

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**INSTITUTE SET TO ADDRESS LOCAL GOVERNMENT ISSUES**

MADISON, WI – “After more than 60 years of State efforts to address issues of local government in Wisconsin local government is still stymied by its ability to address major issues such as sustainable revenue sources, infrastructure, economic development, and environmental quality,” according to Jerry Wehrle, Mayor of Lancaster, Wisconsin and President of the Local Government Institute. “The associations that represent the various levels of local government in Wisconsin decided to combine forces to see if there are ways to make delivery of local government services more effective and stable.”

The Local Government Institute of Wisconsin (LGI) was formed in October 2007 by the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, the Wisconsin Counties Association, the Wisconsin Towns Association and the Alliance of Cities. The purpose of the new organization will be to conduct research, foster collaboration and educate the public and policymakers on methods for improving local government’s ability to serve the people. Notably, it will not be a lobbying organization as it hopes to acquire 501(c)(3) status from the IRS, which prevents lobbying activities.

In February the LGI Board contracted with Gary Becker of Vierbicher Associates, Inc. to serve as the organization’s Executive Director. Becker has over 20 years experience providing local government consulting services to Wisconsin counties, towns, cities and villages.

The Institute has a Board comprised of six voting members and four non-voting members. There are openings for three-to-five additional Board members which should be filled in the coming months. Once the complete Board is in place, priorities will be set and a research agenda established. The LGI expects to contract with public policy research organizations to carry out research on issues targeted by the Board. “We are being very careful in setting up the Board so that it is balanced by geography, politics, background and public/private sector,” according to Board Secretary Jim Dwyer, Chair of the Waukesha County Board. “This is a non-partisan organization and we want to ensure the research we conduct is not viewed as politically biased to the greatest extent possible.”

“The LGI is a place where the various forms of local government in Wisconsin can find common ground on issues that are important to citizens of this state. As a representative of town government, I think this will provide immediate benefit to our residents,” states LGI Board member Terry McMahan, a Supervisor from the Town of Yorkville in Racine County.

The organization recently established a website. “The website will start out by providing basic information about the Local Government Institute, but we expect the website to grow as we generate research and educational material,” says Becker. The website address is [www.localgovinstitute.org](http://www.localgovinstitute.org).

Current Board members include:

Jerry Wehrle (President), Mayor, City of Lancaster

Jim Dwyer (Secretary), County Board Chair, Waukesha County

Tim Hanna, Mayor, City of Appleton

Terry McMahon, Supervisor, Town of Yorkville, Racine County

Dennis O’Loughlin, Supervisor, Dane County

Vacant – to be filled by the League of Wisconsin Municipalities

The non-voting Board members are the executives of the four founding associations:

Dan Thompson, Executive Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities

Mark O’Connell, Executive Director, Wisconsin Counties Association

Rick Stadelman, Executive Director, Wisconsin Towns Association

Ed Huck, Executive Director, Alliance of Cities

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