

MRRPC

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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La Crosse, WI 54601

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MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

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

55th
Anniversary
1964-2019

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission would like to thank the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Wisconsin Department of Administration, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, 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 makes the activities of the MRRPC possible.



Two Child Care Centers, A Trucking and Auto Repair Business and a Floral Shop Received \$332,500 in EDA Revolving Loan Fund Financing.

The MRRPC administers four federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) Revolving Loan Funds (RLFs) that provide gap financing to businesses. The CMV Growth Development Fund RLF serving Crawford, Monroe and Vernon Counties provided \$75,000 in lending to the new Cashton's Cradles to Crayons Childcare Center that will serve 80 children. The Business Capital Fund RLF serving Buffalo, Jackson, Trempealeau, Pepin and Pierce counties also made a \$65,000 loan to Bumble Bee Forest Child Care Center in the Village of Trempealeau. This new center will serve 45 children. The availability of quality childcare in the Mississippi River Region is a key economic development and workforce development concern that this lending is helping to address.



Cashton Cradles to Crayons Childcare Center opened in early 2019 with lending assistance from the MRRPC's CMV Growth Development Fund

Another loan from the Business Capital Fund (BCF) in the amount of \$95,000 was made to Falls Florist to assist with an owner-employee sale that will allow this much needed business to not only continue but grow in downtown Black River Falls. A BCF loan of \$97,500 to Wes's Services of WI Inc. or Erickson Trucking of Durand and Mondovi was also approved. This loan assisted with their over the road trucking business and auto repair services expansion.

Since inception the four revolving loan funds (RLFs) the MRRPC administers have made 85 business loans totaling

over \$5 million creating or retaining over 700 jobs and leveraging over \$46 million in private financing. For more information on the MRRPC Revolving Loan funds go to our website mrrpc.com and click on "Business Loans".

14 Businesses Damaged by Flooding Received Disaster Recovery Microloans Totaling \$203,059

Severe storms on the 27th and 28th of August 2018 led to catastrophic flooding and dam failures in the region resulting in both federal and state disaster declarations. In response to this the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) contracted with the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission to provide Disaster Recovery Microloans (DRM) to businesses damaged by flooding. The maximum DRM loan amount is \$15,000 at a 0% fixed interest rate for 48 months with a 6-month deferral on the first payment. These emergency loans provide some financial relief until longer term business recovery activities or resources can be obtained either through insurance, SBA, FEMA or time for the business to recover on its own. Ten service businesses, three retail businesses and one manufacturer were recipients of this \$203,059 in Disaster Recovery Microloan Lending.



Flooded Businesses in Downtown Ontario, August 2018

Cities of La Crosse, Arcadia and Viroqua Awarded Over \$10.6 million in U.S. Economic Development Administration Funding for Flood Protection and Building Safe Sites for Business.

The Cities of La Crosse and Arcadia were severely affected by heavy rainstorms, flooding, and mud slides in late June of 2017. In La Crosse the rain and storm water runoff exceeded the capacity of its storm pipes, lift stations, pumps and booster stations

causing damages to streets public facility infrastructure and disruption of commerce. The City of Arcadia experienced a levy breach that flooded Ashley Furniture with its 3,000 employees as well as a part of the downtown. The MRRPC hosted meetings with city officials and a representative of the U.S. Department of Commerce-Economic Development Administration to discuss economic recovery projects. These meetings eventually led to the submission of grant applications that were awarded funding from EDA. The following is a summary of each project as they appeared in an EDA press release. Also provided below is an additional EDA funded project for industrial park development in the City of Viroqua.

\$3,677,920 to the City of La Crosse for the construction of three storm water lifts and one booster station to improve the floodwater management infrastructure. These improvements will help maintain business continuity and attract future investment by protecting the value of the area and reducing risks associated with major rain events, which will strengthen the region's economic resiliency. The City estimates that this investment will help create 50 jobs, save 20 jobs, and leverage \$10 million in private investment. Award Date: September 21 – 27, 2018.

