

2020 Annual Report



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVE, INC

We stand ready to help our neighbors



The impersonal hand of government can never replace the helping hand of a neighbor

Hubert Humphrey

Over the years, Community Development Alternatives has spearheaded an extensive range of projects. We have developed and rehabilitated housing, coordinated flood mitigation, developed funding strategies for public facility improvements, fostered economic development, and served as the financial umbrella for community projects. Each project presents challenges – and creates new opportunities.

In developing relationships with communities and organizations - our neighbors - we find ourselves in the right place to help with new projects and challenges as they arise. Public facility

projects present an opportunity to help small communities with debt restructuring and utility rate relief. Working with housing rehabilitation has led to flood mitigation as communities deal with unexpected weather events. Assisting communities with Covid-19 relief will position us to help with infrastructure improvements and broadband expansion funded by The American Rescue Plan Act. All of these challenges and resulting opportunities help define the mission of Community Development Alternatives.

This readiness is built on the combined experience of the CDA staff. Dale Klemme, Executive

Director, has 42 years' experience in housing, economic development, and community development. Lori Bekkum has spent 26 years working with families to improve their housing condition. Gary Koch served 27 years in Administration with the City of Prairie du Chien and 15 years with CDA, providing expertise in municipal budgets and public facilities. Eric Frydenlund spent 25 years in tourism business and 18 years in tourism promotion. And Kelli Boylen brings a wealth of experience in social media and technology. The breadth of our experience creates a convergence of familiarity and opportunity. And it leads to projects entirely

outside the perceived "scope" of CDA services.

As we look to a future shaped by Covid-19 recovery, small-town financial hardships, and a challenged rural population, a multitude of opportunities will again present themselves. By virtue of our experience and nimbleness, we can respond quickly and dynamically to these ever-changing possibilities. With a valued service and little overhead, we can meet these challenges efficiently and cost effectively. CDA stands ready to help our neighbors.

2020 Annual Report

Housing assistance helps turn around lives

One of the staples of Community Development Alternatives over the years remains housing assistance. CDA helps homeowners apply for state and federal housing programs, provides coordination between homeowners and contractors during the construction phase, and

helps people understand the myriad of rules and regulations associated with the programs.

During this assistance, we build relationships with people that grow into trust and friendships. We assist people struggling with financial circumstances unable to fund failing housing conditions. In the process, we help people turn around their lives. “We don’t just work on houses, we work with people,” said Lori Bekkum, of CDA.

2020, the year of the pandemic, proved to be a challenge for funding housing assistance programs, as fewer

homeowners were able to pay off debt, one of the cash flow contributors for Revolving Load Funds. Still, CDA completed projects and closed out Emergency Assistance grants in Crawford County and Grant County. These grants served to bring properties back to preexisting condition from 2018 flooding. All told, CDA assisted 53 households in Crawford County and 33 households in Grant County.

As we look to 2021 and beyond, federal stimulus monies spurred by the pandemic will help CDA assist more homeowners – and help them turn around their lives.



*A warm smile is the universal language
of kindness*

William Arthur Ward

16th annual Driftless Area Art Festival cancelled



The Driftless Area Art Festival first opened in 2004 in Ferryville, as the Crawford County Art Festival. Since then, it relocated to Soldiers Grove and broadened its umbrella to include artists and art lovers from throughout the Driftless Region, the land never touched by the glaciers, including portions of Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin. Events

featured up to eighty artists and attracted crowds over 5,000 strong.

The Festival weathered floods and temporary relocation. But things were different in 2020 and artists, patrons, sponsors, friends and volunteers were informed that the 16th annual Driftless Area Art Festival was cancelled for 2020.

“We are committed to celebrating the many outstanding professional artists of the Driftless Area, and to celebrating and encouraging arts and art education in the schools. Let’s all look forward to a brighter tomorrow that will include an outstanding 2021 Driftless Area Art Festival, September 18 and 19, “ Co-chair Anita Tegen concluded.

