



Thursday, November 20, 2003

Contact: Jessica Erickson, Governor's Office, 608-261-2156

Governor Announces Local Government Summit to Be Held December 10 at UW-Milwaukee

**Former Commission Chairs Don Kettl, Tim Sheehy to Co-Host Summit;
Leaders to Discuss How State, Local Officials Can Work Together**

At a signing ceremony for legislation to help reduce the costs of local government, Governor Jim Doyle announced today that he will convene a Local Government Summit on Wednesday, December 10, 2003 to focus on innovative ways to hold the line on property taxes and help local governments become more efficient. Don Kettl and Tim Sheehy, past local government task force chairs, will co-host the Summit, which will be held at UW-Milwaukee's Student Union, 2200 East Kenwood Boulevard at 10:00 a.m.

"This forum will allow local officials from across Wisconsin to come together to share success stories, discuss what challenges they face, and what opportunities are out there for efficiencies," Governor Doyle said. "Given the budget situation, we as a state need to come together to see what works and what doesn't."

The Governor is calling on local leaders to join him at the Summit to explore innovative ways local governments can reduce costs and become more efficient to reduce pressures on property taxpayers and position the state better for economic growth. Key members of the Governor's Cabinet will discuss ways the state government can help local governments operate more efficiently. Additionally, the Summit will allow local leaders to exchange ideas and success stories on reducing the costs of local government.

Kettl and Sheehy will also lead the participants in a discussion of possible policy changes that would aid local governments to become more efficient and reduce the property tax burden.

"A major area where the state can help local governments is procurement," Doyle said. "The state negotiates bulk discount rates in the purchase of items local governments need – everything from salt to copiers to cars. We need to find more ways – large and small – where we can help local governments achieve efficiencies that will save taxpayers money."

Kettl, Professor of Public Affairs and Political Science at the Robert M. La Follete School of Public Affairs at UW-Madison, served as Chair of the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on State-Local Partnerships for the 21st Century from 1999-2000. The Commission, otherwise known as the Kettl Commission, was charged with the goal of recommending a new system of state-local partnerships, including the system of state aids to local governments.

- MORE -

Sheehy, president of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, served as Chair of the Governor's Task Force on State and Local Government, which was created in 2002 to help local governments find ways to save money and cut duplication of services.

"Tim Sheehy and Don Kettl are well respected individuals who have a wealth of experience and policy knowledge on the relationship between state and local governments," Governor Doyle said. "I am honored that they have agreed to co-host this Summit and work with my administration as we find ways to partner with local governments to find efficiencies and reduce costs."

Governor Signs Legislation to Reduce Local Government Costs

The Governor made his announcement at a bill signing ceremony at the Wisconsin Counties Association in Madison, where he signed into law legislation that helps local governments lower costs. Senate Bill 176, authored by Senators Dale Schultz and Scott Fitzgerald and Representatives Bonnie Ladwig, John Gard, Bobbie Gronemus, and Lena Taylor, permits municipal mutual insurance corporations to offer property insurance to their cities, towns, villages, and counties. It will make purchasing of insurance more efficient, less expensive, and will save property tax dollars.

"This bill is a great example of how local and state government can partner together to decrease local government costs and hold the line on property taxes," Governor Doyle said. "I applaud the Counties Association for inspiring this change to improve the efficiency of government and better serve our citizens. I look forward to working with them and other local government leaders across the state to continue to find cost-saving measures."

Information for Summit Participants

Local government officials who want to participate in the Summit can contact Governor Doyle's project manager Shawn Pfaff by e-mail at shawn.pfaff@gov.state.wi.us or by phone at (608) 266-1212.