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Connecting Communities in the North with the Resources of State Government – What's Next?

MaryAnn and Rachel are both leaving state service at the end of December. Until these northern office positions are filled, please contact the Department of Administration, Division of Intergovernmental Relations when you are looking for information, have a question or an issue.

Dawn Vick is your key contact. She may be reached at dawn.vick@wisconsin.gov or at 608-266-7043.

It has been a pleasure working with you! We hope our final edition of The Northern Connection fulfills our mission of "connecting communities in the North with the resources of state government."

DNR Local Assistance Grants – Start Planning Now!

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) partners with local governments through a wide variety of grant programs. For example, Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Local Assistance, Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, and Federal Recreational Trails Program grants support land acquisition and construction of trails, canoe/kayak launches, fishing piers, and other local outdoor recreation facilities. Applications are due May 1, 2019.

Find out more about these grant programs and other opportunities for local governments by contacting a DNR regional grant specialist or visiting the DNR Grants webpage.

USDA Rural Development – A Resource for Communities

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development office in Wisconsin has shared several helpful resources.

USDA "Innovation Matters" Newsletter

Looking for funding for your community project? The *Innovation Matters* newsletter is issued twice a month, highlighting funding opportunities, training, and toolkits. To sign up, visit www.usda.gov/topics/rural/rural-development-innovation-center, and scroll toward the bottom of the page for the subscription link.

In addition to the newsletter, the Innovation Center Midwest team will also be issuing a funding guide on opposite weeks as the *Innovation Matters* newsletter. To receive this guide, send an email to carol.wetuski@wi.usda.gov and ask to be added to the funding list.

USDA Substance Use/Opioid Misuse Resources

The following information and resources regarding substance use disorder and opioid misuse are for rural communities. Please share with those who may have interest.

- Rural Resource Guide: www.rd.usda.gov/files/RuralResourceGuide.pdf
- Community Assessment Tool: <https://opioidmisusetool.norc.org>
- More information on Opioids: www.usda.gov/topics/opioids

Governor's Tourism Award Nominations

Do you know someone who's made a significant impact on the state's tourism industry? Nominate them for the Governor's Tourism Awards, sponsored by the Governor's Council on Tourism. These awards recognize individuals and businesses in the tourism industry that have shown dedication, creativity, and excellence.

Information, award descriptions, and nomination forms can be found online at <https://wigcot.eventsair.com/gta>. The nomination deadline is January 18, 2019.

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Got an Idea for a Technology-Based Business?

Get valuable early-stage feedback by entering the 16th annual Wisconsin Governor's Business Plan Contest!

The contest is designed to encourage entrepreneurs in the startup stage of tech-based businesses. The contest links up-and-coming entrepreneurs with a statewide network of community resources, expert advice and mentoring, management talent, and possible sources of capital.

Deadline for online entry is January 31, 2019. To get started, create an account at www.govsbizplancontest.com. Connect with mentors throughout the process, while also accessing the judges' comments and feedback. Give it a try—you've got nothing to lose!

News from Wisconsin Rural Partners

2019 Wisconsin Rural Summit April 24-25, 2019, Rice Lake, WI Featured Keynote – David Ivan: Can Small Towns be Cool?

Registration opens February 1, 2019. More information on the agenda will be coming soon, and posted on the [Wisconsin Rural Partners website](#), or visit the website and sign-up for information delivered directly to your inbox.

Top Rural Development Initiative Award Nominations

Since 1998, Wisconsin Rural Partners (WRP) has recognized more than 150 innovative and impactful initiatives as part of the Top Rural Development Initiative Program.

Nominations for the 2019 awards are open now through the end of January, and it couldn't be easier to submit your program or project.

Visit the WRP website to download the application form and submit your materials. [Click here](#) to nominate your project today!

Previous award winners include activities related to agriculture, infrastructure, recreation, conservation, community development, health care, and more. Visit the [WRP Facebook Page](#) for inspiration.

DNR Updates

2019 State Park Stickers on Sale

Looking for a holiday gift that keeps on giving throughout the year?

Give your outdoor enthusiasts access to some of the most scenic areas in Wisconsin with a 2019 Wisconsin state park admission sticker or state trail pass.

Sales of vehicle admission stickers, camping and state trail passes go directly to support the operation of Wisconsin state parks, forests, recreation areas, and trails.

Check Out the Enhanced State Park Campsite Reservation System

Starting on December 17, 2018 campers booking a campsite at Wisconsin State Park System properties will be using a new, improved—and less expensive—reservation system. Visit the [DNR website](#) for more information!

