



Small Community Forums

2018 Summary Report

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About the Forums

More than half of Wisconsin's municipalities are communities of fewer than 2,500 residents. Despite their large number, these small communities represent a wide variety of geographic and economic areas within the state. Because of their small size, these communities have unique issues and needs that are often very different from those of larger communities. These annual forums are intended to bring together those serving and working in and with communities of populations less than 2,500 to address common issues, network, share best practices and identify strategies to address shared concerns through case studies and roundtable discussion groups. Everyone who cares about promoting, enhancing and preserving the future of small town Wisconsin were invited to attend these annual events. Communities are encouraged to share their accomplishments, ask questions about successes and challenges in other communities learn about new opportunities, and explore great ideas.

Who was Invited:

Community leaders, elected officials, volunteers, business leaders, educators, economic development professionals, planners and others interested in small community issues. A listing of participants at each of the four 2018 forums is presented in the exhibits of this report.

Locations of 2018 Forums:

Four geographically diverse sites were chosen as locations for the 2018 forums. Local leaders hosted events and arranged for facilities and meeting support. The following map illustrates the selected locations:

August 9, 2018 – Egg Harbor
August 22, 2018 – New Glarus
September 6, 2018 – Pepin
September 19, 2018 – Hurley

The 2018 Small Community Forums are made possible through a coalition of statewide agencies and organizations involved in rural community development: Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Wisconsin Downtown Action Council, Wisconsin Rural Partners, UW-Extension Center for Community and Economic Development, League of Wisconsin Municipalities, and U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development.



Agenda at Each Forum

Each of the forums followed a similar agenda as presented below. The events all began with local case studies that provided a story on an important community development issue. These case studies provided a foundation for the roundtable discussions that followed.

AGENDA

11:00 pm—4:30pm

10:30—Registration

11:00—Inclusive Community Dialog (Optional)

Facilitated by Eric Giordano, Director, Wisconsin
Institute for Public Policy and Service, Wausau

11:30—Registration for Forum Only

12:00—Lunch and Networking

12:30—Welcome and Introductions of Resources

12:45—Community Case Studies

1:45—Break

2:00—4:15 Roundtable Sessions (2 rounds)

- Housing
- Creative Economy
- Daycare
- Workforce Development

Each discussion, from the above topics, will be
focused on solutions regarding:

- Infrastructure
- Partnership
- Innovation
- Inclusion

4:15—Wrap up and Closing Comments

Community Case Studies

Community members presented case studies on past and current business and civic engagement programs. These presentations touched on local issues, personalities, politics, challenges, and successes. Participants were asked what from the case studies they would take back to their communities and use. The following examples illustrate the diversity of talent and projects presented in the four host communities.

Pepin Case Studies:

- Small town business, economic and workforce development, cultural tourism, and creative entrepreneurship -- with Alan Nugent (*owner of Abode Gallery and Stockholm Pie Company, founder of Stockholm/Pepin Merchants Association and Widespot Performing Arts Center*) and Amanda Scholz (*owner, Purple Turtle Gallery, Stockholm*)
- Flyway Film Festival and creative economy along the Mississippi River -- with Lu Lippold (*Film Festival Director*)
- Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance on the health and future well-being of Lake Pepin, a precious and important resource for the region -- with Mackenzie Consoer (*Communications Director*)

Participant Reactions to Case Study Topics:

- Something to research: local residents and their needs vs. business owners and their needs – how to truly collaborate and meet needs of both (daycare, housing, etc.)
- One needs to be fully committed to operate a seasonal arts venue. Income to start will be very low due to seasonality
- Collaboration is important to solve any problem
- Research more on resources (there are more out there than community knows)
- Social media is where advertising is AT
- Could offer pop-ups in our community to local crafters
- Pop-up option for winter tourist gig
- Bringing shops to communities in other regions as pop-up shops
- Positive attitude/optimism is as critical to success or overcoming an adverse situation as resourcefulness/innovation/creativity and resilience/determination
- No winter draw, no winter income
- Pop-up business during winter provides income during slow months January to March
- Numbers are more important than money for political support (state, national)
- How do you make small business ownership sustainable?
- Local businesses struggles during the off-seasons
- Small business owners have trouble obtaining healthcare for themselves and employees

- Internet and networking/social media being necessary and powerful for all efforts
- Need for small business owner healthcare.
- Community needs to work together and reach out to find resources to promote our initiatives/efforts
- Internet is key
- Internet needs
- Community needs: access to good whole food, internet, & community involvement
- People make change
- Local information – educational highlights of local information, businesses and thought processes. Food interaction = makes one think.
- The positive self-determination that stockholders exhibited and entrepreneurship
- Good information on Flyway as well as the gallery
- Biggest concerns are economic development and environmental protection/impacts
- MN River sediment has been cut less than 1%; goal was 25% by 2020
- Sedimentation conversation – how is this affecting/creating worse flooding around the state?
- LPLA: Local Organization for Local Resilience to environmental challenges, sedimentation, damage from floods, heat excess and extreme cold. Renewable energy?
- Sediment coming from Minnesota River flowing into Lake Pepin
- The severity of the lake destruction
- The connection between natural resources and economic/social system
- Natural resources
- Lake Pepin is in trouble. Most people don't know about all of the help available
- Have an urgent need to use & be a good caretaker of natural resources. Struggles with support & resources
- Protect natural resources. Everything hinges on that. Requires active involvement by community
- Draw of destruction marketing based on events, natural environment, etc.

New Glarus Case Studies:

- Small Businesses leveraging marketing to create a destination market and attract outside customers
- Hawk's Mill Winery – with Ric & Teresa Joranlien
 - A rapidly expanding winery that started in 2011.
- Cow & Quince – with Lori Stern
 - A family owned market who's aim is to make fresh food available locally.
- SBDC – Monroe Entrepreneurial Center – with Kristi Smith

Participant Reactions to Case Study Topics:

- Have a clear mission, purpose, etc. that is distinct, unique. Stick to it
- Focus on customer positive experience
- Requires energy, risk, acceptance and vision
- Social media?
- Sell an experience
- Hawk's Mill: creating quality experiences in rural areas, bringing people back. Willingness to take risks and entrepreneurial spirit
- Vineyard locally sourced restaurant
- Winery – success of social media in promoting new business
- Rich & Teresa: 10 for 10 on award winning wines. Wine making/retail experience. Leap of faith made it happen. No real outside assistance. Tavern league opposition. Huge social media impact (no prior experience). Establish solid biz plan/mission statement and stick with it!!
- Cow & Quince: power of community and networks
- Quince – coordinating food deliveries in winter, reached out to schools, labor shortage
- SBDC – sign in empty storefront
- Opportunities through SBDC
- Working with vacant storefront owner to place sign in window
- Window signs in vacant storefronts and info for businesses
- Empty store fronts – how to help fill it
- Small businesses will succeed if they offer a good product or experience
- We want your business here. Need help getting started?
- There are a lot of resources but knowing about them can be difficult
- Kristy – very enthusiastic, energized.
- Winehaus – social media, train the banks or lenders
- UniverCity year
- UIV program
- Directory of goods and services
- Childcare as a way of engaging youth

