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Gov. Evers Tours UW-Milwaukee School of Freshwater Sciences

Visit highlights new Freshwater Collaborative program, public-private partnerships

MILWAUKEE — Gov. Tony Evers today visited the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's (UWM) School of Freshwater Sciences to learn more about the school's groundbreaking research and the new Freshwater Collaborative. The governor met with UWM experts in the fields of micro-contaminants, genomics, freshwater aquatic species, and aquaculture before touring Lake Michigan on the school's research vessel *Neeskay*.

"We have to preserve and protect our water resources, and we have to connect the dots to be successful," Gov. Evers said. "From our farmers relying on clean water for crops and livestock to our outdoor recreation industry to everyday use, water is essential to our state and our economy, and that's why the School of Freshwater Sciences and the Freshwater Collaborative are so critically important."

The governor highlighted the creation of the Freshwater Collaborative during his visit, which creates a framework for all 13 University of Wisconsin System campuses to develop a multidisciplinary approach to both research and education, and will enable students to participate in a one-of-a-kind undergraduate program in freshwater studies. Initial funding for the program is coming from a \$670,000 grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and \$1.4 million from the UW System.

"Wisconsin is seen as a global thought leader in water," said Vincent Rice, Senior Director of Sector Strategy for WEDC, noting that Wisconsin already has more than 200 water technology businesses based in the state. "This opportunity enables that leadership position to be leveraged to enhance increased market access. It will also draw both researchers and investors to Wisconsin to evaluate technological changes for both study and investment."

UWM Chancellor Mark Mone said: "UW-Milwaukee is North America's only dedicated school of freshwater science. It's a cornerstone in a movement to make Wisconsin a powerhouse in water research and industry – not just in our state but globally."

Val Klump, dean of UWM's School of Freshwater Sciences, thanked Gov. Evers for his support of the program, which will benefit students statewide.

"It is hard to imagine any endeavor more important than ensuring the availability of safe, clean freshwater," Klump said. "UW schools can play a key role, in that no other institution has the tools or capacity to identify, map and solve these often complex problems. Employers are snapping up our students, and are asking us to produce more, and that is the goal – to make UW and Wisconsin the world's leader in freshwater training and research."

Wisconsin is also the only state to have created a private industry group, The Water Council, to share technological advancements and best practices and to enhance collaboration. Dean Amhaus, president and CEO of The Water Council, praised the creation of the Freshwater Collaborative.

“The water technology industry is always seeking the next generation of talent from Wisconsin’s universities but they also recognize that the development of new technologies often times comes through close collaboration with academia,” he said. “It is for that reason The Water Council and its members look to extend its close working relationship with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to the other UW campuses across Wisconsin.”

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