

Element 6: Economic Development

A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local governmental unit, including an analysis of the labor force and economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the local governmental unit's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and shall designate an adequate number of sites for such businesses and industries. The element shall also evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The element shall also identify county, regional and state economic development programs that apply to the local governmental unit.



Element 6: Economic Development

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Element 6: Economic Development

Introduction

Economic development planning recognizes the connection between economic development and quality of life. It leverages new growth and redevelopment to improve the community. Economic development is important because it pays the bills. It is about working together to maintain a strong economy by creating and retaining desirable jobs, which provide a good standard of living for individuals. Increased personal income and wealth increases the tax base, so a community, county or state can provide the level of services residents expect. Wood County is fortunate to have two high quality economic development agencies in the county; the Marshfield Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MACCI) and the Heart of Wisconsin Business and Economic Alliance (HOWBEA). In addition, the Wood County Board of Supervisors has a Conservation, Education & Economic Development Committee whose mission regarding economic development is to, “aggressively pursue the economic development opportunities available to Wood County that will ensure and enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Wood County” and “work to create an environment that will retain and expand business and industry while pursuing initiatives that will attract new businesses and visitors to our County.” Finally, Wood County and its economic development agencies are members of the Board of Directors of Centergy, a three-county regional economic development consortium. More will be presented later in this chapter about these

economic development agencies and the roles they play in Wood County.

As part of their comprehensive plan, the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission prepared a regional economic development plan, with several goals, objectives, policies and programs pursuant to the Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law. One function of this section of Wood County’s Comprehensive Plan is to compare the county’s goals, objectives, policies and programs to those of the region and State. That function is in addition to developing an economic analysis and plan of our own. Wood County, like many communities, has experienced a change in the local economy, one that was dominated by locally-owned paper companies in the southeast and several manufacturing plants in the northwest to one that has downsized as it has been affected by and part of a new global economy. To prosper in the new economy requires greater focus on what the Wood County has to offer. Locally, we must know our county’s economic function in a global economy, we must provide a skilled and educated workforce, invest in an infrastructure for innovation, provide a great quality of life, foster an innovative business climate, reinvent government, and take regional governance and collaboration seriously.¹ This section will begin with a discussion of state economic development goals, move on to a presentation of an economic inventory and trends in Wood County, and then present an analysis of Wood County’s economy and how it fits into the regional, state, national and world economy.

State Economic Development Goals

¹ “A Guide to Preparing the Economic Development Element of a Comprehensive Plan,” Wisconsin Economic Development Institute, Inc., August, 2003, p. 7.

The Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law (Ch. 66.1001) establishes 14 state planning goals (see sidebar). It is incumbent on Wood County, from a planning perspective, to consider the state's goals in our plan. The goals that appear in our comprehensive plan are basic to comprehensive planning development at any level and none pose any threat to loss of private property rights of individual land owners.

Two state goals that focus directly on the

State of Wisconsin Planning Goals

- 1) Promotion of the redevelopment of lands within existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures.
- 2) Encouragement of neighborhood designs that support a range of transportation choices.
- 3) Protection of natural resources, including wetlands, wildlife habitats, lakes, woodlands, open spaces and groundwater resources.
- 4) Protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forest.
- 5) Encouragement of land uses, densities and regulations that promote efficient development patterns and relatively low municipal, state governmental and utility costs.
- 6) Preservation of cultural, historic and archeological sites.
- 7) Encouragement of coordination and cooperation among nearby units of government.
- 8) Building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards.
- 9) Providing an adequate supply of affordable housing for individuals of all income levels throughout each community.
- 10) Providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses.
- 11) Promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional and local levels.
- 12) Balancing individual property rights with community interests and goals.
- 13) Planning and development of land uses that create or preserve varied and unique urban and rural communities.
- 14) Providing an integrated, efficient and economical transportation system that affords mobility, convenience and safety and that meets the needs of all citizens, including transit-dependent and disabled citizens.

economy are: (1) promoting the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional and local levels and (2) promotion of the redevelopment of lands with existing infrastructure and public services and the maintenance and rehabilitation of existing residential, commercial and industrial structures.

Three more of the 14 state goals are related to economic development. They are (1) protection of economically productive areas, including farmland and forests; (2) building of community identity by revitalizing main streets and enforcing design standards; and (3) providing adequate infrastructure and public services and an adequate supply of developable land to meet existing and future market demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses. These goals are also addressed throughout the plan.

Employment Trends

In Element 1, the Wood County employed labor force was described as “not as rapid as other counties in the region.” A comparison of the labor force from 1980 to 2000 revealed a growth of 11.5% between 1980 and 1990 and another 9.3% between 1990 and 2000. For the 20-year period, the growth in the employed labor force in Wood County was, on average, 18.5% slower than the other counties in the region and nearly 8% slower than the State. The unemployment rate for the Wood County labor force was 3.8% in 2000 (3.4% for Wisconsin), which is considered “full-employment,” but that would change with plant closings and downsizing displacing Wood County workers. Beginning in 2001, Wood County’s unemployment rate began rising, reaching a high of 5.9% in 2003 and declining slightly since then. The unemployment rate in 2008 was 5.3% and, through May, 2009, it rose dramatically to 9.0%. The State had a similar trend, rising

from 3.4% in 2000 to a high of 5.6% in 2003, settling back to 4.7% in 2008. The State's rate continued to rise through the first five months of 2009, averaging 8.7% through May. The national unemployment rate through May, 2009 was 8.8%, so the State is about the same and Wood County is somewhat worse off than the nation as a whole.

strongest industry for area employment, followed closely by the Education, Health and Social Service sector. Retail trade, although still a significant employment sector, has had nearly a five percent decline in its proportionate share of jobs in the County. The Entertainment and Recreation Services industry has grown from only one percent of the jobs to nearly seven percent.

