

2020 County Budget Address

By
County Executive
Jim Kreuser

Tuesday, October 1, 2019



Remembering
Supervisor
Michael Goebel





Welcome to Supervisor Amy Maurer and Supervisor Laura Belsky!

Kenosha County's major employers 2008



Kenosha County's major employers 2019



Ideas or comments? Call 262-656-6318 | email newsroom@kenoshanews.com

City, county take lead on infrastructure

Columnist Patricia Murphy caught our attention last week when she wrote challenging Congress to join her in being boring.

The column was about infrastructure and the need to focus on it in Washington. That applies to state and local governments, too.

"There's very little media attention, and even less voter bandwidth, for members of Congress doing the hard work of boring," wrote Murphy, who covers national politics for The Daily Beast.

Kenosha County
leads the way!

the country's infrastructure in general rates only a D+. Anyone who rides the Red Line to work in Washington won't be surprised to know that mass transit in the U.S. gets a D-. Aviation infrastruc-

IN OUR VOICE

19 percent."

This indeed should get attention even in divided Washington, where there are signs of life. As Murphy noted, "Democrats have always wanted to move a big, beefy infrastructure package, and last week, Trump told House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and a group of Democrats he wanted to do something on the issue that's 'not typically Republican.' That

Trump's agreement with a trillion price tag is the strange sound from the two sides. All this is the tricky

in Madison, where to pay for a roads

plan that's desperately needed and has been avoided for too long.

Gov. Tony Evers got elected talking about it and he has made it part of his proposed budget, while majority Repub-

and we were delighted of late to hear County Executive Jim Kreuser highlight infrastructure in his state of the county speech that was anything but boring, and Kenosha Mayor John Antaramian detail planned road work to further fuel the topic that everyone talks about in the city.

"Quality highways and solid public safety are at the heart of county government," Kreuser said. "Good infrastructure leads to economic development, which leads to jobs."

Specifically mentioning the Highway S and Highway KR expansions, Kreuser said, "Now is not the time to take our foot off the gas pedal when it comes to planning and keeping pace with our highway projects. Traffic congestion, the pension fund mess, education, public safety and quality of place are key reasons Illinois companies continue to choose Kenosha County."

In the city, Antaramian updated widespread road construction and resurfacing projects that will be in full swing this

projects underway. The majority of work will be on major streets and getting those ready for the future."

Of course, everybody has an opinion on city road work and how long it's taking, but it's never boring.

Evers recently stopped at the Kenosha News to talk about Medicaid expansion and pointed out that his transportation funding proposal emphasizes road reconstruction, mass transit and outdoor trails and will assist local governments throughout Wisconsin.

"It's important to make a wide commitment to the municipalities and counties that do the hard work on transportation that they have the resources they need," the governor said.

So there's work to be done. But it pays off as improvements that taxpayers deserve and expect.

Let Murphy explain, returning to her challenge to Congress: "There is magic in the mundane. Power in the humdrum. Solve a problem someone sees every day, and you'll get re-elected, no matter what

The role of County Government is:



To do what your friends, family
and neighbors can't do for
themselves



To do what is mandated by the
state and federal government

One of the
services people
can't do for
themselves is:



The proposed contract with the Deputy Sheriff's Association:

Starts new hires at
a more
competitive salary

Pay progression
aiming to retain
deputies

The cost of high turnover of Deputy Sheriffs:



It costs more than \$80,000 to train a new hire before he/she can be on the road alone



Kenosha County lost about 3 newly trained deputies to other departments in the past year



A reliable Public Safety Communications system is critical

Ideas or comments? Call 262-656-6318 | email newsroom@kenoshanews.com

County should move quickly on new towers

If ever a project should speed along, it's the construction of two new communication towers in Kenosha and Silver Lake Park.

At issue are fire and police emergency communications that are inadequate or not even possible now in so many spots that include along Lake Michigan in Somers and Pleasant Prairie and along the state line to the far reaches of Kenosha County.

"When you get along the lake-shore, our portable radios are completely useless," said Somers Fire Chief Carson Wilkinson.

