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NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2014

Placemaking Rice Lake Project Results in a New Community Partnership

This summer, residents, business owners, organizations, and other stakeholders from Rice Lake came together to take a fresh look at key locations within the community. This project was a true local partnership overseen by the Rice Lake Area Chamber of Commerce, with financial support from the City of Rice Lake, coordination support from the Barron County Economic Development Corporation, facilitation by West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, advertising assistance from The Chronotype, and the input of various additional local stakeholders and other community groups. In all, about 340 hours of total volunteer time was spent during a July workshop and a September follow-up

meeting, not including additional pre-planning and work group meetings.

During the project, residents felt strongly that the City's connections and linkages needed to be improved through trails, signage, visual gateways, and making places more



pedestrian friendly and inviting to tourists. Participants also desired a downtown which is vibrant, linked to the lake, welcoming, and "sticky", with outdoor activities and inviting to all ages. Participants visited seven key locations in the community, then developed an action plan with specific recommendations for each. Attendees also recognized that everyone must get involved and partnerships were needed to accomplish the action plan.

Residents and local organizations have demonstrated a strong commitment to implementing the Placemaking Rice Lake action plan. For instance, some of the ideas and recommendations for a public space near the Main Street bridge were being acted upon before the final report was even completed! During the September meeting, local stakeholders and organizations agreed to participate in a new community placemaking committee to champion the placemaking action plan, foster communication, leverage resources, and promote volunteerism. Rice Lake is commended for their efforts to bring together its residents, business leaders, and community organizations to create a shared vision for improving the City's key public places and quality of life, then taking action to make this happen.

Contact [Chris Straight](#) for more information on placemaking in your community.

WCWRPC Assists Communities with Infrastructure & Planning Grants

The WCWRPC recently assisted communities with four successful Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides federal funding to the State through the CDBG program. The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) uses this federal funding to provide affordable housing, suitable living environments, and expanded economic opportunities for persons with low- to moderate-income.

The WCWRPC contracted with three communities to assist in preparing four CDBG Public Facility (PF) and Planning (PLNG) grant applications that were due June 2; the awards were announced on August 8.

- The City of Augusta received a CDBG-PF award of \$375,370 to install public infrastructure to accommodate the future location of Augusta Area Home.
- The Village of Curtiss received a CDBG-PF award of \$500,000 to construct a new fire station (see a rendering of the future fire station to the right). Curtiss also received a CDBG-PLNG award of \$9,000 to update the Village's 2007 comprehensive plan.
- The Village of New Auburn received a CDBG-PF award of \$441,100 to construct a new fire station.



The WCWRPC will be administering the three CDBG-PF projects as well as assisting Curtiss with their comprehensive plan update. Additionally, the WCWRPC will administer a CDBG-PF award of \$500,000 for the City of New Richmond. New Richmond's grant will fund building improvements for the

Community Commons building, a multi-use facility utilized by community groups like New Richmond Head Start, Five Loaves Food Shelf and Clothing Center, and New Richmond Senior Center.

According to the WCWRPC's Executive Director Lynn Nelson, "We are always happy when we can assist communities in securing funding for infrastructure and planning work that they need to complete. This funding creates strong communities, and in turn, benefits the entire region".

Contact [Tobi LeMahieu](#) with your grant-writing or grant administration needs.

WCWRPC Receives TAP Award

The WCWRPC was notified in August that their application for a Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant for 11 Safe Routes to School (SRTS) plans was awarded. The grant shows true intergovernmental partnership and cooperation. Four school districts (Abbotsford, Cameron, Chippewa Falls Area United, and Cumberland) will complete traditional SRTS plans. Seven school districts (Baldwin-Woodville, Clayton, Clear Lake, Frederic, Luck, New Richmond, and Unity) will complete efficiency SRTS plans. The WCWRPC will work with both the school district and respective community on each plan which will include a list of issues and unsafe intersections/corridors, strategic recommendations, visualization enhancements, and map detailing the safest routes to school.



