



# TRANSFORM MILWAUKEE INSIDER

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## TRANSFORM MILWAUKEE PROJECTS RECEIVE LOW-INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDITS

**S**tanding before a jam-packed crowd at the Milwaukee Urban League, Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch and WHEDA Executive Director Wyman Winston announced the award of more than \$14 million in Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) to fund affordable housing developments across Wisconsin. The tax credits, which are distributed by WHEDA, will move forward 28 developments that will create 1,307 units of affordable rental housing.

For 2016, nine Milwaukee projects received LIHTC. Seven projects totaling over \$3.8 million in tax credits are located in the Transform Milwaukee area. The LIHTC announcement came at the anniversary of Transform Milwaukee. Executive Director Winston noted that four years ago he and Governor Scott Walker unveiled Transform Milwaukee that has amassed total investments of over \$389 million since its inception.

Over the past four years, Transform Milwaukee has garnered the support of all cabinet-level state agencies as well as public and private partners that also include: the city of Milwaukee, foundations, community and civic organizations, minority chambers, nonprofit organizations, businesses and industrial parks. Furthermore, the initiative has established



**Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch (center left) joined Rocky Marcoux, Commissioner, Milwaukee Dept. of City Development (far left); Melissa Goins, Maures Development Group LLC (center right) and Wyman Winston, WHEDA Executive Director (far right) to announce more than \$14 million in Low-Income Housing Tax Credits at the Milwaukee Urban League on May 2.**

a Collective Impact Group, a comprehensive set of local leaders who work with and advocate for those living and working in Transform Milwaukee. The Collective Impact Group has now grown to over 180 participants that are committed to making Transform Milwaukee a success long-term.

During the announcement, Lt. Governor Kleefisch highlighted one of the Transform Milwaukee projects receiving tax credits this year – the Historic Garfield Redevelopment. Located right

next to the Milwaukee Urban League, this new construction project by Maures Development Group, LLC will be a four-story, 41-unit building which will be built north of the former Garfield Avenue Elementary School located at 2215 North 4th Street. Led by Melissa Goins, Maures also plans to convert the former school into space for cultural and arts activities.

“Affordable housing and economic development go hand in hand to build strong neighborhoods,” said Lt. Governor

*LIHTC, continued on page 5*



# BROWNFIELD TO BECOME FRESHWATER PLAZA

**D**irectly across the street from Milwaukee's iconic Allen-Bradley clock tower stands what was once a 277,420 square foot vacant lot. The unused property is changing dramatically with construction well underway for the exciting **Freshwater Plaza** development located within the Milwaukee Water Technology District.

Late last year the groundbreaking for the highly anticipated **Freshwater Plaza** took place at 1320 South 1st Street. This \$46 million mixed-use project is being developed by Wangard Partners, Inc. The development is adjacent to the inner harbor, and will be the gateway to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's School of Freshwater Sciences. Wangard Partners, Inc. specialize in green, sustainable, and efficient spaces for office, multifamily, industrial, and retail developments nationwide.

Currently, the potential development phases include:

- A 46,280-square-foot Cermak Fresh Market
- A 6,600-square-feet of retail including a potential financial institution building and two additional retail buildings
- An L-shaped, four-story mixed-use building providing 15,900 square-feet of commercial space and three floors of apartments
- A future 50,000-square-foot office building

WHEDA allocated \$10 million in New Markets Tax Credits toward two of the phases of the Plaza: the construction of a four story mixed-use building with first floor retail and 98 apartment units and



Rendering of Freshwater Plaza that will be located on the now vacant lot across from the Allen-Bradley Clock Tower on South 1st Street.

the Cermak Fresh Market grocery store. Some policy makers and advocates have claimed Milwaukee has its share of food deserts. That's where a significant number of residents live more than one mile from the nearest supermarket. Cermak will address an incredible need for more grocery stores in the Transform Milwaukee area.

There's been an explosion of economic growth in Milwaukee's Water Technology District. It started when Governor Scott Walker, WHEDA Executive Director Wyman Winston and other key partners took part in the groundbreaking and eventual grand opening of the Global Water Center. A study indicates since then there's been an astounding \$211.6 million worth of development in the district. The Freshwater Plaza will serve to enhance the area's economic impact.

Many partners were involved in supporting the Freshwater Plaza including the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). WEDC awarded a Brownfield grant for \$685,542 to aid in the environmental work on the former Grede Foundry site. In addition, Wangard Partners, Inc. has worked closely with the DNR in site cleanup.

