

Rural Sign Standards

The citizens of Northwest Wisconsin request:

- **That the Department of Transportation review and obtain input on the impacts of the current sign regulations on communities in Northern Wisconsin.**

We encourage the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to review regulations for roadside signs along state highways. Rural businesses often do not meet criteria available in other areas, to consider modification of fees for rural business signage. Through a Tourism Oriented Display Program, rural areas, where off-highway, small and home based businesses are more prevalent and dependent upon passing traffic could be supported. Public input sessions to address the concerns of small business owners in rural areas of Northern Wisconsin will be beneficial.

Current Department of Transportation signage regulations on State Highways are controlled by the Highway Beautification Act of 1967. Today, nearly 40 years after its establishment, this legislation is prohibiting both existing signs to be replaced and new signs from being erected.

In rural Northwest Wisconsin areas off-road, small businesses such as farms, orchards and value-added enterprises depend on pass through traffic. Less advertising will result in fewer successful businesses and erosion of the economic base in Bayfield County.

The State does have an existing program to address this in part. The Tourism Oriented Display Sign program or TODS is available. However at a cost of over \$2000 and bi-annual renewal many small and home based businesses cannot justify the time and monetary expense.

The impact of less signage will negatively impact existing small businesses in rural areas where pass through traffic is critical to a businesses success, thus it will impact the very communities, lifestyles and traditions the regulations are intended to protect.

For more information contact:

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