

ELEMENT 6 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The ability for a community to attract new and innovative businesses, industries and workers is a key element for the community's economic survival and prosperity. Providing a good climate for business development enhances the community's overall well being both in financial terms as well as in morale and civic pride. By providing for its businesses, and the residents who comprise its workforce, the community insures its future success.

This chapter of the plan contains a compilation of background information, goals, objectives, and programs to promote the retention and stabilization of the economic base in the Town of Springbrook. As required by §66.1001, Wisconsin Statutes, this chapter includes an assessment of new business and industries that are desired in the town, an assessment of the town's strengths and weaknesses with respect to attracting and retaining businesses and industries, and includes an inventory of environmentally contaminated sites. It also identifies applicable county, state and regional economic development programs that apply to the Town of Springbrook.

6.2 LABOR FORCE

According to the 2000 Census, of the 536 inhabitants in the Town of Springbrook, 392 are 16 years or over. Of those 392, 66.3 percent, or 260, comprise the civilian labor force. At that time, 230 of the 260 were identified as employed and 30 as unemployed, or 11.5 percent.

Between the 1990 Census and the 2000 Census, the percentage of the population over the age of 25 that have attained some education past high school has increased considerably, from 24 percent to 42 percent. Of the 348 people over 25 years old, 147 have some higher level of education, with 39 percent achieving an associate degree or higher.

Economic Base

In 2000, the average annual wage for Washburn County was \$21,410. The highest paying industry in the county is government at \$28,442, followed closely by finance, insurance, & real estate at \$27,774 and then manufacturing at \$24,698. The lowest paying industry is retail trade at \$13,200.

For the Town of Springbrook residents, the manufacturing industry provided 17 percent of the jobs in 2000, which is down from 23 percent in 1990. Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and foodservices (14%); retail trade (14%); and other services (11%) were the next largest industry employers of the town residents. In 1990, the industries employing the most people were retail trade (26%); manufacturing (23%); educational, health, and social services (17%); and construction (10%). Over the last decade, the loss of higher paying manufacturing jobs has had an impact on the economic base of the town.

6.3 CURRENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND BUSINESS INVENTORY

The Town of Springbrook is a rural community with relatively easy access to the Cities of Spooner and Hayward. There are a number businesses located in the Town of Springbrook, though many residents of the town travel to work and to purchase needed and desired goods and services.

The Town of Springbrook is home to a number of business establishments, including home-based businesses. It should be noted that before March 3, 2005, the Wisconsin Department of Revenue in its Statement of Assessments, reports that there were 16 different commercial parcels in Springbrook totaling 17 acres. Currently, there is approximately 16 acres of land zoned for commercial use in the town, most of which exists along STH 63, and in scattered locations throughout the town where businesses currently exist. See Map 8.2, Town of Springbrook Zoning.

Most of the local economic activity that occurs in the town is associated with recreation, forestry, and home occupations. It is believed that some home occupations exist in the town, which were not addressed as part of the business inventory. Such businesses probably do not have special permits or zoning approvals because the nature of such businesses presents no noticeable impacts or nuisances to adjacent properties, so their location and impact is difficult to detect. The town supports a resident's right to have a small business operation on his/her property provided that the establishment does not create an environmental hazard or create a nuisance for neighboring property owners by generating excessive traffic, noise, lighting, signage, etc. This is true because in the planning survey, 66.4 percent of people who own land in Springbrook answered that there should be aesthetic requirements for commercial and industrial development in the town.

6.4 ATTRACTING AND RETAINING BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

The Town of Springbrook has several attributes or advantages that would make it an excellent place to locate a potential business. Specifically the town has:

- Access to a major highway
- Ample tourism possibilities

While the town enjoys its share of advantages, there are several disadvantages or weaknesses that the town must address when seeking to attract new business and industry. In particular:

- Large tracts of federal and county lands
- Resident wishes to maintain rural atmosphere of town
- Lack of utility infrastructure

6.5 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

While the town would like to welcome additional business development to support the local tax base, it is important that any new development exist in harmony with the local environment. Therefore, new business and industry development should be “clean” and not produce waste, which would be a hazard to the natural resources of the Town of Springbrook (i.e.- lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, forests, and agricultural lands). Likewise, new development should blend into the rural landscape and not represent a nuisance to other residents. Also, in helping to determine where new businesses should be located, 55.2 percent of survey respondents in Springbrook said new businesses generally should be located near other businesses.

6.6 SPRINGBROOK’S TARGETED BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES

New business and industry in the town must not require municipal water or sewer service unless the town wishes to begin providing these services through the creation of sanitary district. Also, the town wants to be sure that new developments do not jeopardize the rural character and quality of life, as 82.0 percent of Springbrook survey respondents thought the rural character of Washburn County should be preserved. In essence, businesses and industries that might choose to locate in the town should be environmentally friendly, have limited outdoor storage, and require minimal lighting and signage.

