



## Using education, and more, to buttress businesses

### IBAW giving voice in Madison to small-business owners

By Amber Gramza  
Freeman Staff

**BROOKFIELD** – A local association that was formed 35 years ago to speak out against pending legislation which would have impacted the bottom-line costs of businesses throughout Wisconsin has re-energized itself over the past few years, providing small-business education around Waukesha County and the state.

Independent Business Association of Wisconsin Executive Director Steve Kohlmann said there are about 150 members in the association. One of the nonprofit group's main goals is to enhance the state environment for independent business through active member participation in the political process. IBAW continues to provide a member-driven, grassroots voice in Madison, working closely with state legislators and regulators on issues that affect small and independent businesses.

"We get concerns from small business owners and bring them to legislators and representatives," Kohlmann said. "Some of them might be a little intimidated and this allows them to get out there and have a voice."



Submitted photo

Independent Business Association of Wisconsin Executive Director Steve Kohlmann of Brookfield gives U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson the group's federal legislative priorities recently.

Kohlmann is serving as IBAW's executive director for just about a year and has been involved with the organization for the past seven years. He is a marketing and communication specialist at Heritage Printing/Cultivate Communications in Brookfield.

The association usually meets the third Friday of every month for a breakfast with an educational program at the Wisconsin Club in Milwaukee.

IBAW President Ann Barry Hanneman of Simandl Law Group in Waukesha said the association focuses on "networking, education and legislative action."

The IBAW has hosted Wisconsin U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson and state Supreme Court Justice Patience Roggensack and will host Wisconsin Deputy Commissioner of Insurance

### At a glance

**What:** Independent Business Association of Wisconsin

**Where:** 960 Timber Pass, Brookfield

**Information:** [www.ibaw.com](http://www.ibaw.com), 844-0333

Dan Schwartz on April 19 and John Felmy, chief economist at the American Petroleum Institute, on May 17.

Companies in manufacturing, service, distribution, consulting and the professions participate as members of the nonprofit association.

"Being an American is not a spectator sport; you have to become engaged and part of the process," Kohlmann said.

For more information, visit [www.ibaw.com](http://www.ibaw.com).

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