

# Northeast Wisconsin 2001 Regional Summary Report

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Regional Summit was Held Wednesday, October 24, 2001  
Aid Association for Lutherans Headquarters (Appleton, Wisconsin)

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## Business Leadership Team

**Kathi P. Seifert, Regional Co-Chair**  
*Executive Vice President*  
*Kimberly-Clark Corporation*

**John O. Gilbert, Regional Co-Chair**  
*Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer*  
*Aid Association for Lutherans*

**Larry Weyers**  
*Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer*  
*Wisconsin Public Service*

**Kevin Nolan**  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*  
*Affinity Health Care*

**Wayne Matzke**  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*  
*Grande Cheese Company*

**David Olson**  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*  
*Bay Area Medical Center*

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**Part 1**  
**Regional Activities related to the State Economic Summit**

In 2000 the Northeast Region held a summit with over 130 individuals attending. This group identified 14 major priorities and supporting rationale. Subsequently an electronic voting procedure identified the following as the top five priorities:

1. **Collaboration.** The demands of the future will place a premium on finding new ways to forge a public/private partnership in all areas, including support from educational institutions to advance the interests of the business community.
2. **High Skilled Labor.** We recognize that the future will require a highly skilled workforce that can compete in a global economy. The educational institutions and schools must help the people of the region to realize that there is no future for low-skilled or unskilled labor.
3. **Taxation.** Issues of equity and fairness in the scope of state and local government taxes and spending must be addressed in order for Wisconsin businesses to compete successfully on a national and international scene.
4. **Human Resources.** We must recruit new highly skilled workers to the region. We must undertake efforts to retain the talent we have in place. In doing these things, we must also work to address issues associated with gender, racial, and ethnic diversity and sensitivity to multicultural issues and traditions.
5. **Education.** Educational institutions must reduce barriers that limit access ... we must move toward a seamless educational institution that provides the education and training that is needed at the time it is needed.

In preparation for the 2001 summit a planning committee was formed and met in August to determine how Northeast Wisconsin would participate in the State Economic Summit. Northeast Wisconsin was defined as six communities of interest that were represented on the planning committee:

- Marinette
- Door County
- Green Bay
- Fox Cities
- Oshkosh
- Fond du Lac
- Lakeshore

*Planning Committee*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Kathi Seifert	Appleton	Ex VP Kimberly Clark
John Gilbert	Appleton	CEO Aid Association for Lutherans
Larry Weyers	Green Bay	CEO Wisconsin Public Service
Kevin Nolan	Neenah	CEO Affinity Health Care
Wayne Matzke	Fond du Lac	CEO Grande Cheese Company
David Olson	Sheboygan	CEO Bay Area Medical Center
George Bousley	Marinette	Economic Development Committee
John Casper	Oshkosh	Chamber of Commerce
Paul Ehrfurth	Green Bay	Chamber of Commerce
Tom Grogan	Oshkosh	University
Al Hartman	Oshkosh	University
Ray Hernandez	Sheboygan	UW College
Meridith Jaeger	Oshkosh	Center for Community
Bill Kuepper	Green Bay	University
Richard Krueger	Oshkosh	University/SBDC
Jim Milslagle	Appleton	Technical College
Jim Perry	Menasha	UW College
Jeanne Stangel	Green Bay	University
Jan Thornton	Green Bay	University
Jeff Rafn	Green Bay	Technical College
Joe Reitemeier	Fond du Lac	Chamber of Commerce
Renee Waterman	Oshkosh	Center for Community Partnerships
Bill Welch	Appleton	Chamber of Commerce
Rick Wells	Oshkosh	University
Alla Wilson	Green Bay	University

To help the region effectively compete in the new or next economy a regional summit meeting was planned for October 24 to achieve the following objectives:

- A. Review the results of last year's regional economic summit.
- B. Identify one or two regional initiatives that can be accomplished in the next year. These should be something that can be accomplished, visible to members of the community, require collaboration across the region, and make a difference.
- C. Identify any other possible initiatives within specific industry clusters or geographic regions.

The five priorities from 2000 were fine-tuned into four priorities for which specific initiatives were to be developed at the 2001 regional summit meeting:

*Revised Priorities for 2001*

1. **Collaboration.** The demands of the future will place a premium on finding new ways to forge a public/private partnership in all areas, including support from educational institutions to advance the interests of the business community.

2. **High Skilled Labor & Education.** We recognize that the future will require a highly skilled workforce that can compete in a global economy and our educational institutions will need to prepare students to work in that environment. We need to recruit highly skilled workers to the region and to retain the talent we have.
3. **Vision.** Create a shared, comprehensive economic vision for Northeastern Wisconsin. Obtain support from legislators to assist the region in implementing the vision.
4. **Taxation.** Issues of equity and fairness in the scope of state and local government taxes and spending must be addressed in order for Wisconsin businesses to compete successfully on a national and international scene.

The regional summit was held at Aid Association for Lutheran's corporate headquarters in Appleton on October 24. In attendance at the meeting were 127 individuals representing all types of organizations and counties in the region (See Appendix A for a summary of representation). At the summit the participants chose to work on one of four issues *Collaboration, High Skilled Labor & Education, Vision, and Other* (any issue that did not fall within the first three groups). It should be noted that taxation was not included because it was a statewide issue that could not meet the criteria established.

In the end, five subgroups were formed (*High Skilled Labor & Education* had so many wishing to work on that priority that they were split into two groups) to develop initiatives to achieve the priorities (See Appendix B for a listing of the leadership of each of these groups). The five subgroups used the following the criteria for the review of the initiatives:

- A. **Do-able** – it should be accomplished in a year or two, if longer do we believe we have the capability to accomplish it.
- B. **Visible** – it should be something visible to the public so it is clear that things are being done on a regional basis.
- C. **Big** – it should be large enough that it will make a difference this also means that its success can be measured.
- D. **Collaboration** – it should require collaboration across the region to accomplish

Each group identified numerous possible initiatives and then through group action chose one or two that met the criteria and should be pursued. The Appendix C lists all of the initiatives developed by the groups. Following are descriptions of those initiatives chosen by the groups as best meeting the criteria.

