

World (4 stories)

**NUEVA LOJA, Ecuador (AP)** — Standing beside a stream stained dark with oil in Ecuador's northern Amazon, an Indigenous woman shook her head in disbelief as she stared at the oily sheen drifting across the water and broken pipes cutting through the forest. Nearby, gas flares burned above the treetops.

Julia Catalina Chumbi, a 76-year-old leader from the Shuar ethnic group in the southern Amazon province of Pastaza, had traveled hundreds of miles to see the damage for herself — the legacy of decades of oil and gas production in the northeastern province of Sucumbios.

"Everything is contaminated, even the air," she said quietly.

Moments earlier, she had learned something that shocked her. In communities near the oil fields in Sucumbios, residents can no longer safely drink from local rivers and instead must buy water because of contamination and health fears. "Seeing this makes me want to cry," she said, adding that in her territory rivers are still drinkable.

Chumbi was among about 30 Indigenous women from across Ecuador's Amazon who traveled to the region on what activists call a toxitour, visiting oil fields, pipelines and gas flaring sites to see firsthand the environmental and health impacts of extraction. Organizers said the trip aimed to connect women from areas facing proposed oil projects with communities that have lived alongside the industry for decades. Because many oil blocks overlap Indigenous territories, communities are often among the first to experience contamination of rivers, forests and food sources.

The women — representing seven Indigenous communities — gathered for several days in the city of Nueva Loja for workshops to share experiences and discuss the growing threat of oil expansion in their territories.

**TOKYO (AP)** — Osaka has received a hefty gift of gold bars worth 560 million yen (\$3.6 million) from an anonymous donor asking for its specific use: to fix the Japanese city's dilapidated water pipes.

The gold bars weighing 21 kilograms (46 pounds) in total were given to the Osaka City Waterworks Bureau in November by the donor who wants to help improve aging water pipes, Mayor Hideyuki Yokoyama told reporters Thursday.

"It's a staggering amount and I was speechless," Yokoyama said. "Tackling aging water pipes requires a huge investment, and I cannot thank enough for the donation."

The mayor said his city will respect the donor's wishes and use the gift to improve waterworks projects.

Concern over the safety of Osaka's waterworks systems grew after a massive sinkhole swallowed a truck and killed the driver last year. It was linked to a damaged sewer in Saitama, north of Tokyo. Osaka had 92 cases of water pipe leaks under city roads in the fiscal year ending March 2025, the city's waterworks official Eiji Kotani told The Associated Press on Friday.

With the population of 2.8 million, Osaka is the country's third-largest city that serves as a western Japanese capital.

Most of Japan's main public infrastructure was built during the rapid postwar economic growth.

Urban development in Osaka, a regional commercial hub, started earlier than many other cities and its water pipes and other infrastructure are also aging earlier, Kotani said.

Osaka needs to renew a total of 259 kilometers (160 miles) of water pipes, he said. Renewing a 2-kilometer (1.2 mile) segment of water pipes would cost about 500 million yen (\$3.2 million), Kotani said.

**ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP)** — France returned a sacred talking drum looted during the colonial period to Ivory Coast on Friday as part of a nearly decade-old effort by the French government to return cultural artifacts to African nations.

It was the first such return by France to Ivory Coast, and was part of a broader campaign among European and Western governments to return treasured objects after decades of resistance.

The Djidji Ayôkwé, a massive carved wooden drum once used by the Atchan people of the Abidjan region to communicate between villages, was looted by French colonial authorities in 1916 and is among at least 140 looted artifacts Ivory Coast has asked France to return.

"This is a historic day and a moment of justice and remembrance," Ivory Coast Culture Minister Françoise Remarck said at an event to receive the artifact at the Félix Houphouët-Boigny International Airport. The wooden drum — whose name means "panther-lion" — measures about 11.5 feet (138 inches) long and weighs roughly 950 pounds. Historians say it played a key role in warning villages about forced labor recruitment organized by colonial authorities.

French President Emmanuel Macron first announced plans to repatriate cultural artifacts to African nations in 2018 following a report he commissioned from academic researchers that recommended doing that. The French Parliament last year adopted a special law allowing the Ivory Coast artifact to be removed from French collections, as part of the broader efforts.

The repatriation process required consultations with Atchan traditional leaders, who traveled to Paris to perform rituals lifting the drum's sacred status so it could be restored and transported.

