



Association of Wisconsin Tourism Attractions

September 22, 2017

## 2016-2017 Budget Passes

This week Governor Walker signed the 2016-2017 budget. After a lengthy delay the Governor, Senate and Assembly finally came to terms they could all agree on. While an agreement was reached not all sides were completely satisfied with the outcome. The Association of Wisconsin Tourism Attractions (AWTA) continued to be a strong voice for the tourism industry in the Capitol, and while the outcome of this budget is not perfect there are positives that came out of it.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

The Transportation budget was the most contentious piece of this budget and will continue to be a long-term fight for AWTA. We played a major role in the direction of the group called the DRIVE Coalition, to gain greater support for a new revenue source in the budget for our crumbling roads. The final Transportation budget was an improvement over what Governor Walker originally proposed; it reduces the amount of borrowing and creates one new revenue source (Electric Car Fee's). However, the final product does not solve Wisconsin's transportation issues and we will continue to fight for another new revenue source and decreased borrowing in budgets to come.

### **PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX**

Late last year, AWTA joined a coalition made up of over 40 business interests in Wisconsin to ask for the repeal of the Personal Property Tax (PPT). When we started this journey, we were told many times by legislators that this was too big of a lift this time around. I am happy to report that after 9 months of aggressively lobbying on this issue the PPT was partially repealed in the budget.

The PPT motion was added towards the end of the budget and does the following: effective with property assessed as of January 1, 2018, machinery, tools and patterns (Schedule C from Statement of Personal Property) will be exempt from the PPT for businesses not specifically classified by the Department of Revenue as manufacturers.

We encourage you to reach out to your accountants to determine what is and is not included under this new exemption.

### **SCHOOL START DATE**

At the beginning of the budget process a request was made to the Governor by the Department of Public Instruction to allow school districts to start school earlier than September 1. The AWTA and the rest of the tourism industry responded swiftly. We met with leadership on both sides of the aisle along with the Governor's office and officials in the Department of

Administration to, once again, stress the importance of maintaining the current school start date. We were pleased this change was not added to the budget and we will continue to monitor this reoccurring issue.

#### **DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM FUNDING**

The Department of Tourism earlier this year reported an 8 to 1 return on investment on marketing dollars. Considering this, we were pleased the Department's budget was left relatively unchanged. While we continue to lobby for more dollars for the Department it is also a victory when their budget does not get cut.

**There are many other subjects addressed in the budget. To view the full budget, [click here](#) and if you have any questions, give me a call at 920.728.0661.**

**Eric Knight  
AWTA Executive Director**