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At First Business, we support people with financial needs, not the financial needs of people. So when I heard that a long term client who built a successful business retired in style in Florida, I was both thrilled to hear how happy he was – and grateful to have been able to help him along the way. And when I heard he actually retired early? Well, that made my day.

JERRY SMITH
Co-Founder & Chairman, First Business

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A few short months ago we were in an internal staff meeting talking about Manufacturing Month and how we could spread the word about all the great stuff made in Wisconsin — not just the cheese and beer and motorcycles (which are all awesome) but also some of the other stuff — the behind-the-scenes parts that are made to go into other things, or the things people have no idea are made in our backyard (like Circus Peanuts candy!) And the Coolest Thing Made in Wisconsin was born. Thanks to Johnson Financial Group for stepping up to sponsor it so we could actually make it reality. 

So fast forward to today — we received nearly 300 entries and reached more than 20,000 votes, mostly from the general public. So it worked! Thousands of people learned what we already knew — Wisconsin is a cool place, and we make really cool stuff.

But the fun’s not over. The final round of voting is happening right now! Go to www.madeinwis.com to cast your vote today. Then come to the WMC Foundation State of Wisconsin Business event October 18 in Madison to learn which is the coolest of them all.

Happy voting,

Katy Pettersen
Editor, Wisconsin Business Voice

Publisher’s Note: This is the last edition of Wisconsin Business Voice edited by Katy Pettersen. Katy is leaving WMC after 12 years. Her many noteworthy accomplishments includes establishing this magazine, which has become a popular and valuable WMC member service. All of us at WMC wish Katy all the best in her future endeavors.

Wisconsin Business Voice is published quarterly by Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce. WMC is Wisconsin’s chamber of commerce, manufacturers’ association, and safety council representing businesses of all sizes and from every sector of the economy; WMC’s address is 501 E. Washington Avenue, Madison, WI 53703, (608) 258-3400. This publication is proudly printed on paper made in Wisconsin.

Kurt R. Bauer, WMC President/CEO kbauer@wmc.org
Jane Sutter, Designer

* On the cover: Sen. Johnson congratulates Laretha Branch on her new job.
It costs businesses $2 trillion (no, that isn’t a typo) annually to comply with federal regulations, according to the Competitive Enterprise Institute. That is a lot of money being diverted away from far more productive uses like capital investments, R&D, acquisitions and hiring.

Most business owners and executives closely monitor the impact taxes, regulations and other government mandates have on their competitiveness, which is good. But most businesses fail to share that information with an important stakeholder group that is deeply invested in the success or failure of the enterprise; their employees.

Research shows the most trusted source of information about public policy issues that impact an employee’s job security is their employer, which is why management should provide frequent updates on government initiatives that impact their business. Just be sure not to cross the line by encouraging employees to vote for or against a specific candidate for office. That is illegal. But it is perfectly legal and a best practice to inform your employees about issues that may impact their livelihood.

But business leaders shouldn’t stop there. It is important to be fully engaged in public policy issues that affect your business and industry, as well as the politics that drive them. That is especially true during a time when free enterprise is under attack.

Consider the frightening truth that the only qualification a politician is required to have in order to serve in public office is to get elected. That’s it. They aren’t required to have run a business, met a payroll or to have hired or fired someone. As a result, many don’t understand even the most basic things about the free enterprise system and the broader economy, even though their decisions influence how you run your business.

While trade associations, like WMC and others, are highly effective advocates, I have always believed the best lobbyists for any business are its combined management and employees working together. Never assume someone else can explain to policymakers how an existing or proposed regulation will impact your business as well as you can.

But also remember it is important to know who those people are in the first place. In business, relationships are important. That is just as true in politics. All business owners and executives should get to know their local, state and federal lawmakers. In fact, it is smart to invite them to visit your business.

Many businesses go a step further and prepare a one-page summary of their overall economic impact, including the number of employees, total payroll and benefits, median salary, recent capital investments, taxes paid, number of local vendors/suppliers, charitable giving and hours volunteered by employees.

“Don’t assume politicians will understand your contribution unless you calculate it yourself and share it with them. And while you are at it, share that information with the local media and your own employees.

Lastly, don’t forget the powerful special interest groups that want to impose even more rules, regulations and taxes on your business are active and have the sympathy of the mainstream media. Those groups want a $15 per hour minimum wage, expanded paid leave and free college tuition paid for by higher taxes on businesses. Fight back by speaking up and defending your business and, in the process, the free enterprise system that allows it to be successful. BV

Follow Kurt on Twitter @Kurt_R_Bauer
Wisconsin Manufacturing Quiz

Ten of the Coolest Things Made in Wisconsin

Wisconsin manufacturers make some of the coolest products on Earth. Test your knowledge of state products and where they are made from the nominees for the Coolest Thing Made in Wisconsin Competition sponsored by Johnson Financial Group.

1. Brats were a staple in many Wisconsin’s communities, but none more so than in Sheboygan County. Name the company that standardized brat production and became the world-wide leader in bratwurst and the city where the company is located.

2. Founded in 1922, this American shoe manufacturer makes premium shoes and accessories for men. The shoes are the preferred shoes of Presidents of the U.S., CEOs and well-groomed men around the world. Name the brand and the company’s hometown.

3. Name the original citrus soda and the only place in the world that bottles it in returnable bottles with granulated sugar. Name the product, the company and the hometown.

4. This company manufactures the windows and many of the body panels for the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race cars. Name the company and the hometown.

5. These yachts are the pride and joy of Pulaski, Wisconsin and many of them regularly retail for more than $1 million. Name the company.

6. What is a wireless camera system to allow farmers to view their animals over the internet and where’s the hometown?

7. This iconic company introduced the motorcycle to the world. What’s the company and hometown?

8. Brass diving helmets aren’t just for science fiction. They are made in Wisconsin by which company and in what city?

9. There is only one manufacturer of this specific cheese in the U.S. Name the cheese, the manufacturer and this Swiss-dominated hometown.

10. In the event of a terrorist attack or a natural disaster, the first responders will take charge in this state-of-the-art rapid response vehicle. Name the vehicle, the manufacturer and the hometown.

Answers on page 40
Coolest Thing Made in Wisconsin

www.madeinwis.com
Nominees

Attend the WMC Foundation State of Wisconsin Business Luncheon October 18 to see who wins!

www.wmc.org/sowb

Sponsored by
KEYNOTE SPEAKER: STATE OF MANUFACTURING

Chad Moutray
Chief Economist, National Association of Manufacturers

Chad Moutray serves as the NAM’s economic forecaster and spokesperson on economic issues. He frequently comments on current economic conditions for manufacturers through professional presentations and media interviews. Prior to joining the NAM, Mr. Moutray was the chief economist and director of economic research for the Office of Advocacy at the U.S. Small Business Administration from 2002 to 2010. In that role, he was responsible for researching the importance of entrepreneurship to the U.S. economy and highlighting various issues of importance to small business owners, policymakers and academics. In addition to discussing economic and policy trends, his personal research focused on the importance of educational attainment to both self-employment and economic growth.

STATE OF THE STATE

Kurt R. Bauer
President/CEO, Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce

As the state chamber of commerce and state manufacturers’ association, WMC represents 3,800 companies of all sizes from all sectors of the economy. WMC’s President/CEO Kurt Bauer will present his view of the current State of the State.

GOVERNOR SCOTT WALKER

The Governor will provide a state update and his plans for continuing to move Wisconsin forward.

Governor Scott Walker (invited)

Governor Walker remains committed to helping Wisconsin’s private sector create jobs. After years of record job loss, Wisconsin has gained jobs during the Walker administration. In WMC’s recent annual survey of job creators, 95 percent said Wisconsin is headed in the right direction compared to just 10 percent who said the same thing in 2010.

Visit www.wmc.org/sowb to register.
New Ozone Standard Will Harm Wisconsin’s Manufacturers

When was the last time you took a deep breath at the tip of Door County and thought about how dirty the air was? It is ridiculous to even consider. And yet, under recent regulatory mandates from the federal government, a number of Wisconsin counties, including Door, are at risk of being declared “non-attainment” zones for federal air quality standards.

Under federal law, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets a regulatory definition “clean air” through the use of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). One pollutant regulated by EPA through the NAAQS is ground-level ozone, which forms in the atmosphere when certain chemicals react in the presence of sunlight. Last year, in what is expected to be one of the costliest regulatory changes in history, EPA lowered the NAAQS for ozone from 75 to 70 parts per billion. This change puts large portions of the country, including many Wisconsin counties from Kenosha to Door, at risk of being designated a “non-attainment zone” for ozone.

It is important to note while the EPA continues to push costly new environmental mandates, Wisconsin’s air is the cleanest it has been in decades and continues to improve. Because ozone is formed in the atmosphere, a certain background concentration exists and would continue to exist even if all factories were to shut down. Ozone and the precursor chemicals that form it can also transport in the air from other states and even other countries – leaving Wisconsin employers on the hook to deal with the cost of pollution generated elsewhere.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) utilizes a network of monitors throughout the state to track ozone and other air pollutants. Final decisions on which counties are in non-attainment will not be made until next year. However, based on the most recently available preliminary air quality data from DNR, large areas of Wisconsin are at risk of falling into non-attainment of the new ozone standard, including virtually the entire Lake Michigan coast.

Businesses with air emissions that are looking to establish or expand operations in a non-attainment zone face virtually insurmountable regulatory hurdles. These businesses face more permitting restrictions and would likely see requirements to install the most state of the art emission control technology, regardless of how much it may cost.

As businesses in Wisconsin and nationwide deal with the added costs associated with compliance with this new regulatory standard, Wisconsin families will feel the pinch. The cost of goods will increase and consumer choices will decrease – all while jobs and economic development move elsewhere.

While we wait to find out which parts of Wisconsin will be impacted by this new regulation next year, a variety of states, including Wisconsin, have sued the EPA to stop the standard from moving forward. Additionally, WMC continues to support our partners at the national level who are working with pro-business legislators in Congress – including Wisconsin Senator Ron Johnson – to rein in the EPA and pull back this costly regulatory mandate. Finally, at the state level, as we prepare for the upcoming legislative session, WMC continues to push for regulatory reform to ensure the costliest regulations receive the most oversight from elected officials.

Follow Lucas on Twitter @VebberWMC
Are Conservatives Being Hypocritical When it Comes to Workforce Development?

By Ed Paradowski

Let me start by saying I am an economic conservative. I believe in the laws of a free economy where free markets set prices and wages and efficiency and continual improvement are at the heart of business survival. I also believe government needs to be lean and efficient and an ally partner to the private sector for the private sector to flourish, as “big government” creates a cost burden that can hinder free economic activity and growth.

I would characterize the business constituents I interact with as intelligent leaders who know how to solve problems. Although this may be stereotypical, most economic conservatives I know want government to stay out of the way and let the private sector and free economic process run its course. That being said, are we being hypocrites by expecting government to solve our workforce problems? In fairness, the private sector has very limited influence over the K-12 System and other levels of the educational process, but that does not absolve us of our responsibility to be involved and help solve the problems that exist.

