



# RAPPORT

MEMBER COUNTIES

CALUMET  
MENOMINEE  
OUTAGAMIE  
SHAWANO  
WAUPACA  
WAUSHARA  
WINNEBAGO

VOLUME 32 NUMBER 2

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*Al Anderson*



*Lori McEathron*



*Mike Malcheski*



*David Marcoullier*



*Jacob Schuelke*

## Planning for economic health in small communities

On April 25, 2003 UW-Extension and East Central co-sponsored a half-day forum to discuss economic development tools and techniques available to smaller communities. The conference began with Al Anderson the Director of the UW-Extension Center for Community Economic Development. His presentation involved a broad overview of what economic development can mean to a community. Mr. Anderson suggested that communities think about the type of growth they would like to see, ideally approaching economic development planning in a proactive manner.

The second speaker, Lori McEathron of the Fond du Lac Economic Development Corporation (FCEDC), brought to the conference the perspective of an economic development corporation and the services that FCEDC provides for Fond du Lac County. The FCEDC works with existing businesses on issues such as workforce retention and productivity. Ms. McEathron attributed approximately 80 percent of the county's economic growth to working with existing businesses. The FCEDC spends approximately one-third of its time engaging in business attraction and retention efforts through site and building development assistance and directly working with business prospects. Ms. McEathron also explained the entrepreneurial assistance FCEDC provides which involves start-up business assessment and planning, as well as assistance with business financing.

Another approach to economic development was addressed by Mike Malcheski, a Community Resource

Development Specialist with the USDA Rural Development. Business incubators provide affordable office and/or warehouse space for start-up businesses. Incubators also provide an opportunity for communities beyond the job growth/creation perspective. From a practical stand point, the structure in which the incubator is housed is often the result of the reuse of a vacated building. Incubators can be located in smaller communities, such as Wautoma, for example, and can successfully assist businesses in the difficult early years of development.

David Marcoullier a Natural Resource Economist, UW-Extension Center for Economic Development, discussed the connection of natural resource amenities and the access to recreational activities linked to these amenities. This access can lead toward economic development opportunities for communities. The challenge is protecting the natural resource itself, which draws the interested admirers to the area, while communities use the amenity to their economic advantage.

The last speaker at the conference was Jacob Schuelke, UW Extension Agriculture Agent for Waushara County, who wrapped up the conference by briefly speaking about the economic challenges faced by the farming community.

The strong attendance at this conference shows the interest in economic development tools for smaller communities. Look for future UW Extension/ECWRPC sponsored mini-conference announcements.

## Fox Valley in the new economy

The economy of the Fox Valley, and that of Wisconsin, has been struggling for several years. After sidestepping the downturn of the early 1980s, the Fox Valley has been hit hard since 2000. Why? It has to do with "The New Economy."

The "new economy" is high tech and idea based. It involves the creation of high growth jobs requiring academic degrees or special training which, in turn, pays higher salaries. States operating in the new economy invest in knowledgeable people who can create ideas for new products. On the other hand, old economy states, like Wisconsin, many southern states, and some western ones, depend on natural resources or on mass production manufacturing, and rely on low costs rather than innovative capacity to gain advantage.

A study entitled "The 2002 State New Economy Index" ranks each state on 21 indicators. Wisconsin ranks 40th in this study (see table below). What is really troubling is that our state ranked 32nd just three years before. It's not that Wisconsin

has retracted in its new economy efforts; it is that other states have done more to improve their scores. We have joined a less than impressive group of low tax, low service southern and western states.

### Top and Bottom States in the New Economy

1. Massachusetts	40. Wisconsin
2. Washington	41. South Carolina
3. California	42. Kentucky
4. Maryland	43. South Dakota
5. New Jersey	44. North Dakota
6. Connecticut	45. Louisiana
7. Virginia	46. Wyoming
8. Delaware	47. Alabama
9. New York	48. Arkansas
10. Oregon	49. Mississippi
11. Utah	50. West Virginia
12. Minnesota	

### Taxes Not an Issue

We often hear that we can't grow our economy because we have such high taxes - partially true. We can't grow our existing economy partly because of high taxes, but several top ten new economy states with high or higher taxes - New York (3), Connecticut (1), Washington (2), New Jersey (4), Minnesota (7), and California (10) - grow their economies very nicely, even during these tough economic times.

