



FLORENCE COUNTY
Economic Development
Helping Business Grow
Wendy Gehlhoff – Director
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2019 Economic Development Success:

by Wendy Gehlhoff – Florence County Economic Development Director

- Applied for, received and implemented \$420,000 CDBG CLOSE PFED grant to build new industrial park road, sewer and water to G&G Lumber assuring retention of 13 jobs after their complete loss fire in Fern
- Completed State PSC Broadband Expansion grant to add Northwoods Connect fixed wireless high-speed internet to towers in Fence, Long Lake and Keyes Peak areas. Utilized by residents and cabin owners.
- Continued promotion efforts - Florence County tourism spending grew 12% over last two years vs. 8% state average. Data for Pine River Oxbow use shows 500+% increase since 2015. Other landings also up.
- Sales tax revenue up 19% over last 3 years Jan-July due to business sales growth, may pass \$300,000
- Continued to grow number of events promoted via county website, Facebook page, radio ads and print
- Updated Waterfall Guide to include newly named Breakwater Falls and FUN on the Wild Rivers Itineraries through a tourism grant that helped fund a much needed 2019 website redesign.
- Managed county website and Facebook page (10,300+ followers) to attract more visitors.
- Provided resources to help our employers retain and grow more jobs for our residents.
- Gathered funding and created advertising: radio ads via local/regional radio stations, Discover Wisconsin Florence County TV segment, various print ads and billboards on Hwy 141 and US 2.
- Maintained the business directory for county website and newly updated Visitor Guide.

2020 Economic Development Projects:

- Facilitate development and financing for a much needed 32-bed independent/assisted living facility
- Implement/monitor \$420,000 CDBG-CLOSE-PFED Grant to build road, sewer and water to G&G Sawmill
- Work with DNR to create new Spread Eagle Barrens brochure and new Savage Lake SNA handout
- Locate and apply for a new Revolving Loan Fund program to help start-ups and small business growth
- Work with interested hotel owner to develop a much needed 30 room chain hotel project
- Market Florence County assets through Travel Wisconsin promotional ads to reach wider audience
- Market and facilitate sale of empty commercial buildings to add more services/retail businesses to area
- Work with local stakeholders to push for Pine Dam FERC license renewal and recreational enhancements
- Target and attract telecommuters to Florence County as a great place to live, work and play
- Facilitate construction of new mid-priced homes and rental options