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FOR RELEASE:
April 29, 2024

Wisconsin Policy Forum Announces Leadership Change

Rob Henken Will Shift Roles, VP and Research Director Jason Stein Taking Over as President

The Wisconsin Policy Forum announced today that Rob Henken, who has led the nonpartisan research organization since 2008, will be stepping down as President in mid-July but will remain an integral part of the organization as Immediate Past President.

Taking over as President will be Jason Stein, who was hired as WPF's Research Director and leader of its Madison office in 2018 and added Vice President to his title in 2023. Stein previously worked for 15 years as a reporter for the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* and *Wisconsin State Journal*.

"Rob has been instrumental in building the Forum from a small Milwaukee-based think tank into a robust policy research engine that covers all of Wisconsin and is regularly recognized by peers as one of the nation's best," said WPF Board Chair Grady Crosby. "We're thrilled to be able to retain Rob's wisdom and policy expertise in a reduced but still critical capacity while offering Jason a well-earned opportunity to accelerate our strategic direction and manage our operations."

The succession plan has been in the works for two years and was originally scheduled for implementation in 2025. However, Henken was recently tapped by the Milwaukee-based [Herzfeld Foundation](#) to become its part-time Executive Director. Both moves will take effect on July 16.

"Rob is a Wisconsin treasure," said Fred Haberman, Herzfeld's Board president. "During the last two decades he has made a positive difference in our community by leading research initiatives that have helped our state's governmental, corporate, and nonprofit leaders truly understand a myriad of key issues facing Wisconsin. This, combined with his ability to identify solutions to these problems, will be put to great use as we welcome him with excitement as our part-time Executive Director."

Henken will work half-time for each organization. At WPF, he will continue to lead the organization's local government service sharing portfolio and play a prominent role in its government finance research and analysis. He also will continue to manage and actively participate in WPF's other major Milwaukee-area projects, including its recently launched work on public safety in Milwaukee and new projects he will help develop in the future.

At Herzfeld, Henken will work with the Board of Directors and Vice President Julie Dahms to establish strategic priorities and manage the foundation's day-to-day operations. The foundation, established by Richard and Ethel Herzfeld, makes grants in the areas of Arts & Culture, Education, and Civic & Community. It recently made a \$5 million gift – the largest in its history – to the Milwaukee Repertory Theater for its new theater complex on East Wells Street.

To read Henken's letter announcing the move to WPF members and supporters, [click here](#).