

CHAPTER 6 Economic Development Element

66.1001 (2)(f) Wis. Stat:

Economic Development element. A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to promote the stabilization, retention or expansion of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local governmental unit, including an analysis of the labor force and economic base of the local governmental unit. The element shall assess categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that are desired by the local governmental unit. The element shall assess the local governmental unit's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and shall designate an adequate number of sites for such businesses and industries. The element shall also evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses. The element shall also identify county, region and state economic development programs that apply to the local governmental unit.

Section 6.1 Introduction

This section of the Comprehensive Plan summarizes the Village of Amherst existing economic activity and identifies the desired directions for future economic growth. 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.

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

Section 6.2 Economic Base Characteristics

A. Labor Force Analysis

1. Educational Attainment

Table 1.5 of the Issues and Opportunities Chapter compares educational attainment for the Village of Amherst adults with similar information for the average Rural Village and Portage County as a whole. The Village of Amherst in 2000 had a greater percentage of its 25+ population achieving bachelor degrees than the average Portage County rural village (16.1% and 10.8%, respectively); both Amherst and the average rural village had similar percentages of adults with graduate or professional degrees (4%).

2. Earnings and Income

Wages are not the only form of income that residents receive. "Total income" is defined be 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 business, 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 sources

of income received regularly such as Veterans' (VA) payments, unemployment compensation, child support, or alimony. According to the 2000 Census (Summary File 3 Tables P58, P60, P62-66), 331 (81%) out of the 409 Amherst households sampled were classified as households with earnings; 119 (29%) were households with social security income, 6 (1.5%) received Supplemental Security Income (SSI), 60 (15%) received retirement income, 3 households received public assistance and 70 households had other types of income.

In order to better understand the existing wage-earning realities within the Village of Amherst, "earnings" data was considered to be more informative. "Earnings" are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as the algebraic sum of wage or salary income and net income from self-employed, 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 Amherst area and Portage County overall. The Village of Amherst made great percentage strides in earnings and income between 1990 and 2000, but still lags slightly behind its neighbors and Portage County as a whole in actual dollars.

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
Village of Amherst	\$29,578	\$46,680	58%	\$27,007	\$57,083	111%	\$10,961	\$18,514	69%
Village of Nelsonville	\$24,613	\$55,066	124%	\$27,285	\$64,303	136%	\$9,665	\$19,708	104%
Village of Amherst Jct.	\$34,756	\$52,631	51%	\$34,590	\$60,498	75%	\$12,546	\$19,261	54%
Town of Amherst	\$34,883	\$54,644	57%	\$36,120	\$63,172	75%	\$11,387	\$19,751	73%
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

Table 1.7 of the Issues and Opportunities Chapter details changes in household income over the last 20 years, as reported in the U.S. Census. The 2000 Village of Amherst median household income (\$40,125) is slightly lower than that of the average Portage County rural village (\$40,146) and Portage County overall (\$43,487). Within the greater Amherst area, the Village of Amherst median household income is lower than the Village of Nelsonville (\$41,875), Amherst Junction (\$44,500) and Town of Amherst (\$50,435).

3. Percent in Labor Force and Unemployment

Table 6.2 below shows the number of residents 16 years and above living in the Village of Amherst, average rural village, Portage County and Wisconsin. Age sixteen is considered to be the lower threshold for being eligible for employment. The Village of Amherst has a slightly higher percentage of residents in the labor force (74.2%) as compared to the average rural village, Portage County and the State. According to the 2000 Census information, the Village had an unemployment rate of 5.4%, slightly higher than the rural village average (5.2%), and a half a point lower than Portage County overall.

Table 6.2: Employment Status by Percentage of Population 16 Years and Above (2000 Census)

	Village of Amherst	Rural Village Average	Portage County	State of Wisconsin
Population 16 Years and Over	752	274	53,135	4,157,030
Not in Labor Force	194 <i>25.8%</i>	81 <i>29.4%</i>	15,191 <i>28.6%</i>	1,284,926 <i>30.9%</i>
In Labor Force <i>Labor Participation Rate</i>	558 <i>74.2%</i>	194 <i>70.6%</i>	37,944 <i>71.4%</i>	2,872,104 <i>69.1%</i>
Labor Force Components				
Armed Forces <i>Percentage in Armed Forces</i>	0 <i>0%</i>	0 <i>0%</i>	12 <i>0.03%</i>	2,868 <i>0.1%</i>
Civilian Labor Force <i>Percentage in Civilian Labor Force</i>	558 <i>100.0%</i>	194 <i>100.0%</i>	37,932 <i>99.97%</i>	2,869,236 <i>99.9%</i>
Employed <i>% of Civilian Force</i>	528 <i>94.6%</i>	184 <i>94.8%</i>	35,677 <i>94.1%</i>	2,734,925 <i>95.3%</i>
Unemployed <i>% of Civilian Force</i>	30 <i>5.4%</i>	10 <i>5.2%</i>	2,255 <i>5.9%</i>	134,311 <i>4.7%</i>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. Rural Village Average = Almond, Amherst Junction, Junction City, Nelsonville, Rosholt

4. Type of Employment for Village Residents

Table 6.3 below provides information regarding the type of occupation that Village of Amherst residents are employed in. The Management/Professional category includes the largest number of employed residents, followed by Production, Transportation, and Material Moving and Sales and Office occupations. 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 Village were employed in, and is not a listing of the employment opportunities currently located in the Village.

Table 6.3: Amherst Village Resident Employment by Occupation

Occupation	1990		2000	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Management, Professional, and Related occupation	83	22.6%	160	30.3%
Service occupation	49	13.3%	69	13.1%
Sales and Office occupations	110	29.9%	121	22.9%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry occupations	13	3.5%	8	1.5%
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance occupations	13	3.5%	38	7.2%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving occupations	100	27.2%	132	25.0%
Total	368	100%	528	100%

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

5. Commuting

The majority of people from the Village of Amherst work outside of the Village. According to the Amherst responses to the 2001 Portage County Comprehensive Planning Survey (56 households), 38% of the Village respondents worked in the Stevens Point urban area, 38% worked in other areas of Portage County. Other destinations listed were Waupaca (12%) outside central Wisconsin (7%), Wisconsin Rapids (4%), and Marshfield (2%). The fact that the majority of the Amherst labor force works further from home is also supported by Census 2000 data, which lists the mean travel time to work for Village residents at 20.1 minutes, and identifies that less than 24% of employed Amherst residents work in Amherst (Census 2000 MCD-to-MCD Worker Flow File).

B. Economic Base Analysis

Appendix J lists all the businesses located within the Village of Amherst. As of 2004, there were over 50 businesses in the Village, from large industrial plants to small-scale retail and service establishments. The major employers within the Village are listed in Table 6.4 below.

Table 6.4: Village of Amherst Major Employers

Employer	Number of Employees		
	Full Time	Part Time	Total
Tomorrow River Schools	117	15	132
Amherst Family Foods	12	22	34
Blenker Construction	22	2	24
Tomorrow Valley Cooperative	13	6	19
Amherst Telephone Company	8	7	15
International Bank of Amherst	11	2	13
Amherst Veterinarian Clinic	3	3	6

Source: Village of Amherst, 2004

The value of commercial properties within the Village of Amherst has greatly increased over time. In 1980, Amherst's commercial properties were valued at \$1,769,000; by 2000 the value had risen to \$6,797,000. Table 6.5 below illustrates the change in percentage of total value over the 20-year period. Commercial value accounted for 17% of total value in 1980, 21% in 2000.

Table 6.5: Equalized Property Values for Village of Amherst

Type of Property	1980		1990		2000	
	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total	Value	% of Total
Residential	\$7,977,000	75%	\$10,041,000	67%	\$24,651,000	75%
Commercial	\$1,769,000	17%	\$3,225,000	22%	\$6,797,000	21%
Manufacturing	\$103,000	1%	\$145,000	1%	\$54,000	<1%
Agricultural	\$303,000	3%	\$251,000	2%	\$54,000	<1%
Swamp and Waste	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$3,000	<1%
Forest	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$4,000	<1%
Other	\$0	0%	\$0	0%	\$140,000	<1%
Personal Property	\$457,000	4%	\$1,259,000	8%	\$1,220,000	4%
Total Value	\$10,609,000		\$14,921,000		\$32,923,000	

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue Statistical Report of Property Valuations, 1980, 1990, 2000

In 1980, Amherst's manufacturing properties were valued at \$103,000; by 1990 the value had risen to \$145,000, but fell to \$54,000 by 2000. Manufacturing value accounted for 1% of total value in 1980, but fell to <1% in 2000. This change is in part explained by the reclassification of a large piece of equipment within the Business Park from real property to personal property.