**Collaboration:** Eliminate the boundaries among political jurisdiction, business and education.

Action items:

- Use educational advisory boards as a conduit for planning.
- Support legislation changes that encourage tax-based sharing.
- Identify the core competencies in each area.
- Identify key industry to trial collaboration initiative – e.g. paper industry.

**High Skilled Labor & Education I:** Create a greater awareness (K-12) of all career opportunities students have after high school.

Action items:

- Youth apprenticeships
- Mentoring
- Internships
- Promotion of the community as a great place to live and work.

**High Skilled Labor & Education II:** Establish a pervasive regional public relations and communications campaign to educate students, parents, employers, educators on short and long-term occupational needs and opportunities.

Action items:

- Survey attitudes, needs
- Assess demographics
- Address diversity
- Collaboration between educational institutions and industry
- Educate/train the unemployed
- Get media involved

**Vision:** To develop a shared, comprehensive, and bold vision for concerted efforts to ensure a solid economic future for the people and communities within Northeast Wisconsin.

Action items:

- Develop a committee charged with articulating a vision statement prior to state economic summit on November 26-27
- Define “Northeast Wisconsin”
  - Based on commonalities: industry, quality of life, labor market, media market, etc.
  - Green Bay watershed
- Identify leadership and participant groups/stakeholders to involve in defining action plans
- Inventory existing regional economic planning efforts and collaborative efforts (RPC, NEW ERA, etc.)

**Action plan should aim to...**

- Balance local and global
  - We should be “regionally focused and globally connected”
  - We need to position ourselves to attract/retain companies looking to compete globally
- Rejuvenate the paper industry and supporting/related industries (forestry, printing, transport, machinery, etc.)
- Identify industrial/economic/knowledge clusters which we want to grow and create innovative programs and incentives to encourage growth

- Increase collaboration
  - We need to shed the parochial views that cause us to compete with ourselves within the region
  - We need more collaboration between colleges, universities, technical colleges, and high schools
  - Develop a shared plan to spread costs to improve land use, infrastructure, recycling, solid waste collection, clean water, etc.
- Develop a regional brand/identity based on our strengths/assets
  - Our pristine natural resources (land, water, climate) lend themselves to making NE Wisconsin one of our nation's leading tourism destinations
  - Emphasize utilization and preservation of our assets/resources – *physical* – land, wood, water; *manpower* – population, education, social structure; *infrastructure* – rail, roads, waterways
  - Quality of life
- Gain bi-partisan and state support

**Other:** This group identified many possible priorities, which did not fall within the three priorities. The two that received the most votes were:

***Business assistance:*** This included more venture capital, creation of business centers, and greater support for and encouragement of entrepreneurship;

***Diversification:*** This included not only more high technology companies but also greater internationalization. Because this group identified both priorities and initiatives it did not create action steps.

## **Part 2 Success Stories**

Northeast Wisconsin is a complex and diverse area of the state. Creating a list of unified and focused success stories is difficult. That highlights one of the significant problems identified – lack of focus in the region. Following are just two examples of successes in Northeast Wisconsin that are somewhat tied to the 2000 regional summit; there are many others that are not necessarily related to the 2000 summit meetings.

### **Northeast Wisconsin Educational Resource Alliance (NEWERA)**

This is an alliance of all the public post secondary institutions within Northeast Wisconsin (UW Green Bay, UW Oshkosh, UW Fond du Lac, UW Fox Valley, UW Manitowoc, UW Sheboygan, Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, Fox Valley Technical College, Moraine Park Technical College, and the College of the Menominee Nation). This group was formed to help increase collaboration among the educational institutions.

**Employee-friendly web site and brochure:** A web site and a brochure have been created to share information about jobs for two career couples. Many times when a faculty member is recruited his/her significant other also needs employment and very often within post secondary education. The web site is designed to help sharing of information about jobs available for these individuals.

- All of the NEW ERA organizations can use the brochure as a template with their institution information replacing that of UW Oshkosh

- The group agreed that this initiative has been a success; they like the logical flowing web page plus the URL
- A “News & Announcements” section can be added to the web site

**Cooperation/collaboration makes a difference:** Several examples of cooperation and collaboration demonstrate how working together helps provide better service to the region.

- UW Green Bay will be soliciting actors for its “Theatre on the Bay” presentations from Northeast Wisconsin Technical College. The UW Green Bay choral group will also be looking for participants from Northeast Wisconsin Technical College.
- UW Green Bay and Northeast Wisconsin Technical College are collaborating to offer joint certificates in the GIS area
- UW Oshkosh has received \$300,000 for an adult access initiative for 2002-03 and will carve out a percentage for 2-3 adult access centers in the region on behalf of NEW ERA. Discussion ensued about UW Oshkosh and UW Green Bay working on a web-based bachelor’s degree, as part of the older adult access initiative.

### **Green Bay Business Assistance Center**

This entity was formed by UW Green Bay's Small Business Development Center, the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce's Advance Business Development Center (including a 30-business incubator), the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and Great Lakes Asset Corporation. It is a one-stop shop for entrepreneurs, business start-ups, and emerging/existing businesses seeking help with business planning, counseling, mentoring, financing, and educational assistance. The Center is a partnership among multiple organizations functioning as a single entity irrespective of organizational affiliation. In addition to the four on-site partner organizations, there are a dozen off-site partners.

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## **Part III**

### **Focus on Northeast Wisconsin – Assets and Barriers**

That portion of the state of Wisconsin extending from Fond du Lac to Marinette to the East to Lake Michigan is known by many different names to different people.

During the decade of the 1990’s, the population base of the East Central Regional Planning Commission District grew ten percent to now total in excess of 600,000 people. While the East Central region is comprised of a total of ten counties, almost three-quarters of the regional population is concentrated in the four more urbanized counties (Calumet, Fond du Lac, Outagamie, and Winnebago). The 1999 population estimate for the Bay-Lake Region is 545,768. Within that region, Brown County is the major population center with 220,773 (1999) residents. Of that total, nearly half (103,207) lived in the City of Green Bay.

