



North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Celebrating 40 Years!

Commissioners:

An appointed Commission oversees the activities of the executive director and the organization. As detailed in Wisconsin statute, three commissioners from each member county govern the NCWRPC. One is selected directly by the County (C), one directly by the Governor (G), and the final is a Joint (J) selection between the Governor and County. Commissioners serve until reappointed or replaced. Term ending is also shown. Commissioners listed are current as of June 30, 2013.

NCWRPC officers are Erhard Huettl*, Chairperson; Bettye Nall, Vice-Chairperson; and George Bornemann, Secretary – Treasurer.

Adams County

Glenn Licitar, C (6/12)
Richard Bakovka, G (1/16)
Appointment Pending, J (6/14)

Forest County

Erhard Huettl, C (1/14)
Jim Landru, Jr., J (1/16)
Paul Millan, G (1/18)

Juneau County

Edmund Wafle, C (6/13)
Kenneth Winters, J (6/15)
Appointment Pending, G (6/17)

Langlade County

George Bornemann, G (1/16)
Ronald Nye, C (1/14)
Paul Schuman, J (1/12)

Lincoln County

Robert Lussow, C (6/13)
Frank Saal, Jr., J (6/17)
Doug Williams, G (6/15)

Marathon County

Virginia Heinemann, G (6/17)
Craig McEwen, J (6/13)
Bettye Nall, C (6/15)

Oneida County

Thomas Rudolph, C (1/14)
Appointment Pending, J (1/18)
Appointment Pending, G (1/16)

Portage County

Non-participating County

Vilas County

Bob Egan, J (1/15)
Ralph Sitzberger, C (6/13)
Appointment Pending

Wood County

Tom Haferman, J (6/13)
Gerald Nelson, C (6/17)
Appointment Pending, G (6/15)

In addition, by Wisconsin Statute, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation is an ex-officio officer of the NCWRPC.

* *Celebrating 40 Years is dedicated to Erhard Huettl. Erhard passed away just a few days before our 40th Celebration meeting. He was the last of the founding members of the NCWRPC, and had served as our Chair since 1984. We will miss him!*

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS: INTRODUCTION

2013 marks the 40th Anniversary of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. An anniversary is not only a time for celebration, but also a time for reflection of the past and more importantly a look to the future.

The NCWRPC was formally created in 1973 by then Governor Lucey, acting on petitions submitted by the Boards of Supervisors of Adams, Forest, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas and Wood Counties. Four decades later we are still here assisting the counties and communities of North Central Wisconsin and in doing so have become one of the best examples of intergovernmental cooperation.

Over the years we have directly or indirectly assisted every town, village, city and county in the region. We were the first regional planning commission in the state to prepare a Regional Comprehensive Plan under the new law, not to mention all of the various planning, transportation and mapping projects completed at the local level. We have helped secure funding to build Business and Industrial Parks from Crandon to Mauston, and many places in between. Over \$20 million dollars have been brought to the region for economic development projects alone. In addition we have lent over \$1.5 million to twenty businesses in our region to help create over 400 jobs.

This brief report was prepared to highlight some of the activities and accomplishments of the NCWRPC in its first four decades and to provide local elected officials and citizens alike to gain a better understanding of the NCWRPC's impact to the Region.

PURPOSE: CREATED BY STATE STATUTE

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) is a public agency dedicated to providing professional planning services throughout a ten county Region. NCWRPC was created under Wisconsin Statute 66.0309 as a voluntary association of governments for the purpose of preparing plans for the physical development of the Region and its communities; to conduct research; to serve as a data center; and as a forum for communication, cooperation and coordination among federal, state, regional, and local interests, and to provide technical services to its membership. Adams, Forest, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida and Vilas Counties are active members as well as several local units in Portage and Wood Counties.

The NCWRPC is one of nine regional planning commissions in the state of Wisconsin. Nationwide there are about 500 regional organizations similar to the NCWRPC.

Mission Statement

In an advisory capacity to local units of government and tribes, the NCWRPC offers cost effective, specialized planning services and expertise that support responsible development of the Region's economic, social, natural, and human built environments. The NCWRPC also provides leadership and a regional forum for the creation of cooperative responses to shared opportunities and the challenges facing the counties and communities of the ten-county Region.

Organizational Goals

The goals of the NCWRPC are to:

- identify strategies and solutions to planning issues,
- help communities meet the challenges facing them,
- continue moving from levy to other funding sources,
- do more with less, and
- provide cost-effective planning services to our members.

THE INVENTORY FUNCTION: CREATING AND MAINTAINING DATA AND MAPPING INFORMATION

In the 1950's the framers of the regional planning legislation in Wisconsin recognized that there was a need for organizations to collect, analyze and maintain basic planning data needed by the various units and agencies of government to help make better decisions concerning development and redevelopment. They recognized that, to a great extent, areawide development could be guided and shaped in the public interest simply through the task of collecting, analyzing, and disseminating planning data on a continuing, uniform, areawide basis. Experience has shown that if the areawide inventory function is properly carried out, the resulting information will indeed be used and acted upon by federal, state, and local units and agencies of government and by private investors. If the information is properly used to prepare regional plans, it will then be used to arrive at public and private development decisions on a day-to-day basis and contribute in a major way toward the shaping of development in accordance with those plans.

