

Kassel – Dane Economic Development Project

Prepared for: Office of the Dane County
Board of Supervisors – Kassel-Dane
Sister County Task Force

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Agenda



Partnership
Overview



Dane /
MadREP



Kassel / WFG
Agency



Areas of
Collaboration



Next Steps

Partnership

- Cooperative relationship established in 2007
- Sister-partnership is between Dane County and Landkreis Kassel
- Aims to foster cultural exchanges and bilateral economic development
- Builds upon similar relationships between Wisconsin and the State of Hessen as well as Madison and the City of Friedberg

Dane / MadREP

- Madison Region Economic Partnership
- Economic Development Agency that promotes business in eight counties in South Central Wisconsin
- Facilitates companies looking to expand, invest, or open new locations in the region by highlighting comparative advantage
- Dane County has industrial advantages in manufacturing, agriculture, and biomedical technology, high levels of workforce training due to University of Wisconsin and Madison Area Technical College, and a Foreign Trade Zone (No. 266)
- Coordinates with statewide Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation
- Advance 2.0 Framework seeks to develop infrastructure such as Bus Rapid Transit and Commuter Rail

Kassel / WFG

- Wirtschaftsförderung (WFG) is the German equivalent of MadREP for Kassel
- Cooperates with Kassel research institutions -- notably University of Kassel
- Highlights Kassel's advantages in
 - Solar manufacturing
 - Transportation manufacturing
 - Logistical and commuter hub

Sectors of Focus

Dane County Solar Efforts

- Yahara Solar Project
 - Reach 100% renewable energy in all Dane county facilities by 2024
 - Alliant Energy – public utility company for Dane County – based in Madison
 - SunVest solar based in Waukesha – office in Madison
 - Both experienced in building solar arrays for the county
 - Built 90 acres in Cottage Grove, Dane
 - Madison Gas and Electric also operates two solar arrays – including in Dane County Regional Airport
- UW Madison Solar Energy Lab – under College of Engineering (oldest in the world)

Kassel Solar Industry

- SMA Solar Technology AG
 - Second largest corporation in Kassel
 - Producer and manufacturer of solar inverters for photovoltaic systems
- House of Energy in Kassel – focuses on implementation strategies
- Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems – largest applied solar research institute in Europe
- University of Kassel
 - Department of Solar and Systems Engineering
 - Invests in a lot of research in photovoltaic energy systems
 - Research on how to make manufacturing and implementation more efficient + grid operations
 - Under Institute of Thermal Engineering

Manufacturing

- Dane bicycle industry
 - Trek – Largest bicycle manufacturer in the United States w/ 22.5% market
 - Holds annual world dealer convention in Madison – paused for COVID-19
 - Saris bicycle racks based in Madison, Dane County
 - Madrax bicycle racks based in Waunakee, Dane County
 - Pacific Cycle – American division of a Dutch conglomerate – based in Madison
 - Holding company that owns Schwinn / Mongoose / Kid Trax / InStep
 - Schwinn is a top 10 US bike manufacturer
 - Nord Gear – German investment in a plant in Waunakee, Dane
 - Second largest employer in Waunakee
 - Manufactures drivetrains, gears, and motors
- Rohloff AG – based in Fulda, Kassel -- significant bicycle component manufacturer

Public Transit

- 2021 Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides funding to state and local governments for commuter rail
- Passenger Rail Study being undertaken in conjunction with Amtrak and Department of Transportation
- Kassel has extensive experience in public transit manufacturing and infrastructure
- ~~Kassel Transport Company AG alone operates 20 bus lines / 7 trams / 55 miles of rail w/ millions of passengers~~

Next Steps

- Facilitate collaboration between development orgs
- MadREP and WFG Kassel can utilize close relations with corporations in their respective regions to:
 - Induce further foreign direct investment and communication between private enterprises in manufacturing
 - Can build upon prior experiences with the German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest to network companies
- WFG and Kassel can work with Dane as they are experienced in transitioning economies and implementation of solar and public transit infrastructure
- University of Wisconsin and University of Kassel can formalize research relationships

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