Polk County, Wisconsin

May, 2010

Economic Development Resource Directory

Special points of interest:

- Listing of Polk County municipalities and what they offer in economic development
- Contact information for the Polk County Economic Development Corporation.
- Resource list of some county, state and federal web sites that offer economic development assistance and opportunities.

How to Use This Directory

Whether you're an existing business looking to improve and expand, or a new business interested in bringing your business to Polk County, this directory is your springboard in finding resources to assist you.

The natural beauty of Polk County makes this a special place to live and work.

Polk County and West Central Wisconsin

Doing business in West Central Wisconsin and particularly Polk County is a pleasure. Our location, within an hour of the St. Paul-Minneapolis Metro area makes Polk County and the surrounding region extremely enticing for businesses and people that want to enjoy our pristine lakes, rivers, creeks, wooded areas, and the beautiful St. Croix River Valley.

When you live in our region of West Central Wisconsin, you're automatically entitled to all of the wonderful fringe benefits our region offers. Natural beauty, culture, affordability, great career opportunities, excellent education, high quality health care, small town security, and an endless list of activities.

Here the good life takes up permanent residency.

The regions outstanding livability also gives you leverage to attract and retain quality employees. They'll love living here. And when they have free time, there's never a lack of activities any time of year.

Hiking, biking, fishing and hunting, art museums, theatres, national sporting events, major music festivals or just sitting back and taking in the breath taking scenery, they're all part of the amenities that come with making our area your business's home.

Economic development is a high priority in our county and region. Our economic development efforts promote existing local business and industry expansion as well as facilitate new business recruitment efforts. Our county, region, state have resources to help fund financing opportunities. Side by side comparisons of tax rates favor our county, region, and state. Lower commercial-industrial property taxes in Wisconsin add to a company's bottom line. So does lower worker compensation taxes, lower corporate taxes, lower personal income taxes and lower sales taxes.

Steve Healy, Director

Polk County Economic Development Corporation

Contents:

Municipalities	2-5
County/Regional Economic Resources	6
State/National Economic Resources	7
Chambers/Community Clubs/Alliances	8
Other Assets	8

Municipalities

Following is a listing of Polk County municipalities.

Amery

The City of Amery, Wisconsin lies nestled on an isthmus between the lazy Apple River, and the beautiful North Twin and South Twin Lakes. Located in the heart of the St. Croix Valley, Amery is the largest community in Polk County and serves as a center for shopping, arts, recreation and healthcare. Amery, a quaint community offers its residents a wonderful quality of life and excellent services provided by public agencies and the volunteerism inherent in the community. With seven beautiful parks offering walking trails, fishing, boat landings, birding and vast nature retreats, we believe Amery is a "great place" for families and retirees and we welcome our visitors wholeheartedly.

the City of Amery has some designed industrial parks. One of the parks currently has 13 usable acres. The City has two TIF Districts in the community one in the downtown and the other in one of their industrial parks. The City also has its own micro loan program for small loans. The City owns one of the industrial sites and they own a property in the heart of Amery that is zoned commercial and residential use.

For information on the City's Comprehensive Plan, which includes an Economic Development Element, please visit the following website: http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/pdfs/Planning/CompPlanCAmery.pdf

Amery—continued

Additional information on the City of Amery is available at : www.Amerywisconsin.org and the Amery EDC Website: www.ameryedc.org/ or by contacting: cityadmin@centurytel.net (715) 268-7486

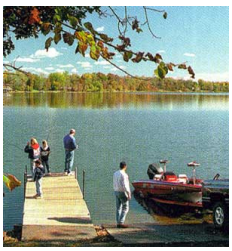
Balsam Lake

The Village of Balsam Lake features the largest lake in Polk County and is also the County Seat. They're close to two state highways , Hwy 8 & 35, and have good school district.

Their industrial park is fully developed with electric, water and sewer and natural gas is available. Notify the Village for possible incentives including possible tax break for new industries.

For information on the Village's Comprehensive Plan, which includes an Economic Development Element, please visit the following website: http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/pdfs/Planning/CompPlanVBalsamLake.pdf. For more information, please visit: www.balsamlakewi.com call the Clerk at (715) 485-3424 or email: vobl@lakeland.ws

Centuria



The Village of Centuria features a great location on Hwy 35 and offers recreational opportunities along with low taxes.

Their industrial park is in the TIF district and offers TIF incentives of 4 acre lots and a 20% loan. There are lots available and new industries may address the village board as to current incentives.

