

Newsletter



The Winner Wonderland Edition



CCEDC Winter 2019 Newsletter

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CCEDC President/CEO Recognized as One of the Nation's Top 50



Chippewa Valley business leaders know the importance of recognition and receiving awards from their peers. Not only because the awards and recognition are benchmarks with others in the industry, it also increases the credibility of the organization, improves brand awareness, and promotes the organization to existing and new customers.

Recently, at the 2019 ECONOMIX - organized by Consultant Connect - the nation's top 50 economic developers were announced. ECONOMIX is a blending of economic development professionals and over 25 site selectors, coming together to stir additional insights and practical tools to enhance work in their respective communities.

These men and women - the top 50 economic developers - are nominated by their colleagues, friends and site consultants who are movers and shakers in the field of economic development. Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) is proud to share that our very own Charlie Walker, President/CEO was honored as one of the nation's top 50 economic developers in Charleston, South Carolina for his outstanding work!

"CCEDC is fortunate to have Charlie leading the organization. He is knowledgeable in every realm of what it means to be an economic developer and demonstrates this in the daily operations and leadership of the organization. Charlie is passionate about the success of Chippewa Valley and strives to ensure that the actions are in the best interest of the mission, vision and values of the organization and the community that he serves." stated Lisa Bruhn, chairperson of CCEDC Board of Directors.



ACCOLADES

CCEDC's Export Assistance Program Wins Midwest Award

CCEDC, working with its state and regional partners, have made it a priority to help rural Chippewa Valley agricultural producers, companies, entrepreneurs, and manufacturers to increase their exports through the use of resources, expertise, counseling, and education programs. Since 2016, CCEDC's export promotion program has been involved in providing and directing clients to needed export assistance and services. The CCEDC Export Program, a component of the organization's BEAR program, was recently recognized at the Mid-America Competitiveness Conference & Site Selector Forum in Downtown Chicago for its Entrepreneurial Support Award for its work with Barron County Cheese.



Barron County Cheese, located in the northwestern Wisconsin town of Barron, envisioned becoming an entrepreneurial exporter in the global market. Their vision was to become an industry leader in cheese packaging and conversion, providing an unmatched quality of service to all customers through ongoing improvement in global research, teamwork, safety, versatility, and innovation. The CCEDC introduced the company to UW-Stout's Export Tech Program (which Barron County Cheese graduated from), assisted the company in increasing its awareness in export opportunities and resources, and introduced them to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture and WEDC so the company could participate in trade events. Finally, Barron County Cheese attended several CCEDC's Lunch & Learns on export trading and compliance. Through these activities, Gene Graf, Chief Operating Officer of Barron County Cheese, discovered how to find crucial information pertaining to exporting and utilized several available programs to land several exporting contracts.

To learn more about exporting, contact the ccedc office at 715-723-7150



HATCH

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

October 2019 was a great month for entrepreneurship in the Chippewa Valley. During that time, CCEDC helped pave the way for local entrepreneurs and assisted them in bringing their business ideas to life by organizing and hosting the second annual Chippewa Valley HATCH, a Shark Tank-like, Event.

Fostering more startup entrepreneurs makes sense because of the role they play in helping the Chippewa Valley grow and prosper. CCEDC once again teamed with the BrightStar Wisconsin Foundation, Inc. and several area local businesses at Cowboy Jack's Saloon in Altoona, WI on

Thursday October 17, 2019 to further develop the local entrepreneurial eco-system. The HATCH Program - now in its second year - is a high-energy idea pitch program designed to facilitate connections between prospective entrepreneurs and those within a community who support them such as industry experts, professional service firms, banks, non-profits, business leaders and investors.

"Launched in 2017 in cooperation with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), BrightStar Wisconsin Foundation's "Hatch" program was created to reward entrepreneurship and deal flow throughout Wisconsin. In 2018,

the program partnered with Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation," said Thomas M. Shannon, President & CEO, BrightStar Wisconsin Foundation. "We are pleased to continue our partnership with WEDC and CCEDC in providing more resources for entrepreneurs in the Chippewa Valley.

Additional financial supporters of Chippewa Valley HATCH included Advanced Laser Machining, CCF Bank, Badgerland Printing, River Prairie Wealth Partners, RuderWare, Xcel Energy, Johnson Financial Group, Dunn County EDC, Small Business Development Center, University of Wisconsin Eau Claire, University of Wisconsin Stout and UW-Stout Fab Lab. "We owe the success to this event to our sponsors and supporters. We thank them for all they do for CCEDC programs," noted Charlie Walker CCEDC President/CEO.

