

Superior Days



Superior Days is a positive experience for Wisconsin Government. It is recognized as a model of grassroots citizen participation and your presence captures the attention of media, legislators, staff, and state agency personnel. Your enthusiasm stimulates interest in the North and your knowledge creates awareness of the specific needs of the area. One of the great strengths of Superior Days is the community effort.

ALL PARTICIPANTS ARE IN MADISON TO PROMOTE THE WELL-BEING OF THE NORTH

YOUR PURPOSE IS TO PROMOTE NORTHERN WISCONSIN AND TO EXPRESS SPECIFIC NORTHERN NEEDS AND PROBLEMS.

- You are the resource ... through your eyes, ears and experience you are in Madison to identify an agenda for northern Wisconsin. You are there to promote the northern Wisconsin community experience. Most people you talk to will be genuinely interested in what you have to say.

STATE GOVERNMENT MUST PROVIDE A PARTNERSHIP TO HELP THE NORTH SOLVE ITS PROBLEMS.

- You are there to ask for help from the legislators and state agencies. You are not asking for a handout but a helping hand so our area can enjoy economic growth along with other areas of the state. The northern agenda is a modest list of proposals and in most ways is similar to programs available for economic and educational opportunity around the state.

SUPERIOR DAYS IS A LEARNING PROCESS FOR NORTHERN DELEGATES AS WELL AS LEGISLATORS, STAFF, AND AGENCY PERSONNEL.

- Be open-minded and positive in conversations. You will learn that other areas of the state have problems, similar to or worse than the North. Be sympathetic and understanding, for we want to work with them, not against them.

WISCONSIN GOVERNMENT IS AN OPEN DOOR GOVERNMENT

- The Capitol is YOUR Capital and the Government is YOUR Government so you have EVERY RIGHT to walk in any office and discuss issues of concern to you. You will be impressed with the openness of our government and the willingness of most staff and most legislators to take time to be with you.
 - » There will be numerous committee meetings in session and you should feel free to enter the rooms, find a chair and enjoy the proceedings. (If it is a public hearing, you may sign a slip requesting to testify.)
- Be relaxed in your approach to legislators. They are human, very open and in most cases genuinely willing to take time to visit and listen to your concerns. Most have very busy schedules, so be respectful of time demands.
- Refer to legislators by appropriate title; however, many will request you to utilize their first names. Most are very informal and your conversations will be casual.

- Rely upon legislative staff. Legislators depend upon them and often they are the opinion leaders on the development of legislation. Get to know them and if a legislator is not present, take the time to share information with them.
- UNDERSTAND the legislator's perspective. Try to appreciate their concerns and biases. Listen carefully and report the positive and negative legislative feedback.
- Be PATIENT AND NOT ARGUMENTATIVE. PLEASE DO NOT BE DEMANDING. There are 132 independent legislators, with some holding strong opinions. You cannot expect every legislator to be sympathetic or supportive. Our goal is to encourage informed decisions and work for a majority support of both legislative houses.
- Don't ask or expect a commitment on any of the issues. Legislators may let you know of their feelings but the budget process will take four additional months and legislators may wish to balance your requests with other demands.
- Become knowledgeable about the legislators and their districts. The more you know about them indicates your willingness to listen as well as talk.
- STICK TO THE SUPERIOR DAYS AGENDA. Your role is to relate to the general concerns and solutions as identified by the Superior Days Committee. Keep personal issues to yourself. Separate personal conversations from your group presentations.
- Try to DOCUMENT your examples and avoid EXAGGERATION. Use specifics or be willing to follow up a meeting by sending materials to make a point. Our problems are serious enough – you should not use secondhand stories or hype to try to make your case.
- ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOURSELF AND OUR COMMUNITY IN SOLVING OUR PROBLEMS. Madison does not have all the answers and most of the solutions will come from efforts back home. Be prepared to discuss local efforts to help the area grow.
- BE APPRECIATIVE OF PAST SUCCESSES. We have been successful for more than two decades and have received cooperation from state agencies and the legislature. Your agenda contains proposals to continue that success.
- BE INFORMED ON THE ISSUES BUT TRY NOT TO BE AN AUTHORITY. Many of the issues you talk about are very complicated and you are not expected to know everything on every subject. You are there to present the general concerns and ask that those concerns be taken into consideration during the legislative deliberation.
- BE FLEXIBLE. Compromise is a healthy factor of the legislative process. Over the course of the next few months, all of these issues will receive consideration but may change due to budgetary or policy reasons. You must be open to suggestions and receptive to constructive changes.
- HAVE FUN. Above all, relax and enjoy yourself. If this is your first trip, talk to others for reassurances. Superior Days makes government an enjoyable and productive experience. But Superior Days is the collective effort of your individual experiences and each of you is critical to its continuing success.