

NCWRPC NEWS

The official newsletter of North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC).

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Serving: Adams, Forest, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas, and Wood counties since 1973.



Director's Note

As the New Year begins, it is a time to reflect on the year just completed and look to the challenges of the coming year. 2011 was filled with numerous projects throughout the region, including a downtown development plan in Mosinee, comprehensive plans in Forest and Oneida Counties, and a Joint Land Use Study for Volk Field in Juneau County. Economic development efforts included loans to several businesses and numerous grant applications prepared. The largest loan approved was to Hurd Windows, which is building a facility in Merrill and will create 60 much needed jobs for our region.

2012 looks to be just as busy. Many planning projects are soon to start, including All-Hazard Mitigation Plans for Langlade and Vilas Counties, a Bike and Pedestrian Plan for Adams County, and local planning assistance in Antigo, Crandon, Mauston, and Nekoosa. Regionally there are many things soon to be underway as well, including the update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), NEWCOM, and NSIC. We are always ready to add more projects. So feel free to give me a call if there is a project you need assistance with.

Finally, I would also like to urge all non-members to consider membership in our organization. If you have any questions related to membership, give me a call. There are a variety of planning related activities we can do for you, from grant writing, economic development, transportation planning and land use related planning. There is considerable information available on our website at www.ncwrpc.org. After all, by working together we all achieve more.

As always, please feel free to give me a call if you have any questions. I can be reached at 715-849-5510, Extension 304, or at dlawrence@ncwrpc.org.

Happy New Year!

Dennis Lawrence, AICP
Executive Director

Commission Meeting Highlights

The last meeting of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) was highlighted by the adoption of the 2012 budget, election of a new Secretary/Treasurer, and adoption of an organizational Strategic Action Plan. The approved NCWRPC budget includes three primary sources of revenue: The levy membership charge is expected to collect \$205,434 (reduced 7% from last year), continuing EDA & DOT grants will total \$136,464 (up 6% from last year), and project revenue will collect about \$391,500 (down about 10% from last year). Overall total revenues are expected to be down 6.7%. Expenditures include salaries and direct costs totaling \$358,025, Fringe costs of \$256,434 and Overhead costs of about \$116,000. Total expenditures for 2012 equal \$731,219.

In other business, George Bornemann, from Langlade County, was unanimously elected as the new Secretary/Treasurer. He will replace Maurice Mathews, from Wood County. In his new role he will sit on the Executive Committee and monitor the financial operations of the organization.

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"Quarterly Quote"

"If you want to make enemies, try to change something."

Woodrow Wilson
28th President

Commission Meetings
See our website for future dates and locations.
The public is always welcome.

Joint Land Use Study Complete for Volk Field

Over 2011, the NCWRPC prepared a Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) for Volk Field near Camp Douglas in Juneau County. The JLUS seeks to understand the impact of nearby land uses on the military mission of the Base, and the effect that military operations have on the surrounding communities. The study was funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Economic Adjustment.



Volk Field, together with Hardwood Range (located just south of the Wood County line and integral to the Base training mission) fill a crucial role in national security as a training facility for Air National Guard (ANG) units from around the country, and as point of embarkation for reservists from the Midwest serving foreign deployments. Volk Field functions as a training site for over 200 units per year, a significant percentage of the ANG force. A mainstay of the Juneau County and Central Wisconsin economy, the Base provides over 450 jobs and \$44 million in economic impact. Ensuring that, to the greatest degree possible, the Base is able to continue its safe operations without posing undue risk to neighboring land uses is important both to the Air Guard and to the community. Communication between the military and its neighbors is the best way to ensure that stakeholders' interests are protected while at the same time strengthening the military mission.

The process began with the establishment of a Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee to assist and monitor the study. During the entire process the opinions of residents and stakeholders were sought. Efforts were made to coordinate activities and to integrate the project with long-term planning efforts by

local units of government, and with Volk Field and the Air National Guard.

