

THE MUNICIPALITY

August 2016, Vol. 111, No. 8

Your Voice. Your Wisconsin.

WISCONSIN'S SMALL CITIES & VILLAGES



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The State of Wisconsin's Cities and Villages

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Milwaukee is Moving Forward

Disruptive Innovation has Come Home

Stockholm: The League's Smallest Member Municipality

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ON THE COVER

Thanks to Linda and Jerry Deschane for the cover photo. They visited the Village of Stockholm in June on a Sunday and met with Village President Jacques Foust. The Village is the League's "smallest" member municipality.



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IT'S ALL CONNECTED



This month's issue of *The Municipality* is packed with great information for and about Wisconsin's small cities and villages. So, why, you may ask, do we include a story about the successes of our largest city, Milwaukee? Because, in Wisconsin, it's all connected. Our big cities and small villages, our environment, our economy, our road

system, everything. Milwaukee will not prosper to the degree that it should if Tomahawk isn't prosperous and vice versa. And Wisconsin needs them all.

All states share this large-small, urban-rural integration to some extent, but in Wisconsin it is magnified. Our population is in the mid-range of states, yet we have more Metropolitan Statistical Areas (city centers) than every state but California and Florida. We have more miles of paved roads than most other states. The historical origin of this high-quality road network was the need to provide milk trucks with safe and reliable routes to their city markets. Other businesses came to rely on those roads and built Wisconsin's economy into a web of big cities, medium cities, and small villages. That web is a unique asset if we recognize it and nurture it.

Here's just one example. Harley Davidson's corporate headquarters is in Milwaukee, but engines for the classic motorcycles are built in Menomonee Falls, new products are developed in Wauwatosa, and body parts are molded in Tomahawk. Milwaukee needs Tomahawk. Menomonee Falls needs Milwaukee. They all need a high-quality, well-maintained road system.

In this issue we debut the results of the First Annual State of Cities and Villages Report. The Report was conceived by the Urban Alliance as an annual checkup of the fiscal health of our communities. It was prepared by the well-known nonprofit research group the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance and funded by League of Wisconsin Municipalities Mutual Insurance. The results will provide you with some important things to think about with regard to the future of our cities and villages. Full copies of the report will be available later this month.

Happy reading, and please, stay connected.

Jerry Deschane
Executive Director

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THE STATE OF WISCONSIN'S CITIES AND VILLAGES

By: Todd A. Berry, President, Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance

Newton noticed that for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. He was referring to physical phenomena, but his observation applies to contemporary public finance in Wisconsin.

At the state level, recent decades have been a bipartisan blur of school tax “buydowns,” tax cuts and subsidies, ever-growing Medicaid spending, and recurring budget crises. The consequences for local municipalities have included freezes or cuts in state aid, tightening state restrictions on local levies, and mandated employee benefit changes.

To better understand the effect of these changes on our 601 cities and villages, the League of Municipalities turned to us: the researchers at the nonpartisan Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX). Together, these municipalities are home to 71% of Wisconsin's population; almost half of which lives in the largest 54 cities and villages, those with 15,000 or more residents.

Soon to be released, the study combines analysis of state and federal data (mostly from 2014) with results of a custom WISTAX survey of city and village officials (completed in May 2016).

REVENUE, SPENDING TRENDS

A key finding confirms what Wisconsinites have long known: We disproportionately rely on the property tax. Of \$4.8 billion in city-village revenue, 57% came from levies, and another 13% from local fees. Various state aids comprised 21% of the total.

A key finding confirms what Wisconsinites have long known: We disproportionately rely on the property tax.

The effects of state-imposed levy limits and state-aid retrenchment are evident. Property taxes in the cities and villages studied increased 5.2% from 2011 to 2014 (or about 1.7% per year). State aids fell a total of 7.5%. Adjusted for inflation, levies were down 0.8% and aids, 12.8%.

Put another way, total 2014 revenues were sufficient to fund only about 95% of municipal services provided in 2010. Act 10 helped close some of the gap, generating up to \$100 million in savings, but that amounted to only about 1.5% of total spending.

With revenues under pressure, spending priorities shifted. Public safety (31.4%) and streets (13.8%) were the two areas

that held their expenditure shares over 2009-14. General government administrative costs (9.1%) and spending for parks and related programs (8.2%) showed some erosion.

The most noticeable shift, however, was in debt service.

The most noticeable shift, however, was in debt service. From 14.4% of spending in 2000, it reached 19.6% in 2009 and peaked at 25.7% in 2012. By 2014, that percentage had retreated to 21.7%. During 2010-14, per capita debt costs were highest in cities and villages with 5,000 to 15,000 residents (\$1,744 to \$1,757) but grew fastest in those with populations of 30,000 to 50,000 (+10.5%).

INFRASTRUCTURE AND INVESTMENT

Expenditures can suggest municipal priorities but they don't necessarily lead to conclusions about service quality. On this score, information on street quality collected by state transportation officials is illustrative.

Last year, 68% of city and village streets were rated in “good” or better condition. However, the percentage is declining somewhat, as it stood at 72% in 2011. A closer look shows this trend is likely to continue. While 37% of municipal streets were rated “excellent” or “very good” in 2010, that percentage had fallen to 31% by 2015. Likewise, those rated “fair” or “poor” increased from 29% to 32%.

By community size, percentages rated “good” or better were lowest (63.1%) in the state's largest communities (50,000+) and highest (72.7%) in those with populations of 5,000 to 10,000.

If street quality is one indicator of how attractive a municipality is to future development, an even better one is overall new construction activity. Median rates of increase in municipal property values due to new construction declined steadily from 2.2% in 2005 to 0.4% by 2011. In more recent years these rates have begun to rise again, but they had still reached only 0.7% by 2014.

Much of that increase was due to commercial development. Though such properties accounted for only 27% of total city-village values, they represented over half of all new construction in 2014.

By municipal size, growth in new construction was 1.0% or more in cities and villages with populations above 5,000 but lagged in smaller communities. The median increase in the smallest communities (<1,000) was 0.3% in 2014, the same as in 2010.

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THE STATE OF WISCONSIN'S CITIES AND VILLAGES (CONTINUED)

LEAGUE SURVEY FINDINGS: FINANCES, PERSONNEL, SERVICE LEVELS

To dig deeper into current municipal conditions, WISTAX researchers, commissioned by the League, this spring e-mailed surveys to 497 municipal officials, with 148 (30%) responding. Response rates were highest (74%) in cities and villages with 15,000 or more people. Questions explored financial health, service and staff levels, community employment growth, and civic engagement.

In the larger municipalities where most Wisconsinites reside, job growth is occurring and civic engagement exists, at least to some degree.

With fiscal stress rising in recent years, local perceptions of financial health and service provision were of particular interest. Comparing 2015 with 2010, 41% of respondents rated the financial condition of their municipality “somewhat or much better,” while 30% provided a rating of “somewhat or much worse,” for a net positive difference of 11%. The remainder saw “no change.”

While net ratings were positive for communities of varying sizes, the populous (15,000+) municipalities were more upbeat (net +24%) than the smaller ones (+8%).

Financial problems, it was thought, might be reflected in staffing and benefit decisions. Overall, 27% of municipalities said they had more full-time equivalent employees in 2015 than 2014, while 16% said fewer – a net change of +11 points. Again, however, there was a noticeable difference between populous (+31) and less populous (+2) cities and villages.

In small communities, however, job trends are weak and civic health, anemic.

By specific employee type, officials reported more police (net +11 points), firefighters (+6), parks/rec. staff (+6), library staff (+2), and administrative/support staff (+5). The exception was public works (-1).

Health insurance has been a major cost factor for public and private employers alike. The survey of municipal officials showed a significant shift in employee cost-sharing since 2010. Then, they reported that 46% of employees were paying 5% or less of the total premium. By 2015, that share had dropped to 24%, while 57% replied that premium-sharing was 10% or more.

One of the most concrete measures of the “state” of cities and villages asked officials to assess changes in facility access and in service frequency. Between 2014 and 2015, there was no change in the facility hours, be they libraries (88%), city/village halls (92%), or parks (95%). Interestingly, increased library access was reported by 9% of respondents, decreased access by 4%, for a net change of +5 points. Net changes for city/village halls (+6%) and parks (+4%) were also small but positive.

