

Wisconsin Town Officers' Handbook now available for check-out at the UW-Extension Office

The *Wisconsin Town Officers' Handbook* (second edition, 2006) is now available for check-out at the UW-Extension Office. This handbook contains 31 chapters and four appendixes and is an update and expansion of the 1994 edition.

This handbook explains and discusses the powers and duties of Wisconsin town officers, especially town board supervisors. The 31 chapters are organized under the following general categories: General Organization; Ethics, Conflicts of Interest and Liability; Open Government Laws; Finance and Taxation; Public Works; Public Safety; Planning, Land Use and Boundary Changes; Miscellaneous; and Appendixes. The first four chapters of "General Organization" follow, for the most part, the structure of Ch. 60 (Towns) of the *Wisconsin Statutes*, but include discussions of legal requirements found outside of those chapters, as appropriate. In addition, the handbook has expanded and updated the appendixes which include materials on ethics, parliamentary motions and resources.

This handbook is a great tool and quick reference source. Pierce County UW-Extension office has purchased one copy of this handbook and will loan this copy out to anyone interested. Please call the UW-Extension Office for availability at 715-273-6781.

- **Economic Development strategies**
- **Measuring Economic Development**
- **Government Facilities and Downtowns**

The Local Elected Officials Newsletter is a quarterly educational publication produced by UWEX Western District CNRED program. We welcome any suggestions that you may have.

The University of Wisconsin-Extension provides affirmative action and equal opportunity education, programming and employment, including Title IX and the American with Disabilities requirements.

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Local Government and Economic Development

What is economic development? Local officials are often asked to support economic development in hopes of improving their communities. But what exactly is economic development? *If you ask ten people, you will get ten different answers:*

"Economic development is the development of economic wealth...of regions for the well-being of their inhabitants" (wikipedia.org)

"Social, environmental, and economic change to enhance quality of life" (Ron Shaffer, author, Community Economic Development, from Theory to Practice)

"Any effort or undertaking which aids in the growth of the economy" (David Miller, Executive Director, Barron County Economic Development Corporation)

"...the process by which a community organizes and then applies its energies to the tasks of improving the economic well-being and quality of life for the community..." (Roger Nacker, Wisconsin Economic Development Institute)

The term *Economic development* is often used to describe *a positive or desirable change in the economic conditions of a community.*

Using this definition, economic development may be evidenced by:

- ❖ **An increase in jobs**
- ❖ **An increase in tax revenue**
- ❖ **An increase in wages**
- ❖ **A decrease in poverty**
- ❖ **An increase in property values**
- ❖ **Other desired outcomes**

Public officials are tasked with at least two challenging jobs when it comes to supporting economic development:

- 1) Figuring out what economic development means for their constituents and
- 2) Providing leadership to make sure that their communities are well prepared to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

What is local government's role in economic development? What are the strategies for improving the local economy? And how do we know if we are making a difference? The following articles explore these questions of interest to many local officials.

Who does what in economic development?

By Andrew Dane, Barron/Chippewa County UW-Extension

There are many different organizations that work on issues that may be considered ‘economic development.’ The following is a brief overview that attempts to answer the question: So who does what in economic development?

Main Street Associations work to enhance downtowns through a program model that focuses on: better design, economic restructuring, historical preservation, and enhancing retail through better marketing.

Chambers of Commerce and Convention and Visitor Bureaus are primarily member-driven organizations that lobby for local business interests, support their members, coordinate and promote tourism and other events, and market their communities.

County Economic Development Corporations focus on business expansion, retention, and attraction at the county level, often working with many different communities at a time. They are often the first point of contact for larger businesses looking to expand or relocate from outside the area.

Local Governments promote economic development primarily through land use decision-making and by targeting public infrastructure investment. Capacity varies widely, some communities employ planners and economic development directors, while others rely on local elected officials and community leaders to play key roles in decision making.

State and Federal Agencies provide financing and training opportunities to new and existing business and local units of government. They include the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce

Development, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Economic Development Administration, and others.

Non-profits include Community Action Agencies and Certified Development Corporations. These agencies typically focus their economic development efforts on lower income populations and other targeted groups or regions.

Utility companies sponsor local initiatives, coordinate joint marketing and other regional efforts, and serve as key points of contact for businesses looking to expand or relocate to an area.

Educational institutions such as the K-12 institutions, the Wisconsin Technical Colleges, and the University System train workers that provide the human capital necessary for wealth creation. UW-Extension provides business counseling and training through area Small Business Development Centers. UW-Extension also provides economic development facilitation, applied research, and planning assistance through County Agents and two statewide Centers for Community and Economic Development.

5 Eco Dev Strategies

These strategies offer a framework for thinking about economic development:

- 1) **Attract new ‘export’ employers from outside the community**
- 2) **Expand the community’s trade area or market**
- 3) **Increase the efficiency of existing firms in the community**
- 4) **Reduce the amount of dollars (or leakage) flowing out of the community**
- 5) **Increase the amount of intergovernmental transfers coming into the community**

Performance Measures for Community Economic Development

Adapted from an article by Steven C. Deller, University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension

As citizens demand evidence of program effectiveness, how can one measure the success of local economic development efforts? Economic development organizations (EDO’s) have historically incorporated performance measures into their strategic planning. Specific goals, such as visiting two dozen businesses through a business retention and expansion program, or organizing half a dozen small business development workshops over the coming year, are commonly found in EDO annual plans of work.

