

THRIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 1, 2019 - AUGUST 31, 2020

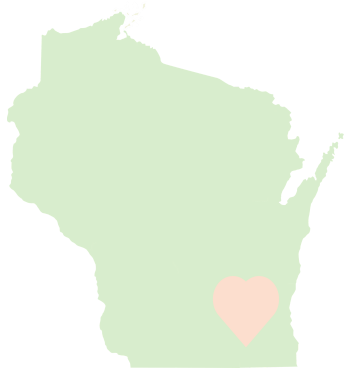


Prepared and presented by:

OUR VISION & MISSION

Thrive Economic Development will lead the change necessary to support economic growth in Jefferson and Dodge counties that results in healthy, thriving and growing communities.

Thrive Economic Development will engage the public and private sectors in actions focused on attracting and supporting business growth that benefit the residents and communities of Jefferson and Dodge counties.



Victoria Pratt, CECD – *President*
Deb Reinbold, *Managing Director of Business Development*
RoxAnne Witte – *Program Specialist*
Julie Olver – *Marketing Manager*

864 Collins Rd Ste 111 | Jefferson, WI 53549
thriveED.org | 920-674-8711
Twitter: @Thrive_ED
LinkedIn: Thrive_ED

as of October 1, 2020

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*bylaws allow for two JCEDC representatives and an alternate

TO THRIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INVESTORS, PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

In this unprecedented year, we are happy and grateful to present our Annual Report. And while COVID-19 continues to affect our businesses, we are reporting our busiest year of activity since our inception. This Annual Report covers our activities from September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2020. In this time frame, we worked on 70 new investment opportunities in the two-county area. A total of 70% of these investment opportunities were manufacturing-related; including 18 just in Food & Beverage processing. Notably, 85% percent of the investment opportunities we saw this past year came to us directly from the customer. This is a testament to our outreach efforts! We've had some great wins since we incorporated in 2016. It is clear that we are gaining traction and anticipate that our final year of our first 5-year Strategic Plan will be a banner year!

With the closure of non-essential businesses starting March 17th, ThriveED partnered with the Small Business Development Center at UW-Whitewater to launch the Back to Business Program. Beginning April 1, 2020, we provided direct assistance to 120 small business owners across the two-county region.

Our website, launched in October 2018, continues to be a significant asset to attract new business investments and provide resources for our existing businesses. Throughout the pandemic, we have provided accurate information our businesses need to navigate the ever-changing waters. Additionally, the Sites and Buildings page contains about 150 commercial and industrial property listings. Everything that we've accomplished this year, and all the work we have yet to do, is possible only with the support of our investors, partners and stakeholders.

We thank you for your support and commitment and as we recover and grow, we look forward to continuing to facilitate more business investments that grow our economic base and add to our quality of life in Jefferson and Dodge counties.



Victoria Pratt, CEcD

President

Thrive Economic Development



AutoPets in Juneau celebrated its expansion in July 2020



Senator Fitzgerald speaking at the AutoPets celebration

OUR AREAS OF FOCUS



We revise our Strategic Plan annually to ensure alignment with our resources: talent, time and money. As we wrap up calendar year 2020, we will be drafting our next 5-year strategic plan in preparation for launching our 2022-2026 fundraising campaign. This will be visible in the first half of 2021. In the past year, our work focused on three key areas of our strategic plan, and our Back to Business Program related to COVID-19.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



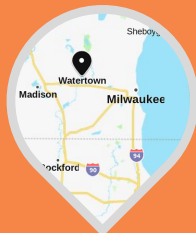
Retain and grow primary industry sector businesses and attract new ones

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



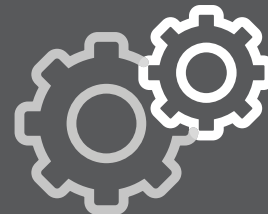
Initiatives and activities that lead to a long-term supply of workers for our primary industries

BRANDING & MARKETING



Promote our region's business support assets and share our story with target audiences

BACK TO BUSINESS



Provide assistance to businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The opportunity pipeline captures the work ThriveED did with any existing business, with site selectors or corporate real estate executives, with new-to-Jefferson or Dodge businesses, with start-ups and entrepreneurs or anyone else related to an investment opportunity in either Jefferson or Dodge Counties. The pipeline activity covers many areas, including:

- Providing confidential site or building searches for businesses
- Providing financing assistance related to the proposed investment
- Connecting any interested party with other technical or professional assistance as needed to advance the proposed business investment. These services are broad and include such things as business plan development assistance, feasibility studies, market research and marketing plan development, staffing resources, licensing or certification issues, zoning, permitting or incentives negotiations.

