



Robert Bauman

4th District Newsletter

Potholes and Public Policy

Dear Neighbor,

It comes as no surprise to Milwaukee residents that our streets are in bad shape and getting worse. This was confirmed in a recent audit (see article on page four) by the city's Comptroller that found – among other things – that “Milwaukee residential streets are on average in fair condition but getting worse....nearly 21%, or 214 residential street miles, are in poor condition and in need of reconstruction.”

Historically, the city has relied on property taxes and state local road aid funded by the state's Highway Trust Fund (which is funded by state gas taxes and vehicle registration fees) to pay for the maintenance, repair and reconstruction of local streets. Beginning in the mid 1990s road maintenance and reconstruction started to fall behind because it became increasingly difficult to rely on property taxes as the need to fund public safety programs, primarily police, increased and as state funding for local road programs declined.

In 2008, the city acted to address this situation by adopting a local vehicle registration fee to increase revenue for local road maintenance and reconstruction. However, this additional revenue only slowed the rate at which the city is falling behind.

A principal cause of this problem is state and federal highway policy which has consistently favored highway expansion and new construction over the maintenance and reconstruction of existing infrastructure. A case in point is the state's plan to rebuild and expand I-94 from the Illinois state line to Milwaukee. The total cost of this project is at least \$1.9 billion of which \$200 million is attributed to adding one lane in each direction (\$200 million would cover the entire cost to reconstruct the 21% of city streets that are in poor condition).

My colleagues and I have been working to change state and federal highway priorities. We have expressed our opposition to expanding I-94 (resolution # 071114, adopted on December 11, 2007). We have asked our state and federal legislative delegations to urge state and federal transportation officials to adopt a “Fix it First” policy whereby transportation funds would be used to maintain and reconstruct existing roadway infrastructure before funds are spent expanding that infrastructure. Finally we have worked to redirect federal stimulus funds to local road maintenance and reconstruction projects rather than expanding interstate highways.

The bottom line is that Milwaukee's streets will continue to deteriorate unless a fundamental change is made in federal and state highway policy. Given the priority Milwaukee has placed on public safety, there is simply not enough local revenue (unless property taxes are increased significantly) to address this growing problem. However, we do not need new or higher taxes. What we need is a new set of priorities for how transportation funds are spent.

This newsletter will discuss various aspects of these infrastructure issues and report on various activities in the district. Finally, it remains a distinct honor and pleasure to represent your interests as 4th District Alderman.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Bauman, 4th District Alderman



Alderman Wins Downtown Award

Alderman Bauman was honored with the **2008 Cheerleader Award** from the **Milwaukee Downtown Business Improvement District** (BID #21). Here he is pictured with **Beth Nicols**, Milwaukee Downtown executive director, and BID #21 board member **Tom Bernacchi**.

The award is presented to a business, organization or individual that ignites energy and enthusiasm embracing the downtown renaissance. The award program stated: **“Bob really pushed the envelope and refused to settle for mediocrity in the development and design of the Milwaukee Intermodal Station. And we applaud you for that.”**

Alderman Bauman has served on several transportation panels, including the Advisory Committee of the Downtown Transit Connector Study, the Technical Advisory Committee of the East-West Corridor Study, the Transportation Commission of the City of Milwaukee, and the Southeast Wisconsin New Transportation Alliance.

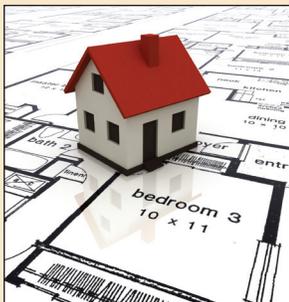
Frank P. Zeidler Public Service Award



In September 2008 **Jack and Lucia Murtaugh** were awarded the inaugural Frank P. Zeidler Public Service Award during a ceremony in the Common Council Chamber at City Hall. Alderman Bauman, the primary sponsor of the legislation that established the Zeidler award and member of the award's selection committee, said, "The Murtaughs are stellar examples of what the award is meant to honor and they clearly embody the dedicated public service legacy Mayor Zeidler left." **The Murtaughs, who worked closely with Frank Zeidler as friends and as community partners, have been dedicated to the Community Meal at St. Benedict the Moor Church** where they regularly serve as greeters for guests, and have been actively involved in the United Nations Association of Milwaukee, a cause very close to the late Mayor Zeidler's heart.