- Sharing of best practices and resources available to assist entrepreneurs in rural Wisconsin
- Lack of capital/money should force entrepreneurs to be scrappy/creative/resourceful
- Entrepreneurs don't need a push – they jump, ask questions later
- Resources to start businesses are out there but people don't know how to access them or there is a lot of misinformation out there on how they can or won't help
- SBDA – go to resource. Grants @ MSDA
- It's all about making connections
- Transition. List resources for new businesses
- Sponsor entrepreneurial gatherings. Help make connections between small businesses. Know your end goal – plan for transitions. “UniverCity Alliance” semester long with UW faculty – specific focus areas – linking course work with real issues
- Contact Green Co. about business coming to our community
- Availability of resources
- People don't know how to access resources available to assist with
- Better understand of UW's UniverCity and the Wisconsin idea
- How do we help those businesses that are growing too fast?
- Stick to the mission driven notion! Support their vision
- People are hungry for additional connections that can help.
- Many small businesses start without seeking help – not knowing what is available
- Have specific plan and stick to it – use social media. “Retailers' roundtable” – great idea. Green Co women's sustainable agriculture. Great model. “Safe Space” kitchen/working with local school guidance counselors – get more adolescents into my space
- Small business development center serves every county free services
- Entrepreneurship is alive in Green county
- Services available to startup companies
- Business plan. Resources are available
- There are resources out there for entrepreneurs and small businesses. Just need to ask and seek them out
- Successful start-ups without guidance – follow your intuition
- Small business ownership/success hinges to a large extent on the persistence and intentional fortitude of the individual. Resources may or may not be topped but much is available

Egg Harbor Case Studies:

- Public Arts Initiative Egg Harbor – discussion on the evolution of the initiative and the important relationship between government, art and the creative economy.
- Celebrate Water Door County – working to bring attention to the threats and challenges that our waters face by partnering with churches and schools that provide programming.
- Green Tier Charter Program – facilitates sustainable actions with an initial focus on refuse, making recycling more accessible and developing a hazardous waste disposal program in Door County.

Participant Reactions to Case Study Topics:

- Art isn't "extra"
- Appreciated that the municipality really listened to the arts group to create the structure that best fit the work they wanted to do and then didn't just cut them loose but still supported them
- Don't be afraid to integrate public art into your community
- Wow – tremendous community impact of sculpture initiative for a \$200 stipend
- I love how they saved the harbor so they did not have to change it to the village of egg. Love working on art for families with the community
- Milwaukee area UPAC performance arts funds. Great opportunity to connect with people. Why have I never been to one of these before since I've started working as a trustee?
- The importance of partnerships public/private/business
- Communities, businesses, people could adopt a "green purchase policy"
- Environmental preservation should be a primary element for communities to attract workers, businesses (a marketing strategy)
- Award show for sustainable businesses
- Solar installation goals
- Seemingly easy to green tier
- Enthusiasm for all the topics discussed – can I generate it in my town?
- Possibility of exploring PACE financing for energy upgraded for one building
- Make sure that mandated services/functions are in good function before taking on extra roles
- Benefits to belonging to planning/policy organization and commitment
- Cost to delayed action
- Green tier program very applicable for Door County
- Resources, resources, resources.
- Green tier legacy communities
- Success in a community takes willing participants

- I want to try green tier in my community
- Green tier sustainable energy
- The importance of healthy partnerships → open, transparent, inclusive government leadership pulling in community members
- Green tier is easy for everyone to do
- PACE financing -- banks that provide the program
- Green tier should be county wide – sounds like a win-win initiative
- Baileys needs green tier
- I enjoy hearing about the proactive approaches that egg harbor has taken to arts, sustainability, green tier ideas
- Permeable street surfaces
- Loved GLTC – would like to see it expanded to more rural and urban communities
- Green tier benefits: benefits especially helpful for our very small community (rural).
- Green tier is a neat program being executed by WI DNR -- good opportunity for communities

Hurley Case Studies:

- Successes in engaging local youth to bolster and expand community development within Iron County – lead by Neil Klemme, Dayne Stuhr and Tabbi Morello
 - Engaging youth in the Iron County Fair Board’s strategic plan
 - Collaborating with youth to update Iron County’s Fe logo
 - Engage local youth in community feedback studies like the First Impression Survey
 - Local youth helped with Community Design Charrettes to design new trailheads and routes that better connect neighborhoods
 - Initiated Iron County Youth Leadership Council – participate in monthly input meetings

Participant Reactions to Case Study Topics:

- Loved hearing about the youth voice in Iron County!! Youth serving on County Board was a great idea! Love it!!
- Also First Impression Survey is a great idea!!
- Good job Neil Klemme!!
- Youth is our future. Do not be afraid to involve youth.
- Involving students good idea
- Engagement with youth and how it’s happening in a county that gets a not as favorable perspective
- Impressed with student activity – want to learn more
- Looking to bring youth into our chamber board for input
- First Impressions Survey – PDF would be very useful in other Northern Wisconsin
- All comp plans should be required to have youth involvement (First Impressions surveys too)
- If communities want to address diversity, they should reflect that in their county board – including youth
- Engaging the youth to have meaningful contribution to real life initiatives and government activities
- Involvement of youth in community projects not only provides invaluable experiences and knowledge but also gives them a stake in the community. It teaches the importance of community engagement, whether it be developing downtown or participating in elections and community meetings. You should partner with the schools to perhaps arrange for school credit for participation – maybe spark more interest
- Youth voice and vote on county/city boards so important to consider during strategic planning
- Youth have a lot to offer community members (board members)

- How do we ensure the youth voice is actually making a difference in city/county board decisions?
- How do you find or choose projects for students to work on?
- Communities that ask our youth for input will likely be communities that thrive and grow
- Impressive involvement by students who presented in very confident and poised way. Neil (leader) enthusiasm and efforts to make program work.
- I was very impressed with the poise and public-speaking ability of the youth
- Youth presentation: importance of give and take between adults and students both benefit!
- 1st impression survey. Survey residents as to likes and dislikes
- Design Charettes – would be a great tool to use in upcoming place based planning
- It's impressive that Neil did get to the point of having youth on the county board. Would love to see it in other counties
- If you want to attract and retain youth ask them what they like and want. What a simple, straightforward idea. Why didn't I think of it?
- Youth Voice – time for us to repeat the first impression process – we involved 2 students back in 2007 when we did the process
- I'd like to meet with our fab lab students, will/can they partner with me re-growing entrepreneurship from fab lab
- A community needs an objective "set of eyes" to look at it
- Mapping your assets (ex. Waterfalls) is critical
- More youth involved in community and future
- Keeping our youth to stay in the community with jobs
- Potential to recognize student volunteers with cords at graduation
- Change is hard but the conversations that are hardest to have are probably the ones we most need to have
- Youth voices in Iron county – will get youth involved Christmas Belles program
- Use our local youth to help our board meet local challenges
- Youth are assets to your community. Engage with youth in your planning
- Adults value young ideas – county board, trail project
- In addition to county board involvement, I loved the idea of peer community surveys. Especially pointing out what some think are obvious community highlights.
- Session I: survey of a new town and what they like about it that their own town did/didn't have
- Waterfall map of where they were and GPS – excellent
- Invite youth into decision making processes – don't do things "for" youth, do things "with" youth

- Hurley high school girl speaker said after visiting another town on a first impression survey: “Oh, I get it now. There’s more to life in Hurley!” Takeaway -- use youth to learn and teach! Get youth out of their own town to stimulate curiosity, innovation, awareness that all help to grow a town.
- Youth input in local and county groups as well as youth surveys
- Get elementary and high school students involved in town government
- Diversity in community development → using youth to plan for the future, because they are the future
- Getting youth/YP impressions in any organization, could be eye-opening
- Love the line “planted something hopeful”
- Look into youth serving on county boards

Potential Impacts Resulting from Roundtable Discussions

Roundtable Discussions

In preparation for the “Toward One Wisconsin: A Conference on Overcoming Barriers to Inclusion” to be held April 11-12, 2019 in Milwaukee (visit <https://inclusivity-wi.org/>), the League partnered with conference organizers to host listening sessions as part of the 2018 annual Small Community Forums. Perhaps the most revealing result was the large turnout in each of the forums for this optional



conversation. The robust interest in and intensity of the conversations signaled the importance of this issue to communities across Wisconsin. Some overall insights from the sessions include the following:

- We desire to be more diverse and inclusive as communities, but we struggle to attract and retain diverse populations generally.
- We see a growing gap between attitudes of acceptance of diversity between our younger and older generations with our younger residents leading the way this issue.
- However, we have just as hard a time attracting and retaining younger residents in our small communities as we do diverse residents.
- We are motivated to become more diverse as we desperately need workers to fill jobs in our communities.
- For people of color and other diverse backgrounds, it is about time we started having these much needed conversations, but change at the local level often seems glacial.
- Wisconsin relies on immigrant labor in its rural communities and we have a direct interest in addressing and resolving the issue of illegal immigration—not to use it as a wedge issue or political litmus test.
- We have just scratched the surface—we need more and deeper conversations about inclusivity in our communities.

In this section of the forum, the roundtable discussions were led by facilitators that focused on four different topics: housing, creative economy, childcare and workforce. For 2018, we asked participants to identify what they might take back and apply in their home community.

Various questions were asked to estimate possible impacts. Facilitators were asked to direct the discussion to receive feedback on the following key ideas in each of the discussion topics:

- Infrastructure – What is needed?
- Innovation – New ideas/delivery/structures
- Partnerships – Who should be at the table? Are there new partners we should include?
- Inclusion – We need to include all segments in the conversation and get input from all.

Roundtable discussion points from each of the communities for each topic are summarized on the following pages.

Small-Group Roundtable Discussion:

Housing

Pepin

- Affordable housing can start with rehab housing. Poor housing to good property
- Tariffs adding 7-12k to new house
- Labor shortage
- Demand is for everything, everywhere, just to different degrees
- Challenge noted for communities that are tourism dependent: single family, multifamily, senior, transitional, rehab
- Workforce housing, employer assisted housing, senior housing, infill development, aging in place, rural infrastructure, broadband, affordable housing, low income housing, short-term rentals
- Providing opportunities employment/housing/quality of life from various sources
- How can we have affordable accessible housing?
- Housing for working poor that does not cost a great percentage of their income and is safe
- Employer giving loans to employees for housing is a good idea
- We need housing for seniors and people transitioning from rehab. Also more hotels/motels
- That in addition to assessing needs in a community it is absolutely necessary to inventory the community assets that are available to help meet those needs
- Difficulties in development of senior housing “act in place”

- High speed internet. Critical to the future of this area (Pepin County)
- Need “net zero” energy. Low rent apartment housing (co-ops?) that are supported by businesses investing in employee housing and recruiting and retaining.

Egg Harbor

- There are a variety of USDA/WITEDA programs that may be useful for communities/individuals in need – people just don’t know about them
- USDA Program
- Neighbor works of Green Bay
- Partnership
- We need to do a better job of connecting with resources. Get the effort going
- Self-help model for getting workforce housing units built
- The need for local government and local businesses to help with housing issues in their community
- USDA – Self-help
- USDA offerings! Wow!
- USDA self-help & other programs!
- Who takes the lead on community workforce housing? The municipality or the business community?
- Separate housing for: short term -- seasonal employees, long term – permanent employees
- The employers and employees who need housing need to be at the table
- “We are the they” local champions need to connect beyond communities
- These issues are so interwoven – where can I facilitate a break in the cycle to move to action!!

- Housing needs: we need housing for families who need affordable housing; workforce (seasonal); artist (affordable)

New Glarus

- Share best practices – the solutions we are looking for is here somewhere
- Private/public partnerships to maximize limited resources
- I am impressed about the level of concern
- Bring regional economic development people to the table in housing discussion. This can't be a dog-eat-dog competitive environment (cities vs. cities) regional cooperation is essential
- Seniors looking to sell homes, creates need for senior housing. City removes barriers and zoning issues to allow private developer. One developer develops among scattered sites. Focus on "workforce housing" not "low-income housing." Outside economic developer
- In order to address the housing need of a community you need to look around the table and see who isn't a part of the discussion and invite those missing in the conversation. This will lead to a more cohesive understanding of a community's housing need
- Housing is a critical issue, very different causes based on geography
- Create clearinghouse to attract developers. All other resources be made known to developer
- Affordable housing in Green County, Green Lake. Limited housing stock. Limited workforce housing
- We can continue this discussion through the Wisconsin's rural partners housing study group
- Potential to network with other small communities to attract investor dollars
- Our municipality is very poised to deal with workforce housing
- Availability of USDA housing tools for communities with 80% of less of regional median income
- Streamline resources access
- The need for regional housing development – a single project with multi sights to enable a developer to afford it and bring it to pass
- The issue of housing is not easy to resolve
- There needs to be a central clearinghouse for municipalities to attract housing developers

Hurley

- Work with several communities to entice contractors/developers into build new housing
- Need housing stock for elderly to transition them out of single family housing to condo type housing
- Varied housing needs across areas
- More need to communicate to access information
- For the aging population co-housing is an option
- SAIL Housing organization and the village movement

- We could use leadership in some communities to help programs go!
- Housing is a pervasive problem
- 100,000-150,000 is the sweet spot
- Multiple barriers exist facing new development – education, financing
- “Village” Idea – sailhousing.org – people co-op for wellness phone in – mattress flipping, ride sharing
- Sailhousing.org – small group to help town boards bring in housing
- Any new development should be universal design and zero threshold entrance
- Scatter development – trying to all work together
- Funding available for average & elder housing. Would like to find more.
- Community/regional collaboration potential
- Need for a housing survey – residential, not just local business owners
- Manufactured house barriers
- Overregulation drives up prices
- There is no government assistance for developers of market rate multi-family housing development. The housing that most small communities are lacking and are demanding. Maybe there should be a program to help these developers.
- Maybe there should be grants to help fund housing studies of smaller communities
- Senior housing cooperative
- Housing study
- Transitional housing
- Working together for cross sharing of what’s worked in your community to entice workforce housing expansion. As well, include the youth in future housing planning.
- Find ways to drive regulation costs down
- Multi-prong: rehab old homes (including ones with seniors), new senior/family housing, maybe co-op or manufactured housing or tiny homes as solutions
- Find solutions for small rural housing projects (under 24 units)
- Look into senior housing “cooperative” so folks can downsize and keep equity
- Partner with NWTC to have summer build and remodel class – student/teachers stay on the lakes (locals adopt a builder) offer free land to help happen
- Tiny home subdivision, 10 manufactured homes subdivision
- Good ideas for re-use or renovation of existing homes/buildings and housing and land co-ops with tech college or high school
- Not a quick fix. Communication with area government/council. Communication with contractors. Housing for summer help – affordable rent. Reasonably price multi-family rental.
- Housing solutions approach must be multi-prong include: building new, rehab, creative living situations (co-op, home sharing, converting out-buildings)
- We should not count on older people wanting to move out of their homes!

