



MILWAUKEE

OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



Finding Smart Solutions to Environmental Sustainability

Overview

The City of Milwaukee Office of Environmental Sustainability (OES) was created by Mayor Tom Barrett to position Milwaukee, WI, as a leader in environmental sustainability and performance. OES promotes cost-effective environmental sustainability practices that meet Milwaukee's urgent environmental, economic, and social needs while enhancing long-term economic growth, thus, improving the environment and livability of Milwaukee for all its citizens. For instance, the OES team works with other City of Milwaukee departments, the Milwaukee Common Council, area businesses, and academic, community, and workforce organizations, to save taxpayer dollars by reducing energy bills in city buildings, homes, and businesses. The OES also promotes cost-effective green infrastructure solutions to the city's storm water management challenges.

Social Responsibility Challenge

In 2004, demand for energy in Wisconsin was at a record high and projected to grow every year. Simultaneously, energy prices were on the rise, increasing the cost of living and doing business in Milwaukee.

That same year, Milwaukee experienced a record 8.9 inches of rain in May that generated 14.5 billion gallons of storm water and wastewater. This surplus entered the city's regional sewer system, overloading capacity and resulting in flooding and sewer overflows. According to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, storm water runoff is the principal cause of water pollution and degraded water quality.

At this same time, Environmental Business News reported that the worldwide market for environmental goods and services had hit \$600 billion. And numerous studies on consumer choices and marketing trends supported the idea that people desired to live and work in cities that are environmentally progressive.

Solutions

In 2004, Mayor Barrett commissioned the Milwaukee Green Team, a group assembled to develop recommendations in three areas: energy policy, stormwater management, and green economic activity. The OES, a key Green Team recommendation, was founded in 2006, and has since initiated targeted projects and goals, including:

- Reduce city energy use by 15 percent – OES provides funding and support to city departments to help reduce energy use, and helps track and monitor its reduction goals through projects such as lighting retrofits and energy-efficiency upgrades.
- Milwaukee Shines Solar Program – OES manages the city's solar program, which works to expand solar energy use

through a comprehensive, citywide approach of education, training, and financial assistance. Specific initiatives include training for contractors and installers; City-funded installations for municipal buildings, non-profits and schools; and the creation of a diverse Solar Hot Water Business Council.

- Milwaukee Energy Efficiency (Me2) – OES provides reduced energy evaluations, education, and low-cost financing options for homeowners and businesses in Milwaukee that want to make energy-efficiency improvements.
- Milwaukee Sustainable Manufacturing (ME3) Program – OES works with manufacturers to identify cost-effective practices and projects that help firms increase material and resource efficiency, cut energy costs and water use, and decrease waste.

Measurement/Results

The OES is funded 100 percent by grants, and since 2006 has successfully attracted more than \$20 million in grant funding to help create an environmentally and economically sustainable community. OES efforts have:

- Contributed to a reduction of \$900,000 in the city's annual electricity and natural gas bills.
- Verified and tracked city performance in order to reach the mayor's core goal of a 15 percent energy reduction by 2012.
- Raised over \$40 million in private capital for residential and commercial energy-efficiency improvements.
- Assisted nearly 30 Milwaukee manufacturers with their resource efficiency and waste-reduction priorities.

Other SR Involvement

- The OES partnered with the Port of Milwaukee to install a 100 KW wind turbine, which will power the Port's administration building with clean, renewable energy while generating revenue for the city by selling excess energy.
- The City of Milwaukee is working with ASQ to incorporate quality best practices into its operations.
- The OES director is chairing a new Milwaukee Green Team, which is working with the community to develop a comprehensive sustainability plan and fund to further improve quality of life for all Milwaukeeans.

Organization: City of Milwaukee Office of Environmental Sustainability

Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Website: <http://city.milwaukee.gov/sustainability>

Founded: 2006

Employees: Four