



STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 3RD ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

A1 Ott

SPRING 2008 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Planning a Summer Vacation? TRAVEL WISCONSIN!

Wisconsin is a beautiful state. We have the best of everything here—pristine lakes, great parks, spectacular wildlife and a wide array of cultural activities. From hiking and fishing to outdoor concerts and festivals, our great state offers endless options for summer fun.

When making your summer vacation plans, consider all that Wisconsin has to offer!

For more information on Wisconsin travel opportunities, visit the Wisconsin Department of Tourism website at: www.travelwisconsin.com

Information on local attractions and events can be found at:

Calumet County
www.travelcalumet.com

Fox Cities Visitors & Convention Bureau
www.foxcities.org

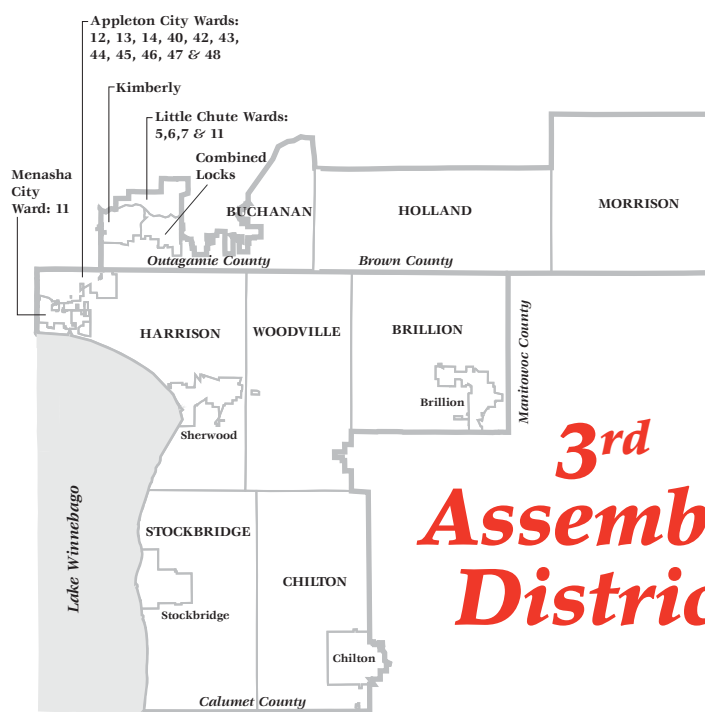
Green Bay Area Visitors & Convention Bureau
www.packercountry.com

State Parks & Trails

The Wisconsin State Parks System provides excellent outdoor recreation opportunities. From High Cliff State Park right in our backyard to Amnicon Falls State Park in Superior, you'll find campgrounds, trails, historic sites, and much more.

For maps and other information on state parks, trails and recreation areas, visit: www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/parks

Starting in October 2008, disabled veterans and former POWs will be able to access the Wisconsin State Parks System for free.



3rd Assembly District



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CAPITOL TOURS

If your summer travels take you to the Madison area, consider a visit to your State Capitol. The State Capitol is a truly remarkable place. I take great pride in having families and school groups from my district visit this beautiful and historic building.

Free tours of the Capitol are offered Monday through Saturday at 9:00, 10:00, 11:00 a.m. and 1:00, 2:00, 3:00 p.m.; and Sundays at 1:00, 2:00, 3:00 p.m. Groups of ten or more are advised to make a tour reservation by calling (608) 266-0382.

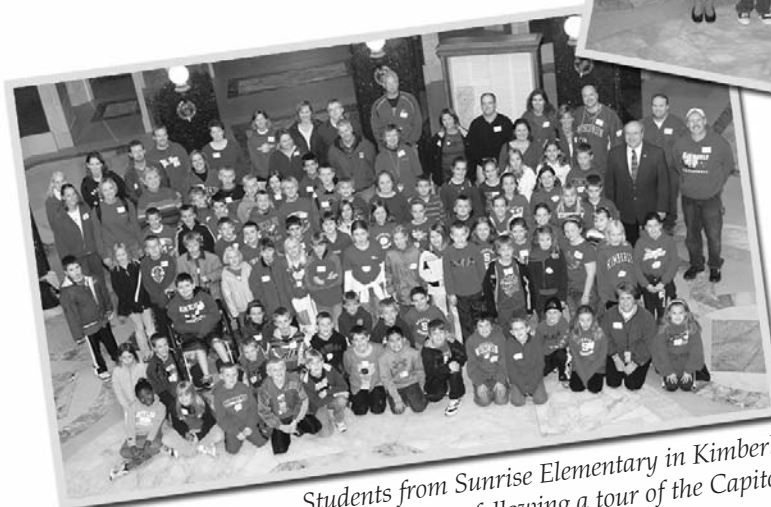
During your visit to Madison, you are invited to stop by my Capitol office. To schedule a visit, contact my office at **1-888-534-0003**.