Shifts in speed or frequency of key service offerings were not major but noticeable in several cases. Net improvements in response times were reported for police (+5 points, 10% faster vs. 5% slower) and fire (+10). However, service frequency declines were reported for lawn mowing (-3 points, 5% more – 8% less), snow plowing (-10 points), and street repair (-11). The latter corroborates earlier findings on street quality.

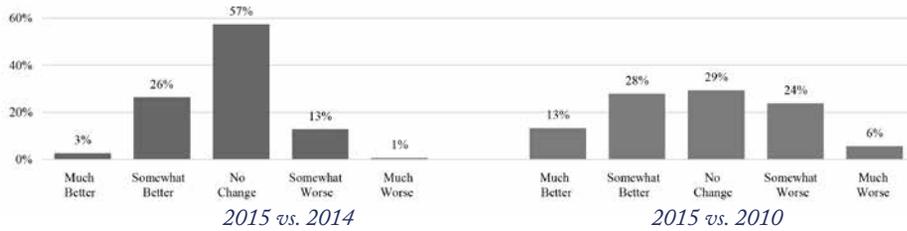
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This research report is the first annual checkup of Wisconsin's cities and villages. It was initiated by the League's Urban Alliance, the leaders of Wisconsin's larger cities. Its purpose is to develop a clear and factual picture of the state of Wisconsin cities and villages, and to present that picture to the public, legislators, and local leaders. It is the hope of the Urban Alliance that this annual fiscal report will drive rational and sustainable municipal and state policies in the future.

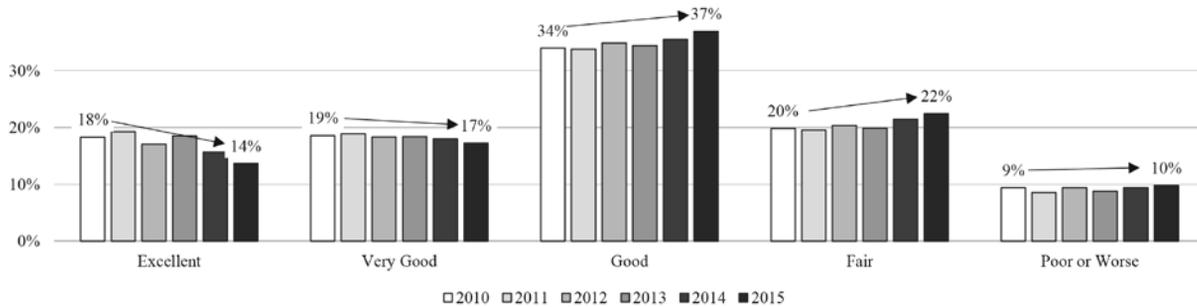
The Urban Alliance selected the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance to be our research partner in this effort because they have an unequalled track record of unbiased monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on a variety of state and local matters. We commend Taxpayers Alliance President Todd Berry and Research Director Dale Knapp for their expert work and advice.

The State of Wisconsin's Cities and Villages was made possible with the support of League of Wisconsin Municipal Mutual Insurance. League Mutual provides property, casualty, and liability insurance protection for the majority of Wisconsin cities and villages. League Mutual is a not-for-profit mutual insurance company created by cities and villages to serve only cities and villages.

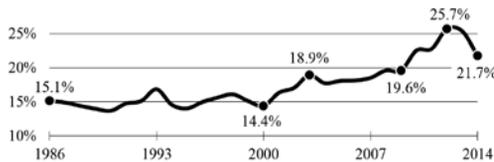
THE STATE OF WISCONSIN'S CITIES AND VILLAGES (CONTINUED)



Comparative Financial Condition of Cities and Villages Survey Question: How would you rate the financial health of your municipality in 2015 versus 2014 (left) and 2010 (right)



Changing Municipal Street Conditions



Debt Service Accounting for Growing Share of Spending, City & Village Debt Service as % of Total Spending, 1986-2014

WARNING SIGNS

Though survey findings were generally encouraging, two areas prompt concern, particularly for less populated cities and villages.

The first is employment growth. On the plus side, 53% of all municipal officials said community job numbers had grown in the past year compared to only 13% who said they had declined, a net difference of +40. However, net perceptions were far more positive for larger (15,000+) municipalities (+77) than smaller ones (+27).

This difference is even more pronounced when 2015 and 2010 are compared. Over the period, 69% of larger communities reported net job growth compared to only 19% for smaller ones. Indeed, 24% of “small-town” officials reported fewer total jobs last year than five years prior.

A second area of concern was civic engagement, specifically, the number of candidates for village boards and city councils over the past three years. Regardless of population, only 4% to 5% of municipalities reported two or more candidates for each board seat. In 52% of communities, there was one or no candidate for each seat. That percentage was 21% in the larger municipalities but a troubling 64% in those with fewer than 15,000 residents.

Taken together, survey results on employment trends and electoral choice suggest a Dickensian “tale-of-two-cities” situation. In the larger municipalities where most

Wisconsinites reside, job growth is occurring and civic engagement exists, at least to some degree. In small communities, however, job trends are weak and civic health, anemic.



About the Author:

Todd A. Berry has been President of the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance (WISTAX) since 1994. Now in its 83rd year, WISTAX is a privately funded and widely respected nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving government through public policy research and citizen education.

Prior to that, Todd combined private business experience with service in state and local Government including as Wisconsin's Assistant Secretary of Revenue. Berry has served on a number of gubernatorial, legislative, and agency commissions or task forces. He also served on the Dane County Board, the Jefferson School Board, and the CESA #2 Board of Control.

Berry holds bachelor's and doctoral degrees from UW-Madison, as well as master's degrees from Harvard University and the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business. Todd, and his wife, Margaret Lewis, have three grown children and reside in Middleton, Wisconsin, where their lives are run by a bossy Welsh Corgi.

GOVERNANCE IN WISCONSIN'S SMALLER MUNICIPALITIES

By: Michael R. Ford, Assistant Professor of Public Administration, UW-Oshkosh and Douglas M. Ihrke, Chair and Professor in the Department of Public and Nonprofit Administration, UW-Milwaukee

Last summer we began researching governance in Wisconsin municipalities with fewer than 10,000 residents. Why focus on these communities? First, a large majority of municipalities in Wisconsin are small (the average population of those under 10,000 is 1,460). While larger cities get much of the research attention, these municipalities are just as important to Wisconsin. Second, these places are facing unique challenges such as brain drain, financial stress, changing immigration and tourism patterns, and cuts to shared revenue. Third, Wisconsin's many small municipalities are unique pieces of the state's cultural fabric, and we wanted to better understand them. Lastly, governance of small communities is rarely studied in the academic literature.

The survey results give us an idea of who governs Wisconsin municipalities, what they care about, and how they think their city or village is performing.

So, with the support of the League of Municipalities, we designed and administered a governance survey completed by 132 city council and village board members serving 92 municipalities. (One-third of respondents were from cities, and two-thirds were from villages.) The survey results give us an idea of who governs Wisconsin municipalities, what they care about, and how they think their city or village is performing.

WHO SERVES?

In most ways the women and men serving as city council and village members in Wisconsin's smaller municipalities are a diverse lot. Sixty-nine percent of survey respondents were male,

compared to 31 percent female. The average council/board member is about 56 years old, and has served in his or her current position for about six years. An overwhelming majority of respondents, 95 percent, identify as white, while just under 50 percent report having a college degree or higher. Council/board members are ideologically diverse, with 38 percent identifying as conservative, 13 percent liberal, and 49 percent as moderate/non-partisan. Finally, three-fourths of all respondents state that they share political beliefs with at least some of their fellow board members.

WHAT DO COUNCIL/BOARD MEMBERS CARE ABOUT?

We asked council/board members to rate the importance of 14 different policy areas to their community. On average, respondents ranked the following as the five most important policy concerns in their community:

1. Economic development
2. Public works
3. Taxation
4. Land use/Zoning
5. Employee relations

We then asked council/board members to state the extent to which the same 14 different policy areas generated conflict on their boards. On average, respondents ranked the following as the most prominent sources of conflict on their boards:

1. Taxation
2. Economic development
3. Public works
4. Collective bargaining
5. Government administration

Overall, it is clear that councils/boards conflict over the very same things they feel are most important to their community, especially fiscal issues such as taxation and economic development.

A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

In an era of shrinking state financial support for local government, leaders are increasingly asked to leverage the power of the nonprofit sector in the provision of public goods. We suspect that using the nonprofit sector is comparatively more difficult outside of major metro areas due to the limited number of service providers. Nonetheless, we wanted to know the policy

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GOVERNANCE IN SMALLER MUNICIPALITIES (CONTINUED)

areas where leaders of smaller municipalities hoped the nonprofit sector could play a major role. The three top areas were:

1. Social welfare
2. Education
3. Economic development

When asked open-ended questions about ongoing challenges, council/board members consistently referred to declining state financial support and the resulting stress on their budgets. However, only about 10 percent anticipated going to referendum over the next five years. In addition, we found deep partisan divides over the ongoing impacts of 2011's Act 10, with conservatives believing the law helped the financial conditions of their municipalities, and liberals feeling it hurt employee morale. Finally, about 12 percent of respondents report a high level of administrative turnover over the past five years.

A deeper analysis shows that boards that engage in strategic planning, view the mayor or city manager as a governing partner, encourage community feedback, and minimize board conflict during the deliberation process are comparatively higher performing.

So what should you make of all this? The good news is that a good number of council/board members feel their governments are doing a good job serving their communities. However, when asked to rate government performance on a scale of 0 – 100 the average grade is 76.2, leaving room for improvement. A deeper analysis shows that boards that engage in strategic planning, view the mayor or city manager as a governing partner, encourage community feedback, and minimize board conflict during the deliberation process are comparatively higher performing. So, while it is clear that leaders in Wisconsin's smaller municipalities are feeling both the fiscal and political strain of the last five years, there are steps boards can take to increase performance. In the future, we are planning to extend this study to municipalities with more than 10,000 residents, conducting interviews of municipal leaders, and getting the thoughts of mayors, city managers, and department heads. So stay tuned.



About the Authors:

Michael R. Ford is an Assistant Professor of Public Administration at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. His research interests include public and nonprofit board governance, accountability, and education policy. He was named a 2016 Founders' Fellow by the American Society for Public

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Douglas M. Ihrke is Chair and Professor in the Department of Public and Nonprofit Administration at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) where he also serves as the Executive Director of the Helen Bader Institute (HBI) for Nonprofit Management. For 12 years he served as Director of the Master of Public

Administration (MPA) program at UWM and he currently serves on the board of the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC). He can be reached at dihrke@uwm.edu.

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WISCONSIN'S SMALL COMMUNITIES FACE CHALLENGES AND HAVE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES

By: Errin Welty, Downtown Development Account Manager, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

More than half of all municipalities in Wisconsin have 1,500 or fewer residents, and these communities are home to more than 10 percent of the state's residents. Despite their small size, these communities represent the entire spectrum of geographic and economic regions of the state and share many of the same goals and concerns of their larger neighbors. Not only do small communities need to provide citizens with basic services and infrastructure and a high quality of life, but they also need to do so with relatively smaller budgets and, in many cases, slow (or even no) growth in their population base. While many larger communities aspire to regional partnerships, small communities

...these communities represent the entire spectrum of geographic and economic regions of the state and share many of the same goals and concerns of their larger neighbors.

are accustomed to working with their neighbors, coordinating to provide enhanced public safety and education services, and often sharing a common workforce and business trade area.

Given demographic and economic trends in the state, small communities will face many challenges in coming years. These issues might be present in larger communities as well, but are often magnified in smaller municipalities. Such challenges include:

- **Developing leadership.** A recent study by the University of Minnesota Extension found that in many small Midwestern communities, maintaining a core level of government and civic organizations will require that one in 25 residents serve on one or more local boards or committees. However, achieving this in today's society will require not only that current leaders make an effort to reach out to specific groups and individuals to invite them to serve, but also that the current establishment be open to reinventing how meetings, activities, and processes occur in the future. Engaging the audience that will need to take the leadership baton handoff takes time and is not without hurdles, but is essential for sustaining small communities' strength.
- **Maintaining existing infrastructure.** We're all familiar with the reality of declining funding to repair and replace failing infrastructure such as roads and water treatment facilities. Everyone has heard the story of the town that opted to revert to dirt roads when budgets were insufficient to maintain roadways. However, an often overlooked corollary is the

deterioration of private infrastructure. Private property comprises the bulk of most municipal property tax revenues. However, in an aging rural community, it is not uncommon for 20 to 30 percent of personal income to come from transfer payments (Social Security, pensions, etc.). Individuals relying on transfer payments as a primary source of income are often unable to perform more than basic upkeep on their properties, meaning that when they ultimately leave that residence several decades later, substantial investment will be required to make the home or business attractive to next-generation buyers. A University of Minnesota Extension study of 2010 census data identified that upwards of three-quarters of owner-occupied homes in rural Midwestern communities are owned by householders age 45 or over, making it likely that such investment will be needed when these properties eventually change hands.

- **Business succession.** Small-town residents are often characterized by their entrepreneurial spirit. The high proportion of locally owned businesses in small communities is a primary characteristic of their charm and frequently enables the provision of goods and services that residents would otherwise lack. However, the aging of the baby boomer population means that 70 percent of businesses will be entering a transition phase in the next decade. A limited pool of up-and-coming entrepreneurs means that the successful transition of a locally owned business takes substantial pre-planning. Identifying an employee, relative, or next-generation entrepreneur well in advance makes the difference between business continuity with comfortable retirement for the owner versus declining services and property values.

While the challenges outlined above certainly point toward a need for strategic planning and policy-making on the part of municipalities, on the other hand, small communities also



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WISCONSIN'S SMALL COMMUNITIES (CONTINUED)

have unique opportunities to capitalize on including strong social networks and a streamlined political approval system. For instance, the previously mentioned history of successful partnerships, generally rural character and frequently lower per capita incomes make rural communities ideal recipients for many types of public and private grant funds. The following sample projects illustrate the range of options that exist for small communities that are able and willing to be proactive, creative, and committed to the future of their community.

• **Rural Arts Road Trip.** Recognizing the economic potential for tourism but lacking a hospitality hub to retain overnight visitors, seven communities in Calumet County banded together to create this three-day event that invites visitors to experience rural arts, scenic roads, small-town charm, and fall color. More than 21 businesses and destinations are included in the self-guided tour, providing critical mass to attract visitors. The program received a \$16,000 Joint Effort Marketing Grant from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism in its first year and \$11,000 in its second year for marketing and promotion of the event and participating businesses.

• **Cardinal Manufacturing Initiative.** The Eleva-Strum School District serves eight western Wisconsin communities. Recognizing a need for workforce talent development and a supply chain for local businesses, this vocational manufacturing program transformed itself into a self-sustaining business operation. Run and managed by students, this program has generated upwards of \$150,000 in annual profits. The innovative program promises real-world skills and employment options, creating strong demand growth since its inception in 2007, and is now admitting 25 incoming juniors annually.

• **Tinker's Bluff Subdivision.** In an effort to create opportunities for local employees and family households to remain and relocate in the community, and unable to entice developers to take a risk on a speculative development, the City of Hillsboro took the initiative in creating this 60-lot residential development. Priced at \$5,000 per lot including utilities, the subdivision has provided much-needed housing options, and two-thirds of the original lots have sold to individual buyers. The development was successful in allowing existing regional residents to upgrade to larger homes while remaining within the community, which proved

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WISCONSIN'S SMALL COMMUNITIES (CONTINUED)



especially attractive for professional families and retirees. This innovative approach provided options to counter a trend toward moving out of town to build new homes, while also sustaining the city's tax base, customer spending, and citizen engagement from long-term residents. The average value of homes built in the new development is more than double the home price elsewhere in the city.

As is evident in both the opportunities and challenges presented here, successful small communities of the future will need to focus on more than traditional services to survive and thrive. Developing successful local and regional partnerships to support, educate, and assist residents, businesses, and organizations to transition to a new model will take patience and dedication from a wide range of leadership. Fortunately, communities are not alone in this endeavor, and there are many opportunities to learn directly from one another, form local partnerships, and share resources. One such opportunity is through the Small Town Forum series of regional workshops, started in 2011 by a partnership of statewide organizations that regularly work with these communities, including Wisconsin Main Street (now at the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wisconsin Rural Partners, UW-Extension, and the Wisconsin Downtown Action Council.

The 2016 theme of the forums is entrepreneurship. Each forum will feature a local success story and highlight an entrepreneurial effort that illustrates creative strategies local businesses have undertaken to be successful despite a small local population. Anyone with interest in small community issues is welcome to join us at any of the four regional sessions. Registration is available at www.wisconsindowntown.org/small-town-forum and the cost is only \$20, including lunch. This year's dates and locations include:

- Phelps (Aug. 31)
- La Farge (Sept. 7)
- Eagle (Sept. 14)
- Shell Lake (Sept. 20)

We'll see you there!

**About the Author:**

Errin Welty has been involved in downtown development for much of her career, starting as a marketing coordinator for the Saint Cloud Downtown Council. From there, she spent five years at the Downtown Denver Partnership, was a founding member of Wheat Ridge 2020, and went on to manage the marketing and research arm of a commercial brokerage firm. Upon returning to Wisconsin, she pursued a career in economic development consulting and is currently employed within the Wisconsin Main Street program at the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. Errin also serves on the Verona Community Development Authority, Verona Area School Board Foundation, and is on the Board of Wisconsin Rural Partners. Errin has an undergraduate degree in Community Development from St. Cloud State University and a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Colorado at Denver. She can be reached at errin.welty@wedc.org

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SOUTHWEST PARTNERS: A NEW KIND OF LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

By: Pastor Mike Breininger, President and Founder, Southwest Partners

Southwest Partners has been a name often mentioned in the newspapers, radio, and social media over the past few years in the Greater Richland County region. So who is Southwest Partners? What do they do? Why do they exist?

Southwest Partners (SWP) is as much a concept as it is an organization. The concept is that people and associations in a community or area are able to come together, find positive ways to create exceptional places to live, and then act on their ideas. The thinking is that most communities need to have a positive and forward thinking vision of what they can do. This takes visionary and task driven people but mostly it takes people who want to make a difference in a positive way for themselves and those who live in their community. Sometimes these changes require cultural shifts in terms of people becoming excited about creating opportunities that did not seem possible. Sometimes those cultural shifts are changing perceptions from a place that does not get much done and does not change to a place that is a living organism that is growing and developing as people of the area engage in roles of leadership and service. At times this cultural shift can be difficult and create tension for people since change always has elements of uncertainty. Others embrace the change and look forward to the new life emerging.

The concept is that people and associations in a community or area are able to come together, find positive ways to create exceptional places to live, and then act on their ideas.

Out of the motivation of wanting to make communities great places to live and work, Southwest Partners was born as a civic community building organization with a mission of **creating a healthy forward thinking culture for attracting, retaining, and nurturing people and their dreams in our region**. Some people may be skeptical because they have heard about plans, dreams, and vision in the past but had not seen anything substantial come of it. That is why Southwest Partners adopted a four-stage process for everything we do. First, we build intentional relationships with people in the community and with organizations and associations so that we have the relational capital to move ahead when we need to act. Second, we conduct research about what assets we have in terms of people and resources and we hear from people about what they

... mission of, creating a healthy forward thinking culture for attracting, retaining, and nurturing people and their dreams in our region.

want to see happen in our area. Third, we take action to create what has critical mass to move forward. Finally, we review and reflect on what we have done to see if we have done it correctly, what we could do better, and who else we may need to have as part of our team.

We are creating a way of thinking about where we live and what we want that is positive and attractive to intergenerational people. Dale Bender, the Co-Chair of the SWP Executive Team calls SWP “the agent of bringing our wishes to reality.” SWP Executive Team member and Co-Chair of the Career Educational Cooperative, Becky Dahl, talks about the enriching relationships she has built having given her “renewed hope and excitement about what we can do for ourselves and the generations to follow.” Another SWP Executive Team Member, Mick Cosgrove, reflects on his family being eight generations deep in the Richland County area and how he wants to leave a better place for his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Since Southwest Partners began it has transitioned from an idea to a force of action. Our first action was the creation of the Career Education Cooperative (CEC). The cooperative is a partnership between schools, businesses, the community, higher education, the State of Wisconsin, and educational service organizations such as Southwestern Technical College and UW-Richland. The CEC creates career pathway opportunities for high school students so they can experience college classroom courses, on-the-job training through youth apprenticeships with area businesses, and mentoring in life and job skills. The main focus of the CEC is to build relationships with young people who may choose to stay in their home community to live and work, or who may return to their home community in the future after living elsewhere.

The second action for SWP was to partner with the City of Richland Center and many sports enthusiasts in the area to create the Pine River Trails and Silent Sports Project. This is an effort to give people opportunities in the Greater Richland County area to enjoy quality canoeing, kayaking, tubing,

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SOUTHWEST PARTNERS (CONTINUED)

The second action for SWP was to partner with the City of Richland Center and many sports enthusiasts in the area to create the Pine River Trails and Silent Sports Project.

hiking, biking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and camping here at home. SWP is the community organization that sponsored the grant application for this large project and then went about fundraising the additional \$50,000 needed to make these silent sports opportunities a reality. Construction is underway and expected to be nearly complete by August 2016.

The action that SWP is working on now is called "Safe Routes"- a plan to develop walking and biking access to schools and businesses. This partnership includes the City of Richland Center, Richland County Government, businesses, schools, and many community members. The Safe Routes and alternative transportation will become a reality in 2017-2018 with support of the community and the hope of obtaining some grant monies. Even if grant monies do not become a reality, the safe routes plan developed by Southwest Partners will put the project in the hands of the community to raise funds and create what we value.

Some of the future plans for SWP include: broadband expansion to underserved and unserved areas in the region, middle income housing, the rebuilding and restructuring of the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development, and entrepreneurial incubation especially focused on young entrepreneurs. For each action taken by SWP there must first be the building of relationships with individuals and organizations that desire to see the same things happen. Then

we work together to research and create a plan of action. Once we have taken the action, we put in place a means of maintaining what we have accomplished and then we evaluate how well we did with our efforts.

SWP is a citizen led and organized group that has incorporated and is seeking an IRS 501(C)(3) tax-exempt status. We have no paid staff but many passionate leaders who are committed to making positive changes. The efforts of SWP have included community building work in Richland, Grant, Vernon, and Sauk Counties. People are rising up to create communities of excellence by doing it themselves. Everyone has a chance to become part of this movement because it is about people, relationships, organizations, and community.

SWP is on the web at southwestpartners.org. Our email address is swpartners15@gmail.com and we have a Facebook page at Southwest Partners. Come and join the adventure.



About the Author:

Mike Breininger was raised on a dairy farm in southern Wisconsin and has been married to his wife, Christy, for 36 years. He is the father of 16 children; seven biological children and nine special needs adopted children. Mike is a former UW-Madison wrestler and was a businessman

in banking and real estate before becoming a pastor. Pastor Mike Breininger has been the senior pastor of Richland Center Fellowship, a non-denominational evangelical church for the past 28 years. Pastor Mike has founded three homeless shelters and oversees an effort in the Richland Middle School that partners mentor families with families in need. He is also the President and founder of Southwest Partners, a community building group that seeks to create cultural shifts that benefit communities in southwest Wisconsin. He is an author of two books and teaches internationally with Youth With A Mission. He can be reached at mikeb@mwt.net



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MILWAUKEE IS MOVING FORWARD

By: Evan Goyke, Wisconsin State Representative

During much of 2015-16 I worked on the publication and distribution of what I titled *Moving Milwaukee Forward*, a compilation of positive data and trends in Milwaukee. The publication was produced on behalf of the State Legislative Democrats representing Milwaukee, a delegation of 15 state legislators that I chair.

Taking *Moving Milwaukee Forward* with me to meetings with local leaders throughout the state was an uplifting, educational experience. My goal was to educate non-Milwaukeeans about the great things happening in my city. The result was maybe a little of that, but I ended up learning much more than I taught.

All Wisconsin communities are really trying to do the same thing: attract and retain human capital. In this way, Milwaukee is a state leader. The resurgence and growth of our downtown is amazing.

All Wisconsin communities are really trying to do the same thing: attract and retain human capital. In this way, Milwaukee is a state leader. The resurgence and growth of our downtown is amazing. Our struggle continues to be the successful connection of downtown growth to the stabilization of neighborhoods beyond. Milwaukee has recently increased efforts to ensure downtown projects benefit non-downtown neighborhoods. This is a great step in the right direction.

