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## Wisconsin Chapter Spring Meeting

The Wisconsin Chapter of the ESOP Association's 2021 Spring Meeting was a success with 74 participants attending virtually!

We had a *terrific* virtual conference on March 30<sup>th</sup>, helping each other become better ESOP citizens by throwing ourselves into six interactive workshops.

But first, congratulations to **MyPath**, the ESOP Company of the Year and **Rebecca Mudler** of Sentry Equipment, the ESOP Employee of the Year! And thanks to **Kristie Marks** and **Jim Bonham** for updating us on the Captive Health Insurance Plan and on the advocacy opportunities and challenges in DC—it's going to be a wild year and we need to keep our legislators focused on what ESOPs mean to America. Contact Scott Drake at [scott.drake@pfsteco.com](mailto:scott.drake@pfsteco.com) if you'd like to support our Government Relations work.

**Will you take the first step?** The Programs Committee is grateful to the presenters for each of the six sessions (below). *But now it's up to you:* You have to take what you've learned and take the next step, whether it's about your brand, your next presentation or valuation, succession program, communications skills or learning more about certified B Corps.

You're surrounded by fellow members and experts ready to help your ESOP and your career: don't let these learning opportunities go to waste! The slides for each are posted in the [Wisconsin Chapter of The Hub](#) in the Discussion tab.

### Communications & Culture

- Does Your Brand Still Support Your ESOP Culture?
- Interactive and Effective: Making Virtual ESOP Meetings Work
- Fab Forty

### Technical & Leadership

- Valuations: 2020 vs. 2021
- Succession Planning: Now More Than Ever
- B Corporations & ESOPs: A Shared Commitment to Social Responsibility

**Proof of value:** Your active engagement explains why our membership held steady during COVID. Our seven new corporate members and seven new professional members more than offset the attrition other associations planned for 2020-21. So, log on, sign in, speak up and help out! And hang in: we'll be meeting in person in just a few months.



## WI ESOP Chapter Awards

### 2020 Wisconsin Chapter ESOP Company of the Year - MyPath



Congratulations to **MyPath** - Wisconsin Chapter ESOP Company of the Year

The Wisconsin Chapter recognized the ESOP Company of the Year award winner during the 2021 Spring Conference held virtually on Tuesday, March 30.

MyPath has been an ESOP since 2002 and became 100% employee owned in 2016. Today, over half of their employees are participants in their ESOP program and each member is seeing the benefits of an employee-owned company. Their employees span the states of WI and Indiana. They've recently made efforts to better connect and educate their employees through the onboarding experience, continuing educational tools, and through a newly established culture club. They've dedicated training to leadership building, which includes a dedicated focus on leading in an ESOP organization. With new 101 introduction programs, this allows them to better educate and connect employees. Their newfound culture drives a "We own this!" mindset and each employee's focus is on making decisions to support quality service, safety for clients and staff, and wise use of company resources, all of which continue to strengthen the success of the business.

While we could not formally present the award in-person, MyPath will receive their award in early April. In addition, we look forward to continuing to recognize our 2021 Wisconsin Chapter ESOP Company of the Year winner, MyPath, at our future conferences and meetings.

MyPath took home the award and will be nominated by the Wisconsin Chapter for the National ESOP Company of the Year Award, which will be announced later this year by TEA. *Excerpts from the award submission will be posted on The Hub to show what makes MyPath a great ESOP Company!*

### 2020 Employee Owner of the Year – Rebecca Mudler, Sentry Equipment

Rebecca Mudler, Sentry Equipment Corporation, in Oconomowoc, WI was recognized as the Wisconsin Chapter Employee Owner of the Year at the 2021 Spring Conference.

Rebecca has been promoting an employee ownership culture at Sentry Equipment for close to 10 years. She has been an ESOP mentor for many new employees and has focused on making sure new employees assigned to her are welcomed into their ownership culture and understand the basics of their ESOP.

