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## **Open government a key issue when state engineers meet with their legislators May 7**

MADISON -- They're state employees and also taxpayers, taking a day off work and traveling from as far as Superior to tell legislators their concerns: open government, sound budgeting, ethical campaigning and good-faith bargaining, among other key issues.

**“It's representative democracy at its finest. No paid lobbyists. Just individuals -- voters, citizens and taxpayers alike -- who work for the state, getting involved and expressing their views on public issues,”** said Tom Mугan, State Engineering Association (SEA) president.

**WHO:** State Engineering Association (SEA), representing about 1,100 State of Wisconsin engineering and technical employees

**WHAT:** Annual SEA Day government office visits

**WHEN:** Wednesday, May 7  
9 am - 1 pm

**WHERE:** Room 411S Capitol

The visits are part of the SEA's annual day at the Capitol. SEA is a bargaining unit for about 1,100 engineers and engineering-related professionals employed by more than a dozen state agencies. Annually for the past decade, SEA members statewide have set aside a personal day to travel to Madison and exchange views with legislators.

Scores of SEA members are expected to attend. They'll meet their first legislator at 9:30 am when Sen. Fred Risser (D-Madison) speaks to the assembled members. Then they'll break up for scheduled meetings in the offices of their own legislators.

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Judging from SEA member comments, treating employees fairly and agreeing to equitable compensation for their work and expenses will be a frequent theme, Mugan said.

“It took our association a couple of years of hard bargaining beyond an expired contract to get the state to approach reasonable compensation adjustments,” Mugan said. “We had to start new contract talks almost immediately and it's turned out to be another long haul.

"Our members want their legislators to know that as state workers we provide great service at an economical cost. They want legislators to make sure that employees are treated fairly and that the state engages in good-faith bargaining.”

Mugan noted that a state study comparing private consultants versus state engineer costs showed that state engineers are at least 18 percent more cost effective than private alternatives. He said SEA wants to see that the state follows through on Act 89, a 2005 law that requires agencies to weigh costs versus benefits of outsourcing state work to private firms.

"Our members are very interested in ensuring that the state gets the best value out of every tax dollar," Mugan said. “We also are focused on getting the state to be more open and honest in carrying out its programs and studies. Political considerations should not be allowed to drive bad public policy.

"Wisconsin citizens and taxpayers expect the best. And that's why we're coming to the Capitol.”

For more information about SEA, visit [www.wisea.org](http://www.wisea.org) on the Internet.

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