

# Our

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# European Countryside



Wiry, Komorniki Municipality  
Photo: Robert Kropacz

## Bulletin of National Rural Network of Wielkopolska Region



„European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe investing in rural areas”.

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**Krzysztof Grabowski**

*Deputy Marshal of the Wielkopolska Region*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to encourage you to read the next edition of the "Our European Countryside" bulletin, the last one in 2020. It was an extraordinary year, marked by major health concern. Despite restrictions and difficulties related to the coronavirus epidemic, the Rural Development Programme (RDP) for 2014-2020 is still being implemented. Beneficiaries implement projects co-financed by the European Union and sign new agreements with the Local Government of the Wielkopolska Region, allotting funds to a number of necessary investment projects.

In this edition, I would like to share with you the effects of co-financed tasks involving investing in cultural facilities. For this purpose, in 2018 and 2019, we allotted a total of nearly PLN 26 million. These funds will be sufficient to build or renovate 70 day-care rooms and community centres in country areas in our Region. More and more facilities, which have been modernized with financial means allocated to the protection of monuments and traditional architecture, are put into use. In October 2020, I participated in the opening of the renovated palace in Bucz, the Przemęt municipality, the Wolsztyn district. I also had the pleasure of signing a contract with the town of Pyzdry for co-financing the construction work in an arcaded house in Pyzdry.

The implementation of the LEADER initiative under the RDP for 2014-2020 has produced many results such as the formation of new enterprises in rural areas of Wielkopolska and the development of existing companies. 28 local action groups (further herein referred to as the "LAGs") financed from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development were involved in this initiative. In the bulletin, you will find examples of actions taken by local beneficiaries in addition to ventures undertaken by partners of the National Network of Rural Areas (the NNRA) for the use and promotion of local heritage.

At the end of October 2020, we settled the photo competition called "RDP on camera". Several dozen photographs entered in the competition. They were divided into several categories, namely summer in the countryside of Wielkopolska, the effects of the Rural Development Programme in our region and traditional crafts and forgotten art. The best photos will be regularly published in the bulletin.

As Christmas and the New Year 2021 approach, on this most blessed days I would like to wish you health, optimism, and undying hope for better future. I believe you will find the time to read "Our European Countryside" bulletin.

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# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RDP

## New day-care rooms for residents of the Wielkopolska countryside

**26 projects co-financed from the RDP for 2014-2020 involving the construction or reconstruction of country day-care rooms and community centers, have already been settled. Some facilities have been serving the residents for over a year.**



Photo: Town Hall in Krotoszyn

The modernized Country Community Centre in Wielowieś in the municipality of Krotoszyn.

Investment projects involving cultural facilities, executed in towns with a population of up to 5,000 people, make up one of the support areas under the Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020. EU funds boost social integration and the development of cultural initiatives in the country. In addition to the construction or reconstruction of day-care rooms and community centres, funds are also allocated to the furnishings in the existing facilities.

*In 2018 and 2019, on behalf of Local Government of the Wielkopolska Region, I signed 56 contracts with municipal authorities and cultural institutions. The total value of grants is almost PLN 26 million. Thanks to these funds, 70 modern day-care rooms and community centres will be built in the region, and some of them will be provided with additional equipment, says Krzysztof Grabowski, Deputy Marshal of the Wielkopolska Region.*

The town of Krotoszyn is one of the beneficiaries of the Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020: the municipal project called "Reconstruction of the Community Centre in Wielowieś to be used as cultural infrastructure" was co-financed with the amount of PLN 500,000. The RDP funds were allotted to the modernization of the existing building involving the construction of kitchen facilities

and the reconstruction of sanitary facilities and the boiler room. The building and the roof were insulated while the window and door frames were replaced with new ones. The renovated building has been serving the residents since September 2019.

The project called "Together for culture – reconstruction and furnishing of buildings for cultural purposes" was completed in the Grodziec municipality. The investment project included three tasks: (1) the reconstruction and furnishing of the Volunteer Fire Department hall in Grodziec for the purpose of a public library; (2) the reconstruction and furnishing of a day-care facility in Lipice, and (3) the reconstruction and furnishing of a day-care facility



The Volunteer Fire Department in Grodziec before renovation.