For Atchan leaders attending Friday's ceremony, the drum's return carries deep symbolic significance.

"After a long stay far from its land, our sacred drum is finally returning to its people," said Aboussou Guy Mobio, chief of the village of Adjamé-Bingerville. "It is like the missing piece of our history coming back," Mobio added.

It is expected to go on public display in April at the newly renovated Museum of Civilizations in Abidjan.

**St Anton am Arlberg, Austria (BBC)** — Five people were killed in a series of avalanches in the Austrian Alps as heavy snowfall hit the region on Friday.

A 42-year-old German man, caught in an avalanche with his 16-year-old son, was among the victims, police said. The teenager was airlifted to hospital from the slope in Nauders near the Swiss-Italian border.

Three other skiers were killed in an avalanche near the popular St Anton resort, while a snowboarder died after being buried in the neighbouring Vorarlberg region.

Austria has now seen at least 21 avalanche-related deaths this winter, while dozens of fatalities have been recorded across the Alps.

The avalanche risk remains high in parts of Tyrol - meaning avalanches can be expected - where two fatal avalanches occurred on Friday in off-piste areas.

Police told Austrian media the avalanche near St Anton am Arlberg, which killed three men, appeared to have been triggered by the skiers themselves.

Two were American and Polish nationals, public broadcaster ORF reported, while the third was a 21-year-old Austrian who died in hospital.

Two other men were recovered from the scene with injuries after a major operation involving four mountain rescue teams, three helicopters, as well as emergency services.

Elsewhere, a 53-year-old man died after being crushed by a snow plough in the northern city of Linz.

The vehicle slid down a set of stairs where the man had been clearing snow, ORF reported. He died at the scene.

The significant snowfall in the region also caused power outages and transport chaos on Friday, particularly in the south-east.

The Red Cross was deployed to help those stuck in traffic jams in the state of Styria, where a motoring organisation described the roads as "virtually inaccessible to private vehicles".

Vienna International Airport temporarily closed in the morning, and afternoon services were "disrupted".

The avalanche death toll in the Alps has been higher than usual this year, and includes three Britons killed in France's La Grave earlier this month.

## **National (4 stories)**

**DC Area (CNN)** — Passengers at three airports in the Washington, DC, area faced significant delays after a ground stop was issued Friday afternoon due to an equipment outage, according to the FAA and Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, who posted details on X.

The disruptions were caused by the temporary closure of a crucial air traffic control center in Virginia after FAA employees reported a strong chemical smell in the building, Duffy said.

Emergency crews and a HAZMAT team responded to the facility. The smell was traced to a circuit board that had overheated and was subsequently replaced, Duffy said in an update.

More than 30 FAA employees were evaluated and returned to work after the scene was deemed safe, according to the Fauquier County Fire Rescue System in Warrenton, Virginia, which responded to the incident.

Passengers at National airport were huddled at gates Friday evening as they awaited their flights, with several sprawled out on the floor. While the ground stop was lifted, delays at Baltimore reached over two and a half hours, three hours at Dulles and more than three and a half hours at Reagan, according to the FAA, as the airports worked to recover from the stop, which lasted about three hours.

Delays slowly decreased through the evening, according to the tracking website FlightAware.com, with delays averaging about 90 minutes at Reagan and Dulles and 60 minutes at Baltimore as of 10:45 p.m. ET Friday.

Reagan led the cancellations, with more than 170 flights canceled and more than 300 delayed coming in and out of the airport Friday, according to FlightAware.com. More than 40 cancellations and over 200 delays were recorded in and out of Baltimore as of late Friday, the tracking website said.

**SPRINGFIELD, III. (AP)** — A turf war over a football team is developing between two Midwestern states with a sometimes-discordant history.

The storied Chicago Bears want to leave historic Soldier Field, where they've played for half a century. Indiana lawmakers are attempting to lure them from the Windy City with a plan to finance and build a domed stadium in Hammond, Indiana, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) from their current home on Lake Michigan's shore.

The Illinois General Assembly has responded with legislation that would give tax breaks to so-called megaprojects of at least \$100 million, a plan that would encompass the Bears' proposal to build a complex in the northwest Chicago suburb of Arlington Heights, about the same distance from Soldier Field as Hammond.

Critics complain it's a bad deal for Illinois, where property taxes are already among the highest in the nation — especially when taxpayers still owe hundreds of millions of dollars on a Soldier Field renovation from two decades ago.

