

EAU CLAIRE AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

*Connecting Our
Community*



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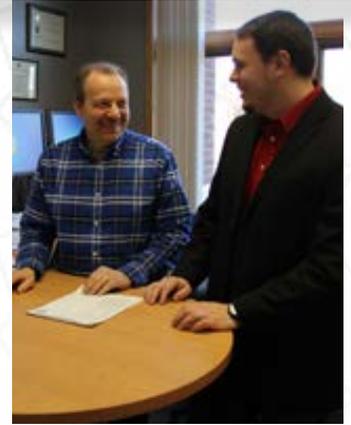
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As a 501 (c) 6 non-profit, we rely on the generosity of our investors to continue offering our services and programs



11 local businesses were assisted with their expansion projects



115 entrepreneurs utilized EDC programs and services



341 potential future jobs generated from EDC led projects



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Over the past year I have had the privilege of serving as the President on the Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation's Board of Directors. The Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation (EDC) is closing out an important year, and we're looking forward to making 2019 a productive and collaborative year that builds on the successes of 2018.

The EDC experienced some first-time opportunities and hallmark events that made 2018 a success. We had the Eau Claire Area featured and promoted on the Fireball Run, a travel series that is streamed to over 5 million individuals domestically. HATCH became the first regional pitch competition hosted in the Chippewa Valley which brought together entrepreneurs throughout the state to pitch for their chance at the grand prize.

2018 also provided many opportunities for collaboration. By partnering with regional entities, we assisted in bringing the Inspire Connections platform to our community - which is designed to connect our local employers with their emerging workforce. Startup 48, Eau Claire's weekend long startup event, became a qualifier for the Wisconsin Big Idea Tournament - helping to connect our entrepreneurs with other resources throughout the state. The first annual Startup Eau Claire Week was a success in connecting entrepreneurs to local resources, and joined the rest of Wisconsin in celebrating the unique challenges that entrepreneurs and startup businesses navigate.

Details about these initiatives, plus many more that the small staff at the EDC dedicated their time to, are found within this annual report. I hope you take the time to learn more about all the exciting progress that has been made.

I want to take a moment to thank all the numerous committees that our volunteers have served on throughout the year. These volunteers are individually recognized later in this report. Without their expertise and dedication to supporting our community's economy, the EDC would not have been able to make such a comprehensive impact.

The EDC Board of Directors is comprised of community leaders who volunteer their time to helping direct the staff of the EDC in their initiatives. I would like to thank our board members for their enthusiasm for the EDC's mission and their commitment to our community.

In 2019, I look forward to continuing discussions with our community partners with the goal to strengthen the critical talent in our community and to heighten the organization's focus on supporting our investors, local businesses looking to expand, and entrepreneurs. The staff of the EDC has set their goals high for the upcoming year and I look forward to seeing what the future will bring for this organization.

Jerry Bauer, 2018 EDC Board President

The EDC experienced some first-time opportunities and hallmark events that made 2018 a success.

"We work with our business community on all levels - whether you're a corporation with hundreds of employees or an individual who wants to start their first business, our door is always open."

LUKE HANSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ABOUT US



LUKE HANSON
Executive Director

Assists local businesses with expansion and retention, and promotes the Eau Claire Area to external industry and business leaders looking for opportunities.

The Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation (EDC) has been a community partner since 1984. Our activities center around strengthening our local businesses, supporting our local talent pool, recruiting new businesses to our community, and supporting local entrepreneurs.

Annually, the EDC visits local businesses during our Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) calls, and help leverage public funding for projects that range from building expansions to equipment upgrades.

Additionally, there are several initiatives that work to strengthen our labor pool such as the Inspire Connections web portal and Chippewa Valley Workforce Demand Survey.

Lastly, the EDC runs or is a partner in several programs to support the entrepreneurial and startup community such as the Idea Challenge, 1 Million Cups, and Startup 48 - Eau Claire's very own weekend long startup event.



CHRISTINA WASSON
Project & Marketing Manager

Supports the entrepreneurial and startup community, and serves as the Facility Manager at the Chippewa Valley Incubation Center.



BERYL OUIMETTE
Program & Operations Manager

Connects our labor pool with local employers and coordinates the Chippewa Valley Workforce Demand Survey to gather local, actionable data.

OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT

In 2018, with a small staff of 3 employees, we supported our current local businesses by leveraging \$2 Million in public incentives and \$14 Million in private investment for our local businesses, collected data for the Chippewa Valley Workforce Demand Survey, and performed 42 BRE calls which resulted in 11 Business Expansion Projects.

Working to continue to bring in new businesses, we performed call trips and marketed our community which resulted in 6 prospects we are actively working with to recruit to the Eau Claire area. Overall, an estimated 341 potential future jobs were generated from EDC led projects.

Additionally, we continue to support our entrepreneurial and startup businesses through the management of Chippewa Valley Innovation Center, our regional incubation center, and the management of several programs such as the Idea Challenge, Startup 48, and HATCH. Through EDC programs, over 115 entrepreneurs were assisted in 2018.



BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

- 42** BRE calls to connect with local businesses
- 11** expansion projects generated from BRE Calls
- 14+** million in private sector project investment secured
- 2+** million in incentives secured from state and regional sources



ENTREPRENEURIAL & STARTUP BUSINESS SERVICES

- 2** products launched into the marketplace through the Idea Challenge
- 20** entrepreneurs are working with the EDC to move their idea into the marketplace
- 47** attendees throughout the region attended Startup 48, 4 individuals qualified for WBIT
- \$11K** total funding provided to Chippewa Valley entrepreneurs via HATCH



LABOR POOL & CRITICAL TALENT

- 36K+** Students connecting with local employers via Inspire Connections throughout the state
- 101** Businesses participated in the Chippewa Valley Workforce Demands Survey



BUSINESS RECRUITMENT

- 18** proposals prepared in response to Request for Proposal/Information
- 6** prospects that would be new businesses in the Eau Claire area

OUR 2019 GOALS



PARTNERING WITH EXISTING BUSINESSES IN THEIR EXPANSION INITIATIVES

- Increase the focus on Business Retention Calls to assist our local businesses with their expansion needs
- Expand on data collection to more thoroughly understand the needs of the community and how the EDC can continue to assist local businesses
- Assist local businesses in leveraging public incentives to enhance and expand their facilities, workforce, and equipment
- Connect expanding businesses with local resources and partners to provide comprehensive services



CONNECTING OUR LOCAL LABOR POOL TO COMMUNITY EMPLOYERS

- Continue to partner with regional economic development agencies to connect high school students with local employers through work-based learning experiences, in the Eau Claire Area
- Promote and secure participation in workforce outreach initiatives such as apprenticeship and internships
- Gather timely and relevant data on employer needs in the Chippewa Valley using the Chippewa Valley Workforce Climate Survey

PROGRAMS & SERVICES

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION CALLS

Cultivating relationships with our local businesses and industries to help facilitate expansion initiatives.

