

WEDC: City of Beaver Dam receives \$126,100 state grant to support downtown project

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WEDC investment to help fund construction of microbrewer

BEAVER DAM – The City of Beaver Dam is receiving a \$126,100 state grant to help finance the redevelopment of a vacant building into a new downtown microbrewery.

The Community Development Investment Grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) will support renovations of an existing, vacant building located on a 14,900-square foot lot, which had been a used car sales lot, to make room for a state-of-the-art microbrewery called Ooga Brewing Co.

The redevelopment of the site will provide an anticipated six full-time positions, which will include a manager, bartenders, service staff and custodial staff. Construction is expected to be completed in June 2019.

“A vibrant downtown is key to a community’s overall economic health, and this expansion is expected to bring more visitors to downtown, which will benefit other businesses and the entire community,” said Tricia Braun, deputy secretary and chief operating officer of WEDC, who joined city and business leaders in announcing the grant Tuesday. “This is the latest example of WEDC’s ongoing commitment to help communities throughout the state revitalize their business districts.”

“Businesses like Ooga Brewing not only generate new jobs but improve the value of existing buildings, and create interesting and contemporary gathering places for residents and visitors to socialize. Projects like this generate a powerful sense of pride in our community and downtown district.” said Beaver Dam’s Mayor Rebecca

Glewen. “The Metz’s made a conscious decision to invest in our downtown and in doing so are making a positive impact in Beaver Dam overall. I’m grateful to have business leaders like Jim and Ruth Metz taking this concrete step forward to revitalize our downtown and hope that it encourages other entrepreneurs to do the same. I also want to express my deep gratitude to WEDC that provided the grant funds to initiate this endeavor.”

“We are excited to be bringing a brewery back to Beaver Dam. Through the years, starting in 1853, Beaver Dam had several breweries until the last one, Ziegler Brewery, closed in 1953. We are also excited to be part of the revitalization of our downtown and hope Ooga Brewing Company will be a catalyst for further development and growth in our downtown district,” said Jim Metz, brewery owner. “Investing in old buildings requires significant remodeling to bring them up to today’s standards so that they may be repurposed for modern, successful businesses. The WEDC recognizes these challenges to older communities and with the Community Development Investment Grant helps encourage investment and revitalization to “worn-out” downtowns like Beaver Dam. We plan to use local contractors and suppliers for the building renovation, supporting the local economy and the domino effect of dollars continuing to be spent in the community. We want to thank WEDC, the City of Beaver Dam and all its citizens and Mayor Glewen for their support and enthusiasm for this project.”

“With this community development grant from WEDC, Beaver Dam will continue its downtown revitalization efforts to promote a growing, healthy economy,” Said Sen. Scott Fitzgerald (R-Juneau)

“I’m thrilled about the opportunities this Community Development Investment Grant will bring to Beaver Dam,” said Rep. Mark Born (R-Beaver Dam). “The new, first-of-its-kind microbrewery will continue our investment in the downtown area, and I look forward to watching the transformation unfold.”

City officials believe this project will promote economic development by diversifying the tax base and creating new jobs. This redevelopment will also allow the city to attract new businesses, employers and entrepreneurs to the downtown corridor as well as develop new tourism opportunities.

WEDC’s Community Development Investment Grant Program supports community development and redevelopment efforts, primarily in downtown areas. The matching grants are awarded based on the ability of applicants to demonstrate the

economic impact of the proposed project, including public and private partnership development, financial need, and use of sustainable downtown development practices.

Since the program's inception in 2013, WEDC has awarded more than \$17 million in Community Development Investment Grants for projects expected to generate more than \$233 million in capital investments statewide.