First-ring Industrial Redevelopment Enterprise (FIRE), a West Allis community development entity, also provided New Market Tax Credits in the amount of \$12 million. Additionally, Tax Incremental Financing was provided by the city of Milwaukee and loans were provided by Tri-City National Bank, National Cooperative Bank and Impact ?.



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# IMPROVED STATE JOBS SITE LAUNCHES

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) has launched additional improvements to *JobCenterofWisconsin.com* (JCW), the state's free online public labor exchange that connects talent with opportunity 24 hours a day.

On any given day, the site has tens of thousands of job postings from across Wisconsin. A snapshot taken May of this year showed over 6,600 job postings on the site from zip codes within the Transform Milwaukee area, underscoring the opportunities available in this region.

Last September, DWD rolled the first phase of JCW improvements that included a site redesign and other upgrades. In January, DWD rolled out a second phase of enhancements, followed by a third phase in April. Highlights include:

- The introduction of MyLMI, a customizable platform for labor market analysts, employers, educators, parents and students to drag-and-drop data sets onto a



single screen, where they can analyze the information and save preferences for future retrieval.

- Quick Job Search options with the flexibility to retrieve and view basic information about current job postings.
- Advanced mapping to locate available talent and job openings geographically and make informed decisions about job opportunities, business relocation/expansion, and recruitment.

- A redesigned and searchable Workforce Events Calendar to find recruitment events easily.
- Enhancements to streamline and create a more efficient and seamless user experience and help DWD and partner staff deliver better service.

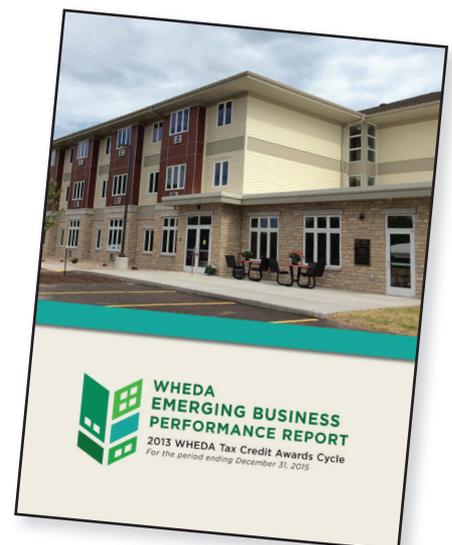
Collectively, the JCW enhancements move JCW toward the ultimate vision of a best-in-class system that helps Wisconsinites make informed, data-driven employment decisions.

## WHEDA EMERGING BUSINESS PROGRAM SPURS JOB CREATION

WHEDA's Emerging Business Program (EBP) connects small, disadvantaged Wisconsin businesses with developers awarded Low-Income Housing Tax Credits or New Markets Tax Credits. Developer partners are encouraged to hire emerging businesses to work on WHEDA tax credit projects. The workforce development component of the program helps both unemployed and underemployed individuals obtain living wage jobs in the neighborhoods surrounding the tax credit developments.

2013 WHEDA tax credit awardees Washington Park Homeowners Initiative, Paper Box Lofts, Ingram Place Apartments, Glendale Heights Townhomes and 700 Lofts participated in the EBP with more than **\$10.8 million** in emerging business contracts awarded for construction and professional services on these projects. In addition, **71 local Milwaukee workers were hired** as part of the workforce development component of the EBP.

To review the WHEDA's Emerging Business Program report, visit: [wheda.com/Emerging-Business-Program](http://wheda.com/Emerging-Business-Program).



# NEW PROGRAM EXPOSES STUDENTS TO ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Entrepreneur Greg Meier and leaders from the Young Enterprising Society (YES) are excited to announce a new partnership with a number of area high schools to introduce over 500 Milwaukee students to the business startup process. This partnership will have a positive impact on expanding entrepreneurship opportunities in Transform Milwaukee.

For the past two years YES has used Steve Blank's internationally recognized Lean Launchpad Program to help students navigate through "Building a Business" workshops to show how Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) are used in real world applications. This process introduces high school students to a new pathway of opportunities for entrepreneurship.

"The idea behind this effort is to expose students to the types of tools entrepreneurs need to grow a business," said Mr. Meier. "We are focusing on high school students in the Transform Milwaukee neighborhoods because entrepreneurship isn't an exclusive club accessible only by a certain age group or a social



Greg Meier (second left) with Northwest Opportunities Vocational Academy high school students who participated in the first "Building a Business" workshop.

standing. We're excited about the opportunity to help our local high school students explore entrepreneurship."

The first class for this program as reported in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel took place at the Northwest Opportunities Vocational Academy (NOVA) High School. YES is currently working with 14 area high schools to complete a total of 15 workshops this spring. For more information visit [followtheyes.com](http://followtheyes.com).