For information on the Village's Comprehensive Plan, which includes an Economic Development Element, please visit the following website: http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/pdfs/Planning/CompPlanVCenturia.pdf

For more information, please visit: www.centuria-wi.org/ call the Clerk at (715) 646-2300 or email: info@centuria-wi.org

Clayton

The Village of Clayton is located on a major US highway 63 and has convenient recreational activities.

They have an industrial park. One lot has utilities, and the others have utilities close by. They have a TIF district and offer incentives to qualified developers.

For information on the Village's Comprehensive Plan, which includes an Economic Development Element, please visit the following website: http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/pdfs/

Municipalities—continued

Clayton—continued

For more information, please visit: www.Villageofclayton.com call the Clerk at (715)948-2460 or email vclaytonct@amerytel.net

Clear Lake

In the Village of Clear Lake you can enjoy the best of everything from unlimited outdoor recreation activities to an indoor athletic club and fitness center. From several large industrial manufacturers located in our industrial park to the small craft shops located on Main Street., From a great school system providing quality education to a local government that cares about people. Clear Lake offers residents and visitors big-city amenities without losing their small town charm.

The Village has two active Tax Incremental Finance Districts (TID), TID #2 and #3. TID #2 is an industrial District on the west side of the Village that was created in 1999 and has a 23 year life so it can exist until 2022. TID #3 is a blighted District that covers most of the downtown and along 5th Street. This district was created in 2003 and has a 27 year life, so it can be active until 2030.

The Village is allowed to put up to 12% of the Village's equalized value in the creation of new TIDs plus the increment of all their active TIDs. As of 2007, the Village has 6.38% of their equalized value in their active TIDs. Therefore, the Village would have

Clear Lake—continued

room to create more Districts if needed without dissolving any of the existing TIDs.

They offer TIF funding to developers. They also utilize regional planning for facade and microloans.

For information on the Village's Comprehensive Plan, which includes an Economic Development Element, please visit the following website: http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/pdfs/Planning/CompPlanVClearLake.pdf

For more information, please visit: www.clearlake-wi.gov call the Clerk at (715) 263-2157 or email: ABannink@clearlake-wi.gov

Dresser

The Village of Dresser is a vibrant small community with quality places to live, work, and play. Residents have a variety of housing choices in the Village to meet their changing needs. The Village promotes high quality growth, and new development is designed and sited to reflect the character of the Village and to preserve sensitive environmental areas.

For information on the Village's Comprehensive Plan, which includes an Economic Development Element, please visit the following website: http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/pdfs/Planning/CompPlanVDresser.pdf For more information call the Clerk at (715) 755-2940 or email vod@centurytel.net

Frederic

Included in the village of Frederic are over 40 acres of parklands and a 20-acre lake with access and docks for public use. Three shelters, a ballpark, basketball court and a bandstand are available for family outings, special events or just peaceful afternoon picnics. Winter activities include ice skating on the public ice skating rink, cross country skiing on trails around the lake or maybe a quiet day of ice fishing. Frederic also boasts a flourishing arts and cultural community.

TIFD is an economic development resource available, and Frederic boasts a water and waste water system that would support wet industry.

For information on the Village's Comprehensive Plan, which includes an Economic Development Element, please visit the following website: TBD
For more information, please visit www.fredericwi.com call the Administrator at (715)327-4294 or email: administrator@fredericwi.com

Community festivals and fun activities help to make Polk County a great place to live.

Municipalities—continued

Luck

The Village of Luck is uniquely blessed with great natural resources. Big Butternut Lake, Gandy Dancer Trail, Straight Lake State Park, John Haukness Wildlife Area and six municipal parks.

The Village also boasts an excellent school system, new library and historical museum, an 18-hole golf course and a variety of downtown businesses.

The current industrial park is full. Please contact Village to find out if there will be development of a second park.

Economic incentives include the Micro Loan and Façade Committees (in conjunction with West Central Regional Planning) review applications to help new and existing businesses and approve appropriate loans. Also available is a housing rehabilitation and home purchase assistance to residents through the Community Development Block Grant Revolving Loan fund. The Village staff offers assistance and guidance with grant/loan applications for the business community.