Also pictured with the Murtaughs (front) are from left: Alderman Michael Murphy; Alderman Bauman; Former Acting Mayor Marvin Pratt (Zeidler selection committee chair); Milwaukee historian John Gurda (committee member); Art Heitzer (committee member); Alderman Nik Kovac; Shelley Bruehling (committee member); Alderman Ashanti Hamilton and Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs.

What We're Doing About the Foreclosure Crisis



As co-chair of the newly created Special Joint Committee on Redevelopment of Abandoned and Foreclosed Homes, Alderman Bauman is spearheading the city's efforts to address vacant and foreclosed properties in city neighborhoods. The joint committee was created by legislation co-sponsored by Alderman Bauman to advise city departments on the best use of \$9.2 million from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (appropriated under the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008).

In cooperation with several agencies and city departments, the joint committee has established programs to rehabilitate housing and reduce blight. These programs include a homebuyer's assistance program, a buy-in-your-neighborhood program, a rental rehab program, a land bank program for foreclosed properties and new infill housing on vacant lots.

Information on these programs as well as program guidelines and application materials are available from the Department of City Development online at www.mkedcd.org/milwaukeestrong.

The 2009 Milwaukee City Budget – A Recap

The 2009 city budget, much like your household budget, reflected the serious economic struggles we are facing. As a result, hard choices were made about how to balance residents' fees and taxes with the level of service the City of Milwaukee is proud to provide, and which residents expect.

As the new vice chair of the Common Council's Finance and Personnel Committee, Alderman Bauman was involved in almost every detail and discussion of the 2009 budget. Committee hearings for the budgets of individual city departments took several weeks before the Council's final adoption vote on November 7, 2008.

This year, the Council kept its pledge to hold the line on property taxes and as a result, the average homeowner will pay approximately \$8.09 per \$1,000 of assessed value in city property taxes. This compares to the 2008 city tax rate of \$8.01 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

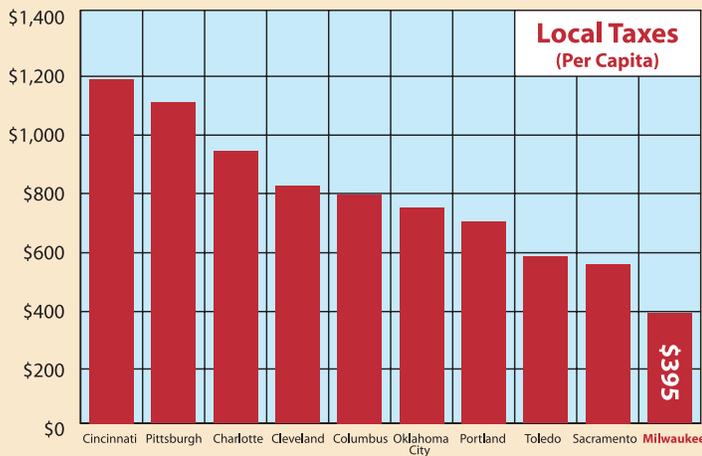
Additionally, neighborhood libraries will remain open and five person fire-fighting crews were restored on many engine companies. The Council also amended the mayor's budget to fund 56 new sworn police officers.

Milwaukee Again Scores High In National Comparison

An October 2008 report issued by City Comptroller W. Martin “Wally” Morics again shows that Milwaukee’s spending and taxes compare favorably to other comparable cities in the U.S. The fifth annual Comparative Revenue and Expenditure Report indicates that Milwaukee generally spends less and has lower taxes and fees than most comparable cities. Some examples:

