

Providing leadership and advancing the professional practice of economic development statewide.

# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



# From the President



Edward White

2017 was a year of change and progress for WEDA.

The most visible changes included a new corporate logo and a redesigned website that greatly enhances WEDA's online presence and how the economic development profession is promoted to businesses, government officials, and the public. But the rebranding of WEDA was more than skin deep. The Board of Directors displayed great leadership on several key initiatives to improve products and services that will align WEDA for long-term success.

WEDA launched exciting new programs over the past year, including the Wisconsin Economic Development Academy. The Academy provides online and traditional educational programming for key economic development stakeholders, including local officials and the private sector. Given the growing importance of an effective advocacy program, WEDA continued to increase efforts to influence critical economic development policy.

2017 was a pivotal year for WEDA, one that saw the association build off past success, embrace new strategies, and strengthen its role as a leading voice for economic development in Wisconsin.

**In 2017, WEDA leadership implemented bold and creative strategies to position the organization for long-term success.**

## 2017 IN REVIEW

# Inside WEDA's Transformative Year

2017 was a transformative year for WEDA – one that built a bridge between the past and the future of the association.

For over forty years, WEDA has been the *Voice of Economic Development* and has provided members with resources and tools to promote economic growth in Wisconsin. WEDA's core mission remains relevant, but the need to reshape WEDA to better meet the needs of members and build the organization for the future was undeniable.

We drew on the strength of WEDA's past success and solid foundation to move the organization forward. The result is a "new" WEDA, with an improved look and feel, enhanced services, and new programs designed for economic development professionals and organizations to achieve greater success.

## WEDA 2017 HIGHLIGHTS:

- **New Logo** – WEDA launched a new logo for the organization, which reflects WEDA's evolution, our vision for the future, and our new member programs and services.
- **Redesigned Website** – WEDA unveiled a new, redesigned website at [www.weda.org](http://www.weda.org). The new site provides members and visitors with a cleaner, more attractive design with improved functionality and enhanced content.
- **Innovative Programs and Services** – WEDA launched two exciting new programs in 2017: The *CRA-Network of Wisconsin* and the *Wisconsin Economic Development Academy*. The CRA-Network offers a new avenue for financial institutions to collaborate on Community Reinvestment Act eligible projects. The Academy provides online and traditional educational opportunities for economic development professionals, businesses, and local officials. WEDA also unveiled a new service that offers association benefit plans, including dental and vision insurance, to WEDA member organizations. Life insurance will also be offered through the new program, as will legal and identity theft protection.
- **Reimagined Conferences** – WEDA's 2017 Governor's Conference on Economic Development was held at the Hilton City Center Hotel in downtown Milwaukee – the first time in WEDA history the conference was held outside of Madison. The different venue provided opportunities to attract new conference presenters and participants, and build new relationships in the Milwaukee area. The 2017 WEDA Fall Conference was also unique. The conference convened WEDA members, workforce development professionals, and the private sector to discuss Wisconsin's workforce challenges and develop potential solutions. The conference hosted a joint public hearing of the Legislature's workforce development committees.



# Legislative Report



WEDA's full-service legislative advocacy program allows the association to pursue policies that help create a favorable economic development climate in Wisconsin. In 2017, WEDA entered its first legislative session with a full-time, in-house lobbyist. The new staffing model allowed us to expand our advocacy efforts, raise our profile in the State Capitol, and increase our influence in the legislative process.

WEDA began the year with an ambitious legislative agenda aimed at promoting policies and legislation to advance economic prosperity. The agenda established an overarching legislative vision to guide WEDA's advocacy efforts for the 2017-18 legislative session:

## ■ **Effective Economic Development Tools**

*Promote new or enhanced economic development incentive programs that encourage private sector investment and employment opportunities.*

## ■ **Advance Workforce Development**

*Advance initiatives to attract talented professionals to Wisconsin and provide workers with skills to meet the needs of businesses.*

## ■ **Competitive Business Climate**

*Support policies and regulatory reforms that foster economic growth and job creation.*

## ■ **Robust Infrastructure**

*Support fiscally responsible public investments in Wisconsin's transportation, communications, and energy infrastructure.*

## ■ **Strong Economic Development Environment**

*Support WEDC's statewide efforts to expand economic development opportunities.*



Using our vision as a guide, WEDA developed specific legislative goals and put strategies in place to help achieve them. Through effective coalition building with like-minded organizations, proactive grassroots advocacy efforts that took advantage of our members' experience and expertise, and direct lobbying strategies, WEDA realized plenty of success in 2017, including:

### ■ **State Capital Lending Program –**

Reestablishment of WEDC's capital lending program to provide critical financing options for new and expanding businesses.

