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The

# INNOVATOR

The WBIA - "Where Incubation Means  
 Business"

## Governor Doyle Announces EDA Funding for Food Enterprise Center in City of Viroqua

MADISON—Governor Jim Doyle announced today that the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is funding a \$2 million EDA grant to the City of Viroqua and the Vernon Economic Development Association in Vernon County. The funding will help turn an empty manufacturing plant into a local food hub.

"I am proud of the work we have all done together – the local government, the state and the federal government - to find solutions that will help the economy in Viroqua and the 7 Rivers Region." Governor Doyle said. "This project will support small farmers and entrepreneurs and helps create a stronger economic future for the state."

The project includes renovating the 100,000-sq.-ft. manufacturing plant into a food processing and distribution center. Available space is for local businesses either looking to start or expand a business. In addition, EDA funds will help to purchase equipment for the facility and

hire a consultant to develop a marketing strategy. The Wisconsin Department of Commerce worked with the EDA to help the City of Viroqua access this grant in partnership with the Vernon Economic Development Association. Total project cost is \$2,946,700.

Susan Noble, Executive Director of Vernon Economic Development Association explains, "This facility is a tremendous resource to the agricultural industry in our region. It provides the aggregation, processing and distribution infrastructure to help small producers increase their market opportunities and business capacity. We're creating jobs, increasing the tax base and engaging our own local entrepreneurs to grow the economy."

EDA is an agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce that partners with distressed communities throughout the United States to foster economic growth and job creation. This year marks EDA's 45 years of public ser-

vice, with its mission to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness and preparing American regions for growth and success in the global economy. For additional information on how EDA investments help distressed communities and create a positive and sustainable economic future, visit [www.eda.gov](http://www.eda.gov).



## Kitchen Incubator in Brown County



Vacant since 2008, the 1,649 sq. ft. kitchen inside the Dr. William Nystrom Center at N.E.W. Curative Rehabilitation Center, 2900 Curry Lane Green Bay, will have

a new purpose in life as it becomes the N.E.W. Community Kitchen Incubator before the end of the year.

This non-profit collaborative effort between N.E.W. Curative Rehabilitation, the Algoma Farm Market Kitchen Incubator, Advance Economic Development and Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, will provide Green Bay and the greater Brown

County area with a commercially licensed, shared-use kitchen incubator. It will be available for use by growers, new and existing food businesses, caterers, restaurants, special event vendors, bakers, groups and organizations...anyone who has dreamed of processing and marketing a food product, but lacked the space, equipment, or support to do it.

A pilot program will begin in November with the official opening being January 2011.

### WBIA MISSION STATEMENT

To educate, inspire, and advocate on behalf of small business start-ups & entrepreneurs  
 by providing incubation facilities and networking resources.

## BETTING ON INCUBATORS TO CREATE JOBS

Business incubators, the bulk of which are independently operated nonprofits that provide startups with cheap office space and professional advice, took off in the 1980s only to stall after the dot-com bubble burst. They're now back to a record high, according to the National Business Incubation Assn. (NBIA), with some 41,000 startups using 1,200 incubators across the country. Participants' survival rate after five years is 87 percent, compared with 44 percent for companies that didn't use incubators, according to the group.

High unemployment and the need to replace jobs lost at

dying industries have been driving forces behind incubators since the first one was created in Batavia, N.Y., in 1959. Increasingly, lawmakers in Washington are embracing incubators as a relatively easy and cheap way to fuel future job creation. A recent study by the Commerce Dept.'s Economic Development Administration found that when it comes to producing jobs, investments in incubators have a higher return on dollars spent than public-works projects such as road building. In 2009, EDA invested \$80.7 million in incubators, which it says resulted in 8,746 jobs and

it plans to invest even more in 2010.

In April, Tim Ryan (D-Ohio) introduced a bill that would allow EDA, which currently limits its incubator funding to construction and renovation projects, to include grants of up to \$3 million for operations and support services. Another bill, the Early Stage Business Investment & Incubation Act of 2010, introduced by Representative Suzanne Kosmas (D-Fla.) in May, would use \$250 million to establish the first funding program for business incubators targeting high-growth industries across the country.

Many new incubators are specializing to increase their potential. Historically, most programs accepted as a tenant any startup with the potential for growth and profitability. About 80 percent of the incubators created in the past few years are focused on one or two industries, says Carol Lauffer, a partner at Business Cluster Development, a Portola Valley (Calif.) consulting firm that plans and develops sector-focused incubators for local governments, universities, and large businesses.

~By Lauren Hatch

Bloomberg Businessweek

August 12, 2010.