\$4,327,080 in 2018 Disaster funding to the City of Arcadia to fund the Storm Water System Flood Improvements Project to upgrade and redevelop four storm water pump stations to help the City of Arcadia recover from both long-term and sudden and severe economic distress. Once completed, the improvements to the City's infrastructure will help make existing business more reliable, which will lead to more employment opportunities and long-term economic development. The City estimates that this project will help save 105 jobs and leverage \$4 million in private investment. Award Date: March 22-28, 2019.

\$2,640,000 to the City of Viroqua to support the construction and expansion of the City's Industrial Park to provide needed industrial and commercial building sites following severe storms and flooding in the area. The improvements will help the region diversify and strengthen its industrial base, attract new industries to build on the area's competitive strengths, attract private investment, and create jobs to improve the local economy. The grantees estimate that this investment will help create 58 jobs, save 3 jobs and leverage \$8,450,000 in private investment. Award Date: March 29 – April 4, 2019.

Flooded Communities of Ontario, La Farge, Viola and Readstown Pursuing Federal EDA funding for Economic Recovery. These four Kickapoo River Valley communities are teaming up and partnering with the MRRPC in applying for federal EDA funds to undertake flood recovery activities including: (1) Strategic direction consensus setting on economic development and site selection market research. (2) Preparing a Site Development Master Plan for community economic development and resettlement (safe

sites for business, industry, homes and community facilities). (3) Community facility assessment, in coordination with Site Development Master Plan (including, waste treatment, municipal wells, electric utilities, communications-broadband, police-fire stations-municipal offices and flood mitigation facilities and corresponding cost estimates for community facilities). (4) Public infrastructure assessment, in coordination with Site Development Master Plan (including streets, sidewalks, water & sewer lines, storm sewer lines, electric lines communication-broadband lines, other public infrastructure needs and corresponding cost estimates for public infrastructure). (5) Real estate appraisal work on Site Development Master Plan and flood prone property acquisition and relocation activity needed to effectuate community economic development and resettlement consistent with the approved Site Development Master Plan. (6) Environmental assessment work to ensure all planning, engineering and future development activity does not violate local, state or federal environmental regulations. (7) Preparation of a public participation plan to ensure adequate public participation is provided throughout each community's economic recovery plan process.



Local officials from Ontario, LaFarge, Viola, and Readstown met with MRRPC staff and state and federal officials at the Kickapoo Valley Reserve in February, April and June 2019 to coordinate and plan flood recovery activities

As part of the economic impact assessment in determining needs for these funds we identified 47 businesses and 10 government buildings that were damaged from flooding. The damaged businesses were retail, services and manufacturing that resulted in job losses or serious employment interruptions for 269 workers. At the time of this writing Congress approved and the President signed a supplemental funding bill for disasters across the U.S. Hopefully some of these funds will make its way to the Kickapoo Valley to assist these communities and their businesses with their economic recovery efforts.

During the 15 year period beginning in 2004 through 2018 the region experienced 10 federal disaster declarations. FEMA approved over \$190 million in recovery assistance for these 10 disasters. Other federal and state agencies approved \$ tens of millions more in additional recovery assistance.

culverts, conduct a voluntary buyout of homes and businesses located in the 100-year floodplain, road elevations, bank stabilization on roads to prevent landslides, develop a list of shelters that can be used to temporarily house residents in the event of flooding, tornadoes extreme heat or cold events. Multi-hazard mitigation plans maintain the county's and other participating local governments' eligibility for Federal and State Hazard Mitigation Grant programs.

Crawford County Hazard Mitigation Plan Completed

Crawford County adopted an update to their multi-hazard mitigation plan of 2/19/19. This plan maintains the county and other participating local governments' eligibility for Federal and State Hazard Mitigation Grant funding that can help pay for the projects identified in their plan. The plans cover 19 natural hazards such as tornadoes, flooding, blizzards, and extreme heat and three manmade hazards involving train derailments, river traffic cargo, and pandemic flu. Some projects identified are: investigate the costs and benefits of installing automated gauges 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; update the existing list of buildings that can be used as shelters during disasters like extreme heat and cold events; undertake erosion control and road improvements at the City's reservoir; and install safe rooms in trailer parks.