1. Commercial Development

Commercial development is generally concentrated in two areas in Amherst: a) the Central Business District (CBD), and b) the Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B area. A third may emerge with the completion of the USH 10 Bypass.

a. The Central Business District

Amherst's CBD (generally, from the funeral home to John Street along Main Street and from the International Bank of Amherst parking lot to the Tomorrow River along Wilson Street) has historically served the primary retail, service and governmental functions of the community. The vitality and economic strength of the CBD has been strained over time by population trends, competition and lack of expansion area.

If working age adults move away and retired persons comprise a larger share of Amherst's population, consumer purchasing power in the local retail market decreases. Limited incomes restrict elderly adults from contributing significantly to the growth of the retail trade market, and this, in turn can affect the CBD.

For the last two decades commercial development in the Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B area has competed with, and detracted from, the convenience and economic importance of the CBD. If development that competes directly with the CBD continues in the Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B area and beyond, the CBD will suffer. The Village should encourage distinct commercial areas that compliment each other and not directly compete.

There is a lack of expansion area for the CBD, because the area surrounding the CBD is developed and mostly residential in character. According to the Village's Zoning Ordinance, the intent of the Central Business District is to encompass the downtown business area and encourage primarily retail uses with a variety of supporting uses. In addition, the downtown was intended to be developed and maintained as a specialized pedestrian oriented shopping and community center. The CBD originally served the agriculture sector and supporting retail trade and services. Recently, an infusion of small scale, professional office development has occurred in the CBD.

The vitality and economic strength of the CBD is also related to its appearance. Although the CBD is well defined by natural boundaries such as the railroad tracks, Mill Pond and Nelson Park, there is a need for stronger cohesiveness and identity. Specifically, there is a need to improve the overall appearance and unity (along with improving the structural integrity of a few buildings), which will enhance the Village's ability to retain and attract business to the CBD.

b. Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B Area

For a long period of time, commercial development in the Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B area consisted of a printing company, grocery store, gas station and restaurant, which were separated by the cemetery and a large tract of undeveloped land. As traffic counts on Cty Rd KK (formerly USH 10) grew, the desire to locate commercial business along the highway to attract that traffic also grew. As of early 2005, the Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B area

includes a significant concentration of commercial development in Amherst. Some of those businesses are highway oriented, while others are not. With the relocation of USH 10 to a by-pass west of its existing alignment, the Village foresees this commercial area remaining intact, although some businesses that are most reliant on highway traffic may seek other locations. With the anticipated emergence of additional commercial development related to the new by-pass (see Section c below), this area is seen as evolving into an “intermediate” place for commercial activity, servicing different needs (auto-oriented shopping where on-site parking is more important, and highway dependent or related business) than the CBD or new commercial area at the southern edge of the Village.

c. Southern Edge of the Village (Cty Rd A at the new USH 10 By-pass Interchange)

In 2004 the Village of Amherst annexed land located in the southeast quadrant of the new Cty Rd A/USH 10 By-pass interchange, and is in the process of establishing commercial and residential zoning on the property. This area, along with property adjacent to Washington and Lorry Streets, is anticipated to support both highway-dependent and local resident-oriented commercial development.

A leadership group to represent CBD interests has been formed, whose objectives are:

- Maintain the CBD as a vital commercial and business center of the community.
- Recommend CBD improvements.
- Address the needs of the CBD.
- Review proposals concerning the CBD.
- Create a program of municipal and civic cooperation.

The leadership group should consist of CBD businessmen and at least one Village government representative. The group should be large enough to assure adequate representation of the business community.

2. Industrial Development

Industrial development in Amherst has historically been located adjacent to the railroad tracks north of Wilson Street and oriented toward agriculture. There is a small amount of vacant land available for industrial development in this area. Other industrial development includes three sites located on the Mill Pond and one located on Wilson Street in the Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B area.

During 1984, Amherst annexed 112 acres of land in what is now the southeast quadrant of the Village. The Village purchased 26 acres of land just north of the annexed area and built a new wastewater treatment facility on the site. The Village’s Development Guide was updated in 1984 relative to this area and called for the development of an industrial park. In July of 1984, the Village Zoning Ordinance was amended and the land south of the railroad tracks and adjacent to USH 10 was zoned Industrial. For a period of years, no development occurred on this land. In 1996, the Village went through the process of creating Tax Increment Finance district (TID) Number 1 to encourage development within the Amherst Business Park (see Map 6.1). TID #1 started with 111 acres and a base value of \$274,500; 40 acres of land were added to TID #1 in 2003, for a total of 151 acres and a 2003 value of \$836,600. In 2003, the Village also created TID #2, adjacent northeast of TID #1. The base value of this approximately 82 acre TID was \$17,200. This Business Park will be the primary focus of industrial development throughout the planning period.

Map 6.1: Amherst Business Park

Section 6.3 Community Assessment: Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis

A. Categories or types of new businesses and/or industries that are desired by the community

- lumber yard
- pharmacy
- sport shop
- fitness center
- retail outlets
- service shops
- professional offices
- bakery
- craft/tourism

Secondary-type work for larger industries was seen as desired for the Business Park

- machining of industrial parts
- printing
- home construction spin-offs (cabinetry, lighting/electrical/plumbing, etc)

B. Community strengths for attracting/retaining businesses and industry

- location (close to many places)
- transportation (rail, highway access)
- award-winning utilities
- land available, with services
- complete community (nice old/new homes, good school district, multiple places of worship, places to shop, eat, recreate, etc.)

C. Community weakness for attracting/retaining businesses and industry

- location (close to TOO many places; too many other options)
- lack of long-term local business leadership
- lack of focus for business mix; need to attract niche stores/businesses

Section 6.4 Economic Development Issues/Trends

Commercial and industrial establishments provide a base for balanced economic growth by supplying necessary goods and services, offering employment opportunities and contributing to the tax base of the community. Historically, Amherst has served as a rural agricultural center with a majority of the commercial activity taking place within the Central Business District (CBD). Industry in Amherst has been oriented to the railroad that bisects the Village, and concentrated northwest of the CBD. Today, Amherst's economy is no longer dominated by agricultural services (although they still play an important role) and the CBD is no longer the only area of concentrated commercial activity.

The first major change was the relocation in 1968 of USH 10 from downtown Amherst to the western portion of the Village. In 1984, the Village annexed a parcel of land at the southeast edge of the Village for the development of an industrial park. Business activity shifted to the USH 10/Cty Rd B intersection on the west side of the Village, and during the 1990's the Amherst Business Park was created to serve as the focal point for new industry in Amherst. In 2004, the Village annexed property adjacent to the Business Park on the south side of USH 10 for the location of residential and commercial development. With completion of the second relocation of USH 10, these areas will see increased development pressure.

A. Commercial Development

To encourage local commercial growth it will be necessary to maintain and improve the appearance and quality of existing business districts, and effectively limit further development to areas that are compatible with and accessible to existing land uses. Three general areas of commercial development are recommended for the Village: the Central Business District, the Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B area, and the new Cty Rd A/USH 10 interchange.

1. Central Business District

Amherst's CBD is accessible to more people than any other point in the Village. Therefore, the CBD should remain a vital commercial and business center of the community. This is essential if Amherst is to improve its competitive economic position with surrounding municipalities and counties. Amherst should explore the feasibility of a program to revitalize the CBD in order to maintain its place as the commercial and business center of the community. A rehabilitation program should be designed to improve the general appearance of the area. The visual appearance of the downtown area should be an important factor in the overall strengthening of the CBD. Efforts to improve exteriors and interiors of retail establishments will be necessary to provide a more attractive shopping environment. The need for long term improvements such as accessibility, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and parking could also be addressed. If renovation plans are incorporated, they should include shopping center planning principles in order to establish an identifiable district with distinct boundaries and compact, concentrated development of compatible activities suitable for pedestrian access.

