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**For immediate release**

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**Public Policy Forum announces  
15<sup>th</sup> annual “Salute to Local Government” award winners**

*Winners cover all seven counties of southeastern Wisconsin*

**MILWAUKEE**, Wisconsin – *Monday, June 4, 2007* – Milwaukee-based Public Policy Forum, a nonpartisan research organization focusing on regional issues, has announced its 2007 “Salute to Local Government” award winners.

“Cooperation with and among local governments is critical to the economy and quality of life of our region,” says Jeffrey C. Browne, Forum president. “This year, the winners covered the entire region, all seven counties – plus Jefferson County – of southeastern Wisconsin.”

The awards will be presented at the Public Policy Forum’s 15<sup>th</sup> annual “Salute to Local Government” breakfast on **Wednesday, June 20, 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. at the Italian Community Center, 631 East Chicago Street, in Milwaukee’s Historic Third Ward.**

The *Salute* is sponsored this year by Ehlers & Associates, Inc.; Forest County

Potawatomi Community; Helen Bader Foundation; HNTB; Marshall & Ilsley Corporation; Quarles & Brady, LLP; SC Johnson: A Family Company; Virchow, Krause & Company, LLP; and Milwaukee Public Television.

The winners in each category are:

### **“Excellence in Individual Teamwork”**

*Milwaukee Public Library*

The management team at the Milwaukee Public Library partnered with the Northwestern Mutual Foundation as the primary private source of funding to provide **free computer training programs** at the Central Library and several neighborhood libraries. For those seeking to upgrade employment skills or those without computer access at home, the programs are invaluable. All classes are taught as hands-on instruction in a computer lab. Each class is two hours long, and students adhere to a curriculum and receive a certificate upon completion.

### **“Intra-governmental cooperation”**

*Walworth County*

In an effort to reduce expenses while increasing revenues, fast-growing Walworth County created the **Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee** to examine alternatives to jail. The committee includes representation from the entire criminal justice system within the county. It serves an important role in bringing together elected and appointed officials to develop ways to reduce incarceration and recidivism.

### **“Inter-governmental cooperation”**

*Waukesha County; cities of Oconomowoc, Pewaukee, and Waukesha; towns of Brookfield, Oconomowoc, and Summit; and villages of Big Bend, Elm Grove, Merton, Nashotah, and Pewaukee*

Faced with state-imposed yard waste disposal restrictions and limitations, Waukesha County along with 11 municipalities created a **yard waste composting and gravel pit reclamation** program. The group entered into a contract with a locally owned gravel pit to manage a yard waste composting operation, mine the gravel pit in accordance with approved site grading plans and permits, and reclaim the entire property after each phase of mining by using compost as a top soil substitute. As a result, the county has avoided tax levy support to cover reclamation expenditures and the municipalities have saved money on yard waste processing. In addition, royalties from the gravel pit help offset costs associated with land conservation efforts.

### **“Regional cooperation”**

*Jefferson County Emergency Management, Kenosha County Emergency Management, Milwaukee County Emergency Management, Milwaukee City Emergency Management, Ozaukee County Emergency Management, Racine County Emergency Management, Walworth County Emergency Management, Washington County Emergency Management, Waukesha County Emergency Management, and Wisconsin Emergency Management – Southeast Region*

Milwaukee County Emergency Management and Wisconsin Emergency Management conducted an exercise to enhance the capability to evacuate downtown Milwaukee in the event of a natural disaster or terrorist attack. As a result, a planning work group was formed to determine the impact of a large-scale evacuation on the surrounding region. It also was the consensus of the emergency management directors in the Southeast Region to work on a **regional evacuation plan** as a group because five of the most heavily populated cities in Wisconsin are in the region. A comprehensive document was developed that will be used as a template by all partners for any large-scale emergency.

### **“Private-public cooperation”**

*Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS)*

**Project Lead the Way** is a joint initiative of MPS and private partners, including Rockwell Automation, the Kern Family Foundation, and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. It seeks to encourage students to explore engineering and technical problem solving before making career decisions. Students are introduced to a variety of rigorous, project-based learning opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and math.

### **“Norman N. Gill Award”**

*John “Jack” M. Bennett*  
City Engineer  
City of Franklin

In 1968, Jack accepted the position as Franklin’s city engineer. Since then, he has taken on several other roles with the city, including director of public works (his current position), manager of the water utility, and principal staff person for planning and zoning. In 1968, the Franklin was a rural Milwaukee County community of 12,000. Today, it is a fast-growing city of 33,000. During that “boom,” Bennett engaged in the best practices of municipal engineering and adhered steadfastly to the principles of fairness. Prior to Bennett’s tenure at Franklin, he held engineering positions with the cities of Milwaukee and West Bend. Bennett graduated from Iowa State University in civil engineering. In 1966, he became a licensed professional engineer and then received a master’s in engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is married to Kathie and has two sons Brett and Brad.

**“Lifetime Achievement Award***Jeannette Bell*

West Allis Mayor

Jeannette Bell has been mayor of West Allis – a suburban Milwaukee city of about 60,000 – since 1996. At the end of her current term in 2008, she will retire. Prior to her election as mayor, Bell served 13 years (seven terms) in the Wisconsin Assembly. During her career in government, she has received numerous awards, including *Child Care Advocate of the Year Award* from the Wisconsin Childcare Union, *Child Health Legislative Leadership Award* from the Maternal Child Health Coalition, *Statesman of the Year Award* from the Wisconsin Women’s Network, and the *Pioneer Award* from the Children’s Trust Fund. Bell is a member of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District Commission and the Milwaukee Area Technical College. She is a past director and president of the Wisconsin Alliance of Cities and Wisconsin League of Municipalities respectively. Bell is married to Chester, Jr. and has three children, Chester III, Colleen, and Edith.

Milwaukee-based Public Policy Forum ([www.publicpolicyforum.org](http://www.publicpolicyforum.org)) – which was established in 1913 as a local government watchdog – is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the effectiveness of government and the development of southeastern Wisconsin through objective research of regional public policy issues.