



Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance

401 North Lawn Avenue • Madison, WI 53704-5033
www.wistax.org • 608.241.9789 • fax: 608.241.5807

NEWS

Contact: Todd A. Berry or Dale J. Knapp
608.241.9789 or wistax@wistax.org
February 15, 2010

Wisconsin Loses 4.3% of Business Establishments in 2006-09

Decline Larger than Surrounding States and U.S.

MADISON—Wisconsin had 6,700, or 4.3%, fewer private businesses in early 2009 than it did at the same time in 2006, according to the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX). The first-quarter statistics—from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics—were part of a WISTAX review of various “state of the state” measures early in the new year.

“While employment figures and jobless rates are closely monitored by the press and the public during a recession—as they should be”, WISTAX President Todd A. Berry noted, “less attention has been paid to the employers who provide jobs.”

The 2006-09 drop in private establishments here was somewhat unusual, for Illinois (7.8%), Iowa (2.2%), Minnesota (0.4%), and the nation (6.1%) all experienced increases; and Michigan (-1.7%), surprisingly, was down less than Wisconsin.

The adverse trend in Wisconsin is a relatively new development, as earlier in the decade the state outperformed the four neighbor states. Between 2001 and 2006, the number of private establishments in the Badger State rose 11.5% to 155,900. That growth rate exceeded all the surrounding states and the U.S. (7.0%). Regionally, Illinois’s increase was second (8.0%) and Minnesota’s third (7.7%). Numbers in Iowa and Michigan declined during 2001-06.

When establishments were examined by employee count, WISTAX found that business numbers were down almost across the board with the largest declines coming among firms with 100 or more employees. The one exception was firms with less than five employees, of which Wisconsin had 6.8% more in 2009 than in 2006. “This is good news, since small businesses create the bulk of new jobs,” noted Berry.

These and other assessments of the state of the state are found in the recent WISTAX report, “Time for status reports,” contained in the nonprofit, nonpartisan group’s biweekly *Focus* newsletter. A free copy is available by contacting WISTAX at 401 North Lawn Ave., Madison, Wisconsin 53704; e-mail wistax@wistax.org; or call 608.241.9789.