

8th-annual LIFE Report identifies priority issues for county

Collaborative report serves as basis for community improvement efforts

WAUSAU, Wis. – Hundreds of community members attended the LIFE Community Forum this morning at the Center for Civic Engagement Theater at the University of Wisconsin-Marathon County, where they received the first look at Local Indicators For Excellence in Marathon County 2011-2013.

The document, commonly referred to as the LIFE Report, provides a wide spectrum of information and data depicting the quality of life in Marathon County. Its purpose is to provide a reference for the community to evaluate strengths and challenges and identify priority issues. Published every two years, the report serves as a tracking vehicle to show how the community has changed over time.

Key priority issues identified by the 2011-2013 LIFE Report include:

- **Unemployment/Jobs Providing a Living Wage.**
- **Alcohol and Drug Misuse.**
- **Development of Young Children (birth to age 6).**
- **Overweight/Obesity.**
- **Basic Needs/Food and Shelter.**

“Marathon County residents enjoy a high quality of life, and benefit from myriad community strengths,” said Joanne Kelly, Executive Director of the United Way of Marathon County, lead agency for the project. “But every community has issues that require attention, and we believe this report identifies those key issues and can serve as a reference and as a starting point for meaningful community action to address them.”

Work on the LIFE Report is guided by a steering committee made up of representatives of local government, education, business, service organizations and health care. Steering committee members identify and recruit local experts to participate in an extensive process of refining and administering a community survey, evaluating the data, identifying key priority issues and drafting the report.

The result is a resource that guides important community improvement efforts.

“Businesses, churches and service agencies throughout Marathon County use the LIFE Report as the basis for their community and charitable activities,” said Roger Lucas, LIFE steering committee chair and senior vice president of human resources with Aspirus. “At Aspirus, we use the LIFE Report as a reference when we plan our community benefits activities.”

To view a full copy of the LIFE Report, please visit unitedwaymc.org.