

Joel Brennan – President/CEO

Discovery World

Joel Brennan began his tenure as President/CEO of Discovery World, a private non-profit educational and cultural organization, in October 2007. Located on Milwaukee's lakefront, Discovery World is Milwaukee's Center for Public Innovation with interactive exhibits, fresh and saltwater aquaria and labs and studios that support its educational mission. Discovery World educates, motivates, mobilizes and inspires the innovators and entrepreneurs of the next century, empowering learners of all ages to create their place in the changing world. In 2012, more than 350,000 visitors experienced Discovery World's programs onsite and in the community.

Under Brennan's leadership, Discovery World has employed innovative tools like federal New Markets Tax Credits to stabilize its capital debt and build a more sustainable long-term future. The organization has significantly reduced operational expenses over the last five years and created a successful Annual Campaign that turned a \$3 million operating deficit into an operational surplus. During his tenure, the organization has developed important new strategic community partnerships and has expanded delivery of its innovative educational programs to neighborhoods of need in Milwaukee.

Previously, Brennan served as the head of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee (RACM). In this capacity, Brennan oversaw real estate development and large impact economic development projects. Major RACM efforts spearheaded or managed by Brennan included Menomonee Valley redevelopment, relocation of the Manpower World Headquarters to downtown Milwaukee and the reconstruction of the Milwaukee Intermodal Station. The *Milwaukee Business Journal* and *Milwaukee Magazine* have recognized Joel Brennan as a leader in Southeast Wisconsin for his commitment to attracting employers, residents and visitors to the Milwaukee area, and for his work on important regional public policy issues.

Prior to assuming this economic development leadership position for the city, Brennan served as Vice President of Development and Government Affairs for the Greater Milwaukee Convention & Visitors Bureau (now Visit Milwaukee). Brennan worked to attract businesses and visitors to Greater Milwaukee, helping foster regional economic development. In his efforts, Brennan also organized and mobilized the tourism community, industry partners, and area residents.

Brennan has managed several political campaigns in Milwaukee and Wisconsin, serving as the campaign manager for Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett's successful bid for the city's highest office in April 2004.

Joel Brennan currently serves on the Wisconsin Center District Board and also serves as the President of the Board at Neighborhood House of Milwaukee.

Joel Brennan grew up in the Milwaukee area and worked his way through Marquette University, where he graduated *magna cum laude* in 1992. He was selected as a Harris Fellow at the University of Chicago and earned a Master's Degree in Public Policy from University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy in 1999. Joel Brennan lives with his wife Audra, daughter Allison (age 7) and son Conor (age 5) in the Brewers Hill neighborhood of Milwaukee at **322 E. Brown Street**.