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**Arlen Albrecht, Professor, Community Resource and Economic Development**  
**2011 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS**

**Selected Major Program Efforts:**

- A. Strengthening Local Government
- B. Protecting and Improving Water/Forestry Resources/Energy
- C. Enhancing Community and Business Development
- D. Community Organizational Development

**Methods Used to Determine Program Direction:**

- Public input and observation
- Taylor County UWEX Committee
- Taylor County Solid Waste/Recycling Authority
- Taylor County Towns Association

**Please note: The University of Wisconsin-Extension bought out 8% of Albrecht's county time for a statewide programming effort, four unpaid furlough days, and thus has less programming time dedicated to County issues.**

**Accomplishments and Results: A. *Strengthening Local Government***

Albrecht plays an active role in Local Government education. In 2011, he and the Local Unit Chairman of the Taylor County Towns Association organized the four quarterly meetings' educational component and were asked to provide a GREAT data presentation in the Village of Gilman. Albrecht responded with providing education on the Working Lands Initiative and Town Government Involvement, Towns Contracting for Services greater than \$25,000, County Board Redistricts and Town Ward Development, and a workshop for Town Clerks. Albrecht was also asked to lead the effort on redistricting after the 2010 Census. Albrecht attended preparatory workshops, presented the information to the newly-formed redistricting committee, was appointed advisor to the committee, provided the committee a timeline on proceedings and list of decision points. He also led the committee through the process of creating the new supervisory districts plan that was then forwarded to the Towns, Villages, and City for public input. The plan passed with no controversy and was forwarded to all jurisdictional levels. Finally, he worked as an advisor to the Taylor County Recycling Authority by providing research-based information to strengthen citizen participation, wrote and produced 20 radio PSA's. A noted result in 2011, only one of the 19 member municipalities did not meet state goals. All members have continually increased volumes. He has also investigated options and markets for Ag plastic waste and submitted three grant proposals, of which two were denied and one is pending.

**Accomplishment and Results: B. *Protecting and Improving Water/Forestry Resources/Energy***

**Land Stewardship Conference-Price & Taylor:** SITUATION: A district and countywide needs assessment in 2007 identified conservation, stewardship, and development of natural resources a high priority to be addressed by UW-Extension over the coming several years. In addition, land use trends continue to show increase in both parcelization and non-resident landownership. Many landowners are not aware of varying management techniques associated with long-term natural resource management. RESPONSE: Northcentral Land Stewardship team members from Price and Taylor Counties UWEX and Land Conservation Departments, Department of Natural Resources, and Pri-Ru-Ta RC & D Council conducted the 8th annual Northcentral Wisconsin Land Stewardship Conference on April 9. The conference goal was to teach private landowners and professional loggers selected land and water management and stewardship practices and improve their understanding of natural resources with the focus on woods, wildlife and water. The conference was arranged so participants could attend the keynote address and their choice of four of the 21 breakout sessions. In 2011, the keynote focus was "It is all about habitat." The program included 15 displays from commercial and educational exhibitors. Participants completed evaluation surveys yielding 82 returns. Albrecht taught two sessions with 30 and 35 participants attending: Enjoying Your Land Year Round, and Understanding Your Property Tax Bill. RESULTS: 150 people attended the 2011 Land Stewardship Conference (we lost 40 registrants because of last minute changes in the FISTA/Loggers certification rules). Participants learned about environmental stewardship in the areas of managed forestry, wildlife and their habitat management, stewardship tools, earning revenue, invasives, grafting, and wetland management. This multifaceted approach to environmental stewardship education has increased peoples' awareness of environmental issues and land stewardship practices; and people do apply their increased understanding by implementing stewardship practices on their land.

**EVIDENCE:** All survey respondents indicated they were very satisfied with the conference. Ninety-six percent stated they had learned something they foresee using on their property for which they identified over 200 examples of things they learned at this conference that they intended to apply to their property.

