



DCEDC HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EVENTS

The Economic Development Task Force first raised the concept of a public/private corporation to lead county economic development efforts in 1988. Appointed by the County Board of Supervisors, the Task Force was charged with researching our community's economic needs and making recommendations to deal with an economic crisis resulting from the loss of almost 2,000 shipbuilding jobs. The Task Force hosted Governor Thompson and his Cabinet at an Economic Summit meeting that focused the State's available resources on our needs. After several months of work, the Task Force published a final report. The keystone recommendation of the report was the need to create a full-time economic development program, organized as a not-for-profit corporation, governed by a private board of directors and funded by both the public and private sectors. The County Board approved that recommendation, which led to the founding of the Door County Economic Development Corporation as a non-stock, private corporation in September 1988. That started a new chapter in our community's history, where businesses, jobs and private investment were elevated to a new level of importance.

Below is a year-by-year listing of some of the community and corporation milestone achievements.

1989

- **Organization** - DCEDC approved as 501c(3) not-for-profit; first year public/private investments total \$92,000; Exec. Director hired and offices established at the Chamber.
- **Strategic Plan** - County's first Economic Development Strategic Plan/Work Program unveiled at luncheon with Governor Tommy Thompson.
- **Marketing** - New community economic development marketing materials developed including promotional video entitled "Door County - Your Peninsula of Opportunity."
- **Business Incentives** - New business incentive programs developed and implemented including WisJOBS, Development Zone and City Revolving Loan Fund programs.
- **Industrial Park** - Grants and public improvements totaling \$1.6 Million implemented in Sturgeon Bay Industrial Park.

1990

- **Industrial Park** - City acquires 16 acres to expand Park; Developed Park enhancement appearance program to include landscaping, signage and new private development standards.
- **Highway 57** - Strong support of local government and business leaders at public hearing results in approval of four-lane project between Green Bay and Dyckesville.

1991

- **Industrial Park** - City approves Industrial Park Tax Increment Finance District, its first TIF program, to finance \$3 Million improvement and expansion program.
- **Waterfront Redevelopment** - City creates Waterfront Redevelopment Authority to lead redevelopment program; consultant engaged to prepare plan.

1992

- **Business Incubator** - Consultant engaged to prepare Business Incubator Feasibility Study; study recommends 20,000 sf facility.
- **Marketing** - State grant underwrites initiative to upgrade County business marketing program; Includes research, marketing plan, new marketing materials.
- **Industrial Park** - TIF-financed storm sewer and street resurfacing project implemented.
- **Highway 57** - Delegation goes to Madison to seek Gov. Thompson's support of required engineering/environmental study of Dyckesville to STH 42 four-lane project.
- **Incentives** - County Revolving Loan Fund created and capitalized with \$500,000 State grant funds/Wagon Trail loan.
- **Waterfront Redevelopment** - Redevelopment Plan published and request for private development proposals disseminated.

1993

- **Defense Adjustment** - County Defense Adjustment Strategy prepared to guide community development efforts in response to defense cutbacks and hundreds of lost shipbuilding jobs; \$650,000 federal grant approved for retraining and employment services to displaced workers; Preliminary approval of \$2 Million grant for adjustment projects including: 1) R & D by Export Marketing Consortium; 2) Business Incubator; and 3) Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund Program; \$500,000 raised to match federal grant.
- **Business Incubator** - Architectural firm engaged to design incubator facility.
- **Marketing** - New business recruitment campaign entitled "Business By Nature" unveiled; program targets visitors to start/expand their business in the County.
- **Highway 57** - Five-person delegation from County sent to Washington, D.C. as part of WI Transportation Fly-In to seek additional federal highway funding for Highway 57.
- **Waterfront Redevelopment** - DCEDC contracted to staff program; preliminary development agreements reached with four developers.

1994

- **Export Consortium** - Hired international marketing consultant to develop Export Marketing Strategy for Consortium members.
- **Business Incubator** - Interim incubator operations begin in leased PBI warehouse, housing five new businesses.
- **Highway 57** - Work begins on Corridor Alignment and Environmental Impact Statement.
- **Industrial Park** - City adopts new incentive package to facilitate sale of industrial sites.

1995

- **PBI Shipyard** - Shipyard closes, displacing hundreds of jobs. DCEDC and City begin work with PBI to redevelop the site.
- **Labor Survey** - Employer Labor Survey identifies labor shortage for skilled and unskilled positions.
- **Business Incubator** - DCEDC acquires title to five-acre site and 12,000 sf warehouse building for development of incubator facility.
- **Planning Session** - Local and State business and government leaders gather at Economic Planning Session to discuss community adjustment efforts in light of shipbuilding job losses.
- **Waterfront Redevelopment** - City approves development agreements for private projects valued at \$25 Million and TIF bonding of \$13 Million for public costs.