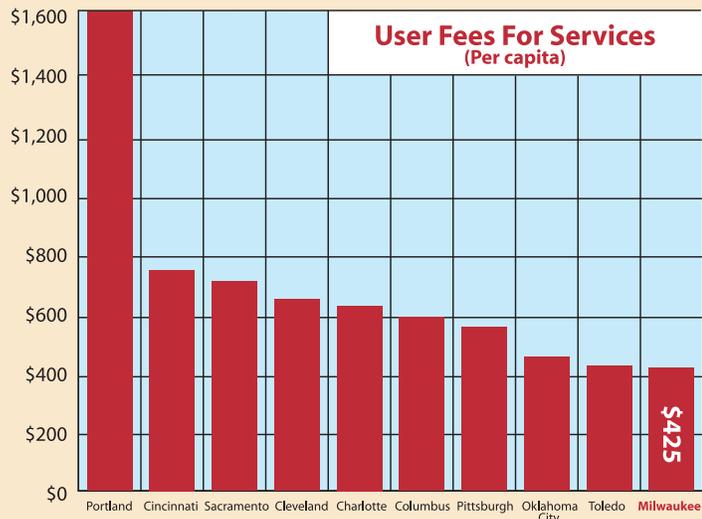
• Local Taxes

Milwaukee again ranks last in per capita local taxes, collecting \$386 per capita less in local taxes than the average of comparable cities. However, with no local sales or income tax, the city must rely on the property tax for all of its local tax revenue. Consequently, Milwaukee’s property taxes are relatively high, again ranking 4th among comparable cities.



• User Fees

User charges have been utilized in Milwaukee as an alternative to the property tax for some city services. Despite gradual recent increases in these fees, Milwaukee’s per capita user charges are \$255 (38%) less than the average of comparable cities.

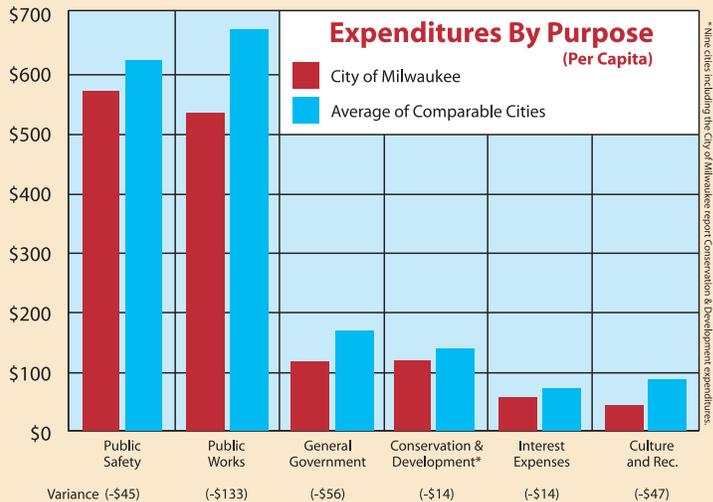


• Expenditures

Milwaukee ranks 8th in total per capita spending among the 10 comparable cities. The city rankings and per capita spending is as follows:

| | | | |
|------------|---------|------------------|----------------|
| Portland | \$2,553 | Columbus | \$1,662 |
| Cincinnati | \$2,315 | Charlotte | \$1,616 |
| Pittsburgh | \$1,908 | Milwaukee | \$1,487 |
| Cleveland | \$1,908 | Oklahoma City | \$1,291 |
| Sacramento | \$1,823 | Toledo | \$1,248 |

Milwaukee also ranks favorably in several specific expenditure categories, such as public safety and public works.



Comparing City of Milwaukee revenues and expenditures to those of nine similar municipalities throughout the country, shows Milwaukee collects lower taxes and other revenue, and incurs lower expenditures than its peer cities. However, Milwaukee’s property tax is higher than the average of comparable cities. As mentioned earlier, this is because local governments in Wisconsin rely on the property tax as its primary local revenue source, while local governments outside Wisconsin utilize local sales, income and other non-property taxes to supplement the property tax.

If you want a copy of the full report, please contact my office at rjbauma@milwaukee.gov or at 286-3774.

211 Social Services Hotline

For help with a wide variety of non-emergency family, financial, health and social service issues. Call the 211 social services hotline, available 24 hours a day.