There were 70 investment opportunities in the pipeline from September 1, 2019 – August 31, 2020. A breakdown by industry sector is below:

13 Manufacturing	2 Accommodations/Recreation
18 Food & Beverage Processing	1 Transportation/Warehousing
13 Other Services	1 Retail
2 Professional/Technical/Scientific Services	4 Energy
5 Agri-business	1 Wholesale Business
5 Restaurant/Food Services	4 Real Estate Development
1 Education Services	



**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT IS
A TEAM SPORT**

ThriveED remains the single biggest source of referrals to the UW-Whitewater Small Business Development Center (SBDC). We vet new start up/prospective entrepreneurs projects and then, once we determine these are real – we refer. We know, because we stay in touch, that every one of our referrals was followed up on. That's very good news.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO MUNICIPALITIES

PROMOTING BEST PRACTICES - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

It's our job to promote the existing business assets and resources within our two-county region. Because of this, much of our work centers around bringing best practices to our communities and institutions. Businesses have a lot of options when deciding where to invest their capital and we must be able to compete.

To support business retention and attraction of new business investments, the Board of Directors created a Product Improvement Committee. One area of the committee's work is focused on helping our municipal partners understand and utilize best practices to elevate their competitiveness. In this past year, the staff of ThriveED has provided assistance to the following municipalities in a myriad of ways including, but not limited to:

- Project-specific assistance
- Revolving Loan Fund assistance
- TID/TIF assistance
- Land assembly for industrial growth
- Incentive negotiations and use of existing incentive tools to encourage new investment
- Municipal team responses to site searches
- General ED assistance during staff transitions (Loss of CDA directors, etc.)
- Best practice solutions to streamline permitting
- Solutions to development barriers

These municipalities received additional assistance last year:

Village of Kekoskee

City of Horicon

City of Waterloo

Village of Johnson Creek

City of Juneau

City of Watertown

Village of Lomira

City of Lake Mills

City of Whitewater

City of Fort Atkinson

City of Mayville

Town of Ixonia

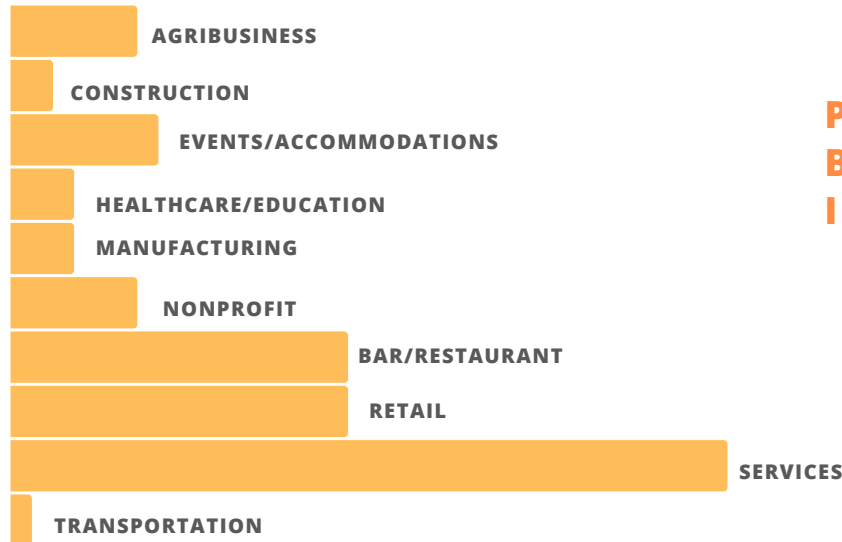
City of Fox Lake

City of Waupun

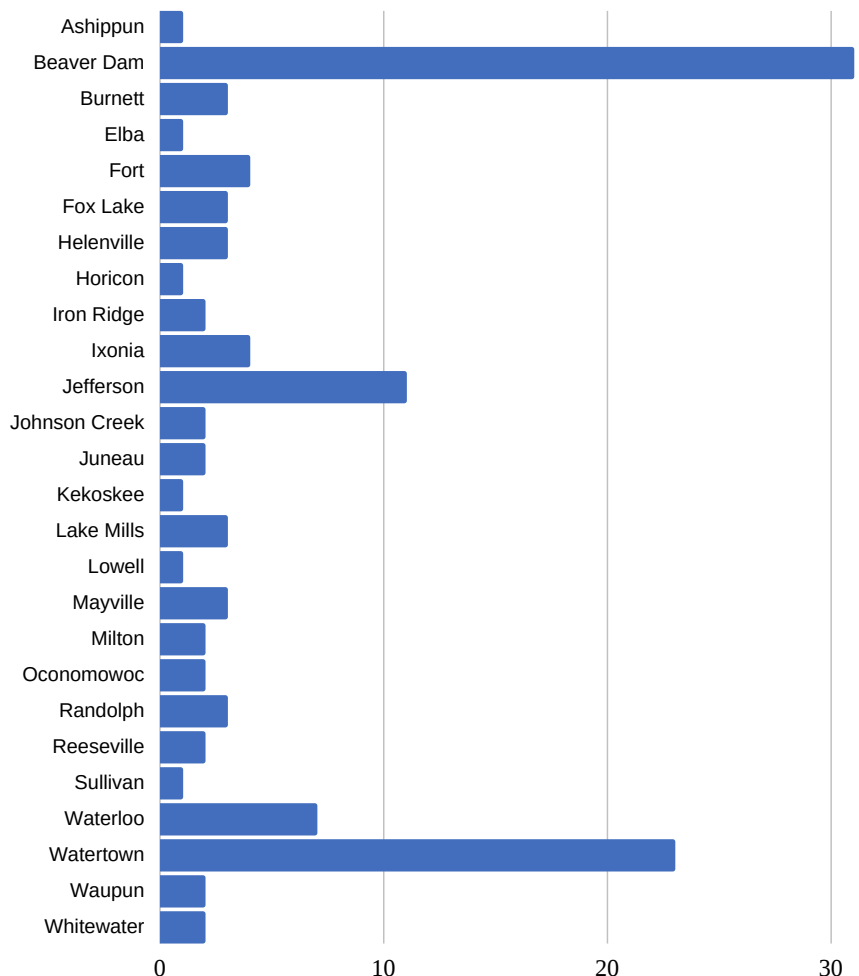
Town of Oakland

BACK TO BUSINESS

With the closure of non-essential businesses due to COVID-19, ThriveED partnered with the Small Business Development Center at UW-Whitewater to create and launch the Back to Business Program (B2B) on April 1. We collectively served 120 small businesses in a very short time frame, providing assistance to emergency financial assistance programs and business consulting on changes that, if made, might help the business survive extended closure.



PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES BY COMMUNITY



EXISTING BUSINESS VISITS

Attracting new businesses is the economic development work that makes headlines, but the most effective way to ensure sustained economic vitality is by supporting the businesses that already call the Jefferson and Dodge Counties region home. To those businesses, we say thank you. We're glad you're here.

