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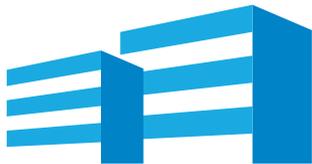
100 Years • 100 Reasons

Why we're feeling great in the 608!

By Laura Barten and the Forward Janesville Staff

What a remarkable decade it has been. In the last ten years, our region has undergone some dramatic transitions: the sudden loss of one of Rock County's largest employers in 2008, years in the national spotlight courtesy of a famous local politician, and, most recently, a recent influx of new and desirable employers and a downtown on the cusp of reinvention. The changes have been devastating, challenging and reinvigorating. But one thing is for certain, this a community that doesn't quit. Today, after much hard work by so many community partners, Janesville and the surrounding region are truly on the upswing, riding a wave that is sure to surprise in the coming years as we redefine who we are and what we can offer. So as Forward Janesville kicks off 100 years, here are 100 reasons to feel great about the 608. Cheers to the new year!

1. Area businesses are growing. The **Janesville/Beloit market added the 25th most jobs of any city** in the nation in 2017.



2. A host of **remarkable companies have made Janesville their headquarters**, including Impact Confections, Prent Corporation, SSI Technologies, and J.P. Cullen, to name just a handful.
3. **New Janesville-based companies are working hard to change the world.** Case in point: Shine Medical, which is using isotopes to basically turn bombs into medicine.
4. **We are Janesville proud.** An unflagging sense of civic pride and spirit has grown over the last decade, as residents and local leaders prove over and over again that nothing can stop forward progress.



5. A responsive and effective city government has translated into **solid growth and visionary plans for the future**, including the exciting ARISE downtown development plan. Visit growjanesville.com for the latest.
6. Janesville has an envied location, with easy access to Madison, Milwaukee and Chicago, and **connected to the world** by four major airports, all within 90 minutes of Janesville.
7. Get ready for your day-trips or commute to be even smoother: **the soon-to-be six lane Interstate 39/90** is sure to ease traffic and reduce travel times.
8. Get educated. Janesville has two high schools, three area colleges, 12 elementary schools, ten parochial schools, four charter schools, 50 youth sports teams and 50 school service clubs—plus **five national blue ribbon recognized schools.**
9. The public-private partnership known as ARISEnow just announced over **\$3 million in private funding to support key downtown development projects.**



10. Don't wait to expand your world. Rock County offers **three world-class higher education options** to meet your needs: UW-Rock County, Blackhawk Technical College, and UW-Whitewater.



11. Ease that growling stomach at one of many diverse dining options, including **cutting-edge newcomers** like Lark and well-known staples like O'Riley & Conway's Irish Pub.
12. Janesville's "rush-hour" is hardly a rush at all. It takes all of **17 minutes to get entirely across the city during peak hours.** A boon for all, since research confirms commute times are a fairly significant factor when measuring overall happiness.
13. Founded in 1836, Janesville has a rich historical tradition, and the **revitalized Rock County Historical Society** has done an impressive job sharing this with the community and visitors.



- 14. Get your water fix with 36 miles of the **scenic Rock River** flowing through the city (and keep an eye out for even more recreational activities on the river coming soon thanks to the ARISE downtown initiative).
- 15. Unemployment peaked in September 2009 at 13.9 percent following GM's departure. Today, **unemployment is at historic lows**, hovering around 4 percent.



- 16. Grab a chair and catch up on what's new with Janesville's award-winning, **172-year-old community newspaper**, The Janesville Gazette—one of the oldest news organizations in the state.
- 17. Like to golf? You've come to the right place: Janesville offers **99 holes of golf across four courses**.



- 18. Our furry friends don't have to go far in this city to **enjoy the great outdoors**. Paw Print Park, which is part of the Prairie Knoll Park on the south edge of Janesville, is made just for them.
- 19. According to MSN Money, **Janesville is #2 for fastest income growth in the U.S.**, based on income growth 2008-2013, per capita income, and annual unemployment.
- 20. It may be hard to imagine with snow on the ground, but come May 7, the **Janesville Farmer's Market will kick-off the 2018 season**, helping residents stock up on produce, specialty items, crafts, flowers, and more every Saturday morning.
- 21. Janesville is home to a **progressive and innovative school district that puts students first**, helping Janesville stay ahead of the curve. In fact, 91% of Janesville residents age 25 and older are high school or higher graduates.



- 22. Rest easy tonight, since a minimum of 24 firefighters and emergency medical personnel are always on duty, and our county's **excellent health care facilities** admit patients to our local ERs 74 minutes sooner than the national average.

