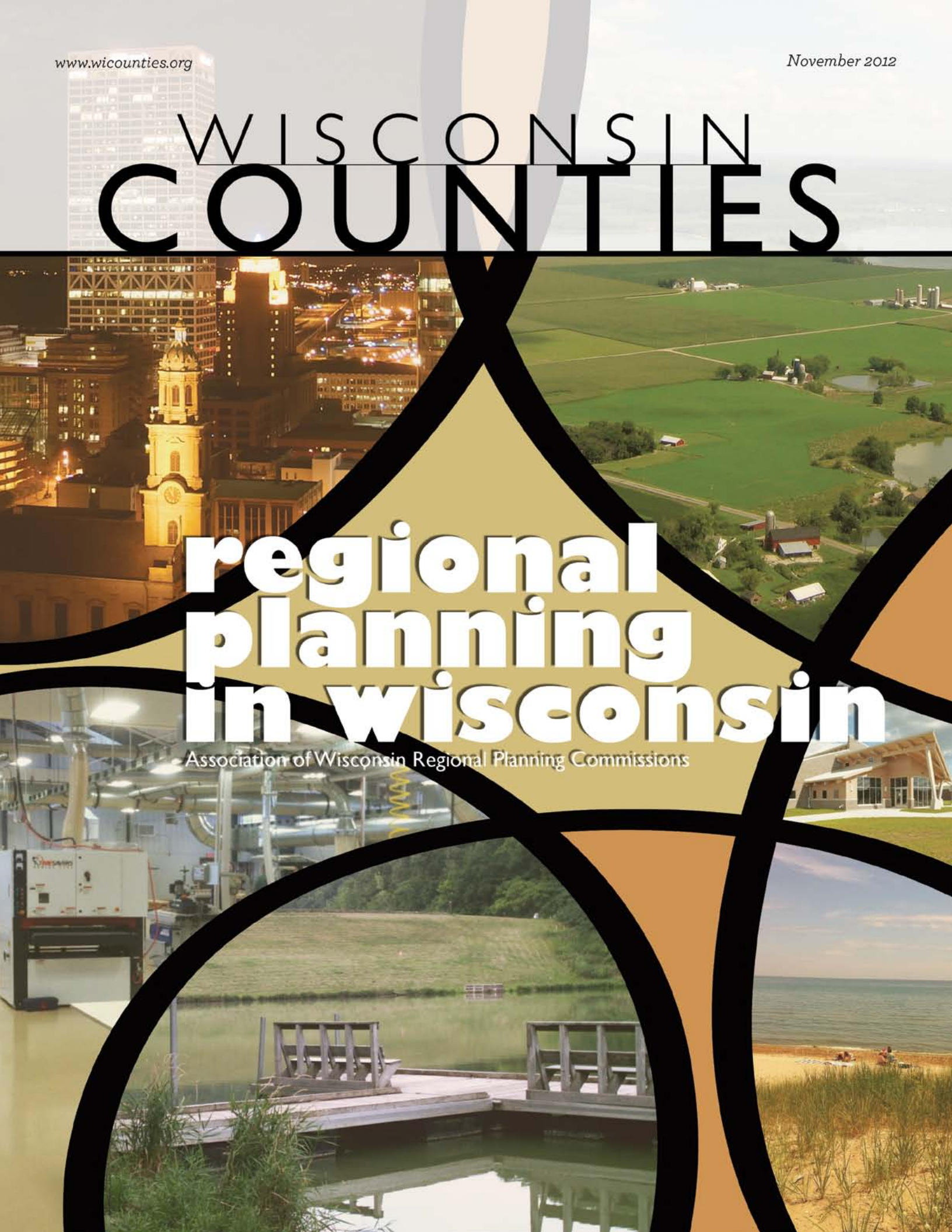


# WISCONSIN COUNTIES

## regional planning in wisconsin

Association of Wisconsin Regional Planning Commissions





AWRPC

Association of Wisconsin  
Regional Planning Commissions

# regional planning in wisconsin

Improving the Future

Bay-Lake RPC • Capital Area RPC  
East Central Wisconsin RPC • Mississippi River RPC  
North Central Wisconsin RPC • Northwest RPC  
Southeastern Wisconsin RPC • Southwestern Wisconsin RPC  
West Central Wisconsin RPC



**AWRPC**  
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# Regional Planning in Wisconsin

Regional planning commissions in the state of Wisconsin are public agencies formed by executive order of the Governor. Wisconsin state statutes specify that regional planning commissions are to provide intergovernmental planning and coordination for the physical, social and economic development of the region.

