



# Capitol LINK

CURRENT ISSUES AFFECTING WISCONSIN AGRICULTURE & AGRI-BUSINESS

November 26, 2012

## Wisconsin Elects a New State Legislature

*By Jordan Lamb -- DeWitt Ross & Stevens*

Wisconsin citizens elected a new State Legislature on November 6, 2012. The new legislators will take office in January, but the planning for next session has already begun.

The Republicans now control the State Senate with a 17-15 majority but, they are expected to win one more seat on December 4 after the Special Election is held in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Senate District (Waukesha Area). That would bring their likely final majority in the new session to 18-15. The 33<sup>rd</sup> Senate District was left vacant this summer when Senator Rich Zipperer resigned to accept a position on Governor Walker's staff. State Representative Paul Farrow won the Republican primary for that Senate seat and will be on the ballot on December 4<sup>th</sup>.

Republicans also control the State Assembly with a 60-39 majority, pending two potential recounts. This is an increase of one seat from 2011, when there were 59 Republicans, 39 Democrats, and one Independent who voted regularly with the Republicans.

Several incumbents from both parties lost their reelection bids, including State Sen. Jess King (D-Oshkosh) pending a potential recount and State Reps. Evan Wynn (R-Whitewater), Joe Knilans (R-Janesville), John Steinbrink (D-Pleasant Prairie) and Roger Rivard (R-Rice Lake).

## 2013-14 Leadership Teams

The new Legislature wasted no time in selecting new leadership teams for this session. The following leadership positions have been appointed.

### Senate Republican Leadership

- Majority Leader, Sen. Scott Fitzgerald
- Senate President, Sen. Mike Ellis
- Senate President Pro Tempore, Sen. Joe Leibham
- Asst. Majority Leader, Sen. Glen Grothman
- Caucus Chair, Sen. Frank Lasee
- Caucus Vice Chair, Sen. Sheila Harsdorf

### Senate Democratic Leadership

- Minority Leader, Sen. Chris Larson
- Asst. Minority Leader, Sen. Dave Hansen
- Caucus Chair, Sen. Julie Lassa
- Caucus Vice Chair, Sen. Kathleen Vinehout
- Caucus Sgt. At Arms, Sen. Nikiya Harris

## Assembly Republican Leadership

- Speaker, Rep. Robin Vos
- Majority Leader, Rep. Scott Suder
- Speaker Pro Tempore, Rep. Bill Kramer
- Asst. Majority Leader, Rep. Jim Steineke
- Caucus Chair, Rep. Joan Ballweg
- Caucus Vice Chair, Rep. John Murtha
- Caucus Secretary, Rep. Mary Williams
- Caucus Sgt. At Arms, Rep. Sam Kerkman

## Assembly Democratic Leadership

- Minority Leader, Rep. Peter Barca
- Asst. Minority Leader, Rep. Sandy Pasch
- Caucus Chair, Rep. Andy Jorgenson
- Caucus Vice Chair, Rep. JoCasta Zamarripa
- Caucus Secretary, Rep. Janis Ringhand
- Caucus Sgt. At Arms, Rep. Josh Zepnick

**Joint Finance Committee.** Sen. Alberta Darling has been named as the Senate co-chair of the Joint Finance Committee. It remains to be seen who will be named as the Assembly co-chair and who the remaining appointments to the committee will be.

## Brief Biographies of Newly Elected Legislators (first term legislators only):

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Sen. Rick Gudex (D-Fond du Lac) is a production supervisor at Brenner Tank LLC. He was elected Mayor of Mayville at age 29 and is now serving his third term as President of the Fond du Lac City Council. (There is the potential for a recount in this district as he beat Sen. Jess King by 590 votes.)

Sen. Nikiya Harris (D-Milwaukee) is a Milwaukee County Supervisor with bachelor's and master's degrees from UWM.

Rep. Mandela Barnes (D-Milwaukee) is a graduate of Alabama A&M University who has worked as a community organizer for M.I.C.A.H., a Milwaukee-based interfaith coalition that advocates social justice issues.

