



Chris Danou's Capitol Report

State of the State is Very Underwhelming

Every year, usually in the middle of January, the Governor gives the annual State of the State Address. This is similar to the State of the Union given by the President each year in that it brings all branches of government together, and gives citizens the chance to have a direct update from our Commander in Chief.

The State of the State gives the Governor a chance to update and address members of the Assembly, Senate, Supreme Court Justices, tribal leaders, state dignitaries and the people of Wisconsin to what has taken place and what the next year will bring. It's a formal event that brings both sides of the aisle together, and provides an optimistic outlook for the future based on things that took place during the past year, or several years.

This year, the Governor provided an address that had little substance and was an attempt to show how things have improved in Wisconsin under his watch. After the formalities ended, the Governor thanked people for being there, introduced his family and went into his speech. It didn't take very long for me to start questioning some of the things he was lauding.

While the State of the State Address is always full of talking points and sound bites that paint a rosy picture, I believe most of the time there are some tangible accomplishments that bring good news for our state. However, in the eight years I've watched the State of the State in person, I don't recall a time when the Governor used facts and figures from when George H. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush were President to make a case for good news in Wisconsin.

The Governor patted himself on the back for our current situation by citing employment and job stats from 1989, 1992 and 2001. It truly surprised me that he was comparing our current unemployment claims levels to years that go as far back as 27 years ago, which is before Ron Wolf came to Green Bay and Barry Alvarez came to Wisconsin. This is the same year that my final semester at the UW was \$1,000. When talking about monthly jobs gains, the Governor cited April, 1992 to show positive numbers. That's back when Paul Molitor was the DH for the Brewers and a pound of bacon was \$1.92. The Governor also cited unemployment numbers from March, 2001, which is six months before 9/11 and when a stamp was \$0.34. Obviously a lot has changed since 1989, 1992 and 2001 in Wisconsin, across the nation and world.

In a day and age when information for just about anything is readily available, it's important for us to make sure we have facts and figures that are up-to-date when talking about monthly job and employment figures. It reinforces me to believe the true picture of job growth and employment in Wisconsin isn't that great when the Governor compares current numbers with information that is from two or three decades ago.

While it's important to have an understanding of history and it's fun to think back and talk about the past, we need to be looking forward with a 21st century vision that will help us create jobs and improve our quality of life. I hope our Governor will not only update his talking points, but will also update his way of thinking so we can get things done, bring back the middle-class, and keep Wisconsin moving forward.

