

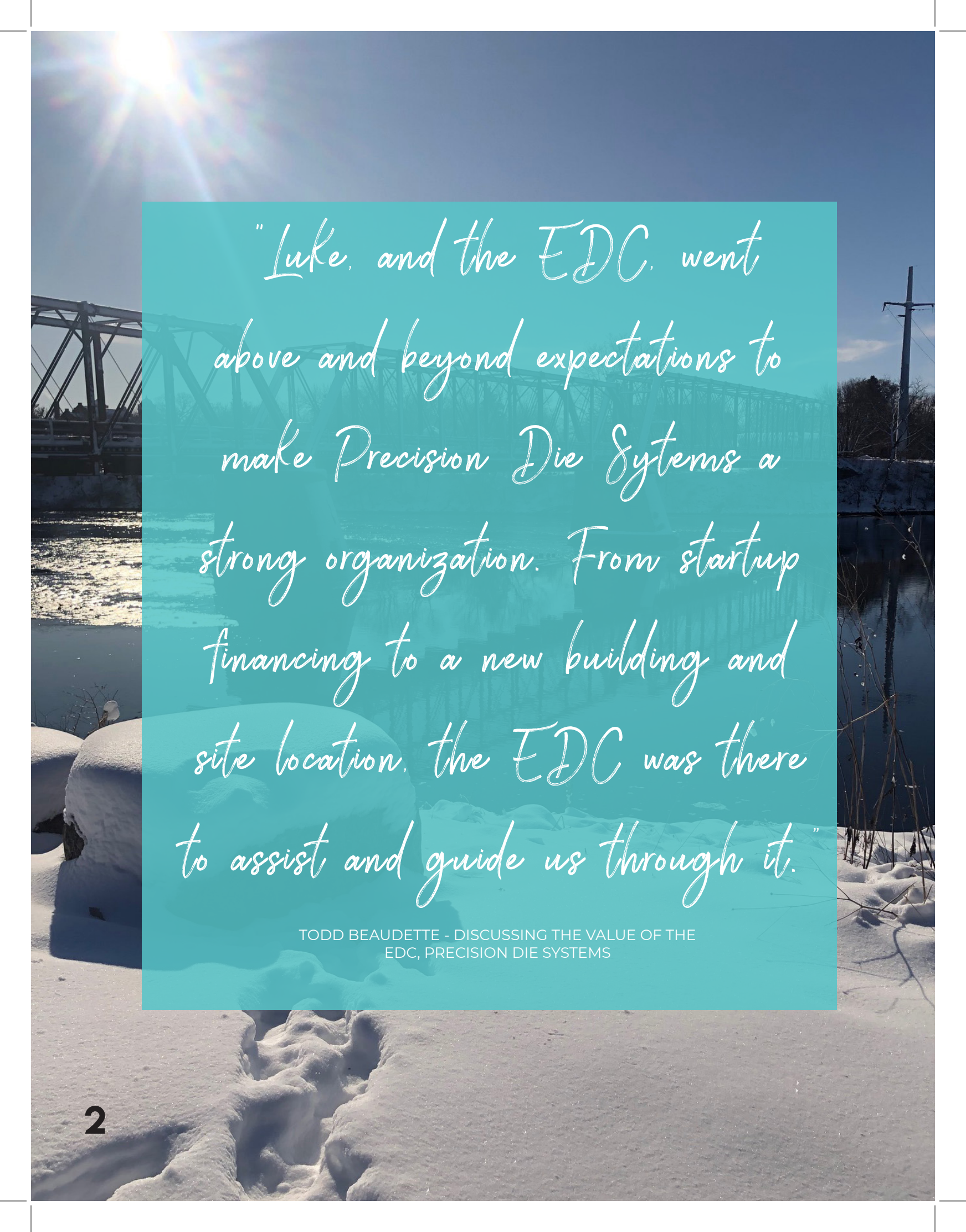
# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation



*Bridging the  
Gaps*





"Luke, and the EDC, went  
above and beyond expectations to  
make Precision Die Systems a  
strong organization. From startup  
financing to a new building and  
site location, the EDC was there  
to assist and guide us through it."

TODD BEAUDETTE - DISCUSSING THE VALUE OF THE  
EDC, PRECISION DIE SYSTEMS

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Gerald Bauer

President JB Systems, LLC

Greetings - and thank you so much for your support over the past year. The year 2019 wrapped up nicely and it marks the conclusion of my final term as the Board President of the Eau Claire Area EDC. The past year has been largely successful in fulfilling the need for economic development in Eau Claire County. The Board members and the EDC staff are always working on and looking for initiatives that advance business prosperity in the region.

In 2018, I started my term with a unified vision for economic development for our area, a vision that asked community members and key stakeholders in economic development to look at our strategy under a different lens: to see the Chippewa Valley as a micro-region - one that competes against other regions. By potentially shifting our approach, we could change the competitive landscape (and overall discussion) from how does Eau Claire compete against its neighbors versus how does the Chippewa Valley hold up against La Crosse (or any other region or corridor in Wisconsin)?

Complimentary to this vision, an early 2019 services survey suggested that the EDC play a larger role in connecting various economic development organizations in the region and assist the area in "Bridging the Gaps" between all organizations. We have worked diligently in facilitating the mission to do just that, so that the Chippewa Valley can be seen as a unified region to do business in. If the Chippewa Valley wins in economic development, we all win.

The Eau Claire Area EDC has had a successful year, despite budget cuts and staffing changes. Even with these challenges, the EDC has been able to fulfil its mission to advance economic prosperity through business and job growth by focusing on business retention, expansion, critical talent and



entrepreneurship. Many of these initiatives are outlined in the following pages.

Most notably, the EDC was directly involved in 3 successful business expansion projects in the Gateway Business Park. Expansions like this will lead to an increase in quality jobs and retention of local businesses in Eau Claire County, which I find imperative to the success of the business landscape.

As I entrust leadership to a new Board President, my support is whole-heartily with the mission and direction of the Eau Claire Area EDC.

This being said, the Eau Claire Area EDC is looking for more support from the community at large and of business leaders. With changes in public sector financial priorities - it is imperative that the private sector businesses acknowledge the importance of our collaborative Economic Development efforts for our area. If all private investors of the EDC increased their contributions by 20%, then the EDC would continue with our mission without any services, benefits, or programs being effected.

The Eau Claire area is an exciting place to call home and grow a business, and I'm honored to have been a part of shaping economic development thoughts and ideas as President of the Board. Thank you again for your continued trust and support, and we look forward to implementing our initiatives for 2020.



# MEET 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.



**BECCA COLEMAN**

Project & Marketing Manager

Supports the local entrepreneurial and startup businesses, manages marketing & community projects.

## OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT



The Eau Claire Area EDC is Eau Claire County's professionally staffed, economic development organization who aims at advancing local prosperity through initiatives that focus on retention, expansion, workforce development and entrepreneurs.

### 2018-2019 BY THE NUMBERS

- 3** Successful projects, in Gateway, resulting in \$5.5 million dollars of building evaluation
- 111** Entrepreneurs assisted through EDC hosted initiatives & events
- 3** Idea Challenge products launched into the marketplace, another 14 entrepreneurs actively working on launching into the local market
- 92** Business Retention calls on businesses located in Altoona, Augusta, Eau Claire, Fall Creek & Fairchild
- 6** Site visits from businesses looking to expand or relocate in Eau Claire
- \$12** Million projected in private investment & public sector funds secured for local businesses

# Day in the Life

From the office of the Executive Director of the Eau Claire Area EDC



What you know about the Eau Claire Area EDC; mission is to facilitate economic development growth through quality jobs in Eau Claire County. What you may not know; what a day in the life of the Executive Director really looks like? Let's dive inside a work-day of the Executive Director.

For the past 6 years, Luke Hanson has been the Executive Director of the Eau Claire Area EDC. Being the Director of Economic Development in Eau Claire County means different things each day; here's a sneak-peek into one of those days.

*7:30am* – Hanson hosts Gateway Industrial Park Corporation partners to discuss developments in this business park. They are working to find suitable land/utilities for an existing local business that wishes to build in the park. Core samples, retaining ponds, and grading is the topic this morning.

*10:00am* – Staff meeting to discuss upcoming The Idea Challenge Finals and awards reception. Hanson reviews itinerary, budget and marketing materials.

*10:39am* – Takes a call from RWE, Wind Energy developer looking to conduct a “Discovery Phase” in Eau Claire County. How can the Eau Claire Area EDC help facilitate the research required to bring education to the potentially effected residents? Hanson and RWE rep discussion open-house style informational events, as well as discussing educating the EDC Board of Directors, so they are at the forefront on the topic.

*11:05am* – Catches up on emails from the morning. Inquiry topics include; vacant land sites in Altoona, information concerning upcoming industry trade shows, messages from Board members regarding the 2020 Strategic Plan.

*12:00pm* – Lunch with area non-profit leader to discuss fundraising events and campaigns. They discuss the EDC's need for supplemental funding and how to best implement a profit generating event.

*2:15pm* – Connection meeting with UWEC Business Development chair. Update each other on current initiatives, brainstorm about business skill training and workforce retention methods. Mid-afternoon coffee is likely.

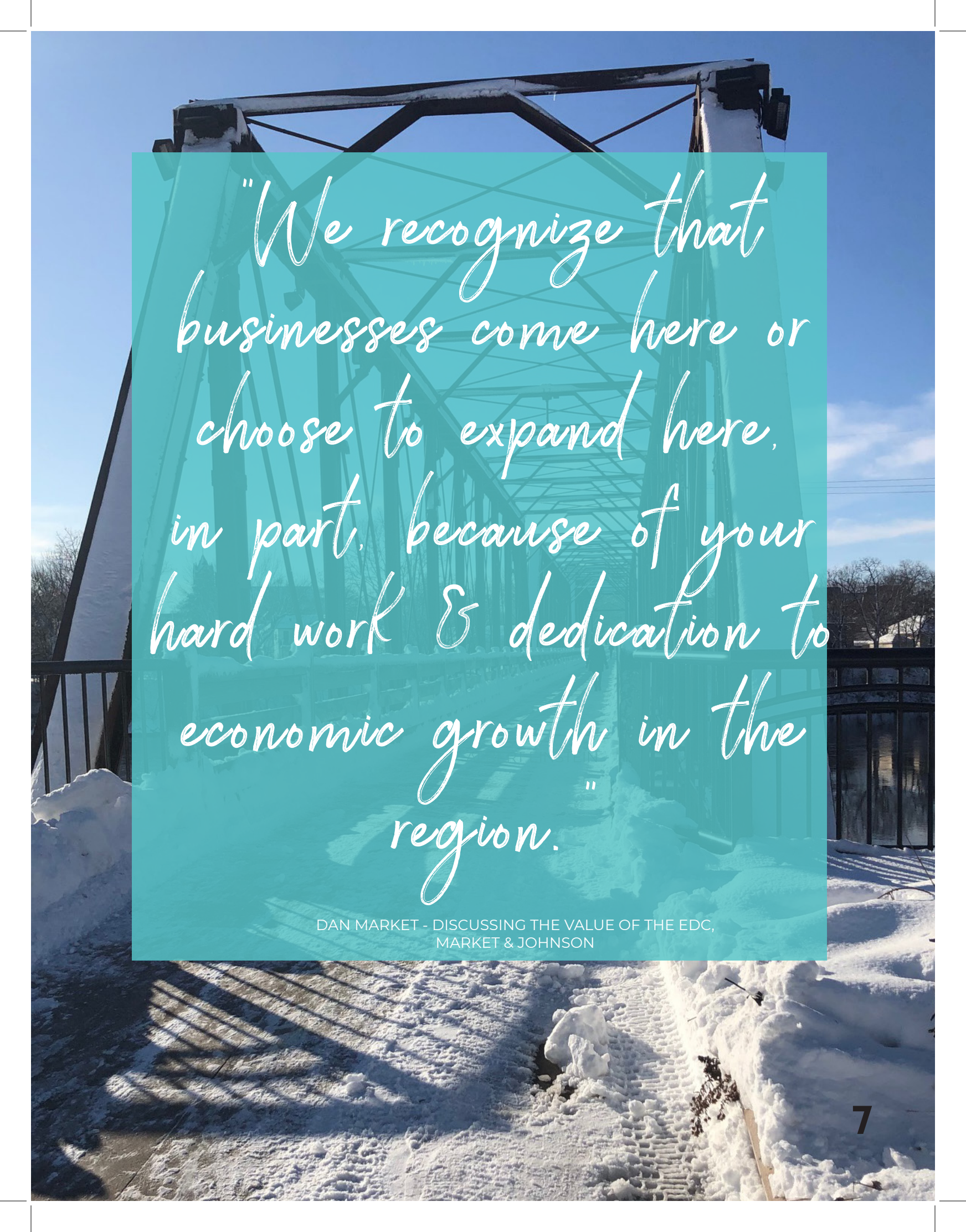
*3:20pm* – Hanson reaches out to Lake Hallie business looking to build in the next 12-18 months. They discuss looking into Eau Claire County sites, as well as in Chippewa County. A meeting to discuss site needs is scheduled.

*4:00pm* – Connects with staff again to discuss Investor email communication that will go out this week. He reviews the content and updates with a new Investor to add to the database.

*4:25pm* – Hanson continues to draft framework for upcoming development of interactive map featuring available industrial, commercial and other large undeveloped residential properties in the county. Calls web developer to discuss qualifiers and other details to get the bid process started.