Visiting a dozen cities throughout Wisconsin, downtown or main street revitalization is happening everywhere. Eau Claire, for example, with a population of less than 70,000, is a little less than 10 times smaller than Milwaukee. When I was given a walking tour of downtown Eau Claire, I saw many of the same ideas and amenities that have grown in Milwaukee. The recognition that large portions of the baby boomer and millennial generations are seeking similar urban environments has led both Eau Claire and Milwaukee to invest in downtown infrastructure. Efforts to connect the future Confluence Arts Center to developing neighborhoods near downtown reminds me of Milwaukee's Third Ward and Fifth Ward neighborhoods. Demanding walkable and bikable infrastructure, both Eau Claire and Milwaukee are transforming old infrastructure as fast as they can.

To transform their dated infrastructure, Wisconsin cities share a similar limitation. What is the one major economic development tool available to local governments in Wisconsin? Tax Incremental Financing.

The history of Wisconsin's TIF or TID law illustrates a nearly annual effort to make a statewide law fit or benefit a local municipality. Expansions and contractions of TIF law have been debated over the years, but to me, one takeaway is clear. Local units of government in Wisconsin lack non-TIF, diverse economic development tools.

I'm not suggesting any specific changes to Wisconsin's TIF law in this article, but rather share my observation from local leaders throughout Wisconsin that State government can and should do more to empower local units of government to promote their locally built environment and local economy.

While Wisconsin has created the ability to form a multi-jurisdictional TIF, there is too often a competition between neighboring communities for development, with the use of TIF dollars as the major incentive. What results is a bidding war between municipalities within the same region. This is inefficient. An economic development tool that better promotes an entire region or at least prevents municipalities being pitted against one another is needed. Pairing with better regional development would be additional state resources for the infrastructure improvements mentioned above.

We are competing nationally to attract and retain our talent. We need to make sure our local governments have the necessary tools and flexibility to respond to the changing demand. Milwaukee is a shining example of what we can achieve at the local level. I believe state government can and should act to help in new and creative ways. I stand ready to help continue this conversation and welcome any feedback.

A copy of the *Moving Milwaukee Forward* publication may be viewed electronically at: <http://bit.ly/MovingMKEForward>



About the Author

(From legis.wisconsin.gov)

Born Neenah, November 24, 1982; single. Graduate Edgewood H.S. (Madison) 2001; B.A. political science St. John's U. (Minnesota) 2005; J.D. Marquette U. Law School 2009. Attorney. Former state public defender. Member: St. Michael's/St. Rose

of Lima Catholic Church; American Federation of Teachers Local 4822; ACLU; NAACP; State Bar of Wisconsin; Milwaukee Young Lawyers Assn. (fmr. bd. mbr.); Historic Concordia Neighborhood Assn.; Eagle Scout, Boy Scouts of America; Progressive Community Health Center (bd. mbr). Elected to Assembly 2012; reelected 2014. Rep. Goyke can be contacted at Rep.Goyke@legis.wisconsin.gov.

DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION HAS COME HOME

By: Mary Kluz, Community Development Outreach Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Extension Broadband and E-Commerce Education Center

John is worried that his larger ad in the Yellow Pages is not drawing customers to his small business on Main Street, even though he added a link to a bare bones website. Kaitlyn is relieved her freshman year in high school is drawing to a close; it has been such a hassle to try to find a ride to the library or McDonald's from her rural residence so she can do her homework. Ruth is disappointed that she can't go home after a recent cardiac event, but her doctor won't allow it unless he can monitor her pacemaker remotely.

These are very different perspectives, but what unites them? The access to and use of high speed internet technology would improve life for each of these people. Widespread access to high speed internet, sometimes referred to as broadband, is a *disruptive innovation*, a term coined by Harvard Professor Clayton Christensen in the 1990s to describe a new method or device that upends existing markets. Broadband has disrupted formerly established ways of doing things in nearly all aspects of our lives.

These small-town neighbors have new challenges—and new opportunities. John is not attracting younger customers who have never heard of the Yellow Pages. His small business has the opportunity to bring more people into its storefront as well as to expand its customer base online—like Carr Valley Cheese, which has more than tripled their business with online sales. A recent study¹ conducted by SCORE found that 97 percent of consumers search online for products and services, yet only 51 percent of small businesses have a website. Additionally, only 1 in 10 small businesses have figured out how to use social media or online advertising to market their product. The potential for economic development is multiplied by adopting online practices.

Kaitlyn's family can't afford home internet service, but her school helps her connect with learning from around the globe. A recent study² by the Family Online Safety Institute, My College Options, and the Hispanic Heritage Foundation, confirmed that nearly 50 percent of American students say they have been unable to complete a homework assignment because they didn't have access to the internet or a computer. Furthermore, 42 percent of students say they received a lower grade on an assignment due to lack of broadband access (<http://neatoday.org/wo16/04/20/the-homework-gap/>).

Ruth may still get to return to her home, if she can get internet access there for her pacemaker to send data to the clinic, something not possible just a few years ago. The Internet of Things (IoT) brings us smart detection devices, smart medication pillboxes, motion-activated monitoring and reminders, personal emergency response systems, and many other assistive technologies operated with remote control devices.

WORKING WITHIN THE SYSTEM

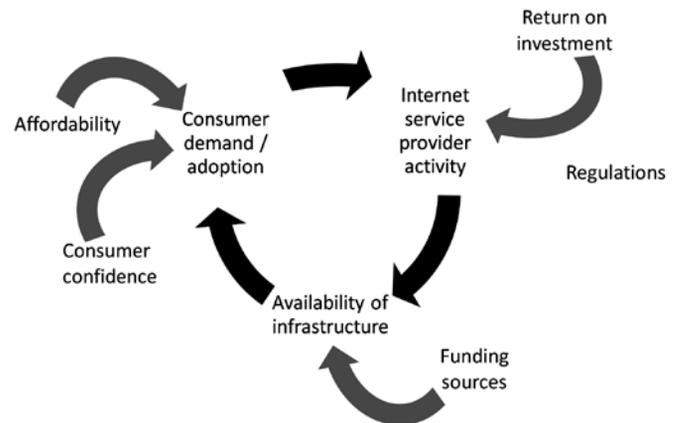


Figure 1: An interaction of factors affecting broadband development.

What part can local elected officials and local government play? Broadband development is a function of an interplay of factors, and learning more about the system can help leaders make informed decisions about the role they are willing to take on.

The complicated business of getting useful internet service to customers is boiled down to an interaction of a few factors illustrated in Figure 1. At the core, internet service provider activity results in a certain level of available infrastructure. Customers make use of that infrastructure, paying for subscriptions, which encourages more provider activity.

Different dynamics work on each of these core factors. Internet service providers are influenced by the regulatory environment, as well as their return on investment. Infrastructure availability is affected by sources of funding and prior investments. Cost, skill level, and online security affect how consumers choose to participate.

There are layers of players, an indicator of a complicated system. At the national level, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is the primary authority for communications law, regulation, and technological innovation. The FCC sets the definition for high-speed internet, currently at 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload, and oversees funding streams that affect telecommunications, such as the Connect America Fund.

The National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), within the US Department of

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DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION (CONTINUED)

Commerce, advises the President on telecommunications and information policy issues. The NTIA features initiatives on digital literacy, providing resources at the web portal www.digitalliteracy.gov, as well as the BroadbandUSA program, supporting broadband deployment. BroadbandUSA released a Guide to Federal Funding of Broadband Projects in September of 2015 (http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/files/broadband_fed_funding_guide.pdf).

At the state level, the legislature makes statutory and budget decisions which affect the state system. Chapters 196 and 197 of the Wisconsin Statutes regulate public utilities and municipal acquisition of utilities, some of which address telecommunications and broadband. Wisconsin

Statute §66.0422 regulates local government resolutions and ordinances to provide video, telecommunications, or broadband services directly or indirectly to the public.

The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW) is the agency home of the State Broadband Office (SBO). In 2009, the governor designated the PSCW as the Wisconsin entity eligible to receive a federal mapping grant under the NTIA's State Broadband Data and Development Grant Program (<http://www.link.wisconsin.gov/about-link-wisconsin>).

