

Village of Ontario Economic Development Plan 2018



Prepared by the Mississippi River Regional
Planning Commission with assistance from the
Village of Ontario Economic Development
Committee



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Village of Ontario Overview - Attachment #1

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ABSTRACT

Title: Village of Ontario Economic Development Plan

Summary: In 2017 the Village of Ontario Economic Development Committee contacted the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) regarding providing assistance to the Village with economic development activities and planning. The MRRPC facilitated a planning process with the Economic Development Committee to gather public input and identify economic development goals and actions. The purpose of this plan is to help provide direction for the committee in pursuing economic development activities.

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VILLAGE OF ONTARIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

In 2017 the Village of Ontario Economic Development Committee contacted the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) regarding providing assistance to the Village with economic development activities. The MRRPC as a planning organization agreed to assist the Village Economic Development Committee in its efforts by preparing a economic development plan for the Village. The purpose of the plan is to help provide direction for the committee in pursuing economic development activities.

Existing Data

To gain a better understanding of the Village of Ontario and Vernon County from an economic development perspective, it is important to have general background information on the local economy and community demographic information. Included in "Attachment 1" is a profile of the Village of Ontario which illustrates population, housing, per capita personal income, etc. and an Economic Overview of Vernon County. These documents provide important demographic and economic data on the Village of Ontario and Vernon County.

PUBLIC INPUT

One of the first steps in the planning process was to gather input from the residents, businesses, elected officials regarding economic development in the Village of Ontario. To accomplish this, the MRRPC facilitated a public meeting in which residents were invited to attend and provide input. Attendees of the public input meeting participated in two planning exercises which helped to identify economic development issues.

Exercise 1 - SWOT Analysis

The MRRPC facilitated a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) exercise at a public input meeting held at the Village Hall. The exercise identified what meeting participants feel are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (challenges) facing the Village of Ontario from an economic development perspective. The meeting facilitator listed various issues that meeting attendees identified as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (challenges) of the Village of Ontario. The responses were written on sheets of paper and placed throughout the room. Once all the issues were recorded each person voted for the issue or issues he/she felt were most important. This exercise was used to identify the issues that were most important to the people at the meeting.

Results of SWOT Analysis Exercise

The participants' responses have been grouped by subject category along with the number of votes each issue received.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<u>Recreation/Tourism (14 Total Votes)</u> Tourism (3) Recreational opportunities – outdoor (3) Kickapoo River (3) Palen Park (2) Wildcat Mountain (2) Green space – ball diamond in downtown area (1) Scenic highway intersections 131 & 33 (0) Kickapoo Valley Reserve (0) Strong hunting tradition (0)	<u>Lack of Selected Businesses/services (11 Total Votes)</u> Need more small businesses (6) Lack of grocery store (4) Lack of medical services (1) Lack substantial anchor business (jobs) (0)
<u>Rural Character/Scenery (12 Total Votes)</u> Unique rural character of area (7) Beautiful scenery – river surrounding area (5) Farming community – rural agriculture	<u>Downtown Business Buildings Deteriorating (10 Total Votes)</u> Downtown business buildings deteriorating (10) <u>Infrastructure/service Issues (communication, transportation, etc.) (10 Total Votes)</u> Lack infrastructure for new businesses (4) Poor internet & cell phone service (3) Location – far away from services (3) Lack of transportation services (0)

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Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><u>Local Businesses (8 Total Votes)</u> Local newspaper (4) Canoeing businesses (2) 3 Restaurants (2) Bank (0) Gas station – convenience store (0) Lodging – hotel, B&B (0) <u>Community Facilities (7 Total Votes)</u> Fire and ambulance (2) Churches and their involvement in the community (2) Community Center (1) Youth Center (1) Library (1) Police – public safety (0) Schools (0) Community Garden (0)</p> <p><u>Clubs, Celebrations (5 Total Votes)</u> Country Music Festivals (2) Community Club plan events (2) 4th of July Celebration (1) American Legion (0)</p> <p><u>Community Involvement (3 Total Votes)</u> Small town community involvement – People involved (3) Strong leadership – Village board & committees – no scandal</p> <p><u>Additional Strengths</u> Amish community (2) Cost of living is affordable (0) Friendly welcoming community (0) People choose to retire here. (0) Programs at library – crafts/educational (0)</p>	<p><u>Housing (8 Total Votes)</u> Houses need repair – removed or improved (4) Lack of affordable housing – rental, entry level, single family (4)</p> <p><u>Employment Opportunities (5 Total Votes)</u> No draw for young people to come back to Ontario after school – no jobs (3) Need employment opportunities for young people (2) Young people who live here don't work here (0)</p> <p><u>Local Business Support (5 Total Votes)</u> People need to support businesses that are here (5)</p> <p><u>Demographic Challenges (4 Total Votes)</u> Aging population – lacking middle aged (2) Disconnect with Hispanic population (2) Low income levels (0) Not enough people to volunteer due to low population (0)</p> <p><u>Additional Weaknesses</u> Lack of long-range planning (1) Lack of tax base (1) Flood plain (0) Not following through on projects – don't maintain (0) Need public bathrooms (0)</p>
Opportunities	Challenges
<p><u>Promotion and Recruiting (15 Total Votes)</u> Recruiting more businesses (11) Promotion of area (3) Partnerships with other communities (1) Reach out to alumni to bring young people back (0)</p> <p><u>Village Enhancements (15 Total Votes)</u> Use Village square and community hall more (7) Improve appearance of Village (6) Expand parks – flood plain, green space (2) Youth Center (0)</p> <p><u>Improve Trail/Sidewalk Connections (9 Total Votes)</u> Horse, bike trails – connections to Village (3) Sidewalks by canoe launches, then you can have crosswalks (3) Bridge across highway for pedestrians (2) Services and trails for ATV riders (1)</p> <p><u>Business Opportunities (9 Total Votes)</u></p>	<p><u>Deteriorating Business Buildings (12 Total Votes)</u> Deteriorating businesses – remove or improve (12)</p> <p><u>Community Involvement (11 Total Votes)</u> How to engage everyone – involvement by younger people (7) Get people to support local improvement efforts (4)</p> <p><u>Promotion of Village (8 Total Votes)</u> Updated website (3) Educate employees to let visitors know what is available (3) How to get tourists into town (1) Make a map for Amish businesses – green houses, bakeries, communication with Amish (1) Ways to promote Village (0) Make our Village welcoming (0)</p> <p><u>Housing/Business Space (5 Total Votes)</u></p>

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Opportunities	Challenges
<p>More lodging – camping, motel, RV, B&B (4) Organic farming or processing opportunities (4) Health care facility – Dr. Menn (1) Logging – buy local, use local (0) Unique product (0)</p> <p><u>Tourism Opportunities (4 Total Votes)</u> More tourism opportunities (4) Fishing – trout (0)</p> <p><u>Additional Opportunities</u> Housing for O.V. or younger employees (0) Local Chamber of Commerce (0) Amish could patronize businesses (0) Farmer's marketing (0)</p>	<p>Space for housing not available (5) Lack of available space for businesses (0)</p> <p><u>Infrastructure/service Issues (communication, transportation, etc.) (3 Total Votes)</u> High speed internet and cell phone (3) Transportation in and out (location) (0)</p> <p><u>Funding (3 Total Votes)</u> Money for Village improvements (2) Grant writing for funding (1)</p> <p><u>Additional Challenges</u> Poverty mindset – hopeless (2) Dependence on seasonal income (2) Flood plain (2) Regulations – too many (1) Pride in Village for cleanup (0) Jealous of success (0) Workforce (0)</p>

Exercise 2 (Keeps and Changes)

Each person attending the meeting was given a 3"x 5" card. Participants were asked if they had the ability to change three things in the Village what would they change (listed items on cards) and if they had the ability to keep three things in the Village what would they keep (listed items on the cards). The exercise attempts to identify things in the Village that people like or dislike. In addition, it helps to identify the issues that the meeting attendees feel are most important.

Results of Keeps and Changes Exercise

The participants responses have been grouped by subject category.



Ontario Village Park identified as a Village asset people wanted to "Keep".

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Keeps

- Small Town Atmosphere, Peaceful, Beauty, Welcoming (14 Responses)
- Palen Park or Parks (12 Responses)
- Community Hall/Village Square (7 Responses)
- Businesses/Existing Businesses (6 Responses)
- Tourism/River (5 Responses)
- Celebrations/Music (4 Responses)
- Library, Churches, Fire Dept. (4 Responses)

Additional Keeps listed

Buildings looking nice
Good Highways

Changes

- Downtown - Cleanup Buildings, Remove Old Buildings, Improve Downtown Appearance (13 Responses)
- Bring In More Businesses and Housing (9 Responses)
- Community Involvement/Support Need More (7 Responses)
- Remove or Repair Deteriorating Housing, Downtown Trailer Court, Property Maintenance (6 Responses)
- RV/Campground Needed (2 Responses)

Additional Changes listed

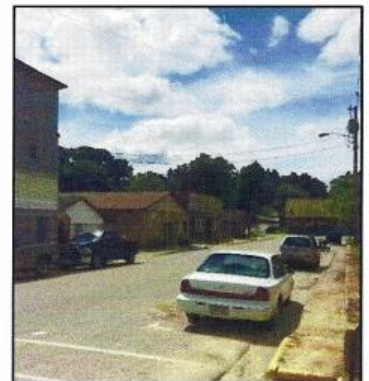
Business worker knowing what is available in the area
If starting a project find out what the up keep is going to be
Bike trail Wilton – Ontario, Trail Ontario – Wildcat Mountain
Flood plain
Attitude toward successful people
Welcome new residents and visitors
Crossing at Highway for canoe liveries
Add more funding from outside resources
Not a thing

VILLAGE OF ONTARIO GOALS

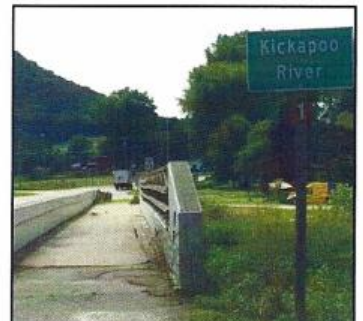
Based on input received from Economic Development Committee meetings and public input exercises conducted at the public input meeting, economic development goals were developed for the Village. The goals developed for the Village of Ontario focus on improving the Village and identifying opportunities to attract more people and businesses to the Village of Ontario and surrounding area. The goals developed are listed below.

Village of Ontario Economic Development Goals:

- *Promote the Village of Ontario to recruit businesses, increase tourism, and attract people to live and work in the community.*
- *Aesthetically enhance the Village of Ontario's business district, residential neighborhoods, and recreational areas.*
- *Improve connections to town – bike trails, walking, horseback, etc.*
- *Create opportunities to involve local residents of all ages in Village activities and projects.*
- *Promote local businesses and identify programs and resources to aid new and/or existing businesses in the Village.*



A goal is to aesthetically enhance the Village of Ontario downtown streets.



Kickapoo River Bridge and sidewalk are not connected to Village pedestrian facilities.

VILLAGE OF ONTARIO ACTION ITEMS

To aid in achieving the goals, a comprehensive list of action items were also identified. A total of thirty-seven action items were developed for the Village of Ontario. Due to the large number of action items the challenge for the Economic Development Committee was to prioritize the items and develop a framework in which to accomplish the prioritized items. Eleven action items were selected as high priority actions by the Economic Development Committee and were recommended for implementation. The prioritized action items as well as steps to accomplish the actions are listed below. As prioritized action items are accomplished, work on additional items can begin. Additional action items developed during the planning process are listed following the prioritized action items.

High Priority – Short Term Action Items (1-3 Years)

- I. Continue to maintain and update the Village website that serves as a portal for tourism information and includes appropriate resource information for existing and new business owners considering locating in the Village.
 - a. Continue to contract website development and maintenance services on an annual basis.
 - b. Clarify management control of the website (identify who is authorized to modify/update the website).
 - c. Develop a blog on the website that provides current information on Village/business activities and events.
 - d. Consider creating a retail/office/industrial space or property availability database on the Village website. The database could be offered voluntarily for landowners wishing to list their space or property on the Village website. A listing of people or businesses desiring space could also be maintained.
 - Review the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation "Available Sites" website or the 7 Rivers "Certified Sites" or "Golden Shovel Ready Sites" as possible templates to develop information for the Village of Ontario.
 - e. Website information and/or blog posts could be incorporated into a quarterly newsletter that could be distributed to Village residents via utility billings.



Updated Village of Ontario website.

Funding

Currently no cost for website maintenance and updating. Website hosting fees and newsletter costs could be funded by annual appropriation through the Village budget.

Project Lead

Ontario Economic Development Committee and website contractor (Amanda Leis)

- II. Establish a Farmer's Market in the Village. A Farmer's Market would provide an outlet for local products and goods. Such a market would provide an outlet for Amish goods and Amish interaction with local businesses. It would also serve as an inexpensive outlet for local producers, "crafters" or entrepreneurs to sell or gain exposure to their products. In addition, it would serve as a regular event that would bring people to Ontario and help generate "traffic" in the Village.
 - a. Initiate farmer's market in late May 2018 (Thursdays in the late afternoon to early evening).
 - b. Identify an indoor location for inclement weather.
 - c. Invite all local producers to be part of the farmer's market.
 - d. Locate the farmer's market near the park with easy access for tourists.