The industries that employ Wood County residents and the type of jobs are listed in Table 6-1. Manufacturing remains the

Nearly 27% of Wood County residents hold management, professional and related positions, followed closely by sales and

| Table 6-1: Employment by Industry & Occupation | | | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| INDUSTRY | 1990 | | 2000 | |
| | Number Employed | Percent of Total | Number Employed | Percent of Total |
| Employed persons 16 years & over | 34,173 | 100.0% | 37,345 | 100.0% |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing & mining | 1,686 | 4.9% | 1,321 | 3.5% |
| Construction | 1,560 | 4.6% | 2,333 | 6.2% |
| Manufacturing | 9,284 | 27.2% | 9,144 | 24.5% |
| Transportation, communication, warehousing & utilities | 1,844 | 5.4% | 2,266 | 6.1% |
| Wholesale trade | 1,115 | 3.3% | 929 | 2.5% |
| Retail trade | 6,282 | 18.4% | 5,150 | 13.8% |
| Finance, insurance & real estate | 1,225 | 3.6% | 1,471 | 3.9% |
| Professional, scientific, mgmt. & other services | 1,607 | 4.7% | 1,288 | 3.4% |
| Entertainment & recreation services | 347 | 1.0% | 2,537 | 6.8% |
| Education, health & social services | 6,984 | 20.4% | 8,558 | 22.9% |
| Other professional & related services | 1,514 | 4.4% | 1,368 | 3.7% |
| Public administration | 725 | 2.1% | 980 | 2.6% |
| OCCUPATION | | | 37,345 | 100.0% |
| Management, professional & related | | | 10,011 | 26.8% |
| Sales & office | | | 8,991 | 24.1% |
| Service, except protective & household | | | 5,598 | 15.0% |
| Farming, forestry & fishing | | | 471 | 1.3% |
| Construction, extraction & maintenance | | | 3,900 | 10.4% |
| Production, transportation & material moving | | | 8,374 | 22.4% |
| Source: U. S. Census 2000, Table DP-3 | | | | |

office jobs (24.1%), then production, transportation and material moving jobs (22.4%). Management positions often indicate higher salaries. In Element 1, it was pointed out that Wood County has the highest median household income in the central Wisconsin region, which may be a result of such a high percentage of management positions held by county residents.

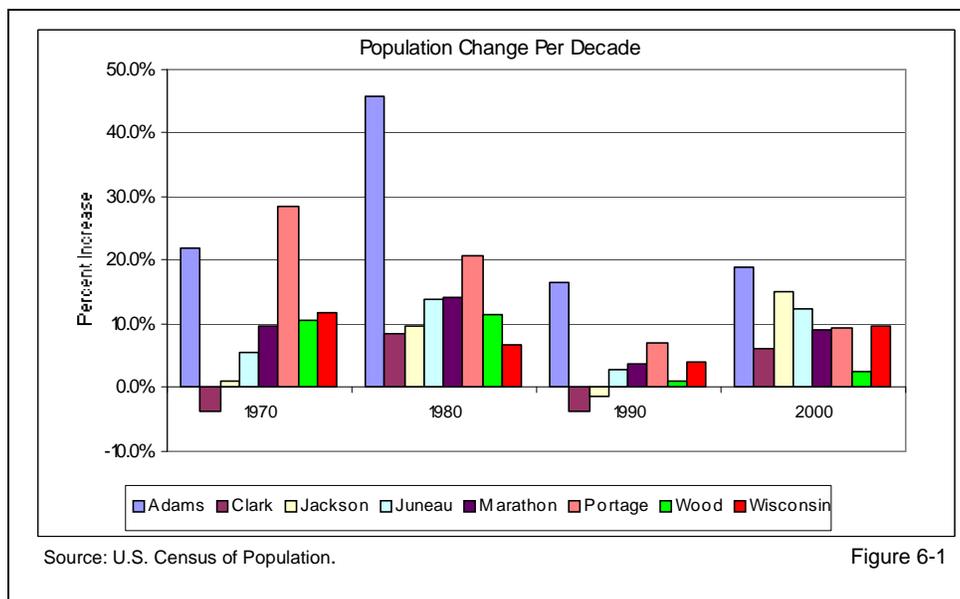
Population & Labor Force

It was pointed out earlier in this plan that the population in Wood County has increased very slowly, growing only 3.8% between 1980 and 2000. Between 1990 and 2000, Wood County grew at a slower rate than all of the surrounding counties and Wisconsin. Figure 6-1 illustrates the percentage increase for Wood County since 1960 and compares it to Wisconsin's change and that of counties that are immediately adjacent to Wood County. It is worth noting the huge gap between Wood County and Adams and Portage counties, two of Wood County's economic competitors. A factor of growth in Adams County is the development of three man-made lakes, beginning in the 1970s. Growth in Portage County has occurred, in part, from the University of Wisconsin

Campus in Stevens Point and, in part, with the widening of Highway 51 and its designation as an interstate highway. Marathon County, the other major economic competitor, has also outpaced Wood County's population growth on a regular basis as it has become a metropolitan city located at the junction of the north-south Interstate 39 and the east-west State Highway 29 – two major arterials in Wisconsin.

Worker Age Structure

In Wood County, there are 47,043 people between the ages of 16 and 65, the group generally considered to be the "working age" group. Eight-two percent of those are between the ages of 25 and 64, a range that the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) considers the "prime working age" population. This is comparable to an 80% proportion for Wisconsin. On the national level, the growth of the civilian labor force is expected to slow down, while the older labor force is expected to grow five times faster than the overall labor force. The age 55 and older portion of the labor force is expected to grow by 46.7% between 2006 and 2016, according to the BLS. Similar conclusions



have been projected for Wisconsin and it is not unreasonable to expect our area to be any different given the information that was presented in Element 1 regarding the local aging population. The two principal reasons for the change are: the baby-boom generation is aging and retiring, and the labor force participation rate of women appears to have peaked.

