



Providing Planning and Economic Development  
Services to Improve the Region's Environment,  
Economy and Quality of Life

Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission  
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# Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission

## 2010-2011 Annual Report

Providing Planning and Economic Development Services to Improve the Region's  
Environment, Economy and Quality of Life

### SPRING VALLEY, VIROQUA AND WESTBY AWARDED SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

**PLANNING GRANTS.** In late 2010 the MRRPC wrote successful Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) planning grants for the Village of Spring Valley (Pierce County) and the Cities of Westby and Viroqua (Vernon County). The grants were awarded in early 2011. Spring Valley was awarded a \$17,700 grant and Westby and Viroqua were jointly awarded a \$34,700 grant to prepare Safe Routes to School Plans. SRTS grants provide 100% funding (no local match required) for planning projects that create safer and healthier ways for children from kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade to get to school. Goals of the Safe Routes to School Program are:

1. To enable and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school.
2. To make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age.
3. To facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

Planning processes are currently underway in the three communities. Safe Routes to School planning taskforce committees made up of school officials, city and village representatives and residents have been formed to oversee the planning process. School parent surveys have been distributed to gauge the attitudes of parents and children regarding walking and biking to school. Teachers are also involved by surveying children in their classroom each day for one week on how each student arrived at school – walked, biked, school bus, car, or carpool.

The Safe Routes to School Plans will be completed in the fall of 2011. Once SRTS plans are adopted, schools and local units of government can apply for SRTS infrastructure and non-infrastructure grants (sidewalks, bike paths, intersection

improvements, signage, classroom curriculum, promotional materials, etc.) to implement projects identified in their SRTS plans.

### VILLAGE OF GAYS MILLS ADOPTS

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.** Over the past two years, staff assisted the Village of Gays Mills in Crawford County in preparing their Comprehensive Plan to address growth and development issues through the nine planning elements identified by State Statute. In January 2011 the Village of Gays Mills Village Board unanimously adopted the Comprehensive Plan that will guide development decisions in the Village over the next 20 years. In recent years the Village has been devastated by two 100-year floods that were included in two separate Presidential Disaster Declarations. These disasters resulted in decisions to relocate much of the Village to a different site and flood proof other homes and businesses.

Comprehensive planning is vital to how the Village addresses future challenges. During the planning process residents identified assisting local businesses, unifying old and new development, preserving natural resources, and capitalizing on tourism opportunities as key issues. Also added to the plan was a "Sustainability Element" that stressed the importance of managing and utilizing local resources to further strengthen the community.

### FT McCOY-MONROE COUNTY JOINT LAND

**USE STUDY (JLUS).** The Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) has identified Ft. McCoy in Monroe County as an installation with possible encroachment issues with its surrounding community. This means that while no major issues of incompatible land use currently exist between the base and the civilian communities around it, planning is recommended to avoid any possible such conflicts in the future. Ft. McCoy, with its \$1 billion impact to the region, is also a major asset to the Department of Defense in that it trains over 100,000 troops a year and serves as one of the power projection platforms in readying troops for deployment to such places as Iraq and Afghanistan. Therefore, maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship between the Fort and

the surrounding communities is essential to the economy of the Region. In December 2010, Monroe County charged the MRRPC with applying for the grant to fund a JLUS, and to conduct the study if it is funded. In addition to providing a valuable assessment of current and future land uses on and around the Fort, the JLUS is expected to document Ft. McCoy's needs for continued success and how the surrounding communities can assist in supporting Ft. McCoy's vital military mission. The application process is currently underway and, if it is funded, the JLUS would be ready to begin in the summer of 2011.

### **PIERCE, PEPIN AND MONROE COUNTIES RECEIVING TACTICAL INTEROPERABILITY COMMUNICATION PLANNING ASSISTANCE.**

Increased threat levels to the U.S. have resulted in the Department of Homeland Security calling for and providing funding to states to prepare Tactical Interoperability Communication Plans (TCIP). MRRPC staff have begun the process of assisting county emergency management directors, law enforcement and emergency assistance organizations with TICPs. These plans identify communication assets, procedures and strategies on how to improve interoperability communications among parties. The plans inventory communication resources such as: radios, dispatch centers, mobile communication equipment, radio channels, software patches, equipment use policies, etc. This information is vital during major emergency response events when adjacent or outside agencies respond to assist in emergency situations. Knowing what channels the host agencies and incoming responding agencies are capable of communicating on will save valuable time and help prevent confusion among all the responding parties. The plan will not only list the county communication resources but also contact information on what resources are available from neighboring counties and state agencies. The plan will document the network of communications available that will help reduce losses and improve a county's ability to be more resilient in recovering from a major disaster. MRRPC staff have started interoperability planning in Pepin County, and will begin planning with Pierce and Monroe counties later in 2011.

