

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



From our 2023 Board Chair: Bonnie Baerwald

Envision Greater Fond du Lac brings stakeholders together to pursue opportunities that improve economic vibrancy, strengthen community identity, and invest in the next generation.

As Chair of the Board, I am extremely proud of the accomplishments the team has achieved in 2023.

- Obtained funding from more than half of the 33 municipalities in the county, many of them for the first time
- Increased private economic development investment by 23% over 2023
- Launched a first-of-its-kind-in-Wisconsin by a chamber, Public Office Preparation or POP101, to educate and encourage citizens to engage in local elections
- Expanded the FDL R.O.C.K program to all county school districts where we assisted by matching graduating seniors with job opportunities in the county
- Convened a Fond du Lac County Child Care Taskforce to bring together public and private partners to discuss solutions to the child care crisis
- Welcomed dozens of new members through the addition of the Waupun Business Alliance
- Presented Ag in the Classroom to more than 10,000 elementary school students
- Our Advocacy Committee hosted multiple candidate forums and recommended resolutions of support to the Board on various community initiatives
- Met with 159 county entrepreneurs providing technical assistance, guidance, and resources
- Launched Envision University, providing workshop based “courses” by leaning into local talent



I want to thank my Board colleagues for their considerable contributions and investment in the future of Envision. And thank you to our 600+ members throughout Fond du Lac County. We can't do what we do without all of you.

From our President/CEO: Sadie Howell


As we close out 2023, our team has much to be proud of, and you will read all the details in the following pages.

We are nearing the end of our 3-year strategic plan and in late 2023 the Board made some slight refreshes to keep momentum and focus our resources. Our team had another year of notable achievements including a YPF rebrand, welcoming twelve individuals to the inaugural POP 101 (one of whom is already running for office), and creating a new position: Workforce Programming Specialist. The launch of Envision University enrolled 23 participants who learned about graphic design, social media, and news release writing. Our economic development team partnered with local municipalities like the Village of Brandon on their downtown revitalization. Our resident entrepreneurship expert held consistent office hours throughout the county.



In 2024, we will focus on telling the Envision story and driving greater awareness of our organization within the community through an educational campaign and improved community relations. Our strategic plan refresh will also focus on supporting housing projects, retaining our membership revenue, rolling out a talent attraction campaign to supplement employers' own efforts, and promoting career opportunities for high school students. The Board of Directors will focus on creating a 5-year strategic plan centered around three pillars: Our Economy, Our Identity, and Our Next Generation.

Our team is excited to work alongside all our members, municipalities, and regional partners to further the mission and vision of Envision Greater Fond du Lac.



New Members in 2023

Ruhe 756 LLC
FreshFit
City of Waupun
Waupun Area School District
Gysbers Jewelry
Bentz Automotive
Olson Eye Care
PS, Beauty Lounge
Jimmy John's- Waupun
Waupun Historical Society
Indigo Gallery & Gifts
Mike's Wild Boar Liquor Store
O'Connor, Wells & Vander Werff, LLC
The Other Bar
Gruett's Inc.: Waupun Equipment/
Eden Equipment
Ver Hage's Furniture
Tropical Smoothie Café
Ang an Eddies
Homan Auto Sales/ Homan Ford/
Homan GM of Ripon
Tony's Pizza
All-Phase
Knuth's Brewing Company
Sam's Well Drilling
Rens Nursery Retail
St. Joseph's Catholic Church
Rock River Eyewear
Stone + Suede
Werner Harmsen
Tom Dooley Apple Orchard
Finders Keepers
Ballweg Implement
Waupun Fine Arts
Thrivent Waupun
Stone House Digital Consulting

Martens Farm & Home Ace
Hardware Store
My Property Shoppe
Modern Mercantile
AmericInn
ASTOP
Nolan Insurance Agency
W&D Navis
Imagine That! Art Studio
Farmers Elevator Company
Waupun Truck-N-Show
Basalt Wellness
Garden Scents Everlasting
Connie's Diner
Two Men and a Truck
RagSpun Studio
Vande Zande & Kaufman
Daily Citizen
QPS Employment Group
BH Home
Friends of Horicon Marsh
Education & Visitor Center
Heidel House
Wells Fargo- Waupun
Home Helpers Home Care
Main Street Bistro and Bakery
Eyes in the Sky Drone Photography
Pericles Financial Services
Simon Says CPR
Catering by Juan
Mr. & Mrs. Catering
Bob Schuchardt Insurance Inc.
ERW Insurance Agency
Alicia Hans LCSW LLC
Pizza Ranch- Waupun
Pennywise Resources

R. Peters & Associates
Gappa Security Solutions
New Medical Center
Hoekstra's Market & Greenhouse
Jud-Son's Bowling
Holliday Food & Sport
Brooks Shoes & Repair
Guth's Candy
National Rivet & Manufacturing Co.
Waupun Utilities
Culver's - Waupun
Milton Propane
Waupun Ultimart
Dentistry of Wisconsin
Focus CFO
Edward Jones Advisors of Waupun
The Rock Golf Club
The Copper Cock Tavern
Bargains Galore Thrift Store

