



WISCONSIN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2017



By nearly every measure, Wisconsin is experiencing an economic resurgence. Thanks in large part to the pro-business policies we've enacted in the last seven years, our unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in decades, more people are working than ever before and we've cut more than \$4 billion in taxes.

Those efforts have resulted in Wisconsin being named a Top 10 "Best State for Business" by *Chief Executive* magazine—the first time we've achieved that honor and a gain of 31 spots since 2010.

There is no doubt that we are working and winning for Wisconsin, and WEDC and its more than 600 partners in every region of the state are a big part of that winning formula. In Fiscal Year 2017, WEDC and its partners assisted more than 4,200 businesses and 120 communities. Those efforts are expected to create or retain more than 22,000 jobs and generate \$2.1 billion in capital investment.

Beyond the numbers, WEDC's work in attracting global businesses like Foxconn and HARIBO to our great state has put Wisconsin on the radar screen of companies all over the world seeking to establish or expand operations in the U.S. From attracting new businesses to working with communities to help revitalize their downtowns to developing long-term strategies to strengthen our key industries, the initiatives spearheaded by WEDC and its dedicated staff have played an instrumental role in our ongoing economic success.



Scott Walker, Governor
State of Wisconsin



In fiscal year 2017 (FY17), the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) continued the passionate fulfillment of our mission—"to advance and maximize opportunities in Wisconsin for businesses, communities and people to thrive in a globally competitive environment."

Our mission statement details not only what WEDC sets out to do, but also how we seek to create economic prosperity in Wisconsin—by focusing on the core components of our state's continued vitality: businesses, communities and people.

This report provides examples of WEDC's work to retain and grow the many Wisconsin businesses that have contributed to our state's legacy of innovation and will help maintain Wisconsin's industry leadership—companies like Generac, Johnsonville, Menasha Corp and MilliporeSigma. We also detail our support of, and investments in, Wisconsin startups whose vision is creating new solutions to global challenges relating to health and nutrition, productivity, sustainability and safety.


2017 saw a milestone in WEDC's support for minority business growth with the celebration of the 35th anniversary of MARKETPLACE, the Governor's Conference on Minority Business Development. MARKETPLACE grows bigger and better each year as word spreads about the valuable networking, learning and sales opportunities that take place during the two-day gathering. WEDC also introduced a new funding solution to support minority businesses in FY17. You can read about the availability of matching funds to Wisconsin-based Kiva microloans through four minority chambers in the pages that follow.

Ensuring the continued competitiveness of Wisconsin companies on a global stage requires forward thinking that identifies and capitalizes upon emerging industry trends. WEDC fosters such foresight through comprehensive industry cluster development strategies focused on sectors of Wisconsin's economy with the greatest potential for future growth. Oftentimes, that growth potential exists in markets outside the U.S., which is why WEDC devotes significant resources to helping Wisconsin companies increase their exports. These efforts include export readiness programs and technical support as well as coordinated global trade ventures designed to generate export sales for participating Wisconsin companies.

Developing our state's workforce to fulfill existing and future job demands goes hand in hand with creating thriving communities where the next generation of workers feel connected and inspired to pursue their career and personal passions. WEDC's community development investments help create the unique sense of place that define our small towns and urban areas alike. Our talent development initiatives—from our support for YPWeek's statewide events to our investments in fabrication laboratories in school districts across Wisconsin—tap the creativity young people in particular bring to both the businesses and communities they interact with. The result is a strong fabric of workforce engagement with mutual benefits to employers and employees alike.

None of the successful outcomes outlined in this report would have been possible without the productive partnerships WEDC enjoys with our network of dedicated local and regional economic development organizations and stakeholders throughout the state. We are grateful for the ongoing commitment of the people we work with every day to sustain and grow Wisconsin's economy and maintain our state's exceptional quality of life.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Hogan
Secretary and CEO

CATALYSTS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

When Wisconsin's economic partners work together, the whole system is stronger and its output is more robust. WEDC works with more than 600 partners across the state, including regional economic development organizations, academic institutions and industry cluster leaders. WEDC's economic development strategies are built upon five key **Catalysts of Growth**:



STRATEGIC ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS



CATALYST WEDC FUNCTION

Future industry strategies
Government relations
Policy and research
State/regional talent and workforce initiatives

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



Entrepreneurship and innovation
Export and international trade
Business retention and expansion
Business and investment attraction

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



Community development
Downtown development
Minority business development
Rural economic development

BRAND DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY



State asset marketing
WEDC program marketing
Events, trade shows and conferences

OPERATIONAL AND FISCAL EXCELLENCE



Information systems and data management
Budget and finance
Underwriting and program management
Operations and program performance
Legal services, contract, compliance and risk
WEDC talent resources and development

MEASURING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUCCESS

WEDC employs a variety of measures to gauge the effects of our economic development investments. WEDC's economic development initiatives range from tax credits for investments in early-stage companies to export readiness programs, industry cluster advancement strategies and downtown redevelopment financing.

In FY17, WEDC and our key strategic partners provided financial and operational assistance to 4,256 businesses and 129 communities.



COMMUNITIES ASSISTED
129



BUSINESSES ASSISTED

KEY STRATEGIC PARTNERS.....**3,577***

WEDC **679**

TOTAL BUSINESSES ASSISTED
4,256

*This number was reduced by 20 percent to account for potential overlap with WEDC businesses assisted.



\$2.1 BILLION
TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT

FINANCIAL AWARDS

To balance its responsibility to protect taxpayer money with the inherent risks associated with pursuing new business development opportunities, WEDC requires significant co-investment in the majority of the initiatives it funds. It is important that WEDC not be the sole or even the majority investor in a project. In FY17, WEDC's financial investments were matched at a ratio of 9:1, which means that projects the agency supported represent a total of \$2.1 billion in capital investment in Wisconsin.

WEDC PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Award Type	# of Awards	Award Amount	Leverage Ratio*
Bonds	7	\$43,271,681	N/A
Grants	215	\$27,439,807	15:1
Investor Credits	50	\$22,986,250	4:1**
Loans	31	\$13,353,300	16:1
Tax Credits	134	\$213,700,708	9:1
Total	437	\$320,751,746	9:1
		FY17 LEVERAGE GOAL	8:1

*WEDC includes a project's total capital investment as reported by the company in this leverage ratio calculation in order to capture the complete impact of a project.

**Ratio calculated based on 25 percent tax credit for eligible Qualified New Business Venture (QNBV) investments. Leverage for all funding secured by QNBV companies in calendar year 2016 was nearly 16:1.



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

EARNINGS CREATED

UP TO

5x

in new wages and salaries for every \$1 WEDC invests.

ANNUAL STATE TAX BENEFIT

\$23 MILLION

in revenue from WEDC investments toward job creation.

JOB IMPACT

Many of WEDC's financial assistance contracts with businesses contain a job impact requirement. This measurement captures the effect of WEDC's investment on current and future jobs in the state resulting directly from the project in question. In some cases, companies are able to hire new employees as a result of WEDC assistance. In other cases, companies are able to retain existing employees either by strengthening their operations or maintaining their presence in the state. In both of these scenarios, WEDC and the company under contract project the number of jobs that will be either created or retained as a direct result of the investment. That job impact number is recorded in the contract and the award is contingent upon its attainment.

It takes time—sometimes years—for the positive direct effects of a WEDC investment to be realized. The question, then, is: when are the jobs in question actually impacted? And when do they get counted? WEDC reports the total impact of the jobs in the year the contract is executed, and tracks performance progress to that impact goal throughout the life of the project. Typically, a contract impacting job creation lasts five years, and for projects contracted in FY17, WEDC estimates the return on investment to the State of Wisconsin. For instance, on a direct basis, four out of five job creation projects are expected to yield a financial return to the state in under four years.

