

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD (OB)  
FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
March 8, 2011  
EDC Board Room, Willmar**

Present: Les Nelson, Kevin Rueckert, Tammy Schirm, Russ Weeks and Randy Zinda

Excused: Brian Borgerding, Nick Dalton and Bruce Peterson

Staff: Jean Spaulding, Assistant Director

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Jean Spaulding called the meeting to order at approximately 12:06 p.m.

**MINUTES**—The committee accepted the February 8, 2011 meeting minutes as emailed.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**—

**Market research.** Spaulding stated last month the committee discussed what market research tools the EDC can provide to lenders. The EDC's Marketing and Public Relations Committee recommended the following tools:

- 20 Questions Before Starting a Business (see attached copy) provided by Julie Redepenning of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, which she obtained from the Small Business Administration; and
- Shiplt pamphlet by Seth Godin recommended by Betsy Bonnema, which is geared toward marketing people. Spaulding has ordered this pamphlet.

[Russ Weeks joined the meeting.]

Spaulding is waiting to hear from Berny Berger of Southwest Initiative Foundation on what she does with their microenterprise loan program. Les Nelson stated Mid-Minnesota Development Commission does not do much with market research. The committee believes a binder of information or a list of website links to information would be a good tool. Spaulding stated additional information and links will be provided on the EDC's website. The EDC's Marketing and Public Relations Committee will continue to help gathering this information.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Workshops.** Spaulding informed the committee of workshops the EDC is hosting with the Minnesota Extension Service through the Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities program. The first workshop, Intro to Doing Business on the Internet, was attended by 12 individuals. Upcoming classes are 5:00-8:00 p.m. at the Willmar Middle School Computer Lab, Room 138 (unless otherwise noted): Google Tools, March 24 (see attached); Using Social Media in

Business, April 5 at the Spicer Library; Roadside Advertising in a Digital Age, April 21; Marketing Your Website, May 24.

**EDC's bank accounts.** Spaulding reported the EDCOB asked that Requests for Proposals (RFP) be sent to the county's banks for the EDC's bank accounts for years 2012-2014. Committee members recommended the following be included in the RFP: number of accounts, average daily balances, interest rate on savings and short-term CDs, fee for online access, monthly service charge on accounts, average number of transactions and minimum balances. Spaulding stated the EDC requires two signatures on its checks, one is a staff member and one a board member.

**Other.** Spaulding reported she is working with two start-up retail businesses that may need working capital. Discussion was held on the assistance the EDC is providing to the downtown Atwater businesses involved in the recent fire and what options they may have. Spaulding announced Tenex Health, the medical manufacturer the EDC has been assisting with financing, will be locating at MinnWest Technology Campus.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:52 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next committee meeting is **noon, Tuesday, April 12, 2011** at the EDC Office, 333 Litchfield Avenue SW, Suite 100, Willmar.



## **20 Questions Before Starting a Business**

Many people dream of having their own business. To see if starting a business is right for you, the U.S. Small Business Administration has 20 questions you should answer. Your answers will help you determine if you are ready to become a small business owner or where you need to spend more time in planning.

1. Am I prepared to spend the time, money and resources needed to get my business started?
2. What kind of business do I want?
3. What products/services will my business provide?
4. Why am I starting a business?
5. What is my target market?
6. Who is my competition?
7. What is unique about my business idea and the products/services I will provide?
8. How soon will it take before my products/services are available?
9. How much money do I need to get my business set up?

10. How long can I have to finance the company until I start making a profit?

11. Will I need to get a loan?

12. How will I price my product compared to my competition?

13. How will I market my business?

14. How will I set up the legal structure of my business?

15. How will I manage my business?

16. Where will I house my business?

17. How many employees will I need to start up?

18. What types of suppliers do I need to contact?

19. What kind of insurance do I need to invest in?

20. What do I need to do to ensure I am paying my taxes correctly?



<http://www.sba.gov>

Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission  
333 Litchfield Avenue SW • Willmar, MN 56201  
320-235-7370 or 888-815-7370 • [edc@kandiyohi.com](mailto:edc@kandiyohi.com) • [www.kandiyohi.com](http://www.kandiyohi.com)

# Google Tools

Google provides many **free tools** and features you can use in your business. From **spreadsheets and documents**, to keep you organized, to marketing tools like **blogs** and **Google Sites**. Google also provides a powerful **web analytics tool** you can use to track the traffic to your website.

During this hands-on workshop you will

- **Explore these tools and more**
  - **Set up your account**
- **Learn how to apply these tools to your own operation**

**Thursday, March 24, 2011**

**5:00 p.m to 8:00 p.m.**

**Willmar Middle School Computer Lab Rm #138**

**\$10 per business for up to 2 people attending**

**Included are classroom materials and a light meal.**

**Please register by calling the Economic Development Commission at 320-235-7370 or email [edc@kandiyohi.com](mailto:edc@kandiyohi.com)**

Kandiyohi County  
& City of Willmar  
**Economic Development Commission**

 **SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE  
FOUNDATION**

  
**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
EXTENSION**  
Driven to Discover™

This workshop is made available at no charge through the University of Minnesota Extension as part of the Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities program coordinated by the Blandin Foundation of Grand Rapids, Minnesota and funded by a US Department of Commerce grant. Local partners may have a charge to cover refreshments or other local expenses.

# Upcoming Workshops

**Using Social Media in Business** – An introduction to the basics of Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn for businesses. Explore ways your business can use social media and online networking tools to effectively reach your current customers and new ones. While the Yellow Pages and traditional websites are still useful for advertising your business or community information, many business owners or community leaders are beginning to interact with their customers through websites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. This workshop will explore basic fundamentals of popular social networking sites, examples of use for, and the potential benefits social media could bring to your business and community.

Spicer Library, 198 Manitoba St., Spicer  
Tuesday, April 5, 2011, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**Roadside Advertising in a Digital Age** -- Does your business have a sign on the digital superhighway? Can your customers find you in this evolving digital world? Over 50 million people use GPS units, while even more use Google Maps or Bing or Yahoo to find goods or services. Can people find your business when they search online or use a GPS device? Digital maps not only describe in detail how to reach a destination, but give advice on the goods or services and should be a key part of your business marketing. In this workshop you will gain the know-how and learn the tools to get on digital maps.

Willmar Middle School Computer Lab, Room 138  
Thursday, April 21, 2011, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.

**Marketing Your Website** – Having a website is only the first step in using the internet for business. The next important step is making sure that customers find and use your site. This hands-on workshop introduces effective ways to market websites. Topics include getting found by search engines, viral marketing and using online tools like e-newsletters to drive traffic to your site. Participants will research key words related to their business, explore how to purchase online advertising, and see examples from businesses that use social media to get noticed. This workshop will also cover ways to find and target customers online.

Willmar Middle School Computer Lab, Room 138  
Tuesday May 24, 2011, 5:00 – 8:00 p.m.