



Sustaining Wisconsin

Sustaining Wisconsin is a statewide community-level policy education project designed to highlight key choices and challenges facing this state in five broad areas of public policy, in advance of the 2002 elections. In each issue area our materials build from the basic facts to talk formatively about the critical choices and challenges facing our state.

Sustaining Wisconsin is a project of COWS, the Center on Wisconsin Strategy, at UW-Madison. A classic example of the Wisconsin Idea, Sustaining Wisconsin is a meaningful University contribution to public life in Wisconsin.

We invite your participation, as an individual, community member, or member of an organization or association concerned about issues or involved in civic affairs. Host a presentation, become a presenter yourself, or serve as a local project contact for volunteers and the media—the opportunities are vast.



**A statewide dialogue
on Wisconsin's future!**

The Issues

The five major issue areas are:

- ▶ **Jobs and the Economy**
- ▶ **Families and Communities**
- ▶ **The Future** (kids, education and the state budget)
- ▶ **Democracy and Civic Participation**
- ▶ **The Environment**

Within each we have identified several crucial issues around which to frame initial discussion about the future of Wisconsin. Policy interconnections are the focal point throughout.

The Goals

Sustaining Wisconsin will *initiate discussion* about issues given short shrift in the media, *inform voters* about our findings and offer common-sense solutions for their consideration, *recruit and train local leaders* around a common message and packaged materials, and *develop broad state-wide support* for a program that underscores our shared values and visions for the future of Wisconsin.

The Elements

Sustaining Wisconsin facilitates participation at whatever level of interest, time and ability citizens have to offer with materials that build from basic facts to suggested policy changes. Among the key features:

- ▶ **Slide Presentation:** We present the state of our state and show how seemingly unrelated issues connect to impact our daily lives.
- ▶ **Briefing Papers:** One-page summaries and 8-10 background papers lay out the choices and challenges we face and offer just some of the potential solutions.
- ▶ **Web Site:** www.sustainingwisconsin.org functions as a virtual headquarters, chock full of information and ideas, including searchable county and regional databases.
- ▶ **Databases:** Key social, demographic, political and economic indicators; State of our State bite-sized policy oriented facts; media; elected officials; all available on-line and through our regional reports.

A project of the Center on Wisconsin Strategy, UW-Madison

Sustaining Wisconsin

A Statewide Dialogue on Wisconsin's Future

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The Sustaining Wisconsin web site is our virtual campaign headquarters. It is filled with issue-based resources; county-specific demographic, economic and political data; and searchable databases linking people to the media, their elected officials and bite-sized facts about the state of our State.

But it is also much more than an information resource. It serves to link people within their communities and Wisconsin. Our profiles and stories from the road catalogue the growing number of active citizens statewide working for a sustainable future.

Key features of www.sustainingwisconsin.org include:

▶ **Background and briefing papers.** These papers—presented as 6-10 background papers and one-page issue snapshots—allow Wisconsinites to become quick studies on everything from recycling to education funding to the state of working Wisconsin to the role of money in politics. Broken into five broad categories, surfers can access more than three dozen papers that describe the choices and challenges we face.

▶ The **"Media Database"** page provides folks with a list of all the media in their area, including vital contact information for each, simply by clicking on their county. Another simple search returns contact information for more than 400 newspaper, radio and television outlets across Wisconsin.

▶ **"Your County, By the Numbers"** is a one-stop-shop for a wealth of county-level data. At the click of a mouse, citizens can access a political, economic and demographic snapshot of each of Wisconsin's 72 counties.

▶ **State of the State database.** In this searchable database we've catalogued more than 1000 bite-sized policy-oriented facts about Wisconsin and are adding more daily. Every page in the web site automatically presents a new fact in our "Did you know..." pop-up on the left side.

▶ Our **Organizer's toolbox** provides a set of essential tools for active citizens. Suggestions for effective letters to the editor, press releases, house parties and more are provided to help local leaders be more effective in talking about these issues.

▶ **Constant updates.** We'll profile local leaders, present stories from the road and provide a weekly commentary on who is taking the high road on public policy issues and who is traveling the low road.

▶ **Sign up, participate, become a local leader** in this growing statewide dialogue on Wisconsin's future.

www.sustainingwisconsin.org



Media Lookup
Your County,
By The Numbers
Breifing Papers

HIGHLIGHTS

Get Local
Profiles
High-Road/
Low-Road
Our Story
Free Stuff

**Did You
KNOW...**

Sustaining Wisconsin is the nation's first program of its kind... grassroots policy education from the university about the state of our State.

