



NEWS RELEASE

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SUBJECT:

Communities Recognized for Legacy Communities Green Tier Charter Encouraging Sustainable Choices

MADISON – The Cities of Middleton and Fitchburg were recognized today as two of the first five communities to sign a Legacy Communities Green Tier charter with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Green Tier is Wisconsin's innovative program for organizations that voluntarily pledge to achieve superior environmental performance.

DNR Secretary Matt Frank and representatives from Middleton and Fitchburg, along with League of Wisconsin Municipalities, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, Center on Wisconsin Strategy, Municipal Environmental Group (MEG), and Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation, presented both cities with Legacy Communities Green Tier Charter plaques at an event at Middleton City Hall.

DNR Secretary Matt Frank called the charter a good step to help Wisconsin reach environmentally-sustainable economic growth and thanked Middleton Mayor Kurt Sonnentag and Fitchburg Mayor Jay Allen for their support and participation. "Making smart choices about the use of energy, water and land will help save taxpayer dollars and help conserve our natural resources," Frank said. "This charter recognizes and brings together local leaders interested in sustainable growth to share ideas, technologies and policies that will enable our communities to grow, provide stable family-supporting jobs, and ensure the clean air, abundant water and beautiful landscapes we enjoy today are here tomorrow and for our children and grandchildren."

Earlier this month, the Cities of Appleton, Bayfield, Fitchburg and Middleton, along with the Village of Weston signed the Green Tier Charter. Through the Charter, local governments commit to the goal of meeting the economic and infrastructure needs of today's residents while conserving resources so that future generations can enjoy the same community benefits.

The Charter has two main components -- sustainability practices and water resources management. Municipalities subscribing to the sustainability component of the Charter are initially focusing on ensuring continued economic stability and reducing impact on the environment through a Sustainability Implementation and Monitoring Plan.

“As a leader in sustainability initiatives, Middleton is pleased to partner with the Department of Natural Resources in the Green Tier charter”, said Kurt Sonnentag, Mayor of Middleton. “We plan to showcase why being a Green community is positive, not only for our environment, but for the economic well being of our area. Sustainability in its truest form forges successful links between the environmental and the economic well being of a community”.

Community sustainability practices might include reducing municipal energy use, developing and implementing a transportation system that provides energy-efficient travel choices, supporting local business development such as increased access to local foods and other products and services. Economic development, public health and social equity will all be factors.

The City of Fitchburg representatives carpoled in hybrid electric vehicles from Fitchburg City Hall to the event.

“Fitchburg has long been recognized as a statewide leader in recycling efforts,” said Jay Allen, Mayor of Fitchburg. “The Legacy Communities Charter allows us the opportunity to expand this recognition to sustainability and water resources issues as well. We are excited to begin work on this charter, both to improve upon what we’re already doing in these important areas, as well as share our successes with other Wisconsin communities.”

Municipalities that choose to focus on the water resources management component of the Charter will address the full range of local water resources issues by integrating wastewater, stormwater, drinking water, wetlands, and other water issues in a holistic, watershed based manner. Two municipalities will pilot this effort so others can learn from and build on their experiences.

Anyone interested in learning more about the Legacy Communities Charter and the opportunities available to Green Tier participants may visit DNR’s Green Tier Legacy Communities web page at:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cea/environmental/participants/legacycommunities/index.htm>