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## **St. Croix EDC Banquet Honors Top Businesses for 2009**

On February 25th, St. Croix EDC honored its 2009 business of the year winners during a banquet at the University Center, on the campus of UW-River Falls, River Falls, Wisconsin. NCCM Company (River Falls, Emerging Business of the Year), Baldwin Telecom, Inc. (Baldwin, Small Business of the Year), and SMC Ltd. (Somerset, Business of the Year) are the 2009 winners.



*2009 Business of the Year winners (l to r) Brent Niccum, NCCM Company; Chetan Patel, SMC Ltd.; Larry Knegeford, Baldwin Telecom, Inc.; and Ken Heiser, Associated Bank*

Ken Heiser, a Hudson banker, received the inaugural EDC Directors Award. The EDC's board of directors created this award to honor an individual or organization that has championed economic development through innovative actions, making St. Croix County a better place to live, work, play, and learn.

Each of the winners received a plaque from the EDC as well as a Legislative Citation from Madison and congratulatory letters from U.S. Rep. Ron Kind and U.S. Senators Herb Kohl and Russ Feingold.

EDC president Patti Robertson presided over the banquet, which included a special recognition of previous winners going back to 1994. Certificates were awarded to members in appreciation of their financial support over the last ten consecutive years.

The 16th annual awards banquet was sponsored by First Bank of Baldwin, First National Community Bank, WESTconsin Credit Union, and Wisconsin Business Development Finance Corporation. It was attended by just over 210 people.

Entertainment was provided by comedian C. Willi Myles, billed as 'America's everyday comedian'. During his 45-minute set, Myles took everyday life challenges and applied humor to them. Banquet attendees were treated to many laughs from Myles and his unique observations of midwest living compared to his native Mobile, Alabama.

## **TireProz Breaks Ground in Hudson**

A groundbreaking on February 25th marked the ceremonial start of construction on a 6,000 square foot tire and auto service center for TireProz. About 1,500 square feet will be showroom space and the balance is the shop. The facility will be located at the corner of Industrial Street and Crestview Drive, along the south side of I-94 between exits 1 and 2 in Hudson.



*Community leaders joined the owners of TireProz and their family for a groundbreaking to mark the start of construction on a auto service center in Hudson*

TireProz offers complete auto service, preventative maintenance, customization, accessories, and custom tire and wheel packages. The Hudson location will be the second for TireProz. It operates another center along Highway 36 in Oak Park Heights-Stillwater, Minnesota.

Derrick Commercial Contracting (New Richmond, Wisconsin) is the general contractor.

## Brewfarm Enterprises Launches Wind-Themed Specialty Beer

### Beer is named “Matacabras” for Strong Wind in Spain

Brewfarm Enterprises LLC of Wilson, Wisconsin, has introduced the first in a series of wind-themed specialty beers. It is called Matacabras after the strong wind in Spain that reportedly kills goats.

BrewFarm Enterprises ([www.brewfarm.com](http://www.brewfarm.com)) was founded by David Anderson in 2008 and operates as Dave’s Brewfarm. It is a sustainable micro brewery that features a 20 kW wind generator, thermal wall foundation, in-floor coil heating/cooling system, and reclaimed material like barn boards, tin sheet metal, and timbers. Hops are also grown on the brewery property. In mid-February, the BrewFarm celebrated the first anniversary of the tower’s installation. Anderson named the tower, Jake.



Anderson says his Matacabras specialty beer, like its name, is dark, mysterious, and difficult to translate into a familiar category. It is dark, yet not heavy; complex, yet balanced; and strong, yet very smooth. Copious amounts of malt, brown sugar, rye, and American hops are used in the brewing of Matacabras.

Tongue in cheek, Anderson insists that no goats were harmed in the production of Matacabras.

The BrewFarm has finalized a distribution deal in Milwaukee and expects another distribution arrangement for the Madison and northern Wisconsin markets reasonably soon. Still another deal is in the works for Pennsylvania.

An inaugural production run of “BrewFarm Select” occurred in October 2009. Anderson has contractual agreements with breweries across the state for the production of his specialty beers.