After renovation, the premises of the Volunteer Fire Department in Grodziec is used as a library. The project was co-financed under the RDP for 2014-2020.

Photo: The Municipal Office in Grodziec

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in Wielołęka. The amount of the aid from the RDP for 2014–2020 was PLN 962,625.00 and was spent on adapting the buildings to suit the requirements of the disabled, thoroughly rebuilding the interiors of the buildings, replacing the roofing, insulating, and providing the necessary furniture to the library and day-care rooms. The day-care rooms in Lipice and Wielołęka were additionally equipped with professional kitchen equipment. As part of the project, a renewable energy source was installed in the library in Grodziec.

In addition, photovoltaic panels were installed, and an area next to the buildings was developed, i.e. its part was sectioned off for a car park and it was enclosed with a fence). Moreover, the day-care facilities have been provided with the necessary equipment that is used by residents during celebrations and cultural events.

In the Wijewo municipality, funds from the RDP 2014–2020 were allocated to the reconstruction of country community centres in Wijewo and Zaborówiec. In the building in Wijewo, window frames were replaced, a wooden floor



Country day-care facility in Dąbrowa (Damasławek Municipality).

Photo: The Municipal Office in Damasławek

The Damasławek municipality received PLN 500,000 from the RDP for a project called “Construction of a country day-care facility in Dąbrowa”. The project involved the erection of a new building with a usable area of 200 m<sup>2</sup>, including a hall, a kitchen, a washing-up room, a storage, a boiler room, changing rooms and bathrooms adapted to the needs of the disabled. The building is powered and heated by photovoltaic panels. Outside, there are car parks and entrances paved with paving stones, a partially covered terrace, and a ramp for the disabled. The area around the facility was fenced and lighted. The building was put into use in November 2019.

In turn, in the Dąbie municipality, the amount of PLN 500,000 was allocated to the modernization and reconstruction of day-care facilities in Chełmno, Chruścin and Rośle. All buildings have been extensively renovated, including replacement of electrical, plumbing and heating installations and insulation of buildings and roofs.

was laid, new washing facilities and equipment were provided, the kitchen was renovated and equipped with new cooking equipment. Power-operated sliding curtains, new chairs and round tables were also purchased. The building has been adapted to the requirements of the disabled. With modern lighting and wall mirrors 12.5 m<sup>2</sup> in area, the object is intended for use by dance and theatre groups. Additionally, the building has central heating, and a pavement was laid in front of it. A number of projects were executed in the Country Community Centre in Zaborówiec. First of all, the building was insulated, the façade was made, the window frames were replaced, and so were new power, water, and sewage systems. The interior of the building was equipped with power-operated sliding curtains, new chairs and round tables, and modern ceiling lighting. Washing facilities were also provided as part of the project. The building is made accessible for disabled people.

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RDP

## The RDP beneficiaries to care about monuments

**On October 15, 2020, the official opening of renovated palace in Bucz, the Przemęt municipality in the Wolsztyn district, was celebrated. The facility and the surrounding park were successfully restored under the Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020. The Pyzdry municipality in the Września district first obtained funding for the purchase of an arcaded house in Pyzdry, and then it successfully applied for funds to renovate the interior of the building.**



Photo: The Municipal Office in Przemęt

The 19th-century historic palace in Bucz shines thanks to funds received under the RDP for 2014–2020. The works mainly involved the protection of the foundations against moisture and the renovation of the building's facade. A landscape park where this impressive building is located has also been developed.

The palace in Bucz was built in the classical style at the beginning of the 19th century. Due to its location in a landscape park, it is one of the most impressive monuments in the Wielkopolska Region. Moreover, the palace is used by the Edward Tomiński Primary School in Bucz. The funds that the municipality of Przemęt received under the Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020 were allotted to the building restoration and the nearby area development. The project cost over PLN 1.1 million, PLN 500,000 of which was granted under the Programme. At the invitation of Janusz Frąckowiak, Mayor of Przemęt, the palace opening ceremony was attended by Krzysztof Grabowski, Deputy Marshal of the Wielkopolska Region, Krzysztof Paszyk, Member of the Polish Parliament, and Robert Goner, a well-known actor who has family connections in the Przemęt municipality.

