

## **CHAPTER 6 Economic Development Element**

### **Section 6.1 Introduction**

This element will present information about the economy within the Town of Eau Pleine. Economic development, which can be defined as the type and level of business activity within an area, is often based on a combination of market forces, regulation, and the extent of local government encouragement. The Town of Eau Pleine has historically been a rural community of primarily agricultural activity with a scattering of small-scale commercial uses. The Town of Eau Pleine has rarely been actively involved with economic development efforts. Most business growth affecting residents of the Town occurs in larger cities, 10 to 30 miles from the Town.

This element concludes with goals, objectives, and policies to address the stabilization, retention, or expansion of the economic base. County and State economic development information is included to help the Town identify potential opportunities that could be used to pursue appropriate economic development activities.

### **Section 6.2 Labor Force and Economic Base**

#### **A. Labor Force Analysis**

##### **1. Educational Attainment**

As discussed in the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this Plan, and illustrated by Table 1.4 of that chapter, the Town of Eau Pleine has seen an increase in the percentage of its residents who have achieved a college degree (Associate, Bachelor, or Graduate/Professional degree).

##### **2. Earnings and Income**

Wages are not the only form of income those residents receive. “Total income” is defined by the U.S. Census as the sum of the amounts reported separately for wages, salary, commissions, bonuses, or tips; self-employment income from non-farm or farm businesses, including proprietorships and partnerships; interest, dividends, net rental income, royalty income, or income from estates and trusts; Social security or Railroad Retirement income; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); any public assistance or welfare payments from the state or local welfare office; retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and any other source of income received regularly such as Veterans; (VA) payments, unemployment compensation, child support, or alimony. According to the 2000 Census (Summary File 3 Table P58, P60, P62-66) 275 (81.4%) of 338 Eau Pleine households sampled were classified as household with earnings; 110 (40.0%) were households with social security income; 57 (20.7%) were households that received retirement income; 5 households received public assistance and 50 households (18.2%) has other types of income.

In order to better understand the existing wage-earning realities within the Town of Eau Pleine, “earnings” data was considered to be more informative. “Earnings” are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as the algebraic sum of wages or salary income and net income from self-employment, representing the amount of income received regularly before deductions for personal income taxes, Social Security, bond purchases, union dues, Medicare deductions etc.

Table 6.1 compares mean (average) earnings, and mean household and per capita income, for households and individuals in communities within the Eau Pleine area and Portage County

overall. The Town of Eau Pleine experienced a higher percentage increase since 1989 in mean earnings than the County, and remains above the rate of increase for mean household and per capita income.

**Table 6.1: Mean Earnings, Mean Household and Per Capita Income Comparison**

	Mean Earnings Per Household			Mean Income Per Household			Per Capita Income		
	1989	1999	Change	1989	1999	Change	1989	1999	Change
Town of Eau Pleine	\$30,962	\$53,583	73%	\$32,903	\$56,964	73%	\$10,597	\$20,301	92%
Town of Carson	\$37,274	\$59,190	59%	\$37,123	\$57,979	56%	\$12,342	\$21,576	75%
Town of Dewey	\$34,931	\$62,520	79%	\$34,916	\$64,392	84%	\$11,400	\$24,623	116%
Portage County	\$33,230	\$50,373	52%	\$33,184	\$52,102	57%	\$11,730	\$19,854	69%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Census

Mean Earnings = total earnings/ #h/holds with earnings;  
Mean income = total income/ # h/holds with income

According to 2000 Census data, median household income for Town of Eau Pleine residents was \$49,167, which was higher than County and State median income. Portage County median income in 2000 was \$43,487, while state median income was \$43,791.

### 3. Percent in Labor Force and Unemployment

Table 6.2 below examines labor force participation and employment percentages for the Town of Eau Pleine, as described in the 1990 and 2000 Census. Age sixteen is considered to be the lower threshold for being eligible for employment. The Town had a 2000 labor participation rate of 69.5%, which was above the Portage County average of 67.1%. Eau Pleine did experience an increase in the unemployment rate from 1.7% in 1990 to 4.1% in 2000.

