PANDEMIC IN THE HEARTLAND: PBS & MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL DOCUMENTARY OF AG REALITIES IN RURAL COUNTY

It started with a call October 2019 - to do investigative reporting to document consistently low agriculture incomes and how small rural communities and counties handle this stressful dairy and ag situation.

As the #1 Dairy County in WI and a noteworthy top producer in the USA – filming and stories began on the realities of our agriculture. This yearlong effort quickly turned into a documentary about small rural central Wisconsin and how COVID affected us on top of the weak ag incomes.

Thank you to Maryann Lazarski & Scottie Lee Meyers from Milwaukee PBS & Rick Barrett for the beautiful, heartfelt stories & video. We appreciate the relationships made with you. Many other partners helped make this happen, from Richard at UW Extension to the featured farm, Alora and Roger Rueth. We thank those who helped share the uniqueness of our county's ag and dairy, and this special place we have through eyes of the local folks. To view the article and video you can visit www.clarkcountywi.org and click on PANDEMIC IN THE HEARTLAND.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS: OUR ANNUAL MEETING WAS A SMALL, COVID-SAFE GATHERING

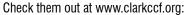


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CLARK COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION INC.

Clark County is fortunate to have our very own Community Foundation helping to bring people, organizations, and local businesses together.



- · Clark County Community Fund
- Fiscal Sponsorships Funds
- Loyal Splash Pad
- Fairgrounds Revitalization Project
- Scholarship Fund
- Giving Circle

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION, INC.

• Endowment Fund







CCEDC CLARK COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION & TOURISM BUREAU

CLARK COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP & TOURISM BUREAU

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We use Constant Contact to keep urgent, important information flowing to you! Send us your e-mail to be added!



CLARK COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION & TOURISM BUREAU MARKED 30 YEARS OF SERVICE IN 2020

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were not able to have our annual partnership celebration to mark our 30-year milestone. When we gathered during each of the past 29 years, we had the opportunity to share highlights and accomplishments for that year and work with all of you to plan our future goals. We missed seeing each of you, but we have worked hard to make certain that everyone is kept abreast of new information so we can continue our recovery.

2020 tested every ounce of our being, from our health care systems and our front-line workers, to our ability to reinvent our business models overnight. Our economic, financial, and emotional status are continually tested, along with our courage to embrace change. We've been there before, but this was a bigger challenge than we could have ever imagined.

New strategies must become the norm. We must blend both old and new marketing concepts and stack opportunities to reach new markets and people in order to increase profits. We have savvy business owners here who have retooled their businesses to meet demands for new products and equipment. We can adjust – and we have done it! Due to our spirited ability to adapt and change quickly, we are recovering faster than other areas. We have many jobs/careers and entrepreneur opportunities available.

There are so many partners who helped us during this terrible COVID-19 pandemic: County Emergency/Health, Luke at SBDC, State of WI/WEDC, Federal resources, West Central Regional Planning, Momentum West, and of course our local leaders, businesses, committees, schools, and citizens. Your constant communication allowed many of us to stay on top of and address/resolve urgent needs. We have such strong, wonderful people in our communities, and it is a pleasure working with everyone. Thank you!









For over a year we had visitors in our county recording many different stories from this special rural setting we treasure. PBS and the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel interviewed and followed our residents, and toured and captured our county's small town atmospheres and our agriculture heritage and leadership. New twists and turns sidetracked some of our spring, summer, and fall stories, as COVID became part of our world. We will forever be a part of the year 2020's documented history for many reasons.

Our county is a very special place, and we are an essential food hub. This is something many do not know about us. This PBS effort will shine a light on the agriculture and dairy work our county champions. It needs a center stage to let folks know that hard work is how we feed people, and Clark County is so proud to be a major player.

Rest assured we are staying focused on the short- and long-term needs of our county, and we are committed to "never go dark". Therefore, your CCEDC&TB has taken on an economic recovery focus: health and well-being of individuals, businesses, schools, and communities is our number one priority. We have such a solid county fabric with great health care, great leadership, and extraordinary partnerships.

We have so much in our future to look forward to. Let us stay focused, stabilize our economy through the recovery and help each other safely move forward.

REMEMBER: WE ARE NOT JUST A GREAT LOCATION...WE ARE A GREAT LIFESTYLE CHOICE!!

