Cudahy, Partners to Create Economic Advancement Center

From CudahyNow. Submitted By Rachel Mosey

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There is new hope for people looking for work or hoping to start their own businesses along the south shore. The City of Cudahy and partners St. Francis, South Milwaukee, the UW-Milwaukee School of Outreach & Continuing Education and the UWM Small Business Development Center have applied for funding to create a new regional center for economic advancement.

The South Shore Center for Economic Advancement (SSEAC), a collaborative effort among the consortium members and the Milwaukee Archdiocese, would focus on cultivating local employment and entrepreneurialism and providing non-profit capacity building assistance to individuals as well as secular and faith-based community organizations. Primary emphasis would be given to low-income residents.

“The south shore has been disproportionately impacted by the downturn in the economy and the shift away from manufacturing,” said Cudahy Mayor Ryan McCue. “That has placed increased pressure on our communities to retrain and provide new employment opportunities for our workers. Right now we do not have the governmental support structures or non-profit infrastructure in place to help our unemployed residents.”

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development reported Wednesday that the unemployment rate in the metro-Milwaukee area rose to 9.8% in June, up from 9.0% in May.

The City of Cudahy and partner agencies have applied for a $250,000 capacity building grant through the Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Children & Families. The consortium will provide $62,500 in matching funds through in-kind contributions of facilities, administrative overhead, technology discounts, speakers’ fees and pro bono donations.

The walk-in resource center would be located in a former church and school facility at the intersection of Swift and Hammond in Cudahy. Once established, it would:

• Provide information, counseling and training regarding resources available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) and other support programs

• Establish a satellite certificate program in non-profit leadership

• Establish regular courses in small business development and business planning

• Create a web-portal for information sharing and communication
• Create a small business incubator for up to five start-up businesses

• Create a business plan competition with a start-up grant award

“Our partnership with the UWM School of Outreach & Continuing Education and the Small Business Development Center presents an opportunity for our cities to educate, train and connect residents to new career supports,” McCue said. “The creation of this entrepreneurial resource center and business incubator is also an innovative approach to cultivating small businesses, which have historically fueled our economy.”

More than 48,000 people live in the south shore region.