Small-Group Roundtable Discussion:
Creative Economy

Pepin

- Explore studio/living spaces such as found in urban areas in rural community
- Loosen definition of “young” for young professionals organizations
- Optimism (grounded-optimism) is half the battle for change/progress
- Whatever the problem that needs solving, you need to go to others, develop relationships and gain support/involvement
- Organic leadership – finding creative ways to break down silos i.e. Trempealeau County ice fishing competition. Ethnic get-together
- Need to work on bringing in more jobs
- Bridge the disconnect between both ends of the county
- Interconnected issues – look at the big picture/common good – address on the local level bit by bit
- Encourage community support
- Find state/county support systems
- Need to create forum for community conversation regarding community needs/wants and making change happen
- Information on beekeeping
- Kayaking information
- “River list”
- Partnership with a similar size community and evaluate on good points and bad points for a win-win partnership

- Need more new worker people. Equals need more affordable housing and internet and things for them to do when not working. Transportation? Health care?
- Rural residents need to give space/grace to one another to disagree on issues but still respect on another
- Stay hopeful and positive
- I learned that there are unique needs that differ within 50 miles of each other. Some communities need foot traffic, some need local residents to invest in the community.
- Score, WBC – info to pass on to community members
- Be better, but it can be done?
- Need more local community forums such as this
- Use informal networks
- Vision to concrete steps to action
- Economic perception/business is multifaceted need to use/ develop sustainable opportunity. Multiple areas

Egg Harbor

- Lack of “creative” entrepreneur support. Still support for traditional business models
- Very important! Broadband needed!
- Southern Door has FAB job. Women’s Business Organization – SBA
- Broadband is needed
- Facebook/technology for innovators to interact
- The “constructive criticism club”

- Creative ways to change attitudes
- Sell the environment as the prime reason for visiting, living here
- Find the common good!
- Decline of established resorts and reduction of lodging units
- Infrastructure needs improvement but can't be afforded by villages and municipalities. We came to no conclusion

New Glarus

- We need help
- Toolbox for starting new businesses
- Networking!! Ambition
- How Green Lake courthouse was revived – just that arts WIS exists
- Bringing in new businesses is difficult
- Have a toolbox with assets and POCs to support new businesses. (Tif, look assistance, etc.)
- Communities need to create a business packet include all resources
- Awesome ideas love it!
- Private/public partnerships
- Partnerships with business and clubs to promote area
- Businesses working together
- Must visit Browntown!
- We are in transitional times and creativity will help us through this transition
- Getting enough time to be involved and complete projects seems to be the biggest hurdle
- Collaboration is an essential aspect of creative economy
- Ag counties to diversity industry

- Young professionals group
- H.A.T.C.H.
- App to tie construction corridor
- Art “business” is becoming

Hurley

- Partnerships , relationships
- Using Land O Lakes LOLA as a template to expand our art economy
- Identify assets – creative people. Start with an “idea” and build upon it. Partner with local schools, town gov. – INVITE EVERYONE
- Start small – pick 1 community art related project and get it done
- Gather creative people 1x/month “coffee for creators” get them talking – help them with ideas and find them resources
- Need for training opportunities for entrepreneurs and business incubators
- We could use communal space to use for businesses i.e. commercial kitchen community foundation
- We need to focus on being adaptive and changing with the times
- Farm to table big for local communities
- Broadband an issue
- Use assets to make an industry
- Finding/being creative in recognizing and utilizing local assets
- Creative economy is based on building assets in community
- Partnership between k-12 colleges for teaching careers

Small-Group Roundtable Discussion:

Childcare

Pepin

- Accessible → affordable → reliable. Childcare is a critical piece of a functioning modern economy
- Childcare is not an area where you will get rich
- Questions on regulatory barrier
- Childcare pay – equates to shortage
- Loved hearing that more schools are doing wrap around programs
- Also, excited to see how business and childcare programs work together
- Knowing that the state is recognizing that a lack of daycare is a critical issue is very promising
- Very excited to learn about the innovative collaboration plans with business owners and daycare providers
- Employers need to recognize daycare as a barrier vs. an excuse
- Micro loans are available for center startup costs for licensed day care centers
- Shared services for childcare

Egg Harbor

- Shared services model need to be explored for N. Door County via DCECO Development Corporation
- A service for small business development of child care
- All of today's topics are connected. Ex. To recruit workforce you need quality childcare

- There can be community collaboration models. Ex. 4 year old kindergarten
- Gibraltar partnering with Northern Door Childcare Center to create 4k program
- Marketing of child care/early childhood education as public good vs. private service
- Look into "sandbox"
- Fund what you want to be, not what you are
- Intergenerational early care and education. A la carte benefits packages

New Glarus

- Financials is the biggest limited factor facing childcare today
- Childcare is a critical issue for businesses but they don't know how to solve the problem. They don't want to be in childcare industry
- Huge need for workforce issue
- Potential for employers to match pretax daycare dollars with a section 125 plan

Hurley

- innovation – employers offering daycare support – like vouchers or shared center
- inclusion – education parents on how to use existing childcare benefits (HSAs)
- partnership/inclusion – childcare and elderly care in shared facilities
- Infrastructure – decreasing the income and welfare gaps so that families can be more successful than

holding back to keep at least some benefits.

- Partnership – school districts expanding programs to accept 3, 4, and 2 year olds
- Innovation – schools developing resources to reduce childcare costs for parents and families
- Innovation – childcare cooperative
- Infrastructure – utilizing existing infrastructure in alignment and collaboration across organization
- Innovation – improving quality of care across programs, including those with federal support
- Inclusion – educating employers about the needs and benefits around employees’ daycare needs and helping them to meet them.
- Inclusion – infrastructure support for home-based daycare. Businesses help potential daycares meet standards and certifications
- Inclusion – better access to childcare support programs and better processes to use benefits
- Partnership – encouraging employers to raise the bar on childcare benefits and break up the homogeneous packages that they collectively share

Small-Group Roundtable Discussion:

Workforce

Pepin

- Workforce development is working on ideas to keep graduates here and attract workers from other states like tax credits
- Work force development even Pepin County needs workforce
- Need someone to connect resources like an economic development director or UW Extension
- Find job candidates for people with autism. Many are very highly skilled, but are too shy
- Lack of 1 stop shop for economic development is a large rural area challenge. Also: broadband access/lack of workers
- We need to find out what people in community need. Ask – share resources
- Labor crisis build people/communities so that people want to come and stay in rural communities
- Seems like you have to learn the unique makeup of the individual communities to really meet their employment needs. i.e. a community w/ no transportation would be challenging for certain demographics
- Biggest challenge seems to be with lack of workers to fill jobs
- Broadband service will continue to impact workforce development – especially with careers that offer telecommuting options