## BELOVED COMMUNITY PARTNER SHARON ADAMS RETIRES

Summing up the many accomplishments of Sharon Adams, who is retiring as the director of the Walnut Way Conservation Corporation, is nearly impossible. Remarkably, Mrs. Adams and the organization she co-founded in 1999 with her husband, Larry, dramatically improved one of the poorest and most dangerous neighborhoods in Milwaukee.

Today Walnut Way is a testament to how neighbors, when they trust and collaborate with one another, can literally, in Mrs. Adams' own words,



"reclaim, restore, and repurpose" a community. For two decades the Adams' have dedicated themselves to rehabbing homes, planting gardens and orchards,

raising honeybees, and supporting families. The husband-wife team pulled it off through community organizing, property restoration, and economic development.

Mrs. Adams grew up in Walnut Way and then left the neighborhood to attend college. Upon her return, almost 30 years later, in 1997 she was surprised and saddened to discover a deteriorated place. Prostitutes worked openly, even next to a school

where children played. Drug deals were made in the middle of streets. Gunshots and police sirens were constant. Homes



were boarded. Vacant lots were littered with trash. In fact, the police told Mrs. Adams to stay out of the neighborhood, even during the day. She opted for a different approach.

Refusing the advice to stay away, Mrs. Adams hit the streets, taking daily walks, shouting greetings to neighbors who peeked out of windows, imprisoned in their own homes by fear. Then others started accompanying her. As a result, more and more joined in and neighbors began taking back their neighborhood.

“Everyone loves beauty,” Mrs. Adams told the Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service. “And, if you stop and you talk to people long enough everyone has a hope — they want their children to succeed, they want to work, they’re tired of their homes being demolished.”

Her leadership has proved to be extraordinary. Through her passion and community work: over 100 homes have been restored; more than 20 vacant lots are now gardens or green spaces; gardening and nutrition programs are available to youth and adults; rain gardens and barrels help to combat storm-water runoff; as well as drug activity and prostitution have almost been eradicated.

With Mrs. Adams retiring WHEDA loses an outstanding partner, Transform Milwaukee loses a strong supporter and the city of Milwaukee loses an amazing public servant. But, her passion and commitment to Walnut Way lives on in the work and partnerships she has fostered for the past two decades.

“We have a lot to do in this country. We have a lot to do in Milwaukee,” Mrs. Adams said at a community event in her honor. “We can either accept the illusion that we are disconnected and isolated and impoverished or we can embrace reality that this is an abundant world, a peaceful world. I feel so loved by so many of you and I’m so grateful. I want you to continue to love each other and continue to do good.”

*LIHTC, continued from page 1*

Kleefisch. “The Historic Garfield Redevelopment awarded tax credits will provide new housing opportunities and spark economic growth right here in the Bronzeville neighborhood.”

In exchange for receiving Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, developers agree to reserve a portion of their housing units for low- and moderate-income households for at least 30 years. Remaining units are rented at market rates to seniors and families without income limits.

“Low-Income Housing Tax Credits create incredible economic activity right here in Milwaukee and across Wisconsin that are worth millions of dollars,” said Mr. Winston. “The tax credit program is effective and is a reflection of the dedication, commitment, and outstanding work of Wisconsin’s housing professionals that supply safe, quality housing.”

The developments within Transform Milwaukee that received tax credits are 15th & North Apartments (\$723,362), 704 Place Apartments (\$561,100), Century Building (\$477,169), City Place (\$405,671), Historic Garfield Redevelopment (\$614,515), St. Anthony’s Apartments (\$530,000), and Washington Park Townhomes (\$515,502). The 5th Street School Apartments and Victory Manor, LLC also received tax credits and are located in close proximity to Transform Milwaukee. To learn more about WHEDA’s 2016



**The former Garfield Avenue School site will become the Historic Garfield Redevelopment and will provide much needed new housing opportunities to the Bronzeville neighborhood.**

LIHTC allocation, visit [wheda.com](http://wheda.com).

This year marks the 30th year for the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. WHEDA has been the sole administrator for LIHTC in Wisconsin since the federal program began in 1986. Since 1986 WHEDA has awarded nearly \$342 million in LIHTC resulting in the development and rehabilitation of more than 53,000 units of rental housing for low- to moderate-income families, seniors and persons with special needs.

## WHEDA 4-YEAR INVESTMENT UPDATE

**A**pril 30 marked the 4-year anniversary since Transform Milwaukee was announced. WHEDA has invested \$153 million and leveraged another \$240 million in direct investments for a total of \$393 million.





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