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- e. Create a community atmosphere with arts, games, face painting, music, etc.
- f. Consider having cooking classes at market.
- g. Place posters at Wildcat Mountain, Milk Jug and other convenient places in Ontario, Cashton, La Farge, etc.
- h. Utilize Facebook and maintain a social media presence highlighting farmer's market events weeks in advance.
- i. Reach out to high school students interested in helping to maintain/coordinate events. Contact churches and welcome input and support.
- j. Establish a committee/organization to manage/set up farmer's market.
- k. Consider developing an indoor co-op beginning in October 2018 based on interest garnered from producers involved in the farmer's market.

Funding

Limited cost associated with the recommendations. Booth/space fees could be established to offset costs.

Project Lead

Ontario Economic Development Committee, Dena Eakles

- III. Promote intergenerational activities in the Village. The purpose of this initiative is to get as many people (generations) as possible involved in community activities and events.
- a. Provide a venue for Saturday entertainment in the park (anyone who has a start-up band, etc. could perform)
 - b. Continue to support regular concerts all summer (possibly twice a month) in the Village.
 - c. Evaluate creating a "game night" at recreation center.
 - d. Evaluate building a permanent shelter and/or stage for better seating. The stage could be constructed to look like a barn or covered bridge - something that attracts people. Proceeds from the concerts could go toward bathroom facility, etc.

Funding

Limited cost associated project unless item (d) is pursued. Funding for events could come from event fees, sponsorship from a local business or organization, appropriation in annual Village budget.

Project Lead

Ontario Economic Development Committee

- IV. Continue efforts to form a business association or chamber of commerce that would be a non-governmental entity to assist in fulfilling economic development activities. The business organization could advertise, plan events, and help each other. The business group could maintain regular contact with existing business owners to monitor their needs and discuss issues and concerns.

- a. Facilitate an annual meeting of the Village Board and Village of Ontario businesses. The purpose of the meeting would be to provide a forum for the Village Board to share information on upcoming Village projects, needs, and



Village of Ontario canoe businesses are vital to the local economy.

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challenges. Likewise, businesses could share information on their future plans, needs and challenges. Such a meeting could be conducted in an informal setting (possibly a picnic at a Village facility or local business) which would foster better discussion.

- b. The Economic Development Committee could be responsible for planning and facilitating the meeting. The meeting should include short presentations/discussions about Village and business projects.
- c. Consider applying to become a State of Wisconsin "Connect Community" designated through the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. The program provides technical assistance to communities in the planning, management and implementation of strategic development projects in downtowns and urban neighborhoods. An annual fee of \$200.00 is the cost of the program for designated communities.

Funding

Limited cost associated with the recommendation. Funding could come from appropriation in annual budget or sponsorship from a local business or organization.

Project Lead

Staci Pieper

- V. Further strengthen the connection with the Kickapoo Valley Reserve and Wildcat Mountain State Park and develop strong partnerships with existing regional organizations that currently oversee activities that promote recreation and tourism resources in the area. Increase exposure through coordinated marketing of tourism and recreational opportunities available in the Village of Ontario and surrounding area (Kickapoo River, Kickapoo Valley Reserve, Wildcat Mountain, etc.). In addition, identify potential regional tourism opportunities.
- a. Meet with the Kickapoo Valley Reserve and Wildcat Mountain State Park to discuss marketing collaboration opportunities. Also discuss shared programming events/classes that could take place at different locations and facilities (determine the feasibility of holding some programming events in Ontario).
 - b. Explore opportunities to make Ontario the focal point of motorcycle tours, bike tours, bus tours, car tours. Identify communities that have been successful in attracting tours and meet with and/or visit such communities to learn from their experiences.



Wildcat Mountain State Park and the Kickapoo Valley Reserve are destinations for many travelers.



Funding

Limited cost associated with the recommendation. Requires scheduling/holding meetings with local/state/federal facilities.

Project Lead

Ontario Economic Development Committee

- VI. Explore opportunities to provide public bathrooms and/or showers facilities for canoers and visitors. Such facilities would assist in encouraging visitors to stay in the Village. An option for the public bathrooms and shower facilities is to add on or modify the Village Community Hall. As described in Action VIII (below) a committee is being established to determine the renovations that are necessary to preserve the Community Hall. The findings of that committee will determine if the Community Hall site could house the public restrooms/shower facilities. Complicating matters is the location of the Community Hall in the Kickapoo River flood plain.
- If the Community Hall is considered as a site for the public restrooms/shower facilities, consult with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding floodplain issues to determine if it is feasible to connect bathroom/shower facilities to Community Hall.
 - Continue to evaluate alternate locations in the Village for public bathroom/shower facilities.
 - Once a final location for bathroom/shower facilities is determined, contract with a consultant to prepare a conceptual site plan, scope of work, and detailed cost estimate.

Funding

Cost to be determined based on conceptual site plan. Estimated cost \$80,000 - \$120,000.

Funding sources: WEDC Community Investment Grant (up to 25% of project costs), USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program, Organic Valley Community Giving Program, Otto Bremer Trust, ITBEC, facility/user fees.

Project Lead

Sue Blanchard

- VII. Encourage efforts to improve mobile wireless phone reception and internet service in the area. Cellular phone reception and internet accessibility for residents and visitors is sporadic and unreliable depending on location and the service providers in the Ontario area. Visitors seeking information via internet in many cases do not have service, potentially resulting in visitors leaving the Village due to service disruptions.
- Vernon County is located in an area that is eligible for Wisconsin Broadband Expansion Grants. It is recommended that discussions be facilitated with internet service providers encouraging them to apply for funding to increase service levels (download/upload connections speeds).
 - Mobile wireless carriers have their own coverage boundaries and generally do not share connectivity speeds. It is recommended that outreach to mobile wireless providers be made informing them of service issues and encourage service improvement to the area.
 - Facilitate a meeting with state and federal elected representatives to bring awareness and discuss the internet service/communication needs of the Village of Ontario and surrounding area.
 - Explore wireless options such as Bugtusselwireless.com. a company that provides wireless service to rural Wisconsin.
 - Support efforts by the Wisconsin Legislature to convince the FCC to provide regulatory certainty to TV White Space. Permitting three channels of TV white space in media markets would enhance the possibility for pilot projects in Wisconsin communities to improve internet service.

Funding

No/limited cost associated with the recommendation. The recommendation primarily involves advocating for better internet/wireless service.

Project Lead

Ontario Economic Development Committee

VIII. The Village Community Hall is in need of renovation to aid in preserving and enhancing the public facility. A committee is being formed to determine the renovation needs and oversee the project.

- a. Form a committee to oversee the community hall renovation.
- b. Define renovation project (renovation plan) and prioritize actions.
- c. Continue events to raise funding for the renovation project.
- d. Continue to promote the www.ontariocommunityhall.org website and GoFundMe page.
- e. Determine additional fundraising needs and activities.



Historic Ontario Community Hall.

Funding

To be determined.

Project Lead

Karen Parker

High Priority - Long Term Action Items (3-10 Years)

IX. Explore and promote additional amenities that would serve the needs of residents and tourists.

- a. Conduct a market survey to determine the demand/need for overnight lodging, food cooperative, restaurant, campground, farmers market etc. The intent of such a study/survey would be to identify service or amenity deficiencies in the Village.
 - Create a consumer survey for the Village of Ontario. MRRPC can provide an example consumer survey that could be modified for the Village of Ontario.
 - Distribute the consumer survey to residents and visitors. Work with local businesses as outlets to distribute the consumer surveys to business patrons.
 - Consider creating an abbreviated consumer survey to distribute to canoers visiting Ontario. The consumer survey could be distributed for a couple of weekends at canoe rental businesses.
 - Tabulate and review results.



Ontario Village Park Improvements.

Funding

Limited cost associated with implementing the recommendation if done "in house" (copying costs and tabulation).

Project Lead

Ontario Economic Development Committee

VILLAGE OF ONTARIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

X. Encourage the aesthetic improvement of existing buildings in the Village of Ontario.

- a. Consider developing annual community business and/or residential property award(s) for landscaping, beautification, business improvement, home improvement, etc. This could be facilitated by the Village by taking nominations then selecting properties via an oversight committee or community ballot.
- b. Review existing Village ordinances regarding property maintenance and evaluate implementation and enforcement measures.
- c. Promote awareness to the Village "Spring Clean-up Day" and to existing ordinances addressing property maintenance through the Village website and newsletter.
- d. Review zoning ordinances of other communities and determine if modifications/updates are need to Village of Ontario ordinances.



Encourage improvement of Ontario Downtown business properties.

Funding

Limited cost associated with the recommendations. Ordinances can be reviewed by Village staff/committee members. Promotional information can be distributed via newsletter/website.

Project Lead

Ontario Economic Development Committee

XI. In an effort to enhance the aesthetic appearance of the Village to support tourism and tourism related businesses, identify and pursue funding for a streetscape concept that can create a unique visual identity for the Village. Utilize the uniqueness of Village Square and surrounding buildings- it is a focal point for all of the things people love about our Village. Streetscaping is an important tool that can be utilized to create a unique visual identity for the Village.

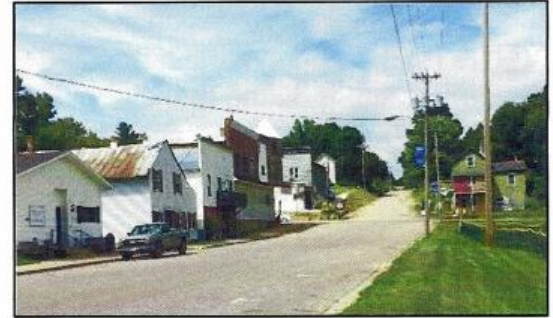
- a. Determine an aesthetic theme for the Village to pursue (old West, historic, etc.)
- b. Consider pursuing a "Senior Thesis/Capstone Project" through the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Landscape Architecture. Students in their senior year must complete a Thesis/Capstone Project focusing on community based design and planning issues. Projects are completed by a student, guided by an advisory group from the community, and supervised by Landscape Architecture faculty.



Main Street looking east in downtown Ontario.

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"Capstone projects for current BSLA and BS major programs. BSLA seniors take on an individual yearlong capstone project with a community partner. These average about 18 per year and serve municipalities, agencies, nonprofits and communities throughout the State of WI and beyond, including Troy Communities, City of Milwaukee, City of Madison, UniverCity Year initiative, UW System, and more. Capstone projects have occurred in more than 75% of Wisconsin's counties and with other organizations and tribal governments. For the 2017-2018 Capstone project, the Landscape Architecture program was able to accommodate 13 projects that include communities in Kaukana, WI; St. Louis, MO; Grantsburg, WI; Rusk County, WI; Racine, WI; and Wausau, WI. To be considered for the 2018-2019 Capstone Project, communities, organizations, etc., can send an email to Eric Schuchardt at ejschuchardt@wisc.edu."



Garden Street a highly visible street in the Village downtown area.

c. Promote business improvement grant/loan opportunities to local businesses. (See Attachment 2)

Funding

If the Village utilizes the Capstone Program to develop a "Streetscape Concept" the cost would be approximately \$500-\$1,000

Project Lead

Ontario Economic Development Committee

Additional Action Items

Additional action items identified during the planning process are listed below. These action items were not designated as high priority actions by the committee during the planning process. The action items are recognized by the Economic Development Committee as being important but due to staff/volunteer time available the items cannot be immediately addressed. As discussed previously, once prioritized action items are accomplished, work on the additional items listed below can be initiated.

1. Develop a brochure identifying businesses and topics of interest to tourists.
2. Focus on attracting/recruiting more service type uses (doctor, dentists, etc.,) to the Village.
3. The connection of the Amish community to the Village of Ontario is important and should be enhanced. Recommendations included:
 - A designated visitor center that would provide directions and information on accessing Amish goods and services.
 - Encourage businesses in the Village to offer Amish goods (some visitors may not be comfortable travelling to the rural areas and visiting private residences)
 - Connect with the Amish Community with a Farmer's Market in Ontario. A market would provide the Amish with a retail outlet for their products as well as provide residents and tourists easy access to Amish products.
4. Develop an informational packet for potential homeowners highlighting community resources and services. In addition, publicize this information on the Village website. The informational packet could be developed by Village staff or the designated economic development committee/organization.