### **CRAWFORD COUNTY ADOPTS LAND AND WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN.**

In 2010, the MRRPC assisted Crawford County in updating its Land and Water Resource Management Plan. These are plans required by Chapter 92 of Wisconsin State Statutes, and are to be updated every five years. The Plan summarizes the County's soil and water resources and identifies conservation programs and actions needed to protect and improve them. The plan is also used by the Land Conservation Department in its efforts to assist county landowners and others. Projects listed deal with solving: erosion, manure runoff, wetland loss, surface water pollution and groundwater pollution from abandoned well conduits and improper land use activities. The Plan

was approved by the Crawford County Board of Supervisors and the State Land and Water Conservation Board.

### **CRAWFORD, TREMPEALEAU AND VERNON COUNTIES MULTI-HAZARD MITIGATION PLANS BEING UPDATED.**

Staff are assisting Crawford, Trempealeau and Vernon counties with their multi-hazard mitigation plans. These plans provide a listing of hazard mitigation projects that reduce losses to life and property in the event of a natural hazard occurring.

The plans cover 19 natural hazards (tornadoes, flooding, blizzards, extreme heat, pandemic flu etc) that could occur within these counties. Draft plans for Crawford County and Vernon County were completed but given extensions for revisions to deal with recovery needs from flooding in 2007, 2008 and 2009. The amended plans meet new federal requirements regarding responsible party identification and measuring progress on projects since a previous plan. When approved by Wisconsin Emergency Management, the counties will be eligible for federal and state hazard mitigation grant funding that can help pay for the projects identified in their plans.

Some projects identified in Crawford County are: investigate the costs and benefits of installing automated gages on the Kickapoo River; develop a flood warning and evacuation plan for Mississippi River floodplain property owners in the city of Prairie du Chien and the towns of Prairie du Chien, Bridgeport, and Eastman; encourage developers and builders to bury electrical and telecommunications lines; update the existing list of buildings that can be used as shelters during disasters like extreme heat and cold events; and inventory and prioritize road shoulder segments that are susceptible to erosion and land/mud slides. Projects identified by the city of Prairie du Chien are: improve the storm water system; improve readability of important signs so they can be interpreted during times of poor visibility like a disaster event; and undertake erosion control and road improvements at the city reservoir.

Some Vernon County projects are: investigate a voluntary floodplain property buyout program; investigate a county driveway ordinance that would require new driveways and access roads to be accessible for large emergency equipment vehicles to operate on; identify buildings that can be used as shelters during extreme heat and cold events; identify priority locations in the County where snow fences should be constructed to increase motor vehicle safety; and encourage anchoring on new mobile homes, carports, and porches. The Village of Viola identified a project involving the Village paying for the costs of widening and paving a town road so the village is accessible by at least one arterial road when state highways 161 and 56 are flooded by the Kickapoo River.

### **2010 MRRPC AUDIT**

Mr. Michael Temp, CPA, Tostrud and Temp, S.C. reported the findings of the 2010 Audit at the April 13, 2011, Commission meeting. Mr. Temp stated that the MRRPC was given an unqualified audit opinion, meaning they found that the MRRPC followed generally accepted accounting principles in the preparation of its financial statements and that the financial statements can be relied upon to provide an accurate picture of the Commission's finances. The audit showed 2010 operating revenues of \$411,297 and operating expenses of \$398,810. The audit also reported total assets of \$268,409 (not including business revolving loan funds) and total liabilities of 41,028 resulting in the MRRPC having net assets valued at \$227,381 on December 31, 2010. The audit included reports on the four business revolving loan funds the Commission administers. These reports indicated that since the four revolving loan funds' inception dates, \$4,459,590 has been loaned to businesses and \$988,356 is owed to the respective revolving loan funds from businesses.

