



# SCEDC Testimonial

RED WING SHOES  
SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN

- Business expansion plan development
- Site assistance
- Non-traditional finance
- Second-stage business acceleration



SHEBOYGAN COUNTY  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION

DO MORE.

# Starting a New Business On the Right Foot

When John and Kelly Church opened a new Red Wing store in Sheboygan County, it helped fill a retail gap in the area. And with reciprocal twist, the area nicely fit the couple's personal life, too.

John was assistant operations manager at the Red Wing shoes Minnesota plant when his daughter accepted a job at Johnsonville Sausage. After numerous visits to the area, the Churches, who had been looking for the right city to open a store, found Sheboygan County to be an ideal place for both the store and themselves.

"We had been unable to find a location that offered the ideal balance of business, recreation, employment and wage earnings," said John. "The City of Sheboygan is the perfect location for almost any business."

The couple was drawn by Sheboygan's clean, well-maintained downtown, the beauty of Lake Michigan, the historic Stephanie H. Weill Center theater and John Michael Kohler Arts Center. They were also impressed by the friendliness of the people, low unemployment rate, and a clearly perceived ambition to enhance industry and business opportunities in the county.

The Churches sought advice for sites, business plan development and financing strategies through the Sheboygan County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC).

Jim Schuessler, SCEDC Business Development Manager, collaborated with extended resources including Chuck Brys, business counselor at the Small Business Development Center at UW-Green Bay (SBDC), and the two joined forces along with the Churches to develop financial projections and a narrative for the proposed business. Financing for the project was completed through Wells Fargo Bank.

John attests, "the final plan that we built under with the support of SCEDC was far more sophisticated than most plans developed for Red Wing Shoes stores."

With the assistance of SCEDC's site services, the couple opened the business in November 2016. Located at 2936 South Business Drive, the business offers high-quality work, hunting and hiking footwear, men and women's dress and casual shoes, accessories and care products. The store continues to see new and returning customers each day and is hopeful that the strong roots of manufacturing in Sheboygan County will help us reach our financial and life goals.

"The SCEDC was an essential part of turning our dream into a reality. Jim's entrepreneurial expertise paired with Chuck's financial prowess allowed us to take the appropriate steps to relocating to the area and opening a business while feeling confident in its success," said John, adding that the SCEDC has been a continued support system as the couple reflect back on the first year of their business plan, and will continue to play a key role in their success in the coming years.

"We would absolutely recommend that anyone with an entrepreneurial spirit or even just a great start-up idea, take the time to meet with Jim and the rest of the SCEDC team to explore and learn more about the organization and how it can help turn your dream into a reality," John said.

Schuessler added, "John and Kelly helped fill a retail gap in the county, one that provides products that are made in America and last much longer than what is found at a big-box retailer or online. This business provides a tremendous service to manufacturers across the region."



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John Church, Owner  
Red Wing Shoes