



Column: National Travel and Tourism Week

May 2-8, 2021

May 2-8, 2021 marks National Travel and Tourism Week, a time to recognize the ways in which travel impacts and improves our economy, businesses and personal wellbeing. It is an annual celebration first established in 1983. This year, during its 38th anniversary, we are celebrating with the theme, "The Power of Travel", to help us focus on how travel and tourism has the power to help us rebuild as we make our way out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Like many other industries, the tourism industry suffered greatly during the pandemic. While travel-supported jobs accounted for only 11% of the workforce pre-pandemic, they accounted for 65% of the unemployment in 2020. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the travel industry has lost over \$1 trillion.

In Wisconsin and in the 14th Senate District, the wellbeing of the tourism and travel industry is especially important. The Wisconsin Dells hosts over 4 million visitors each year and supports over 16,000 jobs in the area. Statewide, this industry supplies over 200,000 jobs and resulted in over \$22 billion in total sales in 2019. While this industry suffered a heavy hit last year, we have the ability to respond and make up for those losses.

A revitalized travel industry can help rebuild our economy, strengthen our workforce, help small businesses and allow us to reconnect with one another again. This can help us revive our communities in the wake of the pandemic. Wisconsin's beauty isn't only outdoors, but it's also in the thriving communities that form the backbone of our great state.

I invite you to join me this National Travel and Tourism Week in recognizing this important industry and supporting it any way you can. Even if you can't travel, I invite you to get out and support your local small businesses, especially those that are usually dependent on travel and tourism. This supports our communities, our state and our nation, and it starts with us!

As always, my office is here to support you if you need help with a state agency, have questions on legislation or have any other concerns surrounding state government. Please feel free to call my office in Madison at (608) 266-0751, or email me at Sen.Ballweg@legis.wisconsin.gov. Also, make sure to ask to sign up for my e-newsletter for regular updates from my office!

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