The JLUS process is meant to identify the steps that can be taken to secure the mission of Volk Field/Hardwood Range and protect the safety and quality of life of surrounding communities. A list of recommendations that arose from several previous studies looking at Volk Field and Hardwood Range, as well as suggestions from citizens and the Air Guard, were adopted by the Policy Committee. Actions that can be taken by the military and by local governments to ensure the long-range viability of the Base are identified. The final report and supporting documents can be accessed at:

<http://www.ncwrpc.org/juneau/jlus/>

The Policy Committee adopted the JLUS report on October 27, 2011. The task now is for Juneau County and other participating local governments to partner with the Air Guard to protect the military mission at Volk Field, while enhancing the communities around it. By fostering on-going communication the Base can remain an economic engine, a national security asset, and a good neighbor.

Contact Mike Agnew, AICP, at 715-849-5510, Extension 307, or at magnew@ncwrpc.org for more information.



North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation Update

The NCWRPC manages two different revolving loan funds through a separate corporation called the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC). The goal of the revolving loan funds are to spur economic development in our region.



There are three basic programs that NCWDC administers. One is a traditional gap financing program, another is a micro loan program, and the third is a façade improvement program. The “gap” program can provide loans up to \$150,000 for a 7 to 12 year term with an interest rate typically

below market rates. The micro-loan program can provide loans up to \$7,500 to early stage businesses. Generally these loans have a 5 year term with a four percent interest rate. The façade improvement program can provide loans up to \$7,500 to property owners in certified central business districts. These loans also have a 5 year term with interest rates at four percent. Currently, the NCWDC has funds available to lend to eligible businesses looking to expand.

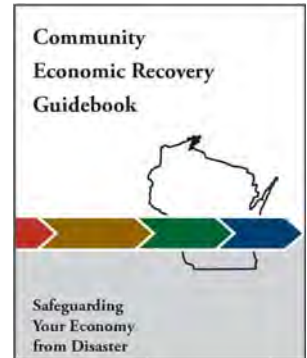
Since it was established, the NCWDC has made 14 loans totaling \$1.3 million. These loans have leveraged an additional \$4 million in private investment, and have created or retained over 300 jobs in North Central Wisconsin. In 2011, NCWDC made commitments to two firms which will create 65 jobs and spur \$800,000 of private investment in our region.

For more information on the NCWDC loan programs please contact Matt Schreiber, AICP, at 715-849-5510, Extension 306, or at mschreiber@ncwrpc.org.



Protecting Your Economy from Natural Disasters

During 2011, NCWRPC worked in cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, now Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, and three other regional planning commissions to prepare a community guidebook called “**Community Economic Recovery Handbook**”. This was a project completed in response to the 2008 floods in the southern portion of the state. The frequency and cost of natural disasters has continually increased since 2000 and the U.S. Department of Commerce provided funding for the project in an effort to minimize those costs.



This Guidebook provides strategies that can be used at the local level to minimize the impacts of natural disasters on the local economy. The four components of the disaster cycle are covered: Response, Recovery, Mitigation, and Preparedness. The Guidebook is now available for download at:

<http://www.ncwrpc.org/hazard/>

We encourage communities to review the Guidebook and develop a local strategy. The NCWRPC can help. If you have any questions related to the Guidebook or All-Hazard Mitigation Planning contact Darryl Landeau, AICP, at 715-849-5510, Extension 308, or at dlandeau@ncwrpc.org.



Updating Farmland Preservation Plans

The Wisconsin Working Lands Initiative was signed into law in 2009 and is comprised of the following three programs:

- Farmland Preservation Program
- Agricultural Enterprise Area (AEA) Program
- Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) Program

The Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) oversees the program at the state level. Since 2009, changes have occurred to the Working Lands Initiative. The 2011 WI Act 32 (Biennial Budget Bill) eliminated the collection of a Conversion Fee when land is rezoned out of a certified farmland preservation zoning district, and created planning grant to assist counties in revising their Farmland Preservation Plans.