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5. Agri-tourism in the State of Wisconsin is a growing element of tourism and continues to flourish in Western Wisconsin. The Village of Ontario is in an ideal position to take advantage of growth in agri-tourism. Visitors are seeking opportunities to connect to the rural lifestyle and home grown/produced products. Whether it be wine, cheese/dairy, antiques, furniture, produce, or the rural experience tourists desire access to these products. The Village of Ontario is fortunate to be located where all these products are accessible. Equipped with this information the Village and businesses can:
 - Designate a visitor center that would provide directions and access to Amish goods/services along with agri-tourism products.
 - Create opportunities for visitors to have access to agri-tourism products in the Village (Farmer's Market, retail outlet facility, etc.).
6. Promote public and private property enhancement opportunities. This could be accomplished by distributing information in a Village newsletter mailed with water bills.
 - Inform residents of outlets for the removal of appliances and abandoned/non-operable vehicles.
 - Publicize Village large item pick up/drop-off days or clean up days.
 - Provide education and information to residents regarding health/safety issues and recycling opportunities.
 - Consider developing annual community business and/or residential property award(s) for landscaping, beautification, business improvement, home improvement, etc. This could be facilitated by the Village by taking nominations then selecting properties via an oversight committee or community ballot.
7. Relationships with clubs, organizations and businesses could also assist with maintenance and up keep of public recreation areas. The Village could facilitate an "Adopt a Path" or "Adopt a Park" program to assist with maintenance.
8. Explore developing a Village of Ontario Garden Club that could enhance Village properties.
9. Repaint the Village identification and welcome signs.
10. Explore "Habitat for Humanity" as an option to increase/improve housing opportunities.
11. Work with the Ontario Development Corporation to explore funding opportunities for community and business projects.
12. Explore the feasibility of a horse trail into the Village of Ontario.
13. Determine if the existing hitching post needs to be relocated or enlarged.
14. Continue to work with Vernon County every five years on updates to the Vernon County Outdoor Recreation Plan. Every five years the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission updates the Vernon County Outdoor Recreation Plan. During that plan update process individual communities are requested to provide a listing of future recreation projects they would like included in the plan. It is important that the Village of Ontario identifies proposed recreation projects when requested. Participation in the plan maintains eligibility for the Village and county to apply for DNR recreational grant funding to improve parks. In addition to park grants, the Village may request DNR recreational grant funding for bike/pedestrian trails in the Village.
15. Consider creating a system of multiuse (bicycle, pedestrian, etc.) trails throughout the Village and neighboring areas connecting Village recreational properties to businesses, residential neighborhoods, and regional recreation areas.

- Identify preferred walking/biking routes within the Village in an effort to create a walking/biking loop in the Village for residents and visitors to use. Identify areas where existing infrastructure (sidewalks) is located or streets with minimal traffic conflicts.
 - Focus routes on connecting significant community facilities or business areas.
 - Evaluate developing a history walk in the Village by placing signs along the sidewalks/trails pointing out historic points of interest.
16. In Village water bills distributed quarterly, describe Village activities/projects (in a newsletter) and request resident volunteers.
 17. Establish "community gardens" on designated properties. The designated areas would be available for residents to plant and maintain gardens.
 - Identify potential properties
 - Develop user guidelines and responsibilities
 18. Explore opportunities to involve youth/teen groups (Boy/Girl Scouts, 4-H clubs, etc.) in Village clean-up activities.
 19. Encourage programs in the school system to teach local trades to students.
 20. Explore creating a tool library.
 21. Identify a person or persons who could assist the Village in writing grant applications. Attend grant writing seminars/workshops when made available through agencies/organizations.
 22. Inform existing and/or new businesses of funding opportunities through the following local programs:
 - CMV Growth Development Fund: The CMV Growth Development Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) is designed to foster growth in economic base activities that are the dominant force in affecting economic growth or decline in the Tri-county area of Crawford, Monroe and Vernon counties. The fund is targeted to manufacturers, tourism and selected service industries that create jobs.
 - Vernon County Revolving Loan Program: Matching funds of at least one dollar of private funds for each dollar of Vernon County Funds must be obtained. Additionally, one job must be created for every \$35,000 of Vernon County Funds.
 23. Explore the possibility of property for sale by the school and hill.
 24. Consider a Pop-Up Shop program in the Village. Explore opportunities with local businesses/landlords to allow entrepreneurs the opportunity to occupy a space temporarily (1-3 months) rent-free or at a discounted rate. Such a program would allow entrepreneurs a temporary location to test out a business idea.
 25. Develop an informational packet for businesses highlighting community resources and services. In addition, publicize this information on the Village website. The informational packet could be developed by Village staff or the designated economic development committee/organization.
 26. Support entrepreneur's clubs and business incubators that provide opportunities, resource sharing, and skills development for entrepreneurs. In addition, explore developing local incentives or tools such as a

revolving or microloan fund, affordable start-up space, and or technical assistance to support entrepreneurship in the Village.

CONCLUSION

This condensed Economic Development Plan was prepared to assist the Village of Ontario Economic Development Committee in pursuing economic development activities that will benefit the Village of Ontario and surrounding area. A primary purpose of the plan was to assist in facilitating public input as well as organizing and prioritizing economic development activities derived from community input. It is intended that this plan provides direction for the Economic Development Committee in pursuing economic development activities that will benefit the Village of Ontario.

Attachment #1- Village of Ontario Overview

Village of Ontario Profile

Vernon County, WI

POPULATION

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Ontario	392	398	407	476	554
County of Vernon	24,557	25,642	25,617	28,056	29,773
State of Wisconsin	4,417,821	4,705,642	4,891,599	5,363,675	5,686,986

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

HOUSING UNITS

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Ontario	173	186	197	254	253
County of Vernon	8,448	10,141	10,830	12,416	13,720
State of Wisconsin	1,472,332	1,863,897	2,055,676	2,321,144	2,624,358

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

REAL ESTATE EQUALIZED VALUES

Millions of Dollars

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Ontario \$	15	15	15	15	14
County of Vernon \$	1,758	1734	1,732	1,744	1,770
State of Wisconsin \$	483,967	475,506	459,699	455,740	466,816

Source: State of Wisconsin Department of Revenue

PER CAPITA PERSONAL INCOME

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
County of Vernon \$	29,030	29,865	31,362	32,206	33,317
State of Wisconsin \$	38,380	38,728	40,780	42,475	43,244
United States \$	39,379	40,144	42,332	44,200	44,765

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, REIS

UNEMPLOYMENT TRENDS

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Vernon County Labor Force	15,182	15,044	15,165	15,083
Number Employed	14,123	14,084	14,257	14,337
Number Unemployed	1,059	960	908	746
Vernon County Unemployment Rate %	7	6.4	6.0	4.9
Wisconsin Unemployment Rate %	7.8	7.0	6.8	5.5
U.S. Unemployment Rate %	8.9	8.1	7.4	6.2

Source: State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY - 2000

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing/Hunting, Mining:	6
Construction:	12
Manufacturing:	75
Wholesale Trade:	0
Retail Trade:	12
Transportation and Warehousing and Utilities:	4
Information:	1
Finance, Ins, Real Estate, Rental/leasing:	8
Prof, Scientific, Mgt, Admin and Waste Mgt Serv:	0
Educational, Health Social Serv:	47
Arts, Entertain, Rec, Accom and Food Serv:	14
Other Services (except public admin):	8
Public Admin:	7
Total Employment by Industry	194

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

2012 WAGE ESTIMATES

	Average	Experienced
Office Clerks, general:	13.79	16.01
Welders, Cutters, Solderers and Brazers:	15.61	17.95
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor Trailer:	19.65	22.19
Computer Programmers:	28.04	32.63
Construction Laborers:	18.87	21.76
*Financial Managers, Branch or Dept.:	32.97	41.15
Maintenance Workers, Machinery:	19.79	22.05
*Janitors and Cleaners, except maids and hskkeeping:	12.43	14.22
Licensed Practical and Vocational Nurses:	18.52	19.70
Retail Salespersons:	11.66	13.45

*Occupation data not available, data shown reflects nearest match to occupation

Source: Wis. Dept. of Workforce Development

EDUCATION

*2013-2014	**2012-2013	County*	State**
High School Drop Out Rate %:		0.38	1.35

2014 TAXES

-Local Property Taxes-

2014 Effective Full Value Rate/\$1000:	22.23
2014 Real and Pers Property Full Value:	14,845,400

-LOCAL CONTACT-

Name:	Village Clerk
Address:	205 State Street, PO Box 66
City, State, and Zip	Ontario, WI 54651
Telephone:	(608) 337-4381
Email:	villageofontario@centurytel.net

-REGIONAL CONTACT-

Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission
1707 Main Street, Suite 435 La Crosse, WI 54601
Telephone: 608-785-9396 Fax: 608-785-9394
Email: plan@mrrpc.com Website: www.mrrpc.com



Vernon County, WI

Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission



1707 Main Street, Suite 435
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601

Contents

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Historic & Projected Trends	3
Population Characteristics	7
Industry Characteristics	9
Business Characteristics	16
Workforce Characteristics	18
Educational Pipeline	25

Economy Overview

30,934

Population (2017)

Population grew by 720 over the last 5 years and is projected to grow by 653 over the next 5 years.

10,714

Jobs (2017)

Jobs grew by 622 over the last 5 years and are projected to grow by 698 over the next 5 years.

\$49.5K

Median Household Income (2016)

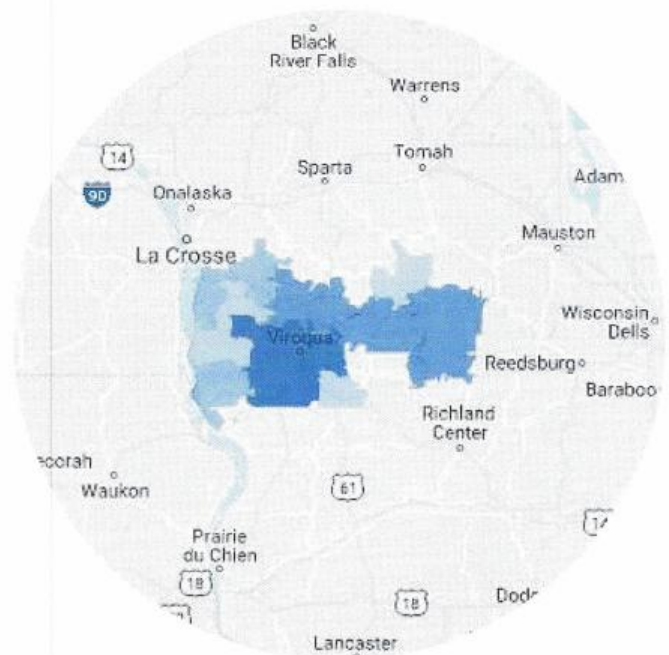
Median household income is \$5.8K below the national median household income of \$55.3K.

As of 2017 the region's population increased by 2.4% since 2012, growing by 720. Population is expected to increase by 2.1% between 2017 and 2022, adding 653.

From 2012 to 2017, jobs increased by 6.2% in Vernon County, WI from 10,092 to **10,714**. This change fell short of the national growth rate of 8.2% by 2.0%. As the number of jobs increased, the labor force participation rate increased from 63.5% to 67.0% between 2012 and 2017.

Concerning educational attainment, **13.0% of Vernon County, WI residents possess a Bachelor's Degree** (5.4% below the national average), and **11.1% hold an Associate's Degree** (3.2% above the national average).

The top three industries in 2017 are Education and Hospitals (Local Government), Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals, and Restaurants and Other Eating Places.



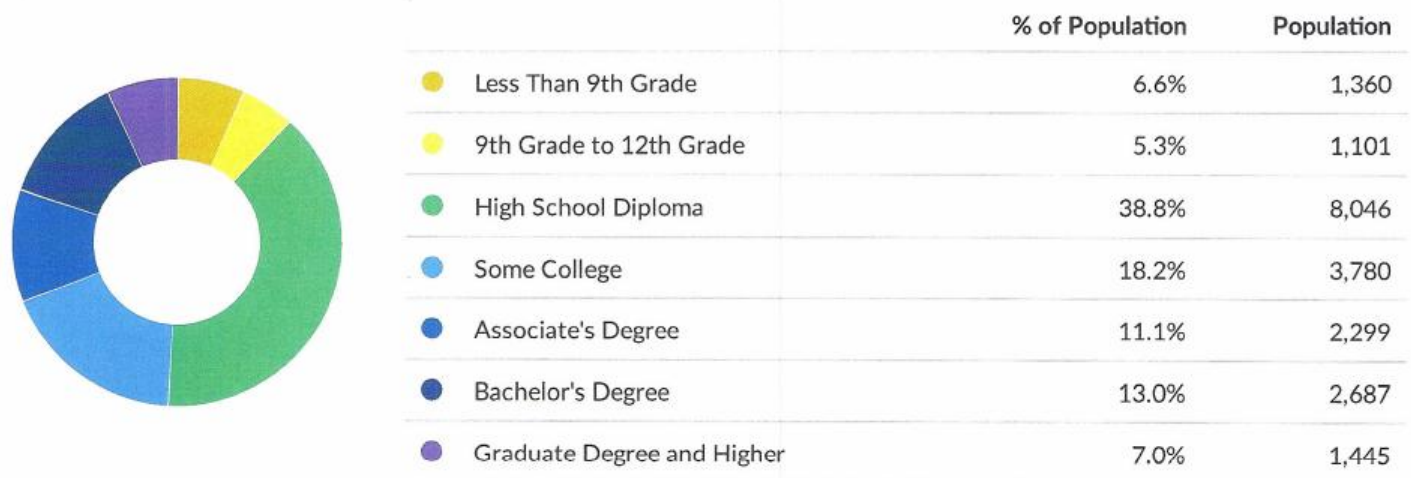
Economy Overview - Cont.