1 MILLION CUPS

<https://1millioncups.com/eauclore>

Free weekly event where our entrepreneurial community comes together to share their stories and connect over a million cups of coffee.

INSPIRE CONNECTIONS

Free web portal accessed through Career Cruising that connects local employers to their emerging workforce, highlighting local career opportunities for high school students.

PARAGON AWARD

Annual award, sponsored by Royal Credit Union, awarded to a local business that is an example of economic excellence within our community.



SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURS AND STARTUP BUSINESSES

- Promote the development of innovative new products, services, and processes
- Facilitate the development new businesses in the Eau Claire Area through the Idea Challenge
- Assist entrepreneurs and startup businesses in securing patents for their ideas
- Support the entrepreneurial community through community initiatives such as 1 Million Cups
- Continue to provide entrepreneurial programs such as Startup 48, Eau Claire's premier weekend-long startup event for the Chippewa Valley



STRENGTHENING LOCAL CRITICAL TALENT

- Continue to work with community partners on connecting students to local employers via Inspire Connections
- Work with community partners to continue to identify and work towards finding solutions for our local businesses
- Share the results of the Chippewa Valley Workforce Demand Survey to community partners, including local employers, educational institutions, and workforce organizations

INDUSTRIAL SPOTLIGHT TOURS

Brief events held over the lunch hour that aims to share local developments of current businesses with the goal to increase awareness of the opportunities that exist in the Eau Claire area to local brokers.

MAKE EAU CLAIRE

www.makeeauclaire.com

Web portal for entrepreneurs and businesses to research and connect with local resources.

IDEA CHALLENGE

www.theIdeaChallenge.com

Annual contest, sponsored by Northwestern Bank, open to individuals with an idea for a new product, service, or process within the Eau Claire area.

STARTUP 48

www.startup48.co

Eau Claire's weekend-long startup event where like-minded individuals come together to learn what it takes to run a startup.

CHIPPEWA VALLEY WORKFORCE DEMANDS SURVEY

Gathers actionable data from Chippewa Valley employers to facilitate local workforce initiatives.

INDUSTRY AND TRADE OUTREACH

Build national and international relationships with businesses and industries to promote the Eau Claire Area for expansion and relocation opportunities.

CONNECTING WITH OUR EMERGING WORKFORCE

Continuing to cultivate an educated and engaged labor pool remains a focus of the EDC. This past year the Eau Claire Area EDC worked with Momentum West and other regional partners to embed Inspire Connections into the Eau Claire area. This cloud-based platform allows employers to connect directly with students and career planners in a safe and secure environment.

Inspire breaks down barriers that face both employers and local high school students when looking for local career opportunities. Under common circumstances, it's difficult for employers to know which local high school may be interested in entering their field, while it's equally difficult for students to connect with local experts in their field of interest.

Students face many transitions during their academic career. The most important and often most challenging transition is entering the workforce. To ease this transition, it is the goal of Inspire to prepare our students with experiences that connect them to real people and real employers in the community. Inspire seeks to help our students overcome these challenges by allowing them to learn about work-based learning activities in the Eau Claire area. They will be able to ask questions of individuals in industries and careers that they are interested in, receive advice and encouragement that is relevant to the local economy, and be matched with local opportunities that match their interests.

When a student's classroom achievement is directly connected to local career possibilities, they become engaged and motivated to learn. Inspire provides every student, who is mandated by the state to have an individualized plan to prepare them for life beyond the classroom, a conduit to experience real-world opportunities to connect with Eau Claire area employers and industries aligning to their future career plans.

One of the unique advantages to the Inspire platform is the focus on local content that is geared towards the students in the Eau Claire area school districts. Community employers and system administrators can highlight regional opportunities and address workforce development needs targeted to their community. Using the tools in the platform, system administrators can:

- post relevant articles
- publicize local events, job fairs and programs
- create links to helpful reference materials and resources
- maintain local industry profiles

Employers wishing to engage with their emerging workforce are able to utilize the Inspire platform to create visibility for their company as students and job seekers explore their career options. By leveraging this platform, they can connect with the students who are interested in the work-based learning activities that they offer, promoting the local community as a place where they can continue to live because they are able to find work. Some examples of the work-based learning opportunities that employers can offer include internships, site visits, guest speaking, and co-op placements.

Inspire integrates employer profile information, career-based learning opportunities, and access to volunteer online career coaches directly into the Career Cruising Academic and Career Planning (ACP) system to more deeply engage business participation in and support of the region's ACP process. Using this information, local educators are able to link school activities to local opportunities and organizations, and identify companies that offer the employment or work-based learning activities that their students and job seekers need.



75% of local businesses have at least 2 positions they are struggling to fill. Most of these positions only require a High School Diploma or equivalent, and do not require any previous experience

CESA's 10 and 11 are working with the school districts in the region to promote the student's use of the online resource. The Eau Claire Area EDC, with the help of the Critical Talent Committee, has been dedicated to partnering with Momentum West and other community partners to encourage this process and promote the site to local employers, students, and educators.

Throughout 2018 and heading into 2019, numerous partners in our region are working to establish a base of business profiles in each county to populate the Inspire portion of the Career Cruising software. Eventually the employer databases of the other nine

- promoting careers that are available in the community to students coming out of high school
- making Wisconsin a workforce-strong and economically vibrant state
- being a part of the solution addressing the region's workforce issues

In addition to companies being able to sign up to offer work-based learning opportunities, individuals can sign up to be online career coaches to provide more in depth support to our local students. Becoming a career coach is free and can easily be tailored to desired level of involvement and schedule.

Inspire provides every student a conduit to experience real-world opportunities with Eau Claire Area employers and industries aligning to their future career plans.

regions like Momentum West will be connected, forming the statewide Inspire network that will help students and employers connect both regionally and statewide.

