



# County Mutual's ODIP Program Keeps Safety at the Forefront

by Michelle Gormican Thompson, Thompson Communications

Over the past 20 years, 25 county construction projects have utilized the Wisconsin County Mutual Insurance Corporation's Owner Direct Insurance Program (ODIP).

The ODIP is a cost-saving insurance product that allows County Mutual member counties to take control of their worker's compensation insurance needs on building projects such as jails, law enforcement centers or courthouses.

In addition to program administration, the administrator for County Mutual — Aegis, a Charles Taylor Company — conducts regular safety visits and on-site training.

"From pre-bid meetings to completion of the project, we work alongside the county, contractors and employees to ensure safety is at the foundation of their daily tasks," said Vance Forrest, vice president of risk management for Aegis. "The ODIP is a huge team effort. On these projects, there is a commitment to safety from all parties. Because of this, job sites are safer and our counties see huge savings."

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development oversees the ODIP. When any project is about to begin, a stewardship meeting is held with the DWD, the general contractor, County Mutual and the county.

"We have a great partnership with the state," said Forrest. "They see that our performance has been outstanding and workers are going home to their families at night because of this dedication to safety."

The ODIP success over the past 20 years speaks for itself. Currently, there are two projects underway in Waushara County, including a new government center and, less than a mile away, a new highway shop.



In Trempealeau County, a new law enforcement center currently under construction hasn't experienced a single lost day of work due to worker injuries. There are countless opportunities for

safety, including interactions with workers, foremen and project managers. For every 100 days without a lost-time accident, a lunch is provided to workers from County Mutual and the contractor.

"I've always been a big believer that the people working the job site should be recognized," said Forrest. "These regular events give us a chance to personally thank them for their work, build comradery and solidify our relationship."

In the next year, there are many new ODIP county construction projects coming up, with County Mutual ready to create safer job sites while saving the county money with the ODIP.

"After 20 years, we at County Mutual are incredibly proud of our safety track record. Oconto, Calumet, Green, and Green Lake counties, the list goes on and on," he said. "The ODIP blueprint works and, in the end, it is the taxpayers of our state who win."

The WCA, along with county officials from around the state, created the Wisconsin County Mutual Insurance Corporation in 1987 to provide quality liability insurance to members, substantially at cost. The company has a strong focus on risk management and currently insures 53 of the state's 72 counties. Visit [wisconsincountymutual.org](http://wisconsincountymutual.org) to learn more. ■