

6. Economic Development

This section provides an economic profile of the town and also an assessment of local economic strengths and weaknesses, employment forecasts, local economic base, and applicable economic development programs.

The following sections describe in more detail the economic conditions of the Town of Beaver.

6.1 Economic Base Analysis

Local Businesses

Because the Town of Beaver doesn't join a city or village and is surrounded by rural townships, economic development lies mostly within agriculture. Business types in the area include manufacturing, greenhouses, auto repair, agriculture processing, food processing and much more. Local businesses have grown within the town over the past several years which is considered healthy for the local economy.

Employment by Industrial Sector

The employment by industry within an area illustrates the structure of the economy. Historically, the State of Wisconsin has had a high concentration of employment in manufacturing and agricultural sectors of the economy. Recent state and national trends indicate a decreasing concentration of employment in the manufacturing sector while employment within the services sector is increasing. This trend is partly attributed to the aging of the population.

Table 6-2 displays the number and percent of employed persons by industry group in the Town of Beaver 2000. The greatest percentage of employment for the town was in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining sector, followed by the educational, health, and social services sector.

Table 6-2 Employment by Industrial Sector, Town of Beaver, 2000

Economic Division	Number	% of Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	112	28.4
Construction	27	6.8
Manufacturing	81	20.5
Wholesale trade	24	6.1
Retail trade	30	7.6
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	24	6.1
Information	0	0
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	14	3.5
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	6	1.5
Educational, health and social services	49	12.4
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	8	2.0
Other services (except public administration)	18	4.6
Public administration	2	.5
Total	395	

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000.

Other Economic Conditions

For information on non-farm wage and salary employment, employment by occupation, wages, commuting patterns, tourism, basic and non-basic employment refer to Section 6.2, Economic Base Analysis of the *Clark County Inventory and Trends Report*.

6.2 Employment Forecast and Economic Trends

An important feature of determining the economic health and future of Clark County and its communities is to determine the amounts and types of jobs currently available as well as making predictions for the future.

During the next several years, Wisconsin’s population is projected to grow slower and older than the nation as a whole, therefore leading to lower participation rates in the workforce. The Town of Beaver is attracting international immigrants, domestic migrants, and retaining its own citizens.

6.3 Economic Development Trends and Outlook

Relative to the Town of Beaver, additional business opportunities may emerge which would support the agriculture and construction industries. This would likely include equipment repair and sales, building and construction. The farming industry is expanding within Township of Beaver as many of the small farms are being bought by the larger farmers. The town should also expect an increase in “home based business” which can

supplement family incomes.

6.4 Economic Development Plans and Programs

Additional Economic Development Programs

Wisconsin towns recently gained a new tool to help promote rural development in Wisconsin with passage of AB 437 in the State Assembly on March 10, 2004. AB 437 provides towns the authority to use the tax incremental financing authority that cities and village have been using for years, to provide infrastructure for tourism, agriculture, and forestry projects in towns.

The new law will give an optional tool to help site projects in towns across the state when special infrastructure needs such as all weather roads, power lines, improved rail connections, and more are needed to create new or expanded tourism, agricultural, and forestry projects. An example of the type of project this tool could be used for is to provide a town highway that could carry heavy truck traffic to such a facility as an ethanol production plant or large livestock facility. A new or improved town highway could be constructed to allow the new facility to be located in more remote areas of the state, thus reducing potential land use conflicts with neighbors, yet avoiding placing the burden of the new improvement on the remainder of the town taxpayers.

AB 437 gives towns similar authority for tax incremental financing as cities and villages, but is limited to the type of rural development in tourism, agriculture, and forestry that does not compete with cities and villages. According to the Wisconsin Towns Association, this bill helps promote rural development as a part of the “Grow Wisconsin” efforts of the current Administration and the Assembly Republican “Agriculture Renewal” initiative.

6.5 Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis

A simple determination of the strengths and weaknesses of Clark County and the Town of Beaver and its economy provide the basic planning steps for future economic development. Strengths should continue to be promoted and new development which fits well with these features should be encouraged. Weaknesses should be improved or further analyzed and new development which displays aspects similar to identified weaknesses should be discouraged. The strengths and weaknesses were developed by analyzing existing trends and examining economic development focus group results. Strengths and weaknesses specific to the Town of Beaver include the following:

Strengths

- ◆ A stabilized Amish and Mennonite population.
- ◆ Centrally located within the state.
- ◆ Part of Agriculture Development Zone.

- ◆ Excellent schools.
- ◆ Railroad availability.
- ◆ Technical and financial resources available at local, county, state, and federal levels.
- ◆ County Economic Development Corporation with a web-site available to assist.
- ◆ High quality of life.
- ◆ Lower cost of living.
- ◆ Assembly of a Clark County Economic Resource Team.
- ◆ United Communities of Clark County (UCCC) group.
- ◆ North Central Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) Learning Center announcement.
- ◆ Abundant recreational opportunities.
- ◆ County Road K.

Weaknesses

- ◆ No four year university or technical college campus.
- ◆ No large population or retail center.
- ◆ Traditionally lower per capita incomes.
- ◆ Independent nature of government and private entities.
- ◆ Declining public school enrollments.
- ◆ Aging population.
- ◆ Distance to county government services.
- ◆ Distance to major markets – other communities and major regional centers.

6.6 Desired Economic Development

Like most communities in Clark County, the Town of Beaver would welcome most economic opportunities that do not sacrifice community character or add a disproportionate level of town services per taxes gained. The categories or particular types of new businesses and industries that are desired by the Town of Beaver are identified within the town's economic goals and objectives.

6.7 Economic Development Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Maintain, enhance and continue to diversify the economy consistent with other town goals and objectives in order to provide a stable economic base.

Objectives

1. Maintain and support agriculture as a strong component of the local economy which provides the town and county with revenue at a minimal cost of service and supports related agricultural processing and service industries in which town residents are employed.

2. Retain and provide new opportunities for local employment of citizens.
3. Accommodate home-based businesses that do not significantly increase noise, traffic, odors, lighting, or would otherwise negatively impact the surrounding area.
4. Increase town involvement, where appropriate, in supporting economic development activities taken by the Clark County Economic Development Corporation, West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, local Chambers of Commerce and local economic development groups in the area.
5. Maintain affordable and quality housing that would meet the needs of locally employed individuals or families.

Goal 2: Promote the agriculture industry and related business as the primary economic base for the future of the town.

Objectives

1. Increase local efforts to ensure quality farmland remains in agricultural use.
2. Allow for the use of “progressive” farming techniques which do not conflict with other goals and objectives.
3. Allow opportunities for implement dealers and other suppliers to serve local farmers.
4. Maintain a close working relationship with local farmers so that public officials are informed of their economic problems, concerns and desires.
5. Accommodate farm processing facilities which do not conflict with other goals and objectives.

6.8 Economic Development Policies and Recommendations

Policies

1. Agriculture, recreation and forestry shall be the preferred economic base of the town.
2. Future development shall include a reasonable assessment of impacts to the town’s tax base, public facilities, services and infrastructure.
3. Plans for large farm expansions or consolidation of farms shall be reviewed for their overall costs and benefits to the town.
4. Business or industrial development opportunities which are major water users shall be directed to neighboring urbanized areas which can provide public utilities (i.e., public

water, sanitary sewer, police protection).

5. Plans for large farm expansions or consolidation of farms shall be reviewed for their overall costs and benefits to the town.
6. The development of industrial areas shall be preceded by a site development and long term industrial plan for the town. Public involvement shall be required during the formation of any such plans.
7. Home based business shall not create conflict with neighboring property owners or put undue strain on existing town roads or services.