An understanding of the employment characteristics of Northeast Wisconsin can be found by reviewing data from the East Central Region. Looking at 1999 labor force statistics, the four urbanized counties in this region had lower unemployment rates than

the state's 3.0 percent (Calumet 2.3 percent, Fond du Lac 2.7 percent, Outagamie 2.5 percent, and Winnebago 2.2 percent). These numbers are consistent with patterns present in the recent past, as the region has traditionally tended to have relatively higher labor force participation rates than the state average. (While detailed similar data for the Bay-Lake Region is not now provided, it is worth noting that Brown County estimates to have more than 4,800 employers, with many employing more than 500 persons.)

### **Northeast Wisconsin Facts**

**Data are from 1994-1997**

<b>Statistic</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Population increase 1990-1999	11%	9%	Fastest growing region of the state (Madison grew 8%, Milwaukee proper lost 3% although surrounding area grew but in total did not grow as much as Valley).
Unemployment Percent	2.2%	3.0%	Region has much more of a labor shortage than rest of state.
Increase in non farm employment 94-97	7.44%	6.80%	Region is growing jobs at a faster rate than rest of state.
Percent employed in Manufacturing	24%	19%	Region relies much more on manufacturing than rest of state.
Change in number of manufacturing jobs 94-97	2.09%	4.31%	Region trend is for us to increase manufacturing jobs at a slower rate than rest of state.
Percent employed in Services	23%	27%	Region relies less on services (including technology services) than rest of state.
Change in number of service jobs 94-97	12%	10%	Region trend is for us to increase in service related jobs at a faster rate than rest of state.
Income Statistics: Per capita income	\$22,971	\$24,048	Region has lower income primarily because the average weekly wage is much less than the rest of the state – opportunity for us?
Weekly wage	\$422	\$509	
Change in per capital income	11.81%	14.45%	Region is not increasing as fast as rest of state or nation (14.65%) – weekly wage mirrors this trend as well.

Green Bay, Oshkosh and Appleton named one of the 25 **World Class Industrial Communities** by *Industry Week Magazine* in 1997. Oshkosh and Fond du Lac two of the fastest growing cities in state in last 10 years (Oshkosh at 13.9% -- 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest growing)

*Notes Statistics have been taken from regional planning data and from Department of Commerce Web site.*

The following summary statement reflects a consensus view of many of the comments and impressions that were shared in the small group processes that were a part of the 2000 Northeast Regional Economic Summit. While this summary should not be viewed as a substitute for specific comments offered in this process, it does provide a narrative picture of many of the impressions of those who participated in the regional activities.

1. **Economy.** We have an economically strong and diverse regional economy. It is the strength of our region's manufacturing base that compliments our region's traditional historic

commitment to agriculture and to the paper products industry. This does present a problem in that there is heavy reliance on manufacturing relative to the state and nation. With the economy being driven more and more by technology, we need to find a way to enhance our strong manufacturing with greater use of technology and at the same time developing industries that use and provide high technology products and services.

2. **Community.** Our region is fortunate to be defined by a series of moderately sized communities – each having a distinctive history and an established tradition of service in support of community pride and economic growth. The considerable strength of the communities within our region is also reflected in the strength of the educational institutions found throughout the region – institutions public and private at all levels of instruction and educational opportunity. This also provides a barrier to regional success – these communities and educational institutions often find it difficult to work effectively together.
  3. **Vision.** We recognize that the lack of a common shared vision for the future within this region has occasionally resulted in communities within our region engaging in forms of competition that have not entirely served well the interests of the people and companies within our region. We know that the development of a common vision for the future – a vision that links our efforts in a concerted push toward shared objectives – will help Northeast Wisconsin Region to grow and develop in the next several decades. We understand the value and the importance of bold, visionary public leadership in support of this vision by public servants at the local, county, regional, state, and federal levels of governmental action. This is a key initiative for this next year.
  4. **Infrastructure.** The strength of our established economic base is sound – as is our core infrastructure and utilities. However, continued growth and future progress will require new investment to support these needs in terms of gas, electricity, water, transportation (roads, railways, airports, and waterways), telecommunications and the emerging fiber optic networks.
  5. **Quality of Life.** We are proud of the quality of life that we offer ... and our historic commitment to the utilization of our natural resources in a manner that compliments economic growth with our responsibility to preserve a clean environment for future generations.
  6. **Skilled Workforce.** We recognize the need to attract and retain our highly skilled workforce. We know that increased diversification of our population base will help our companies and communities to successfully compete in global markets.
  7. **Marketing.** Celebrating our four-seasons of outdoor activities, we also appreciate the value of efforts to market our state and region as an ideal environment for learning, working and growing as we continue our transition to the new and emerging high technology economy.
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## **Part 4**

### **Statewide Issues**

These items were discussed as part of the 2000 summit and remain as issues of concern. In addition Appendix D lists more specific comments related to statewide issues and concerns.

1. **Vision.** The state needs to develop a strong, comprehensive and bold vision for concerted efforts to ensure a solid economic future. The image of “cheeseheads” and cows does not help attract and retain high tech workers.
  2. **Taxation.** Issues of equity and fairness in the scope of state and local government taxes and spending must be addressed in order for Wisconsin businesses to compete successfully on a national and international scene.
  3. **Capital.** We need to work to ensure expanded access to needed funding to start new business concerns using the new information technologies. We need to move toward a tax system that provides incentives for new investment.
  4. **Regulation.** The state’s current regulatory environment needs to move toward an incentives-based model of regulation.
  5. **Income.** Wisconsin’s perception as a high tax state can be addressed by raising income levels hence allowing the reducing taxes. Our relatively low per capita income level is a problem has gotten worse during the last year not better.
  6. **Collaboration.** Governments, economic development entities, educational institutions, and the private sector need to work together to successfully grow our area’s economy. Success for one sector is integrally tied to the others. Collaboration will allow us to eliminate redundancies, present a united front and message, facilitate best use of combined resources, and reduce intra-regional competition.
  7. **Highly skilled labor & education.** We recognize the need to attract and retain a highly skilled workforce that can adapt to the challenges of the global economy. A seamless educational system that provides education and training that is needed at the time it is needed is key to meeting employer demands.
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## Summary

Over 120 community leaders from profit and not for profit organizations met to identify key initiatives to address the priorities identified by the 2000 Regional Economic Summit. As a result of this meeting the key initiatives are the following:

**Vision:** Develop a shared, comprehensive, and bold vision for concerted efforts to ensure a solid economic future for the people and communities within Northeast Wisconsin.

