

*Community Development Alternatives, Inc*

# 2010 Annual Report



La Farge Fire Station



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Create innovative alternatives for local community development  
that represent responsible, compassionate, and progressive  
opportunities for the future.

## About CDA

**Pete Steele, President**

Prairie du Chien

**Phil Mueller, Vice-President**

Soldiers Grove

**Joe Atkins, Treasurer**

Prairie du Chien

**Barb Boland, Secretary**

Eastman

**Laurel Hestetune**

Soldiers Grove

**Gerry Krachey**

Wauzeka

**Jerry Raha**

Gays Mills

**Ali Spurr**

Ferryville

In trying times, the gap between the achievable and expectation can seem insurmountable. Therein lies an opportunity for Community Development Alternatives, Inc. In the midst of a challenging financial and political environment, the need for CDA's services continues to grow. As area communities get caught between declining revenues and the ever-increasing demands of infrastructure, they have turned to CDA to develop innovative solutions to bridge the gap.

This financial gap between revenues and expectations impacts communities, organizations, and people alike. In housing, CDA administers Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), allowing homeowners to make necessary improvements within tight financial constraints. In economic development, CDA found money to eventually clear the lower Kickapoo River of debris to increase its carrying capacity during flooding and to open up the river to canoeing. In public facilities, CDA has helped communities secure grants and financing to fund improvements required by regulations or need. And in tourism, our staff provides small communities the means to collectively promote our unique region.

This undertaking requires a knowledgeable staff dedicated to serving our clients and communities. Our staff has grown to better meet those needs with the addition of Jordon Bekkum, Office Assistant, and Sarah Ronnevik, Tourism Coordinator. As long as there's a need to bridge the gap, Community Development Alternatives, Inc will be there to make the leap for our clients and communities.

## CDA Staff

**Dale Klemme**

Executive Director

**Lori Bekkum**

Housing

**Eric Frydenlund**

Technical Writer

**Gary Koch**

Public Facilities

**Jordon Bekkum**

Office Assistant

**Sarah Ronnevik**

Tourism Coordinator

*Sometimes we just need someone to listen. Better yet, someone who can listen and help turn our needs into a plan of action.*

*As our national, state, and local governments struggle to balance their budgets, it's easy to dismiss the needs of those among us who request a helping hand. Then you meet them; and realize they are grappling with complex problems that defy easy solutions.*

*Our clients include homeowners struggling financially because the utilities on their inefficient home are eating their paycheck. They include caregivers who need home improvements to house their disabled child or ailing parents, dependents who would otherwise be wards of the state at a much higher cost.*

*Community Development Alternatives prides itself on being a hands-on organization to which people in need can turn for help. Our knowledgeable and caring staff is able to listen to our client's most pressing housing concerns and find pathways to solutions. By assisting in ways that make a difference in people's lives, we find ourselves in the unique position of seeing the positive side of what others might view negatively.*

*The housing, flood recovery, and public facility programs that CDA administers not only help our clients make ends meet, they put housing value back into neighborhoods, tax value back into the community tax base, and help preserve our energy resources. By turning needs into actions, both the client and the community benefit in ways not apparent had we not taken the time to listen.*

*Dale Klemme  
Executive Director*

## Housing

Housing assistance programs represent the lifeblood of Community Development Alternatives and have since our inception. The work CDA performs in housing goes beyond dollars and statistics, impacting the lives of real people.

The challenge for CDA is finding the right program and solution that fits those very specific needs. Applicants might fall outside the boundaries of funded communities and end up on a waiting list. Or the solution right for the program may not be right for the individual. How do you tell an elderly couple caring for their disabled adult child that their big farm house – their homestead for their entire lives – is too big to economically repair?

The reward comes when we are able to pull programs and resources together and make a difference in someone's life. The smiles are worth the effort of finding a way through the rules and regulations.

In 2010, CDA was able to make a difference in several communities across our area. CDA administered Community Development Block Grants in Gays Mills for \$300,000 and Readstown for \$500,000. Additionally, CDA is administering a \$69,000 Housing Preservation Grant, which has a lower income threshold for qualifying households.