Farmland Preservation Program

About 30 years ago, each county adopted a Farmland Preservation Plan, and some local governments adopted a Farmland Preservation Zoning Ordinance to delineate the agricultural land eligible for the highest farmland preservation tax credits, (ch. 91, Wis. Stats.). Some landowners not located in a farmland preservation zoning district chose to enter into separate agreements with DATCP to claim tax credits. Many of these landowner agreements are expiring, since they are either 15 year or 25 year contracts with DATCP.

Counties are scheduled to revise their farmland preservation plans to meet new standards designed to better protect farmland. These plans, once certified by DATCP, provide eligibility to programs such as farmland preservation zoning or Agricultural Enterprise Areas. These programs offer benefits such as landowner eligibility for farmland preservation program tax credits. A grant program is available to update county plans, however at this time there is a delay in the program. Counties will receive direct notification from DATCP when they are eligible to apply for the grants. Zoning ordinance certifications expire one year after the expiration of the plan certification.

Expiration of a farmland preservation zoning ordinance certification does not mean that the ordinance is invalid. It does however mean that landowners covered by the ordinance can no longer claim farmland preservation tax credits. So the farmland preservation zoning ordinance will need to be rewritten too. No zoning rewrite grants are available. Certification of a local farmland preservation zoning ordinance must be obtained through application to DATCP. The table below identifies the expiration date by county.

County	Plan Expiration (Dec. 31)	Ordinance Expiration (Dec. 31)
Adams	2014	2015
Forest	2015	2016
Juneau	2013	2014
Langlade	2014	2015
Lincoln	2014	2015
Marathon	2012	2013
Oneida	2014	2015
Portage	2013	2014
Vilas	2014	2015
Wood	2014	2015

To access additional information about the Working Lands Initiative, go online to: http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Working_Lands_Initiative/

A few counties have already contacted NCWRPC to request planning assistance with revising their farmland preservation plans. We have the resources available to assist all of our member counties.

For more information about planning grants, updating the Farmland Preservation Plan, and updating the Farmland Preservation Ordinance, contact Fred Heider, AICP, at 715-849-5510, Extension 310, or at fheider@ncwrpc.org.



NEWCOM

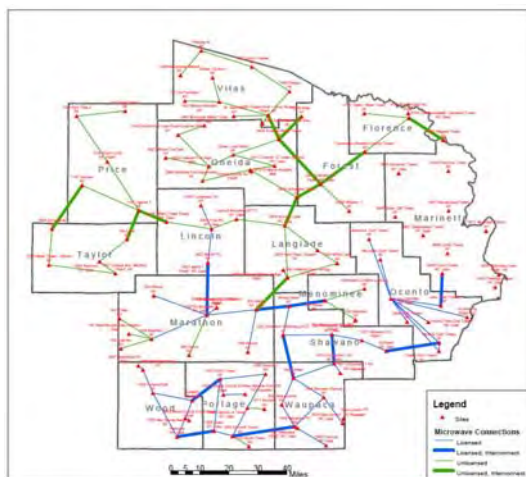
The Northeast Wisconsin Public Safety Communication Group (NEWCOM) held their first meeting seven years ago, and has been meeting ever since. NEWCOM provides a forum for public safety professionals to discuss issues of interoperable public safety communications within the NEWCOM region.

NEWCOM was formed by an Intergovernmental Agreement under State Statute 66.0301. NEWCOM is comprised of the following sixteen counties in the northeast part of the state: Florence, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Marinette, Menominee, Oconto, Oneida, Portage, Price, Shawano, Taylor, Vilas, Waupaca, and Wood.

Over the last seven years NEWCOM has been awarded over a million dollars in grants to do planning, purchase equipment, and perform communication exercises. Counties have benefited in group equipment purchases and shared technical resources.

The counties continue to work together to eliminate duplication, share resources, solve problems, reduce costs, and learn from each other. NEWCOM is a great example of counties working together to make the region stronger, safer, and a better place to live.

For more information about NEWCOM contact Andy Faust, GISP, at 715-849-5510, Extension 305, or at af Faust@ncwrpc.org.



