

Moving Milwaukee Forward
The Next Generation of Developers

Reflections & Lessons Learned
Obstacles and Trap Doors
A Challenge to Excel / A Responsibility to Assume


BOB'S
B TCH
SES SION

The Need to Develop

Tax Base / Public Revenue – **We** Create the Tax Base that Funds our Community's Vitality

- **Employment** Opportunities
- **Educate** our Children
- Provide Effective Public **Safety**
- **Create** Recreation and Leisure

= **A Favorable Place to Live**



The Stark Reality

“Chain Reaction Challenge”

- **Collapse** of a one-dimensional employment market
- **Failure** of our urban public educational system
- **Crime** escalates to influence location decisions and property values
- No funds available to **Invest** in the very attributes that once characterized the livability of our city

The Real Estate Industry and public sector need to work in lock step to reverse the trend @ points of intersect



Is it too late?



Courtesy Milwaukee Magazine

"When I came out of high school in 1970, the only thing you had to worry about was getting drafted. If not, the future was yours."

- *Jesse Barnes*



"I wish that young people had the opportunity that my generation in Milwaukee had – the highest standard of living for black people in this nation. You need to understand the magnitude of what it meant when people took these middle-class jobs away."

- *Earl Ingram Jr.*

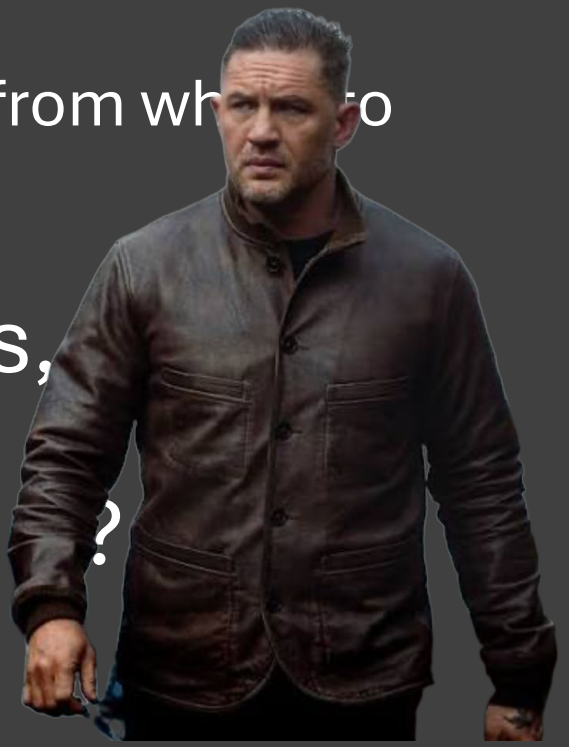
We have a crisis – is anyone paying attention?

The ”Rust Belt” legacy

- *Beginning in the 1970s:*
- Jobs Spiral > Public Education Spiral > Crime Spiral
- Devolving in an ever-more challenging **civic plunge** from wh[illegible]o recover

- How has public policy addressed this, particular at our points of intersect?
- What can we **<u>as an industry</u>** do to fix [illegible]?

- If only Harry were here….



Rx for the Chain Reaction:

Step 1: You need **development** to make coin

Wisconsin's Top Real Estate Equalized Value Municipalities

Rank	Municipality	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	% Change	2023 Population
1	Milwaukee	$29.07B	$30.69B	$34.58B	$38.01B	$43.03B	13.2	575,722
2	Madison	$30.29B	$32.37B	$32.27B	$37.95B	$42.09B	10.9	286,785
3	Kenosha	$7.14B	$7.50B	$8.17B	$9.16B	$10.26B	12.0	100,185
4	Brookfield	$7.41B	$7.58B	$8.05B	$8.89B	$9.79B	10.1	41,121
5	Green Bay	$6.72B	$7.12B	$7.77B	$8.86B	$9.58B	8.1	106,597
6	Wauwatosa	$6.31B	$6.63B	$7.34B	$8.72B	$9.36B		836
7	Waukesha	$6.58B	$6.94B	$7.60B	$8.50B	$9.33B		094
8	Appleton	$5.75B	$6.08B	$6.57B	$7.39B	$8.51B		700
9	Eau Claire	$5.38B	$5.76B	$6.12B	$7.09B	$8.02B	13.1	71,304
10	Janesville	$5.17B	$5.44B	$5.92B	$7.04B	$7.94B	12.8	66,202