At the time of the creation of the NCWRPC, there was a lack of reliable demographic data within the Region. The Region had not even been mapped to modern standards. An area wide inventory was an important function for the NCWRPC to perform and has been one of its regular functions. That function must, moreover, be ongoing because it requires continuing effort to maintain in a current and useful form the information that constitutes a planning information system.

THE PLAN-MAKING FUNCTION: PREPARING REGIONAL & LOCAL PLANS

The NCWRPC is charged by statute with the duty and function of making and adopting a master plan for the physical development of the Region. The comprehensive plan not only provides the necessary framework for coordinating and guiding growth and development within a multi-jurisdictional region, but also provides a conceptual basis to address the problems within the region.

Regional Plans Prepared and Adopted

The performance of a planning agency can be measured in a number of ways. One measure is the extent to which plans have been prepared. Another measure is the extent to which those plans have been formally adopted by the planning body. A third measure is the extent to which those plans have been carried out by the agencies designated in the plan to have implementation responsibilities. And yet a final measure—and the ultimate test of performance—is the degree to which the plan implementation solves the problems and meets the objectives intended.

Plan adoption is considered to be very important. The NCWRPC holds that formal adoption of a plan by the NCWRPC and by the other governmental agencies concerned is an important means of assuring a common understanding of, and agreement on, needed courses of action. This common understanding and agreement enables local units and agencies of government concerned with land use, infrastructure development, redevelopment, and environmental safeguards to establish the necessary plan implementation work cooperatively.

The two major regional planning efforts of the NCWRPC are the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP). In 1980, the initial CEDS – at that time referred to as the Overall Economic Development Strategy or OEDP - was prepared. That plan is updated annually to monitor economic changes in the region and to identify major public works projects to spur development. The original Regional Framework Plan was prepared in 1981. That plan was updated with the existing 2003 Regional Comprehensive Plan. The RCP is now being updated to incorporate livability principles.

Types of Assistance

Over the years, NCWRPC has been involved in a variety of planning efforts, however, most relate to the five core programs of Economic Development, GIS & Mapping, Land Use and Transportation. Each of these areas is highlighted below:

- Economic Development

Our role in Economic Development has changed over the last forty years, as you would imagine. In the beginning the bulk of our efforts related to collecting and disseminating

economic data, preparing reports, and other economic studies for the region. In 1980 we sought and were designated as an economic development district by the US Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration, a designation that we maintain to this day. This designation brought access to all active communities for public works funding, mainly to develop business and industrial parks. Over the years the NCWRPC has secured funding for a dozen such parks in our region. Working with our communities these parks today provide homes to hundreds of businesses and thousands of jobs.

In the 1990s the NCWRPC sought designation from the State to allocate the tax credit program and for nearly ten years we administered that program, which provided tax credits to numerous businesses in our region. The program was eventually phased out as it moved from the regional level to become a statewide program. During that same period business financing was tightening up throughout the region and that's when NCWRPC started exploring solutions. In 1996 an application was made to USDA- Rural Development and working in partnership with financial support from numerous area banks, utilities, and others the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation was established, which brought revolving loan fund dollars to the region. Another effort took place in 2006 working with HUD to add additional loan funds. Over the years these funds have often complimented local and county level revolving loan funds to help area businesses grow and prosper.

A major project recently completed to foster economic development in the region was the Wood Technology of Excellence, which was in collaboration with Northcentral Technical College, Langlade County, and the Langlade County Economic Development Corporation. The result was a state of the art facility in Antigo to address workforce training. This project was a 2012 recipient of the National Association of Development Organizations for innovative regional approaches and program delivery.

- Geographic Information Systems (Data & Mapping)

For over a decade and a half the focus of our efforts revolved around providing data and preparing hand drawn maps. That all changed in 1990 when the NCWRPC implemented a computer based GIS system. It was an Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) PC ArcInfo system running on an IBM DOS platform. There was a large digitizing tablet that was used to turn paper maps into digital GIS layers.

Throughout the 1990s the state began providing counties with funding for land records modernization and the NCWRPC has been providing assistance ever since. We have developed road centerlines, parcels, address points, building footprints, and other GIS layers to assist the counties with implementing local GIS. Since 1990, a layer we have continued to maintain is an existing land use layer for the region. Every 10 years this is updated to coincide with the US Census. This information is used by the planners at NCWRPC to track change and support planning activities throughout the region.

NCWRPC acquired aerial imagery of the region in 1990 & 1995. The images were 6 mile x 6 mile township tiles on mylars and could be reproduced on a blueprint machine. Beginning

in 2005 imagery was scanned into a digital format that could be used in a GIS. In 2010 NCWRPC helped organize the first statewide leaf-off full digital orthoimagery program in Wisconsin history. The Wisconsin Regional Orthoimagery Consortium (WROC) captured over 56,000 square miles of imagery in one flying season. This has become the standard for future efforts in the state. The WROC efforts earned a Best in State Award from ACEC.

GIS has come a long way and the NCWRPC continues to update and improve its regional geographic information system and creating regional data layers like land use. NCWRPC also continues to assist with county and local GIS development.