TOGETHER: SHARING, CARING, SUPPORTING, INFORMING

We expedited our Constant Contact Program plus media alerts, email and calls to assist emergency/health/SBA/SBDC/WCWRPC/WEDC/Federal/State/Regional and others with rapid response sharing. The hours spent to gather the emails and contact information to share economic, health, and safety resources are endless. Here at CCEDC we NEVER shut down. We were and continue to be available 24/7 to gather, distribute, & inform.

PARTNERS PROUDLY SERVING OUR CITIZENS, BUSINESSES, COMMUNITIES

What Clark County, Wisconsin, USA is made of!

With the first whisper of a health crisis, multiple partners immediately jumped in to assist with masks, shields, and other medical safety supplies. We were also able to secure funds to help us stabilize the economic damage through grant matches to aid in our EDC's urgent needs. In-kind donators, sponsors, and volunteers also worked tirelessly to safely serve the various new public concerns.

During this crisis, many businesses donated masks and shields to care facilities and small businesses. Media partners sent marketing pieces to remind folks to support our local restaurants through take-out and curbside orders. CCEDC sent out emails and made personal calls to update you on funding help and other programing COVID brought out. The focus was totally about our county and the great folks right here!

The county relied on strong leadership from Clark County Emergency Management, Social Services, Health Department, Forestry & Parks, local businesses such as Citizens State Bank, DI, LLC, All Metal Stamping, the Clark County Foundation, Workforce Development, UW-Extension, and WI Department of Tourism, to name just a few. We cannot forget the tireless acts from our emergency and front-line workers, our trucking companies, mail carriers, and everyone involved in every way!

We so appreciate Luke Kempen and his team at Small Business Development (SBDC), who continue to provide constant official notification assistance to help us get the resources to the

FARM TECHNOLOGY DAYS IN CLARK COUNTY

Mark your calendars for FTD 2022 to be held July 12-14 at host site: Roehl Acres & Rustic Occasions in Loyal. For more information:

- www.clarkcountywi.org
- · info@clarkcountyedc.org
- wifarmtechnologydays.com/clark/
- 715-797-8356 Jim Mildbrand
- Facebook.com/FTD2022/

CCEDC will have a tent at the 2021 Farm Tech Days in Eau Claire, July 20-22, 2021.

folks that need them. Along with many others like WEDC & West Central Regional Planning, Momentum West, and RBF, we use our Constant Contact and media partner alerts to relay real-time information and keep financial and program information flowing.

Our financial programs include:

We're All In Small Business Grant Program PHASE 1 (108 applicants in Clark Countywere qualified to receive \$2,500 totaling \$270,000)

We're All In Small Business Grant Program PHASE 2 (grants of \$5,000 each are still being awarded at the time of this newsletter printing)

Paycheck Protection Program, Clark County Small Business Relief, WEDC Grant Programs, SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan Assistance, WI Farm Support Program & Rancher Resources, Business & Employer Resources, Unemployment programs, and so much more.

Thank you to our many leaders, partners, volunteers, and local heros. It is a genuine pleasure working together with all of you.

Through these many partners, we connected folks to several information sources. Check out

our COVID Information button on our webpage (www.clarkcountyedc.org). It includes local, state, and federal financial resources for businesses, farmers, and communities. All economic recovery and assistance opportunities are available on our site, as well as through local and regional radio and television, newspapers, and more.

Together, utilizing existing marketing tools and relationships, we learned to quickly ramp up new ways to serve our communities and continue showcasing the superior quality of life Clark County has to offer.

We thank you all for your current and future partnership to pull through this pandemic. It is impossible to capture the sheer magnitude of everyone's help as this year has caused so many health and emotional issues – not to mention the financial struggles we all faced and continue to face in one way or another.

Together we reminded each other what we have and how to access it. We are not all the way through this crisis, and therefore, we will continue to do everything possible to rebuild what COVID has negatively impacted! The stable leadership and attention to detail is remarkable here and will keep us all going in the right direction.

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNTY

Clark County Broadband Consortium supports the opportunity for more research and data collection for our county to find provider partnerships and get connected. CCBC's goal is to keep attention on our city and rural needs, including our agriculture.