2017 Labor Force Breakdown



Educational Attainment

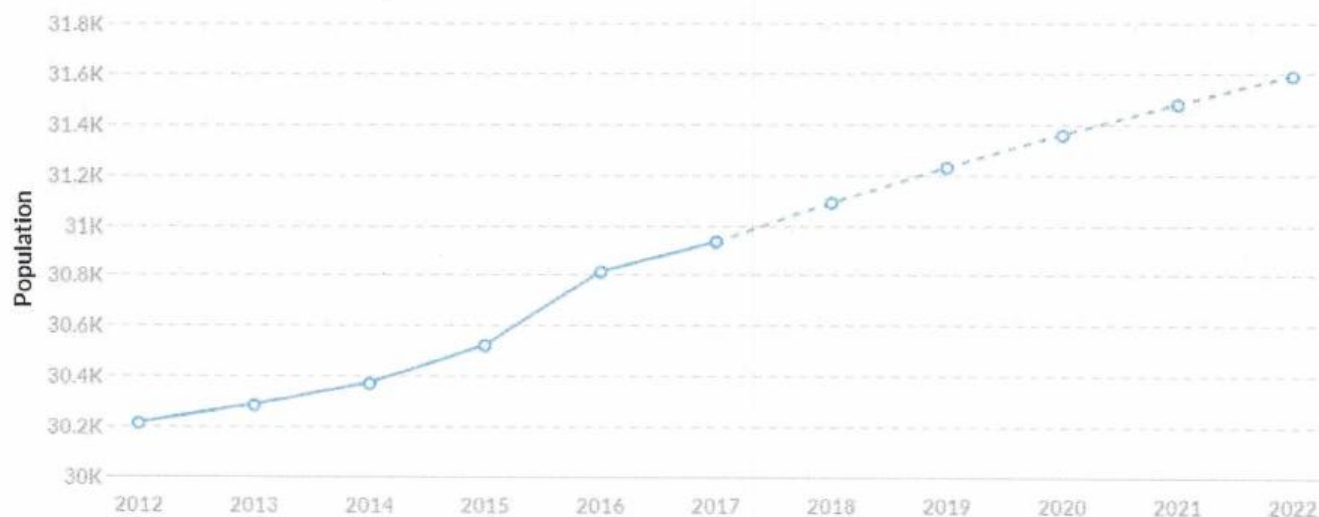
Concerning educational attainment, **13.0% of Vernon County, WI residents possess a Bachelor's Degree** (5.4% below the national average), and **11.1% hold an Associate's Degree** (3.2% above the national average).



Historic & Projected Trends

Population Trends

As of 2017 the region's population increased by 2.4% since 2012, growing by 720. Population is expected to increase by 2.1% between 2017 and 2022, adding 653.

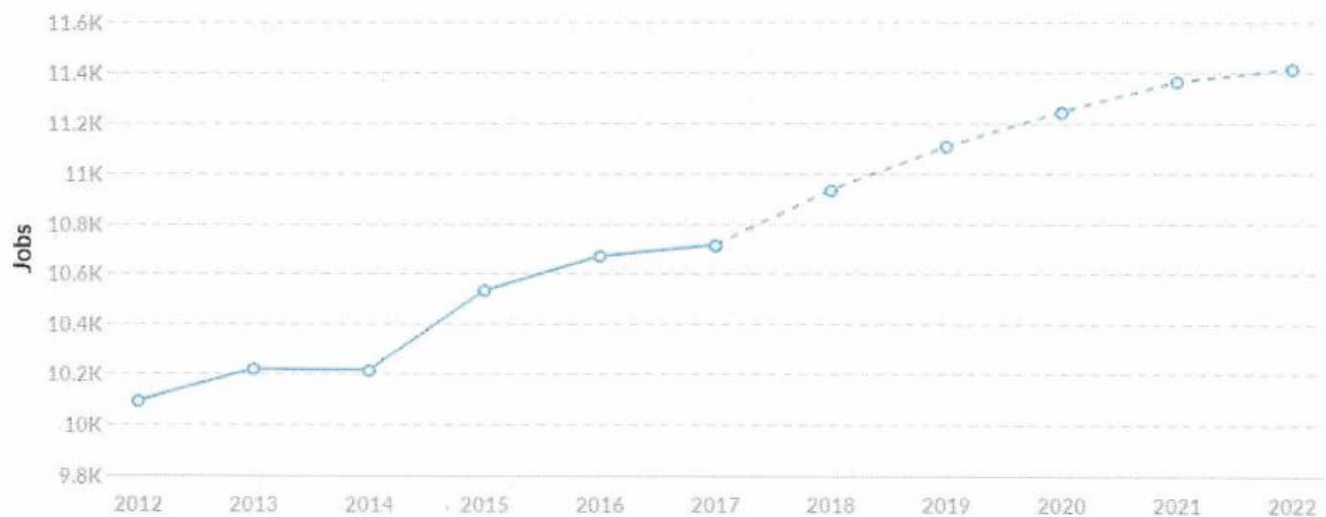


Timeframe	Population
2012	30,214
2013	30,288
2014	30,373
2015	30,523
2016	30,814
2017	30,934
2018	31,087
2019	31,228
2020	31,358
2021	31,478
2022	31,587

Historic & Projected Trends - Cont.

Job Trends

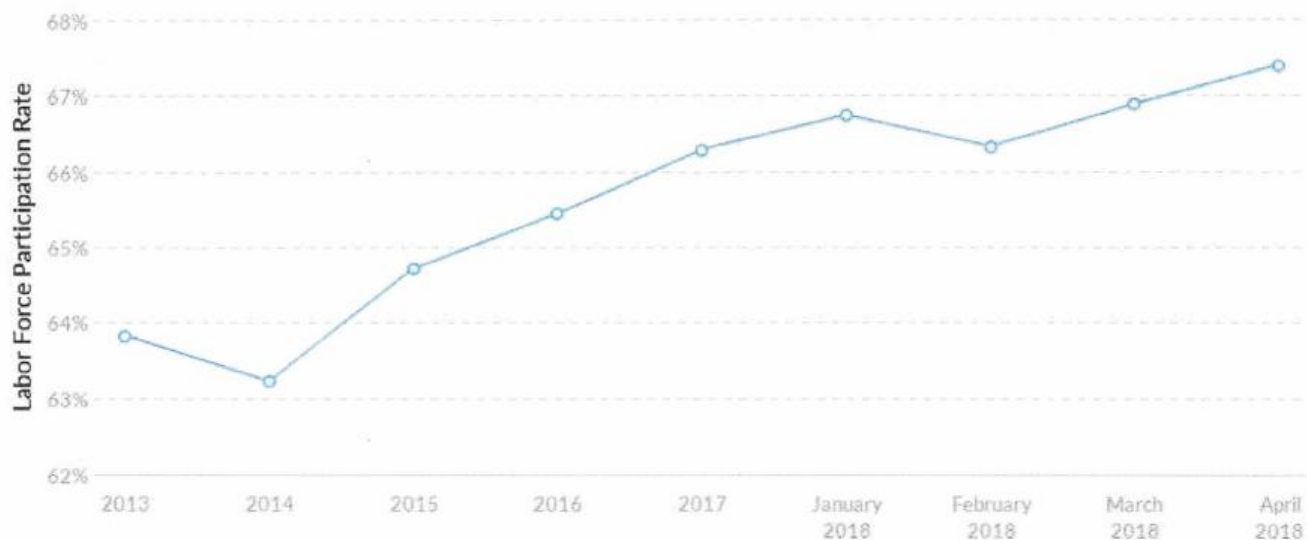
From 2012 to 2017, jobs increased by 6.2% in Vernon County, WI from 10,092 to 10,714. This change fell short of the national growth rate of 8.2% by 2.0%.



Timeframe	Jobs
2012	10,092
2013	10,218
2014	10,216
2015	10,535
2016	10,669
2017	10,714
2018	10,933
2019	11,105
2020	11,244
2021	11,361
2022	11,412

Historic & Projected Trends - Cont.

Labor Force Participation Rate Trends



Timeframe	Labor Force Participation Rate
2013	63.83%
2014	63.23%
2015	64.71%
2016	65.44%
2017	66.28%
January 2018	66.74%
February 2018	66.32%
March 2018	66.88%
April 2018	67.40%

Historic & Projected Trends - Cont.

Unemployment Rate Trends

Vernon County, WI had an April 2018 unemployment rate of 2.66%, **decreasing from 5.96% 5 years before.**



Timeframe	Unemployment Rate
2013	5.96%
2014	4.84%
2015	4.11%
2016	3.64%
2017	3.07%
January 2018	3.28%
February 2018	3.49%
March 2018	3.40%
April 2018	2.66%

Population Characteristics



Millennials

Vernon County, WI has 4,445 millennials (ages 20-34). The national average for an area this size is 6,395.



Retiring Soon

Retirement risk is high in Vernon County, WI. The national average for an area this size is 4,696 people 65 or older, while there are 5,903 here.



Racial Diversity

Racial diversity is low in Vernon County, WI. The national average for an area this size is 11,935 racially diverse people, while there are 1,139 here.



Veterans

Vernon County, WI has 2,016 veterans. The national average for an area this size is 1,863.



Violent Crime

Vernon County, WI has 0.62 violent crimes per 1,000 people. The national rate is 3.75 per 1,000 people.



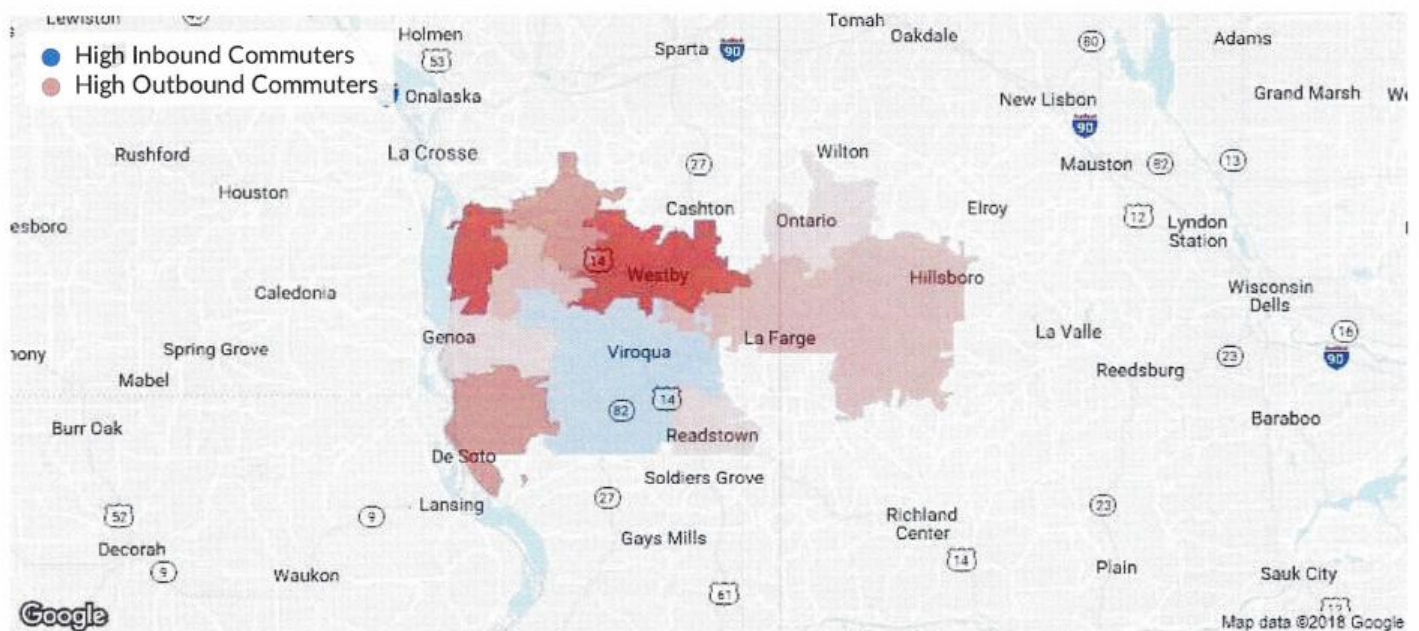
Property Crime

Vernon County, WI has 10.25 property crimes per 1,000 people. The national rate is 24.22 per 1,000 people.

Population Characteristics - Cont.

Place of Work vs Place of Residence

Understanding where talent in Vernon County, WI currently works compared to where talent lives can help you optimize site decisions.