Tax burdens, a common complaint, are based on a percentage of income. Wisconsin produces lower income than these states, and even lower than the national average. Why is this? One reason is because we sold our

state as a cheap place to do business. We also were satisfied with our economic growth, whereas other states were seeing the handwriting on the wall, and began investing in the new economy. Our neighbor, Minnesota, is a prime example of that. Eight years ago Minnesota had a lower per capita income than Wisconsin and decided to change the way it did business. Now its per capita income is \$33,101 and ranks 9th in the U.S. while Wisconsin's is \$29,270 and ranks 21st. The national average is \$30,472. Its all a matter of how we plan for business development.

Smart Growth has more to do with economic development than people think. There is an economic develop-

### Beliefs About Economic Development in the Old and New Economies

#### In the old economy, people believed that:

- Being a cheap place to do business was key.
- Attracting companies was key.
- A high-quality physical environment was a luxury that stood in the way of attracting business.
- Regions won because they held a fixed competitive advantage in some resource.
- Economic development was government led.

#### In the new economy, people believe that:

- Being a place rich in ideas and talent is key.
- Attracting educated people is key.
- Physical and cultural amenities are crucial to attracting knowledge workers.
- Regions prosper if organizations and individuals have the ability or skill to learn and adapt.
- Only bold partnerships among business, government, and the nonprofit sector can bring about change.

Source: The 2002 State New Policy Index Progressive Policy Institute

ment element in comprehensive planning that has been overlooked for too long. Rather than just identifying areas for commercial or industrial development, new economy states identify the kind of industries and businesses they want to attract: high tech, high growth jobs that pay a higher than average wage, and those that will not be lured away by cheap labor someplace else. By being nonspecific, we ended up with someone else dictating the jobs and wages going into the area. We have important industries such as paper, machinery, food processing, and energy. Now let's produce the technology in those industries and sell that to other businesses - fuel cells, network management, food safety, factory automation and micromachining - adding technology to improve energy generation, sewage treatment, water purification, waste handling/recycling, and paper processing.

The Fox Valley and the State of Wisconsin have a choice to make. Do nothing to create good jobs that raise personal income and join the ranks of states well below the national average. Or create a high growth economy, with high per capita income, International Centers of Excellence, well-funded schools, and excellent quality of life. How do we get there? By encouraging big thinking; creating a knowledge-based strategy; establishing high growth technical and research centers; encouraging entrepreneurs and new business formation; adopting a global perspective; promoting regional cooperation and action; and stimulating investment capital. The time to act is now.

## Shaping the region's future in the 21st century

Welcome to our fifth quarterly update on the regional comprehensive planning process. Since the last edition of *Rapport*, we have held a series of public information meetings around the region and have begun to work on Milestone Report 2: Issues/Opportunities and Visioning.

### Major Phases of the Regional Comprehensive Planning Process



### What's New? Regional Public Information Meetings

East Central held public information meetings during the month of June in Kimberly, Clintonville, and Wautoma. The purpose of these meetings was to update the public on the current status of the regional comprehensive planning effort and seek public input on both the comprehensive planning process and the baseline information presented in the *State of the Region Report (April 2003)*. Approximately 100 people attended the meetings. Participants included interested citizens, representatives from county and local government, the private sector, social justice groups, realtors, higher education, and the tribes. East Central's planning staff was available to personally answer questions, as well as take note of the comments people made; a comment box was provided to enable people to submit written comments; and details were provided on how to contact East Central by mail, email, telephone, or via our website.

Each of the meetings followed the same format. After a short introduction by Harlan Kiesow, Executive Director of East Central, participants were invited to look at the poster display, which summarized the current policies, major findings, key issues and the next steps for each of the comprehensive planning elements: economic development, housing, transportation, etc. For each of the elements, East Central provided handouts which summarized the *State of the Region Report (2003): Key Findings*, and the *Regional Focus Groups (Fall 2002): Issue Identification*.

### Questions

Participants asked staff a number of questions about planning, public participation, the regional comprehensive plan, the relationship between the regional plan and local comprehensive plans, East Central's role, and "Smart Growth". A summary of the questions and answers provided follows:

### Why do we need to plan?

• Planning helps us to work toward accomplishing objectives in an orderly, step by step fashion. Everybody plans: financial plans, work plans, vacation plans, and even grocery lists. Communities that fail to plan are like people who shop without a grocery list - they spend too much and often don't get what they need. Planning allows us to take a look at where a community has been, how it got to this point, where it wants to go, and how it can get there. It allows us to be proactive not reactive.

### Why should the public participate in the regional planning process?

- To ensure that the issues important to you are on the table for discussion.
- To listen to the concerns that other people in your community may have.
- To help plan for the future.

### How can the public participate?

- Keeping up to date through our quarterly newsletter, *Rapport*.
- Accessing information and providing comments via our website [www.eastcentralrpc.org](http://www.eastcentralrpc.org).
- Sending us written comments by mail or email.
- Participating in focus groups / technical advisory committees / discussion groups.
- Attending public information meetings.

