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2015 - 2016
Blue Book

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The following LRB staff members produced the
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Julie Pohlman, editor
Lynn Lemanski, lead publications editor and co-editor

Jason Anderson, legislative analyst
Lauren Jackson, legislative analyst
Michael J. Keane, senior legislative analyst
Jenni Le, legislative analyst
Kristina Martinez, reference and instruction librarian
Ciara O'Neill, legislative analyst
Robert A. Paolino, senior legislative analyst
Daniel F. Ritsche, senior legislative analyst

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Photographer



SCOTT WALKER
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF WISCONSIN

P.O. Box 7863
MADISON, WI 53707

July 2015

Fellow Wisconsinites,

Wisconsin's future is brighter than ever. Over the past four years, we have put the power back into the hands of taxpayers. When I first took office, Wisconsin was facing record unemployment and billion-dollar deficits. Many thought our state was headed in the wrong direction. Now, more than four years later, our tough, but prudent, decisions have allowed us to invest in our priorities and strengthen Wisconsin.

Our common-sense reforms are improving our business climate, giving employers, and entrepreneurs the confidence to invest, expand, and create more jobs in our state. In the last four years over 10,000 new business establishments opened their doors in Wisconsin and state exports rose over 18 percent. This is great news for our state.

Because we believe every child, regardless of zip code, should have access to a great education, we continue working to provide more education options in Wisconsin. Our reforms have empowered schools, giving them the flexibility to hire and fire based on merit and pay based on performance, which means we can put the best and the brightest in our classrooms and pay to keep them there. Today, third grade reading scores are up, graduation rates across the board are higher, and Wisconsin boasts the 2nd best ACT scores in the country.

It is our duty to be responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars and we've done just that. Our rainy day fund is 165 times bigger than when we took office. Wisconsin has the only fully-funded pension system in the country. And, for four straight years, property taxes on the median-valued home were lower than they were in 2010. No other state can say that. Overall, we reduced Wisconsin's tax burden by \$2 billion, meaning you—the hardworking taxpayers of Wisconsin—get to keep more of your hard earned money.

Our successes allow us to continue investing in our priorities. We are steadfastly committed to promoting more freedom and prosperity for all of our citizens. Working together, we want to ensure every citizen in Wisconsin has more opportunities and a brighter future.

This year, the *2015-2016 Wisconsin Blue Book* focuses on our state's participation in the Civil War with a featured article titled, "Wisconsin in the Civil War." Wisconsin played a distinguished role in a conflict that touched virtually every family and aspects of society in the 1860s. This is a great chance to learn about Wisconsin's involvement during that era and see Wisconsinites' resolve and hard work that continues to define our state today.

It is my honor to serve as Governor of Wisconsin. I hope the *Blue Book* is a useful tool for each of you as you learn more about our state government, both past and present.

Together, we are moving Wisconsin *Forward*.

Scott Walker



State of Wisconsin

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

INTRODUCTION

On April 12, 1861, confederate forces fired upon Fort Sumter in South Carolina, initiating a conflict that would divide the country for four years until April 9, 1865, when confederate General Lee surrendered in Virginia. 2015 marks the 150th anniversary of the ending of the American Civil War; the 92nd edition of the *Wisconsin Blue Book* acknowledges this milestone with a feature article that focuses on the contributions Wisconsin made during that time told through the personal narratives of its residents. The article was written by the director and staff of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and provides an overview of the state's role in the war from the perspective of its citizens. The collections of the museum provided rich source material for this article, including letters home from soldiers in the field, company photographs, regimental battle flags, and unique artifacts such as uniforms, flag staffs, and munition shells.

Wisconsin celebrated its 13th year of statehood at the start of the war in 1861. The population of the state had more than doubled between the census of 1850 and 1860 – from 305,528 to 775,629 – due to a steady stream of immigrants from western European countries like Germany, Ireland, and Sweden, and from migrations within the United States, lured to the mining opportunities the state provided. During the course of the Civil War over 80,000 residents, new arrivals and those long settled, would be called to serve in the conflict and the entire state would be involved in the effort to see the conflict to resolution. A number of legacies survive as a result of this period of history, notably the organization of the new republican political party and establishing funding and care facilities for the health and wellbeing of veterans in state law.

As the *2015-2016 Wisconsin Blue Book* provides a lasting record of the state and its government today, so too did editions during the war. The *Blue Book* was published annually during the Civil War and contains important information and statistics of the period. The *1862 Wisconsin Blue Book* was the first edition to document the division the nation had undergone by distinguishing between the “United States Government” (p. 124) and the “Rebel National Government” (p. 129); population of the states were broken down into “free states” (p. 164) and “slave states” (p. 164). This edition also featured an 11 page historical timeline leading up to the war, titled “The Southern Rebellion.” Both the 1862 and 1863 editions included details on the state's military forces, including a list of all regiments and companies along with the names of the officers and their ranks, with pay by rank included in the 1863 edition.

The full text of the Conscription Act was included in the 1864 edition, as well as a separate accounting of the military votes for governor.

This edition of the *Blue Book* also demonstrates the changes that have occurred since the prior edition, albeit on a much smaller scale. Federal agencies have made a number of changes in terms of what information they collect and report on, altering a number of annual statistical tables. Wisconsin's cash receipts from farm marketings are now only available at a category level; the United States Department of Agriculture no longer reports at the individual crop level. The United States Census Bureau has also ceased to report per capita federal expenditures by state. A list of famous citizens of Wisconsin will no longer be published; the number of citizens with significant achievements surpasses what can be compiled in a few, succinct pages. Noteworthy additions in the book occurred with the constitution, reflecting two constitutional amendments in 2014 and 2015, and with the addition of new statistical tables. A table on University of Wisconsin System budgeted faculty positions by institution, as well as a table of county-level data regarding nonirrigated cropland cash rents have been added to provide further perspective on education and agricultural industries in the state.

The *2015-2016 Wisconsin Blue Book* continues to serve as the single, most comprehensive resource of information on the government and citizens of the state of Wisconsin. Research staff at the Legislative Reference Bureau have compiled, verified, and updated content from every branch of the government, state agency, and elected officials. I would like to acknowledge and thank the research staff, not only for their contributions, but for their commitment to providing a detailed and valued almanac of the state. I would also like to thank feature article authors Michael Telzrow, Russell Horton, and Kevin Hampton from the Wisconsin Veterans Museum for writing a concise overview of the Civil War from the perspective of this state and its citizens, and providing an engaging collection of accompanying images from their collection. Wisconsin has undergone significant change and growth since this momentous war ended 150 years ago and the *Blue Book* provides a fitting platform to contextualize the story within the state's background. From constitution, to feature article, branch and agency descriptions, to statistical tables, the *Blue Book* provides a way to map the development of the state since 1848.



Julie Pohlman
Blue Book Editor
July 2015

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