

# Perfectly Centered

Triannual Newsletter of the  
Kenosha Area Business Alliance (KABA)

SPRING 2022

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## Gov. Evers announces \$24.8 million in grants for the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood; relocation of Kenosha County Human Services

The State of Wisconsin has awarded nearly \$25 million in Neighborhood Investment Fund grants to important projects throughout Kenosha. Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers announced the grant funding during a visit to Kenosha on March 3. They were a portion of nearly \$213 million in Neighborhood Investment Fund grants announced statewide.

The State awarded \$15 million to boost development of the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood (KIN), including an incubator facility for new businesses and funding toward the proposed new facility for LakeView Technology Academy. The site's proposed Innovation Center, a 60,000 SF "incubator facility" for new

business start-ups, will be funded by \$14 million in state stimulus funds, matched by City funds and potentially other contributions. The Center will be a focal point for entrepreneurs and startup businesses to develop programs that encourage job creation, technology development, and building skills. In addition to the innovation center and new facility for LakeView Technology Academy, the neighborhood would include housing, retail and green space.

An additional \$9.85 million was awarded to Kenosha County to support the relocation of its Human Services functions from the Job Center building at 8600 Sheridan Road to the renovated Sun Plaza shopping center at 52nd Street and 35th Avenue.



*"I want to thank Governor Evers and his team for helping to strengthen this project with these much-needed funds. This will result in bringing our Human Services closer to thousands and thousands of people we serve, and it will be a boost to area businesses and the whole neighborhood around it."*

— County Executive Jim Kreuser



*"This grant is an important first step in our efforts to transform the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood site by investing in the Innovation Center."*

— Mayor John Antaramian

Archives of *Perfectly Centered* can be found on our web site:

[www.kaba.org](http://www.kaba.org)



KABA is the lead business organization that drives economic development throughout Kenosha County and supports and provides services to its members and the community, helping to ensure growth, a robust economy, and a positive business climate for the Kenosha Area.

# From the County Executive...

Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser is retiring in April after serving 14 years in this role. Prior to that Jim served as a representative of Kenosha County in the State Legislature. We would like to thank Jim for his public service, congratulate him on his retirement and share this column he recently authored.



Sometimes you have to look back at where you've been to see how far you've come.

I'll admit that maybe I've been doing a little more of that than usual as of late, as I prepare to wrap up my career as your Kenosha County executive next month.

At that point, it will have been nearly 14 years since I came into this office in June 2008, in what was a deeply uncertain time for our economy, locally and globally.

It was the start of the Great Recession, just a few months before Washington would find itself bailing out the big banks and the auto industry. Home values were beginning to plummet, while foreclosures were rising sharply.

Kenosha County was no exception to these trends. We were feeling the pain of the economy acutely.

In 2010, as the effects of the recession continued to roil, Chrysler closed its Kenosha Engine Plant, shutting the door on our 108-year history as an auto manufacturing community.

But amid all this turmoil and economic pain, Kenosha County remained in position to leverage its key strengths: Location, quality of life, and skilled workforce. And leverage it we did. The sidewalks were not rolling up here.

In the early months of my administration, the city and county of Kenosha and the Kenosha Area Business Alliance worked collaboratively to build out Highway N and extend utilities north of the airport, paving the way for the Gordon Food Service development – our first big economic development win in those challenging times.

Then Uline arrived with its shining corporate headquarters campus in Pleasant Prairie in 2010, and it wouldn't be long before Amazon would build out some 1.5 million square feet just north of the Gordon Food Service site.

As the recession faded, Kenosha County was booming. We had become and remain the hot spot for economic development

in our region and across the state.

A few numbers bear this out.

Five-year job growth in Kenosha County from 2015 to 2020 was the highest in the state, at 11.1 percent, while our new construction in 2020 was the third highest in the state.

About those property values that were plunging in 2008: Our county's equalized value increased by 47 percent during the eight years preceding 2021, to a record high of \$19.74 billion. The median home price in Kenosha County as calculated by the Wisconsin Realtors Association was \$234,000 at the end of 2021, up from a recent years' low of \$110,000 in 2012.