**NEW YORK (AP)** — This stowaway truly was sly as a fox.

A red fox somehow slipped onto a cargo ship that traveled from Southampton, England, to New York, where the animal is now in the Bronx Zoo's care.

The zoo said Wednesday that the 11-pound (5-kilogram) male fox appears healthy after early examinations.

"He seems to be settling in well," Keith Lovett, the zoo's director of animal programs, said by phone. "It's gone through a lot."

It's not clear how the animal got on the ship full of automobiles, which left Southampton on Feb. 4, according to the zoo. U.S. Customs and Border Protection said the ship's crew discovered the furry passenger while traveling to the Port of New York and New Jersey, where the vessel arrived Feb. 18. Officials brought the fox to the zoo the next day. He's estimated to be 2 years old.

The species, formally named *Vulpes vulpes*, is widespread in Europe, Asia, North America and parts of Africa. A long-term home for this fox will be found once he clears some more health screening.

For now, he's in the zoo's veterinary center. Being an omnivore, he's getting a diet of produce, proteins and some biscuit-like items.

**Oregon (AP)** — The state of Oregon may soon have some new public property: A spectacular waterfall, beloved by generations, that was recently put up for sale on Redfin.

Abiqua Falls — known for its 92-foot (28-meter) vertical drop over a columnar basalt cliff — has been privately owned for over a century but open to the public. Its owner, a nonprofit that supports a community of Benedictine monks, put it on the market earlier this year.

The listing worried fans of the natural wonder. But at the tail end of the legislative session this month, a bipartisan group of lawmakers stepped in and approved \$2.1 million to buy the falls and its surrounding land.

“It’s not every day where you see a waterfall come up for sale on Redfin or Realtor.com with no price,” said Travis Williams, president of the Willamette River Preservation Trust, a conservation nonprofit. “The public was really confused and fearful that the site would be closed off.”

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department must complete due diligence, including reviewing environmental and archaeological information, before the purchase can move forward, spokesperson Katie Gauthier said in an email.

The property won’t necessarily become a state park, which would require additional money, she added. It could be managed by a local or tribal government or another state agency.

### **Wisconsin and Sun Prairie or Madison area local (4 stories)**

**Sun Prairie, WI (The Star)** — The City of Sun Prairie, Metro Transit and RoundTrip Greater Madison are hosting a Lean & Ride event at the Sun Park & Ride on Tuesday, March 31 from 7 to 10 a.m.

The event is aimed to help residents feel more confident navigating public transit and to celebrate those already using the bus to get to work, school and elsewhere.

Those who attend will have the opportunity to learn about how the Metro Transit system works and how to:

- Board and ride Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- Plan trips
- Explore fare discounts
- Use racks to secure riders’ bicycles on both BRT and traditional buses.

Free coffee and donuts will be offered while supplies last as well.

Metro staff will also be leading practice guided trips on the BRT Route A1 from the Park & Ride at 7:58 and 8:58 a.m for those who want to learn to basics of boarding, riding and paying fares.

RoundTrip staff will be available the day of to share more resources such as the free emergency ride home program for commuters and the upcoming Spring Roll challenge for residents to ditch solo rides for more environment-friendly options.

Sun Prairie Sustainability Program Coordinator Hannah Best will also be available at the event to share information about sustainability initiatives and upcoming Earth Month events.

**MADISON, Wis. (Channel 3000)** -- A large tree fell on a house during a significant windstorm in the Madison area Friday morning.

The tree fell at a home in the 5300 block of Milward Drive just before 8 a.m.. Madison fire said it received updates through the Dane County 911 Public Safety Communications Center that nobody was trapped inside.

A fire crew arrived to find a large tree resting on a front corner of the home. The tree reportedly penetrated the roof and impacted living spaces within the home.

The tree was also tangled in backyard wires with damage to an electric box. Firefighters searched the home and confirmed nobody was inside.

MGE, City of Madison Building Inspection, and the MFD Heavy Urban Rescue Team (HURT) were dispatched to the scene to evaluate the safety of the building. Electrical power to the home was turned off. MFD HURT surveyed the interior of the home and determined there was no need for shoring.

The home will remain without power until the tree is safely removed.

A neighbor talked to News 3 Now where she said a loud bang was heard in the middle of the night, and this was not the first time it happened.

