

SkillsUSA Wisconsin State Leadership and Skills Conference Scheduled for April 1-2

FOR MMC

The 52nd annual SkillsUSA Wisconsin State Leadership and Skills Conference will be held in Madison, Wis. on Tues., April 1 - Wed., April 2, 2025. Competitions will take place at the Alliant Energy Center, 1919 Alliant Energy Center Way, and Madison Area Technical College (MATC), 1701 Wright St. The Opening and Awards ceremonies will take place in the Alliant Energy Center's Veterans Memorial Coliseum, while the competitions will be held in the Exhibition Hall as well as at MATC.



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The 2025 conference will feature more than 1,750 middle, high school, and college/post-secondary students, over 200 teachers, and more than 300 industry volunteers working in over 75 competitions (the competitions are for high school students unless indicated), including...

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Technical Drafting*
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Video News Production
Video Production
Welding*
Welding Fabrication
Welding Sculpture (High School and Middle School)
Woodworking Display (High School and Middle School)
*Contests taking place at Madison Area Technical College.

The Opening Ceremony is scheduled for 1 p.m. on April 1, with competition set up and event briefings held throughout the day. The State Championships will commence April 2 at 7:30 a.m. and conclude at 4 p.m. All contests are conducted under the direction of industry experts, trade associations, and labor organizations, testing competencies that are set to industry standards.

The Closing Ceremony, including the presentation of awards, will start at 6:30 p.m. The first-place winners will go on to compete in the National SkillsUSA Championships, June 23-27 in Atlanta, Ga.

The public is encouraged to attend the SkillsUSA Wisconsin State Championships for free. Founded in

See SkillsUSA page 6

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Antigo WWII Veteran's Birthday Wish Goes Viral

USPS

What started as a simple birthday request has turned into an overwhelming show of love and appreciation for one of Wisconsin's oldest veterans.

Reuben Kolpack, a decorated World War II combat veteran, is set to celebrate his 104th birthday March 19th. Wanting to make the milestone extra special, his granddaughter took to social media with a heartfelt plea: she asked for people to send him 104 birthday cards—one for each year of his incredible life.

She posted her request across Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat, her workplace, and her son's school, hoping for a modest response. What happened next was beyond anything the family could have imagined.

But it hasn't stopped at just cards. Thoughtful well-wishers from across the country have also been sending parcels, small gifts, and handwritten letters, eager to share their gratitude for Reuben's service and longevity. The sheer volume of mail was so great that the Antigo Post Office stepped up in a big way. Instead of having the family collect the ever-growing stacks of mail, postal employees began offering home deliveries to ensure the cards and gifts reached Reuben with ease.

The local post office also took the celebration a step further. Letter carriers arranged a special meet-and-greet with the birthday veteran, posing for photos and sharing in the excitement of the moment. The event was filled with smiles, handshakes, and heartfelt words of thanks for Reuben's service and incredible life journey.

"This is beyond anything we expected," said Reuben's granddaughter. "It's truly heartwarming to see how many people care. We're so grateful for everyone who

took the time to send him a card or a message."

There's no telling how many more letters and gifts will arrive. One thing is for sure—Reuben Kolpack's 104th birthday will be one for the history books, filled with the love and appreciation of thousands who now know his story.

Photo: Top l-r, Letter Carriers Harry Hooper, Jarin Ryland, Brandon Wells, and Ian Stewart

Top l-r: Letter Carrier Bobbi Baseman, WWII veteran Rueben Kolpack, and Letter Carrier Troy Schafer

Wisconsin Taxpayers with Retirement Income Can Now Use Direct File

FOR MMC

Wisconsin taxpayers with retirement income, contributions and rollovers are now eligible to file their returns using Direct File, the IRS's free, secure online filing program.

Eligible Retirement and Savings Income

Direct File, available in 25 states—including Wisconsin—provides taxpayers with a quick and convenient way to file their federal income tax returns electronically. The IRS has expanded coverage to include contributions and most distributions from employer-sponsored retirement plans and direct rollovers from one employer-sponsored retirement plan to another, or to an Individual Retirement Agreement (IRA).