In 2020, the company's previous ESOP and Social Committee was restructured, and the Ownership Impact Collective was formed with four leading missions. Rebecca volunteered to lead the Community Involvement Mission. Just when things were getting started, COVID hit. She quickly shifted gears to transitioning their focus to a new site on their company intranet, called Sentry Strong. Rebecca and the three other Mission Owners focused on developing activities that connected their employees through such a difficult time. One example was developing "Flair Day" during their annual meeting week. Although this week looked very different than previous years, she was able to find a way to lead an involvement initiative which resulted in over \$900 raised for Hoovers House Dog Rescue. She continued to lead several additional community involvement initiatives throughout the remaining months of 2020 and has continued her efforts in the early months of 2021.

Rebecca will be nominated by the Wisconsin Chapter for the National Employee Owner of the Year Award which will be announced later this year by TEA. *Look for a posting on The Hub to see the more details on what makes Rebecca Mudler a great employee owner!*



## Wisconsin's Featured Member: PFS Corporation dba PFS TECO

*Now 100% Employee-Owned*



PFS and TECO have an interesting ownership history that finally led to what is now a 100% employee-owned company known as PFS TECO. The merger of the two companies in 2015, and the 2018 purchase of Dirigo Labs in Clackamas, Oregon, created what has become a unified company with three operating divisions. As a group, they provide their international client base (clients in more than two dozen countries) with independent and accredited certification, inspection, testing, and plan review services for the Manufactured Structures, Building Product, and Hearth Product industries.

The company's mission is to help safeguard the public while they live and work in the structures that are our homes, offices, school, and stores. Their employee-owners do that by being experts in their field while maintaining high levels of independence and objectivity, an absolute must for a third-party agency like PFS TECO. They also know

that as a service business entrusted with a key part of the construction industry, they must recognize all members of their customer chain. Manufacturers, regulatory agencies, builders, and building owners and users all rely on the behind-the-scenes activity of this independent third-party agency.

Celebrating employee ownership has been a growing priority since the 2015 merger, and especially after becoming 100% employee-owned in 2019. Two of the staff members proudly serve as officers in the Wisconsin Chapter of the ESOP Association, while others participate in state and regional TEA meetings. The information and best practices learned from the ESOP Association events and fellow members are shared throughout the organization through monthly CEO video updates, corporate updates, and events like its annual "Name the Share Price" contest and ESOP monthly activities.

To stay connected and follow PFS TECO, check out their website at <https://www.pfsteco.com/>.

**Number of Employee-Owners:** 90+

**Headquartered:** Cottage Grove, WI

**Other US facilities:** Springfield and Clackamas, Oregon and Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania



## Chapter Roundtables Event

On Tuesday, January 26, 2021, The Wisconsin Chapter partnered with the Iowa/Nebraska Chapter to host virtual roundtable discussions with CEO, CFO, HR, and Communications groups. The roundtables event had a successful turnout with 82 registered participants.

The roundtables were moderated by members of both Chapters, including the following volunteers:

- **CEO:** Victor Aspengren, Keltek Inc. ([victor.aspengren@keltekinc.com](mailto:victor.aspengren@keltekinc.com)) & Derrick Van Mell, Center for Management Terms & Practices ([dvanmell@theindex.net](mailto:dvanmell@theindex.net))
- **CFO:** Tom Durian, Van Meter ([tdurian@vanmeterinc.com](mailto:tdurian@vanmeterinc.com)) & David Ring, Sentry Equipment Corp. ([David.ring@sentry-equip.com](mailto:David.ring@sentry-equip.com))
- **HR:** Brian Berry, The Palmer Group ([bberry@thepalmergroup.com](mailto:bberry@thepalmergroup.com)) & Jessica Bierman, Realityworks Inc. ([jessica.bierman@realityworks.com](mailto:jessica.bierman@realityworks.com))
- **Communications:** Becky Streff, ESP International ([beckys@espint.com](mailto:beckys@espint.com)) & Jason Wellman, ESOP Partners ([jpwellman@esoppartners.com](mailto:jpwellman@esoppartners.com))

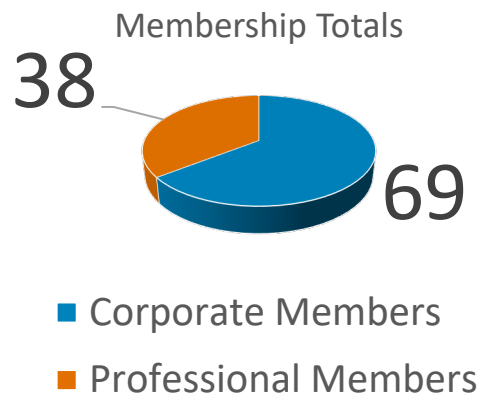
Each roundtable group discussed a variety of topics, including 2021 risk assessments. Reflecting on the stress tests that every aspect of business was put through in 2020, participants shared challenges they faced, and lessons learned. Attendees shared their thoughts and ideas surrounding planning, risk mitigation strategies, and communication strategies for the new year.

