

PARTNERS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Cities of:

- Appleton
- Kaukauna
- Menasha
- Neenah
- New London

Towns of:

- Buchanan
- Clayton
- Grand Chute
- Greenville
- Harrison
- Menasha

Villages of:

- Combined Locks
- Hortonville
- Kimberly
- Little Chute
- Wriestown

Counties of:

- Calumet
- Outagamie
- Winnebago

East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Inc.

Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau

Fox Valley Technical College

Fox Valley Workforce Development Board, Inc.

Heart of the Valley Chamber of Commerce

Kaukauna Utilities

Wisconsin Public Power, Inc.

UW-Extension Outagamie County

UW-Extension Winnebago County

Focus Fox Cities

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President's Report



Kelly Nieforth, FCEDP President

Spring is finally here and as the temperatures are increasing, so is the economic development activity in the Fox Cities. We're seeing signs of improvement in our local economy that point to a recovery ahead.

Most noticeable has been the decreasing unemployment rates in the three county Fox Cities region during the past couple months. The unemployment rates in Calumet, Outagamie and Winnebago Counties have all dropped below the national average and are among the lowest in the State of Wisconsin.

These drops in unemployment can be attributed to recent business expansions in the region, new businesses filling up existing buildings, and entrepreneurs starting their own business. For example, part of an existing manufacturing complex consisting of over 981,000 square feet in the Town of Menasha is being leased to a flexible-packaging company called Prolamina Corp. that will create 70 jobs during the first year and another 100 jobs after. New restaurants and retail stores are also helping the local people obtain jobs in the region and improve the region's quality of life at the same time.

In an effort to boost economic development in the State of Wisconsin, the new administration has created a state-level economic development

corporation and passed laws that will help spur business development. These new initiatives have already improved Wisconsin's ranking for business friendliness compared to other states. According to *Chief Executive's Magazine*, CEOs from across the country were surveyed and found that Wisconsin had the biggest gain in the nation from 2010 to 2011 for being a good place to do business. In 2010, Wisconsin was ranked the 41st best place to do business out of the 50 states. In 2011, the state moved up seventeen places to the 24th best place to do business in the country out of 50 states. If this new ranking is any indication of what's to come for the state, the Fox Cities will be in great shape to capitalize on this improvement with our strong education system in the area, high quality of life, skilled workforce and proactive community leaders who work hard for business development in their communities.



Take a break and enjoy summer in the Fox Cities by walking on one of our many trails, boating or fishing on Lake Winnebago, camping atop the Niagara Escarpment at High Cliff State Park or taking a leisurely stroll through our vibrant downtowns. The Fox Cities Economic Development Partnership welcomes you to our home.

Visitor Spending in the Fox Cities Increased in 2010

A study by Davidson-Peterson Associates shows that in 2010 visitor spending in the Fox Cities increased 1.2% to more than \$363.5 million. The study estimates that tourism-related spending created 5,613 jobs and \$101.93 million in income for Fox Cities Residents.

"Tourism will continue as a good source of economic development for the Fox Cities in 2011," said Lynn Peters, executive director of the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau. "We're pleased to welcome back the Badger State Summer Games and the U.S. Youth Region II Soccer Championships, June events that will bring more that \$1 million in visitor spending."



Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Update

The last issue of this newsletter announced the creation of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), which will be replacing the Wisconsin Department of Commerce. In preparation for that transition, Commerce conducted a series of outreach sessions focused on developing a strategic plan for WEDC. The outreach sessions included economic development partners, business trade associations, education institutions, and business leaders. Additionally, input was sought from key state agency heads and legislators. Below is a synopsis of common themes and some general comments that arose from the sessions.

1. Wisconsin Leadership and Commerce Culture – participants cited a lack of focus and the revolving door of leadership as top concerns. It is thought that Commerce and the economic development community in general overlap, creating confusion.
2. Accessibility and Responsiveness – common criticisms are that Commerce is burdened by too many programs and rules, yet lack the resources to be effective. Participants

cited a disruptive intake process and slow response to financial requests as concerns.

3. Partnerships – there is a broad consensus that coordination between and among economic development delivery players is lacking. Businesses often have no idea where to go for help and that there is no clear vision of accountability and authority.
4. Workforce – workforce quality and availability is a concern among business leaders. Workforce training assistance is fragmented with inconsistent coordination between the state, locals, training providers, and educational institutions.

Overall, participants were very positive about the mission, vision, goals and strategies of WEDC. Some of the comments around WEDC's proposed structure areas included:

- Marketing Division – near universal consensus that Wisconsin has historically been very weak in marketing efforts. Participants liked the commitment WEDC is making to a well-funded, integrated marketing strategy.
- Business Climate Division – WEDC intends to target

resources to improve the state's business climate. Participants liked the focus of putting meaningful programs and policies in place to reduce barriers and encourage growth.

