



Rock County Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

Wednesday, July 17, 2013
3:30 – 5 p.m.
Blackhawk Technical College

Meeting Attendees introduced themselves and they included:

Alicia Griffin, Serendipity Communications, I-39/90 DBE Outreach Coordinator
Barbara Hickman, Resident
Charles Jones, Office of Veteran Services
Debbie Schanke, State of Wisconsin, Department of Workforce Development
Gregory Boysen, City of Beloit
Inga Cushman, City of Milton
Lonna Morouney, Office of Representative Amy Loudenberg
Lynn Jones, E&T Community Action, Inc.
Michele Carter, WisDOT
Nicole Hunt, First Choice Pre-Apprenticeship Training
Olatoye Baiyewu, First Choice Pre-Apprenticeship Training
Paul Ndon, WisDOT
Representative Amy Loudenberg
Rhonda Suda, Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development
Rosalind Roberson, WisDOT (telephone)
Stan Milam, Senator Timothy Cullen's Office
Steven Theisen, WisDOT
Sue Jersild, Rock Roads
Susan Paul, Workforce Development
Vincent Fisher, WisDOT (telephone)
Walter Knight, Rock County Opportunities Industrialization Center
Wanda Sloan, Blackhawk Technical College

Steven Theisen, I-39/90 Communications Manager
WisDOT I-39/90, 511 New Website: <http://projects.511wi.gov/web/i-39-90-project>
(PRESENTATION)

There will be three (3) upcoming public involvement meetings:

- North Segment Public Involvement Meeting - Tuesday, July 23, 2013; 5:30 p.m.
Edgerton High School, 200 Elm High Drive;
- Central Segment Public Involvement Meeting – Thursday, August 1, 2013
- South Segment Public Involvement Meeting – Sometime in August or September



Steven gave an overview of the recently launched I-39/90, 511 website. Elements of the website include, but, are not limited to: project information, project schedule, project team information, business resources, In this together – businesses impacted by the I-39/90 project and construction projects and drawings.

Stan McCay, Senator Timothy Cullen's Office *question*

Once you're signed in to the website, will you receive weekly updates or do you have to re-sign in?

Steven Theisen, WisDOT *response*

Once you're in you're in. There's no need to re-sign in.

Additional information that can be obtained from the website includes:

- Lane closures
- Traffic speed
- Travel times
- Closures - Contractor is required to put all current closures to be fed in this system
- News - Weekly updates, Public meetings, Newsletters
- Resources (e.g., the old public involvement page on the previous website)
 - EA
 - FONSI
 - Youtube narrated video
 - FAQs about project
 - Project Materials (mostly for media)
 - Roundabout outreach
 - Three (3) brochures
 - By early September, a brochure will be added navigating the Racine Street roundabout

Stan McCay, Senator Timothy Cullen's Office *question*

Senator Cullen has been hearing that Representative Craig is circulating a bill to require local approval before any roundabouts can be put on the highway. Have you heard anything?

Steven Theisen *response*

No

Alicia Griffin *response*

Alicia shared that she will bring the question about the roundabout legislation to the WisDOT I-39/90 Project team at the next Corridor Management Team Meeting. Their response will be relayed to the Stakeholders.



Inga Cushman, City of Milton *request*

Inga requested that Steven Theisen provide her with 25 brochures. Steven indicated that he would get the brochures to Inga.

Michele Carter, WisDOT DBE Program Team *comment*

Michele indicated that she wanted the Rock County Stakeholder Committee meeting information on the 511 website.

During the last three months, the Stakeholder Advisory Committee has been talking with people doing workforce development and labor development activities in the area. It is the goal that in having projects this large, we are stimulating opportunities in the community by doing value-added things on a federally funded project.

In working with the Rock County Stakeholders, there have been some lessons learned. It's important that the Rock County Stakeholders know what's already here in the community and leverage those resources.

This group works together to develop the Rock County Stakeholder Action Plan. This committee came up with some priorities: 1) Manage traffic to maximize safety and 2) Minimize the use of roundabouts.

Rhonda Suda, Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development *handouts*

In response to a number of questions presented at last month's meeting, Rhonda brought Rock County Workforce Demographic Reports for distribution. They are as follows:

- Rock County Adult Demographics
- Rock County Dislocated Worker Demographics
- Rock County General Demographics
- Rock County Youth Demographics

Next month's invitation will include electronic versions of the reports distributed by Rhonda.

Susan Paul, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Rock County Job Center (PRESENTATION)

Susan indicated that everyone walking through the doors of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) can get employed if they can get fit correctly. The DVR serves individuals with a diagnosed disability. The DVR provides skilled training and soft skill training.

