

State of the Valley

Reports on Quality of Life in the St. Croix Valley

February 16, 2018, HUDSON, WI – The St. Croix Valley Foundation in partnership with Hugh J. Andersen Foundation, Andersen Corporation, Bremer Bank, United Way St. Croix Valley, United Way of Washington County-East, and the University of Wisconsin River Falls are pleased to announce the update to the State of the Valley website (www.stateofthevalley.org), providing communities of the lower St. Croix Valley with important county level statistics. This invaluable resource includes socioeconomic indicators for Chisago and Washington County in Eastern Minnesota and Burnett, Pierce, Polk, St. Croix Counties in Western Wisconsin.

This collaborative effort aims to measure the quality of life for counties in the lower St. Croix Valley by providing data on community engagement, demographics, economics, education, food security, health, housing, poverty, transportation, and youth. The Survey Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls gathered and analyzed data for the State of the Valley project; as new data becomes available, UWRF updates the information to identify trends and emerging issues.

“This information is important to area funders; we use it to better understand the needs and gaps within the communities of the St. Croix Valley,” said Brad Kruse, Philanthropy Director for the Hugh J. Andersen Foundation. “In addition, the reports help us understand how to best allocate funding to keep our communities strong for generations to come.” Angie Pilgrim, Grants and Programs Officer for the St. Croix Valley Foundation added “The information found on State of the Valley is especially helpful to foundations and nonprofits, but the public is also encouraged to visit the website often to learn about the needs in the community and the types of issues residents and local nonprofits are trying to address.” “The goal of this collaborative effort is to inform and empower area residents,” said Ann Searles, Executive Director of United Way of St. Croix Valley. “By working together, we improve the odds for children and families throughout our community.”

Despite the many factors shaping the regional identity of the St. Croix River Valley, the data presented on the website also show significant variation in terms of socio-economic well-being across the six counties. While most measures of economic well being are better in the region than state and national levels, many in our region face serious economic, health, and other challenges. Using the State of the Valley data, the partners hope to identify and respond to the needs in our communities so that all Valley residents have the opportunity to live better lives.

ABOUT ST. CROIX VALLEY FOUNDATION

The St. Croix Valley Foundation (SCVF) is a regional community foundation located in Hudson, WI; the SCVF supports ten local, volunteer-run affiliated foundations in 6 counties throughout the St. Croix Valley – three Affiliates in MN and seven in Wisconsin. SCVF was founded in 1995 by individuals who saw the river as a bridge and not a boundary and recognized that our Valley communities have common interests and issues.

ABOUT UNITED WAY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY-EAST

The United Way of Washington County-East is working to meet needs and improve lives throughout the greater Stillwater area. UWWCE's mission is to unite our community and local resources to give each person the opportunity to build a better life.

ABOUT UNITED WAY ST. CROIX VALLEY

The mission of United Way St. Croix Valley is to unite communities, focus resources and inspire people to measurably improve lives in western Wisconsin.

ABOUT HUGH J. ANDERSEN FOUNDATION

Founded in 1962, the Hugh J. Andersen Foundation's mission is to give back to our community through focused efforts that foster inclusivity, promote equality, and lead to increased human independence, self-sufficiency and dignity.

ABOUT BREMER BANK

Bremer Financial Corporation is a privately held, regional financial services company jointly owned by the Otto Bremer Foundation and Bremer employees. When you bank with Bremer Bank, we deliver profits to our owner, the Otto Bremer Foundation. The Otto Bremer Foundation uses those profits to make grants to nonprofits in the community.

ABOUT ANDERSEN CORPORATION

Andersen Corporation family of companies includes Andersen Windows, Inc., Eagle Window & Door Manufacturing, Inc., American Craftsman Window & Door Company and Silver Line Building Products LLC. Headquartered in Bayport, Minnesota, Andersen Corporation is an international enterprise employing 9,000 people in locations across North America with sales worldwide.

ABOUT UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN RIVER FALLS

The Survey Research Center at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls provides information gathering services for local governments, community organizations, non-profit groups, agricultural and consumer cooperatives, school districts, and other organizations. For additional information see www.uwrf.edu/surveyresearchcenter.