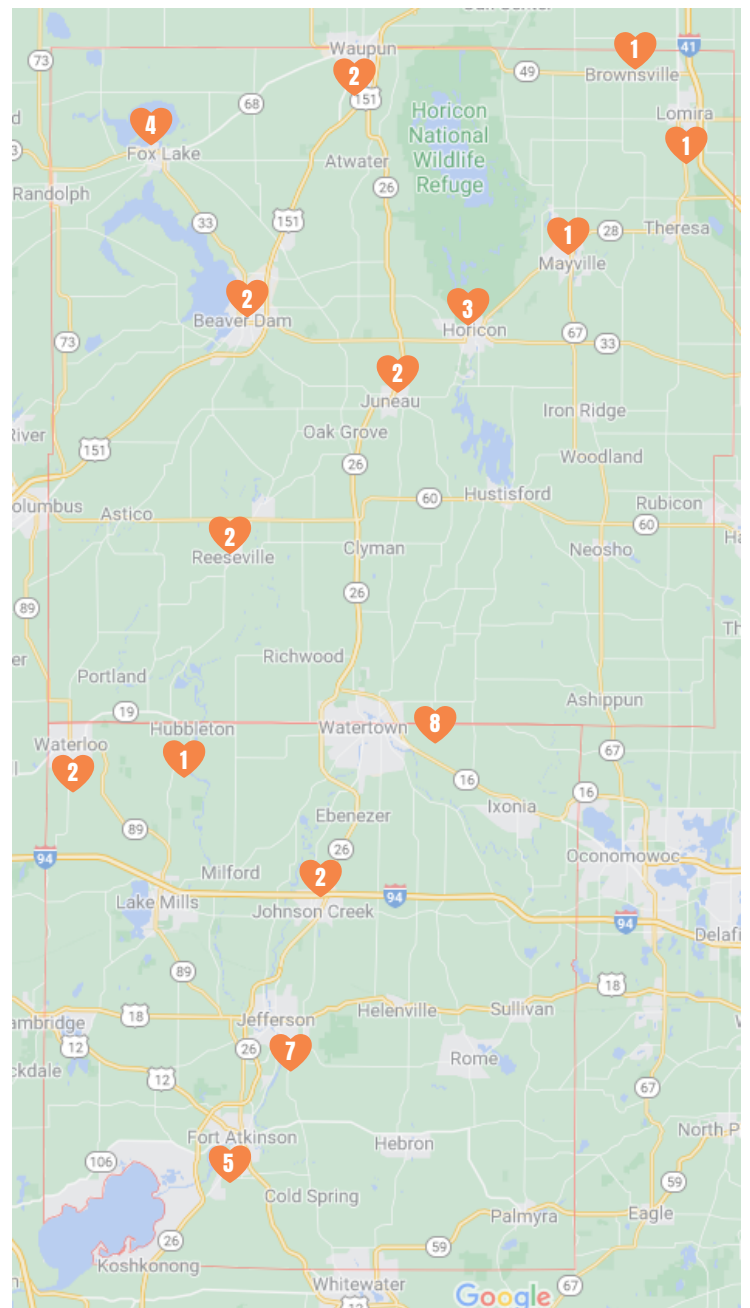
ThriveED conducted 45 business visits between September 1, 2019 and August 31, 2020. Twenty two of these visits were to Dodge County businesses and 21 were to Jefferson County businesses; two visits were to businesses with multiple locations across the two-county region.

45

EXISTING BUSINESS VISITS TO THE FOLLOWING COMMUNITIES

Beaver Dam	Juneau
Brownsville	Lomira
Fort Atkinson	Mayville
Fox Lake	Reeseville
Horicon	Waterloo
Hubbleton	Watertown
Jefferson	Waupun
Johnson Creek	

We know businesses have options when it comes to where they will invest and grow. We want to help businesses stay and grow right here. That's why ThriveED launched a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program in August 2019. This new initiative is focused on Dodge County businesses.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

There are a lot of reasons a business wouldn't want any press or other public fanfare for an expansion or relocation. Our stand on this is simple – the customer is in control of the message. If they don't want it promoted, it isn't.

ThriveED provided assistance in opportunities that resulted in 8 "wins" between September 1, 2019 and August 31, 2020.

