

NCWRPC News

The official newsletter of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Serving Adams, Forest, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas, and Wood Counties since 1973.

Photo: NCWRPC

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Inside This Issue:

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Adopted.....1

Brownfield Development Assistance.....2

Pavement Rating Assistance Available3

Staff Receives WLIA Award.....3

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update.....3

EMSI Analyst Update.....4

Quarterly Quote

“In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.”

- Albert Einstein

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Adopted

Earlier this year the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update was adopted by the NCWRPC. Adoption of the CEDS is one of the requirements to maintain federal designation for North Central Wisconsin as an Economic Development District.

The CEDS covers a variety of topics from basic demographic data to economic analysis to strategy development. The 2015 Regional population was 442,941 which was only a 0.25 percent increase over 2010. That rate of increase is expected to slowly decline for the next two decades. The Region is expected to lag behind both the state and nation in population growth. However, the Region’s population 60 years and older is expected to increase about 60 percent at the same time the Region’s population aged 19 and under is expected to increase about 4 percent. Slow population growth combined with an aging population will reduce the Region’s labor force. As a result, businesses looking to expand or relocate to the area will struggle to find an available and knowledgeable workforce. This continues to be one of the major threats identified in the CEDS.

Total employment in the Region has not rebounded to pre-recession levels. Much of the nation has yet to fully recover. Employment growth has been slow, but steady. Between 2010 and 2015, regional employment grew about 2 percent. In total there are 199,725 jobs in the ten county Region. The CEDS also identified industry clusters in the region. Regional clusters were identified using economic analysis techniques, such as location quotients and industry employment projections.

REGIONAL CLUSTERS:

- Paper and Packaging,
- Insurance Services,
- Production Technology and Heavy Machinery,
- Transportation Logistics,
- Footwear,
- Information Technology and Analytics Instruments,
- Recreational and Small Electric Goods, and
- Food Processing and Manufacturing

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Adopted continued.

Seven regional goals were created to grow and foster economic development based on the Region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. With each of the goals, objectives and specific tasks were identified, as well as performance measures. Combined, these provide the foundation for the NCWRPC's economic development work plan.

The CEDS can be found on our homepage at www.ncwrpc.org. If you have any questions contact Dennis Lawrence at (715) 849-5510, Extension 304 or dlawrence@ncwrpc.org.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY GOALS:

- Encourage business retention and expansion to maintain and increase employment opportunities in the Region.
- Create an innovative and entrepreneurially supportive environment.
- Promote and attract new business to the Region.
- Encourage the reuse of existing commercial and industrial sites for more sustainable economic development.
- Ensure the future availability of a skilled and flexible workforce prepared to meet the needs of both existing and emerging industries and technologies.
- Meet the full range of business infrastructure needs with an emphasis on transportation, utilities and communication.
- Improve communication between regional and county economic development, workforce development and other organizations.

Brownfield Development Assistance

Visit any community and you'll find brownfields—former industrial or commercial sites where redevelopment is affected by real or perceived environmental contamination. They range from the vacant gas station to the old industrial property that used to employ hundreds. The simple fact is that brownfields are everywhere. Dealing with them requires a certain amount of expertise. Getting pointed in the right direction or being made aware of funding sources or programs can be essential.

Fortunately, the brownfields program at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources can help communities with the cleanup and redevelopment process. All it takes is a phone call to set up a "Green Team" meeting. Green Team meetings may include local and statewide DNR staff and the local partners familiar with the project. Together, you'll discuss issues related to liability protections, regulatory processes, and potential financial assistance. Green Team meetings are an effective and efficient way for local governments and others to evaluate options, plan for, and work through a brownfield project. The DNR can be a valuable partner in this effort and is eager to provide the assistance you need.

One potential source of assistance that could be discussed during a Green Team meeting is the Wisconsin Assessment Monies program, or WAM. This WAM assistance is available to local governments, tribes, and to private entities in select circumstances. Administered by the DNR's Remediate and Redevelopment Program, WAM awards provide communities with professional environmental assessments of contaminated properties, helping them to turn properties around and get them ready for a new use. For more information about WAM, including eligibility requirements, visit the WAM website at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Brownfields/wam.html>.

Since 2009, more than half of the WAM funds were issued to small communities. In the North Central Wisconsin alone, the program has assisted Merrill, Mauston, Schofield, Stevens Point, Eagle River and Land O' Lakes with awards totaling roughly \$230,000.

Another resource through the brownfields program is funding through a program called Ready for Reuse. Ready for Reuse loans and grants are used for cleanup at contaminated sites through Wisconsin. These awards are made as either grants or 0% interest loans and are available to local governments or non-profits with projects that have a complete site investigation and are ready for cleanup. There are some other eligibility requirements, and the best bet to sort out whether your project might qualify for a Ready for Reuse grant or loan is to contact the program administrator.

The DNR's brownfields program staff can help. Just pick up the phone and call.