The benefits of WEDC's investments do not stop there. When a company spends millions of dollars on an expansion project, for example, much of that money is pumped into the local economy through the direct purchasing of contractor services. In FY17, every dollar WEDC invested in job creation is expected to generate from three to five dollars in new wages and salaries for Wisconsin workers. WEDC's total investment in FY17 is expected to generate up to \$23 million in annual state tax revenue.



JOB TO BE CREATED

8,719



JOB TO BE RETAINED

13,358



TOTAL JOBS IMPACT

22,077



BUILDING A STRONG ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

While WEDC directly administers a portfolio of economic development programs designed to spur investment in business growth and community vibrancy, the organization also plays a facilitative role within Wisconsin's economic development network by funding programs managed by partner organizations and coordinating joint efforts among parties with a shared interest in Wisconsin's prosperity.

These partners come from all corners of the state and are made up of business and community leaders, educators, industry organizations, government agencies and even new groups coming together for a common purpose. WEDC counts as key strategic partners organizations it funds to help meet its strategic goals. WEDC also offers Capacity Building Grants to support local and regional economic development efforts throughout the state. These grants are intended to foster an advanced economic development network in Wisconsin by assisting organizations and local and regional economic development groups providing support to the businesses and communities they serve.

In FY17, WEDC awarded nearly \$600,000 in Capacity Building Grants to 14 organizations. New North Inc., the regional economic development entity representing 18 counties in northeastern Wisconsin, for example, received a Capacity Building Grant to develop a statewide portal for Wisconsin companies to promote their products and services to other businesses. WEDC Vice President of Business and Community Development Barb LaMue explains that the portal, dubbed the Wisconsin Supply Chain Marketplace, "is designed to be a dynamic sourcing tool for finding suppliers and to communicate with other suppliers." The platform, which is publicly accessible at www.WISupplyChainMarketplace.com, also helps market the capabilities of Wisconsin companies to new business attraction prospects.

Other examples of Capacity Building Grants WEDC awarded in FY17 include funds provided to Visions Northwest, a regional economic development organization representing 10 northwestern Wisconsin counties, to conduct the Northwest Wisconsin Flood Disaster Resilience Study Project. The purpose of this study was to identify, evaluate and address critical infrastructure in the event of future natural disasters. The need for such planning arose from the historic severe storms and major flooding that occurred in Northwest Wisconsin in July 2016. The United Community Center of Milwaukee also received a WEDC Capacity Building Grant to develop a two-year accredited curriculum for an associate degree in nursing in conjunction with Carroll University. The project has helped deliver a health care career pipeline program to Latinos in Milwaukee.

WEDC expanded the scope of the Capacity Building Grants in FY17 to specifically include organizations that provide support services to entrepreneurs. Eleven Entrepreneurship Support Grants ranging from \$40,000 to \$75,000 were awarded through a competitive process aimed at identifying promising programs throughout the state that promote entrepreneurship. "We opened the application process up to organizations throughout the state with limited restrictions because we didn't know what we didn't know," said WEDC Vice President of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Aaron Hagar. "We knew we wanted to uncover great ideas for supporting entrepreneurship—and it worked."



The United Community Center of Milwaukee received a grant from WEDC to develop an associate degree program in nursing in conjunction with Carroll University.

WEDC awarded a total of nearly \$500,000 to recipients representing a wide range of services targeting both urban and rural populations across the state. For example, Milwaukee 7, a regional economic development organization representing seven counties in southeastern Wisconsin, will use its \$60,000 grant to establish and execute a strategic and inclusive entrepreneurial development initiative for the Milwaukee region, while Nicolet Area Technical College will use its \$27,000 award to expand entrepreneurial training, mentorship and support throughout its six-county northern Wisconsin region. ■



DEVELOPING WISCONSIN'S INDUSTRY STRENGTHS

Ensuring that Wisconsin businesses remain competitive in an ever-changing global economy requires a long-term strategy that focuses on working with industry leaders to both capitalize on the opportunities that lie ahead and address the challenges the future may bring.

That is exactly what WEDC and its statewide partners are achieving through a sector development strategy that focuses on industries with the greatest potential for future growth—manufacturing; water technology; agriculture and food and beverage processing; energy, power and control; aerospace manufacturing; and biohealth.

A key project in FY17 was WEDC's support and leadership role in the development of the Transformational Productivity Initiative, a public-private partnership designed to help improve productivity performance for Wisconsin's small and midsize manufacturers. Working with the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership and the Milwaukee 7 (M7) regional economic development organization, WEDC invested \$190,000 in the initiative.

Another new initiative was a \$1.2 million statewide effort aimed at boosting Wisconsin exports and increasing foreign investment into the state. WEDC partnered with the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, The Water Council, M7 and New North on the initiative, which is the state's largest coordinated deployment of resources to drive exporting and encourage foreign direct investment.

A key component of WEDC's sector development strategy is the development of "centers of excellence" that serve as cluster anchors and spur research and development, encourage startup formation and growth, advance product commercialization, and attract new companies and business investment

to the state. WEDC's support played an instrumental role in the creation of the Global Water Center and the Energy Innovation Center in Milwaukee, and in FY17 the organization began laying the groundwork for a third center of excellence: the Connected Systems Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The institute will focus on ensuring that Wisconsin manufacturers can take advantage of opportunities created by the Industrial Internet of Things.

In FY17, WEDC continued to support investments in seed accelerator programs located within these centers of excellence. The BREW (water technology); FaBcap (food and beverage) and WERC Bench Labs (energy) are all successful seed accelerator programs built upon WEDC's vision of industry collaboration and stimulating innovation.

WEDC also continued to invest in the popular Fabrication Laboratories (Fab Labs) Grant Program in FY17, and awarded grants totaling nearly \$500,000 to 21 school districts and consortia in the second year of the program. The Fab Labs Grant Program supports hands-on science, technology, engineering,

arts and math (STEAM) education by assisting public school districts with equipment purchases for instructional and educational purposes in fab labs.

In addition to the grant to local school districts, WEDC in FY17 awarded a \$63,000 grant to the University of Wisconsin-Stout to develop an online tool to increase collaboration and the sharing of resources among school districts with fab labs. The grant also helped UW-Stout develop fab lab training programs for teachers. ■



WEDC's support played an instrumental role in the creation of the Global Water Center in Milwaukee.



TALENT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

WEDC's mission to advance and maximize opportunities for businesses, communities and people to thrive in a globally competitive environment refers not only to economic development projects but also to addressing the state's emerging talent and workforce development needs.

That's why the state is also investing in a wide variety of talent development efforts. From academic and career planning in schools to promoting internship opportunities and expanding training grants, collaboration ensures that Wisconsin's most valuable asset—its people—have the resources they need to be successful.

Through public-private partnerships, Wisconsin schools work closely with industry to develop a workforce with the skills companies need. Looking to the future, it is imperative to ensure that workers have access to training in current skills and that employers have a robust, skilled labor pipeline to support their growth. Between the Department of Workforce Development, WEDC and other state agencies, Wisconsin provides tax credits, demand-driven worker training grants and customized training programs to make it all happen.

WEDC is also helping to outfit public schools across the state to prepare students for the manufacturing jobs of the future. Fabrication laboratories (fab labs) provide hands-on learning to the next generation of workers, equipping them with valuable jobs skills and bringing them into the 21st century's global economy. The positive impact of fab labs goes beyond the individual student and school district to provide benefits to the community, local businesses and Wisconsin's economy as a whole.

In FY17, WEDC awarded grants up to \$25,000 each to 21 Wisconsin school districts and consortia to help them equip educational fab labs. Governor Scott Walker declared April 25, 2017 as Fab Lab Day in Wisconsin, and to mark the occasion, he and Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, along with other key state leaders, presented the 21 school districts the grants and celebrated their successes.