Where Talent Works

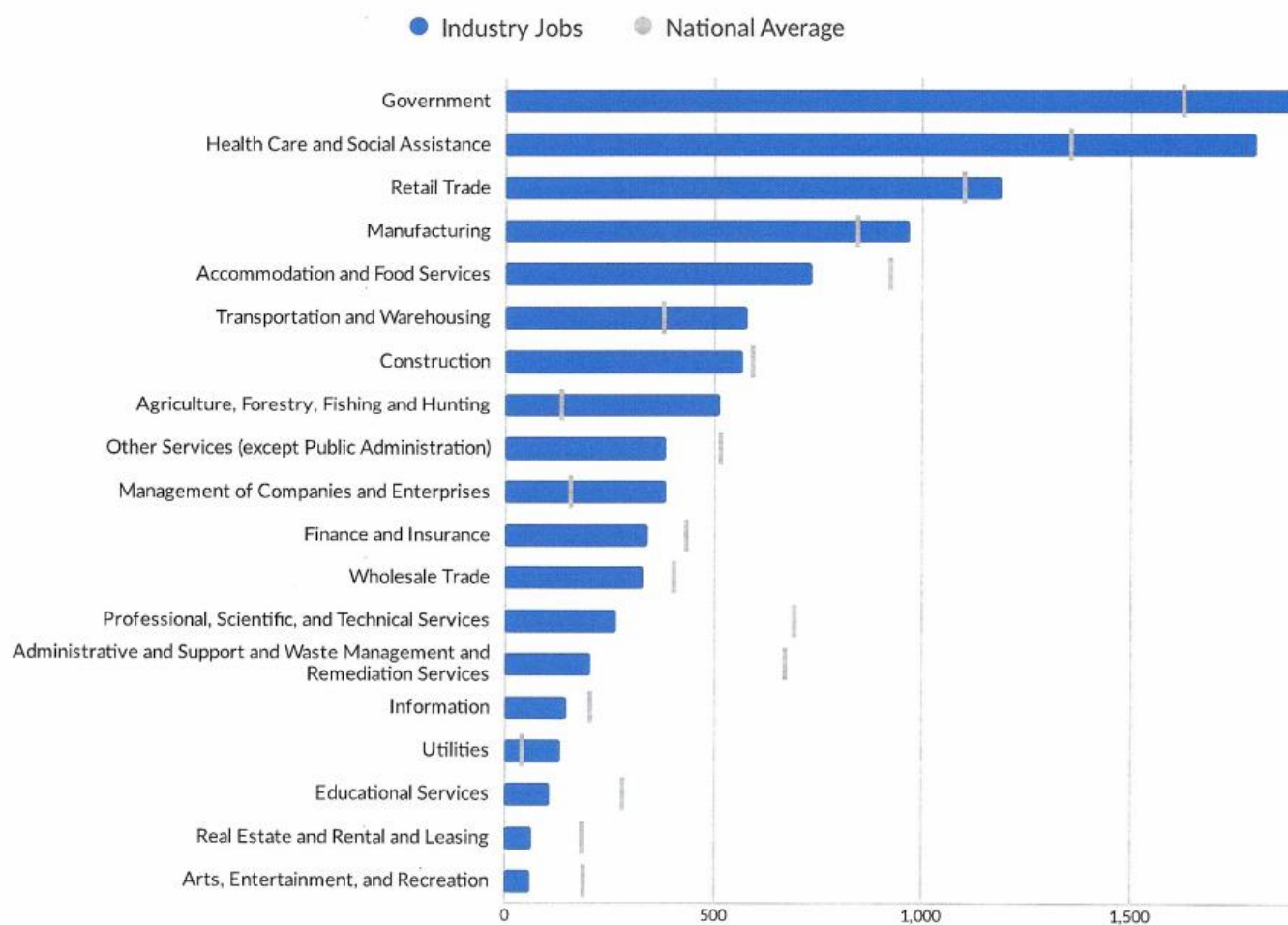
ZIP	Name	2017 Employment
54665	Viroqua, WI (in Vernon...	4,567
54667	Westby, WI (in Vernon ...	2,119
54634	Hillsboro, WI (in Verno...	1,356
54639	La Farge, WI (in Vernon...	570
54623	Coon Valley, WI (in Ver...	494

Where Talent Lives

ZIP	Name	2017 Workers
54665	Viroqua, WI (in Vernon...	4,529
54667	Westby, WI (in Vernon ...	3,056
54634	Hillsboro, WI (in Verno...	1,804
54658	Stoddard, WI (in Verno...	1,329
54623	Coon Valley, WI (in Ver...	1,123

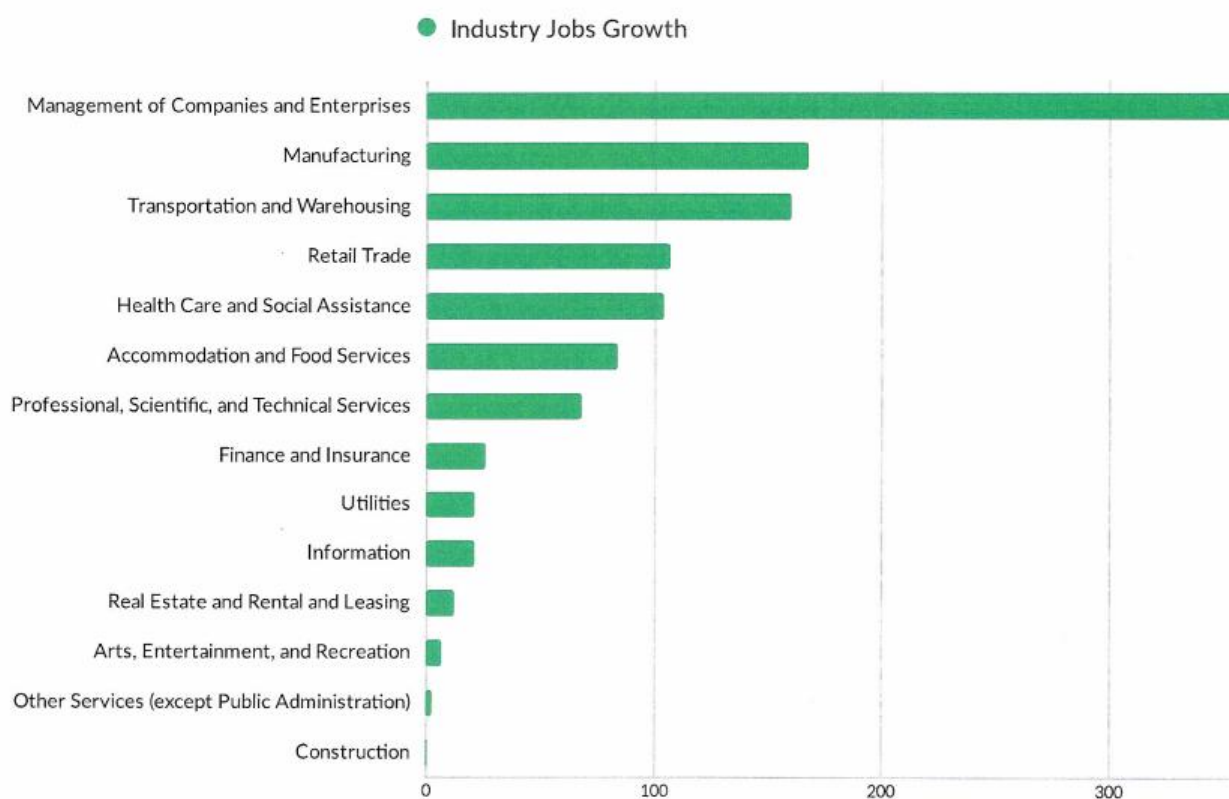
Industry Characteristics

Largest Industries



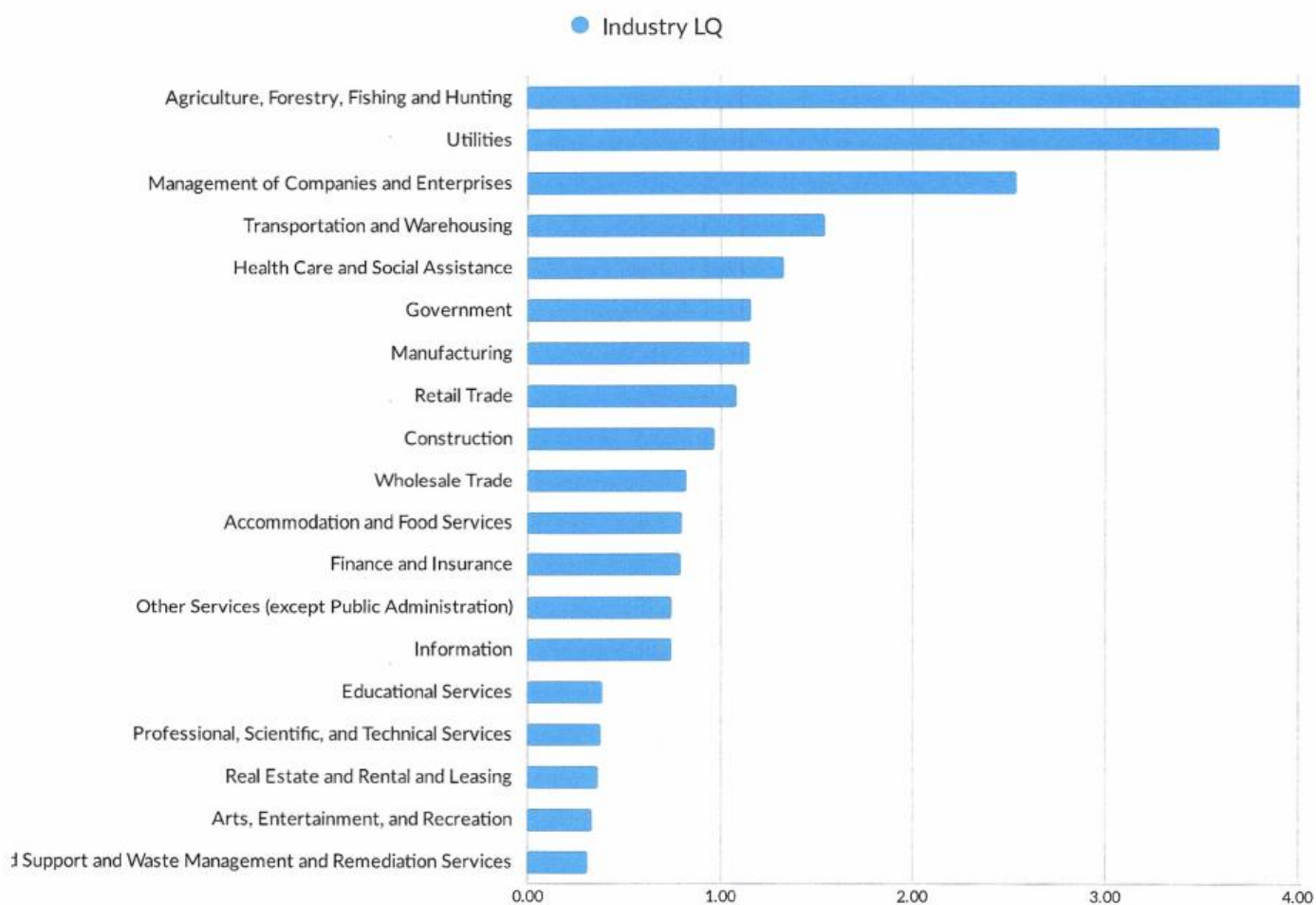
Industry Characteristics - Cont.

Top Growing Industries



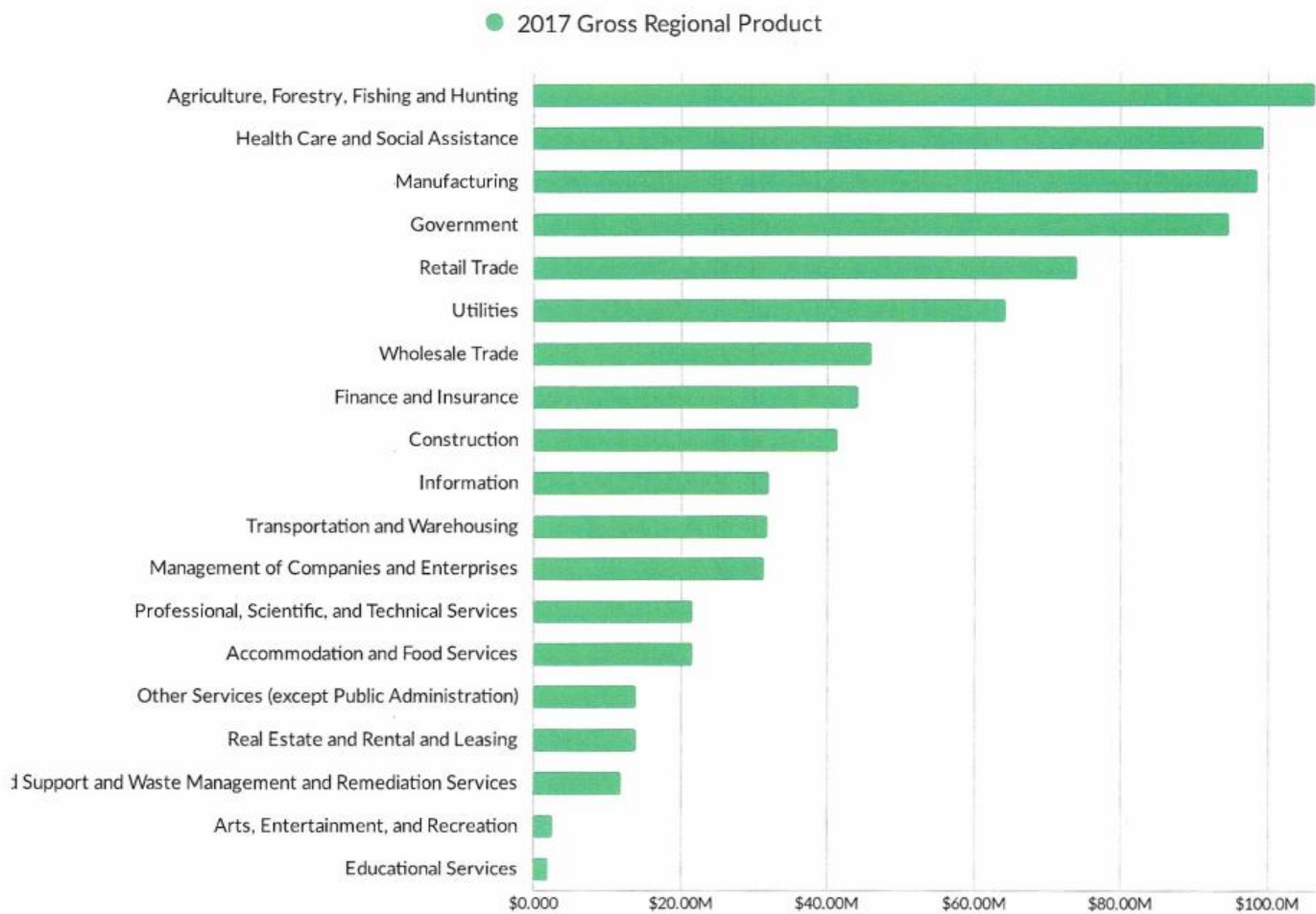
Industry Characteristics - Cont.

