**Biden seeks to turn Foxconn negatives into positives for Dems**

By WisPolitics.com

Back when GOP Gov. Scott Walker was governor, the Foxconn project in Racine County was announced with soaring rhetoric. Then-President Donald Trump predicted it would become the eighth wonder of the world.

Now President Joe Biden is trying to turn the tables and turn the Foxconn negatives into positives for Dems this election year.

Biden came to southeastern Wisconsin in early May to tout Microsoft’s plans for a $3.3 billion new artificial intelligence datacenter.

In the process, he delighted in trolling Trump over Foxconn.

He noted Trump and other GOP officials attended a groundbreaking ceremony in summer 2018 with golden shovels.

“Are you kidding me?” Biden mocked. “Look what happened. They dug a hole with those golden shovels, and then they fell into it.”

Foxconn originally promised a $10 billion plant that would employ 13,000 people and produce cutting-edge flat screens. But the company began scaling back its plans not long after the announcement and signed a revised deal with Democrat Gov. Tony Evers in 2021 that called for Foxconn to invest $672 million by the end of 2025 and create 1,451 jobs.

Biden called the project a “con” that wasted millions in state and local taxes as officials prepared for a project that didn’t materialize.

The president said Wisconsin lost 83,500 jobs under Trump, but has gained 178,000 since he took office, including 4,000 in Racine County. Biden called it part of a “great American comeback story.” Without mentioning him by name, Biden said his predecessor broke more promises than he kept and left a lot of people behind.

“On my watch, we make promises, and we keep promises, and we leave no one behind,” Biden said.

Biden’s stop in Racine County was the 11th of his presidency and the fourth this year. It came one week after Trump was in Waukesha County. Four years ago, Biden lost Racine County to Trump by 3.6 percentage points, a slight improvement over the 4.1-point win Trump posted over Hillary Clinton here in 2016.

The White House said the project is expected to create 2,300 union construction jobs and 2,000 permanent jobs over time. The work also includes partnerships between Microsoft and Gateway Technical College, as well as TitletownTech and the Green Bay Packers to establish a manufacturing-focused AI co-innovation lab at UW-Milwaukee.

Ahead of Biden’s visit, Republicans on a media call accused Biden of “hijacking” the Microsoft announcement to distract from his failed policies.

U.S. Rep. Bryan Steil, R-Janesville, touted the news as a win for the area but argued Biden is taking credit for private sector work that began more than 10 years ago.

“Microsoft’s announcement of private sector jobs in Racine is good for workers, and it’s all the more important when workers and families find themselves falling further and further behind due to the reckless inflation brought on to us by the Biden administration,” Steil said.

Asked if Trump was hijacking the event when he took part in the groundbreaking at Foxconn, state GOP Chair Brian Schimming said a lot of the jobs and development in the area started under Trump and Walker.

“So for the president to come in suddenly [say] hey, you know, I’ve helped get all these jobs here in Racine County just isn’t accurate,” Schimming said.

But Microsoft President Brad Smith said during the White House event that everything the company is doing in Racine County and Wisconsin benefits “directly from the work of this White House and this president.”

Smith said the bipartisan infrastructure law of 2022 is making it easier to transport the steel to build the plant while boosting broadband. He said the Inflation Reduction Act made it possible to achieve energy goals and praised the president’s efforts to embrace artificial intelligence to ensure it’s used responsibly.

He also singled out the CHIPS Act that Biden signed in 2022 to boost funding for domestic research and manufacturing of semiconductors in the U.S.

“A data center without chips doesn’t do much for anybody,” Smith said.

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