The key to the success of this, or the level of interaction within the schools with business and industry, depends on the level of engagement by the employers within the region. Companies leveraging this initiative gain many benefits including:

- increasing visibility within the community
- connecting with your future workforce early in their career development

Online career coaches are able to help students in school determine the right career and a academic pathway for their future by answering student questions about careers and promoting your career field to future talent.

To give back to your community and connect with your future workforce, sign up for a Company Profile, or to become an online career coach go to <http://www.momentumwest.org/workforce/inspire-connections>.

THE PARAGON AWARD: CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY'S SUCCESSES

Market & Johnson, a commercial contractor based in Eau Claire since 1948, has been announced as the 2018 Paragon Award recipient to recognize their recent impact on the economy in the Eau Claire Area. Every year the Eau Claire Area EDC is proud to present the Paragon Award, sponsored by Royal Credit Union, to a local business that is a model of economic excellence. The Paragon Award is an opportunity to celebrate these businesses that support and enhance our community – making it a vibrant place to live and work.

Businesses are nominated for the Paragon Award by their peers within the community and each nomination is evaluated based on economic impact. Examples of economic impact include but are not limited to: creation of new, quality job opportunities; recent or current expansion of an existing facility; construction of a new facility; substantial investment in capital equipment; commitment to the continued education and training of their workforce; and

innovations in the development of new technologies and products.

Over the course of 2018, Market & Johnson contributed significantly to the Eau Claire area's economy through several of their recent projects that enabled new business and job development to grow within the area, significant capital investment in their Eau Claire headquarters, and their continued commitment to philanthropic efforts in our community.

"I would like to congratulate Market & Johnson on being selected to receive the 2018 Paragon Award," said Brandon Riechers, Royal Credit Union President & CEO.

"Market & Johnson has made a significant impact by focusing on projects that make our community a better place to live and work now and will continue to benefit generations to come. Royal Credit Union is proud to sponsor this award and celebrate businesses, like Market &



Johnson, who are committed to strengthening the economy and quality of life in the Eau Claire area."

Founded in 1948, Market & Johnson has grown over the past seventy years to become western Wisconsin's largest construction management and general contracting company. With an annual construction volume of over \$400 million and over 400 employees, Market & Johnson has the experience and the depth of resources to help companies large and small fulfill their construction needs. Their relevant project experience in advanced manufacturing, food processing, office and commercial construction, civic and municipal projects, medical, and multi-family housing have positioned Market & Johnson to continue to help the Eau Claire area and the Chippewa Valley grow and prosper.

Market & Johnson utilized their robust experience in many projects during 2018 that aided in the expansion or establishment of businesses in our community. These projects include Haymarket Landing, River Prairie Events Center, Mills Fleet Farm, and the new Drylock Technologies building.

In 2018 Market & Johnson celebrated its 70th anniversary by completing a more than \$5 million expansion of their Eau Claire headquarters. This new headquarters serves as the "home base" for approximately 60 office staff and over 350 field staff.

They have also played a key role in the revitalization of downtown Eau Claire and the growth of UWEC, both which are imperative for our community's sustainable economic growth. One of the most prolific projects that were completed in 2018 is the Pablo Center at the Confluence - which now serves as a hub for community events and downtown activities.

"Adding Value to Everything We Do" is more than just their tagline - it's a philosophy that has been ingrained within the company's culture to ensure they help their clients succeed. Market & Johnson's continued commitment to giving back to the community includes philanthropic efforts including such as being a founding investor for the Confluence Center Project and one of the major investor in the new Pablo Center at the Confluence.

"Adding Value to Everything We Do" is more than just their tagline - it's a philosophy that has been ingrained within the company's culture to ensure they help their clients succeed.





THE FIREBALL RUN

Eau Claire served as a the Green Light, or starting city, film location for contestants and film crews and is prominently featured within several episodes of the acclaimed series. Setting off from beautiful Eau Claire, Wisconsin, teams had to traverse 2,000 miles before finishing to a massive spectator-attended parade finale in Rapid City, South Dakota.

The Fireball Run is hosted by Ivan Ellis and Professional Wrestler Sassy Stephie who shares the story of 40 driving teams on their journey to compete in an epic quest to find America's obscure historic artifacts, unique attractions, and amazing experiences. Unlike Reality TV, Fireball Run is real- and one of the most complex television shows ever filmed.

"I'm thrilled about taking the opportunity to share information on missing children during this journey and hope our efforts aid in bringing them home!"

Eau Claire was not only the starting line for this adventure to bring the children home - but Luke Hanson, Executive Director of the EDC, and Julie Thoney, Community Service & Economic Development Manager of Xcel, was one of the 40 teams and handed out missing children posters throughout the entire 2,000 mile journey. In addition to assisting in the nation's largest effort to recover missing children, Hanson and Thoney won First Place for Alternate Fuel Class in the competition.

"I'm thrilled about taking the opportunity to share information on missing children during this journey and hope our efforts aid in bringing them home!" Julie Thoney from Xcel Energy and who was on Eau Claire's team in Season 11, the Xcelerators.

Throughout the live-action competition, every driving



team is tasked with distributing thousands of posters featuring a missing child. To date, Fireball Run's Race to Recover America's Missing Children awareness campaign for the Child Rescue Network, a Florida based charity has aided in over 50 child recoveries.

"The Race to Recover America's Missing Children is a huge deal for Child Rescue Network", says Jeff Griesemer, President and CEO.

"Having these amazing vehicles rolling across the country with teams handing out posters of missing children raises a tremendous amount of awareness of the issue and the cases we've selected. It also works! 1 in 6

missing children are found because someone sees a picture and the Fireball Run teams will be distributing nearly 50,000 posters."

Driving teams are tasked with clues which, if solved on time, lead to an array of amazing artifacts, physical challenges and unusual experiences spanning the Midwest.

Notable participants include Original Red Power Ranger Austin St. John, cult film favorite, actor Brian O'Halloran, Miss America's Sharlene Hawkes and Nicole Johnson, Brazilian Astronaut Col. Marcos Pontes, Jacqueline Seigel, star of the Queen of Versailles, and International Best-Selling author Jay Menez.

In Eau Claire the teams had the opportunity to explore and discover our rich history by holding autographs of famous individuals such as Boris Karloff, Abbott and Costello, and Frank Lloyd Wright

who signed a hotel registry while they stayed in Eau Claire, a baseball signed by Hank Aaron, experience our natural beauty by zorbing on Half Moon Lake and releasing Monarch Butterflies at Beaver Creek Reserve; and diving into our booming industry by viewing the first supercomputer at the Chippewa Valley Industrial Museum and experiencing what raw horseradish tastes like at Silver Spring Foods.

The Eau Claire Area EDC worked with community partners such as City of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Visit Eau Claire, Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce, ECRAC, Highland Entertainment, City of Altoona, Xcel Energy, iHeartMedia, Wisconsin Public Radio, Action City, the Post House, Pine Hollow Audio, DigiCopy, The Oxbow, and The Lismore to bring this exciting opportunity to Eau Claire.



CONNECTING ENTREPRENEURS TO OUR COMMUNITY

Eau Claire is fortunate to have an abundance of entrepreneurial resources and service providers for individuals in our community. Whether you just have an idea and are unsure what the next steps are, or if you are an established business and are looking to expand your operations - Make Eau Claire can help you find the resource you need to make it happen.

Individuals who have an idea and need to connect to resources to take their first steps to make their dream to reality are able to browse and contact resources, several of them free!

This website is the one stop where entrepreneurs and businesses can research and get connected to our community's resources!

Other areas of the website are broken down similarly into stages of idea or business development. The main categories of the website connect individuals to resources that will assist them in: taking action and creating a business plan locating funding and investors; expanding their product line, business, or workforce to meet the demands of their customers; finding a building or site, or expanding on an existing structure; connecting to the entrepreneurial and business community in Eau Claire.

This free website can be accessed on computer, tablet, or mobile devices anywhere at www.MakeEauClaire.com



CHIPPEWA VALLEY INNOVATION CENTER

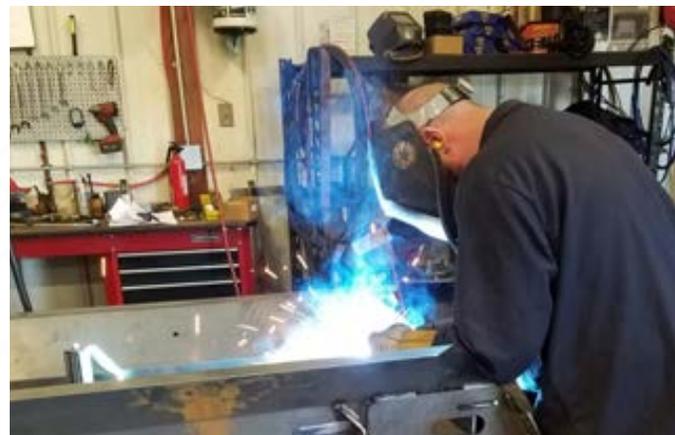
The CVIC is a 501(c)3 whose mission it is to support the region's manufacturing base and the next generation of small business startups. In its over 30 year history, we have graduated many businesses from our incubator program that are successful companies in the Chippewa Valley Region, including Parco Window Manufacturing, Advanced Laser Machining, and Rod-N-Bobs, among many others.

The CVIC was formed in 1986 in response to a growing need within the Chippewa Valley for low cost, appropriately sized space for businesses in the early stages of development. Today, the facility is an example of a successful private/public partnership and serves as an incubation center for manufacturing and service related businesses.

The mission of the Chippewa Valley Innovation Center is to encourage new and emerging entrepreneurial businesses utilizing community resources to provide temporary facility, managerial, technical, and financial assistance.

Currently the facility is full for manufacturing tenants, and over the past year those tenants grew their employment from 10 to 21. In 2017, they represent \$662,905 in payroll and \$230,309 in capital improvements.

In 2018, the center saw the graduation of one of our tenants - Earthbound Environmental Solutions, LLC. This company when through the 3 year incubation period of the CVIC, and heavily utilized several of the advantages of being located out at the Chippewa Valley Innovation Center.



Principal Owner of Earthbound Environmental, Jamie Pappas remarked of the CVIC opportunity.

"The Chippewa Valley Innovation Center, CVIC, is a great fit for up and coming businesses. Being a non-traditional program focusing on food waste recycling, it was difficult for Earthbound to obtain the funding needed for the program's launch. Not only was funding made available through CVIC, but human resources were made available including working with the Board of Directors and facility staff that allowed us to seek guidance when necessary. As a women owned business programs like the CVIC support women leaders as companies like Earthbound continue to push boundaries in the areas of supporting all human beings in the workforce and environmental stewardship."

The CVIC is a partnership between several private and public entities including: Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation, Chippewa County, City of Eau Claire, Eau Claire County, Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation, and Xcel Energy.

FOCUS ON ENTREPRENEURS: EARTHBOUND ENVIRONMENTAL

The Eau Claire Area EDC works with entrepreneurs to help them become established small businesses within our community. Earthbound Environmental Solutions, LLC is one of these small businesses that we have had the privilege of working with and we are thrilled to share their story!

Earthbound Environmental Solutions, LLC is ran by the dynamic husband and wife duo, Zacharious and Jamie Pappas. They submitted their idea for a garbage service that collected organic waste to the Idea Challenge in 2014, where they were one of five finalists. Recently, they participated in the Chippewa Valley Regional HATCH program in 2018 where they won audience favorite in the Eau Claire Community Program, and took home the Chippewa Valley Regional HATCH Grand Prize of \$5,000.

Could you briefly describe for everyone what Earthbound Environmental Solutions does?

“Earthbound offers a multi-pronged waste management program consisting of weekly curbside collection of organic materials, traditional recycling, and refuse. The organization also operates a compost facility where organic material is processed for composting. We think of Earthbound specializing in offering dynamic sustainability based solutions that can be implemented in a variety of industries. Our innovative services such as organics recycling increases the % of material diverted from local landfills for other uses while offering subscribers an easy to use and dependable service.”

This is a new business service that was introduced to our community – how did your journey to becoming an entrepreneur start?

“Becoming an entrepreneur isn’t just one thing, we are still becoming entrepreneurs, and we don’t think it is just something that happens. But in becoming an entrepreneur it started with us identifying a community need that was currently not being served.

Creating a garbage company is not an easy task. Starting at the idea phase, it took us roughly four years to bring our idea to full execution. During that time we connected with many community stakeholders to become educated, to seek guidance during our exploratory process of starting a waste management company, and to gain community buy in. We also had to participate in the democratic process of public hearings, citizen engagement, town, county, town hall style meetings - and going through the necessary permitting and licensing process.”

