



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE

Joint Audit Committee

Committee Co-Chairs:
State Senator Carol Roessler
State Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz

For Immediate Release

August 29, 2006

For More Information Contact:

Senator Carol Roessler
Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz

(608) 266-5300
(608) 266-3796

Audit Co-Chairs Recommend Economic Development Legislation

(Madison)- Today, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee held a hearing on the State Economic Development Programs Audit, which was conducted by the non-partisan Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB). The audit catalogued 152 economic development programs in Wisconsin, spread over numerous state agencies. The audit identified some duplicative, outdated programs and an absence of measurable effectiveness. In response to the LAB's recommendations and concerns raised at today's hearing, the Committee Co-Chairs, Senator Carol Roessler (R- Oshkosh) and Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz (R-Menomonee Falls) announced that legislation is necessary for rectifying these issues.

"We must refine Wisconsin's economic development tools," stated Roessler. "It's clear that our economic development programs lack performance measurements, simplicity, coordination, and quick response."

LAB reports that from fiscal year (FY) 2001-2002 through FY 2004-2005, economic development programs were awarded \$240.4 million in bonding authorization, \$180.9 million in grants and loans, as well as \$64.4 million in loan guarantees and \$56.3 million in targeted tax credits.

"We need to streamline how the state of Wisconsin manages the taxpayer's investment in economic development," remarked Jeskewitz. "In addition to making common-sense changes to our statutes to consolidate or eliminate some programs, we in the Legislature must work with state agencies and the economic development community to develop and then implement practical accountability measures to assess our efforts."

The Department of Commerce is required to report to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee by February 15th, 2007, on its efforts to improve procedures for tracking program results, monitor long-term results, and identify duplicative programs, among other recommendations. Furthermore, the University of Wisconsin System and the Wisconsin Technical College System will report to the Committee on their progress toward designating an economic development liaison at each campus and publishing directories of their business assistance programs offered.

###