



#### **State Senator Mark Miller**

traditional media outlets."

"Make no mistake; there are some legislators who want to get rid of legal notices as they stand today," said Wisconsin Newspaper Association (WNA) lobbyist Mark Graul.

The legal notice study committee is one of seven being formed in 2016. It is chaired by Rep. John Spiros, R-Marshfield, with Sen. Mark Miller of Monona, serving as vice-chairman.

Study committees are appointed by the Legislative Council and include members of the Legislature and citizens who are interested or knowledgeable about the topic. Committee findings can often lead to the introduction of new legislation.

That would be fine, but as any TV fan knows, summer is the time for repeats of your favorite shows.

And, unfortunately, the Legislature prefers watching this re-run more than any other of its favorites because of previous attempts to limit legal notices in newspapers.

Keeping notices in print and designating official newspapers of record creates an independent, permanent and unalterable record of government action, according to Beth Bennett, executive director of the WNA.

Not surprisingly, the WNA is fighting to keep legal notices in your newspaper.

Why?

"Newspapers have accountability and an audience," remarked Mark Stodder, a member of the WNA Foundation Board.

Perhaps even more important, a sector of the population is remaining free of computers, choosing not to even learn about how to use them. Allowing online-only publication of legal notices would leave those residents in the dark.

The WNA already has an answer for legislators who are looking for online legal notices: <u>WisconsinPublicNotices.org</u>.

State WNA member newspapers that publish legal notices are required to upload their notices to the website, which is searchable by the public for free. The archive dates back to 2005.

But perhaps the most important reason for legal notices to remain in newspapers is information. Printing the notices in local newspapers offers people who want to find out about what's happening in their local communities to read those notices.

Notices contain important local information about upcoming school board, city and even legal actions in the areas where the newspaper circulates.

Most of the time, legal notices are the sources for more prominent news coverage -- offering a higher visibility for the issues listed in those notices, and ensuring citizens who read the newspaper will learn more about those topics.

Local governments want citizens to know what is happening in their communities, but many times they are held captive by mandates from other levels of government. Legal notices remain the most efficient and effective way to get information to the greatest number of people in a timely manner because local government taxes pay to have them printed in an easily understood and accessible format.



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Contact Sen. Miller by phone at (608) 266-9170 and urge him to speak and act against any effort to limit legal notices in newspapers. Legal notices are for the public good.



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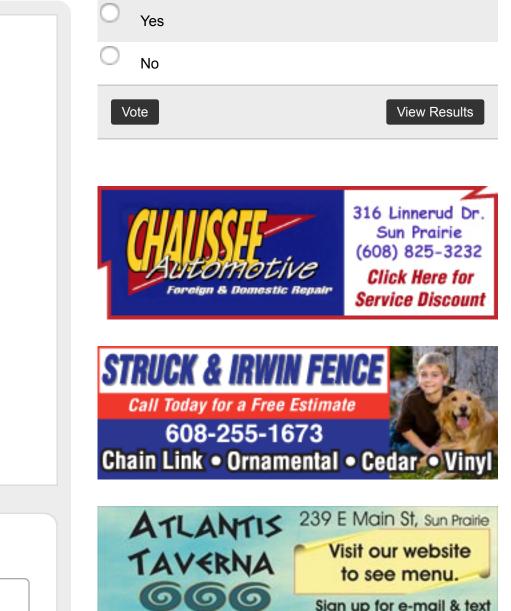
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Are you in favor of the Sun Prairie Area School District buying land next to the existing Sun Prairie High School instead of building a new school on the city's west side?



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