*5:10pm* – Leaves the office to pick up daughters from daycare, and then to regroup with family over dinner.

Every day is different for the Executive Director of the EDC. The office staff is small, which keeps everyone focused, but also makes all projects & leads land on one of two desks. Luke Hanson likes the challenge presented each day, but, more so, **loves helping businesses and employers thrive in Eau Claire County.**

A photograph of a snow-covered bridge structure, likely a truss bridge, with a teal overlay containing text. The bridge is covered in snow, and the sky is blue. The text is written in a white, cursive font.

"We recognize that businesses come here or choose to expand here, in part, because of your hard work & dedication to economic growth in the region."

DAN MARKET - DISCUSSING THE VALUE OF THE EDC,  
MARKET & JOHNSON

# IDEA CHALLENGE



## Entrepreneurship Drives Innovation

The Chippewa Valley has a business culture of supporting and encouraging new startups. Also, there are many resources in the area that facilitate early businesses development. Merge those two together and what we get is fertile ground for entrepreneurs and startup businesses.

The Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation is a proud supporter and resource for local entrepreneurs. For 13 years, the Eau Claire Area EDC has hosted The Idea Challenge, business idea competition

Dr. Dan Czelatdko, Farm Doc Microgreens

The purpose behind The Idea Challenge is to encourage local innovative thinkers to work on new ideas for a product, service or process.

In 2007, with the sponsorship of Northwestern Bank, the Eau Claire Area EDC was able to offer monetary incentives to the winning ideas in the competition. All contestants are coached by the EDC to help refine the business idea and help advance the idea to be ready for the marketplace.



Hunter Angell, Zaba Sports Cards



Tomi Stoyanova, ToyVentive



Scott Zielski, SMARTcare

In 2019, dozens of locals with a business idea applied to be considered in The Idea Challenge competition. After several monthly meetings with our judging partners, used as business mentors, five finalists were selected to advance to compete for startup funds. Here are the finalists (and winner) from this years The Idea Challenge competition.

**Farm Doc Microgreens** – Dr. Dan Czelatdko – Winning Idea! A year-round business, featuring microgreens grown in a controlled indoor environment. Microgreens, the nutrient-packed seedlings of plants, are grown using non-GMO organic seeds and harvested and delivered fresh to local retailers, restaurants and markets.

**ToyVentive** - Tomi Stoyanova -ToyVentive's speciality is combining educational toys, and board books into the perfect gift set! Responsibly designed for toddlers and preschooler, ToyVentive brings versatile, minimalistic, and reducing clutter toys.

**SMARTcare** - Scott Zielski – SMARTcare is improving the home caregiver to patient experience by developing advanced machine learning home care software to create better matches between caregivers and patients. These stronger matches will drive increased engagement between those giving care and receiving care leading to reduced turnover levels, improved home care outcomes and better overall care of our aging population.

**Zaba Sports Cards** - Hunter Angell – Professional grade trading cards for K-12 Student Athletes and their families. Share memories of your child's best sports moments with custom professional grade trading cards.

**Eau Pour Mobile Bartending** - Liz Fagen - Eau Pour provides fun, professional, and insured mobile bartending services, using locally sourced beers and liquors, for events in the Chippewa Valley. Eau Pour helps to make dream weddings and events a reality by providing individualized luxury-feeling services, while being budget friendly.

The Idea Challenge is one of many events and initiatives that the Eau Claire Area EDC facilitates that help enrich the local entrepreneurial community. We strive to keep the Eau Claire area a relevant and thriving place where businesses can succeed. It is shown that local business startups create jobs, enhance job satisfaction and stimulate the local economy.

Special thanks to The Idea Challenge Partners; Ann Rupnow, Per Forsberg, Pam Owen, Jacob Haupt, Larry Blackledge.





*"Just enter, you can do it! The people you meet and the actions you take along the way are so worth it!"*

HUNTER ANGELL - WHEN ASKED ADVISE FOR  
SOMEONE CONSIDERING APPLYING FOR  
THE IDEA CHALLENGE - ZABA CARDS

# OUR 2020 GOALS



## BUSINESS GROWTH & EXPANSION

**Digital Property Showcase** - Publish a comprehensive map of all available industrial, commercial, and large undeveloped residential properties in the County.

**Communication Initiatives** - Collaborate on expanding broadband services to more rural parts of the County & become a Telecommunication Forward County.

**Leadership Partnership** - Launch CEO Leadership Council to establish economic needs and trends. Open private-sector engagement to solve high-level problems within the community.



## BUSINESS RETENTION

**Business Retention & Expansion Calls** - Increase business growth calls to foster and assist in growing existing businesses.

**Economic Recognition** - Present Paragon Economic Impact Award, annual award used to recognize and celebrate a local business who generates local prosperity.

**Regional Economic Collaboration** - Solidify a team approach for regional economic development to focus on growing the Chippewa Valley. Encourage collaboration within local communities within public and private businesses.

## BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION CALLS

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

Over the course of the year, the Eau Claire Area EDC has visited with local businesses to identify current and upcoming challenges that they are encountering.

**In 2018-19, the Eau Claire Area EDC performed 92 BRE calls in the County. Top challenges, as reported by local business leaders, include talent recruitment at all levels including key roles and succession planning as retirements are vast and inevitable.**

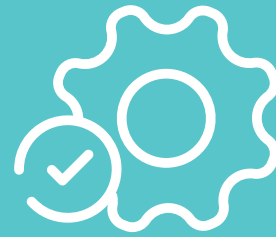


## EMPOWER NEW IDEAS

**Connector in the Startup Community** - Using startup events, cultivate innovative thinkers to bring their ideas to our market. Events include; The Idea Challenge, Startup 48 Business Kick-Start weekend, 1 Million Cups and Startup Eau Claire Week.

**Emerging Industry Clusters** - Partner with UWEC Career Services to develop entrepreneurial opportunities with UWEC Science & Health Sciences Department.

**Supporting Startups** - Promote the development of innovative new products, services and processes by local entrepreneurs.



## STRENGTHENING CRITICAL TALENT

**Identify Needs** - Work with community partners to continue to identify and work towards, finding solutions for local workforce needs.

**Merge Services** - Collaborate & merge the Critical Talent Committee with Eau Claire Chamber of Commerce Workforce Committee.

**Community Connector** - Promote and facilitate interaction between business and higher-education to ensure workforce and skills goals are aligned.





# A SMALL BUSINESS TOOL: THE 504 SBA LOAN PROGRAM

Economic Update Sheds Light on a  
powerful tool for local businesses looking to  
start or expand

Designed to help small businesses grow and create jobs, the SBA 504 loan program has been leveraged by hundreds of local small businesses looking to expand since the program's inception in 1981. The SBA 504 program requires a low down payment and offers long-term fixed interest rates for fixed asset projects (land, buildings, equipment), allowing businesses to start or grow with favorable financing terms, and providing a great alternative to conventional financing. There is also a 504 REFI option for owner-occupied properties.

The low down payment, usually 10% or 15%, allows businesses to preserve more of their cash for operating needs. The long-term fixed rates, currently in the 3's for up to 25 years, results in

interest savings and mitigates future interest rate risk.

Recent businesses in the Chippewa Valley that have utilized the program include StokesHerzog, Cabin Coffee, Selective Countertops, Eau Claire Music School, JY Collision, CrossFit Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire Family Dental, Your Dog's Gym, Furnish 123 and Serenity Health & Home Décor. Projects funded by WBD via the 504 program have created or retained over 66,000 jobs.

While the SBA 504 program is a government program, WBD handles all of the interactions with the SBA on behalf of the business. "For over 20 years I've been helping businesses access financing via the 504 program in partnership with local banks and credit unions. We don't compete with your lender, we partner with them, and chances are I have already worked with him or her", explains Mike Dieckman, Vice President of WBD.

WBD is a non-profit Certified Development Company (CDC) that supports the U.S. Small Business Administration's public policy to promote small businesses and create jobs.

Want to learn more? Contact Mike Dieckman, Vice President of WBD, at [mdieckman@wbd.org](mailto:mdieckman@wbd.org) or 715-834-9474.





# PARCO WINDOWS

## Helping Businesses Grow

During a Business, Retention & Expansion (BRE) call, the Eau Claire Area EDC learned that a local manufacturer wanted to expand its operations and product offerings, but did not have the space in their current building. Discussions about relocating to a vacant, larger building were discussed over the next few years, but there was never the right fit at the right time.

Meanwhile, manufacturing in an outgrown building, spilled over into an adjacent, leased building. The splitting of the production floor, lead to inefficiencies and disconnect between staff and management. In 2019, Parco Windows decided that time and financing was right to build in the Gateway Industrial Park, giving them the freedom to create the best building to fit their growing needs.

## Background

Parco Windows has been manufacturing windows in the Chippewa Valley for 30+ years, starting with operations out of the Chippewa Valley Innovation Center. After a short time at the CVIC, the business moved to a building in the Chippewa Valley Industrial Park. In 2000, Tim McCormick purchased Parco Windows.

Over the decades in this building, the business at Parco windows evolved, but some things remained constant; manufacture quality windows, contract only quality distributors & installers, and stand behind the product. Having these core values has kept customers loyal to the Parco Window brand and keeps them coming back for more.

About three years ago, Parco Windows had outgrown its manufacturing space. New product offerings follow the needs of the customer, but added strain to the already cramped spaces. McCormick and his team started looking for a new home for Parco Windows. The goal was to move into a more efficient, larger space that would provide opportunity to offer more products and expand operations.

The Eau Claire Area EDC was there to offer creative financing solutions and get a lot secured in Gateway Industrial Park. At this time, Parco Windows has an offer to purchase for the land and plans to break ground in 2020 on the new building. The future outlook for Parco Windows is bright. McCormick plans on expanding manufacturing staff as well as adding a Sales Manager to bring in new business that he never could take on before.



# SUCCESS STORY

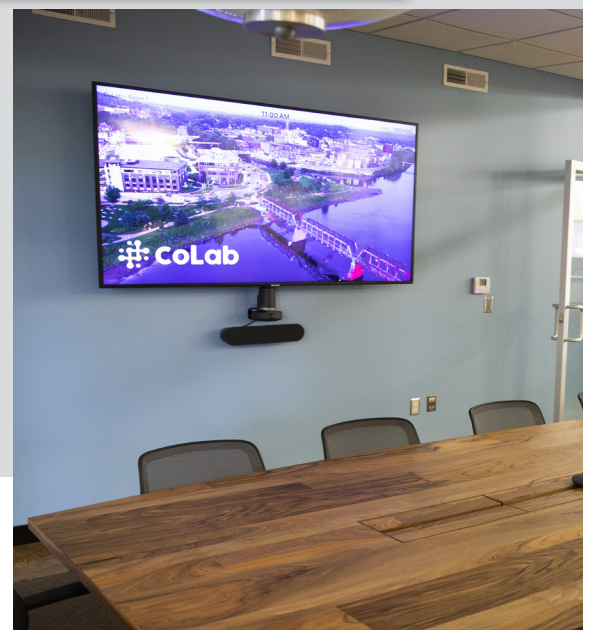
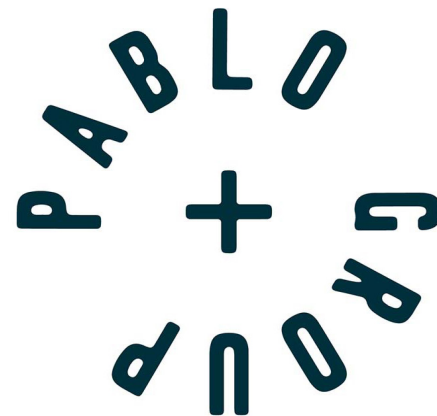
# PARAGON AWARD WINNER

Pablo Group has been announced as the 2019 Paragon Award recipient to recognize their positive impact on the economy in Eau Claire County. Pablo Group, not simply a property management, developer, or event center, but a business aimed to create greater opportunities for the community.

The Eau Claire Area EDC is proud to present the Paragon Economic Impact Award, sponsored by Royal Credit Union, to a local business that has made an economic impact to our community. The Paragon Award is an opportunity to celebrate businesses that support and enhance our community through a broad range of economic development activities or initiatives.

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 included, though not limited to; creation of new, quality jobs; recent or current expansion of existing facility; construction of a new facility; substantial investment into capital equipment; commitment to continued education and training of their workforce; innovations in the development of new technologies and products.

*"I would like to congratulate Pablo Group for receiving the 2019 Paragon Award" said Brandon Riechers, Royal Credit Union President & CEO. "Pablo Group, through their work and dedication to the revitalization of downtown and their philanthropy, has created a buzz of excitement and optimism in our community. They have helped to make Eau Claire a better place to live and work now, and will continue to benefit generations to come. RCU is proud to sponsor this award and celebrate businesses, like Pablo Group, who are committed to strengthening the economy and quality of life in the Eau Claire area."*





Pablo Properties was formed in 2013 by three Eau Claire residents and UW-Eau Claire alumni - Jason Wudi, Zach Halmstad, and Julia Johnson. The three friends worked at Jamf Software and were mutually invested in making a positive impact on Downtown Eau Claire. The Pablo Group's interest in the revitalization of downtown was piqued from partnerships with local and regional businesses during the renovation of The Lismore Hotel in 2015, and the renovation of The Oxbow Hotel, which opened in 2016. These businesses and their hospitality entities quickly became community favorites in the annual Volume One "Best Of" poll and promoted pedestrian traffic to other downtown businesses.