The DVR doesn't just place someone; but, it helps employers understand the disability. It also helps show that people who are disabled are very functional.



There are seven (7) that the DVR confirms: They include:

1. Mobility
2. Communication
3. Self care
4. Interpersonal communication
5. Self direction
6. Work skills
7. Work tolerance

Susan's role at the DVR is to figure out how to match the talent pool of job seekers with employers, to save employers' time and to save expenses.

Charles Jones, Rock County Veterans Employment and Training Representative response

Charles shared that the Rock County Job Center uses a team approach to ensure that everything comes together as a match.

As part of the OJT Training – the DVR will pay for wages and benefits for 30, 60 or 90 days. They will not send applicants to an employer that are not job ready.

Michele Carter, WisDOT response

Although construction with disability may not initially sound like a match, there is nothing that says people with a disability can't be in the construction market. It's not an automatic that they can't be incorporated into the construction workforce.

Susan also shared that their agency works with high school students.

Nicole Hunt, First Choice Pre-Apprenticeship Training comment

Nicole shared an example of a student they worked with that had a learning disability; but, was good with tools. The student just couldn't comprehend through reading. There are examples where it works.

Charles Jones, Rock County Veterans Employment and Training Representative (PRESENTATION)

Charles is the Local Veterans Employment and Training Representative representing six (6) Wisconsin counties. His job is to assist newly released veterans in training and employment. Charles works with employers with the goal of matching employers and veterans (the client).

Charles first starts with an interview with the client to ensure that they are job ready. They look at the whole person concept – They would need to be physically, mentally and spiritually ready to go to work. They are spiritually ready when the basics are taken care of (e.g., family life and troubles of home taken care of). If they are not, it can blow it with the employer.

There are a multitude of job center projects; Charles tries to find the best fit for the veterans, employer or organization that's looking to bring people in to the program.



It can be complex working with veterans -- just because you don't see an outward disability, it doesn't mean that a disability doesn't exist. Charles helps veterans get adjusted and transitioned. A Veteran's counselor comes to the Job Center every other week – ½ day in Janesville and ½ day in Beloit.

Sue Jersild, Rock Roads *question*

Have you contacted unions?

Charles *response*

We work with all local unions with apprenticeship programs. We also work local construction companies – Cullen, etc.

Walter Knight, Rock County Opportunities Industrialization Center *question*

What happens once veteran is connected with employer?

Charles Jones' *response*

There is a 30 day, 60 day and 90 day follow-up. The employer has direct access to Charles.

Michele Carter, WisDOT *question*

Do you know about the Tax Credit?

Charles Jones' *response*

Yes there is up to an \$9,600 federal WOTC (Work Opportunity Tax Credit) per person

Wanda Sloan, Blackhawk Technical College *question*

What is the estimate ethnic makeup?

Charles Jones' *response*

The highest numbers of participants are Caucasian. There are a large number of females and the Hispanic/Black participation is approximately 30%.

Wanda Sloan, Blackhawk Technical College *question*

How is the market?

Charles Jones' *response*

We're doing well in the Rock County area. Employers are being very kind and very generous.

Michele Carter – WisDOT Program Chief

Rock County Stakeholder Committee Action Plan, Editing
PRESENTATION

Our Stakeholder group is growing. We want the Stakeholders to be able to give the reality of a construction career. With various experiences in labor development, we know that there are so many people that are addicted to drugs or have experience in rehab and are in need jobs. It becomes a stretch to translate that into a road construction opportunity. In orientations with



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potential job seekers, we want them to be shown a typical work day. They need to hear a true real assessment.

Michele shared a story of a woman at the YWCA in Milwaukee interested in road construction career who was petite with long manicured fingernails. Michele shared with the woman that “You’re way too cute right now. A construction employer will not take you seriously ‘all beautified’.” Michele continued “Steve Theisen can’t tell that pretty black woman that.”

TrANS providers do that kind of linking to other resources. They should use what’s already in place. They would get someone who leads a construction crew and tell them the real experience of working on a road construction crew. Road construction is very different to a building crew – less predictability.

Every month WisDOT does a bid letting that has a number of contracts across the state. A contractor will submit a bid to win being the lowest responsible bidder and not just the cheapest bidder. Road construction is transient. You can start off slow and it may get hot and heavy (e.g., having 3 or more contracts or even laying off employees. People will work for the Rock Roads Company and when they don’t have other contracts, they will be laid off going from \$30/hr to \$0/hour wages). This can happen when a person hasn’t worked long enough to get unemployment insurance. It’s natural in the road construction industry that workers move around.

