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Governor Doyle Visits Hudson

Governor Jim Doyle stopped in Hudson on July 24th as part of his 3-day tour of communities along the Mississippi and St. Croix River Rivers. His stops in several communities were intended to encourage tourism and promote environmental initiatives. He also met with local citizens and local government and business leaders to make sure their views are heard in Madison. Governor Doyle's stop in Hudson brought him to Hudson Bagel & Coffee Shop. His next stop was to Crystal Ball Organic Dairy Farm near Osceola in Polk County.



Governor Jim Doyle addresses a the crowd at Hudson Bagel & Coffee Shop on July 24th

"The people and communities along the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers are part of what makes Wisconsin so great," Governor Doyle said before the 3-day trip began. "These communities have so much to offer — from great tourist attractions to thriving businesses and I look forward to visiting them all. I believe that government works best when leaders have a chance to get to know people one on one, and hear directly from the people we serve."

Three cabinet secretaries joined Governor Doyle in Hudson, Secretary Kelli Trumble, Department of Tourism, Secretary Rod Nilsestuen, Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and Secretary Matt Frank, Department of Natural Resources.

In Hudson, Governor Doyle spoke about Wisconsin's economy and his commitment to continue working with Minnesota on cost-saving ventures.

U.S. Rep. Kind and Panel Present Updates on Recovery Act

U.S. Representative Ron Kind and officials from the Small Business Administration (SBA) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development presented on update on the federal Recovery Act at the county government center in Hudson on July 6th. The event was hosted by the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) which serves the 3-county region of the St. Croix Valley from its offices on campus of UW-River Falls. About 70 small businesses and individuals attended the event.

Eric Ness, the Wisconsin District Director of SBA in Madison/Milwaukee, presented information on how the SBA has eliminated and reduced loan fees on some of its 7(a) and 504 programs as well as increased the guarantee on the 7(a) from 75 to 85%, up to 90%, depending on the size of the loan.

Ness also discussed a new SBA loan. The ARC Loan program (America's Recovery Capital) was introduced on June 15th and is designed to give viable small businesses suffering immediate financial hardship some temporary relief so that they can keep their doors open and get their cash flow back on track. An ARC loan is a deferred payment loan of up to \$35,000 to help for-profit businesses make their principal and interest payments on existing, qualifying debt. Approved ARC loans are interest-free to the borrower, 100% guaranteed by the SBA, and have no SBA



U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (left) listens as Eric Ness of Wisconsin office of the Small Business Administration presents details on SBA programs
Photo: UW-River Falls

fees associated with them. Approved ARC loans will disburse funds for payments of principal and interest for up to six months, on existing, qualifying loans. The disbursement period of up to six months is followed by 12 months with no repayment of the ARC loan principal. After the deferral period, the borrower pays back only the ARC loan principal over a five year period.

Jeff Hudson from USDA discussed the Business & Industry Guaranteed Loan (B&I). This program is designed to improve, develop or finance business, industry and employment and improve the economic and environmental climate in rural communities. Mr. Hudson is located in USDA's Stevens Point office.

For more information, go to the SBA's Wisconsin website, www.sba.gov/wi or the USDA's website, www.rurdev.usda.gov. Additional information on the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act can be found at www.sba.gov/recovery/index.html.

Becky Freund conducts marketing and outreach in St. Croix County for the Wisconsin office of the SBA. She can be reached at (608) 441-5519.

Commerce Secretary Says Governor's Budget Spurs Business Growth

By Richard J. Leinenkugel, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Commerce

A Column of Personal Opinion



*Richard J.
Leinenkugel
Wisconsin
Secretary of
Commerce*

In tough times, businesses have to cut everything but their core operations. Governor Jim Doyle demonstrates in his new budget that business development remains a core priority.

Here at the Department of Commerce, we'll be implementing the most powerful new economic development tools in the nation to help grow jobs and investment and encourage business consolidation in Wisconsin.

This budget provides refundable income and franchise tax credits (essentially like cash) worth up to 7 percent of new, full-time payroll. In some cases, original equipment manufacturers can claim a similar 7 percent of payroll credit if they are making investments to keep jobs here in Wisconsin. These payroll tax credits can combine with an additional 10-percent refundable credit for companies making significant capital investments.