The Pablo Group has since evolved, and its focus is now on the experiences and opportunities available in the region. The group took over Racy d'Lene's Coffee Shop & The Nucleus Café in November 2018, which expanded the scope of development efforts beyond downtown. The group then launched Skill Shot Coffee Bar, located in Artisan Forge. Since its inception, the Pablo Group has been devoted to bettering the quality of life in Eau Claire by creating greater opportunities throughout the community. As

those plans and properties matured, The Pablo Group turned its attention to residential projects, including the transformation of the Syverson Home into The Guild with 49 apartments located downtown on the Chippewa River, and the reclamation of the historic Salisbury Row Houses on West Grand Avenue. In 2019, the group started an initiative to provide affordable accommodations for housing-insecure families, and have been working with Western Dairyland and other local advocacy groups.

As well-traveled observers of other communities and business infrastructures, the Pablo partners have gathered diverse ideas and concepts for developments. In the words of Pablo Group partner Julia Johnson, *"We recognize that Eau Claire is a special place, and that is why we choose to stay and grow here. By cultivating experiences through the hospitality industry, supporting entrepreneurial endeavors, developing local real estate, and fostering urban living and affordable housing, we aspire to improve upon what exists to expand the opportunities available in this community."*





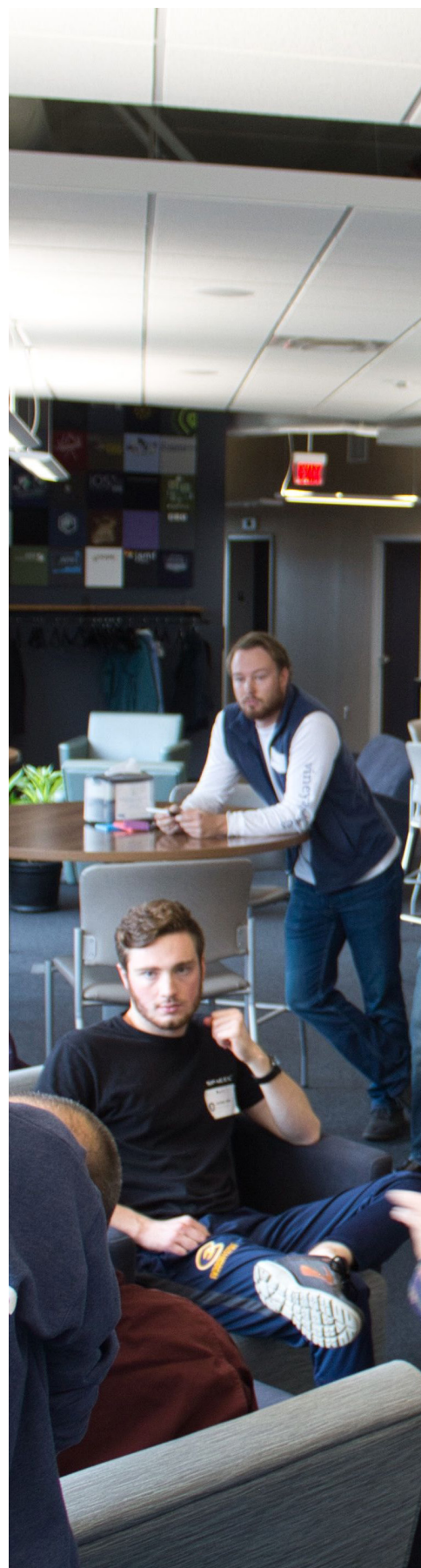
# ACCELERATING OUR STARTUP COMMUNITY

Startup 48 is Eau Claire's only business jump-start weekend. In just 48 hours, individuals form a team around a new business idea and work to create a Minimal Viable Product, one which is ready for the marketplace.

In October of 2019, 37 individuals met at JAMF to begin a weekend-long journey to learn how to create a lean business and prepare to launch into the marketplace. Six dynamic teams formed and worked tirelessly to create business models, verify market need and find their value proposition all based around an initial 60 second business idea pitch. Strangers converged over these pitched ideas and worked together to prove if the idea was valuable or not, starting with clearly defining a problem they'd like to solve.

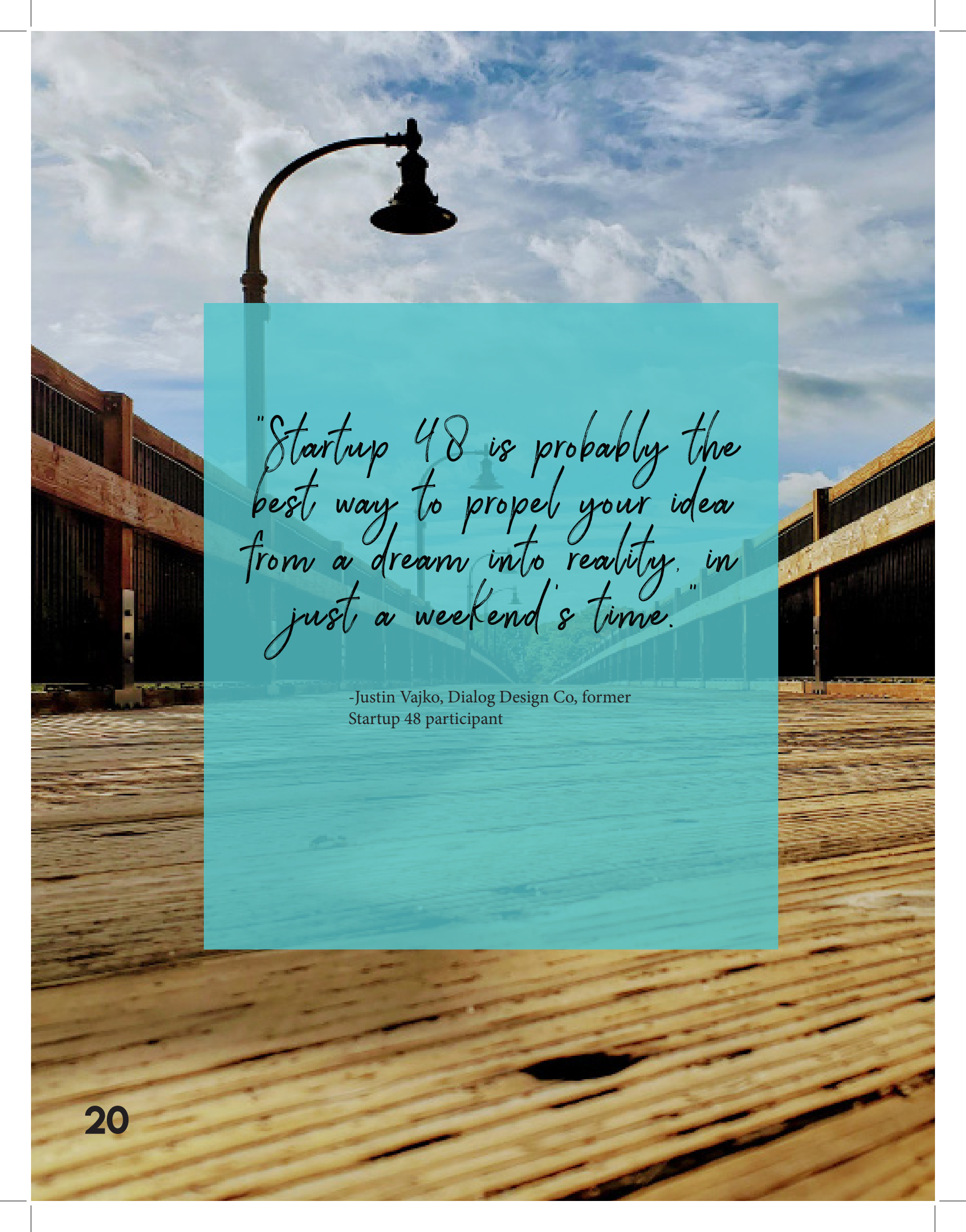
After a few pivots and some intense customer validation, teams focused on these new business ideas;