Meanwhile, the fiscal health of your county government is stronger than ever. This was confirmed just this past August when Standard & Poor's upgraded Kenosha County's bond rating to AAA, the highest possible level.

Achieving the triple-A threshold had been a goal of my administration since I took office, and it will serve to the benefit of everyone who pays taxes in Kenosha County. We are now one of just seven of the state's 72 counties rated at AAA.

As I begin my retirement next month, I will leave public service confident that Kenosha County is in a stronger position than when I arrived in this office, with a very bright future to come. It's been a privilege to serve during this time of economic renewal.

I've always known this to be a great place to live, work, play and raise a family. And it's no question now that the secret is out – Kenosha County is a destination for economic development. I can't wait to see the great things that lie ahead.

## THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES

**FITZPATRICK GROUP OF WELLS  
FARGO ADVISORS**  
fitzpatrickgrp.com

**GREENFIRE**  
greenfire.com

**KENOSHA COUNTY  
FOOD BANK**  
kenoshacountyfoodbank.org

**MINUTEMAN PRESS**  
minuteman.com

**NOSCO**  
nosco.com

**THE PAYROLL PEOPLE**  
thepayrollpeople.com

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT KABA?

## Save the date for the 2022 KABA Annual Meeting, presented by HARIBO, Johnson Financial Group and Zilber Property Group— *Measuring Up: An Analysis of Kenosha County's Recent Economic Performance*

### 2022 KABA ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 27

7:15 - 9:45 a.m.

UW-Parkside Student Center Ballroom

More information and registration is available at [kaba.org/news/events](http://kaba.org/news/events).

KABA is excited to once again be hosting its Annual Meeting in person! This year's event will feature a keynote address from Wisconsin Policy Forum President Rob Henken who will provide a sneak preview of his organization's research project that will present data on a range of economic and social indicators for Kenosha County. In addition to documenting Kenosha County's progress over time, this analysis will compare the county with a select set of peer jurisdictions in the Midwest and across the U.S. The project was commissioned by KABA to increase understanding about Kenosha County's economic performance, how it stacks up with similar counties, and the extent to which its recent economic development successes have made an impact in areas like employment, income, and poverty reduction. The final deliverable will be an online, interactive data tool and accompanying report.

The annual meeting will also include board of directors election results and an update on the KABA organization and Kenosha County economic development initiatives.

The KABA Annual Meeting is presented by HARIBO, Johnson Financial Group, and Zilber Property Group and additionally sponsored by EMCO Chemical Distributors, Gateway Technical College, Riley Construction Co., ULIN, and Vrakas CPAs & Advisors.

## New KABA luncheon series: *Business Lunch*, presented by State Bank of the Lakes

Thank you to the 100+ people who attended KABA's first *Business Lunch* on March 10. The luncheon, held at the Club at Strawberry

Creek, featured Curt Mueller of McKinsey & Co. who spoke about Supply Chain Disruption.



The new workshop series, to be held several times a year, is intended to educate and inform KABA investors, partners, and the community at-large about timely topics affecting businesses in Southeast Wisconsin. If your company is interested in sponsoring future events or has topic ideas, please contact Becky Noble at [bnoble@kaba.org](mailto:bnoble@kaba.org).



## FOR THEIR INVESTMENT IN KABA

PEPPER CONSTRUCTION  
[pepperconstruction.com](http://pepperconstruction.com)

THE SHARING CENTER  
[thesharingcenter.net](http://thesharingcenter.net)

SMT PACKAGING  
[smtpackaging.com](http://smtpackaging.com)

STUCKEY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY  
[stuckeyconstruction.com](http://stuckeyconstruction.com)

UPLOAD PARTNERS  
[uploadpartners.com](http://uploadpartners.com)

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## HARIBO setting up in Kenosha County: begins hiring, leases warehouse space in Bristol, named one of the best workplaces

Gummi candy manufacturer HARIBO of America has begun hiring for its new facility in Pleasant Prairie and recently hosted several interest fairs for prospective employees.

