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**Advocacy Digest | July 27, 2021**

**Brad Boycks, Executive Director**

**2021-2022 Wisconsin State Budget Highlights**

**Schools:** Guarantee a minimum of $781 per pupil for all school districts that were in-person at least 50% in 2020-21, maintained base-budget funding for all school districts statewide, Special Education (10% increase or $86M to 30% of eligible costs), Mental Health (additional $12M that doubles our investment), Sparsity Aid ($6.3M increase, expanded eligibility), High Cost Transportation Aids ($13M investment), $1.6M for the Reading Corps.

**Hospitals & Health Care:** Personal Care worker rate increase ($78M), Direct Care Workers ($104M), Hospital Reimbursement increase ($104M), Long-term care facility (nursing home) reimbursement rate increase ($254M, 12% increase), Surgical Care Quality Improvement program funding for rural hospitals, Community Health Centers ($2M increase), Free and Charitable Clinics ($2M increase).

**Transportation:** $100M for Local Roads, 2%/2% increase for General Transportation Aids (GTA), all projects remain on schedule with no tax or fee increase, the lowest Department of Transportation (DOT) bonding level in 10 years.

**Broadband:** $125M for the Rural Broadband Expansion Grant program.

**Corrections:** $1.3M increase for Length-of-Service Awards for Corrections staff at all prisons, including Boscobel and New Lisbon.

**Agriculture:**Addressed challenges in the meat processing industry by approving four new state meat inspector positions. Created Meat Processor Grant program ($400,000) and increased the Dairy Processor Grant program. Increased Farmer Mental Health program by $200,000.

**EMS:** Fully funded the EMS Funding Assistance Program (FAP), which provides funding to local, volunteer departments, Youth Volunteer Firefighting grants ($100,000).

**Natural Resources:** Reauthorized the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program for four years; invested $33.25M, added $1.5M to the Parks Development Fund for State Park improvements such as campsite maintenance, trail maintenance and more, Well Compensation Grants ($4M), funded at least 7 projects to update facilities at state parks through the State Building Commission, ATV/UTV Trail and Project aids ($1.5M), Snowmobile aids ($200,000), Boating aids ($380,000).

**Justice:** Restored 5.9 Assistant District Attorney positions the Governor vetoed in the last budget and added a ½ position in Lafayette County and one position in Sauk County to manage increasing caseloads, increased funding for the Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) program ($2.5M), funded Law Enforcement Training Grants ($2M) to sustain this important program for local departments.

**Higher Education:** Invested in UW System by funding building projects on five UW Campuses; UW Madison, UW Green Bay, UW Stevens Point, UW Oshkosh and UW River Falls.

**Income Tax Reduction:** Individual Income Tax Rate Reduction. Reduce the tax rate in the third individual income tax bracket from 6.27% to 5.30%, beginning in tax year 2021.

*\*Summary provided by Joint Committee on Finance Co-Chair Senator Howard Marklein, 17th Senate District, and the Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau*