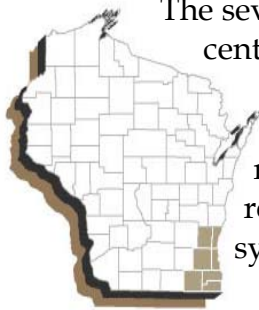


## Southeastern Wisconsin



The seven-county Southeastern Wisconsin region, which includes urban centers such as Milwaukee and Kenosha, accounts for nearly one-third of the state's residents and jobs. This area has traditionally relied on manufacturing as the backbone of its economy. As the region's manufacturing base steadily recedes, remaining companies are replacing assembly lines with innovative robotic and technology-based systems that require workers with advanced skills. Through a collaborative effort led by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Workforce Alliance Executive Leadership Committee, the region has established a plan to prepare the workforce to compete for 21<sup>st</sup> century advanced manufacturing jobs.

Southeastern Wisconsin's transitioning economy faces challenges including high poverty rates and low educational attainment in its urban areas. Through a partnership with the regional 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Initiative, an effort is underway to transform the K-12 system into a seamless proficiency-based K-16 system. The initiative incorporates the use of 21<sup>st</sup> century education and applied technology to achieve educational innovation and economic growth. Another educational component of the region's transformation strategy includes a focus on youth STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) initiatives.

The retention of young adults living in the region, especially its college graduates, is also of concern. A connection to the *Milwaukee 7* - a five-year, \$12 million economic development campaign -- will guide the formation of a one-stop resource team for businesses to attract and retain talent.

The State of Wisconsin has recognized the need to bolster its economy in key areas and shares in the vision of regional economic and workforce development promoted through the WIRED Initiative. In 2003, Wisconsin introduced *Grow Wisconsin*, a statewide plan to invest in local economies and foster a competitive business climate. As part of the plan, the state awarded \$150,000 to the southeastern region to promote a regional approach, linking education with economic and workforce development. As a Second Generation WIRED region, Southeastern Wisconsin will continue to focus its efforts on creating jobs and empowering its workforce.

The Southeastern Wisconsin WIRED for Success initiative seeks systemic change and sustainability to address regional system integration from every angle. The region's combination of diversity, vibrant culture and Midwestern work ethic offers the potential to transform the region into an engine of high wage economic growth.

