Back in 1970, one in four jobs required more than a high school education. Yet today, according to the National Manufacturing Institute, approximately 70% of today’s jobs require not only a high school diploma but also some degree of skills-based training. According to a recent USA Today analysis, by 2017, an estimated 2.5 million new so-called “middle-skill” jobs — ones that require high school education and some training but not a bachelor’s degree — will be added to the U.S. workforce, accounting for nearly 40% of all job growth.

Within Chippewa County, many manufacturing companies are rapidly going “grey,” and there is a scarcity of new workers with which to replace these aging, retiring current workers. The “greying” of our workforce could result in Chippewa County losing its manufacturing edge. This issue is not only a business retention and expansion issue, it is also a business attraction issue. CCEDC has experienced firsthand that the availability of skilled local labor has indeed become the #1 factor in companies looking at Chippewa County as an expansion site.

**Workforce Development, continued on page 5**

**CCEDC Marketing Tool Recognized**

CCEDC President/CEO, Charlie Walker, attended the 2014 Mid-America Competitiveness Conference & Site Selector Forum, on December 8, 2014 at the Intercontinental Hotel in Chicago. During the event the Mid-America Economic Development Council (MAEDC) presented its annual awards during an awards program luncheon ~ CCEDC received recognition at that program in two categories.

Charlie Walker accepted recognition on behalf of CCEDC and was presented with a second place recognition for the CCEDC MapNTour website—the award category was Marketing Program/Special Purpose Website category. Walker also accepted third place in the Annual Report/Small Division category for the CCEDC 2013-14 annual report. These accolades recognize CCEDC’s efforts in creating a positive image for the area and the organization’s demonstration of cutting-edge, effective practices that are worthy of acknowledgement; and also speaks volumes about CCEDC’s commitment to marketing Chippewa County to site selectors and businesses seeking relocation and expansion.

The MAEDC is a multi-state association dedicated to being the leading resource for education, making connections, and sharing best practices for economic development professionals. For many years, The MAEDC has sponsored their annual economic development awards competition to recognize and stimulate the creative use of quality marketing by economic development organizations throughout the ten-state Mid-America region in promoting their respective communities.
CCEDC and Partners Recognizing Small Business

Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation and our small business development partners would like to extend an invitation to attend a Chippewa County Small Business Appreciation Reception.

Bye the Willow
501 N High Street, Chippewa Falls
Wednesday, February 18, 2015
5:00-7:00pm
Food & Refreshments
Cash Bar– Beer & Wine

RSVP by February 16 to Jerilyn Sahr at 715-723-7150 or info@chippewa-wi.com

CCEDC and our small business development partners appreciate you and your business in Chippewa County!

Photo to right:
On December 17 CCEDC held their annual Holiday Open House and Networking Reception over 100 investors and economic development were on hand to share in holiday cheer.

2015 Marketing Strategies Discussed

Photo to left:
Attendees of the CCEDC Networking Leadership Lunch on the topic economic development marketing strategies

CCEDC hosted a Networking Leadership Lunch on January 20, 2015, at CBS² in Chippewa Falls. The meeting presenter was Mr. Paul Taurrants, Associate Director of Custom Content for Conway Data, and Site Selection Magazine. During the event Taurrants gave an update to CCEDC’s 15+ attendees on the latest trends in economic development marketing, effective economic development outreach initiatives, and discussed the statewide Wisconsin economic development guide.

This event created an opportunity for a discussion on what Site Selection magazine sees as the latest trends in economic development marketing, also the benefits and value of print media advertising.

CCEDC would like to thank our event sponsors BMO Harris Bank and CBS².
As a premier economic development organization, CCEDC is dedicated to improving the economic base of Chippewa County. CCEDC’s business attraction efforts are aimed at attracting talent and business, and to promote the County as a leading location for business investment. CCEDC provides professional consulting, customized site location and selection guidance, market intelligence and research, including workforce analysis and demographics, identification of sources of capital and financing: state incentives, tax credits, and workforce training funds. Business Attraction in economic development is about building a healthy economy – a few ways which economic development builds our local economy are

• Increasing the Tax Base- additional revenue provided by economic development supports, maintains, and improves local infrastructure, such as roads, parks, libraries, and emergency medical services.
• Workforce Development- successful economic development provides better wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement.
• Business Retention- a dependable economic development organization makes businesses feel appreciated and, in turn, are more likely to stay in the area thus, contributing to the economy.
• Quality of Life- more local tax dollars and jobs raise the economic tide for the entire community, including the overall standard of living of the residents.