Top Industry LQ



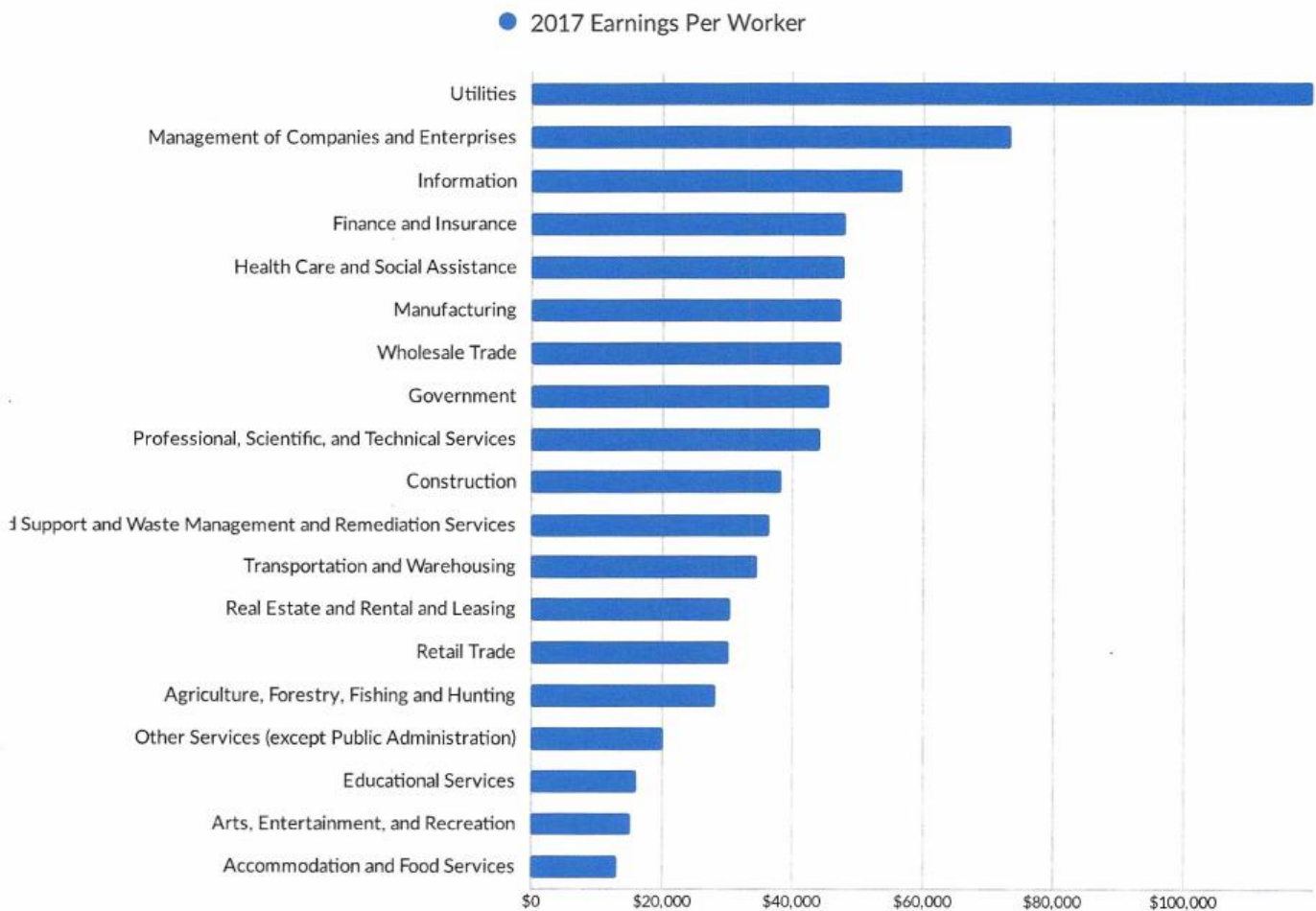
Industry Characteristics - Cont.

Top Industry GRP



Industry Characteristics - Cont.

Top Industry Earnings



Industry Characteristics - Cont.

Industry	2012 Jobs	2017 Jobs	Change in Jobs	% Change in Jobs	2017 LQ	2017 Earnings Per Worker	2017 GRP
Government	1,904	1,894	-10	-1%	1.17	\$45,747	\$94.71M
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,702	1,806	104	+6%	1.33	\$48,079	\$99.49M
Retail Trade	1,082	1,189	107	+10%	1.08	\$30,295	\$74.07M
Manufacturing	803	971	168	+21%	1.15	\$47,614	\$98.63M
Accommodation and Food Services	652	736	84	+13%	0.80	\$13,202	\$21.72M
Transportation and Warehousing	421	581	160	+38%	1.55	\$34,648	\$31.80M
Construction	570	571	1	+0%	0.97	\$38,341	\$41.39M
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	544	517	-27	-5%	4.02	\$28,320	\$106.53M
Other Services (except Public Administration)	383	386	3	+1%	0.75	\$20,305	\$13.94M
Management of Companies and Enterprises	27	385	358	+1,326%	2.54	\$73,639	\$31.43M
Finance and Insurance	317	343	26	+8%	0.80	\$48,153	\$44.22M
Wholesale Trade	813	332	-481	-59%	0.83	\$47,515	\$45.99M
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	197	265	68	+35%	0.38	\$44,261	\$21.72M
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	216	207	-9	-4%	0.31	\$36,603	\$11.91M
Information	127	148	21	+17%	0.75	\$56,798	\$32.12M

Industry Characteristics - Cont.

Industry	2012 Jobs	2017 Jobs	Change in Jobs	% Change in Jobs	2017 LQ	2017 Earnings Per Worker	2017 GRP
Utilities	113	134	21	+19%	3.60	\$119,977	\$64.33M
Educational Services	112	108	-4	-4%	0.39	\$16,279	\$2.09M
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	55	67	12	+22%	0.37	\$30,674	\$13.91M
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	55	62	7	+13%	0.34	\$15,212	\$2.71M

Business Characteristics

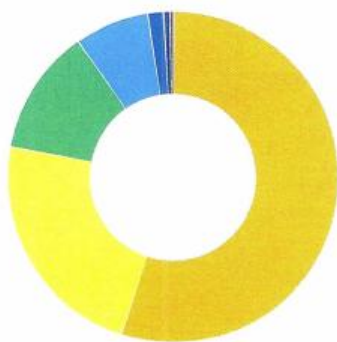
137 Companies Employ Your Workers

Online profiles for your workers mention 137 companies as employers, with the top 10 appearing below. In the last 12 months, 408 companies in Vernon County, WI posted job postings, with the top 10 appearing below.

Top Companies	Profiles	Top Companies Posting	Unique Postings
Organic Valley	6 	CRST International, Inc.	564 
Vernon Memorial Healthcare, I...	4 	Ashley Furniture Industries, Inc.	227 
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.	4 	Roehl Transport, Inc.	225 
Accelerated Genetics	3 	Mutual of Omaha	222 
S&S Cycle, Inc.	3 	Platinum Supplemental Insuran...	172 
Inc	2 	Barr-Nunn Transportation, Inc.	170 
Kwik Trip, Inc.	2 	Vernon Memorial Healthcare, I...	113 
Menard, Inc.	2 	Tutree, Inc.	88 
Rockwell Automation, Inc.	2 	C.R. England, Inc.	77 
Searching For A Brighter Future...	2 	Heartland Express, Inc.	65 

Business Characteristics - Cont.

Business Size

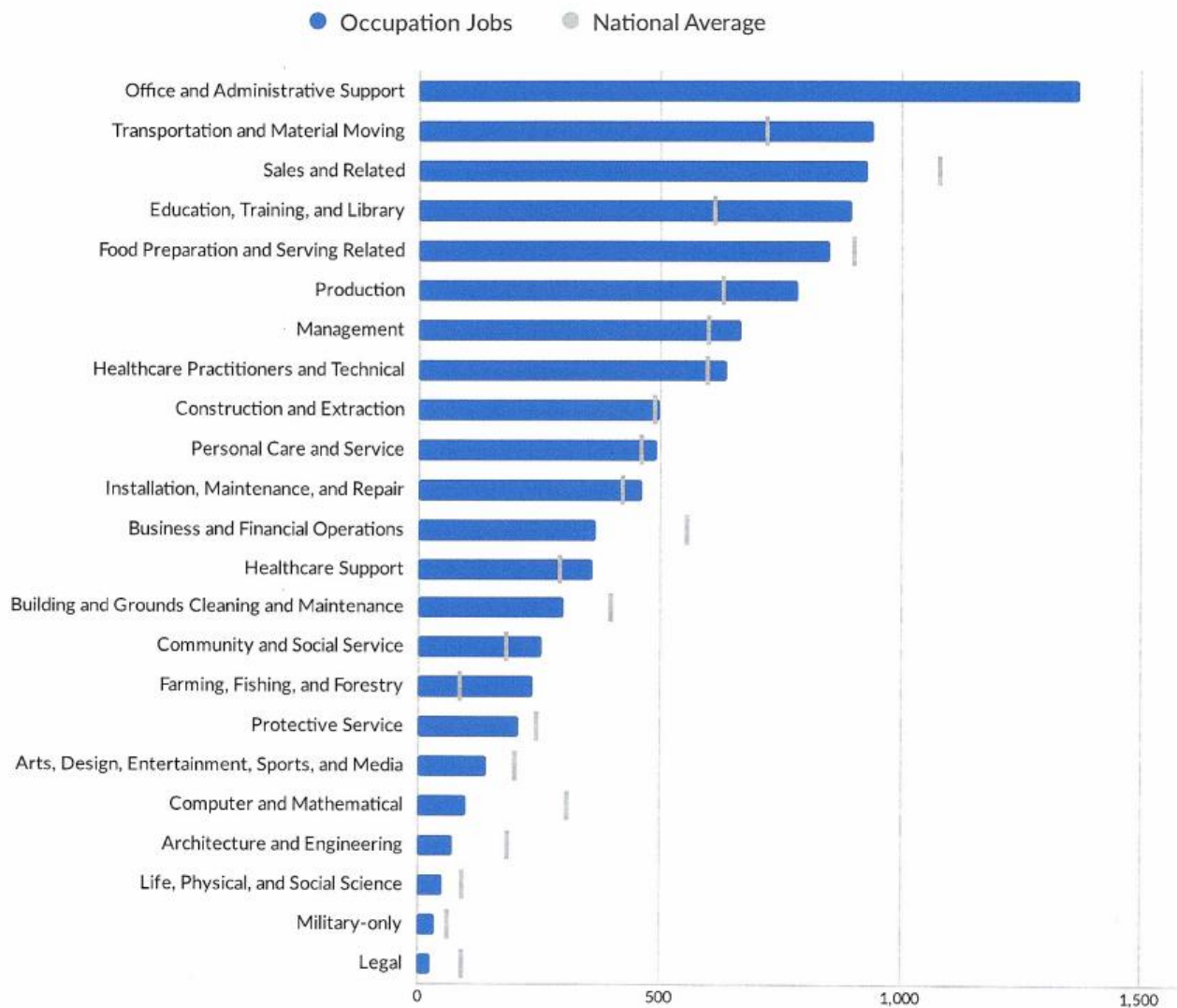


	Percentage	Business Count
1 to 4 employees	55.0%	889
5 to 9 employees	22.9%	370
10 to 19 employees	12.4%	200
20 to 49 employees	7.2%	117
50 to 99 employees	1.5%	25
100 to 249 employees	0.6%	10
250 to 499 employees	0.4%	6

**Business Data by DatabaseUSA.com is third-party data provided by Emsi to its customers as a convenience, and Emsi does not endorse or warrant its accuracy or consistency with other published Emsi data. In most cases, the Business Count will not match total companies with profiles on the summary tab.*