HARIBO is widely recognized as an employer of choice and was recently ranked #23 on *Fortune Magazine's* list of the 25 Best Small and Medium Workplaces in Manufacturing and Production. 86% of employees at HARIBO say it is a great place to work compared to 59% of employees at a typical U.S.-based company. HARIBO was also recently recognized in Great Place to Work's Best Workplaces in Chicago™ 2021 (Small And Medium).

While its facility is still more than a year from production, HARIBO has entered into a 157,656 SF, full-building lease at HSA Commercial's Bristol Highlands Commerce Center adjacent to their campus to store and distribute product.



## Square Roots partnering with GFS on Kenosha farm that will grow fresh produce in shipping containers

Square Roots indoor farming and Gordon Food Service, one of the largest food distributors in North America, recently announced the opening of a new climate-controlled, indoor farm in Kenosha. Kenosha will be home to the fourth Square Roots farm in North America, and the largest farm the company has built to date. The farm has the capacity to produce more than 2.4 million packages of herbs and leafy greens annually. Square Roots already operates two commercial-scale indoor farms in Michigan and Brooklyn, New York.

The new farm will produce more food with fewer resources 365 days a year, regardless of outdoor weather conditions. By deploying a network of local farms, Square Roots also ensures a shorter supply chain and less distance between people and their food, reducing food miles and minimizing food waste.



First harvests are scheduled for spring 2022, reaching local consumers throughout the broader Chicago/Milwaukee areas.

"Our partnership with Gordon Food Service, combined with our modular, smart-farm platform, means we can rapidly deploy new indoor farms in strategically located cities like Kenosha. We are also able to create exciting jobs in the community, while making locally-grown food available, all year round, to new consumers in nearby Chicago and Milwaukee, significantly expanding our reach in the Midwest," said Tobias Peggs, Co-Founder & CEO, Square Roots

Square Roots farmers in Kenosha will soon be harvesting long-lasting herbs such as basil, cilantro, dill, and parsley, alongside nutritious salad mixes and chef-favorite microgreens that have at least 14 days of extended shelf life and are completely free of pesticides and GMOs.



The new climate-controlled, cloud-connected facility is the company's fourth farm in partnership with Gordon Food Service.

*"Together with Square Roots, Gordon Food Service is enabling local food at a global scale, meeting increased demand for produce that is fresher, responsibly grown, and traceable from seed to shelf." - GFS CEO Rich Wolowski*

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Amazon adding 400 jobs, leasing an additional one million SF building in Kenosha

Amazon is leasing a 1,004,400 SF distribution center near its existing facility in the City of Kenosha. Venture One Real Estate began construction on the new building, located east of Gordon Food Service at 10601 38th Street, in Fall 2021. Facility launch is expected in early 2023.



Amazon will occupy the entire building to use as a regional distribution center to sort inventory, optimize inventory placement and store inventory to replenish the network. The project will create up to 400 new jobs.

## Rehrig Pacific plans 49,000 SF expansion

Rehrig Pacific plans a 49,000 SF expansion and site improvements to their existing facility located in LakeView Corporate Park. The addition will house 17 new plastics injection molding machines and add up to 36 new jobs.

Rehrig Pacific has occupied their Pleasant Prairie facility since the building was constructed in 1996. The expansion project is anticipated to start May 2022 and be completed by November 2022.

Rehrig Pacific is a fourth generation privately held company established in 1913. Its businesses include plastics manufacturing, mechanical systems, and technology. Rehrig manufactures nearly three hundred million pounds of plastics annually and places a heavy focus on sustainability and a circular plastics economy.

## KABA PORTFOLIO UPDATE

In December 2021, KABA's Finance Committee approved \$1.1 million in funding to Balcan Plastics. \$800,000 will come from the new EDA CARES Revolving Loan Fund and \$200,000 from the EDA fund. In addition, the committee approved a \$100,000 forgivable loan to the company from Kenosha County's High Impact fund. The funds will assist Balcan's expansion into a 215,000 SF building in Lakeview Corporate Park. Balcan is a manufacturer of flexible packaging and technical films. The Pleasant Prairie building will be the Canadian-based company's first production facility in the U.S. and will bring app. 65 jobs to Kenosha County.