Individuals who earned interest income from common accounts such as savings, checking, savings bonds and treasury obligations, added or used money from a Health Savings Account (HAS), and added or used money from a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) can also use Direct File.

Certain restrictions apply. Wisconsin taxpayers can visit <https://directfile.irs.gov/savingsandretirement> for more information.

Income Tax Filing Tips

With a little over a month left before the tax filing deadline, the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) offers taxpayers the following tips:

- Always review your banking information before submitting your return.
- Doublecheck to ensure you have claimed all your eligible credits.
- Track the status of your refund using DOR's Where's My Refund tool.

To provide extra assistance to taxpayers, DOR will have extended customer service hours (7:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) on April 1–3, April 7–10 and April 14–15.

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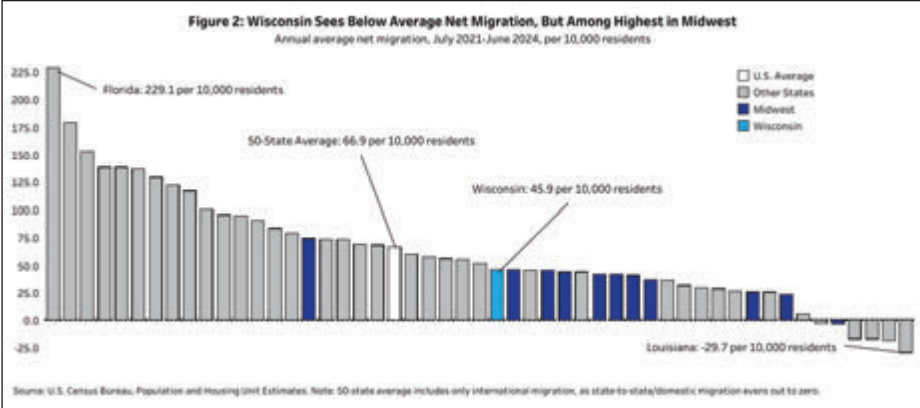
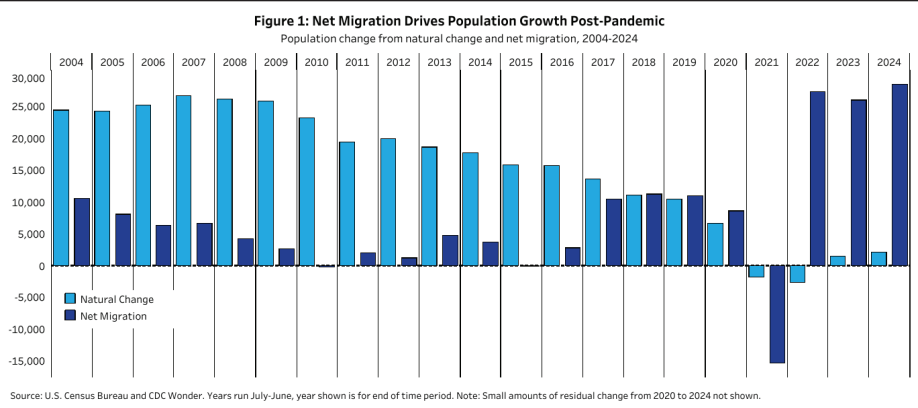
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Wisconsin Sees Record Net Migration Surge, Driven by International Influx



NATASHA WINKLER

In a remarkable demographic shift, Wisconsin has experienced its highest levels of net migration in at least two decades, according to recent U.S. Census Bureau data. From July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, the state saw a net gain of 28,478 residents, with 22,146 coming from international migration and 6,332 from domestic migration. This migration accounted for 93.2% of Wisconsin's population growth during this period, with only a modest gain of about 2,000 residents from natural population change (births exceeding deaths).

A Shift in Population Dynamics

Historically, Wisconsin's population growth stemmed primarily from natural change. However, declining birth rates and rising mortality, especially among the aging Baby Boomer generation, have shifted the state's reliance toward migration for population growth.

This trend began to accelerate in 2022 and remained at elevated levels through 2024, marking a 151% increase in net migration compared to the pre-pandemic period of 2016-2019. During that earlier period, Wisconsin saw 32,522 new residents from net migration, while the most recent three-year period brought 81,605 residents.

