



Press Release

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Media Contact: Kristin Mickelson

Phone: (262) 473-1387

Email: kmickelson@whitewater-wi.gov

New Grant Surveys Whitewater Residents for Promotional Campaign

Whitewater, Wis. October 26, 2020- A survey funded by a new grant award will collect the experience of living and working in Whitewater and help boost local marketing efforts.

The survey will inform a promotional campaign to help the city compete for and attract residents, visitors and businesses, and enhance revenue for existing businesses as well. The survey link will be available for residents and employees in late October.

USDA Rural Development recently awarded UW-Madison Extension a \$48,000 Rural Business Development Grant to meet a need identified by Whitewater businesses during a previous effort. While conducting a small business retention and expansion project in Whitewater via a separate USDA grant awarded last year, business owners frequently mentioned a desire to promote the city and connect the residential, visitor and university markets.

The new grant will utilize the structure and mission of the Whitewater Marketing Alliance to meet that business-identified demand. The Alliance includes the City of Whitewater, Downtown Whitewater, the Whitewater Chamber of Commerce, the Whitewater Unified School District, UW-Whitewater and the Greater Whitewater Committee.

"We're building off previous strategies from the Alliance and leveraging additional resources to understand the resident experience," said Steven Chmielewski, the UW-Madison Extension Community and Economic Development educator who wrote the successful proposals for both the business retention as well as community marketing grants.

The Whitewater Marketing Alliance previously used community input to inform a promotional campaign around words that residents used to describe their city. That effort resulted in signs for area display.

"We hope this survey will give us some additional insight about what our citizens want and need from their community," said Kristin Mickelson, PR & Communications Manager for the City of Whitewater. "The more we know, the more we can deliver as a city. We want to continue to thrive for our current residents, future residents and all visitors for years to come."

"It's important that all parts of our community have a voice in shaping not only the future of our community but the ways in which the community is marketed to visitors, students, those who work in the area and future residents," said Lisa Dawsey, President of Downtown Whitewater, Inc.

The majority of businesses operating in Whitewater are small businesses, meaning they have fewer than 50 full-time employees and less than \$1 million in gross revenue. The new grant also includes market analysis of the Whitewater trade area to inform retail and trade opportunities.

Results from the community survey will be used in a set of tools to promote the city, including messaging and outreach, in addition to workshops on how to apply the tools.

For additional information and inquiries about the survey, contact Steven Chmielewski, Community Development Educator with UW-Extension at (262) 548-7781 or steven.chmielewski@wisc.edu.

The City of Whitewater provides efficient and high-quality services which support living, learning, playing and working in an exceptional community. Visit www.whitewater-wi.gov for community information and updates.

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