

AGENDA
CONSERVATION, EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, March 6, 2024

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

LOCATION: Wood County Courthouse – Room 114

1. Call meeting to order
2. Declaration of Quorum
3. Public Comments (*brief comments/statement regarding committee business*)
4. Review Correspondence.
5. Consent Agenda.
 - a. Approve minutes of previous meetings
 - b. Approve bills
 - c. Receive staff activity reports
 - d. Receive committee reports
6. Review items, if any, pulled from Consent Agenda.
7. Risk and Injury Report
8. Extension
 - a. General Office Update
 - b. Update on Community Health Educator Position
 - c. 2023 Annual Report
 - d. Office Space Update
9. Land & Water Conservation Department
10. Private Sewage
11. Land Records
12. County Surveyor
13. Planning & Zoning
14. Economic Development
 - a. Update from Marshfield Municipal Airport for release of 2024 Economic Development Grant.
 - b. Consider resolution to authorize staff to apply for Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Idle Sites Redevelopment grant funding for the Former Vesper Elementary School as well as development agreement.
 - c. Review North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.
 - d. Review Economic Development Grant application
15. Requests for per diem for meeting attendants
16. Schedule next regular committee meeting
17. Agenda items for next meeting
18. Schedule any additional meetings if necessary
19. Adjourn

Join by phone

+1-408-418-9388 United States Toll
Meeting number (access code): 2498 270 2323

Join by WebEx App or Web

<https://woodcountywi.webex.com/woodcountywi/j.php?MTID=m8da921346f3d3cfa1de2d8523ff6317>

Meeting number (access code): 2498 270 2323
Meeting password: 030624

MINUTES
CONSERVATION, EDUCATION, & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 7, 2024

TIME: 9:00 AM

PLACE: Courthouse – Room 114

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Leichtnam, Dave LaFontaine, Jake Hahn, Tom Buttke, Joe Behlen

MEMBER EXCUSED: Laura Valenstein

OTHERS PRESENT: Trent Miner, County Clerk; See attached sign-in list

1. Chairman Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and declared a quorum present.
2. There was no public comment.
3. Motion by LaFontaine/Buttke to approve the minutes of the previous meetings. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Motion by LaFontaine/Buttke to approve the vouchers, monthly department reports and committee reports. Motion carried unanimously.
5. Area Extension Director Solin provided an email updated due to his absence from the meeting:
 - a. Jen McNelly has been hired for the Groundwater Natural Resources Educator position. She starts next week. Jen was previously the Water Quality Specialist with Portage County Land & Water. Thank you to Chair Leichtnam for being on the interview team.
 - b. The Bilingual Community Health Educator position is posted. We hope to have that position start sometime in March.
 - c. Rombalski reported that the City of Pittsville was successful in receiving a THRIVE Grant for Rural Development. This grant can be used for planning of a larger scale project in the City.
6. Wucherpennig presented the dues request from Golden Sands RC&D. The full price is \$1,900 per year however Wood County has historically only paid 75% of that total. Motion by Buttke/LaFontaine to pay the 75% rate (\$1,425) for 2024. Motion carried unanimously.
7. The Land & Water Conservation Conference is coming up March 6-8, 2024 in Green Bay. Let Wucherpennig know if you wish to attend.

8. Wucherpennig reported that he presented the LWCD request for ARPA funding to the ARPA Adhoc Committee. They will meet again to review the presentations, and allocate the dollars.
9. Grueneberg discussed the upcoming Housing Summit and asked for REDI Implementation Funds to help defray any costs associated with presenting this conference. Motion by Hahn/LaFontaine to approve up to \$1,000 of REDI Implementation Funds for this purpose. Motion carried unanimously.
10. Grueneberg requested REDI Implementation Funds to help fund broadband infrastructure initiatives geared towards the northern townships in the county. Motion by Hahn/Buttke to approve not more than \$7,500 of REDI Implementation Funds for this purpose. Motion carried unanimously.
11. The Wood County Housing Summit is coming up on March 7th at Mid-State Technical College. If any committee members wish to attend, they are to get with the County Clerk's office to register. A meeting notice will be posted for this summit.
12. Grueneberg highlighted the 3 Uniquely Wisconsin videos that were linked in the CEED packet and encourage those in attendance to view them. They will also be posted to other venues as well.
13. The committee, along with Grueneberg and Rombalski, reviewed the application for economic development grants for 2025. Suggestions were made to staff for improvements to the form and process. They will be incorporated into a final document, to be presented at a future meeting.
14. Extension Associate Professor Jackie Carattini discussed the various programming that she is involved with that includes the Hmong Community. By doing this type of outreach, it builds relationships for future programming needs for minority communities. Much of the programming development has been paid for by grant funding.
15. The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 6th at 9:00 AM.
16. Motion by Buttke/LaFontaine to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously at 10:35 AM.

Minutes taken by Trent Miner, County Clerk, and are in draft form until approved at the next meeting.

Conservation, Education, & Economic Development Committee

February 7, 2024

[illegible]

Committee Report

County of Wood

Report of claims for: Extension Wood County

For the period of: February 2024

For the range of vouchers: 30240015 - 30240033

Voucher	Vendor Name	Nature of Claim	Doc Date	Amount	Paid
30240015	GREAT EXPECTATIONS	NR Presentation Meal	02/06/2024	\$223.39	P
30240016	MID-STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE	Housing Summit Registration	02/13/2024	\$20.00	P
30240017	WAE4-HYDP	2024 Professional Dues - 4H	02/13/2024	\$115.00	P
30240018	US BANK	February Credit Card Bill	02/20/2024	\$474.81	
30240019	AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES	Office Supplies	02/20/2024	\$81.98	P
30240020	AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES	Office Supplies	02/20/2024	\$47.95	P
30240021	STAPLES ADVANTAGE	Office & Mailing Supplies	02/20/2024	\$119.70	P
30240022	GRAZE	Agriculture Subscription	02/27/2024	\$30.00	
30240023	NATIONAL 4-H COUNCIL / SHOP 4-H	4H Curriculum	02/27/2024	\$113.40	
30240024	UW MADISON EXTENSION	4H Teen Leadership Camp	02/27/2024	\$3,669.00	
30240025	UW MADISON EXTENSION	StrongBodies Training	02/27/2024	\$350.00	
30240026	VALDERS JOURNAL THE	Farm Record Books	02/27/2024	\$29.63	
30240027	CARATTINI JACKIE	Jan-Feb Expenses	02/27/2024	\$166.16	
30240028	CARBAJAL JASMINE	February Expenses	02/27/2024	\$153.43	
30240029	CARBAJAL JASMINE	February Expenses - Juntos	02/27/2024	\$212.33	
30240030	HUBER LAURA	February Expenses	02/27/2024	\$460.60	
30240031	JAMES ANNA M	February Expenses	02/27/2024	\$22.11	
30240032	JONJAK ALLISON	February Expenses	02/27/2024	\$99.46	
30240033	TOMSYCK KARLI	February Expenses	02/27/2024	\$22.11	
Grand Total:				\$6,411.06	

Signatures

Committee Chair:

Committee Member:

Committee Member:

Committee Member:

Committee Member:

Committee Member:

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Committee Member:

Committee Report

County of Wood

Report of claims for: Land & Water Conservation

For the period of: December 2023

For the range of vouchers: 18230211 - 18230213

Voucher	Vendor Name	Nature of Claim	Doc Date	Amount	Paid
18230211	LINDSEY LOCKER PROCESSING INC	Venison Processing Reimburs	12/31/2023	\$440.00	P
18230212	PITTSVILLE MEATS	Venison Processing Reimbur	12/30/2023	\$110.00	P
18230213	GILBERTSON LARRY A	NMFE Reimbursement	12/31/2023	\$544.00	P
Grand Total:				\$1,094.00	

Signatures

Committee Chair: _____

Committee Member: _____

Committee Member: _____

Committee Member: _____

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Committee Member: _____

Committee Report

County of Wood

Report of claims for: Land & Water Conservation

For the period of: February 2024

For the range of vouchers: 18240004 - 18240011

Voucher	Vendor Name	Nature of Claim	Doc Date	Amount	Paid
18240004	US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE	Bear Abatement Annual Fee	01/30/2024	\$800.00	P
18240005	AWARDS 'N MORE	Conservation Poster Trophy	01/18/2024	\$25.00	P
18240006	GOLDEN SANDS RC D	RC&D Dues-75% per CEED	01/01/2024	\$1,425.00	P
18240007	WI LAND + WATER CONSERVATION	WI Land/Water Conference Fee	02/20/2024	\$325.00	P
18240008	US BANK	Conf Reg, PostePrizes, ESRI	02/19/2024	\$3,558.00	
18240009	NORTH CENTRAL LAND & WATER CONSERVATION	NCLWCA Mtg Registration Fee	02/19/2024	\$5.00	P
18240010	AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES	Truck Supplies	02/15/2024	\$57.08	P
18240011	WI DEPT OF NATURAL RESOURCES	DNR portion NMM permit fees	02/23/2024	\$3,875.00	
Grand Total:				\$10,070.08	

Signatures

Committee Chair:

Committee Member:

Committee Member:

Committee Member:

Committee Member:

Committee Member:

Committee Member:

Committee Member:

Committee Member:

Committee Report
County of Wood

Report of claims for: Planning and Zoning

For the period of: February 2024

For the range of vouchers: 22240007 - 22240018 38240002 - 38240004

Voucher	Vendor Name	Nature of Claim	Doc Date	Amount	Paid
22240007	AMAZON CAPITAL SERVICES	PL-Office Supplies	01/16/2024	\$34.30	P
22240008	SEPTIC GAL THE	PL-Prof Services Other	01/31/2024	\$800.00	P
22240009	BOYER KEVIN	SU-Prof Services	02/01/2024	\$833.00	P
22240010	WOOD COUNTY REGISTER OF DEEDS	SU-R/M Serv-Other	02/05/2024	\$200.00	P
22240011	INDUSTRY SERVICES DIVISION		02/05/2024	\$1,100.00	P
22240012	WCCA (COUNTY CODE ADMINISTRATORS)	PS-Training/Conferences CPE	02/05/2024	\$200.00	P
22240013	WI DEPT OF SAFETY & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	PS-Other Subs, Pubs, & Dues	02/14/2024	\$256.43	P
22240014	MICHAEL BAKER INTERNATIONAL	LR-Prof Serv-Other	01/18/2024	\$14,750.00	P
22240015	WCCA (COUNTY CODE ADMINISTRATORS)	PS-Training/Conference/CPE	02/14/2024	\$100.00	P
22240016	WOOD COUNTY REGISTER OF DEEDS	SU 239-R/M SERV-OTHER	02/21/2024	\$900.00	P
22240017	US BANK	LR/ED CREDIT CARD CHARGES	02/21/2024	\$192.70	
22240018	LANG JENNIFER OR TODD	PS-Private Sewage Fines	02/27/2024	\$224.50	
38240002	WI ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	ED-Dues	01/31/2024	\$350.00	P
38240003	GRUENEBERG JASON	ED-Mileage	02/02/2024	\$278.00	P
38240004	WI ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	ED-Milage	02/01/2024	\$499.00	
Grand Total:				\$20,717.93	

Signatures

Committee Chair: _____

Committee Member: _____

Committee Member: _____

Committee Member: _____

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Committee Member: _____

Extension Wood County staff led, delivered, planned or collaborated on all of the following activities:

4-H POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Laura Huber, 4-H Program Educator

Jasmine Carbajal, Bilingual 4-H Associate Educator (Marathon & Wood Counties)

Malina Carattini, 4-H Americorps member

- Extension Staff coordinated the Teen Winter Leadership Camp on February 16-18, 2024 providing meaningful experiences by hosting a three day, two night engagement focused on perseverance for 6th - 13th grade 4-H youth attending.
 - The 2024 Teen Leadership Winter Camp was a collaboration between Lincoln, Langlade, Marathon, Wood, and Shawano Counties 4-H Programs and staff members to provide a meaningful experience for older youth to connect with relationships, new skills and sparks, and dive into information around values and multiple intelligences and how they guide our thinking. An overall theme of perseverance, grit, and safely failing were emphasized during the 3 day, 2 night experience. Youth experienced interactive learning individually, in small groups, and in large-scale teams to try new skills such as building a marble run, tie dying, tying lanyards, cooking and trying new foods (plantains), glass etching, engineering electrical circuits, team building, creating skits, completing a team scavenger hunt and more. Despite the lack of snow, youth reported an enjoyable experience where they learned about themselves, each other, and how they can use their natural gifts to serve their 4-H Clubs and Communities.
- A hands-on, educational, and fun activity where Wood County 4-H youth learned what a molcajete is and how it is used. Participants made guacamole and mango salsa.
 - The Wood County 4-H Club, Badger 4-H, invited Bilingual 4-H Associate Educator, Jasmine Carbajal, to lead a 4-H Foodie presentation. The educator was able to teach sixteen youth about the Mexican culture and what a molcajete is. Youth also learned how to make guacamole and mango salsa. Fourteen of the sixteen participants filled out an evaluation on the program. 86% of participants learned what a molcajete is. 100% of youth participants tried something new and had fun. Some of the youth stated that their favorite part of the activity was that it was hands-on and that they actually got to make the food instead of just eating it.
- A 4-week ChickQuest program for high school students at River Cities High School, where youth learned about the life cycle of a chicken, agriculture, and STEM to supplement their project-based alternative learning program while introducing youth to 4-H.