"She was just sort of in shock and disbelief that this is happening again and that, you know, this time almost seems worse because I think she said it impacted the inside of the house." "The last time it happened, it was mostly the roof and like a little bit of the siding. So she was just in shock. But, you know, it's just a lot for anyone to deal with, you know, especially late at night."

**MADISON, Wis. (WMTV)** - Two Wisconsin athletes represented Team USA on the world's biggest stage at the Milan Cortina Paralympic Games — and came just short of the podium.

Steve Emt of DeForest and Laura Dwyer of Oconomowoc competed in wheelchair curling, falling short in the bronze medal match Wednesday to finish fourth in the world.

Despite missing the podium, Emt said the team is proud of how they performed throughout the week.

"Tough bronze medal match yesterday but obviously we're not happy with the outcome but we're happy with our performance. We're happy with our play throughout the week," Emt said.

"Unfortunately, we came a little bit up short. It hurts right now, it still hurts. But this is something that's going to drive us and make us better going forward in life," Emt said.

For Dwyer, Milan Cortina marked her first Paralympic Games. For Emt, it was his third appearance.

Both athletes pointed to the crowd atmosphere as the most memorable part of the Games — a stark contrast to the typically quiet sport of curling.

"The atmosphere, the environment that we played in — 500-600,000 people, whatever it was, it was loud, they're chanting, the flags of all the countries they're waving. It was absolutely an incredible experience," Emt said.

Dwyer agreed, saying the energy pushed them to perform at their best — even when the crowd was cheering for the opposing team.

“Even when we were playing against Italy and the crowd was cheering so loudly for Italy, we were asked afterwards like how was it having everyone cheer. I said I just pretended they were cheering for me,” Dwyer laughed. “It was like me being at my kids football game or basketball game. It was so great.”

“It’s been an amazing experience and we’re honored and blessed to represent Team USA – the greatest country in the world on the greatest stage,” Emt said.

**MADISON, Wis. (WMTV)** - Madison Gas and Electric are continuing their mission to reduce carbon emissions and create more renewable energy by purchasing additional solar capacity in Rock County.

MGE received approval from the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin to purchase solar capacity from the Dawn Harvest Solar Energy Center, located in the townships of La Prairie and Harmony in Rock County.

MGE will own 15 megawatts of the 150 megawatt solar array.

The goal of the project is to expand renewable energy, advance energy efficiency, and support the electrification of transportation, thus reducing carbon emissions and supporting a more sustainable environment in Wisconsin.

The organization received the approval in partnership with We Energies and Wisconsin Public Service, which are subsidiaries of WEC Energy Group.

Officials from MGE said that the continued investment into geographically diverse utility-scale renewable generation projects will help the company manage costs, enhance reliability and speed up the transition to a low carbon future.

“MGE’s ownership share of the Dawn Harvest Solar Energy Center is another important step in our commitment to use renewables first and ensure reliability for all customers,” said Jeff Keebler, MGE’s Chairman, President and CEO. “With our current plans, by 2030, we will have added more than 40 renewable generation and battery storage projects since 2015, totaling more than 750 MW, propelling us toward our goal of net-zero carbon electricity by 2050.”

The solar capacity project is set to begin serving customers in 2028.

### **Entertainment (3 stories)**

**COLOGNE, Germany (AP)** — A mirror room dappled with colored dots. Contorted, bright sculptures of flowers on a rooftop at the foot of Cologne’s famed cathedral. A vast showroom with giant octopus-like tentacles that offer up a mesmerizing meander through space and obstacles.

The renowned Museum Ludwig in the western German city is celebrating its 50th anniversary by opening a nearly five-month exhibit on Saturday, with more than 300 works of the famed Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama.

The trek through the time and transformation of the now nonagenarian artist assembles works ranging from her first drawing in the mid-1930s to a newly commissioned “Infinity Mirror Room” made for the show.

Kusama, who turns 97 this month, has become a social media sensation with her use of bright colors and oozy shapes that reflect her feeling of awe about life. Her own life carried her from patriarchal postwar Japan to New York to the Flower Power and anti-Vietnam war movements in the 1960s. She returned home to Japan in 1973.

Curator Stephan Diederich says the exhibit, which runs through Aug. 2, is “very diverse, wide-ranging, and depicts an immensely rich, creative life spanning more than eight decades, still looking ahead.”