In addition to providing programs for skill development, WEDC also ramped up its efforts to attract and retain new talent. Like many states, Wisconsin is facing a demographic challenge in its workforce, and talent attraction will play a key role in keeping Wisconsin's economy competitive in the coming years. Therefore, WEDC continues to foster relationships and build capacity in young professional organizations throughout the state on initiatives designed to attract and retain the best and brightest talent in Wisconsin.



Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch visited the Bradley Technology & Trade School in Milwaukee to announce a \$25,000 grant award on Fab Labs Day in April 2017.



South Milwaukee High School's fab lab helps students learn about product development, entrepreneurship and innovation.

WISCONSIN
FAB LAB DAY
April 25, 2017
#WIFabLab



WEDC FAB LAB
SCHOOLS ASSISTED

21



FY17 WEDC AWARD
AMOUNT NEARLY

\$500k

“ Fab labs are a key part of our goal to make sure that every student in Wisconsin has the tools needed to succeed in school and beyond. ”

— Governor Scott Walker



Companies pitched to prospective employees at a “reverse job fair” event during YPWeek in Milwaukee.



YPWeek 2017 events included a leadership luncheon on “Overcoming Failure” at the Rumpus Room in Milwaukee.



ypWeek

One way WEDC is helping to engage young professionals is by investing in Young Professionals Week (YPWeek) Wisconsin, which celebrates the contributions of the next-generation workforce to the state’s economic future. With leadership from NEWaukee, the

event’s founding organization, and with WEDC support since 2015, participating communities have collaborated on a shared communication strategy designed to retain, excite and grow the state’s talent pool. In 2017, the 25 communities participating in YPWeek piloted the Think-Make-Happen platform with young professionals across the state. YPWeek was recognized with a Silver Award in the human capital category by the International Economic Development Council in September 2016, and this recognition is one indicator of Wisconsin’s status as a national leader in millennial engagement and leadership development and as a preferred destination of choice for younger workers.

WEDC will continue to work with its partners to develop other strategies to help attract and retain a strong workforce. Those efforts are expected to include leveraging the network of young professionals to promote business, career and personal fulfillment in their communities; enlisting university alumni groups in recruitment and attraction efforts; and showcasing Wisconsin as a great place to live and work. ■



SUPPORTING STARTUPS

In light of the variety of companies that fall under the umbrella of the term “startup,” WEDC and its partners connect companies to an array of resources to address their complex needs.

This universe of available services includes loans, angel and venture funding, working capital, structured accelerator programs, mentoring, and assistance with business planning, market research, technology and product development, prototyping, legal services and location selection, among other services and resources.

To create a supportive culture for Wisconsin startups, WEDC relies on its partners in economic development and academia, among others, to deliver business development and financial resources locally. WEDC also relies on strong networks to steer companies with more complex needs to the specialized resources required to move their ideas forward. Through its partners, WEDC is able to effectively deliver assistance that scales to meet the needs of businesses in every corner of Wisconsin.

During FY17, the Entrepreneurial Micro-grants Program assisted nearly 100 entrepreneurs, with 71 clients receiving support for entrepreneurial training coursework, and 24 more awardees in Small Business Innovation Research/ Small Business Technology Transfer funding (SBIR/STTR) assistance and business commercialization initiatives. UW-Extension’s Center for Technology Commercialization (CTC) clients receiving SBIR assistance received over \$8.9 million in federal SBIR/STTR awards. Also during the fiscal year, 41 new companies received Qualified New Business Venture (QNBV) certification, which allows for investors to receive tax credits when they invest in those companies. \$72 million in qualifying investment was made into QNBV companies in 2016, with investors receiving \$18 million in

tax credits in return. WEDC’s Technology Development Loan Program made 22 new loans during FY17, and at the end of year had a total of 96 active loans.

WEDC is committed to continuous improvement in its support for startups. In FY17 WEDC introduced a new program to meet a wider variety of entrepreneurship needs, including plugging resource gaps in rural and midsize communities, as well as capitalizing on unique opportunities and assets. The new Entrepreneurship Support pilot program provided funding to 11 nonprofit organizations and communities for activities such as the promotion of entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial education, mentorship and training, business development and financial services. At the end of the fiscal year, WEDC chose to give the pilot full program status and continue it indefinitely based on its success during the first year.

Startups are an engine for job growth, with the majority coming from smaller companies that are in many cases the unsung heroes of economic vitality. According to the 2016 Kauffman Index of Main Street Entrepreneurship, Wisconsin ranks second among the top 25 states for small business activity. Wisconsin also ranks near the top in terms of startup survivorship and longevity. Starting a new business always involves risk, but that business has a greater chance of success if it’s started in Wisconsin—an indicator of the strength of the startup ecosystem and the state’s support for entrepreneurship. ■

CALENDAR YEAR 2016 IMPACT

COMPANIES ASSISTED BY WEDC’S
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION PROGRAMS



314

TOTAL IMPACT OF PROGRAMS

\$385M

LEVERAGE RATIO

16:1

“ Certification as a Qualified New Business Venture through WEDC has been instrumental in our ability to raise the necessary funds to bring our product to market. This is helping to drive new business and job development in Wisconsin. The state is clearly committed to driving a dynamic environment for business growth. ”

— Eric Haberichter, CEO, Access HealthNet



Ab E Discovery was born from a game-changing discovery out of Professor Mark Cook’s lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, nurtured by entrepreneurial scientists who took its impact beyond the lab and into the marketplace. The Madison-based company, which is certified through WEDC’s Qualified New Business Venture Program, partners with entrepreneurial scientists to find the most direct, deliberate paths to take bio-functional feed ingredient technologies from discovery to impact. The company works alongside its partners to bring their ideas to market, providing the resources and expertise necessary for efficient and effective commercialization.

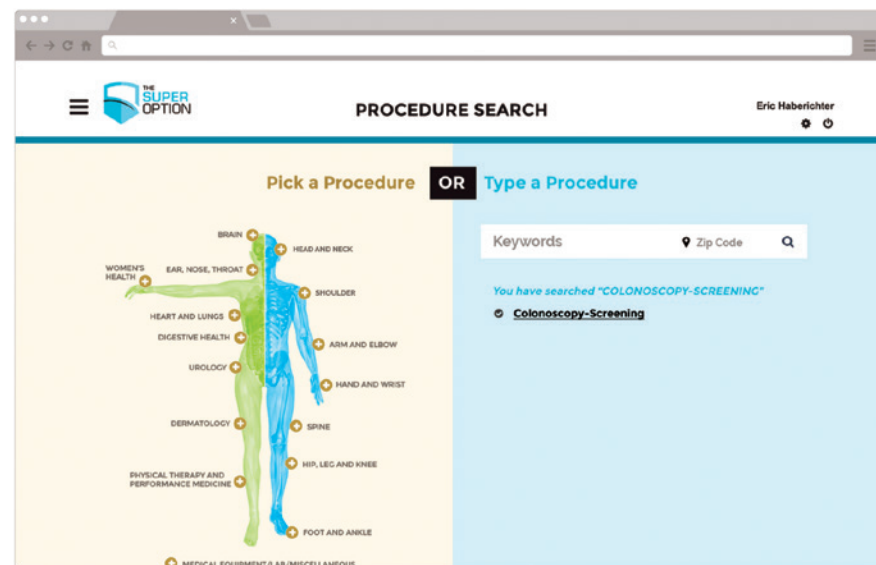
Ab E Discovery is a full-service resource with the comprehensive in-house capabilities—from R&D to manufacturing and scale-up—to engineer a confident, accelerated journey to market. From its vantage point at the intersection of science and industry, the company recognizes the value that innovations in animal agriculture offer beyond protein as food—as well as the need to support scientists in commercializing those ideas. By cutting through the complexities of commercialization, the company clears the way for innovators in animal health and nutrition to focus on driving their technologies forward.



