

# A NOTE ABOUT THIS **REPORT:**

Data for Parts I and II of this report (pages 5-11) is for the year beginning September 1, 2019 and ending on August 31, 2020. This timeframe coincides with the tracking year for Thrive Economic Development. Data for Part III of this report (page 12) is for the 2020 calendar year.

RECTORS as of April 2021

BOARD

Brad Calder, Administrator Village of Johnson Creek

Cameron Clapper, City Manager City of Whitewater

David Drayna Jefferson County Board of Supervisors

Tim Freitag, City Administrator City of Jefferson

Mo Hansen, Clerk/Treasurer City of Waterloo Chair

Rebecca Houseman-LeMire, City Manager City of Fort Atkinson

Richard Jones Jefferson County Board of Supervisors

Russell Kottke **Dodge County** 

Emily McFarland, Mayor City of Watertown Vice Chair

Lisa Moen, Administrator/Clerk/Treasurer Village of Cambridge

**Amy Rinard** Jefferson County Board of Supervisors

Steve Wilke, City Manager City of Lake Mills Secretary/Treasurer



Victoria Pratt, CEcD - Executive Director 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

### TO OUR PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

During this unprecedented time, we are happy and grateful to present our Annual Report. And while COVID-19 continues to affect our communities, we are reporting our busiest year of activity since our inception. With the exception of the data found in Part III, this Annual Report covers 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 2021 will be a banner year.

With the closure of non-essential businesses starting March 17th in 2020, ThriveED, our private sector entity, partnered with the Small Business Development Center at UW-Whitewater to launch the Back to Business Program. Since April 1, 2020, we have provided direct assistance to more than 120 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.

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

Victoria Pratt, CEcD Executive Director, JCEDC President, Thrive Economic Development



State Rep Dittrich congratulates Fire Service Inc President Shawn Junker at the company's opening celebration in Lake Mills in 2020



ThriveED Chair David Schroeder speaking at a Conversations with ThriveED event in Fort Atkinson

# **OUR AREAS OF FOCUS**



We revise our Strategic Plan annually to ensure alignment with our resources: talent, time and money. In late 2020, we drafted our next 5-year strategic plan in preparation for launching our 2022–2026 fundraising campaign. 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 work done 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
- **18** Food & Beverage Processing
- 13 Other Services
- 2 Professional/Technical/Scientific Services
- 5 Agri-business
- 5 Restaurant/Food Services
- 1 Education Services

- 2 Accommodations/Recreation
- 1 Transportation/Warehousing
- 1 Retail
- 4 Energy
- 1 Wholesale Business
- 4 Real Estate Development



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 and attract new business investments. Businesses have a lot of options when deciding where to invest their capital and we must be able to compete. Because of this, much of our work centers around bringing best practices to our communities and institutions.

The ThriveED Board created a Product Improvement working committee to support business investments and retention efforts in our region. 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 tracking year:

Village of Kekoskee City of Horicon City of Waterloo

Village of Johnson Creek City of Juneau City of Watertown

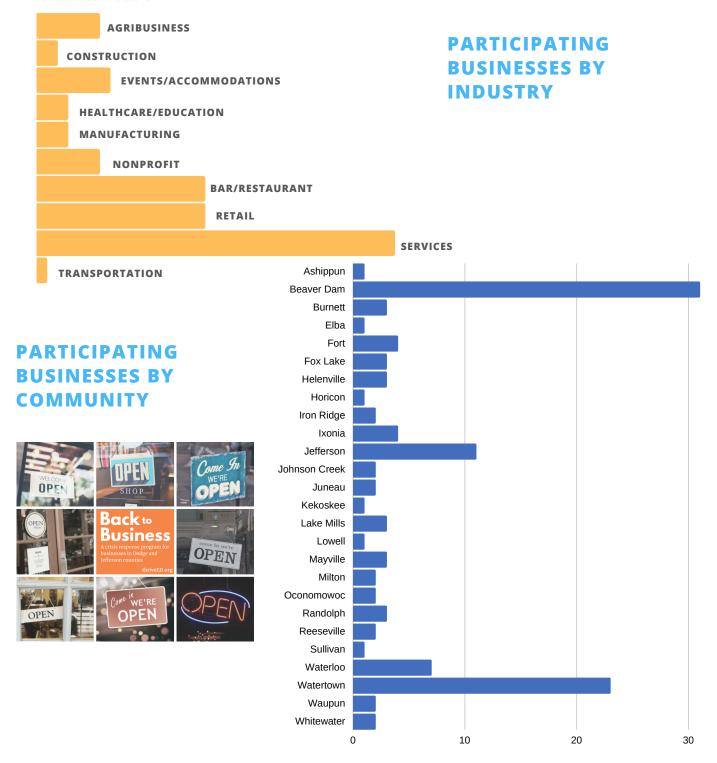
Village of Lomira City of Lake Mills City of Whitewater

