



**FLORENCE COUNTY**  
**Economic Development**  
*Helping Business Grow*  
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## **2018 Economic Development Success**

*by Wendy Gehlhoff – Florence County Economic Development Director*

- Received Wisconsin Rural Partners Top Rural Development Initiative award for Broadband project
- Broadband grant is 50% implemented with service now available in the Fence area, Long Lake next
- Continued tourism promotion efforts gave Florence County 2017's highest % growth in state (17%)
- Sales tax revenue up 18% in the past 2 years and 35% over 5 years due to business growth
- Assisted 4 entrepreneurs with new business start-ups as well as resources to assist existing businesses
- Managed 10 RLF loans and 7 micro-loan portfolio while providing assistance for client success as needed
- Sold three lots in industrial park for new industrial welding facility to break ground in the spring
- Continue to grow number of events promoted via County website, Facebook page, radio ads and print
- Facebook followers/likes is over 9,400/9,600 with posts reaching as high as 151,000 reach
- Worked with multiple entities to get Pine Dam waterfall named Breakwater Falls and signed to find
- Facilitated Discover Wisconsin winter and summer recreational activities filming via co-op of funders

## **2019 Economic Development Projects:**

- Maximize our promotional content with our 2-year Discover Wisconsin Choice Destination partnership
- Oversee final implementation of Broadband Grant to bring high speed internet to Long Lake & Fern
- Continue to lead multi-department effort to develop new mid-priced homes and rental options
- Facilitate development of a much needed independent/assisted living facility
- Oversee hotel study update and then locate investors to develop a much needed chain hotel project
- Target and attract telecommuters to Florence County as a great place to live, work and play
- Market and facilitate sale of empty commercial buildings to add more services/retail businesses to area
- Manage the DOA CDBG/RLF-CLOSE process to defederalize and obtain local control of RLF Loan Program
- Lead collaborative efforts to obtain enhanced recreational opportunities on WE Energies Pine Dam lands
- Write and implement 3<sup>rd</sup> Dept of Tourism 3<sup>rd</sup> Year JEM grant to promote easy Wild River trip itineraries
- Using JEM grant, convert website to new more visual format that has become industry standard