## Becknell Industrial buys 132 in Somers for new business park: Somers Logistics Center

Carmel, Indiana-based Becknell Industrial has purchased 132 acres at 1735 120th Ave., just east of Interstate 94 in Somers and is nearing completion on the first 795,471 SF speculative building there. The new Somers Logistics Center has enough land to build another 1 million SF after that.



## Pleasant Prairie closes TID, adds \$1 billion to Village's property tax base

The Pleasant Prairie Village Board recently voted to close one of its tax incremental districts (TID 2), a move which brings nearly \$1 billion in additional property value to its tax base.

TID 2 had reached its maximum legal lifespan of 23 years. It was created in 1999 to pay for expanded infrastructure in LakeView Corporate Park, one of the largest corporate parks in the State of Wisconsin.

*"TID 2 has brought new infrastructure, numerous jobs, and an improved tax base to the community."*

*- Nathan Thiel, Village Administrator*

# LET'S TALK TALENT

## MMAC's Region of Choice Initiative: Improve the recruitment, retention, and advancement of Black and Brown talent

With the goal of making the Milwaukee Area's workplaces more inclusive, companies signing the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC) Area Region of Choice pledge are committing to collectively increasing the number of African American and Hispanic/Latino employees in Metro Milwaukee by 15%, and the number of African American and Hispanic/Latino managers in Metro Milwaukee by 25%, over five years. They also committed to publicly reporting aggregate data on an annual basis to measure progress, sharing best practices and meeting CEO to CEO to discuss efforts.

Why is this needed? In 2019, MMAC surveyed its board of directors and 500 corporate leaders who identified racial disparity as one of the region's biggest liabilities. They then formed a working group to identify and recommend actions

that would help employers and the region improve metro Milwaukee as a location of choice for diverse talent.

The MMAC compared Milwaukee to 20 of its peer regions using seven measures of economic prosperity across each ethnic group (white, African American, Hispanic). They then ranked each region on these measures. Milwaukee ranked 6th among peer regions for the prosperity of its white population and last for the African American and Hispanic populations. Milwaukee also had the largest gap in prosperity between its white and African American and white and Hispanic populations.

Our workplaces are increasingly diverse. As employers in the Milwaukee Region, it is critical for us to recognize, include, welcome and celebrate this diversity. Many KABA member companies have taken the Region of Choice pledge. To learn more about this initiative or to get involved, visit [mmac.org/rocpathway1.html](http://mmac.org/rocpathway1.html).

## TALENT RECRUITMENT & RETENTION STRATEGIES SURVEY

**KABA is currently conducting its biennial Talent Recruitment & Retention Strategies Survey. Results from this survey help to inform our area about local wage, salary, and benefits trends – and we strongly encourage your company's participation. Employers who participate in the survey will receive the results for FREE.**

The survey provides insight into what employers in Kenosha County are offering for benefits, information on hiring and retention practices, and wage data. Emails requesting participation have been sent to most local employers —however, only one person per company is being asked to participate to avoid duplicate data. Please contact Lisa Feltson at [lfeltson@kaba.org](mailto:lfeltson@kaba.org) to find out if your company has taken the survey or for more information about how to be involved.

## Kenosha Awesome Cookies, seen at *Inspire*, is now KAC's employment training program

In 2020, Kenosha Awesome Cookies began with the intent for participants to learn basic entrepreneurial skills through a small-scale, cookie kit company simulation. They hoped to sell enough to friends and family to fund a fun activity of their choice. The project gained media traction and community interest skyrocketed. The cookie crew had their hands full completing orders and building up stock!

What started as a short-term learning experience has transformed into the cornerstone of KAC's employment training program. The program includes instruction and activities to enhance soft skills like communication, networking and teamwork. Kenosha Awesome Cookies business simulation allows participants to practice and grow these skills on a regular basis.