### **MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION PROFILE**

The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission was created in 1964 under Wisconsin Statute 66.0309 to provide cost-shared planning and economic development services to the Western Wisconsin county governments of Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau and Vernon, and the communities and businesses within these counties.

The Region covers over 6,000 square miles and in 2010 had a population of over 317,068. The Region makes up 11% of Wisconsin's land area, 5.6% of the State's population and 4% of the State's real estate equalized value.

The MRRPC meetings are held bimonthly on the second Wednesday of even-numbered months. The meetings are usually held in La Crosse, due to its central location within the Region.

Each of the nine counties is represented by three commissioners. One commissioner from each county is appointed by the county board, another commissioner from each county is appointed by the Governor, and a third commissioner from each county is appointed by the Governor selected from a list of two or more persons nominated by the county board. The commissioners serve six-year terms and

make all policy, staffing and budgetary decisions of the MRRPC. The following is a list of current MRRPC commissioners.

### **COMMISSIONERS**

#### **Buffalo County**

John Schlesselman, James Scholmeier, Kathleen Vinehout

#### **Crawford County**

Gerald Krachey, Ron Leys, Greg Russell

#### **Jackson County**

Ron Carney, James Christenson, Eugene Savage

#### **La Crosse County**

Vicki Burke, James Ehram, Tara Johnson

#### **Monroe County**

George Baker, James Kuhn, Cedric Schnitzler

#### **Pepin County**

George Dupre, Mike Murray, David Smith

#### **Pierce County**

Richard Purdy, James Ross, William Schroeder

#### **Trempealeau County**

Margaret Baecker, Phillip Borreson, Barbara Semb

#### **Vernon County**

Gail Frie, Nancy Jaekel, Jo Ann Nickelatti

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission would like to thank the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Wisconsin Department of Administration, Wisconsin Department of Commerce, The Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration, Wisconsin Emergency Management, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and most of all the County Boards of Supervisors of Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau and Vernon for their cooperation and involvement. The combined resources of these local, state, and federal government partners provide the funding that make the activities of the MRRPC possible.

### **ANNUAL REPORT DEDICATED TO PAST AND PRESENT COMMISSIONERS**

This annual report is dedicated to the Commissioners who have served and continue to serve on the MRRPC Board. Their continual dedication to review and approve the various projects mentioned in this report would not be possible without their involvement in addition to their administrative policy duties. Many Commissioners need to take a whole day off from work to fulfill their responsibilities at bimonthly meetings. For this we are extremely grateful!

Regional unemployment rates have always been lower than the state and nation.

**Unemployment Trends 2005-2010**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Buffalo	4.1	3.9	4.2	4.2	6.9	6.3
Crawford	4.9	4.9	5.3	5.8	9.8	9.1
Jackson	5.8	5.5	5.5	5.6	8.8	8.4
La Crosse	4.1	3.7	3.8	3.9	6.6	6.1
Monroe	4.1	4.2	4.5	4.6	7.5	6.9
Pepin	5.2	4.7	4.9	4.7	7.3	6.8
Pierce	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.3	7.4	6.5
Trempealeau	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.5	7.5	6.8
Vernon	4.6	4.8	5.0	4.8	7.8	7.3
<b>Region</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.0</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>8.3</b>
<b>Nation</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>9.6</b>

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, LAUS

Manufacturing employment has decreased in the Region but at a slower rate than the state and nation.

**Manufacturing Employment 2006-2009**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	% Chge 2006-2009
Buffalo	413	401	432	427	3.4
Crawford	1,991	1,887	1,666	1,468	-26.3
Jackson	940	970	952	830	-11.7
La Crosse	9,196	9,262	9,098	8,090	-12.0
Monroe	4,306	4,158	4,012	3,548	-17.6
Pepin	160	160	173	157	-1.9
Pierce	1,082	1,124	1,107	1,114	3.0
Trempealeau	5,622	5,526	5,672	5,334	-5.1
Vernon	1,049	1,042	989	826	-21.3
<b>MRRPC Region</b>	<b>24,759</b>	<b>24,530</b>	<b>24,101</b>	<b>21,794</b>	<b>-12.0</b>
<b>Wisconsin</b>	<b>521,563</b>	<b>516,986</b>	<b>508,185</b>	<b>449,883</b>	<b>-13.7</b>
<b>United States</b>	<b>14,688,200</b>	<b>14,729,200</b>	<b>13,989,300</b>	<b>12,393,700</b>	<b>-15.6</b>

Source: Regional Economic Information System (REIS), Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Dept. of Commerce

Half of the top-10 private economic sectors out of 20 private sectors are also among the top-10 in wages paid per employee.