2018 MRRPC Audit.

Mr. Michael Temp, CPA, Tostrud and Temp, S.C. reported the findings of the 2018 Audit at the April 10, 2019, Commission meeting. Mr. Temp stated that the MRPC 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 Governmental Fund Statement showed revenues of \$374,273 and operating expenses of \$362,637. Assets totaled \$341,980 with liabilities of \$20,307 resulting in a fund balance of \$321,673 on December 31, 2018. The business revolving loan funds audit reports that since inception \$5,035,090 has been loaned to fund businesses and \$521,244 is presently owed to the respective revolving loan funds.

Region's Tourism Spending			
Jurisdiction	2017 Tourism-Visitor Business Sales \$	2018 Tourism-Visitor Business Sales \$	Percent Change
Buffalo	20,200,000	21,700,000	7.30
Crawford	64,000,000	64,000,000	0.00
Jackson	57,900,000	58,300,000	0.79
La Crosse	426,300,000	448,900,000	5.29
Monroe	126,600,000	133,800,000	5.73
Pepin	12,000,000	13,500,000	12.56
Pierce	53,300,000	55,500,000	4.08
Trempealeau	51,900,000	54,000,000	3.97
Vernon	58,100,000	62,800,000	8.01
Region	870,300,000	912,500,000	4.85
Wisconsin	20,607,700,000	21,571,600,000	4.68

Source: Wisconsin Department of Tourism. Visitor Business Sales is defined as revenue from recreation, lodging, restaurants, attractions and visitor expenditures traced to food wholesalers, farmers, utilities, marketing, publishing etc., plus ripple effect of tourism employee expenditures

Regional Tourism Spending Increases 5% in 2018.

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism visitor expenditure data table above shows that direct visitor expenditures in the region totaled \$912.5 million in 2018 a 5% increase over 2017. The MRRPC's planning and economic development activities often involve improving recreational opportunities that helps tourism and improves the quality of life for residents.

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City of Mondovi Adopts Update to its Comprehensive Plan

In 2018 and 2019 MRRPC staff assisted the City of Mondovi in updating the City's Comprehensive Plan. The City's existing Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2008 and the Wisconsin State Planning Law requires that local



units of government must update comprehensive plans a minimum of once every ten years. The MRRPC worked with City staff and the City Planning Commission to update the plan. The Comprehensive Plan addresses nine planning elements, each of which had demographics and plan element goals updated. In addition, future actions, projects, or policies for the City to implement moving forward were identified in each planning element. Some of the actions/projects recommended in the plan include:

- Construct a new eco-friendly wastewater treatment plant that will provide opportunities for the community to grow as well as attract/accommodate new and/or existing business expansions.
- Update the City of Mondovi's Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance to assist in implementation of the City of Mondovi's Comprehensive Plan.
- Actively promote the assets of the City on the City website, social media, etc. as well as promote economic development and housing opportunities.
- Identify bike/pedestrian trail opportunities to connect neighborhoods, business areas (downtown), and community facilities throughout the City.
- Support technology advances for the community that will keep Mondovi residents and businesses technologically competitive with other rural communities and urban centers.

The City conducted a public open house meeting and held a public hearing on the updated comprehensive plan this Spring to gain additional public input. The update to the Comprehensive Plan is scheduled to be adopted early this Summer.