*In the current perspective of the EU budget, the Local Government of the Wielkopolska Region transferred considerable funds from the RDP to the beneficiaries for investment projects related to the protection of monuments and traditional architecture. The value of 15 contracts for this type of operations is PLN 10 million. The funds may be used to renovate or*

*improve the condition of historic buildings in order to preserve cultural heritage, or to purchase buildings typical of architectural tradition in our region, intended for public purposes, says Krzysztof Grabowski, Deputy Marshal of the Wielkopolska Region.*



Photo: The Municipal Office in Przemęt

Official opening of the palace in Bucz (from the left): Elżbieta Wita – Chairwoman of the Przemęt Municipal Council; Bartłomiej Górny – Principal of the Edward Tomiński Primary School in Bucz; Krzysztof Grabowski – Deputy Marshal of the Wielkopolska Province; Krzysztof Paszyk – Member of the Polish Parliament and Janusz Frąckowiak – Mayor of the Przemęt Municipality.

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The renovation of the palace in Bucz began in June 2020. As part of the investment project, earthworks were carried out to ensure adequate damp insulation of the foundations (e.g. a drainage system around the facility was installed). As the old plaster was peeling off the walls, it was decided to hack it off and replace it with a new one. The entire façade was plastered, including the balcony railings, which were subjected to specialist re-profiling to restore their original shape. Balcony floor tiles were hacked off and new insulation was laid. The floors were partly re-laid using both old and new tiles, made of flamed granite. The Przemęt municipality also ordered works to be carried out in the park, including the surface hardening, planting new trees, purchasing benches, bicycle stands, lighting

protection, and assigned them to the purchase of an arcaded house in Pyzdry. The historic building, which was built in 1768, houses many valuable exhibits that bear testimony about the life of local people from several hundred years ago.

Having taken over the facility, the municipal authorities order some of the necessary renovation works, including the replacement of roof covering with wooden shingles, to be performed. It turned out that the building had to be renovated also inside. Funds for this purpose were obtained from the RDP for 2014-2020 under the LEADER initiative. On October 6, 2020, Deputy Marshal Krzysztof Grabowski signed a co-financing agreement with Przemysław Dębski, Mayor of Pyzdry.



Photo: The Municipal and Communal Office in Pyzdry

The arcaded house in Pyzdry was purchased under the RDP for 2014–2020 as part of the protection of monuments and traditional architecture. The interior of the building will be renovated from the funds of the LEADER initiative.

and video surveillance and renovating the park entrance gate. All works were carried out based on the permit issued by the Wielkopolska Region Conservator of Monuments.

The beneficiaries of the RDP for 2014-2020 also use funds allotted to the implementation of community-led local development strategies. Grant applications should be submitted to 28 local action groups operating in the Region. EU funds go to the execution of non-commercial investment projects. Some of them are a continuation of previous projects, also co-financed from the Programme. In 2018, the town of Pyzdry obtained funds for an investment project in the field of monument and traditional architecture

EU funds will also be used, for example, to renovate the attic, workshop rooms, porch, staircase and former shop and bakery premises. The investment project will include painting floors and plasters, cleaning window frames and insulation. On the ground floor, the platform under the pillars will be replaced with a clay substrate, and tiles will be laid in the corridor and in the kitchen of the building. According to the plans, this is where an exhibition devoted to the interior of a bourgeois house of former residents of Pyzdry will stand. In turn, the former bakery will be converted into rooms to be used as old craft reconstruction workshops. The first floor will remain a place for educational meetings, talks, presentations and lectures.

## The LEADER initiative to support the development of entrepreneurship in country areas

**There are 28 local action groups operating in Wielkopolska. Their schemes are financed from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The pool of funds to be distributed among beneficiaries in the 2014-2020 financial perspective amounts to approximately PLN 350 million. More than half of this amount is allotted to the development of entrepreneurship, i.e. to projects related to the creation and maintenance of jobs. Below you will find selected examples of such ventures together with their results.**

Community-led local development is an extremely valuable instrument of local support, used in the Region. In this news bulletin, many times have we described initiatives developed thanks to the cooperation of the Government of the Wielkopolska Region with local action groups. In 2016, some were selected to be a part of independently developed local development strategies.

