

RURAL ECONOMIC SUMMIT

WELCOME

MARCH 28, 2024



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



Extension's Mission

- More than a century embodying the Wisconsin Idea
- Extend university resources to every corner of Wisconsin
- Engage with businesses, farmers, families, tribes & governments so they have the tools, research, & resources they need



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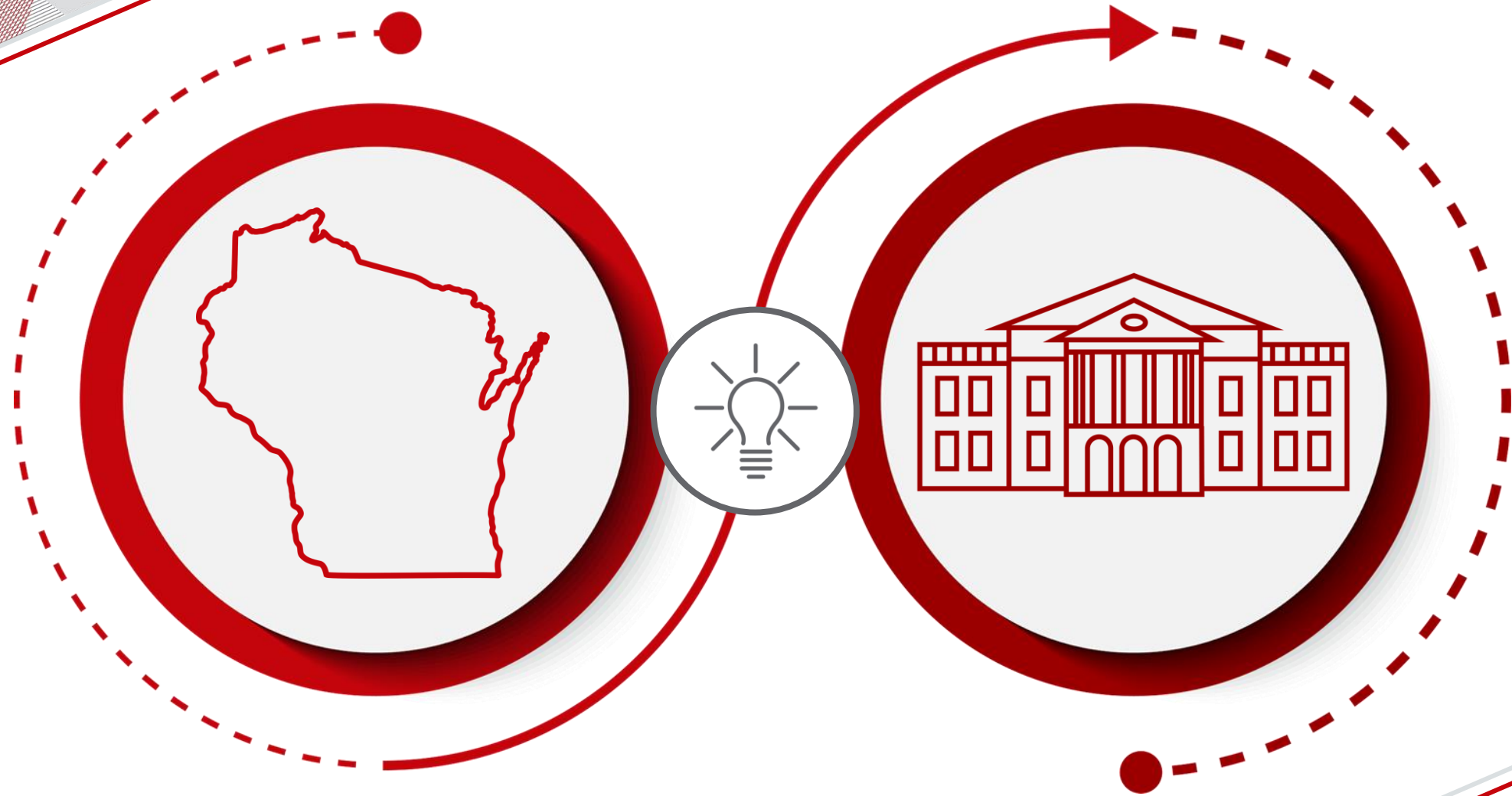
Extension's Reach

- **575,000** participants reached through direct engagement
- **2,000** businesses & nonprofits receiving assistance
- **10,500** volunteers



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Connecting Campus to Communities

Extension is a bridge between research at UW–Madison & the business, nonprofits, & governments of Wisconsin



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Thriving Rural Economies

- Agriculture, manufacturing, & tourism all contribute significantly to our state's identity & prosperity
- Quality of life in rural areas is about supporting economies where communities can thrive



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▶ **Agricultural Sector**



- Agriculture is a vital role that contributes over \$104 billion annually to Wisconsin's economy and provides more than 430,000 jobs



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Areas of Need

- Critical shortage of healthcare professionals
- Scarcity of affordable & quality housing
- Need for broadband
- Low unemployment rate of 3.3% suggests labor shortage



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▶ Entrepreneurship



- Rural Wisconsin Entrepreneurship Initiative, a partnership with WEDC
- Technical assistance & education to small businesses & entrepreneurs
- Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference in Platteville on May 30-31



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Broadband Expansion

- Extension invested in team of broadband specialists to bring communities closer to available federal funding
- Broadband access a key way that rural communities can expand local business activity & keep workers closer to home



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Health Connectors



- Extension hiring a team of health coordinator positions
- Will expand our links between local governments and community-based organizations



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