Potential for Environmentally Contaminated Sites

The State of Wisconsin and its county governments encourage the effective cleanup, reuse and reclamation of sites damaged through prior usage. Several programs exist to fund or assist in funding the redevelopment of these sites. The Brownfield’s Initiative, which provides grants to individuals, businesses, local development organization and municipalities for environmental remediation activities for Brownfield sites where the owner is unknown, cannot be located or cannot meet clean-up costs. Additionally, the Department of Commerce’s Petroleum Environmental Clean-Up Fund reimburses property owners for eligible clean-up costs related to discharges from petroleum tank systems. Refer to Element 8 – Land Use for Town of Springbrook for redevelopment and contaminated sites.

6.7 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

There are many programs at the federal, state, and county level that can help the Town of Springbrook to support economic development efforts. There are also programs available for individual businesses to utilize as well. What follows is a list with descriptions of agencies and programs that can assist the Town of Springbrook with its economic development plans.

The U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration offers two programs for assistance with economic development that apply to the Town of Springbrook and/or Washburn County. One is the Public Works and Economic Development Facilities Assistance Program, which supports the construction or rehabilitation of essential public infrastructure and development facilities necessary to generate private sector jobs and investment, including investments that support technology-led development, redevelopment of brownfield sites, and eco-industrial development. Secondly, the Economic Adjustment Assistance Program is

available to: (1) address the immediate needs of businesses and communities presently undergoing transition due to a sudden and severe job loss; and (2) demonstrate new and proactive approaches for economic competitiveness and innovative capacity for threatened regions and communities.

Another program available at the federal level to public entities is the USDA Rural Development Community Facility Loan Program. The purpose of this program is to construct, enlarge, extend, or otherwise improve community facilities providing essential services in rural areas and towns with a population of 50,000 or less.

Three programs are available to local units of government through the Wisconsin Department of Commerce. The first program is the Community Development Block Grant for Economic Development (CDBG-ED). Its purpose is to provide resources to local governments that will enable them to assist economic development projects in their community. The local unit of government is the applicant and recipient of the funds. A specific business, which must be located in a municipality of 50,000 or less, is loaned the funds for eligible business development uses. When the funds are repaid to the local government, they may stay in the community to be used as a revolving loan fund to assist other businesses in the community.

The second program is the Community Development Block Grant Public Facilities for Economic Development (CDBG-PFED). Its purpose is to provide grant funds to local governments that will enable them to provide needed public facilities (i.e., streets, sewer mains, water mains, etc.) to private business enterprises that are going to create full-time jobs by starting or expanding their businesses because of the availability of the funded public facilities.

The third program available from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce is the Community-Based Economic Development Program (CBED). Its purpose is to provide financing assistance to local governments and community-based organizations that undertake planning or development projects or that provide technical assistance in support of business (including technology-based businesses) and community development.

Available from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation is a program called the Transportation Facilities Economic Assistance and Development Program (TEA). The intent of the TEA program is to help support new business development in Wisconsin by funding transportation improvements that are needed to secure jobs in the state. A governing body, a business, a consortium group, or any combination thereof can apply for TEA program funding.

There are many programs related to business development available to businesses located in Washburn County. On a regional level, there are revolving loan funds administered by Northwest Wisconsin Business Development Corporation (NWBDC), an affiliate of the Northwest Regional Planning Commission in Spooner. Washburn County also has a CDBG-ED revolving loan fund available to local businesses.

A strategic planning initiative called Build Wisconsin was initiated to produce the first cohesive economic development plan for the State of Wisconsin. As part of Build Wisconsin, six counties in northwest Wisconsin, including Washburn, were designated a technology zone. The

Technology Zone program brings \$5 million in income tax incentives for high-tech development to the area. Eligible businesses can receive tax credits based on their ability to create high-wage jobs and investment and support the development of high-tech industries in the region.

There are many more federal, state, and local programs offering assistance to businesses that are too numerous to mention here; however, they are listed in the Economic Development Manual prepared by the Wisconsin Bankers Association and the Wisconsin Financing Alternatives booklet prepared by the Wisconsin Department of Commerce.

6.8 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

A set of recommended goals, objectives, and action-plans has been developed to assist in the overall economic development efforts of the town.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal: Attract appropriate businesses that will provide good paying jobs for the residents of the town.	
Objectives	Actions
1. Promote industries and enterprises that are compatible with our rural and recreational atmosphere, keeping in mind noise, traffic, odor and utilities.	Develop guidelines and/or ordinance for town requirements regarding these issues.
2. Encourage industrial development along county, state and federal roads.	Develop ordinance designating industrial areas, and note acceptable industrial land use areas on future land use map.
3. Encourage utilities development as they become feasible.	Initiate communications with public utilities as to proposed future scheduling for such activities.
4. Promote employment opportunities that may lead to jobs that are better than entry-level positions.	Require that any new developers address the issue of what types of jobs will be produced and the types of positions/wages/benefits will be available to prospective employees.
5. Search for rail line development possibilities and commercial development around it.	Communicate with present rail operators and their plans for Springbrook’s inclusion in rail line activities and the possibilities of developing a commercial infrastructure at the Springbrook stop to service tourism-related trips.