Commerce is the end customer of the educational process. The goal of education is not simply to graduate students with degrees and accreditations. It is to prepare ALL students for a career that ideally matches their skill sets and interests with the needs of commerce. As the end customer, we not only need to be involved in the solution, we need to take a leading role. Historically there may have been a divide between the private sector and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) but that is no longer the case as our collective goals are becoming much more aligned.

Under the leadership of State Superintendent Tony Evers, DPI is focused on the goal of every single student graduating from high school, ready for their next step. That next step might be going into workforce training, a two-year technical college, a four-year university, or the military. Thanks to a new law in Wisconsin, starting in fall 2017, every student from 6th to 12th grade will be required to have access to Academic and Career Planning (ACP) Services; one way our schools are ensuring students are ready. This process will help all students understand the different jobs and their availability in Wisconsin, what education or training would be required (and at what cost) and the earning potential of any job.

This is a systemic change Wisconsin needs and schools have been preparing for this over the last three years. But will ACPs make a difference if we don’t change what student options are available? Not to the extent we need. And that is why we are developing a statewide structure for ensuring every student in Wisconsin has access to high quality career pathways. JP Morgan Chase is funding a project with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) to help states get a jumpstart with this work. Wisconsin has a strong, cross sector team leading this effort. Most importantly, one of the key requirements of JP Morgan Chase is that the process employed by each state be commerce-led.

Commerce, as the end customer, will play a leadership role in guiding a process that will be common in structure across the entire State of Wisconsin, while allowing for local autonomy to address the differing regional challenges.

What’s next? We are looking for business leaders (Presidents and CEOs) who want to be involved. If that is you, please email me at the address below. Together we can do our part to help reshape the workforce development process in Wisconsin for decades to come.

Ed Paradowski is President of Apache Stainless Equipment Corporation in Beaver Dam. He may be contacted at ed.paradowski@apachestainless.com.

“One of the key requirements is that the process employed by each state be commerce-led.”

WMC positively pro-business

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• Wisconsin Manufacturers’ Association
• Wisconsin Safety Council

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For Friends of American Manufacturing

Recognizing the vital role that manufacturing plays in each and every community, big or small, throughout the U.S., the National Association of Manufacturers’ Friends of Manufacturing gives citizens the opportunity to have a say in government policies that affect their livelihood.

From the millions of jobs the industry supports to the products made that touch everything we do, America depends on manufacturing. However, manufacturing in America is under threat. Whether by government policies that favor special interests or by foreign companies and governments that break the rules, our ability to compete and put more Americans to work in good-paying jobs gets more difficult every day.

The government should make it easier, not harder, for manufacturers to grow and succeed, and our elected leaders should be held accountable for the decisions they make. That’s why we need you to be a Friend of Manufacturing. There is no cost or obligation to join. We’ll let you know when lawmakers are debating issues that are critical to your well-being—and share with you how you can make a difference.

With your help, manufacturing in America will grow stronger for our communities, for our workers and for our future. Visit www.friendsofmanufacturing.com or text the word Friends to 52886.
Our Regulatory Burden is Unsustainable

Since the 1970s, the regulatory arm of government has seen growing influence over the day-to-day operation of businesses and the daily lives of individual citizens. The growth in the size and scope of this “administrative state” has been unprecedented over the last eight years during the Obama Presidency.

How bad has the problem of regulatory overreach become? A few data points from the latest edition of the “Ten Thousand Commandments” report published by the Competitive Enterprise Institute are sobering:

- The annual cost of federal regulation in 2015 was $1.9 trillion.
- There are only eight countries in the world with an economy larger than the cost of federal regulations.
- In 2013, unelected bureaucrats passed 51 new regulations into law for every bill enacted by our elected officials in Congress.
- Last year saw the enactment of nearly 25,000 pages of new regulations from federal agencies.
- The Obama Administration has 3,297 additional proposed rules in the pipeline, of which 218 are projected to cost $100 million or more.

These regulatory costs have a significant financial impact on families and businesses. Consider, for example, the cost of $1.9 trillion to consumers. Although consumers do not always pay the direct cost of government regulation, they almost always pay those costs indirectly when businesses pass the costs along in the form of higher prices for goods and services. Consequently, families are paying more for their everyday needs because of the high cost of regulation – significantly more.

The impact of $1.9 trillion in regulatory costs equates to $14,842 per U.S. household. Based on the average household budget of $53,495 per year, regulations cost more than what families spend on food, clothing and healthcare combined.

The cost of regulation to businesses is no less severe. The average American business spends $9,991 per employee each year to comply with regulations. For small businesses with fewer than 50 employees, that number grows to $11,724.

Manufacturing, which is so heavily regulated, faces an even greater burden. A study by the National Association of Manufacturers found the average manufacturer pays $19,564 per employee each year for federal regulations. Small manufacturers are hit particularly hard as they face the equivalent of $34,671 in federal regulatory costs for each employee.

Every dollar a business spends to comply with regulation is a dollar they cannot spend to raise employee wages, hire new employees or invest in research or product development. It’s hard to imagine a less productive use of business capital. Yet the same people who call on government to enact more expensive and intrusive regulations will simultaneously demonize businesses for not increasing wages to a level of their liking. It’s a profound lack of economic awareness and literacy that has become far too prevalent in today’s society.

The upcoming election offers stark choices between candidates who would double down on the growth in regulation from the unelected bureaucracy and candidates who believe in constitutional separation...
of powers. It’s a choice between offloading lawmaking to faceless government agency autocrats or reclaiming government decision-making by elected officials who must answer to voters.

In the presidential race, Hillary Clinton has given every indication she will continue where President Obama leaves off and bring an aggressive level of government regulation and intervention to bear upon our economy. She even vowed to essentially regulate fracking out of existence in the U.S., despite it having led to the creation of thousands of jobs, lower gas prices and an energy renaissance in our country. By comparison, Donald Trump vowed in a policy speech in August to impose a moratorium on new agency regulations, eliminate all regulations that kill jobs and “cancel all illegal and overreaching executive orders signed by President Obama.”

The election for U.S. Senate will also have far-reaching consequences for our nation’s regulatory climate. Former Sen. Russ Feingold proudly cast the deciding vote for Obamacare, perhaps our nation’s most expensive Congressional mandate. He also voted for an incredibly expensive and wrongheaded cap-and-trade global warming regulation that would have been devastating to middle class manufacturing jobs in Wisconsin. Current Sen. Ron Johnson, who was elected in 2010 as the nation’s only manufacturer in the Senate, has consistently sponsored legislation to reign in the federal bureaucracy and make it answerable to “we the people” by requiring Congress to approve the most expensive agency regulations before they can become law.

Families and businesses alike are subject to a crushing financial burden from the cost of government regulations. These costs are depressing wages, depressing job growth and limiting economic opportunity in our country. We are on an unsustainable path and we need to change course. When you cast your ballot November 8, think about which candidates will actually do something about the growth of the administrative state in this country.

Follow Scott on Twitter @ManleyWMC

“The average American business spends $9,991 per employee each year to comply with regulations.”
A close friend who owns three restaurants told me recently that one of his hostesses died of a drug overdose. He also said he and his managers interviewed nearly 300 people for positions at his restaurants in 2015, not because there were that many positions to fill, but because he had to continuously let people go because of absenteeism – a common sign of prescription drug abuse.

Drug overdoses kill more people than car accidents in Wisconsin and those deaths aren’t all caused by “hard street drugs”. In fact, prescription narcotic painkiller overdoses kill more people than heroin and cocaine combined. With over 163,000 Wisconsinites addicted to prescription opioids we all have a role in preventing that number from increasing.

I’m writing to you – Wisconsin’s employers – to deliver this dose of reality: prescription opioid abuse is affecting your business. An Indiana study found four out of five employers have had to deal with opioid prescription painkiller addiction and/or abuse in the workplace. Wisconsin and Indiana have an awful lot in common and if we conducted the same survey here, we should expect similar results, especially considering 80 percent of Worker’s Compensation claims in Wisconsin involve narcotic pain medications like Percocet, Vicodin, Oxycontin, and Hydrocodone.

The Wisconsin Department of Justice has teamed up with the medical community and educators, but now we need Wisconsin’s employers to help. Together, we can make our workplaces safer and we can save lives. But opioid abuse is also affecting your bottom line. Prescription opioid abuse costs U.S. employers $26 billion per year. Workplace insurers spend $1.4 billion per year on narcotic painkillers. Wisconsin employers cannot afford to ignore this epidemic.

Even if all of your employees who are prescribed painkillers are using them appropriately and no one at your business is struggling with addiction, opiate abuse could still be reaching into your business by affecting your employee’s family members. Seventy percent of people who are addicted to prescription opioids got their first pills not from a street dealer, but from a family member or friend. That’s why I’m asking you to be a resource to your employees. An employer can be a safe place to turn to for help or guidance, either for themselves or a family member, and thus can be an opportunity for early intervention.

What can you do as an employer? Educate your employees about the dangers of prescription painkiller use through educational materials like posters, flyers and brochures found at www.DoseOfRealityWI.gov, available at no cost to employers. Train supervisors to recognize the potential signs of drug impairment and know how to help. Consider implementing an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that can offer employees up to three confidential counseling sessions at no cost to the employee on a wide range of mental health issues. Finally, after first consulting your human resources professional and/or legal counsel, evaluate your company’s drug policy and consider including prescription medications in the policy and in your drug testing regimen.

Also consider encouraging your employees to participate in this fall’s Drug Take Back Day on Saturday, October 22. At every Drug Take Back location, you can safely dispose of prescription and over-the-counter medications. To learn more details or to find a Drug Take Back location near you, visit www.DoseOfRealityWI.gov/Find-A-Take-Back-Location/.

Every citizen in this state has a role in solving this epidemic by using prescriptions only as prescribed to them, storing them securely, properly disposing of them when done and helping to spread the important message about safe use of prescriptions. Please go to www.DoseOfRealityWI.gov to learn how we can make our state safer and healthier.

Brad Schimel is Wisconsin’s Attorney General, serving since January 5, 2015

“80 percent of Worker’s Compensation claims in Wisconsin involve narcotic pain medications”
Filling the Talent Gap – The Joseph Project

Zip code 53206 is one of the most incarcerated, crime-stricken zip codes in the country with only 38 percent of men between the ages 30-34 having not spent time in a state correctional facility. Unemployment for working-age men is 64 percent and two-thirds of kids live in poverty. Just over an hour north of the 53206 zip code, the Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation was trying to fill 4,000 factory jobs at companies like Nemak, Pace, Kohler and Johnsonville. It was these staggering statistics that connected Sen. Ron Johnson to Orlando Owens, a Milwaukee community advocate, and Pastor Jerome Smith of the Great Praise Church of God in Christ, creators of the Joseph Project.

Mr. Owens and Pastor Smith teamed up to start the Joseph Project last year to resolve the disconnect between inner-city unemployment and manufacturers who can’t find enough employees. Together, they created a curriculum of workshops focusing on interview skills, work ethic, time and financial management and conflict resolution taught by church members and Sen. Johnson’s senate staff. Admittance to the Joseph Project is competitive; those individuals who persevere through the process receive an interview by a company’s HR department and the rest is up to them to secure a job.

“The Joseph Project is one of the most creative partnerships to solve long-term challenges in the community,” said Pastor Tom Keppeler of Elmbrook Church, Joseph Project supporter. “The project has seen immense success in its 10 short months. With Waukesha-based companies now interested in participating, the possibilities of faith-based projects connecting the community with workforce needs are endless.”

After the first class in October 2015, 13 of 15 people were offered a job and began working. Since then, 77 of 130 people have received a job with another 28 offers on the table. The Great Praise Church of God in Christ church vans are donated to run five shifts a day to the Sheboygan area, allowing these individuals to earn wages between $12.80 and $18.50 an hour, well above the minimum wage.

“Almost all these individuals are in a position where they’ve got to put their pasts behind them and move forward,” explains Sen. Johnson. “Probably for the first time in their lives, not only do they have the dignity of earning their own success, but they have that added dignity and joy of doing something that’s going to benefit somebody they don’t even know.”

The Joseph Project continues to expand. The first Madison class of The Joseph Project — and the 14th since the program began in Milwaukee — will meet this October at the Capital City Sanctuary Church of God on Jenifer Street, led by Superintendent Raymond Davis.

Sen. Johnson talks with Dewayne Hinkle while visiting Nemak. Hinkle is a graduate of the 8th Joseph Project class.

Sen. Johnson visits Joseph Project participants working at Nemak in Sheboygan.


Sen. Johnson visits Joseph Project participants working at Nemak in Sheboygan.

Sen. Johnson talks with Willie McShane outside Greater Praise Church of God in Christ.
Maintaining and Strengthening Wisconsin's Manufacturing Tradition

Gov. Scott Walker

Wisconsin has a rich tradition of home-grown manufacturing businesses employing hundreds of thousands of workers to produce world-class products.

Several numbers demonstrate the importance of manufacturing to our state’s workforce:

• As of December 2015, approximately 9,500 Wisconsin manufacturing employers employed more than 465,000 workers in the state.

• The latest available projections show Wisconsin employers will have almost a million jobs to fill from 2014-24, with tens of thousands of them in manufacturing sectors such as medical device and biotechnology manufacturing, defense manufacturing and water-related processing equipment.

• Manufacturing accounted for 94.4 percent of all Wisconsin exports in 2014, demonstrating a healthy worldwide demand for products and technologies created in the state.

While these numbers are great news for Wisconsinites, both those already employed in the industry and future workers, they also underscore the challenge our state faces in the future as baby boomers retire and projections show there won’t be enough workers to fill all of the openings.

Wisconsin manufacturers already say they can’t find enough available workers to fill openings they have today.

That is why my administration is working with our partners to support and strengthen our state’s talent pipeline given the many challenges and opportunities our state faces.

We’ve already built a strong foundation through proven talent development strategies including Registered Apprenticeship, Youth Apprenticeship, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Wisconsin Fast Forward worker training grant program.

We are also collaborating with the education system through new Academic and Career Plans and expanded tools such as Skill Explorer, MyLMI, investments in the Wisconsin Technical College System and the new statewide Internship Coordination initiative I signed into law earlier this year.

In our approach, we are reaching out to students in the K-12 system and beyond with opportunities to explore their skills and interests, and to see and experience career opportunities firsthand. Part of this involves increasing engagement with employers, particularly in manufacturing, and encouraging them to offer tours and connect with local schools.

By explaining and demonstrating that today’s manufacturing industry offers great-paying and challenging jobs in high-tech and safe work environments, we can build awareness and interest in manufacturing as a great career choice for the long term.

Manufacturing Month, which I proclaimed for the month of October, provides a great opportunity for all manufacturing partners to open their doors to future workers, to change misconceptions students and parents may have about the industry and strengthen the likelihood more Wisconsinites will pursue manufacturing as a career path.

We want to thank all manufacturers who are participating in Wisconsin Manufacturing Month in 2016 and encourage more manufacturers to take part not just during the month, but any time during the year.

Together, with a strategy of investment, partnership and awareness-building, we will keep both Wisconsin’s manufacturing tradition and talent pipeline strong for generations to come.

Visit www.wimanufacturingmonth.org for more information on Wisconsin Manufacturing Month.

WMC positively pro-business

“WMC is a great resource to stay informed on regulations and legislation that may impact our business. The team is very responsive to our concerns and is a strong advocate for the business community.”

Todd Teske, Chairman, President and CEO
Briggs & Stratton Corporation

Not a member? Join today.
www.wmc.org/membership
Did you know?

- Wisconsin’s manufacturers employ more than 465,000 workers and carry payrolls of more than $25 billion.
- Manufacturers contribute $2.17 trillion to the U.S. economy annually.
- 87% of manufacturing workers in Wisconsin have a job with benefits, compared to 72% of all workers.
- All but one of Wisconsin’s 37 driver industries are in manufacturing.
- Manufacturing accounts for 19.9% of Wisconsin's gross product.
- Over the next decade, 3.5 million manufacturing jobs will be needed, 2 million to go unfilled due to the skills gap.
- The average annual compensation of manufacturers in Wisconsin in 2013 was $66,844.
- Industrial machinery, electrical machinery and medical/scientific instruments accounts for more than 51% of Wisconsin's manufacturing exports.
- The manufacturing sector contributed $49.9 billion to Wisconsin's gross state product in 2012.
- Nearly 2/3 of manufacturers pay income taxes at individual rates. Any tax increase on individual is a tax increase on manufacturers.
- Over 324 Wisconsin school districts offer a manufacturing-related course such as welding, metalworking, machining, wood processing and production.
- Wisconsin has established a global network of foreign trade representatives in 36 countries; also in some of world’s fastest growing markets.
- Wisconsin’s 16 Tech colleges are a “first-call” partner for manufacturers, standing by to advance competitiveness and growth opportunities.
- There are currently 12.3 million manufacturing workers in the U.S. accounting for 9% of the workforce.
- For every $1.00 spent in manufacturing, another $1.31 is added to the economy.

www.wimanufacturingmonth.org
Education Funding – is the Sky Falling?

A

other school year is underway which means parents and taxpayers are once again hearing about the supposed drastic cuts Wisconsin public schools have faced in recent years and how public schools are barely making ends meet. The negative stories are cause for alarm for parents worried about their children’s education and career opportunities.

The negative rhetoric coming out of Madison is also frightening for employers looking for the next generation of workers and executives. Employers have been pleading for years about the need for skilled workers, for better alignment of education outcomes with employer talent needs and for an education system that regains a focus on teaching technical education skills. Instead, the talk coming from some lawmakers would have you believe the sky is falling and schools throughout the state are doomed to fail. You may be wondering, have lawmakers not heard the message?

The drumbeat from those seeking endless school funding has been consistent and focused on spreading a message that Republican lawmakers have slashed education funding. Need convincing?

Answer these two questions… In the last state budget, did Republican lawmakers increase or cut K-12 education funding? Since 2011, has in-state spending on education increased or decreased? You are probably surprised to learn that in both cases the answer is that in-state spending has increased for education.

If you’re shocked by the answers, don’t be. Consider a recent coordinated attack from top leaders. Sen. Jennifer Shilling (D-La Crosse), the highest ranking Democrat in the state Senate, issued a press release in August titled “School funding remains below 2010 levels.” Rep. Peter Barca (D–Kenosha), the highest ranking Democrat in the state Assembly, released a statement decrying the “slashed state aid for schools.” Other Democrats followed suit. In her local newspaper, Sen. Janet Bewley (D–Ashland) called the so-called cuts “harmful,” and the legislature and Governor “irresponsible” for making them. Fortunately for school children, for concerned parents, for employers looking for future skilled workers and for our state in general, the truth is far from the negative picture painted by those lawmakers.

According to a memo written in August by the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau at the request of Sen. Leah Vukmir (R–Brookfield), school funding from in-state sources has increased by about $65 per child statewide since 2011. Those sources are direct state aid payments, which account for 85 billion annually – that’s $4.75 billion annually from local property taxes and $465 million annually from other local revenues. It is true overall funding for education is down approximately 1.6 percent since 2011, but the pot that has reduced is federal aid, not state, a fact lost in the press releases that clearly are meant only to confuse readers on the issue. Federal aid was artificially inflated in 2011 due to former Gov. Jim Doyle’s use of federal stimulus money to prop up education spending, and has fallen since.

Another missing point from the attacks from Sen. Shilling, Rep. Barca and others is any recognition of benefits from Act 10, Gov. Walker’s public sector collective bargaining reform bill from 2011. Act 10 provided local governments, including school districts, new tools for balancing their budgets. According to a report by the MacIver Institute for Public Policy, the tools schools now have thanks to Act 10…have resulted in $5 billion in savings for public employers.”

The attacks also do not link spending to results. Business leaders know the importance of looking at return on investment when making budget decisions, but for too many lawmakers, that consideration is not part of the public discourse when it comes to state spending. Instead, the drumbeat is simply more spending, more spending, more spending.

Wisconsin should have an honest debate about school funding. But, results must be part of the equation and policy makers and the public should be willing to discuss how we get the best results for the same or possibly even less money. While that ROI discussion happens in business every day, it will never happen in the public realm so long as one side remains content arguing that more money equals progress. BV

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<th><strong>RUSS FEINOLD</strong></th>
<th><strong>RON JOHNSON</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Current Position</strong></td>
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| **Other Experience**    | U.S. Senator, 1993-2011  
  Wisconsin Senator, 1983-1993  
  Professor, U.S. Envoy to African nations | U.S. Senator, 2011-present  
  1979-2010, PACUR Co. - purchased company in 1997, served as CEO. |
| **Trade**               | Opposed NAFTA, other trade agreements | Supports most free trade agreements |
| **Taxes**               | Supported Clinton tax hike of 1993, taxes imposed under Obamacare and other tax hikes Rules in favor of deferring to the Legislature. | Opposes tax increases and supports tax cuts |
| **Healthcare**          | Voted to pass Obamacare | Opposed Obamacare and supports repeal |
| **Free Speech**         | Supported limits on corporate free speech rights | Opposes limits on corporate free speech rights |
| **Regulation**          | Supports expansive government regulation | Opposes new regulations and supports REINS Act |
| **Energy**              | Supports costly EPA global warming regulations | Opposes costly EPA global warming regulations |
| **Voting Records**      | U.S. Chamber – 25%  
  National Association of Manufacturers – 12% | U.S. Chamber – 82%  
  National Association of Manufacturers – 68% |
Jim Pugh  
Vice President/Treasurer, WMC Issues Mobilization Council, Inc.

Cementing our Pro-Jobs Policy Wins for Generations to Come

WMC Issues Mobilization Council Sets the Record Straight on Job Creation

Since 2011, Gov. Scott Walker and the pro-jobs Legislature have set about dramatically improving our business climate and the capstone of this renewal was signing Right to Work legislation in spring 2015.