CDA helps small communities meet public facility needs

Community Development Alternatives provides planning and funding assistance for a number of Southwest Wisconsin communities. Planning support includes coordination with state agencies and engineering firms, while funding assistance involves tapping different sources, such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), DNR grants and loans, and other matching sources. CDA offers its expertise to minimize municipal budget impacts and mitigate utility rate increases. 2020

projects include:

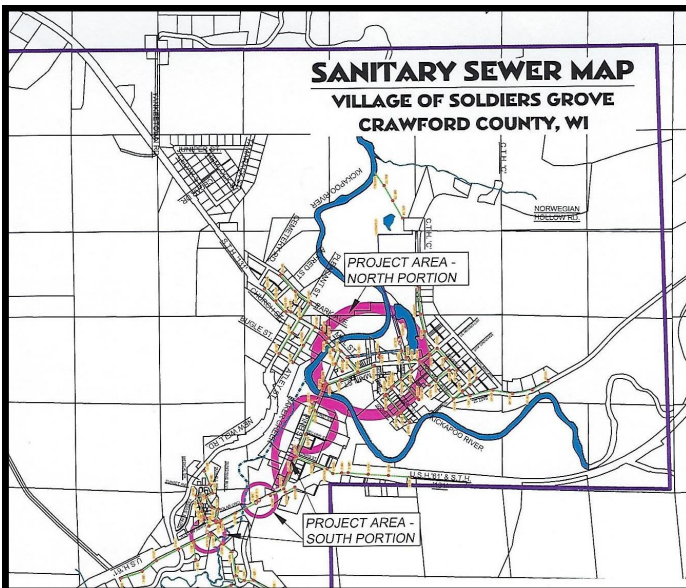
Village of Blue River Wastewater Treatment Facility – the project includes facility upgrades, installation of a phosphorus treatment system, and construction of additional sludge storage. Total project cost estimated to be \$1,711,132, funded in parts by a CDBG-PF grant for \$1,000,000 and a DNR Clean Water Fund Loan.

Pleasant View Nursing Home, Monroe, WI in Green County – the project includes the elimination of

shared bathrooms and window replacement to provide energy efficiency and client safety. The County received a CDBG-PF grant for \$1,000,000 and a CDBG-CLOSE grant for \$1,225,980.

The Village of La Farge – the project involves infrastructure improvements: water & sewer mains, storm sewer, street reconstruction, street lighting and streetscape improvements. The Village received a CDBG-PF grant for \$1,000,000 with the Village providing \$1,632,575 in TIF funding and DNR CWF loan.

The Village of Soldiers Grove – the project includes sanitary sewer improvements: manhole replacement, main lining, force main, lift station improvements, and street reconstruction. The Village received a CDBG-PF grant for \$914,000 and a DNR Clean Water Fund loan of \$457,000.



The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said

Peter Drucker

315 E. Cedar St
PO Box 72
Prairie du Chien, WI 53821

Phone: 608.326.7333
Fax: 608.326.1433
E-mail: dklemme@developmentplanning.net

Staff

Dale Klemme
Executive Director
Lori Bekkum
Eric Frydenlund
Gary Koch
Kelli Boylen

Board of Directors

Jim Czajkowski, Chairman
Wauzeka
Cindy Standorf, Vice Chairman
Prairie du Chien
JoAnn Gonos, Secretary
Gays Mills
Joe Atkins, Treasurer
Prairie du Chien
Judy Gill
Seneca
Becky Hackett
Prairie du Chien
Gerry Krachey
Wauzeka
Jerry Raha
Gays Mills

An optimist may see the light where there is none, but why must a pessimist always run to blow it out?

Rene Descartes

2020 difficult year for tourism



Crawford County

*You don't need cell service
when nature is calling*

The Covid-19 pandemic had a dramatic effect on travel and visitor perceptions in 2020. According to a Study by Longwoods International in April of 2020, 84% of visitors were changing their travel plans for the next six months, while 53% said they would cancel some trips. By the end of the year, almost two-thirds of travelers were planning for no travel before the summer of 2021.

With the arrival of the vaccine in 2021, those plans changed dramatically. By May of 2021, the study indicated nine in ten of travelers plan to travel in the next six months.

The good news for Crawford County is that visitors were looking for outdoor recreation destinations in 2020 where people could enjoy outdoor activities and still socially distance. Still, according to the annual Tourism Economic Impact study commissioned by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, tourism spending was down 17% in Crawford County. However, that performance is considerably better than the state-wide decline of 28%, indicating a preference by travelers of choosing rural destinations where they could experience the restorative powers of nature.