## OEM Fabricators Announces Long-term Agreement With Nordco

OEM Fabricators, Inc., a manufacturing services company based in Woodville, Wisconsin (St. Croix County), and Nordco, a rail equipment manufacturer and railroad services company, have reached a multi-year agreement to collaborate on component manufacturing, engineering, and supply chain optimization. The agreement, and the collaboration it represents, will drive systemic improvement and increase competitiveness within both companies and in their respective markets.

Nordco and OEM have worked together for nearly twenty years. Individually each has grown substantially, driven innovation, and become leaders in their respective markets.

OEM’s president, Mark Tyler, commented, “This agreement represents an incredible opportunity for both organizations to drive operational excellence and supply chain integration to new levels.”



Mark Tyler, OEM  
Fabricators

Patrick Minick, Nordco’s Vice President, Operations added, “Nordco has a long history of bringing innovative products to the railroad industry, we are now expanding that drive for innovation through our supply chain. We are looking forward to the benefits that this collaboration will bring to Nordco and its customers.”

The multi-year agreement is estimated to have a value in excess of twenty-five million dollars. Estimates of cost reductions as a result of the relationship exceed four million dollars.

OEM serves original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), research universities, and process and equipment integrators. From its three facilities in west central Wisconsin (Woodville, Neillsville, and Eau Claire), OEM provides solutions in manufacturing, engineering, research and development, and supply chain optimization.

St. Croix EDC named OEM Fabricators as the 2004 Business of the Year in St. Croix County, and OEM is active in many organizations, including a membership with the EDC.

## Staff at Market & Johnson Earn LEED Accredited Professional Designation

In early February, the general contracting firm Market & Johnson announced that project managers Kevin Renley and Jim Bunkelman earned the designation of LEED Accredited Professional. LEED is an acronym for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and is issued by the Green Building Certificate Institute. This designation recognizes individuals who demonstrate knowledge in LEED's Green Building Rating System(TM). LEED is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high-performance, energy efficient ('green') buildings.



*Kevin Renley,  
PE, LEED AP*



*Jim Bunkelman,  
LEED AP*

Renley has a B.S. degree in civil engineering from UW-Madison and is a registered Professional Engineer (P.E.). He has worked in the La Crosse office of Market & Johnson since 2001. Bunkelman works in the Eau Claire and possesses a B.S. degree in construction management from UW-Stout. He has been with the company since 2000.

## Local Community Leaders Attend Momentum West Legislative Day

Several people from around the area were among the 65 volunteers for Momentum West's legislative advocacy event in Madison on Tuesday, February 16th. They included Angela Popenhagen (Stevens Engineers), Kim Heinenmann (Hudson Area Chamber of Commerce), Ryan Sicard (Village of Somerset - St. Croix EDC), Bill Berndt (Riverwood Consulting), Roger Humphrey (Equity Marketing Group - St. Croix EDC), Trudy Popenhagen (Xcel Energy - Polk County EDC), Russ Korpela (New Richmond Area Chamber of Commerce), Terry McKay (ERA Muske Realty), Patti Robertson (WESTconsin Credit Union - St. Croix EDC), Rosanne Bump (River Falls Area Chamber of Commerce), Noel Eggegraaten (Eggegraaten Associates - St. Croix EDC), Chancellor Dean Van Galen (UW-River Falls), Brian McQuade (B-Wireless - River Falls), Blake Fry (UW-River Falls), Marian Furlong (Hudson Hospital - St. Croix EDC), Cedric Ellingson (Bos 'n Mine - River Falls Chamber), and Bill Rubin (St. Croix EDC).



*Patti Robertson, Kim Heinenmann, Marian Furlong,  
Noel Eggegraaten, Secretary of Commerce Richard  
Leinenkugel, Ryan Sicard, Trudy Popenhagen, Roger  
Humphrey, Angela Popenhagen, and Russ Korpela*

The volunteers participated in several appointments with state senators, representatives, or their respective staff. Legislative priorities were identified in late 2009 and outlined in a booklet during the appointments. The issues were grouped according to major themes like economic development, education, transportation, agriculture, and tax code matters. The elected officials also received feedback on the passage of legislation from the 2009 session that was of benefit to west central and northwest Wisconsin, including enhancements to Act 255, the consolidation of the state's tax credit programs, and state bonding authority for major interstate bridge projects.

