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Lake Delton - Gov. Jim Doyle during a Capital Day in Sauk and Columbia counties promised tourism ... Governor Doyle visits Dell

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Lake Delton - Gov. Jim Doyle during a Capital Day in Sauk and Columbia counties promised tourism leaders to sign two bills of concern to tourism businesses and got a re-election endorsement from a prominent Dells businessman.

The Dells area for many years has been a stronghold of support for Tommy Thompson, the former Republican governor and an Assembly representative for the area.

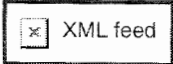
Doyle also received praise from Tom Diehl, of Tommy Bartlett, Inc. Calling Doyle a "breath of fresh air," Diehl, in introducing the governor, said Doyle has had a commitment to economic development and job creation.

Diehl noted Doyle's support of the expansion of the codes that determine what items people have to pay the premier resort tax on, and said that change allowed Lake Delton to put in the utilities for the new outlet mall, being developed by the Watermans and Tangier Outlets Inc.

In return Doyle thanked Jack Waterman and Diehl for their support of raising the minimum wage. The support for the raise showed that the tourism industry would do the right thing, he said.

Jim Holperin, secretary of the department of tourism accompanied him and told those present Doyle would sign two tourism-related bills: One

Syndicate



revises the state's rules on room tax and one allows attractions on interstate signs. The signing will take place when Doyle returns to the area Tuesday and attends the annual Governor's Conference on Tourism. The conference will be at Ho-Chunk Casino Sunday through Tuesday.

The change in the state's room tax law clarifies how the money can be used. The changes will prohibit the tax being used for police salaries, garbage pickup or other services. Instead, Holperin said 70 percent of the funds collected by a room tax would need to be used for tourism advertising, Web sites, construction of convention centers and other tourism efforts.

Doyle said the room tax bill wouldn't affect the Dells area since it already uses the room tax for tourism promotions. In Wisconsin Dells and Lake Delton, 90 percent of room tax collected goes to the Wisconsin Dells Visitor and Convention Bureau.

In a question and answer session, Diehl asked Doyle what the business community here could do to stop the passage of the so-called TABOR or taxpayer bill of rights legislation that would cap government revenue and spending. If it becomes law and part of the constitution, Diehl said the city of the Dells and village of Lake Delton would not be able to pay their bond obligations.

"If we get this wrong, we will have it for years in the constitution. It's very poorly thought out. You just can't govern this way," Doyle said of the legislation.

Doyle suggested contacting the five or six senators who he called responsible moderates. Included in the group is Sen. Luther Olsen, who represents the Dells area.

In response to a question on concealed carry legislation, Doyle said such laws don't make sense. "If you want to carry a gun in Wisconsin, wear it on your hip," Doyle said, patting his hip.

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