

Mayor Barrett's 'Green' Vision

11/28/05

Good Morning.

It's a pleasure to welcome you to the Milwaukee Public Market.

This new Milwaukee icon is the perfect place to talk about our future.

When open, this market is a thriving center. It represents the renaissance of good ideas that make Milwaukee a more attractive city to visit and another reason for people to live here.

This building also represents my 'green' vision for Milwaukee. This place was designed to better meet its energy needs as it grows the local economy.

Green is about our economy...

It's about our environment...

It's about a New Milwaukee.

It is time for us to realize that our economy and our environment are interdependent.

Think about it..... Without proper vision, our water issues will continue to challenge us. We will spend more in the long run on clean-up and sewer upgrades. We will suffer an image problem as long as people believe that we pollute our waters, even though our lakefront and Riverwalk are some of our greatest assets.

Meanwhile, rising energy costs affect us all. City government will spend \$2.7 million more for energy next year. Residents and businesses will see their costs increase by 61%. This issue affects our economy and our bottom-line.

I believe we can turn the tide.

Milwaukee can be a place that attracts people and businesses based on its approach to water and energy.

I want Milwaukee to think **GREEN**.

GREEN can be as exciting as the Milwaukee Public Market: a building that makes the best use of natural light and that includes other smart features to cut energy costs.

GREEN can be as subtle as holding off on doing laundry during rain storms. This is a time when wastewater can add greatly to sewer overflows.

AND... GREEN can be striking as the color of money...money in the pockets of Milwaukeeans who take the new 'green' collar jobs we create based on our demand for green technologies. Our city is home to several leading companies in energy and water technologies. We should grow this segment of our region's economy.

To help us realize a greater vision for green, I enlisted the help of a broad-based group of citizens. I formed a Milwaukee Green Team.

I asked the Team to create a list of recommendations to move Milwaukee forward on issues of stormwater, energy and our green economy.

I also asked them to explore ways in which we can encourage businesses and residents to join us in this effort.

The Team has issued its report. Some recommendations I will adopt immediately.

LET'S START WITH OUR APPROACH TO WATER.

We CANNOT have sewage overflows.

We can't continue to let rainwater run-off polluted surfaces, overwhelm our sewers and run into our waterways.

We must also conserve water. This is more than an ethical choice. It's a crucial financial decision. It'll cost more in the long run to remedy our water woes. Now is the time to change our game plan.

Here are some New Milwaukee approaches to our water issues:

I will issue a directive to reduce by 15% the amount of stormwater run-off from city properties. I ask businesses and residents to do what they can too.

I will start by directing our Public Works Department to use native plants in city boulevards and public green spaces. These plants soak up more stormwater and need less maintenance.

We will also consider adding rain-absorbing plants to NON-buildable vacant lots. When possible, we will add green roofs to new city facilities and look for other green options for city property.

To the citizens of Milwaukee I say:

**WE MUST ALL BE ON THE SAME TEAM
THE MILWAUKEE GREEN TEAM.**

I urge citizens to disconnect their downspouts and add plants to their yards that absorb rainwater.

Businesses can join the TEAM on this effort too. I commend Miller Brewing for 'greening' its parking lot. As Mayor, I've directed the Department of City Development to guide building projects so that we see more green features and fewer 'seas' of asphalt parking lots.

As you can read in today's Small Business Times, developers understand that green development sells. Milwaukee is seeing a greater number of green features in new buildings, like the Milwaukee Public Market.

We can all join the Team on another effort.

The Milwaukee Green Team provided the City with a ‘quick win’ on energy use.

We audited our energy use at City Hall. We found that there were a number of ways we could cut our costs.

Last month, I issued a directive to city departments to cut energy use by 10%. I asked city employees to leave their personal space heaters at home. We will install vending machine misors to cut energy consumption...and we will install light sensors to make better use of daylight in our offices.

We will also take additional steps in the future, so that we can cut our energy use by 15% over the next six years.

We need quick wins for our residents too.

At the same time I ordered an audit of our energy use, I encouraged residents to audit their own homes. I encouraged them to weatherize now to save on their heating bills later. I urged low-income families to sign up for energy assistance, before their bills become a crisis in spring.

We are all on the same team and together we must cut costs for the sake of taxpayers and we must do what we can to help our residents realize energy savings too.

HERE'S ANOTHER QUICK WIN:

In my 2006 budget, I included funding to purchase 'renewable energy blocks' for city hall. A portion of our city's energy will come from renewable sources.

I encourage businesses and residents to do the same.

Renewable energy is a local product. If we can encourage a growing market for renewable energy that's made in this region, we will be better off when fuel prices rise.

Milwaukee is home to several leading companies in energy technologies. There's Johnson Controls, Rockwell International, Eaton Corporation and Magnatek, to name a few.

These are innovative companies and they are at the forefront of how economic growth and green are connected.

There's also a second tier of companies that provide energy innovation. Our regional expertise in energy controls, small engine design and building technologies provide us with a strong base for a **GREEN INDUSTRY CLUSTER**.

Going 'green' will grow this industry cluster and add new jobs to our economy.

In fact, environmental technology is **one of the fastest growing job sectors**.

Milwaukee should expand the number of 'green collar' jobs here. The jobs could range from stormwater landscapers to environmental engineers.

As Mayor, I am always seeking partners that can help lift up our city and create better opportunities.

Today, I am pleased to announce that we will grow our energy technology cluster thanks to a partnership with the Apollo Alliance.

The Alliance is a nationally-recognized group that works with the government, businesses and venture capitalists to promote energy independence and good jobs. They will be our partner in promoting our 'green' energy cluster.

One of the best business-friendly green concepts is the idea of shared resources.

In the Menomonee Valley, our business park will provide stormwater management for all companies that locate there. It allows us to add more businesses over a larger area.

I will ask the Department of City Development and partners in the business community to explore ways in which we can re-develop our industrial corridors to provide shared resources.

In other words, let's provide a GREEN industrial corridor that serves the needs of INDUSTRIAL companies.

From what we hear from manufacturers, there is a growing need to share energy resources during peak times.

My administration will seek ways in which we can offer incentives to stimulate our green economy. In my ongoing conversations with businesses, I will seek input on ways we can remove barriers to going green.

So how do we make a green vision a Milwaukee reality?

It starts with our image.

Milwaukee is already green in many respects.

Our tree canopy, our green spaces, our recycling programs and our green roofs put us ahead of other cities.

It's time we call attention to ourselves.

The next time someone attends one of our festivals or the Wisconsin State Fair, I want them to know they're in a GREEN city.

Let's green the festivals. The Milwaukee Green Team is ready to help enhance existing recycling programs at our summertime events.

It's an opportunity to grab the public and market our image.

My 'green' vision involves a TEAM effort. I invite citizens and businesses to join the Milwaukee Green Team. You can log onto our website www.milwaukeegreenteam.org to learn more.

Now, every good team needs a great front office.

That is why I will create an Office on Sustainability...to help guide our green priorities among city departments and to serve as a resource on efforts in the private sector.

This is not another layer of bureaucracy and it will not be paid for using taxpayer funds. We will seek grants to cover costs. This office will help us cut ACROSS departments to realize our goals.

I now ask for your help.

Please take a copy of the Milwaukee Green Team report.

Read through the recommendations.

In the near future, the Milwaukee Green Team and I will hold a listening session on the recommendations of this report.

I want to hear from you on how we can make our city's 'green' vision a plan for a better Milwaukee.

I will close by thanking the Milwaukee Green Team members for their hard work and their commitment to the future of our city.

Thank you...and thanks to all of you for making this the most exciting, livable city in the country. GO TEAM!