

# "IF WE DON'T FIND WAYS TO ATTRACT PEOPLE TO WORK IN THIS STATE, NOTHING ELSE MATTERS."

- Jim Morgan, WMC Foundation President



**Future Wisconsin Economic Summit**  
December 9, 2015

**WMC**  
FOUNDATION

## *Teaming up to tackle worker shortage*

La Crosse Tribune, 11.13.15

Three years ago, the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce Foundation went to more than 50 cities in the state and met with more than 300 manufacturers. The next year the foundation visited all 16 Wisconsin technical colleges and heard from 1,200 leaders in business, government and education circles.

What has emerged from all of those sessions is a wide-ranging group of partners who are determined to address several issues Wisconsin will need to solve, some in the very near future.

Of foremost concern to WMC Foundation President Jim Morgan — who was in Chippewa Falls Thursday speaking at a meeting of Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce executives — is a looming worker shortage of large proportions.

"If we don't find ways to attract people to work in this state, nothing else matters," he said.

Statistics paint an alarming picture. The number of people age 65 and older in Wisconsin is expected to double in the next 25 years to 1.5 million, he said. Meanwhile, the University of Wisconsin forecasts only an additional 15,000 people of working age in that same time.

"When you match the numbers up, they don't work," said Mike Jordan, president of the Chippewa Falls Area Chamber of Commerce.

The problem of not having enough workers to replace those who are leaving the workforce isn't unique to Wisconsin. In particular, many other Midwestern states are staring at the same dilemma.

"There's no doubt that workforce is an issue," Jordan said, noting the low unemployment rate and signs from businesses in the industrial park and elsewhere looking for workers. "That tells you we have some needs for qualified people."

To combat this and five other critical areas that have been identified, WMC and its foundation have created The Future Wisconsin Project, a 20-year strategic plan. It has partnered with the UW System and technical college system, along with four other state groups: the Department of Workforce Development, the Economic Development Corp., the Department of Public Instruction and the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities .....

## ***State economic benchmark results to be released at summit***

**Wisconsin State Journal, 12.8.15**

Where does Wisconsin rank in economic competitiveness? What will it take to propel the state to the top?

Finding answers to those questions is what The Future Wisconsin Project is all about, according to Jim Morgan, Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce Foundation president.

"This is really the result of our board of directors — which is 50 CEOs — having a conversation about what is Wisconsin going to look like in 20 years and what is it going to take for us to be competitive," Morgan said.

The project was launched at the first Future Wisconsin Project summit in December 2014. There, Morgan said, six items were added to a "to-do" list including establishing a set of competitive benchmarks by which Wisconsin could be measured:

- ✓ Talent development, attraction and retention
- ✓ Business competitiveness
- ✓ Global engagement
- ✓ Government effectiveness
- ✓ Life quality
- ✓ Entrepreneurial spirit

Morgan traveled the state twice, he said, meeting with people and saying, "Help us to figure out what you think is going to make a difference in Wisconsin 20 years from now" ....

## ***How Wisconsin ranks for business compared with the U.S.***

**Milwaukee Business Journal, 12.11.15**

Looking 20 years down the road, leaders in Wisconsin are most concerned about the state's entrepreneurial spirit, when comparing its competitiveness to other states.

The state ranked as average, between 18th and 30th of all 50 states, on six competitive benchmarks in a new study by Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce.  
Enlarge

"We're a very average state, with our size, income and population," said Jim Morgan, president of the WMC Foundation ....

## ***Wisconsin's future success tied to attracting workers***

**Sawyer County Record, 12.11.15**

The message from Jim Morgan, president of the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce (WMC) Foundation and a leader of the Future Wisconsin Project, is unless Wisconsin does a better job of attracting working-age young adults the state will hit a demographic wall in 20 years that will hurt the state's economy.

A state makeover, Morgan said, is needed to attract the millennials who now see America as just "California, mountains and New York." Wisconsin is not even on their radar.

The state is projected to add 825,000 people in the next 25 years, but 766,000 will be 65 years or older, with about 15,000 of working age — a huge imbalance between those not in the workforce and those the state relies upon for services and filling jobs.

Morgan offered a sneak peak of the Future Wisconsin Project research after Gov. Scott Walker's opening address at the Governor's Northern Wisconsin Economic Development Summit, Tuesday, Dec. 1, at the Heartwood Conference Center & Retreat in Washburn County.

"What will Wisconsin look like in 20 years and what can we do to grow our economy and prepare the workers of the future?" Morgan asked ....

# **"WHERE DOES WISCONSIN RANK IN ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS? WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO PROPEL THE STATE TO THE TOP?"**





# "WE'VE GOT TO BEGIN TO SELL OURSELVES BOTH WITHIN THE BORDER OF WISCONSIN AND TO PEOPLE OUTSIDE."

---

## *Economic summit tries to move Wisconsin past cheese hype*

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 12.12.15

OK, already ... enough with the cheese hype!

