

# Boulder Junction Welcomed into State's Downtown Revitalization Program

**For Immediate Release**

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**MADISON, WI.** – The Town of Boulder Junction has been accepted into the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)'s Connect Communities Program, an initiative that works with communities to advance downtown revitalization efforts.

Boulder Junction is one of 15 communities around the state that have been added to the program this year, bringing the total number of participants to 67.

The Connect Communities Program, which was launched in January of 2013, provides access to resources and training to help communities pursue revitalization and redevelopment efforts. In its first two years, participating communities have reported adding 175 net new businesses and more than 550 jobs, as well as \$30 million in private investment.

"WEDC congratulates Boulder Junction for being accepted into this program," said Mark Hogan, secretary and CEO of WEDC. "A vibrant downtown is key to the overall economic health of the community, and we applaud the Boulder Junction community for taking this step toward making its business district even stronger."

"We have high hopes for the success of the all new Connect Communities members," added WEDC Regional Economic Development Director Jason Scott. "We have heard from communities around the state that this program has provided them with the guidance and assistance they need as they continue to strengthen their downtowns."

Boulder Junction VAT and community member Barbara Boston said, "This program was recommended to me when gathering information about the successful 400 Block in Wausau. Our Volunteer Action Team (VAT) set up a meeting, completed the application for the town, and was pleasantly surprised to be accepted. Now it's up to the town board to follow through. A kick-off meeting will take place at the Boulder Junction Community Center on July 20 at 8:00 am. Everyone interested in economic growth, which affects every stakeholder in Boulder Junction, is encouraged to attend."

Connect Communities participants benefit from a variety of assistance and resources simply by being part of a broad-based network of communities with similar objectives, but specific program services include:

- A ListServ/network group to get new ideas from staff and other participating Connect Communities
- Participation in Main Street workshops focused on a downtown revitalization topic
- An on-site visit from a member of WEDC's community development staff to assist in identifying needs and offering assistance
- Training for downtown director or board president
- Roundtable discussion groups on pertinent topics
- Access to WEDC's downtown development online library
- Access to resources and training materials developed for Wisconsin Main Street communities
- Invitation to the annual Main Street Awards program, plus eligibility to nominate a project for a Connect Communities award
- Quarterly webinars/regional training

In order to be admitted to the program, each applicant had to explain the type of activities or assistance they hope to undertake, and had to identify a local team that will be responsible for carrying out activities and participating in program events and training. Additional team members will be added at the July 20 kick-off meeting.

The new Connect Communities participants are:

- Barron Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown Beaver Dam, Inc.
- Town of Boulder Junction
- City of Brillion
- Chetek Chamber of Commerce

- Cross Plains Chamber of Commerce
- Cumberland Chamber of Commerce
- Ellsworth Area Chamber of Commerce
- Florence County Chamber of Commerce
- Jefferson Chamber of Commerce
- Milwaukee Downtown, BID #21
- Mount Horeb Area EDC
- Village of New Glarus
- Reedsburg Revitalization Organization
- City of Waupun