

# NCWRPC NEWS

A Newsletter of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC). Serving Adams, Forest, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas and Wood Counties for over 30 years.

Fall Issue, Number 24

2004

## Welcome

As winter closes in, it is time to reflect on the year ending and to plan for the upcoming year. Every organization needs to evaluate itself, determine its mission and its role. We are no different, so late this year we are going to conduct a strategic planning process and ask some basic questions, including: "How are we doing?" and "What is our Role in the Region?"

We have made great strides in the last few years, but we can get better. Each year we do more with less, as we strive to be the most cost effective planning organization in the Region. Our ability to provide cost effective planning assistance throughout the Region is a result of local membership. Without our continuing members, our mission to make this Region the best place to live, work and play would be in jeopardy.

I also want to remind all of our members that we are in the process of putting together our 2005 Work Program. We ask that you contact us if you have any planning needs for 2005. We have already identified several projects, but know there are more out there. Over 60 projects are listed on our 2004 Work Program. About one-fourth of these projects are land use related, including county, city, village, and town level comprehensive plans.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about the topics in this issue or about the NCWRPC.

Dennis Lawrence, AICP  
Executive Director

## Commission Meeting Highlights

At the September meeting, the Commission approved a \$648,927 budget for 2005. Revenues are made up of three basic components: the levy, continuing grants, and projects. As you may recall, the annual levy rate for 2005 was lowered from 0.002 to 0.00185 percent, which is the third decrease in the last five years. The levy now makes up less than 30 percent of the budget, while just a few years ago it peaked at over 45 percent of the budget. Continuing grants, from EDA and DOT, make up about 24 percent of the budget, and the remaining 46 percent comes from projects. Overall, expenditures have remained very stable.

Other business included adoption of the Economic Development District's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, referrals review of 9 projects totaling almost \$6 million dollars, and the discussion of an upcoming organizational strategic plan.

## Quarterly Quote:

Action springs not from thought, but from a readiness for responsibility.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

## New Commissioner

As you may know, there are three persons from each of our active counties that create our Commission, which is our oversight board. One commissioner is selected by the Governor, one is a joint selection between the Governor and the County, and the final selection is by the County. Langlade County recently appointed Frank Trimmel to our Commission. Frank is a county board supervisor and a retired firefighter from southern Wisconsin. Frank replaces Patricia McKinney on the Commission. Welcome aboard!



## Ice-Age Trail Update

Planning for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail continues in Marathon and Langlade Counties. The Ice Age Trail is a 1,200-mile footpath that traces the extent of the last glacier across the state from Potawatomi State Park in Door County to Interstate State Park on the St Croix River. Roughly half of the projected trail (600 miles) is currently “on the ground”, including thirteen miles in Marathon County surrounding Dells of the Eau Claire County Park and 52 miles in Langlade County.

The Ice Age Trail Corridor Planning Process seeks to identify a general route for the trail that connects existing trail segments, comply with requirements of the Endangered Species Act and National Historic Preservation Act to assure that this project does not negatively impact cultural and natural resources, and involves the public in the planning.

During the planning a very wide (1-3 miles) “corridor of opportunity” is identified. This corridor represents the area within which the trail may be placed somewhere, either through handshake agreement, conservation easement or fee simple purchase.

All participation in the Ice Age Trail is voluntary. No property owner can be compelled to allow the Trail to cross their property. Volunteers do most of trail construction and all trail maintenance.

During September and October of 2003, presentations were made to town boards as part of the Corridor Planning Process. The next step is a series of informational open-house meetings. Due to personnel changes at the National Park Service, the process has been delayed. The open-house meetings in Marathon County that had originally been envisioned to be held in June of 2004, will now be held in January of 2005. Open-house meetings in Langlade County will be held at a future date.

For more information on the Ice Age Trail contact Mike Agnew at (715) 849-5510, Extension 307 or [magnew@ncwrpc.org](mailto:magnew@ncwrpc.org).

## Revised Lincoln County Zoning Ordinance Nearing Completion

Lincoln County is nearing the end of a process that started in 1996 with the County Board asking NCWRPC to “audit” the existing land use ordinances. The audit resulted in recommendations that zoning, subdivision and shoreland ordinances should all be updated. The audit also suggested that the existing 1978 development plan be revised since it had been changed.