Many of the volunteers boarded a coach bus in Hudson and departed by 6 a.m. Additional people were picked up in Eau Claire before arriving in Madison at 10 a.m. Team assignments were given along with overviews on the issues. Following lunch, the teams went on appointments from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Secretary of Commerce Richard Leinenkugel spoke to the group at 4 p.m. and a reception was held from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. The coach bus arrived in Hudson just before 11 p.m.

Plans are underway for another legislative advocacy event in 2011 under the direction of Momentum West. Momentum West is a 10-county external marketing and collaborative economic development organization in west central and northwest Wisconsin. In addition to St. Croix, the counties aligned with M.W. are Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, and Rusk.

## Statewide Business Group Says Jobs, Taxes and Spending are Top Concerns

### *Businesses Offers WI Jobs 2010 Agenda for Reform*

A new statewide poll released on February 23rd found that Wisconsin voters are overwhelmingly concerned about jobs, taxes and government spending, according to Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) during its annual Business Day in Madison. Nearly 1,000 business leaders attended the event at the Monona Terrace Convention Center.

In Wisconsin, the issue agenda is dominated by two issues: jobs and the economy (38%), and taxes and government spending (31%), according to the poll conducted by Public Opinion Strategies for WMC.

“Clearly, the public is looking for reform for job creation and tax relief, and that’s why we’re proposing the Wisconsin Jobs 2010 agenda,” said James Buchen, WMC vice president of government relations.

The survey of 400 voters has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.9 percent.

WMC’s board of directors, and other business leaders, are urging the Legislature and Governor to embrace the Wisconsin Jobs 2010 Agenda to create jobs and improve Wisconsin’s business climate.

The Wisconsin Jobs 2010 Agenda calls for common sense reforms such as limiting government spending, balancing the budget with generally accepted accounting principles, repealing the tax hikes passed in 2009, streamlining regulations, conforming Wisconsin and federal regulations, and lawsuit reform.

“We need to make Wisconsin the most competitive state in the nation,” Buchen said. “The Wisconsin Jobs 2010 agenda is a good start and will lead to job creation.”

The poll also found that 60 percent of voters said the state is off on the wrong track. “We can bring Wisconsin back,” Buchen said. “It will take everyone working together, but we can do it.”

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## Agri-Processing Initiative Positive News for Wisconsin Food Processors

Nick George, president of the Midwest Food Processors Association (MWFPA) says Governor Jim Doyle’s proposal to provide a tax credit to food processors is positive news for Wisconsin’s food manufacturers. The MWFPA represents over 100 processing facilities in Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota and approximately 250 industry suppliers.

The proposal, which was included as part of the Governor’s State of the State address on January 26th, would be similar to investment tax credits available to the state’s dairy and meat processors. “Food processors are an integral component of the agri-food value chain,” said George. “This initiative will help our members maintain their competitiveness by making much-needed capital investments such as equipment upgrades and implementing energy conservation and efficiency efforts,” he added.

The Wisconsin food processing industry is one of the largest segments of the state’s manufacturing sector and worth about \$50 billion. Processed foods are one of Wisconsin’s biggest manufactured export categories shipping \$1.2 billion worth of products.

Wisconsin is a leader in processing dairy, meat, poultry, beverages, condiments, frozen foods, pet foods and vegetable and animal fats and oils.

The state perennially ranks among the top 5 processing states for both canned and frozen vegetable products and currently ranks 2nd nationally in production of vegetables (excluding tomatoes) for processing. Fruit and vegetable processing in the state account for \$3.3 billion in industrial sales.

“The contribution of the sector to the economy can grow further and this proposal can assist in that effort. We trust the credit will encourage continued operation and expansion of the food processing industry in this state” said George.

It is expected that the credit will be introduced as part of a larger package of job growth initiatives proposed by Governor Doyle. The measure will need to pass both houses of the state legislature and then be approved by the Governor.

