

**A Short History of Economic Development in Wisconsin
And the Rise of Professional Economic Development**

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Summary Statement

This paper presents a short history of the emergence and evolution of economic development in Wisconsin. Once typically a follower in terms of economic development activity and implementation, Wisconsin has become a proactive proponent of economic development practices. Further, economic development has been incorporated into the evaluation procedure for many State initiatives.

Simultaneously, the number of and professional capacity of people engaged in the function of economic development has grown apace. Economic development leadership, once the sole domain of government, has benefited over the years from the growth of quasi-government activities and public/private partnerships to, more recently, the emergence of non-government initiatives. This activity has been a direct result of the more comprehensive requirements of development activities in a modern society.

This paper was prepared for the Wisconsin Economic Summit to be held in Milwaukee from November 29 to December 1. The views and observations expressed in this paper are those of the author gathered during his tenure in economic development and are not necessarily those of the Wisconsin Economic Development Association or the Department of Commerce. However, I have greatly appreciated the editorial reviews provided by James Hough, Executive Director of WEDA; Tony Hozeny, Public Relations Director for the Wisconsin Department of Commerce; and Dan Madden and Kathleen Heady, Area Development Managers also with the Department of Commerce.

Roger M. Nacker is currently serving as President of the Wisconsin Economic Development Association and is also President of the newly formed Wisconsin Economic Development Institute. He is recently retired after almost 27 years with the Department of commerce and its predecessor agencies. While with the State, he functioned previously as Director of Business Development, Director of the Permit Office, Director of Marketing, and Director of Research and Policy Analysis.

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A Short History of Economic Development in Wisconsin And the Rise of Professional Economic Development

Early History of Economic Development (ED) in Wisconsin

Wisconsin has a fairly long history of providing assistance to businesses and local governments, and the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, its predecessor agencies, the Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA) and other economic development partners have played important roles in that history.

“Industrial recruitment” was born in the South in the 1950’s and 60’s with the hope of luring manufacturing branch plants from the North with the promise of lower costs. This movement began the early era of economic development. The strategy worked very well, especially for labor intensive industries (particularly low skilled) with low to moderate capital investment. In response, the northern states also began to focus on “economic development”.

In Wisconsin, the Division of Industrial Development was created in 1956 (Appendix A.), and was housed in the Governor's office. As of 1955, 46 states had established planning and development agencies (the Wisconsin Taxpayer). During its first year, the Division completed a multi-firm, multi-state comparative tax study; promoted industrial expansion to the citizenry and to communities; and assisted firms with plant locations.

In 1959, the Division of Industrial Development and the State Planning Division, formerly in the Bureau of Engineering, were abolished and the Department of Resource Development was created. All the functions of these two agencies were assigned to the new Department.

The new Department was directed to promote the State’s industrial development including its lake and river ports, its tourist industry, and to provide assistance to communities and business firms. It offered to aid communities in setting up industrial development programs, provided information about companies seeking new plant locations, and conducted special studies to encourage new industry to locate in Wisconsin.

The Department also provided a variety of planning help to communities on such matters as zoning, land use, annexation, subdivision platting, urban renewal, and area development. It served as the official liaison for certain programs between communities and such federal agencies as the Housing and Home Finance Agency (the predecessor to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)), the Corps of Engineers and the Area Redevelopment Administration.

In 1965 the Division of Economic Development was transferred back to the Executive office.

Chapter 75, Laws of 1967, reorganized the entire executive branch of state government and created the Department of Local Affairs and Development (DLAD). The reorganization

transferred the Bureau of Civil Defense, the Division of State Economic Development, and the Office of Economic Opportunity from the Executive Office to the new Department. The local and regional planning function was transferred from the Department of Resource Development and the Exposition Department and the Olympic Sports Commission were attached to the new DLAD.

In Wisconsin, economic development had traditionally been a multi-dimensional endeavor. This early history of economic development demonstrates that there was an unanswered key question. Which function should take the lead role: industrial development or community development and planning?

Economic Development Joins the Cabinet and Results in Legislation

In 1971, Governor Lucey created the Department of Business Development (DBD), fulfilling a campaign pledge. Removing the Division of Economic Development from DLAD and elevating it to department status created the new Department. Giving cabinet status to economic development was a major milestone.