196%

Source: WI Department of Revenue 2023 Statement of Changes in Equalized Values, WI Department of Administration 2023 Municipal Population Estimates

Municipal Revenue Shortfall

"Gov. Elect Crowley: please secure the other one-half of our shared revenue increase we're owed."

- ACT 12 provided a **10%** bump = $21.7 million
- Average increase across the State was closer to **20%**
- Milwaukee + Madison **got screwed**

- Meanwhile Milwaukee City/County sales tax cover our **past screw-ups**:
  - **County:** 100% to SWIB to underwrite pension obligations
  - **City:** 90% to SWIB to underwrite pension obligations + 10% mandatory public safety investment

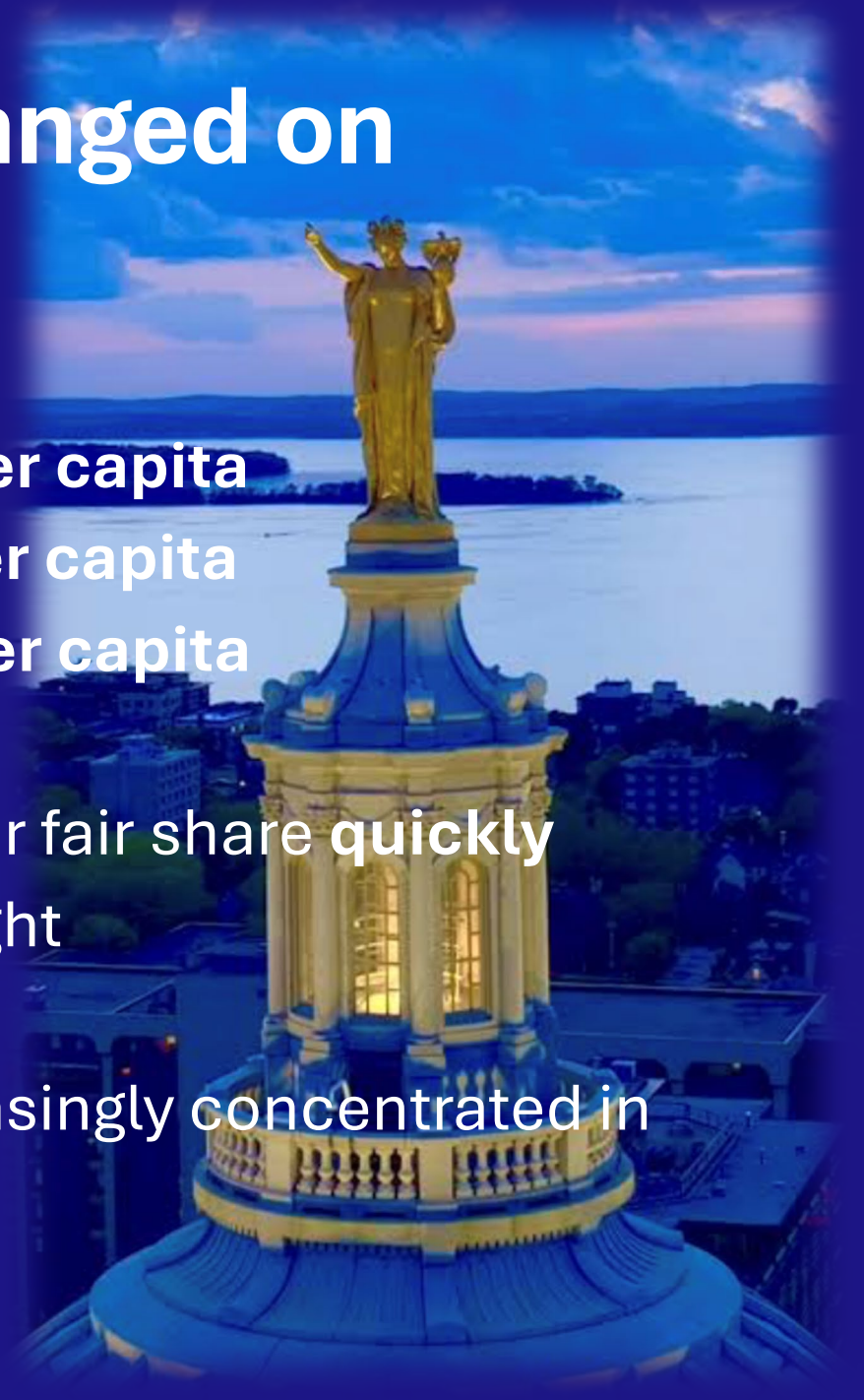


City of Milwaukee is short-changed on State Shared Revenue

- Post ACT 12 Milwaukee receives roughly + **$38 per capita**
- Cities > 20,000 in Wisconsin | Average + **$114 per capita**
- Cities < 1,000 in Wisconsin | Average is + **$157 per capita**

- **Conclusion:** we're getting screwed and need our fair share **quickly**
- **Opportunity:** The stars are aligned to fix this slight

- **Action:** Arrest the % of tax revenue that is increasingly concentrated in pension plans we simply cannot support.
- **YOU NEED TO GET INVOLVED!**



Does this look like a city starved for revenue?

BUSINESS

City of Milwaukee approves one-year ban on data center development



Francesca Pica
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Updated Oct. 13, 2026, 10:50 a.m. CT

*Would you 'ban' **$43,000,000** in Tax Revenue?*

Assessments

Tax Year: 2026

Click here for detailed assessment data. (square footage, year built, building type, etc)

Real Estate Assessments

Code	Description	Acres	Land Value	Improvement Value	Total Value	Action
2	Commercial	318.639	$87,625,700	$1,785,149,80	$1,872,775,500	