CCEDC and Momentum West to Participate in Site Selectors Guild

CCEDC is currently preparing for its’ first major site selector marketing outreach activity by partnering with Momentum West in attending the world’s largest association of business location experts at their 2015 annual conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on February 23-25, 2015. This event will draw hundreds of economic development professionals, site selection consultants, and their guests to participate in professional programming focused on key site selection trends and issues impacting today’s economy.

The opportunity to invest in Western Wisconsin businesses or expanding into the United States market by choosing a Western Wisconsin location has never been better, as the Wisconsin and the United States economy continues to grow and rapidly expand. CCEDC and Momentum West has put an emphasis on increasing exports and international business.

This international event provides a unique opportunity to showcase all the advantages that Chippewa County offers as an investment location.

About The Site Selectors Guild

The Site Selectors Guild is a professional association comprised of the world's most respected site selection consultants. The mission of The Site Selectors Guild is to advance the profession of international corporate site selection by promoting the profession and providing education, networking and other services to those involved in the industry.

All members of The Site Selectors Guild have been nominated and approved by their industry peers. As the first and only group of its kind, the Site Selectors Guild brings together a dynamic network of site selectors from around the world, combining their talent and expertise to create an invaluable resource, unmatched in its quality, for both corporations seeking site selection assistance and economic development organizations.
Lunch & Learn
Wisconsin Fast Forward Grant Opportunities Information Session

Join CCEDC, Eau Claire Area EDC, Workforce Resource, and Shelly Harkins, Department of Workforce Development/Office of Skills Development, Wisconsin Fast Forward Program Administrator to learn about grant opportunities. During the event Harkins will announce available grant programs, requirements, and the process to apply.

Wisconsin Fast Forward helps address Wisconsin’s need for skilled workers. The program offers worker training grants and makes other investments to prepare workers for jobs available today and in the years to come. Wisconsin Fast Forward has resources to develop a cutting-edge labor market information system in the future. Not only will the system provide real-time labor intelligence, but it will also serve as an effective forum to connect job seekers and employers with available jobs.

Tuesday, March 10, 2015, 11:30am-1:00pm
Chippewa Valley Regional Airport, 3800 Starr Avenue, Eau Claire, Terminal Conference Room
$10 per person (includes lunch)
Contact Jerilyn Sahr at 715-723-7150 or info@chippewa-wi.com to register to attend or for more information.

Sponsored by:

Chi-Hi's 3rd Annual STEAM Night
Connecting Students & the Community

Tuesday, March 10, 2015 ~ 5:00-8:00pm ~ Chippewa Falls Senior High School
Keynote Presentation ~ 5:00pm
Dr. Jim Madsen, UW-River Falls

Join other Chippewa County businesses such as Chippewa Sand Plant, TTM Technologies, ITW Engineered Fasteners, and more for a hands-on career exploration fair for high school students. This event is designed to promote post-secondary options and careers in the Chippewa Valley! There will also be student demonstrations, student project, and interactive activities.

If you would like your business represented at this event contact Chippewa Falls Senior High’s Nick Gagnon at 715-726-2406 or gagnonnd@chipfalls.org

www.chippewa-wi.com
Since 2009-CCEDC has aggressively been working to preserve our local manufacturing's most precious resource – our skilled workers! CCEDC took specific steps and followed the National Association of Manufacturers best practices in establishing a manufacturer-led workforce development program. The first step was for CCEDC to organize meetings and focus groups with local manufacturers to identify their own skills gaps and long-term hiring needs. Then working in partnership with Chippewa Valley Technical College and local manufacturers, helped establish a Critical Core Manufacturing Skills (CCMS) training consortium and, by July 2010 there were 19 local manufacturers participating in the consortium.