An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act requirements.

AGRICULTURE

Matt Lippert, Agriculture Educator

- A live, on-line meeting series, for farmers and dairy industry professionals, where participants learned the latest research on balancing diets for energy and amino acids to maximize milk components. The goal of this effort was to increase knowledge of the latest UW-Madison research on impacts of feeding fat sources and amino acids to maximize milk protein and fat.
- Fermented forage samples were collected to complete the SARE grant on the suitability of using cover crops for lactating dairy cows. This is the last year of a multi-year study and demonstration of the variability and suitability of cover crops to feed to milking cows. As cover crops become more popular dairy producers are interested in learning how to successfully utilize them as livestock feed.
- A nutrition survey for dairy farmers with automated milking systems (AMS - robotic) herds to share results with dairy farmers interested in increasing productivity and efficiency in order to achieve / maintain economic viability.
- A nutrition survey for dairy farmers with high producing herds to share results with dairy farmers interested in increasing productivity and efficiency in order to achieve/maintain economic viability.
- A research-based educational article for dairy producers and agri-business professionals, where participants will learn about dairy genetic terminology and selection strategies. The goal of this effort was to present a research based methodology for decision makers to analyze genetic proofs, and empower dairy herd managers to make selection decisions for their herds.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Kayla Rombalski, Community Development Educator

- Continued facilitation of Wood County's Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Steering Committee meetings and planning for the Homegrown program. The group's current activities center on continuing the analysis of the objectives outlined in the Wood County REDI plan. The goal of this work is to make significant strides in benefitting the entrepreneurial ecosystem, while collaborating with partners and building upon work that is already being done.
- A funding proposal presentation to the Wood County ARPA ad-hoc committee on behalf of the Child Care Task Force. The proposal requests a \$2.8 million investment for three child care strategies to be implemented over three years. If funded, these strategies will create up to 540 new child care slots for Wood County children, while also sustaining the 2,262 slots currently being used, affecting child care availability and affordability in a positive way for Wood County families and contributing to the overall economy of our area.
- Development of multiple survey sets to gather community data on housing in Wood County. The surveys/interview questions, targeted for general public/housing users, businesses/employers, landlords/developers, and municipalities will provide valuable qualitative data for the Wood County Housing Study which will be completed this year. A group met at length to review survey questions, and I



will compile the feedback into the final survey products to be distributed by North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

- In collaboration with team members from Wood County Health Department and Planning and Zoning, continued planning for the Wood County Housing Summit including finalizing the agenda and speakers. This activity is important to the success of the event, and ultimately, to identifying community-based solutions for affordable and accessible housing in Wood County and Central Wisconsin.
- Planning for a basic grant proposal workshop for local government, businesses, and organization members and staff. The goal of this effort is for people to learn how to find, write and apply for grants so that they can carry out the activities of their organization, business, or government unit.

CRANBERRIES

Allison Jonjak, Cranberry Outreach Specialist

- A Nutrient Management Plan training session was organized and hosted at the Wisconsin Cranberry Research Station. This training ensures that cranberry growers have the most up-to-date information on nutrient management when establishing their annual Nutrient Management Plans.

FOODWISE

Hannah Wendels, FoodWise Nutrition Educator

Mallory McGivern, FoodWise Administrator

Michelle Van Krey, Healthy Communities Coordinator

- A 5-week nutrition education series for third grade classrooms at Mead Elementary School, where they learn about the importance of eating five food groups, introduce label reading, and the importance of food and physical activity. This effort was designed to make healthy eating a positive experience which will help with making healthier food choices in the future.
- A 5-week nutrition education series for third grade classrooms at Howe Elementary School, where they learn about the importance of eating five food groups, introduce label reading, and the importance of food and physical activity. This effort was designed to make healthy eating a positive experience which will help with making healthier food choices in the future.
- A partnership with United Way/Hunger Coalition, FOCUS Food Pantry, and the Housing Authority of Wisconsin Rapids that provides "Stockboxes for Seniors", a monthly food box service where low-income seniors can receive around 25-30 pounds of nutritious foods to stock their pantry with. The goal of this partnership is to promote the boxes with community partners with the overall goal to improve food security.
 - *Each month, FoodWise partners with United Way of South Wood/Adams County and the Hunger Coalition at FOCUS Food Pantry to provide a free "Stockbox" pickup of commodity food from the Hunger Relief Federation. The Housing Authority of Wisconsin Rapids delivers the boxes to home-bound individuals. The program happens once per month and provides a free box of food to 60+ seniors and continues to grow each month.*



- A Healthy Living series for teens (grades 9-12) at the alternative high school (River Cities), where students learn basic life skills such as food preparation and cooking skills, budgeting and finance skills, and mindfulness activities to better prepare them for their future and living on their own.
- Working with partners in Clark, Marathon, Portage and Wood Counties to build a new platform that directly focuses on food access mapping for those with limited incomes. The goal of this effort is to provide current, reliable food access information for all community stakeholders in Central Wisconsin and the state.

HORTICULTURE

Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator

- Developing informal learning communities utilizing the Horticulture Program's social media for all Wisconsin gardeners, including underserved populations. The goal of this effort is to provide accurate, practical and up-to-date information to the public primarily through the topic hub in order to foster engagement and bolster educational outreach efforts in support of addressing the Horticulture Program objectives.
- A diagnostic service for the general public, where Marathon and Wood County residents' horticultural inquiries are answered through evidence-based resources. This effort is designed to reduce pollution through horticultural product (pesticides and fertilizers) misuse.

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND RELATIONSHIPS

Jackie Carattini, Human Development and Relationships Educator

- A 7-session course, Planning AHEAD that helps adults of all ages to make end-of-life financial, healthcare, and final wishes decisions in order to reduce the stress experienced by survivors and to ensure that their wishes are honored.
- Planning with the Central Wisconsin Partnership for Recovery Safe and Sober Housing initiative to determine which Extension curriculum to use to meet local housing needs and the pre-rental educational component for their program.
- Two online workshops ("Rent Smart" in the Wood County Jail) per month where participants learn how to find and apply for rental housing, understand their responsibilities as a renter, how to communicate effectively with their landlords, and manage housing expenses. This effort is designed to encourage safe and sober housing stability.
- A series of meetings with local financial coalition partners to learn about current community needs that will lead to the development of future financial programs in the Wisconsin Rapids area.
- A 6-session wellness series (WeCOPE) for child care providers where they learned different strategies that support awareness of mind-body connection. The goal of this effort is to offer skills to decrease stress and increase positive emotions of participants.



- A Healthy Living series for teens (grades 9-12) at the alternative high school (River Cities), where students learn basic life skills such as food preparation and cooking skills, budgeting and finance skills, and mindfulness activities to better prepare them for their future and living on their own.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Anna James, Natural Resources Educator

Jen McNelly, Natural Resources Educator

- Jen McNelly joined Extension on February 12th as a Groundwater Educator. Jen will be based out of Wood County and is hoping to work with Counties throughout Central Wisconsin to address groundwater issues or help with education and outreach related to groundwater.
- A facilitated discussion for producers and conservation professionals in the Springbrook and Upper Eau Claire River watersheds where participants will learn about the Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grant Program. The goal of this meeting is for producers to identify conservation related concerns, local stakeholders, and engagement/commitment in order to determine if forming a producer-led watershed protection group is in the best interest of the environment and community members.
- A collaborative planning effort between Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Petenwell and Castle Rock Stewards (PACRS) to gather all citizen led water protection and restoration groups in the greater Wisconsin River basin area. The goal of this effort is to increase collaboration amongst the groups, identify goals and initiatives for improving water quality, and assessing community needs.
- A social indicator survey to better understand agricultural producer's awareness, attitudes, constraints, capacity, and behavior towards water quality and conservation practices. Results from this survey will provide conservation practitioners and educators with important information for planning, implementing, and evaluating conservation practices based on the needs of agricultural producers.
- A survey of agencies and organizations that support farmer-led watershed groups in Wisconsin was conducted to better understand how these groups are functioning and the nature of support they receive from their partners. Results of the survey will be used to inform decisions about what types of support are most beneficial and most needed by the farmer-led groups.



Wood County, Wisconsin LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

Activities Report for Barb Peeters - February 2024

- Answered phones, replied to emails and processed incoming and outgoing LWCD mail.
- Completed LWCD payroll percentages and forwarded to Finance prior to Feb. 8 & 22 payrolls.
- Reviewed payroll reports and payroll registers.
- Processed department vouchers/check requests and submitted to Finance on a weekly basis.
- Processed nonmetallic mining annual permit fees as received.
- Responded to daily customer inquiries via phone & email regarding the tree/shrub/seed sale (sale ended mid-January 2024). Added callers to “request for extra trees” waiting list for April 2024 sale.
- Compiled data for county conservationist to determine 2024 summer intern wage.
- Scheduled, attended and typed minutes for February 2nd and 19th LWCD staff meetings.
- Reviewed information from past SWRM grant applications to determine process for completing the 2025 Joint DATCP/DNR Nonpoint Source Grant Application which is due April 15, 2024. Began compiling data for the 2025 grant application.
- Verified wildlife damage general ledger and assembled all invoices and attachments for 4th quarter reimbursement request to DNR.
- Verified nonmetallic mining permit fees spreadsheet for total 2023 permit fees received. Tallied number of mines by size (acreage) and WI-DNR portion of permit fees for submission of Nonmetallic Mining Annual Report.
- Processed Mill Creek final reimbursement payment (2023 revenue).
- Attended February 7th CEED meeting via WebEx.
- Completed January sales tax report and forwarded to Finance.
- Processed ESRI invoices for 2024 license renewals and one new perpetual license.
- Attended Wellness Committee meeting and shared updates with LWCD staff.
- Attended webinar “Get More Done in Microsoft with Adobe Acrobat”.
- Reviewed DATCP’s monthly report for February 2024 and brought pertinent items to attention of County Conservationist/LWCD staff.
- Started compiling information requested by Finance for upcoming 2023 Audit (DATCP grant/cost sharing, MDV revenue/cost sharing, Mill Creek Grant/cost sharing, DATCP staff & support grant, etc.)
- Viewed webinar “Discover 6 Essential Adobe Acrobat Tools”.
- Sent request for LWCD 2023 Annual Report information to NRCS, Extension and LWCD employees. Sent reminders to NRCS and Extension for submission of reports by deadline. Began compiling report.
- Trained on process for completion of 2025 Joint DATCP/DNR Grant Application and 2023 Audit.
- Processed Multi-Discharge Variance (MDV) payments (as received). Requested the list of 2024 MDV County Payment Disbursements from the DNR-MDV Point Source Coordinator and entered in tracking spreadsheet. Wood County’s share of MDV payments increased from estimated \$13,944.25 to actual 2024 payments totaling \$38,640.30.
- Processed cost-share contracts for two well abandonments.
- Completed 2025 Joint DATCP/DNR Nonpoint Source Grant Application. Submitted to County Conservationist for review. Typed instructions for completing grant application for future reference.
- Worked with Human Services (HS) for check sent in error to LWCD by the State for HS records request.
- Electronically submitted staff reports/packet materials to the County Clerk’s office for CEED packet.
- Organized County Board packet and electronically submitted to the County Clerk’s office.

Activities Report for Emily Salvinski

-February 2024-

- **Friday, February 2.** Attended staff meeting. Helped farmer update his nutrient management plan on snap plus. Worked some in BITS.
- **Tuesday, February 6.** Processed multiple NMPs. Worked in BITS.
- **Wednesday, February 7.** Worked on combining all years and all funding source shapefile into one.
- **Thursday, February 8.** Started mapping nitrate results from Wood County lab. Processed a couple of submitted NMPs (filed away, added info to spreadsheets, added and updated maps in gis).
- **Wednesday, February 14.** Adjusted final NMFE grant report and reimbursement request for submission. Gathered checklists for report and converted to pdfs, combined pdfs, resized pdf to email size. Looked over old vs new soil testing presentation for next day.
- **Thursday, February 15.** Helped with NMFE class in Spencer.
- **Monday, February 19.** Attended staff meeting. Edited wording in mailing for checklists for 2024.
- **Tuesday, February 20.** Gathered 2024 grant numbers from available sources and put in one spot. Continued working on mapping 2023 nitrate results from Wood Co lab.
- **Wednesday, February 21.** Printed, folded mailing for reminder to turn in nutrient management plan checklists.