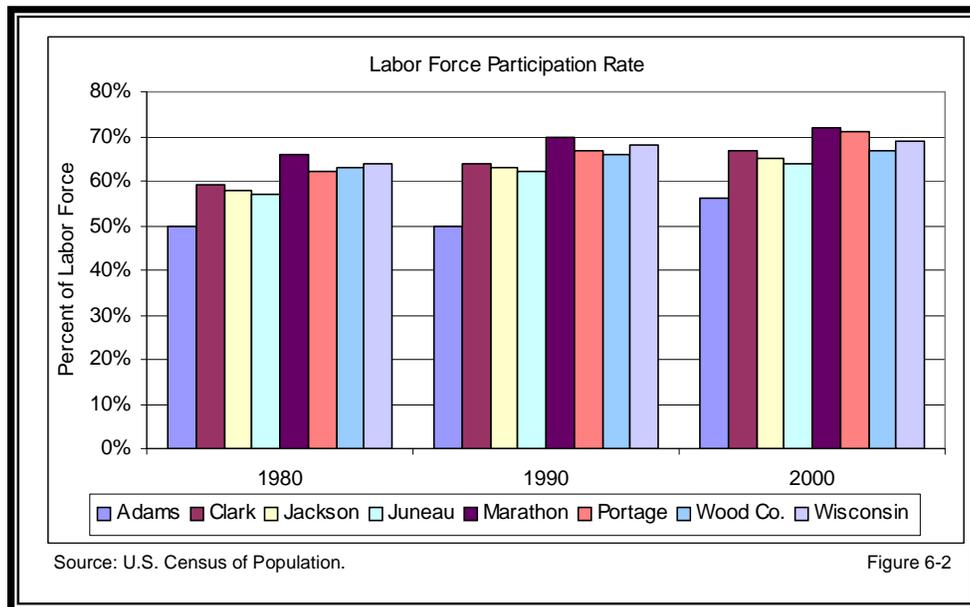
Labor Force Participation

The labor force is made up of people who are 16-years of age or older and are either employed or looking for employment. Exceptions are those in this age group that are students or homemakers, are retired, institutionalized, are unable or unwilling to seek employment, or for some other reason choose not to work. If a person who is 16 years old or older is employed or is unemployed but looking for a job, that person is “participating” in the labor force. Labor force participation rates measure the number of citizens employed or looking for employment as a percentage of the civilian non-institutional population. Labor force participation rates are used to help determine the factors that lead to discouraged workers, or workers that have dropped out of the labor force. Figure 6-2

shows the participation rates for Wood County and its neighboring counties, and that of the State of Wisconsin. In 1980, Wood County had the second highest participation rate in central Wisconsin after Marathon County, which is considerably larger in population size. In both 1990 and 2000, Wood County trailed Marathon and Portage counties. For each of the three reporting years, Wood County’s participation rate was 63%, 66% and 67%, respectively. This means that the proportion of population over age 16 that is in the labor force continues to grow. Wood County’s labor force participation rates trailed Wisconsin’s for each of those years, but only slightly. In both 1980 and 1990, Marathon County was the only county in central Wisconsin to exceed the State’s labor force participation rate and in 2000, Portage County also exceeded the State’s rate. The shift in 2000 reflects the fast growth that has been enjoyed by Portage County during the past several years and, especially, since State Highway 51 was upgraded to Interstate 39.

Commuting Patterns

More people commute into Wood County from neighboring counties than those who



travel to other counties to work (Table 6-2). Wood County has a net gain of over 5,000 commuters on a daily basis. The greatest number of commuters comes from Marathon County. Although most of those probably work in and around Marshfield, many are also known to work in the Wisconsin Rapids area. A lot of Clark County residents also commute to Wood County to work, again probably primarily in the Marshfield area. There are a nearly equal number of persons commuting between Portage and Wood counties. Most Portage County residents who commute to Wood County probably work in the greater Wisconsin Rapids area.

estimated to be nearly \$540 million annually. Dairy production contributes as much as \$438 million of that amount, including production, processing and sales of milk, cheese and other dairy products. Cranberry production and sales continue to play a growing role in Wood County's economy, with sales of nearly \$25 million in 2002.³ In addition to growing markets for cranberries and cranberry products, area officials

Major employers in Wood County include the medical, transportation, paper, grocery, and construction industries and major retail companies. The top employers have 1,000 or more workers and several others have between 500 and 1,000. The three largest employers in Wood County are in the City of Marshfield. The Marshfield Clinic is the largest employer. Each day this clinic attracts several hundred patients from outside the County and the State. This influx of patients to the Marshfield Clinic supports area hotels and motels, restaurants, retailers, gas stations and more. Included in the list of the 24 largest employers (Table 6-3) are seven municipal employers and public school districts.

In addition to those listed in Table 6-3, there are many businesses and industries clustered in Wood County's four cities and eight villages, or scattered among the County's twenty-two towns that are extremely important to the County's economic well being. The website for the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) lists 235 businesses in Wood County's 22 towns. The businesses that are located in the towns range from one employee to the DWD range of 100-249. Small businesses generate 60% to 80% of new jobs annually, according to Small Business Administration (SBA) reports. In

| County | Commute | | Net Commute |
|----------|---------|-------|-------------|
| | Into | From | |
| Portage | 2,572 | 2,639 | 67 |
| Marathon | 1,449 | 3,944 | 2,495 |
| Clark | 272 | 1,956 | 1,684 |
| Adams | 178 | 899 | 721 |
| Juneau | 83 | 186 | 103 |
| Jackson | 52 | 70 | 18 |
| TOTAL | 4,606 | 9,694 | 5,088 |

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census.

Economic Base

Wood County has a very diverse economic base. Agriculture continues to have significant impact on the County's economy as do manufacturing and retail businesses. Agriculture is discussed in detail in an earlier chapter of this plan, but some of that information is worth repeating here.² Family-owned farms still account for 89.2% of all farms in Wood County. The economic activity generated by agriculture is

² Agricultural-related data is from the 2002 U. S. Census of Agriculture. Data collection techniques result in some discrepancies between the Census of Agriculture and Census of Population statistics.

³ 2004, University of Wisconsin-Extension, "Wood County Agriculture: Value and Economic Impact."

**Table 6-3
Largest Wood County Employers**

| Rank | Employer | Industry Type | No. of Emp. | Rank | Employer | Industry Type | No. of Emp. |
|------|---------------------------------------|---|-------------|------|-----------------------------|--|-------------|
| 1 | Marshfield Clinic | HMO Medical Centers | ≥ 1,000 | 13 | Marshfield Public Schools | Elementary and Secondary Schools | 500 - 999 |
| 2 | Saint Joseph's Hospital of Marshfield | General Medical & Surgical Hospitals | ≥ 1,000 | 14 | Ho-Chunk Nation | American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Governments | 500 - 999 |
| 3 | Roehl Transport, Inc. | General Freight Trucking, Long Distance, Truckload | ≥ 1,000 | 15 | DeBoer Transportation, Inc. | General Freight Trucking, Long Distance, Truckload | 250-499 |
| 4 | NewPage Corporation | Paper (exc. Newsprint) Mills | ≥ 1,000 | 16 | Mid-State Technical College | Junior Colleges | 250-499 |
| 5 | Wisconsin Rapids Public Schools | Elementary and Secondary Schools | 500 - 999 | 17 | Marshfield Homes | Manufactured Home (Mobile Home) Manufacturing | 250-499 |
| 6 | Domtar Corporation ⁽¹⁾ | Paper (exc. Newsprint) Mills | 500 - 999 | 18 | Ministry Home Care, Inc. | General Medical and Surgical Hospitals | 250-499 |
| 7 | County of Wood | Executive and Legislative Offices | 500 - 999 | 19 | City of Marshfield | Executive and Legislative Offices | 250-499 |
| 8 | Figi's | Cheese manufacturing, gift novelty & souvenir, and mail order house | 500 - 999 | 20 | Shopko | Discount Department Stores | 250-499 |
| 9 | Wal-Mart | Warehouse Clubs & Supercenters | 500 - 999 | 21 | Nekoosa Public Schools | Elementary and Secondary Schools | 250-499 |
| 10 | Riverview Hospital | General Medical & Surgical Hospitals | 500 - 999 | 22 | City of Wisconsin Rapids | Executive & Legislative Offices | 250-499 |
| 11 | Marshfield Doorsystems, Inc. | Wood Window and Door Manufacturing | 500 - 999 | 23 | Markfest, Inc. | Supermarkets and Other Grocery Stores | 100 - 249 |
| 12 | Renaissance Learning, Inc. | Software Publishers | 500 - 999 | 24 | Ultra Mart Foods, Inc. | Supermarkets and Other Grocery Stores | 100 - 249 |

