

## Youth Delegates to Legislative Days Success Story - 2007

**Situation:** Every two years, a group of Door County residents organize and participate in an event called Door County Legislative Days. The purpose of the event is to develop an agenda of issues that are critical to the county, and then travel to Madison to meet with legislators to thank them for past aid and encourage them to consider our county's needs in the future. This was the third time that such an event was conducted in Door County, and until this point, no youth had been a part of the process.

**Response:** Working with Door County UW-Extension Community Resource Development Educator Rob Burke, and Door County Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Bill Chaudoir, 4-H Youth Development Agent Dawn Kuelz started the plans in motion to develop a youth component to the Legislative Days event. The decision was made to keep the youth delegation small this year, as a trial-run to gauge appropriate roles for the youth in the process. Since the planning for the youth delegation started late, the youth weren't included in the agenda planning and issues statement development, but could be in the future. Youth from the Door County YMCA/Rotary Interact's Youth in Governance program were invited to attend Legislative Day in the new youth delegation. Four youth initially expressed interest, but due to school/sports conflicts, only two were able to attend the event. Kuelz conducted two planning meetings with the two youth delegates. As a part of the Legislative Day event, the youth delegates and Kuelz participated as a legislative team, visiting 4 legislators' staff members and sharing the messages from Door County. The youth delegation also participated in large agency meetings, where officials from a variety of state agencies met with the entire delegation to discuss issues facing the state.

**Results:** The youth delegates were well received within the larger delegation, and participated fully in the events. The two youth explained that they were very pleased with how well the visits to legislators' offices went and how much they learned from that portion of the event. Jon Jarosh, Marketing Director at the Chamber of Commerce and a Legislative Day delegate also served on the youth delegates' lobbying team. He stated "The student delegates brought a certain level of youthful enthusiasm with them to Madison that only students can bring. I felt it made our group meetings with legislators and/or their staff members even more genuine, and they added greatly to the grass roots feeling that our Door County group had in the first place. And to have students talking about education issues like they did in our meetings made those particular subjects hit home even better. I hope even more students are able to join us for Door County Legislative Days again in 2009."

**Evidence:** The two youth delegates and Kuelz discussed each aspect of the event and its value to the youth delegates at the conclusion of the program. The Legislative Day steering committee also conducted a written evaluation of the program, which will be shared as soon as it is completed.