

Wisconsin Academy: Mandela Barnes to kick off Powering Local Leadership Summit at the Bubolz Nature Preserve in Appleton

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MADISON—Wisconsin Lieutenant Governor-elect Mandela Barnes will kick off the [Wisconsin Academy's Powering Local Leadership summit](#) on January 24 and 25 at the beautiful Gordon Bubolz Nature Preserve in Appleton.

According to Barnes, “we need a renewed commitment to education, healthcare, and the environment for our state to reach its full potential.” In previous public statements, Barnes pointed to the need to “invest in renewable energy—it’s the fastest-growing sector of the economy—and if we don’t, others will.”

Barnes will kick off a two day conversation with energy experts, local government, and tribal leaders from across Wisconsin who are making a difference—moving our communities to more healthy, sustainable, equitable, and thriving places to live, work, and play. The summit features two members of Governor-elect Evers’ Agriculture, Energy, and Natural Resources Policy Advisory Council: Lauren Azar and Ashwat Narayanan.

In addition, the summit will highlight exceptional sustainability initiatives from the Fox Valley region, such as the citizen-led initiative in Green Bay to form a new Sustainability Commission and lessons from Oneida leadership about energy independence and innovative workforce development initiatives.

The manager of a local municipal utility, Kaukauna Utilities, will discuss leadership on energy efficiency, PACE financing, and solar and hydroelectric investments. Fox Valley leaders will also gain valuable insights from a summary of local workplace sustainability programs that include suggestions from employees and residents on clean energy and resilience measures that move communities forward.

The summit concludes with a guided tour of the Bubolz Nature Preserve’s new [microgrid](#), which demonstrates how linking solar panels, a fuel cell, a battery, and other components are allowing the innovative community center to operate in a smart, self-contained electricity grid.

“Through presentations from peers and experts on energy issues that many communities are navigating, ample time for questions and discussion during breakout sessions and an evening reception (with dinner and live music!), and a tour of an emerging new technology for energy independence and resilience—we expect summit participants from across Wisconsin will have much to gain from this educational program,” says Chelsea Chandler, director of the Wisconsin Academy Initiatives program.

Participants are encouraged to [register](#) by January 4 to take advantage of early bird rates, but Chandler notes that the summit price was set low to encourage participation by anyone interested in local solutions to global climate change. Local governments, tribal leaders, and nonprofits are also offered additional discounted rates. In addition, to help enable attendance by resource-constrained communities, the Academy will provide need-based [travel scholarships](#) to facilitate broader participation and the best possible dialogue with diverse voices at the table.

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