alderman Ron Dunwiddie.

Following a question from Alderman Gary Lee Payson Jr., Brandl clarified the city would be making the \$6,300 increase to the budget now, and the \$6,000 donation would essentially be refunded later, with Payson noting that he just wanted to make sure everyone understood that while it’s \$6,300 now, it’s actually \$300.

Payson also noted that looking back to when the Flock system was discussed at the Finance Committee level, they were attempting to get as many Flock cameras as the city could afford in an effort to offer more protection.

The motion to approve passed 5-0.

KUNES DONATION

The Flock cameras date back to March of 2023, at which time the council approved the installation of automated license plate reader (ALPR) technology at the intersection, with the \$10,000 annual cost funded by Gregg Kunes of Kunes RV.

At that time, Police Chief Joel Christensen noted more than 70% of crimes in the country involve the use of a motor vehicle and the city had seen a significant increase in

catalytic converter thefts involving vehicles parked at local business with easy access to the interstate.

As of that meeting on March 6, 2023, Kunes had 37 catalytic converters stolen.

In working with Kunes to identify those responsible and prevent further theft, one possible solution suggested was the use of ALPRs.

According to Christensen, the technology not only has the ability to capture the image of a vehicle’s license plate, vehicle description and record the time when the image was captured, but also allows comparison of the license plate information to a “hot list,” which provides information on stolen vehicles and wanted persons. If a vehicle on the “hot list” passes an ALPR camera, the software immediately notifies police, allowing them to respond and investigate.

Christensen said he and Captain Alvin Brandl met with Gregg Kunes, who pledged his ongoing financial support for the technology, offering to cover the \$10,000 annual cost of the ALPRs on South Lincoln/Highway 67 to enter into an agreement with Flock Safety.

At that time, the motion to approve the Flock ALPR cameras was approved unanimously.

Trial pushed back in motorcycle death

The trial of an Elkhorn man accused of killing a long-time Elkhorn Area High School coach and teacher in a vehicle crash has been pushed back to June.

Gregg Guttuso, 61, was in court for his final pre-trial hearing Feb. 24 for charges of homicide by negligent operation of a vehicle.

Guttuso was charged in the death of Randi Wulf, who died Oct. 2, 2023, after the motorcycle he was riding was struck by Guttuso, who was driving a truck.

At the Feb. 24 hearing, Guttuso’s attorney Jeremy Chaves asked for an adjournment, as he had a defense expert that needed more time to complete his report.

The court records also indicate an amended offer was received from the state. Walworth County District Attorney Zeke Wiedenfeld was in court for the prosecution.

A status conference April 23 showed that both parties are now “negotiating.” The final pre-trial now set for May 21. The five-day jury trial is set to start June 2 in the courtroom of Judge Estee Scholtz.

According to the original criminal complaint, Town of Geneva police were dispatched shortly before 5 p.m. on Oct. 2, 2023, to a car vs. motorcycle crash at the intersection of the off-ramp of Highway 12 and Geneva Street – a little more than half a mile from Elkhorn Area High School, where Wulf had just finished cross country practice for the afternoon.

Guttuso, who according to the complaint was driving a Toyota Rav-4, told law enforcement, “I couldn’t see him. I don’t know if it was the light or what.”

The report said Guttso told law enforcement that he looked “and saw nothing. Then I went further and saw him swerve.”

Guttuso, when asked if he failed to stop for the stop sign on the exit ramp, also allegedly told police that he didn’t think he failed to stop.

Medical care was initiated at the scene, and Wulf was transported to Lakeland Medical Center, where he was later pronounced dead.

According to the crash reconstruction report from the Walworth County Sheriff’s Department, Wulf was traveling eastbound on East Geneva Street, going at least 32 miles per hour and employed full use of his brakes about 1.5 seconds before the crash.

The same report shows that Guttuso’s vehicle traveled past the stop sign at about 18 miles per hour and that he did not activate the brakes until less than half a second before the crash.

The report states the speed of Guttuso’s vehicle was about 14.9 miles per hour at the time of impact. It also states that the sun would not have been in Guttuso’s direct view at the time the crash occurred.

If Guttuso is convicted, his driver’s license would be revoked for a year and he could face up to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$25,000.

Former band teacher gets 12-year prison sentence for sex crimes

A former East Troy Middle School band teacher will spend a dozen years in prison for sexually assaulting former students.

During his March 20 sentencing hearing, Walworth County Circuit Court Judge Daniel S. Johnson handed John C. Rash 12 years in prison with 10 years of extended supervision.

The 46-year-old disgraced educator pled guilty to two counts of repeated sexual assault of the same child during a plea hearing Dec. 13, 2024.

In a plea agreement, eight similar charges, across three separate cases, were dismissed but read into the case, online court records show.

In all three cases, Rash was accused by several women of



John C. Rash

inappropriately touching them years ago, during lessons in the middle school band room. While lessons were conducted, the victims claimed he would brush against their breasts. Others said in a guise to correct posture during lessons, he would slap their thighs or rub their legs. The last former student to come forward said Rash slid his hand up her leg and touched her vagina, causing her to cry.

Reported incidents took place between 2005 and 2018.

During last week’s hearing, several victims made impact statements. Rash’s wife, along with a former student and a professional colleague, made statements in support of Rash, according to online court records.

Rash was ordered to register as a sex offender and comply with the Wisconsin Sex Offender Registry, which he will be listed on for life. He is also to complete treatment and may not have any contact with minors, among other conditions.

He was credited for 97 days served in Walworth County Jail.

Rash is being represented by Attorney Patrick Cafferty.

The ins and outs of Lauderdale Lakes

Lauderdale Lakes consists of Green Lake, Middle Lake and Mill Lake and is located in La Grange Township a few miles north of the City of Elkhorn, west of highways 12 and 67. For more information contact the Lauderdale Lakes Marina at (262) 495-8200 or www.lauderdalelakesmarina.com.