- 23. Every spring, Traxler Park travels back in time, becoming a Renaissance Era paradise at the annual **Janesville Renaissance Faire**. See you there, milady.
- 24. Enjoy **bi-monthly musical concerts** and feed your musical soul at the Beloit Janesville Symphony Orchestra.



- 25. **Janesville and Beloit are home to 20 hotels** and multiple external venues capable of hosting conferences and events. Plus, get ready for two more hotels soon—one is planned for downtown and another off the I-90 corridor. Watch for more as details become available.



- 26. Get ready for summer picnics by checking out one of the 26 parks the Janesville "City of Parks" has on offer. Janesville alone has more than **2,500 acres of parkland, 30 miles of paved trails, six boat launches, the Ice Age Trail and a 500-acre greenbelt system**.
- 27. You don't have to wait for summer to have fun, thanks to **226 miles of snowmobiling trails**.

- 28. If warm weather and watersports are synonymous for you, head on over to one of six public boat launches in Janesville ... or take a 10-minute scenic drive to the recreational 10,460-acre Lake Koshkonong in Newville. **Summer fun awaits!**

- 29. **New construction is booming**. The value of residential permits for additions/new construction in Rock County in 2016 was \$122.5 million.



- 30. Rock County new construction projects totaled **\$115.7 million** in 2017.
- 31. We care about our infrastructure. In 2016, **\$19.5 million of public works and infrastructure projects were completed**.
- 32. Per capital **personal income in Rock County has been steadily rising**, from \$32,036 in 2007 to \$39,400 in 2016.
- 33. **Love outdoor concerts?** Enjoy live entertainment on warm summer Tuesday evenings along with many other Main Street Entertainment programs in front of the Rock County Courthouse.

- 34. The Janesville Senior Center on Main Street prides itself on **breaking the stereotypes associated with senior centers of old**, offering action-packed fitness classes, recreational-educational programs, advocacy, and fellowship.

- 35. Janesville has certainly had the **national spotlight** in recent years, most notably as the home of Paul Ryan, the 54th Speaker of the United States House of Representatives since 2015.

- 36. In another testament to economic growth and stability, **Rock County Sales & Use Tax Collections hit a collections record high in Q3 2017**.

- 37. If you're feeling like a walk might do you good, take advantage of the more than **35 miles of trails** Janesville has to offer.

- 38. Janesville is home to the Rock Aqua Jays, the **world's most successful water ski show team**.

- 39. The Janesville Performing Arts Center (JPAC), complete with a **633-seat theater**, **offers outstanding events that range from community theater and comedy nights to headlining concerts**. Be sure to reserve your favorite show before tickets sell out.



- 40. **Get involved with ease**. With more than 1,000 registered non-profits, volunteer opportunities are abundant.

- 41. The Janesville Youth Sports Complex has provided **a beautiful space for young athletes to practice and play** since the first field opened in 2010.

- 42. Thanks to a **generous donation from the Martin W. Roth family**, the Roth Pavilion in Lower Courthouse Park is a reality. Watch for summer performances, like the July 3, 2018, Concert in the Park featuring the Beloit Janesville Symphony Orchestra performing a patriotic pops concert.



- 43. Head over the Janesville Ice Arena to watch the Janesville Jets, the **Janesville-based Tier II junior ice hockey team** in the North American Hockey League, battle it out with rivals.

44. Moody's, as well as Standard & Poor's, have consistently assigned strong bond ratings to Rock County's fiscal health and related management systems. The City of Janesville has a **AA S&P rating for capacity to meet financial obligations** and Moody's Bond Rating for Rock County is Aa1.

45. **We're growing.** The Janesville population is approximately 63,600 at present.

46. **Rock County is located within 500 miles of one-third of all manufacturing operations within the U.S.,** and is served by three railroads: Union Pacific Railroad, Wisconsin & Southern and the Canadian Pacific Railway.

47. Need local air transport? Janesville's Southern Wisconsin Regional Airport (KJVL) has been providing supply chain solutions to companies of all sizes for over 60 years. **The airport provides air cargo, corporate aviation, and charter services at costs far below those found at larger commercial airports.**

48. History buffs with a penchant for architecture will find it good here. **More than 20% of Wisconsin's buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places** are located in Rock County.

49. Average student-teacher ratios in Janesville (14.2) and Beloit (15.1) **are lower than the national average.**

50. **Residential market activity in Rock County continued a three-year upward growth trend,** with record setting price points recorded in 2017.

