

# NCWRPC NEWS

The official newsletter of North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC).

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Serving: Adams, Forest, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas, and Wood counties since 1973.



## Guest Article

### WiMAX: A cost effective broadband alternative for Oneida County

By Roger A. Luce

The Oneida County Board of Supervisors confronted the Oneida County Economic Development Corporation (OCEDC) eighteen months ago with a challenge: Develop a countywide strategy to address the immediate needs of its rural residents to access the internet through high speed broadband (6 Mbps minimum) at an affordable cost.

The OCEDC Technology Committee, comprised of IT professionals, educators, stakeholders and interested citizens, examined reams of documents and interviewed communication industry leaders in an effort to develop a solid plan. With so many landscape issues (trees, lakes & hills) the committee struggled to discover an affordable alternative to fiber. Fiber, as the committee was told, won't be coming to most of the rural areas of Oneida County anytime soon, if ever.

Enter a wireless alternative, WiMAX. Also known as Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access, it is a wireless telecommunications system that enables users to take advantage of high-speed wireless data transfer, like Wi-Fi. However, WiMAX has a longer range, higher spectral efficiency, and ability to connect multiple users at the same time. WiMAX technology seems to have everything in one package. It can provide access to the Internet, television streaming, and wireless phone connection, all while incorporating mobility. Some describe it as Wi-Fi on steroids. Think of WiMAX as a cellphone and Wi-Fi as a cordless phone. Wi-Fi is a short-range system typically covering short hundred meter distances, unlike the 30-mile maximum coverage of one WiMAX site. Wi-Fi cannot overcome interfering objects (like those stated above) the same way that WiMAX can. And best of all it is affordable to the end-user.

The Technology Committee approached the Oneida County Board Administration Committee with a public/private partnership plan to implement WiMAX throughout the entire county over the ensuing months. Oneida County, Town of Minocqua, Town of Hazelhurst, Lakeland Union High School, MHLT School District, Grow North, Ministry Healthcare, Marshfield Clinic, and Northwood's synKro have all agreed to the initial pilot project plan and have committed resources to the effort. The partnership has submitted an application to the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin for a Broadband Expansion Grant.

Coming soon to Oneida County...WiMAX!



*From time to time, we include articles submitted about projects underway in our region that might be of interest to other communities. This article highlights a project in Oneida County where many organizations came together to address a major issue, in this case broadband. Thanks to Roger A. Luce, Executive Director of the Oneida County Economic Development Corporation, for submitting this article. Congratulations to all of the individuals and organizations involved in this effort.*

## Regional Livability Plan Update

The NCWRPC continues working to develop a Regional Livability Plan (RLP). This plan will update the 2003 Regional Comprehensive Plan and lay the foundation for the principles of livability throughout our Region. To date the Regional Livability Plan Oversight Committee has adopted a Regional Demographic Report, and four Assessment Reports: Economic Development, Housing, Transportation, and Land Use. All of these documents will become the foundation for the Regional Livability Plan. More information is available at [www.ncwrpc.org/rlp/](http://www.ncwrpc.org/rlp/).

While developing the Transportation Assessment Report, the committee identified several livability issues. In 2010, over 80 percent of the Region's workforce drove alone to work on a daily basis, while 10 percent carpooled. Commute times in the region are generally less than 20 minutes on average, however, more rural counties like Adams and Forest experience longer commute times. The Region is also experiencing a reduction in drivers aged 18 and 16 while increasing drivers aged 65 and over. With the increase in the region's median age due to the aging baby boomer generation, the Region will continue to increase the number of drivers who are over the age of 65 and 85.

Meanwhile the Land Use Assessment Report identified that with the reduction in median household sizes; more housing units are being constructed in close proximity to one another. Housing density and population density both increased over the past 30 years, but are still well below the state density levels. The increase in housing needs also created a 365 percent increase in residential land cover over the same time period, while agricultural land use decreased 31 percent.

