Federal judge strikes down Wisconsin ban on gay marriage: A federal judge overturns Wisconsin’s gay marriage ban, prompting a rush of same-sex couples to county offices to wed. Vanessa Johnston reports.

Brown CountyExecutive Troy Streckenbach said Brown County will seek direction from the state in the wake of federal court ruling Friday that Wisconsin’s ban on same-sex marriage was unconstitutional.

“Right now we’re waiting to see what the state is recommending,” he said Saturday. “We’ll wait to see what (the county clerk) says about the process and how she is going to move forward with it.”

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Brown County not ready to issue licenses to gay couples

Brown County Clerk Sandy Juno said Friday she is not ready to start issuing marriage licenses and first needs guidance from state records officials on how to process such questions as naming a bride and groom on the license.
“Ultimately we’re waiting to what the state is recommending,” Streckenbach said. “We want to make sure we’re following the law and doing it in an appropriate way.”

Wisconsin Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen, who said he plans to appeal the ruling, said that the state’s current ban on same sex marriage remains in place.

Dozens of gay couples got married at courthouses in Milwaukee and Madison early Saturday, taking advantage of what may be a small window in which to get hitched before a ruling overturning the state’s same-sex marriage ban is put on hold.

Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele said Saturday afternoon that 146 couples married there before the courthouse closed at 1 p.m.

Milwaukee County Clerk Joe Czarnezki said couples were lined up outside his courthouse at 6 a.m., three hours before it opened. Within 30 minutes of opening, about 45 couples had applied for marriage licenses.

U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb issued her ruling Friday afternoon.

Craig Cook and Marshall Draper arrived about 8:30 a.m. Saturday and found nearly two dozen couples in line ahead of them.

"Had this been legal, we probably would have done this 20 years ago," Cook said. He said he and Draper would likely have a reception in a few weeks, but "this was as formal a wedding as I've ever wanted."

Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt said the city will respect the decisions made at the county level.

"We will respect any decision by the county," he said. "The country is changing, and people are watching this issue, and we’re interested in the decision made by the county.

"Whatever it is, we’re going to respect and support," he said.

—The Associated Press
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