Activities Report for Kyle Andreae – February, 2024

- February 1 – Bauer design
- February 2 – Staff meeting, Bauer design, Behlen site visit, Lewis site investigation
- February 5 – Sick
- February 6 – Sick
- February 7 – Lewis site investigation, visit, and rough cost estimate
- February 8 – Behlen design, annual report
- February 9 – Annual report, Behlen design
- February 12 – Bauer design
- February 13 – Bauer design
- February 14 – Gorst construction inspections
- February 15 – Bauer design
- February 16 – Bauer design
- February 19 – Bauer design, contract drafting
- February 20 – Klevene site visit and design, Graf site visit and design
- February 21 – Graf site visit and design, GPS trouble shooting
- February 22 – GPS trouble shooting, Bauer design, Lewis site visit
- February 23 – Bauer design
- February 26 – Bauer design
- February 27 – Lewis site visit
- February 28 – Bauer design
- February 29 – Lewis design



Activities Report for Kendra Kunderling – February 2024

- Participated in the February 2nd staff meeting.
- Assisted Weiler Farms with updating their 2024 nutrient management plan.
- Read “The Financial Implications of Conservation Agriculture: Insights from Analyses of Farms in the Upper Midwest.”
- Attended the North Central Area Association Winter Meeting held in Rhinelander.
- Made the final updates on the invasive species fact sheets and invasive species web page layout.
- Attended the “Is Soil Compaction Squeezing Your Yields” webinar hosted by the American Society of Agronomy and the Soil Science Society of America.
- Read the “Soil Organic Matter Does Matter” technical guide by NDSU Extension and University of Minnesota Extension.
- Attended the February Lakes and Rivers Partnership Meeting.
 - Topic was lake, river, and watershed integration.
- Read the “Upper Midwest Soil Compaction Guide” by University of Minnesota Extension.
- Attended the AIS Detector – Mussels webinar hosted by the University of Minnesota.
- Read the “Upper Midwest Tillage Guide” by University of Minnesota Extension.
- Completed the updates to the new invasive species web page on the Land & Water Conservation Department website.
 - The new web page is now up and running.
- Attended various presentations during the Invasive Species Forum hosted by the Invasive Species Center.
 - Topics included education, outreach and community science, aquatic invasives, eDNA, oak wilt, invasive terrestrial plants, and forest invasives.
- Assisted with the Nutrient Management Farmer Education course in Spencer on February 15th and 22nd.
- Participated in the February 19th staff meeting.
- Attended and presented at the Nepco Lake District board meeting.
 - Discussed objectives and goals of the Lake District and ways the Wood County Land & Water Conservation Department can be of assistance.
 - Mainly discussed opportunities available to the Lake District under the Lake Monitoring and Protection Network (LMPN) funding.
- Completed ArcGIS Pro trainings through ESRI.
- Attended the Wisconsin DNR Invasive Species Council meeting on February 21st and 28th.
 - Discussed proposed revisions to the NR40 Invasive Species Rule.
- Attended various invasive species webinars during the National Invasive Species Awareness Week (February 26th through March 1st).
 - Topics included up and coming invasive species research, AIS language, the next potential plant invasions, quagga mussels and protection from invasive species.

Activities Report for Rod Mayer – FEBRUARY 2024

- Reviewed Kolo financial assurance - created software entry to cover 5 CDs for software tracking, update spreadsheet, bank contact, file updates.
- Picked up and reviewed Pittsville Meat deer donation paperwork.
- Reviewed Hass financial assurance rider – updated spreadsheet, software, and files.
- Reminder calls to 3 fee holders and 1 FA holder for mine sites.
- Completed 4th quarter Wildlife Damage and Abatement program reimbursement report – scanned packet, updated file, sent to DNR. (42 pages)
- Reviewed Lindsey Locker deer donation paperwork – edits to paperwork, receive W-9 form, DNR contact for testing results for Sandhill Reserve deer donated, pantry contact to distribute, etc.
- Processed deer donation paperwork – submitted for payment, scanned, updated file, sent final deer donation report to DNR.
- Edited Marti WM-40 enrollment (claims greater than \$1,000 in prev. year). Remapped public hunting acres attached to fields – multiple rental landowners backed out – remapped to show new acre calcs (gross, huntable & crops), new enrollment forms and shooting authority Form, etc. all sent to Marti for signatures.
- Put annual report info for my programs together and submitted to Barb.
- Prepared poster contest prizes and sent to school.
- Created CIM-Weiler mine site map for field visit – site visit to discuss reclamation, etc.
- Reviewed Kolo financial assurance CD extension issued.
- Reviewed Marti WM-40 paperwork with signatures – scanned, attached to DNR database, DNR contact for enrollment and permits.
- DNR storm water meeting held at River Block office - prepared copies of mine sites with issues, discussed compliance issues on 7 mine sites, created summary notes from meeting, updated files. After meeting with DNR storm water specialist – Earth Inc. representative came in – discussed needs to bring sites into compliance.
- Email reminder listing financial assurance need to Wolosek Landscaping for mine site.
- Met with Brad Brehm in office – discussed needs to bring site into compliance with the stop work order issued.
- Correspondence with Billerud Mill representative – discussed policy for permit transfer and what is currently in place - Billerud responsibility for mine site.
- Staff meeting on 2/19/2024
- Reviewed storm water email summary from DNR storm water to Earth Inc. – updated files.
- Completed 2023 NMM report to DNR – sent to DNR for review, submitted DNR fee portion to Barb for payment.
- Apiary assistance for Moonlight Apiary. Replaced 5 non-working energizers with 5 new 5-mile solar energizers. Completed enrollment forms and equipment received forms, picked up equipment, met with owner, updated DNR database.
- Pond info discussions and info sent to Hints.
- Began preliminary review of info from Vreeland Associates for Nikolai Day Rd mine site.



LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION
DEPARTMENT

Activities Report for Shane Wucherpennig – February 2024

- February 1 – Summer Intern Interviews
- February 2 – Staff Meeting, Virtual meeting, Roger Lewis meeting
- February 5 – Field visits, Landowner contacts
- February 6 – NCLWCA Meeting - Onieda County
- February 7 – CEED meeting, BITS MDV Plans
- February 8 – Database management, Field visits, Operations Committee Meeting
- February 9 – CSP meeting with NRCS, Grant Writing
- February 12 – DNR Stormwater/NMM reclamation meeting at LWCD office, Meeting with Earth Inc on four Wood County Mine sites
- February 13 – Rick Weiler NMM site inspection/discussion with landowner & contractor
- February 14 – Lewis TRM Grant for Streambank Erosion site
- February 15 – Virtual meetings, FPP Planning Grant
- February 16 – Grant applications, Virtual meeting
- February 19 – Staff meeting, CWG meeting, Virtual meetings
- February 20 – County Board, Producer Led Annual Workshop, Wausau
- February 21 – Central Sands Base flow Monitoring meeting in Hancock, Doodle poll for CWFPE mgt.
- February 22 – Drone footage of Roger Lewis SB Erosion Site, Grant applications
- February 23 – Virtual meetings, Grant applications
- February 26 – CWFPE Planning meeting kickoff, Minutes, summary and follow up correspondence for meeting
- February 27 – Field visits, Surveying Roger Lewis SB site and met with Don Kolo
- February 28 – Department Head mgt., Grant applications
- February 29 – Farmland Preservation Planning Grant, CWFPE planning documents, Summer Intern Interviews



Wood County WISCONSIN

OFFICE OF PLANNING AND ZONING

TO: Conservation, Education & Economic Development Committee

FR: Jason Grueneberg, Planning & Zoning Director
Emily Arndt, County Planner
Paul Bernard, Land Records Coordinator
Vacant, Code Administrator
Brad Cook, Code Technician
Victoria Wilson, Program Assistant
Kayla Rautio, Program Assistant

RE: Staff Report for March 6, 2023

1. Economic Development (Jason Grueneberg)

- **Heart of Wisconsin Leadership Class** – On February 8th Wood County hosted the Heart of Wisconsin Leadership Class to learn about government services. The day included a tour of the existing and new jails, learning about the courts, a legislative panel discussion, learning what functions county government is responsible for, and a wrap-up session with Chair Pliml. The session was a success that received very good feedback from the class. I want to thank all of the elected officials and staff that that made time in their busy schedules to help facilitate this session for future leaders of the area.
- **Central Wisconsin Days** – On February 12th and 13th I participated in Central Wisconsin Days at the Capital. The issues that we talked with legislators about included childcare, rural bridge legislation, and business tax credits for workforce housing and childcare.
- **Department Staffing** – I am currently addressing filling the Code Administrator position that has been vacant since October 30th, 2023. I will have more information on the status of the position by the April CEED Committee meeting.
- **Vesper Housing Grant** – I have been working with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and the owner of the closed Vesper Elementary School to apply for an Idle Sites Grant. The grant would provide \$250,000 in grant funding for conversion of the building to 11 senior housing units. The CEED Committee will be reviewing a developers agreement and consider a resolution that would allow staff to proceed with an application by the end of March.
- **REDI Implementation/Task Force Meeting** – In the past month I participated in a variety of REDI implementation and task force meetings. Agendas and links for those meetings can be found on the REDI Dashboard.

2. Planning & Zoning (Emily Arndt)

County Planner Highlights – February

1. Attended the Government Services Day for the Heart of Wisconsin Community Leadership Program
2. Assisted with the organization of the Housing Summit
3. Continued correspondence with Town of Cameron and Town of Rock
4. Continued planning the organization of future Comprehensive Plans
5. Working through review and approval of CSMs and Condo Plats
6. Continued working with staff to ensure that questions are answered in a proficient routine

3. Land Records (Paul Bernard)

- Next Generation 911 Preparation
- Emergency Service Atlas Data Preparation
- Custom Maps – property maps, new state assembly/senate districts
- Parcel Mapping
- Address Mapping

4. Code Administrator (Vacant)

5. Code Technician (Brad Cook)

1-31-2024- (5) inspection reports written and reviewed

2-1-2024- WOWRA Conference

2-2-2024- WOWRA Conference

2-5-2024- (2) well permits issued and reviewed, (16) inspection reports written and reviewed

2-6-2024- (4) well permits issued and reviewed, (12) inspection reports written and reviewed.

2-7-2024- (14) inspection reports written and reviewed.

2-8-2024- (10) inspection reports written and reviewed.

2-9-2024- Reviewed soils, hydrograph, plan review, issued permit for new conventional TN: 18, (1) conventional insp TN: 13, (1) conv. TN:19, (1) conv. TN:10

2-12-2024- (5) inspection reports written and reviewed.

2-13-2024- (1) rep conventional insp TN: 07, (1) soils onsite TN:13

2-14-2024- Well delegation studying

2-15-2024- Well delegation studying, DNR/FEMA floodplain meeting

2-16-2024- (5) Consult with shoreland development citizens

2-19-2024- Reviewed soils, hydrograph, plan review, issued permit for new conventional TN: 20, shoreland permit reviewed TN: 10

2-20-2024- (1) new conventional insp TN: 07,(1) holding tank insp TN: 15

2-21-2024- (1) new conventional insp TN: 07, Well delegation studying

2-22-2024- (1) shoreland permit reviewed and issued TN: 07, Well delegation studying

2-23-2024- (2) shoreland permits reviewed TN 10, 13

2-26-2024- (2) - Reviewed soils, hydrograph, plan review, issued permit for new conventional TN: 18, 13, (2) well permits reviewed and issued TN: 14,19, (1) shoreland permit reviewed and issued TN: 18, (1) shoreland onsite inspection TN: 10

2-27-2024- DSPS POWTS Inspector training.

2-28-2024- DSPS POWTS Inspector training.