Kenosha Awesome Cookies was featured at KABA's *Inspire* leadership event and each participant received a cookie kit to bring home.

# LET'S TALK TALENT

## Gateway Technical College President Bryan Albrecht retiring; leaves a legacy of innovative leadership and community service

Gateway President Bryan Albrecht will be retiring this fall after leading the widely-revered technical college for 16 years. His leadership and influence will be missed by many throughout Southeast Wisconsin.

**KABA President Todd Battle said:** "Bryan has set the bar, and then consistently raised it, in terms of his leadership at Gateway, throughout the community, and around our country. He has been a phenomenal partner in so many ways. Whether putting Gateway on the map as a top tier technical college, building new facilities and programs to meet the needs of local industry, or serving on a community nonprofit board – Bryan has continually left his mark on Kenosha County and Southeastern Wisconsin. We would like to congratulate him on his impactful career and wish him well in his next chapter."

### Dr. John Swallow, President, Carthage College



"I know no educational leader who is held in higher regard than Bryan Albrecht. It has been a wonderful privilege to learn from him, to serve alongside him, and to work with him in finding ways for Carthage and Gateway to collaborate. And Carthage is proud to call him, as a recipient of a master's degree from Carthage, a Firebird of our own."

### Chancellor Debbie Ford, UW-Parkside



"On behalf of the entire UW-Parkside learning community, we congratulate Dr. Albrecht on his upcoming retirement and thank him for his continuous partnership and support throughout his tenure. Bryan was one of the first to welcome me to UW-Parkside when I became chancellor, and since the very beginning he has been a critical partner in our collaborative efforts to improve educational attainment and student success. Our paths have crossed often in the region and we have always looked for ways to enhance our partnerships and our communities. A good example of the positive outcomes of that partnership is the new associate degree pathway between our two institutions."

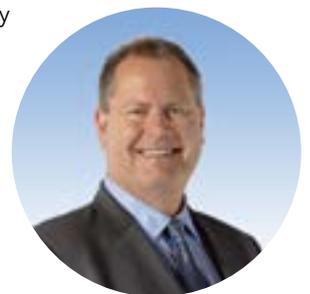
### Sam Bottum, Chief Marketing Officer, Snap-on Incorporated

"All of us at Snap-on are deeply grateful to Bryan for his visionary and tireless advocacy as a champion for students, technical education, and our community.



Bryan and Gateway are both national role models for the best of what technical education has to offer the Nation. Although I will personally miss his thoughtful leadership at Gateway, I look forward to continuing to collaborate with him on upskilling the American workforce."

### Dave Riley, Chairman, Riley Construction Company



"Dr. Bryan Albrecht is a true pioneer of innovation and leadership which created a better reality for our families in the communities that Gateway Technical College served. At a time when our communities were growing a record pace, an educational resource was transformed. Humility, innovation, passion, and teamwork, were the inherent skills that enabled him to bring all stakeholders together for a common cause, making our communities a better place to live."

## WI FAST FORWARD GRANTS

The Department of Workforce Development's Office of Skills Development (OSD) is again accepting applications for \$3 million in Wisconsin Fast Forward training grants. The DWD has redesigned the grant offerings into a single grant opportunity, *Industry Sectors Worker Training Grants*. This grant program is designed to help fund the development of innovative and collaborative customized worker training programs. Learn more at [bit.ly/WI\\_FF\\_0322](https://bit.ly/WI_FF_0322).

# LET'S TALK TALENT!

## Success = Partners working together

The other day I was reading a consumer-research email in which the author mentioned a national restaurant chain (think brightly colored arches) that has successfully navigated the pandemic, "defly avoiding the three horsemen of the consumer apocalypse - COVID, the volatility of economic sentiment, and political tribalism - all while crushing their financial performance."

Quite an accomplishment, to be sure, but that company is not the only one. Many businesses and organizations in our region have successfully responded to myriad local, national, and global challenges of the past 18 months. You are probably not surprised to learn that I think UW-Parkside is also one of those organizations.