**Region's Top 10 Private Economic Sectors with Most Employees**

1. Manufacturing\*
  2. Retail trade
  3. Health care and social assistance\*
  4. Farm employment
  5. Accommodation and food services
  6. Construction\*
  7. Other services, except public administration
  8. Finance and insurance\*
  9. Real estate and rental and leasing
  10. Wholesale Trade\*
- \*Sectors that are among the top-10 in wages paid per employee.

Source: 2008, Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Dept. of Commerce

Real estate equalized value has risen by 10.9% since 2006, almost twice as fast as the state.

**Equalized Value Trends 2006-2010**

	2006	2010	% Change 2006-2010
Buffalo	\$867,825,700	\$1,001,754,700	15.4%
Crawford	\$939,659,000	\$1,066,165,900	13.5%
Jackson	\$1,149,443,000	\$1,384,291,100	20.4%
La Crosse	\$6,888,109,200	\$7,641,024,000	10.9%
Monroe	\$2,226,336,600	\$2,562,041,600	15.1%
Pepin	\$495,473,500	\$532,175,500	7.4%
Pierce	\$3,069,621,200	\$2,907,417,200	-5.3%
Trempealeau	\$1,458,812,200	\$1,750,895,300	20.0%
Vernon	\$1,480,181,400	\$1,757,830,900	18.8%
<b>MRRPC Region</b>	<b>\$18,575,461,800</b>	<b>\$20,603,596,200</b>	<b>10.9%</b>
<b>Wisconsin</b>	<b>\$468,983,199,800</b>	<b>\$495,904,192,300</b>	<b>5.7%</b>

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue

The Region has lost sales tax revenue since 2006, while the state has gained.

**Sales Tax Trends 2006-2010**

	2006	2010	% Change 2006-2010
Buffalo	\$602,893	\$574,233	-4.8%
Crawford	\$1,392,221	\$1,255,398	-9.8%
Jackson	\$1,065,581	\$1,047,026	-1.7%
La Crosse	\$9,603,153	\$9,491,313	-1.2%
Monroe	\$2,592,939	\$2,595,395	0.1%
Pepin	\$375,938	\$356,031	-5.3%
Pierce	\$1,522,625	\$1,528,708	0.4%
Trempealeau	\$1,467,833	\$1,351,773	-7.9%
Vernon	\$1,231,376	\$1,275,716	3.6%
<b>MRRPC Region</b>	<b>\$19,854,558</b>	<b>\$19,475,593</b>	<b>-1.9%</b>
<b>Wisconsin</b>	<b>\$268,009,920</b>	<b>\$271,698,527</b>	<b>1.4%</b>

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue

Traveler spending in 2009 totaled \$587 million and supported over 9,500 jobs in the region.

**Travelers Expenditures - 2005, 2007 and 2009**

	2005	2007	2009	Pct Chge 2005-2009
Buffalo	18,152,372	20,085,476	19,011,066	4.7
Crawford	50,364,153	49,894,747	49,379,758	-2.0
Jackson	71,673,993	70,496,617	60,756,485	-15.2
La Crosse	205,187,373	211,201,626	210,335,407	2.5
Monroe	103,414,639	125,537,168	118,311,424	14.4
Pepin	8,035,216	9,005,462	9,234,099	14.9
Pierce	33,346,427	35,315,003	32,265,865	-3.2
Trempealeau	37,783,656	40,167,443	41,305,529	9.3
Vernon	41,682,258	45,895,536	46,826,252	12.3
<b>MRRPC Region</b>	<b>569,640,087</b>	<b>607,599,078</b>	<b>587,425,885</b>	<b>3.1</b>
<b>Wisconsin</b>	<b>11,950,050,300</b>	<b>12,775,536,291</b>	<b>12,091,745,226</b>	<b>1.2</b>

Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Tourism (Data prepared by Davidson-Peterson Assoc.)