Also new is a \$10 million annual payroll tax credit for small to medium-sized businesses that create family-supporting jobs. In addition, these businesses can access credits to pay for worker training.

At the same time these steps strengthen Wisconsin's manufacturers and other industries, we are taking steps to spur innovation and investment. We can reward investment in Wisconsin start-up companies while improving access to capital for those companies. For example, investors in qualified start-up companies will see a 100-percent capital gains tax exemption.

This budget bolsters biotechnology by extending the tax exemptions already on manufacturing equipment to research equipment. It helps modernize our meat and dairy industries by making co-ops eligible for a 10 percent tax credit.

This budget also builds on the Governor's successful angel and venture capital investment programs. More companies and more industries will be able to benefit from this investment network, and it will be private companies (not the government) deciding where and how these investments flow.

Janesville and Kenosha have seen economic dislocations from the collapse of the auto industry. This budget provides up to \$20 million in tax credits to businesses that create and sustain jobs in Janesville and Kenosha.

It's worth noting that Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce endorsed many of the Governor's economic development proposals in its publication, *Moving Wisconsin Forward*. In fact, between the budget repair bill and this budget, the Governor has checked 11 of 12 goals for innovation and job creation off their list.

Wisconsin businesses have always shown the will, determination and skill to work their way through economic downturns and emerge stronger and more competitive. With this budget, using these new incentives, we will move Wisconsin forward.

Department of Revenue Releases Wisconsin's Economic Outlook

Bottom of Recession is in sight, but Slow Recovery Expected

On July 3rd, the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) released its quarterly Economic Outlook for the state. According to the report, the national economic recession remains severe, but the bottom is in sight and Wisconsin is expected to show recovery in employment and personal income starting in 2010. Real Gross Domestic Product (GPD) is forecast to increase in the third quarter of 2009, as part of the slow recovery.

"The global economic crisis continues to impact Wisconsin families, businesses and governments," said Revenue Secretary Roger M. Ervin. "While a slow recovery is expected to begin next year, we must remain focused on creating and retaining jobs and moving the state toward a path of economic growth," he added.

The Economic Outlook indicates that total state employment is expected to decrease by 4.1% in 2009, hitting bottom late in the year before starting to recover in 2010. Wisconsin personal income growth is expected to fall by 1% in 2009. The drop is tempered by benefits from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which is expected to boost transfer receipts by 9.5% this year, according to the DOR.

A special report on Wisconsin exports shows an increase of 9.2% in 2008, down slightly from 9.6% in 2007. Since 2003, state exports have grown 78.5% overall, totaling \$20.55 billion in 2008. Exports are expected to decline in 2009 due to the continued global recession facing Wisconsin trading partners, before returning to slight growth in 2010.

The executive summary and full report of the latest Economic Outlook are available at <http://www.revenue.wi.gov/ra/0906/0906.html>.

Governor Doyle will Lead Trade Mission to Japan & China

Cabinet Secretaries Leinenkugel and Nilsestuen Will Join Governor

On July 15th, Governor Jim Doyle announced that he will lead a trade mission to Japan and China from September 13-22, 2009. The trade mission will provide participants with opportunities to meet with distributors, potential customers, and key business and government officials. The Governor will also promote investment by Japanese and Chinese companies in Wisconsin. Secretaries Richard J. Leinenkugel (Wisconsin Department of Commerce) and Rod Nilsestuen (Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection) will join the governor.

"Japan and China are among Wisconsin's most important export markets," Governor Doyle said. "By joining the mission, businesses can gain firsthand knowledge of these markets and develop sound export strategies."

Governor Doyle will attend the 41st Annual Joint Meetings of the Midwest U.S.-Japan and Japan-Midwest U.S. Associations in Tokyo, Japan, September 13-15. This venue has proved to be a valuable source of business contacts for Wisconsin firms. In 2008, Japan ranked as Wisconsin's fifth-largest customer, with exports totaling \$724.4 million, a 10.6 percent increase over 2007.

The Governor will lead the mission to Harbin, Beijing and Shanghai, China, from September 15-22. China has weathered the international recession quite well and is predicting economic growth of 8 percent in 2009, thanks in part to the Chinese government's stimulus plan, which targets infrastructure projects coupled with a push for banks to increase lending and dramatic tax breaks for businesses. China is Wisconsin's third-largest customer, with exports totaling \$1.2 billion, a 4.4 percent increase over 2007.