Rep. Ott & Sen. Lasee with students from Chilton Area Catholic School.



Students from Holy Spirit School in Darboy paid Rep. Ott a visit during their field trip to Madison.



Students from Sunrise Elementary in Kimberly with Rep. Ott following a tour of the Capitol.



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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

With the 2007-08 legislative session having come to a close, I am pleased to update you on the State Legislature's work to make Wisconsin a great place to call home.

Without question, it was a challenging session. While it presented its share of difficulties, this legislative session was not without its notable accomplishments.

Comprehensive ethics and elections reform, providing much needed tax relief, fully funding the SeniorCare prescription drug program, investing in our schools, and encouraging economic development are among this session's legislative successes.

Perhaps most importantly for the state's economy and working families, the Wisconsin State Assembly successfully stopped billions of dollars in job-killing tax hikes.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact my office with your views, questions or concerns regarding state government. I'm happy to provide assistance and appreciate receiving input on matters that are important to you and your family.

It is an honor and a privilege to represent the citizens of the 3rd Assembly District. Thank you for allowing me to serve as your State Representative.

Sincerely,

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CAPITOL OFFICE

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P.O. Box 8953
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(888) 534-0003

E-mail:

Rep.Ott@legis.wi.gov

COMMITTEES

Agriculture (Chair)
Transportation
Rural Economic Development
Forestry



Wisconsin Highway Maps & Blue Books

State Highway Maps and Wisconsin Blue Books are currently available to residents of the 3rd Assembly District.

If you are interested in receiving either of these items, please contact my office, toll-free, at 1-888-534-0003.

Supplies Are Limited

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2007-08 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



Rep. Ott and his family on Inauguration day.

Ethics & Elections Reform (Act 1) – Creates the non-partisan Government Accountability Board, which will have the independent authority to initiate investigations of state ethics, campaign finance and election law violations.

Tax Deduction for Child Care Expenses (Act 20) – Increases the tax deduction allowed for child care expenses to help working families afford quality child care. When fully phased in, families will save \$15.9 million per year.

College Tuition Tax Deduction (Act 20) – Increases the current state income tax deduction for college tuition expenses to \$6,000 beginning in tax year 2009.

Retirement Income Tax Cut (Act 20) – Creates a new income tax exclusion on retirement income for Wisconsin seniors. Senior citizens with an adjusted gross income of \$15,000 or less (\$30,000 for married and joint filers) will be eligible for a \$5,000 income tax exclusion.

Property Tax Freeze (Act 20) – Limits local tax levy increases for two years: 3.86% in 2007 and 2% in 2008.

Disabled Veterans & Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit (Act 20) – Expands the eligibility for the Disabled Veterans and Spouses Property Tax Credit to 100% disabled veterans regardless of age, and to veterans compensated due to individual unemployment.

GI Bill (Act 20) – Allows eligible veterans to receive full tuition remission at any UW System campus or technical college. Similar benefits are extended to spouses and children of disabled veterans or those killed in service.

Stewardship Program Renewal & Oversight (Act 20) – Renews the popular Stewardship conservation program for an additional 10 years and institutes legislative oversight of land purchases to ensure proper handling of taxpayer dollars and public access to state-owned lands.

Implementation of the Federal REAL ID Act (Act 20) – Provides funding for the state implementation of the federal REAL ID Act. Under federal law, states are prohibited from issuing and renewing state driver's licenses and identification cards for any person who cannot provide proof of citizenship or satisfactory immigration status.

Video Competition Act (Act 42) – Updates Wisconsin's cable television franchise statutes to incorporate new technologies, promote industry competition, and improve customer service standards. Other states with cable television competition laws have seen rates decrease an average of 23%.

State Government Waste & Fraud Hotline (Act 126) – Establishes a toll-free hotline (1-877-FRAUD-17) to receive reports of fraud, waste and mismanagement in state government.

Small Business Health Insurance Reform (Act 189) – Encourages small businesses to join with a Professional Employers Organization to access high quality health care plans for their employees at a cost that is now only available to the largest companies.



Rep. Ott discusses the findings of a UW student research project.

Rep. Ott's 2007-08 Legislative Initiatives

Licensing of Electricians (AB 294/SB 167): The Federal Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that improper wiring is linked to more than 40,000 home fires each year. These fires claim over 350 lives and cause \$500 million in property damage annually.

The most effective approach for preventing electrical fires is to have wiring installed by a trained and certified electrician. Thirty-four other states, including Minnesota and Michigan, have licensing requirements for electricians.