Wilkinson, head of a consortium of rural fire departments, compares it to 9/11 when New York fire and police personnel inside the World Trade Center could not be reached

OUR VIEW

when it became clear the buildings were collapsing.

Clearly something should be done quickly. As Jill Tatge-Rozell reported earlier this month, Kenosha County plans to construct the two towers to support a simulcast public safety plan.

Ray Arbet, county public works director, said the new system will meet federal guidelines, which are to ensure communication in 95 percent of the county, 95 percent of the time.

Funding for the project is included in the 2019 budget. The county Public Works and Facilities Committee recently approved a resolution for real estate acquisition

and to use eminent domain powers if necessary. The next steps are for the county Finance Committee and the County Board to approve the resolution.

Four parcels near the Kenosha County Public Safety Building, 1000 55th St., will need to be purchased to accommodate the city tower. At least one owner has indicated a willingness to negotiate a sale.

It should be full speed ahead in the meeting and negotiating rooms and at the construction sites. Public safety is in question.

"The new towers will significantly improve communication, which is important for both the safety of our citizens and our emergency responders," Wilkinson said. "It's long overdue."

This
budget
completes
the
Simulcast
Project



Strengthening the Kenosha County Fire/Rescue Association
services

This budget includes an increase for Joint Services





Our Emergency Operations Center is receiving praise



Highway construction and resurfacing are important for economic development



Highway
equipment
replacement
continues



District Attorney's Office
needs room for another
Assistant District Attorney

Also, an
additional
Victim-
Witness
specialist is
proposed

Advocacy for Children in Need of
Protective Services

Assist with Child Sex Trafficking
cases

Take on Restitution and Diversion
Programs shed by the State of
Wisconsin

Costs for State Juvenile Corrections and Local Juvenile Intake are increasing

CAPITOL WATCH
WCA's Weekly Legislative Update
Wisconsin Counties Association • 2019-20 Legislative Session

**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
DHS TO INCREASE RATES AT WINNEBAGO AND MENDOTA**

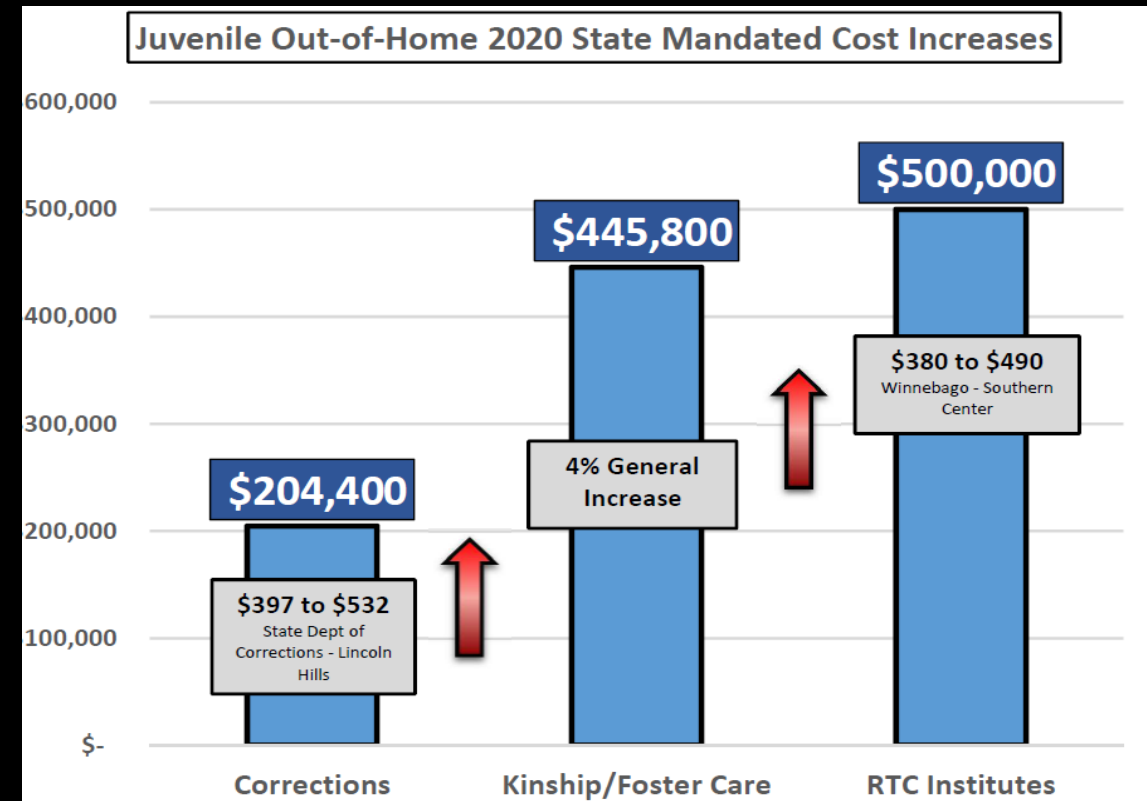
The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) is proposing to increase rates at Winnebago Mental Health Institute and Mendota Mental Health Institute by 5 percent beginning October 1, 2019.