## RPC Designations

All regional planning commissions in Wisconsin are designated by the state and federal governments as clearinghouses for the purpose of reviewing federal grant applications against adopted regional and local plans and development priorities. Seven of the commissions are designated or authorized as Economic Development Districts by the U.S. Economic Development Administration for purposes of areawide economic planning and to guide the investment of Federal funds for economic development. All nine commissions are affiliates of the Wisconsin State Data Center, whereby they provide data services (particularly census data) to local units of government and to the public. In addition, three commissions have been recognized by the U.S. Department of Transportation as Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to carry out a comprehensive transportation planning process in the state's urban areas. Two commissions are designated water quality planning agencies.

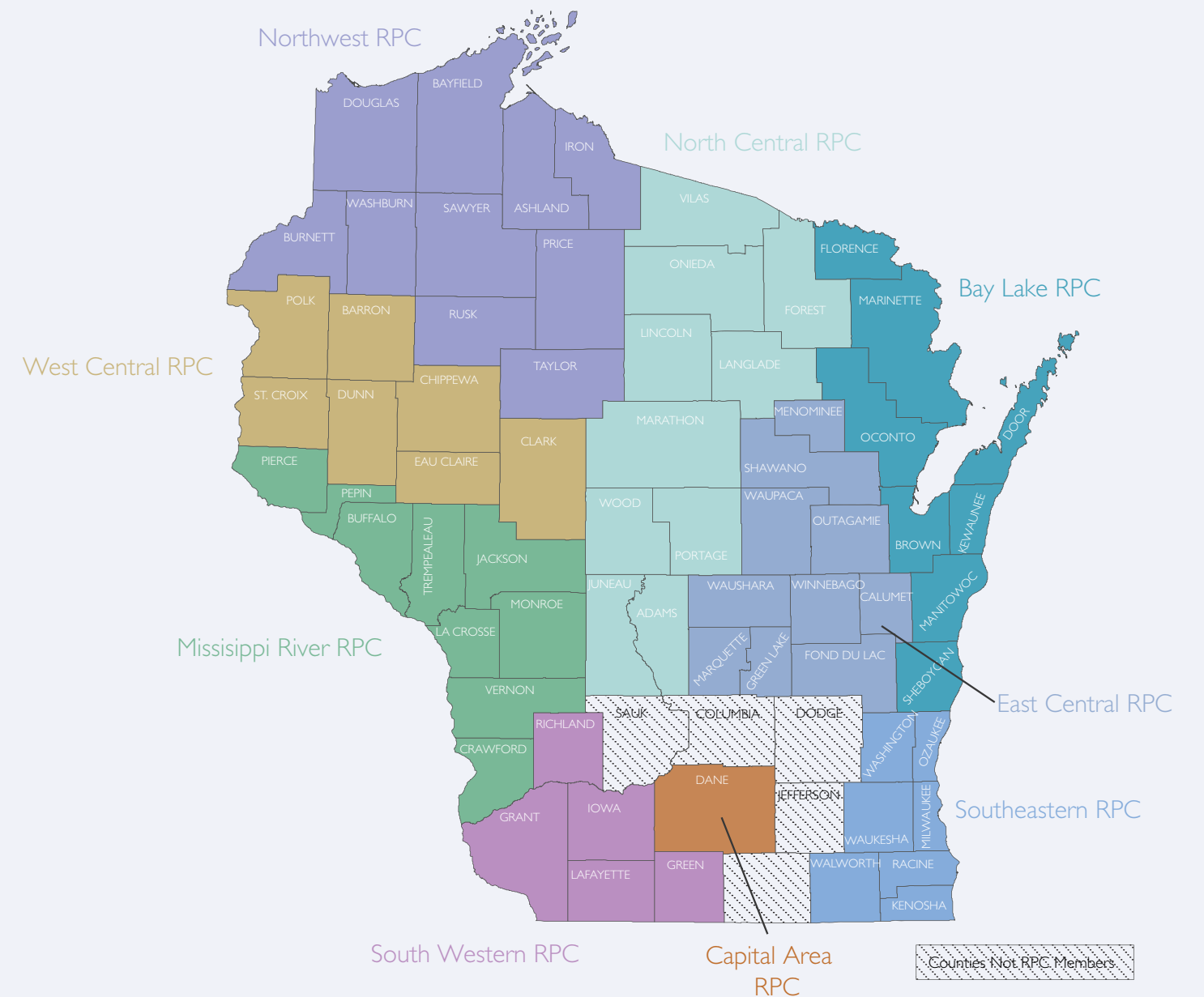
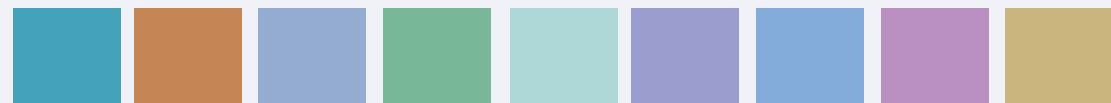
## Functions

Under Wisconsin law, regional planning commissions have the following functions:

1. They may conduct all types of research studies; collect and analyze data; prepare maps, charts and tables; and conduct necessary studies.
2. They may make and adopt plans for the physical, social and economic development of the region.
3. They may publish and advertise their purposes, objectives and findings, and may distribute reports thereon.
4. They may provide advisory services on planning problems to the local governmental units within the region and to other public and private agencies in matters relative to its functions and objectives.