DNR Contacts

Green Team:

Northern Region: Carrie Stoltz
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Danelski 920-662-5494

Statewide: Elisabeth Kuisis
608-267-0543

WAM:

Tom Coogan 608-267-7560

Ready for Reuse:

Gena Larson 608-261-5404

Pavement Rating Assistance Available

It is time once again for local governments in Wisconsin to submit surface condition ratings for all local roads under their jurisdiction. State statute 86.302(2) requires that the ratings be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation every two years. In 2015, the NCWRPC submitted the mandated condition ratings for 22 communities. The next round of submissions will be due to WisDOT by December of this year.

Commission Staff will be providing a variety of services to local units of government within the Region to meet their needs for pavement rating and submitting to WisDOT. Most of these services will be provided free-of-charge to Commission members while non-members will be charged for assistance per our 2017-2018 fee schedule. If you think your community would like to utilize the services of the NCWRPC to help you with this pavement rating mandate, please contact Fred Heider at 715-849-5510 Extension 310 or email to dlandeau@ncwrpc.org.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is intended to provide our member local governments with guidance and resources to create excellent regional and local bicycle and pedestrian networks to improve the safety and attractiveness of bicycling and walking for transportation.

NCWRPC has held three public input workshops for the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan: in the Town of Rome in Adams County, in the City of Wausau in Marathon County, and in the City of Rhinelander in Oneida County. NCWRPC staff also attended the Stevens Point Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Open House earlier in March. These events provided an opportunity to meet with people around the region to discuss and listen to ideas for improvements to bicycling and walking in North Central Wisconsin.

To date we have received over 300 responses to the Regional Bicycling and Walking Survey and 300 suggestions from over 180 users via our online mapping activity. On the right is a snapshot of the comments received on the mapping activity thus far. Visit this page to contribute to the mapping activity: www.ncwrpc.org/bikepedmap.

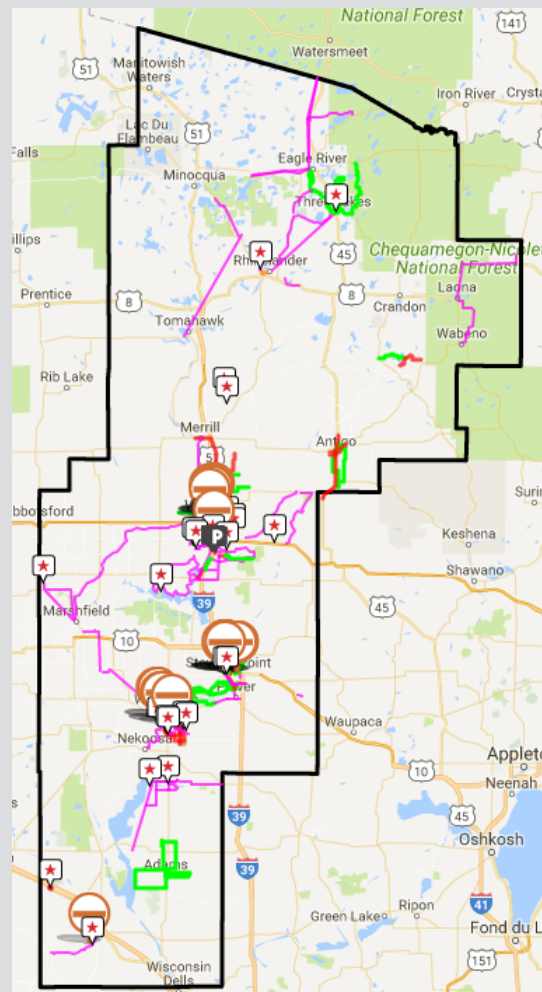
NCWRPC has also been working on analyzing existing plans and bicycle and pedestrian facilities both within and adjacent to our region. If you are aware of any plans or existing facilities in your community please call or email us to ensure we are aware of your plans.

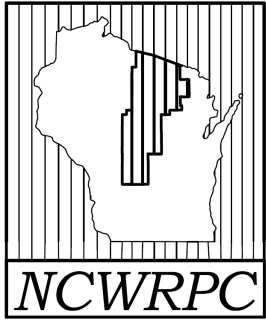
Check the project website at ncwrpc.org/bikepedplan and sign up for our email newsletter to stay up to date. Contact Brad Sippel at bsippel@ncwrpc.org or 715-849-5510, Extension 307, for more information or to provide comments.

Staff Receives WLIA Award

Andy Faust was recently received an award at the 2017 Wisconsin Land Information Association (WLIA) Annual Conference. Andy won second place in the Small Format Map category. This is the 19th consecutive year that staff has won an award in the WLIA Annual Conference Map Poster Competition.

WLIA is a grassroots organization representing a collection of concerned professionals working to develop, maintain, and apply a network of statewide land information systems. WLIA is united by an interest in land records modernization, GIS, and related technologies, and by the need for government policies and programs that support their efficient and effective application. For more information visit www.wlia.org





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EMSI Analyst Update

The NCWRPC continues its partnership with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to provide economic development analysis data throughout the region. A comprehensive economic modeling program, called Analyst, developed by Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI) is a tool that provides industry/occupation data, impact assessments, and economic base analysis information.

Detailed quarterly economic reports have been prepared for each county. Those are available on our website. Requests for additional data can also be made on the website at www.ncwrpc.org/emsi.

For more information, please contact Brad Sippel, at (715) 849-5510, Extension 307 or bsippel@ncwrpc.org.



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