51. **The cost of living in Janesville is exceptionally reasonable.** The media sales price of a home in Madison is \$264,000, whereas in Janesville it is \$140,000.



52. You can also shop more. The **Rock County sales tax rate is 5.5 percent** as compared to the Chicago rate of 10.25 percent.

53. May as well save on gas, too. When average price per gallon is \$2.977 in Chicago, **Janesville clocks in at just \$2.453 per gallon.**

54. Get out of town for the evening and be back in time to get a great sleep, **with Madison and Rockford less than 45 minutes away** (and Milwaukee and Chicago just 1:20 and 1:54 minutes out, respectively).



55. The newly refreshed CAMDEN Playground is the **largest accessible/integrated playground in the world.**

56. **Rock County has one of the highest per capita amount of green space in the state,** with 26 parks that offer access to seven different bodies of water.

57. **Downtown Janesville events just keep on growing.** From weekly farmers' markets and monthly On Top of Downtown events to an annual masquerade ball and the Jolly Jingle, 2018 is filled with opportunities for fun. Visit downtownjanesville.com to learn more.

58. **Janesville's second largest park, the 164-acre Palmer Park,** just added a kid-friendly zip line in addition to the ever-popular wading pool. You can pick up the Ice Age Trail there, too, or exercise your pet in the special pet area at the edge of the park.

59. Beat the summer heat at the new **Riverside Park splash pad, featuring ground sprays, group play stations and user-activated features** that shoot out water in varied four-minute sequences.

60. This summer, **Janesville residents may be the first in Wisconsin to enjoy an outdoor fitness court downtown,** at the intersection of Court and River Streets, across from the new town square. The project would be funded by the city (\$60,000), SSM Health (\$40,000) and the National Fitness Campaign (\$10,000). Watch for more details soon.



61. Always an icon of modern design and a remarkable resource for residents, the award-winning Hedberg Public Library keeps getting better. **It recently launched a new online system and is the throes of a significant fundraising campaign** to fund additional improvements.



62. **Celebrate the new industries calling Janesville home.** Companies in med tech, distribution and logistics, metal fabrication, food processing and health care have relocated to or expanded in Janesville since 2010.

63. Get your summer fix of cream puffs and cheese curds—and see some darn cute animals and remarkable student projects—at the Rock County 4-H Fair in Janesville. **The oldest all-youth 4-H fair in the United States,** this year's event will be held July 24-29, 2018.

64. **UW-Rock County will merge with UW-Whitewater this summer,** allowing students working on degrees at UW-Rock County to earn diplomas from UW-Whitewater. This move is part of the UW System's restructuring plan, which calls for four-year campuses to absorb two-year campuses. UW-Rock County will remain at its current location, but its students and staff will become part of UW-Whitewater following the merger.



65. **Blackhawk Technical College is one of three local university options with outstanding programs.** For example, did you know Blackhawk Technical College (BTC) nursing students are the best in the state? According to the Wisconsin State Board of Nursing, BTC nursing students scored a 95.7 percent on the most recent National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN). The score was the best in Wisconsin outranking notables such as Milwaukee Area Technical College, Fox Valley Technical College, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and Carroll University.

66. As always, **Bessie the Cow continues to happily greet visitors exiting I-90 at Highway 26 on Janesville's Northeast side,** inspiring selfies and smiles.

67. The Ice Age Trail runs through Janesville, **offering some of its most interesting terrain, including Devil's Staircase.** The Devil's Staircase segment of the Ice Age Trail travels along and up the side of the bluffs by the Rock River in Riverside Park. This mile and a half segment of the trail blanketed by native wildflowers in the spring is for foot travel only and is family friendly. Pets are welcome on the trails from September 16 through May 14.

68. **Cycle to your heart's content.** The Rock County Bikeway offers more than 200 miles of paved county roads.

69. **Fancy a pint?** Now you can tour Gray's Brewing Company or taste some local brew at Rock County Brewing Co.

70. Not a fan of lager? **No need to whine ... red, white or rose, Rock County offers at least five local wineries** to suit just about any palette.



71. **Today's employer landscape is far more diversified,** with 36 percent in metal fabrication, 27 percent in logistics, 18 percent in information technology, 9 percent in the food industry and the remaining 9 percent in a variety of other sectors.

72. **We are fortunate to have very little violent crime.** The violent crime rate in Janesville is just 44.8, as compared to the Twin Cities, with a rate of 82.4.

73. **Janesville is home to so many unique manufacturers with a storied history.** For example, the Wisconsin Wagon Company, which produces reproductions of some of the most iconic toys of the last 100 years, including the Janesville Coaster Wagon.