(1) Domtar Corporation recently closed the Port Edwards manufacturing plant, reducing its Wood County workforce by slightly more than 500 workers. That company now employs 250 – 499.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development website.

addition, small businesses employ about half of all private sector employees, pay nearly 45% of total U. S. private payroll, and 52% of small businesses are home-based. Two-thirds of new small businesses survive at least two years, 44% survive at least four years, and 31% survive at least seven years. After the fourth year, the rate of firm closings declines considerably, according to the SBA. Wood County has encouraged the creation of small businesses in the past and continues to do so with its revolving

loan fund program and pro-active participation in the North Central Advantage Technology Zone that provides Wisconsin income tax credits for qualified businesses.

Wage information on the various industry types in Wood County are listed in Table 6-4 for the years 2000 and 2007. Those who work in the Education and Health Services industry earn the most on average and those who work in the Leisure and Hospitality industry are the lowest paid. Similar average annual wage increases are evident in many of the industries with the largest increases in the Other Services, Financial Activities, and Education and Health Services sectors. Very little gain was made in the Professional and Business services which includes professional and technical services, management of companies, and administrative and support services.

**Table 6-4
Average Wages by Industry – Wood County**

| Industry | 2000 | 2007 | Average Annual Increase |
|--|------------|----------|-------------------------|
| Education & Health Services | \$38,974 | \$50,600 | 4.3% |
| Manufacturing | \$41,704 | \$50,211 | 2.9% |
| Professional & Business Services | \$41,179 | \$42,323 | 0.4% |
| Construction | \$36,781 | \$42,152 | 2.1% |
| Information | Suppressed | \$40,008 | N/A |
| Natural Resources & Mining | \$29,963 | \$34,216 | 2.0% |
| Public Administration | \$27,812 | \$33,007 | 2.7% |
| Financial Activities | \$24,237 | \$32,718 | 5.0% |
| Trade, Transportation, Utilities | \$24,038 | \$29,405 | 3.2% |
| Other Services (inc. repair & maintenance, personal & laundry, membership organizations, and private households) | 14,310 | \$20,960 | 6.6% |
| Leisure & Hospitality | \$8,717 | \$10,288 | 2.6% |

Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Workforce Development.

Employment Projections

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development makes 10-year projections of the fastest growing occupations in Wisconsin. Recognizing that these are statewide projections, it is worthwhile to consider their impact in central Wisconsin. Table 6-5 identifies those occupations that are expected to grow the quickest between 2006 and 2016. It should come as no surprise that, given the aging population, the fastest growing occupations are medical and health related. Also, computer and data communications jobs are expected to continue to remain strong during this period.

A follow-up table, (Table 6-6) lists those industries that the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development foresees as the fastest growing between 2006 and 2016. Again, the medical industry has a strong presence in this list as does the computer technology and data communications industry. Ranked 17th statewide is the Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation

**Table 6-5
Fastest Growing Occupations in Wisconsin, 2006 - 2016**

| Occupational Title | Estimated Employment | | | | 2006 Avg. Annual Salary |
|--|----------------------|--------|--------|-----------|-------------------------|
| | 2006 | 2016 | Change | Pct. Chg. | |
| Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts | 5,150 | 7,390 | 2,240 | 43.5% | \$58,024 |
| Home Health Aides | 16,550 | 23,310 | 6,760 | 40.8% | \$20,812 |
| Personal and Home Care Aides | 22,030 | 30,540 | 8,510 | 38.6% | \$19,602 |
| Computer Software Engineers, Applications | 8,830 | 12,170 | 3,340 | 37.8% | \$69,811 |
| Medical Assistants | 7,120 | 9,720 | 2,600 | 36.5% | \$27,632 |
| Physician Assistants | 1,110 | 1,480 | 370 | 33.3% | \$78,373 |
| Radiation Therapists | 490 | 650 | 160 | 32.7% | \$67,848 |
| Personal Financial Advisors | 3,170 | 4,190 | 1,020 | 32.2% | \$74,784 |
| Dental Hygienists | 4,170 | 5,470 | 1,300 | 31.2% | \$55,069 |
| Substance Abuse & Behavioral Disorder Counselors | 1,550 | 2,020 | 470 | 30.3% | \$39,904 |
| Physical Therapist Assistants | 1,270 | 1,650 | 380 | 29.9% | \$38,206 |
| Surgical Technologists | 2,310 | 2,990 | 680 | 29.4% | \$41,203 |
| Skin Care Specialists | 510 | 660 | 150 | 29.4% | \$27,885 |
| Physical Therapist Aides | 1,240 | 1,600 | 360 | 29.0% | \$24,614 |
| Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians | 700 | 900 | 200 | 28.6% | \$44,814 |
| Social and Human Service Assistants | 7,340 | 9,400 | 2,060 | 28.1% | \$29,355 |
| Veterinary Technologists and Technicians | 1,510 | 1,930 | 420 | 27.8% | \$28,104 |
| Pharmacy Technicians | 6,300 | 8,030 | 1,730 | 27.5% | \$25,518 |
| Respiratory Therapists | 1,790 | 2,270 | 480 | 26.8% | \$48,842 |
| Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software | 2,840 | 3,600 | 760 | 26.8% | \$74,640 |
| Financial Analysts | 2,140 | 2,710 | 570 | 26.6% | \$64,017 |
| Registered Nurses | 51,130 | 64,550 | 13,420 | 26.2% | \$57,376 |
| Physical Therapists | 4,060 | 5,080 | 1,020 | 25.1% | \$64,087 |
| Marriage and Family Therapists | 720 | 900 | 180 | 25.0% | \$54,128 |
| Animal Trainers | 730 | 910 | 180 | 24.7% | \$26,590 |
| Medical Equipment Repairers | 690 | 860 | 170 | 24.6% | \$46,212 |
| Veterinarians | 1,750 | 2,170 | 420 | 24.0% | \$77,803 |
| Mental Health Counselors | 1,650 | 2,040 | 390 | 23.6% | \$41,324 |
| Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers | 2,230 | 2,740 | 510 | 22.9% | \$49,021 |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development.