Size

- Green Lake is 311 acres
- Middle Lake is 259 acres
- Mill Lake is 271 acres

Maximum depth

- Green Lake: 55 feet
- Middle Lake: 42 feet
- Mill Lake: 44 feet

Fish species

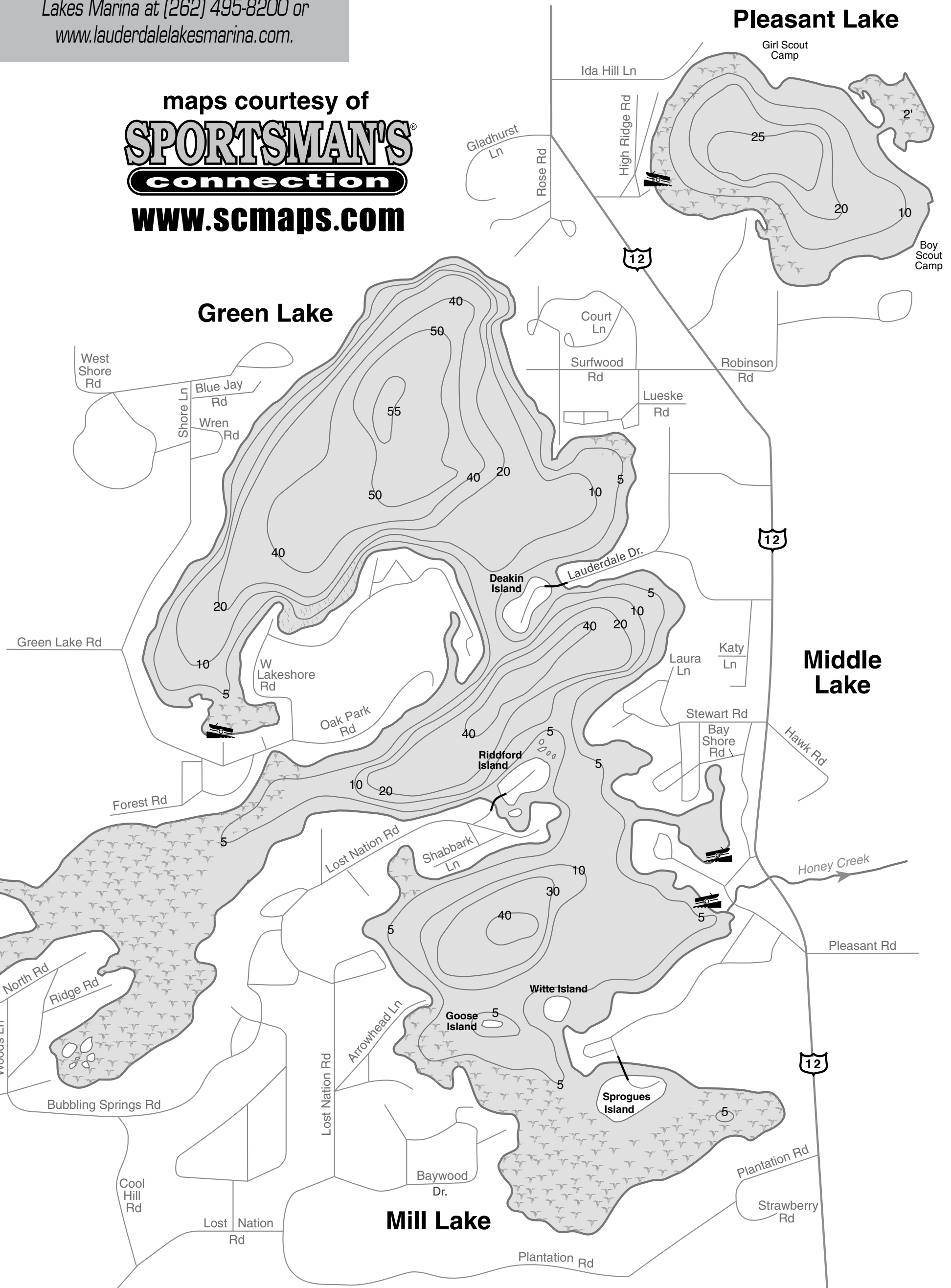
Lauderdale Lakes offers a wide array of fish with the predominant species being:

- Largemouth bass
- Smallmouth bass
- Northern pike
- Walleye
- Panfish

Access

Lauderdale Lakes is accessible via a paved ramp on Sterlingworth Road off of Highways 12/67. Additionally, unimproved landings are located off of Bubbling Springs Road and Westshore Drive.

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Lauderdale Lakes *waterfront property* prices surge as demand soars

The tranquil and relatively affordable market of waterfront homes on Lauderdale Lakes has seen a sharp rise in prices, with property values skyrocketing over the past few years. The scenic beauty, paired with growing demand for lakefront properties, has turned the area into a hotspot for affluent buyers, many of whom are seeking second homes or peaceful retreats from urban life.

Real estate experts cite a combination of factors fueling the boom. As remote work becomes more common, people are leaving big cities in search of more serene environments, and lakeside properties have become increasingly desirable. Lauderdale Lakes, known for its crystal-clear waters, tranquil surroundings, and year-round recreational opportunities, has emerged as a top contender for those looking for the perfect blend of nature and

luxury.

On Lauderdale Lakes the iconic home, "The Boathouse" is for sale. The 192 feet of premier shoreline on Deakin Isle presents a home rebuilt to its original 1915 Jazz Age glory with all the modern conveniences. The home boasts historical details and architectural styles that capture views of all three Lauderdale Lakes throughout the four levels. This rare opportunity is offered by one of Lauderdale Lakes' top agents, Jerry Kroupa. For more information contact him at 262-949-3618.

Recent property data shows that median home prices in the Lauderdale Lakes area have risen by more than 25% in just the last two years. Lakefront homes that were once valued at \$800,000 now regularly sell for upwards of \$1,000,000 with some luxury properties listed for \$2.5 million

- \$4.5 million. The surge in prices has also been driven by a limited inventory of available waterfront properties.

Local service businesses and the tourism industry have also benefited from the influx of new residents and visitors. The increased demand for services, from boating/marine services and restaurants has boosted the area's economy.

Most experts believe the trend of rising prices is here to stay, at least for the foreseeable future. With limited developable land around Lauderdale Lakes and a growing number of buyers seeking waterfront property, the market shows no signs of slowing down.

For potential buyers looking to invest in a piece of lakeside paradise, the message is clear: act fast, or be prepared to pay a premium for the privilege of owning a home on Lauderdale Lakes.