## MANUFACTURING AWARDS OF DISTINCTION RECIPIENT

Advance, the Economic Development arm of the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, recognized Wisconsin Film & Bag as the winner of the prestigious 2010 Manufacturing Awards of Distinction for mid-size companies at a special ceremony held November 4, 2010.

The company is a manufacturer of polyethylene film and bag packaging products for industrial and food applications located in Shawano, WI. Wisconsin Film & Bag was founded in 1972 by John Ruple Sr. and initially operated out of a small plant in Oconto, Wis. They have experienced continued growth and have accomplished numerous milestones.

Jim Feeney, President of Wisconsin Film & Bag said "It is a great honor to accept this award on behalf of our 118 employees who put us in position to win. Their hard work and dedication is a common characteristic of the people of the city and county of Shawano."

Feeney went on to say that "our company has abandoned plans to expand in another state and instead will expand the Shawano operations. The quality of the workforce and the support from the city and county made it clear that our best choice was to grow our business in Shawano."

Wisconsin Film & Bag has been in the Shawano Industrial

Park since 1982. Their expansion will focus on the use of recycled content ECO Blend polyethylene resin that they will produce in their newly leased Airport Road facility.

For more information about Wisconsin Film & Bag, contact Jim Feeney at 715-524-0121 or visit [www.wifb.com](http://www.wifb.com).



The Manufacturing Awards of Distinction, now entering its eleventh year, honors excellence in manufacturing in more than eight Northeast Wisconsin counties. Since 1999, Advance has honored more than 50 companies from all over Northeast Wisconsin.



## 2011 Governor's Conference on Economic Development

**Be Bold Wisconsin: Building Business**

**February 9-11, 2011**

**Monona Terrace Convention & Community Center, Madison, WI**

This year will focus on Innovation: Bold Moves In a Challenging Environment. The conference development partners are the Wisconsin Department of Commerce and the Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA). For more information on the conference, hotel reservations, exhibitor and sponsor opportunities, please contact WEDA at [weda@weda.org](mailto:weda@weda.org) or visit their website at [www.weda.org](http://www.weda.org).



## Welcome to our Newest WBIA Members



We welcome **Tom Shircel** of Pleasant Prairie. Tom has been employed by the [Village of Pleasant Prairie](#) since 1998, serving as Assistant to the Administrator since Jan. 1, 2010. Prior to that he was the Assistant Planner & Zoning Administrator. Tom's duties include assisting in special Village projects such as TIF Districts, development of incubator (s), and grant writing.

Tom reports that the Village Community Development Authority (CDA) and the Kenosha Area Business Alliance (KABA) have applied for and are working towards obtaining an US Dept. of Commerce - EDA grant to help in funding of the Southeast Wisconsin Innovation Center. The application is under EDA review and is currently pending. The proposed project involves the development of an approximate 40,352 square foot business incubator. The primary function of the Innovation Center facility would be to accommodate start-up and early stage technology firms concentrating in the life science, bio-technology and bio-medical industries. The initial design of the facility is a three-story structure and includes office, lab, and flexible research and development space as well as administrative and support resource space. The Innovation Center is proposed to be a major component of the Village Green Center commercial downtown. The Innovation Center, and its supporting resources, will concentrate on the life science and bio-technology industries. The region possesses significant concentrations of private industry talent, research and commercial successes in this sector. The Kenosha County and Lake County, Illinois region is home to several notable pharmaceutical, technology-based and medical-related firms. The Innovation Center would provide a state-of-the-art facility that would house entrepreneurs, bio-scientists, and bio-mechanical scientists that are in the process of developing new companies that would be based upon technological developments and innovations. This would be the predominant use of the facility. The types of innovations and entrepreneur efforts would be dependent upon the mix of tenants that occupy the facility. There have also been preliminary discussions regarding collaborative projects between area universities and private industry. It is conceivable that the Innovation Center could also accommodate those initiatives and projects focused on connecting faculty, staff and students from area universities with relevant private industry programs. Additionally, the Village CDA has plans to redevelop the former industrial building (former Midwest Copier/Manutronics property located at 9115 26th Avenue) into the Springbook Innovation Center, a light manufacturing/mixed-use small business incubator.

Tom and his wife Denise have 3 children, Tyler, age 14, Amy, age 12, and Cora, age 10. Born in Sheboygan, Tom obtained his BS in Geography and MS in Urban and Regional Planning at UW-Madison. His interests include travel, sports and music, and he also enjoys spending time with family and friends.



Welcome to **Brad Niemcek** of the Kickapoo Kitchen Project in Gays Mills. Brad is a retired communications industry entrepreneur with business-building experience in public relations, sports promotions and audio and video production. Brad began his career as a reporter for the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, then moved into corporate public relations in Chicago and New York. Going out on his own in the early 1970's, Brad developed his skills as an entrepreneur for the next 40 years.

