

**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

People who call the Fox Cities home have always enjoyed a high quality of life that has also had a positive effect on economic development in this area. This belief was confirmed with the recent results of the 2011 LIFE Study (Leading Indicators For Excellence).

The LIFE Study is a comprehensive community assessment that examines all aspects of life in the Fox Cities and the region. The LIFE Study will be used as a guide for community leaders to develop new initiatives, policies and opportunities that will improve the quality of life in the Fox Cities even more.

The LIFE Study will be used by economic development organizations and government agencies as a tool to attract business development to the Fox Cities. A high quality of life is viewed as an important element in business attraction and retention. Many companies looking to expand or relocate want to ensure they can attract top-notch employees to their company. Employees are looking for strong school systems for

their families, ample housing, recreational activities, and an overall safe place to live.

The Fox Cities Economic Development Partnership looks forward to utilizing this study and will incorporate it into our initiatives to enhance economic development in the Fox Cities.

So, step outside and enjoy the Fall season in the Fox Cities! We have colorful cliffs along the shores of Lake Winnebago, vibrant downtowns perfect for an afternoon stroll, and plenty of trails to hike on. Take time to see why the Fox Cities is a great place to live and work!



## Northeast Wisconsin Business Plan Competition



Thousands of dollars in prize money were awarded this spring in the 2011 Northeast Wisconsin Business Plan competition. Fox Valley Workforce Development Board wants to get the word out to potential entrepreneurs that it is not too early to be thinking about the 2012 competition cycle.

Business plans are a critical tool in the proper planning and launch of new ventures and are the preferred mode of communication between entrepreneurs, innovators and potential investors. The goal of the competition is to encourage the preparation of business plans for start-up businesses, significant changes to existing businesses, or new products in northeast Wisconsin.

As deadlines for the Northeast Wisconsin Business Plan competition draw near, the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board can provide all the necessary information about entering the contest to anyone who is interested. The deadline for entries is January 9, 2012.

Anyone wishing to get assistance with the development of their business plan or who would like more information on the competition is encouraged to contact Cathy Huybers at the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board at 920-720-5600. Fox Valley Workforce Development Board serves as a partner in the Northeast Wisconsin Business Plan Competition.



## LIFE Study Report Released

The 2010-2011 Leading Indicators for Excellence (LIFE) Study builds on previous data collection initiatives to present a snapshot of the socio-economic conditions in the Fox Cities area. Its purpose is to spark regional leaders and community members to action: action based on an accurate understanding of the things going on in the community across a variety of sectors. The LIFE Study does not provide in-depth information about any one issue. Rather, it paints a broad picture of the community from different angles. Its intent is to provide enough information on a particular issue to generate further discussions and ultimately to spur actions to address particular issues.

The Study is based on information gathered from ten sectors of the community: Arts & Culture, Community, Health, Home, Learning, Natural

Environment, Recreation & Leisure, Safety, Self-Sufficiency, and Work. Within each of those sectors, areas of progress, areas of concern, strengths, and opportunity areas are outlined based on statistical data, surveys, focus groups, and interviews with experts. That information is then compared to previous studies to see what kinds of trends are developing, both positive and negative.



Highlighted in the positive trends are perceptions of arts & culture opportunities, voter participation,

prenatal care, perceptions of the educational systems, recreation & leisure opportunities, air quality, overall safety, and affordability. While on the other end of the spectrum, negative aspects include drug & alcohol usage, teen birth rate increases, childcare costs related to median income, third grade reading proficiency, child abuse, and lack of higher paying jobs.

The Study is the result of the combined resources of the four major sponsors: the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region, Inc., the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce and Industry, United Way of the Fox Cities, and the Fox Cities Economic Development Partnership. Dozens of other organizations provided in-kind contributions that were critical to the completion of the report. The complete report is available at [www.foxcitieslifestudy.org](http://www.foxcitieslifestudy.org).

## Success in a Stressed Economy

There are approximately 15,000 plus communities in the United States that continuously seek businesses for the expansion of their commercial and industrial facilities. Of all the sites that provide facilities and infrastructure for economic development, the number of new firms that arise and seek locations is far less than the number of sites available. This creates strong competition for economic development and desperate communities often find themselves in a position where they want economic development so badly, they end up with bad economic development. In times of economic distress and shrinking markets, communities that strive to expand their economic markets are often better off looking locally. That's not to say that pursuing national or global companies is a bad thing nor undesirable, but the competition between the markets is fierce.

Presently, area communities are providing incentive packages to help grow locally. Existing, local companies have proven track records, are often philanthropists within their communities, contribute to the employment and tax base, and have a positive

financial track record with local lending institutions. Often communities that invest locally first tend to expand their job markets quicker than communities that seek external companies. This also allows communities to spend less on incentives to compete with other markets and to spend more on improving local quality of life. This has certainly been the traditional case in the Fox Cities where the paper industry has long been a staple of the community.

There is no doubt that to diversify and expand our regional market, the Fox Cities must continue to promote itself and to seek new and expanding businesses and industries to help diversify our base. However, it is wise to look first to internal markets to expand our local industry, which in turn puts forth a positive image to the global network. The Fox Cities Economic Development Partnership, in conjunction with the member communities and the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce, have embraced this philosophy and have done an excellent job competing both locally and in the world market. This is indeed something we can all be proud of.

## Fox Cities Visitor Research

During the summer of 2011, the Fox Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau hired Diversified Tactics & Strategies (DTS) to do visitor-related research. Below are just a few things DTS uncovered:

- The six sources of travel information most commonly used by Fox Cities visitors are Internet search engines (79.9%), local tourism websites (66%), state tourism websites (64.2%), state tourism publications (46.6%), local tourism publications (44%) and visitor centers (35.1%).
- The Fox Cities considerably outpaces other destinations as “best known for shopping opportunities.” A large percentage of study respondents (42.2%) selected the Fox Cities as “the best-known shopping destination,” and another 35.5% cited it as one of several destinations known for shopping.
- Visitors and prospective visitors demonstrate confusion between the cities that comprise the “Fox Cities” and those in the “Fox Valley.” Cited as being part of the Fox Cities were Oshkosh, Green Bay, and Fond du Lac, 44%, 25%, and 23% of the time respectively.
- When asked to complete the sentence, “Visitors would like shopping in the Fox Cities because...” respondents most frequently mentioned the Fox River Mall. They also mentioned the variety of shops, and used words like ‘fun,’ ‘clean,’ and ‘easy to get around.’

## Upcoming Economic Development Events:

**November 1, 2011**  
**Governor's Small Business Summit 2011**  
 Lambeau Field, Green Bay, WI  
 Visit <http://wheda.com> for details and to register.

**November 2-3, 2011**  
**Wisconsin Early Stage Symposium**  
 Monona Terrace Community & Convention Center, Madison, WI  
 Visit [www.wisearlystage.com](http://www.wisearlystage.com) for details.

**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. Space is limited and registration is required. To register, contact the Outagamie County UW-Cooperative Extension Office at (920) 832-5122.

**December 7, 2011**  
**New North Summit**  
 Radisson Hotel and Convention Center, Green Bay, WI  
 Save the Date - Watch [www.thenewnorth.com](http://www.thenewnorth.com) for details.

**February 8-10, 2012**  
**2012 Governor's Conference on Economic Development**  
 Monona Terrace Convention and Community Center, Madison, WI  
 Save The Dates - Watch [www.weda.org](http://www.weda.org) for details.

