

Helping Communities Manage Challenges and Opportunities

Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development (CNRED)

In 2001, county government in Wisconsin invested about \$3 million in Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development (CNRED) staff and support. This linking of county programs with statewide campus and area expertise constitutes an additional state investment of \$12 million, or \$4 for every county dollar. The return on this shared \$15 million investment encompasses both economic benefit and the enduring value of strong communities and strong community leadership. Here are examples of how Extension helps strengthen Wisconsin communities:

- Based on data from Wisconsin businesses, these businesses learned how to save over \$3 million annually in waste management costs, thanks to advice from the Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC). Local government programs throughout the state also benefited. Among them, the city of Kenosha, which saved \$100,000 on its recycling contract after receiving SHWEC education.
- Wisconsin government spends over \$1 billion per year on roads. Maintenance education from the UW-Extension's Transportation Information Center has increased the efficiency of investment in road maintenance for thousands of Wisconsin communities. These programs save scarce local resources and contribute to safer and more comfortable travel.
- Most Wisconsin communities are working on comprehensive planning issues in order to comply with the State's Smart Growth Law. Comprehensive local plans can cost from \$50,000 to \$500,000 each. Extension's Land Use programming is helping governments to manage these costs, through helping them to develop cost effective and efficient planning efforts. Aggregated across Wisconsin, Extension land use education is saving communities millions of dollars.
- Extension's Local Government Center provides legal, technical, and regulatory education to all of Wisconsin's local governments. Duplicated from private sources, this high-quality educational support would cost each municipality in the state \$50,000 - \$100,000 per year. In addition to the efficiencies gained, local governments also benefit directly by receiving expert information through local county Extension office contacts.

- Community economic development research conducted by Extension's world-class faculty has helped many Wisconsin communities enhance economic development opportunities. Depending upon community needs, Extension research has focused on labor force studies, retail trade, geographic information systems, community economic analysis, downtown revitalization, parking and other key economic development indicators at the local level. If duplicated by the private sector, these high-quality studies would cost \$100,000 or more each. However, Wisconsin communities with CNRED faculty have saved community resources by working with campus faculty to develop the baseline data that has spurred community economic development across Wisconsin.

Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development programs help Wisconsin communities deal with their unique challenges of land use and smart growth initiatives, natural resource and water quality issues, local government operations and finance, economic development, community decision-making and leadership issues. Backed by University of Wisconsin research, CNRED educators work with local governments, civic organizations, businesses and community leaders to enhance local decision-making and help communities respond to new challenges and opportunities.