District Developments

Local Street Audit Highlights Need for Fundamental Changes in Highway Spending Priorities

In December 2008, the City Comptroller released an audit documenting the serious deterioration of Milwaukee's local roads. Among the audit findings:

- Milwaukee has a total of 1,415 miles of roadway of which 1,024 miles are local residential streets (the others are state highways, arterials and collectors).
- 214 miles of local streets (21%) are in poor condition; 448 miles (43%) are in fair condition; and 361 miles (35%) are in good condition.
- The average age of local streets is 41.7 years, and the average life of a local street is 50 years.
- The average cost to replace a mile of local street is \$910,000, and the current replacement cycle for local streets is 106 years.
- City budgets have underfunded local street replacement/reconstruction for at least two decades.

- The 2009 city budget appropriated \$10.3 million for local street reconstruction/replacement.

- The city would need to appropriate approximately \$25.5 million per year to achieve a 1:1 ratio of service life to replacement cycle (replacement of 28 miles of local streets per year).

- The city would need to appropriate between \$42 and \$52 million per year for 10 years to achieve a 1:1 ratio of service life to replacement cycle for local streets and eliminate the backlog of local streets in poor condition.

- At minimum the city needs to spend 2 to 3 times as much as the 2009 budget (\$20 to \$30 million) for local street replacement/reconstruction to reverse the accelerating rate of deterioration and begin the process of addressing roads that are already in poor condition.

To say the least, these audit findings are disturbing. Unfortunately, the prognosis is equally grim.

The traditional funding sources (property taxes and local road aid from the state) that the city has relied on to fund local street work are inadequate to provide the necessary investment in local street replacement and reconstruction outlined in the audit. Property taxes, which are already too high, have been used to fund ever-larger appropriations for public safety (police and fire). Local road aids from the state have been declining for over a decade. In short, new revenue sources are needed to increase our investment in the replacement and reconstruction of local streets.

One new revenue source (the local vehicle registration fee) was adopted by the council in 2008. But this additional revenue is not nearly enough to bring the city's annual investment in local streets up to the \$25 million level, much less the \$40 to \$50 million level needed to catch up on the backlog of substandard local streets.

What is needed is a fundamental shift in state and federal highway spending priorities. First, the state and federal departments of transportation need to

adopt a "Fix it First" policy which would refocus hundreds of millions of state and federal transportation funds to the repair and reconstruction of existing highways, bridges and local streets instead of ever larger investments in highway expansion projects which drain hundreds of millions away from repair and reconstruction projects. Second, local streets must become eligible for federal and state highway funding (currently 75% of Milwaukee roadways are not eligible for state and federal highway funding).

In other words, we need to be repairing existing infrastructure at the state and local level before we invest in new or expanded highways and freeways.

The Common Council has taken several steps to advance this "Fix it First" agenda:

- We have opposed the \$200 Million expansion of I-94 from Milwaukee to the Illinois state line.
- We have expressed concern over the multi-million dollar proposed expansion of the Zoo Interchange, which would increase lane miles in the interchange by 53% (from 86 miles to 132 miles).
- We have lobbied our state and federal elected officials to adopt a "Fix it First" policy for highway spending in the 2009-2010 state budget and in the upcoming Federal Transportation Authorization Bill.
- We have asked our state and federal transportation officials to direct federal stimulus funds to Milwaukee for local street replacement and reconstruction.

The historic methods of funding the repair and replacement of local streets have broken down. It will take sustained efforts from elected officials to make the necessary changes. We are trying to do just that, but we need public support and input to help make it happen.

Please contact me via e-mail at rjbauma@milwaukee.gov and share your thoughts and ideas.



Capital Improvements Committee to Tackle Infrastructure

As a result of the information contained in the Comptroller's Audit of the Department of Public Works Residential Street Paving Program (see article on page four), the Common Council has established the Capital Improvements Committee. The goal of the committee is to develop, maintain, and update a long-term capital improvements program for the city's construction and maintenance of its infrastructure and facilities. In addition, the committee will evaluate capital improvement recommendations from city departments for the construction and maintenance of infrastructure and facilities; prepare annual capital budget recommendations for infrastructure and facilities; and prepare various reports on the condition of infrastructure and facilities.

