



# City wins grant to develop urban farms

By [Karen Herzog](#) of the Journal Sentinel

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IBM will announce Wednesday that Milwaukee is among 24 cities worldwide to receive a Smarter Cities Challenge grant, which will give the city access to top IBM experts and technology to potentially expand local, cutting-edge urban agriculture efforts around the globe.

The IBM Smarter Cities Challenge grants, valued at about \$400,000 apiece, [are aimed at helping cities improve one aspect of city life](#). Issues addressed by winning cities include health care, education, safety, social services, transportation, communications, sustainability, budget management, energy and utilities.

More than 200 cities in 40 countries competed for the 24 grants. IBM plans to award a total of \$50 million worth of technology and services to 100 municipalities worldwide over the next three years.

"We're getting some really smart people to help us as we move our urban agriculture system to the next level," Mayor Tom Barrett said Tuesday. "They'll do a systems analysis as to how to grow this to a larger economic scale."

The grant specifically will look at how water management and aquaculture intersect, and whether there's a sustainable economic model in Sweet Water Organics, an urban fish and vegetable farm that mimics the Earth's natural ecosystem in an industrial building in the Bay View neighborhood. Harnischfeger Industries once used the building to make mining cranes.

Cofounded by roofing contractor James Godsil and business partner Josh Fraundorf, Sweet Water Organics is the first commercial test of Will Allen's innovative aquaculture model for perch - an eco-friendly system that produces fish and vegetables in a closed system that conserves water. Growing Power, the nonprofit urban farm at 5500 W. Silver Spring Drive, unveiled the system three years ago.

"It's my understanding that IBM wants to help Milwaukee advance itself as one of the world's smartest cities by virtue of our commitment to learning to feed ourselves," Godsil said Tuesday. "We've formed a grand alliance around creating a 21st-century, Earth-friendly industry that reminds me of the grand alliance formed when we shifted from wheat and alfalfa and corn to dairy - a much higher added-value form of agriculture with technology surrounding it."

Each city will gain a team of specially selected IBM experts, researchers and consultants who will study the role that intelligent technology can play to analyze and strategize project goals.

"We selected these cities because of their commitment to the use of data to make better decisions, and for their desire to explore and act on smarter solutions to their most pressing concerns," said Stanley S. Litow, IBM vice president of corporate citizenship and corporate affairs. "The cities we picked are eager to implement programs that tangibly improve the quality of life in their areas, and to create road maps for other cities to follow."

A consistent theme among applicant cities was collecting, sharing, analyzing and acting on data.

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