Critical to advancing the policy wins has been the commitment of the business community to spend aggressively on issue advocacy grassroots lobbying ads to educate the public about the importance of job creation in our state. When the public understands the importance of workplace freedom and tax relief, it makes it harder for those policies to come off the books when the Legislature reconvenes. WMC backs up our advocacy with a lobbying team at the Capitol that delivers on issues.

Right now, the collective anti-business forces are marshaling against courageous lawmakers who stood up for Right to Work, the Manufacturing & Agricultural Income Tax Credit, lawsuit reform, regulation relief and so much more.

Unions and their allies will be spending aggressively against pro-jobs lawmakers in the Assembly and the Senate. The WMC Issues Mobilization Council, Inc. will be spending just as aggressively to set the record straight with the general public when Assembly representatives and Senators are subjected to false charges about their voting records on jobs and the economy. WMC IMC will ensure the pro-jobs voting records will be thoroughly understood – whether in the Assembly or the Senate.

In two Senate districts this fall, there will be a great amount of debate about the importance and future of the jobs agenda. State Sen. Tom Tiffany (R-Hazelhurst) is a freshman Senator who played a strong leadership role on mining, Right to Work and many pro-growth policies. Sen. Tiffany faces an opponent, Bryan Van Stippen from Deerbrook, who has stated his opposition to pro-growth policies such as Right to Work and tax relief.

Sen. Tiffany will have a tough fight and is working hard to explain his votes and support for the jobs agenda. The business community and our allies need to be vocal on these issues as well and tell all Wisconsin residents that Right to Work and tax cuts are good for jobs!

In the Fond du Lac and Oshkosh areas, Winnebago County Executive Mark Harris is seeking the Senate seat vacated by Sen. Rick Gudex (R-Fond du Lac). Harris has repeatedly argued Winnebago County should establish a sales tax rather than cut government spending. He’s anti-Right to Work and is against the Manufacturing & Agricultural Income Tax Credit. Dan Feyen from Fond du Lac is also seeking the seat and committed to supporting pro-jobs policies.

It is critical for state residents to understand these issues in the coming days leading up to the November election. We need everyone to understand the importance of the pro-jobs agenda and our successes in the state legislature. Moreover, we need the general public to start now telling Harris and others they are wrong on the issues. Beginning our grassroots lobbying now will ensure every state legislator goes to Madison to make sure that these policies need to be preserved.

And, if the public tells pro-jobs Assembly Representatives and Senators that they like the direction we’re taking on pro-growth policies, the pro-jobs agenda will be chiseled in granite.

We are at a turning point in our state. Next session will determine if we stay the course on pro-growth policies or if we turn back the clock. To make sure these policies are cemented in place, we need to begin our advocacy this fall – to set the policy record straight and to make sure that every legislator who comes to Madison supports the pro-jobs agenda. BV
ELECTION SEASON

- Energy
- Foreign Policy
- Education
- Economy & Taxes
- Healthcare
- Immigration
- Military & War on Terror
- Crime & Justice
- Labor & Wages
- Science & Environment
How the 2016 Presidential Election Could Impact Wisconsin’s Economy

By Mark Crawford

Every American wants prosperity - for themselves, their families and the nation. We want a strong economy, good jobs, affordable health care and housing, safety and security, and a clean environment. We also want the U.S. to be a compassionate and innovative leader on the world stage. To accomplish these things, Americans need selfless political leaders who work together to solve problems and pass laws that make the U.S. better for everyone.

This is a tall order coming into the November presidential election – the most unconventional presidential election in history. While many Americans agree the country needs new leadership, they are greatly disappointed by the choices they have for president. Recent polls show astounding unfavorable ratings for Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton in the 50-60 percent range.

Both parties presented competing visions for the country during their conventions – “yet both were striking in their lack of focus on the imperative of economic growth,” says Rob Engstrom, senior vice president for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. “Democrats continue to push big-government economic policies that will keep our economy from growing. The Republican platform also has big problems. Their priorities call for a revival of the Glass-Steagall Act, another Depression-era policy to break up banks that would undermine diversity in the U.S. financial system, and to close our borders and move away from sensible immigration reform.”

The U.S. Chamber, WMC and other pro-business groups across the country will continue to advocate for policies at the federal and state levels that stimulate the economy and create more jobs. Key priorities include fighting unnecessary regulations, reforming the tax code, producing more American energy and advancing a global trade agenda. “We’ll work with either party – Republican or Democrat – to advance these policies,” adds Engstrom.

Below is a brief glimpse at how the possible outcomes of the November presidential and state elections could impact the business climate – in Wisconsin and at the national level.

Business Environment

Stark differences exist between how the Democrats and Republicans approach business development. The GOP wants to roll back regulations from the Obama Administration regarding taxes, financing/lending restrictions, labor rules, environmental regulations and health care – all of which impede economic growth.

There are clear policy differences…closely review these candidates’ voting records in an effort to make an informed decision.
A Democratic presidential victory will likely increase taxes and eliminate beneficial tax rates on capital gains, death taxes and other pro-business/pro-investment policies. The national debt will continue to increase, possibly leading to tighter financial markets and lending. A Democrat in the White House will also continue (or expand) the current administration’s labor policies regarding minimum wage, paid sick leave and the Affordable Care Act (ACA), as well as further regulate American energy production.

Both parties are hesitant to support free trade, especially the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

**LABOR**

Labor is a double-edged issue, especially with how it relates to immigration policy. “The overall biggest issue for members statewide is the labor shortage,” states Ed Lump, president and CEO of the Wisconsin Restaurant Association. “Policies that encourage work and immigration reform, which allow people who are already in the country and not convicted criminals to stay here, would be well received.”

Too often, questions regarding immigrant labor in Wisconsin are framed as farming or dairy issues, when in fact they work in a number of industries. “In Wisconsin, when we speak about the ‘immigrant’ workforce, we are essentially referring to the Hispanic workforce,” says Jim Ostrom, president and founder of MilkSource LLC. “Beyond agriculture, nearly one in every four Hispanic workers in Wisconsin works in the manufacturing sector and about one in six works in healthcare or educational services. By 2035, Wisconsin farms will not have enough agricultural workers to fill available farm jobs, regardless of wage levels. We need a coherent federal policy that fosters a sustainable, productive pipeline for documented workers.”

The second part of the labor issue is regulation. A Democratic victory will likely continue, or expand, the current administration’s HR policies regarding minimum wage, overtime, paid sick leave, ACA expansion and more – all driving up operational costs and administrative complexity.

**HEALTHCARE**

There is no question the ACA is increasing cost and decreasing choice for businesses and their employees. “A GOP victory in November holds the best chance for repealing President Obama’s executive orders and the best chance for Congress to defund or repeal/replace the ACA,” says Lump – an objective that is a cornerstone of the Republican platform.

One of the most significant issues for healthcare is insurance coverage expansion. The ACA has increased insurance coverage for millions of Americans, with positive ramifications that ripple well beyond the immediate impacts to the healthcare industry itself. And, although there may be other ways to expand coverage, “Obamacare” is now in its third year and “each day that goes by trying to unwind Obamacare, becomes both functionally and politically more difficult,” says Eric Borgerding, president and CEO of the Wisconsin Hospital Association. “It could be politically dicey if Obamacare is repealed and its insurance coverage elements are removed or changed substantially, so its replacement must result in access to affordable health insurance, ideally at the levels now achieved under the Affordable Care Act.”

The other overarching concern is the sustainability of any approach for expanding coverage. Whether through subsidies for coverage purchased on the Obamacare exchange, or via tax credits for purchasing insurance in the private market per some GOP plans, these subsidies cost money. “We are also starting to see what appear to be sustainability issues related to insurer participation, driven by the regulations surrounding the exchanges, so it is becoming a question of both cost and red tape,” says Borgerding. “The challenge confronting the next president

“We need a coherent federal policy that fosters a sustainable, productive pipeline for documented workers.”
will be how to shore up the exchanges and address these sustainability issues or find a way to use the existing insurance market to maintain expanded coverage should there be a repeal of Obamacare. Both are difficult paths."

**State Election Impacts**

Republican wins in Wisconsin will help maintain current government strategies such as tax reform and providing property tax relief through controlled state spending. “Republican victories will lead to a more consistent, manageable and predictable business climate,” says Ostrom. “In these circumstances, we generally see the implementation of rules that are already in place as written, rather than opening them up to unchecked regulatory interpretations.”

Republicans have a historically high 27 seat majority in the Assembly, which means the GOP is unlikely to lose control of the lower house of the Legislature even if 2016 turns into a wave election for Democrats. However, the GOP’s majority in the Senate is slimmer, just three seats, which creates a potential pathway for Democrats to win the majority on November 8.

Democrat candidates for both houses of the legislature are running on a mix of issues, including repealing the Manufacturers’ and Agricultural Production Tax Credit, which WMC championed in 2011. Democrats are also campaigning for repeal of Right to Work, another WMC backed reform enacted in 2015.

Transportation infrastructure is a big topic this election season but there is disagreement among Gov. Walker and majority Republicans in the Legislature on how much to spend and how to fund it. Gov. Walker has rejected tax or fee increases unless there are off-setting cuts somewhere else. Legislative Republicans have expressed concern over funding projects with more bonding, despite low interest rates.

**Federal Election Impacts**

Elections across the country will play key roles in whether the U.S. House of Representatives or the Senate can be “flipped.” This has huge implications for eliminating gridlock and getting Republican or Democrat legislation through quickly. “One of the most important races for determining Senate majority is between Sen. Ron Johnson (68 percent lifetime NAM voting record) and former senator Russ Feingold (12 percent lifetime NAM voting record), so it’s hard to overstate its importance,” says Ned Monroe, senior vice president of external relations for the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM). “There are clear policy differences so manufacturers and their employees need to closely review these candidates’ voting records in an effort to make an informed decision.”

Scott Manley, WMC’s senior vice president for government relations, joined the U.S. Chamber of Commerce at a statewide tour endorsing Sen. Ron Johnson’s candidacy earlier this year. “We are fortunate to have a manufacturer and proven job creator like Ron Johnson representing our state,” Manley said.

Perhaps the greatest long-term impact the presidential election will have on U.S. businesses will be the makeup of the U.S. Supreme Court. A Democrat victory in November will result in a shift on the Supreme Court from a conservative to a liberal majority and likelihood the court will become an unelected super-legislature imposing its own will over that of the Congress.

Engstrom reiterates the stakes are high in this election, at both the presidential and congressional levels. “The next president could nominate as many as five Supreme Court justices and the Senate is the only backstop the American business community has to keep extreme nominees off the bench,” he says. “Wisconsinites will play a key role in determining the Senate majority when they head to the polls in November.”

Crawford is a Madison-based freelance writer.
As the state chamber of commerce, we at WMC encounter many fascinating yet relatively unknown details of our state’s economy. The outsized role of shipbuilding and maritime commerce are no exceptions.