“Kusama is undoubtedly one of the most significant artists of our time,” he said. “Her mirror rooms, balloon installations and polka dots have achieved cult status and are now iconic.”

Her multifaceted works often relate to the world of nature. She grew up in the greenhouses and fields of her family’s enormous seed nursery in Matsumoto, Japan. When Kusama was young, she began having vivid hallucinations, some of which involved polka dots or flowers spreading around her. She has fought through existential anxieties.

“In my more than 70 years as an artist, I have always been in awe of the wonder of life,” she said in a statement. “More than anything, this strong sense of the life force in artistic expression is what has supported me and gave me power to overcome feelings of depression, hopelessness and sadness.

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Dolly Parton’s name might inspire full-throated sing-a-longs to her working woman’s anthem “9 to 5,” or evoke memories of thrilling days spent at her Dollywood theme park.

Now, the Grammy-winning country music superstar is lending her name to a new cause: advancing pediatric health care in her home state. The East Tennessee Children’s Hospital announced Thursday that it will now be known as Dolly Parton Children’s Hospital.

“Ever since I’ve been in a position to do my part, to help others, I have tried to do just that. Especially when children and families need it most,” Parton said in a video announcement. “I’ve always believed that every child deserves a fair chance to grow up healthy, hopeful and surrounded with love.”

The impact of Parton’s philanthropy is already felt across Tennessee and beyond. Her Imagination Library initiative reports to send 3 million free books every month to children whose parents request them. She donated \$1 million to Vanderbilt University’s Medical Center for research that helped produce Moderna’s COVID-19 vaccine. And her charitable foundation provides numerous college scholarships and offers disaster relief.

Dolly Parton Children’s Hospital did not share how much Parton donated as part of the naming announcement. But Matt Schaefer, its president and CEO, said her support would ensure “every child who walks through our doors receives the treatment they deserve.”

The East Tennessee Children’s Hospital, now named after Parton, has operated with an “open-door” policy that no child would be denied care for their race, religion or ability to pay medical bills since it opened in 1937, according to its website. Its main campus in Knoxville, Tennessee is one of more than 20 locations across the eastern part of the state.

Parton said she is honored to support the hospital’s doctors, nurses and team members — and invited the public to join her.

**New York (BBC)** — A guitar used by David Gilmour on six of Pink Floyd's albums has sold for a record \$14.6m (£10.9m), making it the most expensive guitar ever sold, auction house Christie's has said.

Gilmour played the 1969 Fender Stratocaster, nicknamed the 'Black Strat', on all of the British rock band's albums between 1970 and 1983, including *The Dark Side of the Moon*, *Wish You Were Here*, and *The Wall*.

The guitar sold to an unnamed buyer after 21 minutes of bidding, as part of a rock memorabilia auction in New York on Thursday.

A piano owned by the Beatles' John Lennon also sold at the auction for \$3.2 (£2.5m), believed to be the highest fee ever paid for a piece of Beatles memorabilia.

## **Sports (3 stories)**

**MILAN (AP)** — The opening Para ice hockey match at the Milan Cortina Winter Games set a new record attendance for the sport at a major tournament.

The preliminary round match between four-time defending champion United States and host nation Italy drew 8,992 spectators for a high-octane atmosphere on Saturday night.

That not only broke the previous Paralympic record of 8,462 fans for the gold medal match at the Salt Lake City Games in 2002, but also surpassed the attendance record of 8,600 spectators at the 2019 World Para Ice Hockey championship in the Czech Republic.

“This attendance record is a great source of pride for Milano Cortina 2026 and for the entire Paralympic movement,” local organizing committee CEO Andrea Varnier said on Sunday. “The energy and engagement we are experiencing across our venues demonstrate just how powerful and inspiring Paralympic sports can be.

“Seeing nearly nine thousand people in the stands for a Para ice hockey game is a tangible sign of the Games’ lasting legacy, while celebrating talent, determination and team spirit.”

The home crowd roared in delight — and surprise — when Italy took a shock lead just 25 seconds after the puck dropped.

The U.S., which has won the Para ice hockey tournament at five of the past six Winter Paralympics, roared back to win 14-1.

**PERTH, Australia (AP)** — Defending champion China beat Taiwan 2-0 at the Women’s Asian Cup on Saturday to set up a semifinal against host Australia and clinch a place at the 2027 Women’s World Cup.