I began reflecting on just a few of the recent success stories at UW-Parkside:

- > Generous student success support - Momentum continues to surge regarding student success. Last fall, we received the second largest gift in university history in the form of a \$3 million donation from the Callahan family to fund a new scholarship program that helps with student success and coaching. The new program will benefit students with financial need with an emphasis on supporting Kenosha County students and students of color.
- > EAB CONNECTEDness Award - UW-Parkside has been named one of the recipients of the national CONNECTEDness Award from the education company EAB. Parkside joins its three other partners, UW-Milwaukee, Milwaukee Area Technical College and Carthage College, in receiving the award for the Moon Shot for Equity Program, a national program aimed at helping students from underrepresented populations succeed in college.
- > Amazing campus upgrades - From the upgraded library and new Callahan Family Student Success & Learning Commons to the newly renovated and renamed Alfred and Bernice De Simone Arena and Wyllie Hall renovations - we continue to foster successful corporate and community partnerships that help leverage our academic and athletic success in the classroom and on the field of play.
- > Historic student success - All of our partnerships and hard work have paid off where it counts - our students are not only more successful in the classroom and in their campus careers, but we have seen a record number of graduates

the past three commencements and a record enrollment in master's degree programs and master's degrees awarded!

Since joining the Kenosha community as UW-Parkside chancellor, I admit I've grown accustomed to success. I never take it for granted, but I'm not surprised by it either. When the global pandemic first began to tighten its grip on our region, I didn't know how it would ultimately impact our learning community.

Yet here we are: UW-Parkside students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community partners celebrating significant success. Why? It's all about working together.

Passionate and visionary corporate, community and academic partners have made the success at UW-Parkside possible. Together, we have accomplished so much as we transform thousands of lives. Together, we will accomplish so much more.

If you haven't been to our campus lately - and there are many reasons why you may not have had that opportunity - I invite you to visit us soon and see what partners working together have accomplished.

- > The wrestling, indoor track and field, and men's and women's basketball seasons are in full swing, and you really need to see the De Simone Arena and other RangerVision 2020 enhancements!
- > A full schedule of art exhibits and music and theatre performances is under way in The Rita - come listen, watch, and enjoy!
- > Your business or organization will benefit from a student-faculty research partnership and our students and faculty will benefit from the opportunity to work with you and your team.
- > And through our partnership with local and state health officials, we continue to keep our students, employees, and community visitors safe with up-to-date COVID protocols, including requiring masks indoors, weekly testing of unvaccinated students and employees, and encouraging vaccines and boosters that we offer at the Student Health Center.

Please contact my office and let's talk about working together as partners. We will continue to transform lives as we partner with our community. Go Rangers!

Written by UW - Parkside Chancellor Debbie Ford. Read the blog in its entirety at [kaba.org/news/blog](http://kaba.org/news/blog).



## Equip Your Employees to Problem Solve | by Aleta Norris

A few years ago, I visited a local manufacturing company. As I sat in the president's office, two of his employees leaned in his doorway and said, "Shane, we have a problem."

I observed as he methodically guided his employees through their own thought process.

He asked, "What's going on?" Then, "What contributed to this?" Then, "What else?"

Upon hearing their explanation, he went on, "What are your options?" Wanting them to dig below the surface of their initial reaction, he went on with a few more, "What else?" He gave them time to think.

This situation needed an immediate answer. So, he went on, "What option do you like best and why?" During further discussion, he also asked about involvement of others, implications, etc.

Finally, he asked, "What happens now, and what do you need from me?"

They shared their next steps, said they were good and thanked Shane for his support.

One of the most important tools you can have—for both yourself and your employees—is a process to solve problems. Shane used a process to guide the discussion. His process is similar to the one we teach, called CIDER. I'll share it below:

**Clarify the problem.** Focus on understanding the real problem completely, rather than focusing simply on

symptoms. Define the desired state.

