

2026

Wedding & Event Guide

– A January 28, 2026 advertising supplement of the Oshkosh Herald - Winneconne News - Neenah News –



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Proposals: An Event of Their Own

What begins as a carefully planned night out—both partners dressed to the nines and looking forward to an evening with friends—can quickly turn into a once-in-a-lifetime moment. Increasingly, couples arrive at a new or meaningful venue only to find it transformed: rose petals scattered across the floor, softly glowing signs, romantic music filling the room, and a photographer quietly waiting to capture the surprise.

In today's wedding culture, proposals are no longer just a private exchange. They have evolved into thoughtfully designed experiences, often planned with as much care as other milestone celebrations. Many grooms-to-be are turning to professional photographers, venues, and even proposal planners to help bring their vision to life and create a moment their partner will remember forever.

Industry data reflects this growing trend. According to *The Knot*, the average engagement ring in the United States costs between **\$5,200 and \$6,500**, depending on style, materials, and region. But the ring is often just one part of the overall proposal experience. *WeddingPro* reports that many couples spend **several hundred to a few**

thousand dollars on additional elements such as photography, décor, floral arrangements, transportation, or a celebratory dinner afterward. For many, these details help elevate the moment from a surprise to a carefully curated memory.

These proposal stories often become part of a couple's shared history—retold at engagement parties, weddings, and anniversaries for years to come. A well-planned proposal can reflect a couple's personality, values, and shared experiences, making the moment feel deeply personal rather than performative.

At the same time, wedding professionals encourage couples to approach proposal planning with intention and balance. Setting a realistic budget allows the moment to feel meaningful without creating unnecessary financial pressure or inflated expectations as couples move on to engagement celebrations and wedding planning with family and friends.

Ultimately, whether simple or elaborate, proposals are about creating a moment that feels authentic. When thoughtfully planned, they mark not just the start of an engagement, but the beginning of a story couples will cherish—and tell—for a lifetime.



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From Runways to the Fox Cities: Wedding Dress Trends for 2026

Just as venues reflect more of the personal style of the bride and groom, so is Bridal fashion as wedding dresses in 2026 are less about rules and more about expressing their own story through style.

Brides are blending thoughtful design with timeless elegance and modern details that feel fresh on every aisle as dresses embrace a mix of classic silhouettes with bold fashion moments.

One unique trend is layered looks and dress toppers — as brides add detachable capes, embellished jackets, and embroidered overlays that allow them to shift

their style from ceremony to reception without changing gowns. Lace continues to reign, reimagined in romantic and dimensional ways that range from delicate motifs to more dramatic, textured patterns.

Silhouettes vary widely, with Basque waists, asymmetrical A-lines, and sleek sheath styles gaining traction alongside modern takes on fit-and-flare shapes.

Brides are also exploring unique, personalized touches — subtle color accents, 3D floral appliques, and thoughtful beading — creating gowns that feel elegant yet one-of-a-kind.

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Wedding Trends 2026

Local Flavor Meets Personalized Celebration

Couples planning weddings in the Fox Cities are crafting celebrations that reflect the region's blend of scenic riverfront settings, vibrant downtowns, and warm community spirit. In 2026, wedding trends here emphasize **local experiences, personalization, and versatile event spaces** that make each celebration uniquely Fox Cities.

One key trend is the continued popularity of **local venue diversity**. Couples are choosing from beautiful riverfront halls, historic downtown spaces, and modern banquet centers that highlight the area's character.

Outdoor and flexible event options remain strong. Many couples are blending indoor comfort with outdoor moments—think cocktail hours on patios, garden ceremonies, or receptions under lights beside the water. Landscaped parks also continue to attract those seeking a relaxed but elegant vibe, where local flora and natural settings play a starring role.

Personalization is at the heart of 2026 celebrations. Couples are weaving their personal stories into every detail—from local food and drink stations featuring regional flavors to entertainment that reflects their style and guests' comfort. Interactive experiences like custom playlists and engaging ceremony formats help make the day feel intimate and memorable.

Finally, many are prioritizing **guest experience and flow**, with extended cocktail hours, intentional break-time



From bold flavors to meaningful names, signature cocktails are becoming a popular way for couples to infuse personality into their wedding celebrations.

spaces, and lively receptions that keep guests connected and celebrating throughout the evening. Whether along riverfronts, in historic venues, or at modern ballrooms, local weddings in 2026 reflect place, personality, and shared celebration.

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