- Land Use

Land use planning has been a mainstay of the NCWRPC since day one. In the beginning, much of the planning was community level land use plans, mainly funded by federal planning grants. That funding source was eliminated by the end of the 1970s, but in 1980s several state programs began requiring certain types of plans, such as county farmland preservation plans and outdoor recreation plans. To assist our members we began doing those plans, which continue to this day. Over the years NCWRPC has provided assistance to many of our members in the form of Outdoor Recreation Plans, Land & Water Conservation Plans, All-Hazard Mitigation Plans, Community Wildfire Protection Plans, Sewer Service Area Plans, Land Use Plans, Downtown Plans, Farmland Preservation Plans, Wellhead Protection Plans, and Flood Mitigation Plans. Some of these plans are prepared on five year cycles, so some have been updated multiple times.

Land use planning in Wisconsin took a major step when the Legislature passed a revision of the planning statutes in 1999. Any local government that carried out certain land use regulations had to base those actions on an adopted comprehensive plan that meets the requirements of the statute. Over the decade, the NCWRPC has assisted nearly 70 communities develop plans. In fact, the NCWRPC was recognized by the American Planning Association – Wisconsin Chapter in 2010 for its extraordinary efforts promoting comprehensive planning throughout the region.

One of the functions of a regional planning commission is to develop a master plan for the physical development of the region. Although advisory, the NCWRPC prepared the Framework for Regional Development, in 1981. That plan made recommendations on Natural Resource, Economic Development, Housing, and Transportation issues. In 2003 that plan was updated to comply with the new state law. The adopted plan was titled the Regional Comprehensive Plan. This was the first regional plan prepared in the state under the new comprehensive planning law. The Regional Comprehensive Plan contains nine elements, with a focus on economic development and transportation. Currently the NCWRPC is in the process of updating the RCP and broadening the focus within the plan.

Land use planning is continually changing. In recent years there has been movement to expand planning assistance to incorporate issues such as energy, health, livability and sustainability. Who knows what the future holds?

- Transportation

The NCWRPC is designated as a rural transportation planning organization by WisDOT to coordinate transportation strategies on a regional basis. In this role, the NCWRPC supports WisDOT programs and provides local technical assistance.

State program activities include highway corridor planning assistance such as the U.S. 10 Freeway Conversion Study in a joint effort with East Central RPC. Other major corridor planning efforts in the past have included State Highway 29 expansion, State Highway 17 alternate route (bypass) study around Rhinelander, and a study of U.S. Highway 8 for the Potawatomi Tribe. In 2006, WisDOT asked the NCWRPC to conduct a major transit planning effort for each of our ten counties. The NCWRPC arranged and facilitated planning sessions in each county. The results of these sessions were then used to draft Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plans.

In addition to rural transportation, the NCWRPC also deals with urban issues. NCWRPC staff serves on the technical advisory committee for the Wausau Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). In 2003, the NCWRPC completed a long-range transportation plan for the Wisconsin Rapids urban area.

One of the cornerstones of the NCWRPC's transportation planning program is the Transportation component of the Regional Comprehensive Plan and the development of local transportation chapters. The Regional Comprehensive Plan Transportation component integrates state long-range and multimodal goals to facilitate incorporation into local transportation planning efforts. Numerous county and local unit, both urban and rural, transportation chapters have been completed from this framework.

The NCWRPC has also seen increasing involvement with bicycle and pedestrian facilities planning including safe routes to school planning. NCWRPC staff has developed regional, county and municipal level bike and pedestrian network plans, including plans for Adams, Oneida and Vilas Counties. Currently staff serves on the Marathon County Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Committee.

Road surface management planning has been a mainstay of the NCWRPC's transportation program with over 85 plans completed since 1986. These plans provide a schedule for upgrading local roads and qualify local units for LRIP grant funding. A variety of services are provided relating to road surface management, including pavement rating and reporting for counties and local units to comply with state mandate.

The latest effort of the NCWRPC to advocate for more transportation resources for the Region, is the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission or NRTC. The NRTC consists of ten northern Wisconsin counties. The NCWRPC staffs this effort to sustain and enhance safe, reliable and efficient rail service critical to the businesses, communities and economies in northern Wisconsin.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS: REGIONAL AND LOCAL ASSISTANCE

So what have been the results of the last four decades? The following projects and awards are reflective of the impact of the NCWRPC.

- Sought and received designation as an Economic Development District by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). Annually prepare a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to maintain that designation.
- Since designation the NCWRPC has secured over \$20 million dollars from EDA alone for local communities.
- Established and continue to provide staff assistance to the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC) to manage two Regional Revolving Loan Funds.
- Over the last decade the NCWDC has assisted over 20 businesses and helped maintain or create over 400 jobs.
- Awarded Workforce Development National Innovation Award for the Wood Technology Center of Excellence. This was completed in partnership with Northcentral Technical College, Langlade County, and the Langlade County Development Corporation.
- Maintain designation as a rural transportation planning organization by WisDOT to coordinate transportation strategies on a regional basis.
- Established and coordinate the Northeast Wisconsin Public Safety Communication (NEWCOM) organization to promote better emergency service communication throughout a 16 county Region.
- NCWRPC was the first regional planning commission to prepare and adopt a Regional Comprehensive Plan under the state's new planning law 66.1001.
- Maintain a digital Regional Mapping Information System, maintain and distribute Census and other Demographic Information, and serve as a Planning Library for the region.
- Established and staff the Northwoods Rail Commission working with several counties with the goal of maintaining and promoting freight rail in northern Wisconsin.
- Awarded Emergency Preparedness National Innovation Award from National Association of Development Organizations for preparing the Community Economic Recovery Guidebook. This was prepared in cooperation with WEDC.
- Continue to provide assistance to the 13 county Northeast Wisconsin Emergency Management Region to ensure that communication interoperability addresses both local and regional concerns.
- Established a partnership with WEDC to provide economic development tools to communities within the Region.