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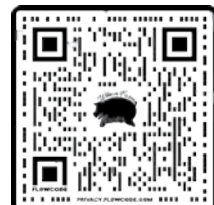
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Fishing has fans of all ages and abilities. The family friendly activity is a great way to strengthen relationships.

STOCK PHOTO Lauderdale Lakes Breeze

Hook a kid on fishing

Quick tips to make their day

As the weather warms, the desire to go fishing is undeniable. And if you love fishing, there's only one thing more enjoyable than catching a big fish – watching a kid catch a fish.

This fishing season, the folks at Rapala fishing lures encourage adults to take a kid fishing. Why? Because kids represent the future of fishing. According to the American Sportfishing Association, kids who are introduced to fishing at an early age by a trusted adult are more likely to fish as an adult.

Here are 15 quick tips from the folks at Rapala on

how you can introduce a kid to fishing this year:

Get them on good bites

The number one thing you can do to hook a kid on fishing, says legendary angler Al Lindner, is to get lots of bites for your child. "Taking kids fishing between the ages of 8 and 12 years old is a critical time. Try to get them on good bites. Their attention span is short. You will quickly know if fishing will be a part of their life in the future. They are either going to like it or not. But they have to get bites. I can't say how important that is. You gotta get 'em on a bite."

Start them on bluegills and sunnies

The easiest bites tend

to be panfish - bluegills, sunfish and bream. As your kids watch you catch bass, walleye and other gamefish, they'll want new challenges. Keep a panfish pliers handy to remove hooks from small panfish.

A small fish can be a monster fish!

To a child, a small sunny can be a trophy. Don't downplay a small fish. Every fish caught is a huge accomplishment.

Keep it simple

Start your kid fishing with a single hook. They're much easier to remove from fish. It could be a hook and a bobber or a single hook

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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‘More than a path through the woods’

Disconnect and reconnect year-round on the Ice Age Trail

During the past 2.5 million years, colossal ice sheets gripped the globe, perhaps 15 different times. Glaciers sculpted about one-third of the earth’s landmass. Sometimes 2 miles thick, they stretched from present-day New York to Montana, and from Ohio to Hudson Bay, Canada, according to the Ice Age Trail Alliance.

Today, the Ice Age Trail takes users through some of Wisconsin’s most scenic terrain – mature forests, expansive prairies and thousands of lakes and rivers. The story of how this landscape was sculpted starts with the glaciers.

Wisconsin is the best place to witness many of the landforms created by continental glaciation, according to the alliance. Fittingly, the most recent period of the Ice Age, which ended about 10,000 years ago, is known as the Wisconsin Glaciation.

Near the end of the Wisconsin Glaciation, a series of ridges formed between two immense lobes of glacial ice in what is now southeastern Wisconsin. These ridges are 120 miles long. Scattered among them are crater-like depressions that were created by large chunks of melting ice.

Geologists named this region the Kettle Moraine. Studies that began in the Kettle Moraine during the 1870s led to key discoveries and the first map of the extent of continental glaciation in North America.

The route of the Ice Age Trail generally follows the last outline of the most recent glacier. The basic features defining the route are the Kettle Moraine of eastern Wisconsin and the most recent terminal moraine as it extends west and north.

Geologic features along the route include kames, lakes, drumlins, ice-walled-lake plains, outwash plains, eskers, tunnel channels, unglaciated features of the Driftless Area and other older landforms. Alliance officials recommend checking out the Ice Age Trail Glossary for definitions of these and other features likely to be encountered while hiking the trail.

The Trail also diverges in some



Ray Zillmer

places to include parts of the Driftless Area, the southwestern quarter of the state that was untouched by the glaciers.

More than 12,000 years ago, an immense flow of glacial ice sculpted a landscape of remarkable beauty across Wisconsin. As the glacier retreated, it left behind a variety of unique

landscape features. These glacial remnants are now considered among the world’s finest examples of how continental glaciation sculpts our planet.

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail is a 1,000-mile footpath that highlights these landscape features as it travels through some of the state’s most beautiful natural areas. The Trail is entirely within Wisconsin and is one of only eleven National Scenic Trails.

But the Ice Age Trail is more than a path through the woods. It is a place for mental and physical rejuvenation, a place to unwind after a hard day and enjoy the landscape of Wisconsin, the alliance states. More than 2.3 million people use the Ice Age Trail each year to hike and snowshoe, to backpack, to disconnect and reconnect.

Behind the scenes, a vibrant community of volunteers across the state work to build and maintain the Trail, making it one of the country’s best hiking experiences.

Family friendly

The Alliance’s website has a wealth of information including numerous games and activities to get kids involved in hiking the trail.

“Explore the Ice Age Trail. Encourage a deeper connection to nature. Enhance your child’s hike,” it states.

• **Backpacks** – The Ice Age Trail Explorer Backpack contains everything you need to interact with and learn about Wisconsin’s flora and fauna while hiking the Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

As you seek out the next yellow blaze, deepen your children’s connection to nature using Wisconsin wildlife identification guides. They’ll gain a closer look at critters through binoculars and learn how to navigate the Ice Age

Trail with the atlas, guidebook, and compass.

The Explorer Backpacks were made possible with support from the National Park Foundation and Granite Gear, which supplied the backpacks. They contain: Ice Age Trail Guidebook, Ice Age Trail Atlas, Pocket Naturalist Guides (Birds, Wildlife, Trees & Wildflowers), “Trees” Fandex Field Guide, Binoculars, Compass, Rite in the Rain Journal, Magnifying Glass, Scat Identification Bandana, Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics Tag and a First Aid Kit.

The backpacks are available for checkout at public libraries located in one of the Ice Age Trail Communities. The closest communities in this area are Whitewater, Janesville, Milton, Hartland, Slinger and West Bend.

• **Digital scavenger hunt** – Before you go out for an adventure on the trail, explore the website, www.iceagetrail.org to learn more about what makes the Ice Age Trail so special, the unique glacial features you’ll see along the way, and how the alliance is working to create, support and protect this 1,000-mile footpath in Wisconsin.

The website contains a downloadable, fillable PDF of a scavenger hunt (parents or hike leaders can also find the answer key on the site.)

• **Trail Discoveries** – Choose downloadable sheets for elementary, middle school, high school or kids of all ages, offered as the result of funding for a grant project known as “From the Inside Out”.