Total:		318.639	$87,625,700	$1,785,149,800	$1,872,775,500	

Estimated Fair Market Value: $0

Average Assessment Ratio: -

* MFL, PFC, and Agriculture values are not included in the total Estimated Fair Market Value.
** Land classified Undeveloped and Agricultural Forest is assessed at 50% of market value. Doubling the assessed value then dividing by the average assessment ratio will determine the EFMV of these land classifications.

Game Over?

"Without data center revenue, local analysts estimate a typical homeowner's tax bill would need to rise significantly (by roughly 30% to over 90% depending on the benchmark) to maintain current public services."

Loudon County, VA



China, Russia and Others Seek to Inflame Debate Over A.I. Data Centers

State actors in China, Russia and Iran have sought to exploit the U.S. public debate over the effects of the technology.

New York Times, July 9, 2026

MPS – Tax Engine

MPS reacts to $252 million tax referendum passing

BY ABBEY TAYLOR | WISCONSIN
PUBLISHED 6:52 PM ET APR. 03, 2024

MILWAUKEE — Approval of Milwaukee Public Schools' (MPS) new $252 million tax referendum came down to the wire Tuesday night, with just more than 51% percent of voters approving it in the end.

What You Need To Know

- The $252 million MPS tax referendum passed with 51% of votes supporting it
- Superintendent Keith Posley said there are a number of factors MPS is looking into to be efficient with the funding
- Property taxes will go up in the City of Milwaukee by $432/year on a $200,000 home

+1,720 Votes (861 margin)

81,452 Votes Cast

Say you have 3,000 apartments in the City of Milwaukee - $1,296,000/year



Sprinklers for all school facilities should be first dollars spent

Education | Public or Private or “Just Good” Choice

- MPS as a public education platform has failed.

