

**MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & TOURISM COMMITTEE**  
**MONTHLY MEETING – 12-14-17 – Local History Room – Sparta**

The meeting was posted in accordance with the open meeting law. Meeting was called to order at 9:08am by Chair Sharon Folcey. Roll-call was taken.

**Present:**

**Committee Board Members:** Sharon Folcey, Dean Peterson, Nodji Van Wychen

**Citizen Members:** Dennis Berg, Bernadine Arena

**Advisory Members:** Tonya Townsell – Ft. McCoy, Tina Thompson – Tomah Chamber & Visitors Bureau, Jarrod Roll – Monroe County Local History Room; Jim Bialecki – Monroe County Administrator

**Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator:** Steve Peterson

**Absent: (AM)** John Hendricks – Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce **(CM)** Mary Jo Hill, Pete Reichardt, Paul Harms

**Special Guest:** Alli Karrels – Executive Director – Deke Slayton Space & Bicycle Museum

**Media:** Tim Evans–Monroe County Herald

**Minutes** – Motion by D. Berg to approve the minutes of the November 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. 2<sup>nd</sup> by D. Peterson. Motion carried.

**Financial Report & Invoices** – S. Peterson informed the Committee that the invoice for the annual Connect Community membership that was approved at a previous meeting was incorrect. The payment was \$200 and should have been \$700. S. Peterson asked for approval for the balance of \$500 be paid to WEDC. Motion by N. Van Wychen. 2<sup>nd</sup> by D. Peterson. Motion carried.

J. Roll requested funding for reprinting the Wegner Grotto brochure. Their supply is getting low and there is always a lot of interest by tourists with that destination. 2,000 brochures would cost \$344.98. Motion by N. Van Wychen. 2<sup>nd</sup> by T. Thompson. Motion carried.

**County Update – J. Bialecki reports:**

- Update on the Rolling Hills project and that the Committee is progressing through options of building a new nursing home either in the current area at the County Farm property or a new location in Tomah near the new Hospital/Clinic campus that is under construction. A decision on the next steps should be approved in late December/January.
- The development of the Highway B corridor in the future with the County property and future housing expansion. There was discussion on the rumors of Highway 21 expanding north on County B, all the way to Cataract, but no one had any further information backing that up.

**Monroe County E.D. Coordinator Report – S. Peterson reports:**

- Many meetings with prospects – conference calls, webinars and site visits
- Tomah Memorial Occupational and Wellness Center Grand Opening – 11/29
- CIT Media Conference Call – 12/6 – marketing in Twin Cities/Chicago markets
- Amtrak Train Expansion Project webinar – 12/7
- Community Venture Network – 12/8 – St. Paul – met with 12 prospects

- Village of Cashton building project announcement – 12/13:
  - Hundt Implement sold some of their property to the Cashton Development Corporation.
  - The Bank of Cashton will be building a new bank on part of that property, starting in early summer 2018.
  - The Village of Cashton bought the bank building and will be moving into that facility after the bank moves.
  - Cashton business will be acquiring the Village Hall building for future expansion.
- County RLF Board of Review – 12/15
- Monroe County Job Skills Initiative meeting – 12/15
- USDA Rural Partners meeting – 12/15 – Cashton
- 2 Prospect Conference Calls – 12/18
- AMS Micromedical – 12/19 - tour with WEDC
- McPherson Guitars – 12/20 - tour
- CGI Video Taping – 12/21 – finishing up the County video project.
- **NEWS/NOTES**
  - **Approved TID - Tomah** – ties in with the \$30 million expansion of Toro
  - **GEN 3 Construction** – on track to start site prep yet this month
  - **Tomah Automotive** – moved into their new home at the VanderMeer building.
  - **South Pointe Business Park** – very close to launching
  - **AMS Micromedical** – purchased land in the East Side Business Park in Sparta and will be expanding their company there.