WisDOT received more than 100 applications, requesting \$62 million in TAP funding. Ultimately, WisDOT was able to award 27 projects, totaling more than \$13 million in project funds.

For more information on Safe Routes to School planning, contact [Eric Anderson](#).

How Old Are Your "Cell Tower" Regulations?

WCWRPC staff recently noticed that a few communities likely have outdated telecommunications ordinances. In July 2013, new laws regarding the siting of wireless telecommunications towers were adopted as part of the State Budget Bill. These new laws limit the ability of municipalities to regulate the siting of these towers and associated facilities, including:



- New towers and facilities can only be regulated through zoning.
- The application process is defined, including associated timelines.
- Municipalities cannot enact a moratorium on the permitting, construction, and approval of towers and facilities.
- Applications for new towers and facilities cannot be denied solely on aesthetic reasons or based solely on the structure heights. The height of new towers cannot be limited to under 200 feet.
- Municipalities cannot "enact an ordinance prohibiting the placement of a mobile service support structure in particular locations".
- Certain new rules also apply to the modification of existing towers and facilities.

More details and the complete list of local regulatory limitations can be found in

Wisconsin Statutes 66.0404. Have your local ordinances been updated to account for these changes? If not, contact [Chris Straight](#).

2015 Farm Fresh Atlas

This will be the fifth year that the WCWRPC compiles the Farm Fresh Atlas of Western Wisconsin. The Atlas is a local food directory for a 16-county region in western Wisconsin. The Atlas includes listings for direct-market family farms, farmers' markets, and sponsors. If you know any farms, farmers' markets, or sponsors that would like to be included in the Atlas, please let them know. You can find more information at wifarmfresh.org or contact [Eric Anderson](#).

New Market Tax Credits in Rural Places

Forward Community Investment (FCI), received a \$20 million allocation of New Market Tax Credits (NMTC) from the US Department of Treasury's Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Fund. Eligible applicants have the opportunity to receive an equity injection when the tax credits are used on their behalf. Contact Carrie Vanderford Sanders at carriev@forwardci.org or at 608-204-8837 for more information.

Idle Sites Grant Application Deadline: November 21, 2014

The *Idle Sites Program* is accepting applications through a competitive process with an application deadline of Friday, November 21, 2014. Grants up to \$500,000 or \$1,000,000 - with a 70% match. The *Idle Sites Program* is intended to stimulate investment and job creation in idle, abandoned, and underutilized sites which have been abandoned for at least five years and due to scale and complexity cannot be redeveloped solely by the private

sector. Contact Marie Steenlage, Community Account Manager for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation at 608-210-6755.

Farmland Preservation Planning Workshops

Farmland preservation planning workshops were held this summer. The purpose of the workshops was to reach out to counties whose Farmland Preservation Plans are set to expire in 2015 or later. Similar workshops will be offered in the future for both farmland preservation plan and ordinance updates. For more information, contact Scott Karel at Scott.Karel@wisconsin.gov.

SEED Funding from IIP Partnerships for Global Talent Available

The International Internship Program (IIP) at UW-Madison has teamed up with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to provide SEED funding to help small- and medium-sized Wisconsin companies invest in developing global talent as part of their international business initiatives. Internship placements can be outside the United States in any discipline, OR in a domestic setting that requires students to use international skills such as a language or knowledge of/experience in a country. The application deadline is October 31, 2014. For more information, click [here](#).



RBF, Inc. Activity Report (2014)
January - September

Loans Closed: 40

Total Amount: \$1,793,800

Jobs Created/Retained: 282 in next 2 years

Committed Loans: 4

Total Amount: \$175,000

Pending Loan Applications: 14

Total Amount: \$1,176,600

WCWRPC Staff:

Lynn

Nelson

Executive

Director



Eric

Anderson

Senior

Planner



Jing

Duan

GIS/

Associate

Planner



Jason

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Levi

Wagner

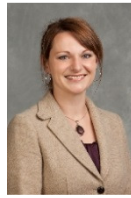
Lending
Specialist



Beth

Waldhart

Fund
Manager



Kim

Zimmerman

Financial
Manager

