



## Appleton tapped for leadership role in Wisconsin's environmental efforts

By **J.E. Espino** • Post-Crescent staff writer • November 26, 2010

APPLETON — Appleton is poised to play a key role in helping shape **future** environmental standards in the state.

The northeast Wisconsin community is one of four cities pegged by state Department of Natural Resources officials for a Green Tier consortium that will focus on water quality and management issues and **sustainability** practices in the next five years.

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The city is likely to agree next week to join the effort, and Mayor Tim Hanna said he sees only advantages with Appleton leaders seated at the table.

"It might give some of our projects a leg up when working with the DNR. We might get some expedited review for projects in **the future**," he said. "There is nothing wrong with being a leader, especially if it's recognizing stuff that you're already doing."

Appleton will work side by side with Bayfield, Fitchburg, Middleton and five Madison-based organizations: 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Municipal Environmental Group Water Division, Center on Wisconsin Strategies and Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation.

The state launched a green program in 1996 and designated money for it in the 1997-99 budget with the idea of giving **businesses** a boost to get them aboard.

The program evolved into Green Tier, and its popularity continued to expand to various industries — such as dairy, manufacturing and energy — looking for potential cost-savings or **incentives**.

But progress has been slower for financially squeezed municipal governments trying to comply with a host of costly mandates to achieve clean water goals.

Some say the new charter could help simplify and streamline regulations.

"We've done a little bit of experimenting with what can be done with charters, but you need to know we're seven years into the program. We're still pretty early in the period of sort of pushing the boundaries of, 'what could we really do with the charter,'" said Tom Eggert, who coordinates the program in the eastern part of the state for the DNR.

This is only the second time municipal leaders have used the program to tackle statewide issues. The first was in 2008 when several communities started to plot out ways to eliminate mercury discharge into waste water systems.

State and city officials have big **plans** for the new group.

"This should really be (about) putting your teeth

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into it and really making a statement for the Green Tier program," said Ald. Joe Martin, city council president.

Eggert said, for instance, the Midwest has had little reason to pay attention to water issues in the past. That is changing.

To the south, Waukesha is looking for water supply alternatives and wants to access Lake Michigan, though the city is outside of the basin.

"What does that mean? How does that get handled?" Eggert said. "What this (group) is trying to do is say, 'All right, let's lay some of that foundation or groundwork to try to deal with some of those issues and look toward the future.'"

Hanna said Appleton already has built up its credentials on land rehabilitation matters. He talked about the turnaround at Trolley Square on S. Olde Oneida Street as an example.

"If you remember," he said, "it was just a gravel lot with a Quonset hut kind of a building on it, very industrial looking, and now it's a place where a lot of people love to go and enjoy the view of the river."

Hanna's attention now is on some of the state's new rules, including one that establishes phosphorous limits and calls for sediment reduction. Communities will have to work together to achieve overall goals.

"Water doesn't recognize municipal boundaries," he said.

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