Founded in 2014 by a team of dedicated health care professionals, Milwaukee-based Access HealthNet, a WEDC Qualified New Business Venture, administers a cloud-based technology solution called the Super Option that connects providers, offering value-oriented services in the form of flat rates and bundles to self-funded, full-pay entities seeking the most direct connection possible. Access HealthNet gives administrators the tools and flexibility they need to effectively control costs and educate patients on value, affording employers and others that administer self-funded plans the opportunity to take control of costs.

Access HealthNet believes in the free market and the quality of U.S. health care, but sought to do something about high costs. By creating the most direct connection between providers and those seeking and paying for care, the company believes it can reduce costs for everyone, increase access for patients and build a bridge toward sustainable, quality health care for all.

Access HealthNet’s founders are joined by a team of dedicated industry experts from the fields of health care, finance, technology, operational excellence, and consumer engagement. Everyone at Access HealthNet is dedicated to service and the company’s mission.



Access HealthNet provides easy-to-use tools to help employers deliver health care plans that achieve their quality and affordability objectives.



BUSINESS RETENTION AND GROWTH

The competition among states for economic development projects is strong, and when Wisconsin companies decide it's time to expand their operations, they have many location options to choose from—both in the state and outside of our borders. Just because a company has its roots in Wisconsin doesn't necessarily mean it will continue to grow here.

“This project will provide much-needed capacity to support the tremendous growth we've experienced over the last 10 years. Thanks to the state's favorable business climate, we can keep growing right here in Sheboygan County.”

—Ralph Stayer, Owner and Chairman, Johnsonville

That's why WEDC has a proactive business retention strategy in which its staff works closely with regional economic development partners to identify existing state businesses that are ready to grow and offer them the support they need to ensure that growth takes place in Wisconsin. Working in tandem with local partners, and often with the private sector and other state agencies, WEDC staff members identify what it will take to keep a company in Wisconsin and develop an incentive package that meets the company's needs while at the same time providing a significant return on investment for Wisconsin taxpayers.

The support from WEDC, however, is just one reason why Wisconsin companies decide to remain and grow here. The state's dedicated workforce, pro-business climate, world-class education system and outstanding quality of life

are also key factors in a company's decision to stay here. Some of the major Wisconsin companies whose expansion plans were supported by WEDC in FY17 include:

- **Great Lakes Cheese Co.**, which is building a \$55 million state-of-the-art packaging plant in Wausau, a project expected to create 125 jobs.
- **MilliporeSigma**, a life science business, which is expanding its facility in Sheboygan Falls by 80,000 square feet. The company plans to create 175 jobs as a result of the expansion.
- **Mills Fleet Farm**, which is constructing a \$64.8 million distribution center in Chippewa Falls. The company, a retailer with 37 stores in the Midwest, expects to hire more than 300 workers at the new facility.



Photo courtesy of Johnsonville Foods LLC

- **Johnsonville Foods LLC**, which is expanding its global corporate headquarters in Sheboygan Falls to provide much-needed capacity to support the company's tremendous growth. The project calls for Johnsonville to significantly expand its investment in engineering, research and development, and marketing.
- **U.S. Venture Inc.**, a leader in the distribution of petroleum and renewable energy products for the automotive industry, which is building a \$58 million corporate headquarters along the Fox River in downtown Appleton. The company expects to hire at least 200 employees once the project is completed.
- **The Menasha Corp.**, which plans to invest \$59 million to expand its operations in Neenah and Menasha. The project could create up to 300 jobs. ■

