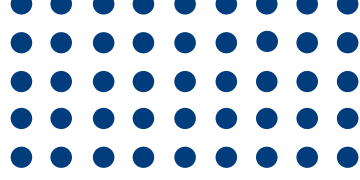




# WAUKESHA COUNTY

**2024 ANNUAL REPORT**



# CHARTING THE COURSE



**Therese Thill**  
Executive Director

I am proud to continue leading an organization so deeply committed to growing Waukesha County. Since its inception in 2016, the Waukesha County Center for Growth (WCCG) has been the cornerstone of economic development in the county. Our strong partnership with the Waukesha County Business Alliance ensures we provide seamless business support and resources, fostering stability and progress through another dynamic year in 2024.

Over the past year, I have had the privilege of deepening relationships with county stakeholders, business leaders, and municipal partners. The cooperative spirit, problem-solving mindset, and unwavering commitment to advancing economic opportunities remain defining characteristics of Waukesha County. My 25 years in economic development continue to affirm that these qualities are the foundation of thriving communities.

Our strong collaborations with the Alliance, Waukesha County, and our municipal investors have driven many of the successes highlighted in this report. These partnerships remain essential as we tackle new challenges and opportunities in the year ahead.

Looking forward to 2025, the Center for Growth is poised to build on this momentum. We've also recently updated the Business Growth Strategy for 2025–2027, laying the groundwork for a successful future. Key initiatives include expanding our business retention and expansion program, increasing the impact of the GROW Fund to support business growth and workforce housing.

Together, we are charting a bold course toward a brighter future for Waukesha County's businesses and residents. •



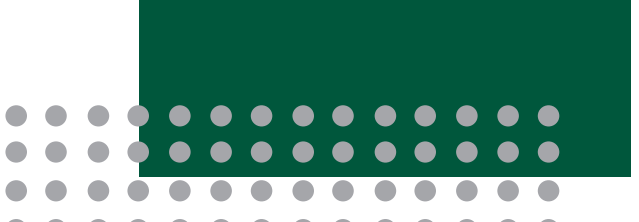
# WHO WE ARE

The Waukesha County Center for Growth is a nonprofit serving as the lead economic development organization for Waukesha County, Wisconsin. Created in 2016, we are focused on expanding the County's economic base by ensuring our businesses and communities have access to the resources they need to thrive.

The key areas of our work include:

-  **BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION**
-  **FINANCE & INCENTIVE PROGRAMS**
-  **BUSINESS ATTRACTION**
-  **TALENT PIPELINE**

**"IF WAUKESHA COUNTY WERE ITS OWN STATE, IT WOULD BE THE 8TH MOST PRODUCTIVE ECONOMY IN THE COUNTRY ON A PER CAPITA BASIS."**  
*Source: Badger Institute, 2022*



# COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

## DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The **City of Oconomowoc** approved a 225,000-square-foot industrial / warehouse building in the Pabst Farms Commerce Centre. (2)

Over 794,000 square feet of commercial and industrial buildings were permitted in 2024 in the **Village of Menomonee Falls**, including Alto-Shaam's global headquarters and manufacturing facility expansion.

Fabick Cat Rentals moved to the **Village of Butler** and is undergoing an extensive remodel project.

Occupancy was granted for Anita's Gardens, a new \$6 million assisted living and memory care facility in the **City of Brookfield**.

The **Village of Sussex** approved a 140,000-square-foot spec industrial building by Wangard in the Highlands Industrial Park.

Wildeck moved and expanded its new 40,000-square-foot headquarters in the **City of Waukesha**. (5)

Jax Inc. completed construction of its \$17 million headquarters in the **Village of Menomonee Falls**, featuring 120,000 square feet of office, production, and distribution space.

The **City of Oconomowoc** approved a Café Zupa's restaurant as part of the Market Square development at the intersection of STH 67 & Valley Road.

The **Village of Mukwonago** had numerous industrial developments including a 31,400-square-foot expansion by L'Bri Pure & Natural and a 60,000-square-foot expansion by GS Global. (4)

The **Village of Sussex** approved a 140,000-square-foot industrial building in the Highlands Business Park for Dynamic Ratings relocation and expansion. (3)

## HOUSING

The **Village of Mukwonago** permitted more than 22 new single family homes, and entered into an agreement with the Village of Vernon to provide shared water/ sewer services in a residential development.

The **City of Oconomowoc** approved an Olympia Fields Mixed Use multi-story development consisting of 19,000-square-foot of first floor commercial, townhomes, and apartment units.

The **City of Waukesha's** new residential development, Springs at Meadowbrook, commenced construction of 320 apartment units.

Nearly 130 building permits were issued for single-family and single-family attached homes in the **Village of Sussex**.

The **Village of Menomonee Falls** approved the construction of 223 dwelling units in one- and two-family buildings, the highest in Southeast Wisconsin. Only Madison issued more permits. (1)

Construction on the Flats at Bishops Woods, the **City of Brookfield's** first workforce housing project, began in 2024. This project is a \$40.5 million investment bringing over 200 new housing units to Bishops Woods.

