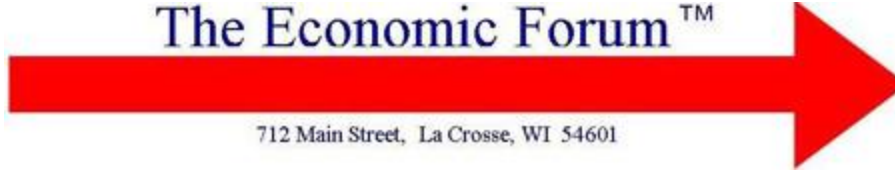


The Economic Forum™

712 Main Street, La Crosse, WI 54601



## **"TIF & Incentives to Business - A Public Policy Discussion"**

The 48th sitting of LADCO's Economic Forum™, "TIF & Incentives to Business - A Public Policy Discussion" was held on Wednesday, June 30th in the Radisson Hotel Ballroom.

Over 165 guests in attendance at the Economic Forum™ heard from the City of La Crosse Director of Planning Larry Kirch regarding the proposed Economic Development/Tax Incremental Financing Policy & Standards as well some background that has led to the development of this proposal. The City of La Crosse's Planning and Development Department, in response to a resolution introduced by Council Member Richard Swantz and Council President Audrey Kader, is preparing recommendations for establishing a need-based policy for the use of economic development incentives and tax incremental finance. The initial policy draft calls for adherence to the "but for" standard - the demonstration of need for public assistance; a uniform application, documentation and review process for all applicants; ceilings on financial assistance; and discontinuance of TIF-based cash grants and incentives for job creation or retention.

A three member panel then provided perspectives on the proposed policy and the use of incentives in economic development. Brian Doudna, Executive Director of the Eau Claire Area Economic Development Corporation and current President of the Wisconsin Economic Development Association, noted that a streamlined policy for economic development incentives is excellent public policy but suggested that the policy should allow for flexibility when necessary. Dr. Kathryn Birkeland, Assistant Professor of Economics at UW-La Crosse, provided perspectives from an economist's point of view, noting that incentives are not necessarily a zero sum game if structured appropriately. Mike Keil, owner of Doerflinger's Second Century, has been instrumental in bringing several recent developments to fruition in the La Crosse Area in recent years. Mike clearly pointed out that some projects, such as the 3 Rivers Plaza development, would not go forward without some public assistance.