**Collaboration:** Eliminate the boundaries among political jurisdiction, business and education.

**High Skilled Labor & Education:** Establish a pervasive regional public relations and communications campaign to educate students, parents, employers, educators on short and long-term occupational needs and career opportunities after high school.

**Business Assistance:** More venture capital, creation of business centers, and greater support for and encouragement of entrepreneurship.

**Diversification:** Not only more high technology companies but also greater internationalization.

## Appendix A

### Economic Summit Participant Summary

#### \*127 Participants

	<b>By Industry</b>
Banking/Finance/Accounting	13
Education	38
Engineering/Architecture/R&D	2
Government	17
Health Care/Medical	7
Insurance/Real Estate	1
Manufacturing	5
Other	29
Not-for-Profit/Community Service	6
Retail	2
Technology	3
Transportation/Utility/Comm	4

	<b>By Region</b>
Appleton	23
Door County	1
Fond du Lac	11
Green Bay	31
Madison	1
Manitowoc	2
Marinette	13
Menasha	7
Neenah	4
Oshkosh	29
Sheboygan	3
Wausaukee	2

## Appendix B

### Small Group Leadership

<b>Regional Priority</b>	<b>Business Leader</b>	<b>Facilitators</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Collaboration	David Olson	Ray Hernandez George Bousely	Jeanne Stengel
High Skilled Labor & Education	Wayne Matzke	Joe Reitemeier	Dick Krueger
High Skilled Labor & Education	Jim Milslagle	Bill Welch	Meridith Jaeger
Shared Vision	Gary Delveaux	Paul Ehrfurth Ala Wilson	Amy Putzer
Other – Priorities missed.	Kevin Nolan	Jim Perry John Casper	Sue Neitzel

## **Appendix C**

### **List of All Initiatives Developed by Groups**

#### **Collaboration**

Identify new ways to forge public/private partnerships in all areas, including support from educational institutions to advance interests of the business community/region.

Group facilitator: David Olson, Bay Area Medical Center  
Other support: Jeanne Stangel, UW-Green Bay  
Ray Hernandez, UW-Sheboygan  
George Bousely, Marinette Economic Development Committee

Process: All participants were asked to write initiative(s) on separate post-its. Over 50 ideas were captured and reviewed. The entire group then worked together to categorize and narrow the ideas down to five initiatives.

#### Initiatives:

1. Business and education collaborate to prepare for the future economy.
2. Collaborate to grow the work force.
3. Create a resource directory with government, education and business economic and work force development information.
4. Collaborate to work as a region.
5. Promote advocacy – especially in government.

The group discussed the top five initiatives and then voted on the initiative that best met the criteria. The group chose to combine initiatives # 1 and # 4:

Winning Initiative: Eliminate the boundaries among political jurisdiction, business and education.

#### Action Steps:

1. Use educational advisory boards as a conduit for planning.
2. Support legislation changes that encourage tax-based sharing.
3. Identify the core competencies in each area.
4. Identify key industry to trial collaboration initiative – e.g. paper industry.

#### Special Note:

The group felt strongly that other initiatives may be more pertinent for the regional priorities like “Shared Vision” and “High Skilled Labor” and should be forwarded to the appropriate working groups.

## High Skilled Labor & Education Group

### Summary:

The group identified and discussed 18 issues relating to high skilled labor and education in Northeast Wis. These were condensed to the following 4 issues areas.

1. Conduct a study to determine the skills employers will require now and tomorrow from basic skills to highly advanced. ( 5 votes)
2. Create a greater awareness ( K-12) of all career opportunities students have after high school. This to be done through youth apprenticeships, mentoring, internships, and promotion of the community as a great place to live and work. (29 votes)
3. Improve and expand the partnerships between business and education to see to it that business' needs are met as efficiently as possible. ( 4 votes)
4. Develop new and innovative programs aimed at keeping what we have and recruiting ( from outside N.E. Wis.) what we need. (10 votes)

The group discussed then voted on the importance of each of the four issue areas.

First with 29 votes was issue #2.

Second with 10 votes was #4.

Third with 5 votes was #1.

Fourth with 4 votes was #3.

# High Skilled Labor & Education

## *Group II*

We recognize that the future will require a highly skilled workforce that can compete in a global economy and our educational institutions will need to prepare students to work in that environment. We need to recruit highly skilled workers to the region and to retain the talent we have.

### **Brainstorm on initiatives**

- Solve Health Care employee shortage
- Create forums to educate students, parents about jobs in growth industries. Including tech jobs and education.
- Understand cost incurred by company to train employees
- Retain trained people from our area and educational institutions
- Assess with educational institutions a collaborated effort to get training at manufacturers location.
- Need to study areas of interest of 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Start early on before high school.
- Bring Jr. High age students together to work on “junk”- get them introduced to the industry early.
- Need to get girls and young women introduced to manufacturing and tech jobs early on.
- Internship initiative to get students in the companies. This will be a helpful recruitment and retention tool.
- Embrace lifelong learning. Use alternative approaches to educate people.
- Product development plan. What education is delivering should match the needs of the industry in the area.
- Tax credit program for training employees
- Get media involved to educate people on how the issue of employee shortages in certain industries will affect the individual.
- We need to understand what drives people. Including generational differences.
- Help employees grow and learn.
- Formal collaboration between educational institutions and labor force.
- Forum for business to communicate their workforce needs to educational institutions.
- Market Wisconsin as a great place to work and live.
- Coordinate field trips for younger/elementary school children to manufacturers.
- Educate the unemployed about resources available to them.
- The unemployed need/want training for “new” skills.
- “What I want to be when I grow up” program for elementary school age kids to learn about different industries.
- Alternative ways to get into teaching field.
- Recognize diversity and ways to recruit and retain a diverse workforce.
- Hands-on training for students.
- Educate parent/students about tech jobs.