Each tab contains age appropriate playsheets as a way to expand and deepen the hiking experience. Created by a former educator, these activities offer something for every learning level and style.

A few facts

• The Ice Age Trail is open for hiking, backpacking and snowshoeing. Many segments support cross-country skiing, too.

• The Trail is not yet complete. Nearly 700 miles of it are yellow-blazed Ice Age Trail segments; about 500 miles of unmarked connecting routes link the blazed segments. The entire route is about 1,200 miles long.

• Most of the blazed Ice Age Trail Segments fit hikers’ ideas of a traditional, off-road hiking experience. Some segments, however, lead hikers right down the main streets of Wisconsin communities. This is by design – the Ice Age Trail is meant to connect people and communities.

• Twenty-two municipalities (with more joining each year) have chosen recognition as an Ice Age Trail Community, underscoring the Trail’s positive economic impact, locally. Together, the Ice Age Trail Alliance and Trail Communities promote the unique qualities that make the Trail – and the community it travels through – a meaningful destination.

• The Ice Age Trail began in the 1950s as the dream of Milwaukeean Ray Zillmer, who had a vision of a long, linear park winding through Wisconsin along the glacier’s terminal moraine.

• The Trail crosses over many ownership types, including private



from the top: Hiking is a great activity for kids and to make it even more fun, the Ice Age Trail Alliance has a variety of trail-related activities on its website. The trail is clearly marked as shown in the Lampham Peak Segment in nearby Waukesha County.

CAMERON GILLIE PHOTOS *Lauderdale Lakes Breeze*

land, city parks, state parks as well as county and national forests.

• The Trail travels through 30 counties.

About the Alliance

“At the Ice Age Trail Alliance we believe that if future generations are to adopt a land ethic and protect our national parks, they will need places that regularly challenge their minds to understand the natural world and engage their bodies to action,” the website states.

“We also believe that the Ice Age Trail is such a place, within 20 miles of 60% of Wisconsin residents and an easy drive from Chicago and the Twin Cities,” it states. “Hundreds of volunteers contribute tens of thousands of hours every year to the Ice Age Trail. Their efforts have

spanned decades. Their legacy is forever.”

This area boasts weekly 3-mile walks, held year-round on Tuesdays at 4 p.m. and Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. Both meet at the Ice Age National Scenic Trail parking lot four miles east of Whitewater on Highway 12. Note that a current state park pass is required to park a vehicle in the lot.

For more information, including detailed history about the trail, an interactive map, assistance planning a hike, how to get involved through volunteering or to make a donation, visit the Ice Age Trail Alliance website at iceagetrail.com.

To connect with the Walworth/Jefferson County Chapter, send an email to walworthjeffersoncochapter@iceagetrail.org.



There is a good a chance of spotting wildlife along the trail, such as this family of sandhill cranes.

BRAD WILKINS PHOTO *Lauderdale Lakes Breeze*

FISHING • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

soft bait, such as the Storm 360GT Searchbait. As your kids get more experience, let them graduate to a lure such as an Original Floating Rapala.

Bring the snacks

Whatever your kids like for snacks, such as chips, cookies or fruit chewies, bring them! You’re sure to work up an appetite catching all those fish. And don’t forget the

wipes for sticky, slimy little hands.

Keep it short

With younger kids, especially, avoid overdoing it. Start out with short trips – a couple hours at most, and if the fish just don’t seem to be cooperating, cut it short and go have an ice cream cone.

Create traditions

One of the best things about

fishing with a kid is creating little traditions to which they can look forward in the future.

Bring a friend

If your child has a good friend, invite them along on the fun, too. That kid may turn into a lifetime fishing buddy for your kid.

Take pictures

Don’t limit yourself to just fish

photos! Take photos of the entire experience.

Watch the weather

Sometimes the weather doesn’t always cooperate. You may think the fishing is best on an overcast, windy day, but that may not be the case for kids. Instead, watch the weather and choose a warm, clear day and get out early when the fish are most likely to bite.

Bring a life jacket

It only takes a second and you may find a kid in the water.

Avoid sunburn

Make sure your kid is wearing a comfortable fishing cap and together, apply your sunscreen to ears, noses and other exposed skin.

Timelines for renovation projects

A number of variables play into the length of time needed

Renovations help homeowners customize their homes to align with their needs and wants.

Remodeling may be necessary to replace outdated fixtures and features, address mistakes previous homeowners may have made, or to make a home more functional.

Homeowners often find it beneficial to hire professional contractors when they have work to be done around the house to ensure the job gets done to code and to their satisfaction.

Timelines for home remodeling projects vary depending on a number of variables, including the size of a crew as well as the scope of the project.

Once a project commences, the timeline can feel endless. The following are estimates of timelines for top remodeling projects to give homeowners an idea of how long their renovation projects may last, courtesy of Renofi, a company that provides a lending platform leveraged by credit unions nationwide to offer loans to consumers.

KITCHEN

There are a lot of moving parts to a kitchen renovation, involving the services of electricians, plumbers, structural experts, and even interior design professionals.

Not to mention the needs of craftspeople who can make custom cabinetry and countertops. Kitchen remodels can take anywhere from six to 12 weeks.

BATHROOM

The process of a bathroom renovation typically involves demolishing the old bathroom, removing old fixtures and starting from the ground up.

As with a kitchen remodel, bathroom jobs require the services of different professionals. That is why homeowners can expect three to 10 weeks for a bathroom, depending on the scope of the project.

FINISHING A BASEMENT

Finishing a basement can add valuable living space to a home. Establishing a home theater space or man cave may require installing framing, insulation, utilities, drywall, flooring, and any additional things if the finished basement will have a bathroom or necessitate additional plumbing.

A finished basement project can last one to two months. But the good news is that typically the rest of the house is livable while the

Did you know?

Planning plays an integral role in the home improvement process, and it's perhaps a more time-consuming component of renovations than homeowners realize.

According to the "2024 U.S. Houzz & Home Study" from Houzz Research, homeowners spent almost twice as much time planning their kitchen renovations in 2023 as it took for the projects to be completed.

The researchers behind the report found that the average time spent planning a kitchen renovation in 2023 was 9.6 months, while the building took just over five months. Additional projects featured a similar disparity between the time to plan and the time to build.