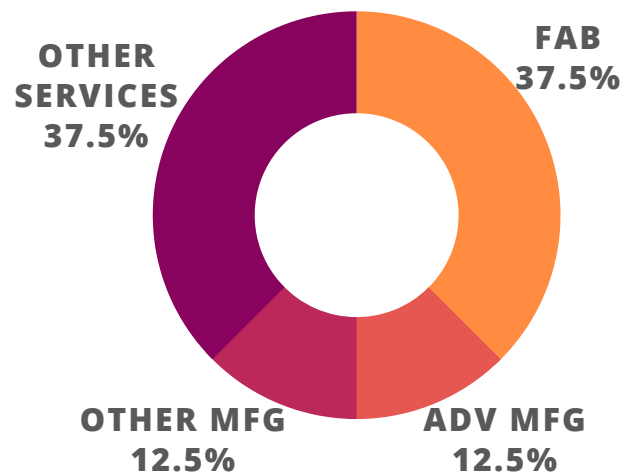
"WINS" BY COUNTY



"WINS" BY TYPE OF BUSINESS



"WINS" BY INDUSTRY



NOTABLE "WIN"

Fire Service, Inc.

A 30,000 sq foot building in Lake Mills has been completely updated and is now home to Fire Service, Inc.'s first Wisconsin location.

Founded in 1991, Fire Service, Inc. is headquartered in St John, Indiana and has locations in Indianapolis and Naperville, Illinois. The Lake Mills location opened in July 2020.

The company, which has 104 employees in total, has already hired six employees for the Lake Mills location, and anticipates a few more hires in the near future. The project's initial investment is in excess of \$1 million.

The building's extensive renovations and updates include the addition of a fire sprinkler system, new HVAC units, the reworking of all the electrical systems and a new concrete parking lot.



NOTABLE "WIN"

AutoPets

The maker of the highest-rated automatic, self-cleaning litter box on the market has expanded its operations in Dodge County. AutoPets, headquartered in Auburn Hills, Michigan, manufactures and ships the Litter-Robot in Juneau. Launched in 2000, the company currently employs more than 90 people.

The company added 30,000 square feet of manufacturing and warehouse space, a new dock area and an expanded parking area.

The expansion is the result of the company's significant growth over the last few years. A new business unit, known as Litterbox.com, as well as the upcoming launch of an automatic pet feeder to complement the company's automatic litter box, has led to the company outgrowing its existing facility in Juneau.



With the goal of enhancing our competitiveness in a crowded marketplace, ThriveED hosts economic development education sessions throughout the year. Open to the public, these education sessions covered a variety of topics.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT-FOCUSED SERVICES

ThriveED's **workforce development** services are focused on:

- Building talent pipelines
- Competing to attract workers & residents
- Strategies to get more working-aged/able-bodied people into the workforce

PILOT PROGRAM

We were finalizing plans to launch a pilot program designed to connect K-12 students at one school district, with all the career options that exist within a 25-mile radius of the high school, and connect all the employers in that community with all the K-12 providers within a 25 mile radius of their facility. And then all schools closed!

To prepare for the launch, we worked closely with a select group of Dodge County employers and leaders, and the Dodgeland School District.

Ongoing conversations regarding this model have resulted in many interested school districts. We fully intend to resurrect this program and implement it once we get back to business in a more organized fashion. A 2021 pilot community is yet to be named.



Our July 2020 Conversations with ThriveED event was held Sunset Bar and Grill in Fort Atkinson. ThriveED Chairman David Schroeder welcomes guests.



IMPLEMENT BEST PRACTICES SOLUTIONS TO BUILD A TALENT PIPELINE

ThriveED is connected with and supports efforts to bring smart solutions to our workforce challenges. While COVID-19 changed the landscape, workforce challenges will persist well into the future. Solutions will require teamwork, i.e., employers, educators, local and state institutions and others working collaboratively to achieve better outcomes. Solutions include:

- More flexible part-time employment options
- Create increased opportunities for teens to work
- Increased employment options for people with disabilities
- Reduce barriers to employment for people with criminal records
- Support for efforts to attract veterans leaving military service to come to the state, and encourage hiring veterans
- Increase exposure to career options within a 25-mile radius of current location for every K-12 student
- Ensure that K-12 educators are aware of and exposed to the diverse career opportunities across industry sectors
- Ensure that incarcerated populations are receiving training that allows them to transition to work opportunities in our region
- Support efforts to attract new residents to the area



Bottom line? A coordinated effort, focused on connecting all the players to all employers across the two-county area, is needed.