**Identify ideas and possibilities.** Delay the selection of solutions by actively seeking other ideas, possibilities, and alternatives to consider. This is the brainstorming step.

**Decide on actions.** Weigh the ideas that have been generated, along with their implications and potential impact on others. Decide on what to try.

**Execute the plan.** Put the decisions and actions into play.

**Review and evaluate outcomes.** Gauge the results of the actions taken and their effectiveness at bringing about the desired state. Return to earlier steps as necessary.

Reflecting back to Shane's conversation, it was fulfilling to see the engagement of his employees and the sense of pride they felt by being asked, not told. Shane likely had a ready answer of some kind, and—based upon his experience with these types of situations—could have directed his employees what to do.

How valuable, in contrast, to equip them with this process so next time they can do this thinking for themselves.

Aleta Norris is a leadership expert and Principal at Living as a Leader LLC.



## Leading Through Relationships | by Carolynn Friesch

When thinking about my leadership journey, my immediate thought is on the power and influence that relationships have had throughout my career. Along the way, I have had the fortune of encountering many people who opened doors, provided a listening ear, and gave advice during challenging times. Each person holds a special place in my heart because they provided me the opportunity to learn, grow, and excel.

I have made it a practice to emulate those actions by sharing advice, being patient and understanding, and ensuring others feel the same level of support and advocacy that was afforded to me. We know that without relationships, our individual and collective success is impossible.

To build relationships, we must start with a foundation based on trust. As a leader, I focus on establishing a culture of trust by communicating the big picture, sharing information openly, and asking for feedback.



Once a foundation of trust is established, it is important to empower others to speak up and encourage diverse thinking. To do this, create a psychologically safe environment where failure is accepted, and ideas are celebrated. Also, I find it helpful to ask my colleagues and partners to assist me in uncovering my blind spots and helping to fill in my knowledge gaps.

Transversely, I make a point of understanding each person, who they are, what motivates them, and treat them with the "platinum rule." This means treating them how they want to be treated. When I have a true understanding of that person, our work is genuine, meaningful, and produces the best outcomes. My goal is foster relationships where both parties can thrive and reach their full potential.

Maya Angelou said, "when we unite in purpose, we are greater than the sum of our parts." I believe that when we develop trusting, open relationships, that we can accomplish anything.

Carolynn Friesch is Chief Executive Officer at the United Way of Kenosha County

Read more about these stories and others at [kaba.org/news/list](https://kaba.org/news/list).

## Rehrig Pacific #16 on *Fortune* 'Best Places to Work' list

Rehrig Pacific was recently ranked #16 on *Fortune* Magazine's list of the '20 Best Large Workplaces in Manufacturing and Production'. The CA-based company, with operations in Pleasant Prairie, manufactures recycling & waste and supply chain products, software and services for the secondary packaging industry—products such as plastic pallets for warehousing.

85% of employees at Rehrig Pacific say it is a great place to work compared to 57% of employees at a typical U.S.-based company. The word most used to describe the culture is 'Family'.

*"The organization is truly treated like a large family. The entire company workforce understands the vision, mission, and values and it's clear that all individuals respect and live by them."*

– Rehrig Pacific employee

## Nosco plans major investment in new manufacturing equipment and technologies

Nosco, Inc. recently announced plans to invest in new assets to support folding carton and digital label production at its Pleasant Prairie facility. The additions include two brasse diecutters and two digital finishing assets and one inspection unit.

This investment decision is coming on the heels of Nosco's recent announcement that it will be significantly expanding its Packaging Innovation Center in Pleasant Prairie.

## Allied Plastics celebrates 25 years; announces sale

Allied Plastics is celebrating 25 years this year (delayed a bit by the COVID pandemic)! The Twin Lakes-based plastics thermoformer was founded in 1995 by Tim Neal and Steve Weider in a 9,800 SF building. In 2021 Allied completed its seventh addition bringing its total square footage to just under 300,000 square feet.

Allied was recently acquired by an affiliate of All-State Industries, Inc.