These members of the CCMS consortium carried significant weight and spoke with a unified voice regarding their workforce and aligned community leaders, educational institutions, and local and state officials to develop and implement the CCMS plan for local workforce training. By some counts (for instance, the Manufacturing Institute) there are roughly 600,000 domestic jobs in manufacturing remain unfilled due to a lack of qualified applicants. According to a study by Manpower Group, about half of the companies trying to fill those positions can’t find the candidates who possess the skills they need for the job. Chippewa County is not immune. Based on feedback from the CCMS consortium local employers want all their workers — even those in entry-level positions — to have “soft” skills considered necessary to be productive, such as a teamwork mentality and conflict management skills. Furthermore, they are increasingly requiring workers to have advanced training in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) areas. Thus, in 2012-13, CCEDC went to work to help align education, economic development partners, workforce, and business agendas to continue to develop the talent necessary to keep Chippewa County manufacturers competitive. During that timeframe CCEDC partnered with the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District in sponsoring their annual STEAM Night, the third annual STEAM night is scheduled for Thursday, March 10, 5:00-8:00pm at the Chippewa Falls Senior High School (more information on page 4).

In partnership with State economic development and workforce partners CCEDC advocated in Madison, WI for the creation of the Wisconsin Fast Forward (WFF) program. Throughout 2014 CCEDC
HSHS St. Joseph’s Open New Facility

**HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital** celebrated the opening of their new 25,600 square foot medical office building on, February 9, 2015 with a Ribbon Cutting and Blessing Ceremony. The welcoming speakers for the event included Ben Lane, Ambassador Chair, Chippewa Falls Area Chamber of Commerce- Mayor Greg Hoffman, City of Chippewa Falls – Charlie Walker, President/CEO, Chippewa County Economic Development President - Joan Coffman, President/CEO, **HSHS St. Joseph’s Hospital** – Melinda Clark, President/CEO HSHS Medical Group, and David Arnold, Vice President, Irgens ~ the blessing was led by Father Ibanga.

The importance of **HSHS St. Joseph’s** is the quality extends well

*HSHS Ribbon Cutting, continued on back cover*

**Spectrum Industries Expanding in 2015**

In an effort to expand operations **Spectrum Industries** of Chippewa Falls purchased the former Pactiv plastics plant, at 1500 W. River Street, Chippewa Falls. The 260,000 square-foot manufacturing facility has been empty since that company, which produced plastics, closed in early 2013.

This newly acquired facility will be used for increased space for manufacturing **Spectrum’s** products- which have seen an increase in sales in the last few years. **Spectrum Industries** had $30 million in sales in both 2012 and 2013 and employs 200 workers at its Chippewa Falls facilities. There won’t be any additional employees hired right away, but over the course of the 2015 **Spectrum** plans to add approximately 40 new jobs. **Spectrum Industries** builds desks, carts, and lecterns with USB ports, plug-ins and storage space for computer equipment allowing for the use of modern technology. These pieces are used in high schools or colleges across the country.

The purchase of the property is a “win-win” for the community and the company. This acquisition positions Spectrum for continued growth, and it shows Chippewa County, and the Chippewa Valley, has a workforce that businesses are attracted to. CCEDC has organized 29 tours of the Pactiv site in the past two years, and is glad it was a local company that ultimately acquired it.

**Gordy’s Acquires additional Chippewa County Locations**

The owners of Gordy’s County Market recently purchased the 169,000 square foot Chippewa Commons Center (Former Kmart Plaza) located at the intersection of Highway 124 and Woodward Avenue in Chippewa Falls, as well as the existing Stanley IGA in Stanley, WI.

The Stanley location was purchased from the Fredericksen and Radtke Families in December 2014. Gordy’s will begin operating the store this month, and plans to retain all of the Stanley IGA employees. Gordy’s will be a good addition to the City of Stanley, and have the ability to meet the needs of Stanley and the surrounding area. Their community involvement and family oriented commitment will fit well there.

In the Chippewa Commons location Gordy’s will utilize the 30,000 square feet that Mega Foods formerly occupied as a new Gordy’s County Market location - additionally this location will include the smoked meat processing division that is currently running at the Lake Wissota store- making the total space Gordy’s will occupy 46,000 square feet. This new expansion is expected to employ 80 people and will be open before Memorial Day 2015.

CCEDC is happy to have Gordy’s County Market maintain their strong hometown presence in Chippewa County!
Chippewa Valley Leaders Visit Capitol

CCEDC’s President/CEO, Charlie Walker and CCEDC Chairman, Dennis Bachman traveled to our State Capitol on February 4, 2015 to participate in a Chippewa County Legislative Discussion group with other Chippewa County leaders Paul Michels, Chippewa County Supervisors Chairman and Chippewa County Highway Commissioner, Bruce Stelzner. The group met with Senator Terry Moulton, Rep. Bernier, Rep. Kulp, Rep. Larson, and Rep. Petryk and discussed Chippewa County’s legislative priorities, specifically in economic development efforts and activities.