6. Office Activity (Victoria Wilson & Kayla Rautio)

- a. Monthly Sanitary and Well Permit Activity – There were 10 sanitary permits and 9 well permits issued in February 2024.
- b. ArcGIS Pro Software Project – Victoria continues to assist Paul with Point of Interest projects. Kayla continues to assist Paul with various GIS mapping projects.
- c. Training – Kayla reviewed training videos and started studying for well delegation
- d. TRIP Receipts – Planning & Zoning received \$527 from the Tax Refund Interception Program on three outstanding cases in February.
- e. Attended the following meetings/trainings & activities:
 - i. February 7th CEED meeting (VW)
 - ii. February 8th Heart of Wisconsin Leadership Class (VW)
 - iii. February 19th Citizen's Water Group (KR & VW)



DATE: Monday February 19, 2024

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Teleconference via WebEx

Present (In person or via WebEx): Bill Leichtnam, Tamas Houlihan, Joe Ancel, John K Endrizzi, Gordy Gottbeheut, Rhonda Carrell, Bruce Dimick, Cecile Stelzer-Johnson, and Bill Clendenning

1. Chair Leichtnam called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.
2. There was no public comment.
3. Motion by Carrell/Dimick to approve the minutes from January 15th, 2024 meeting. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Correspondence/Updates/Handouts/Reports on Meetings Attended.
 - Chair Leichtnam shared information from an article he read: "Rural Wisconsinites greatly value their water but believe that farm pollution and other practices may threaten it, according to a new University of Wisconsin-Madison survey examining perceptions about water issues from residents of the state's less populated areas." (See attached article)
5. Report of CWG Subcommittee on preparations for March 18th event – Roundtable fashion. Address problems/needs/new ideas.
 - Details of the upcoming March presentation were discussed.
6. Continued planning for March 18th (Weekly Planning H/O), Moderator's Script.
 - Chair Leichtnam read a script that he has prepared for Lance, as moderator.
7. Upcoming local and regional events to be aware of. None
8. Agenda items for next meeting (next agenda comes out on week prior)- Look ahead to April 15th
 - Discussion took place on taking a month off after the panel discussion.
9. Next meeting – April 15th, 2024.
10. Adjourn – Meeting was adjourned at 4:13 p.m.

Notes by Victoria Wilson, Planning & Zoning Office



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
WOOD COUNTY



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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University of Wisconsin–Madison Extension Wood County

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Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

UW-Madison Extension's outreach creates key connection points for families, farms, communities, businesses, nonprofit organizations, government, and more. We support local volunteers and leaders to take action and serve as role models in their communities, and we make sure Wisconsinites have the latest research, best practices, and educational opportunities.



Learn more at
extension.wisc.edu





Agriculture

Matt Lippert, Agriculture Educator

PASTURE WALKS

Following two previous years of successful fall grazing pasture walks, local Extension Educators organized a pasture walk on the farm of a very successful organic dairy producer belonging to the plain faith community. Working with the local County Land and Water Conservation departments, an organic milk cooperative and a vendor and provider of organic farm supplies, and ultimately with the farmer host, topics of interest, addressing the current needs of organic dairy producers were identified. These topics included establishment of perennial pasture mixtures, maintaining high yield, crop rotation and high forage quality with maximum use of crop cover to minimize erosion and to maintain soil health; breeding and identifying the optimum type of dairy cow selecting for longevity, disease resistance, fertility and consistent yields of high component milk suitable for organic markets; raising of dairy replacements on pasture systems; and testing of soil and interpreting soil reports to economically improve pasture yield.



Hands on interactive discussion with other farmers with similar production practices is highly valued in this community.



Practices such as improved cattle lanes and efficient fencing systems were reviewed on the pasture walk.

Extension educators were identified to present on these topics and to lead group discussions with the participants and the host farm to learn how these goals were being addressed on this dairy farm.

Promotion of the event among the plain faith organic dairy farm community and with Land Conservation Departments and other groups resulting in a successful day with dynamic and interactive discussion.



Agriculture

FFA CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Students and instructors from nineteen school districts participated in the Career Development Event in the FFA program. Eighty-five people evaluated four classes of dairy cattle for their soundness as a productive animal in a dairy herd. They also took a quiz on general dairy knowledge and understanding of Dairy Herd Improvement records. Many students engage in preparation in advance of the event and increase their skill considerably through these efforts. Students also give a set of spoken reasons justifying their placings, thus having an opportunity to improve their speaking skills and problem solving.

The Marshfield Agriculture Research Station and another local dairy farmer provided their facilities to make the event possible along with collaboration with Mid-State Technical College.

VITAL

VITAL (Valuably Informed Thriving Agricultural Leaders) is an ongoing program for farm women. In February, 20 women interacted with their peers learning about trends in the dairy industry, farm business strategic analysis, successful entrepreneurial efforts of farm women diversifying their farm business by adding enterprises such as retail marketing of milk based lotions and cut flowers.

MEDIA OUTLETS

Media including the Wisconsin Agriculturist, Wisconsin State Farmer, Extension Agriculture SharePoint sites and Extension Badger Dairy Insight zoom programs, included much information on dairy cattle genetic evaluation, dairy transition cow management, feeding alternative forage and management of alfalfa and corn silage reached many audiences.

CENTRAL WISCONSIN FORAGE COUNCIL

Meeting with the Central Wisconsin Forage Council, Matt Lippert shared insights about forage based livestock production in Argentina, and genetic variation in corn silage adapted hybrids. The group included farmers and consultants managing many acres of forage crops.



Community Development

Kayla Rombalski, Community Development

REDI IMPLEMENTATION

2023 was a busy year for community economic development in Wood County. Jason Grueneberg, Wood County's Planning & Zoning Director, and I began forming implementation teams to bring Wood County's REDI Plan (Rural Economic Development Initiative) off the shelf and into practice.

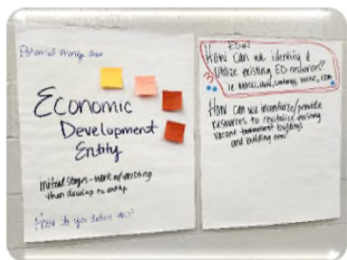
This effort began with a core group of stakeholders (many of whom were engaged in the original REDI process in 2019) forming the REDI Roundtable. This is a "collaborative economic development collaborative group" whose creation is outlined as the very first goal of the REDI plan. Goal accomplished! ✓



Makerspace Director Mark Bowie provides a tour of the C2 Makerspace in Marshfield.

Following REDI formation, an additional four implementation teams were launched to tackle the plan's priority areas.

1. Broadband / Digital Equity Solutions Team (DEST)
2. Child Care Task Force
3. Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Steering Committee (EESC)
4. Housing Task Force
5. (Launching in 2024) Marketing & Outdoor Recreational Infrastructure Team



Brainstorming ideas captured during a Community Economic Analysis strategic planning session in Pittsville.

These teams are comprised of more than 100 individuals across Wood County. Team members provide subject matter expertise, passion, and drive to help us achieve our goals. More than 30 team meetings were held in 2023 with members providing a combined 300+ hours of their time to REDI implementation.

29

REDI BY THE NUMBERS

30

meetings of the REDI Roundtable & Implementation Teams (Broadband, Child Care, Entrepreneurship, Housing) were held

96

individuals were engaged in REDI activities

81%

(78 of 96 people) regularly attended more than one REDI meeting. There are nearly 150 people on the five team email lists

14

Participants (on average) attended each meeting. Total meeting attendance in 2023 topped 400! (416 total meeting attendance)

520+

hours of time given to REDI Implementation in Wood County



Community Development

CLEAN SWEEP

Clean Sweep 2023 was held on Saturday, September 9, at the Saratoga Town Hall in Wisconsin Rapids.

A total of 5,014 pounds of household hazardous waste and 324 pounds of agricultural waste were collected.

115 vehicles participated in the collection. Approximately 70% of the residents who attended live in zip code areas nearest to the Town of Saratoga. The remaining residents came from across Wood County with the second highest number coming from Marshfield.

The full report on the event, including materials collected, disposal costs and year over year comparison can be found at <https://bit.ly/CleanSweep2023>



Cars line up to dispose of hazardous materials at Clean Sweep.

CLEAN SWEEP BY THE NUMBERS

115 vehicles participated

5,014 pounds of household hazardous waste collected

324 pounds of agricultural waste collected



Pounds of hazardous wastes collected, by category, at Clean Sweep 2023.



Clean Sweep event at the Saratoga Town Hall.



Cranberries

Allison Jonjak, Cranberry Outreach Specialist

EDUCATION

The Cranberry Summer Field Day in August attracted 450+ attendees. Extension led the "Mini-Clinics on the Marsh"- a series of bus tours where cranberry growers, employees, and allied industries spent an hour traveling from researcher to researcher. Eight researchers were stationed next to their research projects and were able to show-and-tell growers about the work that is underway.



Allison Jonjak (l), with Dharani Suresh Babu, a PhD student in the Mura Lab at UW-Madison, and a presenter at Cranberry School.



A packed session at Cranberry School.

January's Cranberry School hosted 330 guests at a 2-day event focusing on industry updates and research conclusion presentations from research that is ready for grower adoption.

Seven Cranberry Virtual Brown Bag Lunches were held throughout the year. Attendance ranged from 21-46 per session. Topics focused on issues and practices growers could implement. Some of the topics presented:

- Cold-hardiness research
- Agriculture input supply chain issues
- Worker Protection & Safety education, employee retention
- Extension Farm Management offerings
- Fuel sources and storage

A Spring Cranberry Mini-Clinic was held in a regional format: one live location and 3 livestreamed locations, encouraging growers to meet with their local communities while limiting drive times, for sessions focusing on early season herbicides, live bud dissections, and more. There were 122 attendees across the 4 locations.

CRANBERRY RESEARCH BY THE NUMBERS

Research

- 5** herbicide screening trials
- 3** fungicide screening trials
- 3** insecticide screening trials

Education

- 7** virtual brown bag lunches
- 330** attendees at Cranberry School
- 450** attendees at the Summer Field Day



Cranberries

A Nutrient Management Planning training was held educating 21 cranberry growers about macro and micro nutrient needs of cranberries, and nutrient absorption in cranberry growing conditions. This training also reviewed how growers can create and maintain Nutrient Management Plans to ensure efficient and sustainable use of nutrients on their farms.

RESEARCH

Eight issues of the Cranberry Crop Management Journal were published. The archives are available here: <https://fruit.wisc.edu/cranberries/cranberry-crop-management-newsletters/>

On the research side, 5 herbicide screening trials, 3 fungicide screening trials, and 3 insecticide screening trials were conducted. Most exciting for growers are potential herbicides that show action against the Bristly Dewberry, and a potential insecticide that showed good lasting power against the red-headed flea beetle. A Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Project (funded by DATCP) was undertaken in 2023 at a Necedah cranberry marsh, and nitrogen applications were made according to 4 test timings to see which cranberry growth stage is the most advantageous time for nitrogen uptake. For 2024, three additional marshes (in Plainfield, Manitowish Waters, and Tomah) have applied for NOPP project funding to explore nitrogen optimization in cranberries.

Presentations to other groups included:

- A presentation on water quality was delivered to students in a pre-college program at UW-LaCrosse to encourage understanding of the interactions between wetlands and water purification.
- A presentation was delivered to the statewide Shriner's (a charitable organization) Fall Ceremonial educating them about the ecology of the cranberry, and the cranberry industry's economic importance to Wisconsin.
- A presentation was given to worker protection & safety auditors with the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection to help them understand cranberry production and cranberry chemistry trial applications, to develop rapport and understanding with a lesser-known production crop to help cranberry growers and auditors complete audits successfully.
- A Wisconsin Cranberry Research Station tour was provided to Department of Natural Resources staff, increasing their understanding of cranberry cultivation and the importance of water access for cranberry growing, as well as cranberry soils' capability of water filtration.
- Several media interviews (WFHR, Midwest Farm Report, WSAW, and more) throughout the growing season and harvest season highlighting the importance of the cranberry industry and its positive impact on economics, environment, and society in Wisconsin.



Allison applying a screening trial.



Health & Well-Being



HEALTHY CHOICES HEALTHY LIVES

FoodWise is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). With local strengths, we support healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents experiencing limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels.

ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER

UW-Madison, Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin throughout urban and rural communities to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work. In Wood County, FoodWise partners with Wisconsin Rapids schools, Head Start, ADRC and food pantries to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.

COMMUNITY IMPACTS IN 2023

- Engaged with 603 learners around nutrition education topics in a variety of settings, including early care and education centers, K-12 school settings and food pantries.
- Partnered with 3 schools in the Wisconsin Rapids School District to expand the Harvest of the Month campaign, reaching students, partners and caregivers with messages in English and Spanish to promote eating Wisconsin-grown fruits and vegetables.
- Worked with FOCUS to build relationships with pantry guests. Offered relevant nutrition education classes and provided monthly Stockboxes to about 100 senior community members with limited income.

WOOD COUNTY LANDSCAPE

Whether people are healthy or not is affected by systems, policies and environmental factors.

7%

of county residents experience limited income and low access to a grocery store.[^]



14%

of county residents use SNAP benefits to purchase food for themselves and their families.*



[^]County Health Rankings

* WI Dept. of Administration and WI Dept. of Health Services



Health & Well-Being



INSPIRING COLLABORATIONS

The River Cities Alternative High School approached Wood County Extension about teaching a variety of life skills from the health and well-being perspective for all students in the school to prepare them for life on their own.

Education topics included budgeting, renting and mental health from the Health and Well Being Educator. Other topics included reading a recipe, measuring, safe knife skills, food safety and how to use basic kitchen appliances to make healthy meals at home. FoodWise topics also included stretching food dollars, how to plan meals as well as nutrition education throughout each life skills lesson.



Hannah demonstrating kitchen skills at River Cities High School.