- MPS options:
  - Continue to do what it has always done
  - Continue to rely on its taxing authority
  - Collaborate / Join forces with what works
- Private faith-based education **works**
  - MUHS / DSHA
  - WI Lutheran HS
  - St Augustine Preparatory Academy



- Quit worrying about vouchers and where our tax money goes, worry more about the return on investment

One thing I'd like to say to Tony Evers:

WTF?

Gov. Tony Evers vetoes Wisconsin participation in federal school choice tax credit program

Republicans are trying to 'run roughshod over public education' Evers says

BY **BAYLOR SPEARS** - MARCH 30, 2026 5:12 PM



Gov. Tony Evers said in his veto message Monday that he objected to the national expansion of private school choice and that public funds should go to public schools. Evers speaks to reporters in July 2025 before signing the 2025-27 state budget, which did not provide any additional funding for general school aids. (Photo by Baylor Spears/Wisconsin Examiner)



The Tax Disadvantage to Overcome

Keeping investment dollars in Milwaukee

- **Milwaukee County Property**

  Higher rental rates / revenue per unit

  Real Estate Tax burden/rental revenue **19.20%**

- **Waukesha County Property**

  Suburban rents catching up quickly to urban rents

  Real Estate Tax burden/rental revenue **9.16%**

Misconception: ***"I rent, the landlord pays the taxes"***

TIF Policy

LAND AND SPACE

Downtown adds hundreds of apartments. But this dead zone persists

Large vacant parcels mark part of downtown's northern edge

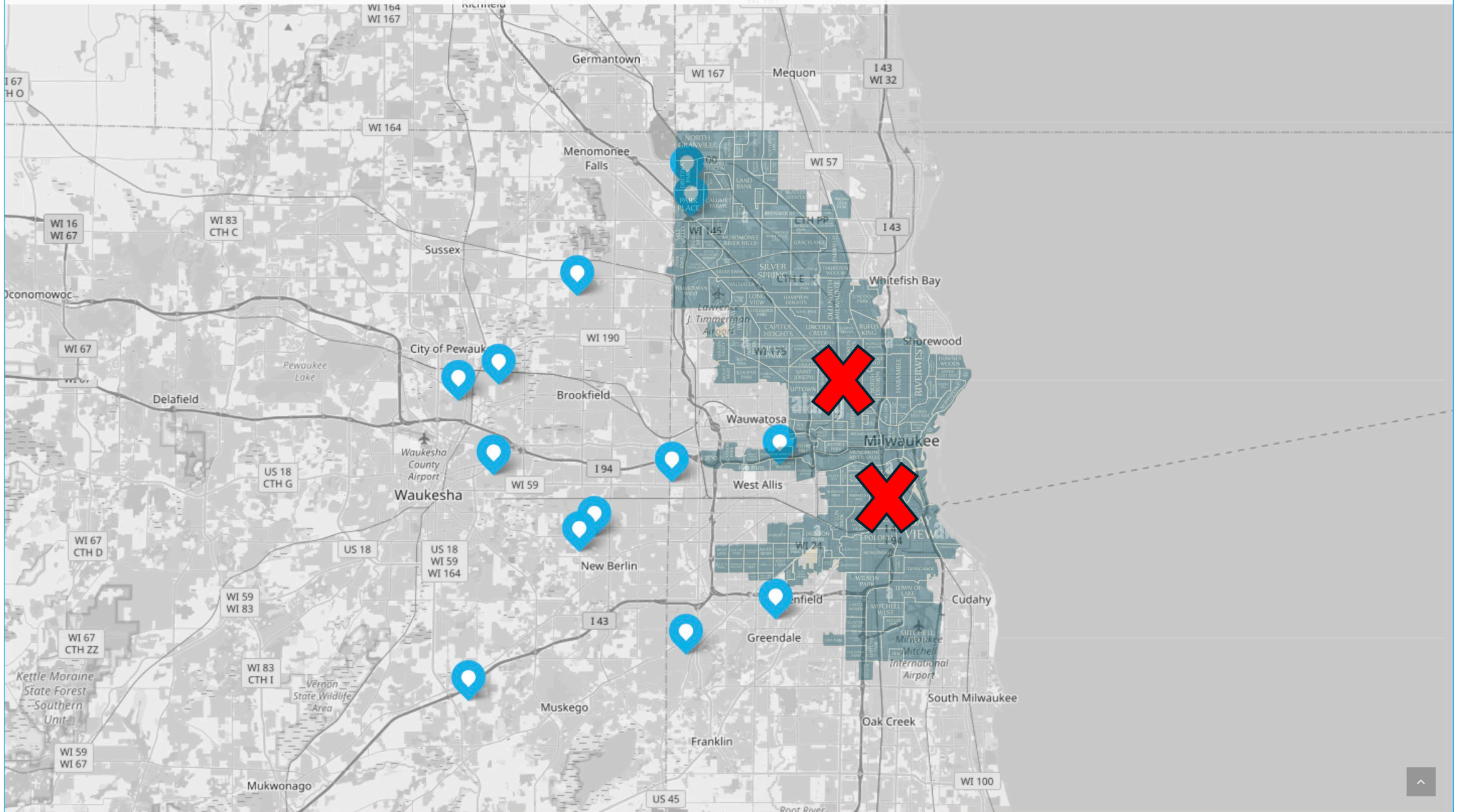


