

Gov. Evers: Building commission approves nearly \$87 million in projects in Wisconsin

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Building Commission Approves Nearly \$87 Million in Projects in Wisconsin

Projects include nearly \$66 million approved for Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center expansion

MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers announced the State of Wisconsin Building Commission (Commission) today approved \$86.7 million in key projects across the state, including projects aimed at addressing flood mitigation, building improvements, energy solutions, and expanded treatment options for youth and adults in need of care or rehabilitation at correctional and treatment facilities.

After more than a year of delay by the Joint Committee on Finance, the legislature approved the expansion of the Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center (MJTC) on May 6, 2020. Gov. Tony Evers responded quickly by asking the Commission to act on MJTC. The Commission today provided authority to construct the Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center expansion at Mendota Mental Health Institute in Madison. The Department of Administration (DOA) anticipates the project will be ready for construction bidding this fall.

"I'm grateful to the Building Commission members for ensuring we can expand access to care for Wisconsin youth in need of comprehensive mental health services," said Gov. Evers.

Highlights of other approvals include:

- Completing a project in conjunction with the City of Wisconsin Rapids to install permanent flood mitigation infrastructure near the Wisconsin Rapids State Office Building. Leasing more than 35,000 square feet for the departments of Administration and Justice, as well as land purchases for the departments of Corrections, Military Affairs, and the University of Wisconsin System (UW);
- Rehabilitating the Building Envelop at the Tommy G. Thompson Center;
- Releasing Building Trust Funds to begin planning for projects at Stanley Correctional Institution for a health services unit, Mendota Mental Health Institute for foodservice renovations, and Wisconsin Veterans Home at King for water quality improvements;
- Constructing ventilation improvements at the Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility;
- Constructing the fifth phase of improvements at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery and VoIP system at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove;
- Accepting private gifts of structures at the Wade House Historic Site for the Wisconsin Historical Society, as well as the Kickapoo Valley Reserve for the Kickapoo Reserve Management Board;
- Constructing infrastructure renovation/replacement projects for the UW-Milwaukee and UW-Whitewater in the Minor Facilities Renewal Program;
- Constructing 32 maintenance and repair projects located at various locations in 17 counties across the state for the departments of Administration, Corrections, Health Services, Natural Resources, Transportation, Veterans Affairs, the State Fair Park, and the UW-System; and
- An energy conservation project, including a renewable energy solution to install a solar photovoltaic array at UW-Stevens Point.

The DOA and the UW System also provided a report of emergency efforts directed by Gov. Evers after large concrete panels fell from the third floor of Van Hise Hall located on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus in April 2021. The University of Wisconsin temporarily closed the building allowing the emergency project to safely remove panels on the third and fourth floors. The work completed under this emergency project allowed the building to be reopened while additional building envelop repair efforts continue. This is evidence of the real-life safety concerns that exist among aging state-owned buildings with outstanding deferred maintenance. It also drives home the point that capital investment can no longer be delayed but must be addressed immediately, thoughtfully, and strategically.

"The longer we wait to address failing infrastructure, the more expensive it gets for taxpayers," said Gov. Evers. "Now is the time to invest in planning for the future. I urge the Joint Committee on Finance to fund my proposed capital budget, which would have an estimated \$4.3 billion economic impact and provide approximately 29,000 family-supporting jobs across our state."

The Building Commission is chaired by Gov. Evers and made up of the following members:

- State Sen. Janis Ringhand;
- State Sen. Jerry Petrowski;
- State Sen. Andre Jacque;
- State Rep. Jill Billings;
- State Rep. Rob Swearingen;
- State Rep. Robert Wittke; and
- Citizen member Summer Strand.

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