**Table 6.2: Employment Status of Town of Eau Pleine Population 16 Years and Above**

Employment Status	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Persons 16 years and over</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>711</b>	<b>100%</b>
In labor force	478	65.9%	494	69.5%
Civilian labor force	478	65.9%	494	69.5%
Employed	466	64.3%	465	65.4%
Unemployed	12	1.7%	29	4.1%
Armed Forces	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Not in labor force	247	34.1%	217	30.5%

Source: U.S. Census 1990 and 2000

### 4. Employment by Occupation

Table 6.3 below provides information regarding the type of occupation that Town of Eau Pleine residents were employed in 2000. The Management/Professional category is now the largest, followed by Production, Transportation, and Material Moving occupations. Table 1.9 of the Issues and Opportunities Chapter summarizes resident employment by industry for the last three Census years. Information for both these tables represents what type of occupation/industry the working residents of the Town were employed in, and is not a listing of the employment opportunities currently located in Eau Pleine.

**Table 6.3: Town of Eau Pleine Employment by Occupation**

Occupation	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Management, professional, and related occupations	63	13.9%	137	29.5%
Service occupations	47	10.4%	44	9.5%
Sales and Office occupations	82	18.1%	106	22.8%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry occupations	92	20.4%	5	1.1%
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance occupations	25	5.5%	56	12.0%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving occupations	143	31.6%	117	25.2%
Total Employed	452	100%	465	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### 5. Commuting

According to the 2001 Portage County Comprehensive Planning Survey, 62% of Town respondents worked outside of the Town and 38% of respondents worked somewhere in Portage County. The fact that the majority of Eau Pleine’s labor force works outside the Town is further supported by Census 2000 data indicating that mean travel time to work was 27.3 minutes.

### B. Local Economic Base Analysis

The Town of Eau Pleine is not active in promoting large industrial or commercial economic development, as residents want to maintain the agricultural base in their Town. However, small scale, home based businesses, and those that are complimentary to agriculture are preferred. Existing businesses in the Town of Eau Pleine include:

- Trucking/Transportation
- School Bus Service- Private Contractor
- Restaurant
- Construction
- Agricultural – cranberry, dairy, beef, crop, worm farm
- Game farm
- Non-metallic mineral extraction
- Blacksmith
- Welding
- Dog Kennel

## **Section 6.3 Strengths and Weaknesses for Attracting/Retaining Business**

### A. Strengths

- Good access to utilities
- Access to available land
- Access to major highways
- 10 miles from the Central Wisconsin Airport
- Available workforce
- Railroad
- Willingness to welcome businesses into the Town.

## B. Weaknesses

- Perception of no control over zoning
- Lack of municipal utilities
- People want to see this area as a “bedroom community”

### **Section 6.4 Desired Businesses**

Sites designated for new development in the Town of Eau Pleine will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Desired businesses for the Town include, but are not limited to:

- Manufacturing that is appropriate to a rural community.
- Small scale, home grown businesses that conform to County Zoning.
- “Farming friendly” related businesses
- Adult Entertainment establishments should be discouraged.

### **Section 6.5 Environmentally Contaminated Sites**

Contaminated sites, also known as brownfields, serve as potential land base for economic development. Brownfields are defined as abandoned or underutilized commercial and industrial properties where redevelopment is hindered by real or perceived contamination. The Wisconsin Departments of Commerce and Natural Resources have jointly prepared a guide to help finance brownfields cleanup and redevelopment. It can be found on the internet at: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/archives/pubs/RR539.pdf>

There is currently one site that is listed in the Town of Eau Pleine with the WI DNR as a brownfield site with open status. The site is listed due to a diesel fuel spill in 1992 and is located a half mile south of Cty Rd H on Highway 34. Open status refers to a contaminated site in need of clean up or where cleanup is still underway. A complete list of all brownfield sites can be obtained by contacting the DNR or through their website at: [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/brrts/index.htm](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/brrts/index.htm).

### **Section 6.6 Economic Development Resources**

#### • **Revolving Loan Fund Programs (Portage County)**

*Purpose:* Funds administered by local communities, which provide local government the ability to assist in economic development projects that will create jobs for low-to-moderate income persons. Typically, the revolving loan fund program provides "gap" financing to local projects that make the project economically feasible.

*Use of Funds:* Land, working capital, buildings, and inventory.

*Amount Available:* Programs are different in each community.

*Advantage:* Offers terms to make the project economically feasible, maximize the return on and provide businesses the ability to finance job creation efforts locally. This program provides a quicker approval process than the Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant - Economic Development Program.

- **Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant-Economic Development (WI Dept. of Commerce)**

*Purpose:* To provide resources to local governments to assist economic development projects that provide jobs to low-to-moderate income persons and expand the local tax base.