In Trempealeau County some of the projects identified are: Investigate the concept of a voluntary floodplain property buyout; improve and develop more cooperative fire agreements among fire departments and the State Department of Natural Resources; update the existing list of buildings that can be used as shelters during extreme heat and cold events; purchase backup generators for emergency shelters and inventory and prioritize road segments that have shoulders susceptible to erosion and land/mud slides. City of Arcadia projects include: raise the Meyers Valley Creek dike 3 feet; replace the Creamery Bridge along CTH J; and develop logistics for the use of public trucks, dump trucks, end loaders and other equipment during natural disasters.

**OVER 170 FLOODPLAIN BUILDINGS MAPPED AS PART OF PEPIN COUNTY'S MULTHAZARD MITIGATION PLAN.** Staff is

assisting Pepin County prepare their first Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. The plan includes an inventory of over 170 land parcels with buildings with a total assessed value of over \$16.6 million. A draft of the Plan has been completed and a public hearing on the plan was held on June 8, 2011. Examples of proposed projects include: a backup generator for the county highway shop so county highway, law enforcement and emergency response services can refuel during a power outage; back-up generators for emergency shelters; and construction of a propane fuel storage site for emergency fuel when natural gas flow is cut off.

**FOOD RESOURCE AND AGRIBUSINESS NETWORK (FRAN) INDUSTRY CLUSTER INITIATIVE.** FRAN members have explored joint ventures

that would help them reduce costs and increase efficiencies. The shrink-wrap recycling effort has continued, with several FRAN members investigating how they could pool their recyclable shrink-wrap and sell it to recyclers, thus reducing their disposal costs and receiving some extra revenue, all while keeping this valuable material out of landfills. FRAN members have also explored what cooperative measures they could undertake in transportation. FRAN members filled out a survey which asked them to identify what types of raw materials they buy, where they originate, what types of products they produce, and where they deliver them. The effort has resulted in an incentive for two FRAN members to work together to combine some outgoing loads and backhauls, thus reducing some transportation costs for both companies.

Workforce Connections and Western Technical College have secured several grants for Workforce Advancement Training and Community Based Job Training. These grants have covered training programs in workplace safety, welding, electronics

maintenance, lean skills, leadership, and business software. Many FRAN members have taken advantage of these opportunities to enhance the knowledge, skills, and abilities of their workforces.

FRAN has heard from several guest speakers at its meetings, including speakers from the UDSA, Vernon County Economic Development Association, and SHE, Inc. Topics have included food safety, business incubators, storm water regulations, and sustainability. For more information on FRAN's activities, please visit the FRAN website: frannetwork.org.

**KVREDI PURSUING WOOD PELLET AND RECREATIONAL TRAIL PROJECTS.** The

Kickapoo Valley Regional Economic Development Initiative (KVREDI) is a collaborative group of municipalities, state agencies, and nonprofits that has grown out of efforts to help communities along the Kickapoo River recover from the disastrous flooding of 2007 and 2008. The KVREDI has identified three sectors as major economic drivers in the Valley: (1) agriculture and food processing; (2) wood and forest products; and (3) recreation and tourism. The MRRPC staff is involved in exploring the possibility of enhancing the wood and forest products industry in the Valley through investments from the federal government and charitable foundations in the Region. One very promising opportunity involves biofuels. The Kickapoo Valley forests produce wood that often just rots away because of the costs of harvesting it from the steep terrain. Under a joint organized venture, these wood products could possibly be harvested and used for furniture, cabinetry, and wood pellets. The MRRPC is working with organizations to investigate the feasibility of higher uses of wood products including surveying household demand for wood pellets if they were competitively priced and a reliable source. A heat and power plant that would also contribute to the manufacture of wood pellets is another concept being looked into. A combined power-generation-and-pellet-manufacturing-plant would have two benefits. First, it would help people in the Region reduce their dependence on fossil fuels for heating and electricity generation. Second, since the export market for wood pellets is larger than the domestic market, wood pellets are a value-added product that can be sold outside the Region, bringing in outside capital. Any such plant would be studied for its sustainability, since careful management of the forests of the Valley is required for the industry's success.

The KVREDI has also turned its attention to the recreation and tourism sector by studying the possibility of a trail from Wilton to Wauzeka. This trail is currently in the conceptual phase, and would take many years, even decades, to build. Several municipalities along the Kickapoo River are working independently on their own bike and walking trails, which raises the possibility of the larger trail simply being a means to connect

those municipal trails. The proposed route is conceived as following the old Stump Dodger Rail Line and would also run through public lands, such as the Kickapoo Valley Reserve, Wildcat Mountain State Park, and the Kickapoo River State Wildlife Area, which would ease the process of making the trail connections. Currently, the KVREDI trail committee is assessing how many parcels are along the potential route, and gauging landowners' interest about the potential for a great quality of life asset for the Region.