Under a new law, which I authored, electricians working in Wisconsin will join the ranks of other state licensed professionals such as plumbers, accountants and real estate agents. This consumer protection measure requires those billing themselves as electricians to be state licensed by 2013. This new law aims to improve the quality and safety of electrical wiring in Wisconsin. *Signed Into Law – Act 63*

Agricultural Education & Workforce Development Council (AB 83): From dairy farmers in Calumet County to Miller Brewing Company in Milwaukee, our state's economy relies heavily on the success and vitality of our farms and agribusinesses. Jobs in agriculture are diverse and include veterinarians, engineers, economists, and nutritionists, just to name a few. Employers, however, are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain enough appropriately trained and skilled workers capable of responding to agriculture's wide range of employment needs.

I worked extensively with industry and education leaders to create a public-private partnership known as the Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council. The Council will work toward improving agricultural education and employment opportunities related to Wisconsin agriculture. *Signed Into Law – Act 223*

Financial Assistance for Proper Well Abandonment (SB 40): There are nearly 200,000 improperly abandoned wells in Wisconsin. These wells can act as a direct path for pollutants to enter groundwater. Proper well abandonment is critical to safeguarding groundwater, especially in the areas of Calumet and Brown counties with shallow topsoil and karst topography.

A provision I worked to include in the state budget allows up to 75% of the costs incurred in properly abandoning wells to be eligible for payment under the current Well Compensation Grant Program. This cost-sharing option

will be a useful tool in getting more wells properly sealed and protecting our groundwater resources. *Signed Into Law – Act 20*

Meat Processor Investment Tax Credit (AB 732): Wisconsin's meat processing industry generates \$12.3 billion in annual economic activity and provides 90,000 jobs in our state. Efforts are underway at the federal level to improve business and growth opportunities for our local meat processors.

To encourage modernization and growth in this sector, I introduced the Meat Processor Investment Tax Credit. Modeled after similar tax credits that have spurred significant modernization in the dairy industry, this tax incentive would provide meat processors with an income tax credit equal to 10% of eligible investments in their operations. *Unanimous Approval by State Assembly*

Skin Cancer Detection & Prevention Month (AJR 119): One in five Americans will develop skin cancer during his or her lifetime. Detected early, skin cancer is highly treatable. I personally credit early detection for the successful treatment of skin cancer found on my forearm.

It was an honor to join with my legislative colleagues to introduce a resolution formally declaring May as Melanoma and Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month in Wisconsin. The resolution also applauds the work of the Wisconsin Dermatological Society in educating the citizens of Wisconsin on how to spot the warning signs of skin cancer through both self-examinations and free skin cancer screening offered by dermatologists. *Unanimous Legislative Approval*



Rep. Ott and industry stakeholders join Gov. Doyle as he signs Rep. Ott's electrician licensing bill into law.

Making Health Care More Affordable

The high cost of health care is a major concern for individuals, families and businesses across Wisconsin. Given the size and complexity of the health care problem, there is no single solution that will address the issues of the current system of care.

The Legislature has, however, taken significant steps toward addressing the problem of health care affordability. These initiatives—including prescription drug assistance, cooperative insurance purchasing pools, and tax deductions—are resulting in real savings for health care consumers.

The popular **SeniorCare** prescription drug assistance program helps over 100,000 low-income senior citizens purchase the medicines they need at a more affordable price.

BadgerRx Gold allows uninsured or underinsured Wisconsin residents, regardless of age, to harness the buying power of the state to gain access to prescription drugs at affordable prices.

The new **Farmers Health Cooperative of Wisconsin** is helping farmers and agribusinesses access health insurance plans with the coverage they need, at a price they can afford.

Beginning in tax year 2008, individuals who pay a portion of their employer sponsored health insurance premium will be eligible for a **Health Insurance Premium Tax Deduction** on their state income taxes. This new deduction will keep an extra \$150 million a year in the pockets of Wisconsin families

*To Learn More About
SeniorCare, BadgerRx Gold or
the Farmers Health Cooperative,
Contact:*

SeniorCare

Toll Free: 1-800-657-2038
Online:
www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/seniorcare

BadgerRx Gold

Toll Free: 1-866-809-9382
Online:
www.badgergold.com

**Farmers Health
Cooperative of Wisconsin**

Toll Free: 1-800-539-9370
Online:
www.farmershealthcooperative.com



Rep. Ott testifies before the Assembly Committee on Labor & Industry.

State of Wisconsin Online

Do you want to know more about your state government, state agencies and public services? It is quick and easy to access State of Wisconsin online resources at:

State of Wisconsin:
www.wisconsin.gov

Wisconsin State Legislature:
www.legis.wisconsin.gov