Due to the fact that the proposed rate increases are greater than CPI, DHS is required to provide public notice. Notice of the rate increases was published in the *Wisconsin State Journal* and *Oshkosh Northwestern* on Friday.

See the notices here for

- **Mendota Mental Health Institute**
- **Winnebago Mental Health Institute**

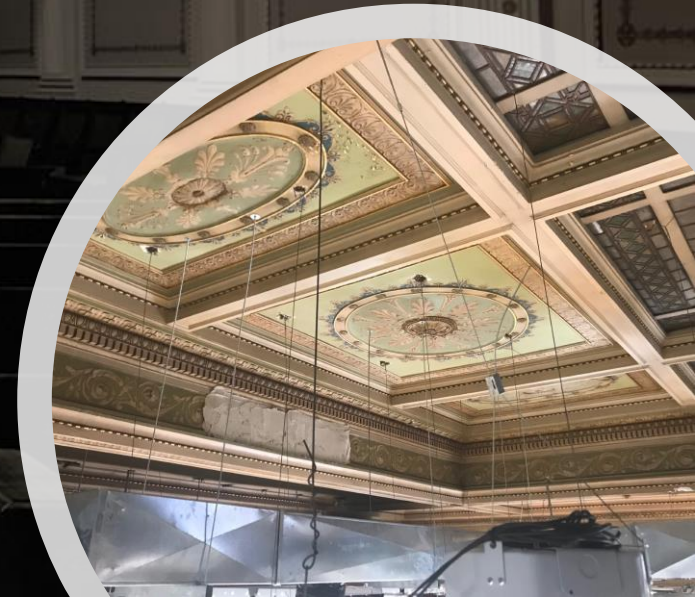
WCA is looking into this issue and will provide updates in future issues of the *Capitol Watch*.




Our prevention programs are a success



Some work proposed for Ceremonial Courtroom






Kenosha County is
blessed with an
outstanding
parks system

Proposing naming KD Park:

Kenosha County
Veterans Memorial
Park



A photograph of a person in a yellow kayak on a calm lake. The person is wearing a red shirt, a blue life vest, and a hat, and is using a black paddle. The lake is surrounded by lush green trees and grass. In the foreground, a large, dark, circular silhouette of a tree trunk and branches is overlaid on the left side of the image. The text is written in white, sans-serif font within this dark circle.

—
The sustainable
nature of the Park is
in harmony with how
our Veterans have
sustained our nation



We will honor the sacrifices of our Veterans so that they will never be forgotten



Work to continue on the South and
North Branches of the Pike River

We are in one of the hottest economic development corridors in the nation

KENOSHA NEWS

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TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2019

★ ★ ★ \$2.00

Home sales starting to heat up

BY JAMES LAWSON
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After a few months of sluggish home sales, local realtors are starting to feel as if the year will not be as bad as they previously feared.

May sales in Kenosha County rose to 18.9 percent, with 290 homes being sold in comparison to 244 that were sold in May a year ago, according to statistics released by the Wisconsin Realtors Association.

