

Did WEDC Create the Jobs in Sherman Park It Claims?

Written by Citizen Action of Wisconsin, Robert Kraig
Friday, 19 August 2016 09:42

<http://newiprogressive.com/images/stories/S5/sherman-park-cops-s5.jpg>



No job creation found. Economically distressed neighborhoods like Milwaukee's Sherman Park have been abandoned by Wisconsin's bankrupt economic strategy.

MILWAUKEE - A review of reporting by Governor Walker's jobs agency by Citizen Action of Wisconsin could verify no job creation in or near Milwaukee's Sherman Park neighborhood, the site of civil unrest over the weekend.

As Citizen Action of Wisconsin documented in [its statement Tuesday on the Sherman Park civil unrest](#), the neighborhood has borne the brunt of the outsourcing and deindustrialization that has taken place since the 1970s.

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), in a Citizen Action review of their database, does claim to have created 483 jobs in the area, but a closer look reveals these companies do not actually exist in the neighborhood.

WEDC's map [on their website](#) lists 8 companies in Sherman Park receiving tax credits or related programs, but only 3 which claim job creation as an outcome. However, a review of these companies show they do not exist in the community despite what is indicated on the WEDC map. All of these locations are listed with the [same area on WEDC's website, which is in fact residential neighborhood](#)

Saelens Corporation, which received \$400,000 in tax credits, is [actually based closer to Menomonee Falls](#) on Milwaukee's far northwest side

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Novation Companies, which received \$750,000 in tax credits, is [actually based downtown](#) and is selling its office to a California tech company.

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Merge Healthcare Inc, which received \$500,000 in tax credits, was [actually based in Hartland](#)

Even if WEDC had created 483 jobs, that would not be nearly the scale of employment necessary to provide jobs to the thousands of area residents who cannot find good jobs.

The revelation that Wisconsin flagship economic development agency is doing little to nothing for one of the most economically distressed areas in the United States is consistent with early reports by Citizen Action and others that it is emphasizing investments in wealthy suburbs. Even if you include the Milwaukee County suburbs, WEDC's own website takes credit for impacting more jobs in Waukesha County (12,317) than Milwaukee County (11,889) despite Milwaukee's much greater population and poverty rates.

Also, Governor Walker choose to [turn down over \\$800 million in federal money](#) for high speed rail, forcing a train manufacturer in the Sherman Park neighborhood to leave Wisconsin. This could have been an anchor for further economic development in the area.

"It is clear that Sherman Park and other economically devastated areas like it have been abandoned by Governor Walker's failed economic strategy," said Robert Kraig, Executive Director of Citizen Action of Wisconsin. "WEDC's misrepresentations of its job creation efforts in Sherman Park are yet another affront to area residents, who simply want real economic opportunity and their fair share of the American dream."

"For decades jobs within Milwaukee's industrial core have been lost to other countries and other communities. We know investment is deeply needed, yet we haven't seen it - and now must find answers to where the State's flagship jobs agency is actually making its investments," said

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State Representative Evan Goyke, whose district includes part of Sherman Park. "Where did the money actually go? As we move to build strong neighborhoods throughout Milwaukee, we are left asking questions about the state's investment, which could be the economic foundation from which to rebuild prosperity in Milwaukee's most economically distressed neighborhoods."