It is exciting to know that you still consider yourselves in the process of becoming entrepreneurs – how do you stay motivated?

“It is really our combined passions of supporting the environment and people with disabilities that helped motivate us begin exploration into the organics recycling niche. Prior to launching Earthbound’s first of its kind service, we spent many years working in Wisconsin’s various Medicaid waiver programs.

We knew there was a tremendous opportunity to create meaningful employment for folks right in our community through our Everyone! program. We also knew that the current waste management infrastructure on the bureaucracy side; regulations, oversight, ordinances, already existed and that a paradigm shift in the public’s view on sustainability, waste management, etc, was starting to take shape.

I love how you are using your journey of entrepreneurship to leave a positive and lasting impact on our community!

Yes, through Earthbound we can offer programs that enhance our community in two big ways; we can protect the environment by handling landfill destined materials, and also support an informed citizenry to reduce the overall percentage of landfill destined material through organics recycling, information on waste reduction practice, and supporting an overall

115+ entrepreneurs were assisted through EDC programs and resources in the past year

awareness of how we can reduce our foot print. The second way is to create meaningful employment to populations historically under employed and marginalizes, such as the disability community. It is also important to us to show that women can be successful as entrepreneurs, no matter what industry. We hope that through Jamie's leadership in Earthbound that the next girl scientist, math wiz, or entrepreneur will find inspiration in knowing that you girls will someday be our leaders and can accomplish anything they put their minds on.

If you had to pick only one word to describe your life as an entrepreneur- what would it be? Flexible!

Do you think Eau Claire offers any advantages to you as entrepreneurs?

Right now there are not a lot of companies doing what we do in our area, even in our region. This allows us to differentiate ourselves among the other providers in the market place. As an emerging business, the initial community support is great, as various stakeholders have a vested interest in our overall success and are very willing to offer assistance. There is the early buzz that entrepreneurs need to take advantage of as excitement builds around your business's offering.

Eau Claire has many individuals who either are entrepreneurs or are considering starting their own business - what advice would you give to other entrepreneurs who are starting out?

"Get as much help as you can, do as much research as you can, and know that there will be many failures and obstacles in your path that you simply

need to overcome. Early in our exploratory process we partnered with organizations like EDC, SBDC, etc, and received valuable assistance that allowed for the further development of our idea. Doing anything worthwhile is never going to be easy, and it is complicated further, if you do not seek in others, the skills or abilities you do not possess. Believe in yourself, even when key stakeholders may not believe in you or your idea. Not everyone is going to "get it" right from the start. Learn from those experiences and how to better educate your audience on what you do and how you'll be successful."



Earthbound has also done so much - what are your plans for the future?

"Earthbound has just completed our pilot and is focusing on a 2019 expansion of both our commercial and residential services. For our commercial accounts we are strengthening existing partnerships while focusing on future collaborations that will allow the organics recycling movement to achieve greater metrics and increase the role of sustainability in our local waste management system. Earthbound will also be expanding its organics recycling curbside service to all Altoona and Eau Claire neighborhoods as 2019 continues its trajectory. We also plan to increase the number of individuals participating in our Everyone! program which is an asset based community development program that creates meaningful employment opportunities for groups of people that are often marginalized and historically under employed."

You can learn more about them, and sign up for their services online at www.earthboundenviro.com/

CHIPPEWA VALLEY HATCH PITCH COMPETITION

Bright Star Wisconsin Foundation, Inc., a non-profit angel investment group that helps entrepreneurs grow their early stage ideas into businesses, expanded into our region for their first ever Chippewa Valley HATCH Regional Finale.

HATCH is a high-energy idea pitch program that offers entrepreneurs the chance to present their business ideas to supportive community members and businesses in a fun and highly social event format. At the finale, regional semi-finalists will have five minutes to pitch in front of judges and a live audience for the chance to win the grand prize of \$5,000.

Ten of those participants each won \$2,000 and qualified for an opportunity to “pitch” again in one of the three regional HATCH finales. The presenters and companies at the Chippewa Valley HATCH Regional Finale are:

- Andrew Niese from Fixity
- Gary Ramsden from Silvermine Stone Company
- Jamie & Zach Pappas from Earthbound Environmental
- Josh Shefner from Blue Mango
- Tanya Stoeklen from Jessie’s Jym
- Zack Arvold from Self Protection Systems

HATCH events are funded by BrightStar with the help of a matching grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. The Chippewa Valley HATCH events were supported by the Johnson Financial Group, Ruder Ware Law Firm and numerous local donations and sponsorships. The events were hosted by the Economic Development Corporations from Chippewa, Dunn and Eau Claire Counties.

STARTUP 48

As Eau Claire’s entrepreneurial scene continued to blossom, community leaders recognized a need for individuals who wanted to learn how to start a business but weren’t ready to become full-fledged entrepreneurs, or didn’t have fully developed business ideas. There wasn’t an event available where entrepreneurial enthusiasts could spend a few short days and learn what it takes to create a startup, from pitching an idea to presenting to a panel of judges.

To fill this need in our community, several members came together from non-profit, education, and business to form Startup 48, Eau Claire’s very own weekend-long startup event. The first event was a rousing success, and it quickly became apparent that not only did individuals want to learn the steps to turn an idea into a viable business model, but they wanted to connect with industry leaders and resources in their community.

Since 2015, this annual event has continued to grow and attract entrepreneurs and entrepreneur hopefuls throughout the region. Every year attendees come with no idea how the weekend will roll, nervous because they aren’t quite sure the event is for them, and at the same time, super excited for whatever is about to happen. Only 48 short hours later they leave with new friends, connections to industry leaders, access to community resources, and experience on how to start a business!

2018’s Startup 48 was held over the weekend of October 20 through the 22. The weekend was hosted at JAMF Software, right in the downtown of Eau Claire across from Phoenix Park. This weekend-long event where individuals come together and learn what it takes to create and run a startup business reached a record attendance - almost tripling the previous years!

“Startup 48 is probably the best way to propel your idea from a dream into reality in just a weekend’s time. It’s fun meeting other people who are just as passionate about their ideas and incredibly valuable to get the feedback of experienced business owners.” explained Justin Vajko.



Friday afternoon all attendees show up and get to know each other over dinner. Then everyone has the opportunity to pitch their idea to the group. Each person is encouraged to pitch an idea, but it is not a requirement. Since the goal is to create a minimal viable product within 48 hours, most ideas for Startup 48 center on web services, apps, and technology. After everyone has the opportunity to pitch an idea, all the participants then vote on their favorite ideas and form teams around the top voted ideas.