From the beginning of the Programme, the funds distributed through the LAGs have been extremely popular among country residents in Wielkopolska. Financial aid to start a business, granted in the form of bonuses in the amount, depending on the LAG's decision, from PLN 50,000 to 100,000, has become particularly popular. These funds may be used to purchase equipment, fittings, or machines necessary to run one's own business. So far, the Local Government of the Wielkopolska Region has concluded over 600 contracts for granting aid for this purpose, worth nearly PLN 40 million.

Most enterprises, as many as 48, were established in the south of the Region, in the area covered by the strategy developed by the Wielkopolska Local Action Group "Land of Forests and Lakes". These enterprises operate in the following sectors: services, construction, photography, beauty, cleaning, or design. 40 new companies were also established in the northern part of our Region, within the Czarnków - Trzcianka Local Action Group. Novice entrepreneurs decided to try their hand at the catering and tourism industries as well as in childcare services.

An even larger pool of funds, as much as PLN 50 million, was allotted to supporting the already existing micro- and small enterprises. The "Piast Tract" LAG Association allocated the most funds for this purpose. The aid worth PLN 4.5 million was granted to as many as 21 enterprises from the Gniezno and Poznań districts. Nearly PLN 3 million were contracted by beneficiaries from the "Leader of

Green Wielkopolska" Association, which covers the districts of Śrem, Kościan, Jarocin, Poznań and Środa.

Such a great interest in financial support for starting and developing business activity confirms that the residents of the Wielkopolska Region are resourceful and not afraid to use external funds to fulfil their professional dreams. Despite deteriorating situation on the labour market due to the coronavirus epidemic, local action groups constantly announce calls for applications for aid. The value of submitted applications often exceeds the funds available.

*Unabated, great interest in submitting applications for and legislative changes introduced in response to the difficult situation that beneficiaries must face, allow us to look to the future with optimism. We hope that all companies that received funds will thrive on the market. The Government of the Wielkopolska Region, in cooperation with local action groups, constantly support aid beneficiaries and, as much as legally possible, meet their expectations and needs, says Krzysztof Grabowski, Deputy Marshal of the Wielkopolska Region.*

The variety of industries, where enterprises co-financed under the RDP for 2014-2020 are established and developed, is undoubtedly the advantage of funds distributed under the LEADER initiative. The LAGs employees make sure that good ideas of the residents of our Region are skilfully committed to an application form for aid. They provide advisory services in this area and help applicants fill in all the necessary documents. Thanks to joint efforts of the beneficiaries, the LAGs, and the Local Government, several hundred companies from various business sectors have been established or are developing in our Region.

Within the Czarnków-Trzcianka Local Action Group, in the village of Piłka in the Drawsko municipality, a tourist accommodation with a recreational equipment rental was established. It was aptly named "Malinówka". Mrs Magdalena Bajończak allotted the funds she had received to

general renovation of the building and the purchase of necessary materials, furniture, sports equipment, and household appliances. Her tourist offer is based on local values. The opening of "Malinówka" is also very well-timed: currently foreign travel possibilities are limited, therefore most people look for alternative rest in quiet corners of our

marketing materials. He also set up a website at: [www.eko-alm.pl](http://www.eko-alm.pl). His company's mission is to expand our knowledge and increase environmental awareness of the role of honeybee in human life.

A child-friendly farm "In the Pine Forest", run by Mrs. Katarzyna Michalska, is an interesting example of a business



A child-friendly farm "In the Pine Forest" established in Tarnowa, the Tuliszków municipality.

Photo: The "Loyal in Partnership" Association

country. Arkadiusz Michalski established his business activity within the Krajna Złotowska LAG Association. The project is entitled „EKOALM szkolenia i doradztwo Arkadiusz

that offers active recreation combined with education. The farm is located in Tarnowa, the Tuliszków municipality, the Turek district, and operates under the "Loyal in Partnership" LAG. The owner is an animal technician by profession, she specializes in horse breeding and riding. Not only horses, but also other animals from the farms, have no secrets for her. She conducts educational classes for children, telling them about the life of her four-legged friends. The farm offer also includes horse riding, pony riding, and special events organized in cooperation with local Country Housewives' Association. Thanks to EU support, a new stable was built, where two horses, a pony, two sheep and a goat currently live. To the delight of children, there is also a gentle dog living on the farm. The dog is trained to provide affection, comfort, and support during pet therapy classes.