The High School indicated that every student enrolled that year was truly in need of basic life skills because many lived on their own or are the main caretaker for their family or have families and children of their own. Teachers also shared that many students never learned to cook before or even spent time in the kitchen. All of the students reported improvement in their ability to read a recipe, measure and use a knife safely.

MULTI-LEVEL PROGRAM EFFORTS



Kelly Hammond (l) and Hannah helping with Stockboxes distribution.

Seniors with limited incomes in Wood County can receive Stockboxes through a partnership between FoodWise, Hunger Task Force, FOCUS, ADRC and United Way. These boxes of shelf-stable goods not only provide needed food, but they also bring valuable social connection during distribution days.

Stockboxes are important resources that support food access when budgets are stretched thin. The distribution itself – those moments when individuals pick up their boxes each month – can be significant social events when volunteers, staff and organizers bring compassion to each individual interaction.

Hannah has worked for years to build trust with recipients and understands the importance of this social outing for many seniors. The relationships Hannah has grown have allowed her to host other educational events for seniors like nutrition education based around Stockboxes as well as teaching the strength training program, StrongBodies.

CONNECT WITH US



Mallory McGivern

FoodWise Program Administrator



Michelle Van Krey

Healthy Communities Coordinator



Hannah Wendels

Nutrition Educator



Horticulture

Janell Wehr, Horticulture Educator

GARDENING TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Social isolation, the absence of social connections, is a key indicator of community strength, impacting individual and communal well-being. Strong social ties correlate with better mental and physical health. Socially isolated individuals face heightened risks like depression, anxiety, and poor physical health.

In an effort to combat social isolation and improve well-being, Extension partnered with local agencies, organizations, and universities to meet the needs of the Wood County residents.

Lifelong learning is beneficial for Wood County's aging population, because it supports overall cognitive function, sense of accomplishment, personal growth and positive social engagement that combats social isolation, which is common in older adults.

- Spring and fall programs serving adults over 55 through the UWSP Learning is Forever program (LIFE). During the spring program, participants learned about best practices in designing and maintaining container gardens. The fall program introduced participants to the biophilia hypothesis, and learned how incorporating elements of nature into their everyday lives supports mental health resilience.
- Four therapeutic horticulture programs at FOCUS (Feeding Our Communities with United Services), which were aimed to develop new skills while supporting positive mental wellbeing and positive socialization.

SOWING SUCCESS

Sowing Success is a 12 week introductory course in horticulture. The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) course teaches participants how to link gardening practices and biology to prevent plant problems. Students learn how to select, grow, and maintain the health of plants, including lawns, woody and herbaceous ornamentals, fruits and vegetables. Students learn how to apply the principles of IPM to pests, including insects, diseases, weeds, and wildlife. As they learn about how to grow plants in a way that helps them plan for gardening success, they will prevent plant problems before they start and manage issues when they happen.

'HORT' BY THE NUMBERS

89

horticulture inquiries answered

3

outreach events

13

outreach programs

5

radio interviews



Horticulture

They will leave the course with a combination of practical gardening skills to try plus the knowledge of why they work.

Six students completed Sowing Success in fall 2023. Students prepared for each session by reading assigned chapters and watching videos hosted on the web. During the sessions, students worked through hands-on activities designed to reinforce the concepts introduced in the readings and video lectures. Wood County Master Gardeners provide added support in mentoring students throughout the course.



Students in the Sowing Success class are familiarizing themselves with all the information available on a fertilizer label.

Sowing Success is an approved learning opportunity for the Wisconsin Extension Master Gardener Program in preparation to become a Wisconsin Extension Master Gardener. The Wood County Master Gardener Association looks forward to adding these students next year.

RESPONDING TO POLLINATOR DECLINE AND POLLUTION DUE TO PESTICIDE AND FERTILIZER MISUSE

Wood County is facing environmental challenges including pollinator decline and environmental contamination & pollution due to overuse of horticulture chemicals. Proper pest management techniques can lead to less fertilizer and pesticide use, leading to reduced likelihood for environmental contamination and pollution.

Wood County residents have come to rely on their local Extension office to answer horticulture related diagnostic questions with research-based answers in a timely manner. Questions come into the office either directly through phone calls to the office, direct emails to Janell Wehr, or the UW-Madison Horticulture Program website. Inquiries also are processed through the Wood County Master Gardeners, either directly via email or at one of the many events they attend. Support for the Master Gardeners includes identification and selection of volunteers, training and orientation to diagnostics, as well as providing continuous support to the volunteers.

By providing research based answers to gardening questions, residents see reduction in time and money spent on efforts that either have no impact, or worse, negative impacts in their lawns and gardens and the larger environment. In 2023, at least 89 diagnostic questions in Wood County were answered through the Extension office. Here are the trends from the inquiries:

- 30% centered on trees and shrubs; this isn't surprising, since trees significantly add to property values.
- 41% centered on insects, diseases and weeds; this is an area of opportunity to increase responsible use of pesticides and fertilizers.
- 9% centered on the drought in the early summer.



Human Development & Relationships

Jackie Carattini, Human Development & Relationships Educator

PLANNING AHEAD

Studies have shown that older adults are more likely to experience social isolation and loneliness, as they often experience losses of family, friends, or spouses; live alone; or have chronic health issues that isolate them in their homes. Immigrants, LGBTQ+ people, minorities, victims of elder abuse, and adults living with disabilities have an even greater risk of developing social isolation and loneliness.

Extension Wood County creates spaces for and facilitates connections between older adults through programs like: the Wise Wisconsin series, Aging Mastery Program, Planning AHEAD, and Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate?. Participation for all these programs increased due to offering them both in-person and virtually.

One topic covered, end of life planning, can be a intimidating process that is often confusing and stressful. The Planning AHEAD (Advance directives, Handling financial changes, Estate planning and Arriving at Decisions for the end of this life) curriculum is a seven-session program that helps participants create a comprehensive end-of-life plan for themselves and/or a loved one. The goals are to help participants create plans that reflect their wishes and to help those who lose loved ones to have the information they need to successfully transition after.

Wood County has also been a pilot location for creating a Hmong adaptation of the Planning AHEAD curriculum in 2023.

Quotes from program participants:

"Prior to this we didn't know where to start. During this series we were able to share the completed book and information with our 7 children. Thank you!"

"Every time I have started to work on end-of-life planning I get overwhelmed and stop. The check lists provided have been great and help me keep going."

HDR BY THE NUMBERS

77

Wood County residents attended Planning AHEAD

99%

of participants learned enough to move forward with planning

79%

of participants in a 4-month follow-up survey reported having gathered or written down important information

93%

of participants in a 4-month follow-up survey reported having completed or are actively working on their plans



Human Development & Relationships

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

Older adults are not the only population that are at risk due to social isolation. Carattini works with all populations to promote positive mental health by teaching skills to manage stress more effectively, practice self-care, increase positive emotions, reduce risky substance use and identify signs of mental health challenges.

Programs offered in Wood County in 2023 include: WeCOPE, Adult Mental Health First Aid, and QPR (**Q**uestion **P**ersuade **R**efer). WeCOPE, an evidence based program designed to help adults cope with life stress by providing tools to increase positive emotions, was offered for the general public as well as to specific groups such as healthcare providers and childcare providers - two groups identified as at risk for employee burn out. Participants reported that WeCOPE gave them the tools to cope with daily stress in a healthy way.

RENT SMART

Access to safe and affordable housing is a issue facing many central Wisconsin residents. It is often difficult for tenants with a positive rental history to find affordable and safe housing but if you have any negative experiences in your past it is extremely difficult.

Carattini works with local coalitions, partner agencies and county departments and programs (Wood County Jail and Probation and Parole) to offer the Rent Smart program on a monthly basis. Rent Smart is a six-session course that helps participants with negative or limited rental records gain the skills to find and keep safe and affordable housing. We also train service providers to use the Rent Smart program with their clients.

Carattini offered Rent Smart monthly in 2023 for 40 participants in the Wood County jail using a virtual format. Classes rotated with male and then female participants every other month.

- 100% of participants were able to request their credit reports
- 86% of participants state the course will help them obtain appropriate housing in the future
- 100% state the course will or might help them keep future housing
- 100% of participants reported that they now know how landlords screen applicants

Quotes from Rent Smart participants:

"I'm glad there was a class like this available to us in jail to help us better understand our rights as a tenant. I learned a lot that I never knew and I will now fully read my lease and determine what needs to be fixed prior to signing it."

"I now know the importance of reading your lease before just signing it and making sure I budget first to make sure I can afford a place and set myself up to succeed."



Natural Resources

Anna Mitchell, Regional Natural Resources Educator

CONNECTING YOUTH WITH NATURAL RESOURCES

There is currently a lack of opportunities for youth to engage in hands-on experiences in an agricultural and natural resources setting. To provide youth access to these kinds of experiences, Anna James partnered with AgriVenture Farm Camp and led a 6-session environmental science course.



Anna and a camper during the Symbiotic Scavenger Hunt.

Anna held the environmental science course in an outdoor classroom where youth learned about symbiotic relationships in local ecosystems. The outdoor classroom provided a space for youth to learn about these relationships through hands on activities and guided exploration. After participating in the environmental science station youth increased their knowledge of local ecosystems, confidently identified symbiotic relationships, and built courage to explore the natural environment.

SOCIAL INDICATOR SURVEY IN THE 10- AND 14-MILE WATERSHEDS

Anna James along with Extension colleague, Guolong Liang, created a survey after recognizing a need to better understand social indicators (awareness, attitudes, constraints, capacity, and behaviors) of producers around the topics of water quality and conservation practices to improve water quality. Anna and Guolong also wanted to gather this information in order to build relationships with producers and better understand producer needs in regards to water quality improvement and how they could utilize education and outreach programming to address those needs.

During the summer of 2023, Anna and Guolong traveled to 12 different farms in the Central Sands area and interviewed producers using the survey as a guide for conversation.

NRE BY THE NUMBERS

Outreach & Education

10

water quality
focused events

490

total participants

Partnerships with Water Quality Focused Groups

9

producer-led
watershed groups

4

lake protection groups

45

facilitated discussions
or capacity building
exercises

Research

2

social science
surveys

25

in-person
interviews



Natural Resources

As a result of this effort, Anna and Guolong have gained a better understanding of the farming systems in the Central Sands, specifically vegetable and potato production systems. They've also created relationships with producers who have not historically worked with UW-Madison Division of Extension. The following data points from the survey are a very small representative of the total data set.

When asked to indicate the level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements, participant responses showed:

- 100% of participants agree or strongly agree that "it is my personal responsibility to help protect water quality"
- 100% of participants agree or strongly agree that "my actions have an impact on surface water and groundwater quality"
- 92% of participants agree or strongly agree that "using conservation management practices on farms improves water quality."

Trusted sources of information about soil and water (ranked from most trusted to least trusted) – please note that some rankings have two responses due to the average sum equaling the same amount.

- #1) University Extension and NRCS, #2) County Land & Water Conservation, #3) Private agronomists & producer-led watershed groups, #4) Peers, #5) Trade and industry groups, #6) Resources Conservation & Development Council, #7) DNR & processors/buyers

Anna and Guolong plan to use the data from this survey to inform future education and outreach programming. That programming has yet to be determined but is being worked on.

THE VALUE OF REGIONAL CONNECTION

The efforts of producer-led watershed protection groups are generally focused on a local watershed ecosystem, but the importance of regional collaborations should not be overlooked. Producer members and conservation educators in the Wisconsin River basin recognized the importance for regional collaboration and decided to host a regional gathering for the 7 producer-led groups in the North Central area. During the gathering, 24 producers and collaborators participated in a guided question and answer session led by Anna James, to identify regional resources concerns, discuss successes and hardships, examine group needs, and talk about the statewide producer-led program. The regional gathering ultimately served as a space for groups to strengthen their relationships through candid conversations.



Guided Q&A session led by Anna.



Wisconsin 4-H

Laura Huber, 4-H Educator

Jasmine Carbajal, Bilingual Associate 4-H Educator

WOOD COUNTY 4-H IS GROWING!

In 2023, Wood County 4-H welcomed its first AmeriCorps member. AmeriCorps is a national service program and its members serve our local communities. Wood County 4-H's first AmeriCorps member, Malina Carattini, is focused on outreach. Her focus is on offering hands-on learning opportunities to youth who are not already members of 4-H. She has expanded 4-H's partnership with local libraries, especially McMillan, and the Boys and Girls Club of South Wood County.



AmeriCorps

SUMMER CAMP

Summer camp is more than just a few fun days away from home, it's an intense learning experience. Youth in grades 3-7 from Lincoln, Marathon, and Wood Counties ventured to Northern Lakes Impact Center in Rhinelander for 3-days and 2-nights of learning by doing. Camp is designed to help youth create positive relationships with their peers, empower youth to develop their independence, and to give them opportunities to try new activities. This year, those activities included rock climbing, paddling, archery, swimming, and more!