Clark County Economic Development, WEDC. WCWRPC, WPS Commission's Broadband Mapping Coordinator, UW-Madison, CINC. WiscNet and District Administrator Bob Houts have all partnered together for the beginning phase Broadband Pilot Project for the Owen-Withee School District and Clark County. Having a high-speed, high-capacity, affordable network, can have a positive impact on our citizens, visitors, communities, and economic vitality. High-speed broadband access affects all areas of our daily life, such as education, health, public safety, government, and cultural enrichment. Without proper access to broadband, the risk of negative impact on our entire county's livelihood is possible.

The pilot program has allowed for a systematic approach to get our student population connected now and to map where our gaps in services are in the county. This is the first layer of the countywide project which includes many more layers of important data to be collected spring and summer of 2021.

COVID has exposed the lack of connectivity in our county. Thus, filling the gaps here is our top priority! Plus, we must have higher uploading and downloading speeds. With all the funding and provider partnerships through the years, it was very surprising how unprepared/unconnected we were for what happened in 2020.

CCEDC&TB, along with our partners, are working to correct, collect, and make contact, so we are not left without essential high-speed, high-capacity, affordable networks, which will continue to make our great county thrive.

CELEBRATING CLARK COUNTY

In 2020, we joined with Clark County communities, leaders, and businesses to celebrate with ground breakings, ribbon cuttings, and grand openings.

Several others have quietly opened their doors as previously planned, and others held off opening. We look forward to their grand openings in 2021, when it will hopefully be safer to gather and celebrate their investments and accomplishments.

Are you looking for help with business planning? For information on gap financing, packages for startups, or business expansions, please contact:

- Sheila Nyberg, Executive Director for Clark County Economic Development Corporation & Tourism Bureau sheila@clarkcountyedc.org or call 715-255-9151
- Luke Kempen, Director of SBDC kempenls@uwec.edu or call 715-836-5902
- Tobi LeMahieu, Fund Manager for RBF www.rbfinc.org or call 715-836-2918, ext. 19



Yellowstone Computing, Thorp



Red Daisy Girl, Owen



Great Deals LLC, Abbotsford



Perfect 10 Outdoors, Town of Hewett



Uplifting Movement & Fitness, Loyal



Thiago's Café (celebrated new ownership of the long-time Amber's Café), Colby

ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY – HEALTH CARE

An Economic Impact Study for Marshfield Medical Center-Neillsville (part of Marshfield Clinic Health Systems network) was performed in 2020 in order to discover the potential impact of the MMC-N Campus on the overall economy of the Neillsville region.

MMC-N is Clark County's largest employer, providing many economic and quality of life benefits to the community and region. The new larger hospital campus includes spaces for an infusion center, pharmacy, optometrist. YMCA wellness center, and other facilities.

In anticipation of this project, the City of Neillsville, Clark County Economic Development Corporation, MMC-N,

CLARK COUNTY UNEMPLOYMENT RATE TRENDS

Through challenges we never could have imagined or planned for, we have seen a remarkable recovery in employment growth. Employers are restoring confidence in our economy through reinventing, creative resourcing, and investment. Clark County's unemployment increased from an average 3.1% UI rate at year end 2019, to a skyrocketing 10% within just the month of April 2020, which matched our average UI rate during the great recession.

Our thanks goes out to the county's Workforce Resource Team. They, along with many partners, helped us get back to our previous year levels; an amazing fete in only a few short months. COVID has had an extreme impact on our physical and emotional health and financial wellbeing, but our workforce is unbelievably resilient. Special folks live, work, and play in this great county! Together safely, we can continue the forward movement.

YEAR	ANNUAL RATE AVG
2010	10.1
2011	8.1
2012	6.9
2013	6.7
2014	5.6
2015	4.2
2016	3.9
2017	2.9
2018	2.7
2019	3.0
2020	4.8

MONTH	CC 2020 RATES
JAN	4.9
FEB	4.7
MAR	3.6
APR	9.4
MAY	7.2
JUN	6.1
JUL	4.3
AUG	3.7
SEP	2.8
OCT	3.1
NOV	3.2
ANNUAL AVG	4.8

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) and other community partners joined together to financially support the study.

In February 2020, WCWRPC staff presented their findings, which included a discussion on local housing market needs, as well as potential goals and strategies to prepare for and obtain related economic opportunities.