- Rent-able vans for travel & lodging
- Software to aid farmers regarding ideal planting scenarios
- A modular shovel with removable head attachment
- Healthy, pre-packaged meals benefitting a cause
- Event planning services for the workplace
- Dating app that outlines an evening of local activities



# STARTUP 48





*"Startup 48 is probably the best way to propel your idea from a dream into reality, in just a weekend's time."*

-Justin Vajko, Dialog Design Co, former  
Startup 48 participant

At the end of the weekend, groups presented to a panel of judges to define the business model and how they will fit into the marketplace.

Judges choose **D8 Venture**, an app that plans a date night in the Chippewa Valley, as the winner of Startup 48 competition. The D8 Venture team now qualifies to advance to the Wisconsin Big Idea Tournament, a statewide pitch competition vying for startup capital of up to \$25,000. JAMF, in Eau Claire, will again be the host, but this time there will be qualifying teams from around the state. Date for the WBIT is April 18, 2020.

**Startup 48 is an annual, weekend-long business startup learning experience and competition. Local entrepreneurs and industry experts act as mentors throughout the weekend to assist and re-direct teams when needed, all with the goal to cultivate new business ideas and leaders in the Eau Claire area.**

Several community partners make this annual event possible, including JAMF, UWEC Entrepreneur Program, Chippewa Valley Developers Group, Associated Bank and Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation. Financial sponsors are critical and include WiSys, The Idea Fund, Associated Bank, RCU, Security Financial Bank, Weld Riley and Erberts & Gerberts.

If you or someone in your organization is interested in

participating, we are always looking for Sponsors and Mentors. Contact Becca Coleman, Eau Claire Area EDC for more information. 715-834-0070.

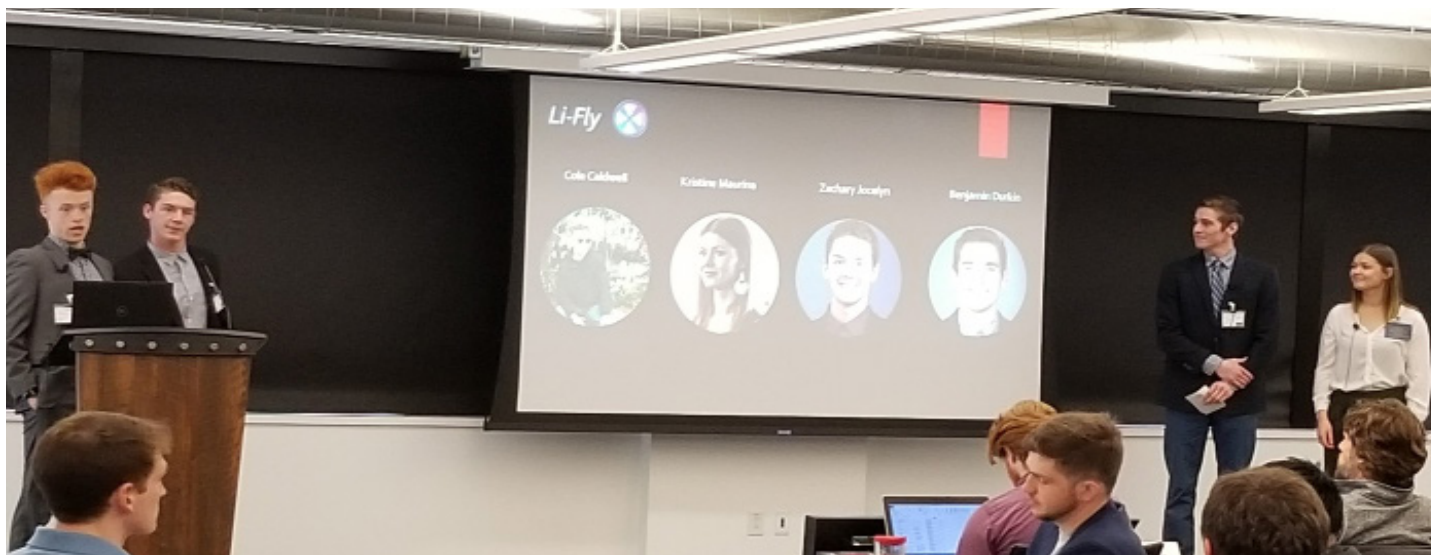
A special thanks to the organizers of Startup 48; Ann Rupnow, Doug Rhoten, Nick White, Rob Brynelson, Christina Wasson, Becca Coleman & Luke Hanson.



### Lean Canvas Business Model

There is a movement around the Lean Canvas Business Model. Business experts say that entrepreneurs waste valuable time and resources by only launching a product when all specifications are perfect, most often the product never makes it to market. The Lean Canvas Business Model fundamentally cuts out options that are not essential and gets an idea to market quickly, allowing customer feedback to shape the next phase of the product.





### Representing University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire on the Stage

*On Saturday, April 13th, 2019 a team of University Wisconsin-Eau Claire Entrepreneur Students presented their idea, Li-Fly, at the Wisconsin Big Idea Tournament for a chance at \$25,000 and an opportunity to compete internationally. Pictured above, from left to right, are Cole Caldwell, Austin Perkins, Ben Durkin and Kristine Maurina, all whom attended Startup48 in 2018.*

**Li-Fly** uses unmanned aerial systems to professionally acquire, manage, and accurately deliver data for farmers. This business idea was pitched and worked on throughout the 2018 Startup 48 event and then refined to be ready for the Wisconsin Big Idea Tournament.