Youth show off their art projects at summer camp.

Youth love camp, and it's a good thing! When campers age out of summer camp, they have the opportunity to come back as counselors. Camp counselors have very important roles at camp. Not only do they help plan and lead activities at camp, they also serve as role models and youth leaders for campers.

4-H BY THE NUMBERS

564 youth members
(3.64% growth over last year)

14 community clubs

4 chartered 4-H groups

Most Popular Projects:

- Art
- Photography
- Foods & Nutrition
- Swine
- Cloverbuds



Wisconsin 4-H

Counselors voluntarily step into leadership, and 4-H staff are serious about helping them become the best leaders they can be. Counselors participate in 15-20 hours of training before camp. Counselors grow their leadership, confidence, communication skills, and a whole lot more.

In 2023, Wood County sent 24 campers and 3 counselors to summer camp. The Incourage Community Foundation helped make this possible with donations towards transportation costs and scholarships for youth who would otherwise be unable to afford camp.



A camper participating in rock climbing.

TEEN LEADERS: READY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

2023 was a year where Wood County 4-H offered various programs to help youth find their sparks. For some of those youth, it was leadership. After a few dormant years, the Wood County 4-H Teen Leaders has revived and the program has hit the ground running. The goal of the Teen Leaders county group is to develop and foster their leadership, teambuilding, and communication skills while they outreach and give back to their community. Youth enrolled in 4-H in grades 6th and up are eligible for Teen Leaders.

One of the first projects the group decided to work on was service. They partnered with The Ronald McDonald House in Marshfield to cook a meal for families being housed there. The Teens not only had to work together for the cooking portion of the session, they also had to practice basic cooking and communication skills while in the kitchen. The participants loved it so much that they chose to do a second visit to cook a different meal at a different season of the year.

The Wood County 4-H Teen Leaders also offer a space for adolescents to come together and do fun activities like pizza parties, escape rooms, bowling, cornhole tournaments, and running concessions at local 4-H events. Youth that participate in the Teen Leaders county group are exploring sparks, have a sense of belonging, are building adult-youth partnerships, and are active in their community. The goal of having the Wood County 4-H Teen Leaders is to keep teens engaged in 4-H, but greater than that, is to support our local youth in making a difference in their community.



Winners of the Teen Leaders' Cornhole Tournament.



HELPING LATINX YOUTH AND FAMILIES CONNECT

The LatinX population is growing in Wood County. For many of these families, language is a serious barrier. Language barriers often cause parents to feel disconnected from their children's school life and cause youth to feel isolated from their peers.

In 2023, Wood County 4-H partnered with Marshfield Public Schools to help build connections between schools and families and among students in school. The partnership has taken a multi-pronged approach.

Part 1 - Family Nights at School: These interactive outreach nights brought families, students, school staff and community assets together in one space. The goal was to inform families about what resources are available and how to access them (like health care, for instance), as well as help them feel connected to the school community.

Part 2 - Tools to Thrive: These 8-week educational series were held in both Marshfield Middle School and Marshfield High School. The focus in both schools was mental health. Students learned strategies for dealing with stress and discussed navigating two different cultures in their family setting and their school setting. The goal of this series was to create a safe space for LatinX English Language Learners (ELLs) to learn and talk about topics in their native language (Spanish) to help with long-term positive outcomes like more engagement in school, more positive relationships and better grades.

Part 3 - Juntos: This program's intent is to help families understand how Wisconsin schools work, why graduation matters, and how families can make education (including higher education) an attainable goal. As part of the program, parents learn about how to support their students in school - including how to communicate with school staff, check on grades and what the requirements for graduation are. All participants learn about higher education options like college and technical school, what funding options are available and how to set and achieve goals.



Jasmine presenting at a Family Night.



Laura and Jasmine with Juntos participants.

Quote from Juntos participant:

"I moved to this area 10 years ago. All my children went through this school district and it was difficult because we didn't have any resources or help. This is the first time that this district has done a family night for LatinX families that I know of at least since I have been here."

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in
employment and programming, including Title VI, Title IX, the
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the
Rehabilitation Act requirements.



Extension

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In October 2023 a runway patching project was started on the airport with the assistance of Federal and State funds. Our expansion joints and cracks had become like reverse speed bumps. A previous patching job from two years earlier had failed in Spring of 2023. The main patching of the project has been completed on both runways and taxiways. The Bureau of Aeronautics is coming back this Spring to complete the project with crack sealing and airfield asphalt painting.

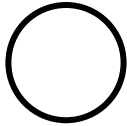


The Marshfield Airport Committee and City of Marshfield are continuing to work with SEH Engineering, Becker-Hoppe Engineering, the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics and the Federal Aviation Administration to get the Master Plan completed. There has been many comments / changes between the FAA and SEH on the Master Plan. We are hopeful that this will be completed yet this year as it is holding up our future reconstruction of the main runway at the airport. Reconstruction of the main runway is now pushed back to construction in 2027. In addition to the reconstruction of the runway we are hoping we will have the justification for a runway extension by 500 feet. This will be an added safety factor as well as hopefully attracting more business jets to land at Marshfield. With just 5,000 feet some aircraft will not land at Marshfield if there is any form of water on the runway that would be contamination to the braking distance for landing.

Aircraft	Operations 2023
Jet	158
Turbo Prop	168
Twin	164
Single	2778
Helicopter	2038
Light Sport	304
Total	5610

In June Duffy's Aircraft began marketing one of the lowest fuel prices around for Air Venture. In July we had sold as much fuel in one month as we had from January to June in 2023. We are certainly going to see if we can market that again this year to attract more activity into the airport during AirVenture in July.





RESOLUTION#

Introduced by Conservation, Education and Economic Development Committee
Page 1 of 1

ITEM#
DATE March 19, 2024
Effective Date March 19, 2024

Committee

JRG

Motion:

Adopted:

1st

Lost:

2nd

Tabled:

No:

Yes:

Absent:

Number of votes required:

X

 Majority

Two-thirds

Reviewed by:

, Corp Counsel

Reviewed by:

, Finance Dir.

INTENT & SYNOPSIS: Authorization to Apply for WEDC ISR Grant for the Former Vesper Elementary School, 6443 S Virginia St, Vesper- Parcel 29-00478.

FISCAL NOTE: No additional cost to Wood County. Stemparosa Estates, LLC, owner of the Former Vesper Elementary School will receive up to \$250,000 in WEDC ISR Grant funding.

WHEREAS, the Wood County Rural Economic Development Plan (March 2021) identifies as a goal, to improve affordable, safe, quality housing for those living in Wood County; and

WHEREAS, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) has grant funds available through its Idle Sites Redevelopment (ISR) grant program for shovel-ready projects with an emphasis on, but not limited to, downtown community-driven efforts, including housing; and

WHEREAS, Wood County is located in Wisconsin and is an eligible recipient of ISR funds; and

WHEREAS, Wood County will be applying for said ISR funds for purposes of a project to renovate and redevelop the former Vesper Elementary School building to accommodate eleven senior housing units, and a fitness center and an event center that will be open to the public,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Wood County Board of Supervisors that the proper County officials are hereby authorized to submit an ISR grant application to the WEDC to obtain funds for said purpose, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if said grant funds are awarded, the proper County officials are hereby authorized and directed to accept said funds, pursuant to the terms of the grant application, and to execute any and all documents and assurances which may be required for purposes of the same.

{ }

Bill Leichtnam (Chair)

Laura Valenstein

Tom Buttke

Dave LaFontaine

Jake Hahn

Adopted by the County Board of Wood County, this 19 day of March 20 24 .

County Clerk County Board Chairman

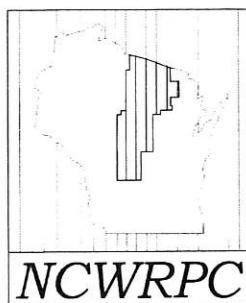
North Central Wisconsin

Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC)



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

2024 Annual Performance Report



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2024 Annual Performance Report

Table of Contents:

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The NCWRPC's ten- county region is designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the U. S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA).

This document was prepared by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and was partially funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA).

I. Introduction

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) is a voluntary association of governments, created in 1973 under Wisconsin State Statute 66.945, now 66.0309. Currently, the Commission serves the Counties of Adams, Forest, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas and Wood. This area received designation as an Economic Development District (EDD) in 1980 and has maintained that designation since.

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Performance Report was discussed, reviewed, and adopted by the Full Commission of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC). The Full Commission serves as the committee to oversee this effort.

This Performance Report provides an update on the activities of the NCWRPC related to the 2021 CEDS, which was the last full update. As part of the update process a CEDS Committee will be organized to oversee the effort. The committee will include local elected officials, economic development groups, workforce groups and others. In addition, three area advisory organizations will provide review and input into the CEDS process as well. These are Centergy, which represents five counties in the central and southern area of the Region, Grow North, which represents five northern counties in the Region, and the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, which is the area workforce development agency.

II. Recent Activities

The following provides a brief listing of economic development activities conducted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission since the last Performance Report. Assistance is provided at both the regional and local level:

Regional Activities:

Economic Development Planning: The CEDS will be revised annually and updated every five years, while in other years a Performance Report is prepared. The most current demographic and economic data available will be used with oversight provided by a CEDS Committee and or the Full Commission. The strategy becomes the foundation for all other economic development efforts of the NCWRPC.

Continue to partner with other regional organizations: Partners include all local and county economic development organizations, as well as the two regional marketing groups in the Region (Centergy & Grow North) and the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, among others. There have also been recent discussions with the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point – the only four-year institution in the Region – to promote connections between the university and community

development. Maintain staff assistance to these economic development groups and promote additional cooperation and cooperation within the Region.

Promote Livable and Sustainable Development: Bring the principles of livability and sustainability into the planning discussion in the Region. Also consider equity in all planning efforts.

Regional Data & Mapping Center: Maintain clearinghouse of data by continuing to assemble and array various data relating to economic development, e.g. employment and unemployment statistics, population estimates, income levels, etc. Also maintain a regional mapping database.

Training and Education: Maintain staff expertise by attending EDA conferences, national and state level economic development and planning conferences, as well as workshops and other training opportunities.

Access to Capital: Work to secure financing for local businesses and work with local communities to secure funding for projects. NCWRPC will work with area businesses to secure funding through various programs, including the Central Wisconsin Economic Development (CWED) Corporation. The NCWRPC will also provide oversight to the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC).

Regional Assistance Summary:

- Prepared the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Performance Report.
- Provided pandemic related assistance to communities related to recovery and resiliency.
- Assisted State of Wisconsin distribute business grant funding throughout the Main Street Bounceback Program. A total of 560 awards were made throughout the Region.
- Maintain Census Data, Socioeconomic Information and Planning Library. Provide special Census data and EMSI reports on request.
- Updated County Profiles graphically display economic data, including an inventory of all sixty-nine industrial parks.
- Assemble and arrange various data relating to economic development, e.g., employment and unemployment statistics, sales tax receipts, population estimates, income levels, etc.
- Prepared Quarterly Economic Development Reports for each county, the Region, and the Grow North and Centergy regions.
- Continued to provide staff support to the Northwoods Rail Commission to maintain and expand freight rail options for area businesses in northern Wisconsin.
- North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC) assistance. This organization manages a revolving loan fund. These “gap” funds assist local businesses to

expand and create jobs throughout the Region. Many of these businesses are in EDA funded business parks.

- Provided various support to other economic organizations and efforts in the Region.

Local Activities:

Local Assistance: Provide direct assistance to local units of government, businesses and other groups involved in economic development. Assistance is made available through providing data, developing plans, preparing grant applications, or providing staff assistance. Also provide assistance to updates of county and local comprehensive plans, in particular the economic development sections.

Maintain detailed Economic Development Profiles for each county in the Region. Economic data would be collected and analyzed, maps prepared, and economic development profiles would be designed. These would be prepared in both print and digital format and used to market the area to prospective businesses.

Foster Communication and Coordination: Promote the recommendations of the CEDS, maintain liaisons with federal, state, regional and local government agencies, disseminate current information about economic development and financial assistance programs and coordinate and evaluate economic development efforts in the Region. Attending and participating in various committees and organizations throughout the Region fosters these objectives.

Staff will continue to work with various organizations throughout the Region, such as Workforce Development, Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA), Centergy, Grow North, Member County Economic Development Corporations, and the Wausau Business Incubator Board, among others.

Support Local Efforts: Support the efforts of and collaborate with Workforce Development Boards, Technical Colleges, Colleges and Universities, and Regional Economic Development Organizations.

Support Infrastructure Efforts: Support businesses and communities applying for funding for new and improved infrastructure, as well as technology upgrades, such as broad band.

Work to incorporate economic development principles and implement CEDS strategy into local plans, particularly economic development chapters of comprehensive plans.