Businesses interested in learning more about the Wisconsin Mission to Japan and China can contact the following officials at the Wisconsin Department of Commerce:

Jennifer Winner, (608) 266-0413, jennifer.winner@wisconsin.gov;
Christine Stamm, (608) 264-7824, christine.stamm@wisconsin.gov; or
Beng Yeap, (608) 266-1480, beng.yeap@wisconsin.gov.

State Dept. of Transportation Seeks Comments on Long-Range Multi-Modal Plan

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has completed the final draft of Connections 2030, Wisconsin's statewide long-range multimodal transportation plan.

Connections 2030 addresses all forms of transportation over a 20-year planning horizon: highways, local roads, air, water, rail, bicycle, pedestrian and transit. The overall goal of the planning process is to identify a series of policies to aid transportation decision-makers when evaluating programs and projects.

The plan has been updated to reflect feedback received during the draft plan public comment period.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) will conduct five public hearings in August. Additional public input and involvement are critical for Connections 2030 to be effective. Public feedback helps ensure the plan reflects the state's values and priorities. The closest hearing for the St. Croix Valley is in Eau Claire, on Thursday, August 20th at the Sacred Heart Conference Center, 900 West Clairmont Avenue, from 4:00 to 7:00 pm.

This is your opportunity to provide written and oral testimony. The comment period runs from July 24th to August 31st. To learn more about Connections 2030, view or print copies of plan-related materials, and learn about upcoming public hearings, visit the Connections 2030 web site, www.wiconnections2030.gov.

Regional Loan Fund Launches Website

A supplement loan fund for new and existing businesses in the 7-county region of west central Wisconsin recently created a website, www.rbfinc.org as a way for create greater awareness for the low-interest funds.

The Regional Business Fund, Inc., (RBF, Inc.), a nonprofit organization created by the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, administers the loan program. The RBF, Inc. provides supplemental loans to businesses that expand in the region, diversify the economy, add new technology and create quality jobs and capital investment.

In 2007, RBF, Inc. began accepting the transfer of revolving loan fund accounts from towns, villages, cities, and counties in west central Wisconsin. This allowed RBF, Inc. to capitalize a new set of loan programs for new and existing businesses. The loan funds were capitalized at approximately \$15 million, broken down as \$4.582 million in cash and \$11.407 million in loan receivables. From the 2008 annual report, the fund had \$4.138 million in cash and \$12.952 million in loan receivables.

The RBF, Inc. has four distinct loan programs, including the business loan fund (supplemental loans of up to \$150,000), micro loans (loans between \$5,000 and \$25,000), downtown facade loans (zero-interest loans of up to \$30,000), and technology enterprise loans (\$100,000 to \$250,000) as quasi-equity or patient debt for new and emerging technology companies.

The seven counties participating in the RBF, Inc. loan programs include St. Croix, Polk, Pierce, Clark, Barron, Dunn Chippewa and Eau Claire (businesses located in the City of Eau Claire are only eligible for the Technology Enterprise Fund program).

Applications to the loan programs are available on-line.

Raymond Hughes (Eau Claire) is the president of the RBF, Inc. Joel Kraemer is St. Croix County's representative on the RBF, Inc. board of directors.

For additional information on the Regional Business Fund, Inc., contact Char Gurney or Beth Waldhart at the regional planning commission (715) 836-2918 or rbfinc@rbginc.org.

First National Bank of River Falls Names Jeffrey J. Johnson President and CEO

On July 8th, the board of directors at First National Bank of River Falls announced the hiring of Jeffrey J. Johnson as president and chief executive officer. Johnson has worked in finance and community banking for over 20 years. He will oversee the day-to-day functions of the bank, including supervision of the bank's executive team, liaison with the board and shareholders, business development, customer service, and community support.

"Jeff Johnson is a respected community banker with a lengthy track record of banking industry success," said Patricia Smith Neir, the lead director at First National Bank. "First National is fortunate to have him join our management team."



Jeffrey J. Johnson, president and CEO, First National Bank of River Falls Photo: River Falls Journal

Most recently, Johnson served as president of Badger Bank in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. "I look forward to joining the First National organization," said Jeff Johnson. "I have found that only community banks offer the personalized service customers expect. It's the way you take care of your employees, your customers and your community that sets you apart," he added.