Over fifteen applications from eager entrepreneurs were submitted to participate in the pitch event and CCEDC judges had a challenging task of narrowing down and selecting nine finalists for the Chippewa Valley Hatch Program. Those nine finalists competed for a cash reward of over \$5,000.00. The entrepreneurs traveled from locations that included Chippewa Falls, Stanley, Menomonie, Eau Claire, Stevens Point, and even as far as Saint Michael, Minnesota.

Using an app on their cell phones, over 125

Entrepreneurs Take the Stage! 2019



audience spectators took the opportunity to vote for their "favorite" entrepreneur pitch - Eric Boud. His pitch was voted the audience favorite and he receiving \$500 in professional services from Badgerland Printing. Boud's idea, Heart to Heart, provides a life line that connects NICU parents to their babies by streaming the parent's heart beat to the infant who is in

distress. This is critical as studies have shown that a parent's heart beat aids in development, decreases pain perception, provide calming effects and reduce heart and lung problems. Heart to Heart also provides education, community and support for NICU parents.

After a 15-minute deliberation from judges -Paul Madsen of Cowboy Jack's Saloon, John Walton from Advanced Laser Machining, Stephen Bianchi from CCF Bank, Becca Cooke from Red's Mercantile and Pete Marsnik from Musky Tank LLC. - the overall business idea winner was chosen. Jim McDougall from Eau Claire took first place and won \$5,000. His business, UpStream, provides 100% wireless audiovisual solutions using proprietary software and hardware for businesses and homes. The company's technology leverages wireless networks to do what has only ever been done with cabling. UpStream eliminates the need for AV wiring with back-end distribution systems that cost thousands without adding value.

McDougall stated that "UpStream's solution will enable unprecedented flexibility and production values of audiovisual systems. "Winning the Chippewa Valley HATCH event will better position us to fuel grow and reach new customers."



Agriculture Issues discussed with Senator Baldwin



In the fall of 2019, CCEDC participated in a round table discussion with Senator Tammy Baldwin at Yellowstone Cheese in Cadott, WI. CCEDC investors, cheese makers, and dairy stakeholders met with Senator Baldwin to discuss the increasing number of farm closures and the challenges with milk prices. “Agriculture is a major employer in Chippewa County and its importance to our communities can’t be overstated.” expressed Charlie Walker, President/CEO.

Senator Baldwin highlighted parts of the 2018 Farm Bill which contained the Dairy Business Innovation Act. Senator Baldwin successfully shepherded its passage through the 2018 Farm Bill. Baldwin championed this program, along with Wisconsin Congressmen Glen Grothman, Ron Kind, Mark Pocan, and Brian Steil. This Act would spur innovation in dairy businesses, assisting in the development of new dairy products, and would provide support for new dairy entrepreneurs.

“Wisconsin’s dairy businesses are a key driver of our state’s economy, but recently our dairy farmers have faced very challenging times. It is critical that farmers, cheese makers, and dairy processors have tools to innovate and develop new, made-in-Wisconsin dairy products to build a brighter future for our dairy farms and drive rural Chippewa Valley economies forward.” said Senator Baldwin. “I’m proud to stand with Wisconsin dairy leaders, including those with the Center for Dairy Research and Wisconsin Cheese Maker’s Association and work together to open up new resources for our dairy businesses.”



ADVOCACY

CCEDC welcomes WEDC CEO Missy Hughes

CCEDC’s Board of Directors - in its continuing quest to improve collaboration and advocate for Chippewa County Economic policies and programs - spent an afternoon with Missy Hughes, Secretary and CEO of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). During the visit, she received an introduction to the organization’s Business Retention and Expansion Program (BEAR), Entrepreneurial Initiatives, Business Attraction, and Talent/Workforce Strategies that are currently being implemented in the Chippewa Valley.

Mayor Greg Hoffman of the City of Chippewa Falls took the opportunity to update Missy Hughes on the robust partnership that the City has with CCEDC. “One of the reasons our economic development program is successful is because we have built a great team that works together and always looks for innovative ways to improve our economy,” stated Mayor Hoffman.

The meeting also focused on ways the two organizations can better work together to help accelerate growth within

the region and strengthening our talent pipeline in the Chippewa Valley. “WEDC is appreciative of the partnership we have with CCEDC and we look forward to continuing it through programs such as our assistance in export promotion, rural development, and assisting in developing new talent initiatives. For instance, the new online tool kit that helps businesses set up internship programs with UW schools will be a great tool that CCEDC can promote to help local businesses,” expressed Missy Hughes. “These types of initiatives will take steps in solving the issue of not enough workers by positioning us to ‘grow them locally’ and keeping them here.”

