



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

Capitol Update **By Senator Howard Marklein** **June 26, 2015**

Tourism by the Numbers

It is summer in 17th Senate District! Annual festivals, parades and picnics happen every weekend. Our state, county and municipal parks are bustling with families camping, hiking or hanging-out, enjoying the weather and natural resources of our state. Our bike trails take visitors and locals through gorgeous terrain. Local retailers and restaurants offer unique treasures and experiences unmatched in other parts of the state!

Summer in the 17th is a busy time of year that means a lot to our local economies.

According to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism (Tourism), the economic impact of tourism in the counties of the 17th Senate District was \$1.7 billion in 2014, an increase of 6% over 2013! We beat the state average of a 5.5% increase overall!

We employed 15,654 people in tourism-related jobs in the 17th Senate District last year which contributed \$319.7 million to our local economies through the income generated by these jobs. Most tourism-related jobs are small businesses, travel and hospitality jobs that can't be outsourced or exported. These employees must work and live right here in the 17th Senate District.

It is difficult to list all of the events, destinations and activities that bring visitors to the 17th Senate District! Our geography, which reaches from the border with Illinois and Iowa all of the way north through Juneau County touches the Mississippi River, the Wisconsin River, the Lemonwier River, the Baraboo River, Castle Rock Lake, Lake Petenwell and a host of other lakes, streams and natural attractions.

We have more than 100 trout streams enjoyed by anglers from around the world. Cyclists use more than 150 miles of bike trails that take them through beautiful natural areas, farm fields, bluffs and forests. The 17th Senate District includes parts of eight state parks and at least 57 county and municipal parks, forests and natural areas.

Visitors also seek historical and educational experiences at the wide variety of museums and attractions throughout our communities. From Taliesin and the House on the Rock in Spring Green to the Toy Museum in Fennimore; from the Pioneer Log Village in Reedsburg to Gravity Hill in Shullsburg; from the Mining Museum in Platteville to the military aircraft on display at Volk Field in Camp Douglas; visitors and locals can experience an amazing array of attractions and inspiring ideas.

Our local restaurants offer unique dishes and dining experiences throughout the 17th Senate District. Many incorporate locally-sourced products and design their menus to compliment the natural environment around us. Some of our local eateries offer visitors homemade comfort foods that Wisconsin is known for! Taverns and bars throughout our district create memorable nightlife with local musicians, local craft beers and signature drinks. I have enjoyed a limburger cheese sandwich at Baumgartner's in Monroe a time or two!

Main street businesses sell local art, unique gifts, handmade items and a plethora of Something Special from Wisconsin delicacies. With the wide variety of retail in our district, visitors are drawn away from the big box into the small business to find unique products and ideas.

Combine all of the business and natural wonders with local people and you get a festival or picnic just about every weekend. Whether enjoying a fish fry in Argyle or a pancake breakfast with the American Legion in LaValle; or perhaps a ride on the Ali Babba at Butterfest in Reedsburg or a catfish dinner in Potosi; visitors who meet us in the 17th Senate District appreciate our small towns and our brand of hospitality.

As your State Senator, I make my way throughout the district every week, enjoying local events and parades while talking with the people I meet along the way. It is clear to me that the economic growth we have experienced in tourism is due to our efforts to share the bounty of our communities with each other and visitors from Wisconsin and beyond. Your local organizations have done a spectacular job of promoting our communities and building opportunities for visitors to spend money and time in the 17th Senate District.

I look forward to continuing my summer in the 17th and hope you will join me at a local event or attraction to experience everything we have to offer!

For more information and to connect with me, visit my website <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/17/marklein> and subscribe to my weekly E-Update by sending an email to Sen.Marklein@legis.wisconsin.gov. Do not hesitate to call 800-978-8008 if you have input, ideas or need assistance with any state-related matters.

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