**Table 6-6
Fastest Growing Industries – Wisconsin
2006 - 2016**

| Industry Title | Estimated Employment | | | |
|--|----------------------|---------|--------|-----------|
| | 2006 | 2016 | Change | Pct. Chg. |
| Securities, Commodity Contracts and Other Financial Investments | 9,500 | 13,120 | 3,620 | 38.1% |
| Social Assistance | 65,800 | 86,210 | 3,620 | 31.0% |
| Ambulatory Health Care Services | 104,150 | 133,990 | 29,840 | 28.7% |
| Warehousing and Storage | 12,230 | 15,260 | 3,030 | 24.8% |
| Support Activities for Transportation | 5,250 | 6,370 | 1,120 | 21.3% |
| Internet Service Providers, Web Search Portals, & Data Processing Services | 8,040 | 9,750 | 1,710 | 21.3% |
| Waste Management and Remediation Service | 5,370 | 6,500 | 1,130 | 21.0% |
| Administrative and Support Services | 127,480 | 151,570 | 24,090 | 18.9% |
| Hospitals, including State and Local Government | 113,010 | 133,960 | 20,950 | 18.5% |
| Lessors of Nonfinancial Intangible Assets (except Copyrighted Works_) | 550 | 650 | 100 | 18.2% |
| Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 95,810 | 113,080 | 17,270 | 18.0% |
| Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institution | 1,720 | 2,020 | 300 | 17.4% |
| Nursing and Residential Care Facilities | 69,400 | 79,630 | 10,230 | 14.7% |
| Transit and Ground Passenger Transport | 13,580 | 15,560 | 1,980 | 14.6% |
| Nonmetallic Mineral Product Manufacturing | 11,520 | 13,020 | 1,500 | 13.0% |
| Management of Companies and Enterprises | 41,510 | 46,800 | 5,290 | 12.7% |
| Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries | 26,060 | 29,360 | 3,300 | 12.7% |
| Real Estate | 19,000 | 21,400 | 2,400 | 12.6% |
| Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations | 87,800 | 98,700 | 10,900 | 12.4% |
| Construction of Buildings | 30,980 | 34,710 | 3,730 | 12.0% |
| Accommodation | 31,510 | 35,210 | 3,700 | 11.7% |
| Wholesale Electronic Markets and Agents and Brokers | 6,570 | 7,340 | 770 | 11.7% |
| Food Services and Drinking Places | 192,060 | 214,060 | 22,000 | 11.5% |
| Truck Transportation | 49,550 | 55,050 | 5,500 | 11.1% |
| Insurance Carriers and Related Activities | 67,700 | 75,180 | 7,480 | 11.0% |
| Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods | 68,220 | 74,850 | 6,630 | 9.7% |
| Specialty Trade Contractors | 81,470 | 89,380 | 7,910 | 9.7% |
| Repair and Maintenance | 21,700 | 23,690 | 1,990 | 9.2% |
| Credit Intermediation and Related Activities | 54,770 | 59,650 | 4,880 | 8.9% |

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development.

Industries. This category may rank higher in our area because of our ability to attract statewide sports tournaments. All three of these areas provide an opportunity to attract new development to our area. The presence of Riverview Hospital, the U. W. Cancer Center, the Marshfield Clinic, Saint Joseph’s Hospital and the research labs associated with the Marshfield medical industry are examples that can be used to market our area for medical industry expansion. Renaissance Learning provides a good base for attracting the computer industry. In addition, our location in proximity to the rest of Wisconsin has helped attract major state and national sports tournaments to our area. This is an area that local officials have been trying to improve upon with some success, but does not create high paying jobs like the two other sectors.

Business & Industrial Parks

There are 10 industrial parks and business parks in Wood County and another that is proposed. Two of the industrial parks totaling about 80 acres are privately owned; a 21-acre park in Pittsville that is owned by T & W Gardner, LLC, and the Norwood Industrial Park in Marshfield. A third, the Wood County Business Park in Biron, is also a privately owned project. Of the 1,527 total acres in the existing parks, 522 (34%) are available for development. Of the two oldest industrial parks, the Marshfield East Side Industrial Park is full and the Wisconsin Rapids Industrial Park has only a small amount of space available for additional development. Consequently, both cities have acquired and prepared additional land for industrial development - the Yellowstone Industrial Park in Marshfield and the East Side Commerce Center in Wisconsin Rapids. The Village of Biron is also in the process of working with a private developer to create a 230-acre business park along Highway 54. Table 6-7

| Table 6-7 Industrial and Business Parks | | |
|--|----------------|-----------------|
| Industrial or Business Park | Total Acres | Available Acres |
| Marshfield East Industrial Park | 260.0 | 0.0 |
| Marshfield Air Business Park | 26.0 | 7.7 |
| Mill Creek Business Park (Marshfield) | 154.0 | 133.2 |
| Norwood Industrial Park (Marshfield) (privately owned) | 60.0 | 54.0 |
| Yellowstone Industrial Park | 104.0 | 104.0 |
| Wisconsin Rapids Industrial Park | 537.8 | 30.9 |
| Wisconsin Rapids East Side Commerce Center | 213.0 | 97.0* |
| The Woodlands Business Park (Wisconsin Rapids) | 147.7 | 27.4 |
| Nekoosa Industrial Park | 58.0 | 58.0 |
| Wood County Business Park – Biron (proposed) | 230.0 | 230.0 |
| Pittsville Industrial Park (privately owned) | 21.0 | 10.0 |
| Total Acreage | 1,757.5 | 752.2 |
| * The Wisconsin Rapids East Side Commerce Center has an additional 77 acres for possible future expansion. | | |
| Source: Municipal web site, Heart of Wisconsin Business & Economic Alliance. | | |

lists the industrial and business parks, including the one proposed in Biron.