- PR Campaign – Educate on the job opportunities in the region
- The needs of the workforce need to equal the education the area schools are providing.

### **Initiative**

Establish a pervasive regional public relations and communications campaign to educate students, parents, employers, educators on short and long-term occupational needs and opportunities.

### **Action items**

Survey attitudes, needs

Assess demographics

Address diversity

Collaboration between educational institutions and industry

Educate/train the unemployed

Get media involved

## Vision

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### Issue as articulated at the 2000 Regional Economic Summit

We recognize that the lack of a common shared vision for the future within this region has occasionally resulted in communities within our region engaging in forms of competition that have not entirely served well the interests of the people and companies within our region. We know that the development of a common vision for the future – a vision that links our efforts in a concerted push toward shared objectives – will help the region to grow and develop in the next several decades. We understand the value and the importance of bold, visionary public leadership in support of this vision by public servants at the local, county, regional, state, and federal levels of governmental action.

### Initiative

To develop a shared, comprehensive, and bold vision for concerted efforts to ensure a solid economic future for the people and communities within Northeast Wisconsin.

### Next Step

- Develop a committee charged with articulating a vision statement prior to state economic summit on November 26-27
  - Define “Northeast Wisconsin”
    - Based on commonalities: industry, quality of life, labor market, media market, etc.
    - Green Bay watershed
  - Identify leadership and participant groups/stakeholders to involve in defining action plans
  - Inventory existing regional economic planning efforts and collaborative efforts (RPC, NEW ERA, etc.)

### Action plan should aim to...

- Balance local and global
  - We should be “regionally focused and globally connected”
  - We need to position ourselves to attract/retain companies looking to compete globally
- Rejuvenate the paper industry and supporting/related industries (forestry, printing, transport, machinery, etc.)
- Identify industrial/economic/knowledge clusters which we want to grow and create innovative programs and incentives to encourage growth
- Increase collaboration
  - We need to shed the parochial views that cause us to compete with ourselves within the region
  - We need more collaboration between colleges, universities, technical colleges, and high schools

- Develop a shared plan to spread costs to improve land use, infrastructure, recycling, solid waste collection, clean water, etc.
- Develop a regional brand/identity based on our strengths/assets
  - Our pristine natural resources (land, water, climate) lend themselves to making NE Wisconsin one of our nation's leading tourism destinations
  - Emphasize utilization and preservation of our assets/resources – *physical* – land, wood, water; *manpower* – population, education, social structure; *infrastructure* – rail, roads, waterways
  - Quality of life

Gain bi-partisan and state support

## Other

### Other initiatives that need attention:

1. Infrastructure
2. Technology
3. (Small business) assistance
4. Venture capital
5. Business center – centralized access to services
6. Utilization of local talent – international
7. Diversification
8. Control of health care costs – excessive(?) duplication of capital projects
9. Enhance entrepreneurial climate
10. Regulatory problems
11. Strengthen existing regional industry
12. Retention of local, corporate ownership
13. Transportation efficiency
14. Regional collaboration for essential services
15. Comprehensive infrastructure planning e.g. power
16. Environmental remediation and central city redevelopment
17. Extension of high speed fiber to outlying areas and within communities
18. Cooperation of city gov'ts for economic development within existing cities
19. Manpower planning
20. R & R of people
21. Branding NE Wisconsin

### *Grouping of the initiatives and voting*

- 8 - Infrastructure/technology
- 15 - Business assistance – venture capital – business centers – entrepreneurship
- 15 - Diversification – internationalization
- 12 - Regulatory – inter and intra gov't cooperation – city redevelopment
- 2 - Existing regional corporations – ownership + strengthening
- 5 - Human resources – manpower planning and R & R
- 4 - Health care
- 5 - Regional branding

*Groups talked through top 3 initiatives*  
*Business Assistance*

Business incubator in Valley  
Legislative assistance and tax breaks  
Supportive programs not tied to direct job creation (financing, etc)  
Business planning assistance  
Mentoring program  
Centralized business assistance programs/centers  
Branding – entrepreneurial hotbed – advertising  
Educational programs re: entrepreneurship in schools – start young  
Hi speed regional train FDL – Lakeshore – GB

**How do we achieve?**

Legislation – incentives/taxes  
Advertise existing infrastructure and strengths  
Foster education/PK-12 and mentoring

**INITIATIVE** - Regional “Business Assistance Center” coordinating activities of those already in place (1-800-Info)

*Diversification*

= facilitate growth of desirable industry and business  
= become less dependent upon existing manufacturing sector  
This articulates with and depends on the other 2 topics!

**ID desirable**

Competitive advantage existing  
Technology intensive  
Exploitable niche  
Global market  
Clean, green and good neighbor

**How achieve?**

Attract existing companies  
Grow our own  
Create incentives  
Create a regional plan

*Regulatory and governmental cooperation*

Customer service focus – change attitude  
Create incentives to encourage redevelopment projects

**Program** – Hold a forum between developers and city officials to educate cities on the economics of real estate development; understanding the cost of redeveloping a brownfield site vs greenfield

## Appendix D

### Specific comments related to key regional and statewide issues

Although these issues were raised initially in the 2000 summit they remain concerns.

#### 1. Collaboration

**Collaboration** -- Within the next year, it will be important to increase collaboration among governments, economic development entities, educational institutions, and the private sector because ...