International Migration Leading the Way

The surge in international migration is part of a broader national trend. The Census Bureau reported a net gain of 2.8 million residents nationwide from international migration in 2024, up from 1.7 million in 2022 and 2.3 million in 2023. Wisconsin's share of this influx has been substantial, with international migration contributing nearly three-fourths of the state's net migration since 2021.

Regional Comparison

On a per capita basis,

Wisconsin ranked 26th among the 50 states, with 45.9 net migrants per 10,000 residents. However, within the Midwest, Wisconsin ranked second among 12 states and first among its neighboring states.

This growth stands in contrast to Minnesota, which saw a decline in net migration during the post-pandemic period despite being one of the Midwest's strongest performers before 2020.

Challenges Ahead

While the recent surge in migration has boosted Wisconsin's population, experts warn that federal policy changes could reduce future international migration, and the state's aging population will likely lead to further declines in natural population growth.

If current trends continue, Wisconsin could face net negative natural population change, with deaths outpacing births. This shift would exacerbate existing workforce

shortages in critical industries like healthcare, education, agriculture, and construction.

Policy Implications

To maintain population growth, Wisconsin policymakers may need to focus on attracting domestic migrants and retaining current residents. Potential strategies include:

- Increasing affordable housing options
- Recruiting out-of-state students to Wisconsin universities
- Offering tax incentives or workforce benefits to attract families with young children

As Wisconsin navigates this demographic shift, proactive policies will be essential to sustain economic growth and address the needs of an aging population. The full report from WI Policy Forum can be found here: <https://wispolicyforum.org/research/wisconsins-net-migration-soars-to-levels-not-seen-in-decades/>

Correcting the Record about Social Security Direct Deposit and Telephone Services

SOCIAL SECURITY REGIONAL PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Recent reports in the media that Social Security plans to eliminate telephone services are inaccurate. SSA is increasing its protection for America's seniors and other beneficiaries by eliminating the risk of fraud associated with changing bank account information by telephone.

SSA continuously investigates and analyzes potential threats to strengthen and secure our programs and protect people who receive benefits. Approximately 40 percent of Social Security direct deposit fraud is associated with someone calling SSA to change direct deposit bank information. SSA's current protocol of simply asking identifying questions by telephone is no longer enough to prevent fraud.

If someone needs to change their bank account information on SSA's record, they will need to either:

- Use two-factor authentication with SSA's "my Social Security" service; or
 - Visit a local Social Security office to prove their identity.
 - These methods align with most major banks.
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Adults and teens invited to MCPL Wausau for live-action mystery game

FOR MMC

It's time to put your sleuthing skills to the test! Adults and teens are invited to the Marathon County Public Library's Wausau Headquarters (300 N. First St., Wausau) for an interactive live-action mystery game on March 29. Sessions will be held at 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

Cherished librarian, Kat Logs, believes someone may be out to get her. She received a threatening letter, a cryptic message, and already survived an attempt on her life. Your investigative team has been called in to identify the would-be culprit before



they have the chance to strike. Can you put the right person behind bars before Kat is Dewey Decimated?

Free, open to adults and teens, registration is required. Call the library at 715-261-7230 or visit <https://mcpl.us/event/wausau-mystery-in-the-stacks/> to register.

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Check out our FACEBOOK for more specials!

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Wed. 4p-9p & Fri. 11a-9p

Wednesdays: Lightly Breaded Haddock, Jumbo Tiger Shrimp, Fish & Shrimp Combo and Fish Tacos.

Fridays: Haddock (Lightly Breaded, Beer Battered & Baked) Pan Fried Walleye, Perch, Jumbo Tiger Shrimp, Fish & Shrimp Combos, Smelt, Haddock & Walleye Sandwiches and Soup of the day.

Check out our FACEBOOK for more specials

This page will run weekly through April 16th.

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PUBLISHER'S LETTER

Luck O' The Irish

Dear Reader,

Another Saint Patrick's Day is upon us, and for one day, everyone—Irish or not—joins in the celebration. On this day, we revel in the so-called “luck of the Irish” and pass it along to everyone we meet.

