



Eastern District Innovative Grant Program

Calendar Year 2009 Application Form

Completed application form should not exceed (3) pages, using a minimum font size of Arial 11 point, retain form formatting, and no less than 1-inch margins. Submit completed application electronically to karen.smiley@ces.uwex.edu, and fax signature page (if electronic signature not available), by **April 9, 2009**.

Project must be completed by December 31, 2009, unless prior approval received for extended timeline.

1. **Project Title:** Building Capacity for Grassroots Economic Development Initiatives

2. **Funding Requested:** \$ 4,000

3. **Project Lead/Grant Applicant (Name & County):**
Claire Thompson, CRD Educator, UWEX Kewaunee County

4. **Signature:** _____
Claire Thompson

5. Project Description

a) Situation Statement

Kewaunee County is a rural, agricultural county with three small population centers: the City of Algoma, the City of Kewaunee, and the Villages of Luxemburg/Casco. Each center has less than 4,000 in population and a small downtown shopping district. In Luxemburg/Casco, shops primarily serve local residents. Algoma and Kewaunee, both located on the shores of Lake Michigan, have an influx of summer tourists that supplement local spending.

These communities are between 10-15 miles away from each other and each has its own Chamber of Commerce. Residents and businesses have tremendous pride in their hometowns, which has contributed to insular behaviors and attitudes especially in terms of shopping habits . . . residents of one community rarely go to another community to shop, but are more likely to go to regional shopping centers out of the County. As a result, approximately \$63 million in retail spending leakage is lost from Kewaunee County every year.

Visitors to Kewaunee County currently contribute nearly \$32 million to the local economy and are responsible for about 800 full-time jobs each year. Over the past twelve years however, Kewaunee County has lost the competition with other tourist destinations and subsequently on many community and economic development opportunities. As of 2006, Kewaunee County ranked dead last among all other Counties in the State of Wisconsin in terms of growth in tourism spending between 1994 and 2006. In short, Kewaunee County cannot afford this opportunity lost any longer.

These two trends, fewer locals shopping locally and declining tourism revenues, has spurred the need for a grassroots economic development initiative that captures a greater share of both local purchasing power and the tourism market. To address this, a new collaborative

partnership has been formed to advance the economic well-being of Kewaunee County through building the capacity of local businesses to appeal to locals and tourists alike.

The new partnership includes community organizations that have not traditionally worked together as a cohesive unit, and includes: the Algoma Chamber of Commerce, Community Improvement of Algoma, Kewaunee Chamber of Commerce, Kewaunee County Economic Development Corporation (KCEDC), Kewaunee County Promotion & Recreation, Luxemburg Chamber of Commerce, and UW-Extension. The efforts of the partnership fall squarely within Claire Thompson's UWEX Plan of Work which was based on an assessment of community needs.

Together, the partners have spearheaded two related initiatives, the Buy Local Initiative – which is designed to decrease economic leakages of locals shopping outside of the County, and the Visit Kewaunee County initiative – which will help raise Kewaunee County's profile as unique, affordable and family friendly place to come visit.

Combined, the Buy Local and Visit Kewaunee County initiatives have the following components:

- Business Capacity Building & Networking Resources - At monthly networking meetings business owners receive education, information and support on topics such as economic trends, trends in tourism and travel, small business growth opportunities, improving customer service, and marketing & advertising your business.
- Public Education & Marketing - Through the development of a Speakers Bureau, regular article contributions to the local newspaper, a youth educational outreach component and a consumer marketing campaign, locals and visitors alike will have a greater awareness of Kewaunee County's business and entertainment options, natural resources, ethnic and cultural heritage, and the full range of activities available to them.

On behalf of the partnership Claire Thompson is requesting \$4,000 to support the stipend of a part-time summer Intern for 2009, printing of educational materials developed for the project, and funds to help offset the cost of in-County travel incurred by the Intern. The summer intern would be an employee of the County and housed at UWEX Kewaunee County. This individual would report directly to the CRD Educator yet would be accountable also to the partnership.

Specific outputs of the Intern, working with Claire Thompson and appropriate partners, include the development of:

- Buy Local Speakers Bureau: a curriculum and materials to support volunteers, volunteer recruitment, training and matching to community organizations, and publicity and outreach to area community organizations.
- Research and fact sheet development on economic, business and marketing trends affecting Kewaunee County businesses.
- Relationships with area businesses to help advance participation in and support for the Buy Local and Visit Kewaunee County initiatives.
- Public Education and Marketing print and web-based promotional materials that support the goals of both initiatives.
- Documentation of the Buy Local Initiative processes, materials, evaluation and outcomes-to-date.

To date, the partners have raised over \$9,000 to support various aspects of these two initiatives. All funds raised to date have been designated, see the budget section. Any and all funds raised for these initiatives will be used as "matching" funds for a JEM grant application to be submitted in September, 2009. Although the Kewaunee County Economic Development

Corporation is the fiscal sponsor for funds raised to date, any funds received by the UWEX District Resource Management Grant would be shepherded by Kewaunee County.

Project Objectives/Expected Outcomes

The ultimate, long-term community impacts of these initiatives are to reduce economic leakages associated with locals' spending outside of the County and increase Kewaunee County's market share of tourism dollars, therefore improving economic vitality and community quality of life. Baseline data have been and will continue to be tracked each year as they become available from various State and Federal Sources by the CRD Educator.

The shorter and medium term outcomes include:

- Increased in-County business-to-business transactions
- Increased public awareness of business product and service offerings
- Improved sales at area retailers and service establishments
- More "heads in beds" at area lodging establishments
- More positive business climate.

All educational curricula, materials, process guidelines, and evaluation of the Buy Local and Visit Kewaunee County initiatives will be documented, packaged and shared with other UWEX professionals via web documents, at District Program In-services, and if accepted at either the CNRED Symposium or JCEP conference in 2010.

b) Project Timeline

The partnership and initiatives launched in spring, 2009. The intern will be hired for 13 weeks over the summer to work on the above stated outputs. Short term outcomes will be evaluated by December, 2009. Both initiatives will be sustained beyond the UWEX District Resource Grant funds. Long-term outcomes will be evaluated over the course of the next several years.

c) Evaluation Plan

Participating local businesses are currently receiving baseline surveys, and will receive follow-up surveys at the end of 2009. Community organizations will also be surveyed upon engaging the Speakers Bureau. Longer-term economic impacts will be tracked annually from State and National data sets. .

6. Detailed budget breakdown (specifying the amount and purpose of funds requested from District Resource Management funds, and clarifying the source and amounts from other funds):

Source : District Resource Management Funds \$4,000 total request
Use: Internship Stipend \$3250, Printed fact sheets, brochures, and other educational handouts \$500, Travel expenses (mileage): \$250

Source: Dominion Energy Foundation \$5,000, City of Kewaunee \$1500, Kewaunee County \$500, City of Algoma \$1500, Luxemburg Chamber \$500
Use: Website Development, Web optimization, Web advertising, print advertising, business and promotional directory, coupon books, educational and launch events.

The partnership will use these funds to leverage additional local fundraising and WI Department of Tourism State grant competitions.