- Completed Comprehensive Plans for Adams, Forest, Langlade, Oneida and Vilas County. In addition, completed over 75 local level comprehensive plans.
- Received 2010 Recognition Award from APA-Wisconsin for promoting good planning throughout the Region.
- Awarded the 2012 American Planning Association STaR Award for best small town plan in the nation for the Mosinee Downtown Development Plan.
- Coordinated efforts to conduct orthophotography throughout the region in 2005 and 2010. Discussions are underway for another flight in 2015.
- Awarded Best in State in both 2006 and 2011 from American Council of Engineering Companies for coordinating the WROC Flights.
- Staff prepared multiple Land & Water Conservation Plans for Adams, Oneida and Vilas Counties.
- Staff the North Central Wisconsin Stormwater Coalition on behalf of several cities in the Region.
- Staff prepared multiple Outdoor Recreation Plans for Adams, Forest, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida, and Vilas Counties, among others.
- Staff prepared multiple All Hazard mitigation Plans for Adams, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida and Vilas Counties.
- Established a partnership with DNR to provide funding for brownfield redevelopment assistance.
- Awarded the 2013 Local Government Achievement Award from the Wisconsin Land Information Association (WLIA).
- Established NCWRPC Website, annually prepares an Annual Report, and prepares a quarterly newsletter – NCWRPC NEWS to keep members informed.
- Staff have participated on a number of Boards and Committees in the Region and State, including American Planning Association - Wisconsin and Wisconsin Land Information Association, among others.

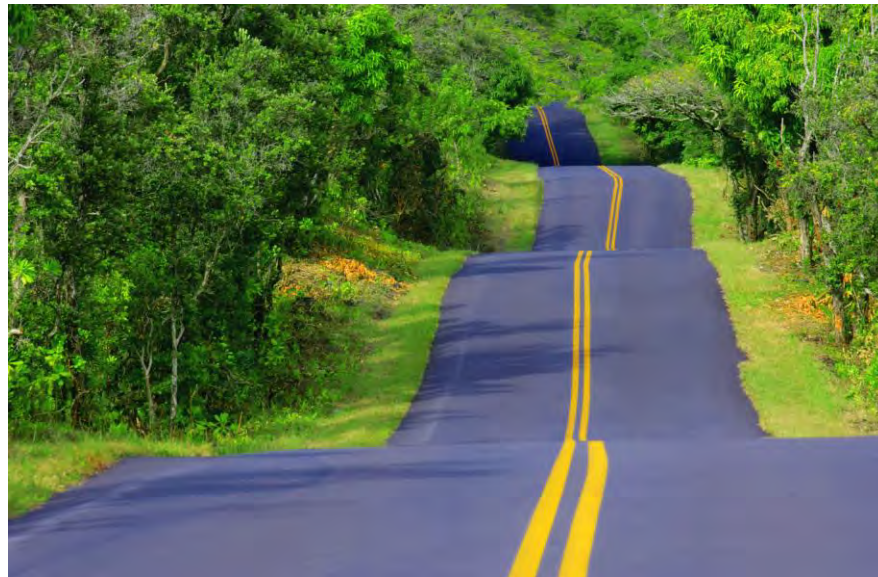
The NCWRPC has been involved in hundreds of other local and regional efforts throughout the years that are not mentioned above.

THE FUTURE: OUR ROAD AHEAD

The work is never done. Many of the planning efforts we assist our members with are on regular cycles to be updated; federal and state laws change and with them bring new rules and regulations for communities to comply; and local needs are ever-changing as growth and redevelopment occur, be it economic development, transportation, geographic information, or land use related. To make sense of these things communities will need data, maps, and planning. Planning is the process of setting goals, developing strategies and outlining tasks and schedules to accomplish the goals.

There are also challenges that lie ahead of us as well, such as ever tightening local budgets, fewer state and federal grant programs, maintaining and expanding general membership, and overall changing priorities at all levels of government. However, working together these can all be overcome.

On behalf of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, thank you for your support over the years; and we look forward to your continued support in the years to come. Remember, together everyone achieves more!