Marshfield Medical Center Neillsville



CLARK COUNTY EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

For the most up to date workforce/job opportunities:

- Visit www.clarkcountywi.org and check out Jobs/Careers.
- Call us direct at 715-255-9100
- Email us at info@clarkcountyedc.org

CLARK COUNTY HOUSING OPTIONS

We have low unemployment rates and many job openings, therefore, the need for all types of housing is crucial all over Clark County. Available residential land, new/existing apartments, and homes for sale and rent will help our new recruits find the perfect home in the perfect neighborhood for their families. We have marketing solutions available to help vou.

We want to thank everyone in the housing market at this time. It is indeed a busy season, so please keep us informed of your needs and opportunities. We have the right ingredients and appreciate everyone involved in making this happen, from companies, realtors, and lenders, to the folks seeking a high quality of life, which Clark County provides.

2019 WI/CLARK COUNTY TOURISM ECONOMIC IMPACT

Clark County statistics:

- \$57 million in business sales a 4.65% increase
- 362 jobs with a total personal income of \$7.2 million were supported by visitors
- \$3.2 million in state & local taxes
- 11.1% increase in room tax revenue

Many thanks to our WI Department of Tourism and Clark County Forestry & Parks leaders for helping us safely market and serve many visitors to our beautiful county so they could carefully enjoy our many treasurers. The 2020 pandemic year has reminded us to appreciate what we have. We certainly realize our quality of life is precious here.

SPRING INTO THE ARTS, **BLOOMIN' GREENHOUSÉS, & HARVEST MOON TOURS**

Many visitors enjoyed our annual Spring into the Arts Tour, Bloomin' Greenhouse Tour, and Harvest Moon Fall Tour. They experienced Clark County's finest artists and their creations, numerous greenhouses, unique shops, beautiful fall colors, and a "Taste of Clark County".

In 2020, CCEDC&TB worked with the County Health Department, recognizing our greenhouses and gardening centers as essential businesses. The survey results concluded that visitors came from all over to gain knowledge from our gardening experts. The large variety of new consumer needs made 2020's Bloomin' Greenhouse Tour a success! Learning to garden, grow, and harvest your own food became important again. Clark County is called the "Hub of the Harvest" and for good reason; we see much to enjoy in planting, growing, and harvesting time here.

The Art Tour was held, but was moved to fall due to COVID. We so appreciate everyone's involvement. It was not easy, but we all made it work. We can figure out how to make anything happen, even during a pandemic!

THANKS TO OUR MANY **VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers are a tremendous resource for CCEDC&TB. Our 313+ volunteers donated more than 2,426 hours during the year, leading our organization by serving on our Board of Directors, Tourism Committee, RBF Board, Broadband Consortium, Young Professionals, and Workforce Councils. They made sure Clark County's Spring Into the Arts, Bloomin' Greenhouse, and Fall Harvest Moon tours were possible even with the changing dates. Special project teams helped ensure safety and health practices by getting signage, masks and communications out. As in past years, they kept up with the everchanging needs of our county. Additionally, during this COVID-19 pandemic year, they were communicating and organizing to get health and care supplies, which were graciously produced and donated by our local businesses, to those in need!

CCEDC&TB would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the impact volunteers make on our organization. Thank you for your time, efforts, insight, and leadership in our county.

YELLOWSTONE TRAIL NEWS

The Historic Yellowstone Trail runs right through the northern part of Clark County. The Ridges will be coming out with a new book in 2021 about the historic trail, and we are preparing for travelers because of that exposure. We are working to replace historic marker signage in Curtiss and developing new brochures for our area to remind folks of our history on the trail. www.yellowstonetrail.org



CLARK COUNTY YOUNG PROFESSIONALS – JOIN TODAY!

- Encourages young business people
- Connect with like-minded peers
- Build solid relationships
- Learn from experienced businesses to actively shape the future of Clark County
- Retain and recruit Young Professionals

Join Clark County Young Professionals – be a part of our TODAY, TOMORROW and our FUTURE. Contact: Riley Hebert, president at 715-743-5308 or

- clarkcountyyp@gmail.com
- facebook.com/clarkcountyyp/
- twitter.com/@clarkcountyvp
- instagram.com/?hl=en



YOUNG PROFESSIONALS