Check out the Upcoming Events and Meetings for more opportunities to network and engage with other members of the Wisconsin Chapter, either virtually or in-person.

## Membership Committee Update

The membership committee had a goal of seven (7) new corporate members in 2020. We achieved this goal with seven (7) new members. Here is a list of all the new members between January 1, 2020 and March 1, 2021:

- Kretz Lumber Company, Inc. (1/8/20)
- Spuncast, Inc. (1/27/20)
- Boston, Inc. (2/10/20)
- Roberts Irrigation Company, Inc. (5/12/20)
- Badger Bank (5/12/20)
- Healics, Inc. (8/20/20)
- Hallmark Building Supplies, Inc. (9/11/20)



*Current Membership Totals as of  
Monday, March 1, 2021*

The Wisconsin Chapter is your local chapter of The ESOP Association. There are 18 chapters across the country. As a member of this chapter you are

automatically enrolled, at no additional cost, in the National ESOP Association. Your membership provides you with free materials and discounted rates at conferences, publications and more. Visit [ESOPAssociation.org](https://ESOPAssociation.org) to learn more.

## 2021 Wisconsin Chapter Leader Level Sponsors

Thank you to our 2021 **Leader Level** sponsors for supporting the Wisconsin Chapter of the ESOP Association! We still have annual sponsorships available. Visit the [Wisconsin Chapter on The ESOP Association website](https://www.esopassociation.org/wisconsin-chapter) for details.

**DeWitt** LLP : Law Firm



**CHARTWELL**

**esi**  
**Equity**





## The Hub – Powered by the ESOP Association

BY: [PAUL PFLIEGER](#)

### Welcome to The Hub!

The HUB is here for you! The ESOP Association's digital networking platform is comprised of a series of networks that will become the center of online activity for ESOP companies and employee owners.

The HUB offers tools for chatting, sharing resources, asking questions, and gathering insights and ideas—all in a safe online environment offered exclusively to ESOP Association members. The HUB is also where recordings of our popular new [webinars are stored](#).

Best of all, this environment is safe and secure. Your interactions will be read and commented on by knowledgeable peers and experts who have the best interests of the ESOP community at heart.

To get the ball rolling, we have launched the following networks:

**COVID-19 Network**—This network supplements our [COVID-19 Action Center](#), providing a way for members to share ideas and ask pertinent questions about today's health and business challenges. All members are automatically enrolled in this network, which also is where all [webinar recordings are stored](#).

**Chapter Networks**—These networks offer a way to stay in touch with your fellow members in your chapter and share questions and concerns about local topics. Each chapter has its own network and all members in a chapter automatically have access to that network.

**Work Groups**—We also are rolling out closed networks, or work groups. These platforms provide our volunteer leaders—such as chapter officers and Advisory Committee members—a secure place to carry on the invaluable work they do on behalf of the ESOP community.

### GETTING STARTED!

1. Log in to [The ESOP Association website](#) to access The HUB.
2. Click *My HUB Settings* in the navigation menu.
3. Enter a bio and photo for yourself. Remember to keep it professional.
4. Connect any social channels you want your fellow members to see. We recommend starting with LinkedIn.

View the Announcement section including the Archive for helpful tips to set up your HUB Profile.

Once you've got your profile updated, feel free to check out your Networks and engage with your fellow members. Post questions and see what your fellow members have to say!

## Government Relations Committee Update

The Government Relations Committee Needs Your Help! Jim Bonham, the President and CEO of The ESOP Association spoke at the WI Chapter Spring Meeting regarding the association's continued, and expanded, work to ensure ESOPs are not overlooked in any new tax and labor laws being drafted. ESOP companies and their employee owners are encouraged to contact their national and state representatives to share the value ESOPs bring to their workplace and community. Please also join alongside the Government Relations Committee to visit our WI representatives on Capitol Hill this June 21-23rd during the ESOP National Conference in Washington D.C.