**PIERCE COUNTY OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN UPDATED.**

The Outdoor recreation plan for Pierce County has been updated. Updating this plan maintains Pierce County's eligibility to apply for grants under the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON) and the Wisconsin Stewardship Funds. In addition quality recreation resources play an important part in helping attract and retain business and a high-quality workforce. The plan identifies outdoor recreational facilities and programs for the County along with the Villages of Bay City, Ellsworth, Elmwood, Plum City, Spring Valley and the City of Prescott. In addition to identifying facilities the plan also lists projects or programs the various municipalities would like to do to improve recreational opportunities. Some of the projects listed are: expand boat launch at Trenton Island; expand trail system at Lee-Kay Forest; establish day use facilities at Martell Forest and to develop community parks at the Town of Clifton and Town of Oak Grove town hall sites.

**LinkWISCONSIN HIGH-SPEED INTERNET/ BROADBAND PLANNING.**

LinkWISCONSIN is a state-wide initiative to promote the availability of broadband internet access. The effort began with mapping of where broadband currently is available, is not available, and why not. The current phase involves working with planning groups throughout the state to develop a plan for establishing greater access to broadband. The state-wide effort is divided into 9 regions; most of the MRRPC is within Region 6. The MRRPC has been asked to take a leadership role in Region 6. LinkWISCONSIN has met in person and via conference calls for briefings on the mapping study, which shows areas of the state where broadband access is limited. As other Regions across the state have done, the Region 6 group has begun nominating projects that will be considered for the focus of this planning process. For more information on this state-wide effort, visit the website: [www.link.wisconsin.gov/lwi](http://www.link.wisconsin.gov/lwi).

**COUNTIES COLLABORATIVE COMPACT**

The MRRPC participated in meetings and planning sessions with various stakeholders in the Region – including La Crosse County, the 7 Rivers Alliance, and the La Crosse Area Development Committee – to develop the Counties Collaborative Compact. As a signatory of the Compact, the MRRPC has agreed to help in economic development efforts that will benefit the Region as a whole. This agreement calls on local units of government, nonprofits, educational institutions, and others who are engaged in economic development to consider that a success for one community in the Region benefits all. The Compact states that success in the global economy depends on local collaboration. Therefore, communities should see each other as partners in building a better economic future.

**BUSINESS LOANS**

Business Capital Fund (BCF):

The BCF approved one new loan in the last 12 months. This loan, for \$12,325, was for the expansion of a variety store in Galesville. The store is an entrepreneurial venture that sells sporting goods and craft items. It provides a marketplace for local craftspeople to sell their custom-made and hand-crafted goods. The BCF held its annual meeting on June 30, 2010, where it discussed proposed changes to the Administrative Plan and bylaws. The Economic Development Administration recommends that RLFs review their Administrative Plans and By-Laws once every 5 years or so. The major changes being considered had to do with altering some of the requirements for BCF loans to more accurately reflect the economic conditions of today. **Loan Funds are available, so if you know of a business in Pierce, Pepin, Buffalo, Trempealeau or Jackson County in need of gap financing, please have them give us a call.**

CMV Growth Development Fund: The CMV held its annual meeting was held on December 14, 2010. One of the topics at the meeting was marketing efforts that the CMV can make to promote the RLF, attract new borrowers, and thus stimulate more economic development in Crawford, Monroe, and Vernon Counties. In the fall of 2010, the CMV administrator embarked on an effort to raise awareness of the CMV by visiting interested lenders in Crawford, Monroe, and Vernon Counties. The CMV administrator also regularly visits the Vernon/Crawford Inventors and Entrepreneur Club meetings to publicize the fund to the creative and innovative people gathered there. The CMV is also reviewing its Administrative Plan and Bylaws for updating. **Loan Funds are available, so if you know of a business in Crawford, Vernon or Monroe County in need of gap financing, please have them give us a call.**