Statewide Recreation Plan Ready for Public Review

You are invited to review and make comments on the draft Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

This plan provides guidance for public outdoor recreation policy decisions. It is used in distributing recreation-related grants administered by the Department of Natural Resources. The public input period is open until January 4, 2019. Learn more at dnr.wi.gov/topic/Lands/scorp.

Business & Community Resources from WEDC

Companies Invited to Promote their Wisconsin-Made Products

Made In Wisconsin®. What better testament to the innovation, integrity and quality that separates your products from those originating elsewhere? Now, you can proudly stamp your state pride on your work.



The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation has developed a Made In Wisconsin logo for companies to use. The logo can be adapted to reflect your production processes.

Options include:

- Made In Wisconsin
- Manufactured In Wisconsin
- Produced In Wisconsin
- Built In Wisconsin
- Grown In Wisconsin
- Designed In Wisconsin
- Engineered In Wisconsin
- Brewed In Wisconsin

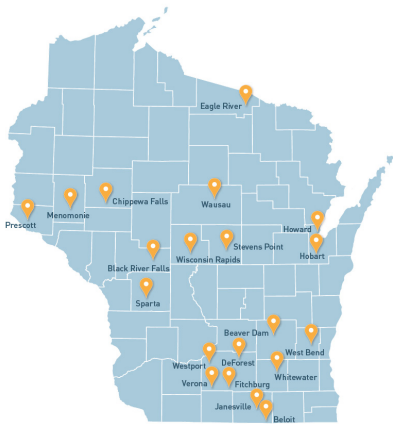
There is no cost to use this certification mark. Companies that wish to participate fill out a simple application stating how they will use the logo and certifying that the product or service on which they seek to use the mark fulfills program requirements.

More than 200 companies in a variety of industries are now part of the program and logos are being placed on all sorts of products—from park benches to popcorn to handbags to heaters.

Communities Urged to Apply for Certified Sites Programs

In January, WEDC will begin accepting applications for the Certified in Wisconsin® Program, a designation that ensures that an industrial property is development-ready and allows for fast-track construction for major relocation or expansion projects.

Once a site is certified, a potential developer has all the standard information generally needed to make a quick decision about whether that site is right for their needs, such as utility and transportation infrastructure, environmental assessments, quality of nearby labor force and much more.



To date, there have been 19 economic development projects on the state's Certified Sites—which are expected to result in more than \$400 million in capital investment and more than 2,300 jobs. WEDC will begin accepting application on January 15, 2019. For details visit the Certified Sites website at wedc.org/programs-and-resources/certified-sites.



News from DATCP

These are challenging times for Wisconsin farmers. Here are resources from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP) that may help.

Agricultural Enterprise Areas

If your community could benefit by being designated as an agricultural enterprise area, gather local officials, landowners, and agribusiness owners to submit a petition by the June 21, 2019 deadline for 2020 designation.

Agricultural enterprise areas, or AEA's, are blocks of land that are used primarily for farming and businesses that serve the farming sector. They are created when at least five landowners and their local governments petition for an AEA designation and DATCP approves the petition.

Farmers in AEA's may qualify for tax credits. The designation can also be used with local planning and zoning, conservation easements, agriculture economic development incentives, and other tools to support farming and the local farm economy, while providing certainty for farmers making investment decisions.

For more information, visit datcp.wi.gov/Pages/News_Media/AEAPetitionCall2019.aspx.

Wisconsin Farm Center Resources

During times of critical need, or when planning for the future, the Farm Center is available to help Wisconsin farmers and agribusinesses.

The Wisconsin DATCP Farm Center works one-on-one with farmers and their families during all phases of the challenging farm life cycle. This includes start-up, growth, financial hardship, generational succession, or retirement. Services are free. Farmers and agribusinesses can contact the Center's toll-free line at 1-800-942-2474, or visit datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Growing_WI/FarmCenterOverview.aspx.

Industrial Hemp License Period Runs Through March 1

The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is accepting industrial hemp license applications and annual registrations for the 2019 growing season until March 1, 2019.

Growers and processors who received licenses in 2018 do not need to reapply for licenses, however, will need to register for the 2019 season. Those who do not have a license will need to apply for one and register if they intend to grow or process in 2019.

This will be the only licensing and registration period for the 2019 growing season. Licensing materials, fee information, other details about the program are available at datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/IndustrialHemp.aspx. You can also sign-up to receive updates about the program. ■

About the Northern Office

The Northern Office serves as a connection point between communities in Northern Wisconsin and the resources of state government. If you are looking for information, have a suggestion, or need assistance with problem resolution with a state agency, please contact us. We travel throughout the 40 county region north of U.S. Highway 10 and can be available, with 3 to 4 weeks notice, to attend your meetings and events. Keep in touch!