

CITY OF MANITOWOC

WISCONSIN, USA
www.manitowoc.org

15-943



MEMO

TO: Public Infrastructure Committee

FROM: Dan Koski, PE, Director of Public Infrastructure

DATE: December 2, 2015

RE: Wheel Tax Information

An internet search for Wisconsin Wheel Tax information yielded the following data:

Wisconsin law allows a town, village, city or county to collect an annual municipal or county registration fee (wheel tax) in addition to the regular annual registration fee paid for a vehicle. The fee applies to regular vehicles kept in the municipality or county with:

- Automobile registration
- Truck registration at 8,000 lbs. or less (except dual purpose farm)

The following special plates are exempt from the wheel tax:

- Antique
- Collector (although "Collector Special" are not exempt)
- Ex - Prisoner of War (if issued without registration fee)
- Historic Military
- Hobbyist
- Medal of Honor
- All special plates issued to a farm truck, dual purpose farm truck, or motor home
- Motorcycles & Mopeds

State law does not specify the amount of the wheel tax. However, the municipality or county must use all revenue from the wheel tax for transportation related purposes.



WisDOT collects the wheel tax, keeps an administrative fee of 10 cents per vehicle, and sends the rest to the municipality or county.

WisDOT currently collects a wheel tax for the following:

- Municipalities
 - Appleton - \$20 beginning February 2015
 - Arena Township - \$20 beginning April 2015
 - Beloit - \$20 beginning February 2015
 - Gillett - \$20 beginning July 2015
 - Janesville - \$10
 - Kaukauna - \$10 beginning August 2015
 - Milwaukee - \$20
- Counties
 - Chippewa - \$10 beginning January 2015
 - Iowa - \$20 beginning February 2015
 - St. Croix - \$10

Four local governments once levied wheel taxes ranging from \$5 - \$10, but political pressure forced their repeal.

- Amery
- Sheboygan
- Mayville
- Marathon County

In Dane County, it was shot down in 2011 when the County Executive said the policy was regressive to low income residents.

Wheel Taxes are typically very controversial, and are often discussed in association with referendum and/or a sunset clause.

Vehicle owners in cities with wheel taxes sometimes attempt to dodge the fee by lying about where they keep the vehicle, which is a concern to the DMV.

Appleton discontinued Special Assessments against property owners in lieu of the Wheel Tax.