For example, homeowners spent more than eight months planning living room renovations, which then took an additional four-plus months to complete.

Even smaller projects like closet renovations required ample planning (six 1/2 months) that more than doubled the time required to complete the project (just over three months).

(METRO CREATIVE)



work is being done, so residents will not be disrupted.

WHOLE HOME REMODEL

Hogan Design & Construction says that a whole house remodeling project can take anywhere from 16 weeks to 24 weeks. More involved projects can take longer.

Remodeling a home often involves a considerable investment of time and money. Knowing how long a homeowner will be inconvenienced by the work can help the household plan accordingly.

(METRO CREATIVE)



Year-end data shows 2024 sales were up 4.7% from their 2023 levels. However, affordability remains a challenge; levels declined 10% over the previous 12 months due to factors such as mortgage rates, price appreciation, and median income levels, according to the Wisconsin Realtors Association.

PEXELS.COM PHOTO Lauderdale Lakes Breeze

Housing market closes year strong

Inventory remains very tight, according to state realtors association

The Wisconsin REALTORS Association recently released its December 2024 Wisconsin Real Estate Report, noting a substantial increase in sales and very strong price appreciation for the existing home market.

Additionally, affordability remains a challenge; levels declined 10% over the last 12 months due to factors such as mortgage rates, price appreciation, and median income levels.

Year-end data shows 2024 sales were up 4.7% from their 2023 levels, and the median price rose 8.8% to \$310,000.

Chris DeVincentis, 2025 Chair of the Board of Directors, Wisconsin REALTORS Association, offered some winter home-buying advice.

"We saw the strongest December sales since 2021 even as affordability fell over that period. This good sign indicates that buyers who work with a realtor during winter may find opportunities that would be unavailable during the peak season," DeVincentis said.

"Sellers in the winter are often highly motivated to sell and likely open to price concessions compared to peak months," he added.

Tom Larson, President & CEO, Wisconsin REALTORS Association, compared the state's affordability to other areas.

"There is no doubt that Wisconsin's housing affordability has been declining since mortgage rates bottomed out in 2020. However, the Midwest fortunately has higher affordability than all other regions of the country," Larson said.

"This is primarily due to the Midwest's lower housing prices, which averaged just under \$305,000 in November. By comparison, National Association of REALTORS data showed November prices 21% higher in the South, 60% higher in the Northeast, and 110% higher in the West," Larson added.

David Clark, Professor Emeritus of Economics and WRA Consultant, said he hopes for reduced federal deficits in the future.

"Declining affordability closely ties to mortgage rates, which ended 2024 at levels similar to January 2024. Although the Fed lowered the short-term Federal Funds rate by 1% in the fall, mortgage rates more closely track the yield of 10-year treasury bonds," Clark said.

"Think of the bond yield as the guaranteed annual interest rate paid when purchasing a bond. Those yields rose a full percentage point during Q4, corresponding with a half percent increase in the 30-year fixed mortgage rate in that time span. The treasury bond yields will likely stay high as long as there are large deficits that need to be financed with treasury bonds. Hopefully federal deficits are reduced in the next administration," Clark added.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

The existing home market heated

up in December with a substantial spike in sales and very strong price appreciation. December home closings jumped 9.2% compared to their levels 12 months earlier, and the median price rose 13% to \$305,000. December growth in sales was stronger than any month since May 2024, and the media price appreciation in December was the strongest of the year.

A review of year-end data shows sales for all of 2024 were up 4.7% from their 2023 levels, and the median price rose 8.8% to \$310,000.

Total statewide listings of homes in December were 3.8% higher than December 2023. However, new listings in December 2024 fell 3.7% compared to their level 12 months earlier, even as sales increased 9.2% over that same period. In fact, December closings were 62% higher than new listings.

Strong demand and weak supply created a strong seller's market with just 2.7 months of available supply, which is unchanged from December 2023. This is well below the six-month benchmark that indicates a balanced housing market.

The average 30-year fixed mortgage rate was 6.72% in December, which is only slightly lower than the 6.82% average rate of December 2023.

Persistently high mortgage rates, robust appreciation of median home prices, and relatively flat levels of median family income led to a 10% decline in statewide housing affordability over the last 12 months.

The Wisconsin Housing Affordability Index measures the percent of the median-priced home that a potential buyer with median family income qualifies to purchase, assuming 20% down with the remaining balance financed with a 30-year fixed mortgage at current rates. The index fell from 140 in December 2023 to 126 in December 2024.

ABOUT THE WRA

The Wisconsin REALTORS Association is one of the largest trade associations in the state, headquartered in Madison. The WRA represents and provides services to more than 17,500 members statewide, made up of real estate sales agents, brokers, developers, appraisers, inspectors, bankers and other professionals who touch real estate. The association is under the direction of a statewide board of directors, comprised of members from the top real estate firms around the state.

BY THE NUMBERS

Waterfront Home for Sale in Lauderdale Lakes

W5854 Bubbling Springs Dr	\$649,000
W5683 Park Rd	\$825,000
W5693 Ridge Rd	\$959,700
W5712 North Dr	\$1,049,700
W5505 Rocky Rd	\$1,650,000
W5672 Ridge Rd	\$1,699,700
W5553 Oak Park Rd	\$1,895,000
W5681 Ridge Rd	\$1,929,900
N7729 Laura Ln	\$3,199,997
W5357 Lauderdale Dr	\$4,499,700

THE GOING RATE



HOMES RECENTLY SOLD IN LAUDERDALE LAKES SINCE APRIL 1, 2025

W5742 North Dr. • La Grange
\$1,565,000



Certified in Wisconsin program open for applications

Applications are now being accepted for the Certified In Wisconsin Program, which designates industrial development sites as being shovel-ready, making them attractive to developers and valuable to communities.

Applications will be accepted through May 2.

Offered in partnership with the Site Selection Group (SSG), the Certified in Wisconsin Program partially subsidizes the cost to communities of obtaining site certification.

The program’s goals including gauging the potential for corporate investment at the site, making recommendations for the community to consider, and gathering detailed site information to effectively market the property.

“The Certified in Wisconsin Program sends a message to site selectors and businesses that these properties and their communities are ready for new development,” said Missy Hughes, secretary and CEO of WEDC, the state’s lead economic development agency.