Other lands have also developed in industrial uses and some communities have land available for industrial development. The Village of Milladore, for example, has 40 acres zoned for industrial uses and the Town of Grand Rapids has approximately 255 acres zoned for manufacturing uses adjacent to the East Side Commerce Center in Wisconsin Rapids. There is industrial development in nearly all Wood County communities, although most have little

industrial activity and it is usually somewhat scattered or isolated.

Environmentally Contaminated Sites

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment oversees the investigation and cleanup of contaminated soil or groundwater in Wisconsin and tracks these sites on what is called the Bureau of Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System, or BRRTS. There are 1,418 Wood County sites listed in the BRRTS database. Spills make up over half of the records and over half of all records are reported to be "closed." A total of 524 sites are recorded⁴.

Most (56%) BRRTS records are for spills. Spills result in a discharge of a hazardous substance that may adversely impact, or threaten to impact public health, welfare or the environment. Spills are usually cleaned up quickly.

Leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs) account for nearly a quarter of all BRRTS records and Environmental Repair (ERPs) sites account for another 10%. A LUST site has contaminated soil and/or groundwater with petroleum, which includes toxic and cancer causing substances. However, given time, petroleum contamination naturally breaks down in the environment (biodegradation). Some LUST sites may emit potentially explosive vapors.

Environmental Repair sites are sites other than LUSTs that have contaminated soil and/or groundwater. Examples include industrial spills (or dumping) that need long term investigation, buried containers of hazardous substances, and closed landfills that have caused contamination. The ERP

⁴ "Conditionally Closed" sites are defined as "activities where cleanup actions were approved, but the site closure will not be approved pending receipt of documentation of abandonment of wells or disposal of soil."

module includes petroleum contamination from above-ground (but not from underground) storage tanks.

Economic Development Organizational Framework

There are several economic development organizations and efforts in Wood County and central Wisconsin. Each is focused on a specific area, but each has a mission to create jobs, retain existing business and industry, and see the area enjoy economic growth. Some of the primary organizations and their missions, starting with local agencies and working up to higher level groups are:

HOWBEA – The Heart of Wisconsin Business and Economic Alliance, or HOWBEA, receives financial support from annual membership dues, local government funding, public and private grants, sponsorships, program revenues and more. HOWBEA serves as a first contact for business resource assistance, maintains the Wisconsin Rapids revolving loan fund, provides entrepreneurial training and either sponsors or participates in several economic development workshops each year. The Wood County Board of Supervisors, through their Conservation, Education and Economic Development Committee, provides financial support to HOWBEA and County supervisors and staff members participate on various HOWBEA-sponsored committees and events.

MACCI – The Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MACCI) is the strength of the Marshfield area's economic development. MACCI has nearly 600 members consisting of medical, manufacturing, professional service firms and retail. The nucleus of MACCI is based on six areas of concentration, including workforce development; economic, industrial, and community development; infrastructure development; community collaboration; governmental relations; and

organizational enhancement. As with HOWBEA, Wood County provides an annual stipend to MACCI. County supervisors participate in Marshfield community events and on community committees and county staff works closely with Marshfield area officials on various projects and programs.

Wood County – Under the oversight of the Conservation, Education and Economic Development Committee, Wood County participates in several economic development activities and is represented on various Boards of Directors of area economic development organizations. Wood County has a revolving loan fund that has been used successfully with area businesses, including a growing cranberry processing industry in Grand Rapids. As mentioned above, Wood County staff and elected supervisors participate on many local boards of directors and committees whose function is in some way related to economic development. County officials also attend the Governor’s conferences on economic development and tourism because of the importance of both in maintaining a presence at the state level.

Centergy – Centergy is a private, non-profit organization that was originally formed in 1988 to foster economic development in central Wisconsin. Centergy is supported by and represents business and industry in the three county region that includes Wood, Portage and Marathon counties. Centergy has continued to grow in its membership and hired an Executive Director in 2008. The Board of Directors and membership participated in a strategic planning workshop to determine Centergy’s direction and established the following as priority activities:

- Biofuels and Energy Production: Support and invest in research, technology transfer and businesses that will make Central Wisconsin a player in the alternative fuels/biofuels energy market.

- Paper: Support and invest in value added products and processes that enhance and grow the existing world-class paper making assets and labor pool in the region.
- Health Care: Build economic activity in medical research, medical education and training, regional health care delivery, medical supplies and medical software/bioinformatics.
- Logistics: Build on the existing base and attract new businesses that further develop the strong logistics position of Central Wisconsin.
- Agriculture and Food Processing: Build upon an already strong base in food processing and production of regionally grown crops such as potatoes, cranberries, and ginseng.
- Research: Support existing and seek new research companies, centers and projects that will enhance and increase research activity and make it a major economic driver in Central Wisconsin.
- New Business Development: Encourage and support the growth in the number of new regional business establishments.

Workforce Education & Training: Capitalize on the region's central location and the presence of workforce training institutions delivers workforce education and training. Exploit the region's central location to establish and promote the region as a center for workforce training.

NCWRPC - The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, located in Wausau, provides technical assistance and compiles economic development data for its members. It also administers a regional revolving loan fund on behalf of the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation and the North Central

Advantage Technology Zone, one of eight technology zones in Wisconsin that provides Wisconsin income tax credits to qualified high technology businesses that create jobs in the region. The ten counties the NCWRPC serves have also been formally designated as an Economic Development District by the State of Wisconsin and by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration. Under this designation, the NCWRPC maintains a continuous process of planning assistance that supports the formulation and implementation of economic development programs designed to create or retain full-time permanent jobs and income. The NCWRPC provides services such as economic research, marketing, financial packaging, evaluation and analysis of public infrastructure needs that support private economic development activity, and works with local units of government to maintain eligibility for certain grants.

The Regional Planning Commission has an adopted "Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy" (CEDS) for the north central region of Wisconsin⁵. The purpose of the CEDS is to maintain the region's eligibility as an Economic Development District with the U. S. Economic Development Administration. As part of that document, the NCWRPC adopted as their goal for the region, "promote the expansion or stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities at the state, regional, and local levels." Five objectives were spelled out to work toward that goal. They are:

- Maintain and diversify the region's economy.
- Develop a well-trained workforce in the Region.

⁵ "Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2008," North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.

- Maintain and enhance public facilities throughout the Region.
- Pursue increased funding from both public and private sources for the Region.
- Bring additional venture capital into the Region.