Fincantieri Marinette Marine is among the top-ranked shipbuilders in the world and currently producing Littoral Combat Ships for the U.S. Navy as well as vessels for other government and private agencies. The shipyard recently completed a more than $73 million capital expansion and serves as an anchor to the Northeast Wisconsin economy.

Wisconsin is home to several yacht-building firms like Burger Boat of Manitowoc, a venerable shipbuilder with a modern facility and significant capabilities. If our state followed the lead of others like Florida in capping the amount of state sales taxes assessed on the purchase of boats, it would almost certainly see an increase in the number of taxable purchases of boats made here – and result in more state tax revenue.

A common theme among port directors is how to accommodate “over-sized/over-weight” freight, commonly referred to as “OSOW” loads. These movements exceed the legal size and weight restrictions our infrastructure allow and must receive special permits from the state Department of Transportation (DOT) to safely operate.

Manufacturers like Caterpillar (previously Bucyrus) and Joy Global have long depended on the Port of Milwaukee to ship out their equipment, which are OSOW loads. Companies like A-C Equipment of West Allis similarly depend on a “high/wide” corridor to the Port. Maintaining that route ensures these so-called “mega-loads” can continue to be manufactured in Southeast Wisconsin and access the world market over the Great Lakes via the St. Lawrence Seaway.

The state DOT is currently working with stakeholders including WMC, the City and Port of Milwaukee to ensure a “high/wide” route is in place as well for inbound OSOW loads, including a great number bound for the north side of Chicago. Securing these routes will offer Wisconsin many commercial advantages for years to come.

With the closure earlier this year of the only Green Bay pipeline moving gasoline, the Port of Green Bay is now receiving inbound shipments of gasoline. While prices at the pump in northeast Wisconsin are higher than they should be due to the pipeline’s closure, marine transportation is keeping a lid on cost.

Moving intermodal containers by water is an activity we’ve seen little of in Wisconsin but expect to increase. The National Center for Freight & Infrastructure Research & Education (CFIRE) at UW-Madison has devoted considerable time studying the feasibility of moving containers by barge on the Mississippi River or by ship on the Great Lakes. Milwaukee could easily be used, having the port and rail infrastructure already in place to allow such an operation to quickly commence. The day may also come when restoring the Fox River locks would again have commercial value.

Lastly, the concepts of “inland ports” (rail/truck hubs for loading containers or transloading) and “port authorities” (governmental units able to raise revenues and invest in port infrastructure) have caught on in many states, including Minnesota and Ohio. Many places in Wisconsin could benefit significantly from being allowed to operate these entities. They will be more likely if shippers, whether an anchor company or a consortium, push to make them a reality.

There’s much to review in the need to upgrade Wisconsin’s infrastructure. Considering the needs of water-borne commerce and the significance of our shipbuilding industry shouldn’t be lost in the discussion.
WMC’s Kurt Bauer (right) met with Mike Gallagher. Gallagher is a former U.S. Marine and current Republican candidate for Congress in the 8th District (Northeastern Wisconsin).

Janie Ritter (center) Director of WMC’s Wisconsin Safety Council, visited Mercury Marine’s President John Pfeifer (third from left) and team members to re-present the company’s Wisconsin Corporate Safety Award.


WMC’s first Freedom Shoot helped raise thousands for WMC’s Conduit. Pictured here (second from left) is Jason Culotta with his team.

Steve Johnson, factory manager of John Deere Horicon Works with WMC’s Scott Manley.

WMC President/CEO Kurt Bauer (right) participated in ceremonies marking the opening of Mexico’s consulate in Milwaukee. Pictured from left to right are Milwaukee Metropolitan Association of Commerce President/CEO Tim Sheehy, Mexico’s Secretary of External Relations Claudia Ruiz Massieu, the Consul General of the Milwaukee Consulate Julián Adem Díaz de León, and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation President/Secretary Mark Hogan.
In 2015, Millennials surpassed Generation Xers as the majority share of the American workforce. However, older workers make up 20 percent of workers. Although there is no consensus on the age at which workers are considered “older workers,” the aging workforce phenomenon is real.

Over the last 20 years, the median age of the labor force has increased from 37.7 to 41.9. And, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 10,000 - 13,000 baby boomers in the U.S. will turn 65 every day until about the year 2030. As many of you know, Americans are working longer and delaying retirement. We continue to work for a variety of reasons which may include economic stability, healthcare coverage, passion for profession, or for the basic human desire to be relevant, needed and appreciated. Whatever the reason, this combination has made it more difficult than ever for safety managers, HR professionals, plant managers and others to devise comprehensive safety and health programs for such a diversely aged workforce.

A 2015 Society for Human Resource Management survey found that organizations are unprepared for an aging workforce, with just over one-third of organizations examining policies and practices to address the demographic change. Some of the challenges facing employers to accommodate the growth in older employees include, but are not limited to, physical job demands, training and flexible work schedules and intergenerational relationships. Employers who successfully attract, retain, train and motivate older employees may enjoy a competitive edge, but it will be a big adjustment from the youth-centric culture of many workplaces.

While older workers provide accumulated skills, wisdom, knowledge and experiences, they may not be physically or mentally as capable as they once were to perform certain work-related tasks. Without proper prevention, OSHA recordables and lost-time-incident costs could start adding up or may lead to production losses, worker’s compensation claims, etc. This is why it is crucial to understand the hazards and risk involved in not only your industry, but also for each specific job. Once you understand the risks and hazards of the environment, you can analyze the physical requirements of the tasks involved and create a list of physical and mental qualifications for each job. If your workers cannot safely accomplish the tasks, you may have to consider re-evaluating the work environment or re-assigning their role within the organization.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health’s National Center for Productive Aging and Work has started a program called Total Worker Health® to assist in preventing age-related workplace illnesses and injuries. You can find more information on their website www.cdc.gov/niosh/TWH/. The Total Worker Health program blends health and safety programs along a continuum of organizational, personal and occupational activities to enhance overall worker well-being and prevent work-related injuries and illnesses.

A recent study at Duke University found many people begin to experience physical decline when they are in their 50s, which indicates a strong need to work on maintaining
and improving strength and endurance earlier in life. Regardless of age, it is always important for employers to promote a culture of health and safety through offering programs centered on employee well-being. Here are a few key objectives:

- Provide health and wellness programs with stakeholder input, creating buy-in and greater employee participation.
- Consider offering incentive structures – finding one that best works for your employees.
- Organize frequent and a variety of fitness/wellness events. Offering multiple opportunities for employee involvement will increase the likelihood of their participation and continued interest. And don’t forget to recognize their efforts through internal communications and newsletters.
- Connect employee well-being to safety, stressing being physically and mentally strong allows a person to perform work better and more safely.

The Wisconsin Safety Council and our team of trainers and consultants are available to assist you with completing job hazard analyses and ergonomic assessments. BV

Follow WSC on Twitter @WISafetyCouncil

![Projected change in U.S. civilian workforce between 2014 and 2024 for selected age groups](chart.png)

**This topic will be featured at the Autumn Safety Conference in Cleveland, WI on October 7.**
Visit [www.wisafetycouncil.org](http://www.wisafetycouncil.org) for more information.

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**WISCONSIN SAFETY COUNCIL SAFETY TRAINING**

**October - January**

www.wisafetycouncil.org

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**MILWAUKEE AREA SAFETY TRAINING**

**OCTOBER 19**
Coaching the Lift Truck Operator, Train-the-Trainer

**DECEMBER 5-8**
OSHA 30-Hour Voluntary Compliance for General Industry

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**MADISON AREA SAFETY TRAINING**

**OCTOBER 4**
RCRA Compliance for Hazardous Waste Generators Overview (AM)

**OCTOBER 10**
DOT Hazmat Transportation Refresher (PM)

**OCTOBER 18**
Coaching the Lift Truck Operator, Train-the-Trainer

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**NOVEMBER 7**
Supervisor Development: Safety & Health Fundamentals

**NOVEMBER 16**
OSHA Construction Breakfast “Silica Standard”

**DECEMBER 12**
Effective Team Safety

**JANUARY 12, 2017**
OSHA Construction Breakfast “OSHA Recordkeeping, Reporting & Anti-Retaliation Requirements”

**JANUARY 23-26, 2017**
Fundamentals for Industrial Hygiene (FIH)

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**FOX VALLEY/GREEN BAY AREA SAFETY TRAINING**

**OCTOBER 7**
Safety on the Lakeshore Autumn Conference & Expo

**OCTOBER 11**
Safety Inspections

**NOVEMBER 2-3**
OSHA 10-Hour Voluntary Compliance for General Industry

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**SAVE THE DATE!**

_75th Annual Wisconsin Safety & Health Conference and Expo_  
APRIL 10-12, 2017  
Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells

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**75th Annual Wisconsin Safety & Health Conference and Expo**

APRIL 10-12, 2017  
Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells

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**Projected change in U.S. civilian workforce between 2014 and 2024 for selected age groups**

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We are pleased to present these highlights from the 2015-16 Legislative Voting Record, WMC’s biennial business issue scorecard for the Wisconsin State Legislature. This report is designed to help the business community see how individual members of the legislature voted on key issues affecting the business climate in Wisconsin. Visit www.wmc.org to view the full report.

### SENATE

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Sometimes the best offense is a strong defense. Blocking bills that would harm our business climate by imposing costly and cumbersome regulations is every bit as important as passing bills that would improve our business climate. With that in mind, we thought it would be important to highlight some truly bad bills that did not pass because of the efforts of pro-growth lawmakers and WMC’s advocacy against these misguided proposals.

Assembly Bill 12: Allowing Local Minimum Wages
This bill, introduced by Rep. Cory Mason (D) and Sen. Bob Wirch (D), would subject employers to an expensive and confusing patchwork of minimum wage requirements by allowing local governments to enact their own minimum wage. The bill also hikes the state minimum wage to $10.10 per hour, and indexes it to inflation.

Assembly Bill 151 / Senate Bill 100: Zoning Sand Mining Out of Existence
This bill, introduced by Rep. Chris Danou (D) and Sen. Kathleen Vinehout (D), would have added expensive and unprecedented requirements to the process of siting a new industrial sand facility in the state.

Assembly Bill 160 / Senate Bill 270: Repealing “At-Will” Employment
Wisconsin has long been an “at-will” employment state, which means workers can leave a job at-will, and can be terminated at-will. Rep. Tod Ohnstad (D) and Sen. Jon Erpenbach (D) introduced legislation to undo this longstanding doctrine by prohibiting employers from discharging employees without wrongdoing.

Assembly Bill 264: Mandating a $15 Per Hour Minimum Wage
Looking to join their counterparts in San Francisco and Seattle, Rep. Melissa Sargent (D) and Sen. Bob Wirch (D) introduced legislation to more than double the minimum wage in Wisconsin to $15/hour, despite evidence that such an increase will result in drastic low-wage job loss.

Assembly Bill 318: Unemployment Insurance Cost Increase
With unemployment at low levels, the Unemployment Trust Fund is building a surplus, preparing for the next recession and jump in claims. Rather than let the fund continue to grow, Rep. Deb Kolste (D) and Sen. Julie Lassa (D) introduced a bill to add $25 million in annual costs to the program by making unemployed workers eligible for benefits one week sooner.