Wisconsin is blessed to have a very balanced economy, and consequently is not overly dependent on any one industry or company. However, starting in the late 1960's, structural changes in national and world economies began to have a deleterious effect on the economies of all states in the Midwest. Particularly, manufacturing employment shares began to decline dramatically. Since manufacturing production brought new dollars into the economy from sales elsewhere, and since manufacturing traditionally paid wages higher than other sectors, this trend was a major concern.

Wisconsin traditionally had a strong aversion to direct financial assistance to business. This reluctance also manifested itself in a slow adoption of development mechanisms used by other, especially southern, states. Industrial revenue bonds, tax incremental finance districts, development zones, tax incentives and direct financial aid were all adopted and implemented by other states long before they were used in Wisconsin.

In response to changing economic conditions, Wisconsin did, however, adopt major business tax modifications and significant economic development programs in the early 1970's. Tax code changes were a logical choice due to the Wisconsin principle of government - business separation and adherence to a strong equity ethic. The "Uniformity" clause of our constitution requires that all items of a class of property be taxed uniformly. Consequently, "tax breaks" enacted were equally available to existing business as well as "new" businesses - the level playing field concept. Virtually all of these tax changes were directed toward manufacturing firms in recognition of manufacturing's important role in our economy.

Some of the economic development programs included: staff and program expansion of the Department of Business Development, establishment of the Governor's Economic Development

Coordinating Committee for analyzing economic development issues, and initiation of a revolving loan fund for construction of "spec" buildings to foster local development. Further, the Wisconsin Supreme Court approved the constitutionality of industrial development revenue bonds, thus providing an economic development financing tool.

Additionally, a change in the state income tax apportionment formula for domestic and foreign corporations made it more profitable for corporations to locate and operate in Wisconsin. This "concession" was both a major tax and economic development policy change.

The Wisconsin property tax system was revised to promote tax equity and economic development. The shared tax formulas and school aid formulas were altered to implement an equalization concept. Personal property tax relief was increased with the phase out of the property tax on inventories.

Manufacturer's machinery and equipment were exempted from local property taxes. The assessment of manufacturing property was moved from a local assessor's responsibility to a State Department of Revenue responsibility. And finally, the state imposed limits on the rate by which municipalities could increase local property tax levies.

Organizing for Economic Development Impact

These changes did not immediately insulate the state from economic downturns. The recession of 1974-75 (Figure 1) resulted in a significant reduction in manufacturing employment. At that point, and with the demonstration of the willingness of state government to react to economic development needs, a group of economic development professionals decided to give political voice to their concerns. The Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA) was born, in 1975 with 54 charter members. The group succinctly defined WEDA's mission as "People-Jobs-Profits."

This initiative followed other states in the Midwest. Michigan (1960), Illinois (1968), and Minnesota (1967) all had similar groups established earlier.

Shortly thereafter, in early 1977, Governor Lucey requested WEDA's input to the 1977-79 biennial budget, demonstrating state government's commitment to incorporate economic development thinking and policy into action.

From the trough of the 1975 recession, Wisconsin saw steady growth in manufacturing employment until the start of 1980 and the start of another mild recession. The recent tax changes appeared to work well in an expanding economy. By 1979, Wisconsin had created manufacturing jobs at a rate far exceeding that of other states. A front-page story in the Wall Street Journal proclaimed Wisconsin the "Star of the Snowbelt."

Within a few years, however, the nation was in the grip of a recession, second only to the "Great Depression" in negative impact. In Wisconsin, employment conditions were the worst since statistics had been kept, some forty years. Exorbitant interest rates and a record high American dollar, in comparison to other currencies, effectively shut down capital intensive, export dependent manufacturing, Wisconsin's economic mainstay.

Out of this turmoil, a series of public/private initiatives were fostered which significantly changed economic development in Wisconsin.

Current Economic Development Programs are Established

In July of 1983, four private sector task forces were appointed by Governor Anthony Earl to examine state government policies in the areas of marketing, regulation, capital availability, and small business. As a result of the recommendations of these task forces, the State's first special session of the Legislature devoted entirely to economic development was called. Eleven economic development pieces of legislation were passed. Forward Wisconsin, Inc., the State's public/private marketing arm, was the direct result of a Marketing Task Force recommendation. WEDA members played an important role on that task force and WEDA as an organization helped to lobby for legislative enactment.

