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# City poised to be water leader

City in hot spot of opportunity, U.N. official says

The Business Journal of Milwaukee - by [David Doege](#)

Frederick Dubee sees global opportunities for Milwaukee, as the city tries to position itself as a freshwater mecca in North America.

That might seem outlandish thinking for a guy who's never been to Milwaukee. But as a businessman and, currently, as senior adviser to the **United Nations**, Dubee has seen much of the world and believes Lake Michigan offers an abundance of opportunity for area businesses and researchers involved with water.

"Water is a big deal around the world, and it's one of the topics being discussed at the G8 Summit," Dubee said of the conference of world leaders in Japan this week. "The question is how does Milwaukee best use the resource it has and serve the American and global communities in terms of being very creative in water."

Dubee expects to get some answers at Water Summit 2008, where he will be keynote speaker. The July 14 event is being hosted by the **Greater Milwaukee Committee** and Milwaukee 7.

Dubee, who spent three decades in the international auto industry before joining the U.N. Global Compact, travels the world spreading the word of socially responsible business practices.

"Milwaukee is in a position where it can take a leadership role when it comes to worldwide problems like water shortages and water pollution," Dubee said in a phone interview from Sweden. "I suspect that there is the type of innovative spirit in Milwaukee that might make that possible."

Representatives of 120 area companies, 87 researchers and investors from several venture capital funds have been invited to the area's second water summit, said Julia Taylor, president of the GMC.

"Part of our goal is making actual connections between companies and researchers who don't know each other to give them an opportunity to learn what they are doing and, from that, create business opportunities," said Taylor, who met Dubee on a trip to China earlier this year.

Sammis White, a professor in the **Department of Urban Planning** at the **University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**, said it is important for area academicians and industry executives working with water to develop a dialogue.

"We think we have a great combination of business and researchers in the area that we can build upon," said White, who noted that the **Great Lakes Water Institute** at UWM is the largest freshwater science program in the nation. "What we'd like to see them do is collaborate more for mutual benefit."



Scott Paulus

Lake Michigan offers "an abundance of opportunity" for area businesses and researchers involved with water, says Frederick Dubee, a senior adviser to the United Nations who will be keynote speaker at Water Summit 2008 in Milwaukee on July 14.

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The summit presents an opportunity "to get over this petty argument of who's west of Sunny Slope Road" in the Waukesha County city of New Berlin, said Rich Meeusen, chairman, president and chief executive officer of **Badger Meter Inc.**, a Brown Deer-based manufacturer.

"I think we've gotten so caught up in the discussion of who has and doesn't have water in southeast Wisconsin," Meeusen said, "that we've overlooked how to take advantage of that to grow as a region."

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