Trempealeau County Comprehensive Plans Completed

Over the last three years the MRRPC has assisted Trempealeau County staff in updating comprehensive plans for the fifteen Towns in Trempealeau County. The Town plans were originally adopted in 2007-2008 and are required to be updated every 10 years. The planning process for updating the plans included input from town residents and public hearings in all fifteen Towns prior to the updated plans being adopted by the Town Boards. Demographic information and land use maps were updated in each Town Plan. As part of the plan update, plan goals and future actions/recommendations were also updated. The Town Plans had similar goals of preserving agricultural land and the rural lifestyle. The

Towns also recommended land use districts that manage the location and density of housing in the rural areas focusing most growth near existing cities/villages or existing rural developments. The adopted Town Plans were forwarded to Trempealeau County to be included as part of the updated Trempealeau County Comprehensive Plan. The Trempealeau County Board of Supervisors adopted the updated Trempealeau County Comprehensive Plan at their April 2019 meeting and included the Town Plans as part of the County Comprehensive Plan. This inclusion ensures consistency between the Town and County Comprehensive Plans and demonstrates intergovernmental cooperation at its highest level.

Vernon County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Nearing Completion

The Vernon County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan was nearly completed in 2018 and was presented to the Vernon County Board of Supervisors for adoption in early 2019. The purpose of a Multi-Hazard Mitigation plan is to address the different hazards which may occur within the county, such as blizzards, high winds, tornadoes, flooding, and train derailments, as well as to provide a list of potential projects which will prevent or lessen the loss of life or structures in the event of a hazard occurring. The plan provides information on each of the hazards, i.e. how often they occur, how much damage they have caused, how likely each is to occur again, and the amount of damage that will occur. Flooding is by far the hazard the county is the most vulnerable to and causes the most damage. Many developments are brick and mortar projects, such as the purchase of a backup generator for municipal buildings, the installation of larger culverts, a voluntary buyout of homes and businesses located in the 100-year floodplain, the purchase of electronic moveable road signs for road closures, or bank stabilization on roads to prevent landslides. There are also non-brick and mortar projects, like the development of a list of shelters that can be used to temporarily house residents in the event of flooding, tornadoes, and/or extreme hot or cold events. Multi-hazard mitigation plans maintain the county's and other participating local governments' eligibility for Federal and State Hazard Mitigation Grant programs.

Trempealeau, Monroe, Jackson and La Crosse County Hazard Mitigation Plans Underway.

MRRPC staff is in the process of updating the Trempealeau, Monroe, Jackson and La Crosse County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plans. These Hazard Mitigation Plans will address 21 different hazards from blizzards, high winds, tornadoes, flooding to train derailments. The plans provide information on each of the hazards, i.e. how often they occur, how much damage they have caused and how likely each is to occur again and the amount of damage that will occur. Each plan will identify potential mitigation projects for municipalities. The identified projects are those that will prevent or lessen the loss of life or structures in the event of a hazard occurring. The list of projects will be developed through municipal surveys and individual meetings with municipalities. Past plans have listed projects such as purchase backup generator for municipal buildings, install larger

Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plans Approved for All Nine Counties.

The most recent Federal Transportation Bill, the "Fixing America's Surface Transport Act" (FAST Act), requires regional planning for local governments to receive funding under the state's Elderly and Disabled Transportation Program (\$85.21), and the federal 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Programs. Federal transit law requires that projects selected for funding under these programs be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. In 2006, 2008, and 2013 MRRPC staff assisted each of the region's nine counties develop their Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plans. In 2018 the plans required updating and again the MRRPC assisted each county in the region with completing their plan.



Representatives from all nine counties attended the MRRPC sponsored Public Transit Human Services Transportation planning session in July 2018.

The planning process involved a morning meeting held at the public library community room in West Salem. Opportunity for public input from representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation providers/organizations and the general public was provided. For inclusion in each county plan the MRRPC developed information on population trends, income, poverty levels, number of disabled persons, age of disabled persons, means of transportation employees are using to travel to work, and an assessment of service area and population served by the regions 32 publicly supported transportation providers. From this information needs and gaps were identified, what things have been done well were documented and what things could be done better was also reported for each county.

From this information county goals were developed that addressed each counties specific needs. Each County's Plan was then submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in November 2018. The updated plans maintain the counties eligibility for various transit funding programs that mostly serve the low income, handicapped, and elderly populations. The plans focused on better service to the disadvantaged, sustainable service levels, improving efficiency through technology, innovation, coordination, and improved marketing of the transportation services available. Specific actions and agencies responsible for implementation are included in each county plan.