Our Conversations with ThriveED events looked different this year – social distancing, contactless food serving and limited attendance

BRANDING, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Our marketing efforts are focused on:

- Ensuring that our target prospects remain aware of our business assets
- Keeping our assets and resources in front of our target audiences
- Keeping our investors aware of our work
- Ensuring opportunities to compete for business investments
- Keeping our communities well informed about economic development-related activities, programs and opportunities

Though COVID-19 limited our ability to host events, we were able to continue our popular Conversations with ThriveED series this year.

These well-attended events have allowed us to tell our story to business and community leaders in a casual setting. They have also produced new business investment projects!

The pandemic increased the need for business-related assistance and information, and decreased the opportunity for face to face events, so we pivoted to virtual events. We held two virtual town halls in May of 2020, as well as two Peer to Peer Listening Sessions. These sessions provided updates to businesses faced with challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.



**STATE OF DODGE COUNTY:
BUSINESS UPDATE**

Virtual Town Hall

Wednesday, May 6, 2020 | 5pm-6:30pm



We held two virtual town hall sessions, one for Dodge County and one for Jefferson County. Each session provided an update from county administrators on the financial impact of COVID-19, as well as an overview of legislation, such as the CARES Act, that includes funding for loans and grants to businesses impacted by the pandemic.

THRIVEED.ORG

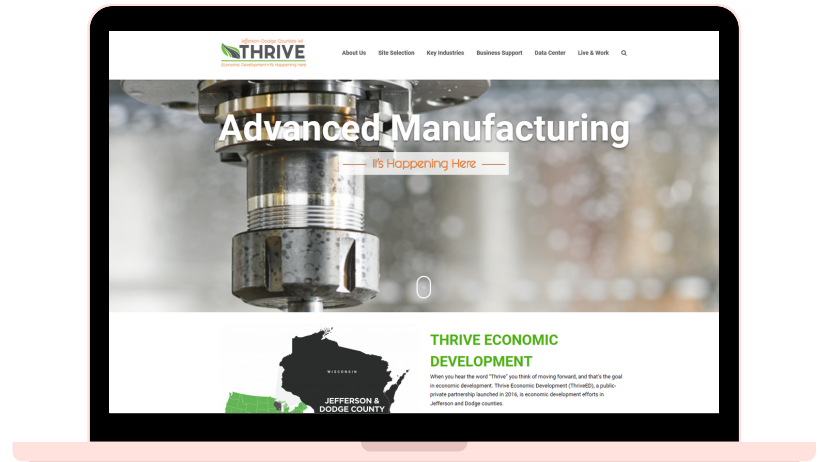
PAGE VIEWS 9/1/19 - 8/31/20

18,467



74.38%

INCREASE OVER
PREVIOUS YEAR



Traffic on our website, thriveED.org, continues to increase. With the COVID-19 pandemic, we have added a new section of our website, COVID-19 Business Resources. This section includes information on best practices, grants and loans, legislation and a COVID-19 related news feed.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Typically, we limit our social media efforts to LinkedIn and Twitter, as they align better with our target audiences. However, with many people looking to Facebook for information about COVID-19, we began using that platform in 2020.



34,582 organic impressions



11,271 organic impressions



9,000 organic impressions (approx)

INVESTORS

as of October 1, 2020

thank you!



W. D. HOARD & SONS CO.



JAK'D
Investments,
LLC



Watertown Daily Times



gojefferson.com



TWS Pharma



CAMBRIDGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
FORT ATKINSON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
JEFFERSON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
JOHNSON CREEK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
LAKE MILLS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
WATERLOO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
WATERTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
WHITEWATER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

JOHN AND NORA DAVID
KYLE ELLEFSON
BRIAN KNOX
MATT MAUTHE
JIM MODE

VICKI PRATT
NATE SALAS
AUGIE TIETZ
JAY WERTH