That's one conclusion to be drawn from a survey conducted as part of the larger "Future Wisconsin Project," which involves some of the state's leading business groups, higher education and parts of state government.

Based on responses from more than 2,000 people who took the online survey this fall, it's hard to escape the conclusion that Wisconsin and cheese are synonymous. When asked for words to describe Wisconsin, cheese was the No. 1 answer from people who live within and outside the state.

That's not a bad thing — except the same respondents who listed cheese as their top-of-mind descriptor also think Wisconsin has little to offer in the way of jobs beyond a career in curds, Colby and cheddar.

When asked what kind of jobs they would expect to find in Wisconsin, respondents selected agriculture first (dairy makes up the bulk of it), health care second and food production third from a list of 10 choices.

There's nothing wrong with working in the dairy industry — thousands of people do so happily. But that sector is a statistically declining source of jobs in Wisconsin. Almost every other sector, including manufacturing, financial services, technology and health care, is adding jobs and having trouble finding enough people to fill them.

At a time when Wisconsin needs to attract and retain more talent, it's vital to tell people — especially those who live outside the state — about the much broader job opportunities here. But short of scrapping the "America's Dairyland" license plate or usurping the advertising budget of the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, is there a way to get that word out? ....



## *Summit broaches Wisconsin's structural economic challenges*

Wisconsin Public Radio, 12.9.15

### *Badger State Lags On Multiple Metrics*

Wisconsin's economy is frequently judged through a political lens of, "how many jobs did who create in what amount of time?" But many of the economic challenges facing the Badger State are more fundamental than quarterly jobs numbers or income reports can show.

Wisconsin's population is aging and its growth of 1.24 percent in the past four years puts it in the bottom quartile of the nation. Baby boomers are set to retire at a rate that will far outpace the inflow of new workers to the labor market.

The economy also looks bleak from the supply side of the labor market. This year, a Pew report showed that between 2000 and 2013, Wisconsin had the fastest-shrinking middle class in the country. Adjusting for inflation, the median household income fell \$8,877.

As Wisconsinites retire, grow old, and require more medical care, industry and labor alike will face a growing tax burden. Things don't look great from either side, and the trends extend back decades, across different political administrations.

Many of those structural issues were in focus at the Future Wisconsin Economic Summit held by Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, the state's main business lobby, on Wednesday.

"Quite frankly, if we do double our over-65 population and don't have a net in migration of people to fill the jobs that we're going to have open in the state, it's going to have an impact across the board on healthcare, on property ownership, on sales taxes and everything else," said Jim Morgan, president of WMC.

For Morgan, the crux of the issue is retaining young Wisconsinites and attracting more from out of state. "We've got to begin to sell ourselves both within the border of Wisconsin and to people outside," he said ....



**“WE ARE MAKING  
PROGRESS, BUT WE  
HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO  
DO TO MAKE WISCONSIN  
IRRESISTIBLE TO  
FUTURE GENERATIONS  
OF WORKERS.”**



**WMC**  
FOUNDATION

***WMC establishes  
benchmarks for state  
business competitiveness;  
mixed marks found in  
perception survey***

Wisconsin State Journal, 12.11.15

Wisconsin ranks 23rd among U.S. states when it comes to business competitiveness.

That is one of the outcomes of Wisconsin's Competitive Benchmarks, compiled and released this week by the Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce Foundation.

The state's standing in areas of talent, global engagement, government effectiveness, life quality and entrepreneurial spirit was also in the middle of the pack.

The WMC Foundation, along with its seven state partners, is working on a 20-year strategic plan for Wisconsin called The Future Wisconsin Project. This plan aims to address issues facing Wisconsin over the coming years — a changing workforce, new and innovative technologies, infrastructure demands and more.

Some key observations from the the WMC benchmarks report include:

- ✓ Although workers' compensation costs in Wisconsin rank 42nd in the country, the number of the state's workforce employed in quality manufacturing jobs as a percent of total non-farm jobs is second.
- ✓ Wisconsin's ability to retain, create and attract good-paying jobs is dependent on the competitiveness in the state's overall business climate, which stands at 23rd.
- ✓ With a high focus on venture capital investments, academic and industrial research and development, there is a hope that Wisconsin will come out of last place for its number of startups.
- ✓ The fact that Wisconsin is No. 1 in the country in funding the state pension means a positive business environment for future entrepreneurs.

“While Wisconsin ranks high on post-high school educational attainment at 12th place, we lag behind in net migration with a placement of 24th,” said WMC Foundation President Jim Morgan.

“We are making progress, but we have a lot of work to do to make Wisconsin irresistible to future generations of workers” ....