In Racine County, sales for last month rose 8.91 percent, with sales professionals selling 313 houses compared with the 287 they sold for the same month a year ago.

Year-to-date sales rose slightly to 2.2 percent, with realtors selling 901 homes compared with 882 sold for the same period a year ago, according to the WRA.

The slight boost of year-to-date sales have some Kenosha County real estate professionals optimistic that it may be a sign that sales might keep pace with those of last year, and con-

tinue the upward trend of the past three years.

"Due to the low unemployment and even low interest rates, we are seeing a lot more buyers coming on the scene to purchase, and since it's still a seller's market, sellers are still making a killing on getting top dollars for their homes," explained Mini Samuels, a broker with Mini Enterprises.

In contrast, year-to-date sales in Racine County dropped 2.1 percent, with real estate professionals selling only 1,030 houses compared with 1,052 they sold for the first five months of last year.

Statewide, May sales increased slightly by 3.2 percent, with the industry selling 8,589 houses. Year-to-date sales declined by 4.3 percent, with the industry only selling 28,267 houses this year.

Samuel noted that there has been a rise in condo sales this year that may be due partly to people electing

REAL ESTATE: Higher priced homes still remaining on the market longer

From Page A1

to buy because rental costs are rising.

Additionally, she attributed some condo sales to an aging population that is downsizing.

A tight inventory, fueled by a slower rate of new listings, has contributed to the rise in the median price of a house. In Kenosha County, the median price in May was \$189,900 compared with \$177,000 in May a year ago.

Last month, it was \$192,000, up 9.1 percent from \$176,000 in Racine County.

The WRA reports that the year-to-date median price in Kenosha County

rose by \$16,000, or 9.6 percent, to \$183,000 compared with \$167,000 during the first five months of last year.

The median price was \$175,000 or \$11,000 higher in Racine County for the first five months.

Statewide, the median price in May was \$203,000, up by 9.1 percent. For the year, it is \$189,900, 7.9 percent, or \$13,900, higher than for the same period a year ago.

"Definitely we have a shortage of inventory, and median prices have risen since last year," Samuel said.

WRA President and Chief Executive Officer Michael Theo said

demand pressure "continues to intensify, which is why we've seen such strong price appreciation."

While the WRA reports that houses priced in the \$125,000 to \$349,999 range are on the market for an average of 87 to 95 days, those priced above \$500,000 are on the market for an average of 145 days.

"My only concern is with homes priced above \$600,000. They are taking longer to sell in this market," Samuel said.

Locally, houses are on the market for less time. In Kenosha County, the average days on the market is 66 days, and 74 days in Racine County.

Kenosha County a hot spot for Wisconsin tourism

BY JAMES LAWSON

jlawson@kenosha-news.com

Kenosha County was a hot spot for tourism in 2018.

Visitors to local sporting events, festivals, workshops, exhibits at the museums and downtown night life venues poured in a record \$227.8 million, according to the latest economic impact statistics released by the Kenosha Area Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The KACVB, in its report issued in celebration of National Travel and Tourism Week (May 5-11), said more entertainment and shopping venues throughout the county attracted people who spent more than \$14.3 million, or 6.7 percent more than they spent during the previous year. Kenosha County currently ranks 18th out of 72 Wisconsin counties

for annual spending.

Kenosha County's tourism industry is continuing to grow as an important component of the region's economic development environment. It has helped to create more jobs, generate more tax revenue and further develop the region as a destination, according to KACVB.

The KACVB reported that tourism generated \$24.6 million in state and local tax revenues and generated 3,368 jobs with \$86.8 million in related income.

KACVB President Dennis DuChene is optimistic that tourism will continue to grow in 2019 with the completion of the Stella Hotel & Convention Center downtown, which opened in April, and as another hotel, the Apis Hotel & Restau-

rant, comes online.

Other attractions in 2019 feature Boundless Adventures, a family fun venue that is soon to open later this month in Bristol Woods Park. Later this summer, the Kenosha Tall Ships Festival will return.

As the Kenosha County economy continues to grow, tourism continues to grow. DuChene said tourism spending has grown 46.2 percent since 2011.