Friday night through Sunday, the teams work towards creating a minimal viable product. Sunday evening all the teams present their startup ideas to a panel of local judges that could include business owners, experienced entrepreneurs, and venture capitalists.

Throughout the weekend, all teams had to take the initial pitched idea and continuously work through the lean startup model. This model encourages individuals to work through an idea and build a Minimal Viable Product (MVP). This required the teams to go out and seek market validation, continuously pivot the product or service idea to meet the needs and feedback of the market, and develop their MVP by the end of the day Sunday.

Sunday the teams raced to finish their MVP into a short 5 minute pitch that was given to a panel of judges. These judges then determined who the Grand Prize winner was.

New for 2018, Startup 48 became a Wisconsin Big Idea Tournament. This provides a new opportunity for the Grand Prize Winner of Startup 48 to be connected to state resources to further their idea. The winner of Startup 48 not only gains access to these resources, but has the opportunity to share their idea on a statewide, and even international, level.

"Startup 48 is probably the best way to propel your idea from a dream into reality ... it's fun meeting other people who are just as passionate..."

This year's Grand Prize winner of Startup 48 is Build-A-Bio, an automatic biography writing system for new and emerging professionals.

"Startup48 is UW-Eau Claire's qualifying competition for the Wisconsin Big Idea Tournament. By taking part in WBIT, Build-a-Bio will develop their Lean Startup business tools and receive business mentorship." Kristen Ruka, Regional and Licensing Associate with WiSYs states. "They will compete at a state level against other UW teams for a chance to win seed funding for their idea as well as the opportunity to compete internationally at the 2019 International Business Model Competition."

Learn more about Startup 48 at www.Startup48.co

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION CALLS

Utilizing Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) calls is one of the oldest and most impactful programs that the EDC engages in. The main goal of the BRE calls is to determine what the challenges that our community is facing.

Over the course of a year, the Eau Claire Area EDC has visited with local businesses to date to identify current and upcoming challenges that they are encountering. These 42 businesses represent 3,104 current employees. 80% of these businesses are currently hiring - representing 135 positions.

The industries represented in the BRE calls are reflective of both Eau Claire's industry sectors and the exclusion of downtown businesses that are called on by the City of Eau Claire.

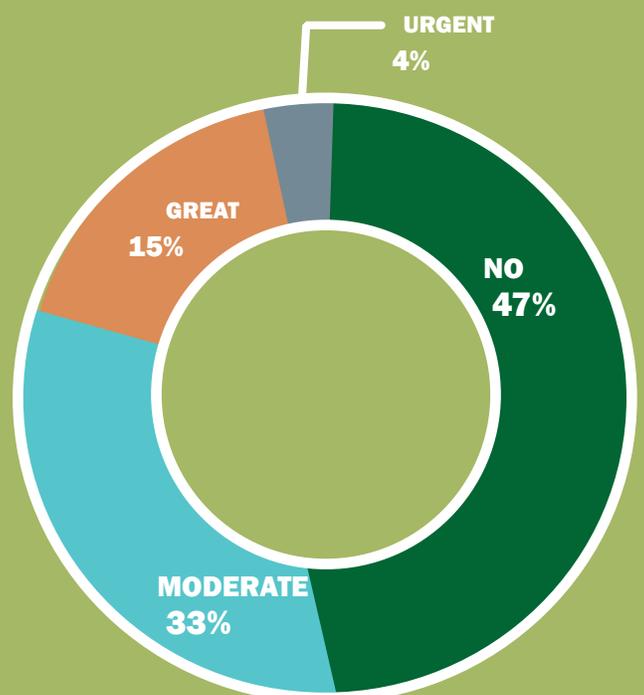
Top current challenges, as reported by local businesses, include finding good employees, competition, the rising cost of operations, and importing/exporting.

When asked what they foresee to be upcoming challenges, the most notable shift was the top concern which went from "finding good employees" to "not having enough workers in the labor pool". Other challenges that businesses foresee include the continued issues of competition and rising operational costs.

To schedule a BRE call for your business, please reach out to the EDC at 715-834-0070 or contact Luke directly at Luke.Hanson@eauclaire-wi.com

The results of this survey have been and will continue to be used to focus workforce efforts in a way to benefit our local employers.

HOW CONCERNED ARE IS YOUR BUSINESS
OVER UPCOMING RETIREMENTS?



CHIPPEWA VALLEY WORKFORCE DEMAND SURVEY

Since 2012, the Eau Claire Area EDC has worked with community partners across both public and private sectors to gather local labor market data on hard to fill positions, upcoming retirements, degrees hired, and internships. Understanding the local labor market is a vital to our efforts to serve local businesses and continue to work towards a healthy and robust labor pool.

Preliminary results of the 2018 Chippewa Valley Workforce Demand survey revealed that not only are local employers dealing with current labor force shortages, but many are looking at further demands as upcoming retirements generate more vacant positions within their companies.

Current hard to fill positions indicated in the most recent survey reflect the top industries in both the Eau Claire area and the Chippewa Valley. The top of the list, with 465 positions over the next two years, is Customer Service, a position that is utilized throughout most industries including retail and healthcare. The next two hard to fill positions are Certified Nursing Assistant/Resident Assistant and Registered Nurse with 435 and 344 positions respectively anticipated over the next two years.

It is worth noting that while the top positions include positions within the healthcare field that require higher education, when looking at the education desired overall for hard to fill positions, the majority of the positions require a High School Diploma or equivalent.

When looking ahead, a little over half of all businesses indicated some level of concern with upcoming retirements. The top positions that businesses indicated concern over filling in the future due to retirements included: Registered Nurses, teachers, management, and maintenance.

Education desired in positions that will be opened due to retirement reflects a higher level of need when compared to current hard to fill positions. The most common level of experience desired for these positions include some level of higher education - from certification to Ph.D.

An addition to the 2018 survey asked local employers if they offered internships to students. a majority, 67%, indicated that they did offer internships to students who were at least 18 years old. Businesses who indicated that they do not offer internships were asked what barriers kept them from offering internships.

By far the two most cited barriers for not being able to offer an internship was “not enough time to train an intern” and “don’t have the budget for an intern” at 38% and 35% respectively. Other barriers towards offering internships that were indicated included: lack of access to individuals who are interested in internships, unawareness of the internship process, and internal obstacles such as corporate approvals.