CDA will continue to place a high priority on our housing programs, which reflects the importance of housing in meeting the basic human needs of area residents.



Before



After

## Special Projects

**Flood Recovery**— Twelve homes and four businesses have been acquired as part of the Chaseburg flood recovery project. Flood prone Oak Street was reconstructed in 2010 to handle any future heavy rain events. Seventeen homes have been purchased and two properties elevated by a variety of grant programs in the Village of La Farge. The La Farge Fire Station project was completed with a \$1.736 million dollar grant.

**River Cleanup Project**— In 2010, CDA successfully applied for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for clearing obstructions from the lower Kickapoo River. Submitted on behalf of Crawford County government, the grant will cover the cost of removing all logjams that block flowage, restoring the channel carrying capacity during flood events. In addition to flood mitigation, the project will also clear the river for canoe navigation and other recreational opportunities that will encourage economic development.

**The Driver Opera House** in Darlington, an 1883 building, has been adopted by a group of area residents. Some see the challenge to be the generation of money to allow for the restoration project to succeed. The real challenge is generating 'grass root' support from local persons from all walks of life so that the entire community takes ownership and pride in a project that will help define the community. Grass root support is necessary to restore the property, but more importantly support the community-based theater to assure success – long term.



Kickapoo River Cleanup



Driver Opera House

## Public Facilities

Community Development Alternatives has been involved in both securing and implementing public facilities projects for a number of Southwest Wisconsin communities. By coupling municipal grants with low-interest financing, CDA assists communities by increasing utility efficiency and reducing utility rates for its citizens. Moreover, public facility improvements pave the way for economic development by improving the capacity and curb appeal for prospective businesses.

Most importantly, public facility improvements restore a sense of well-being and quality of life to communities ravaged by natural disaster or overwhelmed by failing systems. Often the residents of communities we assist are either elderly or low income, unable to withstand the financial burden of disaster events or significant increases in utility rates. The convergence of natural disaster events and a low-income population creates an untenable dilemma for Village officials.

Projects include both the standard public facility projects and infrastructure projects related to the extensive flooding of 2007 and 2008. We completed a number of projects in 2010:

- Village of Highland - \$220,000 grant to help fund the STH '80' project that included water, sewer, storm sewer, and streets
- Village of Blue River - \$145,000 grant to help fund a water extension and well project (chlorine building)
- Village of Wauzeka - \$203,500 grant for an extensive storm water and water main project
- Village of Avoca - \$272,500 grant for a water, sewer, and streets



Village of La Farge



Village of Blue River

## Tourism

Since its inception in 2003, the Crawford County Tourism Council has focused its resources on promoting Crawford County as a tourism destination. The Council has done this through website development, event creation, tourism development projects, and advertising and promotion. The success of our program of work illustrates the important role that tourism plays in economic development. In 2010:

- The website development of **DriftlessWisconsin.com** represents the collaborative efforts of three organizations – the Crawford County Tourism Council, Vernon County Tourism Council, and the Kickapoo Valley Association. It features stunning photography, compelling narrative, and an abundance of information about our exceptional region.
- **The Driftless Area Art Festival** in Soldiers Grove continued its pattern of annual growth, attracting 80 artists, 4000 visitors, over \$80,000 in art sales, and most importantly, generating over \$150,000 in economic impact for the area.
- **Crawford County Celebrates** promoted four events in three communities as companion events to the Driftless Area Art Festival. The Amish Market in the Park attracted many visitors to Ferryville; the Kickapoo Brave Ride in Gays Mills hosted 110 bikers; and the Harvest Dinner, also in Gays Mills, served 130 attendees.
- The Crawford County Tourism Council placed over **\$20,000 in advertising** in various markets throughout the Midwest, including Milwaukee, Chicago, Madison, Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, Galena, and LaCrosse. Our events have seen an increased number of attendees coming from these prime markets.



Chicago Sun Times Ad



Kickapoo BRAVE Ride