- People will commute for a job if quality of life is equally as good
- Seasonality of jobs in towns but revolving loan fund to economy. Pop-up concepts to incubate new business

Egg Harbor

- Education to parents and young adults on skilled trades a viable career
- Discuss the intergenerational community concept. This will allow for a vibrant community
- Increase participation in the existing high school home-build project (DCEDL) – and or increase the number of projects each year
- Acquire historic site for educational purposed. Available resources at county level are not participating at state level
- Apprenticeship programs are not capitalized on
- Better marketing of our services/programs
- Identification of available jobs beyond tourism
- Host family idea for seasonal workers
- Where in the county is there a group working on workforce development?
- Workforce housing is hindering workforce development. So maybe host families to provide housing to get the workforce back in areas
- Countywide there are opportunities for: county wide seasonal work force housing development; county

wide transportation for work force;
county wide zoning changes to
allow for workforce housing

- How do we attract youth? What will we do to keep youth in the community?
- Rural workforce development
- Mentorship/host family program
- “Who is going to talk to who” → starting the dialogue!
- Laborers are not/never included in “workforce” development discussion

New Glarus

- Using disabled people for jobs etc. and less education. More tech training.
- Given the cyclical nature of the economy and given our current full employment, do we really want to increase the workforce only to have the eventual lay off when things slow?
- Employers need to modify recruiting practices
- Education needs to modify to match students’ needs
- Creative brainstorming for recruiting workforce across different industries
- The future of workforce needs and timelines are unclear so it is difficult to anticipate needs in the future. Need more young folks participating
- Workforce development starts relationships development. Transitioning to inspire
- Education system and employers need to communicate and coordinate to form a partnership in

working with high school kids and maybe middle school to get kids exposed to different trades and professions

- Excellent conversation – much more is needed “overwhelming” topic
- Change way high school teaches and add trade skills
- Message needs to get into the schools to tell them what they need
- Major need for structural change of education system
- There are programs available for training employees. Common knowledge of these area readily available
- Work force development needs to be more widely discussed earlier in child development

Hurley

- The healthcare system is way more complicated and in challenges than I ever knew! We’re in big trouble with our local health care delivery facilities and systems!
- Challenges with healthcare not being responsive to changing demographics
- Online → small business → apartment housing → craftsman/building larger businesses → use of natural assets to attract people
- Business → need employees → work ethic? (show up when scheduled)
- Apprenticeships needed, entrepreneurship training, succession planning

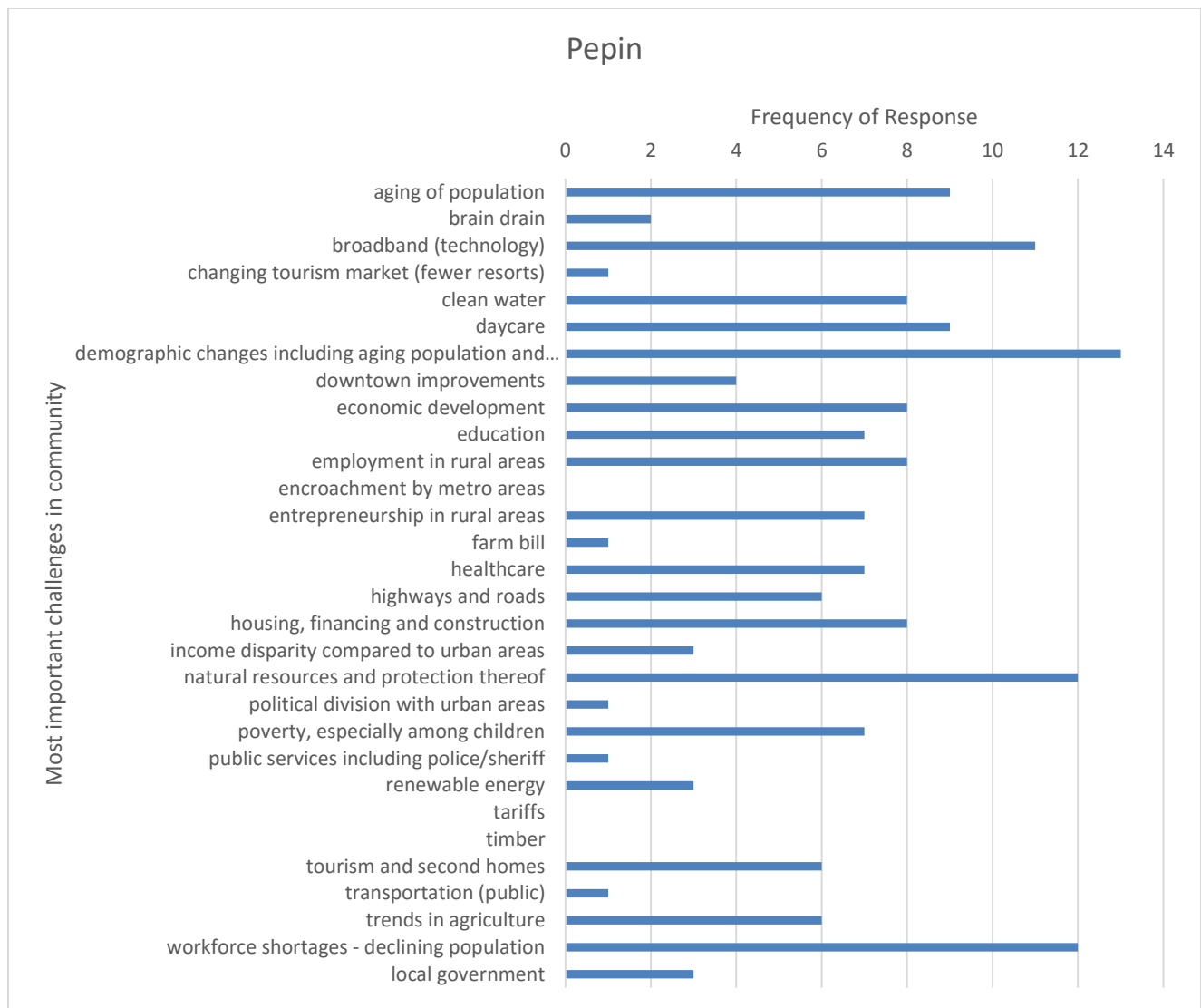
- Tourism is not a sustainable job base
- Skilled labor working back into high school – tech program
- Importance of connecting the ideas of developing industry/jobs to developing community/society at the same time
- Workforce education and civic education – need to be happening side-by-side
- Jobs will get people there, an inclusive society/community will make them stay!
- Website: number Northwoods luring – locals talking about great daily impressions they are having – encourage others to enjoy ahead/move here
- Demographics – ages gap which may lead to greater shortage
- Education for older individuals in technology
- Services for working families increase
- While there were some very good ideas, without a large industry with a decent wage and benefits the workforce would suffer
- Lots of good ideas – we need to make them work
- Bring in more opportunities to learn the trades and new skills
- We need to brand our area to capture our assets of natural resources: forests, lakes, streams, waterfalls, beautiful night skies with little light pollution and capitalize on it while preserving its beauty and value.
- Battle of health care services
- Aging population needs more tech training/well trained health care for elderly
- Use our natural beauty and rich history and simple living to attract tourists and potential citizens
- How to provide housing ideas for lower pay health care providers, homecare, CNA & TC.
- Innovation in medical industry is crucial to continue to serve the current/future population

Biggest Challenges Facing Your Community

At each of the forums, participants were given a sheet of paper with the following options and asked to circle the five challenges they felt were the most prevalent in their community (or write in others challenges that were not listed). The results were tabulated and formulated below to show which challenges had a large consensus in each community and between communities.