1996

- **Business Incubator** - Construction begins on remodeling of 12,000 sf building and 20,000 sf addition for incubator facility; Governor Thompson set the cornerstone of new facility; Bay Electric Systems Service is first “graduate” of incubator.
- **Capital for The Day** - Governor Thompson moved State government to Door County for a day; addressed Economic Development Luncheon and toured local businesses.
- **Highway 57** - Large Door County delegation testifies at public hearing in support of enumeration of Dyckesville to STH 42 4-lane project; Project wins approval of Transportation Projects Commission.
- **Economic Development Grant** - \$750,000 State grant approved for City to lend funds to Palmer Johnson for major expansion and job creation.

1997

- **Export Consortium** - Six County manufacturing firms complete international marketing projects resulting in significantly increased export sales and 120 new jobs.
- **Business Incubator** - 200 supporters tour new D. C. Business Development Center at grand opening celebration; three new businesses “graduate.”
- **Industrial Park** - Sale of several industrial sites deplete City’s inventory of improved sites; new industrial subdivision planned to improve 35 additional acres for development.

- **Highway 57** - Legislature approves enumeration of Dyckesville to STH 42 4-lane project fatalities prompts organization of the Highway 57 Project Committee leading to highway safety improvements and pressure to accelerate completion schedule.
- **Waterfront Redevelopment** - West side projects completed; East side infrastructure projects under construction; State grant funds PBI Shipyard Redevelopment Study proposing re-use plan for 20-acre shipyard.
- **Incentives** - Federal grant capitalizes new DCEDC Revolving Loan Fund, which helps finance five business startup/expansion projects.
- **Airport** - County Board approves construction of new aircraft maintenance facility to enhance local airport services.

1998

- **Workforce Development** - New DCEDC Workforce Task Force created to address labor shortages.
- **Incubator** - Already home to 15 businesses, the facility is fully occupied.
- **Defense Adjustment** - Updated study completed; supports federal grant for 30-acre industrial park expansion and recapitalization of RLF and export marketing programs.

1999

- **Workforce Development** - Workforce development ranked top priority by Board. Subcommittees and action plan established. Strategies include workforce recruitment, business and education partnership, manufacturing training program, employee retention program and attainable housing development. Local manufacturers recruited displaced workers from southern Missouri. RLF loan approved for employee housing at Landmark Resort.
- **Defense Adjustment** - \$1.45 Million federal grant approved and matched by almost \$1 Million of local funds.
- **Organizational Development** - DCEDC developed new mission statement and strategic plan.

2000

- **Export Assistance** - Joined Northeast Wisconsin Export Consortium to offer international business consulting services in County. Six local firms participate.
- **Organizational Development** - New Economic Development Manager position created. DCEDC agrees to sponsor Door/Kewaunee Business & Education Partnership. Goal is to strengthen business and K-12 relationships and grow the local workforce.
- **Web Site** - New website launched www.doorcountybusiness.com.
- **Workforce Development** - Published report, "The Current Door County Employment Crisis." Report assesses needs and presents plans to address problem. Sponsored a two-day Employee Retention Workshop. Produced video highlighting local manufacturing job opportunities, proposed county zoning amendment to encourage onsite employee housing in commercial districts.

2001

- **Industrial Park** - 30-acre expansion project completed and three lots sold to new and expanding businesses.
- **Northeast Wisconsin Regional Economic Development Partnership** - (NEWREP), an 18 county regional partnership created to seek state technology zone designation.
- **Airport Expansion** - DCEDC completed an Airport Economic Impact Assessment survey as part of the Airport Runway Expansion Feasibility Study.
- **Technology Council** - DCEDC forms Tech Council to study telecommunications needs and develop a plan to improve.
- **Workforce Development** - Helped launch new web site, www.jobsindoorcounty.com to recruit more workers. Secured \$460,000, federal labor grant to help eight local manufacturers enhance skills of their employees.
- **Attainable Housing** - Secured \$600,000 WHEDA incentives funding to build four affordable homes.

2002

- **Entrepreneurial Training Program** - DCEDC and UW-Green Bay Small Business Development Center launched 12-session business planning course, now offered annually.
- **Financial Incentive** - Assessment concludes that Sturgeon Bay Development Zone program has awarded \$1.8 Million in state tax credits and assisted 43 businesses, generated \$29.4 Million in private investment and helped create 639 jobs.
- **RLF Program** - Assessment concludes that local RLF programs have approved 22 loans, totaling \$3.3 Million, generating \$15 Million in private investment and 363 jobs.
- **Industrial Park** - Assessment concludes that since 1989, \$1.8 Million secured to expand park, 16 lots sold to businesses that invested \$7.3 Million, 17 expansions worth \$20.2 Million have occurred. The value of the TIF District has increased 167% to \$26 Million since 1991.
- **Canal Property** - Worked with the Sturgeon Bay Utility Commission to develop a plan for use of this 369-acre parcel.
- **Technology Council** - Consultant prepared Telecommunications Infrastructure Assessment of Door County, which documents numerous infrastructure deficiencies.
- **Export Marketing** - Six local manufacturing firms complete 22 new export marketing initiatives utilizing \$167,000 in Federal Defense Adjustment Grant Funds.
- **Business Development** - \$150,000 County RLF loan approved for new Simon Creek Vineyard and Winery; project helps solidify this growing agriculturally based industry cluster in the County.