Photo: The Krajna Złotowska LAG Association

The company "EKOALM szkolenia i doradztwo Arkadiusz Leszek Michalski" operating in the Złotów district offers interesting bee-keeping workshops, not only for children.

Leszek Michalski" and involves conducting workshops and training courses on bee-keeping. As part of the project, Mr Michalski bought hives with the necessary equipment, electronic devices, protective clothing for participants and

The "Hospitable Wielkopolska" LAG Association from Pępowo supports companies operating in the catering industry, using local food products. The Seronada farm, a cheese factory, is located in the village of Babkowice, the Pępowo municipality. Under the project, Mr Grzegorz Junatowski converted a farm building that once housed animals into a cheese dairy. He also purchased equipment to make cream cheese and yoghurt. He started his mini-production in January 2019. Mr Junatowski's business plan was very

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Source: farmakodynamika

The Seronada Farm sells the highest quality cheese products. Its owner, Grzegorz Junatowski, offers various products for cheese lovers.

ambitious: he wanted the Seronada Farm to make top-shelf cheeses for conscious consumers looking for high-class food. And so he did. The owner has dairy sheep, while cow and goat milk comes from small, traditional farms nearby. The quality of cheeses depends on what animals eat. In addition, all products are made by hand. Clients may choose goods from a vast array of 100% sheep, goat, and cow milk cheese, including hard and soft cheese, ricotta, buntz, ripening cheese, velvety yoghurt as well as Chocoletta and Dragon Herbs cottage cheese based on the healthiest whey proteins.

A bakery opened by Mrs Michalina Pakowska from Mosina in the Poznań district proves that the success of one's own business is determined by a deep insight into the local market. The bakery operates under the patronage of the "Leader of Green Wielkopolska" LAG Association. Healthy Gluten-Free Bakery is a small manufacture where fresh, tasty, gluten-free and home-made bread is baked every day, without any additives or preservatives. All products are made of homogeneous flours. The assortment includes warm, crispy breads and rolls made of yeast or leavening, delicious cakes and sugar-free, cow milk-free and vegan bread. The bakery's clients may enjoy a delicious cake and aromatic coffee on the spot.

EU funds were also allotted to a business start-up in the entertainment industry. Mrs Agnieszka Kaszubowska from the town of Mączniki, the Kraszewice municipality, the Ostrzeszów district, covered by the "Ostrzeszów LAG" Association, allotted the EU funds to establish a company organizing closed and open events, providing event decoration services, and selling decorative articles. For this purpose, Mrs Kaszubowska bought inflatable slides, gas grill, cotton candy machine and chocolate fountain.

Mrs Karolina Wylegała received financial aid to develop an already conducted business operating within the "Noteć Forest" Association. The funds allowed her to build a modern doctor's office with medical facilities. The office operates in Chrzypsko Wielkie in the Międzychód district.



Photo: The "Leader of Green Wielkopolska" Association

Michalina Pakowska from Mosina used EU funds to open a gluten-free bakery.

## The RDP on camera

On October 22, 2020, by a resolution of the Board of the Wielkopolska Region, a photo competition called "RDP on camera" was settled. The competition was organized by the Regional Unit of the National Network of Rural Areas in the Wielkopolska Region. The winners received prizes in the form of vouchers for a photo shop.



The winning work in the category "Summer in the Wielkopolska countryside" by Małgorzata Kolasa.

The aim of the competition was to increase knowledge of the effects of the RDP for 2007-2013 and the RDP for 2014-2020 and promote country tourism and culinary heritage of the Region. The competition participants, residents of the Wielkopolska Region, sent their works by September 30, 2020. Everyone could send one photo dedicated to each of the three thematic categories: (1) "Summer in the Wielkopolska countryside", (2) "How has the RDP changed the Wielkopolska countryside?" and (3) "Dying professions and forgotten art in the Wielkopolska countryside".