“Having the opportunity for the CCEDC BOD and stakeholders to update Secretary Hughes on our recent accomplishment was important because she listened and provided us with some valuable feedback on how we can work closer together with WEDC to accomplish our projects. In addition, we took the opportunity to familiarize her with our Certified Shovel Ready Lake Wissota Business Park and Opportunity Zone,” noted Charlie Walker, President/CEO of CCEDC.



BUSINESS EXPANSION AND RETENTION



Stanley, WI Company Feedback

CCEDC proactively connects with our area’s existing businesses using its BEAR program. The Business, Expansion and Retention Program (BEAR, for short) focuses on the fact that several studies have shown that expansions of existing businesses represent between 60 percent and 90 percent of a community’s job creation. Our local companies and the local workforce also serve as a “barometer” of Chippewa County’s overall sense of place and economic health.

This program is a collaborative form of outreach, emphasizing face-to-face contact and dialogue that uses this outreach to collect comprehensive, comparable inputs from our business community. Recently, the CCEDC BEAR Team led by Board member Rick Kaiser of Xcel Energy spent some time in Stanley visiting Ace Ethanol and Film Tech.

Ace Ethanol LLC is an ethanol production facility built by local investors in Stanley, Wisconsin. Each year the facility takes in more than 17 million bushels of corn, resulting in an output of approximately 50 million gallons of ethanol, 118,000 tons of DDGS, 8,000 tons of distiller’s corn oil, and 65,000 tons of carbon dioxide. The facility has a storage capacity of two million bushels on site and is the first ethanol plant to integrate the patented D3MAX technology with its existing corn dry mill- a move that will position it to become one of the most efficient ethanol facilities in the world. The feedback from that visit was a need for our local schools to see the career opportunities in the bio-engineering arena.

Film Tech LLC manufactures custom COEX and mono-layer plastic film for laminated or unstructured converting needs for sterilized medical device or healthcare supplies. Their custom films are designed to PROTECT, PROCESS, or PROMOTE product functionality.

The BEAR team learned about the challenges and opportunities facing these businesses, discussed state and local regulatory burdens, barriers to competitiveness and expansion which centered on the discussion to continue to aggressively improve local workforce soft skills, work ethic, and help support the maintenance of a competitive business climate among elected officials. Our stage 2 firms throughout the County have moved toward a greater emphasis on talent development with an focus on improved work ethic.



Mark Your Calendar - Jan 14



Incoterms 101: The Language of Trade

The next Exporting Lunch & Learn Seminar Series – Incoterms 101: The Language of Trade is scheduled for January 14th at J&D Manufacturing in Eau Claire, WI from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. The topic will be presented by Chris Wojtowicz of Maple Creek International Trade and is the first of CCEDC’s 2020 Exporting Seminar Series.

Incoterms are a set of rules which define the responsibilities of international sellers and buyers for the delivery of goods. Are you using the best international trade terms for your exports? This BEAR seminar introduces attendees to an overview of Incoterms - the essential rules for international and domestic contracts.

Because of our BEAR sponsors - J&D Manufacturing and BMO Bank, the cost to attend is \$15 per person, and includes lunch. Space is limited.

Register today! chippewa-wi.com or call 715-723-7150



Local Businesses Gather for Information

Each year, CCEDC’s BEAR Program helps support business retention by helping our existing companies solve some of their issues by helping them learn more about the topic and suggest possible solutions through a Lunch & Learn Series. Our economic development Lunch & Learn

topics are generated through a variety of means. First, they’re identified via BEAR visits, Lunch & Learn feedback surveys, and direct customer requests. Participants of CCEDC Lunch & Learn Series are provided insights and information that helps them grow their business. This past quarter,

Employee Support Services

For instance, Neal Bennett, President of Occupational Chaplains of America (OCA), discussed how employee support services can help build employee loyalty in the workplace and how mental health is just as critical to your most valuable assets of your company - your employees.

In addition, local company owners, executives, and employees had the opportunity to be introduced to the new HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital new President/CEO John Wagner.

Compensation Trends

Compensation Trends were discussed in both Bloomer and Stanley, WI where over 60 businesses attended to receive the latest 2019 compensation trends and 2020 forecast from Mark Harding, a certified compensation professional.

Benefit Benchmarking

Adding value to the Compensation Trends events was the Benefit Benchmarking seminar. Amber Richardson and Jill Gorres of J.A. Counter had a robust discussion with over 30 attendees on medical cost trends and approaches to reduce employer health insurance costs.

