

# Citizens Travel to Madison to Promote St. Croix Valley Issues

Almost 50 people from St. Croix, Polk, and Pierce Counties participated in the third annual United St. Croix Valley Legislative Days in Madison on March 5-6, 2008.

Eleven teams met with state representatives and senators or their respective staffs to discuss legislative issues of importance to the 3-county region. Issues included the consolidation of the five tax credit programs administered by the Department of Commerce, a state tax exemption for contributions made to health savings accounts (HSAs), improved media access (Fair Access to Networks Legislation), long-term funding for transportation projects like I-94, U.S. Highway 8, major feeder systems, and the St. Croix River Crossing, and long-term funding for a scientific and research park in the St. Croix Valley.

The issues were published in a booklet to help legislators and staff understand them. Booklets were left at each appointment, along with a CD of the recently completed 3-county manufacturers directory. The joint project reflects the growing cooperation between St. Croix, Polk, and Pierce County EDCs.

Mickey Judkins, a division administrator with the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, spoke to the group during lunch on March 5th. Judkins, with board oversight, also directs the activities of Forward Wisconsin's staff. Forward Wisconsin is the state's public-private external marketing arm for economic development.

Michael Morgan, the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Administration, addressed the group at breakfast



*A group of citizens stopped by the office of State Senator Sheila Harsdorf on March 5, 2008 during United St. Croix Valley Legislative Days (l to r): Tim Ryan, Bernick Companies, Norma Ryan, Kristin Samp, WITC-New Richmond, State Senator Sheila Harsdorf, Ann Hall, Edward Jones, and Bill Rubin, St. Croix EDC.*



*Several people gathered at the Inn on the Park before departing to the capitol. State Representative John Murtha is in the front row with New Richmond Mayor David Schnitzler. State Representative Kitty Rhoades is in the back row at the top.*

on March 6th. Secretary Morgan oversees a cabinet agency involved in virtually every aspect of public administration at the state level, including the development of the state budget and providing services to state agencies.

In addition to volunteering their time during the legislative event, the participants were responsible for a registration fee and overnight lodging. Many traveled to Madison on a coach bus that was arranged as part of legislative days. Twenty corporate sponsors provided financial support to offset the costs associated with the event.

United St. Croix Valley Legislative Days is a project started by the nonprofit economic development corporations (EDCs) in St. Croix, Polk and Pierce counties.