Over the years, the demands of various regions on the regional planning commissions have changed. These changes, however, have not altered the basic advisory role of the commissions. The original and traditional role of the commissions was to plan for the physical development of the areas they served. This involved planning issues such as land use, transportation, natural resources, and water and sewer services. While this function has continued to be important, additional program responsibilities have been assumed, including technical assistance in such areas as economic development, grant and loan services, and local government management.

The broad range of functions and services performed by Wisconsin's regional planning commissions are a result of the different needs and levels of financial support provided by each commission's member units of government. Commissions receive funds through a statutorily authorized charge, state and federal planning grant programs, and contracts with local governments for special planning services. Local funds are often used by the commissions as a match for federal and state planning grants.



The Association of Wisconsin Regional Planning Commissions (AWRPC) is a voluntary association of the nine regional planning commissions in the state of Wisconsin. AWRPC convenes meetings of RPC leaders to exchange information and serves as a clearinghouse for state agency communications and involvement with RPCs.



For more information regarding AWRPC, please see [www.awrpc.org](http://www.awrpc.org) or contact the executive director of your local regional planning commission.

# Bay-Lake

Regional Planning Commission

## Improving Beaches in the Bay-Lake Region

Communities located along Lake Michigan have been concerned for the past several years about the need to close their beaches due to the high levels of E.coli. The Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (Bay-Lake RPC) found a way to assist them by applying for and receiving funding through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant program. This initiative targets the most significant problems in the Great Lakes region, including Nearshore Health and Nonpoint Source Pollution, by protecting, maintaining, and restoring the chemical, biological, and physical integrity of the Great Lakes.

In May 2004, the Great Lakes were recognized as a national treasure by a Presidential Executive Order calling for the creation of a "Regional Collaboration of National Significance." In December 2005, the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration comprised of the eight Great Lakes states, along with the Great Lakes Mayors, tribes, congressional delegation, and federal agencies, announced agreement on the Great Lakes Restoration Strategy, which was developed through the efforts of 1,500 volunteers. Starting in May 2009, President Obama's budget set aside funding for the annual GLRI grant program to fund projects that target the most significant environmental problems impacting the Great Lakes' ecosystem.

The marketing and administration of the approved GLRI beach project started in 2010 and beach water sampling began in the summer of 2011. The Bay-Lake RPC partnered with the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh (UW-O) to gather the sampling data and conduct beach assessments. The sampling data and beach assessments will help to identify the sources of contamination and provide necessary information

to develop detailed beach improvement plans at nearly 20 beaches in the cities of Algoma, Kewaunee, Manitowoc, Marinette, Sheboygan and Two Rivers. The beach improvement plans will provide communities with effective beach redesign, restoration and management recommendations.

Being the official area-wide planning agency for northeastern Wisconsin, the Bay-Lake RPC has provided a variety of planning and administrative services to communities along the shores of Lake Michigan for the past 40 years. With nearly 400 miles of coastal shoreline in the eight county region, maintaining the health of Lake Michigan has always been an important goal of the Bay-Lake RPC. This beach project is a perfect example of the collaboration and intergovernmental cooperation that is necessary to accomplish such a large region-wide initiative.

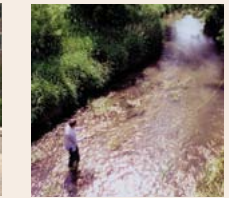
Throughout this three-year project, meetings will be held with local officials and the public to ensure the beach improvement plans being prepared address their concerns and are consistent with the vision each community has for their beaches. The outcomes of this project will lead to real, on-the-ground, and sustainable beach improvements. In addition, communities will receive ongoing guidance and the tools necessary to achieve and maintain healthy and desirable beaches that will remain open throughout the summer to be enjoyed by residents and tourists.

The Bay-Lake RPC and UW-O will take the next step to improve beaches in the region with the submission of a second 2011 GLRI grant that will focus on funding to fully implement the beach improvement plans at a number of the beaches in the region. The GLRI action plan adopted in 2005 extends through 2014.



# Capital Area

Regional Planning Commission



Established in May 2007, the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC) is the newest of Wisconsin RPC's. CARPC is responsible for water quality planning and for Master Planning for the physical development of the region. In addition to collecting and analyzing data concerning development growth and the health of the natural resources, CARPC strives to bring together diverse stakeholders and seeks to build regional consensus in support of a holistic approach to development. This holistic approach seeks to integrate land use and development with natural resource systems, agricultural landscapes, transportation and infrastructure networks, and government and management processes and structures. Because the region is one of the fastest growing areas of the state, CARPC's work has a significant influence on economic development and related systems.

