
IN THE NEWS Evers announces millions of dollars for city, county during Thursday visit to Kenosha

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Gov. Tony Evers announced millions of dollars worth of grant funding for both the city and county of Kenosha during a stop here Thursday.

Evers announced that the state has awarded \$15 million in stimulus funds to help boost development of the proposed Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood at the former 107-acre Chrysler engine plant property. Evers also announced \$9.85 million for the county to help relocate the County Human Services/Job Center campus to Sun Plaza, 3446 52nd St.

Evers made the announcements at the Kenosha Human Development Services center at Sun Plaza. He was flanked by city council members, county supervisors, state representatives and local activists.



"We don't just want to rebound and recover. We want to see Wisconsin families and communities and our economy succeed for years to come. We need to make these investments today," Evers said during the hour-long event. "It is my pleasure to invest these critical funds in Kenosha's communities and their people."

Innovation Neighborhood

The Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood is a proposed \$1 billion project that aims to revitalize the Chrysler site east of 30th Avenue between 52nd and 60th Streets into a hub for innovation. It is proposed to include a new facility for LakeView Technology Academy, a Kenosha Unified School District choice school that specializes in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education. The neighborhood would also include much-needed affordable housing, green space and retail stores.

"It will bolster entrepreneurship and start-ups in the area, as well as provide education and training opportunities for Kenoshans," Evers said

Kenosha Mayor John Antaramian said he's grateful for the support.



"This is something that is going to impact this community dramatically," Antaramian said. "Governor, I want to again thank you so much because with this we are going to change and move Kenosha forward faster. And in the state of Wisconsin, I hope that this becomes a bit of a template for other communities to follow and do."

The site's proposed Innovation Center is expected to be a 60,000 square-foot "incubator facility" for new business start-ups.

"The center will be a focal point for entrepreneurs and startup businesses to develop programs that encourage job creation, technology development and building skills. Collaborative programs will engage the resources of regional colleges: University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Carthage College, Gateway Technical College and Herzing University," according to a media release from community relations liaison Kris Kochman.

New Job Center campus

Under a public-private partnership, Bear Development would purchase the existing Human Services/Job Center property, 8600 Sheridan Road, and redevelop Sun Plaza to better suit the needs of the county. The aging facility off of Sheridan Road, which is more than 50 years old, would require millions of dollars worth of repairs over the next few years.

"I want to thank Gov. Evers and his team for helping us strengthen this project with these much-needed funds so we can maximize the utility of (Sun Plaza) to do outreach in our communities," said Kenosha County Executive Jim Kreuser. "This will result in our bringing our human services closer thousands and thousands of the public that we serve."

The Department of Human Services provides job training, veterans services and health services, among other things.

Evers on Kenosha impact

When questioned about how these funds and projects would actually benefit the people of Kenosha after a difficult two years for the city in the wake of the pandemic and riots, Evers said it will make a huge difference.

"If you look at what's going on in the county and the city, this is really going to make a huge difference — economic development, job training, people being able to access services easier than ever before," he said. "It's so forward looking. It's not just going to be for the next year, it's going to be for generations. Really good thinking here and I'm really glad that we are able to persevere."

Elected leaders respond

State Rep. Samantha Kerkman, R-Salem Lakes, praised the announcements.

"I am thrilled that the needs of Kenosha County and the City of Kenosha are being recognized and that our families, students, and workers will get to enjoy the revitalization, growth, and opportunities for the community that both the county services building relocation and the KIN project will bring," Kerkman said in a statement. "The events of the last two years were economically devastating to small, local businesses and start-ups and underscored the need to build a truly diverse regional economy. These grants will not only help the area bounce back, but help fund the transformational groundwork needed to bridge gaps in training and opportunity. I look forward to both projects advancing to meet the needs of our residents and to continue building a robust, inclusive economy in southeastern Wisconsin."

State Sen. Bob Wirth, D-Somers, thanked Evers "for his commitment to Kenosha."



"This money moves both of these great, important local projects one step closer to reality, and I am very excited about the ripple effect this will have on economic and workforce development in our community," Wirch said in a statement.

"The Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood, located on the 107-acre Chrysler engine plant site, will focus on developing opportunities in education, workforce development and job training, and entrepreneurial development and will connect Kenosha residents with opportunities in high-growth fields. Through a public-private partnership, Kenosha County plans to move its Human Services and Job Center building to the former Sun Plaza shopping center on 52nd Street. Construction is set to begin this year, and the new center should be operational by 2024."

State Rep. Tip McGuire, D-Kenosha, expressed similar sentiments in a statement.

"We are extremely grateful for his steadfast commitment to our community and to making the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood a reality," he said.

McGuire said Evers previously sought to fund the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood plan in his budget "but Legislative Republicans stripped it out."

"Despite roadblocks along the way, Gov. Evers made it a priority to get this critical project over the finish line for our city. We are extremely grateful for his steadfast commitment to our community and to making the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood a reality," McGuire said.

State Sen. Van Wanggaard, R-Racine, who represents a large part of Kenosha County, in a statement said both he and Kerkman have requested for months that the pandemic funds be used for the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood.

"I'm so glad that Governor Evers finally recognized the importance of and his ability to spend American Rescue Plan Act funds for the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood (KIN) in an election year. It's great news," he said in a statement. "Imagine how much progress could have been made on this vital redevelopment project in the last nine months. Of course, we know that Evers is typically slow to react to help Kenosha."

More than \$200M awarded statewide

Evers announced Thursday that more than \$212.9 million has been awarded statewide through the Neighborhood Investment Fund Grant program to address the needs of communities through long-term investments and economic recovery projects.

"From Rice Lake to Kenosha, our Neighborhood Investment Fund is providing support to address a variety of community needs, and whether its affordable housing, area revitalization, or improving the access and delivery of public services, these projects will be transformational in the daily lives of the folks who call these neighborhoods home," Evers said in a press release after Thursday's event in Kenosha.

"Over the last week, I've had the pleasure of visiting with grant recipients all across the state, and the dedication, ingenuity, and passion folks have demonstrated through their creative proposals is proof that these grant dollars are building a foundation for a brighter future for Wisconsinites."

Source: https://www.kenoshanews.com/news/local/watch-now-evers-announces-millions-of-dollars-for-city-county-during-thursday-visit-to-kenosha/article_5d61f97d-b876-59d7-8c1b-7d6e86cdac5b.html