Each of the objectives was accompanied by a list of recommended actions to accomplish the objective.

Wisconsin Department of Commerce – The State's Commerce department has been instrumental in many economic development activities and projects in Wood County and central Wisconsin. It was Commerce that capitalized the Wood County revolving loan fund (RLF) to the tune of nearly one million dollars. Likewise, Commerce capitalized several other RLFs throughout the region. At the time this plan was being drafted, 18 communities in Wood, Adams, Portage and Marathon counties were in the process of consolidating their RLFs in an effort to make better use of about \$4.5 million in fund reserves and a total loan portfolio of about \$11 million. The Department of Commerce has also provided customized training grants to area industries and will help businesses with other expansion and retention programs. Much of the funding that Commerce channels to lower level jurisdictions is federal money from the Economic Development Administration and others.

Trends in Economic Development

The plan was developed in the middle of an economic recession described as the most severe since the Great Depression. Consequently, trends in the County's economy are shown to be downward. Toward the end of the planning process, however, there were some positive turns in

Figure 6-8 Economic Development Trends

1. Unemployment rates remain high

Wood County's five-year average (2004 – 2008) unemployment rate was higher than both the State and the Nation.

County unemployment rates for Wood County from January through May, 2009 average 9.0%, compared to Wisconsin's 8.7% and the Nation's 9.1%.

2. Number of workers is increasing

Although unemployment rates remain high, the actual number of people working in Wood County has increased slightly in the five years from 2004 – 2008. Actual number of people working remains lower than in 2000.

3. More workers commute into Wood County than out

There are about 9,700 commuters coming into Wood County for work and 4,600 Wood County residents commuting to other areas for their jobs (2000 census). This could change with the downturn in the paper industry.

4. Medical and IT industries are the fastest growing

Of the 10 fastest growing occupations in Wisconsin, seven are medical related, two are in the computer industry and one is in financial planning. Wood County has a strong medical industry where jobs can be cultivated.

5. Central Wisconsin has a strong economic development network

Wood County has partnered with private industry, neighboring counties, the regional planning commission and the State to enhance economic development opportunities in central Wisconsin. More strong partnerships are likely as economic conditions remain unstable and budgets are strained.

the economy. Table 6-8 highlights some of the economic development trends in Wood County.

Competitive Strengths and Weaknesses

A community's approach to economic development is based on its competitive strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Strategic planning workshops have been held for our area in recent years. A consistent conclusion of various SWOT analyses is that Wood County has a strong presence of an economic development infrastructure of professional organizations dedicated to fostering economic development. Wood County's unique position of having two similarly size major cities at far ends of the

county contribute to the need for that strong economic development infrastructure. In addition to the Heart of Wisconsin Business and Economic Alliance, and the Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry, it has already been mentioned that Wood County plays an important role in economic development with active participation in Centergy. The County has also been very proactive with their revolving loan fund and the consolidation of RLFs with Portage, Adams and Marathon counties.

Strengths

Several strategic planning studies have listed Wood County (and central Wisconsin) strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. A review of those studies will find agreement with conclusions drawn in a

recent study funded by Centergy.⁶ The top four strengths are:

1. The region boasts a strong quality of life.
2. The region is blessed with abundant natural resource assets, particularly fresh water, productive soils, and wood fiber.
3. The region has several economic clusters that have long been part of the regional economy and are key to maintaining and growing the regional economy by providing a job base and being centers of knowledge and labor skills that feed into other clusters and businesses. The highest ranked cluster was forest products, followed by processed foods, agricultural products, and distribution services.
4. The region's central location makes it a natural center for meetings, training, and the distribution of goods.

A compilation of other strengths of Wood County that have been listed in various strategic planning studies and by participants in economic development workshops in recent years are listed in Table 6-9.

Weaknesses

In any SWOT analysis, what some perceive as strengths of a community, others perceive as weaknesses. Consequently, one will often see that same factor listed as both a strength and weakness with supporting rationale. SWOT analyses that have been conducted in Wood County and central Wisconsin have listed certain weaknesses on a consistent basis. The top four, as concluded in the Centergy study, are:

1. The aging workforce and overall attainment of the workforce become critical as area businesses transition to new technologies and processes to compete globally.
2. Wood County in particular is subjected to gaps in the highway system that have been a detriment in attracting new business that relies on four-lane, high speed highways to move raw materials and finished product.
3. A shortage of risk capital has continued to be a major concern. If the area is going to compete for new high-tech businesses that attract high wage jobs, it is crucial to increase the amount of and access to early stage investment capital.
4. The region's information technology infrastructure will require substantial improvements in order to attract and retain competitive enterprises.

A compilation of other weaknesses of Wood County (and central Wisconsin) are listed in Table 6-9.

Opportunities

Wood County has suffered plant shutdowns and downsizing, especially in the southeast communities, which has been a cause of concern for area residents and officials, but this economic downturn has also created an abundance of opportunity for economic growth in the County. While there has been an economic downturn in the Marshfield area, the medical industry has continued to grow, probably a function in part of the aging population. The top opportunities listed in the Centergy study directly relate to Wood County and are:

1. There continues to be a strong potential for expansion of health care and medical research clinics. Wood County is well

⁶ October 27, 2006, NorthStar Economics, Inc., "An Economic Opportunity Study for Central Wisconsin."