Development Toolbox 101/Revolving Loan Funds

CCEDC’s 2019 Lunch and Learn series wrapped up with Tobi LeMahieu, Fund Manager from Regional Business Fund, Inc (RBF) presented “Development Toolbox 101/Revolving Loan Funds”, where attendees learned about the revolving loan funds as an option for small businesses. Special thanks to CBS Squared for hosting and sponsoring this event!

topics included compensation trends, building employee loyalty, employee benefit benchmarking, global exporting, and understanding Revolving Loan Funds.



CCEDC Discusses The Role of Broadband in Economic Development

CCEDC for the past several years has been supporting the expansion of broadband throughout rural Chippewa Valley. CCEDC continues to advocate for the funding of the Wisconsin Broadband Grant Program. We continue to support broadband funding grant applications for organizations like Citizens Connected, Bloomer Telephone Co, and 24-7 & West Wisconsin Telcom.

Because of CCEDC’s continued support for broadband expansion and its impact on economic development, President/CEO Charlie Walker served as a panelist at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s Milwaukee meeting. The session titled “The Role of Broadband & Emerging Technologies in Economic Development” highlighted how economic development is a core function of electric cooperatives, who are vital to the communities they serve. Charlie shared his observations about this topic, how broadband and emerging technologies relate to how it takes cooperation and collaboration like what was done in Chippewa County for a successful project to be implemented, for example, like Ntera.



BROADBAND & FUTURE TALENT

TTM Technologies Hosts Chippewa Falls Girl Scout Troop 3345 & 3101 for Manufacturing Month

Every October - Manufacturing Month - Manufacturers across Wisconsin, the Chippewa Valley and next door utilize the month as an opportunity to inspire and recruit the next generation of manufacturers. With a continued goal of providing our future workforce with exposure to real STEM workplaces, the Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) has organized, hosted, or arranged over 50 tours to 20 different Chippewa Valley manufacturing sites. Since 2006 the CCEDC Program has introduced over 300 students from middle school, home school, high school, plus teachers, athletic coaches, scouting organizations and parents to the world of modern manufacturing.

In the last week of Manufacturing Month, CCEDC worked with TTM Technologies, Inc, (TTM) one of Chippewa Falls largest employers and a leading global printed circuit board manufacturer that focuses on quick-turn and volume production of technologically advanced PCBs, backplane assemblies and electro-mechanical solutions, as well as design and manufacturer of high-frequency radio frequency (RF), microwave components, and assemblies, welcomed Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin Girl Scout Troop 3345 & 3101.

Participants were given a tour of TTM to learn how lean manufacturing tools are being utilized throughout the facility. For several of the Girls Scouts, this was their first experience inside a manufacturing plant. By the end of the day the girls got a feel for the teamwork, creativity, and high level of engineering that goes into designing a world class product.

“The Girl Scout Tour is a great opportunity for the girls to learn about local manufacturing and creating an awareness for some of the opportunities manufacturing provides,” stated Sheridan Welch, Plant / General Manager at TTM Technologies and CCEDC Board Member.





STRATEGIC BOARD RETREAT &

Just before Christmas, the CCEDC Board of Directors met in a retreat format to review and adjust the organization's 5-year Strategic Plan in an effort to continue to stimulate economic growth in the area.

Moderated by Bob Oliver of Manufacturing Outreach Center, UW-Stout, the Board Members were solicited for input on issues, trends, and strategies for the purpose of finding common threads that help develop the organization's 2020 Work Plan. The CCEDC's 2020 Work Plan guides the organization's yearly activities as it accomplishes its overall 5-year Strategic Goals.

In addition, the Board wanted to continue improving Chippewa County's product/space for expanding companies and finally, working on improving communication with our investors and economic partners.

Some of the themes that were identified were to continue to align our economic development programs with our regional stakeholders, expand our business retention program, to continue to address the challenges of the workforce shortage, promote greater use of automation in manufacturing, and assist poorer neighborhoods throughout the county that are not sharing in the region's overall prosperity.

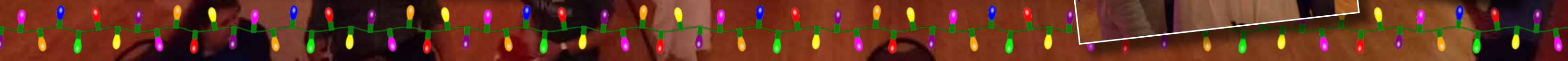


Christmas Investor Reception 2019



Each year at Christmastime, our supporters, financial investors, and stakeholders are invited to a reception to show appreciation for everything they do to help us do what we do. Over 150 participants converged at The Heyde Center for the Arts. They enjoyed a live string quartet, an impressive spread from KP Katering and Lake Wissota Bakehouse, all while reflecting and sharing their camaraderie with their Chippewa Valley colleagues.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year to All!





*Wishing You All!
the Best in
2020*