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## 2010 Training and Development Summit Set for April 8th

University of Wisconsin-Stout College of Management and Outreach Services, ASTD Northwest Wisconsin Chapter and Chippewa Valley Technical College will present the 2010 Training and Development Summit, "Driving Organizational Excellence in Today's Economy" on Thursday, April 8, 2010 at University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, Wisconsin. The Summit starts with an 8:30 a.m. registration and continental breakfast and includes a keynote speaker, workshop sessions, lunch, a corporate panel, door prizes and wrap up at 4:00 p.m.

The 2010 Training and Development Summit will focus on key issues, needs and strategies facing today's training and development industry. Attendees will gain hands-on, applicable strategies at the 2010 Training and Development Summit.

Keynote presenter, Jeffrey Russell, Co-Director, Russell Consulting, Inc. (RCI) has provided an array of consulting and training services to a wide variety of clients in the United States, China and Jamaica. The focus of RCI and Russell's work is on leadership, strategy, and leading change. His work often fuses these three areas into intervention strategies that guide RCI clients toward their desired outcomes. Russell uses a systems approach for understanding and responding to the complex challenges facing his clients, and then he develops a consulting approach that recognizes the interdependent nature of the various organizational system components that may be the target of the intervention.

Attendees are encouraged to register early. The first 20 registrants will receive a complimentary copy of one of Jeffrey Russell's books: "Ultimate Performance Management" or "Strategic Planning Training"

"Ultimate Performance Management" delivers an innovative yet practical guide to designing a comprehensive performance management system for your company. If you want to explore practical strategies for developing a performance-oriented culture in your company and performance management skills in both your managers and individual contributors, this book is for you.

"Strategic Planning Training" offers all the tools you need to conduct training workshops on strategic planning, problem solving and decision making. We present various approaches to strategic planning and give you both tools and tips for designing your own strategic planning workshops.

Registration fees are: general registration - \$159; NWASTD or CVSHRM Members - \$129; or Student Registration - \$59

Learn more on the Summit's website at <http://www3.uwstout.edu/outreach/training/index.cfm>.

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## Department of Revenue Releases Wisconsin Economic Outlook

### *Job growth expected to pick up later in 2010*

On February 11th, the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) released its quarterly Economic Outlook. The report says Wisconsin will start to recover jobs in the second quarter of 2010. Total state employment declined by 4.0% in 2009 but is expected to start recovering in the second quarter of 2010 and show positive annual growth toward 2011.

The report also shows that although Wisconsin's personal income declined in 2009, it continues to outperform the Great Lakes Region and is closing the gap with U.S. income growth. Wisconsin's personal income is expected to grow by about 3.3% in 2010. The housing sector is showing signs of slow recovery at both the national and state level, as well.

"As we continue to focus on creating and retaining jobs, Wisconsin's economy is showing stability in personal income growth and is turning the corner in job growth this year," said Revenue Secretary Roger M. Ervin. "These are signs that Wisconsin's economy will emerge from this national economic recession competitively positioned to maintain and attract business and jobs."

The Executive Summary and full report are available at: <http://www.revenue.wi.gov/ra/econ/index.html>.

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## St. Croix Ranked Second Healthiest in State

On February 17th, the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation released the 2010 county health rankings, a collection of 50 reports reflecting the overall health of counties in every state in America.

Wisconsin’s rankings listed St. Croix as the 2nd healthiest county. Ozaukee County was ranked first.

The Population Health Institute used a model that relied on ‘health outcomes’ (mortality – length of life, and morbidity – quality of life) and ‘health factors’ (health behaviors at 30%; clinical care at 20%; social and economic factors at 40%; and physical environment at 10%).

Across the 10-county region of western, west central, and northwest Wisconsin, counties were ranked:

County	Health Outcomes	Health Factors	County	Health Outcomes	Health Factors
St. Croix	2	8	Chippewa	32	30
Pierce	7	14	Pepin	38	57
Eau Claire	13	4	Rusk	45	45
Dunn	14	17	Clark	47	49
Polk	26	19	Barron	51	58

*Source: St. Croix EDC, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

*Note: The 10 counties of western, west central, and northwest Wisconsin comprise Momentum West, an external economic development and marketing organization*

The entire report and related rankings can be found at <http://countyhealthrankings.org>.

