

BRIEFS

Compiled from Gazette wire services

Priest faces sex assault charge

WAUKESHA—A Pewaukee priest has been charged with sexually assaulting a girl.

A criminal complaint filed in Waukesha County charges Charles Hanel with second-degree sexual assault of a child. Hanel is the pastor at Queen of Apostles Church and was placed on administrative leave earlier this year after allegations surfaced that he had inappropriate contact with a minor.

Hanel's attorney, Jerome Buting, said his client has never, and would never, do what he is accused of in the criminal complaint.

Families get \$94 million in rebate

MADISON—Gov. Scott Walker's office says Wisconsin families claimed \$94.2 million from a child tax rebate the Republican incumbent proposed as he faces re-election in November.

That's short of the \$122 million that could have been claimed.

Walker said Thursday the child tax rebate money went to almost 558,000 families for 942,333 children.

State gets unexpected \$91 million in road aid

Money can help but can't fully close funding gap

By Patrick Marley
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

MADISON

Wisconsin is getting nearly \$91 million in extra road money through a federal program—far more than it typically receives—at a time when highway funding has become a top issue in Gov. Scott Walker's re-election bid.

The extra money will give the GOP governor a chance to move up some projects but is well short of enough to close a long-standing gap between funding available for roads and the cost of the work the state has identified that needs to be done in the coming years.

Wisconsin in recent years has typically gotten about \$34 million annually through a federal program known as redistribution.

Last year, it got \$66.4 million and this year it is getting \$90.8 million—a record amount—according to a recent designation by the Federal Highway Administration.

State officials expected to get \$43.9 million through the program this year. That means they're getting \$46.9 million more than they thought they would.

The money could be put toward an array of projects, including Highway 20 in Racine County, I-94 in Waukesha County and I-39 in Dane County. The state Department of Transportation hasn't finalized what projects will get the money but

plans to emphasize rehabilitation work, DOT spokesman Christian Schneider said.

"We can confirm the record federal redistribution received will allow us to complete additional projects ahead of schedule," he said by email.

State Sen. Jon Erpenbach, D-Middleton, who sits on the Legislature's budget committee, said the extra money will help a handful of projects but will do little to address the state's long-term prospects for paying for roads.

"It doesn't fix the problem," Erpenbach said. "We may have gotten more from the federal government this time. We may very well get less next time."

The state spends about \$3 billion a year on transportation using a mix of state and federal money. The latest cash is about 3 percent of that amount.

The funding comes at a time when Walker and his fellow Republicans in the Legislature have been divided over road funding.

Some in his party have wanted to put more money toward roads, but Walker has fought efforts to raise the gas tax of 32.9 cents per gallon.

Walker's Democratic opponent, state schools Superintendent Tony Evers, has backed putting more toward roads and said he would consider raising the gas tax to do that.

Evers spokesman Sam Lau welcomed the additional federal aid but said it wouldn't do anything to address long-term problems.

"As governor, Tony will work with Democrats and Republicans alike to fix our roads," Lau said in a statement.

Flooding damage now at \$209 million

Associated Press

MADISON

Damage estimates are soaring in southern Wisconsin after weeks of severe flooding and storms destroyed pavement and damaged hundreds of homes. Here's a look at where things stand:

How bad is it? Gov. Scott Walker tweeted Thursday that the flooding and storms that began Aug. 17 have caused at least \$208.7 million in damage, including \$98.2 million in damage to homes, \$40.8 million in damage to businesses and \$69.6 million to public infrastructure. Emergency officials expect those numbers to rise. Many communities are still responding to rising water and haven't had a chance to tally the damage.

Who's been hit hardest? Almost all of southern Wisconsin has been affected, but Dane County has gotten the worst of it. That county has seen about \$155 million in damage so far. About 1,540 residences have been affected, with five destroyed.

Who's going to pay for all this? Probably not the insurance companies. According to Dane County officials, only 2 percent of the affected residences and businesses have flood insurance. But help is out there. Walker declared a

statewide emergency Aug. 29, triggering a number of recovery programs.

What about the feds? The federal government offers a complex web of disaster assistance programs. Many require a federal disaster declaration before they're activated, but others don't.

A federal disaster declaration would activate at least one of two major Federal Emergency Management Agency programs. One reimburses local governments for repairs. The other reimburses individuals for essential repairs.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture also offers a host of disaster assistance programs for farmers.

What does it take to get a disaster declaration? Federal emergency officials make a recommendation to the president after they consider a number of factors, including the cost, the disaster's impact, disaster history over the last year, the degree of trauma, and the extent of insurance coverage and state assistance.

Will Walker ask for a declaration? Probably. Walker's spokeswoman, Amy Hasenberg, said Thursday that surveyors will conduct a statewide damage assessment after flood waters recede. She said once that assessment is complete, the request process can take place.

An excerpt from the book...

Rock County Roots: History of Local Businesses

is a partnership program between Bliss Communications, Inc. and the Rock County Historical Society. Information has been supplied by participants and is not a product of The Gazette newsroom. This article appears in full in the published book

Rock County Roots: History of Local Businesses.



Right: Dr. Henry Palmer

Center: Sister Mary Michael Berry

Bottom: Palmer Memorial Hospital



Mercyhealth: Serving with a passion for making lives better.

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A look back

In 1895, local physician Dr. Henry Palmer opened Janesville's first hospital to care for the city's 13,000 residents. In 1907, Palmer Memorial Hospital was purchased by the Sisters of Mercy. They changed the hospital's name to Palmer Memorial Mercy Hospital, doubled the capacity to 34 beds and created a school of nursing. In 1913, an all-new 50-bed facility was constructed next door and renamed Mercy Hospital. By 1946, the hospital's capacity had grown to 200 patient beds, with a new wing and new fourth floor.

The 1960s brought a new administrator to the system, Sister Mary Michael Berry. Over her tenure, Sister Michael and the Sisters of Mercy would usher Mercy into the era of modern medicine.

By the late 1980s, larger hospitals in the surrounding region were extending their competitive reach and Mercy Hospital was struggling. In 1989, the volunteer Board of Directors recruited a new President and CEO, Javon R. Bea, to begin a new chapter in Mercy's history.

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Bea's vision was to bring health care close to home by creating a vertically integrated health system that would employ the best primary and specialty care physicians available.

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Read the entire story in The Rock County Roots: *History of Local Businesses* book, now available through Rock County Historical Society



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