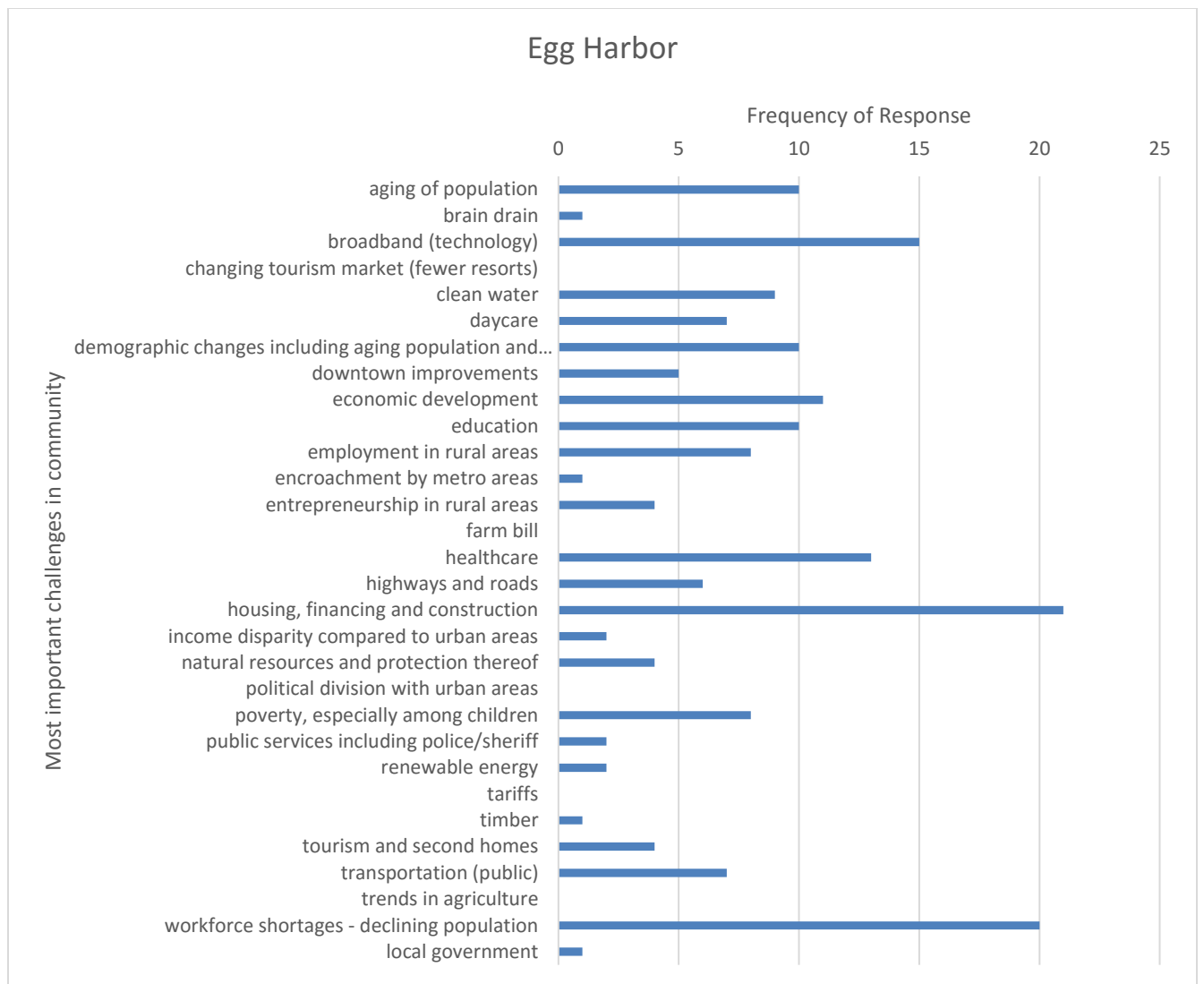
Options:

- Aging of Population
- Brain Drain
- Broadband (technology)
- Changing Tourism Market (fewer resorts)
- Clean Water
- Daycare
- Demographic Changes Including Aging Population and Growth of Millennials
- Downtown Improvements
- Economic Development
- Education
- Employment in Rural Areas
- Encroachment by Metro Areas
- Entrepreneurship in Rural Areas
- Farm Bill
- Healthcare
- Highways and Roads
- Housing, Financing and Construction
- Income Disparity Compared to Urban Areas
- Natural Resources and Protection Thereof
- Political Division with Urban Areas
- Poverty, Especially Among Children
- Public Services Including Police/Sheriff
- Renewable Energy
- Tariffs
- Timber
- Tourism and Second Homes
- Transportation (Public)
- Trends in Agriculture
- Workforce Shortages – Declining Population
- Local Government