Rep. Mark Born (R-Beaver Dam) works for the Dodge County Sheriff's Department in its Corrections Division. He is a graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College.

Rep. Mary Czaja (R-Tomahawk) is an independent insurance agent who owns the C.I.S. Insurance Group. She is a graduate of UW-River Falls.

Rep. Eric Genrich (D-Green Bay) is an Information Technology Librarian at the Brown County Library. He is a former aide to Sen. Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay) and to former US Rep. Steve Kagen (D-Wisconsin). He is a UW-Madison graduate.

Rep. Evan Goyke (D-Milwaukee) is an Assistant State Public Defender who received his law degree at Marquette University. He is the son of former Democratic State Sen. Gary Goyke.

Rep. Dianne Hesselbein (D-Middleton) is a Dane County Supervisor and former member of the Middleton-Cross Plains School Board. She is a UW-Oshkosh graduate.

Rep. Rob Hutton (R-Brookfield) is the president and CEO of Rock Transfer and Storage, a private logistics company. He is a UW-Whitewater graduate.

Rep. John Jagler (R-Watertown) served as communications director for Assembly Speaker Jeff Fitzgerald. Prior to that, he was a newscaster for WTMJ AM 620 in Milwaukee.

Rep. LaTonya Johnson (D-Milwaukee) is a self-described trade union activist.

Rep. Robb Kahl (D-Monona) owns a title insurance agency and is the former Mayor of Monona. He is a graduate of Ripon College and the UW Law School.

Rep. Debra Kolste (D-Janesville) is a medical technologist who has also owned and managed a family farm for more than 25 years.

Rep. Dave Murphy (R-Greenville) is the owner of DJM Health LLC.

Rep. Tod Ohnstad (D-Kenosha) is a Chrysler retiree who was active in the UAW. He is currently serving as a member of the Kenosha City Council.

Rep. Daniel Riemer (D-Milwaukee) took a leave of absence from his studies at the University of Wisconsin Law School to take on Rep. Peggy Krusick (D-Milwaukee) in the August primary election. He is the son of David Riemer, who served as Budget director for former Democratic Governor Jim Doyle.

Rep. Joe Sanfelippo (R-West Allis) is a Milwaukee County Supervisor who operates his own landscaping business. He attended Marquette University.

Rep. Melissa Agard Sargent (D-Madison) is a small business owner and a former capitol staffer. She is a UW-Madison graduate.

Rep. Michael Schraa (R-Oshkosh) is the owner of Leon's Frozen Custard in Oshkosh. He has also worked as a stock broker and attended UW-Oshkosh.

Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) spent two years managing solar programs at the Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) before leaving to work on political campaigns and run for the legislature. She is a UW-Madison graduate.

Rep. Stephen Smith (D-Rice Lake) owns the Rainbow Home Center, a grocery store in Rice Lake. He formerly owned a school bus transportation business started by his father. He is the son of former Rep. Pat Smith (D-Shell Lake). He is a UW-Superior graduate.

Rep. John Spiros (R-Marshfield) is the vice president of safety and claims management at Roehl Transport in Marshfield. He is a former police officer. His wife is a nurse at Marshfield Clinic.

Rep. Rob Swearingen (R-Rhineland) and his wife own the Al-Gen Dinner Club in Rhineland. He is the current president of the Wisconsin Restaurant Association.

Rep. Paul Tittel (R-Manitowoc) is the Chair of the Manitowoc County Board and a former member of the Manitowoc City Council. He is the owner of the Vacuum & Sewing Center in Manitowoc.

Rep. Dana Wachs (D-Eau Claire) is a trial attorney who graduated from Valparaiso University Law School. He also serves on the Eau Claire City Council.

Rep. Tom Weatherston (R-Racine) is a retired industrial engineer who worked for Modine Manufacturing Company. He is a graduate of SUNY Buffalo.

Rep. Mandy Wright (D-Wausau) is a 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher who graduated from St. Olaf College.

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