**Table 6-9
Wood County Economic SWOT**

| Strengths | Weaknesses | Opportunities | Threats |
|---|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce (strong work ethic, large labor pool, mobility of workforce, educated, good vocational training, low cost labor). • Entrepreneurism (forward thinkers, strong “buy local” support). • Abundant natural resources providing recreational opportunities, agricultural opportunities, quality of life, and community amenities. • Sense of community (safe, friendly neighborhoods, mixture of generations, family values, quality of life). • Quality educational opportunities (PK-12, technical, and colleges/universities). • Top notch health care (quality hospitals and clinics, and research centers). • Affordable housing (good selection of housing for all economic levels, with housing types for all needs). • Good government (political awareness, proactive and collaborative government, strong community leaders, and dedicated sense of place). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce issues (aging workers, short supply of skilled workers, declining work ethic, lack of respect for manual labor, lack of young talented workers, low wages, reduction in volunteerism). • Business climate (plant closings, business downsizing, sale of major industries to foreign investors, lack of retention). • Housing (rising costs and rising taxes). • Government (restrictive zoning, cost of services not shared adequately, lack of cooperation on regional business park). • Telecommunications (aging infrastructure, lack of IT options and workers). • Vision (lack of entrepreneurs and risk takers, declining volunteerism, perception that area is “dying,” image problem, lack of corporate and individual benefactors). • Rising health care costs. • Education (linkages between businesses and schools, declining enrollment, and “brain drain”). • Capital (lack of risk capital, lack of corporate and individual benefactors). • Transportation/Logistics (lack of air connections, direct access to an Interstate highway, geographic location – distance from major metropolitan areas.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health care (clinic spin-offs, business services, and connections to angel investors). • Growth of small and medium-sized businesses, including new business start-ups. • Development/expansion of the arts and cultural programs and activities. • Expansion of tourism, utilization of county park facilities. • Housing expansion and diversification of housing types. • Food services and restaurants. • Communication about local and regional economies and how they relate to each other and to national and global economies. • Workforce education and training. • Community cooperation (desire to address weaknesses, willingness to share services and facilities, honest and forthright communication between elected officials of county municipalities and residents). • Aging population (expanded market opportunities and services). • Green community movement. • Growth of cranberry production and processing industry. • Increase in corporate farming. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging workforce/worker shortage. • Brain drain (students leave the area for education with no jobs to attract them back). • Competition (other areas of Wisconsin, United States, and global competitors). • Global industrialization and commerce. • Decline of the paper industry. • Loss of family farms. • Lack of direct Interstate highway access. • State tax burden on new businesses. • Lack of economic development incentives. • Media/information gap. • Upper Midwest climate. |

Sources: Community planning survey responses (Towns of Milladore, Cameron, Lincoln, Saratoga, Seneca and Grand Rapids, and Villages of Biron and Milladore), Centergy’s “An Economic Opportunity Study for Central Wisconsin” by NorthStar Economics, Inc., The Daily Tribune, Marshfield News Herald.

situated to leverage its assets in biotechnology.

2. Wood County has good potential to grow in the area of logistics because of the convergence of Class I rail, the proximity to Interstate highways, and the central location in Wisconsin.
3. Marketing opportunities appurtenant to the aging population will result in new startups and expansion of businesses that serve the needs and desires of an aging population.

A compilation of other opportunities that are seen for Wood County (and central Wisconsin) are listed in Table 6-9.

Threats

Many threats to economic development, as seen by area residents, are not unique to Wood County, Wisconsin, the nation or even parts of the world, as this plan is developed. Three of the most common perceived threats are:

1. Global and local competition for investment dollars. Wood County has worked toward turning competitors into allies, however, by mounting strong “buy local” campaigns and working cooperatively with neighboring central Wisconsin counties to pool resources to market the region.
2. The lack of risk capital may pose one of the largest threats to economic development in central Wisconsin. Venture capital is critical in New Economy business attraction and retention.
3. The rural environment, the existing business base, and the distance from the state’s largest metropolitan areas limit or prevent certain types of economic development. Investment in infrastructure and state-of-the-art

telecommunications and other technology can minimize this threat.

Other threats to economic development in Wood County (and central Wisconsin) are listed in Table 6-9.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

Participants in a HOWBEA workshop identified four key actions that are needed for our area to move aggressively forward in economic development. These can be used as overall goals and objectives with specific goals and objectives developed from them. The first key action that was defined is regional collaboration; the development of a shared vision and common economic development goals by all regional leaders and more cooperation between municipalities to create and support a strong economic base.

Second is business innovation. The strategy here is to attract and grow new industries by developing economic incentives to draw industries capable of competing on a global, versus regional or national, scale. In addition, the strategy would include developing a support network for to retain and expand local businesses. In 2008, the area has created and promoted the “Buy Local” campaign to keep sales and jobs in our community.

The third action is to develop strong and inclusive local leadership with broad based community participation and engagement. This action includes programs to encourage more people to become involved with local programs and government through leadership training, entrepreneurial training, etc.

The fourth action that was identified is the creation of a new model for education. Workshop participants identified a need to reshape the education system in the region to include entrepreneurial training beginning

in the elementary school levels, long range planning to include Charter schools, and creating a workforce collaborative to re-skill and retain our workforce.

Other goals and objectives for Wood County include, but are not limited to the following:

A. Goal. Continue to maintain a strong presence in area economic development organizations.

Objectives.

1. Have the County Board Chairman or his/her designee serve on the Board of Directors of the Central Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation.

2. Have the Planning staff represent Wood County as a member of the Centergy Board of Directors.

3. Have the Planning staff serve on the Board of Directors of the North Central Advantage Technology Zone.

4. Continue to provide financial support to the Heart of Wisconsin Business and Economic Alliance and the Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

5. Participate in area events with local legislators both in the central Wisconsin region and in Madison.

6. Attend and participate in the annual Governor's Conference on Economic Development.

7. Build an economic development budget at the county level to help support economic activities and programs that benefit Wood County business and industry.

B. Goal. Retain local businesses and jobs and help them expand.

Objectives.

1. Assist proposed business expansions by providing information about financial incentives and programs.

2. Monitor business status and take a proactive role in getting legislators and state agencies involved in helping retain jobs.

3. Encourage development, expansion and maintenance of communications infrastructure that businesses require for global competition.

4. Support local business needs for faster permit processing at both the local and state levels.

C. Goal. Attract new business to Wood County.

Objectives.

1. Follow-up on leads when companies suggest Wood County as a place to locate or expand their operations.

2. Assume a pro-active role with the Boards, Committees and economic development agencies in central Wisconsin and the State.

3. Work with local communities to assure that industrial and business park infrastructure is in place so businesses can commit to the area and begin construction immediately.

D. Goal. Continue to improve the logistics in Wood County.

Objectives.

1. Communicate with Wisconsin Central, Ltd. Railroad to encourage maintenance of tracks that serve Wisconsin and, specifically, Wood County businesses.

2. Participate on area transportation committees to push for the completion of Highway 10 to Marshfield, and a relocation

and extension of Highway 54 to Port Edwards.

3. Make recommendations to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation regional office regarding signage to assist traffic circulation.

E. Goal. Provide a quality of life that is attractive to young company executives.

Objectives.

1. Support the development of “green” businesses and housing developments.

2. Continue to expand the county multiuse trail system to showcase our forests, waterways and wetlands, and to connect to the statewide network of trails.

3. Maintain the high quality of our county parks and make improvements as necessary to continue that high quality.

4. Encourage the expansion of Wifi or other communications technologies that help professionals and business executives, as well as recreational users of the Internet, maintain important contacts.