“Going through the process and completing key reviews, documents, and assessments offers certainty to developers, site selectors, expanding companies, and other attraction prospects,” Hughes added.

For site selectors and developers, the Certified Site designation is a pre-qualification, indicating a

property’s title is clear, it possesses sufficient utilities and other infrastructure for industrial use, it is properly zoned, and it has adequate transportation access for industrial use, among other criteria.

The certification makes sites more attractive to developers by removing many of the ambiguities, pitfalls, and delays that can crop up during the siting and planning process.

A recorded informational webinar and other program materials can be found at wedc.org.

WEDC and SSG are seeking a diverse pool of applicants with respect to regions statewide, including both rural and urban sites, as well as sites located within established industrial parks and those that are not.

To be eligible for the program, a site must consist of a minimum of 20 contiguous, developable acres that are available for sale or lease to prospective industrial buyers. Both privately and publicly owned properties are eligible, provided the community either owns the property or has an exclusive option on the property.

Applicants must submit a letter of interest with supporting documents, including a parcel map, by May 2.

For more information about the program or the application process, contact Sarah Bownds at sarah.bownds@wedc.org or 608-210-6769.



Individuals understand that it can be in their best interests to work with real estate professionals, but they may not know where to look as they seek to work with one. Consider these tips for finding the right match in a real estate professional.

METRO CREATIVE *Lauderdale Lakes Breeze*

How to find the right real estate agent

Working with a real estate agent can give both buyers and sellers an edge in what continues to be a challenging real estate market. Agents, brokers and realtors are professionals who have distinct expertise and knowledge of the process of buying and selling homes. That expertise is evidenced by how many people rely on real estate professionals each year.

A recent Zillow Group Consumer Housing Trends report found 88 percent of homeowners choose to list their homes with a real estate agent when it comes time to sell. Individuals understand that it can be in their best interests to work with real estate professionals, but they may not know where to look as they seek to work with one. Here are some tips for finding the right match in a real estate professional.

- Know the difference in real estate professionals. Real estate agents are required by the state in which they operate to pass a real estate license exam. Real estate brokers take it a step further and undergo additional training, which could bring additional experience

to the table. Realtors® are members of the National Association of Realtors® and beholden to its strict code of ethics. These individuals also may have undergone additional training that qualifies them to work with certain types of clients, such as seniors.

- Seek referrals. Friends or family members, or even others in the community, can put people in touch with real estate professionals. When asking for referrals, individuals can inquire about certain professionals and how they handled buying and/or selling a home.

- Work with the right type of agent. Generally speaking, real estate agents either work with buyers or sellers in the transaction. Many will do both, but some specialize in buying or selling. Find a professional who either does both or specializes in your position.

- Research an agent’s online presence. Use the internet to see if the agent has a website, a particular philosophy or a specialty. This also may be a place to check online reviews. Don’t be dissuaded by one or two poor reviews. However, if

there are many, it may be best to look elsewhere.

- Meet and interview potential agents. Individuals should speak with a couple of real estate professionals to see what they offer. This is a good way to determine if there is a connection there, and whether the agent will get the results needed. A well-prepared agent will come with data, including “comps” of properties in the area. Professionals typically have information about the current market trends and a portfolio of the homes they have brokered recently.

- Go with gut instincts. If it’s between two people of equal qualification, select the person with whom you have a stronger rapport. This person will be guiding you through a sizable financial transaction, so comfort level is important.

Finding the right real estate professional can take some time. But the right professional will guide clients through the often complex and occasionally frustrating process of buying or selling property.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Money sense

Five moves for young investors to consider

If you’re just beginning your career, what are your financial priorities?

You might have student loans to deal with. And you may even be thinking about saving for a down payment on a house. These are certainly significant issues, and yet, you shouldn’t ignore your long-term goals, such as retirement – which is why you may want to get started as an investor.

And as you invest, consider these suggestions:

1. Take advantage of your opportunities. Even while addressing your other concerns, such as loan payments, you may well have space in your life to invest — if you take advantage of the opportunities presented to you. For example, if you work for a business that offers a 401(k) or other retirement plan, try to put in as much as you can afford, or at least enough to earn your employer’s matching contribution, if one is offered. And you may find that contributing to a traditional 401(k) or similar plan is more affordable than you think, as your contributions may be deductible, lowering your taxable income.

2. Think long-term. Some people make the mistake of seeking short-term gains by trying to “time” the market – that is, they try to “buy low and sell high.” While this is a great strategy in theory, it’s almost impossible to follow, as no one can really predict market highs and lows. The most successful investors follow a long-term strategy and don’t jump in and out of the market.

3. Know your risk tolerance. Your investment choices should be based partially on your risk tolerance. Typically, the more investment risk you take on, the greater the potential reward, but it works the other way, too – riskier investments can result in greater losses, at least in the short term. You need to find a risk level with which you are comfortable. Also, your risk tolerance can change over time — when you get close to retirement, for instance, you might want to invest more conservatively than you did when you still had decades ahead of you in the working world.

4. Diversify your investments. The financial markets affect different investments in different ways, which means that, at any given time, some investments will perform better than others. But if you only owned one type of investment or asset class, your portfolio could suffer if a market downturn had a particularly strong effect on that investment or asset. By spreading your investment dollars among a range of investments, you’ll have more opportunities for success, and you can help reduce the effects of market volatility on your holdings. Keep in mind, though, that diversification, by itself, can’t guarantee profits or protect against all losses.

5. Prepare for the unexpected. You don’t always know when you’ll face a large expense, such as a medical bill or a major home repair. If you’re not prepared, you could be forced to dip into your long-term investments, such as your 401(k), to pay for these costs. To help avoid this problem, you may want to take steps such as keeping a cushion of cash in your portfolio and building an emergency fund containing several months’ worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid account.

By putting these moves to work, you can help yourself make progress on an investment journey that could last a lifetime.

This article was written by Edward Jones.



Peggy Stebbins



Matt Zastrow



Silvia Donday-Selenske



Amanda Morgans



Tim Smith

PremierBank announces officer promotions

PremierBank recently recognized several officer promotions approved by the bank’s Board Directors at its January meeting.