Safe Routes To School Update

Communities have the opportunity to apply for Safe Routes To School (SRTS) planning, or implementation grants every two years. As of late December, the new federal transportation program has not been approved beyond a short extension into 2012. However, the next SRTS application period is still scheduled to begin in spring. We can assist you with writing these grant applications at no charge. Creating a local SRTS Task Force now will start to build that local capacity necessary for a successful SRTS program upon receipt of the planning award.

NCWRPC has created Safe Routes To School Plans for the cities of Wisconsin Rapids and Antigo; and is currently finalizing plans for the Almond-Bancroft School District in Portage County, and for several public and private schools in Rhinelander.



Once adopted, communities move into the plan implementation phase. The NCWRPC has worked with the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin to create an implementation training package of expert, hands-on instruction to train a local administrator on how to implement the SRTS Plan. Wisconsin Rapids developed a successful implementation grant with the assistance of the NCWRPC, which included funding for this training.

Over the last year, NCWRPC staff member Fred Heider actively participated in regular statewide SRTS teleconferences and attended WisDOT sponsored training. In August 2011, he attended the national Safe Routes To School biannual conference in Minneapolis, MN, and organized two regional SRTS sessions in Wisconsin Rapids and Rhinelander to share ideas from the conference.

For more information about SRTS, creating a local SRTS Task Force, or to have us complete an SRTS grant application on your behalf, contact Fred Heider, AICP at 715-849-5510, Extension 310, or at fheider@ncwrpc.org.



Outdoor Recreation Plan Updates

We are finishing several county outdoor recreation plans, including Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, and Juneau; as well as some local plans in Mauston and Wisconsin Rapids. In 2012, we have efforts planned in Adams County and the Village of Kronenwetter.

An outdoor recreation plan consists of five parts that together identify the types of outdoor recreation (parks and trails) the local government wants to provide over the next five years. Outdoor recreation plans begin with a review of outdoor recreation related plans created by other governmental agencies (e.g. trail plans, comprehensive plans, and the state outdoor recreation plan). This review of plans reduces potential duplication of services by the various governmental agencies, and determines what the priorities are for providing outdoor recreational facilities in the local jurisdiction. Next is an inventory of existing outdoor recreation facilities, with private facilities also listed for reference. Then the public is asked through surveys and at meetings how they would like to improve existing facilities, or if they would like different facilities, and those notes are included in the plan. Goals and objectives are created based upon the collected public input; and then projects that implement the goals are added to the plan. Not all projects listed are necessarily going to occur, but if they are not listed, chances of being funded are greatly reduced.

The primary purpose of the outdoor recreation plan is to maintain a local government's eligibility to apply for DNR funding. Forestry and parks departments may apply to these programs for grants up to 50% for the purchase of land for park use, or to make capital improvements (e.g. restrooms, and trails) as long as the project is listed in the plan.



For county plans, adoption by all municipalities is not necessary if they wish to cooperate with the county to use this plan for grant applications. Local town government grant applications have a better chance of approval if the county applies on their behalf. Cities and villages are encouraged by the DNR to create their own outdoor recreation plans, and then include those plans by reference in the county plan.

If your community would like to prepare a plan or apply for a grant for a project already listed in a county plan, contact Fred Heider, AICP, at 715-849-5510, Extension 310, or at fheider@ncwrpc.org.



Commission Meeting Highlights Continued

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The Commission also adopted a Strategic Action Plan that was developed building off of the Strategic Planning process conducted earlier in the year. Three primary goals were identified. They are: Increase opportunities for local governments to collaborate on cross-jurisdictional goals and increase awareness of the importance of working together – regionalism; Develop an understanding by local government and the public about our mission, role, and capacity to serve the planning needs of communities, and create meaningful forums for dialogue with agencies from all three sectors – government, business and non-profits; and Maintain and enhance funding sources for core services, maintain and enhance membership in order to improve capacity to provide service to clients. In addition, a variety of actions and benchmarks were established for each goal. The Strategic Action Plan helps set the course for the agency for the next five years.

Please contact Dennis Lawrence, AICP, with any questions. He can be reached at 715-849-5510, Extension 304, or at dlawrence@ncwrpc.org.