- Innovation and Entrepreneur Division – participants like some of the existing state early stage programs, but stressed that more work needs to be done to increase access to capital, to focus on an innovation culture, and to leverage partnerships with the entrepreneurs and technology community.
- Business Development Division – participants were excited that incentives will be more flexible and responsive to business and that more funding will be available.
- Industry Sector Division – participants liked the industry led approach and the focus of resources on high-impact projects.
- Finance & Administration Division – participants liked the stated commitment by WEDC to provide tools, technology, and training to support this economic development enterprise.

For more information about WEDC, visit their website: <http://commerce.wi.gov/wedc/>.

Northeast Wisconsin Business Plan Contest

Winners of the Northeast Wisconsin Business Plan Contest were announced recently with the top five business plans splitting \$25,000 in prize money. The five finalists reached this point by outscoring a starting field of 33 businesses. On March 21, 2011, the following results were announced:

- **First Place** – The Docking Station (Brown County) was awarded \$10,000 for a collaborative full-service work space service.
- **Second Place** – RagSpun Studio (Fond du Lac County) was awarded \$6,000 for a quilting, sewing, and craft supply business.
- **Third Place** – BreadStreet (Winnebago County) – was awarded \$4,000 for a website development service that targets medium sized service clubs and organizations.
- **Fourth Place** – Athletic Recruiting Consultants (Outagamie County) was awarded \$3,000 for a consulting service to high school students and their families being recruited to play college athletics.
- **Fifth Place** – Going Places Family Hair Care & Tanning (Brown County) was awarded \$2,000 for a full service beauty salon.

New Business—Prolamina Corporation

Prolamina Corporation has announced that a new facility will operate at the former Kimberly Clark Lakeview Diaper Plant on Chapman Ave in the Town of Menasha. The company will be using the northern portion of this building which will front on Winchester Road.

Prolamina will manufacture flexible packaging substrates for the food, medical and consumer packaging industries. The plant will feature state-of-the-art equipment such as a 10-color printing press, a high-speed windernew tandem head, and multi-layer extrusion laminating equipment

Initially operating on a 24/5 schedule, it

will be designed and planned to operate 24/7. Total employment at the site is expected to reach over 100 employees and is looking to start operate as early as August 2011.



Prolamina looked at multiple locations around the Midwest for a site and chose this facility for its close proximity to a major highway, to raw materials, and to other paper and packaging converting

plants. An advantage to the company is the nearby educational opportunities at Fox Valley Technical College, which has a Printing Technologies and Research Center. This location will bring faster service and lower freight costs for its customers in the region, in addition to its facilities in Westfield, Massachusetts and Montreal, Canada.

This successful reuse of this vacant facility shows how the Fox Cities Economic Development Partnerships regional effort to highlight the region's strengths, which include a high quality of life along with a productive, educated workforce.



Upcoming Economic Development Events:

June 5-7, 2011
International Economic Development Council Spring Conference
Understanding Tomorrow's Industries Today: The Landscape of the Future
 Hyatt Regency, Indianapolis, IN
 Visit www.iedconline.org for conference details.

June 6-10, 2011
Competing for Global Success: Finding New & Emerging Opportunities
 JW Marriott Union Square, San Francisco, CA
 For more information, visit www.c2er.org/conference.asp.

June 7-8, 2011
2011 Entrepreneur's Conference
 Pfister Hotel, Milwaukee, WI
 Visit www.wisconsintechcouncil.com for details.

June 9, 2011
Revitalizing Wisconsin's Downtowns: Public-Private Partnerships
 Time Warner Cable Offices, 3520 Destination Drive, Appleton, WI
 This webinar is available at no charge through the generous sponsorship of Dimension IV. However, space is limited and registration is required. To register, contact the Outagamie County UW-Cooperative Extension Office at (920) 832-5122.

June 15, 2011
Wisconsin Innovation Network - Northeast Chapter
 FVTC - DJ Bordini Center, Appleton
 Go to www.wisconsintechcouncil.com or call Gina Leahy at 608-442-7557, ext. 27 for more information.

June 22, 2011
Entrepreneur Networking Day
 Fox Valley Technical College, Appleton, WI
 For more information about this event, visit www.thenewend.biz.

October 20, 2011
Revitalizing Wisconsin's Downtowns: Bringing Small Industries to Downtowns
 Time Warner Cable Offices, 3520 Destination Drive, Appleton, WI
 This webinar is available at no charge through the generous sponsorship of Dimension IV. However, space is limited and registration is required. To register, contact the Outagamie County UW-Cooperative Extension Office at (920) 832-5122.

November 10, 2011
Revitalizing Wisconsin's Downtowns: Working With Big Box Stores to Attract People Downtown
 Time Warner Cable Offices, 3520 Destination Drive, Appleton, WI
 This webinar is available at no charge through the generous sponsorship of Dimension IV. However, space is limited and registration is required. To register, contact the Outagamie County UW-Cooperative Extension Office at (920) 832-5122.