COMPANIES

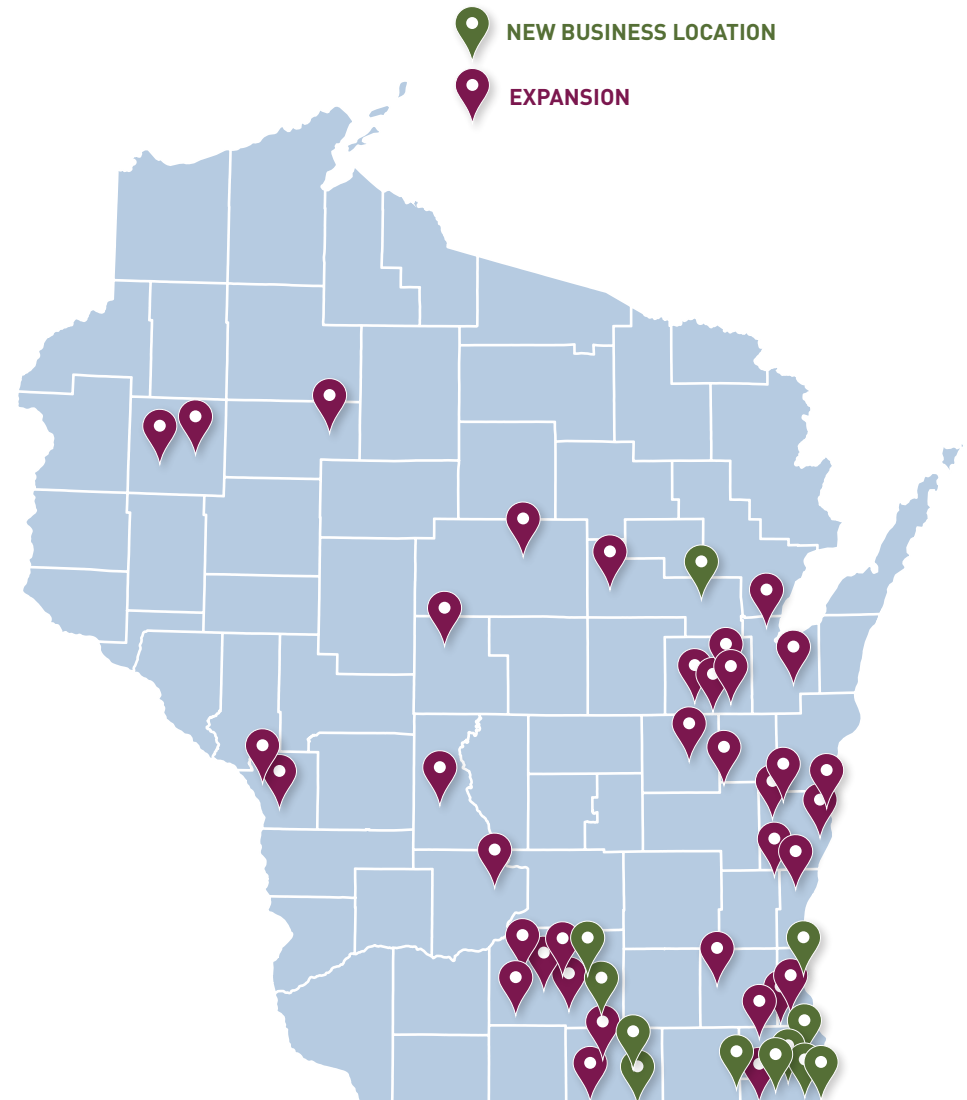
LOCATION

JOB IMPACT

INVESTMENT

Haribo of America Manufacturing LLC	Pleasant Prairie	85	\$220,000,000
Saputo Cheese USA	Almena	197	\$81,000,000
Direct Supply Inc	Milwaukee	1,884	\$80,240,000
Epicentre Technologies Corporation	Madison	134	\$78,197,097
Great Lakes Cheese Company Inc	Wausau	125	\$75,913,471
Mills Fleet Farm Group LLC	Appleton	284	\$69,084,454
MilliporeSigma (Merck KGaA)	Sheboygan Falls	1,352	\$64,131,000
Menasha Corporation	Neenah	1,624	\$59,000,000
U.S. Venture Inc	Appleton	703	\$56,474,017
Gold Standard Baking - Pleasant Prairie	Pleasant Prairie	96	\$42,675,000
Frito-Lay Inc	Beloit	520	\$38,000,000
Catalent Pharma Solutions LLC	Madison	202	\$33,000,000
Electronic Theatre Controls Inc	Middleton	787	\$30,000,000
Belmark Inc	Shawano	91	\$26,500,000
McFarland Cascade Holdings Inc	Cameron	29	\$26,100,000
Colbert Packaging Corporation	Kenosha	108	\$24,450,000
Dynamic Recycling Inc	Onalaska	275	\$20,300,000
PreventionGenetics LLC	Marshfield	296	\$20,000,000
Nueske's Meat Products Inc	Wittenberg	178	\$19,602,418
Cintas Corporation No 2	Greenville	432	\$18,100,000
Johnsonville Sausage LLC	Sheboygan Falls	1,035	\$16,000,000
E.R. Wagner Manufacturing Co	Menomonee Falls	126	\$15,500,000
Nestle Dreyer's Ice Cream Co	Appleton	100	\$14,540,000
Standish Industries LLC	Kiel	317	\$13,788,000
Vonco Products LLC	Trevor	86	\$12,249,500
Mill Haven Foods LLC	New Lisbon	79	\$10,133,575
DuraTech Industries Inc	La Crosse	281	\$9,050,000
Port City Bakery Inc	Green Bay	300	\$8,775,000
Plymouth Foam Inc	Plymouth	53	\$8,700,000
Agility Holdings LLC	Milwaukee	112	\$8,596,850
Sheboygan Paper Box Co	Sheboygan	107	\$8,300,000
Kem Krest - Pleasant Prairie	Pleasant Prairie	129	\$8,100,000
Toledo Molding & Die Inc	Janesville	118	\$7,975,000
Baptista's Bakery LLC	Franklin	584	\$7,783,000
IPMF LLC	Beloit	126	\$7,541,500
Grand Appliance Inc	Sturtevant	37	\$7,200,000
TRU Enterprises LLC	Beloit	41	\$6,135,750
Red Bull Distribution Company Inc	Madison	57	\$6,040,000
Teel Plastics Inc	Baraboo	314	\$6,000,000
Carnivore Meat Company LLC	Green Bay	56	\$5,800,000
Wisconsin Foam Products Inc	Madison	40	\$5,500,000
Impact Confections Inc	Janesville	184	\$5,300,000
LDV Inc	Burlington	247	\$5,000,000
Octopi Brewing LLC	Waunakee	23	\$4,971,000
Riddell Sports Group Inc	Sun Prairie	227	\$4,900,000
Metal-Era Inc	Waukesha	32	\$4,625,705
Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery	Ellsworth	120	\$4,516,000
Artisans Inc	Glen Flora	87	\$4,500,000
Prestige Metal Products Inc	Bristol	46	\$3,974,380
Krones Inc	Franklin	25	\$3,500,000

TOP 50 KEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

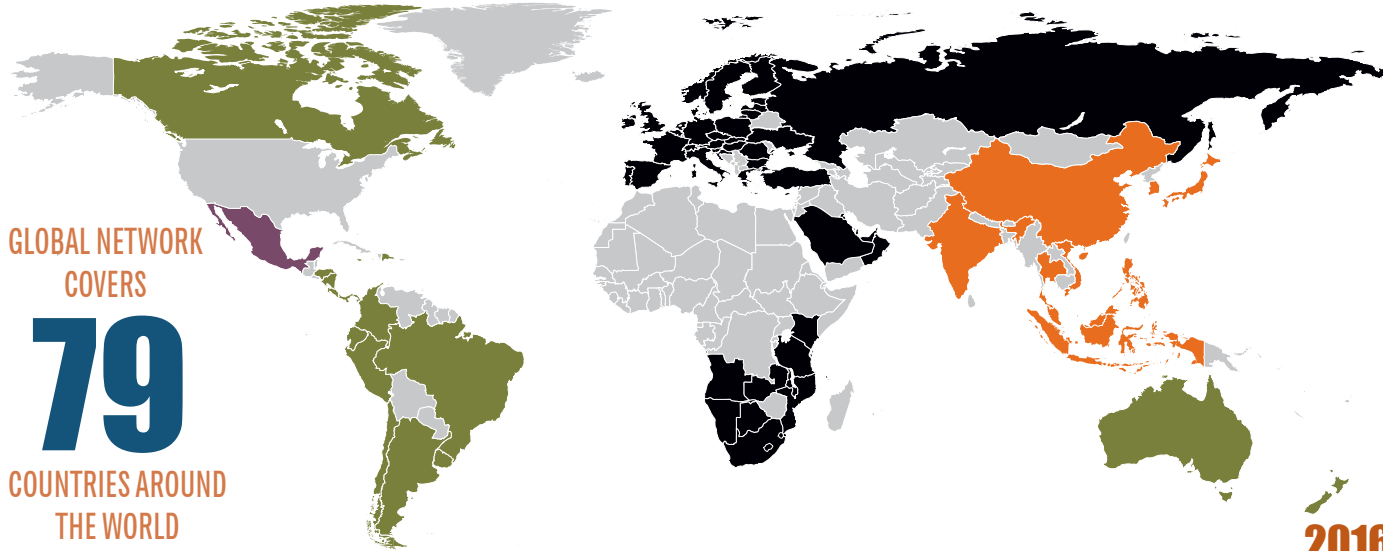


Awards provided by WEDC in FY17 are expected to create or retain **22,077** jobs and generate **\$2.1 billion** in capital investment. This map highlights the locations of significant economic development projects in Wisconsin.



GROWING WISCONSIN'S ECONOMY THROUGH INCREASED EXPORTS

Exporting of Wisconsin-made products is an important driver of growth not only for individual Wisconsin companies, but for the state's economy as a whole. WEDC is committed to helping Wisconsin companies increase their exports.



GLOBAL NETWORK
COVERS
79
COUNTRIES AROUND
THE WORLD

Several individual categories of exports increased significantly from 2015 to 2016—including aircraft/spacecraft and parts, which grew 49 percent. Exports to several individual countries also grew: Wisconsin's exports to Kuwait grew by 186 percent, or \$108 million; to India by 16 percent, or \$33 million; and to Mexico by 3 percent, or \$81 million. Wisconsin's exports to Mexico surpassed \$3 billion for the first time, in a year when the total U.S. exports to Mexico declined. (Notably, Wisconsin exports more to Mexico than it imports from Mexico—\$3.1 billion versus \$2.8 billion in 2016.) Although overall exports for Wisconsin and for the U.S. as a whole decreased in 2016, this trend appears to be reversing as Wisconsin exports have begun to grow again in 2017.

Each year, WEDC's Global Trade Venture Program takes Wisconsin companies to markets around the world to make connections that generate export sales. During FY17, a total of 21 companies went on WEDC's six global trade ventures to destinations including Chile and Argentina; India; the United Arab Emirates and Qatar; China; Canada; and Mexico. At each destination, participating companies receive a schedule of customized meetings with potential business partners chosen specifically for each company's needs. These global trade ventures are offered at a subsidized rate for the purpose of promoting Wisconsin exports. In addition, WEDC's Global Network of trade representatives support and promote interests of Wisconsin companies in 79 countries around the world—and the network expanded to 82 countries for fiscal year 2018.