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update Underway

In 1980 the NCWRPC's ten county region was designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). To maintain that designation the NCWRPC is required to prepare what is now called a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy or CEDS. A CEDS provides an assessment of economic development conditions in the EDD, identifies a Regional Economic Development Strategy, and lists potential public works projects.

One of the more important reasons to maintain this designation is that it provides access to grant funds from EDA. Annually, EDA has over \$200 million available for public infrastructure to spur economic development. Some recent projects in our region include a wastewater treatment plant upgrade in Wisconsin Rapids, the Wood Technology Center of Excellence in Antigo, and business park expansions in the cities of Adams and Mauston.



Some of the information contained in the 2011 CEDS is summarized here. Between 2000 and 2010, our Region's population grew by over 10,000 persons or about 2.5 percent. Juneau County showed the greatest percentage growth, followed by Marathon and Adams Counties. Forest County experienced the lowest percentage population growth. In all, over that same period employment declined over 8,500, or about 4.3 percent. Not all ten counties, however, experienced a loss of employment, Adams, Forest and Portage all experienced growth.

Beyond data and trends the CEDS outlines a regional development strategy, which includes a goal, objectives and recommendations. The CEDS has one overall goal, which reads: Promote the expansion and stabilization of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities throughout the region. There are five objectives identified as well, these are: Maintain and diversify the region's economy; Develop a well trained workforce in the region; Maintain and enhance public facilities throughout the region; Pursue increased funding from both public and private sources for the region; and Promote compatibility between economic development and natural resources within the region.

A committee will oversee the CEDS update over the next few months. The committee will review data and maps, create a new regional development strategy, and create a work plan for the NCWRPC. Projects will also be reviewed and identified for inclusion in the CEDS. It is essential that a project be listed in the CEDS for EDA grant consideration. Only projects from active (member) governments will be listed. For those non-members this is something you might want to reconsider, you are minimizing grant opportunities by not being part of the EDD.

If you have any questions about the CEDS process or how to become active in the process, contact Dennis Lawrence, AICP, at 715-849-5510, Extension 304, or at dlawrence@ncwrpc.org.



Freight Rail Update

The NCWRPC continues to work with a consortium of Northwoods counties to form a freight rail transit commission. The mission of the consortium is "To sustain and enhance safe, reliable and efficient rail service critical to the businesses, communities and economies in northern Wisconsin." Currently, the Northwoods Rail Coalition includes Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida, Vilas, Barron, Florence, Marinette, Price and Rusk counties. These counties are working to develop and pass resolutions formally creating the Northwoods Freight Rail Commission. NCWRPC staff is also looking at bringing in additional potential members including other Wisconsin counties, adjacent Michigan counties and area Native American Tribal Nations that are affected by rail service issues.

For more information on the Northwoods Rail Coalition please contact Darryl Landeau, AICP at 715-849-5510, Extension 308, or dlandeau@ncwrpc.org or Matt Schreiber, AICP at 715-849-5510, Extension 306, or mschreiber@ncwrpc.org. 

NCWRPC Commissioners

Adams County

Donald Krahn
Glenn Licitar
Ron Jacobson

Juneau County

Edmund Wafle
Appointment Pending
Appointment Pending

Lincoln County

Robert Lussow
Thomas Rick
Doug Williams

Oneida County

Wilbur Petroskey
Thomas Rudolph
Appointment Pending

Vilas County

Bob Egan
Ralph Sitzberger
Appointment Pending

Forest County

Erhard Huettl
Jimmy Landru, Jr.
Paul Millan

Langlade County

George Bornemann
Ronald Nye
Paul Schuman

Marathon County

Virginia Heinemann
Craig McEwen
Bettye Nall

Portage County

Inactive

Wood County

Frederick Camacho
Gerald Nelson
Maurice Mathews

PRRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 6235
WAUSAU WI

North Central Wisconsin
Regional Planning Commission
210 McClellan Street, Suite 210
Wausau, Wisconsin 54403
715-849-5510
www.ncwrpc.org
Fax: 715-849-5110
staff@ncwrpc.org