For information on the Village's Comprehensive Plan, which includes an Economic Development Element, please visit the following website: http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/pdfs/Planning/CompPlanVLuck.pdf

For more information, please visit: http://www.villageofluckwi.com/ email: volkristina@lakeland.ws or call the Administrator at (715) 472-2221

Milltown

The Village of Milltown is committed to an environment where residents have a sense of community, know their neighbors, and are welcomed to volunteer for worthwhile causes and events. The Village is dedicated to participating in the best manner of industrial, small business, and residential growth to ensure a safe, tranquil and friendly place where the residents are proud to call Milltown their home.

For information on the Village's Comprehensive Plan, which includes an Economic Development Element, please visit the following website: http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/pdfs/Planning/CompPlanVMilltown.pdf For additional information, please email: milltownvillage@lakeland.ws or call the Clerk at (715) 825-3258

Osceola

Located less than an hour from the Twin Cities and nestled in the bluffs of the beautiful Saint Croix River Valley, Osceola is the perfect natural setting to live and work. The Village has maintained its history by using historic preservation as a tool to keep its downtown vibrant. Home to a great school district it also boasts a bridge to Minnesota, an airport with a 5,500 ft runway and rail potential.

With both an industrial and business park. With fully developed sites, this Village

Osceola—continued

has an Economic Development Fund and Incentive Fund available.

For information on the Village's Comprehensive Plan, which includes an Economic Development Element, please visit the following website: http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/pdfs/Planning/CompPlanVOsceola.pdf For additional information, please visit: www.myosceola.com call the Administrator at (715)294-3498 or email: neil@vil.osceola.wi.us

St. Croix Falls

The City of St. Croix Falls is dedicated to preserving its pristine river valley community and to providing a safe, friendly environment by investing in the future through orderly growth, thereby protecting its scenic beauty, natural resources and its historic character.

The City is ready to assist businesses in accessing economic development resources offered at the regional/state/national level. The industrial park has full utilities, and you will find an available workforce at affordable wages with available sites to build homes.

For information on the City's Comprehensive Plan, which includes an Economic Development Element, please visit the following website: http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/pdfs/Planning/CompPlanCStCroixFalls.PDF

For additional information, please visit: www.cityofstcroixfalls.com call the Administrator at 715-483-3929 or email: administrator@cityofstcroixfalls.com

Municipalities-continued

Turtle Lake

The Village of Turtle Lake has a friendly, small-town atmosphere for residents and visitors alike, which encourages community involvement and makes the Village a good place to raise a family. Their Residents are proud of their community's school system, its recreational opportunities, the access to quality, affordable housing, and their active role in the community. The Village of Turtle Lake will continue to preserve the traditions of their small town past while looking forward to the future to promote a diversified economic base, making the Village a good place to visit, work, and live.

The Village of Turtle Lake proposes to construct a Regional Sustainable Business Park with an emphasis on sustainable design criteria such as:

- Emphasis on the use and preservation of natural systems
- Use of life-cycle cost analysis
- Holistic design and systems thinking.
- Design and application of new, innovative and more sustainable technologies
- LEED certification for new building designs
- Sustainable solution alternatives visualization
- Emphasis on public outreach and involvement

The Village of Turtle Lake envisions the Regional Sustainable Business Park to be a business park where businesses cooperate with one another and the community to reduce waste and pollution and improve environmental efficiency by sharing resources. The

Turtle Lake—continued

goal is a sustainable development that provides economic gain while improving environmental quality. All activities in the Regional Sustainable Business Park, including solid waste recycling, energy management, storm water treatment, and natural resources use will have an environmental focus.

For information on the Village's Comprehensive Plan, which includes an Economic Development Element, please visit the following website: http://www.co.polk.wi.us/landinfo/pdfs/Planning/CompPlanVTurtleLake.PDF call the Administrator at (715) 986-2241 or email: admin@turtlelakewi.com

Many communities in Polk County have farmers' markets to provide the freshest produce, farm raised meats, and more...

The Polk County Information Center

Located in St. Croix Falls they are here to provide you with enough information to assist your family or business in the important decision to relocate here.

www.polkcountytourism.com

1-800-222-7655

Community Economic Profiles and other local links:

http://www.polkcountytourism.com/business.html

County & Regional Economic Development Resources

Polk County Economic Development Corporation

The purpose of the Polk County EDC is to encourage and promote economic development and capital investment in Polk County in order to create and retain attractive jobs for a diverse population, enhance our community's tax base, and facilitate positive, sustainable economic growth. Polk County EDC can offer assistance of starting and financing a business.