A contributor to the increase in tourism, DuChene noted, was the Kenosha area's fourth feature episode of Discover Wisconsin TV that premiered on broadcast channels across Wisconsin and the Midwest last June.

The agency also secured three grants totaling \$42,400. The grants helped to fund Tribute Island,

Food, Folks and Spokes and operations at the Interstate-94 Visitor Information Center.

DuChene encourages people who want to a Wisconsin vacation to stop in at the Visitor Information Center at I-94 and HWY 165 where summer hours are now in effect. It is staffed from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. seven days a week. Visitors can find more than 100 free resources and can get one-on-one travel advice and directions.

This budget
keeps us on
track as a AA+
County
working
toward AAA

Local

KENOSHA NEWS | THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2019 | **A4**

Strong bond rating reflects county's robust fiscal health

KENOSHA NEWS STAFF

Kenosha County's fiscal health remains strong as a pair of rating agencies recently reaffirmed the county's AA+ bond rating.

The Kenosha County Board learned Tuesday that Fitch Ratings, as well as Standard and Poor's Global, had upheld the strong bond rating, praising the county's fiscal management and expressing a favorable forecast for the future.

This comes as the county's overall long-term obligations have declined sharply over the last 15 years and general obligation debt remains essentially equal to its level in 2004, in spite of a recent wave of significant

infrastructure improvement projects undertaken in response to the area's booming economy.

"The rating agencies ... are reaffirming something



Jim Kreuser

we've long known," County Executive Jim Kreuser said. "Kenosha County is in excellent fiscal health."

In its Aug. 15 report to the county administration, S&P Global analysts wrote: "Buoyed by large-scale commercial development, the county has posted strong economic growth recently, and we expect

the local economy to remain strong during the next few years.

"Moreover, the county's stable financial performance and continued maintenance of healthy reserves in keeping with its reserve policy demonstrates the county's commitment to sound financial governance."

Fitch Ratings expressed similar sentiments in an Aug. 13 report.

"The county's operating performance has been exceptionally strong during the present expansion," the report stated. "Ample financial resilience derives from broad revenue-raising flexibility, solid control over employee salary and benefit

costs and substantial fund balances. The county has steadily augmented its general fund reserve and cash position during the economic recovery since 2009."

The rating agencies noted that 82 percent of the county's present debt load is scheduled to be retired within 10 years. This was viewed as a positive credit factor for the county.

Fitch and S&P both issued AA+ ratings with stable outlooks for the county's latest round of borrowing: \$16.62 million in general obligation, 10-year promissory notes and a 20-year issue of \$8.9 million in general obligation bonds.

Capital projects

The \$16.62 million issuance is to fund various capital projects, including road and highway improvements, information technology updates and economic development grants.

The \$8.9 million package includes the county's cost share of the upcoming expansion of Highway S between Highway 31 and Interstate 94 and other major highway infrastructure improvements.

Both issuances are more than 80 percent below the county's maximum authorized borrowing amount. The County Board approved them Tuesday.

