

THE REPORTER

MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2013

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FdL, Dodge DA offices feel staffing pinch

By Samantha Strong
The Reporter Media

Mimicking a trend around the state, district attorney offices in Fond du Lac and Dodge counties are strapped for staff.

The Fond du Lac County District Attorney's Office needs about four more prosecutors to keep up with current caseloads, according to a study by the Wisconsin State Prosecutor's Office. The study found the Dodge County District Attorney's Office is understaffed by about four prosecutors as well.



Eric Toney



Kurt Klomberg

The study says Fond du Lac County is at 64 percent of the staffing it should have based on caseload, and Dodge County is at 50 percent.

Over the past three years, the number of prosecutors in the Fond du Lac County DA's Office has remained the same — 7 ½ full-time attorneys. Between 2010 and 2012, the number of prosecutors needed rose from about 9.4 to 11.5 when the workload formula was updated to more accurately reflect the time required by cases, according to the study.

The number of prosecutors in the Dodge County DA's Office also has remained the same between 2010 and 2012, with four full-time attorneys, according to the study. The number needed based on caseload from from 6.3 to eight.

"None of the DA offices across the state have ever been (fully staffed), so that's always been an issue," said Dodge County District Attorney Kurt

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As US talks diplomacy; N. Korea takes hard line

Associated Press

TOKYO — The United States and Japan opened the door Sunday to new nuclear talks if North Korea lowered tensions and honored past agreements, even as the saber-rattling government rejected South Korea's latest offer of dialogue as a "crafty trick."

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry told reporters in Tokyo that North Korea would find "ready partners" in the United States if it began abandoning its nuclear program.

Japan's foreign minister, Fumio Kishida, also demanded a resolution to a dispute concerning Japanese citizens abducted decades ago by North Korean officials.

The diplomats seemed to point the way for a possible revival of the six-nation talks that have been suspended for four years.

China long pushed for the process to resume without conditions. But the U.S. and allies South Korea and Japan fear rewarding North Korea for its bel-

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WISCONSIN PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE STAFFING

429.1

2012 ACTUAL STAFF

214.85

2012 STAFFING SHORTFALL



TOTAL OF ALL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE'S IN THE STATE OF WISCONSIN | 643.95 2012 TOTAL STAFF NEEDED | GANNETT WISCONSIN MEDIA GRAPHIC

GANNETT WISCONSIN MEDIA INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

SUPPLY & DEMAND

PROSECUTOR STAFFING DROPPING DESPITE GREATER NEED

By Eric Litke | Gannett Wisconsin Media Investigative Team

Sheboygan County prosecutors operate "like a MASH unit," says District Attorney Joe DeCecco, whose staff numbers half what the caseload requires, based on the latest state analysis.

District attorneys in Brown, Ozaukee and Winnebago counties have each used the term "triage" to describe their offices in separate interviews during the past year.

Demands on prosecutors throughout the state are rising, but prosecutor staffing is going in the other direction, falling from 444 county-level positions in 2002 to 429 last year. Lawmakers are lauded as tough on crime for implementing harsher penalties or funding police work, but

prosecutors say their role in the justice system continues to be overlooked.

"People don't realize that (police) can do the best job in the world; if we can't do our job, then all that's for nothing," DeCecco said. "We're at the end of that chain of prosecution. Nothing gets filed in court until we file it, no matter how many arrests they make."

