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# HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

## **Capitol Update By Senator Howard Marklein July 3, 2015**

### *In Rural Wisconsin, Five Minutes Matter*

The 17<sup>th</sup> Senate District is huge. We are part of one of the largest Senate Districts in the State of Wisconsin with all or parts of nine counties, three congressional districts and geography that spans from the Iowa and Illinois border to the tip of Juneau County! It takes nearly three hours to drive from the northern most part of our district to the point furthest south.

The reason for the massive geography of our district is that most of it is rural. Every Senate District represents roughly 170,000 people of Wisconsin's total 5.758 million residents. In order to collect that many people, our district spans all of Grant, Lafayette, Richland and Juneau counties. We also have parts of Iowa, Sauk, Monroe, Vernon and Green counties.

Our largest municipalities are Platteville (11,224), Monroe (10,827), Reedsburg (10,014) and Richland Center (5,080). We have 181 individual municipalities in 74 different zip codes and 67,573 households. Our geography covers 4,550 square miles which is 7% of our state!

Our district is rural in every sense of the word. Webster defines "rural" as of or relating to the country, country people or life, or agriculture. Even though we have several cities in our district, the entire 17<sup>th</sup> Senate District is considered rural. Our population is spread out. Agriculture is a major part of our economic portfolio and natural resources abound. There is great distance between people and places. We live a rural lifestyle.

With this definition, comes unique challenges. Representing a rural district means that I am focused on different priorities than many of my colleagues. I continually seek ways to protect and promote the things that our communities need.

A prime example of our unique approach for rural issues was on display at the state capitol this week. Senate Bill (SB) 182 was signed into law to allow out-of-state ambulance service in portions of Lafayette County. I was proud to sponsor this bill with State Representative Todd Novak (R-Dodgeville).

Residents in southern Lafayette County have been utilizing the Warren Illinois Emergency Medical Services (EMS) from Warren, Illinois since the 1970's in emergency situations. An issue arose, however, when the state Department of Health Services (DHS) issued a memo determining out-of-state EMS providers would no longer be able to provide services because of a difference in licensing.

In medical emergencies time is everything. State government paperwork should not stand in the way of life saving services in any circumstances. I was pleased to work to see this bill become law for those that rely on emergency services that happen to be just a few miles across a state border.

The bill, signed into law by Governor Scott Walker, allows a limited exemption from the requirement for licensure for an ambulance service in another state.

Warren, Illinois is located about five minutes away from the Gratiot and South Wayne areas. The nearest Wisconsin-based EMS to those communities is more than 25 minutes away. This difference in time could save a life. I want to thank Lafayette County Sheriff Reg Gill and the many residents of Lafayette County that made us aware of this, so we could take meaningful steps to address the issue.

In coming weeks, I look forward to sharing more ways rural Wisconsin has been served in the state budget. I am proud of our efforts to represent you and look forward to providing more details and data as the state budget is completed in the next week.

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](mailto: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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