La Crosse County Economic Development Fund (LCEDF): The La Crosse County Economic Development Fund successfully weathered the closing of Skipperlin Industries, Inc., through the buyout and opening of Skipper Manufacturing. Skipperlin was a manufacturer of large yachts and tour ships. The recent recession, however, made it almost impossible for customers to get financing for their boats, causing Skipperlin Industries to close. Fortunately another La Crosse area businessman and past customer of Skipperlin Industries made an offer that was accepted. A new business was born, called Skipper Manufacturing, that will continue to manufacture the Skipperlin line of ships. Skipper Manufacturing has also assumed the loan debt and will soon start making payments again to the La Crosse County Economic Development Fund. This past year the Board of the LCEDF also made a new policy decision on documenting jobs. Now all existing and future loan recipients must provide copies of their Federal Form 941s and Wisconsin Unemployment Compensation Wage Reports each quarter. **Loan Funds are available, so if you know of a business in La Crosse County in need of gap financing, please have them give us a call.**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS) REPORT UPDATE**

At the April 13, 2011, meeting, the Commission approved the update to its CEDS, which outlines economic development strategies and projects, and maintains the eligibility of local governments and institutions in the Region to receive federal funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce—Economic Development Administration. Some of the current Regional trends included in this report are summarized below.

**Population has increased at a rate faster than the state, but slower than the nation.**



**Population Trends 2000-2010**

County	2000 Census	2010 Census	% Change 2000-2010
Buffalo	13,804	13,587	-1.6
Crawford	17,243	16,644	-3.5
Jackson	19,100	20,449	7.1
La Crosse	107,120	114,638	7
Monroe	40,899	44,673	9.2
Pepin	7,213	7,469	3.5
Pierce	36,804	41,019	11.5
Trempealeau	27,010	28,816	6.7
Vernon	28,056	29,773	6.1
<b>Region</b>	<b>297,249</b>	<b>317,068</b>	<b>6.7</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>5,363,715</b>	<b>5,686,986</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Nation</b>	<b>281,421,906</b>	<b>308,745,538</b>	<b>9.7</b>

Sources: US Census, 2000; WI Dept. of Administration - Demographic Services Ctr

**Regional housing is growing at a greater rate than the state and nation and increasing at a rate almost twice the rate of population growth in the region.**

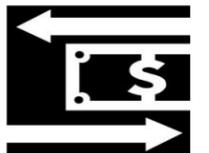


**Housing Trends 2000-2009**

County	2000	2009	% Change 2000-2009
Buffalo	6,098	6,679	9.5
Crawford	8,480	9,117	7.5
Jackson	8,029	9,127	13.7
La Crosse	43,479	48,129	10.7
Monroe	16,671	19,316	15.9
Pepin	3,036	3,402	12.1
Pierce	13,493	15,853	17.5
Trempealeau	11,482	12,780	11.3
Vernon	12,416	13,890	11.9
<b>Region</b>	<b>123,184</b>	<b>138,293</b>	<b>12.3</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>2,321,157</b>	<b>2,592,617</b>	<b>11.7</b>
<b>Nation</b>	<b>115,904,641</b>	<b>129,969,653</b>	<b>12.1</b>

Sources: US Census 2000; WI Dept. of Administration - Demographic Services Center, Annual Housing Survey; US Census Bureau, Population Division

**Regional per capita income is lower than the state and the nation. Buffalo County's per capita income is very close to matching the state.**



**Per Capita Income Trends - 2004-2008**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Buffalo	33,578	32,855	34,388	37,493	37,767
Crawford	25,088	25,833	26,748	27,946	28,774
Jackson	27,559	27,581	28,856	30,562	31,220
La Crosse	30,027	31,106	32,809	34,015	35,040
Monroe	26,199	26,731	27,662	29,045	30,153
Pepin	27,377	28,140	29,048	30,964	31,965
Pierce	29,418	30,041	31,058	32,477	33,151
Trempealeau	27,898	28,375	29,299	31,089	31,854
Vernon	23,511	24,007	25,570	27,107	28,045
<b>Region</b>	<b>27,851</b>	<b>28,297</b>	<b>29,493</b>	<b>31,189</b>	<b>31,997</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>32,721</b>	<b>33,673</b>	<b>35,644</b>	<b>36,990</b>	<b>37,770</b>
<b>Nation</b>	<b>33,881</b>	<b>35,424</b>	<b>37,698</b>	<b>39,392</b>	<b>40,166</b>

Source: Reg. Economic Information System, Bureau of Economic Analysis