Summary of the full survey results will be communicated directly with K-12 educators and higher educational institutions to highlight which areas of study are being sought by area employers. Survey results may also allow for employers to apply for state training grants (Wisconsin Fast Forward) tied to their specific skill needs.

Completed results from the 2018 survey will be released and available for download from the Eau Claire Area Economic Development’s website. Questions on the data can be sent to Scott Hodek via email at Scott.Hodek@dwd.wisconsin.gov

1 MILLION CUPS

Eau Claire, Wisconsin was one over 160 chapters of 1 Million Cups, a national program to engage, educate and connect local entrepreneurs. Founded by the Kauffman Foundation, 1 Million Cups is based on the notion that entrepreneurs network and discover solutions over a million cups of coffee. The free, weekly gathering helps build startup communities on a grassroots level.

Every Wednesday morning at 9:00 am, an entrepreneur shares their story and verbalizes how the community can help them succeed. During the year Eau Claire's 1 Million Cups meets at Chippewa Valley Technical College's Business Education Center, moving to the Chamber of Commerce for the summer months.

"It is rewarding to see our community come together every week to engage with and support one another." stated Christina Wasson, Project and Marketing Manager at the Eau Claire Area EDC and one of the organizers for the Eau Claire 1 Million Cups Chapter. *"The feedback we continuously receive from presenters is how amazed they are about the amount of support and feedback they received, and how grateful they are that we have a supportive environment."*

To learn more, see past presentations, and apply to present - visit our chapter online at www.1millioncups.com/eauclaire



THE IDEA CHALLENGE

Fixity, an idea submitted by Andrew Niese for an app to report and manage issues within a city, was awarded the 2018 Idea Challenge Grand prize of \$5,000 towards reimbursable business expenses to move his idea into the local marketplace. Niese explained that he came up with the idea after he took up running:

"Fixity started shortly after I took up running a couple years ago. I'd keep noticing things like overgrown branches blocking the sidewalk, and dangerous crosswalks. When I tried calling the city, sometimes it was tough to reach the right people or describe exactly where the issues were, so I thought maybe this was something that software could help with."

"I think a lot of people want to be proactive in helping shape their neighborhoods and making them better places to live. Fixity is about helping them do that and helping cities to respond effectively."

The Idea Challenge is an annual contest where individuals in the Eau Claire Area can submit their idea for a new product, service, or process. Entrepreneurs and inspiring entrepreneurs submit their ideas to the Idea Challenge where the Eau Claire Area EDC then walks them through the process of taking an idea and moving it into the marketplace.

Launched by the Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation in 2007, the Idea Challenge has been supporting local entrepreneurs and innovative thinkers within our community for over a decade. In 2011, thanks in part to the added contribution of the Idea Challenge's sponsor Northwestern Bank, the Idea Challenge was able to offer cash awards and reimbursements to aid some of the applicants in advancing their idea.

When asked what the next steps are for Fixity, Niese said *"We're doing a limited beta test now, so next we want to reach out to more cities and expand that. Marketing will be a big thing. If I can find help to increase awareness and outreach, that will free me up to focus on product"*

development. The Idea Challenge prize money will really help with that."

Fixity was presented alongside four other ideas that had been submitted to the contest throughout the year. The five Idea Challenge finalists that presented for the \$5000 Grand Prize - in no particular order - are as follows:

- Shockless Chisel by Thomas Zimbauer Jr.- an ergonomically designed chisel to ease the discomfort of use for home renovation projects
- Fixity by Andrew Niese- an app to report and manage issues in a city
- Payload by Eric Boud - new type of functional ammo packaging
- Foam Forge LLC by Ronald Barribeau - customized foam weapons for fun & fighting
- Revolutionary Studios Revolutionary Studios by Nick Scherrer - a 3D scanning company

Gerald Jacobson, President of Northwestern Bank explains how the Idea Challenge continues to impact the Eau Claire area:

"The Idea Challenge has again given many budding entrepreneurs a chance to showcase their ideas of future businesses. The breadth and creativity of their ideas shows that our community is vibrant and growing. I am sure that some of these ideas will blossom like previous year's winners and contestants whose businesses are evident thru out the Eau Claire area."

Through the Idea Challenge, dozens of ideas have been assisted into the local marketplace. Some notable examples include: Chip Magnet, Gorilla Dumpster Bags, Earthbound Environmental Services, Silvermine Stone Company, Northern Star Fire, and Chippewa



"One of the unique things about Eau Claire is our strong and growing entrepreneurial community."

Valley Tours (AKA Three Foodies LLC - and last year's winner of the Idea Challenge). Products from these Idea Challenge applicants, as well as many, many more, are being sold throughout the nation.

As explained by Jacobson, "I feel that the Idea Challenge gives the push for someone to take their idea from the kitchen table and make the idea a plan, which has benefited the entire community in new business startups."

The Idea Challenge is open to any individual or company with an idea for a new product or service. For over a decade the Idea Challenge has been assisting entrepreneurs in getting connected to community resources, practicing their pitch, assisting in getting their idea into the market, and -of course- the chance to win \$5000 in reimbursable business expenses to move their idea forward. Individuals can submit their ideas online at www.theIdeaChallenge.com

*The Eau Claire Area Economic
Development Corporation thanks all the
committee volunteers for your hard work
and dedication to our community!*