The PSCW created the SBO, with the goal of working with stakeholders to build partnerships with providers and consumers to enhance broadband across the state. The SBO also administers broadband improvement funding through the annual Broadband Expansion Grant Program. Applications for the most recent round were due in June 2016. In the past three years, 25 grant awards totaled nearly \$2.5 million. More information regarding the grant program can be found at <http://www.link.wisconsin.gov/funding>. Maps showing internet access speeds reported by providers and locations of past grant awardees are available at the LinkWisconsin website <http://www.link.wisconsin.gov/broadband-maps>

TAKING ACTION LOCALLY

People are asking, how can we make that loop turn a little faster? Internet service needs to be available and people need to know how and why they should use it. This is the “magic combination” that will enable broadband to have the largest impact, and people around the state are taking action in a variety of ways to accelerate broadband development.

Step one is raising awareness and increasing the sense of urgency around the issue. Some local governments have used educational sessions with their boards or councils to learn more about what is at risk if they are left behind. Sauk County Board Chairman Marty Krueger recently stated, “Having broadband doesn’t guarantee that you’re going to have economic development, but if you don’t have broadband, it pretty much guarantees you’re not going to have economic development.”

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DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION (CONTINUED)

At this early stage, some communities choose to survey residents and businesses to gather baseline data. Surveying efforts have been undertaken at the municipal and county levels.

The second step a number of governmental bodies have taken is to form a committee or coalition to guide community action around broadband. Committees are often comprised of local officials, business leaders, educators, and interested citizens. Oneida County tasked their economic development corporation with tracking and supporting broadband development. Their broadband committee has coordinated efforts across sectors and received a PSC grant award in 2014.

Communities have been using planning processes to formulate a vision of success around broadband, either as a topically focused process or as part of a broader planning process, such as comprehensive planning. The City of Ashland included objectives addressing broadband and incorporated results of a community survey in their comprehensive plan amendment of 2012.

Enabling action toward a vision also entails removing barriers that may stand in the way. As an example, the Sauk Prairie Comprehensive Plan covers the Village of Prairie du Sac, Village of Sauk City, and Town of Prairie du Sac. Amended in 2013, their plan seeks policies to promote high-tech wireless and fiber optic infrastructure in the area. In addition to development of a Technology Master Plan, they will review and revise land use ordinances to support broadband development. Some communities are proactively laying conduit during road construction to facilitate upgrades of telecommunications infrastructure. Others are making their own investments in infrastructure.

Short-term wins help assure people that their decisions and actions are benefiting the community. Doable, measureable improvement builds momentum, especially if progress is communicated and celebrated. Internet adoption is an avenue that yields numerous benefits for individuals, families, and businesses; digital literacy programs can boost demand. Private internet service providers are more likely to invest in areas that demonstrate high demand for service. Some local governments have invested in programs focused on adoption, through libraries, community centers, and at events such as technology fairs. Pilot programs in communities around the state are featured in a series of videos available online at <https://www.youtube.com/user/WIBroadband1>

Building on a community development approach to broadband, the UW-Extension Broadband and E-Commerce Education Center has published Broadband Policies and Regulations, describing more examples of what communities in Wisconsin and across the country are doing to encourage broadband development. The publication is available at <http://broadband.uwex.edu/resources/policy/>

¹ <https://www.score.org/resource/infographic-customer-friendly-websites>

² <https://www.fosi.org/events/taking-pulse-high-school-student-experiences/>

**About the Author**

Mary Kluz is a Community Development Outreach Specialist with the University of Wisconsin-Extension Broadband and E-Commerce Education Center. Mary's work at the center focuses on community engagement around broadband. A part of Cooperative Extension, the Broadband and E-Commerce Education Center engages, educates, and trains to help Wisconsin compete globally. Mary can be reached at mary.kluz@ces.uwex.edu

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STOCKHOLM: THE LEAGUE'S SMALLEST MEMBER MUNICIPALITY

By: Jerry Deschane, Executive Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities

The tiny Village of Stockholm has endured by understanding its unique character and place in Wisconsin. With an official U.S. Census population of 66 and a land area of 0.94 square miles, Stockholm is the smallest member of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities and the second smallest village in Wisconsin. Unofficially, Village President Jacque Foust estimates there are 70 “full-time residents, with another 70 or so who live here on weekends.” And they love their unique community.

Unofficially, Village President Jacque Foust estimates there are 70 “full-time residents, with another 70 or so who live here on weekends.” And they love their unique community.

The first wave of residents arrived from Sweden in 1851. They saw beautiful Lake Pepin and the Mississippi River to the west and land for farming to the east. The village’s population swelled to 280 by the end of the 19th Century with farmers, clambers, and shopkeepers, but then gradually declined.



Foust describes himself as a typical Stockholm resident. “About 20 years ago, we stopped here to visit. I bought a T-shirt and a house and called it a day.” Today, Stockholm is an art community, with artisans in disciplines from baking to writing to performance art. This current chapter of the Village’s saga began in the 1960s as textile artists from Minneapolis found Stockholm’s beauty, serenity, and proximity to the Twin Cities to their liking. Today, several national award-winning authors, wood carvers, potters, and painters live in the area. Stockholm also has a performing arts center called the Widespot, housed

The village’s median age is 59.3 years, compared to Wisconsin’s median of 38.5.



Stockholm Village President Jacques Foust visits with Jerry Deschane at the Stockholm Pie and General Store.

in an over 100-year-old opera house, which attracts performing artists to its intimate, yet high tech space. The village’s tiny downtown buzzes on weekends with travelers moving up and down the Great River Road.

Village government in Stockholm is simple. The village hall is a tiny cement block building that was erected in 1912 to house a grain and livestock brokerage. A part-time village clerk oversees contracted village services. Stockholm participates in a regional fire department, regional emergency medical services, and county law enforcement.

The most recent challenge facing the village was improving access to its lakeshore park, the “heart” of Stockholm. To get to it, village residents and visitors have to cross a busy pair of railroad tracks. The village made safety improvements at the crossing including a “Quiet Zone” which eliminates the need for trains to sound their whistles and which channels vehicles so they cannot avoid crossing arms. The village paid for other safety upgrades using revenue from a Premier Resort Tax.

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STOCKHOLM (CONTINUED)

Stockholm is one of five Premier Resort Communities in Wisconsin authorized to collect one half of one-percent on sales within the village. The freight trains continue to zip through, but train whistles no longer jar residents and visitors.

Another front-and-center issue is an aging population. The village's median age is 59.3 years, compared to Wisconsin's median of 38.5. Just 9.1 percent of the population is under 18. Foust knows that providing services to a retired population will be a growing challenge. While many of those services are provided by the county, the village faces obligations for accessibility and to keep its share of the property tax manageable for households on fixed incomes. "Property taxes are horrendous," acknowledges Foust. Because some of the homes in the lake area have such high values, Stockholm homeowners pay a lot to make up for lost state school aid revenues; in Foust's case, twice as much as the taxes on his other home in River Falls.

But beyond taxes, aging citizens and rushing trains, Stockholm knows itself. Village residents have embraced the diverse collection of artists who live and work in and around the village. Many residents volunteer for the annual art fair,

which draws an estimated 8,000 people and participation in community book clubs is nearly universal. Stockholm is a "place," as that term is used in modern land use nomenclature. It is "A small village with big arts," in the words of the local chamber of commerce.



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THE LEAGUE WELCOMES ROBIN POWERS AS ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES MANAGER



In his capacity as Captain with the City of Oregon Fire Department, Robin recently participated in training at Volk Field using the aircraft frame crash fire simulator. It uses propane to simulate fire conditions. The drill was organized by Wisconsin Emergency Management and the Wisconsin National Guard with the Fitchburg Fire Department acting as the simulated site. The drill simulated tornado damage with numerous emergency calls so units from multiple jurisdictions could practice working together. Robin practiced a rescue call to a collapsed parking ramp with an ammonia leak and an aircraft fire all with multiple departments he had never worked with before. He said it was a great learning experience and quite a lot of fun with challenging scenarios.

Robin Powers is the newest member of the League staff, joining the League as the Administrative Services Manager in July. Robin comes to the League with 24 years of experience in emergency services working with five different Wisconsin municipalities. During that time Robin was trained in a wide variety of disciplines from the firefighting, emergency medical service, and law enforcement fields. He is an avid learner and continues to seek new skills and challenges.