**MapNTour** – S. Peterson reported that he’s begun creating the virtual mapping of Monroe County for economic development recruiting through a Bing mapping system. It will feature current businesses’ locations along with fact points about the company. It will also feature virtual building software where a building can be placed on a parcel of land to show the prospect how it will look on the site. S. Peterson said it will be unveiled at the Monroe County E.D. Conference. Funding for this feature will be paid in part by the County E.D. Contract and Peterson will be applying for grants from various utilities as well.

**True Job** – S. Peterson reported on a new job posting service that will be available for any business in the County. It has special features that will appeal to the millennial job seeker along with many analytics the human resources department at these businesses can utilize. The Job Board will be unveiled at the Monroe County E.D. Conference. Peterson said he negotiated a year-long posting contract in lieu of a Conference Sponsorship and True Job speaking at a session at the Conference.

**Monroe County Economic Development Conference Update** – S. Peterson reported that the Conference web site is live and people are already registering for the Conference. Sponsorships are being secured and the line-up of speakers are close to being finalized.

- WI Tourism Secretary Stephanie Klett will be the opening speaker on Day 1. WI Governor Scott Walker is scheduled to speak at the Conference on Day 2. Wed. Luncheon Speaker is Jerry Deschane – E.D. – League of WI Municipalities
- Topics include:
  - Workforce Roundtable

- WISE Plan
- Monroe County Trivia
- State of Wisconsin's Economy
- GPS Mapping to Enhance Your Economic Development Efforts
- Why Lease? What equipment leasing can do for your Business
- Succession
- Saving Energy – Building Relationships
- How Technology Can Drive Talent Acquisition & Workforce Development for EDO
- Wisconsin PACE Program
- Marketplace & Dine Around
- Broadband Roundtable
- Military Base Update
- Business Spotlights – AMS Micromedical; Handishop Industries; F.A.S.T. Corporation; McPherson Guitars
- Employee/Employer Relationship Building
- Do's and Don'ts of Building Renovations
- Grow your Business Online
- Navigating the Tricky Waters of Family Business
- Marketing the Right Way to Generate Tourism \$\$s
- Simple Steps to Online Safety

**County Tourism Web Site upgrade** – S. Peterson assessed the current site and recommended an upgrade be started in December. Some of the upgrades would include expanding the lodging and dining directory pages and a new home page. S. Peterson said that the site has been a mirrored image of the new Activities Guide and is an option for the upgrade after Evans Printing has finalized the cover of the new guide. S. Peterson said the upgrade would cost \$550 and he'd begin the upgrade in December. Motion by D. Berg. 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Roll. Motion carried.

**VINO FEST** – S. Peterson reported that the WI Department of Tourism announced on 12/11 that VINO FEST had received a Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant for \$28,650. Those funds will be used to market the festival in the Twin Cities, Chicago, Milwaukee and Madison markets. Peterson said that they are working on a potential promotional tour to Chicago this spring to showcase VINO FEST in that market. Peterson requested funding from the Committee as a matching fund to the JEM Grant. The request of \$1,000 could be split with \$500 coming from the 2017 budget and \$500 from the 2018 budget. The Committee had already approved the \$500 funding in October 2017 but it had not been paid yet. It will be put on the January agenda for the paying the 2<sup>nd</sup> installment of the commitment.

**Deke Slayton Space & Bicycle Museum Report** – Alli Karrels, Executive Director of the Museum reported that the museum has had a very successful year. She read some of the reviews from Trip Advisor and the Museum's Facebook page to show the Committee what tourists think about the Museum and its artifacts. Karrels said that their visitors come from all over the world and there has been a steady growth in motor coach bus tours. Not having an elevator is still an issue but they are making the museum floor upstairs in the building handicapped accessible.

**Tear off Maps** – S. Peterson discussed with the Committee on looking at reprinting and updating the County Tear off Maps that have been around for many years. Still a very heavily used tool for businesses in the County when sending visitors around the County. The current map was reviewed by the Committee and it was determined that an update version is needed, regardless that there are still many pads of maps available. It was determined that the map reprint be put on the January agenda for action.

