

IN FOCUS

Economic News in Polk County

The Grove Childcare Center Brings New Energy to Polk County's Early Education Landscape

The Grove Childcare Center officially opened its doors on July 1st, becoming a significant addition to the early childhood education infrastructure in Polk County. Licensed to serve up to 125 children ranging from 6 weeks to pre-K age, The Grove was developed in direct response to the growing need for high-quality childcare options in the region — a critical issue impacting both families and local employers.

Located in Milltown, The Grove provides care for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years old. Recognizing the need for quality school-age care, they have developed a dynamic STEM-focused program designed specifically for children up to age 12. They also offer drop-in care for children ages 5–12 during school breaks and holidays, helping to meet a critical need for many working families when school is not in session. .



There are great things happening throughout Polk County delivering economic success. It is a culmination of multiple factors that deliver economic stability & prosperity. We are extremely fortunate to have an incredible environment that makes Polk County an excellent place to live, work & play.

This issue:

- New Childcare Center Opens in Polk County - The Grove
- Wisconsin Economic Development Micro-Grant Available
- Polk Economics to Ponder
- Viresco Expands Operations in Turtle Lake
- Workforce Housing Opens in St. Croix Falls
- PCEDC Annual Awards Breakfast - Register Now!
- Sweet Stats & Strong Coffee

The Grove Childcare Center continued...

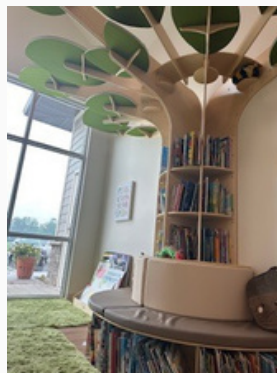


Its approach is designed to foster early learning through exploration, hands-on engagement, and connection to the natural environment — all key differentiators that set the center apart in the area.

In addition to its educational focus, The Grove is also helping raise the standard for early childhood employment in Polk County. From the outset, the organization has prioritized strong compensation packages for its staff, including competitive wages and benefits. This commitment aims to address industry-wide staffing challenges while creating a stable, supportive environment for both children and educators.

The Grove sits on approximately 3.5 acres, including 2.5 acres of green space planned for future outdoor education initiatives. Expansion plans include a fruit forest walking path and additional nature-based opportunities for children to play, explore, and grow.

To learn more about The Grove or inquire about enrollment, visit their website below.



[Visit the Grove Childcare website HERE.](#)

Wisconsin Economic Development Micro Grant Available



Through collaboration with Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, the St. Croix Valley Innovation Center is proud to announce a new micro-grant program (covering 90% of project, up to \$9,000), for businesses headquartered in St. Croix, Pierce, and Polk counties that want to scale and need a financial boost.

The first round of applications are due October 12, 2025 at 11:59 p.m.

For eligibility and more information visit the link below. For any questions, contact St. Croix Valley Innovation Center Director, Sheri Marnell, at sheri.marnell@uwrf.edu

[WEDC Micro-Grant Info HERE.](#)

Polk Economics to Ponder

QUESTION:

HEALTHCARE IS THE LARGEST EMPLOYER IN POLK COUNTY. WHAT PERCENT OF JOBS ARE IN HEALTHCARE?

Visit our Facebook Page and 'LIKE' the Polk Economics To Ponder post to see the answer to this article's trivia question.



Viresco Expands Operations in Turtle Lake

VIRESCO celebrated the Grand Opening of their new 25,000 square foot DePak facility in July. This facility expansion allows VIRESCO to process more than 83,000 tons of food related waste. This waste stays out of landfills and reduces the burden on wastewater treatment plants. We produce enough power to supply up to 2,600 homes every year. This expansion is part of VIRESCO's investment in the community, doubling employment in less than 5 years, all while on a mission to convert waste into energy and improving the environment.



[Visit the
Viresco Website
HERE](#)

New 40-Unit Workforce Housing Development



Maple Wood Cottages is a new, rural workforce housing development with a standalone community center and workforce accelerator in St. Croix Falls, Wisconsin. The workforce accelerator space within the community center is designed to rapidly develop job-ready skills through Northwood Tech's targeted training. The college's welding and advanced manufacturing mobile labs also deliver flexible, on-demand training to business partners and the community, ensuring access to essential skills and career advancement opportunities.

Project Details:

- Located on approximately 9 acres in south central St. Croix Falls
- Another approximately 10 acres available for a future phase II development
- 4 single story cottage-style building with clubhouse building
- 40 apartments: 1, 2, and 3 bedroom units
- Attached 1-car garages with private driveways



21 Oct 2025

ANNUAL AWARDS BREAKFAST

Event Detail	Location
October 21, 2025	Big Rock Creek
7:30 a.m.	1674 State Highway 87
Register by 10/15	St. Croix Falls, WI 54024

[EVENT REGISTRATION](#)



GUEST SPEAKER:

Scott Hodek is the Section Chief of the Office of Economic Advisors (OEA), an office within Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development. The Office assists economic data users to better understand the relationships between labor markets and other economic and demographic trends. Scott has been with OEA since returning to his home state of Wisconsin in Jan '06, covering multiple areas throughout the state. Prior to this position, he was a regional economist in Oregon, covering the Columbia Gorge region, as well as a marketing analyst in the private sector. Scott earned a bachelor of science degree in Economics from the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire in 2002.

SWEET STATS

&
Strong Coffee

WAKE UP TO MARKET TRENDS



Barron County Economic
Development Corporation



Thursday, November 13

8:00-9:30 AM

St. Croix Valley Innovation Center

1091 Sutherland Ave | River Falls, WI 54022

8:00 AM – Coffee, light breakfast, and networking

8:30–9:30 AM – Presentation by Dale Knapp, Forward Analytics

Join us for a data-driven look at how shifting demographics are reshaping Wisconsin's economy, especially in our western counties. Presenter Dale Knapp, Director of Research & Analytics at Forward Analytics, brings over 20 years of experience in economics and public policy, including 18 years with the nonpartisan Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance, with the last 15 as Research Director. He will highlight trends in St. Croix, Polk, Pierce, Barron, and Dunn Counties, and preview new research comparing how Wisconsin counties to those in other states.

Scan to Register

or visit: <https://business.stcroixedc.com/ap/Events/Register/EqFlQEMUgC6C9>



Questions: amanda@stcroixedc.com

Learn more about Forward Analytics before the
event:
forward-analytics.net/about

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