For more information, please visit: www.polkcountyEDC.com or contact Steve Healy, EDC Director at (715) 405-7655 or email info@polkcountyedc.com

UW-Extension Office-Polk County

UW-Extension Offices provide educational tools in land use and economic matters for residents and businesses. They custom fit their knowledge and provide research to communities with whom they are assisting.In a collaborative effort with UW-River Falls Small Business Development Center, the UW-Extension office also hosts a monthly Small Business Consultation Sessions. These confidential face-to face sessions are an informal opportunity for local entrepreneurs to have their business plans and financial projections reviewed and analyzed.

For more information, please visit http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/polk/ or contact Bob Kazmierski at (715)485-8600 or email: bob.kazmierski@ces.uwex.edu

Momentum West

The best of business, education, service, technology and tourism is brought to your fingertips by the creators of this comprehensive website Momentum West. Momentum West is a regional economic development organization serving Barron, Clark,Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pierce, Pepin, Polk, Rusk, and St. Croix counties.

For more information:http://www.momentumwest.org/ or Email: info@momentumwest.org

Regional Business Fund, Inc.,

RBF, Inc. is a non-profit economic development corporation whose purpose is to promote business and economic development in west central Wisconsin. The RBF, Inc. offers loan funds to businesses that expand within the region, diversify the economy, add new technology and create quality jobs and capital investment in the region. The Business Revolving Loan Fund, Downtown Façade Loan Fund, TEF Loan Fund are loan programs available through the RBF, Inc. www.wcwrpc.org or (715) 836-2918

Business Revolving Loan Fund

The Business Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) is a flexible source of loan funds for commercial and industrial projects. The purpose is to encourage the creation of quality jobs and to increase the tax base. Eligible activities include acquisition of equipment, machinery, furniture and fixtures, and new working capital http://www.rbfinc.org/Programs/programs.html

http://www.commerce.state.wi.us/bd/BD-RLF-Contacts.html

Downtown Façade Loan Program

The Downtown Facade Loan Program provides financial assistance to encourage property and business owners in core downtowns to revitalize downtown commercial buildings within towns, cities, and villages of West Central Wisconsin. Eligible activities include facade renovation, exterior lighting, doors, graphics, signage, windows, and awnings, other facade or landscape improvements. Applicants must provide acceptable facade design plans that comply with approved general design guidelines based on the National Trust or suitable design guidelines prepared and adopted by local governments.http://www.rbfinc.org/Programs/programs.html

Micro Loan Fund Program

The Micro Loan Fund Program provides small loans to startup, newly established, or growing small businesses. The key objective is to assist business owners, who have traditionally had difficulty assessing debt financing, by affording them another alternative to obtaining credit. Eligible activities include new working capital, inventory purchases and supplies, acquisition of equipment, machinery, furniture and fixtures, leasehold improvements, building renovation and rehabilitation, real estate acquisition, natural disaster recovery.

http://www.rbfinc.org/Programs/programs.html

Technology Enterprise Fund (TEF)

Companies locating, or agreeing to locate, their primary operation to Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Polk, or St. Croix County, may be eligible for TEF Funds - a revolving loan fund that provides creative financing to new and emerging technology companies. The goal of the program is to leverage private investment dollars and enhance sustainable economic development opportunities within the region. Eligible technologies include any business engaged in the activities of research, development or manufacturing of advanced products or materials for use in factory automation, biotechnology, chemicals, computer hardware, computer software, and similar technologies.

http://www.rbfinc.org/Programs/programs.html

State & National Economic Development Resources

Forward Wisconsin

A resource for information on business climate, taxes and costs, workforce and State comparisons. www.forwardwi.org

Wisconsin Department of Commerce: Business Development

Offers business planning, site selection, initial capitalization, permitting, employee training, research and development, business expansion and export development, low interest loans, tax credits, training incentive programs, early-stage planning grants, and federal research grant assistance

www.commerce.wi.gov/bd

Wisconsin Entrepreneurs' Network (WEN)

Resource center and several grant opportunities. www.wenportal.org

Industrial Revenue Bond

All Wisconsin municipalities—cities, villages, and towns—are authorized to issue Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRBs). IRBs are municipal bonds whose proceeds are loaned to private persons or to businesses to finance capital investment projects. The Industrial Revenue Bonds are exempt from federal tax and therefore, are at a low interest rate. The entire project including land, buildings and equipment can all be paid for via IRBs. Communities that issue these bonds, either to retain businesses or to encourage the expansion of new businesses, generally do so to build their economic base and add jobs. http://www.commerce.state.wi.us/bd/BD-IRB.html

Tax Incremental Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts are established to improve and revitalize blighted areas or extend new development for industrial purposes. Taxes on the improved value of the land because of redevelopment pay for the extension of the infrastructure and raise the tax base on an area that would otherwise stay undeveloped.

