

Polk County 2025 Awards Breakfast

HONORING LOCAL SUCCESS IN POLK COUNTY

The Polk County Economic Development Corporation proudly hosted the 2025 Polk County Awards Breakfast on Thursday, October 21, 2025, at Big Rock Creek near St. Croix Falls. The Polk County EDC Awards Breakfast recognizes the economic and community contributions of local businesses and organizations to economic vitality.

Approximately 90 people attended the program including numerous representatives from various economic development organizations: Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, Polk County Tourism, the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Regional Business Fund, St. Croix EDC, Pierce County EDC, Amery EDC, and Polk County.

Prior to the award presentations, Terry Hauer, Executive Director of the Polk County EDC, presented an overview of the organization, the initiatives it directs for greater economic impact, and highlighted the economic progress happening in Polk County. Although there are numerous new businesses and expansions currently underway, the Polk County EDC continues to engage and assist local employers with the workforce and housing shortage that is having a negative economic impact in Polk County and our regional economy.

Scott Hodek, Section Chief of the Office of Economic Advisors (OEA) an office within the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development was the guest speaker. Hodek provided an overview of the current economic landscape of Polk County and our region. Hodek also presented on what the future may hold for economic activity and trends.

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:

- Polk County 2025 EDC Awards Breakfast Winners
- \$3.5 Million Grant Available for Nonprofits
- Become a Member of the Polk County Economic Development Corporation
- Polk Economics to Ponder

AGRICULTURAL EXCELLENCE



Recognizing the impact of agriculture in Polk County and its importance to the local economy and job opportunities.

Winner: Neu-View Acres

Neu-View Acres was awarded the 2025 Agricultural Excellence Award for their continued growth and success in agriculture in Polk County and our surrounding regions. Neu-View Acres has been a family-owned business since 1953 in Polk County. They farm over 4,000 acres and feature robotic milkers for their herd of 200 dairy cows. They are very active in the local community and are always willing to host tours of their farming operation.

Receiving the 2025 Agricultural Excellence Award – (L to R) Jamie and Bjorn Neumann

Recognizing excellent business performance along with providing significant contributions toward the betterment of the community and others.

Winner: Northwoods Passage

Northwoods Passage, headquartered in Frederic, was awarded the 2025 Service Award due for their involvement in our local communities since 1978. they've been a beacon of hope in northwestern Wisconsin, pioneering mental health care that blends clinical treatment with nature, art, and community. Their commitment to building therapeutic lifestyles rooted in relationships, service, and spirit has transformed countless lives.

Mark Elliott, accepting the 2025 Business Service Award.



BUSINESS SERVICE AWARD

NEW BUSINESS OF THE YEAR



Recognizing the contributions and success of a business or organization that has begun business in Polk County within the last two years.

Winner: The Grove

The Grove Childcare Center was awarded the New Business of the Year for opening a much-needed childcare center in Milltown. As many employers and young families know, there is a severe shortage of childcare available in our area. The new Grove Childcare Center is a welcome and essential business needed in Polk County that serves the community, parents, employers and children.

(L to R) Steve Schaffer and Shannon Donaghue accepts the 2025 New Business of the Year Award.

Recognizing excellence in business performance along with its contribution to Polk County and its citizens.

Winner: Rockshield Rubber

Rockshield Rubber Company has just moved into a new 50,000 Sq. Ft. facility in the newly expanded Milltown Industrial Park. Rockshield is a custom manufacturer specializing in the designing and manufacturing of screen media and wear components used in the mining and aggregate industries. Their unique process allows the flexibility to manufacture new and innovative products to service their nationwide customer base.

Gabe Fuerhelm accepts the Polk County EDC 2025 Business of the Year Award.



BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

MAIN STREET AWARD



Recognizing excellence in business performance making an economic and community impact in the heart of a city or village.

Winner: Elite Automotive & Fabrication

Elite Automotive and Fabrication offers our community a vast variety of automotive repair, welding and metal work. Truthfully, they do so much more than just repair vehicles and weld things. Elite is a full custom shop. They will weld and fix just about everything. If they can't fix the existing parts, they will customize new parts for you with their plasma cutter. We have used their services countless of times for business and personal use. Elite was established in 2022 from two longtime friends with a combined 30 years of experience.

Christian McCabe of the Polk County EDC Board accepts the 2025 Mainstreet Award on behalf of Elite.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS AND FOR
ALL WHO ATTENDED OUR 2025 EVENT.



St. Croix Valley Foundation Launches Bold \$3.5 Million Grant Program to Strengthen Nonprofits Across the Valley

The St. Croix Valley Foundation has announced the launch of the Nonprofit Capacity Building Grant Program, a regional initiative supported by a \$3.5 million investment from the Nonprofit Stability Collaborative Fund. The program aims to strengthen the leadership, systems, and long-term sustainability of nonprofits as they face rising community needs and limited resources.

This initiative is open to organizations in the six counties bordering the St. Croix River: Chisago and Washington (MN), and Burnett, Polk, St. Croix, and Pierce (WI).

- Four Avenues of Support include: Experiences (up to \$10,000), Planning (up to \$25,000), Implementation (up to \$100,000), and System-Wide Infrastructure (up to \$250,000).
- Applications open on October 13, 2025.

The new Nonprofit Capacity Building Grant Program invests in the people, systems, and strategies that help nonprofits adapt and thrive - visit their website to learn more!



[St. Croix Valley Foundation Grant Program](#)

Become a Member of the Polk County Economic Development Corporation



Join a network of leaders, innovators, and businesses shaping the future of Polk County. As a member of the Polk County EDC, you'll have the opportunity to collaborate on initiatives that strengthen our local economy, attract new investment, and support sustainable growth for our communities. Membership offers exclusive access to networking events, regional updates, and resources designed to help your business thrive. Together, we can build a stronger, more vibrant Polk County - one opportunity at a time.

[Learn more about membership opportunities here.](#)

Polk Economics to Ponder

QUESTION:

WHAT IS THE SECOND LARGEST JOB CATEGORY IN POLK COUNTY?

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

