



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

## **2020 Economic Development Successes:**

*By Wendy Gehlhoff – Florence County Economic Development Director*

- Successfully managed \$420,000 CDBG CLOSE PFED grant to build new industrial park road, sewer and water to G&G Lumber Inc assuring the retention of 15 jobs. Road was paved and all work complete 7/29
- Informed/helped 150+ businesses with SBA/WEDC loan/grant programs & rules during COVID pandemic
- Working with regional developer on 44 mid-priced rental units to reduce workforce housing shortage
- Expanded promotions, especially radio, across northern WI, Upper MI and statewide. Pine River Oxbow use up 500+% over 3 years. Restaurants continue to see sales grow. Facebook grew to 10,800 followers
- Sales tax revenue is up 6% per year over last 3 years. Up \$4,000 through July this year despite COVID.
- Used a \$3,800 Yr 3 Tourism JEM grant to redesign waterfall guide, website and promote Wild Rivers Fun
- TID value up 11% versus last year for many reasons including business growth and housing demand
- Assisting 8 people considering development of new housing and rental options from flyer in utility bills
- Helped 3 entrepreneurs apply and receive \$10,000 micro loans to start new businesses: North Shore Storage & Service, Seven1Five Outpost and B's Lawn and Landscape. Managed micro & RLF loan files.
- Led or assisted 3 Chamber, 3 County plus new Keyes Peak Uphill Truck Drags (2,000 attended) events
- Continued to grow number of events promoted via county website, Facebook page, radio ads and print
- Joined Wisconsin Rural Partners board and voted secretary. Network group to share rural best practices
- Executive Committee Rail Transit progress with WisDOT to facilitate sale of CN light density rail lines
- Partnered with Bug Tussel Wireless for a PSC Broadband grant to add service to 7 towers: awarded 3/21
- Designed/printed new Spread Eagle Barrens State Natural Area brochure in partnership with WDNR

## **2021 Economic Development Projects:**

- Continue to promote county to help grow our tourism businesses and increase county sales tax revenue
- Facilitate development and financing for a much needed 32-bed independent/assisted living facility
- Finalize TID funding and other details for 44-unit mid-priced rental housing project for 2022 construction
- Apply for new Revolving Loan Fund program through USDA to finance startup and small business growth
- Locate interested hotel investor to develop a much needed 30 room chain hotel project with TID/BCPL
- Market and facilitate sale of empty commercial buildings to add more services/retail businesses to area
- Work with local stakeholders to develop recreational trail enhancements and statewide promotions
- Target and attract telecommuters to Florence County as a great place to live, work and play
- Continue multi-entity effort to develop new workforce homes and rental options

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