

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
May 18, 2015
Board Room, EDC Office, Willmar

Present: Donna Boonstra, Shari Courtney, Lindsey Donner, Sarah Isdal, Ann Winge Johnson, Heather Koffler and Mike Negen

Excused: Caroline Chan, Mitra Engan, Jean Geselius and Julie Redepenning

Consultant: Betsy Bonnema, REDstar Creative

Staff: Jean Spaulding, Assistant Director

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

Jean Spaulding called the meeting to order at approximately 12:00 p.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Donna Boonstra, SECONDED BY Heather Koffler, to approve the minutes of the April 27, 2015 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Website. Spaulding reported she has been comparing the EDC's new website with other economic development sites and, in particular, the Greater MSP and Sioux Falls sites. The committee discussed the categories listed along the top banner of the new site: The Region, Key Industries, Doing Business Here, Site Selector, Living Here, Impact, Moving Here and Your Team. The Impact section is where news items will be inserted.

Spaulding reported she and Betsy Bonnema attended the recent meeting of local human resource professionals where they identified four issues as to recruitment: employment for spouse, housing, daycare, stuff to do.

Spaulding is disappointed that Johnson Group didn't do an audit of the current site's content before it transferred all of the current data into a new template. EDC staff will be going through the content and modifying it as necessary.

The committee viewed the EDC's new website and made the following comments:

1. Combine the Moving Here tab under the Living Here tab
2. The main navigation page having a large submenu is cumbersome
3. In the mobile connection, make the main headers the only list that appears

4. Your team could be moved to the very top by the gold circles or the gold Contact Us bar
5. The Impact or news section could also be moved to the very top by the gold circles or the gold Contact Us bar or could be the side bar instead of Site Selector and only have a one or two line description of the article as a link or highlights, such as Ridgewater College does
6. Site Selector does not need to be a side bar on every section of the website; rather only on the sections that would be pertinent to a site selector

The new design is currently using mainly stock photos rather than local. It was the committee's consensus to use local photos where possible. Spaulding met with Aury Glenz, who is interested in providing photos and video, but requested direction and a list of photographs wanted. Committee members suggested providing the photographer with an image board of the types of photos wanted rather than a list of photos; images can be obtained from stock photo sites.

Marketing plan. The committee reviewed the EDC Marketing Plan Draft 4/27/15 prepared by Betsy Bonnema (see attached), which identifies two strategies: 1) Create awareness of EDC activities and services in our local/regional community and 2) Market our community outside of our region in order to attract targeted business and talent. As to Strategy 1, the EDC wants increased visibility in the community whether it is via print or electronically. Sarah Isdal provided circulation numbers for the West Central Tribune—30,000 online per day and 11,000 print. Mike Negen suggested doing a banner ad on the West Central Tribune's website highlighting the work the EDC is doing, what the movers and shakers of the community are doing with the help of the EDC and what businesses are coming in and leaving. Spaulding is meeting tomorrow with representatives from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) office potentially about placing an ad in a new publication DEED is implementing to promote economic development in Minnesota. As to Strategy 2, the two primary areas businesses are interested in when contacting the EDC are funding and workforce. EDC staff creates customized packages to attract businesses. As to workforce, committee members suggested creating a closed group in LinkedIN to advertise positions and assign area human resource personnel as administrators to post and see openings. It was suggested to contact Michelle Falling with any questions regarding LinkedIN. Spaulding requested the committee develop an advertising campaign, including the costs to implement the plan for presentation to the EDCOB. Additional comments and suggestions on the marketing plan should be emailed to Spaulding or Bonnema.

NEW BUSINESS

June ADvantage. The committee was shown a congratulations to the Kandiyohi County CEO program that will be used for the EDC's flyer for the June ADvantage (see attached). Bonnema suggested the insert be made into poster size and used at the CEO's trade show this week. The committee suggested changing the heading on the flyer from Congratulates to Supports and Congratulates Kandiyohi County CEO.

WORKUP open house. Bonnema invited the committee to attend WORKUP's open house on May 21 or 22. Spaulding reported the first planning meeting for the Hackfest was recently held at WORKUP.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:25 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **12 noon, Monday, June 22, 2015** at the EDC Board Room, 222 20th Street SE, Willmar.