But what is luck, really? Some see it as pure serendipity—good fortune striking at random, being in the right place at the right time. Luck, in this sense, feels fleeting, unpredictable, something that happens to you rather than something you create.

Yet, there's another kind of luck—the kind that isn't random at all. It's the luck that comes from hard work integrity, and a commitment to doing what's right. This kind of luck isn't just stumbled upon; it's earned. It's built through perseverance, through lifting others up rather than



stepping over them. It's the luck that carries not just the fortunate individual but those around them as well.

Of course, there's also another version of luck—the kind that comes at the expense of others. The luck of those who cut corners, take advantage, and push others down to climb higher. But that kind of luck is hollow, fleeting, and never truly fulfilling.

So this Saint Patrick's Day, may you find yourself on the right side of luck—the kind that brings joy, kindness, and goodwill to all. May your blessings be many, your troubles be few, and your heart be as full as a pint of Guinness.

PATRICK J. WOOD

Publisher

Author of “Reflections” a new book now available on Amazon.

Reflections

by Patrick Wood

is Now Available at

Janke Book Store,

Wausau

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OUT & ABOUT

GRAND PRIZE DRAWING

MAR 29



Spring into GREEN

GRAND PRIZE	PRIZE PAYOUT
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7:30 PM	\$500 CASH
8:00 PM	\$750 CASH
8:30 PM	\$750 CASH
9:00 PM	LAWN MOWER
9:30 PM	\$1,000 CASH
10:00 PM	LAWN MOWER
10:30 PM	\$1,500 CASH
11:00 PM	TRACTOR
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Miscellaneous Sales7212

Antique/Unique Items for Sale:
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Auctions7282

Estate Sale by V&J Estate sales
226068 Gavitt St. Weston wis March 21st, 22nd, 23rd Fri. 10-2, Sat. 10-3 Sun. 10-2 Lift Chairs, love seat, coffee table, side tables, curio cabinets, full size bed, shelf units, queen bed with underneath storage, dresser, only a few yrs old. Cedar chest, jewelry armoire, desk, costume jewelry, women's clothes, L to XL. Crafting items, Kitchenware, dish set, flatware sets, cookware, Kitchenaid mixer, mens clothes, M to L. Lamps, pictures, essential oils, sewing items, sewing machine, gone with wind collectibles, gun safes, kids toys and games, reloading items, fishing items, holiday decor, foosball table, pool table, exercise equipment, large us general tool chest, very large auto tech Mac tool chest, trailer, lots of hand tools, tools, auto body items, Husqvarna lawn tractor with blower, cab 24hp 48cut. Ski doo snowmobile 2007, Yamaha wolverine 4x4 side by side 2021, electric scooter and motorized wheel chair.
Way too much to mention Dress for the weather, be aware of neighbors mailboxes and driveways.
For pictures go to EstateSales.org or our Facebook page at V&J Estate sales and service.

Antiques and Collectibles7214

Wausau Antique Show
March 22 (9am-5pm) & 23 (10am-3pm). DC Everest Sr. HS, G--T Field House 6400 Alderson St., Weston. ZurkoPromotions.com

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The Marathon County Historical Society presents

Lost Wausau Architecture: 2 p.m. Saturday, March 29, 2025

FOR MMC



Join Gary Gisselman at the Marathon County Historical Society for this

month's History Speaks presentation of Lost Wausau Architecture. Gary will explore the story of historic and significant buildings lost to the wrecking ball during the course of Wausau's history. These lost buildings have been

torn down for different reasons over the years. Sometimes for urban development, sometimes massive urban renewal, sometimes buildings are just run down. However these buildings were historically significant and architecturally distinctive, and they were an important part of Wausau religious, cultural, educational, political, and business history. These buildings and what went on inside of them were a reminder of the growth and development of the city and were key ingredients in what made Wausau tick.