“Having a Startup 48 winning team compete in the Wisconsin Big Idea Tournament takes our local competition to a whole new level. Now a winning local team represents us in the WBIT, where the winner of that competition receives up to \$25,000 in IdeaAdvance funding, and a trip to compete in the International Business Model Competition in Provo, Utah.” Ann Rupnow explains, Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Coordinator at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

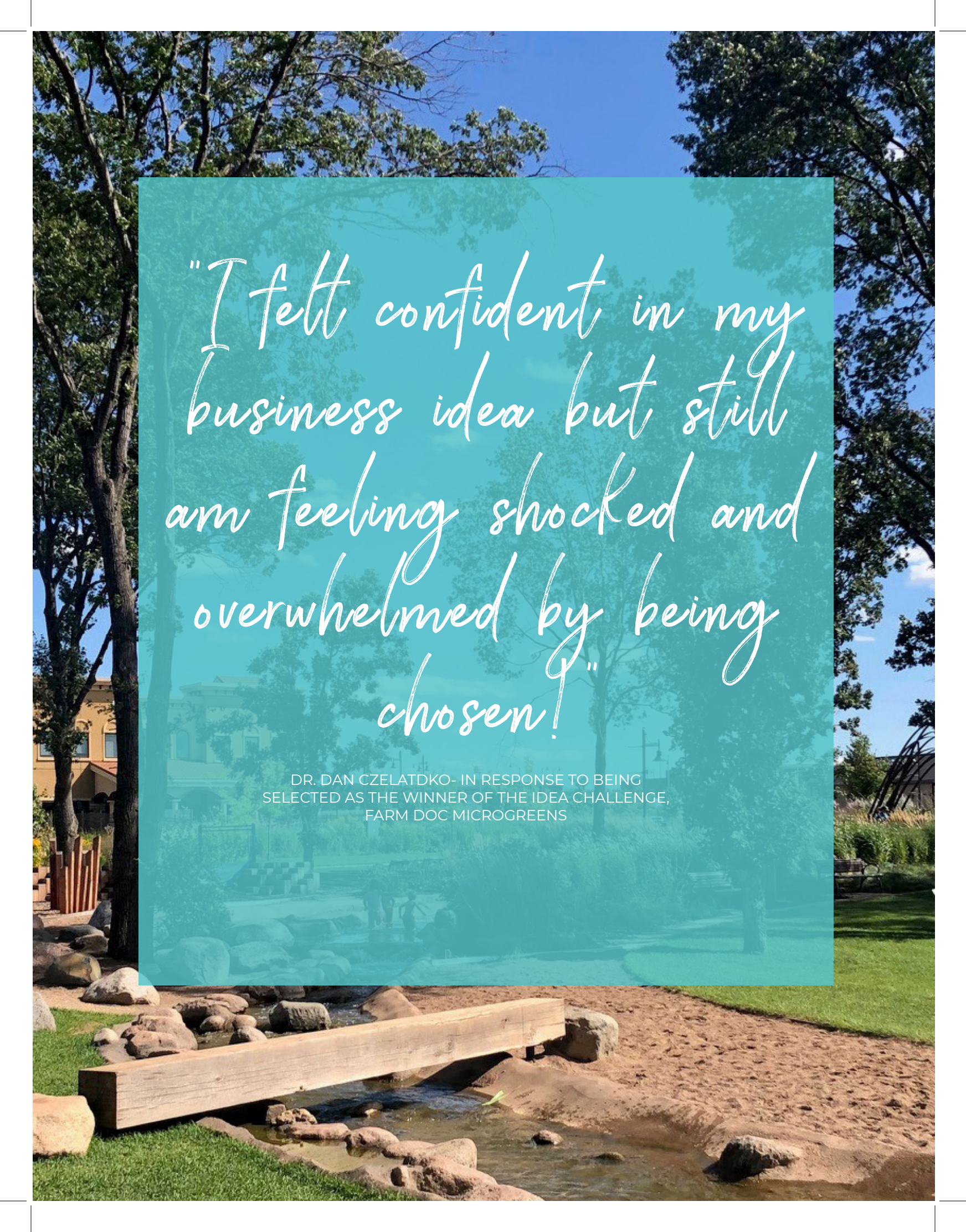
“The link between Startup 48 and the Wisconsin Big Idea Tournament is a strategic move that simply makes great sense given the number of UW-Eau Claire entrepreneur students that participate in this event. It's a natural next step that grew out of WiSys' interest as a Startup 48 sponsor.”

The Wisconsin Big Idea Tournament teaches cutting-edge Lean Startup business development tools, provides business mentorship, and allows participants to compete at a state level for a chance to win seed funding for their idea. WBIT is an entrepreneurship competition open to undergraduate and graduate students attending any two- or four-year University of Wisconsin school across the state (except UW-Madison).

The opportunity for Startup 48 to be the qualifying event for the WBIT is thanks to a generous sponsorship through WiSys. WiSys was established in 2000 as an independent, nonprofit supporting organization for the UW System to support the creation and transfer of innovations from the University of Wisconsin System to the marketplace.

Li-Fly business has pivoted several times since the idea was formed in 2018. Presently, team members have brought on industry experts and are close to launching into the marketplace, current business description is a *satellite-based agricultural software solutions service based in Eau Claire.*

# WISCONSIN BIG 22 IDEA TOURNAMENT



"I felt confident in my  
business idea but still  
am feeling shocked and  
overwhelmed by being  
chosen!"

DR. DAN CZELATDKO- IN RESPONSE TO BEING  
SELECTED AS THE WINNER OF THE IDEA CHALLENGE,  
FARM DOC MICROGREENS

# WIND ENERGY

The Eau Claire Area EDC is assisting in the *Discovery Phase* of a new wind-energy project to be located in Eau Claire County, aimed for the townships of Clear Creek & Pleasant Valley.

## Wind Benefits Us All.

RWE Renewables is proposing a wind energy project that would make Eau Claire County a leader in Wisconsin with 200 megawatts of clean, sustainable power. While most people think of renewable energy in terms of its environmental benefits, there are many more positives wind farms bring to the community. Thanks to advancements in technology and plummeting costs, the growth of renewables has been an economic boom for many, and the green economy continues to create new jobs and employ more and more people every year. In fact, wind turbine technician is the 2nd fastest growing occupation in the United States(1). Those same advancements also allow new wind energy projects to be built in areas previously inaccessible. **Eau Claire County is a prime example where modern, state of the art turbines have made a project feasible, and opened the possibility of all the benefits that come with it.** Here are highlighted some of those economic benefits that a community can enjoy when hosting a wind energy project.