**Taylor County Energy Conservation:** In late 2009, Albrecht helped the Taylor County Building and Grounds director work with FOCUS on Energy on an energy audit of its buildings and suggested practices to implement. He also was the principal writer of a Federal Stimulus Project Grant (\$250,000) to further implement planned energy saving practices. Award announcements were given in 2010, but funding was not awarded until late November. This agent helped secure all necessary contract signatures, developed a project solid waste plan, applications to the State Historical Society for proposed work, and helped understand necessary accounting options before dollars were awarded. Building and Grounds personnel completed all lighting retrofitting and the heating plant replacement was completed by sub-contractors in 2011. Past energy conservation work is yielding \$60,000 in annual energy savings. This current project is yielding an additional \$8,000 in quarterly savings (projected at \$32,000 annual). This agent continues to assist Building and Grounds Department in quarterly reporting and records keeping, and searching avenues for further energy savings.

**Clean Sweeps:** For the past 18 years, Taylor County has conducted hazardous waste clean sweeps for agricultural and household residents. Albrecht teams with the county Solid Waste Department and is responsible for the radio, newspaper and community education to promote the event and lessen the use of, or improper disposal of, hazardous materials. In 2011, 13,000 lbs. of hazardous materials, 193 lbs. of pharmaceuticals, 30 mercury thermometers, 6,081 fluorescent light bulbs, 320 gallons of waste oil, 406 oil filters, 230 old appliances, and 2,519 electronic units were collected and properly disposed of. Five hundred forty-five vehicles representing 427 households participated in the event. Albrecht's roles were similar in the old tire collection events held by the 19 participating towns. Eight thousand one hundred seventeen tires or 306,580 lbs. of tires were collected.

#### **Accomplishments and Results: C. *Enhancing Community and Business Development***

Albrecht continues to work with area development foundations and individual entrepreneurs with whom he has gained trust and respect through 23 years of work. His work meets the unique and individual requests of pre-venture entrepreneurs and the three community foundations, as problems are unique and confidentiality is important. Seventeen pre-venture clients received counseling on feasibility, business plans, and avenues for financing and marketing data. He continues efforts in bringing the three foundations together and this year they held two joint meetings, one of which was a businessman's banquet in Rib Lake. He also published the 2011 Taylor County Economic/Data Profile.

In September the UWEX Price County Agent asked if Medford would be interested in a First Impressions (FI) program relationship with Park Falls. Albrecht met with the Chamber Director and it was suggested that he lead the effort with the Friends of the Downtown. Members felt that Medford would benefit from hearing from an objective visitors' view of the community and further the total renewal effort and pride. **RESPONSE:** Albrecht met with the FODT group and four volunteers were identified for the effort. A two-hour FI informational and planning meeting was held with the volunteers. The final report provides an outsider's perspective of the community as it might be perceived by a prospective business, consumer, potential resident, or tourist. On October 18 the group conducted its FI visit (with one additional trip in early November to finalize a few points). **RESULTS:** Albrecht utilized group notes to draft the report with further input and subsequent drafts. Albrecht offered suggestions for when Park Falls delivers their document: present the findings to the Chamber Board, the Friends of the Downtown membership, the City Council; post the findings on the Web; and discuss the findings on WKEB radio and provide a major article in The Star News. Time will tell what action will be taken by appropriate players. However, there is much anticipation and further discussion regarding the downtown and the highway redevelopment efforts.

Significant contribution of time and research was invested in the Rib Lake Log/Sediment Removal project which resulted in an EPA grant proposal to carry out a minor dredging effort to pilot its business plan for a self-sustaining project of dredging sediment, processing it for market and identifying submerged, highly valued old-growth logs lost during the sawmill era. Albrecht drafted the grant with guidance of the Rib Lake Inland Lake Improvement District and Rib Lake Community Development Foundation. The project is being advanced to EPA Region 5 for consideration.

#### **Accomplishments and Results: D. *Organizational Development***

Albrecht works with the Taylor County Humane Society, Farmers Market and Community Garden as an advisor.