

Gov. Walker: Highlights executive budget proposal, strong Wisconsin economy at La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce monthly meeting

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Madison - Governor Scott Walker spoke to the La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce this afternoon about Wisconsin's strong economy and proposals included in his 2017-2019 budget that will have a positive impact on the people of La Crosse.

"We are working and winning for Wisconsin," Governor Walker said. "Our state's unemployment rate dipped to 3.9 percent in January, the lowest it's been in 16 years and significantly better than the national rate of 4.8 percent. And we're building upon this solid foundation in our 2017-2019 budget proposal to ensure our students continue to succeed, government services are more efficient and accountable, and everyone who wants a job can find a job. Our budget has a direct impact on La Crosse as well. For example, our proposed sales tax holiday for back to school clothes and supplies makes us more competitive with Minnesota, and our Capital Budget invests \$5 million to remodel and expand the La Crosse Center. These are just a few of the things we're doing to move La Crosse, and Wisconsin, forward."

Formed in 1868, the La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce was the 156th chamber of commerce in the nation. Today, it includes more than 775 member companies,

employing more than 25,000 professionals. They work to connect businesses with purpose, offer progressive resources to grow companies and leaders in the community, and serve as the region's advocate for business. The La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce offers educational programs, seminars, networking events, and opportunities for exposure, promotion, and involvement.

Governor Walker's 2017-2019 Biennial Budget includes the following proposals that will benefit the La Crosse Community:

State Investment in La Crosse Center

- **\$5 million investment in Governor Walker's Capital Budget** to remodel and expand the La Crosse Center. Every year, the La Crosse Center hosts more than 400,000 guests and 200 events. The expansion and renovation of the center will attract more guests, businesses, and organizations hoping to host their events at the center, which in turn boosts local economic development.

Tax Relief

- **Property taxes on a median-valued home will be lower in 2018 than they were in 2010 under the Governor's proposal. To drive them down further, Governor Walker's budget eliminates the state portion of the property tax bill.** For the first time since 1931, there will be no state tax collected on your property tax bill under the Governor's proposal.
- **The Governor's budget creates a "Back to School" sales tax holiday effective for two days in both August 2017 and August 2018 for specified school supplies.** The sales tax holiday will provide tax relief to the hard-working families of Wisconsin sending their children back to school in the fall.

Education Investments

- Governor Walker's budget proposal includes an **\$11.5 billion state investment in K-12 education, an all-time high.**
- **Increase per-pupil state aid by \$509.2 million.** This marks the largest per-pupil categorical aid increase in history, providing a \$200 per student increase in the first year and a \$204 increase per student in the second year of the biennium.
- **A more than \$100 million increased investment in the University of**

Wisconsin System. This is on top of an **additional \$35 million investment to fully fund a 5 percent tuition cut** for all resident undergraduate students.

- **A \$10 million increase in aid for the Wisconsin Technical College System**, which will, in part, offset a freeze in technical college fees, saving the typical student \$279 over the next two years.
- **\$42.5 million in performance funding to be distributed to UW institutions** based on improving college affordability and attainment, enhancing work readiness, graduates finding jobs in Wisconsin, and college efficiency.

Transportation Funding

- Governor Walker's budget proposal **provides the most funding ever to local governments for local roads.**
- **\$1.705 billion for State Highway Rehabilitation**, the most funding ever.
- **Total funding for major highway development projects is \$669.9 million over the biennium**, alleviating delays to all active major projects.
- **At \$500 million, Governor Walker's budget proposal includes the lowest level of bonding since 2001-2003.**