

Notes by Carl Duley on Steve Deller's presentation "The Buffalo County Economy in Light of Sand Mining" May 1, 2012 Buffalo County Courthouse.

These notes are not intended to be a complete summary of the presentation, only to offer some general observations from one perspective (Carl's). Please review the complete presentation that was given.

- What are the important elements of the current economy that must be considered?
- Is the lack of population growth, or actually declining population, something the people of Buffalo County want? What are the consequences?
- Buffalo County population is older than Wisconsin, and school age kids is dropping faster than average in Wisconsin – consequences? Who takes the jobs if/when jobs are created? Where do they live?
- Buffalo County has no diversity within its population
- In the relatively small economy in Buffalo County, one business with good jobs, can make a significant impact in the overall economic picture. One example that was very clear was the expansion of operations of Marten Transport in Mondovi. Very clear that the expansion had a significant impact in the Buffalo County economy.
- In the power point slides, remember that the employment growth slides were; 1) just jobs located in Buffalo County, 2) the numbers in the slides are indexes, not actual numbers. Therefore in an industry like mining may is less than 10 jobs to cause a huge spike in the index.
- Manufacturing 2 types: commodity – items sold at big box type stores and custom manufacturing – items made locally, not many jobs, but usually jobs with higher wages.
- Retail employment – does retail trade go up with an industry like mining? Depends if jobs are local, if people move to the county or commute, if people spend money at the limited number of businesses in located in the county, and the historical instability of jobs in the mining industry.
- Currently, the growth industries in the United States and Wisconsin are the Health Care Industries, Financial Industries, and Management Industries – none which are located in Buffalo County.
- State and Local government employment has been on the decline in Buffalo County since 2000 and actually since 1970.

- Agriculture as a county economy has been flat since 1970 (not a growth industry). Start of the declining dairy industry and a switch to agriculture industries that hire fewer people, farm more land per person, and need little infrastructure (few buildings) all contributing less to the local economy.
- 1940's – 1960's job growth came from Fortune 500 companies, since 1970's job growth has come from small business development. Buffalo County has lagged behind in small business development.
- Significant income in Buffalo County has come from Social Security benefits (increasing age of the population).
- Buffalo County has an advantage/cluster in the area of recreation. The size of the recreation is current a small sector of the economy but it is growing and has been strong. Is this a sector that the county should target for growth? How much will mining and recreation compete?
- Transportation (trucking) is currently 24 of the Buffalo County employment – very dependent on one industry
- Agriculture is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest industry (based on employment) providing 13% of the jobs. Unlike transportation, agriculture has been declining for reasons mentioned already.
- What can communities do to help industries with potential growth to grow?
- Suggestions for more information from meeting participants:
  - What does Buffalo County have in infrastructure to help the economy to grow (roads, rail, river)
  - Economic forecast information
  - Increase of state road use and effect on other businesses and road uses.