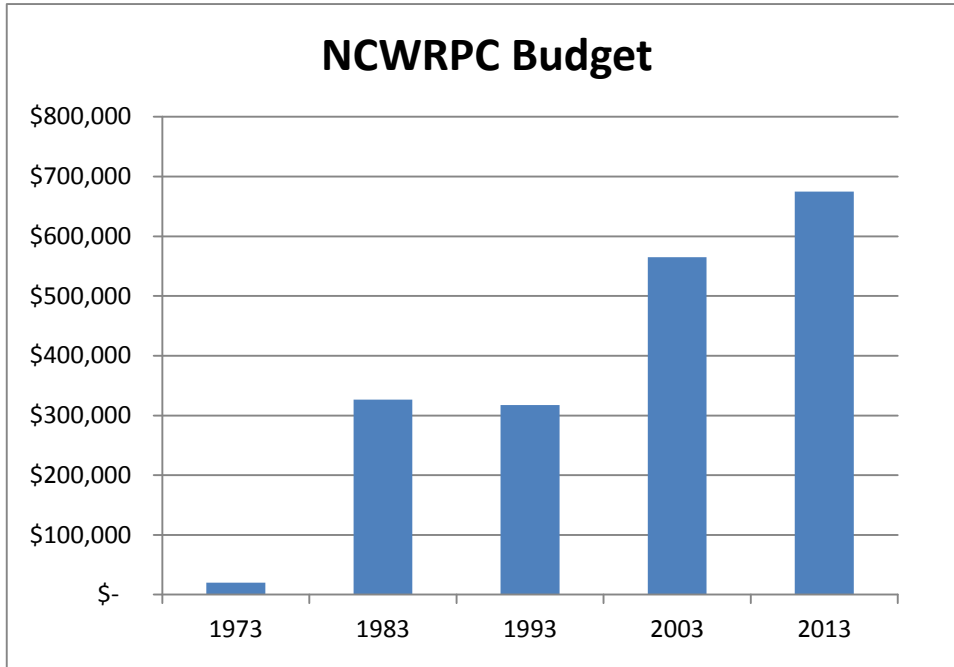
Why Planning?

We should all be concerned about the future because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there."

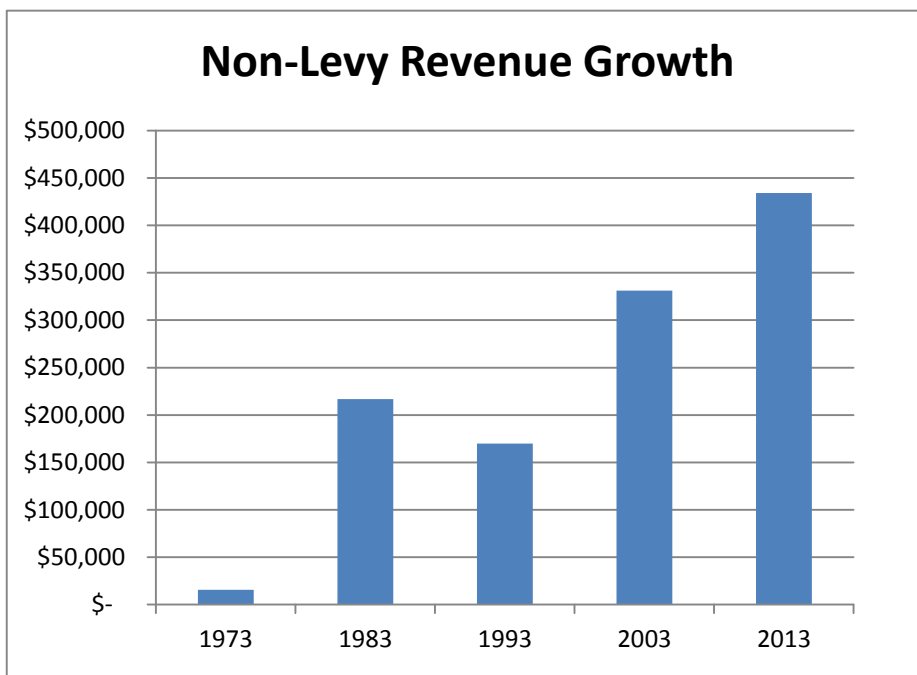
Charles Francis Kettering

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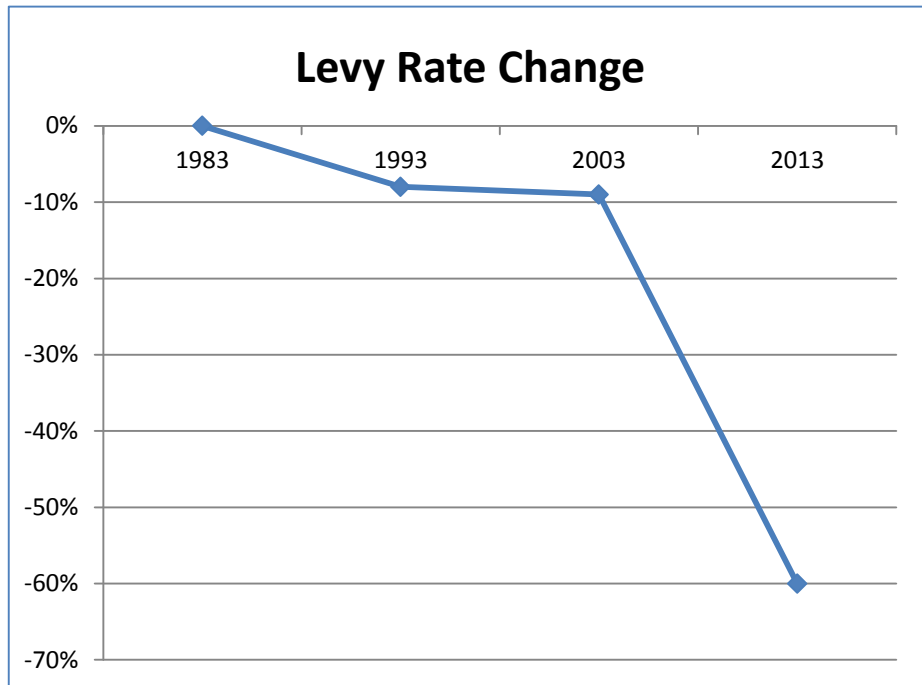
Financial Change – The NCWRPC’s budget grew rapidly in the first decade and stabilized over the second decade. Since 1983 the budget has steadily grown.