To maintain the quality of life and protect the natural resources of the area in balance with growth and development, CARPC led a partnership and successfully applied for a 3-year, \$1,980,000 Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in 2010. The grant funds, combined with local resources, lay the foundation for strategic and sustainable economic development in the Capital region. Through this initiative CARPC has provided funding for the following projects:

- ◆ Facilitate cooperative planning for sustainable future urban development that meets shared economic, environmental, transportation, housing and other goals. Grant resources will fund additional planning, design and natural resource staff, and modeling capabilities, to examine impacts of various growth scenarios, and to engage the public in selecting preferred scenarios. Lead: CARPC in conjunction with local communities.
- ◆ Study and prepare recommendations for enhanced regional bus transit, including the option of bus rapid transit, and transit-oriented development that improves regional mobility, neighborhood and commercial revitalization, and access to jobs and activities. Lead: Madison Area Transportation Planning Board.
- ◆ Prepare transit-oriented development site plans, in

conjunction with local neighborhoods, that increase ridership and access to regional job centers, provide diverse housing choices, promote commercial development, walkability and quality civic spaces. Lead: CARPC in conjunction with local communities.

- ◆ Prepare studies of potential market demand for "smart growth" commercial, housing, and transportation-oriented development in various locations in the region, to better guide planning and development and promote investment opportunities. Lead: CARPC.
- ◆ Prepare a business plan and site preparations for the Madison Sustainability Commerce Center in the Capital East District, a facility for renewable energy, energy efficiency and other green businesses along with public education and networking facilities. Lead: City of Madison.
- ◆ Prepare a feasibility study and business plan for a fresh vegetable packing house to connect local growers to large institutional buyers, strengthen local farmers, promote healthy food choices, and provide jobs. Lead: Dane County.
- ◆ Prepare a business plan for a year-round food market that meets the needs of underserved, nearby neighborhoods south of the beltline. Lead: Dane County.
- ◆ Prepare a strategy and recommendations to capture 100% of an average 1-year rainfall in the planned North McGaw neighborhood. Lead: City of Fitchburg.
- ◆ Prepare a regional housing strategy for meeting the region's diverse housing needs. Lead: public, private, non-profit and for-profit housing organizations and businesses.
- ◆ Prepare recommendations to increase participation in planning and implementation by traditionally under-represented groups. Lead: public and private non-profit organizations.
- ◆ Prepare recommendations to incorporate greenhouse gas and air quality goals and performance targets into local and regional plans. Lead: Dane County and local communities.
- ◆ Prepare performance indicators and methods of collecting indicator data to track and communicate progress towards long-term desired outcomes. Lead: UW-Madison Urban and Regional Planning and CARPC.



**Executive Director Richard Heath**  
441 S. Jackson Street • Green Bay, WI 54301  
920-448-2820 • rheath@baylakerpc.org  
www.baylakerpc.org



**Deputy Director Kamran Mesbah**  
210 MLK Blvd., Room 362 • Madison, WI 53703  
608-266-9283 • kamranm@capitalarearpc.org  
www.capitalarearpc.org



# East Central

Regional Planning Commission

## Regional Safe Routes to School Program a National Success



Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a national and international movement to create safe, convenient and fun opportunities for children to bicycle and walk to and from schools. In 2005, the U.S. Congress approved \$612 million in funding for five years of state implementation of SRTS programs in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Communities are using this funding to construct new bike lanes, pathways and sidewalks, as well as to launch SRTS education, promotion and enforcement campaigns in K-8 schools.

The East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission's "Regional Safe Routes to School Program" was initiated in October, 2009 to empower school districts and communities with SRTS programming and the resources and knowledge to develop sustainable and successful SRTS programs. The Regional SRTS Program was piloted in 2009 after individually funded school district projects illustrated the loss of momentum resulting from not having adequate support and capacity to continue the efforts actively. East Central was chosen by WisDOT to pilot a regional approach to SRTS in the state of Wisconsin and it has since been shown to be effective. For example, in 2009, there were eight school districts with SRTS programs within East Central's ten-county region. That number doubled to 21 schools districts and 79 schools within nine months of the program. As of October, 2012, there are 26 school districts and just over 114 schools participating. This represents 41% of all the K-8 schools within the region.

With the Regional SRTS Program, local schools and communities now have a "one-stop shop" that can help them implement their plan recommendations and build a successful SRTS program. The Regional SRTS program, which is open to both public and private schools within the ECWRPC ten-county region, allows school districts and communities to start their SRTS program at any time. New SRTS programs begin by working with ECWRPC staff to form a local SRTS task force and develop their local SRTS action plan.

