
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

March 23, 2005

Ald. Robert G. Donovan
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New Water Safety Initiative Aims to Prevent Child Drownings

Milwaukee Water Safety Task Force to Discuss New Plan for 2005

Heavy spring rains often create hazardous situations in Milwaukee's urban waterways. And too often the rapid waters claim lives. Ald. Robert G. Donovan and other members of the Milwaukee Water Safety Task Force will announce plans tomorrow for a new swift water safety initiative. **Media coverage is welcome.**

"I'm encouraged by the community response and the groups that have formed and are working together to teach our youngsters about the dangers of rapid waters," said Ald. Donovan, chair of the Common Council's Public Safety Committee. "It seems that every year Milwaukee sees some tragic drownings and it's our hope that through this new initiative we can save lives." The plan will also be presented at the next meeting of the committee.

Ald. Donovan will be joined by Mayor Tom Barrett, Chief Wentlandt and representatives of the Milwaukee Water Safety Task Force during a news conference at 1 p.m. Thursday (March 24) to discuss the safety initiative. Aldermen Mike McGee, Jr., and Michael J. Murphy, who like Ald. Donovan have felt the tragic loss of life from drownings in their districts, are also expected to take part in the news conference.

The news conference will be held at Kilbourn Landing along the Milwaukee River in the 1900 block of N. Commerce St., where two sisters drowned last year.

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City Launches Water Safety Initiative/ADD ONE

“The Milwaukee Fire Department is pleased to have collaborated with the Milwaukee Water Safety Task Force,” said Chief Wentlandt. “This initiative is a compliment to many agencies that have dedicated themselves to designing a water safety education and prevention strategy for our kids.”

The Milwaukee Water Safety Task Force was organized last fall. This year’s goal is to create water safety awareness in three zip codes in the City of Milwaukee, 53215, 53212 and 54208, where nearly all recent drownings or near-drownings have occurred in the Milwaukee, Menomonee and Kinnickinnic rivers.

Community partners include Safe Kids Wisconsin, the Injury Free Coalition for Kids of Milwaukee, American Red Cross, Milwaukee Public Schools Recreation and Community Services Division, Milwaukee County Parks System, YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee, Urban Ecology Center and the Milwaukee Police Department. An overall strategy to deal with water dangers will be discussed at the news conference, and speakers will announce a series of educational events to run from spring into the summer.