Local Planning Assistance: Continue to assist local communities in developing and updating Comprehensive Plans. Assist local comprehensive planning efforts develop economic development sections in their plans that relate and are compatible with the CEDS. Also assist in the development of detailed economic plans, such as downtown plans, redevelopment strategies, and financial plans.

Grant Application Assistance: Continue to assist area businesses, local governments, and development corporations in preparing state and federal economic development matching grant applications for local projects. Prepare Economic Development Administration (EDA), Wisconsin Department of Administration, and USDA's Rural Development applications, among others for additional economic development funding for active district members and NCWRPC sponsored projects. For example, NCWRPC recently assisted the Lac du Flambeau Tribe prepare an EDA application for a tribal-owned molding plant, North Central Technical College prepare an EDA application to support sawmill and forest products workforce development, and Mid State Technical College prepare an EDA application for equipment for an advanced manufacturing training facility.

A major component of the NCWRPC's efforts in grant assistance is helping communities secure funding for eligible economic development projects through EDA's various grant programs. Since 1979 EDA has funded 45 projects totaling over \$30 million throughout the Region. Table 1 below breaks down EDA's investments within North Central Wisconsin by county.

Table 1: EDA Investments in North Central Wisconsin by County (1979-2023)		
County	Number of Awards	Amount Awarded
Adams	3	\$1,553,135
Forest	5	\$2,268,575
Juneau	5	\$2,188,885
Langlade	4	\$3,191,497
Lincoln	1	\$500,000
Marathon	5	\$4,722,346
Oneida	0	\$0
Portage	1	\$470,965
Vilas	5	\$8,620,937
Wood	9	\$5,931,310
Regional	7	\$1,191,850
Total	45	\$30,639,500

Local Assistance Summary:

- Provided general assistance to area economic development organizations at the county and local levels.
- Prepared the Wausau Area workforce and the Juneau County housing studies.
- Continued to provide general assistance to communities related to economic development.
- In partnership with WEDC, provided Lightcast (formerly EMSI) reports as requested.
- Assisted in the preparation of several EDA grants in the Region.

- Provided assistance for various state and federal grant applications on behalf of local communities.
- Prepared economic development chapters as part of comprehensive planning efforts throughout the Region, including county, city, village, and town plans, including Forest County, Portage County, Vilas County, and several local communities.
- Staff worked with various economic development and related organizations throughout the Region.

In addition, staff provides EDA Grant Administration as required for the Partnership Planning Grant. This consists of completing the annual EDA planning grant application, preparing and submitting EDA reports (semi-annual and year-end), maintaining financial statements, preparing and submitting EDA fund requests, and other related tasks to maintain EDA compliance. This also includes attendance at EDA meetings and other tasks as required for the planning grant.

III. Regional Demographic & Economic Changes

The Region's population in 2022 was 447,762, which was about 8 percent of the state's total population. Over the last twelve years the population has slowly increased by 1.3%, meanwhile over the same period the state grew by about 3.4%. The largest county is Marathon with over 137,000 persons, while Forest County is the smallest with just over 9,200 persons.

County	2010	2020	2022	2010-2022 Change	2010-2022 % Change
Adams	20,875	20,654	20,730	-145	-0.7%
Forest	9,304	9,179	9,239	-65	-0.7%
Juneau	26,664	26,718	26,695	31	0.1%
Langlade	19,977	19,491	19,512	-465	-2.3%
Lincoln	28,743	28,415	28,402	-341	-1.2%
Marathon	134,063	138,013	137,820	3,757	2.8%
Oneida	35,998	37,845	37,799	1,801	5.0%
Portage	70,019	70,377	70,281	262	0.4%
Vilas	21,430	23,047	23,146	1,716	8.0%
Wood	74,749	74,207	74,138	-611	-0.8%
Region	441,822	447,946	447,762	5,940	1.3%
Wisconsin	5,688,040	5,843,443	5,882,128	194,088	3.4%

Source: U.S. Census 2010, 2020; American Community Survey 2018-2022

Employment numbers have rebounded since the recession. In 2022 there were 213,842 jobs within the North Central Wisconsin Region. Overall employment grew by only 0.2% between 2010 and 2022. The state grew at a faster rate, growing by over six percent during this time. However, the slow growth in regional employment is likely due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as employment was steadily increasing between 2010 and 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic drastically decreased employment in 2020. The North Central Wisconsin Region has since recovered the jobs lost due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the Region gained 4,468 jobs between 2020 and 2022.

Table 3: North Central Wisconsin Employment 2010-2022					
County	2010	2020	2022	2010-2022 Change	2010-2022 % Change
Adams	8,022	7,325	7,333	-689	-8.6%
Forest	3,764	3,423	3,648	-116	-3.1%
Juneau	12,359	12,435	12,838	479	3.9%
Langlade	9,083	8,754	8,895	-188	-2.1%
Lincoln	13,920	13,934	14,261	341	2.4%
Marathon	66,842	69,316	71,105	4,263	6.4%
Oneida	17,161	16,707	17,226	65	0.4%
Portage	36,752	35,470	36,446	-306	-0.8%
Vilas	9,197	9,628	9,754	557	6.1%
Wood	36,337	32,382	32,336	-4,001	-11.0%
Region	213,437	209,374	213,842	405	0.2%
Wisconsin	2,820,620	2,897,422	2,992,049	171,429	6.1%

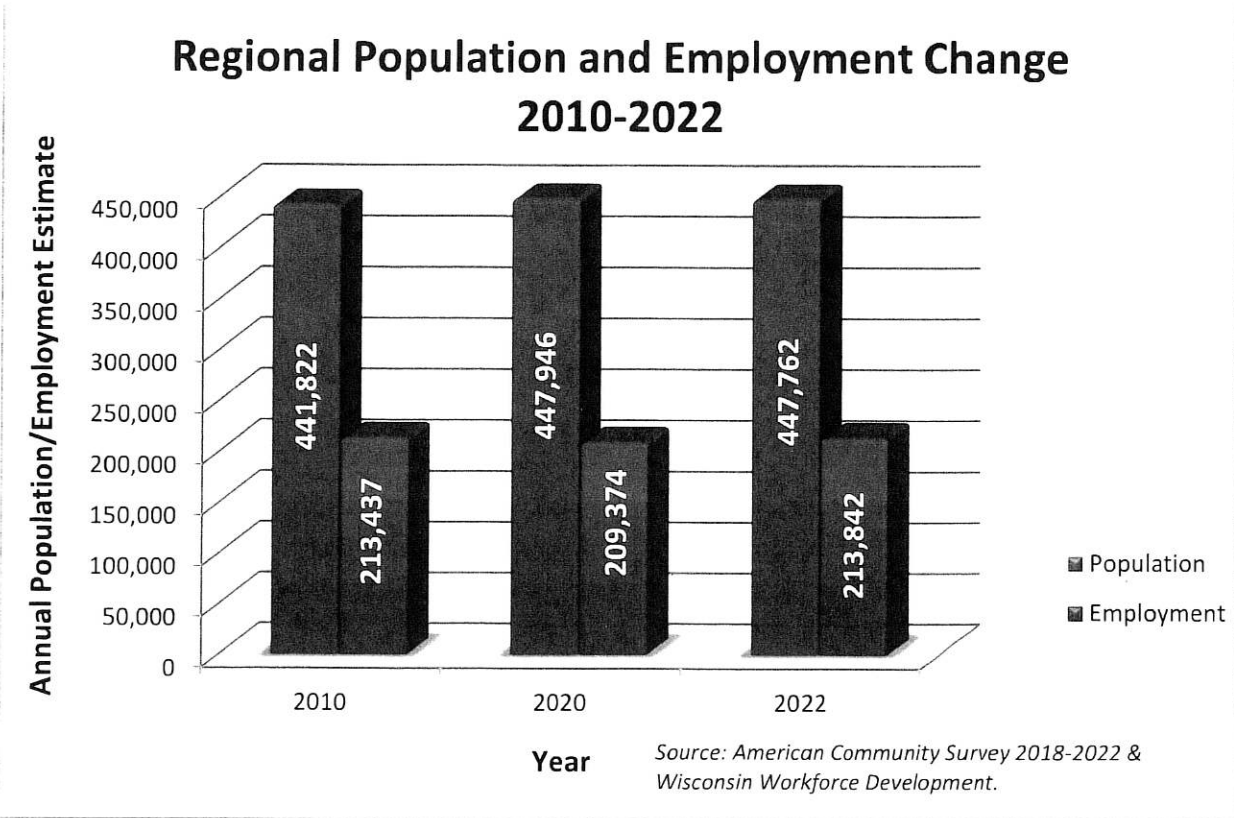
Source: WI DWD, LAUS

In 2022, unemployment within the North Central Wisconsin Region was 3.1%, ranging from 2.5% in Marathon County to 4.8% in Adams County. Meanwhile, the Region's Per Capita Income was \$37,913, ranging from \$40,136 in Vilas County to \$30,310 in Forest County. Generally, the Region's county incomes lag behind the state and nation.

Table 4: North Central Wisconsin Unemployment Rates & Per Capita Incomes		
County	Unemployment Rate, 2022	Per Capita Income, 2022
Adams	4.8%	\$32,223
Forest	4.7%	\$30,310
Juneau	3.2%	\$31,211
Langlade	3.6%	\$32,989
Lincoln	3.1%	\$35,558
Marathon	2.5%	\$38,886
Oneida	3.3%	\$40,086
Portage	2.9%	\$37,990
Vilas	3.9%	\$40,136
Wood	3.3%	\$36,712
Region	3.1%	\$37,913
Wisconsin	2.9%	\$40,130
United States	3.6%	\$41,261

Source: WI DWD, LAUS; American Community Survey 2018-2022

The graph below graphically displays both the population and employment changes in the Region. Overall, both population and employment have increased in the Region since 2010.



In summary, the Region's population has grown since 2010, but at a slower rate than the state and nation. However, that growth is concentrated in only some of the counties. Five of the ten counties experienced declines in overall population. Employment has grown in the Region as well, but similar to population, only five counties had an increase in employment during this time.

IV. Regional Economic Issues

Over the last year there were several economic issues that were identified within the Region. These include:

- The Region is aging, which impacts future workforce size
- Labor shortages in many fields, including manufacturing, technology, and the tourism & hospitality industry
- Regional economy lags slightly behind national economic recovery
- Lack of adequate broadband access in areas of the Region, especially in rural areas
- Low availability of childcare
- Shortage of affordable workforce housing
- Lack of new housing being built and a lack of housing diversity in the existing housing stock
- Lower wage and benefits packages offered locally than the state and national averages poses challenges in attracting workers to the Region
- Continued lack of access to National Forest for timber production
- Decline of Paper Manufacturing industry and ripple effect in rail needs throughout the Region, especially in the northern counties

V. Regional SWOT

As part of the previous CEDS Update a Regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats exercise was completed. It was reviewed as part of the Performance Report process.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Manufacturing Base • Access to quality Interstates • Access to Regional airport • Regional economic development effort and communication • Innovative workforce • Tourism • Knowledgeable and hardworking workforce • Competitive wages for businesses • Lower Cost of Living • Quality education system • Technical, 2-year and 4-year college programs • Access to natural resources • Quality freshwater resources • Quality of life/place • Quality healthcare options • Wealth of recreational activities • Low state taxes for businesses • Access to regional/local airports 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry specific 2-year training programs • Innovative workforce • Creative new uses for existing infrastructure, i.e. paper mills • Emerging healthcare sector • Better use of the regional airport • Access to Federal Lands timber • Specialized manufacturing clusters • Access to freshwater • Natural resources and environment • Entrepreneurial support • Increasing number of incubators and seed accelerators • Increase Regional collaboration • Capitalization of educated active retiree population • Strong work ethic • Municipal airports • Amtrak stop
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited broadband • Roads limits for heavy transportation • Unprepared future workforce • Lack of skilled labor for specialties • Lack of knowledge of manufacturing careers • Distance to major markets • Limited freight rail access in North • High dependence on traditional manufacturing industries • Waste disposal/ solid waste issues • Declining young population • Aquatic/ natural and terrestrial invasive species • Lack of national forest access for timber cutting • Lower wages for workers • Availability of diverse affordable housing options • Lack of public transit 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow population growth • Shrinking workforce • Unprepared workforce • Low wages result in low quality workers • Aging population • Manufacturing dependency • Paper manufacturing dependency • Lack of diversity in industries • Shortage of older woods supply • Shrinking manufacturing workforce • Aquatic and terrestrial invasive species • Declining water quality • Lack of creative industry clusters • Decreasing population under 17 • Aging/ retiring workforce • Growing healthcare costs • Brain drain, threat of people not moving back after receiving education • Funding for entrepreneurial, small, and midsize businesses

VI. Regional Economic Strategy

Economic development is pursued by many communities and organizations throughout the Region with the overall goals of expanding the regional economy, increasing employment levels, and increasing tax base. Much of this work requires collaboration and partnerships with the various economic development organizations, state and federal agencies, local and county governments and the business community of the Region. The goal of the CEDS is to provide a general framework for communities throughout the Region as they work toward these goals.

