



## Green Bay Weather



## BUSINESS

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## Economic summit to focus on future business changes

By Elaine Kauh

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The opening session Monday at the fourth annual Wisconsin Economic Summit will focus on Northeastern Wisconsin and how it is looking ahead to big changes in the kinds of businesses and workers the region needs to thrive.

A new effort to ensure a viable future — the NorthEast Wisconsin Economic Opportunity Study — will bring together work force and industry.

Throughout a 16-county area, they'll partner with other groups, businesses and University of Wisconsin-Extension to work toward a vibrant future economy.

"It really cements a relationship between workforce development and economic development," said Jim Golembeski, executive director of the Bay Area Workforce Development Board in Green Bay. "We need to work more closely together."

Finding ways to prepare the work force for a more technological regional economy follows up on the concepts economist Richard Florida discussed during a recent visit to Green Bay, he said.

Florida emphasized the need for communities to tap into creative talent to boost progressive growth.

Paul Ehrfurth, vice president of economic development at the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, said that's what will help the region attract knowledge-based industries and retain educated workers like scientists and engineers.

"We're not as strong in those areas as we have been in manufacturing," he said. "We need to work to build those things in our state and our region."

The study will be a big step toward that, he said.

The bulk of the funding for the project will come from the Fox Valley Workforce Development Board and Bay Area Workforce Development Board. Those agencies will contribute a combined \$150,000 using federal funding.

"We need to determine where are the opportunities as we move forward," said David Muench, community resource development educator with the University of Wisconsin-Extension.

Plowing public and private dollars into job training and re-training without knowing the viable,

### Wisconsin Economic Summit IV

- Monday and Tuesday, Midwest Airlines Center, Milwaukee

- For more information, visit the UW System Web site, <http://www.wisconsin.edu/summit>

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growing employment sectors of the future is like "shooting a gun into thin air," he said.

By mid-November, the East Central as well as Bay Lake regional planning commissions will have surveyed historical and current patterns in demographics, population, income and other related areas. By year's end, the UW-Extension will have surveyed marketplace trends.

Economist David Ward of NorthStar Economics Inc. will work on a later phase of the study, which will create a strategy for the region's future by identifying potential industry growth areas and analyzing strengths and weaknesses.

"It's not one-regional-plan-fits-all," Muench said. "It will be directed at various sub-regions; it will be manageable that way. What works in Marinette and Oconto is different than Green Lake and Marquette, which is different than Manitowoc and Sheboygan."

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