A street landscaping program promoting the addition of shade trees, sidewalk planters, street furniture and improvements to the roadways could also improve the atmosphere and add comfort and appeal to the CBD. The CBD should offer increased availability of merchandise and services. Prospective customers must be offered the type, variety and quality of goods and services consistent with their needs.

Orientation to pedestrian circulation leaves the CBD less able to accommodate extensive automobile usage. The Village does not perceive traffic circulation, including "through" truck traffic, as a problem through the planning period. If traffic congestion were to become a problem, the Village should explore the feasibility of a circulation system that removes "through" traffic from CBD streets. This would result in improved access for locally oriented traffic and improved safety for pedestrians. Amherst has an adopted sidewalk plan in place to address pedestrian issues (see Map 3.2 of the Transportation Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan). The re-location of USH 10 to a western by-pass, the re-alignment of Cty Rd A, and jurisdictional transfer of certain County roadways within the Village may serve to re-route commercial traffic.

On-street parking is provided free of charge for downtown business patrons, and is very important to downtown business owners. Public parking facilities are also available on the perimeter of the CBD which help function to separate vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Fringe area parking also facilitates better pedestrian access and interaction in the downtown district. Current public parking facilities are projected to be adequate through the planning period. See the Transportation Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan for a more complete discussion of current and future parking issues.

Much of the area surrounding the CBD is residential in character, which limits possible expansion. One area along Main Street, from Lincoln Street to the railroad tracks to the south, should be considered for expansion of the CBD. This area has been identified for medium density, residential development (see Map 8.2 of the Land Use Chapter of this Comprehensive Plan); however, equal potential exists for commercial and professional office development. The potential for this area to become part of the CBD is largely due to its location adjacent to the existing CBD and land uses, consisting of a bed & breakfast and home occupation, single, and two-family residences.

2. Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B Area

The Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B area provides a significant concentration of commercial development. This area should be utilized for additional commercial and office development. Commercial development along Cty Rd KK may serve major automotive establishments such as motels, service stations and restaurants, as well as other activities. The objective is to promote economic growth and improve the Village's retail trade position within the surrounding trade area.

Approximately 2.5 acres of vacant land remains available for development in this area. This acreage is insufficient to support the Village's short and long range needs for commercial land. The most suitable location for new commercial and office development is adjacent to the Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B area, along the northeast side of Cty Rd KK. This area, although located outside Village limits, has been identified for future commercial and residential development by the Village. In order to provide for future commercial development and address existing limitations in the Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B area, Amherst should undertake to:

- Develop an access plan for the northwest quadrant of the Village, including land outside the Village proposed for commercial development. The Village should work in conjunction with the Town of Amherst, Portage County Planning and Zoning Department and DOT. In order to facilitate commercial development, the access plan should include a frontage road along the northeast side of Cty Rd KK.
- Encourage annexation of the area proposed for commercial development so that sewer, water, and roadway facilities could be provided upon annexation.

3. Other Commercial Areas

a. Business Park Area

There are locations that may be appropriate for commercial and professional office development in the Amherst Business Park. The Village should finalize a development plan for the northern half of the Business Park. This plan could include locations for commercial and professional office development.

b. Cty Rd KK/Packer Avenue Area

The Cty Rd KK/Packer Avenue area includes lands within the Village that are located north of Packer Avenue and west of Cty Rd KK. Land use currently consists of a veterinary clinic, single-family residences, agricultural services, and commercial property. Currently, the County highway serves as a barrier to development in this area, with access controlled by the WisDOT. New development west of Cty Rd KK currently would have to obtain access from Packer Avenue, Fairgrounds Road, or a new street.

B. Industrial Development

Future industrial growth in Amherst will focus on development in the Amherst Business Park. Industrial development is encouraged for the following reasons:

- To provide jobs within the Village in order to stem out-migration, especially youth.
- To provide additional balance to Amherst's economy.
- To increase the Village's tax base.
- To increase income for Village residents by providing higher paying jobs.

