



# Neighbors

Newsletter of the Walworth  
County  
Intergovernmental Cooperation  
Council (ICC)

Fall 2017

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Government Center Fall Clean-Up

*Photo courtesy of Walworth County Public Works*

## WCEDA Update

Derek D'Auria from the Walworth County Economic Development Alliance (WCEDA) was a featured speaker at our October ICC meeting. Derek presented information regarding the three mainstays of the economy in our county; manufacturing, agriculture and tourism. According to recent statistics, agriculture generated \$600 million of sales in our county and accounted for 4,000 jobs. Walworth County currently ranks sixth in terms of tourist spending, which accounts for a \$528 million annual economic impact. Finally, manufacturing may get a boost with the development of Foxconn, the Taiwanese electronics firm that will be building in our state. Although their first plant will be constructed in Racine County, Derek pointed out that the development will create the need for up to 150 suppliers

to locate in Southeastern Wisconsin, creating an additional 22,000 jobs.



Derek D'Auria

*Photo Courtesy of David Brett*

### Mark Your Calendars

It may seem like a long way off, but the next meeting of the ICC is scheduled for Tuesday, March 27, 2018 at 6 pm. If any member has a topic they would like included on that agenda, contact Dave Bretl at (262) 741-4357 or by email at:  
[dbretl@co.walworth.wi.us](mailto:dbretl@co.walworth.wi.us)

## Safe Driving

Mike Dressendorfer joined our October meeting and provided an informative presentation on challenges faced by older drivers and an initiative that he is involved in through AARP (American Association of Retired Persons). Older drivers often face challenges as they age including vision, hearing or other impairments, which can pose risks while on the road. Mike will be presenting a class on Driver Safety for older persons on December 1, 2017 at the Government Center in Elkhorn. The class, which runs from 9AM to 1PM, will include a refresher on rules of the road and right-of-way, strategies for handling left turns and roundabouts, and proven methods to keep drivers safe on the road. The cost of the program is \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for non-members. For more information about the class, you can contact Mike at (847) 973-9957.

## Youth Smoking

Our October ICC meeting provided an opportunity for members to learn about a number of organizations dedicated to improving the quality of life in our County. Jacqueline Sieracki spoke on behalf of the organization called KRW Tobacco-Free Coalition. KRW stands for Kenosha, Racine and Walworth counties, and an important mission of this organization is to eliminate the use of tobacco products by minors. Jacqueline's presentation was timely considering that not too long ago, ICC members listened to a presentation by Jan Ellefsen, our county's health officer at the time, regarding the state of public health in our county. She reported that our county's health ranking had fallen in recent years relative to the rest of the state. In 2006, our county ranked among the top twenty counties in the state in terms of health outcomes. By 2015, when Jan spoke to us, our ranking had slipped to 45<sup>th</sup> place. I believe that we are now 43<sup>rd</sup>, but tobacco use is a factor that has hurt our rating. Jacqueline pointed out that there is no shortage of products that appeal to young smokers including flavored tobacco products, e-cigarettes and small cigars

which are currently taxed at a far lower rate than cigarettes. One program run by the Coalition, in conjunction with local law enforcement agencies, is to test retailers to see if they will sell tobacco products to underage customers. In 2016, seventy checks resulted in 14 underage sales.



Jacqueline Sieracki  
Photo courtesy of David Bretl

## Safe Families

Nicole Zorn and Jesse Adams presented information at our October meeting about Safe Families for Children Wisconsin. Safe Families is dedicated to supporting local families in crisis by providing safe, secure, preapproved, temporary homes for children until a crisis can be resolved. Unexpected expenses, the sudden loss of a job, a devastating accident or illness, eviction from residence and domestic violence can plunge a family into sudden chaos. Oftentimes, children become the victims of such circumstances. Safe Families seeks to provide security to children



from families in these situations while the adults, with support, seek to resolve the underlying issues. The program relies on volunteers and, in appropriate cases, can provide a valuable alternative to programs we run at our Human Services Department. Nicole and Jesse are passionate about their organization. They are seeking to create awareness of the Safe Families initiative, connect with volunteers and partner with local organizations that could use their services. I would also guess that they would not return your check if you saw fit to donate to this important cause which relies heavily on charitable contributions. You can learn more about this initiative on their website, [www.safefamilieswi.org](http://www.safefamilieswi.org).