

Records: Evers using state planes less than Walker

Posted on Tuesday, Aug 13, 2019

Gov. Tony Evers has dramatically cut the use of state planes compared to Scott Walker and instead is much more likely to use a car to get outside of Madison, according to records obtained by WisPolitics.com.

Still, Walker's plane use — which became an issue that dogged him in last year's election — also meant Wisconsin residents outside of Madison were more likely to see him in their communities. The WisPolitics.com check found Walker made more stops outside of Madison during the first three months of 2017 than Evers did over his first three months in office.

The records show state planes traveled 3,692 miles to ferry Evers and his aides around the state over his first three months in office at a cost of \$28,296 to taxpayers. Altogether, he used the state planes on 13 days during his first three months in office.

By comparison, Walker racked up 11,046 miles at a cost of \$84,625 during the first three months of 2017, when he was selling a state budget, just like Evers was earlier this year. Walker's trips on 24 days also included a flight to Washington, D.C., on a state plane, while Evers' only stop outside of Wisconsin on a state plane was Menominee, Mich., to visit Marinette, which is right across the state line.

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Lt. Gov. Mandela Barnes is also using state planes less than his predecessor, flying 687 miles at a cost of \$3,450 to taxpayers over the first three months of the year. Former Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch flew 2,242 miles at a cost of \$14,550 during the first three months of 2017.

During the 2018 campaign, opponents focused on Walker's plane use, including the

number of flights that were 50 miles or less. The liberal One Wisconsin Now also documented 82 times state planes flew without Walker on board between September 2015 and April 2018 before picking him up on the way to other stops in Wisconsin.

The records WisPolitics.com obtained showed two instances where state plans flew without Evers as part of a trip.

* On March 4, Evers drove to Milwaukee in the morning to meet with UW-Milwaukee Chancellor Mark Mone, according to his official calendar. Later that morning, a state plane flew from Madison to pick him up for stops in Green Bay, Sturgeon Bay and Sheboygan for public events. It then flew him back to Madison.

* On March 19, Evers also drove to Milwaukee in the morning for several public events until he headed to the airport, where a plane flying in from Madison picked him up at 4 p.m. for a 30-minute flight to Baraboo.

The state plane then returned to Madison as Evers overnighted for the governor's Tourism Dinner Awards Reception. It then came back the following day to fly him up to Green Bay for two stops before returning him to Madison.

Evers' office didn't provide on-the-record comment on his plane use despite multiple requests, and several Republicans didn't respond to offers from WisPolitics.com to comment on the gov's travels.

While Evers is using state planes much less frequently than Walker, he's also more likely to hit the road in a state car.

A comparison of Evers and Walker's calendars over the three-month periods show the Dem made some two dozen road trips on official business in a state car with 17 of them to Milwaukee.

Over the first three months of 2017, Walker listed nine road trips in his official calendar with seven of those to Milwaukee or its suburbs. There were also several trips on Walker's calendars that were blacked out.

Evers' longest road trip on official business was to Wausau as he overnighted during his first week in office as part of a tour of the state's troubled youth prisons.

Altogether, Evers' calendars list public events in 59 Wisconsin cities outside of

Madison during his first three months in office, with 19 of them to Milwaukee or its suburbs. Walker, meanwhile, visited 68 cities outside of Madison over the first three months of 2017 with 22 of those Milwaukee or its suburbs.

Evers has been dinged by critics who suggest he hasn't spent enough time getting outside of Madison and meeting with residents since taking office. While signing the budget, Evers mocked that idea that he's a "hermit king" who doesn't talk to anyone, noting his various meetings with lawmakers since taking office.

Walker signed all four of his budgets outside of Madison, going to Ashwaubenon, Pleasant Prairie, Waukesha and Neenah to sign the documents.

"But also getting out from underneath the bubble and going into villages and cities and townships of this state is far more important to me and will continue to do that," Evers said last month.

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