



October 13, 2003



## Editorial

**Go governors, tell it like it is**

***High-profile drive to focus attention on manufacturing is a worthy effort.***

OVER THE PAST three years, Wisconsin has lost more than 50,000 manufacturing jobs. Nationwide, the number tops 3 million.

These are not easy jobs to replace. Most manufacturing jobs \_ often unionized \_ are high-wage occupations with exceptional benefits. The impact on a community when these jobs disappear can be devastating, as Beloit and other Stateline Area cities have learned the hard way.

Even when workers find other employment in the area, it's often service-related at a substantially reduced wage. It is not an exaggeration to suggest such losses lower the standard of living for an entire community, not just the affected workers and their families.

YET FEW POLITICIANS are addressing troubles in the manufacturing sector. It's not hard to understand why President Bush prefers to look the other way. He'd rather voters were distracted with other matters. The job losses have occurred on his watch so, for him, the less said the better.

His political opponents, too, have contributed little in the way of potential solutions and strategies. Instead, the main motivation simply is to bash Bush. The tactic may move Bush opponents toward a goal \_ defeating Bush in '04 \_ but it does nothing to improve opportunities for America's working men and women.

Which is why we're so pleased that Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle is talking about the manufacturing challenge and being creative in

an effort to build support and put heat on Washington.

DOYLE HAS PROPOSED a number of initiatives in Wisconsin to help manufacturers grow and prosper. He calls for spending money to boost business and assist in finding and training workers. It's a good start.

But Doyle also realizes the problems facing manufacturing are not restricted to Wisconsin, and will not be solved here. He is teaming with Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm \_ and they're lobbying other governors to join them \_ in a high-profile challenge to Congress and the Bush administration. The governors plan to press Washington for fair trade agreements and other measures to bolster America's sagging manufacturing economy.

CORRECTLY, DOYLE calls it a matter of national security. We've said the same thing before, in this space. The United States has won wars because of the vitality and productivity of its manufacturing companies and workers. If that capacity continues to be diminished and shipped overseas, America will be more vulnerable to its enemies.

Add that to the economic realities \_ declining opportunities and a lower standard of living \_ and it's obvious American citizens must expect better performance from Bush and Congress.

Imagine this: The equivalent of a march on Washington ***led by the governors***. Tell it like it is, Governor Doyle.

Close Window