

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Monroe Street Green Program Rollout**

*First Main Street Green business district to highlight cutting edge sustainable practices to benefit environment and economy*

MADISON – A new program will enable local main street businesses and commercial districts to obtain a “Main Street Green” designation by utilizing stewardship tools and innovative best practices developed by WEI (Wisconsin Environmental Initiative). The program will officially be launched on Monroe Street, where the local merchants association and 26 businesses representing various retail, food and beverage, and service establishments are making a strong commitment to superior environmental performance.

“Main Street businesses, no matter the size of the town, define our culture. As staples of each community, they serve as leaders, whether for responsible business practices, fair prices, or customer service,” said John Imes, Executive Director of Wisconsin Environmental Initiative. “We want customers to support Main Street Green businesses that are ready to move forward with more sustainable operations.”

Inaugural members of Monroe Street Green include: Alvarado Real Estate Group, Arbor House, An Environmental Inn, Art Gecko, Bluephies, Brasserie V, Full Circle Natural Medicine, HAIR, HotelRED, J. Kinney Florist, Jacs Dining & Tap House, Karner Blue Candle & Supply, Madison Environmental Group, Mallatt's Pharmacy, Maurie's Fine Chocolates, Monroe Street Family Dental, Monroe Street Framing, Mystery to Me, New Orleans Take-Out, Orange Tree Imports, Paragon Video and Stereo, Pizza Brutta, Restaino & Associates Realtors, SERRV, The Wine and Hop Shop, UW Credit Union, Wingra Boats.

The role of “green business districts” to foster better economic and environmental outcomes will also be a focal point. “Monroe Street is already being “green” by offering local shops, boutiques and restaurants that are located within walking and biking distance, or reached by public transportation,” said Orange Schroeder, co-owner of Orange Tree Imports and head of the Monroe Street Merchants Association. “But we also want to show that our shops, restaurants and other businesses are leaders in environmentally responsible business practices.”

Working with WEI and interns from the UW–Madison WE Badger Volunteers program, Monroe Street Green businesses will receive technical support to establish baselines, benchmark their operations and identify best practices that others can learn from. By utilizing the Main Street Green Checklist, a stewardship tool that sets effective, yet achievable goals relating to eight major environmental topic areas, participating businesses will be able to:

- Establish a baseline of their current energy, solid waste, water consumption and storm water impacts.
- Pursue energy efficiency goals.
- Incorporate water-saving strategies.
- Implement best practices in landscaping and related efforts to reduce storm water run-off.
- Shift their purchasing practices to more local and environmentally responsible choices.
- Educate their customers, employees and the public about actions they can take to reduce their environmental impact.

“The Main Street Green Checklist provides a cost effective, yet innovative way for local businesses to improve economic and environmental performance,” said Leah Samson-Samuel, President of Madison Environmental Group, an interdisciplinary consulting firm located on Monroe Street. “As businesses demonstrate more sustainable business practices, we expect other stakeholders and the public will soon learn from and apply these practices in their own homes and neighborhoods.”

Founded in 1995, the WEI (Wisconsin Environmental Initiative) has worked to improve the environment, economy, and quality of life in Wisconsin through educational initiatives, multi-stakeholder dialogues, and the advancement of best practices in the area of business strategy, environmental policy, green building, tourism, and land use. WEI has created a number of successful programs including Green Built Home, Travel Green Wisconsin, and recently launched its newest program: Main Street Green.

For more details about WEI’s initiatives, please visit [www.weigogreener.org](http://www.weigogreener.org) and click under Main Street Green.

(Alternative Listing) Monroe Street Green Participants

Alvarado Real Estate Group  
 Arbor House, An Environmental Inn  
 Art Gecko  
 Bluephies  
 Brasserie V  
 Full Circle Natural Medicine  
 HAIR  
 HotelRED  
 J. Kinney Florist  
 Jacs Dining & Tap House  
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 Madison Environmental Group  
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Maurie's Fine Chocolates  
 Monroe Street Family Dental  
 Monroe Street Framing  
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