## Study Says Bicycling is a Key Contributor to Wisconsin’s Economy

According to a new report from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, recreational bicycling is among Wisconsin’s top outdoor activities in terms of economic impact. Adding ridership has the potential to deliver health benefits and savings, too. The report, produced by the CHANGE program of the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, estimates the economic impact of recreational cycling in the state exceeds \$924 million. Of this amount, \$533 million is considered annual direct spending and the remainder, \$391 million, is due to indirect and induced effects, such as increased purchases of supplies and labor by restaurants and hotels serving the cyclists. The indirect and induced impacts may occur on an annual basis or may extend over a longer timeframe.

Combined with previous estimates of the state’s bicycling manufacturing, sales, and services industry, bicycling may generate more than \$1.5 billion a year in total economic impact, according the analysis in the report. By comparison, deer hunting in Wisconsin generates \$926 million, according to the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. According to a 2001 report, the Wisconsin Department of Tourism estimated the impact of snowmobiling at just under \$250 million.

A follow-up study of the demographics of current and future cyclists will help target investments in bicycling infrastructures to maximize the potential benefits.

The report recommends aiming bicycling improvements at younger people. In addition, future investments, ideally within the next two decades, recommends a focus on bicycle paths and traffic signals to accommodate the state’s aging population.

The report, entitled, “Valuing Bicycling’s Economic and Health Impacts in Wisconsin,” draws information from ore than two dozen published sources. It is available free online at [www.bfu.org](http://www.bfu.org).

## SBA's FY 2011 Budget Reflects Core Mission of Growing Businesses & Creating Jobs

The Small Business Administration's (SBA's) FY 2011 request of \$994 million reflects the agency's commitment to its core mission of growing businesses and creating jobs, according to a fact sheet posted on its website: [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov). The budget strengthens the relevance of SBA's programs and resources to the current needs of entrepreneurs and small business owners, continuing to give small businesses the tools they need to meet the challenges of this difficult economic time, while providing support for long-term growth for small businesses from Main Street to those with high growth potential.

The SBA's proposed budget helps expand access to capital. The budget supports more than \$28 billion in small business financing, including:

For the SBA 7(a) program, \$165.4 million in subsidy will support \$17.5 billion in lending authority. This includes \$1.5 billion in revolving lines of credit that will support \$39 billion in total disbursement activity as borrowers draw and repay over time. In total, this supports more than \$55 billion in credit activity when taking 7(a) loan terms into account.

For the SBA 504 program, \$7.5 billion in lending authority will support loans in collaboration with Certified Development Companies (CDC's).

For Small Business Investment Company debentures, which support high-growth, high-impact small firms, \$3 billion in authority is requested.

For Microloans, \$3.8 million in subsidy will support a program level of \$25 million.

The budget requests legislation to increase the maximum sizes of 7(a) and 504 loans from \$2 million to \$5 million (\$5.5 million for manufacturing projects) and \$50,000 for microloans.

The proposed budget also supports entrepreneurial education, counseling, and training. It reflects funding for SBA and its resource partners who provide free counseling to more than one million entrepreneurs and small business owners each year. Annual impact studies show that these education and counseling relationships contribute to the long-term success of these businesses and their ability to create jobs. SBA's proposed budget includes a total of \$134 million to support SBA's resource partners and their 14,000 SBA-affiliated counselors.

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## "Wisconsin Companies to Watch" Winners Include Fiberstar & Interfacial Solutions

On February 22nd, Department of Commerce (Commerce) Secretary Richard J. Leinenkugel and Wisconsin Entrepreneurs' Network (WEN) State Director Gayle Kugler announced the winners of the inaugural year of Wisconsin Companies to Watch (CTW). Two River Falls companies are among the winners – Fiberstar, Inc. and Interfacial Solutions. CTW attracted more than 80 entries; 54 companies were selected as finalists; and 30 companies received the designation as a Company to Watch. The companies will be honored on Tuesday, April 13th at the Mona Terrace Convention Center in Madison.