T-Mobile
4imprint
Sovereign Select Insurance
Gueller's Photography
Leading UP
Municipal Well and Pump
Summit Credit Union
Damark Manufacturing
B&B Plumbing Services
Flanagan State Bank
Press Box
Brothers Antiques
Dual Dynamix
Fondy Sports Park & Aqua Park
Level Up Manufacturing
Vossekuil Real Estate-
KW Envision
Waypoint Financial Solutions
Stitches N Tyme
LSM Chiropractic
Camelot Children's Center
Priessnitz Properties
American Family-
Brad Tagliapietra Insurance
Maplewood Commons Acq LLC
Hammes Fire and Safety LLC
SCORE Fox Cities
Into the Woods Wellness
Bird's Eye View Optical
Caribou Coffee
Elite Wealth Planners
Semper FI Storage
Chic Tique Girls LLC
Just Fare Market

JP Tank Inc.
The Stretch Restaurant
Ken Bauer's Little Studio
Eden Impressions
Mirrorball
Associated Bank - Beaver Dam
MSI Express
Realtors Association of Northeast
Wisconsin
Arch Solar C&I
Froedtert Health
Whisper Hill Clydesdales
Wonder Café



New Members in 2023

Business Excellence Award

BCI Burke

Eden-Schneider Award

SSM Health & Moraine Park Technical College (Treffert Studios)

Allen J. Buechel Lifetime Achievement Award

Rick Parks

Volunteer of the Year Award

David Neumann, RB Royal Industries, Inc.

Entrepreneur of the Year Award

Salchert Meats

Fond du Lac Cyclery

Donald G. Jones Leadership Alumni Award

Dan Hebel, Boys & Girls Club of Fond du Lac

YPF Future 5 Awards

Kim Bresser (Mercury Racing), Grace Bruins (Horicon Bank), Rhiannon Diederichs (First Weber), Jim Misudek, (Fond du Lac Dock Spiders), Tyler Schulz (Werner-Harmsen)

YP of the Year

Kim Bresser, Mercury Racing

2023
Recognition



Envision Greater
Fond du Lac
Team



Advocacy & Government Affairs



- Piloted **first-of-its-kind** candidate development workshop called Public Office Preparation 101 (POP 101)
- **Lobbied and funded** beautification project at Interstate 41/Highway 23
- Hosted **8** county Legislative Forums and **1** Fond du Lac School Board candidate forum
- **Participated** in WHEDA Lobby Day in Madison
- Joined the regional Housing Now Coalition; provided a Housing Challenges summary to the Fond du Lac County Board



Agri-Business Council



- The Ag Ambassador program
 - presented to **10,154** students in the 2022-2023 school year
 - was welcomed into **537** classrooms
- **2,356** people served at Breakfast on the Farm
- More than **1,800** participants experienced the Fond du Lac County Fair Little Hands on the Farm exhibit
- **1,084** Ag Gift Boxes sold in 2023
- More than **1,200** attendees at the 2023 Ag Showcase
- Day on the Farm had **645** students and **125** adults attend

Ambassadors Club



- 37 ribbon cuttings
- 11 Business Connections attended by 659 people
- 4 Coffee Connections attended by 103 people
- Ambassador of the Year: **Deb Winterhack, SSM Health**



Program Area Updates

FDL SHRM

- Hosted **11** events attended by **253** people
- **100+** members
- **Fond du Lac** hosted the 2023 SHRM Volunteer Conference



Young Professionals of Fond du Lac (YPF)

- **93** volunteers
- **15** events with **689** attendees
- Casino Night raised and donated **\$3,000** to Fond du Lac Soccer Association
- More than **75 first-time** event attendees



Leadership Fond du Lac County

- **29** participants
- **6** community projects completed raising **\$58,000** donated back into the community through financial and in-kind contributions
- **11** volunteers on Advisory Committee
- Recognized **Sherry Behnke ('02)** with Donald G. Jones Leadership Alumni Award
- Voted to change the program name to **Leadership Fond du Lac County** to reflect the growth of the organization around the county



Program Area Updates

Waupun Business Alliance

- Hosted **15** events in Waupun
- Nearly **sold out** golf outing
- **125** attendees at Waupun Business Alliance Annual Banquet
- Hosted an **Envision 101**
- **Staffed** office twice a week
- Provided **Certificates of Origin** to the Waupun community
- **Revamped gift certificate program** to now include the more than 600 member-network
- Provided **one-on-one social media audit assistance** to entrepreneurs and small business owners
- Provided a **market analysis** for a start-up
- Created a **“What’s Happening”** landing page to support and promote local events
- Sent regular **e-communication** updates
- Provided entrepreneurial technical assistance to **18** entrepreneurs and small business owners, of which **3** launched
- **68** new members



