UW-Extension Local Government Center recognized with “Opee” award
Center honored for educating local public officials on Wisconsin’s open records and meetings laws

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Madison, Wis.—A University of Wisconsin-Extension center that serves as a resource for local public officials around the state has been honored with an award for political openness from the Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council.

The Council, an organization of media representatives that works to protect public access to meetings and records, acknowledges groups that highlight open government in Wisconsin every year with its openness awards (“Opees”).

“The recognition by this statewide organization affirms what UW-Extension colleagues already know about the Local Government Center,” said Ray Cross, UW-Extension and UW Colleges chancellor. “The center fills critical educational needs of Wisconsin’s 14,000 local elected and appointed officials. For two decades, the center has served communities well by providing resources on public meetings and open records, along with many other topics and issues.”

Each election cycle brings a 20 to 25 percent turnover of Wisconsin’s local officials. Local Government Center staff provides education on a variety of topics that prepares officials to make effective decisions and respond to emerging issues.

In announcing this year’s “Opees,” the Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council noted that the Local Government Center had been educating public officials about the state’s open records and meetings laws for 21 years through workshops for town, county, city and village officials and presentations to local government groups. The center also makes information accessible to officials and the public through fact sheets, webinars and online resources.

The political openness award will be presented at the third annual Wisconsin Watchdog Awards dinner in Madison on April 24. The event is held by the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism, Wisconsin Freedom of Information Council and Madison Pro Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists.

To learn more about the UW-Extension Local Government Center, visit http://lgc.uwex.edu.

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