“These promotions reflect the exceptional hard work, dedication, and unwavering commitment our bankers demonstrate daily. Their priority is always to serve our customers and communities with the highest level of care and professionalism, and their efforts make a meaningful impact on the success of our bank and the people we serve,” Russ Turk, PremierBank’s Chairman, CEO, and President, said.

Officer promotions include the

following:

Peggy Stebbins, CPA, was promoted to Executive Vice President, Chief Operating Officer, and Interim Chief Financial Officer. Stebbins joined the bank in April 2023.

Matt Zastrow was promoted to Senior Vice President and Chief Lending Officer. Zastrow has been with the organization since 2018.

Silvia Donday-Selenske was promoted to Vice President, Bilingual Loan Officer. Donday-Selenske joined the bank in 2019.

Amanda Morgans was promoted to Assistant Vice President, Branch Manager

Jefferson after having been with PremierBank since 2014.

Tim Smith was promoted to Assistant Vice President, Loan Officer. Smith joined the bank in 2018.

ABOUT PREMIERBANK

PremierBank was established over 160 years ago in 1863 and remains a locally owned community bank that prides itself on building strong partnerships with the businesses and residents in Jefferson, Rock and Walworth counties.

For more information, visit bankwithpremier.com.



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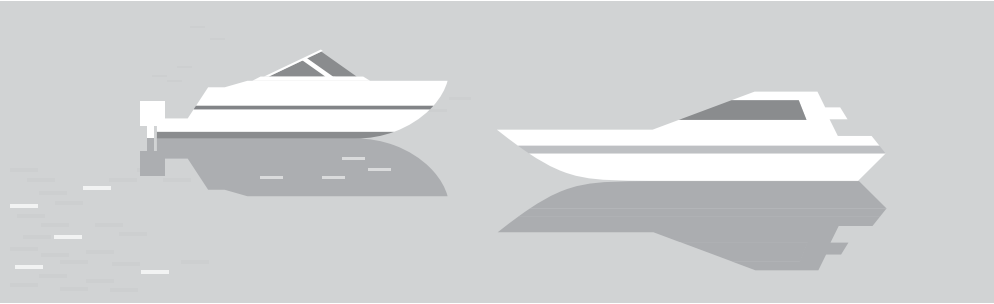
14FT. ALUMACRAFT BOAT with trailer, 9.9 hp. Johnson motor, professionally maintained. (Receipts available.) Includes motor stand, trolling motor & more. Tom 262-498-2809.

1989 ARRIVA 21 ft 305 V8, good interior, runs good, needs starter. \$1,500. 708-431-4955 Browns Lake, WI

2003 ALUMACRAFT 175 TROPHY W/ Trailer. 90 HP, 9.9HP & equip. 815-389-2480.

25' MAGNUM MARINE 1974 With trailer. Twin 350 Chevys, restored and in great shape. \$25,000. Call 414-530-8300.

JON BOAT WITH TRAILER 18 foot, 25 hp Yamaha F/S. \$1,500. Call 262-206-1725.



LAKES AREA CLASSIFIEDS



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1995 Mastercraft Sammy Duvall series, Corvette engine, flat wakes great slalom boat \$13,500 best. (262) 742-3665

1996 Tracker Bass Boat, 17 foot, easy loader trailer, 60 hp Mercury outboard, runs good. \$4500 best. Text only (708) 785-2440.

Fishing Boats

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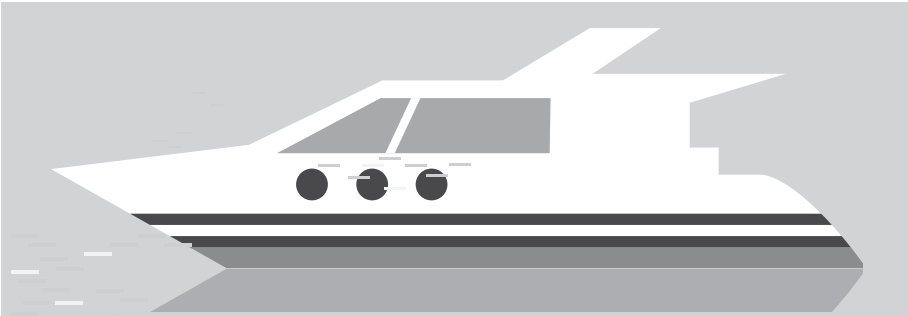
Lauderdale Lakes. (262) 742-3665

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Jerry Kroupa, REALTOR®



N7729 Laura Lane, Elkhorn - Luxurious lakefront estate on Lauderdale Lakes' exclusive "Gold Coast" with 142' of pristine sand frontage and 1.28 acres of gated, wooded privacy, all on a private road for additional exclusivity. The 4BD, 4.5BA main home is designed for elevated lake living, with panoramic views, lakeside dining, a vaulted screened porch, and a lakeside primary suite with private deck. Entertain with ease in the walkout lower level featuring a family room, wet bar, brick fireplace & patio with fire pit. A rare wet boathouse includes a stunning 2BD/1BA guest cottage above with vaulted ceilings, full kitchen, living room, and screened porch. Premium amenities include a 36x30 heated/cooled garage with 4 vaulted rooms including workout room & dog run, plus an additional heated 3.5-car detached garage **\$3,199,997**



W5672 Ridge Rd, Elkhorn - Experience lakeside luxury with this custom-built Thelen Construction home, offering 83' of private frontage on Lauderdale Lakes. This elegant 3BR, 2.5BA lake home is designed to impress, blending timeless craftsmanship with upscale finishes throughout. Enjoy stunning lake views from expansive windows, a gourmet kitchen, vaulted ceilings, and a spacious open-concept layout perfect for entertaining. Step outside to a beautifully landscaped yard with ample space for lakeside relaxation and recreation. Trex balconies, screened porch w/ heaters facing the lake, LL family room, stone fireplaces, wet bars, zoned heating & heated 3 car garage. For additional fun, turn the rec space into a bar or gym. A rare opportunity to own a true luxury retreat on one of Wisconsin's most sought-after lakes. **\$1,699,700**



