

# SOUTHWEST ITBEC

## Late 2013 and 2014 Activity

The Southwest ITBEC Board reaffirmed their role to act as an umbrella organization in the region to foster collaboration, to stimulate and promote economic growth. Working partnerships continued between the Southwest ITBEC and regional organizations including the Wisconsin Ag Tourism Association, the 7 Rivers Alliance, Wisconsin Rural Partners, Outdoor Recreation Alliance, Inventors & Entrepreneurs Club, and Hidden Valleys.

- The Southwest ITBEC will again be a sponsor of **Sparta's *Holiday Lights***, a community volunteer program, for the 2014 - 2015 holiday season. The major undertaking of *Holiday Lights* is to update the outdated incandescent lighting to energy efficient LEDs.
- The Southwest ITBEC was proud to be a sponsor again in 2014, as we also did in 2013, of **Monroe County's "Exploring Regional Economic Opportunities"** summit held this past February. Over 200 people attended the conference that was held on Feb. 27th at the Fort McCoy military base. Along with the sessions, the event featured 22 exhibitors booths. The highlight of the one-day Conference were speeches by Governor Scott Walker and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation CEO and Secretary Reed Hall.
- Southwest ITBEC provided ***Hidden Valleys, Inc.*** with funds so they could attend a Chicago area sports show this past January. *Hidden Valleys* showcases the beauty and diversity of the best of Wisconsin -- highlighting cultural attractions, events, scenery, outdoor recreation, agriculture, and heritage of nine counties in the southwestern corner of the state. The Chicago area show was their first venture into this market. While the Chicago market is very attractive to southwestern Wisconsin, the costs associated with attending sports shows there are almost prohibitive. The partnership between Southwest ITBEC and *Hidden Valleys* opened the door to this great opportunity.
- The Southwest ITBEC donated funds to the **Citizen to Citizen Diplomacy Trip** for small incidental costs such as flag pins, Wisconsin flags that have flown over the capital, and things like required translators. Participants traveled to Kazakhstan through Open World's Leadership Development Program in partnership with World Services of La Crosse. The group visited various governmental, municipal and educational venues throughout Kazakhstan. Congress established the Open World Leadership Center in 2000. To date, over 14,000 young political, community and cultural leaders from all 89 regions of Russia and other Eurasia Countries have participated in the program. The Center's programs aim to forge better

understanding between the U.S. and other nations by creating opportunities for developing leaders to observe and experience American political, business, human services, community development, and community life.

- The Southwest ITBEC's grant of \$1,000 to the **iLead Charter School** will help with the purchase of a 3D printer. The goal is to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in our region and to foster the development of new start-up companies and new products via our young adults. The purchase of a 3D Printer will give our young people the ability to take their ideas and recreate them into a physical prototype. It will also assist them in learning the ancillary arts of product design through software platforms such as CAD Drawing as-well-as introduce them to material science via the use of plastics, composites and nylon. The 3D Printer will be made available to inventors of the region under supervision and regulation of the iLEAD Charter School.
- The Southwest ITBEC has continued its membership in the ***Wisconsin Agriculture Tourism Association*** since 2011. The Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association promotes and preserves the rural lifestyle, fosters partnership opportunities within the ag-tourism community, and provides tools which encourage sustainable economic growth while creating awareness of Wisconsin agriculture.
- The Southwest ITBEC was a sponsor of **Sparta's Holiday Lights**, a community volunteer program, for the 2013 - 2014 holiday season. The major undertaking of *Holiday Lights* is to update the outdated incandescent lighting to energy efficient LEDs.
- The Southwest ITBEC maintains a website, [www.southwestwisconsin.net](http://www.southwestwisconsin.net). The website acts as a portal to the region and helps direct people to local government websites, economic development organizational websites, and tourism related websites.