The seven person committee is comprised of the Commissioner of Public Works, the Budget Director, the Comptroller, the chairs of the Common Council's Public Works Committee and Finance and Personnel Committee, a Common Council member appointed by the Common Council President and a public member appointed by the Mayor. As chair of the Public Works Committee, Alderman Bauman will serve on Capital Improvements Committee.

"Maintaining our city's infrastructure and facilities is one of the central functions of city government. This committee will enable city departments and the Common Council to take a strategic approach to the development and maintenance of infrastructure and facilities to better serve the needs of our citizens and businesses," said Alderman Bauman, a co-sponsor of the legislation that created the committee.

Tax Incremental Districts



During a March news conference at City Hall Alderman Bauman spoke in support of a Common Council proposal to use millions from city tax incremental districts (TIDs) to fund badly needed street reconstruction projects and provide valuable training and job opportunities for city residents. Alderman Bauman said the plan could free up tens of millions of dollars for street reconstruction and maintenance work by amending project plans for some or all of the city's 48 active TIDs.

Merrill Park Gets Renovations



Alderman Bauman joined colleague Michael Murphy (with tie, standing to the right of the alderman) and other officials in **dedicating two new basketball courts at Merrill Park** last year. The previous courts, built in 1974, were in severe disrepair with one court being essentially unusable. The park is important to the west side of Milwaukee, where there's a high concentration of young people. As a result, Alderman Bauman said the renovation is pivotal in fighting crime in our city.

Maintaining Abandoned Properties

Within the past few months, Alderman Bauman helped pass an ordinance that requires mortgage companies and banks to be responsible for the maintenance on the foreclosed properties they obtain. Often, when a property has been foreclosed, residents leave the property abandoned and regular maintenance tasks like snow removal and lawn care are also left behind.

In addition to becoming a target for crime, abandoned properties reduce property values in the neighborhood, become infested with vermin, have a higher risk of fire and pose other threats to the health, welfare and safety of the public.

Further, because it is often difficult to trace the official ownership of foreclosed properties as they float through the banking system, this ordinance helps establish a process that requires parties with a mortgage lien interest in the residential property to inspect the property once a foreclosure action has been initiated. If it is determined that the property is abandoned, the ordinance requires registration of the property with the commissioner of neighborhood services.

The City of Milwaukee can then regulate the regular maintenance of the property and impose a fine structure on the mortgage or banking companies that are neglecting their responsibilities to the property, the neighborhood and the public as the lien holder of the property.

"The City of Milwaukee is working very hard to weather the foreclosure crisis and is providing a variety of resources to residents. One service we can also provide is to help make banks responsible for the properties they hold and help keep property values in our neighborhoods intact," Alderman Bauman said.

Other resources are available to residents facing foreclosure, including a number of approved agencies to help with credit counseling and mortgage information help. For more information go to www.mkedcd.org/milwaukeestrong.



Helpful Tips

Organize a Neighborhood Spring Cleanup!

Do you want to help make your neighborhood a better place to live? Participate in a block cleanup.

Get a group of concerned residents together and form a group to help clean up. A block cleanup can be a great way to get to know the people in your community while helping to spruce it up.

You can register your cleanup group by calling Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful, and they will provide cleaning materials and garbage bags. Call them at 272-5462.

Large roll-off dumpsters can be reserved from the Sanitation Division for weekend cleanups. Call 286-8282 if a dumpster is needed for your cleanup date (these dumpsters are NOT for private, individual use).

Household Hazardous Waste

Safely dispose of pesticides, paint, solvents and other potentially harmful chemicals by taking items to the appropriate collection site. And, it's free to City of Milwaukee residents. Please do not put hazardous waste in the garbage or recycling container. Take the items to one of three facilities designed to properly collect and dispose of hazardous waste.

Milwaukee

City of Milwaukee Self Help Station

3879 W. Lincoln Ave.

Hours: Friday and Saturday, 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Menomonee Falls

Veolia Environmental Services

W124 N9451 Boundary Road (124th St.)

Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Franklin

Veolia Environmental Services

10518 S. 124th St.

Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Ald. Bauman's Call for More Effective Snow Removal for Pedestrians Gets Answered

Concerned that snow covered city corners, intersections and crosswalks were becoming dangerous for pedestrians to traverse, Alderman Bauman sponsored successful legislation that directs the Department of Public Works to quickly and adequately remove snow.

In past years, it would sometimes take weeks to fully clear public walks because there was too much snow and too little equipment. Alderman Bauman, however, sought out additional funding so that DPW could begin responding sooner.

With the additional funding, DPW has increased the amount of equipment on the streets and added 10 inspectors for quality control. This allows equipment to get out sooner and cover more areas in a shorter amount of time. More equipment out in the city of Milwaukee means bus stops are being cleared in about one night and crosswalks and sidewalks are taking 48 hours in most instances to fully clear.

"I'm pleased that we've been able to ramp up the snow removal at crosswalks and intersections, and residents – including many with physical disabilities and challenges – have expressed their opinions that things have been a bit better this winter," the alderman said.

The excessive snow experienced last winter and at times this winter leaves huge obstacles for pedestrians and residents who use public transportation. The problem is even worse for persons with physical disabilities or those using scooters and wheelchairs.

Also, new legislation now makes property owners responsible for clearing ramps and crosswalk openings. They are given 24 hours after mechanical clearing by the city is complete to perform the tasks and help maintain the cleared areas.

Alderman Bauman says he is pleased with how DPW and property owners have thus far responded to snow removal efforts in the city of Milwaukee.

"This coordination is a simple way to make access for everyone happen quickly and efficiently," he said.

Taking on Water Pollution in the City of Milwaukee

Water pollution has posed a problem in our city for quite some time. However, a vote at a recent Common Council meeting may help turn the tide on the problem. The Common Council approved a set of storm water management regulations on July 30, 2008, designed to help prevent water pollution.

“Every inch of Milwaukee, including sidewalks and roads, receives approximately two and a half feet of rain a year,” co-sponsor Alderman Bauman said.

As rainwater falls to the ground, collecting and mixing pollutants, its next stop too often is to head towards an essential natural resource.

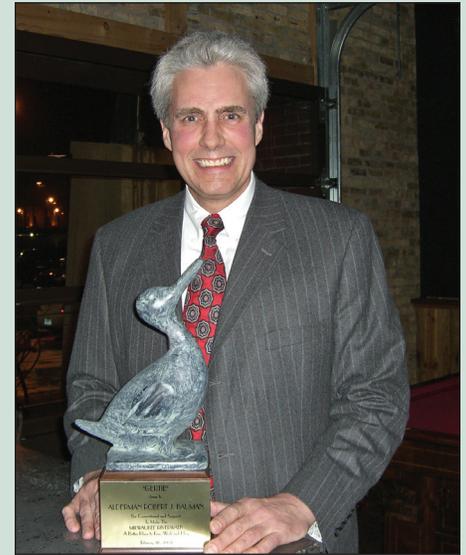
“Rain water searches for the lowest point to accumulate, collecting with it along the way anything and everything that comes in its path, like pet waste, litter and leaves. This polluted water eventually ends up in Lake Michigan, perhaps the city’s most valuable resource,” Alderman Bauman said.

As a result of the resolution’s approval, several storm water management issues will be tackled. These include new street design standards, street and alley construction, driveways, parking regulations, storm water treatment and storage, storm water management facilities and erosion control facilities, all of which are designed to help the city better manage storm water runoff.

According to Alderman Bauman, the goal of the new regulation is to reduce the construction of non-permeable (paved) surfaces, such as driveways and parking lots because it is these surfaces that increase water flow into the sewer system, thus producing a problem. The resolution also encourages the construction of more permeable (grassed) surfaces, resulting in more natural filtration of the water.

To receive further and more detailed information about this legislation, please go to <http://milwaukee.legistar.com/Legislation.aspx>.

Gertie Riverwalk Award



In February, Alderman Bauman was recognized by the RiverWalk District with the 2008 Gertie RiverWalk Award for **“Contribution and Support to Make the Milwaukee RiverWalk District a Better Place to Visit, Work and Live.”**

Landlord Training Program

The award winning landlord training program operates out of the Department of Neighborhood Services’ downtown office. The goal is to teach landlords fundamental ways to keep illegal activity out of their property.