Economic development organizations, however, could benefit from thinking about the broader performance measurement discussion that is occurring within the field of public administration, specifically, the widely discussed distinctions between **inputs, outputs and outcomes**. Inputs and outputs are easily identified and measured, but outcomes are an entirely different matter. Consider for example, educational programs aimed at helping local entrepreneurs. Inputs are easily measured: number and breadth of courses offered, level of direct one-on-one counseling, or volume of packages distributed. Outputs are easily measured: number of individuals participating in programs, number of completed business plans, or volume of SBA loans flowing into the community. But outcomes are more difficult to measure. Ideally, entrepreneurs will be more effective at identifying opportunities, crafting strategies to minimize risks and avoiding business ideas that do not make economic sense. But how does one know if the skills of program participants have really increased as a result of participation? Would these entrepreneurs have made the same decisions with or without the programs?

Is the goal of visiting two dozen businesses through the business retention and expansion program an input, output or outcome? When considered within the framework of performance measurement the goal of visiting the businesses would clearly be an input. The output would be the identification of businesses at risk or are thinking of expansion which the EDO could then lend support to help those businesses. The outcomes are more vague and not as easily measured: a stronger sense of community, enhanced economic opportunity and perhaps a stronger business climate. The leap from inputs and outputs to outcomes can be difficult, but is necessary. It is important for economic development organizations to think about the local economy in a broader sense.

What economic outcomes does the organization wish to foster? Are the broader goals to reduce poverty or the unemployment rate, or to increase average wages or something as vague as enhancing economic opportunities? Too often, it is easy for economic development organizations to focus on tangible inputs and loose sight of the broader outcomes that they are striving to achieve. By stopping and reflecting on those broader outcomes, inputs and outputs can be refined and focused. But how might some of these broader outcomes be measured? A partial list would include increased average income, reduced poverty levels, lower unemployment rates, higher home ownership rates, higher property values and lower commercial vacancy rates. Once the broader desired outcomes are agreed upon, the appropriate mix of performance measures can be identified. **To read the entire article, visit: www.aae.wisc.edu/pubs/cenews Click on #340**

The Importance of Government Facilities in Downtowns

An Analysis of Business Establishments in Wisconsin’s County Seats
Adapted from an article by Ryan Ziegelbauer, Steve Grabow, and Bill Ryan*

Government offices have traditionally been built in the center of cities and towns. However, given the change in shopping habits, dependence on the automobile, increased dependence on computers and the internet, and the rising cost of land in the city center, some argue that there are fewer reasons to keep government offices downtown.

Downtown Public buildings are important both socially and economically to a downtown area. Municipal office buildings, courthouses, libraries and post offices are essential components of healthy downtowns. **Government workers who come each day to a downtown public building will spend between \$2,500 and \$3,500 annually**, according to Place Economics, a Washington, D.C.-based consulting firm. Federal, state and local government leaders are beginning to recognize the important role they play in downtown revitalization efforts. Federal agencies are now required to consider downtown areas first when looking for new space. They are strongly encouraged to locate there unless there are compelling reasons to the contrary. State agencies also attract and generate significant economic activity, and several states have established policies directing state agencies to locate downtown whenever possible. Relatively few local governments have enacted similar policies, but are beginning to recognize their importance to downtown.

Comparable Community Analysis
A study was conducted in Summer 2005 by the University of Wisconsin – Extension Center for Community and Economic Development in order to determine if communities with a county

seat have a greater number of businesses in their downtowns than comparably sized communities without county seats. This comparison included twenty cities with county offices downtown and twenty cities with no county government offices downtown. After the cities were selected a 1-mile diameter ring was drawn around the center of each downtown area, and all of the businesses that fell within the ring were selected. From this data, the mix and number of businesses were analyzed. The table below lists total business counts for all cities by business category, excluding government establishments. County seats had 8.4% more businesses in their downtowns than comparison Communities with few or no county offices downtown

Conclusions

Public facilities are essential components of a healthy, strong and vibrant downtown. Based on both governmental policies and actions at all levels, there appears to be renewed recognition of the importance of public buildings and their activities to the vitality of the downtown and the overall quality of their communities. Based on the accumulation of business data from the downtowns of selected communities in Wisconsin, it can be determined that communities with county government offices downtown tend to have more businesses than those communities without county offices downtown. This further reaffirms the validity of the downtown strategy to retain major governmental activities in the downtown area.

Description	County Seats	Non-Seats
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	13	10
Mining, Utilities and Construction	197	228
Manufacturing	139	136
Wholesale Trade	90	93
Retail Trade	825	764
Transportation and Warehousing	52	71
Info, Finance, Insur and Real Estate	576	512
Prof, Scientific, and Technical Services	455	341
Mgmt. of Co. and Enterprises, Admin. ..	117	114
Educ, Healthcare and Social Assistance	516	382
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	84	84
Accommodation and Food Services	332	339
All Other Services, Including Misc.	688	667
Total Businesses Excluding Government	4,084	3,741

Data Sources: 2000 US Census, ESRI, Info USA

Visit “Let’s Talk Business” at www.uwex.edu/ces/cced to read the entire report