

PRESS-GAZETTE FOCUS: SELLING GREEN BAY



Anglers fish on the Fox River in June. Donsia Strong Hill, co-chair of the group that plans to brand the Green Bay area, said many people don't realize the area is located on water. **Photos by Jim Matthews/Press-Gazette**

Group hopes to put brand on area's recruiting effort

Goal is to unify message to attract businesses and talent

BY NATHAN PHELPS

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A consortium of Brown County businesses and agencies has launched a new effort to come up with an "authentic brand" for the Green Bay area with the hopes of attracting additional business by showing the region has more to offer than cold weather and football.

The effort is meant to attract and retain businesses in the area, bring in additional tourism and attract young professionals and skilled workers to the community, said Donsia Strong Hill, co-chair for the Greater Green Bay Branding Initiative.

"Recruitment is a big part of this because people don't really know who we are," she said after a news conference Tuesday.

The result of the branding efforts is expected to launch in March, said Michael Hildebrand, group co-chair. The group is working to raise \$1 million over two years to cover the initial costs of the branding effort.

A logo and tagline are expected to be rolled out at a later date. In the meantime, the group continues to work on collecting data — including input from area residents through a Web site (www.brand-greenergb.com) and, eventually, through postcards.

"This part is critical for me. I'm not going out to sell something that's not real," Strong Hill said. "I want people to tell me what they think ... what they like and what they don't like."

While the area is well-known for its National Football League franchise, there's also the perception, among others, that Green Bay is always cold. And some people don't realize the city is located on water.



A swimmer emerges from a water slide at the new Resch Aquatic Center in Green Bay in June. Donsia Strong Hill, co-chair of the group that plans to brand the Green Bay area, said many people have the perception that it is always cold in Green Bay.

"I often hear from businesses in the greater Green Bay area that they have a tough time recruiting people to relocate to our community," Green Bay Mayor Jim Schmitt said at the news conference. "But once candidates come in for a visit or stay for a few days, they're sold on the area."

He said a solid branding effort is going to help area businesses draw new employees and retain employees and may lead to relocation or expansion of businesses in the area. Schmitt described the branding effort as complementary to the New

Green Bay area branding

■ A consortium of business and governmental groups have come together to create a new branding effort for the greater Green Bay area. As part of ongoing research, they are seeking input from the community, which includes a Web site where people can leave their thoughts and suggestions about the Green Bay region. It can be found online at www.brand-greenergb.com.

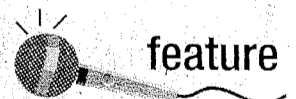
■ The core group of the branding initiative includes the city of Green Bay, the Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation, Arketype Inc., Leonard & Finco Public Relations, Pulse Communications and Unique Business Solutions.

■ Initial supporters are The Green Bay Packers; Shopko; Wisconsin Public Service the Oneida Nation; Godfrey & Kahn and Brown County.

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feature

North initiatives. New North Inc. is a consortium of business, economic development, chambers of commerce, work force development, civic, nonprofit, and education leaders in 18 counties of Northeastern Wisconsin that works to promote the region.

Ashwaubenon-based Shopko is one of the companies that has backed the project in the early stages. Jack Mullen, the firm's senior vice president of marketing, said this project

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Branding/Efforts have worked for other cities

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has the potential to be a boon for their business and others around the region.

"When we're recruiting people from outside the state and outside the area, we often have obstacles to overcome," he said. "We think developing this brand ... and being able to utilize this information in our recruiting efforts will help our company immensely."

Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce President Paul Jadin said the effort also allows participating businesses, communities and governments an opportunity to collectively develop a single, unified message and professional marketing materials as well as advertising and public relations efforts that may otherwise be too costly to create on their own.

Other metropolitan areas that underwent similar successful branding efforts include Tacoma, Wash., and Duluth, Minn., Strong Hill and Hildebrand said. They

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have also looked at branding efforts at two NFL cities — Kansas City and Pittsburgh — to see how football was rolled into those efforts.

Hildebrand said some studies in cities that have undergone branding efforts can push to around \$400 million in economic impact.

"That's through economic growth and new jobs," he said. "If we can say Green Bay looks like a pretty good place to live and work ... that's going to help all these businesses thrive and grow."