

Wisconsin Towns Association

Mike Koles, Executive Director

Attorney Carol Nawrocki, Assistant Director

W7686 County Road MMM, Shawano, Wisconsin 54166-6086

Ph: 715-526-3157

Fax: 715-524-3917

wtowns@wisctowns.com

WTA Clarification of Erroneous Reporting

This morning, MT Western Wisconsin (Metro Source) provided a news feed to media throughout the state attributing comments to Jerry Derr, a member of the Wisconsin Towns Association Board of Directors, as indicating that “his group is satisfied the extra money will be enough to improve local roads and bridges”. The extra money references an additional \$14.6 million in general transportation aids to towns that Governor Walker announced he intends to include in his budget proposal.

This erroneous quote, which was printed on the web by at least one radio station, is alarming for at least two reasons. First, Derr has not talked to a news reporter since the additional investment was announced, and he has not spoken publicly.

To be clear for MT Western Wisconsin, the \$14.6 million fully addresses an equity concern in WisDOT’s budget request that was being voiced to WTA by town officials representing 95% of Wisconsin’s geography. The budget request included a \$65 million increase, of which only \$8.9 million was appropriated to towns. This amount was a 2.99% increase in LRIP and GTA combined. We are very pleased that the Governor’s announcement creates an 8.5% increase for towns, which is consistent with the 8.43% increase for counties and 8.61% increase for cities and villages.

Second, although the Towns Association quoted Derr in a recent press release, the faulty reporting does not come close to what Derr said or the WTA position. As was actually stated in the press release by WTA President Lee Engelbrecht, we are looking forward to “begin to work toward a long term, sustainable transportation solution for the whole system.”

To accomplish this solution, WTA continues to feel strongly that we first must squeeze every drop of blood out of the transportation rock through efficiencies that have already been found during the last legislative session and presumably will be found through the WisDOT audit. It is very likely efficiencies will not be enough to address significant unmet needs. At that point, a long term, sustainable, and equitable solution can only be achieved by growing the transportation resource pie so state and county highways, town roads, and city and village streets provide a foundation for economic development in Wisconsin.