

Draft Goals for Crawford County Comprehensive Plan (Economic Development)

Each goal is followed by recommendations, policies and/or actions developed during the planning process to achieve the goals.

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Goal 1 ► Retain existing businesses in the County and enhance growth opportunities.

- Develop a land use map (in coordination with towns, cities, and villages) that identifies locations for businesses to grow and expand. Input gathered during the planning process indicated that supporting existing businesses and encouraging new businesses to locate and grow in Crawford County was important to residents. Protecting existing businesses from non-compatible land uses is very important to meeting existing and future business needs.
- Improve the business environment in Crawford County by enhancing the business infrastructure (communications, transportation, etc.) necessary for existing and new businesses to prosper.
 - Support programs/projects that will maintain and improve the transportation system that connects residents to employment opportunities.
 - Support programs/projects that will maintain and improve the transportation infrastructure that serves agricultural and forestry producers, and local businesses for the movement of commodities.
- Work in conjunction with local and regional business organizations and associations (the Crawford- Vernon Inventors and Entrepreneurs Club, Prairie Du Chien Area Chamber of Commerce, Prairie du Chien Downtown Revitalization Inc. the Prairie du Chien Industrial Development Corp., Kickapoo Valley Association, etc.) to promote existing businesses and identify business expansion opportunities in the County.

Goal 2 ► Create and maintain an economic environment that encourages sustainability and sustainable use of natural resources.

- Define “sustainability” in terms of economic development for the County. In general terms, sustainability is meant to ensure that the natural resources and environment that generate economic activity are protected and enhanced in order for future generations to gain the same (or increased) economic benefit. The Natural Step Framework and many communities use the following four considerations to evaluate economic and community development decisions:
 - Does it increase the amount of substances extracted from the Earth's crust?
 - Does it increase the concentration of man-made substances?
 - Does it physically degrade the natural environment?
 - Does it undermine people's capacity to meet their basic needs?¹
- Continue to promote policies and programs aimed at growing the local agricultural economy. Crawford County is rural and agriculture and agriculture related businesses

¹ <http://www.naturalstep.org/> Accessed March 25, 2009

have been the backbone of the local economy. Input during the planning process indicates that residents wish for the county to remain rural and that agriculture remain a vital part of the local economy.

■ Support various forms of agriculture including organic agriculture, orchards, vineyards, value added agriculture, and forestry etc. as a way of providing more agricultural opportunities in the local economy.

Goal 3 ► Enhance recreation and tourism opportunities throughout Crawford County.

■ Continue to support state and federal recreational facilities (Lower Wisconsin State Riverway, Kickapoo Wildlife Area, Rush Creek Natural Area, etc) in the County as a means to provide recreational opportunities for visitors and tourists.

■ Develop strong partnerships with existing regional organizations, that currently oversee activities that promote recreation and tourism resources in the County. This includes the Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC), Kickapoo Valley Association, the Prairie Du Chien Area Chamber of Commerce, the Tourism Council, and local tourism boards. The MRPC is the commission that oversees activities of State Highway 35 "The Great River Road" National Scenic Byway.

■ Support local and regional festivals (Driftless Area Art Festival, Gays Mills Apple Festival, Prairie Villa Rendezvous, etc.) as a way to promote tourism throughout Crawford County.

■ Continue to maintain and update the Crawford County Outdoor Recreation Plan every five years. Updating the plan maintains eligibility for the County to apply for DNR recreational grant funding to improve parks. In addition to park grants, the County may request DNR recreational grant funding for bike/pedestrian trails in the County.

■ Capitalize on the economic benefits from tourism destinations located adjacent to Crawford County (Potosi Brewery Museum, Effigy Mounds National Monument, etc). Getting visitors to stop and stay in Crawford County would provide more exposure to tourism and recreational businesses in the County.

■ Increase exposure through coordinated marketing of tourism and recreational opportunities available in Crawford County (Kickapoo River, biking trails, Wisconsin River, Mississippi River, Apple Orchards, etc.).

■ Support efforts to increase recreation/tourism opportunities along the Lower Kickapoo River (Gays Mills to Wauzeka). Such recreation and tourism opportunities may include biking/walking trails, canoeing, camping, etc. In order to facilitate the recreational activities, the voluntary purchase of property or securing of access easements to provide increased public access to the natural resource may be needed.

■ As part of the Comprehensive planning process and future updates develop and implement a land use plan that enhances the rural landscape and preserves recreational and tourism opportunities in the County. Passive recreation and tourism uses (fishing, sight seeing, biking, etc.) that will not detract from the rural qualities of the County have been identified as the most desired uses. It is important that the County maintain the qualities that people are attracted to (scenery, rural atmosphere, etc.) in order for such uses to flourish.

Goal 5 ► Expand information technologies (such as broadband internet, fiber optic cables, etc.) throughout Crawford County.

- Support programs and identify funding sources to improve information technology services (broadband internet, fiber optic cables, etc.) for all residents.
- Identify a County Committee responsible for staying abreast of changing technologies to ensure the County is ready and able to take advantage of innovative technology improvements. An important part of information technologies is the ability to stay current and look forward to see technological advancements.
- Work cooperatively with the Public Service Commission and communication service providers to survey county businesses and residents to establish existing service areas and gaps in internet service.

Goal 6 ► Promote opportunities for a diversity of businesses to grow and prosper in the County

- Support programs, policies, ordinances that enhance home businesses. Home businesses being described as small home offices, craft outlets, repair businesses, etc. are important to the county's rural lifestyle. Generally, these businesses are family operated, have one to five employees and have a limited visual impact on the rural landscape. These businesses are important because they provide supplemental income to existing farm operations and allow the land to remain in productive agriculture rather than being sold to competing uses (residential) that may detract from the rural atmosphere.
- Maintain policies and ordinances that encourage niche businesses. In this unique area niche businesses that cater to a particular need can be vital to a local economy. They may evolve from a particular need in the community but flourish because of their uniqueness.
- Encourage "green" businesses that conserve the natural environment as well as those that support green industries such as solar power manufacturing and bio-fuels, and green building.
- Create the economic infrastructure and economic environment in the County that enables people and businesses to manage and produce locally (when possible) the entire means for product production from natural resource to end product.

Goal 7 ► Continue to participate in local and regional economic development activities.

- Create an Economic Development Committee. During the planning process, the concept of developing a Crawford County Economic Development Corporation was discussed. Based on the discussions and input the plan recommends that the Crawford County Board of Supervisors in the short-term form an Economic Development Committee. The purpose of the Economic Development Committee would be to establish the framework for developing a permanent Crawford County Economic Development Corporation. The Economic Development Committee would identify the goals, membership (private/public), and structure of a County Economic Development Corporation along with the legal method to create such a corporation.

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- Focus economic development activities on the five strategic opportunities identified in the 2009 study on the Riverlands Region prepared by the Center of Regional Competitiveness. The five strategic opportunities identified are manufacturing, food and agriculture, business services, tourism, and innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Improve communication between incorporated and unincorporated local units of government on economic development related issues. Areas where improved communication would benefit the county and businesses include land use issues, rules /regulations, economic development tools, public infrastructure, etc.
- Work with existing economic development organizations to improve systems for effectively matching new and existing business owners with technical support and financing programs.
- Coordinate local businesses employment needs (training, etc.) with local high schools and area technical colleges and universities. An outcome of such a program would be to create job opportunities for young workers to reduce the out migration of the county's youth.