The number of schools participating in East Central's Regional SRTS Program has increased significantly over the last two years.

### Total within the Region

274 Kindergarten through 8th grade schools  
2009: 23 schools (8%)      2011: 100 schools (36%)  
2010: 80 schools (29%)     2012: 114 schools (41%)

### International Walk to School Day

The Regional SRTS Program has seen an increase in participation in International Walk to School Day  
2009: 16 schools              2011: 57 schools  
2010: 43 schools              2012: 85 schools

### Bike Safety Day

Bike Safety Day activities ranging from bike rodeos, to wear your helmet to lunch contest, and biking to school.  
2010: 73 schools              2012: 80+ schools  
2011: 76 schools

### Walking School Buses

Two walking school buses were piloted in the spring and fall of 2011. The pilot at Riverside Elementary School in Fond du Lac had 8-10 students walking to school. At Green Lake Elementary School, two walking school bus routes were developed and 25% of the students participated on the walking school bus.

The East Central Regional Planning Commission's work in the development and implementation of a multi-jurisdictional, centralized approach to the SRTS Program has shown clear benefits including program delivery efficiency, program consistency and comprehensiveness. The program's biggest strength is its network of stakeholders that share resources, provide advice, and work together with the common goal of increasing the number of students that walk and bike to school.

Today, East Central's Regional SRTS Program is nationally recognized, as the East Central Regional Planning Commission now serves on the Safe Routes to School National Partnership Steering Committee. Additionally, one of the regional program's participating schools – the Omro Middle School, located in Winnebago County – was awarded one of only two 2011 James L. Oberstar National Safe Routes to School Awards.



**Executive Director Eric Fowle**  
400 Ahnaip St; Ste. 100 • Menasha, WI 54952  
920-751-4770 • efowle@eastcentralrpc.org  
www.eastcentralrpc.org



# Mississippi River

Regional Planning Commission

## Providing Cost Beneficial Services



The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) prepares plans, ordinances, reports, maps, grants and undertakes implementation activities related to transportation, economic development, community facilities and the environment. The cost for these services are paid for with funding from the nine member counties based upon their real estate equalized value. In 2012, funding from all counties totaled \$132,770. For every dollar the MRRPC receives from member counties it raises three to four dollars from federal, state and private

sources to fund its operations. What is often overlooked in the delivery of these cost-shared services is the compounding positive return from completed projects. The following are a few of the projects the MRRPC has been involved in where it plainly shows how the benefits of regional planning exceed the costs.

**A regional Economic Development District designation has generated a \$16 million economic development benefit.** This benefit is in the form of federal grants from the U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration for 12 industrial parks and seven other economic development related projects that led to new jobs and a stronger economic base. To qualify for these grants, communities need to be included in a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. The MRRPC prepared and adopted the region's first CEDS in 1976 and has completed the federal economic development district required updates ever since. The MRRPC staff was also involved in writing many of the grants that were awarded.

**Working on dam safety problems regionally helped secure a \$281,660 research grant for counties.** The Mississippi River Region's topography make it vulnerable to flooding. Dam construction was determined to be the

solution to this problem; however, after decades of service and increased development below the dams, the physical conditions of the dams are a big concern. To respond to this, the MRRPC prepared a regional long-term flood recovery plan that led to inspection and maintenance studies on 42 dams. Total cost to conduct these studies exceeded \$354,000; however, through the efficiency and capacity of the MRRPC's regional-multicounty partnership, a federal grant was awarded to cover 80% of these costs. This funding was used to hire engineers to develop details on what is needed to bring the dams up to safe standards and what the social and economic losses would be below the dam if it breaches.

**A regional business loan fund has made over \$3.3 million in loans to 58 businesses.** The need for more flexible financing to help small business startup or expansion was identified as a regional need to help spur economic growth. To address this, the MRRPC prepared a funding formula involving population, bank assets, and business size and mailed out requests for a funding commitment if a federal grant was awarded. After numerous regional meetings and marketing efforts, over \$168,000 in commitments were received. With these commitments in hand the MRRPC wrote a successful \$500,000 federal grant that capitalized the Business Capital Fund, a multi-county revolving loan fund. Later, an additional grant award of \$200,000 further capitalized this fund. Since the Business Capital Funds inception it has made 58 loans totaling \$3.3 million, leveraged \$35 million in bank and equity financing and helped create or retain over 470 jobs.

**556 regional development organizations can't be wrong.** With federal, state and local funding for planning, infrastructure and economic development in decline, the cost shared services of regional planning commissions are a greater bargain now. This is why there are now over 550 regional development organizations across the United States. Doing more with less, maximizing returns, pinching pennies, cost sharing, resource pooling, strategic partnering and going lean are all efficiency terms that exemplify what regional planning commissions do, and results in benefits that exceed the costs.