The classes are FREE and held on a regular basis through out the year at various locations. The classes are generally either (1) five hour session in one day or (2) two and a half hour sessions for two nights. Attendees get a free 100 page comprehensive manual and handouts on a variety of legal and business issues related to managing a property.

Advanced registration is required for all courses and more information is available online at the DNS website at www.milwaukee.gov/landlordtraining or by calling (414) 286-2954.

Time Warner Scholarship



Alderman Bauman and Mayor Tom Barrett congratulated **4th Aldermanic District native Kenneth Blacks** during the 2008 Time Warner Cable college scholarship presentation ceremony at City Hall. Kenneth, a 2007 graduate of Bay View High School, is studying information technology at the University of Dubuque and received a \$2,000 continuing education scholarship award for the 2008 school year.



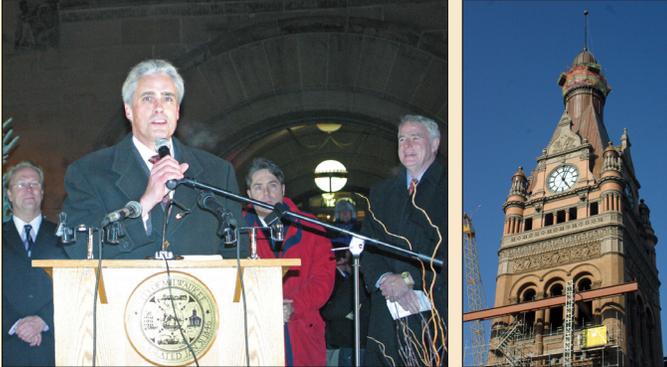
Check out the city's website at:
www.milwaukee.gov

For Ald. Bauman's webpage and more info. on the 4th District go to:
www.milwaukee.gov/district4



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Alderman Bauman spoke during a **December 18, 2008 public celebration of the completion of the City Hall restoration project.** The event included fireworks and public tours and displays inside the 114-year-old National Historic Landmark and architectural gem. Alderman Bauman and the Common Council's Public Works Committee, which he chairs, closely monitored the restoration project, started in 2005. **The project was completed on time and on budget.**

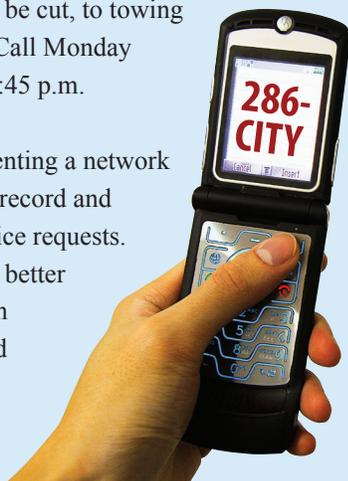
DPW Services Hotline Call 286-CITY (2489)

If you have a request relating to garbage collection, special pickups, potholes, malfunctioning streetlights, traffic lights, or plugged sewer basins, call 286-CITY (2489).

This one-stop number for citizens who need service or information from the Department of Public Works has more than 101 uses from reporting properties needing tree, brush removal, grass or weeds to be cut, to towing or water works problems. Call Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Plans also call for implementing a network database program that can record and track information and service requests.

This will enable the city to better serve residents and assist in planning more efficient and effective public works programs and services.



Food Safety Inspections Available Online

A new City of Milwaukee website is offering a new system that lets visitors review inspection records of city restaurants, food stores and other outlets that serve food. The Food Establishment Inspection Reporting System, available at www.milwaukee.gov/fi, provides timely information on the current city codes compliance of any restaurant, tavern or food store in the 4th District or anywhere in the city.

The search capabilities of the Food Establishment Inspection Reporting System are very flexible. For example, one may search by:

- City of Milwaukee aldermanic district
- ZIP code
- Establishment name
- Establishment street address

Inspection reports currently go back to January 2007 with special inspections starting June 2007. New records are added daily. "While the health department conducts routine and special inspections of all food establishments, citizens can file a complaint directly with the department at 286-3674," Ald. Bauman said.