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## Green Tier Communities Sign Charter In Appleton

Communities take path to sustainable growth

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The cities of Appleton, Bayfield, Fitchburg, Middleton and the Village of Weston, as well as five non-governmental organizations, signed a "Green Tier Legacy Communities Charter" on Wednesday afternoon.

Along with the municipalities, the organizations signing the document included 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin League of Municipalities, the Municipal Environmental Group, the Center on Wisconsin Strategy and the Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation.

The five communities, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the four non-profit collaborators formalized the Green Tier effort at a Green Tier Charter signing ceremony in Appleton.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Secretary Matt Frank called the charter an important step to set Wisconsin on a path of environmentally-sustainable economic growth.

"Making the smartest possible choices about the use of energy, water and land will save taxpayer dollars and conserve our priceless natural resources," Frank said. "This charter recognizes and brings together local leaders in sustainable growth to share ideas, technologies and policies that will enable our communities to grow, provide stable family-supporting jobs, and ensure that the clean air, abundant water and beautiful landscapes we enjoy today are here tomorrow and for our children and grandchildren."

Through the charter, local governments commit to the goal of meeting economic and infrastructure needs of today's residents while conserving resources so that future generations can enjoy the same community benefits, information from the DNR reads. Actions under the Charter will address a broad range of issues that include clean and renewable energy, environmental stewardship, sustainable economic growth, and public health.

"The League is thrilled to be a part of the Legacy Communities Green Tier Charter," said Curt Witynski, assistant director of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities. "The goals of the Green Tier program include not only superior environmental performance but also community development and economic gain. Municipalities across the state are already focused on these very same goals. So, Green Tier is a natural fit for municipalities."

The charter has two main components -- sustainability practices and water quality 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, the DNR says.

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 municipality actions will address.

The charter signing shows commitment to a new, voluntary state-sponsored sustainability program that promises to help communities reduce pollution and save money, according to 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin.

"Wisconsin is a leader in innovative strategies to help communities become better places to live," said Steve Hiniker, executive director of 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, one of the founders of the Legacy Community program.

Green Tier Legacy Communities have pledged to improve the environmental practices in their jurisdictions to lower the cost of local governmental operations, improve the walkability of neighborhoods and set the goal of a higher quality of life for residents. The participants in the program will receive technical assistance from the state and the participating nonprofit organizations. The communities will also share strategies to determine the most cost-efficient practices to achieve superior environmental performance.

"We applaud the cooperation between communities, the state and nonprofit organizations to improve the quality of life for residents of these communities. The Green Tier program stands as a national model for sustainability efforts," added Hiniker.

Under the terms of the charter, participating communities will identify areas where they can reduce energy consumption through more efficient local operations or more efficient technologies. Communities will also work to reduce traffic by the development of walkable neighborhoods and better transit strategies. Other strategies will help reduce polluted runoff and improve other environmental practices.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources administers the Green Tier program.

Communities that are interested in participating in the Green Tier program are encouraged to contact 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin League of Municipalities, or the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Green Tier program.

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by **Guest (not verified)** | December 2, 2010 - 8:25am

Hooray for these communities, but it is sad to not see any Cheq. Bay communities on this list. We were ahead of the curve for about four years, but now have fallen behind. Sustainability is the future, we should be investing in it locally.

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