



Department of City Development
News Release

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MAYOR UNVEILS 'GREEN' VISION
OFFERS NEW APPROACHES TO ECONOMIC ISSUES

Mayor Tom Barrett said today he wants to stimulate a 'green' economy and attract more businesses and people to Milwaukee based on its approaches to water and energy issues. In a speech before business and community leaders, Mayor Barrett spoke of the need for a 'green' vision that will enhance Milwaukee's image as it addresses crucial issues.

"It is time for us to realize that our economy and our environment are interdependent," Mayor Barrett said. "Without proper vision, we will spend more in the long run on our water issues as the need for clean-up and sewer upgrades will continue. We will suffer an image problem as long as people believe that we pollute our waters, even though our lakefront and Riverwalk are two 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."

Mayor Barrett said it's time for Milwaukee to think green. Earlier this year he formed 'The Milwaukee Green Team,' a broad-based group that looked at ways Milwaukee could move forward on issues of stormwater management, energy and a green economy. Today, the Mayor asked everyone to 'join the Team.'

"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," said Mayor Barrett. "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. Green can be striking as the color of 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."

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Mayor Barrett outlined the following initial steps he would like to take, based on recommendations of the Milwaukee Green Team. Listening sessions will be held on additional recommendations in the near future.

WATER

Reduce by 15% the amount of stormwater run-off from city properties. Businesses and residents are asked to join the Team and reduce their own run-off.

Rainwater runs off polluted surfaces and not only floods our sewer system – it runs into our waterways. Mayor Barrett will begin efforts to reduce city runoff with a request to the Public Works Department to use native plants in city boulevards and public green spaces. These plants soak up more stormwater and need less maintenance.

The City will also consider adding rain-absorbing plants to non-buildable vacant lots. When possible, green roofs and rain gardens will be added to new city facilities.

Mayor Barrett urges citizens to disconnect their downspouts and add plants to their yards that absorb rainwater. Businesses will be asked to follow the lead of companies like Miller Brewing, by adding ‘green’ to its parking lots to help keep rainwater on-site. The Department of City Development will continue to guide building projects to include features that keep stormwater on-site and offer energy efficiencies.

ENERGY

Audit City Hall’s energy use and immediately reduce energy consumption by 10%
Earlier this month Mayor Barrett announced this Milwaukee Green Team ‘quick win.’ He also urged residents to audit their own energy use and weatherize to reduce home heating costs this winter. Low-income families are encouraged to sign up for energy assistance now before their bills become a crisis in spring.

Take additional steps to reduce City Hall energy costs by 15% in the next six years

Purchase ‘renewable energy blocks’ for City Hall. Encourage residents and businesses to do the same.

Another Milwaukee Green Team suggested ‘quick win’, Mayor Barrett included in his 2006 budget funding to purchase a portion of its energy from renewable sources. Renewable energy is a regional product and can help grow the economy as it helps ease the reliance on conventional fuels.

GREEN ECONOMY

Grow our Green Industry Clusters and add new jobs to our economy

Milwaukee is home to several leading companies in energy technologies. Johnson Controls, Rockwell International, Eaton Corporation and Magnatek are just a few. These innovative companies are at the forefront of the green industry. A second tier of companies also provides energy innovation. Our regional expertise in energy controls, small engine design and building technologies provides Milwaukee with a strong base for a green industry cluster.

Environmental technology is one of the fastest growing job sectors. Milwaukee could expand the number of ‘green collar’ jobs ranging from stormwater landscapers to environmental engineering.

Grow our Energy Technology Cluster in 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. The Apollo Alliance will be Milwaukee’s partner in promoting its ‘green’ energy cluster.

Explore possible green industrial corridors to offer shared resources to businesses

One of the best business-friendly green concepts is the idea of shared resources. The Menomonee Valley is a good example, as its business park designed to provide all stormwater management for companies that locate there.

Seek opportunities to offer incentives to stimulate green practices among businesses and review regulations that are current barriers to green.

MILWAUKEE'S GREEN IMAGE

Milwaukee is already green compared to other cities when it comes to its tree canopy, green spaces, recycling programs and the use of green roofs. Mayor Barrett said the time has come for Milwaukee to call attention to its status as a green city.

Green the Milwaukee Festivals and Wisconsin State Fair

The Milwaukee Green Team is ready to help enhance existing recycling programs at summertime events to reduce waste and to bring greater awareness of Milwaukee as a green city.

Create Office on Sustainability

This office within city government would coordinate citywide green efforts and serve as a resource on private sector green projects and resources. The office will only be created if proper grants can be secured, as Mayor Barrett said he does not intend to create new positions using taxpayer funds.

“From this day forward, we are all on the same team: The Milwaukee Green Team,” said Mayor Barrett. “I want to hear from the public on how we can make our city’s ‘green’ vision a plan for a better Milwaukee.”

You can read the entire list of Milwaukee Green Team recommendations by clicking onto the website: www.milwaukeegreenteam.org

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