### Why do we need a regional plan?

• East Central's objective is to develop a policy framework plan that will help to promote consistent and cost efficient land use decisions within the east central region, while meeting the requirements of the new Smart Growth legislation. A regional plan is able to address those issues that are multijurisdictional, for example, transportation, water quality and air quality. County and local government will benefit from the regional planning effort with savings in the cost of data collection, public participation, and broad policy development.

### What is regional planning?

- With over 250 units of government in the region, promoting intergovernmental cooperation and addressing multi-jurisdictional issues is the center point of regional planning.

### What is the East Central Regional Planning Commission?

- In May 2002, the Commission celebrated 30 years as a regional planning agency in east central Wisconsin. The Commission profile has changed over the years, but its mission remains the same; prepare a regional plan, promote inter-governmental cooperation, and provide advisory services to member governments. The Commission represents 10-counties.

### What is comprehensive planning/smart growth?

- Governor Tommy Thompson signed Wisconsin's new Smart Growth initiative into law in 1999. The new law includes a list of 9 elements that make up a comprehensive plan: issues and opportunities; housing; transportation; community and public facilities; agricultural, natural and cultural resources; economic development; inter-governmental cooperation; land use; and implementation. The law requires that beginning January 1st 2010, any program or action of a local government unit that affects land use must be consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan.
- The term Smart Growth refers to giving priority to improving services, such as schools, roads, affordable housing, and transportation in existing communities, rather than encouraging new housing, commercial development, and highways, in the countryside.



Clintonville - June 24th 2003

### **Public Comments**

Participants provided us with comments on a wide range of issues. The types of issues raised at this series of meetings were broadly similar to those identified both by the regional focus groups in September 2002, and by staff, following their analysis of the baseline data. A detailed record of all the comments received will be made available shortly on the East Central web site. A summary of the comments received is presented below. While many issues and comments apply to more than one element of the comprehensive plan, they are listed by element.

### Transportation

◆A number of people expressed surprise at the percentage of truck freight (95%) vs. rail freight (4%) in the region. There appeared to be a general desire to increase the percentage of rail freight, and relieve highways of some truck traffic. This is of particular importance in the light of the recent decision by Canadian National Railroad to close the inter-modal facility in Neenah, a facility for loading truck containers onto rail cars. ◆While there seemed to be general support for public transportation, there was recognition of the difficulties in provision in the rural areas.

### Community Facilities

◆There was widespread concern about stormwater management issues. There was support for more regional cooperation in stormwater management planning and implementation on the basis that this might help to reduce duplication and improve cost-effectiveness. ◆There were also concerns about future capacity to deal with wastewater treatment problems. ◆While there was support for developing alternative energy sources there was also recognition of the need to address the aesthetic and environmental impacts, particularly of wind towers. ◆The concept of shared utility corridors was raised. There was recognition that telecommunications, electric and gas utilities have a major impact on property owners and the environment. ◆The proposed wind farm and the proposed transmission line in Shawano County were mentioned. ◆The lack of nursing homes, particularly in Waushara County, which has an aging population, was raised.

### Natural Resources

◆The Niagara Escarpment was identified as a unique geological area within the region that would require special handling with respect to land use and development.

### Land Use

◆Concern was expressed about the immediate and long term social, economic and environmental impacts of sprawl development. ◆Particular reference was made to the impacts on groundwater recharge, water quality and wetlands. ◆There were questions about why, when there was a number of empty commercial buildings available, development was continuing to occur on "greenfield" sites. It was suggested that there was an urgent need to examine the potential opportunities for re-development. ◆Concern was expressed about the cost of residential development in rural areas and the impact this was having in terms of the fragmentation of farmland and forestland. ◆There was also concern about the loss of rural character/atmosphere, particularly in Waushara County. ◆Concern was expressed about the relationship between Comm 83 and sprawl, the feeling being that Comm 83 is facilitating development on land that would otherwise not be suitable. ◆There was a suggestion that the regional plan should include a future land use plan and that consideration should be given to how to incorporate the proposed land use plans from those communities/counties that already have an adopted plan. ◆It was suggested that there was a need to develop a consistent and reasonable process

for making land use decisions generally, as well as specifically in relation to non-metallic mining issues. Within this discussion issues were raised about ownership and how land use decisions impact both private and public owners, specifically the DNR.

