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### **Strangled by Levy Limits League Partners with WisconsinEye on Facebook Live Panel Discussion**

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Madison – The League of Wisconsin Municipalities partnered with WisconsinEye to bring the discussion of levy limits and their impact on local decision-making to Facebook Live this morning. “Strangled by Levy Limits: Local Decisions in Cities and Villages Impacted by Levy Limits” was broadcast live from the WisconsinEye studio on the League’s Facebook page at 10:00 a.m. The panel discussion was led by WisconsinEye’s Steve Walters and included South Milwaukee Mayor Erik Brooks, Clintonville City Administrator Sharon Eveland, Howard Village Administrator Paul Evert and League Executive Director Jerry Deschane. You can watch it here: <http://bit.ly/StrangledByLevyLimits>

In response to a question, Deschane stated he would ask League members to stop being so diplomatic when they talk with candidates about this topic. “For years, cities and villages have been making it work. It’s time to start telling the stories we told today. Municipalities need a more diverse revenue system, a more locally controlled system and that’s the question for candidates.”

In South Milwaukee, with a base operating levy of \$10,774,142, the city was allowed to increase their spending under levy limits by just \$9,688 last year according to Mayor Brooks. When asked what the impact on his city would be if there were no changes, Brooks stated “You worry about all the things that governments do.... That problem neighbor you have whose lawn is a foot tall, we may not get to it as often and now its two feet tall. It may not be a draconian cut, but it’s a little slice here and there and it all adds up.”

The story is the same in the Village of Howard, even though it is a high-growth community. In Howard, \$10 million in new growth allows the village to spend only \$39,000 more than in the previous year under the state’s levy limit law. When talking about the property tax, Village Administrator Evert said that at the same time the state has continued to cut back its support, “In 1998, Howard received \$1.2 million in state shared revenues, and now, even though the population has grown substantially, we are at \$537,000 from the state.”

The City of Clintonville is a smaller community illustrative of many Wisconsin communities who, in an effort to be responsive to their citizens and retain services, are more and more dependent on borrowing. “We’re working very hard to lower our tax rate and we are looking primarily at our debt load. We’re down to bare bones. We can’t make some of the improvements that we need,” City Administrator Eveland said and she went on to talk about delays in needed road repairs.

Mayor Brooks concluded by saying, “Residents expect a level of service, I want to deliver that level of service but I can’t. We need flexibility and support from Madison to deliver that level of service.”