\$21.2B

WORTH OF PRODUCTS EXPORTED TO
201 COUNTRIES AROUND THE GLOBE

2016 TOP EXPORT DESTINATIONS

CANADA	31%
MEXICO	15%
CHINA	7%
JAPAN	4%
UK	4%
GERMANY	3%
AUSTRALIA	3%
SOUTH KOREA	2%
SAUDIA ARABIA	2%
FRANCE	2%
OTHER	27%



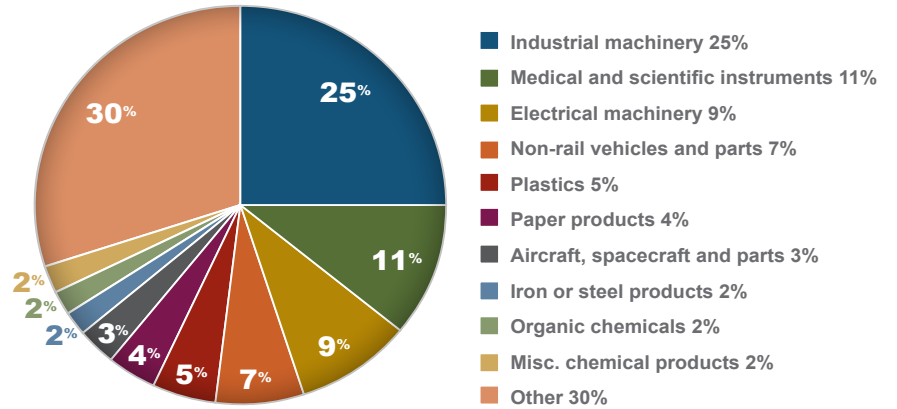
The Wisconsin delegation met with United Arab Emirates Undersecretary of Foreign Trade and Industry Abdulla Ahmed Al Saleh (center) on a global trade venture in January 2017.

Exporting not only allows a company's products and services to reach a broader swath of global customers, it also distributes risk, since economic volatility that affects one market will not impact a company as much if the company sells into multiple markets. The ExporTech™ Program, offered in partnership by the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership and WEDC, supports companies in developing strategic export plans based on solid market analysis, so companies can be proactive in boosting their exports to markets with the greatest potential for success, instead of waiting for customers to come to them. A total of 23 businesses completed ExporTech during FY17; of these, 20 entered new markets and three were new to exporting altogether. In addition, the first session of the ExporTech Renew pilot program was offered during FY17, with four companies renewing their export plans. ExporTech held its first on-site session at a company's facility, and also held three industry-focused sessions: one for water technology and two for food and beverage sector companies.

WEDC's Global Business Development Grant Program also assists companies in growing their exports, through grants that can be used to partially reimburse the cost of activities such as exhibiting at overseas trade shows and translating/customizing a company's website for a foreign market. And the Governor's Export Achievement Awards recognize companies that excel at exporting, sharing their stories and practices to inspire other companies. In 2017, the companies that received these awards were CMD Corp., an Appleton-based maker of machinery to produce plastic bags, pouches and packaging; CONNOILS LLC, a Waukesha-based manufacturer and distributor of oils, oil powders and protein powders; and Lucigen Corp., a Middleton-based provider of biomedical research products used in life science research and testing.

In addition, WEDC is one of the partners in Wisconsin's team for the Global Cities Initiative, a Brookings Institution-led program that seeks to grow exports and foreign direct investment hand in hand, among other strategies toward the goal of enhanced economic competitiveness. ■

2016 WISCONSIN'S TOP EXPORTS



Wang Zhengshu, deputy general manager of Beijing Capital Company (center), met with WEDC Vice President of International Business Development Katy Sinnott and The Water Council President and CEO Dean Amhaus on a global trade venture to China in March 2017.



ATTRACTING BUSINESSES FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO WISCONSIN

HARIBO



The popular “GoldBear” brand of gummy candies will soon be made in Wisconsin, as HARIBO, the Germany-based confectionery company, will build its first-ever North American manufacturing facility in Kenosha County—a \$220 million project expected to create about 400 jobs.

The company’s decision to locate here was a sweet win for Wisconsin, and resulted from months of discussions between the company and WEDC’s attraction team, as well as local and regional economic development partners.

It also is one example of how WEDC and its partners engage with and cultivate relationships with corporate location decision-makers and business executives worldwide to increase their awareness of all Wisconsin has to offer. WEDC’s attraction team recruits targeted companies by identifying their unique needs, delivering solid data supporting the decision to locate in Wisconsin, and developing a competitive incentive package.

In terms of both the number of jobs and the amount of capital investment, the HARIBO project is one of the largest investments of new operations by an overseas company in Wisconsin history. Attracting HARIBO to Wisconsin aligns with WEDC’s proactive foreign direct investment strategy, which includes meeting with business executives around the world to promote the state’s assets and make a strong case about why those companies should establish operations in Wisconsin.

The state’s dedicated workforce, pro-business climate, reliable infrastructure, world-class education system and outstanding quality of life helped attract HARIBO and more than a dozen other companies to Wisconsin in FY17.



Governor Scott Walker announced in March that HARIBO has chosen Kenosha County as the site of its first manufacturing facility in North America.

“ HARIBO’S decision to invest in our community and make this the location for their first U.S. production facility will have a tremendous impact on our county and our state. We are incredibly excited about this investment and the long-term positive impact it will have on our entire area and residents. ”

— Jim Kreuser, Kenosha County Executive



WEDC also began discussions with **Foxconn Technology Group** in FY17, a \$10 billion investment in Racine County that is by far the largest economic development project ever in Wisconsin, and is the largest greenfield investment by a foreign-based company in U.S. history.

Other major attraction projects in FY17 include:

- Chicago-based **Gold Standard Baking Inc.**, a high-volume commercial bakery, decided to expand in Kenosha County and is building a \$42 million plant in Pleasant Prairie expected to create about 100 jobs.
- **Vonco Products LLC**, a leading manufacturer of high-performance flexible packaging and promotional products, relocated its operations from northern Illinois to the Town of Salem in Kenosha County after considering numerous location options. The \$13 million plant is expected to employ about 100 people.
- **Diversified Manufacturing Inc.**, a private-label manufacturer, relocated its operations from Minnesota to Pierce County in western Wisconsin, a project expected to create 150 jobs.
- **Toledo Molding & Die Inc.**, an Ohio-based global supplier of interior and air/fluid management systems to the automotive industry, has opened a \$14 million facility in Beloit that will employ more than 100 workers.
- **Colbert Packaging Corp.**, a leading manufacturer of cartons, boxes and paperboard specialty products, moved its flexographic packaging operation and related warehousing services from northern Illinois to Kenosha. The project is anticipated to bring more than 100 new jobs to Wisconsin. ■

“The State of Wisconsin, with its persuasive and attractive incentive programs, made it an easy choice to set up shop in Prescott.”

— Ram Motilall, Founder and President,
Diversified Manufacturing Inc.



Vonco Products manufactures flexible packaging and promotional products.



Photo courtesy of Toledo Molding & Die Inc.



REVITALIZING IDLE COMMERCIAL SITES

Business startup and growth, talent attraction and retention, development of new ideas—all of these activities take place within communities. Thus, vibrant communities are crucial to the state's economic strength and its outstanding quality of life.

Creating these vibrant communities requires a communal effort that unites various partners around a shared vision. As one of the partners guiding this vision, WEDC offers a variety of programs to help communities and businesses across the state grow and thrive, and FY17 was another banner year for these programs and the communities and businesses they serve.