#### Agricultural Resources

◆Concern was expressed that the trend towards industrial agriculture and mega farms is not sustainable. ◆It was suggested that we need to examine options for developing a sustainable agricultural sector. ◆There was discussion as to whether farmers could use alternative energy sources, such as wind farms, to diversify and supplement their income.

#### Economic Development

◆The importance of diversifying the economy was recognized. ◆It was suggested that there was a need to focus on developing tourism and recreation as a viable business sector in the rural areas. ◆This generated discussion on the importance of developing bike and pedestrian trails. The drawbacks of single industry towns were raised and there was recognition of the need to identify industries, which could be attracted to the region. ◆The importance of identifying areas where community facilities need to be upgraded to attract new industries was also raised. For example, there was a feeling that the region cannot attract computer industries, because it does not have the appropriate infrastructure.



Wautoma - June 26th 2003

#### Housing

◆The importance of providing housing choices to meet the needs of the population was raised. ◆This related specifically to a recognition of the need for affordable housing in the rural recreation counties in the western part of the region and also in areas, such as Hortonville, where there appears to be a mismatch between the price of rental properties and homes for sale and what the local population is able to afford. ◆Comments were also made about the need to promote livable environments by focusing on mixed uses, linking residential areas to commercial and industrial areas by pedestrian /bicycle trails, and aesthetics and design.

#### Cultural Resources

◆Particular reference was made to the involvement of the Hmong population and the Native American tribes in

both the regional and local planning efforts. ◆With respect to the former, comments were made that there is an agricultural tradition and that perhaps we need to consider how we can help those who wish to reenter the agricultural sector.

#### Intergovernmental Coordination

◆There was support for current inter-municipal agreements pertaining to boundary agreements and provision of emergency services and a recognition that these agreements need to be built upon. ◆The importance of ensuring that interest groups, such as realtors, developers, farmers etc. are involved in the planning process upfront was also stressed.

### **What's Next? - Milestone Report #2: Issues, Opportunities and a Regional Vision**

Developing a vision of our preferred future is the next step in the regional planning process. To help us clarify our aspirations for how we want the region to look in the future there are three questions that we will need to address - (1)What do we want to preserve in the region? (2)What do we want to change in the region? and (3)What do we want to create in the region? In addressing these questions, we will need to take a broad, long term, proactive approach. We will need to accept uncertainty and ensure all stakeholders are involved in the process of identifying the preferred future.

Once we envision the future we want, we will need to explore the impact of the trends identified in the State of the Region Report (2003), specifically to identify the match or mismatch between the vision for the future and the likely future given current and anticipated trends. This process will help us to determine the broad goals that will enable us to achieve the identified regional vision.

To move forward successfully will require close cooperation and partnership between the public, private, and voluntary sectors at the regional, county, and local levels. To facilitate this process, East Central is currently establishing a series of Advisory Committees. Between now and September of this year, members of these advisory committees will focus on producing a regional vision statement, as well as a series of thematic vision statements that will address economic development, housing, transportation, etc. They will explore the impacts of current and anticipated trends, and begin to identify goals to ensure achievement of the envisioned future. If you are interested in serving on an Advisory Committee or on a Citizen Panel, please contact Denise McShane at 920-751-4770, or by email at [dmcshane@eastcentralrpc.org](mailto:dmcshane@eastcentralrpc.org).



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**Feavel honored for environmentalism**



It doesn't come as a big surprise to us when we hear our Commission Chair, Ms. Yvonne Feavel, described as "a model citizen," "an exemplary leader," or "an example to all," but we like to take every opportunity to make it known, especially when these qualities are recognized by someone else. Ms. Feavel was recently

awarded the 2003 Wisconsin Lake Stewardship Award, in the Individual category, by the Wisconsin Association of Lakes. While much of Yvonne's community-minded pursuits over the past 20-plus years have dealt with lake and water issues, including: service on the Waushara County Lakes Watershed Council; County Representative to the Lake Management District of Marl, Long, and Silver Lakes; and Director, President, and Chairman of the Board of the Wisconsin Lakes Association, she also serves as President of her local Library Board and is on the Board of Governors of the State Bar of Wisconsin, among other pursuits. Many organizations, including the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commissions, are both fortunate and proud to have this "example to all" leading the way. Thank you Yvonne, and congratulations!



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This is an important conference for all chief elected officials. You will learn about impacts, issues, opportunities, and needs of the Lake Michigan watershed, including: lake water levels; beach closings; urban stormwater management; fisheries; waterfront development/redevelopment; sludge spreading; source water; invasive species.

For more information, contact Mark Walter, mwalter@baylakerpc.org, or Angela Pierce, apierce@baylakerpc.org, or call Mark or Angela at (920)448-2820.