In the road construction industry, success is sustainability. The goal should be to sustain a worker in the construction industry; not, just the employer

Michele Carter directed a leading question to Sue Jersild, Rock Roads

At Rock Roads, I’m sure you can confirm that supervisors work all the time; but, workers change all the time. Initially, everybody wants to be a flagger – very temporary work – to stop traffic – not the whole project. It is certainly a good foot in the door; but, it’s not the most sustaining thing.

Sue Jersild, Rock Roads response

Rock Roads has superintendents and supervisors that are employed year round. There is a 6-7 man crew, a core crew. These people have been with the company for 5 – 30 years. It takes time to get in the core crew. Additional workers are obtained from the union shop. After using people for the contract work needed, they are returned to the union for other companies’ use. A lot of work is temporary in nature and go with the type of work needed on project

Michele Carter, WisDOT comment

Although everybody doesn’t operate like Rock Roads, they can be a road construction company to use as a template.

One thing that WisDOT has found – The Stakeholder Group brings a synergy. We’re WisDOT with a mega project. There are positive outcomes in general associated with this. We want to build a network. We will share information and strategies that make sense. There can be benefits. We as a committee can look at other employment opportunities and make referrals. TrANS is an orientation and outreach program and tool that we will use.



TrANS is a 120 hour industry awareness program. Participants study for CDL and people are tailored to move into the road construction industry. Although our goal is road construction, we are trying to do due diligence and equal opportunity.

Sue Jersild, Rock Roads *comment*

One area that we can give attention to that is not addressed here is bringing in businesses that buy materials by incentivizing them. Rock County has very few DBE businesses so contractors must go to Madison and Milwaukee to get DBE firms. Rock County, both Beloit and Janesville, have great business district that can be developed.

Stan McCay, Senator Timothy Cullen's Office *question*

What do we want to accomplish with the TrANS training? The action plan references building a network to connect with WisDOT opportunities. The RFP that is due out is for training in the construction industry. Most of the Stakeholders in this room thought that this training would be geared toward the I-39/90 project. It appears that every week, we are getting farther away from that. Stan wants to make sure that he understands if we are going to bring these resources together, create a local training opportunity for jobs as a result of the project.

Michele Carter WisDOT *response*

This job is a catalyst. The RFP is for a preparation or training program. It is a community outreach. But, it is larger than this project. There will be over 100 projects. Michele provided as example:

Rock Roads will apply for all 100 projects; but, may only win one. Payne and Dolan may win many of the other. Rock Roads are at meetings and working with TrANS. Another provider will solicit every contract winning a contract. Road Roads will work throughout the staff. You are cheating that person (the employee) if they just work on I-39/90 project are not able to work on the other companies' contracts. The opportunity has to fit the industry overall. What WisDOT buys, pays or puts money into came to about \$1.2 billion last year. Out of the \$1.2 billion WisDOT dollars, \$700-\$800 million were federal dollars. There were 200 contractors total in the year – awarded to different contractors. If we focus on one project, Rock Roads may not need new people. We want a construction worker to find any employer that will take them first. Our goal is the project, the project is the catalyst. There are 30-40 contracting opportunities per month. This is our primary contract and we don't know the contractor until they win the project. They have 6 weeks to mobilize. We, as a Stakeholder Group, are trying to be strategic and responsive.

Stan McCay, Senator Timothy Cullen's Office *comment*

How strategic is it if you are training them here so that Kramer can use them in Spooner. We want training done in this area, for people in this area, to work in this area not a state wide pool. Charles, Susan and other people have already established their outreach programs with their clients. We want to make sure that there will be training appropriate for their clients to get construction jobs in this area related to that project. That can't be emphasized enough.



Michele Carter, WisDOT *response*

We want them to get into construction careers. Everybody is not willing to travel. Rock Roads is probably working in many areas e.g., Eau Claire, Monroe, Rockford-II, Dane County. If Rock Roads hires somebody, WisDOT can't tell them not to make the person travel. The orientation is key – people understand what it's about. Those people who are not a good fit can go somewhere else. We are trying to get training in this area. It will be serving the people in the area.

Lynn Jones, E&T Community Action, Inc. *comment*

This will provide an opportunity for people in the area to have training. It's an opportunity to understand the business. They may start here; but, they have flexibility.

Michele Carter, WisDOT *comment*

That's the beauty of apprenticeship. You can take a journeyman license anywhere.

Michele Carter, WisDOT

The next few meetings we will be getting into the discussion of business – Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) – providing access to economically and socially disadvantaged individuals.

Michele will begin with an explanation of the DBE Program and there will be 2 – 3 meetings on business resources.

About TrANS – A provider has not been selected yet. As soon as we get one, the concerns of the Stakeholders will be conveyed.

Meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 14; 3:30 p.m.
Beloit Utilities and Engineering Facilities