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**Big-Box Tool-kit Released to Address Wisconsin Sprawl**

**Madison**—With big-box development proposals on the horizon in Sun Prairie, River Falls, Sturgeon Bay, Stoughton, Monroe, and a long list of other Wisconsin communities, Midwest Environmental Advocates, Inc. (MEA) and Sierra Club announce the release of *The Big-Box Tool-kit: A Guide to Sustaining Communities*. *The Big-Box Tool-kit* guides residents through local annexation and zoning processes, highlighting legal and practical reasons for denying big-box proposals and promoting planned, incremental growth.

“We are excited to offer a free resource that will help residents in communities across the State, get involved with major planning decisions,” said Brent Denzin, MEA attorney and director of the Sustaining Communities Campaign.

“Imagine bringing supermarkets back into our neighborhoods, multi-story retail buildings back into downtown areas, and developments that filter rainfall and send it to replenish our drinking water supply,” said Carla Klein, Director of the Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter. “Local governments and community members have the power to make this a reality and *The Big-Box Toolkit* offers guidance for how to do this.”

Some of the negative impacts of big-box supercenters include:

- An estimated 10,000 daily car trips to parking lots outside the city center, contributing to excessive ozone levels in a growing number of Wisconsin counties.
- Degradation to our waterways by producing roughly 16 times more polluted runoff than the farm fields they often replace.
- Second waves of sprawl by turning highway districts into daily shopping centers.

According to Carla Klein, “With better tools, local residents can speak up and get involved. The message is clear: We want planned growth that conserves resources, protects public health, and promotes a sense of community.”

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## **FAST FACTS ABOUT THIS ISSUE**

- To focus on big-box sprawl, MEA and Sierra Club began the Sustaining Communities Campaign in September 2005. While working with community groups to address Wal-Mart Supercenter proposals in Sturgeon Bay, Jefferson, Hartford, Monona, Jefferson, Green Bay, and Stoughton, MEA Attorney and Sustaining Communities director Brent Denzin began constructing the tool-kit. *The Big-Box Tool-kit* was developed to help unite communities and focus local efforts to reign in big-box sprawl. The tool-kit combines legal standards with practical insight to help concerned residents take early action. The tool-kit includes guides to zoning, annexation, conditional use permitting, big-box ordinances, stormwater permitting, and more.
- *The Big-Box Tool-kit* is free and available on Midwest Environmental Advocates, Inc.'s website ([www.midwestadvocates.org](http://www.midwestadvocates.org))
- Midwest Environmental Advocates is Wisconsin's first and only non-profit, public interest environmental law center. Midwest Environmental Advocates provides legal representation and community organizing assistance to community groups who are working for clean air, clean water, and environmental justice. For more information, go to [www.midwestadvocates.org](http://www.midwestadvocates.org).
- The Sierra Club's members are more than 750,000 of your friends and neighbors. Inspired by nature, we work together to protect our communities and the planet. The Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization. For more information about the Sierra Club group nearest you, go to <http://wisconsin.sierraclub.org/findgroup.htm#Four> or contact the Wisconsin state office at 608-256-0565.
- Ten Wisconsin Counties from Milwaukee County to Door County are not meeting EPA standards for ozone, a by-product of car emissions. (EPA, "Green Book," <http://www.epa.gov/air/oaqps/greenbk/gncs.html#WISCONSIN> (last visited July, 2006).
- DNR considers stormwater run-off to be the largest remaining threat to our waters. According to DNR, stormwater discharges are degrading or threatening an estimated 40 percent of the streams, 90 percent of the inland lakes, many of the Great Lakes harbors and coastal waters, many wetland areas and substantial groundwater resources in Wisconsin. (Source: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/nps/about.htm> (last visited July, 2006).
- In November 2005, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency produced a clear guide to reducing stormwater from big-box developments. Measures, such as roof gardens and underground parking, have been utilized by large factories and big-box development to avoid stormwater run-off. (Source:

[http://www.minnehahacreek.org/documents/bigbox\\_final\\_doc\\_000.pdf](http://www.minnehahacreek.org/documents/bigbox_final_doc_000.pdf) (last visited June, 2006)