Assembly Bill 461: Repeal of Parental School Choice Law
Wisconsin has been a national leader in granting parents options when it comes to K-12 education. First started in Milwaukee, school choice has now been expanded statewide, ensuring that all kids, regardless of income or zip code, can attend a school of their parents’ choosing. Rep. Sondy Pope (D) and the Democratic Minority Leader, Rep. Peter Barca (D), introduced AB 461 to repeal the statewide school choice program, ending those options for parents throughout the state.

Assembly Bill 474 / Senate Bill 352: Mandatory Paid Sick Leave
Many employers offer paid sick leave as part of their benefits packages in order to attract and retain top talent. Not satisfied that some employers don’t provide paid sick leave or can’t afford to, Rep. Cory Mason (D) and Sen. Nikuya Harris Dodd (D) introduced a bill to require all employers to provide paid sick leave to workers.

Assembly Bill 516 / Senate Bill 385: Mandatory Paid Family Medical Leave
Legislation by Rep. Sondy Pope (D) and Sen. Janis Ringhand (D) would have drastically expanded Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requirements in Wisconsin by applying the law to all businesses with at least 25 workers (current level is 50+) and requiring leave to care for grandparents, grandchildren and siblings. The bill also would have required employers to provide paid FMLA leave by creating a new government-run insurance program paid by a new payroll tax.

Assembly Bill 570 / Senate Bill 145: New Employment Discrimination Penalties
In addition to penalties already in law to stop employment discrimination, Rep. Christine Sinicki (D) and Sen. Dave Hansen (D) introduced legislation to pile on additional penalties, including the ability for workers to bring costly new lawsuits in court.

Assembly Bill 605: Chilling of Corporate Free Speech
This bill, introduced by Rep. Terese Berceau (D) and Sen. Janis Ringhand (D), would have put onerous new state reporting requirements on businesses in an attempt to prevent those businesses from engaging in advocacy about issues important to them.

Assembly Bill 634 / Senate Bill 577: Establishing Special Air Regulations to Stifle Sand Mining
This bill, introduced by Rep. Chris Danou (D) and Sen. Kathleen Vinehout (D), would have subjected industrial sand companies to costly, unwarranted, and ineffective new monitoring requirements in an effort to stifle growth in the industry.

Assembly Bill 900 / Senate Bill 666: Repeal of Collective Bargaining Reforms
Democrats, led by Rep. Chris Taylor (D) and Sen. Fred Risser (D), attempted to repeal Governor Walker’s public sector collective bargaining reform law, Act 10, despite the fact that Act 10 has saved taxpayers $5 billion, saved teaching jobs and allowed local governments the flexibility to innovate with their workforces.

Senate Bill 773: Expensive Global Warming Mandates
This bill, introduced by Rep. Dianne Hesselbein (D) and Sen. Fred Risser (D), would have increased the state’s mandate for renewable energy, driving up electricity costs and making Wisconsin less competitive. This costly legislation was proposed at a time of significant regulatory uncertainty at the federal level and would have further burdened every Wisconsin who pays an electric bill.

Assembly Joint Resolution 120: Constitutional Amendment to Strip Businesses of Rights
This constitutional amendment, introduced by Rep. Chris Taylor (D) and Sen. Fred Risser (D) would have stripped corporations of constitutional rights, including free speech.

Senate Joint Resolution 12: Referendum to Limit Corporate Speech Rights
This constitutional amendment, introduced by Rep. Lisa Subeck (D) and Sen. Dave Hansen (D), would have required a statewide referendum vote to strip corporations of constitutional rights, including free speech.

Legislators designated in the green bars scored 80% or higher on the WMC scorecard and received the 2016 Working for Wisconsin Award.
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Pulaski, WI 54162
(920) 822-3951
www.baytekgames.com

Located in Pulaski, Bay Tek Games is a family owned and operated manufacturer dedicated to providing fun and innovative coin-operated games. You will likely recognize many of their arcade-style games such as Skee Ball, Hopstar, Gridiron Blitz and Hot Shot. The company began in 1975 as an electrical engineer firm and became Bay Tek in 1977 after receiving a game concept from a church member. After several expansions over the years, Bay Tek now houses a total of 56,000 square feet among all their facilities.

Employee-owned Leer, Inc. is the world’s leading manufacturer of retail ice merchandising equipment and walk-in coolers – you likely see them outside gas stations, in grocery stores, and even at Miller Park! Leer, Inc. began as an ice merchandiser, harvesting ice in the Wisconsin River and delivering via horse-drawn wagons. Now, with over 60 years of dedication to engineering research, quality service and manufacturing excellence, Leer is committed to consistent improvement in order to better serve their customers.

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(608) 562-3161
www.leerinc.com

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Attracting and Retaining Top Talent amid Labor Shortages

By Scott A. Mayer

As unemployment numbers continue to fall, the talent market is tightening at a rapid pace. The labor participation rate is a key metric as it reflects the number of people who are interested in participating in the workforce. The current rate is 62.8 percent, which is hovering near a 37 year low. Wisconsin is outpacing that with a rate of 68.5 percent in July 2016.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the ratio of unemployed persons per job opening was 1.4 in June 2016. Job openings have trended upward since July 2009 and surpassed the pre-recession peak of April 2007. In July 2016, there were 5.6 million job openings. The Manufacturing Institute says six out of ten positions remain unfilled due to the talent shortage and 82 percent of executives believe the skills gap will impact their ability to meet customer demand. Employers need to acknowledge the labor shortage is here and therefore, they need to rethink some of their business methods.

In order to make the most of this shallow labor pool and retain current workers, companies need to know where they stand against other employers in their market. When job seekers have the choice between two positions, they often choose the one with the higher wage. Employers need to evaluate their pay and benefits package to make sure that they are staying competitive. They should also measure how their equipment, technology and software stack up compared to others in the market.

The old way for hiring was where companies had their pick of candidates and it was on the job seeker to sell their abilities. In this current labor market, companies now have to be the ones selling themselves. Job seekers are asking “what’s in it for me?” Hiring managers have to be able to describe what sets their company apart. In my meetings with other business leaders and hiring managers, I always encourage them to think about the “EVP” – the employee value proposition. These are the reasons star employees want to work for your company over other organizations. They can include things like company history, benefits, career advancement, performance recognition and work/life balance programs.

Companies should also evaluate their skill requirements. Are the skills required truly necessary for the job? Can the more basic skills be taught? Background check policies should also be reviewed to ensure hiring managers understand why the policies exist and why they preclude individuals from doing their jobs. For example, how would a drug charge from two years ago impact the duties of a simple assembly job? If there is an offense, re-evaluate the time frame in which the infraction occurred and handle each check on a case-by-case basis.

Finally, we need to encourage our educational system to push alternatives to the four-year college degree. In the old days, college was just for the elite. Then college became more mainstream and kids were expected to go to a four year university. Manufacturing made our country and it is coming back strong. Young adults need to understand they can make a great living with these middle class jobs and college really isn’t for everyone.

We are experiencing one of the tightest labor markets in history and there is no clear end in sight. In order to stay competitive, employers need to know how they stack up in comparison to other employers and sell themselves to job seekers. Companies should adjust their requirements when possible and celebrate as a company all of the great things they have to offer. What is your company’s EVP?

Scott Mayer is Chairman and CEO of QPS Employment Group and a member of WMC’s board of directors.
The WMC Foundation is dedicated to building a better future for Wisconsin by providing business and economics education, workforce development initiatives, local chambers of commerce support, safety training programs and business best practices.
Forging Energy into Gold – Wisconsin’s New Alchemy

Wisconsin is world famous for dairy, tourism, and recreation, yet few understand the economic importance of our fine manufacturing industries including paper mills, food processors, printers, plastics processors, ethanol producers, machinery, fabrication, mining, metalcasting and many others.

Manufacturing industries not only lead the way in innovative and sustainable products sold internationally, with annual exports in excess of $20 billion; manufacturing is also a major job generator for Wisconsin. In 2015, it accounted for 16.4 percent of Wisconsin’s labor market, the second highest of any other state, with nearly 8,000 manufacturing firms employing approximately 475,000 workers. These are impressive statistics as new process and systems trend toward automation.

Foundries Critical

Foundries play a significant role in Wisconsin’s economy, accounting for many jobs and producing numerous metal cast components that go into our everyday products. Wisconsin ranks fourth in the nation with 125 foundries focused strictly on metalcasting. The three companies featured in this article agree the new world economy is extremely challenging for manufacturers – resulting from increasing overseas competition opened by recent trade agreements and other factors, such as Great Britain’s Brexit vote, making demand for future production uncertain. The need to innovate and diversify has heightened as foundries continue to seek new markets for their products. Varying costs in material and labor rates also continue to heavily impact the competitive landscape. In an effort to find a competitive cost advantage, many foundry businesses are looking more closely at managing their third highest cost – energy. Metalcasting is highly energy intensive, with energy costs accounting for 6–12 percent of a product’s total cost per unit.

Three Wisconsin foundries that have skillfully adjusted to market changes are highlighted in this article: Neenah Foundry, Signicast and Waupaca Foundry. By offering technical training to internal staff, responding to market demands and cutting their energy intensities with the support of their utilities and Focus on Energy, these organizations have adapted and found success in this extremely competitive industry.

Proud of its workforce retention, Waupaca Foundry has retained 44 percent of its 4,400 employees worldwide for at least 10 years. Wisconsin facilities employ 2,225 workers. Waupaca Foundry has seen a growing need for highly skilled labor in response to new automation, according to Marketing and Communications Manager Sara Timm. While reducing the need for lower skilled labor, automation actually amplifies the need for higher technical skills. The company tries to promote workers internally, through up-training into new positions that meet this challenge. One task of these highly trained workers will be to keep track of how much energy is used and how it is used, leveraging real-time data available via an energy use “dashboard”. Through Wisconsin Public Service Corporation and Focus on Energy’s Strategic Energy Management (SEM) program, Waupaca Foundry has developed a pilot energy-monitoring model that tracks energy usage versus production.

The real-time data allows the company to see how changes in operations can reduce energy intensity. The model also assists in tracking the dramatic energy reductions resulting from the installation of new energy efficient equipment as well as improved operational and maintenance practices.

“We must move, and move quickly, from a philosophy of energy as ‘just another cost’ to one of energy as ‘a manageable expense’ that can provide Waupaca Foundry with a strategic competitive advantage,” said Bryant Esch, Environmental Coordinator.

Committed to a 25 percent reduction in energy intensity by 2020 through the U.S. Department of Energy’s Better Business Better Plants program, Waupaca Foundry has already achieved 16.5 percent energy reduction after six years.

“With top level management commitment and strong support from Focus on Energy, Waupaca Foundry will become the first U.S. foundry to achieve ISO 50001 certification – the Gold Standard in energy management,” said Energy Manager Mike Hoecker of Waupaca Foundry.