N8367 Hillburn Mill Rd, Elkhorn - The ultimate nature enthusiast property on a very private 5.73 acres, amongst majestic oak trees. You'll be impressed by this 5 BD, 3.5 bath, 2 story with finished walk-out. As you enter the foyer off the covered porch you're greeted by the LR with vaulted ceiling gas fireplace adjacent to Ktch with wood floors, large breakfast bar, granite tops and new Bosch appliances WiFi capable. Off the ktch you have a dinette with deck access, formal dining room plus den off dinette. Master BD ensuite with double vanity, soaking tub plus glass shower and walk-in closet. 2nd Bd with Vaulted ceiling. Upstairs offers a loft 3rd BD with sitting area, jack and jill bath & 4th Bd. Family room walk-out to cement patio, 5th Bd and ample storage. Walking trails throughout the woods and natural spring pond. **\$1,075,700**



W5712 North Dr, Elkhorn - Exquisitely remodeled in 2020, this stunning 3-bed, 2-bath ranch offers 92 feet of Middle Lake frontage with breathtaking, expansive views. The main level features soaring vaulted ceilings, a wall of sliding glass doors opening to a spacious wraparound deck, and a chef's kitchen with elegant Quartz countertops, designer backsplash, KitchenAid SS appliances, and a striking waterfall island with bar seating. A luxurious bedroom and spa-like bath with heated floors and a glass shower complete the main floor. The walk-out lower level boasts a chic beverage center, 2 additional bedrooms, a modern bath with glass shower, and laundry. Two 9x12 sheds, including one lakeside, lead to the pier and manicured yard. **\$1,049,700**



W5693 Ridge Rd, Elkhorn - This Lauderdale Lakefront home has everything you been looking for. Situated on 76' of Middle Lake frontage with southern exposure, offers you a 3BR, 3.5 multi-level with walk-out lower level to screened in porch. Main floor features living room with hardwood floors, natural fireplace and sliding glass door to deck, kitchen with breakfast bar and dinette with sliding glass door to 3 season room adjacent to deck offering extending lake views. On the second floor you'll find the master BR ensuite with sliding glass door to private balcony, plus 2nd and 3rd bedrooms and full bath. Lower-level family room with bar & walk-out to huge, screened porch and deck, full BA and laundry room. Level lakeside yard featuring shed, fire-pit and Forever Pier installed last summer. Come enjoy the lake life! **\$959,700**



W5135 Sterlingworth Ct, Elkhorn - Located in a prime spot at Sterlingworth Condominiums in the atrium, this 2-bedroom, 2-bath unit is just steps from the beach with its own boat slip. Enjoy stunning lake views through a wall of sliding glass doors leading to a spacious deck. The eat-in kitchen features a breakfast bar and dinette, while the living room offers a cozy gas fireplace. The master suite boasts an updated bath with a walk-in multi-head tile shower and double vanity. Wood flooring throughout. Direct access to the indoor pool, tennis and pickleball courts, and the finest sand beach on the lake. Just a short walk to Lauderdale Golf Course & minutes to Kettle Moraine trailhead. Turn-key for effortless lakefront living! **\$697,700**



W5357 Lauderdale Dr, Elkhorn - The Iconic Lauderdale Lakes home, "The Boat-house" on Deakin Isle is situated on 192' of premier shoreline. Rebuilt in 2015 to its original 1915 Jazz Age glory, this 4 bedroom, 3.5 bath home is bursting with historical details and architectural styles. Ballroom features 1,200 sq ft with original hard rock maple floors, unique hanging Meiji era Japanese lanterns, with the original Opium Den prepped for a future hidden wine cellar. All 3 Lauderdale Lakes are visible from numerous vantage points throughout the four levels. Kitchen features custom marble countertops, farm sink, Wolf & Sub-Zero appliances. Master BR ensuite with luxury freestanding tub, full steam room, and private deck with fireplace. A finished swim basin provides access to the marque wet boathouse w/ underwater lighting. **\$4,499,700**



W1260 South Shore, Palmyra - Your lakefront search stops here! Move-in ready two-story with walk-out lower level and 65' of frontage on Blue Spring Lake. Low-voltage lighting runs to the floating pier and boat ShoreStations which stay in year-round. Lakeside kitchen with large breakfast bar and dining area offer extended lake views and access to multi-level decking which leads to lake access. Lakeside level lawn and shed. Cozy living room with wood-burning fireplace. In-floor heating system upgraded in 2021 with backup furnace and new A/C system installed in 2025. Main floor laundry room and Master Suite with lakeside sitting room. Upstairs offers four bedrooms and a full bath. Lower-level rec room with sliding glass door for lake access. Blue Spring Lake is an all-sports lake with crystal clear water. **\$789,700**



W5635 Forest Road, Elkhorn - Welcome to your dream Lauderdale Lakes lodge—this 6BD, 3.5BA timber-frame retreat offers 134' of level Middle Lake frontage, a private beach, and a lakeside boat house with rooftop deck. Inside, the soaring great room features exposed beams, a 2-story stone fireplace with wood stove on the LL, and a wall of windows framing stunning lake views. The wood-floored kitchen with large island opens to a dining area, screened porch, and wrap-around deck—ideal for entertaining. The main-floor primary suite offers lake views and direct deck access. Upstairs, vaulted bedrooms include cozy sleeping lofts. The walk-out lower level features a family room with a wood stove, game room, and 6th bedroom. A 3-car garage and mudroom complete this serene lakeside escape. **\$2,749,700**



W5742 North Dr, Elkhorn - Why go through the hassle of building when this 2023 custom built 4 Plus Bedroom, 3.5 bath two story is ready to enjoy. Situated on 75' of Middle lake frontage you'll find this open concept main level with wall of windows lakeside. Inside Kitchen offers everything the discriminating chef would demand and ultimate living and dining space with gas fireplace, custom wet-bar and deck access. Master Bdrm ensuite with breathtaking lake views offering double vanity, large tile shower and ample walk-in closet. Family room walk-out with gas fireplace, full bath, work-out room or Bdrm, 4th bdrm and screened porch. Kitchen also features large island/breakfast bar with Delkton countertops and Zline Autograph appliances. Outside fireplace and level lakefront yard by pier and storage shed. **\$1,565,000**



Karen Ostermeier
Lauderdale Lakes Resident & Specialist



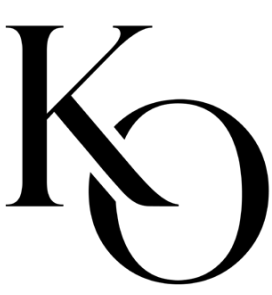
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