

Forward Wisconsin's role in the economic development arena is to help businesses establish profitable Wisconsin operations. We provide state cost comparisons, Wisconsin financial information and a variety of other relocation consulting services to prospective expanding businesses. In Wisconsin, business assistance is very important to us. To enhance the site selection process, we also offer a database of available buildings and sites complemented by community profile information. For the past 22 years we have promoted Wisconsin and helped bring nearly 16,000 new jobs, over 280 new businesses, and hundreds of millions of dollars in new investment to our state. Visit <http://www.forwardwi.com> for more information.

Wisconsin is experiencing an economic renaissance. Spawned by experience in a wide range of technology-oriented industries, assisted by our government's firm commitment to economic development, and fueled by an aggressive attitude, a more competitive Wisconsin has emerged. Here are some of the reasons why:

- Wisconsin's **business taxes are among the lowest in the country** due to property tax exemptions for manufacturing machinery and equipment, computers and computer equipment, inventories and pollution-control equipment.
- Wisconsin provides **tax credits for energy used in manufacturing** and for R&D expenditures.
- Wisconsin has **single-sales-factor tax treatment and a 60% capital gains exclusion**; no unitary tax on foreign-owned corporations; no inheritance and gift taxes.
- Wisconsin's **worker's compensation rates** for most industries consistently rank **among the lowest in the country**.
- **Wisconsin electric rates are among the lowest in the country**; commercial and industrial water and sewer rates are also among the lowest in the nation.
- Wisconsin has **one of the lowest cost of living indices** in the country.
- A **Customized Labor Training Fund** and more than 500 technical outreach training locations assist companies in their specific training needs.
- Wisconsin's **Technology Development Fund** makes grants in support of university and industry R & D for new products and processes.
- The University of Wisconsin receives **more research and development money than any other public university** in the country.
- No public institution--anywhere--spends as much on **transfer of applicable technology to private industry** as the University of Wisconsin (Madison, WI).
- Wisconsin's technical college system offers **more than 800 degree programs** and serves one out of every eight adults--twice the national average.
- Wisconsin is among the **top 15 states in industrial production**.

In addition to its business advantages, Wisconsin also enjoys close proximity to the major markets of the U.S. and Canada. That means freight cost savings for distribution companies and just in time production firms. Within 500 miles of Wisconsin (one day's shipping) are:

- 33% of the nation's population
- 31% of all U.S. manufacturing
- 30% of all U.S. business operations

Wisconsin's business climate is strong.

- **Construction activity is at record levels.** Wisconsin recorded \$11 billion worth of construction starts between May 2003 and April 30, 2004. Construction employment in Wisconsin hit 121,600 in April--the highest level ever for that month--and grew to 129,100 in May.
- **Wages in Wisconsin are below the national average.** Wisconsin's average wages are 11.6% below the national average of \$36,764 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- **Wisconsin is among the top 15 states in industrial production.** Wisconsin ranks 3rd nationally in percentage of total jobs that are in manufacturing (Bureau of Labor Statistics).
- **Best Places for Business.** *Forbes Magazine* (May 2004) ranked Madison, Wisconsin as the No. 1 Best Metro Area for Business. *Inc. Magazine* (March 2004) ranked Madison as the No. 2 Medium City for Doing Business right behind Green Bay, WI that took the top spot.
- **International trade leader.** Wisconsin recorded a 1.86% increase in exports last year compared to a 5.17% national decline.
- **Smart and safe.** Wisconsin ranks as the 6th smartest state, the 10th safest state, and the 11th most-livable state (Morgan Quitno Press). In 2003, Wisconsin high school seniors topped the

nation in ACT scores for the 7th straight year. Wisconsin has the nation's 3rd lowest dropout rate (U.S. Department of Education).

- **Most Livable State.** Wisconsin was recognized as a *2003 Most Livable State* (Morgan Quitno Press).
- **Tops in R&D.** UW-Madison ranks first among the nation's public universities in R&D spending.
- **Low insurance rates.** Wisconsin's homeowner insurance rates are the *lowest in the U.S.* and its auto insurance rates are *fifth lowest* (National Association of Insurance Carriers). Wisconsin is among the six best states for physicians to practice thanks to the low level of malpractice insurance premiums.
- **Low health care costs.** Wisconsin's hospital patient-care costs are 20% below the national average (Wisconsin Health and Hospital Association).
- **Short commutes.** Wisconsin has the nation's 10th shortest travel time to work with an average of 20.3 minutes (U.S. Census Bureau).

Wisconsin is business-friendly. It offers a variety of tax incentives for corporations and other businesses to locate or expand their operations within the state. Available tax incentives include exemptions, credits, and other special corporate tax treatment along with preferential treatment of capital gains.

In addition, Wisconsin has designated certain areas as Economic Development Zones and local governments have created Tax Incremental Finance (TIF) districts. Businesses locating or expanding operations within Development Zones are eligible to claim development zone tax credits. Businesses locating operations within a TIF district benefit from infrastructure improvements financed by tax increments.

More recently, a Technology Zones program was enacted that provides tax credits for high-technology businesses locating in a designated technology zone. Enterprise Development Zones offer tax credits in areas of the state suffering from high unemployment or other economic distress.

Wisconsin is an emerging technology center.

Wisconsin's vibrant and growing technology base bolsters both its traditional and knowledge-based industries. For more than 80 years, Wisconsin entrepreneurs have built successful businesses using leading-edge research--from the Vitamin D milk irradiation discoveries in the 1920s, to the world's first commercially available computer in the 1960s, to magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) innovations in the 1980s.

- Today, Wisconsin is in the international spotlight through the isolation of human embryonic stem cells--a discovery now paving the way toward treatments for incurable diseases.
- Strong technology transfer programs underpin the state's fastest-rising industries, including biotechnology and medical imaging.
- Public-private partnerships--including the \$317 million dollar BioStar Initiative for construction of University of Wisconsin research facilities--are another way Wisconsin is investing in its technology infrastructure.

The Wisconsin Available Building & Site database is a searchable database providing details on nearly 1,900 available buildings and about 700 sites throughout the state. It also gives you instant access to profiles of Wisconsin communities, maps you can customize, plus GIS information.

For additional information on why Wisconsin is the place for your business, contact:

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