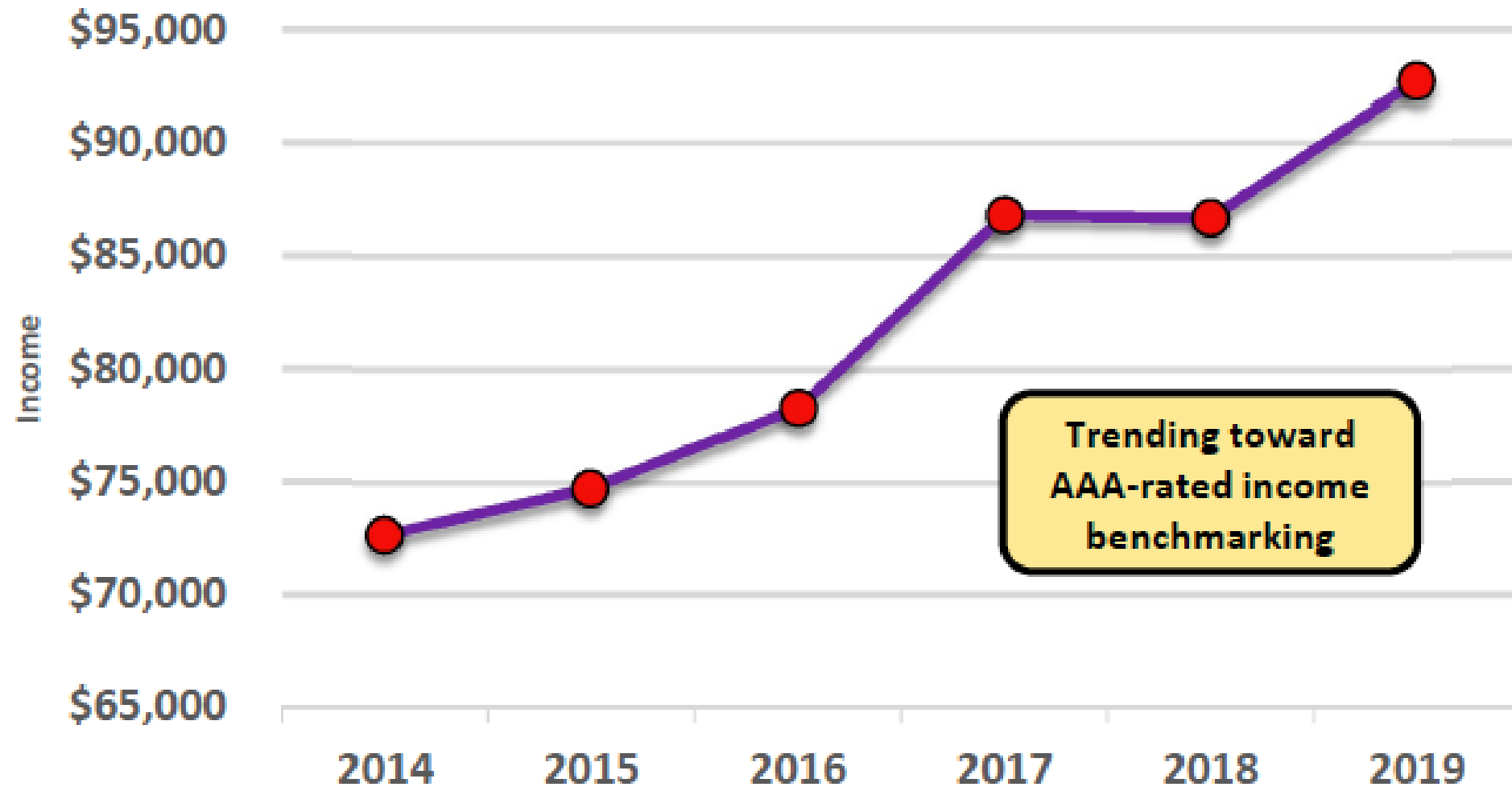
Shooting for AAA

Kreuser said that while he is pleased with the continuance of the county's AA+ rating, it remains a goal of his administration to eventually reach the top-flight AAA rating.

"We will continue building on our track record of sound fiscal management and strategic planning," Kreuser said.

Kreuser noted that the county's current total long-term obligations of \$145.96 million is down nearly 40 percent from where it sat in 2004, at \$238.64 million. The current general obligation debt of \$102.77 million is nearly the same as 15 years ago, when it was \$102.48 million.

Per Capita Effective Buying Income (EBI)

