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Beloit College, Wisconsin Power and Light Company exploring possible reuse of power plant in downtown Beloit

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Friday, October 12, 2012

BELOIT, Wis.—Beloit College today announced that it is partnering with **Wisconsin Power and Light Company (WPL)** to explore the possible reuse of the company’s **Blackhawk Generating Station** as an activity and recreation center for the college. The Blackhawk facility, which has been retired since 2010, sits on the Rock River in downtown Beloit, just across Highway 51 from the college’s campus.

Beloit College’s **Board of Trustees** formally approved this exploratory work at its fall meeting on **Saturday, Oct. 6**. The college has been developing its plans for more than a year while in informal talks with WPL. With the board’s approval, the college will continue to fully explore the project’s feasibility and to assess the site’s remediation needs with WPL. At the same time, the college will begin to fundraise for the project, which will require an estimated **\$30 million** to complete.

“We couldn’t be more excited about this project and working with WPL,” said **Scott Bierman, president of Beloit College**. “If we are successful, Beloit and Beloit College will gain a landmark on the river that will celebrate the industrial history of this city while providing the college with a building that will be the envy of every small college in the country. This building powered the growth of our city and region, and we’re convinced it holds similar promise as a facility for energizing and assuring the college’s future. We couldn’t be more appreciative of the partnership we’ve enjoyed with WPL as we’ve pursued this dream.”

“Wisconsin Power and Light Company, an Alliant Energy Company, is excited to be partnering with Beloit College and working through the details of a potential agreement for the Blackhawk site,” said **Patricia Kampling, Chairman, President and CEO – Alliant Energy**, in a statement. “The College’s vision for the transformation of this riverfront site into a state of the art student recreation

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and activity center that will benefit students for generations to come is very impressive, and WPL is proud to be a part of this effort. While there are still many details to work out, WPL is committed to working together with Beloit College to try and make this vision a reality.”

Additional Details:

- President Bierman has said that the college will raise all of the estimated \$30 million needed to transform the current building into a campus activity center. In the months ahead, Bierman and the college’s development officers will begin formally approaching donors who may have an interest in the project.
- The college ran an on-campus study in the spring to determine the campus community’s needs and desires related to the project. Based on that work, 10 specific needs were outlined for such a building. Among the campus priorities identified: an indoor track; fitness center; a flexible, fieldhouse-style “big open space”; a lecture and movie hall seating around 150; and spaces that generally take full advantage of the river views and access the site naturally affords.
- Based on current estimates, the building offers 120,000-square-feet of usable space. This is roughly the same size as the college’s Center for the Sciences, a LEED-Platinum building built along Highway 51 and opened in 2008, just yards from the southeast corner of the Blackhawk Station.
- This fall, three different classes at Beloit College are studying the project and examining possible approaches to using sustainable and green energy practices when renovating the facility.

Pictures/Renderings [Available Online:](#)

(1) The Blackhawk Generating Station in downtown Beloit, Wis. The college’s Center for the Sciences and the cupola of Middle College, the main administration building, are visible in the background, right. Photo by Trevor Johnson.

(2) Angus-Young Associates, Inc. was hired by the college in the spring of 2012 to draw up preliminary plans for the activity center based on feedback from Beloit students, faculty and staff. Here: a view of the activity and recreation center from the west with the campus in the background. The plans include a green roof, competition pool, wellness center, indoor track, top-floor event space, and numerous student activity venues and lounges. Rendering by Angus-Young Associates for Beloit College.

(3) A rendering of the proposed green roof space, with the fitness center level (and track) visible above. Rendering by Angus-Young Associates for Beloit College.

**Additional photos, renderings are available via Beloit College (see below).*

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