### **Direct Landowner Payments**

First and foremost, landowners who lease their land and decide to participate in the project will receive substantial direct easement payments - estimated to total more than \$1,000,000 every year for the estimated 30-year life of the project. This stable, yearly income can be reinvested into family farms to reinforce farmers' bottom lines, providing dependable income in the face of crop price fluctuations, adverse weather impacting yields, and the numerous other unforeseen expenses and risks that farmers take every day.

Dairies are facing especially challenging circumstances with 2700 U.S dairy farms closing their doors in 2018(2).

This dependable income is another way for farmers to ensure family farms remain in the family. It's not just limited to farmers; wind farm income has helped make retirement for thousands of landowners a reality, cushioned economic blows for working families across the US, and provided another opportunity for families to generate wealth. Additionally, landowners often spend that money locally, boosting the area's economy by buying goods and services from local businesses and supporting the community.

### **Business to Business**

In addition to existing customers having more disposable income, there is also the opportunity for new customers - like RWE. When we look to develop and construct a project of this scale, we make the commitment to using local vendors and labor whenever possible to further stimulate the area's economy. During operations, this can mean the regular use of services like snow removal, landscaping, and catering from nearby restaurants. During the construction phase, local businesses can benefit through direct and indirect procurement by RWE's construction contractor, which will consider local vendors in a competitive process for subcontract work such as surveying, concrete and aggregate, trenching, road building, etcetera. And, the construction staff and crews would frequent hotels, restaurants, gas stations, super markets, recreational outlets, and more, adding yet another economic boost.



### **Jobs**

On the topic of jobs, a project like this represents a \$200+ million investment for RWE and will require at least 150 construction jobs. Historically, RWE has utilized union labor for construction at every one of our Midwest projects and we aim to continue this practice. Once the wind farm is operational, there will be a need for 8-12 permanent, long-term positions. RWE prefers to hire local candidates when possible for these positions; however, some will require specialized knowledge and bring in new professionals and their families to the area - families that will attend nearby schools, shop and contribute to the local economy, and grow with the community.

### **Township and County Revenues**

This wind energy project also represents a new revenue source for the townships and county who stand to receive an estimated \$26,000,000 + in additional revenues over the life of the project. That can be used for top community priorities, whether that's new EMS and police vehicles, more modern school equipment, facility upgrades, road enhancements, neighborhood projects, or additional services. In a time where taxes seem to increase whenever there's a budget shortfall or unforeseen major expense, this additional revenue stream can also help cushion the blow and reduce the need for raising taxes, making the area more attractive not only for individuals but for businesses as well.

### **Open for Business**

Businesses that are expanding or starting up are increasingly conscious about how they use energy and it's not just because of their own internal focus on environmental impact; customers are increasingly factoring in sustainability into their purchasing decisions<sup>(3)</sup>. That's one reason corporate procurement of renewable energy has sky-rocketed in the last few years and it's increasingly becoming a key factor in determining where to locate expansions or new businesses. It's not just high-profile businesses like Ford, Google, and General Mills procuring renewable energy, it's also small and medium size businesses as well who want to hedge their energy costs. Wind – as a power source with no fuel price volatility – has been able to meet that need by offering electricity at a fixed and known price for upwards of 20 years. All of this would make the greater Eau Claire area more attractive for investment, not just by RWE, but by many other new businesses as well.

### **Much More Than Economics**

There are many other benefits as well such as utilizing renewable energy to help reduce air and water pollution, improving the environment and quality of life; keeping farms in the family and maintaining the character of the Wisconsin countryside; and becoming a leader in Wisconsin, stepping up to the plate by planning and acting for a sustainable future. Wind energy is a huge opportunity for the Eau Claire area and RWE is working hard with the community to make this project a reality.

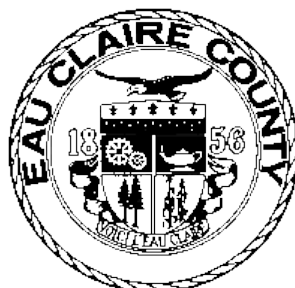
You can find out more about this project at **[www.eauclairewind.com](http://www.eauclairewind.com)** or attend the **Eau Claire Wind Farm Open House, Saturday, February 22, 10am-2pm, Florian Gardens.**

- (1) <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/fastest-growing.htm>
- (2) <https://nfu.org/2019/06/26/dairy-together-fights-for-a-fair-dairy-economy/>
- (3) <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/article/2018/sustainability-sells-linking-sustainability-claims-to-sales/>

# **RWE PROPOSES RENEWABLE ENERGY TO EAU CLAIRE COUNTY**

# INVESTORS

## DIAMOND INVESTORS



## GOLD INVESTORS



## PLATINUM INVESTORS



**Eau Claire Energy Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



## SILVER INVESTORS

Associated Bank  
Bush Brothers & Co  
Citizens Community Federal, N.A.  
JAMF Foundation  
Keystone Corporation  
Group Health Cooperative of Eau Claire  
Marawood Construction  
Market & Johnson, Inc  
Merchants Bank  
Miron Construction  
Plank Enterprises  
Well Fargo  
Wipfli

## BRONZE INVESTORS

Bauman Construction of Chippewa Falls, Inc  
Cedar Corporation  
Durand Builders Service  
JB Systems, LLC  
Manpower  
Realityworks, Inc  
WBD, Inc

## COPPER INVESTORS

A.F.T Real Estate, Inc  
Automation Displays  
B&B Electric  
Baker Tilly  
Banbury Place, Inc  
Bauman Associates, Ltd  
Chippewa Valley Technical College  
Choice Products  
Coldwell Banker Brenizer Realtor  
Commonweal Development Corp.  
E.O. Johnson Business Technologies  
Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce  
Florian Gardens  
Fabick Cat  
Haselwander Companies, Inc  
Herrick & Hart  
Hovland's Inc

Huebsch Serices  
J.C.Norby & Associates  
Kurth Heating & Cooling  
L&M Mail & Courier  
Landmark Company/Gateway Corporation  
Monarch Paving Company  
NEI Electric, Inc  
Overhead Door Company of the Chippewa Valley  
RBC Wealth Management  
Ruder Ware, LLC  
Senn Blacktop  
Sterling Water - Culligan  
Town of Pleasant Valley  
Trane  
TSI Voice and Data  
UW Stout STTI-NWMOC  
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WESTconsin Credit Union

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DAVID MINOR Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce	JEFF HALLOIN Gateway Corporation	

## FINANCIALS

REVENUE	ACTUAL
PRIVATE SECTOR FUNDING	\$57,580
PUBLIC SECTOR FUNDING	\$100,980
MISC.	\$64,981
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$223,541</b>
EXPENSES	ACTUAL
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$139,181
OPERATIONS	\$87,351
PROGRAMS	\$26,157
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$252,689</b>



**EAU CLAIRE AREA ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

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