IDLE SITES REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

By bringing new life to vacant industrial and commercial sites, this program helps these sites once again become generators for economic development and an improved quality of life for the cities and communities where they are located. Offering grants of up to \$500,000 to Wisconsin communities, this program helps communities implement redevelopment plans for large commercial or industrial sites that have been idle, abandoned or underutilized for a period of at least five years. In FY17, nine Wisconsin communities received grants—the largest number of recipients in a single fiscal year since the program was created in 2013. WEDC committed \$4.3 million in grant funding for the following projects:

- **Eau Claire County:** \$500,000 toward the first phase of a \$90 million downtown redevelopment project. Buildings will be razed to make room for a wellness, aquatics and recreation complex; a major event center; and a river education center. The project is expected to create 170 jobs once all four phases are completed.
- **Green Bay:** \$425,000 to redevelop Larsen Cannery into an upscale office, retail and residential development in downtown Green Bay along the Fox River. The project is expected to create 100 jobs.
- **Kimberly:** \$500,000 to help redevelop NewPage Paper Mill, a 90-acre site along the Fox River, into a \$12 million mixed-use neighborhood. The project is expected to create 400 jobs.
- **La Crosse:** \$500,000 to redevelop the 108-year-old La Crosse Plow building that has been vacant for 23 years into commercial, office and retail space and 60 loft-style apartments on the second and third floors. Located in downtown La Crosse, the \$33 million project is expected to create more than 270 jobs.
- **Madison:** \$500,000 grant to redevelop the severely blighted former Garver Feed Mill Building into a \$20 million artisan food processing facility with retail and office space for local second-stage food companies.
- **Manitowoc:** \$500,000 to raze the old Mirro Aluminum facility, which has been vacant since 2003, and redevelop the five-acre sit.
- **Muskego:** \$500,000 to redevelop the former Parkland Mall, vacant since 1998, into a \$34 million Parkland Towne Center, including a new grocery store, 90 housing units and commercial space. The project is expected to create 155 jobs.
- **Oshkosh:** \$375,000 to redevelop the former Jeld-Wen manufacturing site, vacant since 2009, into a mixed-use development to include residential, commercial and office space. The project is expected to create 75 jobs.
- **Waunakee:** \$500,000 to redevelop the former Waunakee Alloy Casting site to include a new downtown library, senior housing, a local elementary school and restoration of six mile creek. This is a \$15 million project.

To date, the Idle Sites Redevelopment Program has awarded more than \$12.8 million in grants to 19 projects in 17 communities, which is projected to draw an additional \$170 million in private investment.

SITE ASSESSMENT GRANTS

Abandoned, idle and vacant sites can come with a number of unknowns, including issues hidden from plain sight. The Site Assessment Grant Program provides funds to assist local governments with conducting initial environmental assessment and demolition activities on an eligible abandoned, idle or underutilized industrial or commercial site. This funding can be used for specific activities, such as investigating environmental contamination and asbestos abatement. WEDC awarded grants to 11 communities and organizations in FY17, investing more than \$1.3 million to help conduct these crucial site assessment activities.

BROWNFIELDS GRANTS

To help convert contaminated sites into productive properties, the Brownfields Grant Program provides funds to assist with brownfield redevelopment or associated environmental remediation activities on sites with demonstrated soil, groundwater or vapor contamination on abandoned, idle or underused industrial or commercial facilities or sites. Thirteen companies, businesses and communities received \$4.4 million in grants in FY17, providing an important boost in converting contaminated sites into productive properties that are attractive and ready for redevelopment. ■



FOSTERING HEALTHY DOWNTOWNS

The livelihood of Wisconsin's communities, particularly its downtowns, is directly linked to quality services and infrastructure that ensure long-term economic growth.



Opening of the John Rose Canoe and Kayak Launch on the Rock River in downtown Beloit

To help with this, WEDC's Community Development Investment (CDI) Grant Program supports urban, small city and rural community development and redevelopment efforts, primarily in downtown areas. This program provides incentives for shovel-ready projects that will create jobs, increase local property values and leverage matching investment from local and private partners. In FY17, WEDC provided CDI grants totaling \$4.6 million to 21 communities. Among other projects, the city of Prairie du Chien received a \$33,750 grant to redevelop a former clothing store into a café and adult day-care facility. The center will provide services to adults who need enriched social or health-supportive experiences, or who may need assistance with daily living activities, and the café will be an extension of the existing Sharing Spaces Kitchen, which provides work opportunities to clients with disabilities. Directly across the state, Milwaukee County received a \$250,000 grant for the renovation of an underutilized historic industrial building on North Fourth Street in Milwaukee. This public-private venture will include the renovation of about 38,000 square feet of office space and the creation of 59 new housing units, creating a "walk-to-work" environment.

In all corners of the state, CDI grants are benefiting communities large and small. Since the program was created in 2013, WEDC has awarded 82 grants totaling more than \$15 million. This investment was supported by more than \$137 million in planned capital investment.



CREATING PLACES FOR BUSINESSES TO THRIVE

When a new or expanding company is ready to make its move, it doesn't want to be held back by costly delays in permitting and approvals. That's where the Certified In Wisconsin® Program shines.

The program applies a consistent standard, putting in place all the key reviews, documents and assessments most commonly required for industrial use. The Certified Site designation means faster turnaround times, quick approvals and low risk, so companies can break ground on new development projects sooner. In FY17, two new Certified Sites were added: Whitewater University Technology Park and Black River Falls Industrial Park.

Wisconsin has 17 Certified Sites in all, with 21 development projects completed or underway on 11 of them. These projects, when complete, are expected to create nearly 2,300 jobs and represent nearly \$400 million in capital investment. ■



REVITALIZED DOWNTOWNS KEY TO ECONOMIC SUCCESS

There is no question that a vibrant downtown provides an economic shot in the arm to small businesses located within those districts. However, creating and maintaining a thriving central core has benefits for a community that extend well beyond Main Street.



An American Family Insurance agency in Rice Lake utilized a grant from the local Main Street organization to assist with a complete building restoration after purchasing the building in a deteriorated condition. The project, located in Rice Lake's historic downtown, received design assistance from WEDC's downtown team.

In order to attract new businesses and help ensure that existing ones don't go elsewhere, a community must offer the kind of amenities that will help companies hire and retain talented workers. That means Wisconsin's communities must concentrate their efforts on creating the high-quality, well-connected places—including vibrant commercial districts—that young professionals have come to expect. Creating a downtown that offers diverse shopping, dining, social and cultural opportunities can help a community market itself to potential workers seeking a better quality of life.

Working closely with communities seeking to revitalize their downtowns is the mission of the Wisconsin Main Street Program, administered by WEDC. The 35 currently active Main Street communities receive assistance from WEDC's downtown development team to implement strategies that breathe new life into business districts through creative reuse of buildings, streetscape improvements, new tenant recruitment, and proactive marketing and promotion efforts.

Wisconsin Main Street, which was created in 1987, is part of the nationwide Main Street America program, with more than 1,600 members in all, and has been recognized nationally for its initiatives, engagement and outcomes. Since the program's inception, Wisconsin Main Street communities have created more than 2,600 net new businesses and nearly 14,000 net new jobs. They also have generated more than \$1.8 billion in public and private investment since then, and consistently renovate more than 250 buildings per year.

In FY17 alone, Main Street communities reported creating 65 net new businesses, 373 net new jobs and nearly \$140 million in public and private investment.

The Connect Communities Program, which WEDC created in 2013 and which currently has 69 participating communities, supports and complements the Main Street Program by providing access to resources and training to help communities pursue revitalization and redevelopment efforts. Since the start of the program, participating communities have reported adding 274 net new businesses and more than 1,600 jobs, as well as \$178 million in private and public investment.

13,871

NEW JOBS SINCE MAIN STREET PROGRAM INCEPTION IN 1987

In FY17, participating Connect Communities reported creating 46 net new businesses, 506 net new jobs and nearly \$75 million in public and private investment. Those results could not have been attained without the assistance of the numerous partners that have contributed to the success of the two programs. ■



The Chalkfest event transforms downtown Wausau each year.