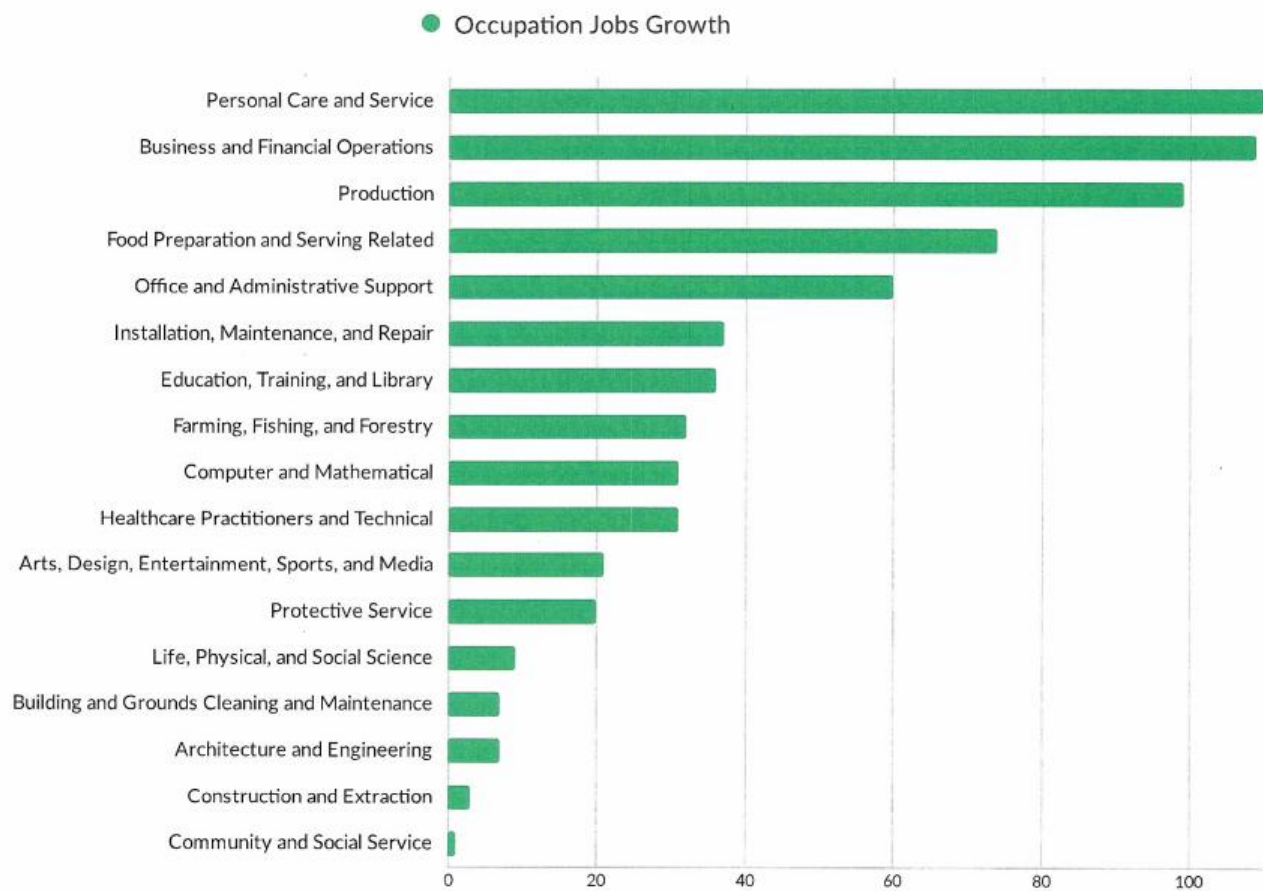
Workforce Characteristics

Largest Occupations



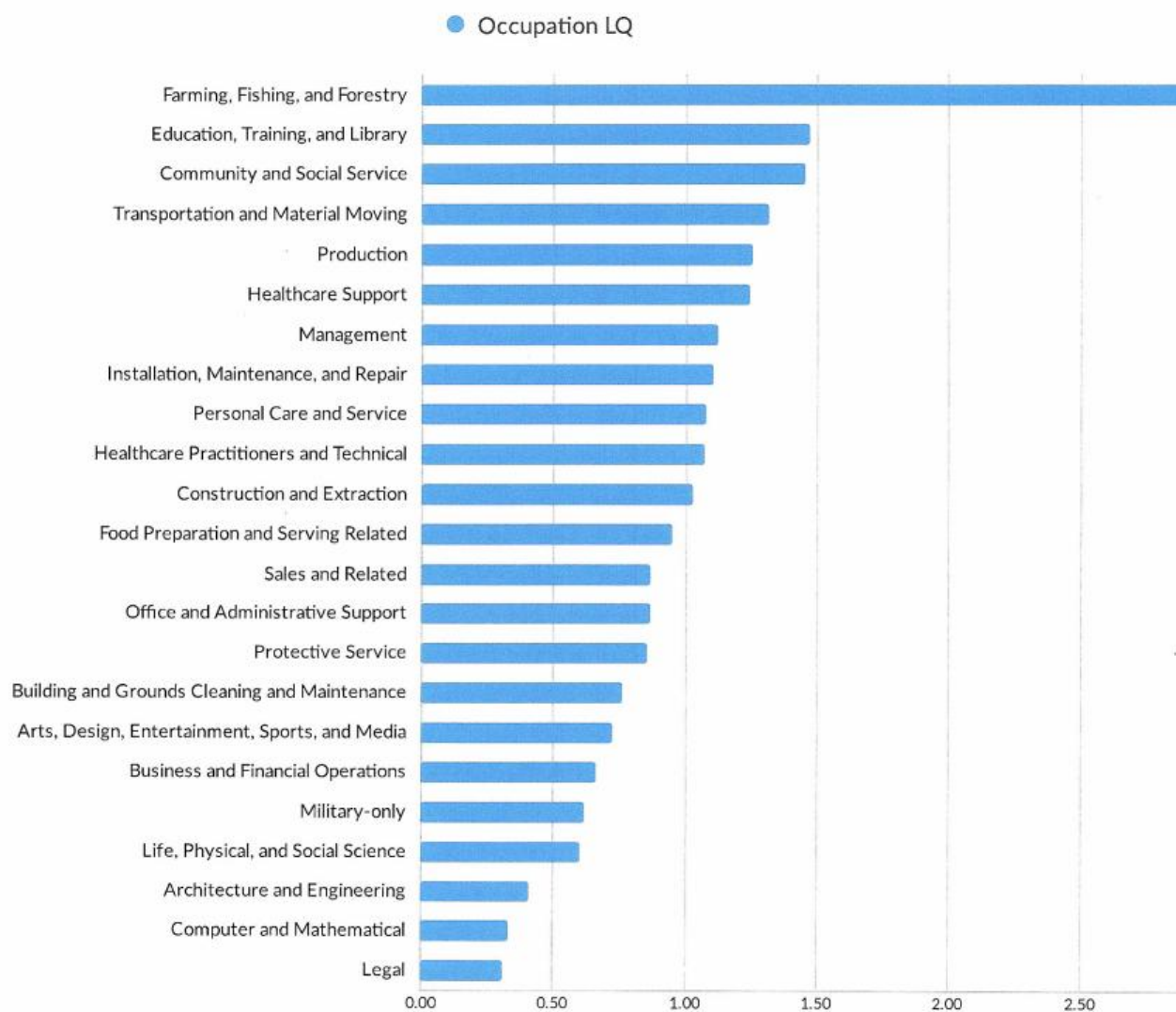
Workforce Characteristics - Cont.

Top Growing Occupations



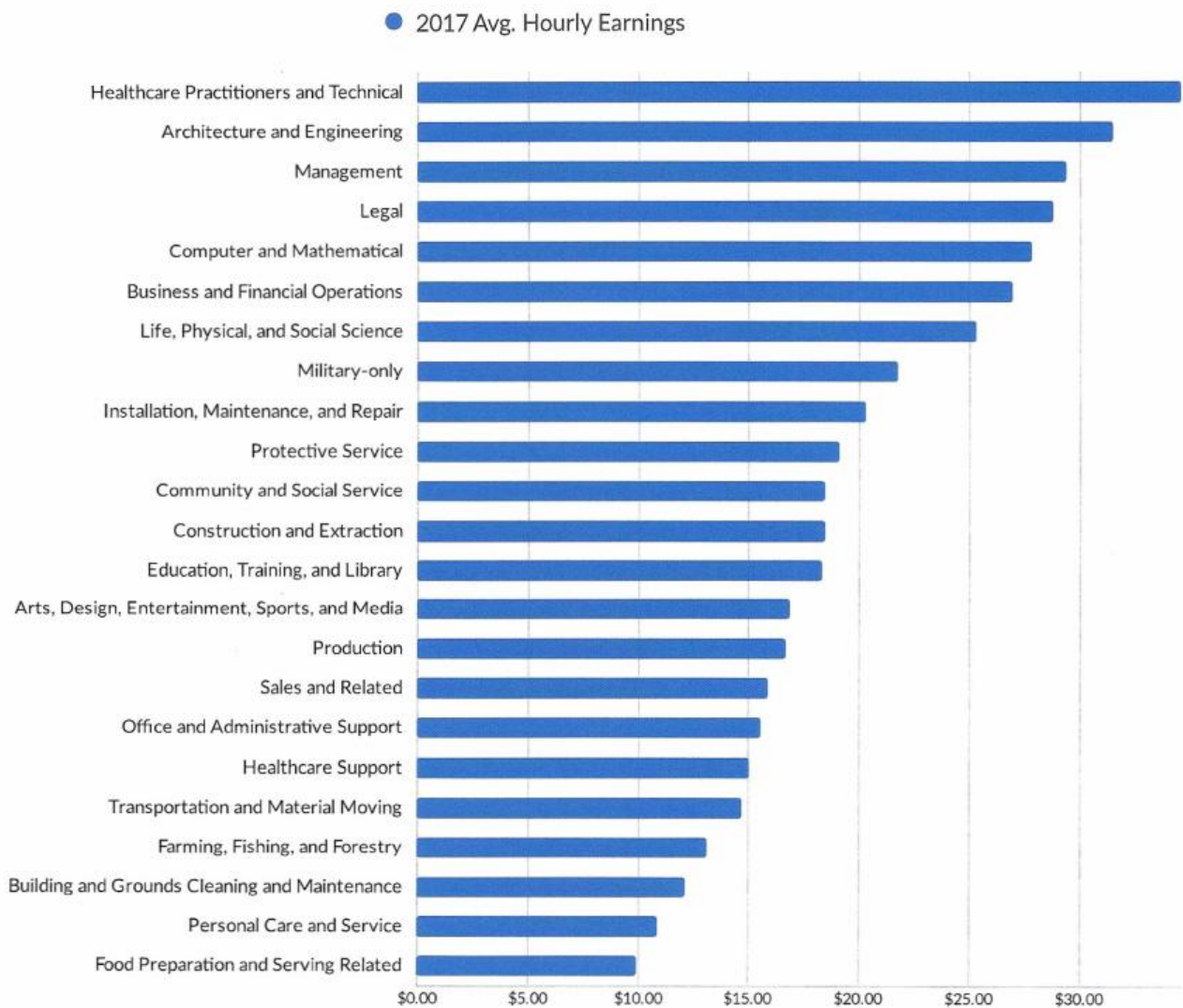
Workforce Characteristics - Cont.

Top Occupation LQ



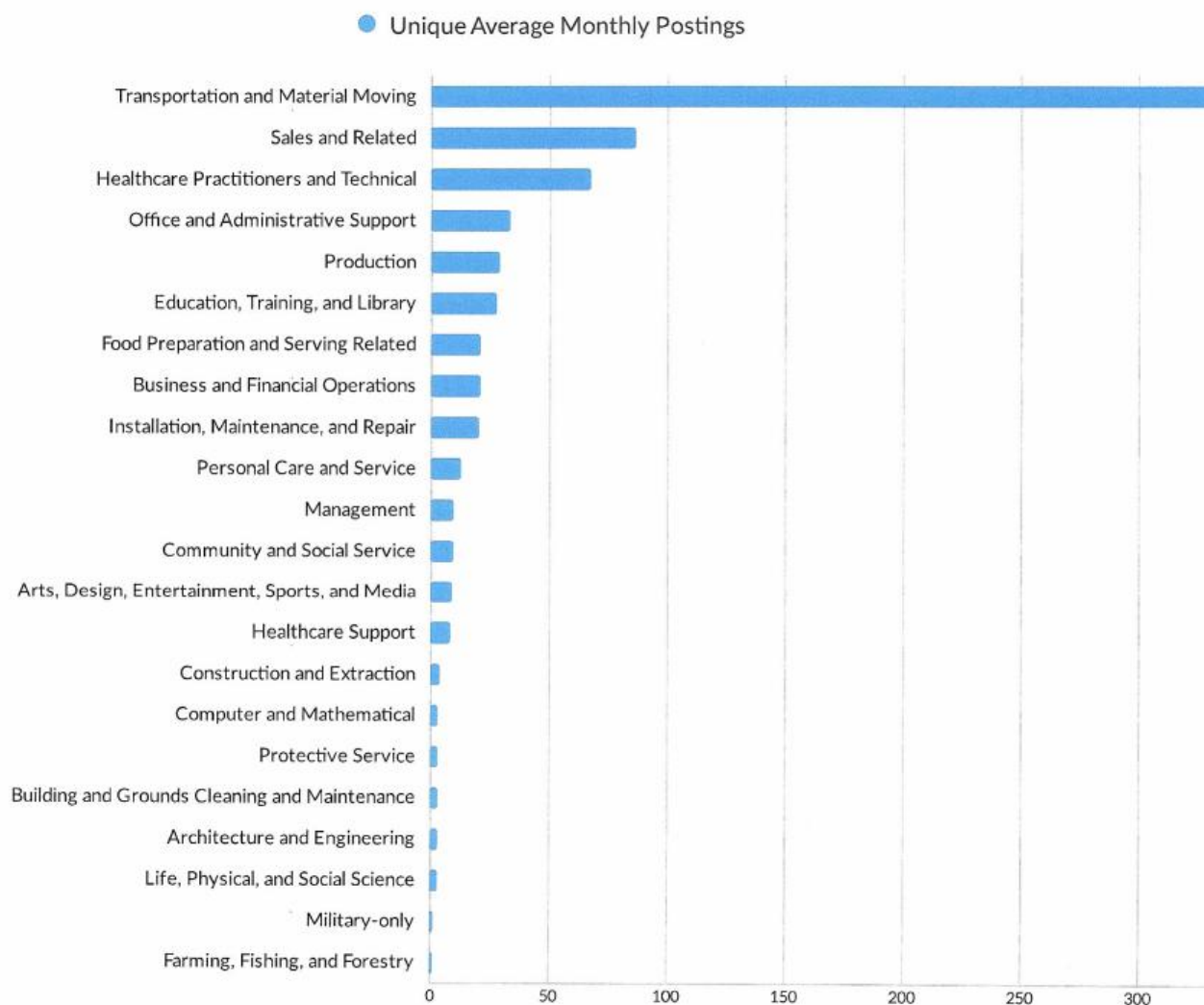
Workforce Characteristics - Cont.

