



WisPolitics: Barrett announces Spanish manufacturer coming to Milwaukee in State of City address
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For WisPolitics

MILWAUKEE -- Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett today announced Spanish manufacturer Ingeteam will build a wind-turbine parts plant in Milwaukee, as he touted the city's successes on the jobs front in his annual State of the City speech.

Barrett, who is running for governor, invited WE Energies CEO Gale Klappa to make the announcement about Ingeteam. Klappa said the Spain-based firm chose Milwaukee's Menomonee Valley for its first-ever American manufacturing plant and said it would bring hundreds of jobs to the valley.

Klappa described the company as heavily involved in renewable energy and the making of generators, converters and other essential components for wind turbines. Ingeteam's Web site lists among its products converters, generators and control electronics for wind-generators, electric pitch, telecontrol of wind parks, integral maintenance of parks.

A complete announcement is planned for tomorrow, Barrett said,

Barrett delivered his upbeat speech touting job growth and the city's financial stability at Manpower Inc.'s downtown headquarters. He also pointed to Manpower's expanded corporate offices as a symbol of the city's progress.

"Manpower's international headquarters is new, but people already view this building as a downtown landmark," said Barrett, "and when I see this building, I think of jobs."

Barrett also noted that Republic Airways had added jobs in the Milwaukee area last year by choosing the city over Denver and Indianapolis for the consolidation of its maintenance and call center operations. In addition to keeping 800 jobs in the area, the move added 800 more. He noted that C & D Technologies had received a federal defense contract to make lithium-ion batteries for the military, creating an estimated 150 jobs.

Barrett has often touted the successful turnaround of the formerly blighted Menomonee Valley and Tower Automotive site on the city's west side.

Today, Barrett reiterated that "we continue to develop the Menomonee Valley. What was a short time ago Wisconsin's largest brownfield, a mostly abandoned and desolate landscape, is now home to thousands of new jobs."

As he did in last year's State of the City address, Barrett touted Milwaukee's potential as a "water technology hub," a concept that also became the subject of debate after University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee professor Marc Levine last fall challenged the premise that outside companies would flock to the region because of its abundant water supply and existing presence of water-related industry.

Today, Barrett optimistically said he expected the state's Public Service Commission to approve a city proposal to offer water at reduced rates to new businesses that would use lots of water and provide at least 25 jobs.

"We are working with partners to secure Milwaukee's position as the world water hub for economic development,

education and research,” Barrett said. “We are working closely with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee as it establishes the School of Freshwater Science. And we are assembling the resources -- including land and incentives -- that those water businesses will need to grow in Milwaukee.”

Barrett indicated today he still supports a governance change for Milwaukee Public Schools, a topic from his 2009 address that became a hot-button issue by mid-year.

“The policy debate had to happen and needs to continue,” he said today. “I continue to believe that a clear line of accountability -- connecting to a singular, accountable leader -- is the right thing to do to help improve Milwaukee Public Schools.”

Gov. Jim Doyle and Barrett pushed the issue heavily last fall, but objections from Milwaukee lawmakers have held up the proposal. With the legislation still pending, the school board voted early this year to hire Gregory Thornton of Pennsylvania to be the district’s new superintendent. Many believe that move and the objections from some lawmakers nixed any chance mayoral control of MPS would be approved this year.

“I am not walking away from the kids in MPS,” Barrett declared today.

Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, who is running against Barrett for governor, said he agreed with Barrett’s upbeat tone in his State of the City address and said many of its themes matched what he said in his State of the County speech. Walker said the city’s success “shows how powerful it is to lower the burden of taxes” and backs up his point that reducing taxes is the best way to create jobs.

“That is good news about the jobs,” said Walker. “Clearly, it’s driven by tax credits. I’d like to see the state cap on tax credits lifted. I’d like to see all of our residents and small businesses have those kind of tax credits.”

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