A total of 56 works were entered in the competition, 40 of which met the requirements. The works were judged by a jury consisting of employees of the Marshal's Office of the Wielkopolska Region in Poznań. As for the "Summer in the Wielkopolska countryside" category, Małgorzata Kolasa won the first prize for her photo entitled "The way home", the second prize went to Arkadiusz Macios for the photo entitled "Rainbow", while the third prize went to Iwona Tomaszewska for the work entitled

"Sunflower summer in the village of Pobiedziska". The jury awarded an honourable mention to Grzegorz Mroziak for his photo entitled "Foggy morning".

As for the "How has the RDP changed the Wielkopolska countryside?" category, the jury awarded the prize for the first, second and third best photograph to Maciej Grzeszczak ("The Szczepan windmill at sunset"), Katarzyna Wojtkowiak-Żaczek ("Our town") and Mateusz Stróżyk ("The Palace in Kaźmierz"), accordingly.

As for the "Dying professions and forgotten art in the Wielkopolska countryside" category, the first prize went to Robert Cierniak for "Traditional crafts", the second one went to Jarosław Janowski for the photo entitled "Forest bee-keeper: oak sweet", while the third prize went to Julia Hartwich, author of the photograph called "Wheelwright".

The jury awarded an honourable mention to Paweł Władysław Płócienniczak in the second and third category. He sent two photographs, namely "The Długoleka reservoir with infrastructure" and "Zdzisław Cieluch, a blacksmith from Tomice".

# PARTNERS OF THE NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK

## Local heritage in campaigns conducted by the NNRA partners

**Despite difficulties resulting from the pandemic, the partners of the National Network of Rural Areas in the Region of Wielkopolska have executed a number of projects aimed at spreading history knowledge or using local products to promote and increase tourist potential of the Region. Such initiatives were taken by two municipalities from the area of Southern Wielkopolska: Grabów on the Prosna River and Stawiszyn.**



Photo: The Municipal and Communal Office in Grabów on the Prosna River

During the picnic in Grabów on the Prosna, a project called "Reconstruction of the partition border in Grabów on the Prosna River" was initiated. Cutting the ribbon (from the left): Marcin Biel – Chairman of the Council of the town of Grabów on the Prosna; Maksymilian Ptak – the town Mayor; Krzysztof Grabowski – Deputy Marshal of the Wielkopolska Region; Łukasz Szczypkowski – Head of the Grabów Historical Association and Jan Cegielka, town councillor.

On September 13, 2020, the Third Historical Picnic was held in Grabów on the Prosna River called "History and sport on the Prosna River". Historical picnics in Grabowskie Błonia have become an inherent part of the calendar of cultural events organized by the municipal authorities. As in previous years, the past was the event leitmotif. This time, the residents and guests watched the show entitled "Prosna as a border river". The "Gloria Victis" re-enactment group presented old clothes and weapons, everyday life, crafts from the past, and also staged a skirmish.

During the picnic, a project called "Reconstruction of the partition border in Grabów on the Prosna River" was initiated, hence two guardhouses with a symbolically open barrier, historical boards, benches, and a solar lamp were erected by the river.

The picnic programme included sports competitions for children, youth, and families. Anyone interested in canoeing could try this form of physical activity. There was also entertainment provided: local bands – Harmonia and Joy Friends – gave a concert. The event participants could try local delicacies by visiting stands with regional honeys and juices and tasting dishes made by the Country Housewives' Association from Grabów on the Prosna River.

The hosts also promoted good practices in the development of village councils from the Grabów municipality over the years, which were possible with funds obtained for this purpose. In turn, the Grabów Historical Association held an exhibition devoted to the history of Grabów on the Prosna River. In addition to the picnic, a fishing competition in the "Jankowski" old riverbed, in the town

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of Palaty, and a beach volleyball tournament were organized.

The ceremony was held thanks to the funds from the National Network of Rural Areas, in cooperation with its partners, namely: the town of Grabów on the Proсна River, the Grabów Historical Association, the Association for the Development of the Town of Grabów on the Proсна River and the local community centre.