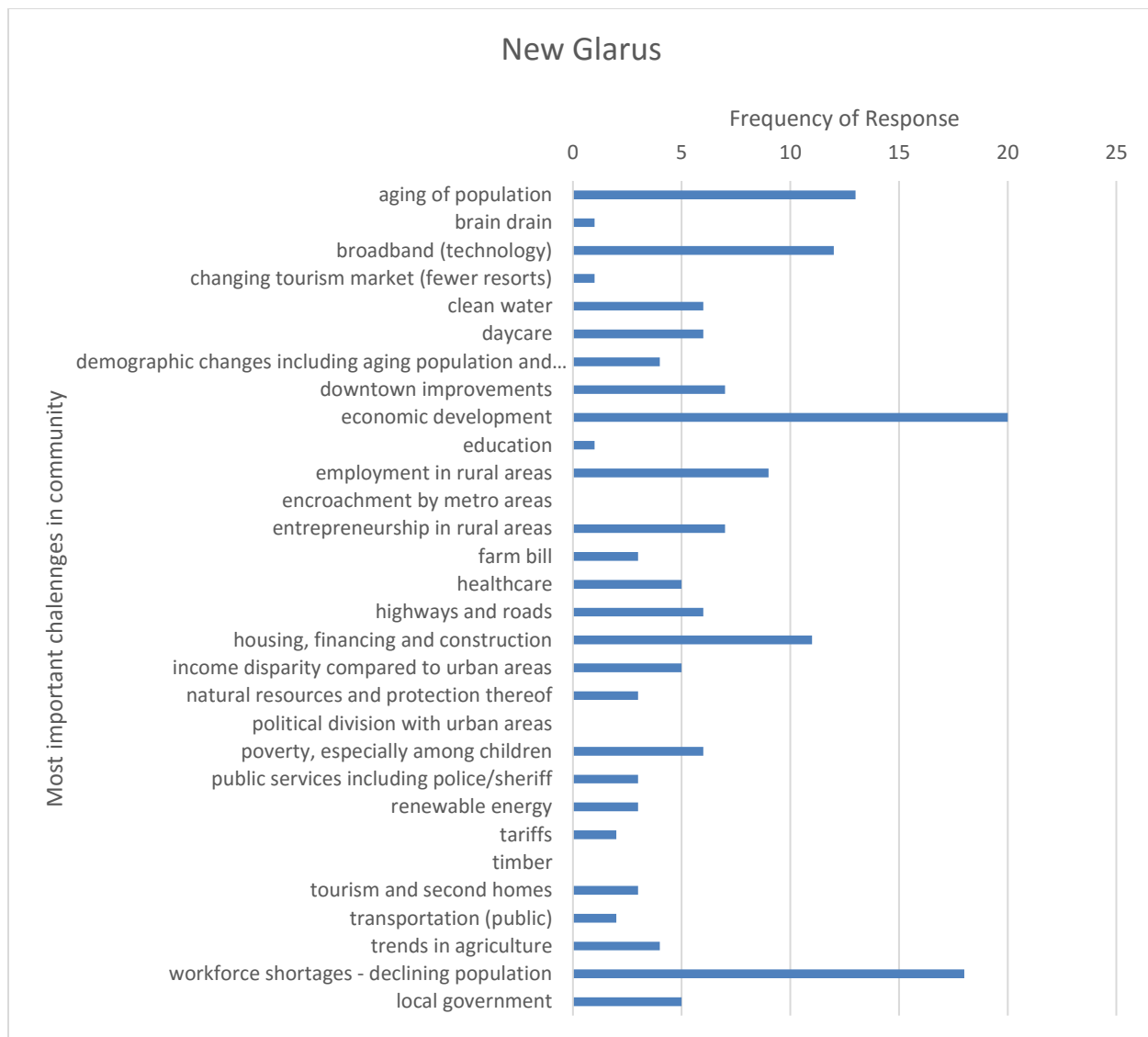
Other challenges:

- Luring back grads that went away for school
- Immigration
- Training for students staying in the area
- Ongoing training for workers
- Helping community members define and work towards success
- Community engagement and planning
- Wage issues
- Not enough employees in rural areas
- Funding of local government
- Access to healthy food
- Water quality



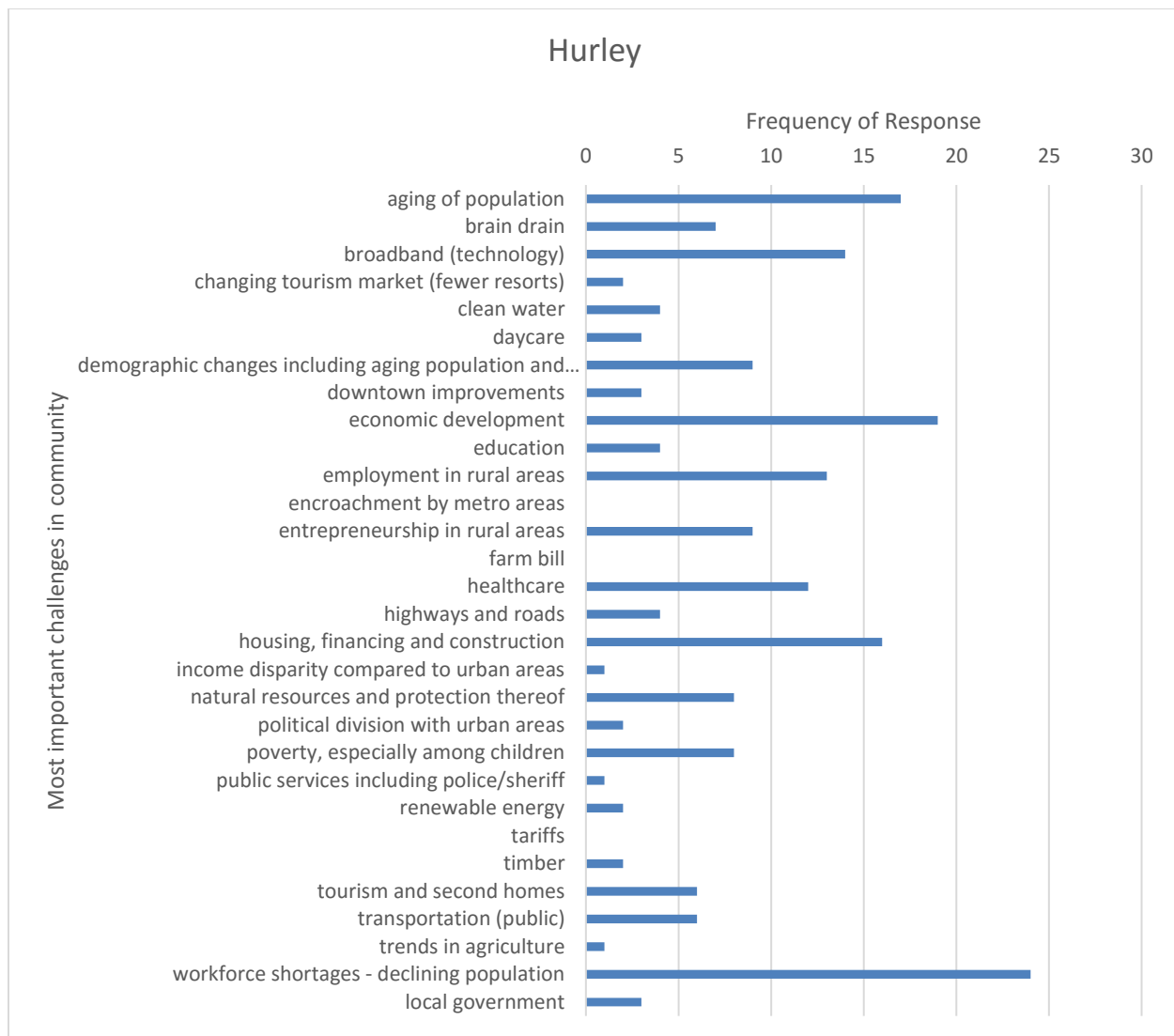
Other challenges:

- Housing affordability and accessibility
- Income disparity
- Year-round employment in rural areas
- Lack of wage growth
- Flight of young from rural areas (they don't return)
- Diversity
- Cell service



Other challenges:

- High housing cost
- Civics, succession planning in local government
- Diverse and inclusive communities
- School enrollment declines
- More workers to fill jobs



Other challenges:

- Young people leave – there is nothing to keep them around!
- Can't keep or attract young professionals to the area
- Natural resources are our biggest asset. Lack of light pollution could be capitalized on (i.e. build a telescope contract for universities to study astronomy – not many places have this asset anymore!)
- Cell service
- AODA – Meth
- Employment in rural areas outside of the service industry
- Nature based outdoor activities
- Emergency services (i.e. EMTs, firefighters)

Additional Resources

This list includes links to the organizations involved in the forums as an additional resource for follow-up information for participants and their community.