- There needs to be established a shared sense of purpose and accountability. There needs to be a cooperative effort to tackle the challenges relating to a shortage of labor in the area. We need to address issues relating to continued expansion on a unified basis. The lack of this collaboration is the single most important impediment to our gaining the standing within the state and country that we need to make progress.
- Although competition between businesses can drive down costs to the consumer, competition between municipalities typically drives the cost of service delivery up. (For example, the duplication of services causes inflated taxation.) We need to work in coordination with each other to ensure all are working towards the same goals.
- Only with a unified effort will we be able to display the benefits of work, living and play in Wisconsin needed to entice workers and capital to congregate here. Although this is an initiative of the UW system, I believe that it is important to include the private universities and colleges in this statewide planning effort.
- It is important to make best use of limited resources. Collaboration allows each partner to bring their strengths to the table. Further, working on common goals and sharing communications will enhance the working relationship between the parties. The impact will be much greater when we work together than working individually. If we don't figure out a way to work better together, we will be losing out on opportunities to benefit us all.
- Control expenses, stretch available resources, eliminate red tape, avoid duplication of facilities and build on the opportunities and partnerships afforded by our neighbors. Creating an atmosphere where competitive products and services flourish, we must maximize the already existing talent basis found in Wisconsin.
- We need to work together as a team to be successful in the further development and growth of our area. It's the mix of all of these sectors that adds depth and richness to any organization, opening new avenues for solving regional issues. It is the collective thinking of all that will form new partnerships/alliances as well as solve old problems with new/fresh approaches. These alliances will breed a strong economy, strengthen

the workforce, which lends itself to wise policy-making. It will eliminate redundancies; present a united front and message, facilitate best use of combined resources, and reduce intra-regional competition.

- Of the need to ensure we are all working towards a similar goal. Many times government, education and private sector units do not understand the needs of one another and are creating goals for their units, which are heading in different paths. For too long these entities have often worked at cross-purposes. Collaborations will help reduce the inefficiencies of separate purposes and be more economically beneficial to all. Success for one sector is integrally tied to the others.
- There needs to be a regional public-private partnership when dealing with economic development. We need to reduce duplication of efforts in order to remain competitive in the economy. Everyone can't do everything.
- Increased collaboration will more efficiently utilize resources available and enhance economic development. We can never develop and implement a regional strategy without significantly higher levels of real and honest collaboration between all agencies. Without this collaboration economic development is increasingly difficult if not impossible. We need to be far less parochial in our approach to all development.
- There can't be partisan decisions made, when they all affect everyone. It's not a "me me" area. It should be we. We need to tear down walls not build new ones. This is what the future demands; it's time to get started now.

## **2. Highly-Skilled Labor**

**Highly skilled Labor** -- Within the next year, it will be important to develop and/or recruit a highly skilled workforce to compete in the global economy because ...

- The most critical need to expand Wisconsin businesses is to expand the work force. Without highly skilled workers, we are not heading toward a future of distinction. We need to recognize and value that which fuels the economy: the efforts of the individual worker.
- The challenges of a global economy force us to be on the leading edge of technology to gain and maintain a competitive advantage. Productivity and flexibility mean more in the long run than just cheap labor. High skilled individuals are needed to keep the economic expansion proceeding.
- We have to do a better job meeting today's labor needs of the businesses already present in this area, otherwise we will experience increasing problems with business retention and attraction over the next 10 years as our general supply of qualified workers is reduced through retirement and attrition, and these workers are not replaced with new skilled workers. This will become a larger factor in business

relocation and expansion decisions, which could place much of northeastern Wisconsin in a declining competitive position in the market.

- Our history of a skilled workforce has been overcome by demand for products and services in excess of Wisconsin companies to produce. Our level of unemployment is less than 3% in most counties. The quality of new workers is inadequate to meet the current needs of employers and without a pickup of our ability to produce we will lose market opportunities that once lost are never replaced. This is the number one need of our business and they need to have a viable workforce to compete.
- With ever increasing global competition and the pace at which some of the world's underdeveloped countries are developing, it is critical we are able to develop and/or recruit the top talent which will help give us an intellectual advantage over some of the global competitor's who will have a inexpensive labor cost advantage.
- Wisconsin has an excellent educational system, but it can be better and we have to stop the brain drain. By developing and recruiting highly skilled workforce, we can perhaps show that this area is a good place to live and work.
- We have the business opportunities coupled with the required capital, but are lacking a workforce pool from which to hire. With the aging of the existing workforce, the skills and work ethic of existing employees will need to be replaced so that companies can continue to succeed and thrive.
- High-tech businesses that are being recruited by state and regional efforts must have the assurance that the labor force is trained and ready for the jobs that will be offered. This is the number one constraint on business today. We need to keep our skilled workers and create the environment to attract new workers. One of the largest problems we face is affordable housing for our skilled blue-collar workers.
- There is a shortage of young people pursuing the skilled trades such as machinist, tool and die maker, and mold maker. This shortage of skilled workers in manufacturing positions is made worse because the schools are not providing basic skills such as math, language, common sense, etc. We need these hands on trades to manufacture the parts that drive our economy.
- The traditional manufacturing methods are being replaced by the high tech, e-commerce type business. To be competitive in this arena, we must have a workforce that can adapt to the challenges of the global economy.

### **3. Taxes**

Taxes -- Within the next year, it will be important to reduce state and local taxes to improve the ability of Wisconsin businesses to compete on a national and international basis because ...

- We cannot continue to linger amid the ranks of the highest taxing states in the country, and expect to be competitive either at home or abroad. To recruit and retain the best employees, we must become more competitive in our personal and business tax burden. The higher rate of taxation does not entice high-tech firms to locate in Wisconsin and encourages the departure of graduates to other states (enhancing positions, higher salary scale, and lower personal taxes).
- Taxes are one of the biggest concerns of business location. Too many manufacturers are moving to other states because of more favorable tax advantages. One of the biggest reasons people and business don't want to come here are the taxes. We rank exceedingly high compared to the rest of the country. It is a major factor when siting a new facility.
- Wisconsin must shed its image as a highly taxed state in order to be competitive in attracting new business and venture capital. As economic developers we are no longer competing against neighboring communities, but we compete globally. Any edge we can obtain to make Wisconsin more competitive in site searches the better and more plentiful opportunities will follow for our citizens. Lower taxes means more money put back into the economy on a more diversified scale. Attractive tax rates are a main consideration for new and existing business in relocating.
- Business taxes and regulation fees are high in Wisconsin. The high income, property, sales tax rates make it hard to recruit workers due to higher cost of living than some neighboring states. It drives up the cost of labor and hinders our ability to keep people within the state.
- Without competitive tax incentives it will be difficult to attract new businesses to our area. We have some of the highest taxes in the nation. That may deter businesses from starting up in the area or even expanding. To remain competitive, we need to lower our taxes as neighboring states have done.