Top Occupation Earnings



Workforce Characteristics - Cont.

Top Posted Occupations



Workforce Characteristics - Cont.

Occupation	2012 Jobs	2017 Jobs	Change in Jobs	% Change in Jobs	2017 LQ	2017 Avg. Hourly Earnings	Jul 2017 - Jun 2018 Unique Average Monthly Postings
Office and Administrative Support	1,311	1,371	60	+5%	0.87	\$15.54	33
Transportation and Material Moving	964	943	-21	-2%	1.31	\$14.72	332
Sales and Related	960	932	-28	-3%	0.87	\$15.91	87
Education, Training, and Library	862	898	36	+4%	1.47	\$18.31	28
Food Preparation and Serving Related	778	852	74	+10%	0.95	\$9.98	21
Production	689	788	99	+14%	1.26	\$16.69	29
Management	681	669	-12	-2%	1.12	\$29.40	9
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	608	639	31	+5%	1.07	\$34.63	68
Construction and Extraction	497	500	3	+1%	1.03	\$18.45	4
Personal Care and Service	385	495	110	+29%	1.08	\$10.86	13
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	427	464	37	+9%	1.10	\$20.32	20
Business and Financial Operations	259	368	109	+42%	0.67	\$26.96	21
Healthcare Support	366	361	-5	-1%	1.24	\$15.02	8
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	295	302	7	+2%	0.77	\$12.13	3
Community and Social Service	256	257	1	+0%	1.46	\$18.49	9

Workforce Characteristics - Cont.

Occupation	2012 Jobs	2017 Jobs	Change in Jobs	% Change in Jobs	2017 LQ	2017 Avg. Hourly Earnings	Jul 2017 - Jun 2018 Unique Average Monthly Postings
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	205	237	32	+16%	2.90	\$13.11	1
Protective Service	187	207	20	+11%	0.85	\$19.10	3
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	121	142	21	+17%	0.73	\$16.89	9
Computer and Mathematical	70	101	31	+44%	0.33	\$27.84	3
Architecture and Engineering	66	73	7	+11%	0.41	\$31.52	3
Life, Physical, and Social Science	43	52	9	+21%	0.60	\$25.36	3
Military-only	36	35	-1	-3%	0.62	\$21.74	1
Legal	29	28	-1	-3%	0.31	\$28.83	0

Educational Pipeline

Over the last 5 years, no schools in Vernon County, WI produced graduates.

Attachment 2- Business/Community Financial/Technical Assistance Programs

Business Assistance Programs

CMV Growth Development Fund: The CMV Growth Development Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) is designed to foster growth in economic base activities that are the dominant force in affecting economic growth or decline in the Tri-county area of Crawford, Monroe and Vernon counties. The fund is targeted to manufacturers, tourism and selected service industries that create jobs. For further information on this program, call 608.785.9396 or email plan@mrrpc.com.

Vernon County Revolving Fund (RLF) Loan Program: The program was established to retain and create employment opportunities, encourage private investment, and provide a financing alternative for small start-up or expanding businesses in the County. The RLF program includes interest rates and loan maturities that are designed to encourage business development, while providing for the recapitalization and growth of the RLF. Since its inception in 1999, the RLF has loaned \$2.6 million dollars to 54 businesses. These businesses have added jobs and additional tax dollars to our local economy. As the businesses repay their loans, those funds then provide an ongoing source of funds for other businesses in the County. For start-up businesses or companies needing capital to expand, the RLF can help; offering terms based on the individual businesses. Contact Vernon County Resource and Development 608-637-5379.

Dairyland Power Financial Assistance Loan Programs: Dairyland Power offers an array of financing programs for new or expanding business including loans, loan guarantees, grants, tax incentives, jobs training, etc. Funds can be available for a number of business and community development purposes such as real estate, building, equipment, and infrastructure improvements.

Selected State of Wisconsin –Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Programs/Resources

- **Brownfield Program**

Environmental Improvement Assistance for Redevelopment

Wisconsin's Brownfield Program provides grant funds to assist local governments, businesses and individuals with assessing and remediating the environmental contamination of an abandoned, idle or underused industrial or commercial facility or site. This program will help convert contaminated sites into productive properties that are attractive and ready for redevelopment.

How It Works

Any city, Village, town, county, individual or business may apply for funds, provided that the party that caused the environmental contamination and any person who possessed or controlled the environmental contaminant is unknown, cannot be located, or is financially unable to pay for the remediation of the soil and/or groundwater.

- **Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC)**

The Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) is a statewide economic development corporation that provides quality business education and financing to Wisconsin's entrepreneurs and small business owners. WWBIC makes loans up to \$100,000 to small and micro businesses that meet a specific set of criteria and qualifications.

- **Center for Technology Commercialization Micro-grants**

The Center for Technology Commercialization (CTC), housed in the University of Wisconsin-Extension, assists Wisconsin technology-based small businesses in their efforts to obtain R&D funding necessary to advance the commercialization of their technologies. Eligible companies can apply for a micro-grant, funded by WEDC, to obtain the services of a qualified provider to develop competitive proposals for federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)/Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Program grants, which fund research and development activities of innovative small businesses in the U.S. In addition to SBIR/STTR assistance, CTC consultants provide assistance with business and commercialization planning, as well as market research supporting the development of such plans.

- **Technology Development Loans**

Flexible Lending Options for New Technology Development In Wisconsin

Companies that provide high-tech or innovative solutions with national or global market potential may be eligible for WEDC Technology Development Loans, which are tailored to the evolving needs businesses face as they move through their development cycle:

<u>Stage of Development</u>	<u>Loan Limit</u>
Product/Process Development	Up to \$250,000
Product Launch/Commercialization	Up to \$500,000

Among the criteria WEDC uses to make investment decisions are financial need, private investment leverage, management team experience, the potential to increase production, and the potential for long-term, positive economic impact in Wisconsin. WEDC financing is generally limited to 25 percent or less of an identified project or funding cycle. WEDC may require the balance of funding to be committed and/or available prior to loan closing.

- **Entrepreneurial Training Program**

Delivered by the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC's) of the University of Wisconsin-Extension, the Entrepreneurial Training Program provides expert guidance on business plan development to Wisconsin entrepreneurs and small businesses through an 8 to 12-week course. A majority of program costs are reimbursed through funding provided by WEDC upon successful completion of the course.

- **SBIR Matching Grant Program**

With funding provided by WEDC, the Center for Technology Commercialization (CTC) at the University of Wisconsin-Extension administers SBIR Advance. The competitive grant program provides eligible technology-based businesses in or relocating to Wisconsin with funding of up to 50% of federal awards received under the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs.

- **Impact Seven Programs**

A community development corporation (CDC) that offers a variety of loans and venture capital for growing Wisconsin businesses through its four major financing programs, Impact Seven offers low cost deals and flexible terms. **Greater Wisconsin Fund** Impact Seven has assembled a number of different revolving loan funds to create this program, which serves the entire state of Wisconsin. Loans from this program are generally from \$35,000 to \$1,000,000. Most new and expanding businesses are eligible. **Venture Capital Fund** Impact Seven's Venture Capital Fund is one of few such pools in Wisconsin. It is available statewide for ventures that have high growth potential and will consider sharing equity. **SBA Microloan Program** Impact Seven is an intermediary for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) MicroLoan Program, an alternative loan program providing technical assistance and loans of up to \$50,000 to new and expanding small businesses. Generally, if you are the owner of a for-profit small business in Wisconsin, you are eligible for this program.

- **Special Project Loan Fund**

Expanding Business

Wisconsin's Special Project Loan Fund provides loans or loan guaranties to eligible companies preparing for future growth, diversifying operations, markets or product lines to increase competitiveness, or preparing a project site for future commercial development.

How It Works

Special Project loans or loan guaranties generally cannot exceed \$250,000. Special Project Loan Fund requests will first be referred to the appropriate local or area regional loan fund when available.

Eligible Uses

Recipients may use Special Project Loan funds for purposes that include:

- Working capital, equipment purchases, brownfield remediation, new product development

- **Small Business Association (SBA) 504 Loan Program**

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 loan program was developed by Congress to assist growing businesses by offering an attractive financing option for real estate and equipment needs. The SBA utilizes Certified Development Companies (CDCs) to process and administer the loan program on its behalf. There are currently 270 CDCs nationwide, each covering a specific geographic area.

- **Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA) Programs**

WHEDA offers a number of programs and services in support of business development within the State of Wisconsin. **Guarantee Programs:** Loan guarantees targeted to specific types of economic development projects. **Participation Lending:** Partnerships with lending institutions to provide commercial credit for larger projects. **State Small Business Credit Initiative:** Capital access, private equity and other programs that promote job creation and retention. **New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program:** Serves as a resource to help fuel job creation and economic development efforts by promoting equity investment in low-income urban and rural communities. Businesses involved in NMTC deals can obtain benefits including lower interest rates on loans, interest-only payments for seven years, non-traditional financing not available in the marketplace, access to a reduced cost of capital, and more. Projects must be located in highly distressed census tracts, which are determined by factors such as poverty rates and percentage of median family income.

- **Training Grants**

- Improving Work Skills Through Job Training*

- Wisconsin provides Training Grants to assist businesses in workforce retention and expansion into new markets and technology. The program provides grant funds to businesses to upgrade or improve the job-related skills of its full-time employees. Grant funds may be approved for eligible training and provided to existing and new employees in full-time jobs.

- How It Works*

- Any business making a firm commitment to locate a new facility in Wisconsin or expand an existing facility within the state, and is upgrading a product, process or service that requires training in new technology and industrial skills, may be eligible for a Training Grant. Training grants are limited to 50 percent of the eligible training costs or up to \$5,000 per employee trained, whichever is less.

- **Jobs Tax Credit**

- Assisting Business Expansion and Relocation*

- Businesses located in or relocating to Wisconsin that are creating full-time jobs may be eligible for Jobs Tax Credits.

- How It Works*

- A certified business may qualify for tax credits only for eligible activities that occur after an eligibility date established by WEDC. Positions that are created as a result of the tax credits claimed shall be maintained for at least five years after the certification date established by WEDC. To be certified for Jobs Tax Credits, businesses will be required to submit an application along with supporting documentation. A business will be required to enter into a contract with WEDC for the tax credits prior to any certification or verification of tax credits by WEDC. The contract will include penalties for non-compliance.

Community Assistance Programs

Tax Incremental Financing District.

Wisconsin's Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) program was approved by the legislature in 1975, and the first districts (TIDs) were created in 1976. Its purpose is to provide a way for a municipality to promote tax base expansion through its own initiative and effort. The legislature found municipalities were postponing or canceling public improvements that would allow new development because their taxpayers paid the price, while everyone that shared the expanded tax base profited. Establishing a tax incremental system relieved this inequity. Plus it benefited Wisconsin's people by improving and otherwise promoting their health, safety, welfare, and prosperity.

IF is aimed at eliminating blight, rehabilitating declining property values, promoting industry, or encouraging mixed-use development. TIF works because it provides its own financing resource. It is basically a financing tool that municipalities can use to promote tax base expansion. When a TIF district is created the aggregate equalized value of taxable and certain municipal owned property is established by the Department of Revenue (DOR); this is called the Tax Incremental Base. The municipality then installs public improvements and property values grow. Taxes paid on the increased value are used to pay for projects undertaken by the municipality. This is the Tax Increment. It is based on the increased values in the TID and levies of all the taxing jurisdictions that share the tax base.

The Community Development Investment Grant Program (CDI)

CDI will support urban, small city and rural community redevelopment efforts by providing financial incentives for shovel-ready projects with emphasis on, but not limited to, downtown community driven efforts. Funded activities should lead to measurable benefits in job opportunities, property values and/or leveraged investment by local and private partners. This grant opportunity is available through two different competitions: high-impact projects and planning or marketing development.

Program Goal:

The program will support local initiatives with a downtown emphasis and incentivize economic development for communities. These initiatives are anticipated to provide a number of benefits, including the following:

- The creation and retention of jobs, increases to the local tax base, and the creation of a strong commercial district.
- The promotion of vibrant downtown districts that symbolize economic health, quality of life, sense of community, pride and history which are relevant factors in residential, industrial, commercial, and professional recruitment.
- Reductions in sprawl and efficient use of infrastructure, tax dollars, and land resources
- The promotion of traditional commercial districts

Eligibility Requirements:

Municipalities (including counties, cities, Villages, and towns) tribal entities and other governmental entities. The grants will be limited to 25% of project costs up to \$500,000.