

## **CHAPTER 6 Economic Development Element**

### **Section 6.1 Introduction**

This element will present information about the economy within the Town of Grant. 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 Grant has historically been a rural community of primarily agricultural activity with a scattering of small-scale, home-grown commercial uses. This will likely remain. Besides agriculture, the Town of Grant has never been actively involved with economic development efforts. Most business growth affecting residents of the Town occurs in the larger cities, 5-10 miles from the Town. These jobs provide employment for the residents.

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 Table 1.4 above, the Town of Grant had seen an increase in the percentage of its residents aged 25+ who either attended some college or received a college degree (Associate, Bachelor, or Graduate/Professional degree), from 27.4% in 1990 up to 44.2% in 2000. Please see the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this plan for more details.

##### **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) 682 (89.5%) of 762 Grant households sampled were classified as household with earnings; 151 (19.8%) were households with social security income; 118 (15.5%) were households that received retirement income; 3 households received public assistance and 141 households (18.5%) has other types of income.

In order to better understand the existing wage-earning realities within the Town of Grant, "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 neighboring Towns and Portage County overall. According to the 2000 Census, the Town of Grant had the highest earnings and income

among the units compared, coming in approximately 10% higher than Portage County overall, and 6% to 16% higher than neighboring Towns. Grant's rate of household earnings and income growth between 1990 and 2000 was also strong, allowing it to surpass the Town of Plover as top-earner of the four Towns being compared.

**Table 6.1: Mean Earnings, Mean Income 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 Grant       | \$38,889                    | \$55,528 | 43%    | \$39,068                  | \$58,280 | 49%    | \$12,692          | \$21,793 | 72%    |
| Town of Buena Vista | \$35,365                    | \$48,055 | 36%    | \$36,182                  | \$51,832 | 43%    | \$11,246          | \$18,775 | 67%    |
| Town of Plover      | \$39,877                    | \$52,187 | 31%    | \$41,315                  | \$56,495 | 37%    | \$13,677          | \$21,186 | 55%    |
| Town of Pine Grove  | \$26,147                    | \$47,986 | 84%    | \$27,277                  | \$47,491 | 74%    | \$8,952           | \$18,257 | 104%   |
| 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 Grant residents was \$52,459, which was higher than Portage County (\$43,487) and Average for all other Portage County Towns (\$47,760). See Table 1.6 of the Issues and Opportunities chapter of this Comprehensive Plan for further information on household income.

### 3. Percent in Labor Force and Unemployment

Table 6.2 below examines labor force participation and employment percentages for the Town of Grant, 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 70.9%, which was lower from 74.1% in 1990. However, this rate was above the Portage County Average of 67.1%. The unemployment rate in Grant for 2000 was 4.0%, which was the same in 1990

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

| Employment Status                | 1990         |             | 2000         |             |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
|                                  | Number       | Percent     | Number       | Percent     |
| <b>Persons 16 years and over</b> | <b>1,235</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>1,572</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| In labor force                   | 915          | 74.1%       | 1,115        | 70.9%       |
| Civilian labor force             | 915          | 74.1%       | 1,115        | 70.9%       |
| Employed                         | 865          | 70.0%       | 1,052        | 66.9%       |
| Unemployed                       | 50           | 4.0%        | 63           | 4.0%        |
| Armed Forces                     | 0            | 0.0%        | 0            | 0.0%        |
| Not in labor force               | 320          | 25.9%       | 457          | 29.1%       |

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

### 4. Employment by Occupation

Table 6.3 below compares information regarding the type of occupation that Town of Grant residents were employed in 1990 and 2000. The Production, Transportation, and Material Moving category remained the largest, and while this occupation group added 125 residents, it increased employment by only 3% in the decade. The second largest category was Management/Professional occupations; this category had the largest increase in percentage (+7.4%) and second largest in number (+124). The third place category, Sale and Office

occupations, added 30 residents, but lost overall percentage of workforce from 27.1% to 21.6%. The fourth place category (Construction, Extraction and Maintenance occupations) showed strong gains: +93, +6.1%. Table 1.10 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 Grant.**