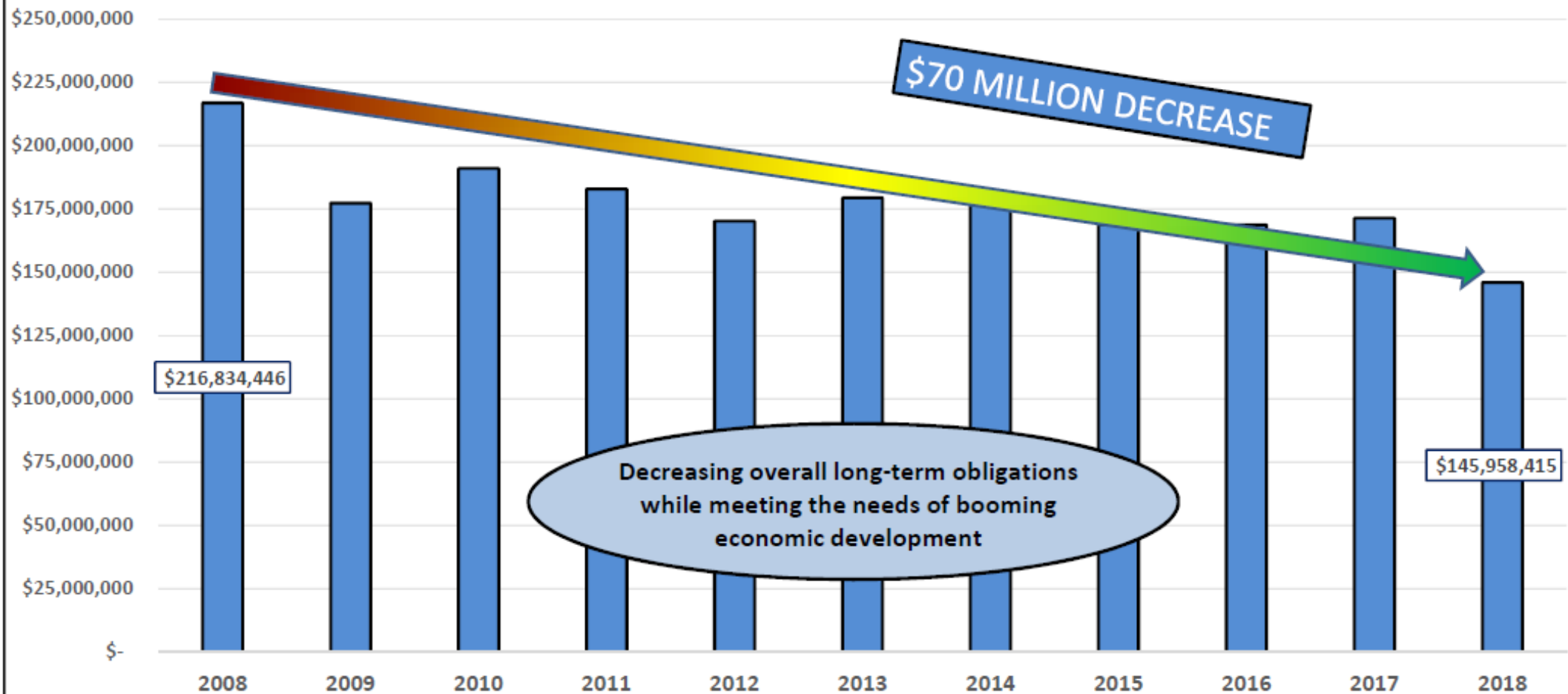




Job growth is strong!

Kenosha County job growth is the highest in the state at
24.4 percent from 2013 to 2018.

Kenosha County Total Long Term Obligation 10 Year History



Non-levy funded debt excluded.

This budget:



Addresses our current and future infrastructure needs



Makes changes to our employee health insurance in response to continuously rising healthcare costs

