



Certified in Wisconsin® Program Can Help Spur Economic Growth

Coleman Peiffer, Business Investment and Attraction Director,
Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

State to start accepting applications for development program on January 15



When the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) launched its Certified In Wisconsin® Program in 2012 as a way to pre-certify industrial sites as ready for development, the Village of DeForest was one of the first municipalities to receive the designation.

And village officials haven't looked back since.

Since the DeForest Business Park became a Certified Site, it has landed two major economic development projects expected to create \$70 million in capital investment and provide more than 400 jobs.

“Our village had the foresight to participate in the WEDC Certified In Wisconsin Program at its inception,” said Sam Blahnik, community development director for DeForest. “With the Certified Site due diligence having already been completed, the village was able to meet expedited development timelines for both The Little Potato Company and American Packaging Corporation. The competitive advantage of having Certified Sites ready for development has greatly benefited the village’s economy.”

The DeForest Business Park is one of 17 sites in the Certified In Wisconsin Program, which can play a critical role helping municipalities like DeForest compete on a national level for economic development projects by allowing for fast-track construction for major attraction or expansion projects. Not only does the program increase the comfort level of site selectors and companies by removing unknowns about a site, but WEDC also actively markets the Certified Sites to get them in front of the people who make decisions about corporate expansions and relocations.

DeForest isn't the only community seeing results from the program. To date, there have been 19 economic development projects on the state's Certified Sites – which are expected to result in more than \$400 million in capital investment and more than 2,300 jobs.

It's that type of success that officials in Black River Falls hope to replicate at the city's industrial park, which became the state's newest Certified Site about six months ago.

“There had not been any significant development in our industrial park for quite some time, so we knew we had to take



a different approach,” said City Administrator Brad Chown. “Thanks to the program, the Black River Falls Industrial Park is now on the radar for national business locators, which puts us in a great position to attract new businesses and new jobs to our community.”

Under the program, WEDC works with Deloitte Consulting to create consistent standards for industrial site certification based on representative needs of advanced manufacturing projects. WEDC’s thorough review process produces detailed documentation about a site’s price, availability, utilities, access, and environmental standing – information that allows investors to make informed decisions.

Once a site is certified, a potential developer has all the standard information generally needed to make a quick decision about whether that site is right for their needs, such as utility and transportation infrastructure, environmental assessments, quality of nearby labor force, and much more.

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In Wisconsin Program will be accepted from January 15 through February 12, 2018. Municipal officials and others seeking information about the program can visit inwisconsin.com/certified or contact Coleman Peiffer at coleman.peiffer@wedc.org



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More details on page 31. Save the Date and Join Us.

May 4, TBD • May 11, Eau Claire • June 1, Madison • June 8, Appleton • September 28, Stevens Point