Local government isn't a new venue for you. Tell us about your background in public safety?

My career in public safety began as a volunteer with the Oregon Fire Protection District where I was hired by Chief Richard Anderson and then promoted to Lieutenant by Chief Gene Berman. I was also hired in the then-separate Oregon EMS under Chief Tim Olson. I volunteered for 10 years in

the fire service holding every rank up to Deputy Chief under Chief Randal Sellnow. During this time, the fire department and EMS merged and also remodeled the fire station to accommodate both services.

While volunteering I attended Madison Area Technical College and earned a degree in Police Science. I accepted a Police Officer position with the City of Stoughton and served the city for four years. During that time, I was noted to be a very active officer and served as co-steward of the local chapter of the Wisconsin Professional Police Association. I received training in drug investigation, intoxilyzer certification, and FBI interview and interrogation techniques, standardized the squad medical kits, and created a plan that placed standard tactical rifles in the squads to replace a variety of the shotguns in service.

Although police work was both challenging and fulfilling, I found that I craved a full-time career in firefighting more. I accepted a full-time position with the Oregon Area Fire and EMS District, serving 14 years. I was promoted back to Captain and initially worked on coordinating vehicle and building maintenance. This included obtaining and entering into service the first aerial truck and a 2,000-gallon pumper/tender. I was also involved in the organization of the full-time firefighters into union local 311 and served as union steward of the Oregon local and on the local 311 executive board my entire career at Oregon.

In small communities firefighters don't just respond to fire and EMS calls. What were some of your other responsibilities?

As with many fire departments, there are many needs to be met. This is where I became involved as a coordinator of firefighter training. I enjoyed this role immensely and prided myself with providing relevant training with interesting problem solving scenarios. When the district's fire marshal took another position I stepped up and assumed that responsibility as well. I also became a petroleum tank inspector at this time to inspect the tanks in the district. Using the skills learned from training firefighters I worked hard to educate business owners on the reasons behind the fire codes while learning from them about the challenges and needs of their work.

What is one responsibility you really enjoyed?

Oregon was one of the first Wisconsin departments to establish a full-time, in-house internship and I was tasked with leading it under Chief David Bloom. I found this responsibility very fulfilling and was very proud that the three-year program had a nearly 100 percent placement rate of graduates into full-time fire and EMS positions during my tenure. I learned a great

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THE LEAGUE WELCOMES ROBIN POWERS (CONTINUED)

deal about mentoring and teaching a wide variety of age groups and demographics for the challenges and stresses of emergency services work. In seeking to expand the pool of potential staff, I also acted as coordinator of the service's School to Career program. This program allows high school students to gain work experience in their career field with high school credits and professional certifications. Students from the Village of Oregon and the cities of McFarland and Monona all gained experience in this program.

What are some of the skills you are looking forward to using at the League?

When all is said and done I have worked for six different fire chiefs, one police chief, and the elected officials of the Towns of Dunn, Oregon, and Rutland, Village of Oregon, and City of Stoughton over a 24-year period. That coupled with inspecting and working with all the businesses in the District, means I have had the privilege of working with a lot of different people with different priorities. My skill for getting everyone on the same page will serve me well here at the League.

Tell us a little about your off-the-clock interest, and introduce us to your family.

My wife Noelle and I, and our two boys Aidan and Griffen, live in Evansville. Noelle's mother is Mary Malone, a long-time League Technology Coordinator and a rock star supporter of the Powers family. We enjoy many family activities, especially in Wisconsin's state parks. I have many hobbies including kayaking, blacksmithing, antique tractors, science fiction, and our family's two vexing, yet adorable cairn terriers.

Welcome Robin! You can reach Robin at rpowers@lwm-info.org

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LEGAL FAQs

Financial Procedure FAQ 1

Is a city or village mandated by law to have a yearly audit performed by a certified public accountant?

Municipalities with a population of 25,000 or more must have an annual audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. Such communities are required by the Department of Revenue to file annual audited financial reports. See Wis. Admin. Code, Tax secs. 16.02 and 16.05.

Also, municipalities that have adopted the alternative system of approving financial claims against the municipal treasury under Wis. Stat. sec. 66.0609 must adopt an ordinance which provides in part that the governing body shall require an annual audit of its financial transactions and accounts by a public accountant. Wis. Stat. sec. 66.0609(3).

In addition, municipalities may be compelled to conduct a financial audit under other circumstances. For example, if a municipality receives a federal or state grant for a designated program, a program audit may be required as a condition of that grant.

Officers FAQ 6

Is a village president a chief executive officer under state law?

No. A village president, unlike a mayor, is not designated as the chief executive officer by state law. Instead, a village president is declared a trustee with certain administrative responsibilities. These responsibilities include presiding at all board meetings and signing all ordinances, rules, bylaws, regulations, commissions, licenses, and permits adopted or authorized by the board and all orders drawn on the treasury except as provided by Wis. Stat. sec. 66.0607. In addition, the village president is also directed to “maintain peace and good order” and “see that the ordinances are faithfully obeyed.” The village president is also given authority to appoint special marshals in certain circumstances and is given charge of the village jail. In all other respects, the executive authority of a village president is a shared authority with all other members of the village board. Wis. Stat. sec. 61.24.

Officers FAQ 12

How does a city or village change the method of selecting a municipal officer such as clerk, treasurer, etc. from election to appointment?

Wisconsin cities and villages are authorized to change the method for selecting officers such as clerks, treasurers, etc. Wis. Stat. secs. 62.09(3)(b)6 and 61.197(2). However, such change must be made by a charter ordinance in the manner provided by Wis. Stat. sec. 66.0101. Wis. Stat. secs. 62.09(3)(b)6 and 61.197(2). The selection of non-governing body officers may be switched to a civil service system by an ordinary ordinance.

Officers FAQ 13

Does a city or village have to follow a particular procedure to consolidate two statutory municipal offices (e.g., clerk and treasurer)?

Yes. Consolidation of two or more statutory municipal offices in a city or village requires a charter ordinance. See Wis. Stat. secs. 62.09(3)(c) and 61.195. The specific charter ordinance adoption procedures are set forth in section 66.0101, which provides three alternative adoption methods: a charter convention, municipal governing body approval, or adoption by voter initiative as direct legislation.

Publications FAQ 2

Are cities and villages required to have an official newspaper for publication of legal notices, ordinances, minutes, etc.?

Cities are required to designate newspapers for the publication of council proceedings and other city legal notices. Wis. Stat. sec. 985.06. Such newspapers must be published in the city, although a fourth class city in which there is no eligible paper published may designate a newspaper published in the county and having a general circulation in the city. Wis. Stat. sec. 985.06(2). A newspaper is “published” at the place from which its mailing permit is issued, except that if the place where a newspaper has its concentration of circulation has no primary post office, then it is published at the place it designates as its place of publication. Wis. Stat. sec. 985.01(5).

A village board may, but is not required to, designate a newspaper published or having general circulation in the village as its official paper or use it for specific notices. Alternatively, the village board may direct that other forms of publication, such as posting, be used, except that certain cases do require actual newspaper publication. The statutes specifically require the publication of: tax redemptions or sales, annexations, detachments, consolidations, incorporations and notices directed to specific individuals. Also, if an eligible newspaper is published in the village, village board proceedings and village ordinances imposing a forfeiture must be published in that newspaper even if the newspaper is not designated as the official newspaper. Wis. Stat. sec. 985.05(1).

Zoning FAQ 9

May a municipality create two zoning districts that have identical uses but different setback, side yard, and etc. restrictions?

Yes. The zoning enabling statute only requires that zoning restrictions be uniform within each zoning district and specifically authorizes regulations in one district to differ from those in another. Wis. Stat. sec. 62.23(7)(b). As long as there is some rational basis for the different restrictions, a municipality



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LEGAL FAQs (CONTINUED)

may create two zoning districts that allow the same land uses (e.g., single-family residential) but impose different setback, side-yard, etc. requirements on the structures allowed in each district. For example, a municipality might reasonably decide to create a single-family residential zoning district for older neighborhoods that allows the same uses as are allowed under an existing single-family residential district classification but impose less stringent setback and side yard restrictions in the older neighborhood zone. A rational basis for the different classifications would be the smaller lot sizes in the older neighborhood. One significant advantage to this classification scheme would be a reduction in the number of zoning variance requests for structures in the older neighborhoods.