Scenic Mississippi River Transit - SMRT Bus Service Adds La Crosse to Tomah Route

The SMRT bus service began in December 2012 with routes serving La Crosse, Viroqua and Prairie du Chien, and eight communities in between. In October of 2017, based on the findings of a public transit feasibility study completed by La Crosse County, the La Crosse Area Planning Committee, and the MRRPC, the SMRT Bus expanded service to Monroe County and now provides service to fifteen communities in four counties.

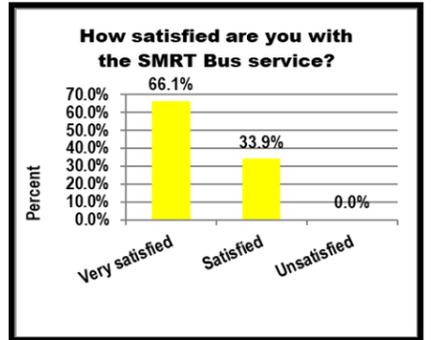
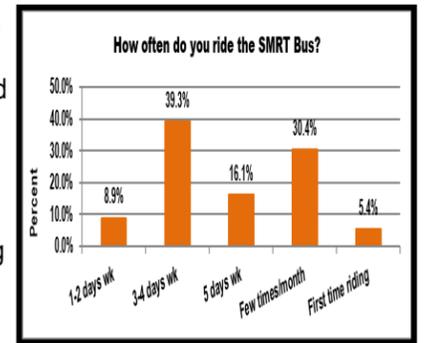
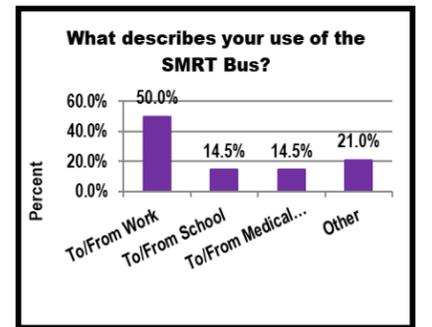


According to the 2019 annual ridership survey, 100% of SMRT Bus riders were very satisfied or satisfied with the SMRT Bus Service.

The MRRPC conducts an annual ridership survey of SMRT Bus customers to assist in evaluating the service and gauging ridership trends. The tables on page 3 illustrate the purpose, frequency and satisfaction levels of the SMRT Bus riders in 2018. The SMRT served 21,303 riders in 2018 a 9% increase over 2017. Service expansion also helps to reduce commuter traffic and parking space demand.

To finance operations, the MRRPC staff continues to assist in marketing and raising funds from the private and public sources to match a U.S. Department of Transportation Grant. Routes and schedules are also regularly evaluated in order to provide quality service.

SMRT Bus Survey Results



Buffalo County Adopts New Zoning Ordinance and Maps

On July 23, 2018 Buffalo county adopted a new Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Maps. MRRPC staff has been working with Buffalo County and the towns in preparing this ordinance and maps. Wisconsin Statutes call for zoning ordinances to be consistent with a comprehensive plan. Updating the county's zoning ordinance was a key recommendation of the comprehensive plan Buffalo county adopted in 2013. During meetings with the county zoning committee and the towns it was decided to implement density-based housing zoning districts that will meet state farmland preservation requirements, so eligible landowners can receive farmland preservation tax credits.

With these provisions in mind, nine zoning districts were created. Five of the districts are agriculture-based and are established to preserve farmland. The five Agriculture zoning districts and their minimum acreage requirements are: (1) ANR- 40 Agriculture/Natural Resource - 40 Acres; (2) ANR- 20 Agriculture/Natural Resource - 20 Acres; (3) ANR- 10 Agriculture/Natural Resource - 10 Acres; (4) ANR- 5 Agriculture/Natural Resource - 5 Acres; (5) ANRT-5 Agriculture/Natural Resource Transition - 5 Acres, which is intended for lands transitioning from agriculture to a more higher density use. The four other zoning districts are: (6) R Residential, which was created to establish and protect the essential characteristics of areas within which predominantly high density residential development not served by public sewer and water facilities should occur; (7) CONS Conservation, which consists primarily of county, state, and federally owned lands established to protect and preserve the natural features, wetlands and waterways; (8) C Commercial, which are locations for commercial establishments that are not industrial in nature; and (9) I Industrial, intended for areas which have heavy volumes of traffic, noise, and the potential need for rail access, which could pose a nuisance in other districts.

