



## NEWS RELEASE

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**SUBJECT:** Achieving real business advantage through environmental leadership

MADISON – More than 120 business and environmental leaders joined government officials this week to learn more about a nationally recognized state program that helps businesses be healthy community members by beefing up methods to save dollars and the environment.

The two-day conference in Madison featured panels involving businesses and industry leaders already active in the program known as Green Tier. Signed into law almost four years ago, Green Tier is a voluntary program that provides incentives, including streamlined but not reduced environmental regulations, to businesses that want to perform beyond environmental compliance minimums.

Gov. Jim Doyle told the conference a strong environment is key to a thriving state economy. Green Tier, he said, shows high environmental standards are possible in a regulatory climate that is fair, predictable, flexible and encourages business expansion.

“My Administration is successfully streamlining regulations and making our state agencies more responsive at the same time we are strengthening our commitment to the environment,” Doyle said. “Competing for the high end of the economy means competing for a green economy.”

Thanks to flexibility offered by Green Tier’s pilot program, Packaging Corporation of America is enhancing both environmental performance and company profitability. Innovative pollution controls and a biogas project are saving the company more than \$1 million a year and are reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 70,000 tons. The customized relationships are helpful for 3M, too. Access to expedited permits is invaluable for 3M’s competitive edge and ability to quickly turn new products.

John Imes, executive director of Wisconsin Environmental Initiative, said: “With Green Tier, we have the potential to achieve greater environmental good because Wisconsin businesses, developers, communities and citizens can finally join together, set shared environmental performance goals, and apply new technologies, practices and mind-sets that yield both economic and environmental benefit.”

Green Tier improves relationships between businesses and multiple levels of governments. Consider the Clear Waters Initiative.

This Green Tier charter – signed by the state, county, several cities and Veridian, a residential Madison-based builder – has pulled the parties together with a common goal of improving storm water protection and more efficient implementation of laws. They are sorting out inconsistencies among regulations and significantly improving storm water protection.

For some participants the value of being part of the program comes in improved business-to-government relations. And for others, the business-to-business relationship improves. Cook Composites and Polymers has developed green products that improve their company's performance and their customer businesses. As part of their agreement, Cook Composites is working with the department and the community to build sustainability strategies.

Tom Still, president of the Wisconsin Technology Council, moderated a panel of state and community leaders who shared their views on emerging trends in environmental performance.

"Green Tier and the public's concern for climate change provide the perfect storm of opportunity for enlightened business to cater to the informed consumer," said panelist Art Harrington, environmental lawyer and shareholder, Godfrey & Kahn. "Green Tier allows businesses to negotiate a business-specific regulatory model in exchange for superior environmental performance that "green prints" the company's image to the informed consumer. This is the future for enlightened businesses in a world shaped by climate change."

Consumers interested in learning who is a Green Tier participant should look for a new program logo unveiled at the event. The logo, part of a new communication strategy, is one benefit Green Tier participants receive in exchange for a commitment to superior environmental performance. The DNR provides different benefits to participants depending upon the level of participation.

Green Tier was signed into law in 2004 to encourage collaboration between the DNR and Wisconsin businesses in their approaches to environmental performance. Green Tier has four Charters, 21 Tier 1 participants, two Tier 2 participants, and 6 Pilot Program participants. New applications are welcomed any time.

*Green Tier Advantage 2008* was hosted by Wisconsin DNR in cooperation with the WI Environmental Initiative (WEI). Other sponsors for this event included Madison Gas & Electric, Alliant Energy, WisPolitics.com/WisBusiness.com, Environmental Compliance Systems, Kestrel Management Services, Michels Corporation, and Godfrey & Kahn S.C.

For more information on Green Tier, visit the DNR Web site's Green Tier page at <http://greentier.wi.gov>.