Tom Daykin
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Sept. 14, 2026, 5:02 a.m. CT



- Too Many Conditions = **Too Few Wins**
- Competitive Environment
- TIF #1 goal - fill the financial feasibility gap – the **‘but for’** statement


Germantown
Menomonee Falls
Mequon
Sussex
Whitefish Bay
Shorewood
Wauwatosa
Milwaukee
West Allis
City of Pewaukee
Brookfield
Delafield
Waukesha
New Berlin
Greenfield
Cudahy
South Milwaukee
Oak Creek
Franklin
Muskego
Mukwonago
Greendale
Pewaukee Lake
Waukesha County Airport
Lawrence J. Timmerman Airport
Mitchell International Airport
Kettle Moraine State Forest Southern Unit
Vernon State Wildlife Area
WI 164
WI 167
WI 57
I 43
WI 32
WI 16
WI 67
WI 83
CTH C
WI 190
I 94
WI 59
US 18
CTH G
WI 67
CTH D
US 18
WI 59
WI 164
WI 59
WI 83
WI 67
CTH ZZ
WI 83
CTH I
WI 59
WI 67
US 45
WI 100
WI 24

TIF Policy

Can I Make a Suggestion?

Structure

+ Economics-Driven
+ Simplify
+ Linkages – High/Low Value Districts

Emphasize

+ City-Located Contractors
+ MBE / Mentoring
+ Participate in *City Construction Clusters ~*

~ Wait, what's a construction cluster?

TIF Policy
Construction Clusters



- **Concentrate** hiring, training and resources in the areas where employment challenges exist
- Use a **carrot-vs-stick public policy structure** to encourage participation (points)
- **Training** to on-ramp into trades
- **Support** for existing businesses (MBE)
- **Resources** to grow new businesses (MBE) – equipment, space, collaboration, investment capital

TIF Policy

Construction Clusters

“Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.”



