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**Republican parties in 3 Wisconsin counties honor Trump alongside Lincoln, Reagan**

*By WisPolitics.com*

At least three county Republican parties in Wisconsin have added a new name to their events celebrating eminent Republican presidents Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan. That name is Donald Trump.

The move this year by the Waukesha, Winnebago and Waupaca county parties comes on the heels of Trump losing Wisconsin by less than 21,000 votes and the national vote by more than 7 million.

Still, Trump energized rural supporters and helped the Republican Party close the gap in the U.S. House of Representatives, defying expectations. Meanwhile, Wisconsin Republicans lost two state Assembly seats but picked up two in the state Senate in November.

The Winnebago County GOP hosted a virtual dinner event in mid-June that was billed as the Lincoln & Trump Dinner. It was called the Lincoln Dinner last year.

Winnebago County Republican Party Chair Ed Hudak said Trump’s name was added because “we are trying to indicate to all Trump supporters that they are part of the party and Trump is our leader.”

Hudak added Republicans want to keep those Trump voters excited for coming elections so they vote for Trump in the future and for fellow Republicans down the ballot.

He also said the move is part of a larger effort to make Trump voters feel more included in the Republican Party rather than feeling like quasi-Republican outsiders.

Fond du Lac Party County Chair Rohn Bishop, who has regularly urged Republicans to move on from Trump’s loss, said he understood the desire to keep the former president’s supporters engaged. Still, he argued adding Trump’s name to county party functions diminished the legacy of GOP presidents such as Lincoln and Reagan.

The Fond du Lac County party, which boasts being home to Ripon, the birthplace of the GOP, has an event in the fall of odd-numbered years to honor Reagan and one in the spring of even-numbered years honoring Lincoln.

He noted Trump was the first Republican to lose the White House, House and Senate in his first term since Herbert Hoover.

“We didn’t run around having Herbert Hoover dinners in the 1930s,” he said.

The moves by the county parties to add Trump’s name to events come as Republicans have continued to debate nationally about the path forward after the former president’s loss last fall. That’s particularly true with Trump hinting about a possible run in 2024 and with his endorsement carrying significant weight in GOP primaries. He’s also a regular fixture in GOP fundraising appeals.

Waukesha County Republican Party Chairman Terry Dittrich told WisPolitics.com the party’s grassroots wanted to show their appreciation for Trump’s service in the White House over the past four years.

The party held its event, titled the Lincoln-Reagan-Trump Dinner, on May 22. The graphic used to promote the event features an image of Trump in the foreground and Lincoln and Reagan in the background.

Last year, the party hosted its 70th such event, titled The Lincoln Reagan Dinner, with Donald Trump Jr. as a guest speaker. President Trump’s name, however, was not part of the event title.

Dittrich added the party feels Trump did a phenomenal job and added his name to its event alongside Lincoln and Reagan to display that appreciation.

Waupaca County Republicans hosted a Lincoln-Reagan-Trump Dinner on April 17 after dubbing last year’s event the 2020 Lincoln/Reagan Day Dinner. The event page on Facebook for last year’s event featured only an image of Trump.

Democrats, meanwhile, chided Republicans over their fealty to Trump. State Democratic Executive Director Nellie Sires said Republicans are “laser-focused on venerating a failed one-term president.”

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