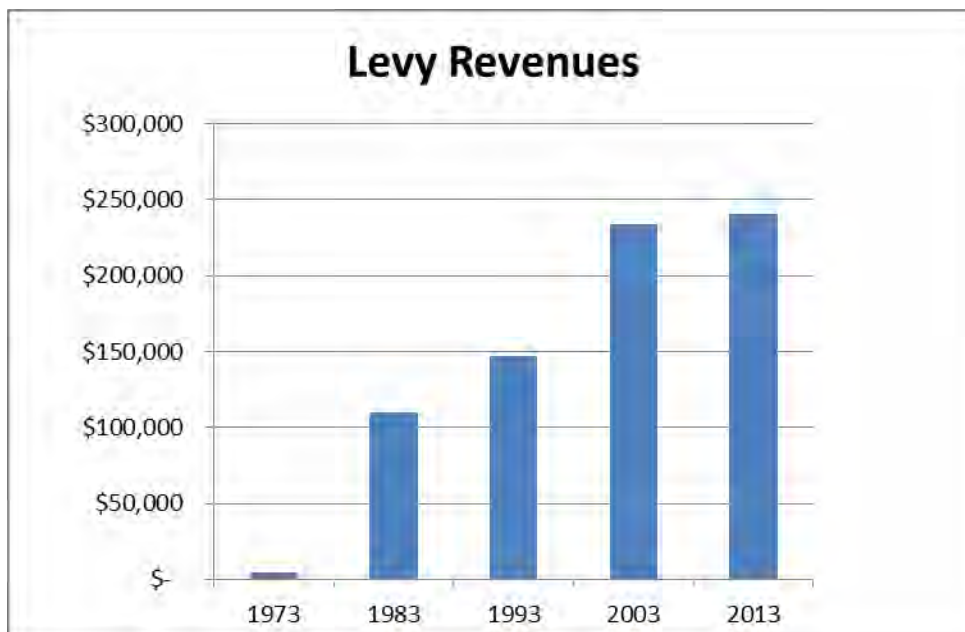
Non-Levy revenue, which includes state and federal grants as well as local project revenue, has increased substantially since 1993.



By State Statute, regional planning commissions set an annual rate for membership up to 0.003% of equalized value. The membership rate held steady with some minor decreases until 2003 when the rate drastically decreased.