Brad and his wife, Sharon Murphy, live on a small farm in Southwest Wisconsin near the village of Gays Mills, keeping bees, making maple syrup, and growing mushrooms and hazelnuts. Brad and Sharon are active in projects ranging from a local farmers market to their goal of establishment of a shared-use kitchen business incubator, referred to as the Kickapoo Kitchen Project.



A warm welcome to **Robert Musgrove**, President of [Pine Technical College](#) (PTC) in Pine City, Minnesota. PTC is a two-year campus of the Minnesota State College and University (MnSCU) system located in East Central Minnesota, 50 miles north of the Twin Cities. Robert recently successfully applied to the federal Economic Development Administration for funding to create a business incubator and an entrepreneurship center on campus.

Robert has served at PTC since 1998. From 1989 to 1998, he was the Dean of Instruction and chief academic officer for Texas State Technical College - Sweetwater. He also taught middle school English, high school English and journalism and college English in his educational career. He is a native of Sweetwater, TX, and holds a B.A. in English from the University of Texas, a Master of Arts in English and a Masters of Education from the University of Virginia, and a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Texas.

Regionally, Musgrove was chair of the Northern Technology Initiative (a regional consortium to improve economic development and technology business recruitment in East Central Minnesota) from 1999 to 2010, and the group was recently awarded one of four grants statewide to do integrated regional workforce and economic development planning by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

At Pine Tech, Musgrove founded Johnson Center for Virtual Reality, an advanced technology research and development lab, which produces virtual reality simulations and serious games for industrial training. He worked to have the college named to two of four MnSCU statewide Centers of Excellence - in Manufacturing and in Healthcare. He also created PTC Foundation and led seven successful annual campaigns and one endowment campaign. For the statewide MnSCU system, Musgrove has chaired the Technology Committee of the system's Leadership Council, and he serves on the Enterprise IT Investment Committee to direct a \$60M project to upgrade core IT infrastructure for all state colleges and universities. He is currently on the MnSCU Leadership Committee on Finance, Facilities and Administration and on the Enterprise Investment Committee to direct a \$60M upgrade of the MnSCU system's information technology infrastructure.

## WWW.WBIASTATE.ORG - CHECK IT OUT!

Did you know that the WBIA website is an ever-changing, resource packed tool at your fingertips?

Besides providing prospective members with information on business incubation, membership benefits and materials, it also contains information the most seasoned member can appreciate. Recent updates to allow online payments and online registrations for WBIA events has proven to be a great time saver. There are also pertinent resources located under the News You Can Use tab such as: Studies & Reports, Resources, Programs or Funding, New Items, NBIA Industry RSS feed, and Members in the News. For a listing of all the WBIA members or a map of all the business incubators and related organizations, click on the Incubator Listing By County tab.

Have a suggestion or addition for the website? Please contact Steve Sengstock at [scepi@frontiernet.net](mailto:scepi@frontiernet.net) or Lisa Harmann at [lharmann@titletown.org](mailto:lharmann@titletown.org).

***WE WOULD LOVE TO SHOWCASE YOU AND/OR YOUR ORGANIZATION!***

***PLEASE SEND US YOUR ARTICLES!!***

Send your information to Steve Sengstock at [scepi@frontiernet.net](mailto:scepi@frontiernet.net) or Lisa Harmann at [lharmann@titletown.org](mailto:lharmann@titletown.org)

## WBIA IMPORTANT “SAVE THE DATES”

### January 13-14, 2011:

WBIA Board Meeting. The winter quarterly Board meeting will be on **Thursday, January 13, 2011** at the Wisconsin Innovation Kitchen, Mineral Point, WI. The time and other details will be posted when determined.

WBIA Member Meeting. The winter quarterly WBIA members meeting will be held on **Friday, January 14, 2011** at the Wisconsin Innovation Kitchen, Mineral Point, WI. The time and educational presentation will be posted when determined.

### April 14-15, 2011:

WBIA Board Meeting. The spring quarterly Board meeting will on **Thursday, April 14, 2011** in either Whitewater or Marinette (TBD). The location, time and other details will be posted on the website when determined.

WBIA Member Meeting. The spring quarterly WBIA members meeting will be held on **Friday, April 15, 2011** in either Whitewater or Marinette (TBD). The location, time and educational presentation will be posted on the website when determined.

### July 14-15, 2011:

WBIA Board Meeting. The summer quarterly Board meeting will be held on **Thursday, July 14, 2011** in either Spooner or Grantsburg (TBD). The location, time and other details will be posted on the website when determined.

WBIA Member Meeting. The summer quarterly WBIA members meeting will be held on **Friday, July 15, 2011** in either Spooner or Grantsburg (TBD). The time, location and educational presentation will be posted on the website when determined.