Everyone interested in supporting or working with the WI Government Relations Committee can contact Scott Drake at [scott.drake@pfsteco.com](mailto:scott.drake@pfsteco.com).

## Want Help with Advocacy?

The ESOP Association has prepared a straightforward and useful advocacy kit which you can download here: <https://www.esopassociation.org/advocacy/esop-association-advocacy-guide>. The Government Relations Committee stands ready to assist. Please contact one of us if you are interested in inviting a Member of Congress and we will help. The Wisconsin delegation is as follows:

### Member of Congress

Congressional District 1 – **Bryan Steil**  
Congressional District 2 – **Mark Pocan**  
Congressional District 3 – **Ron Kind**  
Congressional District 4 – **Gwen Moore**  
Congressional District 5 – Scott Fitzgerald

### Member of Congress

Congressional District 6 – **Glenn Grothman**  
Congressional District 7 – Thomas Tiffany  
Congressional District 8 – Mike Gallagher  
**Senator Tammy Baldwin**  
Senator Ron Johnson

A complete list of state ESOP supporters can be found on the TEA website: <https://esopassociation.org/articles/esop-champions-congress>. Those marked in **bold** have supported ESOPs in the past and, if asked, may be likely to support upcoming or current ESOP legislation.

TEA does not promote any one political party over another – this list is representative of those individuals in the Senate and House that have shown their support of ESOPs.

## Upcoming Events and Meetings:

Below is a list of some upcoming events, for a full list of offerings log onto the TEA website. As TEA members, if your company has offices in a state other than Wisconsin, employee owners can participate in those chapter events at member pricing.

**National Live Webinars:** The ESOP Association and its 18 chapters – in conjunction with the Employee Ownership Foundation – host more than 150 meetings across the country each year. From large national conferences, to intimate roundtable discussions, you're sure to find an event or meeting that is perfect for you. [See Full List of Webinars.](#)

**May 18, 2021: Wisconsin Chapter Roundtable Virtual Meetings – CEO, CFO, HR, and Professional Member.** A virtual meeting where members can share ideas and ask questions. The goal of the virtual roundtable is to give ESOP Companies and Professional Members the opportunity to share ideas on strategies and tactics for dealing with current issues along with any other topics the group wants to discuss. Come with a few issues, concerns, or questions you would like the group to discuss. The CEO/CFO/HR Roundtable Registration is reserved for ESOP Company Members serving in those roles. [Register on The Hub.](#)

**June 21-23, 2021: TEA National 2021 Conference** in Washington, D.C. TEA is excited to offer our first opportunity to gather in person in 18 months! The National Conference is a hybrid event offering flexible attendance opportunities, enhanced advocacy training, and cutting-edge content. [Register Today.](#)

**July 20, 2021: Wisconsin Chapter Summer Conference.** Stayed tuned to The Hub for further details and conference registration.

**September 15-17, 2021: Midwest Regional ESOP Conference.** This collaborative regional chapter event is hosted by the Heart of America, Illinois, Iowa/Nebraska, Minnesota/Dakotas, and Wisconsin Chapters of The ESOP Association. Stay tuned for more details coming soon. Continue to watch your email for updates and information.

**November 10-13, 2021: Employee Owned 2021 Conference.** Details coming soon!

### About Us:

The Wisconsin Chapter is one of the 18 regional chapters of the ESOP Association. Our Chapter is made up of numerous volunteers from ESOP Companies and Professional Service Providers in the great State of Wisconsin.

We welcome anyone that is interested in joining one of our committees in continuing to advocate and educate about Employee Ownership.

Feel free to contact us to get involved in our upcoming events and activities seen throughout this newsletter by emailing [WI-Chapter@esopassociation.org](mailto:WI-Chapter@esopassociation.org).

### Chapter Leadership

**Emilie Poehlmann**

*Chapter President*

**Rhonda Leader**

*Immediate Past President*

**Dan Marcue**

*Chapter Development Officer*

(202) 349-1364

For more information on events, who we are, advocacy and more, visit:

[www.esopassociation.org/chapters/wisconsin](http://www.esopassociation.org/chapters/wisconsin).



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