**Executive Director Greg Flogstad**  
1707 Main Street, Suite 435 • La Crosse, WI 54601  
608-785-9396 • greg@mrrpc.com  
www.mrrpc.com



# North Central

Regional Planning Commission

## Wood Technology Center of Excellence

Things are changing in the Northwoods, where nearly one in five jobs is wood products related. Over the last decade, forestry and wood product businesses have struggled to find employees with the skill set they need, an issue compounded by the large percentage of current employees nearing retirement age. How to nurture these skills and keep jobs in northern Wisconsin was the challenge posed to local communities.

A partnership of Langlade County, Northcentral Technical College (NTC), and Langlade County Economic Development Corporation approached the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) in 2009 hoping to address the problem. A state-of-the-art facility dedicated to forestry workforce training was identified as the best approach. The project was listed in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and NCWRPC went to work.

The partners, working with NCWRPC, submitted a grant application to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration and secured \$1.28 million. Langlade County and NTC together provided the local match to move the project forward. The Wood Technology Center of Excellence, a 22,000 square foot facility on NTC's Antigo campus, opened in 2011. The project is intended to strengthen wood products manufacturing and provide the training needed to keep the region competitive in this sector. Over fifty students were enrolled in the first year.

The Wood Technology Center of Excellence is just one example of how the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission can help local governments build a better future. Clearly, working regionally pays off!



The NCWRPC was established in 1973 to serve a ten county region in north central Wisconsin. It provides assistance in the areas of Economic Development, Geographic Information Systems, Intergovernmental Cooperation, Land Use Planning, and Transportation.



### NADO INNOVATION AWARD

This project was awarded the 2012 Innovation Award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO). NADO honors regional organizations who have had significant and positive impacts on their regions through innovative approaches to problem solving and program delivery.



**Executive Director Dennis Lawrence**  
210 McClellan Street, Suite 210 • Wausau, WI 54403  
715-849-5510 • [dlawrence@ncwrpc.org](mailto:dlawrence@ncwrpc.org)  
[www.ncwrpc.org](http://www.ncwrpc.org)



# Northwest

Regional Planning Commission

The Northwest Enterprise Center Network (NECN) is a business incubation and acceleration program located in Northwest Wisconsin. The program was developed by the Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC) in partnership with numerous organizations at the local, state and federal levels. The network consists of ten facilities located in six communities that serve a wide variety of companies. The purpose of the program is to enhance technology-based business development within the region; resulting in new economic activity that adds diversification and strength to the economy through the creation of high-skill, high-wage jobs.

Business incubation is much more than simply furnishing a building to a company from which to operate. It is a dynamic process that provides synergy and support for entrepreneurs. Business incubation programs deliver a wide range of support services and resources that accelerate the growth and success of start-up and expanding companies. The NECN program strives to capture each company's uniqueness and offers support and customized services to maximize their potential. Providing a comprehensive package of business resources that includes flexible lease space, business technical assistance, revolving loan funds and venture capital financing, promotes the development and commercialization of leading edge technologies and expansion of growth oriented companies.

Business acceleration programs differ from business incubation programs in that they offer clients access to venture

capital, but typically not lease space like incubators. Availability of venture capital can have a positive impact on the rate that a company is able to expand during the "commercialization" stage of growth. The Wisconsin Rural Enterprise Fund (WREF) is a community-based venture fund that was founded along with other economic development organizations under the umbrella of the NWRPC. The purpose of the fund is to provide a source of equity investment capital to businesses that are likely to create high-skill, high-wage jobs and provide a good return on investment for the fund. Since its formation, the WREF has attracted total contributions of \$2.2 million and made investments in 14 companies ranging from \$50,000 to \$200,000. Along with the enterprise center network, the WREF is an extremely valuable resource that allows NWRPC the ability to offer clients the best of both worlds; business incubation and acceleration.

Facilities of the NECN total 180,000 square feet and are a tremendous tool available to assist businesses in meeting their goals. Modern infrastructure, such as clear span designs, 480v three phase power, truck loading docks and high speed, high capacity telecommunications capability increases operational efficiency. Flexible, affordable lease space helps to preserve working capital and substantially accelerate a company's growth. Preference to utilize the program is given to companies with a solid business concept built upon advanced manufacturing or R&D with the potential to create high quality jobs.

The NECN serves a diverse range of clients that primarily export their products

or services outside the area; bringing new money into the regional economy. Clients and graduates of the network are demonstrating that they have the ability to compete globally. International sales of products designed and manufactured in Northwest Wisconsin are being made in Australia, Canada, China, France, Great Britain, India, Italy and Norway. Businesses served by the program represent a wide variety of industries ranging from bio technology to national defense.