Continued

http://www.revenue.wi.gov/pubs/slf/tif/cvmanual.html

Northwest Manufacturing Outreach Center

Offers impartial guidance that manufacturers need to increase the competitive advantage for their business.

www.nwmoc.uwstout.edu

State of Wisconsin Business Wizard

Licensing, permitting and regulatory requirements, and necessary application forms. Identify available state resources, and access other valuable business-related information with this helpful website.

http://ww2.wisconsin.gov/state/wizard/app/LoadIntro click on Business Wizard under links.

Small Business Administration (SBA)

The SBA offers the "Wisconsin Business Development Program" including SBA 504 loans and SBA 7(a) guaranteed loans

www.sba.gov

Count-Me-In

The first online micro lender. Count-Me-In provides loans from $500 - $10,000. Your first loan must be *$5,000 or less.*

www.count-me-in.org e-mail: info@count-me-in.org.

SCORE

Get advice to power up your dream. SCORE mentors are available online and in-person to share helpful business advice. An expert advisor can help you make the right business decisions to successfully start your biz. Free and confidential.

www.score.org

U.S. Government's Official Web Portal

Your online source on how to contract with the U.S. Government, file wage reports, get a State business license, get an employer ID number and other business services.

http://www.usa.gov/Business/Business_Gateway.shtml

USDA Rural Development

USDA Rural Development is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in rural America. Financial programs support such essential public facilities and services as water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities and electric and telephone service. They promote economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks , credit unions and community-managed lending pools. They offer technical assistance and information to help agricultural producers and cooperatives get started and improve the effectiveness of their operations. They provide technical assistance to help communities undertake community empowerment programs.

http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/Home.html

Chambers, Community Clubs and Alliances

Amery Community Club

http://www.amerywisconsin.org/?111320

Balsam Lake Chamber http://www.balsamlakewi.com/cc/

Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce

http://www.clearlakewi.com/

Milltown Community Club

http://www.milltown-wi.com/

Osceola Chamber of Commerce

http://vil.osceola.wi.us/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={5D7FEC62-F4A1-41CC-8EDC-3C21BB4EA533}

Falls Chamber (St. Croix Falls/Taylors Falls, MN)

http://www.fallschamber.org

Turtle Lake Chamber of Commerce

http://www.villageofturtlelake.com/turtle_lake_area_chamber_of_commerce.htm

Thrive Local Independent Business and Community Alliance

http://www.thrivelocal.org/

This Economic Development Resource Guide was developed by:

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For the Polk-Burnett Leadership Academy

You are encouraged to reproduce and share all or part of this document.

Polk County: Other Assets

Canoeing on the St. Croix River.

Polk County has many tangible or hard assets to offer prospective businesses and industries. Another of the county's strengths are the intangibles or soft assets available.

Polk County has many of the features that companies and their employees look for in a quality location. There is an abundance of recreational opportunities. In fact, both the oldest State Park (Interstate State Park) and the newest State Park (Straight Lake State Park) are found in Polk County. Numerous State Wildlife Areas, State Forests, and County Forests are found here, such as: McKenzie Creek, Joel Marsh, Rice Beds Creek, Governor Knowles, and over 17,000 acres of County Forest. Everything from bird watching to pan fishing to deer hunting can be pursed.

The St Croix Rivers forms the entire western border of Polk County and offers fishing, boating, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, hiking, rock climbing, and wildlife viewing. The Gandy Dancer State Trail and Cattail State Trail offers biking, hiking, and snowmobiling.

The incorporated communities in this resource guide each offer their own annual festival, usually during the summer months. These showcase the local charm of the small towns in Polk County. Each community also has its own unique historic downtown.

Excellent school districts are a staple in Polk County. We are surrounded by quality higher education, WITC, CVTC, UW-Stout, UW-River Falls, and numerous colleges and universities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area of Minnesota.

All of these fantastic qualities are bundled up in a county that is directly adjacent to one of the largest metropolitan areas in the country. All told this makes Polk County an excellent place for your economic endeavor.