74. For the period of October 2016 through October 2017, the Janesville-Beloit Metropolitan Statistical Area's **employment base increased by 3.2%**. This growth rate resulted in an overall weighted rank of #8 among 100 peer small metropolitan locations. This Top 10 ranking was the highest recorded by any Wisconsin metro area, irrespective of population size.



75. Living large on less is easy here. **Janesville's overall cost of living is 1.9 percent below national average.**

76. Perhaps it's stating the obvious, but Rock County **residents enjoy the beauty of all four seasons.** Sure, Florida weather is nice, but who doesn't love fall colors?

77. Live music fans don't have to go far to hear their favorites—from local Janesville bars and coffee shops to the Janesville Performing Arts Center, **opportunities abound to listen to great up-and-coming artists just about every night of the week.**



78. This winter, **grab your cross country skis** and head to the groomed trails at Rockport or Riverside Park.

79. Come spring time, visit the 160-acre Janesville Schools Outdoor Laboratory (JSOL) to try and **spot one of more than 280 species that call this area home.**

80. Once summer is in full swing, **consider going berry picking** at one of four local farms.

81. Get your fall fix at one of nine-plus fall orchards and pumpkin patches in the area.

82. No matter what your belief, with **52 places of worship** available there is sure to be something to inspire you should you wish to seek out a spiritual community.

83. The Janesville **Innovation Center (JIC) is a start-up incubator** that provides business mentoring and support to new businesses in Rock County. JIC offers tenants 22,000 square feet of office and manufacturing space, conference rooms, and common spaces including a kitchen.

84. **JIC has successfully mentored many regional start-ups**, including N1 Critical Technologies, a power supply systems design, purchasing, installation and maintenance service provider, that announced that is now relocating and expanding into downtown Janesville.

85. The Humane Society of Southern Wisconsin has **been saving the lives of animals in need for more than 107 years.** With plans to build a new shelter to better accommodate all pets and expanded programming, it's never been a better time for area pet lovers to consider adoption.

86. For wine aficionados, the approval and implementation of **downtown wine walks marked a very happy occasion indeed.** Be sure to get tickets early for this year's walks, scheduled for May 19, 2018, and September 22, 2018.

87. **The Tour of America's Dairyland Bike Race Series**, the largest competitive cycling event in the U.S., will welcome Janesville as its newest venue in 2018.

88. Janesville is home to the **award winning Rotary Botanical Gardens**, with over 25 different garden areas and 4,000 plant varieties spread across 20-acres.



89. **Janesville is an excellent example of how collaboration works.** Since its inception, The Rock County Development Alliance has a solid track record of facilitating development projects, minimizing costs, streamlining local and state regulations and packaging value-added assistance to attract employers to the region and enhance economic stability.

90. This year **ARISE will complete the highly anticipated Town Square improvements** on the west side of the Rock River, converting River Street into a Festival Street for future downtown events in the process.

91. The Janesville School District's diverse **international program features 20-plus sister school relationships**, the most extensive Chinese language and culture program in Wisconsin and more.

92. Janesville's Peace Park and playground erected the **world's tallest peace pole** (52-feet) in 1992.

93. Elevate your next road trip on one of our many rustic roads. Drop the top and cruise down Rock County's Serns or Riley Roads.

94. **Ice skating is fun in all seasons.** Get your fix during family nights at the Janesville Ice Arena.

95. Janesville may well benefit from a Wisconsin ad campaign that just launched. Over the next six months, the State's main economic development group plans to use social media and other advertising platforms to **sell Wisconsin as a vibrant state that offers more affordable living**, more leisure time, and loads less commuting time than life in Chicago.

96. The downtown Janesville **retail and entertainment district just keeps growing.** Grab a coffee, pick up a cupcake, and purchase some cool new threads on your next afternoon outing.

97. Recent booms for United Alloy and other local companies have kept **Janesville among the top 40 best-performing small cities in the U.S.** for three straight years, according to a report released in January 2018 by California economic analyst Milken Institute.



98. **Redevelopment of the former General Motors plant is at hand, at last.** Commercial Development Company, Inc., purchased the site and plans to invest significant resources to reposition the large industrial property for new utilization.

99. Proper zoning, compatible land uses, right-sized utilities, onsite storm water management, rail service, tax increment financing, and Interstate visibility/access are just a few of the attributes that are **common offerings among Rock County's available sites inventory: all for about a \$1/SF.**



Our region is great for business.

In addition to local incentives, Chief Executive Magazine named Wisconsin one of the Top Ten States for Business in 2017.