Important client benefits include : business planning and technical assistance; human resources assistance; affordable/flexible lease space; preservation of working capital; a network of relationships with other clients; technology transfer opportunities; access to rapid prototyping; financial assistance – RLF's, banks, equity.

The ultimate goal of the NECN is to launch profitable, sustainable and dynamic companies into the economy. Data collected from clients and graduates of the network have validated that the implementation of this strategy is having a positive impact. Wage levels for employees of these companies are 35% higher than the regional average and 8% higher than the state average. This information is an excellent indicator that the goal of creating high-skill/high-wage, technology based jobs is being accomplished in Northwest Wisconsin and that implementation of the program has provided funders a good return on their investment.

Results of the NECN to date include 40 companies assisted; 328 high quality jobs; \$28 million annual sales; \$14 million annual payroll; \$30 million private investment.



**Executive Director Myron Schuster**  
1400 South River Street • Spooner, WI 54801  
715-635-2197 • [mschuster@nwrpc.com](mailto:mschuster@nwrpc.com)  
[www.nwrpc.com](http://www.nwrpc.com)



## Southeastern

Regional Planning Commission

The Southeastern Wisconsin Region encompasses seven counties – Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha – and 147 cities, villages and towns. Home to over 2 million persons and 1.2 million jobs, the region is highly urbanized, containing five urbanized areas as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau: Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, West Bend, and the Wisconsin portion of the Round Lake Beach urbanized area. Many of the region's issues and concerns cross municipal and county boundaries, including flooding, water quality, water supply, sanitary sewerage, and traffic movement and congestion, and underlying all of these, land use. Study and analysis of these issues on a region-wide basis is essential to understanding the issues, evaluating alternative actions, and developing cost-effective plans for solving problems. The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) was created in 1960 by the seven counties under state law to provide an advisory regional planning agency to assist the seven counties and 147 cities, villages, and towns in considering and developing action plans to address the problems identified above, and in so doing, promote cooperation and coordination within the region.

SEWRPC plans have addressed regional land use; parks and open space; drainage and flood control; transportation; sewage collection, transmission, and treatment; point and non-point sources of water pollution, housing, water supply, and the identification and preservation of the region's natural resource base including not only its wetlands, woodlands, and ground water recharge areas, but also its rich agricultural soils and productive agricultural areas.

The most recent such regional plan, adopted late in 2010, is a regional water supply plan for Southeastern Wisconsin. Significantly complicated by the existence of a major subcontinental divide that traverses the region, separating the Lake Michigan and Mississippi River drainage basins, preparation of this regional plan was preceded by extensive, technically complex studies of groundwater aquifers and attendant recharge areas and rates, of the potential for water conservation, and of county and local land use plans and zoning ordinances. The resultant regional plan includes recommendations that address water conservation practices, the protection of groundwater recharge areas, high capacity well siting, enhanced rainfall infiltration and related stormwater

management practices, and proposed sources of supply – surface supply from Lake Michigan, shallow groundwater aquifer, and deep groundwater water aquifer – for each of 81 subareas of the region recommended to be served by public water utilities. The plan took into account the requirements of the international Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact, as well as the provisions of Wisconsin's enabling legislation. Significant efforts are now underway to implement these regional plan recommendations, from preservation of groundwater recharge areas to the City of Waukesha actions to abandon its deep water supply aquifer and access Lake Michigan as a source of supply, returning the spent water to the Lake Michigan Basin.

To properly address areawide issues and to prepare and then keep up-to-date the required complex set of regional plans, SEWRPC maintains a multi-disciplinary staff. The staff skills include expertise in highway and transit planning, engineering, and operations; hydrologic and hydraulic engineering, municipal engineering, and sanitary engineering; limnology, biology, terrestrial and aquatic plant ecology; and land and control survey and parcel based land information system development, together with the more traditional planning skills associated with demographic and economic studies, and land use planning, land subdivision regulation, official mapping, and zoning. While these skill sets are essential to prepare technically competent regional plans, these skills are also made available by SEWRPC to its member units of government for use as shared staff in smaller scale, more locally focused planning efforts. This community assistance function has resulted in numerous local planning and engineering studies that have addressed, by way of example, parking and traffic circulation, park siting and development, lake and stream management, agricultural and stormwater drainage, floodplain delineation and flooding mitigation plans, transit operations and management, wetland and environmental corridor delineation, and local planning, zoning, and regulatory issues. The Commission provides County Surveyor services to five of its seven counties, another example of the cost effective sharing of professional skills and costly equipment. Collectively, then, the SEWRPC staff skill sets, while brought together for essential regional plan preparation, serve as an important resource for local government.



