



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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Jim Kreuser, County Executive

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Kreuser lauds Kenosha County's strong economy in 2018 State of the County address

KENOSHA – Robust. Resilient. Heavy-duty. Exceptional. Outstanding.

These were among the words County Executive Jim Kreuser used to describe Kenosha County's present condition, as he delivered his 2018 State of the County Address to the County Board on Tuesday night.

“Quite frankly, there just aren't enough adjectives to accurately describe our current condition,” Kreuser said. “Saying the State of Kenosha County is ‘strong’ just doesn't quite do it justice.”

Kreuser noted that the county currently has high employment in new jobs, and its lowest unemployment rate in 19 years. Income is rising and the crime rate has declined and is lower than the national average, Kreuser said.

The county executive's speech focused heavily on the economy, noting that more than 8,000 new jobs have been created and \$1 billion in capital investment has been made in Kenosha County over the past four years.

“We are the hotspot,” Kreuser said, referencing the recent, new developments at the Salem Business Park in the Village of Salem Lakes and First Park 94 in the Village of Somers, as well as ongoing expansion in and around LakeView Corporate Park in the Village of Pleasant Prairie.

To help attract business development to the area, Kenosha County and its economic development partner, the Kenosha Area Business Alliance, have granted \$3.5 million in High Impact Fund awards to nine companies or developments, producing nearly 1,500 jobs and creating \$168 million in capital investment, Kreuser said.

Existing businesses such as Uline are expanding, while Kenosha County landed two of Wisconsin's largest economic development projects in 2017: Haribo and Gold Standard Baking.

“Haribo, the German candy manufacturer, will be building a 500,000-square-foot manufacturing facility, making a \$242 million investment, and adding 400 new jobs,” Kreuser said, adding, “How sweet is that?”

These economic development gains were made possible by the county’s commitment to improving its infrastructure, Kreuser noted.

The state is now completing an expansion of Interstate 94 from Kenosha County to Milwaukee County and is also improving Kenosha County highways A and H in preparation for the Foxconn development across the border in Racine County. Meanwhile, Kreuser said planning continues for the expansion of County Highway S to four lanes, with completion expected around 2022.

Kreuser stressed the county’s ongoing commitments to high-quality programs, cost-effectiveness and efficiency. Specifically, he cited the recent opening of the KARE Center, a mental health treatment facility, as well as other programs aimed at combatting addiction.

“I want to recognize the work of the Opioid Task Force, the new Family Treatment Court led by Chief Judge Jason Rossell, the continued successes of the county’s Vivitrol program, the DA’s First Offender program, and the Health Department’s Narcan training,” Kreuser said. “Our goal is to be proactive and help people address their addictions.”

Kreuser also touched on the county’s fiscal health, noting that it is very close to receiving a top AAA bond rating. Kreuser said he, County Board Chairman Daniel Esposito, and Finance and Administration Committee Chairman Terry Rose remain committed to reaching AAA status.

“As interest rates continue to climb, an AAA rating gives us flexibility and saves the county money now and secures the county’s fiscal future for our children and grandchildren,” Kreuser said. “It is the smart and the best way to do business, and that’s what we always try to do in Kenosha County.”

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