Now that the County has repealed the old zoning ordinance and adopted a new one, each town must also adopt the new ordinance. A Town has one year from the date the County adopted the new ordinance to either adopt the ordinance or become an unzoned town.

Mississippi River Region Economic Indicators

Table 1 on page 5 shows the growth or decline of four economic indicators over an eight-year period (2010-2018). The nine county Mississippi River Region saw an upward trend in each of the four indicators slightly below or on par with the state of Wisconsin as a whole. Individual counties saw a similar positive trend, though both Buffalo and Crawford county saw little growth or declines in job and/or business growth. The total number of jobs in most counties rose by 2-10%. The two exceptions to this were Crawford county where job numbers rose very little and Buffalo County, which experienced a decline of 12%. This decline is probably attributed to a major trucking company cutting jobs and/or reassigning drivers to another pay-

rolled location in a different county. The closure of a coal power plant in Alma likely attributed to this decline as well. As a whole, the region experienced a 5% increase, below the 8% increase statewide. Counties also experienced an increase of 3-14% in the number of payrolled business locations, except Crawford, which saw a 4% decline. The Gross Regional Product of the Mississippi River Region increased 34% over the eight-year period. The only county that experienced a decline in GRP growth was Buffalo, with an 8% decrease. All other counties grew anywhere from 28-40%. Finally, the data shows the average earnings per job increased by 20% in the region, similar to the 19% upsurge statewide. All counties underwent a similar increase, with the average earnings per job rising anywhere from 14-28%. Below are the definitions of the economic indicators used in Table 1 and sources where this information came from.

Total Number of Jobs: A job is any position in which a worker provides labor in exchange for monetary compensation. This includes those who work as employees for businesses (a.k.a. "wage and salary" employees) and proprietors who work for themselves. The total number of jobs were acquired via Emsi data based off the QCEW (Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages), with additional estimates from County Business Pattern. Payroll Businesses Description (Emsi).

Payrolled Business Locations are the same datapoint as QCEW Establishments - the single, physical locations where economic activity takes place. Due to the fact that QCEW captures only the businesses covered by state or federal unemployment insurance systems, we can infer that this datapoint is limited to payrolled business locations. This is an important distinction, as many small businesses (especially in the retail sector) are run exclusively by the owners and have no payroll. Such businesses are Not represented in this data point. Source: Emsi data based on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW).

Gross Regional Product measures the final market value of all goods and services produced in a region. This figure is the sum of earnings, property income, and taxes on production. Source: Emsi data based primarily on data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Average Earnings also called "Current Total Earnings", this is the total industry earnings for a region divided by number of jobs. Includes wages, salaries, supplements (additional employee benefits), and proprietor income. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Bureau of Economic Analysis. If using only QCEW and/or non-QCEW in Class of Worker settings, this figure shows only wages, salaries, and supplements paid to Employees.