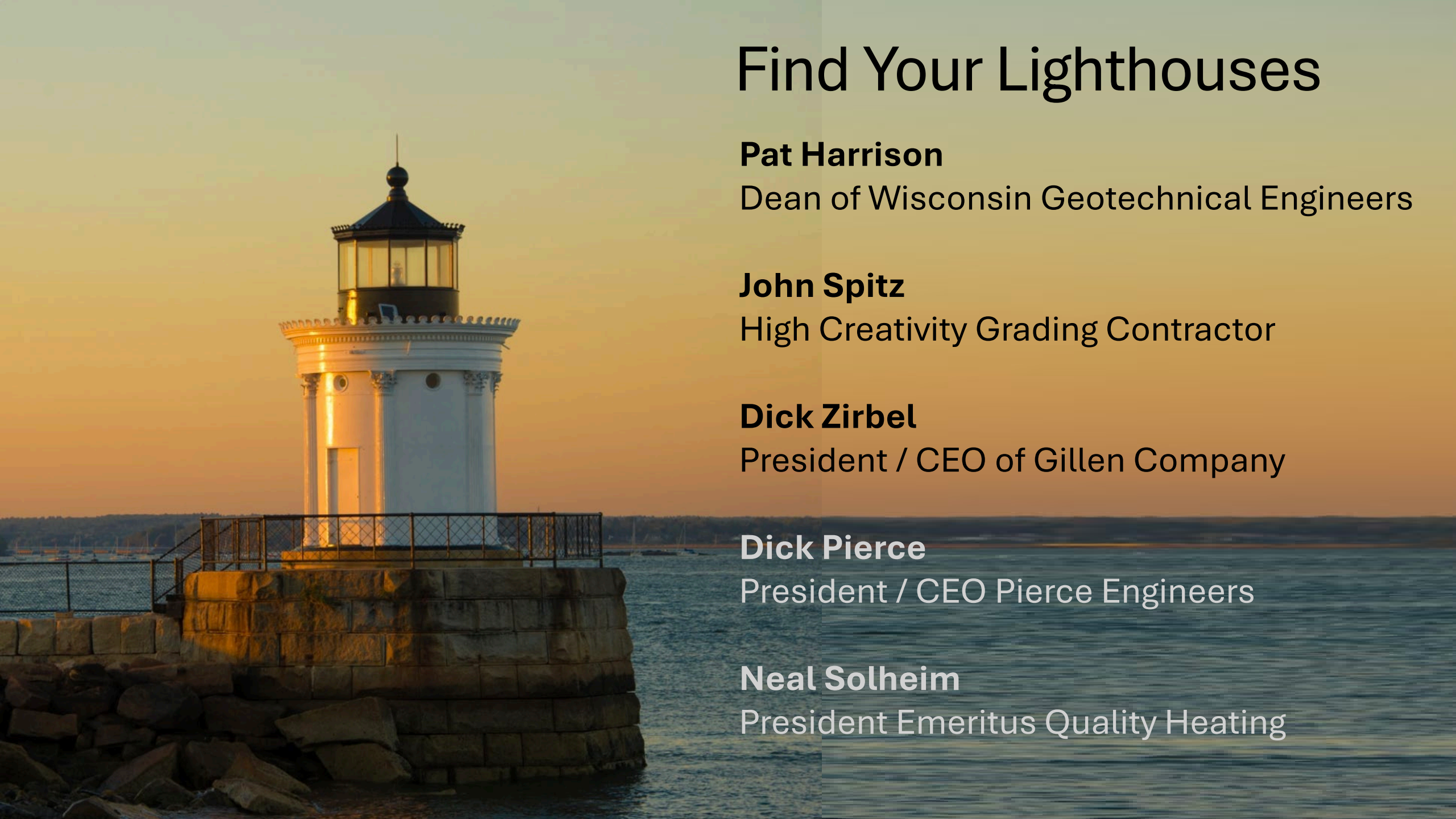
Don’t Squander “Our Time”