Transportation Funding Discussed

CCEDC, along with the Transportation Investment Coalition (TIC) hosted a Networking Leadership Event to discuss the future of transportation -specifically funding mechanisms- in Wisconsin. The event was held on Monday, February 02, 2015 at General Beer Northwest, located in the Lake Wissota Business Park, Chippewa Falls.

Craig Thompson, Executive Director of the Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin and a member of the TIC lead the discussion for the event. The discussion surrounded around the depleting sources of funding for Wisconsin’s transportation infrastructure which only make-up 85% of what is needed. Wisconsin’s transportation network is funded primarily through state revenue, federal revenue, and bonds. Federal funding is derived from the Highway Trust Fund, which includes a Highway Account and a Transit Account. The Federal Highway Trust Fund is only solvent through May 2015, at which time there will be an insufficient balance to fully reimburse states for Highway projects. Attendees of the event discussed long term funding solutions.

CCEDC supports and promotes for transportation improvements - Wisconsin’s transportation infrastructure provides a network for transporting goods to the market, citizens to work, children to school, and families to tourism destinations throughout the state -transportation is the lifeblood of Wisconsin’s economy.

CCEDC would like to thank the event sponsors BMO Harris Bank and General Beer Northwest.

Duffy Holds Town Hall in Stanley

Congressman Sean Duffy held a Town Hall Meeting in Stanley on February 9, 2015 at the Stanley VFW Post 2771. The meeting was open to all 7th District constituents in the area to join him to discuss issues that are important to them - Town Hall meetings with elected officials are a great way to present ideas, voice your opinions, and/or ask questions.

Congressman Duffy opened the session by taking a few minutes to discuss his views on policies and initiatives then opened the floor for questions. The majority of the conversation revolved around the Veteran’s Administration and access to good healthcare for veterans. Other items that were discussed included government run healthcare, other healthcare policies, and disability regulation. Duffy was able to stay following the event to discuss issues with constituents one-on-one.

CCEDC Board Member Brian Milliken of Bank Mutual and Deb Chilson of Chilson Corner Motors were moderators for this event.
Workforce Development, continued from page 5
organized and hosted a variety of workshops aimed at informing local businesses of the WFF workforce training grant (more information on page 4) resulting in 7 local companies being awarded workforce development training grant funds. Working to solidify collaborative working relationships with service providers that work to solve the skills gap CCEDC organized and hosted a Skills Solutions Forum which was held on Wednesday, December 17, at the Chippewa Valley Technical College in Chippewa Falls. The event was organized with the shark tank concept-allowing skills gap service providers the opportunity to pitch their program and services to the attendees then receiving feedback from a panel of workforce specialist from Manpower. Chippewa Valley organizations and school district solution providers presented their ideas during the 2-hour Forum, and following the presentations select groups split up into small group workforce discussion sessions. “The purpose of the event was to get solution providers together and made aware of available Chippewa Valley solutions- then to use each other as a resource or referrals,” stated Charlie Walker, President/CEO, CCEDC, “small group discussions where set up for employers to get more detailed information from solution providers.” The manufacturing industry is a target for most of the solution providers, since it is one of the biggest industries that needs help with skills gap issues. There were 50+ attendees at the Forum and many more others who came specifically for the workforce discussion groups.

HSHS Ribbon Cutting, continued from page 9

Photo Above: HSHS St. Joseph’s Ribbon Cutting and Blessing

beyond the health care services they provide. They are in fact a major local driver of economic growth. As an industry, health care has been outpacing the growth of the rest of the economy. Besides many community health benefits and community health improvements HSHS St. Joseph’s already exceeds in today’s leadership recognized within Chippewa County.

The new facility is located at, 2508 Highway I, on the site of the former St. Francis Convent site, which is on the HSHS Campus in Chippewa Falls. This new state-of-the-art facility will be used to house the HSHS medical group, family health, hospital outpatient rehabilitation services, hospital occupational health, and a pharmacy.

CCEDC welcomes this new addition to the medical industry to Chippewa County!

In recognition of our financial investors companies that invest in Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation and are mentioned in this newsletter are mentioned in Bold