

December 2022



*Richard Brissette: What's the Word December 2022*

My name is Richard Brissette. I have worked and lived in Madison for the last 31 years. This is my second time doing What's the Word and I wanted to talk about how my life and work has changed during the pandemic and my thoughts about retirement. I've been with the WI Department of Revenue for the last 31 years and my hope is to work there for another 15 years. I enjoy my job and I've done well at it so I'm happy to keep working for a while before I retire. I get to work with numbers, and I like my coworkers so it's a win-win for me. I feel like I brighten my coworker's day when I come into work, and it brightens my day to see all of them. Working is important to me because it feels good to work and contribute to the state that I live in. I get to learn new projects quickly and easily which I love since learning new things is always exciting. I feel like I get to make my decisions, set my own routines and have so much more control over my life.

When the pandemic hit, I switched to working from home. It was a transition for me, and I had to learn a lot of new things really quickly. I feel like I have it figured out now and I'm back in the office half of the time. Sometimes I miss working at the office full time since I don't get to see my coworkers as much as I used to. I have a couple of advocates who have said that when I reach 65 years old they will help me plan my retirement. I realized that there were a couple of things that I needed help with so I asked some friends to help me start planning for it now to make sure I'm ready rather than waiting for when it got closer.

I have a three-wheel electric bicycle that I love to ride. It runs really well and it's a smooth ride too. I ride my bike to McFarland, Verona, Fitchburg and to the grocery store sometimes. I usually use the bike trails that are all around Madison. Capital City Trail, the lower Yahara River trail and Cannonball Trail are my favorites. I will sometimes take the Cannonball Trail over to Culvers to get food over the weekends. I got my bike during the pandemic because it was a good way to get outside during the last two years. Not only was it a good purchase for me during the pandemic, but it is also a great investment going forward since I can get around town very easily now. I've also been able to ride my bike to work and it's a beautiful ride into work. I get my exercise in to help keep me active and healthy. It's really important for me to make sure my bike is secure, so it doesn't get stolen it's one of my favorite things I own and I want to have it for a long time.

I'm also a board member for. In April 2022 I became a board member of the Arc-Dane county. I've been able to attend their dance, awards banquet and Halloween party which are all very fun! I heard that there was an opening on their board so I asked a friend of mine to help me with the application and I got accepted. I'm really excited for their Winter Ball which will be held at the Concourse Hotel in 2023. It will be my second dance since getting on the board.

This past July I helped out at the Disability Pride Festival in Madison. I was there with Cindy Bentley representing People First WI. I have been staying in touch with people through Facebook and Instagram. I started using social media during the pandemic to stay connected. Now I've been using it to make friends and I really like being able to keep up with what my friends are doing even if they don't live around me.

A couple of months ago, my good friend Brad Wing moved into my condo with me. I'm glad that he is my roommate now after 16 years of friendship. Over the years I've had lots of roommates but I'm much more excited to have such a great friend living with me now. We both have our own routines, and it all works out well. My friend works for the Department of Agriculture so we both work for the state which I think is neat. I'm so glad to have great friends and advocates in my life and it really helped me out during the last couple of years even if we couldn't always see each other in person.