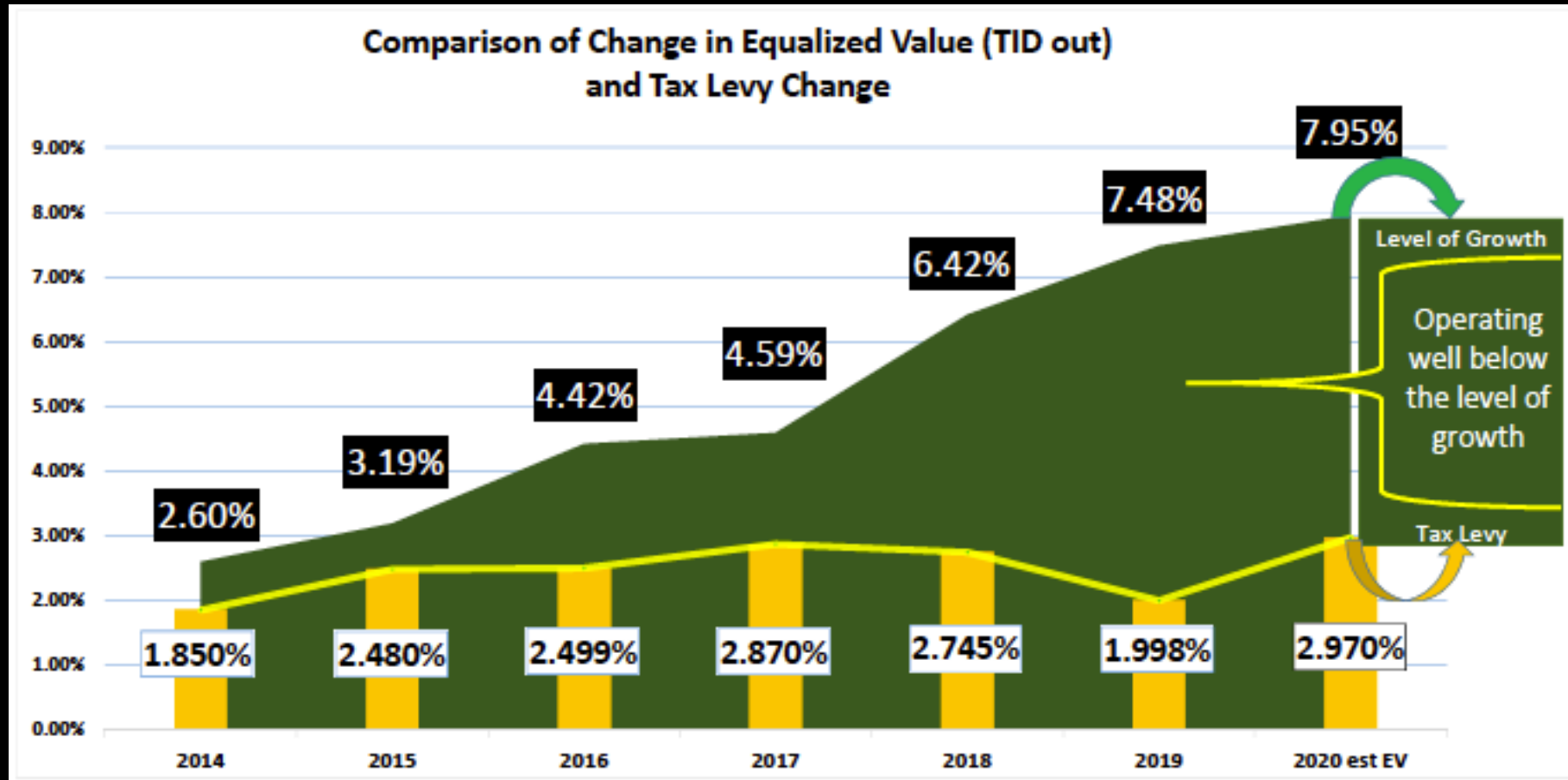


Makes an overall market adjustment for employees to ensure we are keeping pace with our very competitive job market

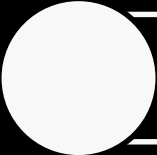


Continues our work with municipalities

Budgeting below growth chart



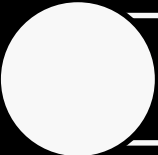
This budget:



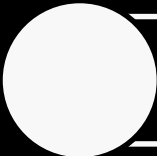
Continues to be well below the amount of growth by 5%



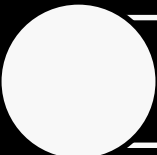
Assures law enforcement the ability to serve and protect our community going forward



Provides the necessary public safety infrastructure our protective services need, businesses want and the public expects



Positions our most vulnerable people to get the services they need and helps assist job seekers to seize opportunities



Is fiscally responsible and carefully crafted to sustain the momentum that has made Kenosha County in a category of its own

Thank you and God Bless Kenosha County