## COMMUNITY IMPACT & ACCOLADES

Diana Dykstra was welcomed as Village Administrator and Lana Kropf was named Clerk-Treasurer in the **Village of Mukwonago**.

Matt Heiser was named the **Village of Pewaukee's** new Village Administrator.

WalletHub ranked the **City of Brookfield** as the #2 Best Small City to Live In America for 2024, and the **Village of Menomonee Falls** #5.

The **Village of Butler** welcomed new Assistant Village Administrator Aaron Kramer.

The **Village of Lannon** is the fastest growing municipality in the state according to the Wisconsin Demographics Services Center.

Mkewithkids.com ranks the **Village of Menomonee Falls'** Village Park Playground #4 on its list of 25 Must-Visit Playgrounds in the Milwaukee Area for 2024.





## GROW FUND DRIVES ECONOMIC GROWTH

The GROW Fund is an \$11 million revolving loan fund that provides gap financing to manufacturers, service providers, and other businesses located in or relocating to Waukesha County that are planning to expand operations and create jobs. It also supports developers working on workforce housing projects.

The GROW Fund complements lead lenders and other financial programs by providing competitive, fixed interest rates, flexible amortization aligned with project terms, and gap financing for construction, expansion, or equipment purchases.

This year alone, the GROW Fund financed six projects with \$2.75 million in loans, creating 40 new jobs. All recipient companies have fewer than 100 employees, making the fund a vital resource for small businesses and community growth.

"The GROW Fund is a powerful tool driving small business growth in Waukesha County," states Waukesha County Center for Growth Executive Director Therese Thill. "It has enabled companies to build new facilities, invest in machinery and equipment, and hire staff—boosting our county's economic development base. This progress simply wouldn't have been possible without the GROW Fund, and we are fortunate to have such a vital resource supporting our community."

To learn more about the GROW Fund, visit [www.waukeshagrowth.org](http://www.waukeshagrowth.org).

### DOMENICA PARK

The GROW Fund is proud to be a financial partner in the Habitat for Humanity of Waukesha and Jefferson Counties Domenica Park housing project in the City of Waukesha.

Domenica Park is a previously vacant city block in the Broadway Heights neighborhood. The former site of the century-old Aeroshade factory will be the site of 16 single-family homes and 2 duplex townhomes—future homes for 20 families.

To support the project, the GROW Fund has provided a revolving construction loan to Habitat for Humanity totaling \$660,000. This financing will support three home construction projects at a time. Upon the completion of each home, the GROW fund will be repaid from the new owner's traditional mortgage process, at which time a new construction project will be initiated to support a future homeowner, designated by Habitat for Humanity. Additionally, the construction projects will foster continued construction employment and build the tax base of the community in which the housing project is occurring.



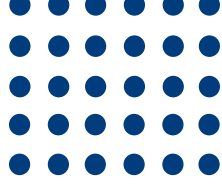
### XIOGENIX

Xiogenix is advancing disease treatment by developing specialized equipment that separates components of blood and tissue donations. This equipment enables clinics to deliver cell and gene therapies for potential health treatments. While the company does not directly handle the biological products, it partners with treatment providers to design equipment and methods that enhance therapeutic outcomes.

In addition to manufacturing custom equipment, Xiogenix is developing consumable components used with the equipment. These consumables, supported by investments in a clean room, machinery, and R&D, present a significant growth opportunity.

The project, made possible by a GROW Fund loan, supports R&D, the purchase of new machinery and equipment, and the development of clean room manufacturing space. As a result, Xiogenix will create 12 full-time jobs, strengthening the company's impact on the local economy.





# STRATEGIC METRICS & OUTCOMES

Each year, the Waukesha County Center for Growth tracks four high-level metrics—projects supported, capital investment, jobs created / retained, and loans initiated through the GROW Fund—to measure our impact and drive our mission of advancing economic growth. This past year, we exceeded our goals, supporting 6 projects, generating over \$14 million in capital investment, and helping to create / retain 40 jobs, all of which strengthen our local economy. By providing critical financial support through \$2.75 million in GROW Fund loans, we continue to fuel business growth, job creation, and long-term economic success for Waukesha County.

