



FLORENCE COUNTY
Economic Development
Helping Business Grow
Wendy Gehlhoff – Director
P.O. Box 410, Florence, WI 54121

2017 Economic Development Successes

By Wendy Gehlhoff – Florence County Economic Development Director 9/25/17

- Awarded \$66,000 State PSC grant to add high speed internet to Fence, Long Lake and Fern area
- Managed 14 RLF business loans in 4 townships: Fence, Florence, Long Lake and Tipler
- Assisted 3 clients with micro loan applications for funding to start new business (2 Aurora, 1 Florence)
- Facilitated new search to find gap funding for 65 unit assisted living facility project to create 30 jobs
- Managed TID developer agreements for incentives that led to new day care and pharmacy businesses
- TID projects leveraged \$4 million of new business spending and created 55 new jobs
- TID value up 4 % since last year and 30% since 2013 - county sales tax up approximately 3%
- Advocated to remove 90,000 lb county road weight signs to assist our forest industry businesses
- Awarded forestry education grants: interpretative signs at visitor center and new school forest habitat
- Designed Florence County Attraction flyers/signs to highlight our county, school and job opportunities
- Partnered with school and regional industry for fab lab and Tech Fair to grow tech-skilled workforce
- Promoting our Wild Rivers (the Pine and Popple) outside the area via radio, flyers and trade shows
- Managed website, Facebook and regional PR for 7 tourism events plus others and ongoing content

2018 Economic Development Projects

- Facilitate gap funding approval from 3 state/federal programs to finance the assisted living facility
- Oversee successful implementation of grant to bring high speed internet to Fence, Fern, Long Lake
- Initiate and lead a multi-department effort to develop new mid-priced homes and rental options
- Find investors to build an AmericInn or Cobblestone Hotel project to address limited lodging supply
- Continue to manage loan programs and provide business counseling resources to our entrepreneurs
- Continue to work with partners to promote Florence County as a great place to live, work and play
- Continue to support Forest Products industry to enable more business and workforce growth
- Collaborate with school to grow Fab Lab community use and school curriculum to grow workforce
- Continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce to provide benefits to our business community
- Continue to promote county events and recreational assets like Wild Rivers to grow visitor spending