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 are less than 10 sites listed by the WI DNR within the Village of Amherst as a contaminated site with open status. Please see attachments (Appendix K) for listings. Open status refers to a contaminated site in need of clean up or where cleanup is still underway. A complete listing of all brownfield sites can be obtained by contacting the DNR or through their website at: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/aw/rr/brrts/index.htm>

Section 6.6 Economic Development Programs

This section contains a brief description of the various programs that could potentially assist the Village of Amherst's businesses with loans and grants:

A. Village of Amherst

The Village of Amherst does not currently offer any incentive or assistance programs for economic development.

B. Portage County

1. Portage County Business Council

The Portage County Business Council provides confidential development services to businesses considering expansion or a location in Portage County. The Businesses Council provides a variety of services including but not limited to: site selection, labor market analysis, financial packaging services, liaison between governments and businesses and researching federal and state programs to leverage private dollars on economic development projects.

2. Revolving Loan Fund Programs

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

The municipalities in Portage County that have their own revolving loan programs are: the City of Stevens Point, Village of Plover, and the Village of Rosholt. These loan programs can only fund projects within their municipal boundaries.

3. Community Development Block Grant – Customized Labor Training

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.

4. Wisconsin Community Development Block Grant – Economic Development

Purpose: To provide resources to local governments to assist economic development projects that provides jobs to low-to-moderate income persons and expands 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 an existing Revolving Loan Fund.

5. Wisconsin Rural Economic Development Program

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.

C. Regional

1. North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The Regional Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) is intended to provide gap financing to qualified businesses. A gap can be defined as the difference between what a borrower and private lender have available and what is needed for a project to take place. Typically, these funds are long-term, have low down payments, and carry lower interest rates than traditional

private financing. RLF's do not compete with banks, but complement them and other programs in a total financial structure.

2. 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 businesses in eight central Wisconsin Counties, and offers several types of services including seminars, customized in-house training, and individual counseling. (715) 346-3838.

D. State

1. 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's pollution prevention specialists will assess hazardous waste systems, provide no-cost non-regulatory technical assistance, and identify potential waste reductions options.

2. The Wisconsin Department of Commerce

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce has a broad range of financial assistance programs to help communities with economic development. The federally funded Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program can be used for housing, economic development and public facilities improvements. The Community Development Block Grant Economic Development (CDB-ED) program was designed to assist businesses that will invest private funds and create jobs as they expand or relocate. Refer to the following link for additional financial programs: <http://commerce.wi.gov/MT/MT-COM-4200.html>

3. 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.

Section 6.7 Economic Development Conclusions

- A. The Village Plan Commission and Board take an active interest in promoting appropriate economic development, both within the Village limits and in surrounding areas.
- B. Village officials work to recognize and understand the unique challenges and advantages associated with each area of business development.
- C. Realize the importance of planning for new business growth as well as nurturing existing business enterprises.

Section 6.8 Economic Development Goals, Objectives and Policies

Amherst's advantageous central location, combined with the effective use of the Village's human and natural resources, will improve Village of Amherst's ability to capture existing income, provide greater employment opportunities for residents, including young people, and provide adequate and convenient goods and services.

A. Goal

To encourage and promote commercial and industrial development, in order to achieve balanced economic growth in Amherst.

B. Objectives

1. Encourage community support and leadership in coordinating and promoting commercial and industrial development.
2. Encourage commercial and industrial development that will reflect the effective use of the Village's human and natural resources.
3. Encourage commercial development in areas that are compatible with and accessible to existing urban activities.
4. Maintain and improve the appearance and quality of existing commercial businesses in the community.
5. Minimize the negative impacts of industrial activities on neighboring land uses.
6. Encourage industrial development where access to needed transportation is available and appropriate.

C. Policies

1. Encourage commercial and industrial development that will provide career opportunities for the Village's residents, especially young adults.
2. The location of new industry should be directed towards the Amherst Business Park.
3. In order to maintain strong, compact shopping districts, new commercial development should be directed toward the CBD or the Cty Rd KK/Cty Rd B area.
4. Main and Mill Streets should be maintained as attractive shopping corridors.
5. Encourage municipal and civic cooperation and work cooperatively with the Portage County Business Council and the Stevens Point/Plover Area Chamber of Commerce to attract and maintain industrial firms that are compatible with a residential community.