In March of the following year, the Wisconsin Strategic Development Commission was created by Governor Earl to devise the State's first long-term strategic plan for economic development and job creation. As defined by the Commission, "economic development is the creation of jobs and businesses that otherwise would not be created without the efforts of both the public and private sectors." When completed, the Commission's final report contained over one hundred recommendations for improving Wisconsin's business climate.

The Wisconsin Business Climate Study conducted coincident with the Strategic Development Commission was prompted by the move of Kimberly-Clark Corporation's headquarters from Wisconsin. Among the study's conclusions, "Economic development must be raised to the number one priority (and) the Governor must lead both the public and private sectors in this mission." Governor Tommy G. Thompson took this message to heart and inaugurated it throughout his four terms. Governor Thompson appointed the first members of the Wisconsin Strategic Development Council in 1987, authorized by 1985 Wisconsin Act 84, to continue the work of the Commission.

All of this attention to economic development gave impetus to the incorporation of development themes throughout the framework of state and local government.

Wisconsin enacted its first direct financial incentives. Funds for labor training and research and development were provided to accomplish transfer to new manufacturing technologies. In concert, regulatory structure was examined and modified, small business was given public audience and economic development was elevated to a central position. Additional dollars were

subsequently allocated to direct financial programs as this recession continued to linger in Wisconsin.

Utilities, too, became active economic development participants. ED departments were created or enlarged and economic development marketing campaigns were initiated.

A study by the Department of Development (DOD), the department resulting from the merger of the Departments of Local Affairs and Development and Business Development in 1980, found 285 local economic development organizations in 70 of Wisconsin's 72 counties, in 1985 (Local Economic Development in Wisconsin). WEDA's membership at that time had also grown to over 250 members.

Also in 1985, The Development Preparedness Task Force, convened by Lieutenant Governor James T. Flynn and working with the assistance of the Department of Development and the Wisconsin Economic Development Association, produced the "Wisconsin Community Preparedness Manual." The Manual was designed to provide communities with the information to become better prepared to take advantage of economic development opportunities. This Manual remains useful today.

In 1987, the Governor and Legislature expanded financial assistance and named it the Wisconsin Development Fund. This fund provides financing for development loans and grants to finance economic development labor training programs, major economic development projects and technological development. Direct financial assistance is a giant step from the nature of Wisconsin's early ED efforts.

WEDA continued to play a high profile role in economic development. The Association was asked to contribute to the second report of the Wisconsin Strategic Planning Council. This report contains a series of objectives for state economic development, which were based on research requested from WEDA by the Council. Published in February 1990, the study's first two objectives were quite prescient, focusing on labor availability and retraining, and the educational needs of tomorrow's workforce. In March, WEDA took up the labor issues by creating a Labor Task Force. Two years later, WEDA published the "Skilled Labor Directory", a three ring binder containing a compilation of all of the federal, state and locally funded programs directed at improving the employability and skills of the current and potential Wisconsin workforce. A public/private venture, twenty companies helped fund the project.

By the early 1990's, Wisconsin was again creating manufacturing jobs at a rate far in advance of other industrialized states. With the crisis over and with relative economic performance having been demonstrated; direct, non-targeted financial assistance to business was substantially reduced. The business-government separation ethic and concern with a comprehensive, long-term stability has lead to a focus on economic development hyphenated programs. For example, ED-transportation, ED-rural development and health services, and ED-community development,

ED-technology, are now expected to bring the benefits of economic development (viz., jobs and income) to all corners and sectors of Wisconsin.

Continuing this pervasive application of economic development, the 1995 legislature abolished the DOD and created the Department of Commerce. The new agency combined the Division of Safety and Buildings from DILHR, all of the functions of the Department of Development and the petroleum site cleanup programs from DILHR and DNR.

How Does one do Economic Development?

Economic development has been and is about working together to maintain a strong economy: 1) Creating and retaining desirable jobs; 2) Providing a good standard of living for individuals; and 3) Increasing the tax base ... so a community, county or state can provide the level of services residents expect.

There is, however, an even broader view of what economic development encompasses today, governed by the needs of local areas and the assets the areas have to offer. These needs are more than job creation and require comprehensive public/private partnerships.