Find Your Lighthouses

Pat Harrison
Dean of Wisconsin Geotechnical Engineers

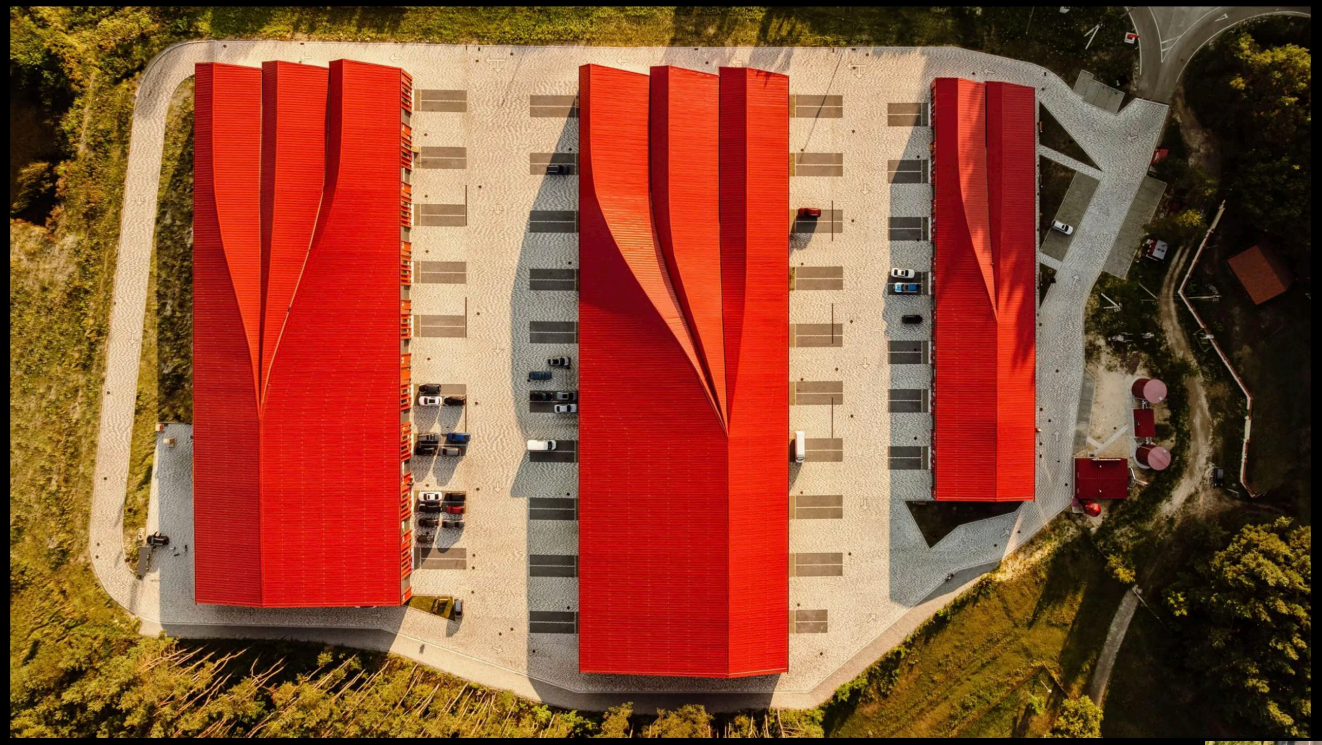
John Spitz
High Creativity Grading Contractor

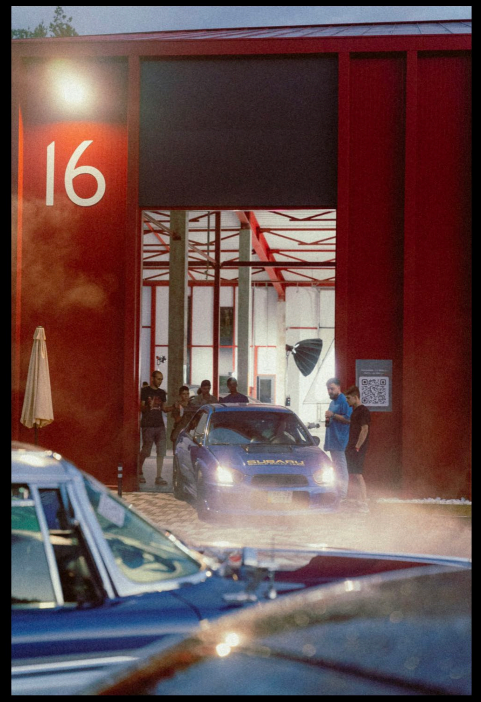
Dick Zirbel
President / CEO of Gillen Company

Dick Pierce
President / CEO Pierce Engineers

Neal Solheim
President Emeritus Quality Heating

Do Something Remarkable!







Do Something Remarkable!

The Future is Yours!

Thanks for Listening.