**Executive Director Kenneth Yunker**

W239 N1812 Rockwood Drive • Waukesha, WI 53187  
262-547-6721 • kyunker@sewrpc.org  
www.sewrpc.org



## Southwestern

Regional Planning Commission

### USDA Gives Region \$90,000 for creating plan to connect farmers with buyers



Everyone knows that agriculture is vital to Wisconsin's economy. That is especially true in southwestern Wisconsin, where local farmers grow primarily corn and soybeans. The Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC) is working with area farmers in a new effort to look at opportunities that might be available given the current interest in local foods.

Thirty-five million people live within 250 miles of southwestern Wisconsin and the resurgence of interest in wholesome, local food is an opportunity for our local farmers to expand

their options. "One hundred billion dollars is spent by these folks every year on food. If we could increase our share of these purchases by 2% that would mean an extra \$2 billion in our local economy," said Larry Ward, Executive Director of SWWRPC.

"We are grateful for this grant and excited about the possibilities", said Ward. "We will begin a discussion about the opportunities and work with regional experts to identify what people want to buy, what we can produce, and how to get this up and running. We need to identify our opportunities and barriers – what can we do well and what will we have to work on and improve. We obviously want the farmers involved in this to make sure we are asking the right questions and coming up with things that are doable," said Ward.

At an event at the Potosi Brewery, USDA Under Secretary for Rural Development Doug O'Brien visited with SWWRPC staff and Commissioners and citizens of the region and presented a \$90,000 grant to SWWRPC for this project, which will serve an area of 14 counties, including portions of eastern Iowa and northwest Illinois. At the event O'Brien, a native of Cascade, Iowa, said "I never underestimate what folks at the local level, some spark plugs in a region, can accomplish. When they decide that they want to do something, it's pretty amazing what they can do with very little resources."

*The Southwestern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SWWRPC) provides intergovernmental planning and coordination of community development planning, economic development and transportation. In response to local and regional goals, the commission and its staff work to enhance fiscal and physical resources and to balance local and regional development, preservation, conservation and social priorities. SWWRPC's member counties are Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette and Richland.*



**Executive Director Larry Ward**

709 Pioneer Tower • Platteville, WI 53818  
608-342-1713 • l.ward@swwrpc.org  
www.swwrpc.org



Southwestern Wisconsin  
Regional Planning  
Commission



## West Central

Regional Planning Commission

### SunPower Biodiesel Expansion Cumberland, Wisconsin

Cumberland is on its way to becoming a major biofuel production and research hub thanks to effective collaboration between the City of Cumberland, SunPower Biodiesel, the state of Wisconsin, and the West Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC). The groundwork for that vision was secured in 2010 when the state of Wisconsin awarded Cumberland and SunPower more than \$1.5 million in grant and loan assistance to develop an International Biofuels Research & Development Park. That infrastructure, which is now under construction, will allow SunPower to expand its biodiesel production facility, which utilizes locally grown canola. Future plans include a headquarters for both SunPower and Ardisam (SunPower's sister company), and sites for other businesses focused on alternative fuel research and production.

The WCWRPC is honored to have provided the funding assessment and application assistance that resulted in that award. To support the success of the SunPower project WCWRPC staff:

- Assisted the community in assessing funding sources available to install the necessary infrastructure
- Developed the economic need analysis and projected economic impacts
- Prepared two extensive grant applications, both of which were awarded
  - CDBG-PFED application for \$350,000 for sanitary sewer, storm sewer, water mains, electric service, and street lighting
  - DOT TEA application for \$385,000 for street and related infrastructure work
- Assisted SunPower/Ardisam in preparing a Department of Commerce State Energy Program (SEP) loan application for \$800,000, which was also awarded
- Administered the CDBG-PFED and DOT grant awards

The SunPower facility expansion will include construction of a fueling station to provide biodiesel fuels to bus companies,



truck fleets, fuel tankers and other industrial vehicles, as well as expansion of the canola crush plant and production, which will allow SunPower to double production.

The expansion of the SunPower facility and headquarters building is expected to create and retain a total of 78 jobs and result in a business investment of over \$5 million.

During the award ceremony, Wisconsin Department of Commerce Secretary Aaron Olver stated, "We need to seize these opportunities, capitalize on our resources, and use them to build the economy."

That capitalization of resources to build the economy includes having the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission on your economic development team.

The WCWRPC was established in 1971 to provide planning and economic development services for a seven-county region in western Wisconsin. The Cumberland project is just one example of how the WCWRPC is helping build the regional economy.



**Executive Director Jay Tappen**  
800 Wisconsin St., D2-401, Mail Box 9  
Eau Claire, WI 54703  
715-836-2918 • [jtappen@wcwrpc.org](mailto:jtappen@wcwrpc.org)  
[www.wcwrpc.org](http://www.wcwrpc.org)



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[www.awrpc.org](http://www.awrpc.org)



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