



PRESS RELEASE

COUNTY ECONOMIC LEADERS FORM ECONOMIC RECOVERY TEAM TO ADDRESS ECONOMIC RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC, LAUNCH WEBSITE TO ASSIST BUSINESSES IMPACTED

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Portage County, WIS. – Regional economic leaders representing Portage County, City of Stevens Point, Village of Plover, CAP Services, Small Business Development Center at UW-Stevens Point, CREATE Portage County, Plover Area Business Association, and the Portage County Business Council have formed the County-wide Economic Recovery Team to provide assistance to local businesses through the COVID-19 Pandemic and economic recession expected to occur as a result of this pandemic.

The Economic Recovery Team's mission is to focus community resources, energy and effort dedicated to finding collaborative and decisive strategic actions for beginning immediate economic recovery, and positioning Portage County to achieve even greater long-term regional economic resilience.

“For years the County, City, Village, and partners like the Portage County Business Council, CREATE Portage County, and the Stevens Point Area Convention & Visitors Bureau have worked hard to create a financially resilient economy to insulate us from national economic uncertainty” said Todd Kuk Kahn, Executive Director of the Portage County Business Council, “Without our local businesses, everything we’ve worked so hard to achieve as a community could be lost. It’s time to step up and help where we can.”

In the coming days, the Economic Recovery Team will be focusing on the following:

- Formulating and implementing a plan to assess the economic impact to local business, and respond as soon as possible to provide financial relief and assistance.
- Creating a website to serve as a 'financial dashboard' for businesses who are overwhelmed by the process of obtaining assistance from all federal, state, and local partners, and help guide applicants through the process.
- Identify ways to collaboratively consolidate points of contact and have a unified community-driven response to the economic uncertainty as a result of the pandemic.
- Host webinars and outreach programs to help identify financial assistance opportunities from all partners.

"These professionals are local leaders with an intimate knowledge of financial resources available to local businesses, have contacts with our state and federal partners, and know what it takes to continue to make our community a thriving place on all fronts" stated Stevens Point Mayor Mike Wiza.

The Economic Recovery Team is made up of the following individuals:

Chris Holman, County Executive – Portage County
Jeff Schuler, Director of Planning – Portage County
Meleesa Johnson, Chair of Finance Committee – City of Stevens Point
Ryan Kernosky, Director of Community Development – City of Stevens Point
Mike Wiza, Mayor – City of Stevens Point
Steve Kunst, Community Development Manager – Village of Plover
Dan Mahoney, Village Administrator – Village of Plover
Greg Wright, Executive Director – CREATE Portage County
Todd Kuckkahn, Executive Director – Portage County Business Council
Laura West-Kralcik, VP of Lending – CAP Services, Inc.
Mike Beacom, Owner – Point Properties
Melissa Meschke, Director – WI SBDC at UW-Stevens Point
Sara Brish, Director - Stevens Point Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
Shannon Finnessy, Executive Director – Plover Area Business Association

The Economic Recovery Team has already met several times to discuss immediate action items to insulate our local economy from any additional financial stress from this pandemic. A website, www.portageeconrecovery.org has been created to serve as a dashboard for local businesses to connect to community, state, and federal resources. Additionally, local businesses who have needs not currently met by existing resources can share their information with the Economic Recovery Team to provide additional guidance through these uncertain times.

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