2003

- **Door County Legislative Days** - DCEDC lead the planning for the first-ever Legislative Days that brought 100 volunteer delegates to the State Capitol to share local issues and to seek assistance from state officials. A Legislative Agenda, including 5 issues, received very good response and support from the state.

- **Shipyard Cluster** - Received state grant to fund Sturgeon Bay Shipyard Cluster Master Plan, providing a blueprint for future growth of Palmer Johnson Yachts and Bay Shipbuilding Company.
- **Economic Development Adjustment Plan** - Following the closure of two manufacturers (electric motors and candles), DCEDC secured a state grant and established a steering committee to lead the creation of a plan to assess the local situation and to produce a strategy to help grow the economy.
- **Technology Council** - DCEDC commissioned a study entitled, "Technology Needs and Market Study." The study surveyed local business telecommunications needs and recommended actions to improve broadband services in the county.
- **Attainable Housing** - Surveyed local builders and developers to identify local zoning barriers preventing the development of additional attainable housing. Results used to recommend numerous changes to the zoning codes of the City of Sturgeon Bay; several zoning code changes approved by the City.

2004

- **Shipbuilding Cluster** - The Shipbuilding Cluster Plan identifies the potential investment of \$30 Million and the creation of 600 new jobs after implementation of the Phase I improvements, including new production space for Palmer Johnson Yachts and a new launch system for Bay Shipbuilding. The state commits \$9.2 Million Phase I implementation.
- **Technology Council** - Incumbent telecommunication vendor (SBC) and Charter Communications improve broadband services and redundancy to the county. DCEDC secured a \$75,000 state grant to fund a feasibility study for a countywide fiber optics to end premises (fttx) telecommunications network. Brilliant Cities, Inc. selected Door County as the initial community for their proposed ftx network.
- **Workforce Development** - Fifteen local employers provided training to almost 1,200 local workers as part of a \$460,000 Federal labor training grant program.
- **Attainable Housing** - County received a \$467,000 state grant to provide \$15,000, zero interest down payment loans to qualified first-time homebuyers.

2005

- **Legislative Days** - The second bi-annual Legislative Days event brought over 80 delegates to the State Capitol to advocate for Door County issues. The most significant accomplishment was securing funds for a new \$30 Million downtown Sturgeon Bay bridge.
- **Capitol for the Day** - Governor Doyle brought 15 members of his Cabinet to the county in order to meet with local government officials and business leaders regarding local issues.
- **Economic Development Adjustment Plan** - New comprehensive economic plan is released. Includes seven strategic recommendations and 75 action steps for implementation. The plan is a blueprint to guide the work of local government and the economic development organization.

2006

- **Entrepreneurial Services** - New Door County Inventors and Entrepreneurs (I&E) Club launched to provide learning and networking opportunities for new entrepreneurs.
- **Marketing Plan** - New marketing plan, web site and collateral materials are produced. Plan targets early retirees, visitors and seasonal residents as sources of new businesses for the county.
- **Shipbuilding Cluster** - Phase I implementation begins with Palmer Johnson Yachts' groundbreaking for expanded production facility, utilizing \$2 Million of state grant.
- **Workforce Development** - \$29,000, state grant to Door/Kewaunee Business & Education Partnership launches new initiatives to retain and encourage youth to join the local workforce.
- **Attainable Housing** - DCEDC encourages local employers to offer housing assistance to employees. Hatco Corporation is first to design and offer a program.
- **Business Retention** - New Executive Pulse on-line business retention software is secured and implemented to improve volunteer-based retention program.

2007

- **Legislative Days** – The third bi-annual Legislative Days event brought 85 delegates to Madison to advocate for Door County issues.
- **Business Incubator** – The Business Incubator celebrated its 10th anniversary with a public Open House event. The Incubator has 11 current tenants and has graduated 17 businesses.
- **Shipbuilding Cluster** – DCEDC facilitates a \$2 million loan/grant to Palmer Johnson Yachts for their significant expansion project involving three buildings..
- **Industrial Park** – DCEDC coordinates a Landscape Improvement Project in the STH 42/57 right of way along the Sturgeon Bay Industrial Park.
- **Workforce Development** – Wisconsin Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman presents training grants to Palmer Johnson Yachts and Bay Shipbuilding Company. DCEDC conducts wage and benefits survey of local manufacturing businesses.
- **Attainable Housing** – Completed implementation of Door County Housing Assistance Program that provided \$372,000 in financial aid to 20 first-time homebuyers.
- **Technology** – With DCEDC encouragement Charter Communications expands their network, including high speed internet to the Sturgeon Bay Industrial Park.