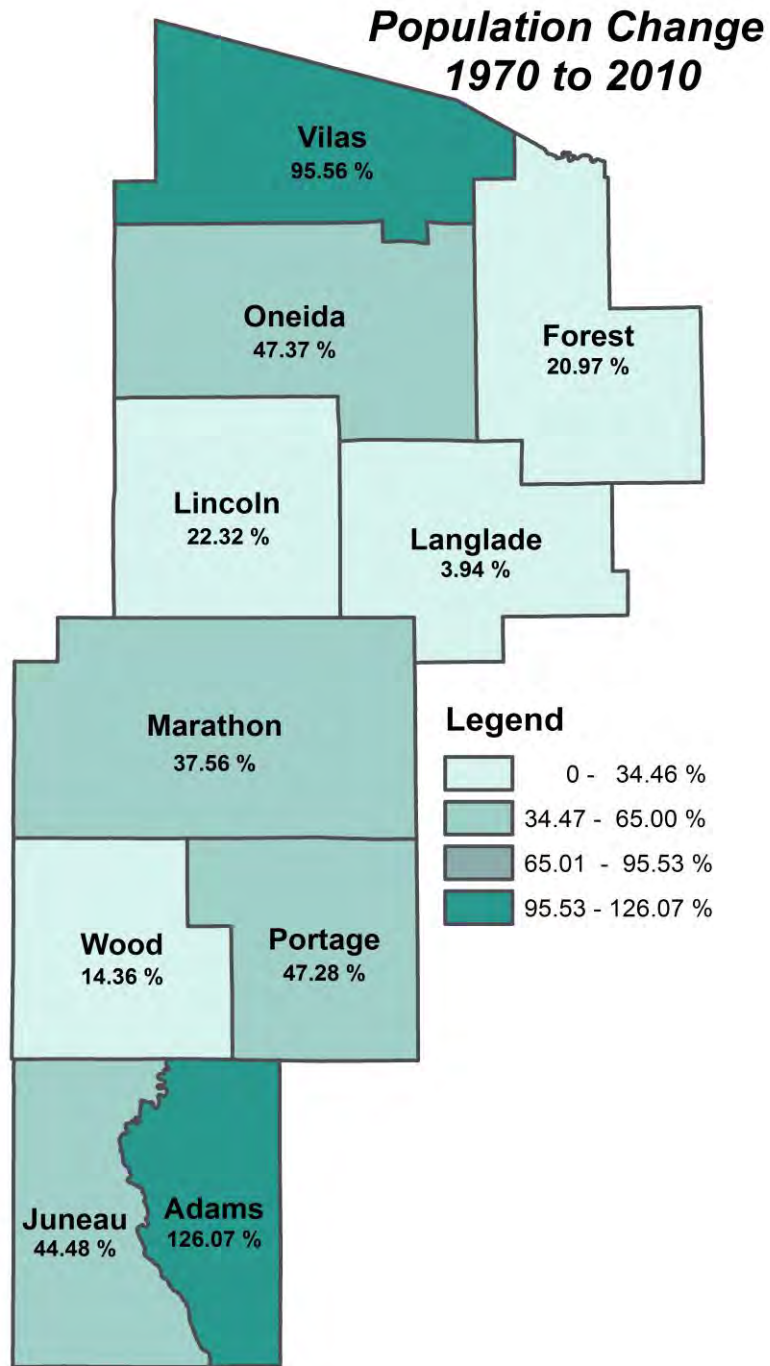


For the first three decades levy revenues increased steadily. However, as a result of policy changes to seek growth by other means, levy revenues have stabilized in the last decade.



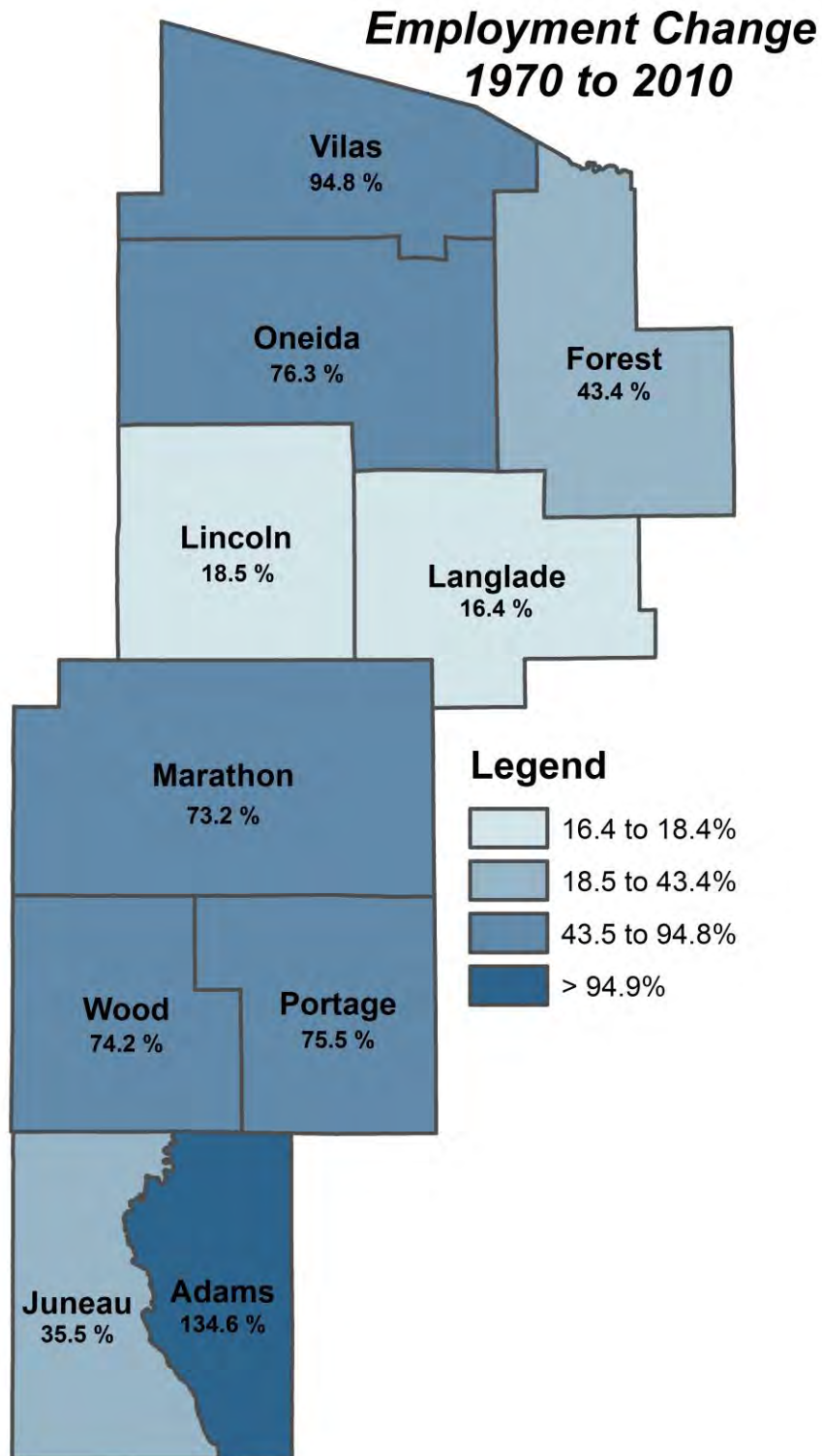
Population Change:

Population growth over the last four decades has varied between counties. Overall population increased about 36%, or about 118,000 people, from 323,844 to 441,822.



Employment Change:

Employment growth also varied widely throughout the region. Overall employment increased about 65%, over 70,000 jobs, from 114,000 to 189,000.



Current Staff:

Dennis Lawrence, EDFP, AICP, Executive Director

Dennis started with the NCWRPC in 1992 and became Executive Director in 1997. He has a bachelor's degree in public administration from UW-La Crosse and a master's degree in urban planning from UW-Milwaukee. He is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and is also certified as an Economic Development Finance Professional (EDFP). Dennis provides overall management to the organization and works in all areas of planning. He also oversees the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation.