Economic development involves:

Retaining and growing existing businesses: maintaining and building on the tax base and jobs that already exist in the community. This is accomplished in a number of ways such as: providing land to grow, helping companies to expand in exporting, and solving regulatory problems. This also includes the related issues of labor force recruitment and retention, training and education. Financial packaging to finance capital expansion or improvement also comes into play. Technology transfer takes on an increasingly important role. "The New Economy" requires that firms work in new ways for greater efficiency in order to meet increasing global competition. Up to 80% of all business growth in a community typically comes from existing businesses. Retention and expansion of existing businesses is a very important strategy for maintaining a strong local economy.

Preparing communities for growth: planning for the future - getting infrastructure in place, promoting a positive business "attitude," offering financial help for businesses, establishing the organizational structure to plan for and accomplish growth. New legislation (Smart Growth) requires Wisconsin communities to create comprehensive plans by January 1, 2010 addressing nine specified areas including land use, intergovernmental cooperation, economic development, transportation, housing, and utilities. "Smart Growth" generally means developing sensible plans that balance the growth needs of the communities with other concerns such as environmental issues.

Attracting new business / investment: seeking the types of businesses that will provide jobs/services needed in the community - and make new investments, increasing the tax base. Marketing, site selection, real estate information, and the ability to respond rapidly and confidentially are the hallmarks of this traditional approach to economic development.

Nurturing local entrepreneurs (start-ups): provide financing, services & support for start-up companies that can grow in the community. Venture capital availability is an important element for those new companies looking to commercialize innovative ideas.

Redeveloping target areas: updating commercial areas, downtowns, and brownfields. Bringing “blighted” areas back into productive service.

Working with a wide range of businesses: manufacturing, retail, distribution, high technology, biotechnology, business services. In order to create a positive business climate for high-technology and biotechnology firms, the state is considering tax code changes, a new recruiting and retention program called the Wisconsin Technology & Entrepreneurs Council and a heightened economic development effort spearheaded by the Department of Commerce and Forward Wisconsin. The state also plans to be a lead partner in investing \$317 million in a series of new biotechnology research centers on the UW-Madison campus (BioStar Program).

Working with tourism and recreation: a multi-million dollar industry in Wisconsin. In some areas, it is a key to economic health. Tourism is also often considered an export-base industry, producing something here, that brings new dollars into the economy.

Most importantly, economic development is an ongoing process: - never "done." The economy is always changing, requiring planning & creative responses to maintain jobs, tax base, and capital investment and quality of life.

Economic Development is a Team Effort

The comprehensive nature of most economic development projects requires a team approach. This is probably the major enabling feature of a trade association such as WEDA. WEDA is a statewide organization (Figure 2.) representing people from a wide variety of professional backgrounds (Figure 3.) who are all vitally interested in sustaining and growing a strong economy in Wisconsin.

WEDA achieves its goals in three main ways (Appendix B):

1) Lobbying.

WEDA focuses on key legislative issues that affect development.

The issues range from transportation to air quality to litigation reform to financing tools for business growth.

2) Continuing education for members.

WEDA produces three major conferences each year, including the Governor’s Conference on Economic Development. Additional regional training is planned through a newly formed Wisconsin Economic Development Institute.

3) Networking.

Sharing information is essential to success in economic development. WEDA offers many networking opportunities to learn from others. In addition, WEDA provides

members with a quarterly newsletter, faxes and e-mails to communicate urgent information and a comprehensive Web site.

WEDA has the ability to mobilize resources. WEDA's professional consultants and WEDA's members know the legislative process and are committed to acting on initiatives. The members understand advocacy. The Association and its members network well. Networking is one of the major goals of the association and is largely responsible for the significance of three conferences per year. The widely diverse membership provides a representative view of regional issues in ED. WEDA exists to collectively act on behalf of all major state economic development interests.

The Future of Economic Development in Wisconsin

1) The focus of economic development has shifted to address the labor shortage. Nationally, there are fewer young people entering the work force than in the past. This makes it difficult for businesses to find qualified employees. And, the problem is expected to get worse before it gets better. Getting involved with education is a major concern for development practitioners.

2) Economic developers now spend much of their time solving labor-related issues such as: childcare, transportation and affordable housing. They help employers with worker training and retraining.