Current County zoning was adopted in 1968 as a “comprehensive amendment” to the original 1934 ordinance. In response to the audit findings, several changes were made to the ordinance in 1998, but the majority of zoning regulations are the same as thirty-five years ago. To complete a full update, it was felt that a new land use plan should be the

first step in the process. In 1998, a series of public meetings were held to ask if the county should hire a consultant to assist in the preparation of a combination of individual town-level plans, tied to a comprehensive County plan; 82 percent of participants approved.

Just two months after selecting a consultant, the State passed a major revision of the planning enabling statutes. In order to satisfy the requirements of the new law, the County Plan incorporated the required nine elements. The County Board unanimously adopted the Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan in October of 2001.

In August of 2002 the County began the process of formulating a comprehensive amendment to the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances. A consultant was again enlisted to assist in the recodification effort. A Code Review Committee, with representatives from 15 towns, met 22 times to consider the details of the ordinance rewrite. An open-house meeting and two sets of quadrant meetings were held to inform citizens about the revision process and solicit public input. Planning committees and commissions in the towns offered feedback on the proposed ordinance language. One-on-one meetings with staff and planners were held with the individual towns and other concerned parties. NCWRPC assisted the County by providing some meeting facilitation and technical assistance to the Code Review Committee.

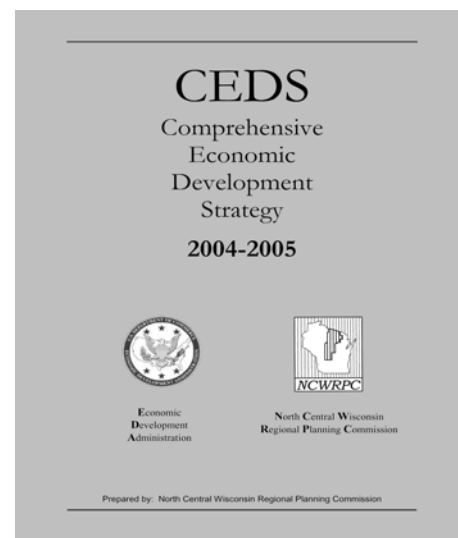
Drafts of the new ordinance language and zoning maps were revised to reflect the new districts embodied in it and were made available to the towns this spring. After four months in which to review the proposed changes, a final draft was presented to the Planning & Zoning Committee for its consideration. On September 29<sup>th</sup> the Committee held a public hearing attended by about two hundred people. The Committee will integrate the public feedback received at the hearing into the ordinance and decide whether to forward the revised Ordinance to the County Board for its action.

## Commission Adopts CEDS

At its September meeting the NCWRPC adopted the 2004-2005 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The report provides an assessment of economic development conditions in the Region. The CEDS also includes a section on the Regional Economic Development Strategy, the NCWRPC's Economic Development Work Plan, and a listing of 31 potential public works projects.

Since 2000, our Region's population grew by approximately 2 percent. Juneau County showed the greatest percentage growth, followed by Vilas and Adams Counties. Wood County experienced the lowest percentage growth. From an employment standpoint, the region lost jobs, over the same period. Four of the ten counties lost jobs. The most, in percentage terms, were lost in Lincoln County. Forest and Adams Counties showed the greatest percentage growth.

Adoption of the CEDS provides eligibility for local units of government in the Region to access U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration dollars, as well as other federal and state agencies.



If you have any questions about the CEDS process or U.S. EDA, contact Dennis Lawrence at (715) 849-5510, Extension 304 or [dlawrence@ncwrpc.org](mailto:dlawrence@ncwrpc.org).

## Digital Airphoto Consortium

The Bay Lake, East Central and North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commissions (RPC) formed an airphoto consortium in early 2004. This group consists of the three RPC's and the 28 counties they represent. The consortium was formed to eliminate the duplication of airphoto efforts, create consistency, and save money. The consortium committee went through a selection process and chose Ayres & Assoc. to provide leaf-off, spring 2005, high resolution orthophotography.

Several partnerships were formed with private, local, tribal, state, and federal agencies to share the project costs. By working as a Region, the consortium achieved about a 30 percent cost savings for each of the counties.

If any one has any questions or wants any additional information please contact Andy Faust at (715) 849-5510, Ext. 305 or at [afaust@ncwrpc.org](mailto:afaust@ncwrpc.org)

## NCWRPC Commissioners

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