Andrew Faust, GISP, Senior GIS Analyst

Andy has worked with the NCWRPC since 1995. He has a bachelor's degree in urban and regional studies from UW-Oshkosh. He is certified as a Geographic Information System Professional (GISP). Andy works in the areas of GIS and intergovernmental cooperation.

Matt Gupta, GISP, GIS/Planning Technician

Matt has worked with the NCWRPC since 2001. He has a bachelor's degree in geography from UW-Stevens Point. He is certified as a Geographic Information System Professional (GISP). Matt works in the areas of GIS and transportation.

Fredrick Heider, AICP, Planner

Fred has worked with the NCWRPC since 2004. He has a bachelor's degree in natural resources from UW-Stevens Point and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). Fred works mainly in the areas of land use and transportation.

Darryl Landeau, AICP, Senior Planner

Darryl has worked with the NCWRPC since 1993. He has a bachelor's degree in natural resources from UW-Stevens Point and a master's degree in urban studies from Mankato State University. He is also a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). Darryl works mainly in the areas of transportation and land use.

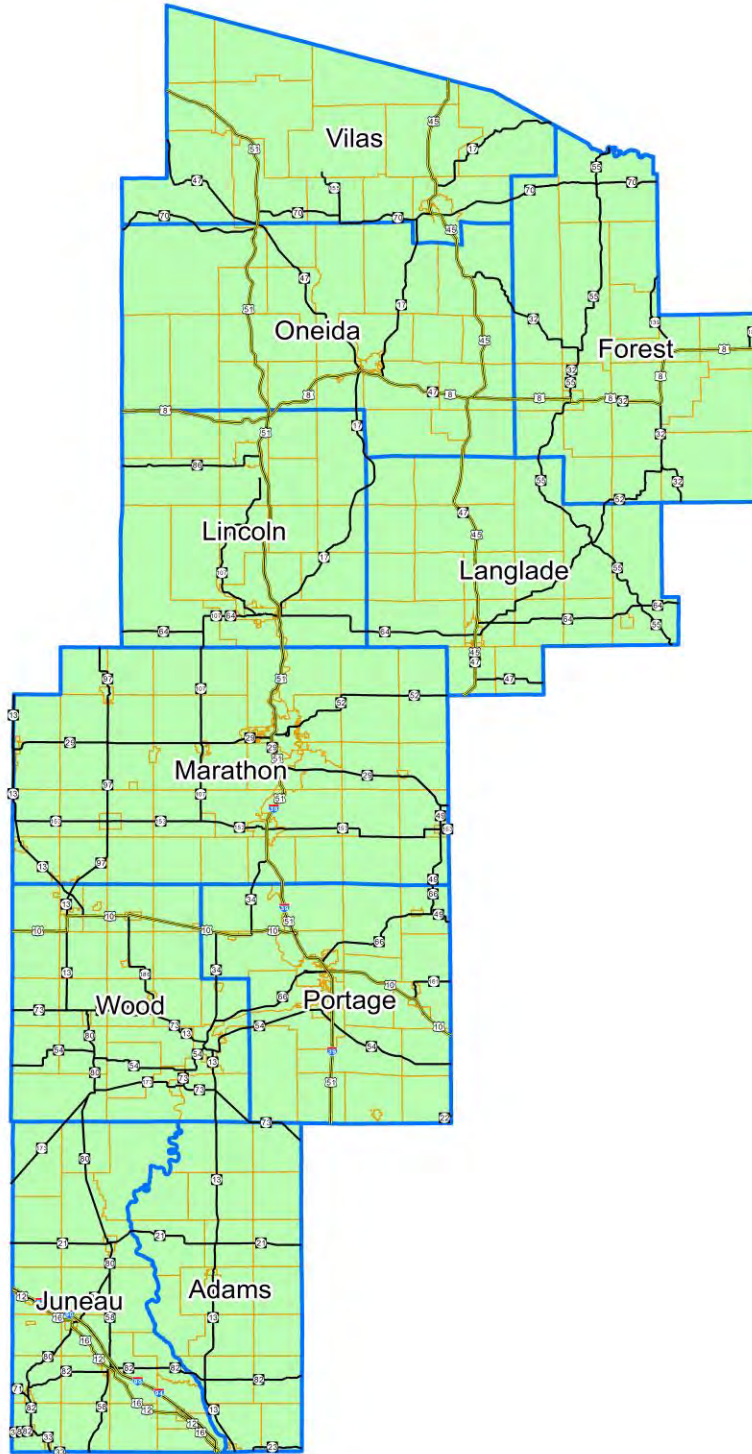
Bernie Lewis, Office Assistant

Bernie has worked with the NCWRPC since 1998. She is responsible for providing general support to staff and the day to day operations of the office. She also provides support to the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation.

A new Community and Economic Development Planner is scheduled to start in August.

THE REGION

The ten county Region covers over 9,325 square miles or nearly six million square miles, and includes 21 cities, 39 villages, 197 towns and 4 tribal nations. In all, over 443,000 people reside within the region for a density of about 47.5 persons per square mile.



CELEBRATING



**NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

— Established 1973 —