Neenah Foundry which employs almost 1,000 people, also acknowledges “the foundry business is a tough place to be right now.” He notes since demand for cast metal products is down, largely due to lower investment in capital goods including items such as tractors, trucks and agricultural equipment, companies must be on the lookout for new ways to save on product cost as well as opportunities to fill new market niches.

“The need for skilled workers, the trend toward automation, worldwide competition and regulation all play important roles in the way our business performs,” said Goudzwaard. “Energy, which is manageable, is one key ingredient that affects our product cost. So we have been studying our energy costs for quite some time. While it is currently harder for management to justify energy efficiency projects for return on investment, we are aware of the importance of energy costs and are doing our own monitoring.”

Neenah Foundry’s Electrical Engineer, Keith Rushford, emphasizes “at about 10 percent of our product’s cost, energy is strategic from a cost and regulatory standpoint.” He adds that talk of a carbon tax is certain to drive energy costs up making it necessary to find savings. Although not a Focus on Energy SEM participant, the company uses its existing infrastructure to sub-meter its energy use and develop a statistical Energy Performance Indicator (EPI) model to track its energy intensity. Neenah Foundry’s energy team identifies how energy is used, what project opportunities exist, potential
behavioral and operational changes that may help save energy and establishes departmental energy cost accounting through sub-metering at the end-use level. By applying SEM principles, data is gathered and analyzed to develop an EPI that can be tracked.

Focus on Energy’s foundry expert recently suggested Neenah Foundry consider installing new mulling controls – a process which mixes sand, water and bentonite to form a mold. Instead of mulling based on a preset timed set-point, the controls are set to an energy set-point which reduces the mulling time of sand and produces more consistent molding sand. This innovative control strategy has resulted in verified annual energy savings of over 1.5 million kilowatt-hours for the company.

By partnering with Focus on Energy and We Energies, Neenah Foundry has discovered many energy saving opportunities and is achieving annual savings of over 10 million kilowatt-hours and more than 200,000 therms.

Employing approximately 800 people, Signicast, a manufacturer of high precision investment castings, is facing similar challenges and reducing energy costs is a high priority for the company.

Brad Witte, Chief Operations Officer, describes his company’s energy management process as: “First, we make each department aware of their energy costs. Second, we partner with Focus on Energy and our energy utility (Hartford Utilities and We Energies) to identify opportunities and incentives that can reduce our project paybacks. Third, we set goals, by facility, to help each one become more accountable for energy usage. We have eight manufacturing facilities in Hartford and Brown Deer, six of which are casting plants.”

Like other manufacturers, Signicast does not have the internal expertise to spec out projects and provide accurate energy savings estimates. By leveraging Focus on Energy’s special Project Assessment incentive they have been able to complete a technical study that specifies energy savings and costs of custom energy projects tailored to its business.

With help from Focus on Energy, Signicast has compiled energy and output data to feed into an Energy Performance Statistical Model. One module at a time, they plan to have all seven of their modules sub-metered and measuring data on a real time basis. This will enable the company to make adjustments to its energy use and track the savings of their energy efficiency projects.

Signicast is already saving almost five million kWh per year and has reduced its peak power demand by almost 800 kilowatts. One major variable frequency drive project, due for completion in 2017, will save 2.2 million kilowatt-hours per year.

There are approximately 125 foundries in Wisconsin. Since 2008, Focus on Energy has partnered with 66 of them to provide technical engineering support and over $8 million in energy efficiency project incentives. Together, these companies now save almost 100 million kWh and over 7 million therms each year, resulting in savings of about $8.5 million each year and over $100 million over the lifetime of the investment. Furthermore, they have reduced overall power demand by approximately 13 megawatts. This reduction in demand is helping defer the need for new power plant capacity in their communities, keeping costs lower for everyone.

These energy savings also translate into reduced emissions, helping these foundries manage environmental requirements as they establish themselves as conscientious, responsible members of their respective communities.

Wisconsin's foundries are optimizing their labor force, materials and energy intensity, but they are not doing it alone. Through education and support of their utility partners and Focus on Energy they are reshaping their futures in the new, highly automated, competitive world. BV

Focus on Energy is Wisconsin utilities’ statewide energy efficiency and renewable resource program.
The United Arab Emirates Offers Great Exporting Opportunities for Wisconsin Companies

The countries comprising the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) - Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) - are among some of the wealthiest in the world. Although much of the region’s wealth has accumulated thanks to oil and gas exports, world economic trends are forcing them to diversify their economies and these countries are spending heavily to do so.

Top government and private-sector priorities for growth in the region include the following sectors: tourism, transportation logistics, health care, bioscience, medical devices, aerospace and aviation, downstream energy processes and clean technology, education and food processing and food security. Wisconsin companies doing business in these sectors should consider exporting into the GCC markets.

The UAE has long been recognized as the commercial and business hub of the Middle East and can be one of the easiest markets in the region for U.S. exporters to enter. In 2015, Wisconsin companies exported $178 million worth of products to the UAE; 4.54 percent more than the total in 2014.

In the first six months of 2016, Wisconsin exports to the UAE totaled $139 million, 46.7 percent more than the first six months of 2015. In 2015, the UAE ranked #22 among destinations for Wisconsin exports. As of June 2016, it had climbed to the #13 spot.

To help Wisconsin companies understand the dynamics of the UAE market and connect companies with potential buyers, distributors and other partners in GCC markets, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) will be leading a global trade venture in January 2017 to the UAE and Qatar. The global trade venture coincides with the Arab Health trade show, making it an especially promising opportunity for companies in health-related fields.

For more information on this global trade venture, visit InWisconsin.com/middleeast. For general information about exporting, visit InWisconsin.com/exporting.

Visit the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation’s website www.InWisconsin.com/exporting for more information on exporting to Australia or other parts of the world.

INTERNATIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES IN UAE

![Chart showing top exports and imports to and from UAE]

Population: 5.8 million (roughly the same as WI)
Area: 83,600 sq km (1/2 the size of WI)
GDP: $345.5 billion

2015 WI Exports: $178 million
2015 WI Imports: $6 million

Key Industries: Petroleum and petrochemicals; fishing; aluminum; construction; fertilizers; commercial ship repair; wholesale trade and distribution; financial services; tourism; handicrafts and textiles

To learn more about growing your business in the UAE, visit InWisconsin.com/Exporting or call 855-INWIBIZ (toll free).
A healthy smile is a powerful thing. It can transform a mood, shift a mindset, change a life. Help your employees protect theirs with Delta Dental, the nation’s leading dental benefits provider. With more than 50 years of experience, we have the tools, oral health resources, and industry expertise to be your partner in wellness. DeltaDentalWI.com

The Future Wisconsin Project’s Third Annual Summit
December 15, 2016
Monona Terrace Community & Convention Center, Madison

This year’s event will feature:
• Job Honor Awards
• How to brand Wisconsin for success
• A comparison of Wisconsin’s and Minnesota’s economies
• How to expand entrepreneurship
• The need for strong global engagement
• Gov. Scott Walker (invited)

www.futurewi.org
Since 1966, it has been our privilege and good fortune to work with many Wisconsin-based manufacturers, helping them achieve amazing heights. Our clients have been local, regional, national and global — and we’re proud that so many have stayed with kinziegreen year after year. What’s our secret? It’s our mission to provide better thinking and better results for every client, every project. Let’s talk.

kinziegreen
marketing group
better thinking. better results.

Branding • Strategy • Web • Advertising • Marketing • PR
715.845.4251 | info@kinziegreen.com | kinziegreen.com/betterthinking

ANSWERS to the Wisconsin Manufacturing Quiz on page 3.

1. Johnsonville Sausage, LLC. Sheboygan Falls
3. Sun Drop. Twig’s Soda. Shawano
4. Five Star Fabricating, Twin Lakes
5. Carver and Marquis Yachts
6. Saddlebrook Barn Cams, Oconomowoc
7. Harley Davidson, Milwaukee
8. Desco, Milwaukee
9. Limburger cheese, Chalet Cheese Cooperative, Monroe
10. Customized Mobile Command Centers, LDV – Lynch Diversified Vehicles, Burlington
I’ve Been in Your Shoes

By U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson

Manufacturing is the backbone of our economy here in Wisconsin. As I’ve traveled around the state and visited manufacturers and businesses large and small, I’ve listened to your challenges and heard frustration about how bureaucrats in Washington make it so much harder for you to do business. The simple answer is that there are not enough people in government who have experience in the private sector – and as a result, they do not understand the burden that big government’s taxes, laws, rules and regulations place on people like you.

I understand your perspective because I share it. As a manufacturer from Oshkosh, I spent 31 years building a plastics manufacturing company from the ground up – installing the equipment, working the night shift and keeping the books. Today, we are the largest producer of a specialty plastic and we don’t export jobs, we export plastic – to over 20 countries, including China.

I know how difficult it is to build and grow a business, because I’ve done it. I understand how federal regulations make it harder for you to be successful, because I’ve experienced it. And I know how important it is to make sure we have a tax and regulatory environment that makes companies want to stay and invest here in Wisconsin – and in America.

That real-world experience taught me invaluable lessons of solving problems, improving efficiency and building consensus – and I’m using that perspective to get things done as your U.S. Senator.

I’ve cosponsored dozens of pieces of legislation focused on getting rid of job-killing regulatory overreach. We’ve had over 28 bills from my committee signed into law. I’m fighting against the rules and regulations that would make it harder for Wisconsinites to get by – like the overtime rule, which would cause payrolls to skyrocket and force employers to trim jobs and slash hours, and Obamacare, which has an outsized harmful effect on small businesses. And we need to support educational programs to give people the tools to succeed -- and provide employers and manufacturers the skilled workforce they need.

I’m working to scrap our current tax code and replace it with something simpler that raises the revenue we need and does no economic harm. Less time spent navigating the tax and regulatory systems means more time spent growing a business – and creating jobs.

The solution to many of our challenges is economic growth. Right now, our economy is at two percent real annual growth, but boosting growth to three percent will help fund critical programs – specifically infrastructure. Repairing our nation’s roads and bridges will lay the foundation for stronger growth while creating good-paying jobs. As a manufacturer, I know how important our infrastructure is to building a successful company and moving goods to market.

Fixing our broken system requires the perspective of someone who has actually spent time in the private sector. Sen. Feingold, who has spent 34 years in politics, is an out-of-touch career politician who thinks higher taxes and growing the federal government is the answer to every problem – and who once compared building his own political career to starting a small business.

I understand the challenges we face, but I also see great opportunity. The U.S. still has the hardest-working people and the sharpest minds but we need the right leadership to create the opportunity for people to succeed. I’ve been in the private sector and I’ve got a real record of accomplishment in the Senate. And every day, I’m working to get Washington out of the way so Wisconsinites can keep more of their hard-earned money to put back into their family budgets and their businesses. It’s how we create good jobs, stronger economic growth and more opportunity for all.