3) Numerous economic development governing bodies have instructed their staffs to develop programs specifically excluding marketing to new companies. Competition for labor and a protracted period of "good" economic conditions have produced satiated communities. And, anti-development forces have arisen in many areas. Consequently, economic development advocacy is often required just to maintain the status quo.

4) There are still many local areas which can be considered "have nots." In these areas, traditional economic growth is still of highest importance. As of this September, there were seventeen counties and six cities in Wisconsin with unemployment rates higher than the national figure. This economic development opportunity remains even though the Wisconsin unemployment rate has been below the national average for well over 10 years.

5) Economic development activity continues to be robust in Wisconsin. WEDA currently has about 500 members. This is the largest group among our neighboring states, Illinois Development Council has 300 plus, Professional Developers of Iowa has 300, Michigan Economic Developers Association has 200 plus, and the Economic Development Association of Minnesota has 425 members.

6) Not all people working in ED in Wisconsin are WEDA members. The Association does, however, have members in 122 locations in 58 counties. Local Development Organizations (LDO's) exist in all 72 counties and 209 of the known 561 organizations do not belong to the trade association. Many of these non-members are part-time, volunteer, or conduct their respective ED functions as one of many other duties. And, the number of LDO's continues to grow. More significantly, small locales are often choosing to become parts of larger economic

development entities, either county or regional. This allows small organizations to leverage themselves. The Wisconsin Department of Commerce is encouraging this synergy by strongly recommending that revolving loan programs setup through the federally funded, small cities, block grant program be established at the county rather than the community level.

7) The economic development community is increasingly becoming a very diverse group. WEDA's current membership draws almost 30% from the private sector while government at all levels is 27%. ED corporations are represented by 24% of the members. It is gratifying to see that education is well represented at 13%. However, roles will be continually evolving. Most of the new guard of people working in economic development has never experienced a cyclical economy. For that matter, neither has a very large segment of the general population. This will be both the opportunity and challenge of the future.

Next Steps

Once a follower, Wisconsin professionally and through policy is now more often a leader in economic development in the Midwest. WEDA, itself, undergoes a major strategic planning effort every few years. Drawing from its diverse membership, this work has helped keep the Association apprised of the needs of the membership and subsequently of the economy-at-large. Economic trends and emerging problems are easily identified from such an exchange. This diversity is augmented by the fact that in order to be effective in economic development work, practitioners need to be immediately involved with changing times and emerging trends.

Similarly, this planning has helped produce the education programs through conferences or national certification training such as the National Development Council's, Economic Development Finance Professional, which have helped make Wisconsin a major economic development force among surrounding states. Most utilities also have local education programs.

WEDA hopes to continue to expand and to complement these efforts.

Additionally, in August of this year, WEDA sponsored the formation of a 501(c)(3) corporation, the Wisconsin Economic Development Institute, Inc. (WEDI). WEDI is a nonprofit foundation formed to conduct economic development research and to provide training and development, and education for professional economic development.

In order to recognize Wisconsin's full development potential, WEDI will provide short-term deliverables of policy research materials, informational publications, and educational services and training. WEDI will serve as an "informational clearinghouse" to economic development practitioners.

The goals of the foundation are parallel to those of the Economic Summit; that is, to create a more informed public, support thoughtful and effective policy-making, and secure improved economic conditions.

WEDA through advocacy and awareness and WEDI through research and education are prepared to help in the implementation of the Summit's recommendations.

Figure 1.
WI Unemployment Rate
March of each year, Seasonally Adjusted
 Source: WI Dept. of Workforce Development