## **6. Industry Diversity**

**Industry Diversity** --Within the next year, it will be important to broaden our region's business base by encouraging development of high-technology companies because ...

- High technology industries are growing faster than traditional manufacturing industries. These businesses will provide the wage levels and job growth necessary to ensure the region maintains and even improves its current economic prowess. Communities that lose in the High Tech development game will find it difficult to catch up with the more prosperous areas. The absence of diversified industry makes our region vulnerable to unpredictable shifts in the evolving global economy.
- Old economy companies, our manufacturers, are becoming more and more reliant on new technologies, but we are unable to provide those technologies at the levels required. We have too long depended on the paper industry for our livelihood. The

future belongs to the world of technology, as these companies represent the best opportunity for long-range business growth and vitality. It just makes good economic sense to continue to diversify the local economy to maintain greater control over our economic destiny as well as provide further opportunities for future growth.

- High technology is the future driving force, and the expansion of this business base is attracting the top talent. New graduates in technology fields may be leaving the state or region for more advanced jobs found elsewhere and with higher earning potential.

## 7. Vision

Vision -- Within the next year, it will be important to create a shared, comprehensive vision for the Northeast region because ...

- If we have a bold vision, we can achieve bold goals. Absent vision, we are wandering in the darkness. We are competing in a global market, and we need to shed the parochial views that cause us to compete with ourselves within the Northeast region.
- Without a strong sense of where we are going, we will not be working toward the same goals, thus losing focus, and diminishing our chances for achieving long-term economic stability. With a shared vision that is embraced by all stakeholders more can be accomplished than if efforts are spread among too many diverse interests. We need to work together to promote our strengths and stop competing against one another for businesses.
- To preserve one of our strengths, our quality of life, we need to plan on a regional basis our land use, infrastructure, etc. Such issues as clean water and solid waste demand economy accomplished through a shared infrastructure to finance the high costs for improvements. We need to head into the next century with plans, direction and goals that will help us achieve our mission collectively while ensuring planned growth and development for our community. Our world depends on it!
- We need to cooperate as a unit on various projects that are economically important to the area. The communities of the Northeast area need to look more to regionalism than to border wars. The splintered Northeast region, with Appleton being in three counties and numerous far flung state elected officials representing the area, makes it very difficult to tell the story of the Northeast region to prospective business executives who may be thinking of relocating or building in the Northeast region. If everyone is pulling on the rope in the same direction wonderful things can happen. Look at Pittsburgh, Cleveland and other communities where the leadership has come together and have agreed to a common vision and an agreed upon way to get there. They have been very successful. Look at communities and states where there is conflict, agendas of self-interests, and a lack of a shared vision and plan: What you see is chaos.

## 9. Income

**Income** -- Within the next year, it will be important for Wisconsin to raise its relatively low per capita income levels because ...

- High skilled individuals have higher income and spending levels. With more purchasing power for the residents of the state, there will be an increase in the revenue to support state, county and municipal operations. This will help provide the infrastructure necessary to meet the increasing requirements of the global marketplace.
- Competition from other states demands that we pay attention to our compensation levels. Higher incomes are necessary to prevent “brain drain.” If we are to retain a greater share of this talent base and posture ourselves to recruit new talent to the Northeast, the wage issue must be addressed or the drain will continue. Paying higher wages will allow us to be competitive in attracting highly skilled people to our area.
- Our regional wage levels must be attractive enough to attract workers and families to this area. The nice amenities our area offers matter little if the wage levels prevent individuals and families from accumulating wealth.

## 11. Regulation

**Regulation** -- Within the next year, it will be important to change regulatory policies to support business growth and development because ...

- Wisconsin is perceived to not be as friendly to business as our neighboring states. We are over-regulated with an overly restrictive environment that makes it hard for us to compete with other states. We have a tough business climate based on current regulatory guidelines. A detriment to growth is the difficulty of getting permits and licenses.
- Competition is now global. Many of these countries have controlled economies. If we need to change or move ahead it must be done as expeditiously as possible, which is often at odds with bureaucratic decision-making. Bureaucratic decision-making often lags behind technological advances.
- Business thrives where there are the fewest impediments from government, especially social policy driven regulation that distracts management from focussing on competition and product/service development.

## 12. Venture Capital

**Venture Capital** -- Within the next year, it will be important to expand regional sources of funding for new business ventures because ...

- Venture capital is extremely hard to locate in this region. Too many startup opportunities are lost because they're unable to get funding. Finding new capital for start-ups and expansion in fields requiring high level paying jobs and education would definitely enhance the image as well as the welfare of the region.
  - Wisconsin is not known generally as the hot bed of new companies. We grossly lack investment in new, high tech types of businesses. I don't know if it is because of our state's tax structure, but our surrounding states generate much more investment than Wisconsin does. Maybe that's why our salaries are lower and we are losing over 25% of our college grads to other states. The growth in the new economy will be in new ventures. To attract new technology businesses, we must have venture capital for them to tap into. It will also attract the young talent to grow existing businesses. New ideas and success in obtaining appropriate capital draws in qualified people.
  - Local businesses are unwilling to accept capital from out of town unless they are forced to. If local sources exist, they will likely be accepted. Awareness of these sources at a local level will likely open our eyes to the existing national market and break down our parochial attitudes toward out of town sources.
1. We must overcome the perception that the region is “small town conservative” rather than a robust thriving area.
  2. We must overcome the perception that the region has “low tech jobs” rather than a variety of high tech professional opportunities.
  3. We must move beyond the historical rivalry between and among the communities within the region that have led to duplicative services and a failure to achieve economies of scale through a shared vision.
  4. We must recruit a more diverse and more highly qualified workers.
  5. We must develop new approaches to diversify the ethnic profile of the region and to more fully appreciate the multicultural diversity that already exists.
  6. We must address the existing gender-based wage gap.