**Table 6.3: Town of Grant Employment by Occupation**

| Occupation  | 1990   |         | 2000   |         |
|---|--------|---------|--------|---------|
|   | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| Management, professional, and related occupations           | 104    | 14.3%   | 228    | 21.7%   |
| Service occupations   | 99     | 13.6%   | 93     | 8.8%    |
| Sales and Office occupations                                | 197    | 27.1%   | 227    | 21.6%   |
| Farming, Fishing, and Forestry occupations                  | 56     | 7.7%    | 15     | 1.4%    |
| Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance occupations       | 65     | 8.9%    | 158    | 15.0%   |
| Production, Transportation, and Material Moving occupations | 206    | 28.3%   | 331    | 31.5%   |
| Total Employed  | 727    | 100%    | 1,052  | 100%    |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

### 5. Commuting

According to Census 2000 data, mean travel time to work was 20.0 minutes, while 86% of Town respondents worked outside of the Town. Of the 146 Grant residents who answered the “Where do you work” questions in the 2001 County-wide Comprehensive Planning Survey, 66% reported working in Wisconsin Rapids, followed by Stevens Point Urban Area (11%), Elsewhere in Portage County (13%), Outside Central Wisconsin (6%), Marshfield (1%), Mosinee/Wausau area (1%), Waupaca area (1%).

### B. Local Economic Base Analysis

The economic base in the Town of Grant is mainly agricultural and the Town has a range of businesses relating to the agriculture industry. Grant ranks 4th in the County in the amount of acreage of irrigated cropland with 9,531 acres. The community supports the development of agriculture related businesses that are in harmony with existing land uses and are complimentary to the agricultural activities that currently exist in the Town. It also supports some commercial growth in the Kellner area. Types of existing businesses located in the Town of Grant include:

- Agriculture
- Construction
- Auto sales/repair
- Banking
- Stables
- Landscaping
- Forestry
- Home occupations
- Restaurant/Tavern

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

### A. Strengths

- Plentiful groundwater for agricultural and industrial users
- Highway and Rail access
- Strong Agricultural base
- Large available work force
- Central to Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids
- Close to University and schools

## B. Weaknesses

- No municipal sewer and water
- High water table in some areas
- No economic development plan/committee to promote growth

### **Section 6.4 Desired Businesses**

The Town of Grant will evaluate new proposals for industrial and commercial activities and sites on a case-by-case basis. New businesses in the Town are anticipated to be primarily agricultural related businesses. Desired businesses in the Town, as identified by the Plan Commission, include:

- Agriculture related commercial and industrial.
- Commercial services for local residents.
- Agriculture and forestry
- Commercial and light industrial businesses

### **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 listed in the Town of Grant with the WI DNR as a brownfield site with open status. The site, identified as Stenzels Auto, 8010 Cty Rd WW, was last acted upon in 1996. 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 Grant**

The following issues were identified during the comprehensive planning process:

- How can the Town support regional economic development efforts with limited local funds?
- High volume water users such as agriculture operations or food processors are desirable because the bulk of water used stays in Grant; municipal wells or commercial water bottling operations are not desirable because the water is exported.
- Understand the economic impact of residential development for the Town of Grant.

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

### A. Goals:

1. Promote the stabilization and expansion of the current economic base.
2. Planned development areas are identified and/or established throughout the Town.

### B. Objectives:

1. Identify lands having good commercial use potential.
2. Identify and preserve productive agricultural land.
3. Identify areas suitable for non-agricultural related business.
4. Allow for a range of employment opportunities.
5. Businesses that support or service the agricultural activities within the Town are to be encouraged.

### C. Policies:

1. New businesses shouldn't hinder existing agricultural operations.
2. Review commercial and industrial development proposals on a case-by-case basis.
3. The Town of Grant recognizes and may support the efforts of county and regional economic development organizations.