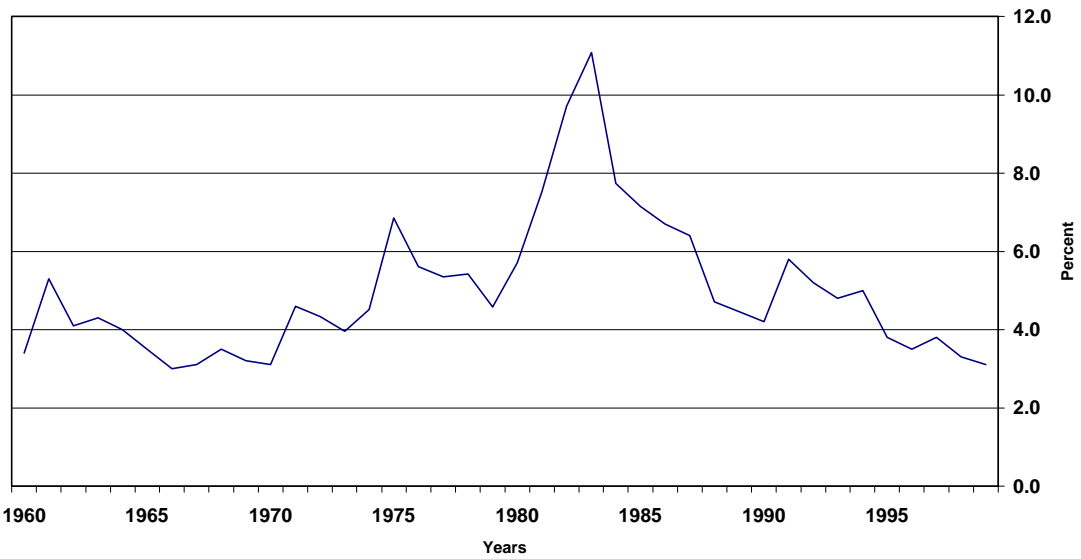
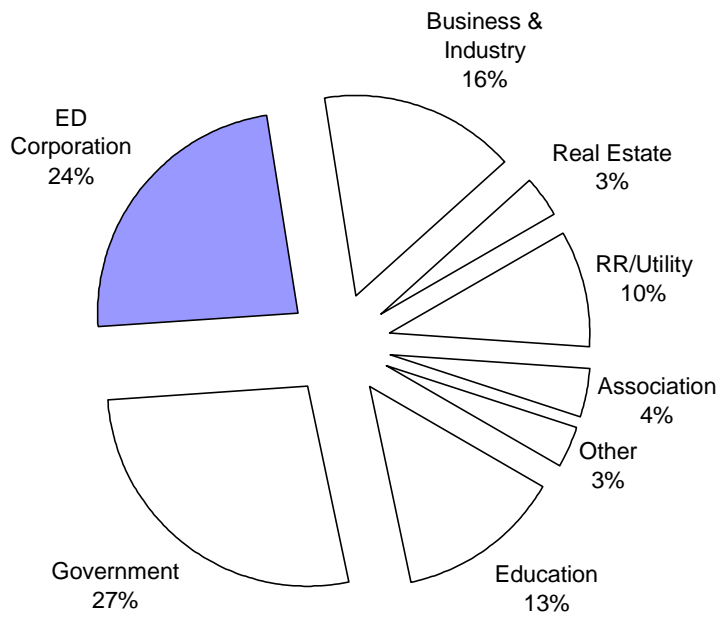