The next step is to develop regional goals and objectives addressing the issues identified in each assessment. The regional livability goals will be based on the U.S. Department of Transportation's (US DOT) six key livability principles: Provide more transportation choices; Promote equitable, affordable housing; Enhance economic competitiveness; Support existing communities; Coordinate policies and leverage investment; and Value communities and neighborhoods. The goal is to have the Regional Livability Plan adopted in early 2015. The creation of the Regional

Livability Plan will provide guidance to county and community leaders as they update their county and municipal comprehensive plans working to create a more attractive and livable region for current and future residents.

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



## New Staff

We are pleased to announce that Paula Priebe has joined our staff as a Planner. She will be working on various planning projects throughout the region.

After finishing her Bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan, Paula served for 2 ½ years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in South Africa as an Organizational Development Specialist. She recently completed a Master's of Urban Planning degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Feel free to contact Paula Priebe at [ppriebe@ncwrpc.org](mailto:ppriebe@ncwrpc.org) or at 715-849-5510, Extension 311.



## Farmland Preservation Planning Assistance

Agriculture is an important part of Wisconsin's economy. As such, many counties have the goal of preserving farmland. A primary tool to help protect and promote agriculture is called a Farmland Preservation Plan.

In 2009, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) updated the Farmland Preservation Program. The program requires that each county develop a plan that identifies areas for agriculture. The plan also makes land owners eligible for farmland preservation tax credits. Once adopted and certified by DATCP, these plans ensure access to program benefits, including landowner eligibility for credits. Eligible farmers located in a designated farmland preservation area may enter into voluntary agreements to claim farmland preservation tax credits.

NCWRPC staff are currently assisting Langlade, Oneida, and Vilas Counties with revising their farmland preservation plans to meet new requirements, and replacing plans that were adopted in the early 1980's. When these new Farmland Preservation Plans are adopted they become part of the County's Comprehensive Plan.

Additional information on each draft county plan is available online:

Langlade County

<http://www.ncwrpc.org/langlade/farmland/index.html>

Oneida County

<http://www.ncwrpc.org/oneida/farmland/index.html>

Vilas County

<http://www.ncwrpc.org/vilas/farmland/index.html>

If you have any questions about Farmland Preservation Plans, feel free to contact Fred Heider, AICP at 715-849-5510, Extension 310, or [fheider@ncwrpc.org](mailto:fheider@ncwrpc.org).



## Land and Water Resource Management Planning Assistance

One of the many benefits of membership in the NCWRPC is assistance with the update of County Land and Water Resource Management Plans. Currently staff are working with Adams, Langlade and Vilas Counties to update their plans.

Land and Water Resource Management Plans provide counties an opportunity to identify how they will meet the state performance standards and prohibitions (NR 151 and ATCP 50) to reduce runoff and protect water quality, as well as address other local land and water resource management concerns. The LWRM Plan provides the counties with the ability to develop local strategies to address the concerns; budget the limited staff and cost share dollars toward these concerns; provide for integration of programs and funding from all sources; and develop a variety of implementation tools.

At the root of the county Land and Water Resource Management Plans is the concept of cooperation among all land management agencies and groups within the county to minimize land deterioration and water degradation. The Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) requires that each county Land and Water Conservation Department (LWCD) have a 5-year or 10-year LWRM plan to coordinate county land conservation department activities.

Additional information on each draft county plan is available online:

Langlade County

<http://www.ncwrpc.org/langlade/lwrmp/index.html>

Vilas County

<http://www.ncwrpc.org/vilas/lwrmp.html>

If you have any questions about Land and Water Resource Management Plans, feel free to contact Fred Heider, AICP at 715-849-5510, Extension 310, or [fheider@ncwrpc.org](mailto:fheider@ncwrpc.org).





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### NCWRPC 2015 Work Program

Each fall the NCWRPC develops its work program for the following year. Many projects have already been identified, but there is always room for more. Feel free to contact us if your community is thinking about a planning related project.

Projects may fall under any of our five programs areas of economic development, geographic information systems (mapping), intergovernmental cooperation, land use, and transportation. Even if we cannot help, we can often steer you to someone who can.



Contact Dennis Lawrence at 715-849-5510, Extension 304 or at [dlawrence@ncwrpc.org](mailto:dlawrence@ncwrpc.org).



### NCWRPC Commissioners

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Richard Bakovka  
Rocky Gilner  
*Appointment Pending*

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