

# Working Together to Make a Difference in the State Capitol

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## Goals of this Workshop

Provide a legislative update, focusing in particular on the 2013-2015 State Budget.

Give an overview of the current political climate in the state capitol and forecast how the remainder of the legislative session will play out.

Discuss ways you can become engaged in the legislative process and help League lobbyists advocate for cities and villages.

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## The 2013-2014 Session So Far

Session Began January 2013.

State Budget, Act 20, adopted June 30.

Legislature has enacted only 45 new laws so far.

Session Ends April 3, 2014.

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## In 2011-2013 Budget, Municipalities took \$100 million Hit to help Solve State's Financial Difficulties

- 7 percent cut in total Shared Revenue Funding for cities, villages and towns (\$47.7 million).
- 41 percent cut to Recycling Grant Program (\$13 million).
- 6 percent cut general transportation aids (applied to cities and villages only, not towns) (\$30 million).
- 10 percent cut in mass transit aids (\$11.8 million).
- 10 percent cut in payments for municipal services program (\$2 million).

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## How did we do in the 2013-2015 State Budget?

- Governor declined to restore any cuts made in last budget.
- Act 20 maintains current funding levels for shared revenue, expenditure restraint, payment for municipal services, and recycling grants.
- Assembly considered adding \$10 million to Shared Revenue Fund, but Senate wouldn't go along.

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## Transportation Aid – Moving in the Right Direction

- Legislature Increased GTA funding by 4%, beginning in 2015 (\$6.2 million).
- Legislature increased Mass Transit Aids by 4% beginning in 2015 (\$1 million).
- Legislature increased Paratransit Aids by 10% (\$250,000).

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## Other Policy Items in the State Budget Beneficial to Municipalities

- Clarifies that, except for employee premium contributions, all costs and payments associated with health care coverage plans for represented police and fire unions employees are a prohibited subject of bargaining.

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## Other Policy Items in the State Budget Beneficial to Municipalities

- Creates a new grant program to reimburse municipalities for spending on LEAN government consultants. (Maximum of two reimbursements in 5 years. Maximum reimbursement is \$2,000).

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## Other Policy Items in the State Budget Beneficial to Municipalities

- Changes from December 1 to November 20 the deadline by which DOR must annually provide municipalities information about the lottery and school levy tax credits.

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## Other Policy Items in the State Budget Beneficial to Municipalities

- Authorizes municipalities to allow golf carts to be used on municipal streets with speed limits of 25 mph or less.

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## Policy Items in the State Budget Interfering with Local Control

- Strict levy limits retained (i.e., percentage growth in equalized value from net new construction).
- Municipalities Allowed to carry forward unused levy capacity of up to 1.5% of prior year's levy.
- Municipalities that do not carry forward are exempt from negative levy adjustment triggered by a reduction in debt service payments on pre 2005 debt.

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## Policy Items in the State Budget Interfering with Local Control

- Requires a municipality to reduce its levy limit by the amount of fee revenue it collects for providing garbage collection, fire protection, snow plowing, street sweeping, or storm water management if those services were funded in any amount by the property tax levy after July 2, 2013.

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## Policy Items in the State Budget Interfering with Local Control

- Residency Preemption. (Municipalities can only require police, fire, or emergency personnel to reside within 15 miles of a municipality's borders.)

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## Policy Items in the State Budget Interfering with Local Control

- Limits ability of a municipality to regulate the location of cell phone towers.
- Establishes a new process for challenging the reasonableness of municipal fees.
- Prohibits using a certain method of assessing the value of billboards for property tax purpose.

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## Current Issues of Concern – Bills we Oppose

**AB 23/SB 48**, Requiring Municipalities to Fund Post-Retirement Health Benefits on an Actuarial Basis.

**AB 385/SB 301**, Removing Municipal Discretion and Flexibility with regard to spending Room Tax revenues.

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## Current Issues of Concern – Bills we Oppose

**SB 338**, Granting Towns over 5,000 in population and with over \$500 million in equalized value full TIF Authority.

**AB 122/SB 112**, Eliminating Requirement that county development plans incorporate municipal master plans.

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## Current Issues of Concern – Bills we Oppose

**AB 8**, Prohibiting municipalities from banning bow and cross bow hunting within the municipality.

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## Current Issues of Concern – Bills we Support

**AB 22/SB 15**, Increasing maximum allowable municipal court fee from \$28 to \$38.

**AB 75/SB 183**, Making county shoreland zoning ordinances inapplicable within annexed areas.

**AB 147/SB 132**, Increasing the historic building rehabilitation tax credit by 10%.

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## Current Issues of Concern – Bills we Support

**AB 289/SB 252**, TID district base value re-determination.

**AB 416**, Allowing an environmental remediation TID to receive tax increments from a donor TID.

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## Current Issues of Concern – Legislation we Seek

- Reducing Interest Paid on Property Tax Refunds.
- Clarification of state budget provision requiring municipalities to reduce their levy limit by amount of fee increases for certain services formerly on the levy.
- Receiving financial information from the state in a timelier manner.

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## Looking Ahead – What’s in Store for the Remainder of the Legislative Session?

- An overview of the current political climate provided by Mike Rogowski and Steve Lyons – the League’s contract lobbyists.



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We need your help to advance the municipal agenda in the State Capitol.

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## The League's Strength is in its Membership

The only way to preserve local control and our revenue sources is to work together.

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## Ways to Get Involved

- Stay informed.
- Connect with your state legislators.
- Join League's Lobbying Corps. Recruit new members.
- Join League's Rapid Action Team.
- Participate in League Meetings, including the Legislative Luncheon.

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## Stay Informed

- Stay up-to-date about legislative issues of concern to your municipality and region.
- Subscribe to and read the *Legislative Bulletin* and *Capitol Buzz*. Subscribe by sending your e-mail address to Curt Witynski. [Witynski@lwm-info-org](mailto:Witynski@lwm-info-org).

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## Connect with Your Legislators

- Develop relationships with your legislators and meet with them regularly.
- Invite legislators to tour municipal facilities.
- Share League's Legislative Agenda with legislators.
- Get to know your legislator's staff.
- If your region has special clout, use it.

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## Join the League's Lobbying Corps

- Open to any municipal official, elected or appointed, willing to make the commitment.
- Meets in Madison four Wednesdays during the two year session.
- League reimburses mileage expenses.
- If already a member, recruit a member.

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## Join League's Rapid Action Team

- New effort, open to any municipal official.
- Team members must commit to communicating with their legislators after receiving e-mailed legislative action alerts from League staff.
- League staff provides talking points.
- Team members report to League staff what position their legislators took on an item and any concerns or questions legislators may have.

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## Consider Making a Contribution to the League's Conduit

- The League's Board of Directors recently voted to create the League of Wisconsin Municipalities Conduit.
- A political conduit is a group of people who pool their individual donations together to donate to the political candidate and committee of their choice.
- Join us right after this workshop at our inaugural League of Wisconsin Municipalities Conduit Reception and learn more.

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By working together and speaking with a unified voice we can make a difference.



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