## **REPORTS:**

### **7 Rivers Alliance**

- no official update, but Committee members who attended the State of the Region event in November said it was very informative. The WISE Plan was unveiled at that meeting. S. Peterson said that 7 Rivers Alliance will be promoting the WISE Plan at the Monroe County E.D. Conference.

### **Hidden Valleys - N. Van Wychen reports:**

- they are working on their game plans for 2018 and the new 2018 magazine will be arriving soon.

### **Local History Room – J. Roll reports:**

- The Christmas themed 1950's living room display has been a tremendous success. In just a 30-day period, 1,184 visitors viewed the display. Roll credited the media coverage for the huge traffic numbers. He felt that 2/3 of the visitors came from reading the newspaper article and the Facebook postings. 1/3 came from the 3 TV stories that aired in the La Crosse market.
- Fundraising for the new permanent display is close to reaching its goal of \$46,000. They are about \$1,500 away and the new display will be created by Pica Grove in Sparta.
- The Local History Room is getting close to a real need for additional storage. Their archiving continues and it's taking up more space daily. He asked Committee members if they knew of any quality storage areas around Sparta, to let him know. D. Peterson said that they may be able to find storage space in a County facility but nothing available right now as the continue the moving around of Departments from Rolling Hills to the Courthouse.

### **Ft. McCoy – T. Townsell reports:**

- Workforce recruitment is getting better with quality hirings lately
- Work is being done on the Gate entry where deliveries and freight go through.
- Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> – cold weather training began. Very strong year again for training large # of troops.
- T. Thompson said that she has heard rumblings pertaining to the base potentially being closed in the years to come? T. Townsell said there has been no talk of that and long-range planning is taking place right now so that's a great sign that no future closing is being considered.

**Sparta Chamber of Commerce** – no report.

### **Tomah Chamber of Commerce – T. Thompson reported:**

- The Discover Wisconsin episode on Tomah is finishing up and the premier is scheduled for Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>.
- The Tomah Chamber & Visitors Center Area Guide is moving along and anticipated printing will be by the end of January.
- Plans are already started for the Annual Chamber Banquet in February.
- Announcing a new Travel Program, hosting a River Cruise on the Blue Danube for 9 days in 2018. Cost will be \$2,800 per person and more details will be coming soon. Other Chambers in the State

are offering these types of Travel Programs to their Chamber members with great success.

- Merry Mixer drew 60 people with snacks, drinks, white elephant gift exchange at the Chamber.
- 3 candidates are running for the Mayor of Tomah. The incumbent Mayor Nelli Pater, City Council members – Mary Ann Komiskey and Mike Murray. Plans have started for a Mayoral Forum before the election, sponsored by the Tomah Chamber and Tomah Rotary.
- Struggles continue with the finalization of the lease agreement between the Tomah Chamber and the City of Tomah on the new Chamber building. A lease agreement was discussed during the renovation of the building but some Council members now want an adjustment on the lease fees. The agreement has been tabled 5 times and there is no lease agreement in place at this point. Hopefully a consensus can be agreed upon very soon and the lease agreement can be signed.

**SW-ITBEC – N Van Wychen reported:**

- Grant recipients gave presentations at the December meeting, outlining how the funding from SW-ITBEC aided in their projects/events.
- Jackson County will become a new member of SW-ITBEC, joining Monroe and Vernon Counties.
- Darrek Owing, the new Trempealeau County E.D. Director will be joining as a citizen at large in January.

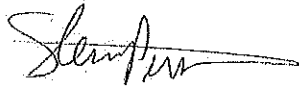
**Next meeting** – January 11<sup>th</sup> – 9:00am – TBA in the Tomah area.

**Agenda Items for next month:**

- Monroe County E.D. Conference
- County Tear-Off Maps
- VINO FEST funding
- County Tourism web site upgrade
- Go Monroe County Activities Guide update – Evans Printing
- Governor’s Conference on Tourism
- WEDA Membership Dues
- 7 Rivers Alliance Dues

Motion by J. Roll to adjourn. 2<sup>nd</sup> by N. Van Wychen. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:18am.

Submitted by:



Steve Peterson