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Town of Cable receives \$250,000 state grant to redevelop idle resort site

WEDC funding to help support former Telemark Lodge Property

MADISON, WI. FEB. 17, 2021 – The Town of Cable is receiving a \$250,000 state grant to help redevelop the former Telemark lodge and resort property located in Bayfield County.

The Idle Sites Redevelopment Grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) will support the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation (ABSF) on the first and second phase of the idle resort redevelopment. The total project cost for these phases is \$2.6 million.

“WEDC is committed to supporting communities throughout the state as they invest in quality infrastructure and services to enhance their communities,” said Missy Hughes, secretary and CEO of WEDC. “This project will not only bring new business to the Town of Cable, which will attract visitors, but it will also serve to improve the health and quality of life of its citizens.”

“This grant is an outstanding example of public-private cooperation between the Town of Cable and the American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation (ABSF) for local and regional development,” said Brett Rondeau, Chairman of the Cable Town Board. “The ABSF redevelopment of Telemark is a major step forward for our community.”

The first phase of the project involves acquisition of the property from the current ownership, after which ABSF will demolish the old hotel property. During the second phase of the project, ABSF will begin improvements to the cross-country ski and mountain biking trails and establish a competition stadium area.

ABSF plans to turn the 700-plus-acre Telemark property into a premier outdoor recreation destination. The foundation has a long-term strategic plan to reposition the former resort into a hub of year-round outdoor activity and open additional miles of ski, bike and hiking trails to Wisconsin residents and visitors—with the ultimate goal that the property, along with the adjoining thousands of acres of county and national forest land, will cement northwestern Wisconsin as a leading outdoor recreation area in the state.

“The American Birkebeiner (Birkie) ski race is the crown jewel of North American cross-country ski racing, and the Telemark property has been at the heart of the Birkie since the race’s inception,” said Ben Popp, ABSF executive director. “Having the ability to restore the trails and make venue improvements will further position northwestern Wisconsin as the foremost year-round outdoor recreation destination for all outdoor enthusiasts.”

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“Bayfield County has a long and storied tradition of outdoor recreation. It's a reflection of our incredible natural beauty, and it's an important economic driver for our region,” said state Rep. Beth Myers. “The last year has been difficult for the tourism industry, and I'm thrilled to see this investment. This project will open up new opportunities and employment for local residents, and it will only grow the area's reputation as a premier tourist destination.”

The resort was purchased by Telemark Partners LLC in 2013 but never reopened. The property is developed with the former Telemark Lodge, condominiums, various outbuildings, cleared ski slope areas and undeveloped lands. The Town of Cable has entered into a development agreement with ABSF for this project, and ABSF currently manages the ski trails through a lease to purchase agreement.

Formed in 1985, ABSF is a nonprofit that hosts the American Birkebeiner, North America's largest and most prestigious cross-country ski race, and maintains one of the nation's best recreational trail systems in the Cable and Hayward, WI, areas. ABSF is known for World Cup quality cross-country ski racing and plans to develop additional mountain bike trails on the old ski area terrain. ABSF also intends to partner with other businesses to provide amenities such as a modern campground, adventure center, hospitality, food and beverage providers and entertainment.

WEDC's Idle Sites Redevelopment Grant Program, created in 2013, stimulates investment and job creation at idle, abandoned and underused sites that are unlikely to be redeveloped solely by the private sector due to their scale and complexity.

The grants may be used for demolition, environmental remediation or site-specific improvements defined in the community's redevelopment plan. The goal of the program is to advance the site to shovel-ready status or to enhance the site's market attractiveness to encourage business growth.

Since 2014, WEDC has awarded more than \$17 million in Idle Sites Redevelopment Grants to 25 communities for projects expected to generate more than \$129 million in capital investments statewide.

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About the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) leads economic development efforts for the state by advancing and maximizing opportunities in Wisconsin for businesses, communities and people to thrive in a globally competitive environment. Working with more than 600 regional and local partners, WEDC develops and delivers solutions representative of a highly responsive and coordinated economic development network. Visit wedc.org or follow WEDC on Twitter @WEDCNews to learn more.

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