

2006 Future Wisconsin Conference

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The Future Wisconsin Conference was founded in 2005 in response to the demand for an outlet for conservative energies in the state of Wisconsin. Taxpayers in the state have grown tired of the inept political party system and its failure to address the major problems of the state. The failure of accomplishment has led to the virtual disintegration of the Democrat party, and the diminished structure of the Republican Party statewide. It would be very difficult to find a party leader in this state that has a vision for the future of Wisconsin.

As Owen Robinson, author of “Boots and Sabers.com”, a very active conservative blog said: “conservatism is about ideology, parties are about power”. This is very apropos. Most political activists are tired of fighting their way up and around the party structures. They expend a considerable amount of energy and at the end have to ask what have we accomplished? The interest in the conservative movement is to affect legislation and elect conservatives. That is why the Future Wisconsin Conservative Conference was formed.

Just prior to the founding of the Wisconsin Conservative Digest and it's website, “widigest.com”, Ed Garvey, a perennial liberal candidate for office had founded “Fighting Bobfest”. This liberal hate-fest attracts a considerable number of wild-eyed leftwing activists to hear speakers disparage conservatives and their representatives in office with an incredible amount of vitriol. After reading the news articles depicting the antics of “Fighting Bobfest” I thought; “Boy if you gather a few nuts in one place you sure can attract a lot of squirrels.” It was this debacle that initiated the concept of a conservative conference built on positive discussion about solving problems in Wisconsin, rather than mindlessly lash out at liberals.

The staff at the Digest realized we needed an outlet to bring conservatives together in a positive manner to teach people “how to think, not what to think”. In that vein, I contacted Kim Babler of Madison and we discussed the concept of a conservative conference. With Babler's encouragement, work began on the first Future Wisconsin conference. The editor of the Digest, JJ Blonien, based on his past experience in publishing newspapers and community leadership, was very well versed in doing this type of conference. The grass roots organization, Americans for Prosperity (AFP), came on board as a co-sponsor. With the assistance of AFP's Regional Director, Mark Block and his very able associate Lori Pickens, we set out to develop a very worthwhile program that looked at the issues, ideas and leadership programs, the very principals on which the Wisconsin Conservative Digest was formed.

After attending Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), a project of the American Conservative Union Foundation, held every February in Washington DC., we were able to flesh out our ideas. As we began to contact other conservative political activists throughout the state utilizing our website and email, we realized the great amount of interest there was for a conference of this type. We particularly wanted to reach the students, both in college and high school, to inspire them to become interested in the public arena. By working with

various people, we found home-school students, college students, private school students and choice program students. Thanks to scholarship money donated by the Terry and Mary Kohler, the Bradley Foundation, Tim Michels, and others, about 150 students were able to attend the first conference. In addition to the students, more than 200 people attended the conference, with nine conservative organizations hosting a booth.

The reception from people to be member of the panels was tremendous. Few people turned us down and only if they had other commitments. Our panels on health-care, education, the economy and the candidates for statewide office were very well accepted, mostly because they were interactive allowing for a lot of questions and answers. I believe conservatives are bored with the lackluster political conventions where you sat for hours and listened all day. If you are going to hold the interest of the activists you need to make them a part of the process. The attendees have ideas and lots of good ones. They need to be heard, and Future Wisconsin gave them a forum.

The Wisconsin Conservative Digest was founded to discuss issues, ideas and leadership. The Future Wisconsin Conference is just one way to do it. We found that the attendees were very enthusiastic and energized. We wanted to show them that conservatism was the wave of the future and how they can analyze issues and ideas and come up with solutions that emphasized the individual and free enterprise, not just more government programs. We accomplished that.

Liberalism has become one long tedious rant against the ideas of others but bereft of their own programs for the future. A good example is the recent spate of anarchistic threats to the safety of the populace in the Milwaukee area. Milwaukee County Sheriff, David Clarke, has come up with a good program that can help us take back the streets and promote the education and families of the inner city. The liberals have nothing. Their hacks criticized Sheriff Clarke for his conservative ideas, but then failed to offer any alternative programs. The Mayor of Milwaukee looks like Chicken Little when asked about the problem and offers no solutions for the future.

Milwaukee needs leaders that can go out and stimulate the populace to clear the streets of the hoodlums, improve education and family life and encourage the community, especially the churches, to take an active part in rebuilding the inner city.

The 2006 Future Wisconsin Conference is far improved and promises to hold up a light to look for solutions to the problems of the state. Go to the widgest.com web site and click on "Future Wisconsin" for the complete program. We invite you to attend, be a sponsor, participate in the program, have a booth, and bring some students. The Future is now.