PROMOTING MINORITY BUSINESS GROWTH

WEDC works year-round to enhance the environment for minority, woman and veteran-owned businesses in Wisconsin.



Godwin Amegashie recently retired after 18 years of state service, received the Community Economic Development Award for State Development and Advocacy at MARKETPLACE.

The capstone of these efforts each year is MARKETPLACE, the Governor’s Conference on Minority Business Development. The conference, which celebrated its 35th anniversary in 2016, is a two-day event that includes workshops on business topics, a networking reception, a breakfast and luncheon with awards presented, an expo hall, and organized meetings with buyers from government and the private sector. Since 2014, the conference has also included a half-day Small Business Academy that covers topics of specific interest to people who have recently started businesses or are planning on starting them.

A record-setting 823 registrants attended MARKETPLACE in 2016, and the Small Business Academy also drew a capacity crowd of 200 registrants. In addition, 667 buyer meetings were held by 34 different organizations during the conference to discuss potential purchases from minority-, woman- and veteran-owned businesses.

During FY17, WEDC awarded \$1.325 million to 13 partner organizations that serve Wisconsin’s minority business communities. While all awarded during FY17, these funds were committed during two separate fiscal years: \$575,000 during FY16 and \$750,000 during FY17.

AWARDED TO 13 PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS
THAT SERVE WISCONSIN’S MINORITY
BUSINESS COMMUNITIES

MARKETPLACE REGISTRANTS IN 2016

823

\$1.3M

As part of this funding to partner organizations, WEDC provided \$50,000 each to four minority chambers for the purpose of allocating matching funds to Wisconsin-based Kiva microloan proposals. Kiva has been providing small loans to current and aspiring business owners in the developing world since 2005, and began offering zero-interest loans in the U.S. in 2011 through a pilot program that has since expanded. Kiva’s loans are funded by individuals who visit the Kiva website and choose projects to support, with individual contributions of as little as \$25 being pooled together to support a loan amount from a few hundred dollars up to \$20,000. The funds provided by the minority chambers serve as matching funds, allowing projects to move forward that otherwise might not be able to if they were not fully funded by individual lenders. When the funds are repaid, they are directed back into another loan for a different borrower. With the funds provided during the first year of the program, two of the four chambers provided matching funds to business owners—the Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce matched one Kiva loan for a Waukesha-based business, and the African American Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin matched five loans for businesses based in Milwaukee and Plover—with additional loans expected to be matched as the chambers further publicize the new program.

In addition, during FY17 Bunker Labs Wisconsin launched a new program aimed at helping military veterans throughout Wisconsin start and grow their businesses. The Innovator Academy, funded with a \$95,000 grant from WEDC as well as support from private sector sponsors, will offer veteran-led startups training, workspace and access to mentors and investors in a peer-to-peer learning environment. Managed by a team of experienced business, technology and finance experts, most of whom are veterans themselves, the program emphasizes the development of entrepreneurial strengths and talents as the mentors counsel entrepreneurs and connect them with the resources, tools and networks necessary for their success. In addition, WEDC provided the Wisconsin Veteran Chamber of Commerce with a \$25,000 grant to support the chamber’s advocacy work, events and workshops, efforts to connect veteran business owners to one another, and general efforts to promote economic opportunity for military veterans, their families and veteran-friendly businesses. ■



EXPANDING PERCEPTIONS OF WISCONSIN



WEDC Deputy Secretary and COO Tricia Braun unveils the Think-Make-Happen In Wisconsin collaborative marketing strategy designed to attract business investment and talent to the state at the 2016 Future Wisconsin Summit.

In December 2016, WEDC Deputy Secretary and Chief Operating Officer Tricia Braun was joined on stage at the Future Wisconsin Summit by a business executive, an educator, a regional economic development representative and a young professional to introduce a unified message designed to powerfully convey the value Wisconsin delivers to the people and businesses that reside in the state. Each speaker shared his or her unique perspective on Wisconsin's workforce challenges and demonstrated the power of collaboration—in both word and deed—in engaging, retaining and attracting the talent necessary to maintain and advance Wisconsin's economy and exceptional quality of life.

After months of input from stakeholders statewide, including young professional organizations representing a demographic segment critical to Wisconsin's economic future and a national survey testing the motivating effects of a number of brand statements meant to convey Wisconsin's core identity, WEDC unveiled the Think-Make-Happen In Wisconsin platform. Before a receptive audience at the well-attended event in Madison, Braun summarized the 18-month process that yielded a strong consensus around how best to effectively articulate and deliver on Wisconsin's promise. As part of the presentation, the featured economic development partners shared their organizations' strategies for leveraging Think-Make-Happen

to promote the opportunities their communities offer for business, professional and personal success. Former Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce President Shannon Full demonstrated the expansive potential of Think-Make-Happen in the debut of a video promoting the Fox Cities as a lifestyle and career destination. Representing organizations throughout the state channeling the passion Wisconsin's young professionals bring to the workplace to help build and sustain Wisconsin's strong workforce and excellent quality of life, Joe Truesdale, president of Young Professionals of Fond du Lac, detailed what can best be described as a "movement" in Wisconsin represented by a weeklong



Communities and organizations throughout Wisconsin have adopted and localized the Think-Make-Happen logo to tell their unique Wisconsin stories.

event—YPWeek—designed to retain, excite and grow the state’s talent pool. The 25 communities that participated in YPWeek in April adopted Think-Make-Happen as a shared message to be adapted to promote each area’s unique assets.

WEDC also worked with Momentum West, its regional economic development partner in west-central Wisconsin, and Global Finishing Solutions of Osseo, to lay the groundwork for what would become a statewide web-based strategy for promoting regional lifestyle destinations, both to business investors and the talent they need to succeed. This early collaboration created a vision for a highly engaging new InWisconsin.com website that would launch in late 2017.



Exploring the full range of career opportunities available to young people sometimes involves getting them and their parents to think differently about their educational paths. Michelle McGlynn from Waunakee High School shared an initiative that is exposing students to new opportunities while also filling open positions within companies throughout the area. One of the challenges Michelle and her colleagues face in promoting her school’s Youth Apprenticeship program is overcoming misperceptions about technical career options. WEDC worked with Michelle to produce a video featuring positive testimonials from students and employers who participated in the school’s Youth Apprenticeship program. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development has shared the video with school districts throughout the state to use in the promotion of their Youth Apprenticeship programs, and Waunakee High School even featured the video during halftime of the school’s homecoming football game.

Since the launch of Think-Make-Happen at the 2016 Future Wisconsin Summit, many communities and organizations throughout the state have joined the chorus, localizing this shared message to promote the distinctive attributes that make their city, county or area a great place to pursue one’s passions. For its part, WEDC has built upon the foundation laid at the event to expand the reach of its talent marketing, building new social media channels to engage with young people seeking the best location for career and personal fulfillment and developing integrated strategies to drive interest and action among target audiences within Wisconsin, regionally and nationally toward the idea that if you THINK big and strive to MAKE your mark, anything can HAPPEN in Wisconsin. ■



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The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) leads economic development efforts for the state by advancing and maximizing opportunities in Wisconsin for businesses, communities and people to thrive in a globally competitive environment. WEDC provides resources, operational support and financial assistance to companies, partners and communities in Wisconsin. WEDC achieves its mission through initiatives driven by five strategic pillars: business development; community and economic opportunity; strategic economic competitiveness; state brand management and promotion; and operational and fiscal excellence. Working with more than 600 regional and local partners, WEDC develops and delivers solutions representative of a highly responsive and coordinated economic development network.

Visit wedc.org to learn more.



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