*Use of Funds:* Land, working capital, buildings, and inventory.

*Amount Available:* \$750,000 maximum award, \$75,000 to \$500,000 is usual. Provides fixed-rate long term financing.

*Advantage:* Offers terms to make the project economically feasible, maximize the return on public funds, and provide business with rate of return comparable to industry norms. In addition, these funds remain locally for the creation or expansion of a existing Revolving Loan Fund.

- **Wisconsin Rural Economic Development Program (WI Dept. of Commerce)**

*Purpose:* To stimulate the start-up and expansion of small businesses in rural and/or small communities.

*Use of Funds:* Planning and managerial assistance only. This could include development of a marketing strategy for a new product line. Program pays for technical assistance such as consulting fees.

*Amount Available:* Maximum loan award is \$30,000. This program allows straight loans and/or forgivable loans.

*Eligibility:* Businesses with fewer than 25 employees. The business should be starting or expanding operations.

- **Community Development Block Grant - Customized Labor Training (WI Dept. of Commerce)**

*Purpose:* To stimulate the expansion of existing businesses, the attraction and creation of businesses, and the "retooling" of Wisconsin's Industrial base by providing customized labor training. Program is for new technology to industry and industry sector.

*Use of Funds:* Training costs incurred in the upgrading of manufacturing skills. This includes training on the shop floor while not producing salable product.

*Amount Available:* Grant Award. Training grant, competitively awarded, requires 50% match from company. Maximum \$2,500 per employee trained.

*Eligibility:* Proposed training must not supplant training available through existing federal, state and local resources (such as the Technical College and University System). Projects are evaluated on economic contribution; quantity and type of jobs created or saved; cost effectiveness significance of skill upgrading and local unemployment situation.

- **Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation**

A voluntary, non-governmental organization controlled by member families to represent them on legislative issues and to provide farm marketing, business and planning consultation and services. Contact information:

Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation  
PO Box 5550  
Madison, WI 53705-0550  
1-800-261-FARM or 608-836-5575

- **USDA – Rural Development Administration (Wisconsin)**

The Rural Development Administration is an organization affiliated with the United States Department of Agriculture that provides funding for home purchase and rehabilitation, technical assistance and funding to new cooperative ventures, and financing for new business development. A full list of their programs can be found on the internet at: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/wi/programs/index.htm>.

Contact information:

USDA Rural Development - WI  
4949 Kirschling Ct.  
Stevens Point, WI 54481  
Phone: (715)345-7615 FAX: (715)345-7669

### **Technical Assistance**

- **Small Business Development Center**

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, is one of ten university-based SBDC's in Wisconsin. Their mission is to provide learning opportunities and practical guidance to help individuals make informed business decisions. The Stevens Point SBDC works with small business in eight central Wisconsin counties, and offers several types of services including seminars, customized in-house training, and individualized counseling. (715) 346-3838.

- **Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP)**

In an effort to improve quality and productivity of small to medium sized Wisconsin Manufacturers, a partnership between government, industry, labor, and education was formed. The WMEP assessment process is designed to be broad based rather than in-depth. The purpose is to "raise flags" where more effort should be placed. After the assessment, this can lead to a technical assistance project, in which your company is paired with a facilitator to help design and implement solutions.

- **Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC)**

The University of Wisconsin-Extension's SHWEC program was created to provide pollution prevention services to waste generators in Wisconsin. SHWEC' pollution prevention specialists will assess hazardous waste systems, provide no-cost non-regulatory technical assistance, and identify potential waste reduction options.

### **Section 6.7 Economic Development Issues Identified by the Town of Eau Pleine**

The following issues were identified during the Comprehensive Planning process:

- Town residents would like to have the ability to review business proposals.

- Portage County Business Council is not promoting business development in outlying areas.

## **Section 6.8 Economic Development Goals, Objectives and Policies**

### A. Goals:

1. Promote the stabilization and expansion of the current economic base and the creation of a range of employment opportunities.
2. Support commerce and tourism in the Town.

### B. Objectives:

1. Maintain present tax rate to encourage business retention.
2. Encourage businesses that are compatible with rural lifestyle.
3. Encourage the Portage County Business Council to work more closely with the Town of Eau Pleine.

### C. Policies:

1. Encourage citizen review and input for proposed business development.
2. The County informs the Town of Eau Pleine of economic development proposals planned within the Town.
3. The Town will conduct a public hearing for any use that requires a zoning change to a commercial district.