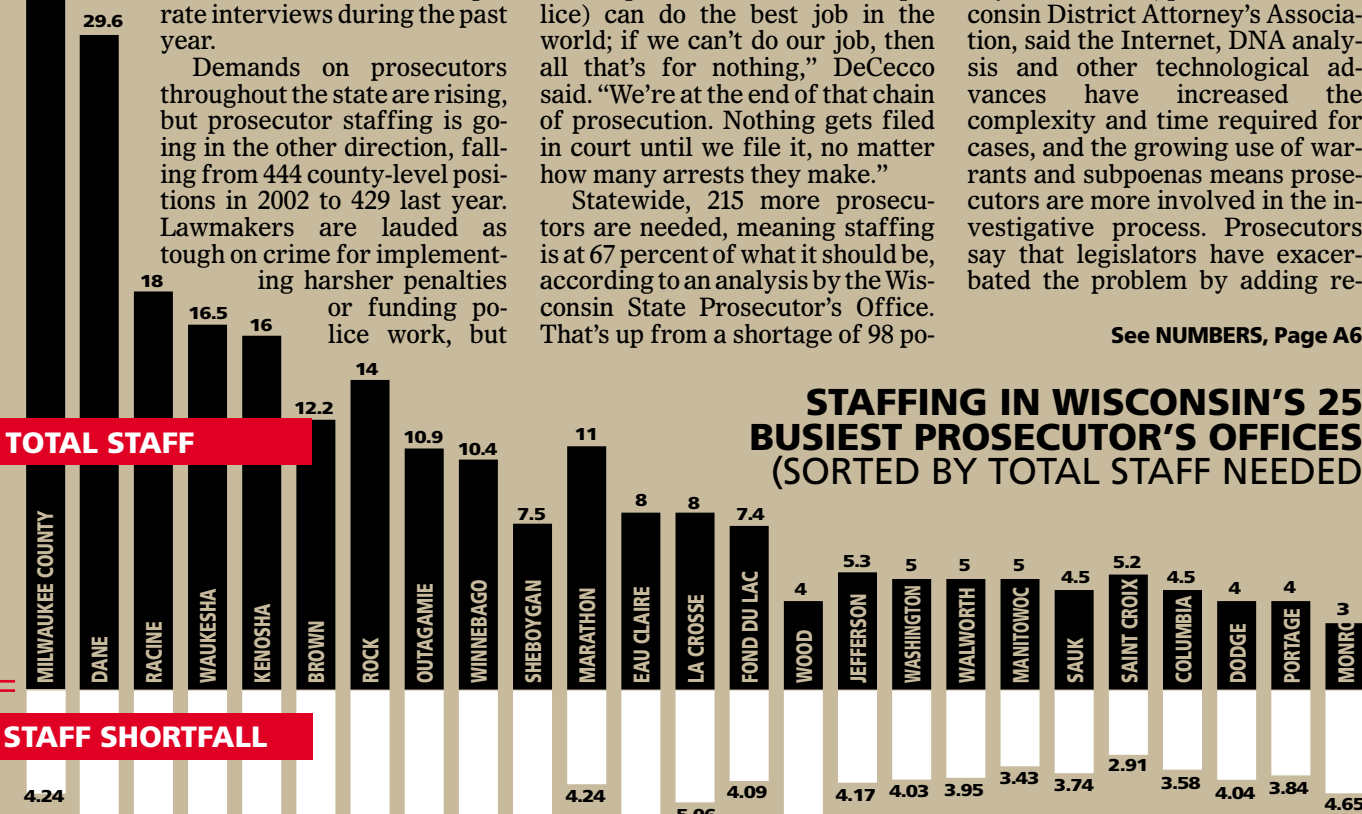
Statewide, 215 more prosecutors are needed, meaning staffing is at 67 percent of what it should be, according to an analysis by the Wisconsin State Prosecutor's Office. That's up from a shortage of 98 po-

sitions in 2010, before the weighted caseload formula used to determine need was adjusted to more accurately reflect the time required by various types of cases.

The analysis shows all but five of Wisconsin's district attorney offices are understaffed, half are operating with less than 60 percent what their caseload requires, and 10 are below 50 percent.

Ozaukee County District Attorney Adam Gerol, president of Wisconsin District Attorney's Association, said the Internet, DNA analysis and other technological advances have increased the complexity and time required for cases, and the growing use of warrants and subpoenas means prosecutors are more involved in the investigative process. Prosecutors say that legislators have exacerbated the problem by adding re-

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STAFFING IN WISCONSIN'S 25 BUSIEST PROSECUTOR'S OFFICES (SORTED BY TOTAL STAFF NEEDED)

The full bar represents the staff each office needs, based on the latest state analysis. The black portion of the bar represents current positions, and the white portion represents the additional positions recommended by the analysis based on caseload.

SOURCE: 2012 ANALYSIS BY THE WISCONSIN STATE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE
GANNETT WISCONSIN MEDIA GRAPHIC



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WEATHER

THE NEXT 36 HOURS

High today 54
Low tonight 31
High tomorrow 52

Mostly cloudy
Partly cloudy
Scattered showers

Five-day forecast Page A6

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INSIDE

MASTERPIECE

Adam Scott birdied the second playoff hole to beat Angel Cabrera for his first major.

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