**6** Projects in Waukesha County.

**\$14M** Capital investment in Waukesha County.

**40** Jobs created/retained in Waukesha County.

**\$2.75M** Loans initiated through the GROW Fund.

# GROW FUND PROJECTS

### AIR ENGINEERS OF WISCONSIN:

Construction of new facility.  
City of Waukesha  
Projected jobs added: 10 FT

### THIRD SPACE BREWING:

Addition of second tap room.  
Village of Menomonee Falls  
Projected jobs added: 10 FT / 8 PT

### HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF WAUKESHA AND JEFFERSON COUNTIES:

Build out of vacant land.  
City of Waukesha  
Projected homes added: 16 single-family, 2 duplexes

### VEZZETTI FAMILY DENTAL CARE:

Support of expansion project.  
Village of Sussex  
Projected jobs added: 5 FT

### PROEX FOOD:

Hiring of support and technical staff.  
Village of Menomonee Falls  
Projected jobs added: 3 FT

### XIOGENIX:

Addition of clean room manufacturing space.  
City of Muskego  
Projected jobs added: 12 FT

# ADDITIONAL OUTCOMES

In addition to the Center for Growth's core metrics, the organization tracks additional ways we support a growing vibrant business community. This past year was an incredible showcase of our work to drive economic growth, and included the following:



**\*ASSIST** - a value-added connection or referral. Think of a hockey assist where a player who passes the puck to the player who scores the goal receives an assist. An example might be a referral to the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP) for assistance with plant floor layout that enables a company to continue to grow on-site. Assists help us tell the story of the economic development work we do outside of the top-line metrics of new capital investment and new jobs.



# ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE

This year, the Center for Growth developed the **2025-2027 Business Growth Strategy** which marks the fourth edition of our roadmap for advancing economic development. Built on comprehensive data analysis and input from key stakeholders, the strategy reaffirms three core outcomes:

- Business retention expansion, and attraction
- Building of the GROW Fund
- Serving as the economic development resource for investing communities

A new target industry, medical technology, has been added to the existing focus, reflecting the region's recognition as a biohealth tech hub. Key performance indicators will guide progress, with annual targets and results shared through a public dashboard and annual reports. This plan ensures alignment among partners and provides a clear path to sustained growth in Waukesha County. •





THIS SUCCESS STORY REPRESENTS AN 'ASSIST' BY THE WCCG: A VALUE-ADDED CONNECTION OR REFERRAL.

## A SWEET SUCCESS

### Center for Growth Assists Award-Winning Chocolate Shop

In early February, the Center for Growth met with the Elm Grove Business Association and eight of its members to discuss resources available to small businesses. During the meeting, our team connected with Cindy and her husband Mark, owners of Fazio's Chocolate — a family-run chocolatier and confectionery shop known for its artisan treats and truffles.

Fazio's has a loyal customer base at its retail storefront in the Village, but Cindy wanted to expand into the wholesale market to attract new corporate and hospitality customers. Unfortunately, the current location lacked the space to accommodate additional equipment or staff for this venture.

Over several months, we worked with Cindy to identify a suitable new location. Despite extensive efforts, we couldn't find a viable option within Elm Grove, the county, or even a 25-mile radius that fit her needs and budget. To overcome this challenge, we introduced Cindy to the Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP). WMEP is part of the MEP National Network™, a public-private partnership dedicated to advancing U.S. manufacturing. With over 1,400 trusted advisors and experts, WMEP centers in all 50 states and Puerto Rico provide valuable support to small and midsize manufacturers.

The WMEP team worked with Cindy to optimize her production flow, redesign her workspace layout, and improve inventory management. These changes freed up the space she needed to expand into the wholesale market — all without leaving her current location.

Cindy and Fazio's Chocolate are now poised for growth, entering an exciting new chapter in their business journey.

"Working with WCCG was a game-changer for our business," states Co-Owner of Fazio's Chocolate Cindy Karrels. "They helped us connect with resources that we otherwise wouldn't have had access to. As a result, we've been able to take our business to the next level. We're incredibly grateful for their support in making our vision a reality."



## FUELING THE TALENT PIPELINE

Waukesha County understands the importance of workforce development solutions. In 2024, our work to fuel the talent pipeline and support the future workforce continued. Through dozens of programs, the Center for Growth and Waukesha County Business Alliance were able to engage with nearly 2,500 students throughout Waukesha County and our region. •

**24**  
**STUDENT TOURS**  
 Opportunities for students to go inside the doors of businesses and gain exposure to careers in manufacturing.  
**400+ STUDENTS**



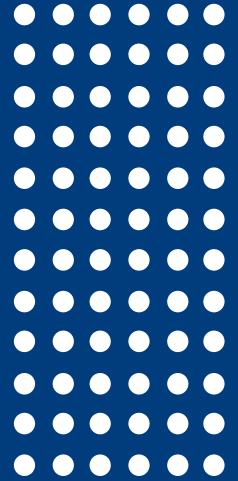
**7**  
**BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMS**  
 Programs built-on fostering strong relationships between schools, educators, and businesses.



**2**  
**STUDENT EXPOS**  
 Hands-on experiences for students to learn about careers in manufacturing, construction and healthcare.  
**2,000+ STUDENTS**



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## MUNICIPAL PARTNERS

City of Brookfield  
City of Delafield  
City of Oconomowoc  
City of Waukesha

Village of Big Bend  
Village of Butler  
Village of Eagle  
Village of Elm Grove  
Village of Lannon

Village of Menomonee Falls  
Village of Mukwonago  
Village of Pewaukee  
Village of Sussex



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