

Wisconsin Economic Development Corp: Now accepting applications for Certified In Wisconsin Program

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Program that designates industrial sites as ready for development has generated \$456 million in new investment throughout the state

MADISON, WI. Jan. 14, 2019 – The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) is now accepting applications for its Certified In Wisconsin® Program, which designates industrial parcels of 20 acres or more as being “development ready.”

The program has played a key role in helping communities throughout the state attract new companies by providing independent certification that a wide range of concerns have been evaluated—such as environmental and geological factors, transportation access, utility and infrastructure capacity, zoning and property rights—and that the site is ready for industrial development.

“Certified Site designation is a fast track for your property to get the attention of site selectors and real estate developers,” said Zanya Bugri, real estate and location specialist for WEDC. “The competition for attracting top economic development projects is stronger than ever, and the Certified In Wisconsin Program gives communities an added advantage as they compete on a national level for those major projects.”

WEDC introduced the Certified In Wisconsin Program in 2012 to help spur development of commercial properties throughout the state. Working with WEDC, communities can obtain site certification for properties at a much lower cost than they would pay to pursue the “development-ready” designation on their own through an independent consultant.

WEDC works with Deloitte Consulting to evaluate sites to determine if they are ready for development and meet certification requirements. By certifying that these sites meet common basic requirements for development, WEDC provides assurances for potential companies eager to get their projects completed quickly, and in the process makes Wisconsin more competitive when it comes to attracting new projects.

Once a site is certified, a potential developer has all the standard information generally needed to make a quick decision about whether that site is right for a project's needs, such as utility and transportation infrastructure, environmental assessments, quality of nearby labor force and much more.

Not only does the program increase the comfort level of site selectors and companies by removing unknowns about a site, it also raises the visibility of the property as WEDC actively markets the state's Certified Sites to get them in front of the people who make decisions about corporate expansions and relocations.

Wisconsin has 21 certified sites, with 29 development projects completed or underway that are expected to create more than 2,600 jobs and generate more than \$472 million in capital investment.

Some of the major economic development projects taking place on Certified Sites include:

- Mills Fleet Farm, which is building a \$64 million distribution center at the Lake Wissota Business Park in Chippewa Falls that is expected to create 325 jobs;
- Diversified Manufacturing Corp., which relocated its operations from Minnesota to the Eagle Ridge Business Park in Prescott and expects to create 150 jobs;
- United Natural Foods Inc., which operates a distribution facility on the Prescott Certified Site that employs about 300 workers;
- The Little Potato Company, which established its U.S. headquarters in the DeForest Business Park and plans to create 125 jobs; and
- Dollar General Corp., which opened a \$75 million distribution facility at the Highway 11 Business Park in Janesville that will employ more than 500 people.

Applications for the program will be accepted through Feb. 15. For more information on the program and how to apply, visit wedc.org/certified.