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Ald. Peter Burgelis
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City of Milwaukee Receives Wisconsin Policy Forum Innovation Award for Access to Refuse Collection Information

The City of Milwaukee has been recognized with an Honorable Mention in the Wisconsin Policy Forum's 2025 Salute to Local Government Awards for innovative use of technology to improve public services. The award highlights Common Council file [241854](#) authored by **Alderman Peter Burgelis** that directed the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the Department of Administration's Information Technology Management Division (ITMD) to develop improved, tech-forward access to garbage and recycling collection information.

The initiative resulted in the QR Code Garbage and Recycling Schedule Lookup Tool, a simple but powerful feature now used citywide. By scanning a code on stickers included in summer municipal services bills, residents can instantly access accurate pickup schedules tailored to their mobile device's specific location. Hunting through webpages or calling customer service is no longer needed. The tool has already improved convenience for residents, reduced calls for missed collections, and strengthened DPW's service responsiveness.

"This recognition shows what happens when local government leans into creativity," said Alderman Burgelis. "A smarter, more accessible city doesn't always require massive budgets or big-tech rollouts. Sometimes innovation removes small frustrations with thoughtful design. Milwaukee deserves tools that work for everyone, in every neighborhood."

The Wisconsin Policy Forum's awards celebrate innovation, efficiency, and fiscal responsibility in public sector problem solving. Milwaukee's project stood out for transforming a common pain point into a user-friendly digital solution that benefits both residents and city operations.

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City receives WPF award/ADD ONE

DPW and ITMD staff partnered closely with the Common Council in developing the lookup tool, demonstrating how cross-department collaboration can deliver measurable improvements in day-to-day city services.

“With this tool, we’re making it easier for residents to stay informed and keeping the City on a cleaner, more predictable schedule,” Alderman Burgelis added. “Milwaukee continues to lead with practical innovation, and we’re just getting started.”

For more information on the Wisconsin Policy Forum’s Salute to Local Government Awards, visit their website [here](#).