



WISCONSIN ALLIANCE OF CITIES

April 22, 2009 e-newsletter

May 20 in Madison

City leaders gather to tout transit, fete legislators, ponder cap-and-trade

The Wisconsin Alliance of Cities, League of Wisconsin Municipalities and Wisconsin Urban and Rural Transit Association (WURTA) have a busy day planned for local leaders on May 20.

First, the Alliance Board of Directors will meet at 9 a.m. that day at the Concourse Hotel. Everyone — not just board members — is invited to hear Dave Benforado, executive director of Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin, talk about carbon cap-and-trade and its ramifications for the state's consumers and local governments. We'll also have a legislative update.

Cap-and-trade is President Obama's proposed strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change by placing a limit on carbon-dioxide emissions and allowing polluters either to meet limits or buy their way out of them.

Because Wisconsin burns so much coal for power, electric rates under cap-and-trade could soar as much as 63% from 2012 to 2030, according to Midwest Consumer Utilities, a group that includes investor-owned companies and WPPI Energy, which serves 50 customer-owned utilities.

The board meeting should be over by 10:45 a.m. so participants can walk to the Capitol for a news conference at 11 a.m. on regional transit with DOT secretary Frank Busalacchi, who will receive a leadership award in the Capitol Rotunda from the Alliance, the League and WURTA.

Then, at 12:30 p.m. at the Madison Hilton, there's the League-Alliance legislative luncheon. Don't forget to personally invite your legislators!

Happy Earth Day!

By Rich Eggleston

The late Sen. Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin promoted Earth Day on April 22, 1970, as a national day of grassroots teach-ins and demonstrations on behalf of the environment, and the idea took off like he never imagined.

In my first newspaper job, I covered Earth Day activities at St. Mary's Catholic School in Menasha, and one way or another, I've been following Earth Day ever since.

So, happy Earth Day, and many happy returns!



NASA

Alliance welcomes new mayors



Bob Ryan, Sheboygan's new mayor
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Bob Ryan, 45, is Sheboygan's new mayor. Ryan succeeds Mayor Juan Perez.

Matt Harter, 24, is the new mayor of La Crosse, succeeding Mayor Mark Johnsrud.

Justin Nickels, 22, is the new mayor of Manitowoc, succeeding Mayor (and former Alliance President) Kevin Crawford.

Johnsrud will become village administrator of Johnson Creek April 27, at a better salary than he received as mayor.

Alliance to explore consolidation in Green Bay in July

The focus of our July 23-24 meeting in Green Bay is consolidation, and Ed Huck and Mayor Jim Schmitt have invited Mayor Jerry E. Abramson of Louisville Metro to speak to city leaders and guests on July 24.

Abramson was an architect of the city-county merger approved in 2000 that catapulted Louisville, Ky., from 67th to 16th among America's largest cities. Louisville has experienced an economic renaissance since, with \$2.1 billion worth of development occurring downtown, including a \$350 million arena due to open next year and a \$250 million Center City district.

"If you start pitching yourself as a region, if you start seeing yourself as a region, you can be very, very successful," Mayor Abramson told the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*.

The Alliance, long interested in mergers and consolidation of local government, hopes Mayor Abramson can provide some guidance on how to transform that interest into accomplishment.

Our conference hotel is the Hotel Sierra at 333 Main Street in downtown Green Bay. Details soon.



Mayor Jerry Abramson

After Green Bay, Appleton

The Alliance is holding a board and general membership meeting in Appleton on Oct. 14 in conjunction with the League of Wisconsin Municipalities' 111th Annual Conference Oct. 14 to 16 at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton.

There will be an election to fill board vacancies and to choose a successor to Appleton Mayor Tim Hanna, the Alliance president. Mayor Hanna is prohibited by Alliance bylaws from seeking another term as president, but he gets a permanent seat on the board as ex-president, for as long as he is mayor.

Alliance briefs

Milwaukee foresees layoffs. Beset by pension woes and declining property values, Milwaukee's already fiscally squeezed city government may need to cut up to 1,400 jobs, most of those reductions coming in the 2010 budget, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported.



Fancy — and expensive — street sweeper

Wisconsin Rapids launches storm water fee

A quarterly fee — \$7 for a single-family home — will fund Wisconsin Rapids' new storm water utility, the *Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune* reports.

"The most frustrating thing is an unfunded mandate from the state," Mayor Mary Jo Carson told the newspaper. "I hate to dump fees on (residents), but this came directly from the EPA."

Among other things, the fees will pay for a new high-efficiency street sweeper equipped with a vacuum to clean up dirt and debris at a cost of about \$200,000, said Mike Weiler, assistant city engineer.

Janesville receives \$ for transit. The city will receive \$1.66 million in stimulus money for transit, including \$1.4 million for construction of a new operations and maintenance facility, Dave Mumma, transit director, told the *Janesville Gazette*.

Fond du Lac closes three TIF districts. The move adds \$63.4 million to the city's tax base, director of administration Hal Wortman told the *Fond du Lac Reporter*.



Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton is passionate about climate change

Lawton stumps for climate

Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton began her Earth Day activities early.

In March, she was one of five ambassadors for Oxfam America's *Sisters on the Planet* initiative, visiting Sens. Herb Kohl and Russ Feingold in Washington to plead the case for greenhouse-gas controls.

She also champions a Green Economy Agenda to foster energy independence, combat climate change and strengthen Wisconsin's position in the global economy.

In "A Green Discussion with Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton" April 20, she convened local leaders, citizens and entrepreneurs in La Crosse to share ideas and foster the growth of the Green Economy in the Coulee region.

Green La Crosse is observing Earth Week with a renewed effort toward sustainability — and a sustained effort toward renewable resources.

Key planks of Alliance’s legislative priorities enacted into law

Three of the Alliance of Cities’ legislative priorities aimed at helping balance the state budget were enacted into law in the budget repair legislation signed by Gov. Jim Doyle. Together, they will make up about \$478 million of the budget deficit:

- combined reporting, to make sure out-of-state corporations pay their fair share of taxes;
- the hospital assessment, to recoup Medicaid money for the state treasury; and
- a streamlined sales tax collection process for out-of-state and Internet merchants.

“It will bring Wisconsin’s fair share of federal health care dollars back to the state and use them to better fund necessary health services for hundreds of thousands of patients and families,” the Wisconsin Hospital Association said of the hospital assessment. The Alliance’s priorities are here: <http://wiscities.org/09-issues.pdf>

RSVP for Alliance Board, transit events, Legislative Luncheon May 20

Please e-mail this form by May 13 to Ed at ed@wiscities.org to RSVP for the Alliance Board meeting, on cap-and-trade and legislative update, at the Concourse Hotel at 9 a.m. on May 20.

Mail this form with \$12 per person for lunch to Mary Malone of League of Wisconsin Municipalities, 122 West Washington Avenue, Suite 300, Madison, Wisconsin 53703.

Name/City _____

___ Yes, I will attend the 9 a.m. 5/20/09, Board Meeting at the Concourse Hotel. (\$10)

___ Yes, I will attend the 11 a.m. transit press conference in the Capitol (with transit advocates from around the state).

___ Yes, I will attend the League-Alliance Legislative luncheon at 12:30 p.m. at the Madison Hilton.

No. of people attending x \$12= _____.

Attendees: _____

More information on Alliance meeting: ed@wiscities.org and on the League-Alliance luncheon: mmalone@lwm-info.org