To help accomplish this, the following strategy was developed during the preparation of the CEDS Update. It is reviewed annually as part of the CEDS Performance Report.

Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: Encourage business retention and expansion to maintain and increase employment opportunities in the Region.

Objectives:

1. Expand communication with existing businesses to identify opportunities and challenges.
2. Improve the Region's competitiveness by assessing and leveraging industry clusters.
3. Educate businesses on different grant and funding opportunities available.
4. Encourage and promote business education on exporting opportunities.

Goal 2: Create an innovative atmosphere to foster an entrepreneurially supportive environment.

Objectives:

1. Diversify the Region's economy by fostering the development of emerging industry sectors, including preparing a regional assessment.
2. Identify, create and promote programs, activities, and policies fostering innovation and new business reducing the risk for entrepreneurs.
3. Identify resources and build a website to provide information
4. Promote a culture of entrepreneurial and innovative business development.
5. Promote and encourage the development of new business incubators throughout the Region.
6. Develop the connection between the creative industries and economic development.
7. Identify and study "place-making" opportunities to improve public spaces.
8. Establish a link between educational institutions and business development.

9. Support start-up and small businesses with training, market research, financial assistance, strategic planning and other assistance.

Goal 3: Promote and attract new business to the Region.

Objectives:

1. Work with local governments, Regional partners and the state to assist with the attraction of new businesses to the area.
2. Recruit new businesses and industries that complement existing clusters, and place special emphasis on higher wage clusters.
3. Diversify the Region's economy fostering the development of emerging and evolving industry clusters.
4. Make prudent use of government incentives to enhance business development in the Region.

Goal 4: Encourage the reuse of existing commercial and industrial sites for more sustainable economic development.

Objectives:

1. Ensure that building and development codes and plans within the Region promote and facilitate the redevelopment of existing structures and infill development.
2. Continue to assess, remediate, and redevelop brownfield sites throughout the Region, taking full advantage of federal and state funding opportunities.
3. Work to increase the number of key, viable businesses and institutions in the downtown districts of our communities.
4. Maintain and enhance infrastructure and public facilities throughout the Region.

Goal 5: Ensure the future availability of a skilled and flexible workforce prepared to meet the needs of both existing and emerging industries and technologies.

Objectives:

1. Work with North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development to provide training to workers of all ages and economic strata to ensure they are current in existing and emerging skills, knowledge, ability and expectations.
2. Increase the number of 4-year high school completions in the Region.
3. Increase the number of associates and 4-year degrees in the Region.
4. Develop entrepreneurial training and education at area high schools, technical colleges, and universities.

5. Work with businesses, K-12 Schools, Higher Education (both 2-and 4-years programs) and Workforce Development to determine and develop skill sets.
6. Enhance business-specific leadership skills in young professionals
7. Develop a plan to retain and attract a young workforce.
8. Develop a mentor program for older workers to work with new workforce.
9. Develop a training program for retiring workforce to help develop a “second career”.

Goal 6: Meet the full range of business’ infrastructure needs with emphasis on transportation, utilities and communications.

Objectives:

1. Work with WISDOT to plan for, develop and maintain the capacity of the Region’s transportation system.
2. Continue to support upgrades and repair of existing roadways.
3. Expand utility and transportation links to serve areas where they are needed for job growth.
4. Develop a reliable data infrastructure using both wireless and high-speed fiber optic networks, especially in north sub-Region.
5. Support efforts to maintain and expand freight rail in the Region.
6. Work with Central Wisconsin Airport and the Rhinelander /Oneida County Airport to expand cargo and passenger service in the Region.
7. Explore commuter and passenger rail service to the Region.

Goal 7: Promote and increase communication between Regional and county economic development, workforce development and other organizations.

Objectives:

1. Collaborate with local, county, economic development organization, surrounding regional planning commissions, state and federal agencies, as well as private business on economic development goals, objective and activities.
2. Create a unified vision of Regional growth and development needs for the Region.
3. Increase communication and collaboration at the Regional level about land use and transportation planning as it relates to economic development.
4. Coordinate economic development efforts among all entities to provide a seamless approach to maintain and diversify the Regional economy.
5. Establish and maintain partnerships to promote economic development for North Central Wisconsin.

VII. Regional Performance Indicators

In an effort to monitor change over time, these ten indicators have been established. These will be examined in the CEDS Update. These are listed in no particular order:

1. Total regional population, including age by cohorts
2. Total regional employment
3. Total regional business establishments
4. Regional unemployment
5. Regional employment per sector
6. Regional Location Quotient changes
7. Regional Per Capita & Median Household Income
8. Regional education levels for high school, associates, and bachelor's degrees
9. Broadband access and reliability (area change)
10. Acreage available for industrial/businesses development

VIII. NCWRPC Action Plan

Below is the current Action Plan to guide the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The following section provides a brief summary of tasks that the NCWRPC will undertake alone or in support of members, as resources permit, to support the overall goals of the CEDS:

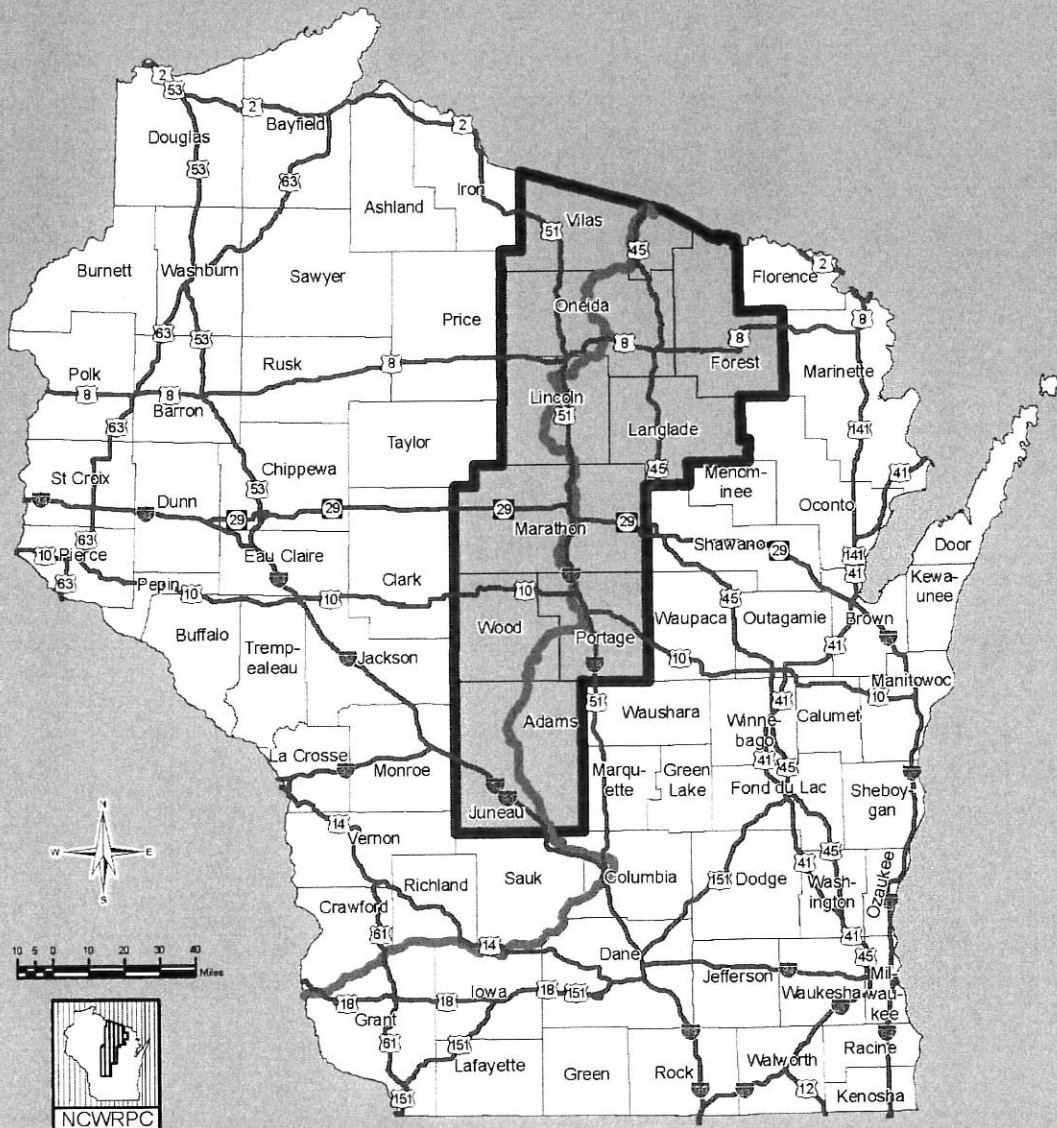
NCWRPC Strategy	
Goal 1. Encourage business retention and expansion to maintain and increase employment opportunities in the Region.	
Tasks	Timeframe
Prepare Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy/Annual Performance Reports.	Annually
Attend member County Economic Development Corporation's meetings to provide updates on CEDS and NCWRPC assistance.	Ongoing
Update comprehensive plan Economic Development Chapters to incorporate CEDS goals locally.	Ongoing
Provide Regional demographic information using Lightcast (formerly EMSI) and other data to complete economic analysis.	Ongoing
Update County Economic Development Profiles.	Occasionally
Assist the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation and other existing loans funds in the area to support local business development.	Ongoing
Provide assistance to members as needed. Explore WEDC, WHEDA, DOA, EDA, USDA-RD and other grant opportunities to complete plans/projects.	Ongoing
Assist local development corporation staff, county ED committees, and regional economic development groups.	Ongoing
Encourage and assist preparation of county and local economic development strategies.	Ongoing
Promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses.	Ongoing
Encourage and assist start-up of firms in the Region.	Ongoing

Goal 2. Create an innovative atmosphere to foster an entrepreneurially supportive environment.	
Tasks	Timeframe
Assist local communities prepare and update comprehensive plans and other related plans.	Ongoing
Assist preparing “downtown” and “place-making” plans as part of a Quality of Place/Life efforts.	Ongoing
Support area business incubators and prepare feasibility studies for new business incubators.	Ongoing
Goal 3: Promote and attract new business to the Region.	
Tasks	Timeframe
Research and identify new business grant opportunities with DOA, WEDC, WHEDA, USDA, and EDA.	Ongoing
Maintain an inventory and map of business parks, including available acreage within the Region.	Ongoing
Support communities in the recruitment of new businesses to the Region.	Ongoing
Research and identify emerging clusters in the Region and state.	Ongoing
Goal 4: Encourage the reuse of existing commercial and industrial sites for more sustainable economic development.	
Tasks	Timeframe
Assist Brownfield planning efforts to assist communities.	Ongoing

Utilize GIS mapping to identify brownfields in the Region as requested.	Ongoing
Continue to support the Wisconsin's Regional Planning Commission Brownfields program with the Wisconsin DNR.	Ongoing
Pursue grant opportunities from federal agencies, such as EDA, EPA and USDA, and state programs, such as DNR and WEDC.	Ongoing
Goal 5: Ensure the future availability of a skilled and flexible workforce prepared to meet the needs of both existing and emerging industries and technologies.	
Tasks	Timeframe
Support the efforts of and collaborate with the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Technical Colleges, 2 and 4-year Colleges and Universities.	Ongoing
Provide data related to employment characteristics and needs.	Ongoing
Encourage educational institutions to develop training programs needed by the area's businesses.	Ongoing
Encourage educational institution and job training centers to offer "second" career training options.	Ongoing
Work with various organizations to create a plan to attract and retain young professionals in the Region.	On-going
Goal 6: Meet the full range of business' infrastructure needs with emphasis on transportation, utilities and communications.	
Tasks	Timeframe
Maintain a listing of all business/industrial parks in the Region.	Ongoing
Promote telecommunications/broadband infrastructure and other technology development and expansion in the Region.	Ongoing
Work with CWA and Rhinelander/Oneida County Airport as needed.	Ongoing

Assist efforts of the Northwood Rail Commission.	Ongoing
Goal 7: Promote and increase communication between Regional and county economic development, workforce development and other organizations.	
Tasks	Timeframe
Attend local and county economic development corporation meetings to discuss EDA and NCWRPC assistance.	Ongoing
Attend regional economic group meetings, and related.	Ongoing
Attend meetings/conferences/ webinars with various state and federal agencies and other organizations.	Ongoing

North Central Wisconsin



Comprehensive Economic
Development Strategy

North Central Wisconsin
Regional Planning Commission

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
Annual Performance Report