■ **WEDC Base Funding** – Restoration of WEDC's base funding. The funding increase will allow the WEDC to continue to provide timely and effective assistance to their economic development partners.

■ **Broadband Investment** – Investment of \$14 million in new funding for the state's broadband expansion grant program to help rural communities spur business growth.

WEDA was also highly engaged on several key bills still under consideration by the Legislature. The proposals include legislation to reform the regulatory process for non-federal wetlands, a bill to restore the state's historic tax credit program as a powerful economic development tool, and a proposal to close the "Dark Store" property tax loophole in Wisconsin.

WEDA focused on developing a talent attraction proposal to help meet the workforce needs of Wisconsin businesses. The resulting legislation, which was recently introduced for consideration by lawmakers, would help attract young, skilled professionals to live and work in Wisconsin. The bill would allow out-of-state students to earn "in-state" tuition by remaining in Wisconsin after graduation.

Of course, a recap of 2017 wouldn't be complete without mention of the Foxconn project and the subsequent incentive legislation passed to secure the electronic manufacturing company's plan to build a \$10 billion industrial complex in southeastern Wisconsin. WEDA was publicly supportive of the project and advocated for the legislation that paved the way for the once-in-a-generation project.

WEDA joined forces with our strategic partners to defend tax incremental financing (TIF) from a legal challenge that could significantly diminish the effectiveness and use of TIF as an economic development tool.

WEDA members deserve a big thank you for helping to drive the association's advocacy efforts. We had a strong turnout for 2017 Legislative Day and members were actively engaged in the legislative process throughout the year. In fact, on numerous occasions, members testified at legislative hearings and met with legislators on WEDA's legislative priorities.

2017 was a year of change and progress for WEDA. That progress certainly extended to WEDA's legislative advocacy program, which built off past legislative accomplishments and positioned the association for future success.



# Financial Report

In 2017, the Board of Directors advanced the organizational model to add greater value to membership through investment in the development of programs and services. These efforts will serve as a foundation in 2018; which will focus on program implementation, revenue generation, while reducing annual operating costs.

In 2016, the corporation converted to accrual accounting – recognizing revenue when billed. WEDA will prioritize past due collection of any qualified accounts receivable as vital to retaining adequate fund reserves for the organization in the future. The new member database software has been designed to work with the accrual accounting system and the new service offerings now being implemented by WEDA.

In 2018, retention of existing members and recruitment of new members is a strategic priority and is essential to ensuring WEDA's long term vitality.

## WEDA 2017 Income Statement

Revenues	Actual	Budget
Conferences	\$84,457	\$77,000
Professional Development	\$86,410	\$110,250
Membership	\$59,035	\$74,500
Corporate Membership	\$95,105	\$108,000
Contract & Misc	\$67,363	\$60,150
	<b>\$392,370</b>	<b>\$429,900</b>

Expenses	Actual	Budget
Administration	\$291,177	\$280,275
Conferences	\$77,690	\$63,700
Advocacy/Programs	\$45,702	\$72,500
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$414,569</b>	<b>\$416,475</b>
A/R Write Off 2016	\$710	
<b>Net Income:</b>	<b>(\$22,199)</b>	<b>\$13,425</b>

## 2017 Board of Directors

### Executive Committee

#### President

Edward White, Sauk County Development Corporation

#### President-Elect

Heather Wessling, Kenosha Area Business Alliance

#### Treasurer

Jason Monnett, WBD, Inc.

#### Past-President

Pam Christenson, Madison Gas and Electric

#### At-Large Board Member

Mary Rajek, Redevelopment Resources

### Board Members

#### Christian Tscheschlok

Economic Development Washington County

#### Manny Vasquez

Pfefferle Companies, Inc.

#### Robert Dennik

VJS Construction Services

#### Bob Duffy

Oconomowoc Bureau of Economic Development

#### Courtney Berner

UW Center for Cooperatives

#### Seth Hudson

Cedar Corporation

#### Carol Karls

Wisconsin Public Service Corporation

#### Rob Kleman

Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce

#### Matthew Mikolajewski

City of Madison

#### Lynn Nelson

West Central Regional Planning Commission

#### Michael Ostrowski

City of Stevens Point

#### Donna Walker

Alliant Energy

#### Lisa Herr

7 Rivers Alliance

### Board Ex-Officio Members

#### Barb LaMue

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

### WEDA Contracted Staff

#### Steve Genoway

Havenlight, LLC Project Management

#### Kristy Herms

Kessler Consulting, LLC Finance

### WEDA Staff

#### Brian Doudna

Executive Director

#### Michael Welsh

Director of Legislative Affairs and Communications

#### Megan Purtell

Purtell Marketing Accounting Clerk

