

WEDC: Finding resources for rural Wisconsin

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MADISON, WI. DEC. 30, 2021 – Wisconsin’s rural communities and residents have access to a new and growing directory of resources and success stories offering aid and inspiration on topics ranging from affordable housing and economic development to cultural programs and environmental protection.

“Wisconsin’s rural communities face unique challenges,” said Missy Hughes, secretary and CEO of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). “There are numerous state and federal programs, as well as nonprofit resources, out there that can help communities and residents. But finding and navigating those programs can be difficult especially for smaller communities that may not have dedicated staff. [Ruralwi.com](#) aims to make it easier for communities to find resources and connect with one another.

The website is a project of WEDC’s Office of Rural Prosperity and was one of the recommendations of the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Rural Prosperity.

“Rural communities are used to coming up with creative solutions,” said Marcy West, director of the Office of Rural Prosperity. “Harnessing those good ideas, sharing solutions and resources to make these ideas come to life can help all of Wisconsin’s communities find the projects and solutions that work best for them.”

What makes [Ruralwi.com](#) work are the practical examples and list of assistance options that make it easier for community leaders and residents to visualize what fits for them, West said.

“We are asking rural communities to share both their successes and challenges so that all of us can learn from them,” West said. “We encourage nonprofits, agencies

and others to list their services here so that they can reach more communities.”

Success stories featured include efforts to connect food producers with their buyers, early childhood education enhancements, creating ways for high school students to get career experience and more. Readers can submit ideas for success stories to be featured by emailing rural@wedc.org.

“These success stories are more than inspiration,” West said. “They have already been shown to work and could be adopted in other communities.”

Resources and success stories are being continually added to the site, she said. The office is also working with Wisconsin’s Native American tribes to include their input and targeted resources.

The site also provides an easy way for residents to learn about the Office of Rural Prosperity, its projects and ways to get in touch. The office, created in 2020 by Governor Tony Evers, supports rural economic development, ensures rural communities have access to government resources and celebrates the best of rural Wisconsin.

“We like to say that this site is rural Wisconsin’s front porch,” West said. “It’s a place to come to learn the news, share good ideas, build relationships and get help. We’re hoping everyone will stop over and check it out.”