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 in March of 2020, ThriveED partnered with the Small Business Development Center at UW-Whitewater to create and launch the Back to Business Program (B2B) on April 1, 2020. We collectively served more than 100 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.



# **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.

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.

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.

# 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



# 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

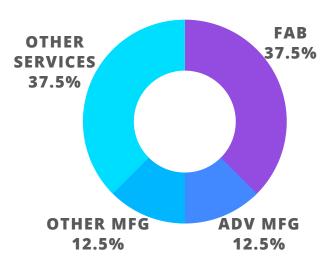
5 JEFFERSON COUNTY

3 DODGE COUNTY

### "WINS" BY TYPE OF BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS EXISTING 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.







Conversations with ThriveED events look different under COVID-19 - social distancing, contactless food serving and other changes

### **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 in 2020.

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

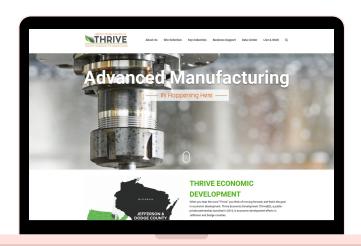


for Dodge County and one for Jefferson
County. Each session provided an update
from county administrators on the financial
impact of COVID-19, as well as an overview
of legislation, such as the CARES Act, that
includes funding for loans and grants to
businesses impacted by the pandemic.

# 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.





11,271 organic impressions



9,000 organic impressions (approx)

# **HOMEBUYER & HOME REHAB PROGRAMS**

The JCEDC continues to partner with the HOME Consortium and the Down Payment Plus Program to provide home buyer education for down-payment assistance. In 2020, JCEDC provided education/counseling to 70 families. Not all families are ready to purchase a home once they have completed their education; some will continue counseling to work on their credit worthiness with hopes of purchasing a home in the near future. Of those 70 families, 37 continued their counseling and were able to purchase their first home, which had an average purchase of \$148,135.14. (Average price includes purchases made with and without the grants.) Qualified families were able to apply for up to \$11,000 for down payment and closing costs through the HOME Consortium and the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago. The total amount of the grant money received by home buyers in Jefferson County in 2020 was \$260,000; in Dodge County it was \$17,000, in Rock County it was \$6,000 and in Walworth County it was \$72,000. Since JCEDC took over the program in 2011, 758 families have attended home buyer education classes.



In addition to the homebuyer program,
Jefferson County also offers a pre-purchase rehab program. Home buyers

apply for a 0% deferred loan of up to \$15,000, payable on sale of the property, for repairs to get the home up to code, a requirement of the grant programs. Of the 37 families that purchased homes in 2020, 14 used the pre-purchase rehab to make needed code repairs. The average loan amount for the pre-purchase rehab loan program in 2020 was \$11,956. Jefferson County also offers two post-purchase rehab programs, which are 0% deferred loans, payable on sale of the property. In 2020, two loans were issued through the HOME Consortium program for \$28,325. Through the Southern Housing Region program, one new loan and three change orders were issued for projects in Jefferson County, with an average cost of \$71,411.03 per loan.

37
homes
purchased in 2020

\$355K \$ grant money received by homebuyers in 2020