2023 Economic Development At a Glance

While 2023 didn't have a record number of projects utilizing low-cost capital, it did have substantial, quality projects cross the finish line using this unique tool specific to Fond du Lac County: Fond du Lac County Capital Resources (FCCR). Here's how the numbers break down for projects utilizing (FCCR) financing:

- **4 projects** using low-interest financing
- **245 jobs** retained and/or created
- **\$1.06 million** invested
- **\$8.1 million** total private investment leveraged

Through the Economic Development team's Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) outreach across the county, the team organically encountered entrepreneurs and employers who were looking to build a new facility, expand their current footprint, or access capital. The Economic Development team **completed 120 BRE touchpoints** (either face-to-face meetings or survey completed), with a majority coming from the manufacturing, construction, and service sectors.

Additionally, area employers are often looking for data and research assistance, small business start-up coaching, and assistance in recruiting their next superstars from the pool of recent area high school graduates.

2023 positioned us to have a strong project pipeline already in early 2024.



Program Area Updates

School Partnership

School Partnership Programming included:

- Central Wisconsin Christian School
- Fond du Lac
- Lomira
- North Fond du Lac
- Oakfield
- Ripon
- Rosendale-Brandon
- St. Mary's Springs Academy
- Winnebago Lutheran Academy

Project G.R.I.L.L

- 7 school teams
- 77 students
- 10 business sponsors
- 4 scholarships awarded



Summer Series for Interns & Co-Ops

- 110 interns/co-ops
- 8 businesses
- 5 events



Career Connections Academy

CAREER CONNECTIONS ACADEMY



- 15 schools
- 785 8th graders
- 29 career presenters

Fond du Lac R.O.C.K

Fond du Lac **ROCK**

- 18 tour sites
- 2 schools participated in tours
- 26 students attended the breakfast from 6 schools
- Representation from 8 businesses at breakfast



Concierge Luncheons

- Offered in April and November
- 53 attendees
- Nearly 40 non-profit partners attended vendor fair



Program Area Updates



Ignite

- Hosted the Vetrepreneur program, assisting **7 veteran entrepreneurs**
- Launched **2 new pitch events**
 - Envision THIS!
 - Envision THIS! high school
 - \$2,250 invested in winning participants
- Hosted **county-wide office hours** to better serve North Fond du Lac, Ripon, Campbellsport and Waupun areas
- Provided **programming** related to financial literacy, digital content creation, burnout prevention, and AI
- **35** start-up clients launched

Economic Forecast Breakfast

- **127** attendees
- Keynote speaker, **Michael Gregory**, Deputy Chief Economist & Managing Director, BMO

Fond du Lac County Worker Relocation Incentive Program

- **Relaunched** in April 2023
- **8** candidates utilized the program
- Average incentive offered was **\$6,000** per candidate

Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)

- **120** completed BRE visits
- **Industries represented:** Agriculture; Manufacturing and Construction; Retail and Services; and Child Care Providers
- Results from visits
 - **63%** of participating businesses stated customer loyalty is driving growth
 - **56%** of respondents felt their business performed somewhat stronger to much stronger than the previous six months
 - Looking ahead, **57%** of respondents felt their business will perform somewhat stronger to much stronger
 - **Top 3 items inhibiting growth:** labor availability; inflation; and labor quality and retention
 - **Top reasons for locating or keeping their business in the Fond du Lac area:** access to customers; business-friendly community; and access to workforce
 - **Top resources Envision can provide to support the business community:** access to capital; access to workforce training; and expansion planning and digital marketing assistance (tied)

Envision Greater Fond du Lac offers a variety of programming and events to engage with members. This specialized engagement provides networking options, learning opportunities, and public relations engagement.

Empty Bowls

- **22** years running
- **191** attendees
- **49** volunteers
- **\$8,400** raised and donated to **6** local food pantries

Envision Greater Fond du Lac Golf Outing

- **Sold out** 3rd year in a row
- **144** golfers
- **32** hole sponsors

Public Relations Activities

- **132** radio interviews
- **195** media mentions
- **871** shared member news releases
- **16%** increase in Facebook followers (+512)
- **16%** increase in Instagram followers (+135)
- **+284** followers on LinkedIn
- Managed **13** social media accounts
- Managed **3** websites
- Designed more than **400** creative pieces
- Sent nearly **100** e-newsletters
- The Ally weekly e-newsletter is sent to more than **5,600** with an open rate average of **35.7%**
average open rate across industries was 21.33% in 2023

Specialized Engagement

For more information on
Envision Greater Fond du Lac,
please visit
envisiongreaterfdl.com

For information on the strategic plan,
please scan below or visit
[envisiongreaterfdl.com/
strategic-plan/](http://envisiongreaterfdl.com/strategic-plan/)





2023 Board of Directors

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