## Riley Construction announces key leadership transitions

Dave Riley, Chairman of Riley Construction Company, recently announced several transitions within the firm's leadership.

Matt Prince has moved from his current role as President to that of Chief Executive Officer. Ben Kossow, Executive Vice President of Operations, has been named the company's new President. Erin Anderson was promoted to Chief Operating Officer. Vince Montemurro was named Chief Financial Officer after serving as Riley's Controller for the past 12 years. Erik Dillon, Project Executive, has been named Vice President. Vice President of Preconstruction John Delavan has been named to Riley's Board of Directors as a company shareholder.



Pictured above, L-R: Erik Dillon, Vince Montemurro, John Delavan, Matt Prince, Erin Anderson, Dave Riley, and Ben Kossow.

## Nexus Pharmaceuticals named Best in Business by *Inc.* magazine

Nexus Pharmaceuticals in Pleasant Prairie was recently recognized by *Inc.* magazine as among the most inspiring companies of the year. Overall, 196 companies were noted for the positive impact they have made on their industry, community, the environment, and society as a whole. Nexus was highlighted as a Changemaker with Heart.

*"Being family-owned allows us to give back to a community that has given our company and family so much. It brings us back to our fundamental mission of helping provide affordable medications to those who need it most."*

– Mariam Darsot, CEO and founder

## Gener8tor will bring gBeta accelerator program to Kenosha; now hiring an Executive Director

The City of Kenosha recently received a state Workforce Innovation Grant worth up to \$990,000 to help bring the gBETA program to the city. Run by Gener8tor, a nationally-ranked accelerator program, gBETA offers coaching, mentoring and networking to help build a healthy entrepreneurial eco-system. In Kenosha, gBETA will focus on working with women and people of color founders.

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Secretary and CEO Missy Hughes and Department of Workforce Development Secretary-designee Amy Pechacek recently visited Kenosha to talk with city leaders and entrepreneurs about the expansion of Gener8tor's popular gBETA program to the city.

gBeta is currently hiring a Director for its Kenosha program. More information is available at [bit.ly/gBeta\\_KED\\_0322](http://bit.ly/gBeta_KED_0322).

*"We're strong believers that talent is everywhere, opportunity is not. Startups and innovation can really transform a community in terms of importing more venture capital and jobs into those communities. As we've seen, things have not necessarily been easy within the community in Kenosha for the last year and a half."*

*- Abby Kursel, partner with gener8tor/managing director of gBeta*

## Downtown businesses are invited to apply for upcoming workshop

Longtime Main Street partner Lyn Falk of RetailWorks and her team will provide a brief webinar tutorial on designing attractive storefronts and interior spaces that attract attention, recruit customers and drive sales.



Interested businesses in Downtown Kenosha can apply to be one of six businesses chosen for the informational session 'Business Merchandising Basics' where they will learn successful strategies regarding color, placement, layout and grouping of merchandise to maximize sales in your business, as well as strategies and plenty of examples of eye-catching storefront displays to change with the seasons. Each business will also have a 45 minute individual meeting with Lyn and her team.

**Thursday, April 7 | 7:30 a.m. | KABA Training Center | Contact [info@kaba.org](mailto:info@kaba.org) for more information or to apply.**

## UW-Parkside launches Smart Cities U Virtual Certificate

The Smart Cities U noncredit certificate is designed to meet the needs of anyone looking to benefit their community, particularly an area or neighborhood with fewer than 500,000 residents.

Taught by faculty and industry-recognized experts, Smart Cities U is constructed with specialized certificates in different smart cities topics, allowing participants the ability to partake in their area of greatest need. Each topic has three separate workshops focusing on the following components: assessment, government capacity, and action planning. You will learn about smart city development planning, including the importance of collaboration amongst stakeholders, through case studies, activities, and additional resources. These sessions are helpful for non-government and government organizations, including individuals looking to do business with governmental organizations.

Learn more at [uwp.edu/learn/continuingeducation/smartcitiesu.cfm](http://uwp.edu/learn/continuingeducation/smartcitiesu.cfm).





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