Gary Gisselman is currently Chairperson of the City of Wausau Historic Preservation Commission, historian and librarian at the Marathon County Historical Society, and leads historic walking

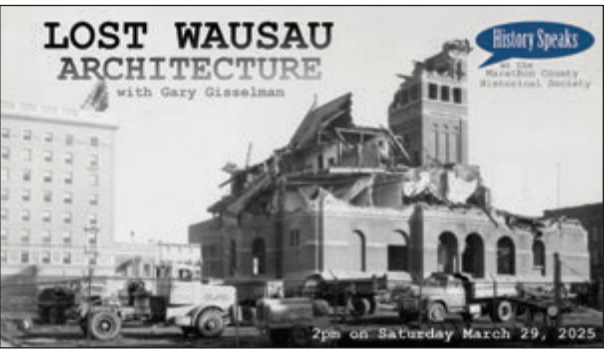
tours throughout the city of Wausau.

This History Speaks program will be presented live at 2pm, Saturday March 29th at the Woodson History Center (410 McIndoe Street, Wausau). History Speaks is presented in conjunction with the Marathon County Public Library and is sponsored by Janke Book Store. This is a free program, no RSVP required.

MCHS is located in the Woodson History Center at 410 McIndoe Street, Wausau, Wisconsin. Exhibit and office hours are Tuesday – Friday 9 am to 4:30 pm and Saturday and Sunday 1 pm to 4:30 pm. Admission is free. The Research Library is open from 9 am to 3:30 pm Tuesday – Friday. Tours of the Yawkey House Museum are available Tuesday – Sunday. Call for times and prices. For more information, please call MCHS at 715-842-5750, email us at info@marathoncountyhistory.org, or visit our website at www.marathoncountyhistory.org.

The mission of MCHS is to collect, preserve, and exhibit materials related to the history of Marathon County, and to use these materials to help people learn about North Central Wisconsin, connect with their roots, and explore their own historical connections.

The Marathon County Historical Society is supported in part by City of Wausau Room Tax Funding. Additional support provided through the B.A. & Esther Greenheck Foundation.



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SkillsUSA from page 1

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More than 200 corporations, trade associations, businesses, and labor unions support SkillsUSA Wisconsin. Programs are integrated into career and technical education through a framework of personal, workplace, and technical skills grounded in academics. SkillsUSA also offers technical skill assessments and other workplace credentials.

Helping each student excel and a solution to shrinking the skills gap, SkillsUSA is a national nonprofit organization serving high school and college students who are preparing for careers in trade, technical, and skilled service occupations.

SkillsUSA empowers its members to become world-class workers, leaders, and responsible American citizens. SkillsUSA improves the quality of our nation's future skilled workforce by developing framework skills, including personal, workplace, and technical skills grounded in academics. The SkillsUSA mission is built upon — and its success depends on — the commitment of members and partners to the following values: integrity, respect, responsibility, citizenship, and service.

For more information on the State Leadership and Skills Conference, visit www.skillsusa-wi.org or email wisconsinskillsusa@gmail.com.

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Wisconsin Lottery Enhances Responsible Gaming and Problem Gambling Resources on Website

WI LOTTERY
In conjunction with the national Problem Gambling Awareness Month campaign, the Wisconsin Lottery has enhanced its responsible gaming and problem gambling resources on its website to help educate players about playing responsibly, avoiding scams, protecting minors, and where to find help for problem gambling behaviors.

A long-time partner with the Wisconsin Council on Problem Gambling (WCPG), the Lottery worked with the WCPG on the new web pages to ensure that the content is easy to navigate, engaging for users, and provides a wide range of contact information and literature for players seeking help. The new web pages also give users suggestions on how to spot the signs of a problem

gambler, how to talk with a friend or family member about a potential problem, and information about common myths and facts surrounding the gaming industry.

This month, the Lottery is working with more than 3,600 retailers across the state to implement its Problem Gambling Awareness Month multi-media campaign including:

- Lottoview (digital display) video messaging and poster placement at retailer locations
- Radio spots throughout the state and on the Wisconsin Lottery's YouTube channel
- Print ads in community publications
- Social media and Players Club newsletter content
- The Wisconsin Lottery is dedicated to encouraging responsible play and supporting the state and

national councils on problem gambling.

The WCPG helpline is available at 800-GAMBLE-5. Online chatting and texting (850-888-HOPE) are also available. Calling, online chatting, and texting is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For more information about responsible gaming and problem gambling, visit wilottery.com/responsible-gaming/home.

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