Partner host organizations

- League of Wisconsin Municipalities www.lwm-info.org
- USDA Rural Development www.rd.usda.gov/wi
- UW Extension Center for Community & Economic Development www.cced.ces.uwex.edu/downtown-revitalization/
- Wisconsin Downtown Action Council (WDAC) www.wisconsinowntown.org
- Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation www.wedc.org
- Wisconsin Rural Partners www.wirural.org

Resource organizations and opportunities

- Arts Wisconsin – advocacy, service and development for the arts, arts education, and creative economy www.artswisconsin.org
- United States Small Business Administration (SBA) www.sba.gov
- Wisconsin Department of Administration <https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/home.aspx>
- Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority www.wheda.com
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources www.dnr.wi.gov

Resources, readings, and inspiration

- Small Business Survival www.smallbizsurvival.com/
- Housing Assistance Council www.ruralhome.org
- Art of the Rural www.artoftherural.org
- [How small towns and cities can use local assets to rebuild their economies](#), EPA, 2015
- [101 small ways you can improve your city](#), Curbed, 9/22/16
- State of Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development www.dwd.wisconsin.gov
- Inspire Wisconsin www.inspirewisconsin.org
- Wisconsin Early Childhood Association www.wisconsinearlychildhood.org

Exhibit - Brochure

REGISTRATION FORM

**Registration Fee is \$20.00 per person,
Lunch is included in registration
Space is limited so register early**

Register Online at:
www.wisconsin-downtown.org/forums
(Online registration available June 1, 2018)
OR

Please complete the following:

Name: _____
Community: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State _____ Zip _____
Daytime phone: _____
Email: _____

I will attend at this location:

____ Egg Harbor, August 9, 2018
____ New Glarus, August 22, 2018
____ Pepin, September 6, 2018
____ Hurley, September 19, 2018

Mail Form and Check to:

Wisconsin Downtown Action Council
PO Box 260258
Madison, WI 53726-0258

Make check payable to:

Wisconsin Downtown Action Council

About the Small Town Downtown Forums

Small communities have unique issues and needs that are often very different from those of larger communities. These regional forums are designed to bring together people involved and interested in promoting, enhancing and preserving Wisconsin's small communities.

If you live in, work in, or help shape communities with populations of 2,500 or fewer, attend a session near you to learn through case studies, roundtables and discussion groups.

Come with examples of local and regional success stories as well as challenges, and be prepared to share with and learn from colleagues and friends. Everyone in the community and region is invited!

Who should attend?

Community leaders, elected officials, volunteers, business leaders, educators, local and regional economic development, civic, and planning organizations.

Find information on the sponsors at:

League of Wisconsin Municipalities
www.lwm-info.org

United States Department of Agriculture
www.rd.usda.gov

University of Wisconsin—Extension
<https://cced.ces.uwex.edu/>

Wisconsin Downtown Action Council
www.wisconsin-downtown.org

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
<https://inwisconsin.com>

Wisconsin Rural Partners
www.wiruralpartners.org

Small Community Forums



Four Regional Workshops

August 9, 2018—Egg Harbor
August 22, 2018—New Glarus
September 6, 2018—Pepin
September 19, 2018—Hurley

*Improving the vitality and
economic health of our small
communities*

LOCATIONS



Egg Harbor
August 9, 2018
Kress Pavilion
7845 Church Street

New Glarus
August 22, 2018
New Glarus Hotel
100 6th Avenue

Pepin
September 6, 2018
Pepin Village Hall
508 2nd Street

Hurley
September 19, 2018
Iron County Memorial Building
201 Iron Street

AGENDA

11:00 pm—4:30pm

10:30—Registration

11:00—Inclusive Community Dialog (Optional)
Facilitated by Eric Giordano, Director, Wisconsin
Institute for Public Policy and Service, Wausau

11:30—Registration for Forum Only

12:00—Lunch and Networking

12:30—Welcome and Introductions of Resources

12:45—Community Case Studies

1:45—Break

2:00—4:15 Roundtable Sessions (2 rounds)

- Housing
- Creative Economy
- Daycare
- Workforce Development

Each discussion, from the above topics, will be
focused on solutions regarding:

- Infrastructure
- Partnership
- Innovation
- Inclusion

4:15—Wrap up and Closing Comments

PRESENTED BY:



Exhibit - Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Anne Katz, akatz@artswisconsin.org

July 9, 2018

SMALL COMMUNITY FORUMS COMING UP IN EGG HARBOR, HURLEY, NEW GLARUS, AND PEPIN

Sessions provide participants opportunity to network, share best practices and identify strategies for small community success.

Register at www.wisconsin downtown.org/forums

More than half of Wisconsin's municipalities are communities of fewer than 2,500 residents. Despite their large number, these small communities represent a wide variety of geographic and economic areas within the state. Because of their small size, these municipalities have unique issues and needs that are often very different from those of larger communities.

Now in their eighth year, a series of **Small Community Forums**, to be held in four locations in August and September, allow residents in these communities to come together, address common issues, network, share best practices, and identify strategies to address shared concerns. Representatives from many state and regional resource partners will be on hand to connect with attendees and provide guidance on specific concerns introduced during the sessions.

Everyone who cares about the future of their community is invited to attend. The Forums are open to everyone interested in small town and rural Wisconsin, including those involved in quality of life issues, business, government, education, the nonprofit sector, civic and community development. Civic leaders, elected officials, volunteers, business leaders, educators, and local and regional economic development, civic, and planning are encouraged to participate. Discussions will focus on infrastructure, partnership, innovation, and inclusion in housing, creative economy, childcare, and workforce development.

These forums are about sharing ideas, learning and networking for people who care about the future of rural Wisconsin.

Forum dates and locations *(subject to change)*

- * **Thursday, August 9, Egg Harbor**
Kress Pavilion, 7845 Church Street
- * **Tuesday, August 22, New Glarus**
New Glarus Hotel Restaurant, 100 6th Avenue
- * **Wednesday, September 6, Pepin**
Pepin Village Hall, 508 2nd Street
- * **Wednesday, September 19, Hurley**
Iron County Memorial Building, 201 Iron Street

Each Forum starts with lunch at noon, with the program following from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. An optional, free pre-Forum discussion on equity and inclusivity, led by the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and

Service, will take place 11 am – 12 noon. Registration at each site opens at 10:30 a.m. The registration fee is \$20 and includes lunch and materials. **Register at www.wisconsin downtown.org/forums.**

Matt Trotter, a recent Forum participant and small business owner in Princeton, had this to say about the forums: “As a small business owner, finding ways to help our community thrive and grow is important from a personal and professional standpoint. Being able to network and gather creative ideas and best practices from others in similar situations is a really valuable experience. I came away from the forums refreshed and reenergized.”

The 2018 Small Community Forums are made possible through a coalition of statewide agencies and organizations involved in rural community development: Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Wisconsin Downtown Action Council, Wisconsin Rural Partners, UW-Extension Center for Community and Economic Development, League of Wisconsin Municipalities, and U.S. Department of Agriculture-Rural Development.

For more information, go to www.wisconsin downtown.org/forums or contact Anne Katz at akatz@artswisconsin.org.

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