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**A look at Tony Evers' first four cabinet picks**

Governor-elect Tony Evers, responding to criticism that his first four cabinet picks are from Milwaukee, said future announcements will allay concerns he is ignoring rural Wisconsin.

"I happen to be in Milwaukee, and these four happen to be from Milwaukee," Evers said during a news conference Dec. 19 at MacDowell Montessori in Milwaukee. "We will have more announcements in the near future, and I think the criticism will be dissipated as we move forward."

He said he hopes to have the rest of his cabinet announced before he takes office on Jan. 7.

For his administration secretary, Evers named Joel Brennan, who ran Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett's 2002 gubernatorial campaign and has been CEO of Milwaukee's Discovery World for the past 11 years.

He also announced three other Milwaukeeans will join his cabinet, including Preston Cole as Natural Resources secretary, U.S. Marshal Kevin Carr as Corrections secretary and Sara Meaney as Tourism secretary.

Cole now serves as a commissioner for the Department of Neighborhood Services under Barrett and is a member of the state Natural Resources Board that advises DNR. According to a profile on the city's website, he was the first African-American forester hired by the Conservation Department.

Carr was sworn in as a marshal in 2010 after 30 years with the Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office and is a member of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives.

Meaney earlier this year was hired to be chief marketing officer for Milwaukee Film, and she has served on the organization's board of directors since 2012.

Evers described his picks as people who "reflect our Wisconsin values and also our state's great diversity."

Brennan said he's pleased to work for someone who shares his passion on the issues and who "wants to set a different level of expectations for what the citizens of the state can demand from Madison.

"Sadly, they've been conditioned, I think, to expect too little," Brennan said. "That must change."

Carr said criminal justice reform is a priority and that with the help of labor, advocacy groups, elected officials, the community and experts the state can become "smart on crime," produce better results and reduce prison costs.

Cole pledged to run the DNR with transparency and openness and to bring science back to natural resource management.

"I'd like to double down on science being the epicenter of natural resource management," Cole said.

Meaney highlighted the benefit of travel in people's lives and said she will work to ensure people feel inspired to "put our great state at the top of their travel lists."

Gov. Scott Walker praised Evers' pick of Cole via Twitter, calling it a "solid" decision.

"He did a good job on the board and understands the importance of the entire state," Walker wrote.

Assembly Speaker Robin Vos, however, said he was "greatly disappointed" the four were from Milwaukee and that Brennan is the brother-in-law of Kevin Conroy, who serves as co-chair of Evers' transition.

He also said the picks appear "well-qualified but for the most part, lack significant state government experience."

"If independence is supposed to be a hallmark of his administration, he's already disproving it by showing that political connections are more important than anything else," Vos said.

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