

Superior Days XXV



ANYONE CAN LOBBY . . . the legislative process is open to everyone who has something to say about an issue, a bill, or a problem that requires legislative action. Lobbying is not restricted to the hired guns of special interests. Average citizens make a substantial contribution to the legislative process.

REMEMBER THE PURPOSE OF SUPERIOR DAYS . . . to allow the citizens of Superior, Douglas County and other northern Wisconsin communities to share their enthusiasm and hospitality regarding the excellent resources and quality of life in northern Wisconsin. It is your opportunity to inform legislators on issues of importance to you and to encourage attention and visitation to our area. Many people you will contact have

never been in our area of the state and your contact will leave a lasting impression regarding our concerns. Superior Days and your presence have already left a positive impression about Superior and northern Wisconsin.

REMEMBER . . . LEGISLATORS ARE HUMAN. They are ordinary citizens who were elected to office, and they all have different family, educational, and work experiences. Don't expect legislators to be authorities. They deal with hundreds of issues each session and can't be expected to be knowledgeable on every subject.

REMEMBER . . . YOU ARE THE AUTHORITY ON NORTHERN WISCONSIN. Your responsibility is to share knowledge about our area which will provide helpful information to a legislator when they are asked to make decisions affecting our area.

REMEMBER . . . BE YOURSELF! The most effective approach is sincerity. You don't need facts or figures at your fingertips to be effective. Carry on a conversation as if you are among friends.

BE PREPARED TO LEARN AS WELL AS TO EDUCATE. Learn and understand the legislator's background and district before your meeting. Understand that each legislator's first concern is his/her district and your knowledge about his/her area will improve your conversation. Be familiar with something about their legislative career and committee assignments. Expect some disagreement, but:

- Understand their concerns
- Understand their biases
- Understand their politics
- Understand their problems

Don't be surprised if a legislator claims that their problems are worse than ours. Every community has its own unique problems.

REMEMBER . . . RESPECT A POSITION EVEN IF YOU DISAGREE. There are 132 legislators who collectively reach decisions by majority vote. Within that process, there is much room for disagreement and legislators are not put off by disagreement as long as their opinions are treated with the same dignity and respect you expect for yourself.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO APPROACH A LEGISLATOR OR A STAFF PERSON. They are interested in meeting people from other parts of the state.

- Begin your conversation by addressing legislators as “Senator” or “Representative.” But if he/she corrects you, don’t be afraid to use his/her first name.
- If a legislator is unavailable, don’t hesitate to talk with his/her staff. The staff members are essential to a legislator and can greatly influence his/her decision to support or oppose.
- In conversation, don’t hesitate to ask questions of legislators. For example, ask what they think of highway construction in general and don’t be surprised if some don’t support it. Most do--but some don’t.
- Be friendly, warm and courteous; but feel free to express your opinion, especially if it is based on personal experience. Legislators are elected to listen to opinions.
- Don’t be argumentative or demanding. Legislators resent ultimatums or threats.
- Don’t ask or expect a commitment. Your mission is informational. Don’t have any expectations that legislators will promise you the moon.
- **ABOVE ALL, BE POSITIVE!**