EDC MARKETING PLAN DRAFT | 4/27/15

EDC Marketing Team Notes

Situation Analysis: The Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar EDC is a government agency whose mission is to be a catalyst for economic development of the greater Kandiyohi area. We do that in a wide variety of ways, including supporting existing businesses, assisting area entrepreneurs and recruiting targeted industries that are a fit for our region. While we have been successful in that mission, we face the ongoing challenge of educating our community, prospects and partners about how that is accomplished and what kinds of services we offer. We also need to lead area efforts to market our community to businesses outside of our region who are interested in locating or expanding here, a process that requires ongoing review and refinement in order to stay competitive.

Target Audience Groups:

1. **LOCAL / REGIONAL:** The EDC must reach our local and regional community for two reasons. First, we must educate them regarding our purpose and activities as a government funded, volunteer driven organization. Second, we must make our services and expertise known and available to local businesses and entrepreneurs who need help starting or expanding.
2. **OUTSIDE REGION:** The EDC must aggressively market our area outside of our region for the purposes of attracting new businesses and talent to our community. We need to promote our brand to enhance our economic development efforts, showcase our quality of life and bring more people to the community.

Strategy #1:

Create awareness of EDC activities & services in our local/regional community

OBJECTIVES

1. Refine/remix EDC "brand"

PROJECTS

- a) Create branding elements: new website design + old JUMP IN campaign
- b) Update/create templates for marketing materials

2. Be an agent of positive messaging about our business community & economy

PROJECTS

- a) Complete new website with a searchable database, customized demographic reports and recruitment tools to assist companies.
- b) Create/publish social media content
- c) Create/distribute newsletter insert
- d) Create advertising campaign and flight plan for full year

3. Educate community about services/resources of EDC

PROJECTS

- a) Sponsor WORKUP programming partnership targeting start-ups & entrepreneurs (including WORKUP, Ridgewater, KCEO and Heritage Bank)
- b) Create signage or visibility with projects EDC works on
- c) Support community organizations – be a part of messaging where appropriate
- d) Create advertising campaign and flight plan for full year

Strategy #2:

Market our community outside of our region in order to attract targeted business and talent

OBJECTIVES

1. Deliver specific, sought-after area metrics such as workforce, demographics & accessibility

PROJECTS

- a) Finish website tools
- b) Create updated, customizable proposal template

2. Create customized packages to attract business interest:

PROJECTS

- a) Create incentive packages
- b) Create financing packages

3. Support the recruitment efforts of area businesses for workers & talent

PROJECTS

- a. Work with HR departments to develop resources
- b. Create LinkedIn page



Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Congratulates

KANDIYOHI COUNTY **CEO**

CREATING ENTREPRENEURIAL OPPORTUNITIES



On a successful first year!

The KCEO program offers select students an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in our local business community.

**For more information about the KCEO program contact
Tyler Gehrking at (320) 212-7371 or gehrkingt@willmar.k12.mn.us**

The goal of the Kandiyohi County CEO program is to help our students see the Kandiyohi area as a place of opportunity and to give them skills and confidence to help move a business idea forward.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM A SUCCESSFUL KICK-OFF YEAR:

- Partnership formed with Willmar, New London-Spicer and ACGC School Districts
- 46 investors, businesses and organizations involved in the program
- Mentors provide advice as needed to student protégés
- Over 40 business tours throughout the school year showcasing a wide variety of business models to learn from
- Over 50 guest speakers providing personal knowledge to run a successful business
- KCEO Trade Show — giving students an opportunity to showcase their individual business ideas.
- KCEO Fundraiser Dinner — attended by over 200 people, the 1920's themed dinner was planned, coordinated and executed exclusively by the KCEO students

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

- **Be an investor.** \$1,000/year for three years.
- **Be a partner.** Any contribution less than \$1,000.
- **Schedule a visit.** Allow the class to tour your business.
- **Be one of our 'Home Bases.'** We will actually hold class at your business for a period of six weeks. (There will be over 20 people in attendance daily.)
- **Be a speaker.** Schedule a time to stop in to class and discuss your business and what makes you/it successful.
- **Be a mentor.** Each student is paired with a mentor. These mentors offer advice, ideas, and business connections to our students.

For more information:

Tyler Gehrking
KCEO Instructor
(320) 212-7371
gehrkingt@willmar.k12.mn.us