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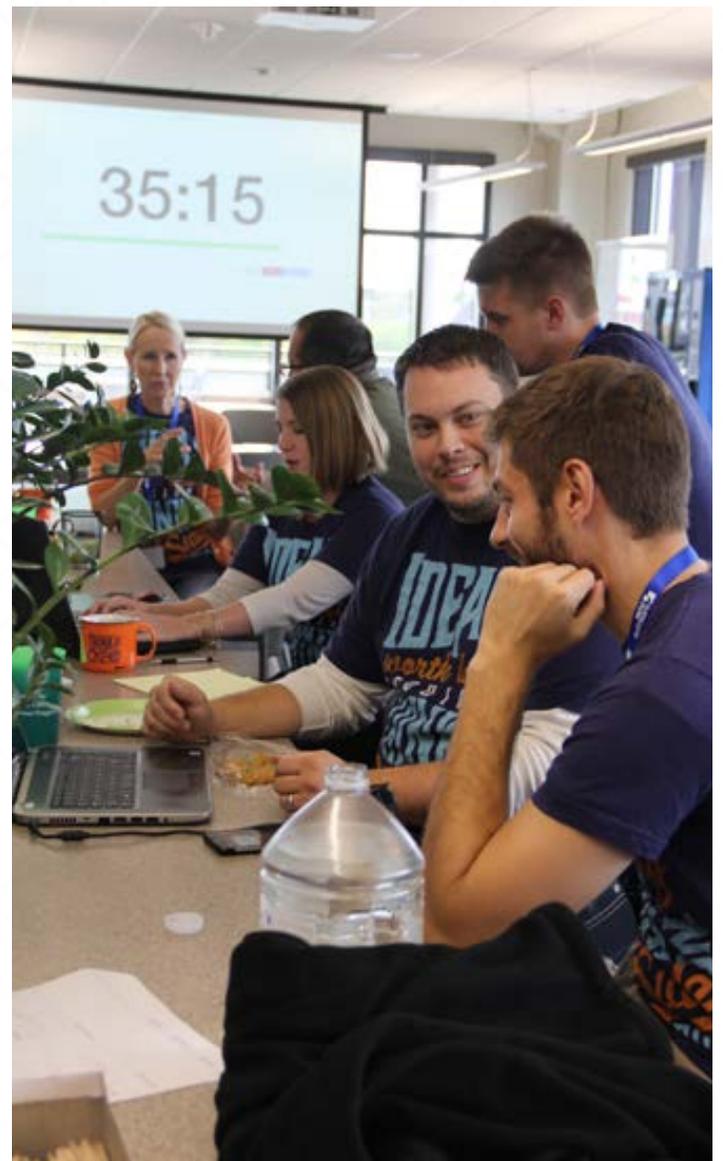
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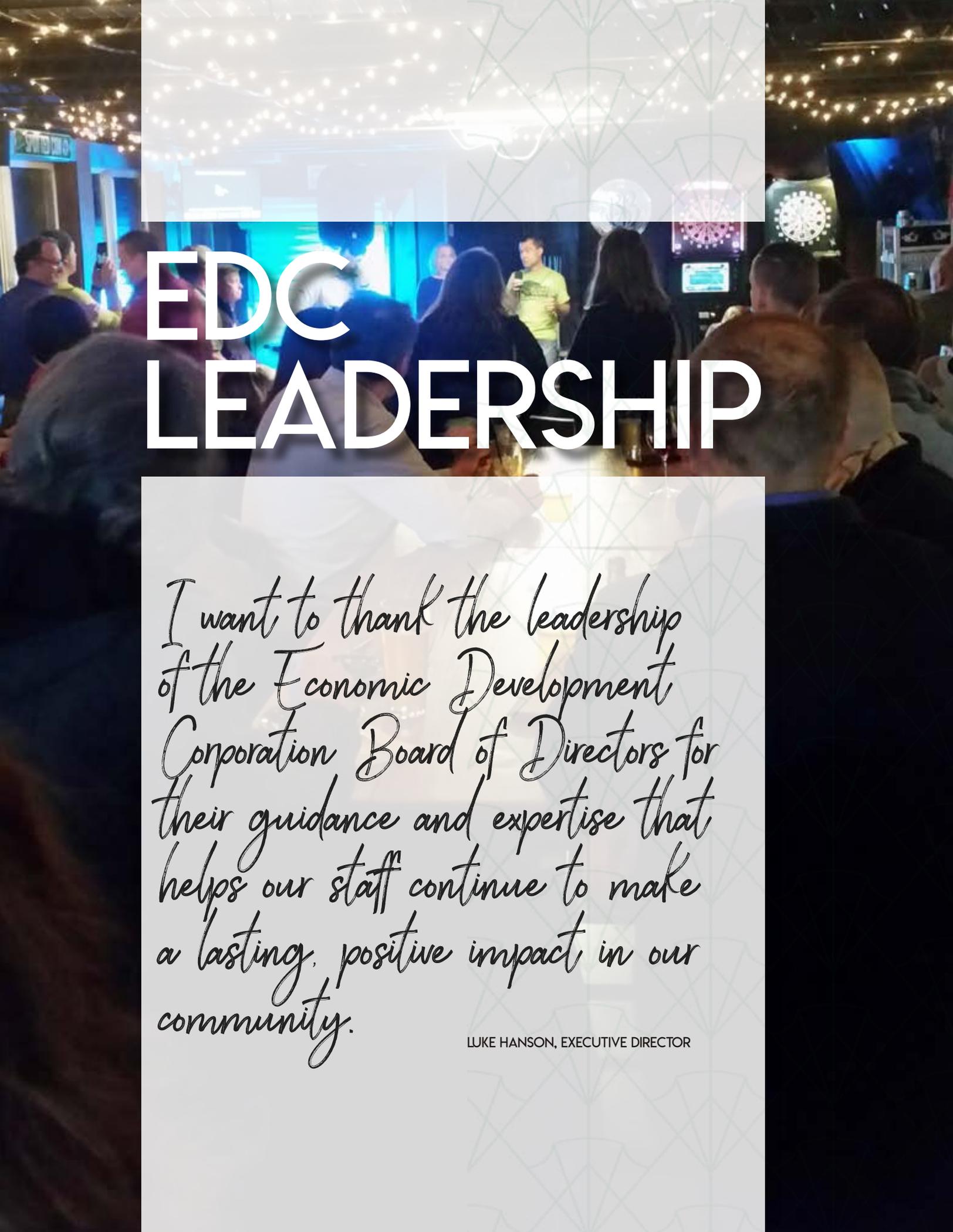
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STARTUP 48

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I want to thank the leadership of the Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors for their guidance and expertise that helps our staff continue to make a lasting, positive impact in our community.

LUKE HANSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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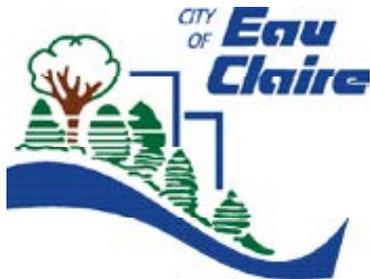
FINANCIALS

REVENUE	ACTUAL
Private Sector Funding	\$ 71,715
Public Sector Funding	\$173,000
Services	\$ 21,600
Misc.	\$ 32,048
Total Revenue	\$299,263
EXPENSES	ACTUAL
Administrative	\$ 180,149
Operations	\$ 62,558
Programs	\$ 39,840
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 282,548



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