Fiberstar, Inc. is a privately owned research and development company focusing on improving food freshness and nutrition through technological innovation. It also operates a manufacturing facility that produces its Citri-Fi® line of products. Fiberstar's corporate offices and r&d operations are located at the River Falls Industrial Center – the former Kolpak facility along St. Croix Street in River Falls.

Fiberstar holds an exclusive worldwide license for patented bio-technology developed at the University of Minnesota. Its investment in research over the past seven years has led to the development of unique products that will improve the physical and functional characteristics of a wide variety of foods for which industry solutions are currently being sought.

Interfacial Solutions (IFS) is a privately held materials development and transfer company. The company is dedicated to helping organizations in the plastics industry successfully address technological challenges by providing timely and effective solutions utilizing Interfacial's expertise in materials science. IFS was formed in 2003 and has a growing reputation for providing differentiated

technology and products to the plastics industry through specialty compounding, plastics additives, composite materials and processing, nano-technology, and interfacial modification.

Last October, IFS started work on a 22,000 square foot addition to its current 15,000 facility in Whitetail Ridge Corporate Park. The expansion will add new office, laboratory, and warehouse space as a result of IFS’s continued growth. IFS was awarded state tax credits as a result of the projected job creation that will follow the expansion.

“Companies to Watch” (CTW) is a distinctive awards program developed by the Edward Lowe Foundation to honor second-stage companies that demonstrate high performance in the marketplace, exhibit innovative products, services or processes, or otherwise make their company “worth watching.”

“I’m pleased that we could join the Wisconsin Entrepreneurs’ Network in recognizing these dynamic, innovative companies,” said Commerce Secretary Richard J. Leinenkugel. “I’m confident that we will be watching and benefitting from their achievements in the years to come.”

“CTW recognizes companies at the crucial stage of growth where financial potential, concept and management have been established, and attracting talented workers, solid vendor relationships and access to peer learning are key components of future growth,” added Gayle Kugler. The Edward Lowe Foundation’s studies have shown second-stage companies are the ones who generate jobs and economic growth in their communities.

The Wisconsin Entrepreneurs’ Network (WEN) was established in June 2005 as a joint venture between the Wisconsin Department of Commerce and the University of Wisconsin-Extension’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Division (DEED). WEN and its partners strive to provide seamless access to the statewide network of entrepreneurial resources and expertise to create new ventures. WEN partners help grow existing businesses and move forward high-potential entrepreneurs to enable Wisconsin to be competitive in a global economic environment. For more information, visit [www.wenportal.org](http://www.wenportal.org).

## Recession Impacts Regional Workforce and Employment in 2009

The current recession has a negative impact on the workforce of the 10-county region of western, west central, and northwest Wisconsin. The January 2009 workforce of the region was estimated at 266,494. By December 2009, the workforce had dropped slightly to 262,100. All 10 counties reported fewer people in the workforce. In addition, the number of people employed in the 10-county region dropped from the January 2009 estimate of 244,774 to the December 2009 estimate of 242,008.

<i>County</i>	<i>Labor Force January 2009</i>	<i>Employed January 2009</i>	<i>Labor Force December 2009</i>	<i>Employed December 2009</i>
Barron	25,683	23,214	24,480	22,356
Clark	18,079	16,279	17,670	15,874
Dunn	25,881	24,012	26,021	24,341
Eau Claire MSA*	90,112	83,671	89,761	83,521
Pepin	4,119	3,747	4,084	3,775
Pierce	23,492	21,821	23,059	21,753
Polk	24,854	22,244	23,872	21,448
Rusk	7,606	6,653	7,137	6,297
St. Croix	46,668	43,133	46,016	42,643
<b>Totals</b>	<b>266,494</b>	<b>244,774</b>	<b>262,100</b>	<b>242,008</b>

\*the Eau Claire metro area consists of Eau Claire and Chippewa counties.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development; St. Croix Economic Development Corp.

Note: The 10 counties of western, west central, and northwest Wisconsin comprise Momentum West, an external economic development and marketing organization.