After 90 minutes ended goalless in a match between opponents with geopolitical tensions, Shao Ziqin broke the deadlock three minutes into extra time before a late own goal sealed the win.

“I’m so happy we won the match today and that I was able to score a goal,” Shao said.

On Friday, Sam Kerr scored one goal and created another as Australia advanced and secured a World Cup spot with a 2-1 win over North Korea.

In Sydney on Saturday, South Korea moved into the last four with a 6-0 rout of Uzbekistan. Son Hwa-yeon opened the scoring for the 2022 finalist after just nine minutes and Ko Yoo-jin fired home from outside the area in the 20th. Four second-half goals completed the thrashing.

South Korea will face the winner of Sunday's game between Japan and the Philippines. Japan has scored a tournament-leading 17 goals without conceding.

The semifinals are set for Tuesday and Wednesday with the final to be played next Saturday in Sydney.

**HOUSTON (ESPN)** -- In the aftermath of the Dominican Republic's mercy-rule win over Korea to advance to the World Baseball Classic semifinals, Dominican fans at LoanDepot Park in Miami made clear what they wanted to see next, chanting: "Queremos a USA" -- we want the USA. The United States booked its spot in the WBC semifinals with a 5-3 victory against Canada on Friday night, setting up a dream clash between the two most talented teams in the tournament. National League Cy Young winner Paul Skenes will start for Team USA against the formidable Dominican lineup that has wrecked opposing pitchers, while A's right-hander Luis Severino is expected to face an American lineup big on names but not so much on production thus far.

Weather

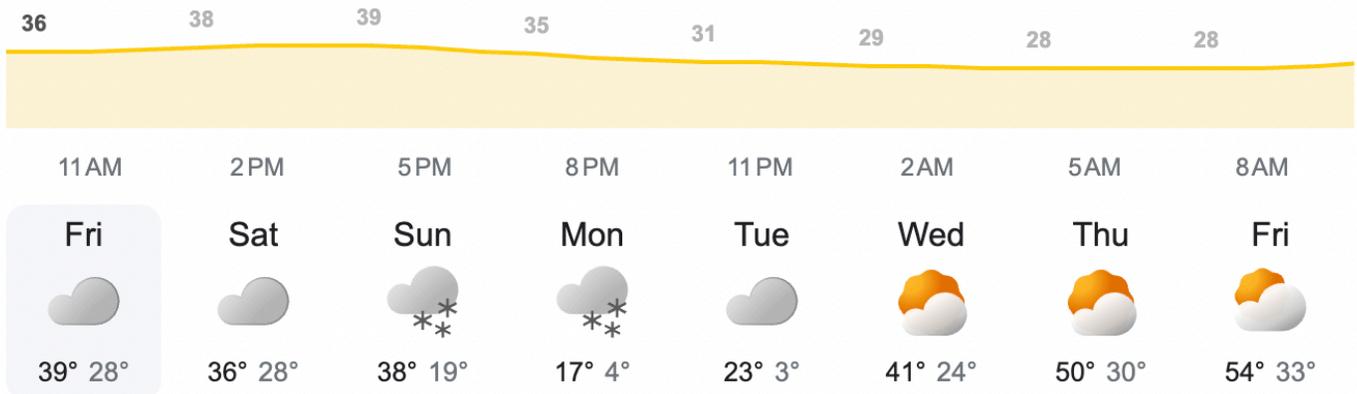


36 °F | °C

Precipitation: 10%  
Humidity: 64%  
Wind: 32 mph

**Weather**  
Friday 10:00AM  
Mostly cloudy

Temperature | Precipitation | Wind



Two commercial options

1. At Bank of Sun Prairie, you'll find a wide array of traditional and technologically advanced products and services that offer value and flexibility. We invite you to experience the Bank of Sun Prairie difference and learn what we mean by "The Right Balance." We'll make it easy for you to switch to your local community bank and start a banking relationship with people you know and trust. Bank of Sun Prairie.

2. Looking for a night of mystery, mayhem, and nonstop laughs? Then don't miss Clue, the hilarious stage adaptation of the classic board game coming to Sun Prairie Civic Theater. Six suspicious guests...One spooky mansion...And a host who ends up very dead. Running April 10th through the 19th, tickets available at [SunPrairieCivicTheater.com](http://SunPrairieCivicTheater.com)