

## **HISTORY OF OZAUKEE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (OED)**

A group of concerned Ozaukee County leaders, including Rose Hass Leider, Mark Grams and John Stackman, met with Ralph Huiras, attorney and former Ozaukee County Board Chair, to discuss the economy of Ozaukee County. As a result of this meeting, ten public and private sector people met in July of 1989, at the urging of Ralph Huiras, to establish a 501 C6 non-profit corporation known as the Ozaukee County Economic Development Corporation (OCEDC). Ralph Huiras was elected the first president of the OCEDC Board. The early years were spent in an assessment of what the corporation intended to be and what they hoped to accomplish. In 1991, Randy Tetzlaff at the University of Wisconsin-Extension (UWEX), assisted OCEDC in developing a structure for the organization and making the board more diverse with representatives from the business community and public sector.

In 1992, a survey was sent to employers in Ozaukee County in order to identify workforce needs. Representatives from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Wisconsin Electric Power Company and the IBM Corporation assisted OCEDC by facilitating a two-day strategic planning session to address the workforce shortage in Ozaukee County. 56 people participated in this planning session, which led to the creation of Workforce 2010.

In 1993, a Workforce 2010 Board, made up of employers, workers, educators, students, and parents, was created. Dr. Julie Backus wrote the first grant to start up the program in Ozaukee County. School-to-Work apprenticeship programs, with paid work experience, were offered in computer information technology, manufacturing, financial services, health, automotive and engineering. This program continues today with five of the County's high schools participating. Also in 1993, Yvonne Bishop was hired by the corporation as an independent contractor to provide part-time public relation services.

In 1995, the Ozaukee County Transportation Management Association (OCTMA) was formed to address the need of transporting qualified workers from Milwaukee to available jobs in Ozaukee County. In 1997 over 95,000

trips were made at no cost to Ozaukee County taxpayers. OCTMA was turned over to Ozaukee County and is now known as the Ozaukee County Transit Services. That same year an OCEDC quarterly newsletter, called the Ozaukee Outlook, was created and mailed to 994 Ozaukee County Businesses.

In 1999, the corporation helped develop the public/private on-line recruiting partnership with Forward Wisconsin called GreatJobsWI.com. The program was marketed to out-of-state alumni from Wisconsin's state universities, private colleges and technical colleges. Ozaukee County had 65 active employers and 85 job postings when the program was taken over by Forward Wisconsin in the fall of that year. In 1999, Therese Pandl led OCEDC through a brainstorming session that helped rejuvenate the organization. During this period, John Ernster became the president of the OCEDC Board and OCEDC made Yvonne Bishop its first Executive Administrator. Also in 1999 the Ozaukee County Development Foundation, Inc., a Wisconsin 501(c) (3) non-stock corporation, was formed. The Foundation seeks to raise and disburse contributions from the general public for the purpose of building and maintaining the public infrastructure of Ozaukee County, Wisconsin and the various governmental bodies therein, including (a) by disbursing funds directly to governmental bodies and agencies in Ozaukee County for use in building and maintaining public facilities, (b) by directly purchasing capital improvements and maintenance services for public facilities in Ozaukee County. John Ernster was elected the first president of the foundation.

OCEDC continues economic development activities in the new millennium. In August of 2000, OCEDC facilitated a Talk Back Program of Ozaukee County Businesses in order to address the concerns of business within the County.

In 2001, Therese Pandl took over as president of the OCEDC Board. Randy Tetzlaff left UWEX and became a voting board member of OCEDC representing the City of Port Washington. Paul Roback was hired by UWEX and became an ex officio OCEDC Board member. In 2002, OCEDC partnered with the Regional Economic Partnership and was awarded \$10 million dollars in tax credits for high technology companies in Southeastern Wisconsin. 2003, OCEDC partnered with the Small Business Development Center at the

University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee to offer a nationally recognized entrepreneurial training program, called Fast Trac. Since 2003, this program has been offered yearly in Ozaukee County and forty-nine business plans have been completed. Additionally, Paul Roback facilitated a strategic thinking process with the OCEDC Board to identify and prioritize organizational goals.

In 2004, Jeff Larson took over as president of the OCEDC Board. OCEDC partnered with Washington and Dodge Counties in the creation of the Tri-County Industry Cluster Initiative, which received a \$60,000 grant from the Wisconsin Department of Commerce. Also in 2004, the Ozaukee County Development Foundation agreed to be the fiscal receiver for the Ozaukee Interurban Trail Advisory Council for their Trail Improvement Project.

In 2005, OCEDC partnered with the Small Business Development Center at the University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee and offered a pre-venture counseling class to potential entrepreneurs, called First Steps. Yvonne Bishop retired as the Executive Administrator and Cindy Hilgendorf was hired.

In 2006, Roger Kirgues becomes the President of the OCEDC Board. OCEDC hired the UW-Milwaukee Consortium for Economic Opportunity to develop enhanced Board priorities and strategic objectives. In addition, a fundraising strategy was developed and implemented.

In 2007, the OCEDC hired its first full-time Executive Director, Kathleen Cady Schilling. In addition, OCEDC opened its new office in the Ozaukee County Administration Center in downtown Port Washington and launched a new web site, [www.OzaukeeBusiness.org](http://www.OzaukeeBusiness.org).

In 2008, OECED went through a rebranding initiative, began doing business as Ozaukee Economic Development (OED) and created its new logo. Additionally, OED began to offer programs for businesses. In February, OED, in cooperation with several partners, developed, sponsored and held its first annual Manufacturing Career Fair at Port Washington High School. The program highlighted the Manufacturing Industry and the careers and salaries available. In May, OED held its first Outreach Event with Gale Klappa, co-chair of the Milwaukee7 and President of We Energies, speaking to a crowd of

130 key business and government executives. In July, OED jointly sponsored a "Salute to Manufacturing" with MATC- Mequon and Federal Tool and Engineering. The program recognized the first Ozaukee County graduates for the Manufacturing Skills Standards Certification Program. Governor Doyle and Secretary of Workforce Development, Roberta Gassman attended along with over 100 business people. Lastly, OED developed an electronic newsletter that comes out three times a year and is sent to business and government executives throughout the county.

In 2009, OED went through a restructuring process, reduced the size of its board and created three new committees, Business Development, Board Development and Program Development. The creation of these new committees will increase business involvement with OED. OED also held its second Manufacturing Career Fair at Grafton High School and its second Annual Outreach Event with then Secretary of Commerce, Richard Leinenkugel speaking to over 150 local executives. OED hosted two sustainability programs, the first was in partnership with MATC-Mequon and focused on the wind industry and federal stimulus dollars; the second program was in partnership with Cook Composites and Polymers (a company in Saukville) and focused on sustainability and green business practices. OED also hosted the fall meeting of the Milwaukee7, over 70 top executives from around the region attended. Additionally, OED formed an Economic Development Practitioner's Network that focuses on local development issues and meets on a quarterly basis.