For several years, the town of Stawiszyn has been undertaking actions related to the identification of development potential. In order to attract tourists, it focuses on promoting local products, effectively using the support offered to the partners of the National Network of Rural Areas as part of competitions announced by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. In 2018, the Parade of the Holy Sepulchre Guard in Stawiszyn was co-financed. It was attended by the groups of "Turks" maintaining traditions related to the 17th-century Vienna relief. A year later, the town of Stawiszyn established cooperation with the town of Wisła in the Silesia Region to exchange experiences and ideas in creating a local product during two study trips. The guest from Wisła went for a narrow-gauge railway ride and visited the Community Centre in Zbiersk. Its wall is decorated with a mural referring to the narrow-gauge railway.

As a tourist attraction, the narrow-gauge railway running on the Zbiersk - Petryki route appears to be gaining in popularity, both for residents and for guests visiting the town of Stawiszyn. Its authorities are making efforts to promote it as its local product. For this purpose, on October

2 and 3, 2020, a conference, a meeting and an exhibition of narrow-gauge railway models were held. The aim of the project was to exchange experiences and increase the awareness of institutions, organizations, entrepreneurs, and residents of the Kalisz district about the potential of the narrow-gauge railway as a local product that contributes to the development of rural areas.

The participants of the exhibition organized by the town of Stawiszyn, the Zbiersk Local Railways Association and the H0e87PL modelling group could see how much fun it is to simulate railway traffic. All models were very realistic and were made by hand by modellers from different parts of Poland. The mock modular arrangement allows you to combine individual elements in various ways. Guest who visited the exhibition could also go for a free ride by a narrow-gauge railway from Kalisz to Zbiersk - Petryki, and children could enjoy numerous attractions for them.

On the second day of the event, at the Community Centre in Zbiersk, a meeting was held for all those who love a narrow-gauge railway. It was attended by former and current railway workers. During the meeting, visitors could listen to memories, stories and anecdotes related to working on the railway in its heyday. Grzegorz Kaczmarek, Mayor of Stawiszyn, gave awards to the winners of an art competition called "Railway through the eyes of a child". The competition was very popular among the youngest residents of the town of Stawiszyn, who showed extraordinary creativity. All drawings were presented at the model exhibition. The oldest railway workers received the best drawings as souvenirs.



As part of the event organized by the town of Stawiszyn, an exhibition of models of narrow-gauge railways was held.

Photo: The Municipal and Communal Office in Stawiszyn

## Borscht based on mushroom broth

**This soup was entered on the list of traditional products in the category “Ready meals and dishes from the Wielkopolska Region”. It uses dried mushroom broth, typically the porcini mushrooms. It is served in bouillon cups with dumplings stuffed with mushroom, patties, or croquettes. Borscht is a fasting dish traditionally served for Christmas Eve supper.**

### Soup ingredients:

- 2.5 kg of red beets
- 3 litres of cold water to cook borscht
- 50 g of dried mushrooms
- 1 litre of cold water to cook mushrooms
- 500 ml of dried mushrooms broth
- 1 bay leaf
- 4 berries of allspice
- 4 peppercorns
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1.5 tablespoons of salt
- 2.5 tablespoons of white sugar
- 3-4 tablespoons of synthetic vinegar
- 1 tablespoon of marjoram

### How to make it:

Wash the mushrooms under running, cold water, then put them into a pot, pour 1 litre of cold water and boil them. When the broth is ready (approx. 500 ml), it should be

strained, but not poured. Meanwhile, peel, wash and cut red beets into pieces.

Put the chopped beets into a large pot, add salt, bay leaf, allspice berries, peppercorns, garlic cloves, garlic (peeled it and crushed with a hand or a knife), and pour 3 litres of cold water. Cook the soup over medium heat for about 30–40 minutes. After this time, add sugar, vinegar, marjoram and cook for another 10 minutes. Finally, pour in 500 ml of the dried mushroom broth and bring to a boil again, then put away from the heat. Leave it overnight so that the borscht turn on some colour.

The next day, strain it, heat it up, but don't boil it, because the soup will lose its colour. If necessary, add some salt, sugar, or vinegar to taste. Serve the borscht hot with ravioli and/or cooked beans or croquettes.

Enjoy your meal!





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