Johnson earned his Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Finance from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. He has also completed the Graduate School of Banking at UW-Madison.

First National Bank of River Falls has been a locally-owned community bank since 1904. The bank has four branches, including River Falls, UW-River Falls, Prescott, and New Richmond.

Frisbie Architects Adds Two Architects

Frisbie Architects (River Falls, Wisc.) recently added two registered architects. They are Kevin Thode, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP and Jim Muehlbauer, AIA, LEED AP. Frisbie Architects Principal, Matt Frisbie, AIA, said, "We are excited about the healthcare, commercial and sustainable design project expertise these two key strategic hires bring as we continue to enhance the value we provide our clients."

As a Project Architect and Business Development Manager, Kevin Thode, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP, brings over twenty years of diverse architectural experience in the retail, restaurant, themed entertainment, and family health club market segments on projects up to \$30 million in construction value. In addition to being a project manager, Thode will help focus the firm's business development efforts as they continue to strategically grow in healthcare, assisted living, higher education and other commercial markets. Thode has a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Minnesota, is a LEED Accredited Professional, and is currently licensed in 22 states and the District of Columbia. He lives in Stillwater, Minnesota, and is originally from in Winona, Minnesota.



Kevin Thode, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP



Jim Muehlbauer, AIA, LEED AP

Jim Muehlbauer, AIA, LEED AP is a Project Architect/Sustainability Specialist. With more than 20 years of experience, Muehlbauer has led sustainable design initiatives and LEED Certification submittals for healthcare and commercial projects, including Iowa's first LEED Silver Certified hospital (certification pending) and a corporate campus building that received LEED-EB Gold Certification for Existing Buildings. Muehlbauer also has experience as a project architect for office, multi-family housing, religious, educational and industrial projects. As a LEED Accredited Professional, Muehlbauer is actively involved with the U.S. Green Building Council's Mississippi Headwaters Chapter, and strives to help clients incorporate earth-friendly, energy-saving choices. He is a resident of Woodbury, Minnesota and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture from the University of Minnesota and is a registered architect in Wisconsin.

Frisbie Architects is a growing twelve-person architecture firm specializing in commercial, assisted living, healthcare, government, higher education and church projects. The firm has architects registered in Minnesota, Wisconsin and twenty two other states and the District of Columbia. For more information, visit their website www.frisbiearchitects.com.

Baldwin Area Medical Center Names Alison Page CEO

The Board of Trustees of the Baldwin Area Medical Center (BAMC) announced that Alison Page will serve as its chief operating officer, effective July 16, 2009.

Page comes to BAMC from the Fairview system. She has the following degrees: Masters of both Healthcare Administration and Science; Bachelor of Science; Registered Nurse, licensed in both Wisconsin and Minnesota; and Greenbelt, Six Sigma quality improvement methodology certification.

Page's career in direct patient care, governance, operational and community leadership brings her to the position of CEO. She has been the Vice President of Operations of Fairview Red Wing Health Services, in essence, the Chief Operating Officer, leading all operational aspects of the Red Wing facility. In this position she oversaw the design of the new facility including the selection of all major clinical equipment and systems.

Page has also been Chief Safety Officer of Fairview Health Services, reporting directly to the Fairview CEO in system-wide leadership of quality and safety of patient care.

Julie Herman serves as the Chair of the Board of Trustees.



*Alison Page, CEO,
Baldwin Area
Medical Center*

Bakke Norman Announces New Attorney

Attorney Adam Jarchow recently joined Bakke Norman, S.C. Mr. Jarchow began his legal career in Jacksonville, Florida, practicing in the corporate, business and real estate groups of a respected Florida firm handling mergers and acquisitions, succession planning, real estate, bank loans and workouts, securities, entity formation and general contract negotiation and drafting. He then worked in the international law firm of Fulbright and Jaworski in Minneapolis, continuing to work on corporate and business-related matters.



Adam Jarchow

With a background in finance and a keen interest in a variety of business law matters, Mr. Jarchow is presently involved in handling all types of transactions for Bakke-Norman's business, banking, real estate and transactional group, as well as representing area municipalities.