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wisconsin) represents Wisconsin in the U.S. Senate and is up for reelection this fall. He is Chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and serves on the Budget, Foreign Relations, and Commerce, Science and Transportation committees.
When I first joined the legislature, we were in the midst of passing Act 10. This bold conservative reform resulted in the elimination of a multi-billion dollar budget deficit. It has allowed Wisconsin taxpayers to save over five billion dollars and right our fiscal ship.

Now, five years later, some who heralded Act 10’s successes have joined Democrats to support you paying more at the gas pump. The Democrat-controlled, tax-hiking legislature of 2009 who left a multi-billion dollar deficit and a depleted transportation fund was replaced by voters in 2010 with Republicans who brought fiscal restraint and reformed government to expand prosperity. Unfortunately, sometimes our memories are short and people are tempted to head down the tax increase path just a few years removed from these dire straits.

Taxing advocates point to the perceived deficit in transportation funding. This projected deficit assumes, in part, continued large future spending on highway expansions. They dismiss the idea that some expansion projects could be delayed even though traffic counts have remained largely flat statewide. In one instance, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) left off three years where traffic was flat to justify a project. Population trends indicate traffic counts will not radically increase anytime soon. Virtually all projected population growth between now and 2040 will be among those under age 18 and over 65. Why would we spend taxpayer dollars to expand roads that do not, and likely will not, have increased traffic?

Gov. Walker is leading the effort to prevent your taxes from increasing tens of millions of dollars. I strongly support the Governor’s realigned priority of highway safety and maintenance over further expansions. Additionally, conservatives in the legislature will continue to promote the implementation of efficiencies to solve any DOT budget challenges the same way we have the past few years – bold, courageous reforms. The road builder special interests and their political beneficiaries will continue to advocate for the status quo – wasteful and antiquated practices that line their pockets but do not serve the best interest of the taxpayers. Every penny must be pinched in our transportation budget – and there is plenty to pinch.

What’s more, Wisconsin’s highway expenditure is in the top 15 nationwide. Wisconsin spends over $3.8 billion annually on highway expenditures. According to a recent study, only a quarter of states spend more per state-controlled mile of road than Wisconsin. Wisconsin’s road disbursements of $226,000 per state-controlled mile of road are more than Minnesota, Iowa, and Michigan and we spend more per capita on roads than Illinois and Michigan. Wisconsin is spending adequately on roads; however, our priorities continue to be on expansion rather than maintenance. We need better results from the spending we do already. For example, a re-design of the Zoo Interchange saved a half billion dollars.

With Wisconsin’s overall tax burden still in the top ten, this is no time to campaign for higher taxes. Even though Wisconsin’s gas tax is among the highest in the nation, those advocating for a tax increase claim Wisconsin drivers pay less to operate a vehicle than in other states. This statement is true only when ignoring that drivers living here pay other Wisconsin taxes far and above at least 40 other states. Wisconsinites’ tax burdens should be compared in their entirety. And remember, Wisconsin drivers are taxpayers.

When I joined the legislature five years ago, the focus for Republicans was lowering our overall tax burden through breakthrough reforms. We conservatives have always addressed challenges by fixing them, not raising taxes. We all know what a competitive world we live in. Continuing to govern this way gives Wisconsin the best chance at ensuring economic growth and prosperity for our citizens. I agree with the Governor that we cannot reverse our fiscal victories of the last five years with any tax or fee increase.

Sen. Duey Stroebel represents Wisconsin’s 44th Assembly District. He was on the 2015 Wisconsin Assembly Committee on Health.
Wisconsin Transportation: Starting the Conversation

By Rep. John Nygren (R – Marinette)

We can all agree that one of the main roles of government is to build and maintain our state’s infrastructure. Updates to our roadways are necessary to maintain the highest quality safety standards for Wisconsin drivers. Our highways and interstates are the lifeline to our state’s economy; businesses, tourism, agriculture, and our educational system all rely on our roads. That said, we cannot take short cuts or minimize the importance of our infrastructure by pretending there isn’t a funding problem. The time has come to begin finding department efficiencies and discussing possible solutions to our transportation budget.

As part of the 2011-13 State Budget, the legislature created a 10-member Wisconsin Transportation Finance and Policy Commission. This Commission examined transportation finance issues with the goal of developing recommendations to balance projected transportation needs. The commission clearly identified problems with our state’s transportation funding mechanism and released a report in January 2013 outlining the negative impacts of continued borrowing.

Later, during the 2015-17 State Budget process, Gov. Walker advocated to continue using an unsustainably high amount of bonding to fill Wisconsin’s transportation budget. As a result, we have seen several transportation project delays across our state. Unfortunately, these delays call our roadways’ safety and efficiency into question.

There isn’t an easy fix to Wisconsin’s transportation funding issue. The first step is to focus on finding program savings through department efficiencies. While this will save our state money, it won’t be enough to fill our transportation funding gap. To help address this gap, proposals have been brought to the foreground; now is the time to begin vetting possible solutions. I’m calling on my fellow state legislators, local officials and Wisconsin residents to participate in the discussion to find the most equitable and sustainable transportation funding mechanism for our state.

According to the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB), we will need to recover over $939 million just to maintain what was approved last budget. That figure doesn’t include debt service payments. Our state’s principal repayment currently stands at $4.3 billion in bonding; a whopping $3.5 billion of this repayment is owed by the transportation fund. Moreover, some of the transportation bonds that were approved last budget have yet to be issued, which means Wisconsin’s debt service will only continue to rise.

I believe we are on the right path by simply having these important discussions. Our top priority is to look for department efficiencies and program savings, then we need to bring everyone to the table and consider the potential advantages and disadvantages of each option. I look forward to continuing these conversations with my legislative colleagues, the governor, local officials and Wisconsin residents statewide as we approach the start of the 2017-19 State Budget process. BV

Rep. Nygren represents Wisconsin’s 89th Assembly District and is Co-Chair of the Joint Finance Committee.
“Somewhere Better” Campaign is Getting Traction

By Betsy Alles

Convincing someone to move to a new place is tough. First, you arouse curiosity. Then you offer a unique selling proposition. Ultimately you have to be “Somewhere Better” – significantly better – than what they have. That’s how the Sheboygan County relocation brand was born. Faced with a growing number of vacant jobs, our mission was clear.

We have a long list of plusses. Short commutes. Outdoor recreation. Lake Michigan. Bike-friendly designation. Global brand companies. Urban, rural and small town lifestyle options. Progressive schools. Those of us who live here know Sheboygan County is a place you can vacation where you work. But how could we best tell that story?

Because this was the first shared project of the Sheboygan County Chamber and the Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation, we started with a Memorandum of Understanding. “Together” was the only way forward so we agreed to a simple document to define the relationship. I believe that was the most important thing we did; it freed us to focus on the right things.

The branding process was messy; it always is. We conducted focus groups with new residents and feedback tours with young people from another community. We had a variety of folks at the table to develop the brand. There were strong opinions – no surprise to us of course. But when the right option revealed itself, we forgot whose idea it was; we just knew it was right. “Somewhere Better” was the unanimous choice.

We Started from the Inside Out

Tourists love to visit Sheboygan County, arriving in increasing numbers every year. But a good number of people living here either complain about it or don’t relish the idea of others moving here. Sheboygan is a well-kept secret.

First, we created a relocation guide. This was a mammoth seven-month project featuring all the best offerings of our fair region.

A matching website was developed featuring the most compelling photos and stories, along with a jobs database that pulls from top sites and from the Chamber. Currently more than 3,000 jobs are featured on www.someplacebetter.org.

Our January 2016 press rollout was on a slow news day (fortunately) in downtown Sheboygan. Eight major news outlets found our press release compelling enough to make the trip. Our panel of major employers – Kohler, Sargento, Acuity and Aurora Healthcare – talked about their urgent need for employees.

In the three days following the announcement we had more than 1.6 million online and broadcast impressions from that one event. It was a solid start.

A Sheboygan city bus was wrapped, billboards were launched in areas of high unemployment as far away as North Dakota and visits were made to areas where plants were closing. We also played the inside game, providing relocation guides to employers, hosting tours for HR professionals to brush up on their area knowledge and continue building bridges between educators, and employers to fill the pipeline with future employees.

We’ve Only Just Begun

In the coming year we hope to develop more ambassadors to assist employers in recruitment and retention efforts. Our young professionals network, Coastal, has grown to nearly 600 members. Much needed housing complexes are breaking ground to help solve our housing shortage. A unique intern housing project in a repurposed nursing home made news. Grass roots efforts such as Ignite Sheboygan County and our Levitt Amp Summer Concert series are cropping up to add to the vibrancy.

Thankfully, recognizing the inherent greatness of the area in “Somewhere Better” has ignited a movement that is getting traction for Sheboygan County employers. It’s an uphill battle struggling against a significant demographic shift. But we are heading in the right direction.

Betsy Alles is Executive Director of the Sheboygan County Chamber of Commerce

CHAMBER FUN FACT

Mercer, Wisconsin
The Loon Capital of the World

How much does a 16 foot loon weigh? The Mercer Loon, which made its debut on May 22, 1981, weighs approximately 2,000 pounds. It was erected at the location of the new Mercer Chamber of Commerce building to emphasize Mercer’s claim as the “Loon Capital”.

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ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND CONTRACTORS OF WISCONSIN

CONSISTS OF 823 MEMBERS WHO EMPLOY 23,000 PEOPLE AND PERFORM $4 BILLION IN CONSTRUCTION SERVICES EACH YEAR

IMPROVING SAFETY PERFORMANCE

Member companies that achieve the highest level of performance in ABC’s safety program are 720 percent safer than the BLS industry average.

* Based on analysis of the Total Recordable Incident Rates (TRIR) of participants in ABC’s 2015 Safety Training Evaluation Process (STEP) vs. the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) construction industry average.

TRAINING TOMORROW’S WORKFORCE

ABC of Wisconsin is preparing more than 1,000 apprentices for the construction trades who completed nearly 150,000 hours of paid-related instruction in 2015.

$694.1 BILLION 2016

GROWING THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Nonresidential construction spending in the U.S. has grown nearly 35 percent since 2011.

*U.S. Census Bureau nonresidential construction spending, annualized rate, seasonally adjusted from April 2011 to April 2016.

ABC MEMBERS BUILD WISCONSIN

- ABC of Wisconsin’s 800-plus member firms represent all specialties within the construction industry, primarily focused on the commercial and industrial sectors.

- They are champions of free enterprise and open competition who are committed to delivering high-quality, safe construction projects that are awarded to the most-qualified bidder based on merit.

- ABC members build our communities - from schools and hospitals to industrial facilities, skyscrapers, professional sports venues and the playground down the street. They build structures we use to work, play, heal and learn.
As we celebrate Manufacturing Month, Wipfli salutes Wisconsin’s manufacturers for the positive impact and the vital role you play in our state’s economy.

Through eight decades of helping manufacturing companies, we understand the hard work and dedication it takes to overcome ever-changing challenges and to succeed. We’re ready to help you tackle today’s issues and prepare you for those you will face tomorrow.

Visit us October 20 at the Manufacturing First Expo & Conference in Green Bay, Wisconsin.