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ANNUAL CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS DEADLINE: AUGUST 17, 2016

Municipalities are invited to submit resolutions establishing League positions on legislative and other issues for consideration by the membership at the Annual Conference October 19-21 in Stevens Point.

Please submit your resolutions as a Word document by Wednesday, August 17, to Curt Witynski, the League's Assistant Director, at witynski@lwm-info.org. They will be published in the October issue of *The Municipality*. According to the League's constitution, all such proposals must be published prior to the Annual Conference to be eligible for consideration.

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Member* Thursday Only Registration	\$110	\$135	_____
Non-Member Thursday Only Registration	\$130	\$155	_____
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2016 MUNICIPAL ASSESSORS INSTITUTE

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Tuesday, September 13

12:30 - Moderators' Meeting

1:00 Afternoon - Concurrent Workshops

(1) Expert Witness

(3 Hours Appraisal)

Moderator: Belinda Fechhelm, City Property Appraiser, Marshfield

Instructor: Robert Sherman, Certified General Appraiser

**This is a repeat session from 2015. If you attended last year you will not get credit.*

(2) Uniformity & Equity Part II

(3 Hours Appraisal)

Moderator: Cathy Timm, City Assessor, Cedarburg

Instructors: Mike Grota, James Toth, Les Aherns

(3) WI Open Records Law

(3 Hours Appraisal)

Moderator: Matt Tooke, City Appraiser II, Appleton

Instructors: Paul Ferguson, Department of Justice

4:30 - Wisconsin Duck Ride Pick-Up

(Advance registration required)

Dinner on Your Own

Wednesday, September 14

9:30 - Morning - General Session

Cathy Timm, City Assessor, Cedarburg

Chairman, Assessors Section, presiding

Welcome Address

Address—IAAO Representative, Larry Clark

Address—NCRAAO Representative - TBD

WAAO Business Meeting

10:30 - DOR Roundtable – Claude Lois, DOR

1:30 - Afternoon - Concurrent Workshops

(4) IAAO Standards & Sources of Information

(3 Hours Law/Mgmt)

Moderator: Mary Reavey, Retired City

Assessment Commissioner Milwaukee

Instructors: Larry Clark, IAAO

(5) WI Property Tax Litigation – General Overview

(3 Hours Law/Mgmt)

Moderator: Russ Schwandt, City Assessor, Green Bay

Instructors: Jamie Staffaroni, Assistant City

Attorney, Madison

Dana J. Erlandsen, Chief Counsel, Wisconsin

Department of Revenue

(6) Effective Appraisal Report Writing

(3 Hours Appraisal)

Moderator: Mike Higgins, City Assessor, Kenosha

Instructors: Robert Sherman, Certified General Appraiser

Evening

5:15 Reception

6:00 Banquet/DJ

Thursday, September 15

9:00 - Morning - Concurrent Workshops

(7) Excel for Assessors

(1 Hour Appraisal and 2 Hours Law/Mgmt)

Moderator: Mike Patnode, City Appraiser I, Waukesha

Instructor(s): Megan Lukens, Property Assessment

Supervisor, DOR

(8) AAR

(2 Hours Appraisal and 2 Hours Law/Mgmt)

Moderator: Mark Hanson, City Assessor, Madison

Instructor(s): Mark Paulat, DOR

(9) Property Tax Litigation II – Specific Case Law

(3 Hours Law/Mgmt)

Moderator: Michelle Laube, Deputy City Assessor, Janesville

Instructors: Amy Seibel, Seibel Law Firm

1:30 - Afternoon - Concurrent Workshops

(10) Drug & Paraphernalia ID, Signs and its Use and What to Look for

(3 Hours Law/Mgmt)

Moderator: Jason Williams, Ass't City Assessor West Allis

Instructors: Jeremiah Winscher, Officer Dept. of Justice

**This is a repeat session from 2015. If you attended last year you will not get credit.*

ASSESSORS INSTITUTE (CONTINUED)

(11) Solar Power and Its Impact on Value

(3 Hours Appraisal)

Moderator: Steve Miner, Assessment Commissioner, Milwaukee

Instructors: Elizabeth Hittman, Sustainability Program Coordinator, City of Milwaukee Environmental Collaboration Office

(12) The Effects of Green Construction & Millennials on Real Estate Valuation (Residential & Commercial)

(3 Hours Appraisal)

Moderator: Matt Tooke, City Appraiser II, Appleton

Instructors: Jim Siebers, Content Strategist, CoreLogic

Friday, September 16

9:00 Morning

(13) Active Shooter Training

(3 Hours Law/Mgmt)

Moderator: Deb Edwards, Village Assessor, Plover

Instructors: Capitol Police Chief David Erwin

Registration available online at lwm-info.org



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Sept. 21-23

The Riverwalk Hotel, Neenah

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Annual Conference

Oct. 19-21

Holiday Inn,

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Police and Fire Commission Workshop

Nov. 4

Glacier Canyon Lodge at

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Mayors: **Hudson**, Rich O'Connor, **Burlington**, Jeannie Hefty.

Police Chief: **Medford**, Bryan Carey.

Police Lieutenant: **Medford**, Robert Horenberger.

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IN MEMORIAM:

Belmont. Village of Belmont Trustee Bill “Booker” Moody, 74, died unexpectedly on June 3. He had served as a Belmont Village Trustee for 14+ years and volunteered for the Belmont EMS and Belmont Fire Department for 49 years. Bill was also serving as a Lafayette County Board Supervisor since 2008 and was on the Belmont School & Community Fair Board for many years. He is survived by his wife, Karen; stepson, Craig (Kathryn) Oleson of La Crosse; and grandsons, Tanner and Tyler Oleson.

ADDITIONS AND CHANGES

Please send changes, corrections, or additions to league@lwm-info.org, fax (608) 267-0645 or mail to the League at 131 West Wilson St., Suite 505, Madison, WI 53703

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You are invited! Mayors, village presidents, managers, and administrators gather every summer to participate in the League's Chief Executives Workshop. You can join us and hear from the experts, contribute your own expertise and experiences, and go home to lead your municipality inspired by what you've learned.

Join us August 24-26 at Lake Lawn Resort, Delavan.

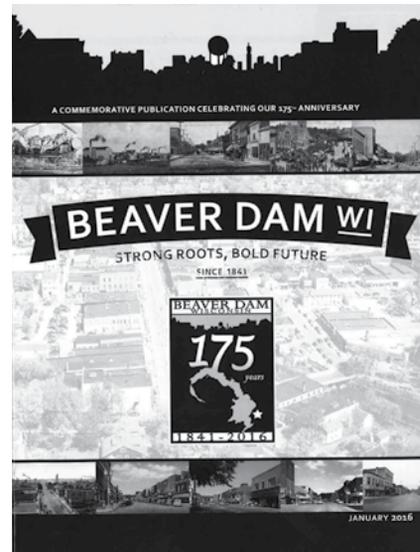
Registration materials were mailed in July.

Online registration at <http://www.lwm-info.org/>

Workshops include:

- Innovative Service Delivery in a Time of Constrained Resources
- The Results of the First Annual State of Wisconsin Cities and Villages Report
- Flint, Michigan and the Failure of the Emergency Management Mentality
- Economic Success Stories from Monona and Oak Creek
- Live Lobby Team Legislative Update Webinar

We'll see you August 24-26 in Delavan.



The city of Beaver Dam is celebrating its 175th anniversary in 2016. Beaver Dam was initially settled by Europeans in 1841 and got its name from the beavers that built a dam in a small stream flowing through the city. The city was governed by town government until its incorporation as a city on June 2, 1856. Now as a thriving community with more than 16,000 residents, continued growth has certainly marked the city's history. With the passage of time, the city continues to maintain its character with an emphasis on preserving the exceptional quality of life for its residents.

There are many events planned to mark the City's 175th milestone during this commemorative year, including a special anniversary parade, fireworks, a city picnic, a time capsule that will be opened 25 years from now at Beaver Dam's 200th anniversary and much, much more. This year's events are held to commemorate the city's 175th anniversary is an opportunity to make the community an even better place to live.



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