Mr. Jarchow grew up near Reeve and attended Clear Lake High School. He received his Bachelor of Science in Finance from the University of South Florida, graduating cum laude. Mr. Jarchow received his law degree from University of Florida, where he finished in the top 5% of his class and was the Managing Editor of the Law Review.

Licensed by the State Bars of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Florida, he is admitted to practice before the United States District Courts for the Western District of Wisconsin, District of Minnesota and Middle District of Florida.

Bakke Norman, S.C. is a Northwest Wisconsin law firm handling business and estate planning transactions, complex commercial, employment and intellectual property litigation, personal injury, family law, criminal matters, and also represents many area municipalities.

For more information on Bakke Norman, S.C., visit: www.bakkenorman.com.

Chiefs Hold Training Camp at UW-River Falls

The Kansas City Chiefs have returned for the 19th consecutive year to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls for its summer training camp. Players, coaches, and staff arrived at River Falls on Thursday, July 30th. The first day of practice was Saturday, Aug. 1st. The Chiefs have called River Falls its training camp home since 1991.

Practices will be conducted a little differently in 2009. In previous years, the Chiefs practiced twice per day, everyday. This year, the team will alternate practicing once per day and twice per day. On the days when the team practices once, the practice will run from 2 to 4 p.m. During two-a-day practices, the team will practice from 9 to 11 a.m. and then again from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. All practices, except Family Fun Day, which requires an admission fee, are free and open to the public.

On Wednesday, Aug. 5th and Wednesday, Aug. 12, Kids' Days will be held. During Kids' Days, children's games will be available and there will be discounts on concession stand food. The events will be from 9 to 11 a.m. The events are free. Call 715-425-3771 for more information or to register.

Saturday, August 8th marks the annual Family Fun Day. In past years, the event was held during the evening, but this year, the activities will be held during the Chiefs' afternoon practice. Family Fun Day is sponsored by Viking Coca Cola of River Falls. It gives fans a chance to take photos and obtain autographs of their favorite Chief players and coaches. Food and beverages will be sold, and there will be a range of other activities for the family. Gates open at 11 a.m.

The popular Chiefs Experience, which includes football skill activities for all ages, will be available again. The Chiefs will sign autographs starting at 1:30 p.m., and a scheduled two-hour practice will start at 2 p.m. Admission is \$7 for adults and free for children under 18.

The team will break training camp on Thursday, Aug. 20th.

St. Croix County's Unemployment Rate Rises **Unemployment Rises in 57 of 72 Counties**

On July 22nd, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) released the June unemployment rates for Wisconsin's 72 counties. St. Croix's rate was estimated at 8.4% which is up compared to the May rate of 8.2% and April's rate of 9.1%. A year ago, the county's unemployment rate was estimated at 3.8%. Twenty-two counties had unemployment rates lower than St. Croix in April.

Unemployment rates from May to June increased in 57 of Wisconsin's 72 counties, decreased in 11, and remained the same in four. Dane County recorded the lowest rate at 6.3%, followed by Pepin County at 6.6%. Rusk County had the highest rate in June at 13.0%, compared to 13.4% in May.

The adjusted unemployment rate for Wisconsin in June was estimated at 9.0% which is higher than the May rate of 8.7% and April's rate of 8.8%. The state's rate was 4.4% one year ago.

The U.S. unemployment rate was estimated at 9.5% which is an increase from the May rate of 9.1% and April's rate of 8.6%. One year ago the U.S. rate was estimated at 5.6%.

<i>County</i>	<i>June 2009 Unemployment Rate</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Rate One Year Ago</i>	<i>County</i>	<i>June 2009 Unemployment Rate</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Rate One Year Ago</i>
Barron	9.0%	41	4.8%	Pepin	6.6%	71	4.1%
Chippewa	8.4%	50	4.6%	Pierce	8.1%	63	3.8%
Clark	9.2%	37	4.8%	Polk	10.0%	20	5.1%
Dunn	7.6%	67	4.4%	Rusk	13.0%	1	6.6%
Eau Claire	7.5%	70	4.3%	St. Croix	8.4%	50	3.8%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development; St. Croix Economic Development Corp.

Note: The 10 counties of western, west central, & northwest Wisconsin comprise Momentum West, a regional economic development & marketing organization