

Spring 2010

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Steve Healy named Polk County EDC's executive director

In March, the Polk County EDC named Steve Healy as its executive director. Healy is a former resident of Clear Lake, Wisconsin, and currently resides in the River Falls area. He is a retired executive of a rural electric cooperative and brings over 35 years of experience to his position with Polk County EDC. Steve is active in numerous organizations in west central Wisconsin, including the Pierce County Economic Development Corporation (past president), St. Croix Valley Angel Network (president), Wisconsin Rural Enterprise Fund (board of directors), Momentum West (a 10-county external marketing and collaborative economic development organization in western, west

central and northwest Wisconsin.) and the 2010 Farm technology Days.

Steve has been introducing himself to business and community leaders throughout Polk County. He can be contacted at (715) 405-7655 or info@polkcountyedc.com.



Steve Healy

Annual banquet set for May 18

Speakers include regional economist and extension agent

The Polk County EDC will hold its annual banquet on Tuesday, May 18th at the Dalles House, 720 Highway 35, in St. Croix Falls, starting at 5 o'clock p.m. with a reception. Dinner is served at 5:45 p.m.

Scott Hodeck, a regional economist with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, and Bob Kazmierski, Polk County's UW-Extension Agent, are the evening's

speakers. They will discuss the results of the EDC's recently completed labor market and business retention surveys and will compare them with state and national trends.

The event is open to the public, but reservations are required by calling the Polk County EDC office at (715) 405-7655. The cost is \$20 per person. The menu choices are walleye or filet mignon. Please RSVP by May 10th.

Polk County Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors

Director: Steve Healy
President: Trudy Popenhagen
Vice President: Steve Figmiller
Secretary: Eric Dueholm
Treasurer: Bruce Noll

Directors:
Tom Braml
Gary R. Hanson
Sue Houston
Neil Soltis

Oxbo International named to Sustainable Manufacturing Pilot program

Clear Lake, Wisconsin manufacturer supplies ag equipment worldwide

On April 20th, Governor Jim Doyle announced the names of 50 companies that will participate in the state's Sustainable Manufacturing Pilot program. Among the companies is Clear Lake Wisconsin's Oxbo International Corporation.



Governor Jim Doyle

Oxbo develops, manufactures and supplies specialized agricultural equipment for niche market agribusinesses worldwide, including equipment for application, berries, citrus, forage, seed, vegetables, and vineyard. Oxbo's technologically advanced equipment gives producers the ability to reduce labor, increase efficiencies and boost profits. An example of Oxbo's innovative technology is their 50 Series corn head, which was named one of the top products of 2009 and a recipient of a FinOvation award.

In the 1950s and 60s, Oxbo developed specialized harvester for corn, beans and peas. Over the years, Oxbo's products lines have grown to wide acceptance in their markets. Exports are an important part of the company's business. Their equipment is supplied worldwide to more than 20 companies.

The state's new pilot program is designed to help small and mid-sized manufacturers use sustainable practices to save

money and gain a competitive advantage. Wisconsin will invest \$1.75 million through the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) to help the participating companies. Over the next year, the 50 companies will receive assistance to cover up-front planning costs to assess and create plans to implement sustainable improvements to their businesses.



In making the announcement, Governor Doyle said, "Today, I am proud to announce the 50 companies that will pilot and chart the future of manufacturing in Wisconsin. We know that investing in more efficient manufacturing is the best way to help our manufacturers thrive. Through this pilot program, we will create model companies and clear paths to success for small and mid-sized manufacturers looking to make sustainable investments."

For additional information on Governor Doyle's announcement, go to <http://www.commerce.state.wi.us/NEWS/releases/2010/066.html>.

For additional information on Oxbo International Corp., go to www.oxbocorp.com.

Contact Polk County EDC for Financing

Local businesses are encouraged to contact Polk County EDC if expansions or the purchase of machinery and equipment are contemplated. The EDC can connect businesses to a variety of financing programs and other resources, including the Regional Business Fund, Inc. at www.rbfinc.org and the Wisconsin Department of Commerce at www.commerce.state.wi.us.

Examples of financing programs from the Regional Business Fund include (1) the Micro Loan Fund, (2) Revolving Loan Fund, (3) Downtown Facade Loan Fund, and (4) Technology Enterprise Fund (TEF). Many businesses in Polk County have successfully accessed these programs. Micro loans range in size from \$5,000 to \$25,000 and are available to start-up businesses, newly-established companies, or growing small businesses. The key objective

is to assist business owners who have traditionally had difficulty in securing debt financing. The Revolving Loan Fund is intended as supplemental financing for commercial/industrial projects involving land, building, equipment, or working capital. Supplemental loans may range from 25,000 to \$150,000. The Downtown Facade program helps business owners in core downtowns to revitalize buildings. Up to \$30,000 is available from this fund. The TEF Fund is quasi-equity, patient debt financing for high-tech businesses.

Polk County EDC was formed to assist business and industry to access vital programs that result in job creation and an expanded tax base in Polk County, Wisconsin.

Please contact Steve Healy at (715) 405-7655 or info@polkcountyledc.com for more information.

NEI Electric receives safety excellence award

NEI Electric was presented a Safety Excellence Award for 2009 at the Associated General Contractors banquet held on February 12th. The award reflects excellence in construction safety. Larry Koenig, safety director at NEI Electric accepted the award and said, "We have a company wide commitment to the safety of our electricians. They are not only our employees, they are our friends and family."

NEI Electric, formally NEI – Northern Electricians and CMA – Claude M. Anderson, has three locations, including St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin (Polk County), Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and St. Paul, Minnesota. These locations serve western Wisconsin and eastern Minnesota.

For additional information, visit NEI's website at www.neielectric.com.



Larry Koenig,
safety director,
NEI Electric and
the 2009 Safety
Excellence
Award

Polk County EDC announces annual membership campaign

Polk County EDC is organized as an IRS nonprofit organization. It is comprised of public and private sector members, including towns, villages, cities, the county, banks, utility companies, manufacturers and general contractors. Reflective activities of the EDC include business retention, expansion, recruitment, new incorporations, and business advocacy at the local, regional, state, and federal level.

Opportunities to participate in the EDC's 2010 membership campaign are still available. Private sector financial support is available through memberships. The IRS gives businesses the ability to deduct the cost of a membership as a trade or business expense on their federal tax return.

Financial supporters of Polk County EDC are a diverse set of members who wish to improve the business climate of the county. The EDC's activities of business retention, expansion, recruitment, new incorporations, and advocacy are aimed at creating a stronger tax base in Polk County.

The Polk County EDC is based in Balsam Lake, Wisconsin and is comprised of a board of directors

and staff that serves new and existing businesses throughout the county.

The current 2010 Polk County EDC Board of Directors includes:

President: Trudy Popenhagen (Xcel Energy)

Vice President: Steve Figlmiller (Coldwell Banker Burnet)

Secretary: Eric Dueholm (Welsh Companies)

Treasurer: Bruce Noll (The RiverBank)

Directors:

Tom Braml (CenturyLink)

Gary Hanson (Administrator, Village of Turtle Lake)

Sue Houston (Westaff)

Neil Soltis (Administrator, Village of Osceola)

vacant (Polk County Board Representative)

Polk County EDC staff:

Executive Director: Steve Healy

Administrative Assistant: Kathy Zalusky

For information on becoming a member of the EDC, contact Steve Healy at (715) 405-7655 or info@polkcountyedc.com.