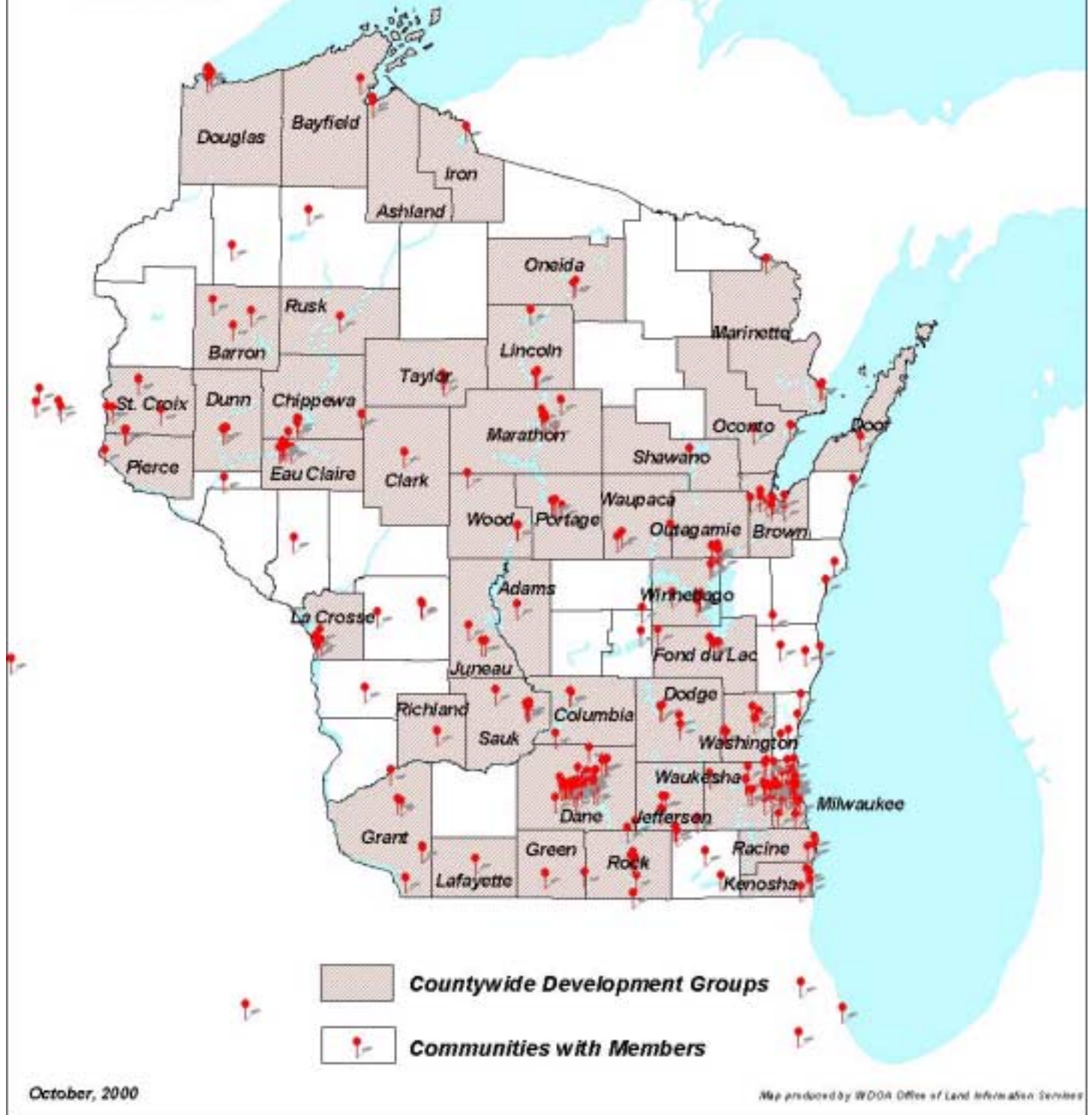
Figure 3.
WEDA Membership Profile 2000
 -492 Members-





Wisconsin Economic Development Association

Members Statewide Locations



Appendix A
Economic Development in Wisconsin
-A Chronological Summary-

- 1956 -Division of Industrial Development created, housed in Governor's Office
- 1959 -Department of Resource Development created
- 1965 -Division of Economic Development back to Governor's Office
- 1966 -Department of Local Affairs and Development (DLAD) created
- 1971 -Department of Business Development (DBD) created (ED elevated to Department status)
- 1974 -Property Tax equalization and major business tax reductions (M&E), Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB's) - Supreme Court ruling on constitutionality
- 1974 -Tax studies debating efficacy of tax reductions for economic development
- 1975 -The Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA) incorporated
- 1975 -TIF law passed, modified 1981 and thereafter
- 1975 -Tourism moved from Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to DBD
- 1974 -"Star of Snow Belt" - Wall Street Journal - September 1977, Wisconsin one of top manufacturing growth states
- 1979 -DLAD and DBD merged to form Department of Development (DOD)
- 1980 -DOD assumed responsibility for Small Cities Block Grant (CDBG) from HUD
- 1981 -Competitive Wisconsin, Inc. formed
- 1982-84 -Worst recession since statistics kept in Wisconsin
- 1983 -Governor's Task Forces -- (4), Marketing, Capital Formation, Small Business Regulation, Permit Process
- 1983 -October Special Session on Economic Development, passed economic development bonding for export and economic development - Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA), established foreign trade offices, made changes in regulatory process for small business and established a state permit center, thus codifying the recommendations of the Governor's Task Forces.
- 1983 -Business Improvement Districts, Act 184, passed in April
- 1984 -WEDA membership and legislative initiatives
- 1984 -Forward Wisconsin incorporated, May 1984, 1983 Wisconsin Act 381 as a result of Marketing Task Force recommendations
- 1984 -Technology Development Fund and Customized Labor Training in budget bill
- 1984 -Wisconsin Bell Business Retention Studies Program started, 1-800# (HELP-BUSINESS) started
- 1984 -Yankelovich, Skelly and White, Inc. "Wisconsin Business Climate Study," July- Only 20% of Wisconsin executives thought Wisconsin "good" for business
- 1984 -Wisconsin Strategic Development Commission - charged with development of State's first strategic plan focusing on economic development
- 1985 -Development Preparedness Task Force started, October; Utility holding company laws passed
- 1987 -Pari-mutuel betting and state lottery, End to inheritance taxes, Main Street Act passed
- 1987 -Wisconsin Development Fund - Major Economic Development Projects in budget
- 1988 -Transportation 2020 - a plan to link economic growth centers, Development Zones law passed
- 1991 -Targeted finance programs in latest budget (Minority, CBED, Native American, etc.)
- 1995 -Department of Commerce (COMMERCE) created by combining the DOD with Safety and Buildings (S&B) from Department of Industry Labor and Human Relations (DILHR) and Petroleum Site Cleanup Programs from DILHR and DNR
- 1995 -Enterprise Development Zones enabled
- 1996 -Dairy 2020 and Brownfields funding provided
- 1999 -Capco's initiated (venture capital)