Table 1 Mississippi River Region Economic Indicators 2010-2018

Counties, Region, States, Nation	2010 Jobs	2018 Jobs	% Job Change	2010 Payrolled Business Locations Est.	2018 Payrolled Business Locations Est.	2010 - 2018 % Change in Payrolled Business Locations	2010 Gross Regional Product	2018 Gross Regional Product	2010 - 2018 % Change in Gross Regional Product	2010 Avg Earning Per Job	2018 Avg Earning Per Job	2010 - 2018 Earning Per Job % Change
Buffalo	7,835	6,872	-12%	368	380	3%	502,583,180	461,648,559	-8%	32,556	37,142	14%
Crawford	10,491	10,534	0%	483	464	-4%	648,513,604	881,035,140	36%	32,628	41,901	28%
Jackson	10,900	11,938	10%	458	491	7%	681,449,699	934,589,858	37%	40,743	49,391	21%
La Crosse	80,197	85,293	6%	2,875	3,140	9%	5,421,778,708	7,326,703,771	35%	41,931	49,720	19%
Monroe	26,113	27,852	7%	1,051	1,130	8%	1,668,501,814	2,341,330,774	40%	39,433	48,350	23%
Pepin	3,764	3,856	2%	258	280	9%	210,282,169	271,498,585	29%	31,394	38,601	23%
Pierce	16,383	16,981	4%	824	937	14%	904,389,085	1,196,319,669	32%	33,289	38,932	17%
Trempealeau	19,003	19,686	4%	699	791	13%	1,082,512,909	1,480,460,568	37%	35,203	43,431	23%
Vernon	14,856	15,621	5%	659	719	9%	773,203,293	987,711,215	28%	29,937	35,859	20%
Mississippi River Region	189,543	198,634	5%	7,675	8,330	9%	11,893,214,460	15,881,298,141	34%	38,045	45,807	20%
Wisconsin	3,403,435	3,689,833	8%	156,451	174,273	11%	247,176,382,071	327,872,402,683	33%	44,653	53,217	19%
Iowa	1,926,416	2,066,029	7%	95,253	102,662	8%	139,326,737,206	191,042,367,295	37%	41,387	50,801	23%
Minnesota	3,396,895	3,777,115	11%	163,743	174,784	7%	268,598,496,868	365,936,414,158	36%	48,997	60,088	23%
U.S.	173,021,889	198,631,997	15%	9,033,392	9,999,710	11%	14,605,819,086,035	20,025,791,886,146	37%	49,726	58,994	19%

Source: EMSI - Datarun 2019 Qtr. 2, Compiled by the MRRPC

Hemp Gaining Popularity in Wisconsin

Hemp a "born again" specialty crop in Wisconsin is making a significant comeback in the region and state. Over the past year hemp growers, processors or their agents have contacted MRRPC staff about public/private financing alternatives for their operations. What's causing this interest is new federal and state legislation making hemp a more attractive cash crop. The 2018 Farm Bill removed hemp from the controlled substance list, legalized interstate commerce of hemp and defined hemp as an agricultural commodity eligible for crop insurance and banking. Legal hemp must also test below 0.3% THC.

These changes along with the state's new regulations increased applications from hemp growers from 260 in 2018 to 1,460 in 2019 a 460% increase. Hemp processor applications saw an even greater increase rising from 107 applications in 2018 to 716 applications in 2019 a 570% increase, Source DATCP.

Hemp grown for grain/seed is processed and sold for its nutritional value in things like tea, energy bars, coffee, flavored water and granola. Hemp grown for fiber is processed and sold for clothing, shoes, insulation, paper, cardboard, rope, twine, and particle board. Hemp for cannabidiol (CBD) use is processed and sold for its medicinal-therapeutic properties and is taken orally in liquid, oil, pill or edible form and is also available in lotions, soaps, salves and other skin care products.

Hemp's wide variety of products along with the region's overstocked biomass resources to supply the rapidly evolving solid and liquid biofuel industries provide interesting opportunities for the region's farmers. This potential combination of new home grown products coupled with the region's existing organic food industry, food processors and wood product manufacturers provides an intriguing industry cluster mix that could spawn new sources of income for farmers leading to more business formations and jobs up and down each products supply chain.

2018 - 2019 Wisconsin Hemp Grower and Processor Trends	
2018 Hemp Grower Applications	260
2019 Hemp Grower Applications	1,460
2018 - 2019 Number Change in Hemp Grower Applications	1,200
2018-2019 Percent Change in Hemp Grower Applications	460%
2018 Hemp Processor Applications	107
2019 Hemp Processor Applications	716
2018-2019 Number Change in Hemp Processor Applications	609
2018-2019 Percent Change in Hemp Processor Applications	570%