



**WELCOME!  
 NEW MADISON SIGN**

by Persona, Inc.

Madison residents and visitors will get a new greeting when coming to the city on US Hwy 34. The new “Welcome to Madison” sign was manufactured by Persona, Inc., a local sign manufacturing company. The new sign takes advantage of LEDs for its illumination. LEDs are a relatively new method for lighting signs, and employees at the Madison facility have been incorporating more and more of them in their projects.

It’s not just the lighting system that makes the sign special to the employees at the plant. We, at Persona, always take a special interest in local signage needs. We have assisted both profit and non-profit businesses in our community and have previously manufactured a Madison sign. We, at Persona, like to promote our wonderful community and feel this truly is our

way we  
 make a  
 contribution.

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The new Madison sign can be seen entering Madison from US Hwy 34 and is adjacent to one of Madison’s bike trails. It will include a picnic area and feature a waterfall from spring to fall.

Persona owes its success to its employees’ on-going commitment to quality and their dedication to making sure deliveries are on time. The Madison facility builds channel letters and large sign frames, and has been integral to Persona’s work on the Cenex and Holiday Inn re-imaging programs. Our customer base is extensive and includes primarily national accounts. This adds up to our signs being placed in more than 6,000 locations each year.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

The main responsibility of economic development organizations is to facilitate the preservation and creation of quality jobs. National economic events have made that task much more difficult. As we all know from recent local job losses, Madison is not immune from the economic contraction that has spread across our country.

The LAIC continues to work on several promising job preservation strategies as well as job creation opportunities. These efforts may produce results in the early months of next year. Some of these strategies include both local organizations as well as the introduction of new jobs. We hope for quick results to stem the spread of economic distress in our community.

As we enter the holiday season, it is important to remember those in our community that are already in economic distress. As a member of the United Way Board, I can personally attest to a growing number of families needing help.

There are numerous organizations that provide help to those in need and they need contributions of both money and time. Organizations with programs such as the Angel Tree can provide immediate help and joy for children during this holiday season. Others provide long-term help. The United Way has a list of organizations providing such assistance.

Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership (ICAP) has in place many programs that are geared to help folks in our community. The programs provide help with child care, clothing needs, emergency food and shelter, foreclosure assistance and a plethora of other opportunities.

The Lake County Food Pantry has provided for families and individuals for more than 25 years. They are not just about food; the organization also provides clothing, coats, boots, school supply distributions and Christmas food boxes.

The United Way has supported these and other organizations in the community. They focus on education of our youth, and the health and well being of the citizens in our community.

The LAIC has been supportive of these organizations and will continue to work with them and provide support that will be passed on to the workers and families in our community.

Economic expansion cannot take place when family incomes shrink. I can promise that LAIC will continue to work very hard to preserve and create jobs that expand family income.

Mike McDowell, LAIC President

## WELCOME (CONTINUED)

The Madison plant is one of four Persona manufacturing centers. The company headquarters and two manufacturing facilities are located in Watertown, SD, and the fourth plant—added just this year—is located in Centerville, TN. Persona, Inc. was established in 1980 and has now been located in Madison for 14 years. Seventy-three employees are currently employed at the Madison facility.

In September, Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership (ICAP) announced its new program, Homebuyer Education (HBE), which is available to everyone in the community. Persons who are interested in gaining knowledge that will protect them as homeowners and assure that they get a fair deal when purchasing a home may want to complete the program.

Kristen Reese, ICAP's Lake Area Housing Coordinator, works one-on-one with participants on issues such as money management, credit worthiness, home financing options, down payment assistance programs, predatory lenders, shopping for a home, maintaining your home and homeownership. ICAP's HBE program is certified by HERO, the Homeownership Education Resource Organization. HERO, a South Dakota Housing Development Authority certification, provides ICAP with standards to assure that the HBE program is of the highest possible quality. There are no income guidelines and no charge to clients who wish to attend HBE.

Participants must complete a minimum of three hours of HBE to finish the program and receive a certificate of completion. Kristen is working with many local businesses to put together a coupon booklet with discounts on products and services connected with buying a home. Participants who complete the program will be given the booklets.

Another service offered by the program is foreclosure prevention. Kristen will offer seminars for employees of local businesses that are experiencing cutbacks or other changes. She can also work one-on-one with individuals needing debt management information and resources.

For more information please contact Kristen Reese at (605) 256-6518 or via e-mail at [kreese@interlakescap.com](mailto:kreese@interlakescap.com).

### **MADISON SIGN—THE CONCEPT**

Additional touches and landscaping will complete the Madison sign that can be seen entering Madison from US Hwy 34. Inception of the idea was by Mike Brooke owner of the Eye Care Center and Jerry Johnson co-owner of B&G Transportation. Designed by Doug Van Der Werff, owner of Outer World and Lucas Mueller, an associate with Commission Soup. Chad

Comes, City Engineer was a part of the original design team. The landscaping was completed by Spencer and his crew at Oakridge Nursery out of Brandon, SD. Special thanks to Damon Adams, Plant Manager from Persona. His team was able to convert the idea from paper to reality. B & G Transportation delivered the sign as an in-kind contribution to the community.

This sign stands as a welcome to all visitors and residents of Madison. It signifies the pride we all have in our community and enjoy sharing with our visitors. Madison is a unique and prosperous community growing in partnership with all residents. The sign features landscaping, a waterfall and a picnic area for those traveling along the adjacent bike trail.



## UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Save the date! January 8, 2009 is the Lake Area Improvement Corporation's annual meeting. Invitations and further announcements will be forthcoming. The key note speaker will be Lt. Governor Dennis Daugaard. As always, the development corporation looks forward to seeing you there.
- Although Madison and Lake County have been touched by recent layoffs, business expansion continues in the area. The development corporation has been working with several potential expansions. Over the next 3 to 4 months, several announcements will be made.
- The development corporation has created a revolving loan fund. Information explaining the fund and the application process will be available soon. These dollars can be used throughout Lake County to create jobs and grow your business. The LAIC Fund can be used by almost all business sectors. If you are considering an expansion, please contact the LAIC for more information.

The Lake Area Improvement Corporation Board of Directors and staff would like to wish everyone a healthy and enjoyable holiday season.



We are on the web!  
[www.madisonworks.com](http://www.madisonworks.com)