Appendix B



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Wisconsin Economic Development Association

History

The Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA) began in 1975 as 54 charter members convened in Green Bay to form a professional trade organization to give political voice to economic development concerns. The group succinctly defined WEDA's mission as "People – Jobs – Profits."

WEDA is a full-service economic development organization comprised of people from varied vocational and professional backgrounds all vitally interested in expanding Wisconsin's economic development horizons.

Membership

WEDA's strength comes from its most important asset – people. WEDA membership has grown to nearly 500 people who are involved in a wide variety of economic development leadership positions throughout the state.

Legislation

WEDA has retained HFO and Associates to coordinate the organization's effort to monitor and act on bills and administrative rules that affect Wisconsin's economy. Whether acting alone or in partnership with other business coalition partners, WEDA pursues an aggressive pro-economic development agenda. This broad-based approach is responsible for the association's effectiveness while avoiding being branded with a "special interest" label.

Education

WEDA's conferences and training have established a solid reputation for outstanding professional programming, which is balanced among legislative, professional and business concerns which affect our state and our members.

Communication

The WEDAWIRE newsletter, WEDA Research Notes, and legislative updates are sent to members several times a year, and our web site (www.weda.org) is accessible 24 hours a day. In addition, the association holds three statewide conferences annually, including the Annual Governor's Conference on Economic Development. This continued emphasis on communication is vital since WEDA's members often serve as the bridge between the public and private sectors in development projects.

Accomplishments

Of the literally hundreds of issues and initiatives in which WEDA has been involved, the following reflect the scope and focus of the association:

- helped to create funding mechanisms for state business expansion, such as a secondary market for Industrial Revenue Bonds, Tax Increment Financing, the Wisconsin Development Fund, Development Zones and others
- played a significant role in the creation, funding and continuation of Forward Wisconsin, Inc.
- continues to support a tax climate favorable to economic growth
- continues to support a civil justice system favorable to business growth
- continues to support improvements to Wisconsin's educational infrastructure with a focus on worker training and classroom-to-career initiatives
- developed and published the Skilled Labor Force Directory

Appendix C

New Initiative, Corporation Formed August 24, 2000



Wisconsin Economic Development Institute, Inc.

Mission Statement

The Wisconsin Economic Development Institute, Inc. (WEDI) is a nonprofit foundation formed to conduct economic development research and to provide training and development, and education for professional economic development.

Goals

The goals of the foundation are to create a more informed public, support thoughtful and effective policy-making, and secure improved economic conditions.

Objectives

In order to recognize Wisconsin's full development potential, WEDI will provide short-term deliverables of policy research materials, informational publications, and educational services and training. WEDI will serve as an "informational clearinghouse" to economic development practitioners.

Values

The foundation relies on the generous support of individuals, businesses, and foundations. (WEDI has applied for 501(c)(3) nonprofit, educational organization status to which contributions are tax-deductible.) To maintain its independence, WEDI does not endorse candidates, ballot measures or legislation.