#### C. Action Steps

1. The individuals and organizations in the various communities throughout the greater Fox River Valley region need to develop a shared vision of the new economy along with new and innovative ways to demonstrate collaboration toward the accomplishment of shared goals. This broader sense of community collaboration will also be reflected in greater collaboration between and among the regional governmental units (local, regional, state, and federal).
2. The State of Wisconsin should provide an incentive to build new jobs.
3. We need to find a basis to re-examine the assumptions about the “old economy” to develop a more vigorous view toward the “new economy.”

#### D. Other Action Steps

1. We should provide incentives to businesses by lowering taxes.

2. We should have expanded promotional efforts – for people, businesses, and in support of entrepreneurship – to emphasize regional assets and other positive attributes.
3. We should provide incentives for students and employees to move to the region.
4. We should build upon community partnerships in support of economic development.
5. We should try to resolve the tradeoff between high taxes versus expanded services.
6. We should encourage regional thinking as it relates to infrastructure and new business development.
7. We should solicit information from other interested parties (e.g., students, labor, and recruiters) in order to find out why people are attracted to move to other regions.

### **3. Increasing Seed and Venture Capital Investment**

This conversation focused on strategies for improving the investment -- from both within and outside Wisconsin -- of funds required to finance the birth of new technologies and businesses.

#### A. Opportunities

1. Help to connect investors with new and expanding opportunities.
2. Provide information/education to investors on venture capital.
3. Retooling ‘old’ companies help with intellectual capital vs. physical capital
4. Funding for ideas with intellectual balance sheet capital
5. Identify and market the state’s established strengths (e.g., the UW System).

#### B. Challenges

1. We need to help established companies move into new technologies.
2. We need to develop a coordinated marketing scheme for promoting our competitive advantage over other regions/states.

#### C. Action Steps

1. Provide information and support to encourage the exchange of information between investors and entrepreneurs
2. Provide support and assistance to enable established organizations to develop institutional capital to be invested in the new economy

#### D. Other Action Steps

1. Learn what worked in other communities (Seattle and Silicon Valley).
2. Identify external experts to help with regional educational needs.
3. Develop a network of potential venture capital sources.
4. Identify best practices that could serve as models for “established firms” to enter new high tech markets.

5. Develop informational and educational programs on investing and entrepreneurship. Ensure that educational curricula at all levels includes coverage of venture capital issues and other related topics such as technology and intellectual property.
6. State R & D credit.
7. Form a quasi-public clearinghouse to help promote new investment and to identify serious new investment opportunities.

#### **4. Improving the Regulatory Climate**

This conversation focused on state and local governmental rules and regulations that deal with quality of life and the state's economic vitality, such as: environmental standards, land-use planning, business siting, energy and telecommunication policy, e-commerce policy, efficient delivery of state services, providing timely decisions.

##### A. Opportunities

1. Change the regulatory environment.
2. Change tax policy.
3. Move toward an incentives-based model of regulation.

##### B. Challenges

1. Develop a regulatory model based on goals and incentives, rather than on “command and control.”
2. Encourage broad visionary leadership in regulatory affairs.
3. Move beyond the status quo in terms of the traditional politics of regulation.

##### C. Action Steps

1. Encourage regional collaboration.
2. Provide encouragement to elected and appointed officials to change the regulatory model.
3. Demonstrate greater collaboration between education organizations and the business community.

##### D. Other Action Steps

1. Provide leadership to help to change the way people view role of government.
2. Understand how changes in legislation can change the role of trial lawyers.
3. Political and community leaders need to be engaged in active community-based conversation on real issues.
4. The Fox River needs to be recognized as a true regional asset.
5. Move toward new methods of managing environmental regulation.
6. Recognize the value and the importance of legislative leadership in support of regional action.

7. Public policy efforts should originate from the regions with help from local governments, business organizations and others.
8. Explore alternative tax alternatives to remove disincentives to business re-investment.
9. Education and business sectors need to develop new models of collaboration.
10. Expand public access to governmental proceedings (e.g., televise more public activities).

## **7. Building a Distinctive Brand/Image for Wisconsin**

This conversation considered the development of a statewide brand, or image, for Wisconsin as a "business-growth state" -- as well as strategies for advancing the Wisconsin brand in the national and global marketplaces.

### A. Opportunities

1. The region has considerable advantage in terms of quality of life and family focus.
2. The region has a well-established base.
3. There are quality educational opportunities.
4. The region has existing global businesses.

### B. Challenges

1. There is a well-established and self-limiting impression of the state (dairy industry, cheeseheads, brats and cold weather).
2. The state is perceived as a high tax, not high tech, state.
3. The state must recruit and retain skilled workers from out of state.
4. There is considerable competition between and among the regional communities.
5. There is a very tight labor market.

### C. Action Steps

1. There is a need for a new regional identity ... are we really a "Valley" with no surrounding hills?
2. We need to create an attractive image that will allow us to effectively compete against other markets.
3. We need to develop common goals and supporting strategies.
4. We need to build an organization that unifies and connects the communities within our region.
5. We need to use our existing educational institutions/systems to attract people and industry to the region and state.
6. We need to create new jobs that help diversify our communities and workforce.

### D. Other Action Steps

1. Collect pertinent information necessary to develop a regional and statewide focus.

2. Continue to develop existing infrastructure (transportation, communication, utilities, etc.).
3. Produce more graduates with needed skills and training, such as Information Technology.
4. Develop regional efforts to attract and retain new businesses, new investment, skilled workers, and students.
5. Identify, clarify and market existing industry segments within the region.
6. Facilitate the development of collaborative partnership among business and education sectors to provide new employment-based learning experiences.
7. Gather information to effectively address existing negative perceptions.
8. Coordinate efforts to overcome homogenous population and to develop new appreciation for the existing cultural differences.
9. Develop strategies to address the state's relatively low per capita income.