



Capitol LINK

CURRENT ISSUES AFFECTING WISCONSIN AGRICULTURE & AGRI-BUSINESS

October 28, 2013

DNR Releases 2012 Water Usage Numbers

By Jordan Lamb, DeWitt Ross & Stevens

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) released its 2012 Wisconsin water use report on October 22nd. The report, which is available online at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/WaterUse/documents/WithdrawalReportDetail.pdf>, summarizes water used from both surface waters and from groundwater. The DNR has only been collecting this data for the past 5 years.

As is not unexpected given the extreme drought during the summer of 2012, the report identifies significant increases in groundwater usage by irrigated agriculture, dairy farming, golf course irrigation and other groundwater users who were impacted by drought conditions during 2012.

Water supply systems in Wisconsin that are capable of withdrawing 100,000 gallons per day are required to register and report withdrawals. In 2012, total statewide withdrawals exceeded 2.25 trillion gallons of water from over 14,000 wells, ponds, streams, rivers and lakes. Agricultural irrigation represented the largest use of groundwater in the state, up from second place in 2011. Agricultural irrigation withdrawals increased 83% in 2012: from 74 billion gallons in 2011 to 135 billion gallons in 2012.



Primaries Held in Two Assembly Special Elections

By Jordan Lamb, DeWitt Ross & Stevens

Special Primary Elections were held October 22 to choose the Republican candidates in Wisconsin's 21st Assembly District, vacated by former Rep. Mark Honadel (R-South Milwaukee) and the 69th Assembly District, vacated by former State Rep Scott Suder (R-Abbotsford). Special Elections will be held on November 19, 2013.

In the 21st Assembly District, Republican Jessie Rodriguez easily won a five-way primary for the right to face Democrat Elizabeth Coppola. Rodriguez is active in Hispanics for School Choice and won the support of conservative activists from across the state.

In the 69th Assembly District, Republican Bob Kulp had nearly twice the number of votes than the second place finisher in a four-way primary. Kulp, who owns a roofing and insulation company, will face off against Democrat Kenneth A. Slezak.

Former State Representative Mark Honadel has taken a position with Goodwill Industries. Former Assembly Majority Leader, Scott Suder, has become the lobbyist for the Wisconsin Paper Council. He is not taking the administrative position at the Public Service Commission (PSC), which he had resigned from the State Assembly to accept.

Taking Suder's place at the PSC will be State Rep. Jeff Stone (R-Greendale). Stone's resignation from the Assembly was effective on October 14, 2013. He is now the Division Administrator for Water Compliance and Consumer Affairs at the PSC. No date has yet been set for the circulation of nomination papers in the 82nd Assembly District, which Stone has represented since 1998.

After Rep. Stone's resignation, the partisan split in the Assembly will be 57 Republicans, 39 Democrats, and 3 vacant seats.

DATCP Names Daniel Smith New Agricultural Development Administrator

By Jordan Lamb, DeWitt Ross & Stevens

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection Secretary Ben Brancel announced Daniel Smith as the agricultural development administrator.

According to the DATCP press release, Smith was the Chief Executive Officer of Midwestern BioAg in Blue Mounds since July 2011. Previously, Smith had worked at DATCP in the Wisconsin Farm Center as an economic advisor assisting farmers in difficult financial situations. Smith operated his own dairy farm in northwestern Illinois for more than thirty years.

As the agricultural development administrator, Smith will be responsible for guiding the efforts of local, regional and international marketing. He will also direct the farm and business development services available through the division.

Link to DATCP Press Release: <http://datcp.wi.gov/news/?Id=930> .

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