

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
June 22, 2015
Board Room, EDC Office, Willmar**

Present: Shari Courtney, Jean Geselius, Ann Winge Johnson, Heather Koffler and Mike Negen

Excused: Caroline Chan and Julie Redepenning

Absent: Donna Boonstra, Lindsey Donner and Sarah Isdal

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 12:02 p.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Heather Koffler, SECONDED BY Jean Geselius, to approve the minutes of the May 18, 2015 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Website. Spaulding reported incremental progress is being made on the website. Jayme Sczublewski of WORKUP has been asked to research and write new content to capture the unique personality and culture of each community for the community section. Spaulding continues to work on the site map and creating something more specific as to outreach recruitment. Spaulding would like to hire an intern to work with the area's education foundations to help create databases or to outreach to databases already created. Spaulding has researched other economic development sites for ideas, specifically Sioux Falls and Greater MSP.

Marketing plan. The committee reviewed the draft marketing plan (see attached). It was felt the regional hub aspect of the market area is important and should be a focus of the website. Bonnema met with Cameron Macht of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and Luke Greiner will customize statistics sought by site selectors. Bonnema noted the EDC has used several identifiers and needs to eliminate one or more. The committee discussed the following identifiers:

1. Tag line, “supporting local business, assisting area entrepreneurs, recruiting targeted industry,” is currently on the EDC’s website, letterhead and marketing materials. The stakeholders who attended the website meeting did not like the tag line.
2. Jump In campaign, which subtly brings in the lakes and is more tailored to the EDC—similar to Open for Business.
3. Open for Business, done by Johnson Group for the new website, which resulted from the stakeholder meeting and was to create an image of a business friendly, welcoming community. Individuals questioned what it really means and if it could be used as a generic header with explanatory sentences underneath. Open for Business is a good graphic, but not a heading; it needs to mean something.
4. New concept of a regional hub/west central Minnesota hub. Currently, the EDC is not capturing nor owning the regional hub concept. The EDC needs to start acting and projecting the importance of the Willmar area as a regional hub.

Spaulding and Bonnema discussed having a planning session with Scott Johnson of Johnson Group at WORKUP as to how Open for Business fits with the EDC’s other identifiers. This is part of Strategy 1, Objective 1 of the marketing plan to “refine/remix EDC brand.”

A proposed ad was shown that includes industry recognized metrics site selectors need to know when looking at a community (see attached). Comments on the ad, included:

- use the bottom of the ad as a call to action
- like regional hub and playing off the lakes area
- remove Alexandria and St. Cloud from the map
- use Kandiyohi County is home to *businesses, *lakes, *green space and work in lifestyle
- nobody works 24/7, it speaks to more than quality of life

Spaulding noted additional work is needed for Strategy 1, Objective 2, Project d) “Create advertising campaign and flight plan for full year.”

Spaulding has had discussions with Ken Warner, who provided information on a Lyon County Informational Summit that is well attended. Warner feels Lyon County does economic development 101 well and they go to the policy makers. Spaulding asked if something similar should be added under Objective 3, Strategy 1, Educate community about services/resources of EDC? Committee members commented a lunch ‘n learn could be done at WORKUP on a similar topic. Under Strategy 1, Objective 3, Project c), Spaulding will add events sponsored by the EDC. New events will need to be added as they occur.

As to Strategy 2, Objective 1, Project a) Finish website tools, it may be changed to a dashboard. Spaulding has been working with Bonnema on Strategy 2, Objective 1, Project b) Create updated, customizable proposal template. Spaulding also added three more projects to Strategy 2, Objective 3.

Bonnema reported on programming they have developed for WORKUP. There will be two sessions each month: 1) QUP will address topics for entrepreneurs and will include an expert on the topic; and 2) MEETUP will be a lunch 'n learn featuring entrepreneurs speaking on lessons learned. Each session will be limited to 25 people at a cost of \$10-\$15. Bonnema will be the first QUP speaker on early stage branding and she is hoping to obtain Dallen Peterson for the MEETUP session. All sessions will be posted on their blog for public access.

Spaulding noted she would like to get estimated costs for an advertising campaign. Half page ads in the West Central Tribune's *B2B* focusing on assistance provided by the EDC and in *Prairie Business* with the MinnWest Technology Campus (MWTC). Spaulding reported the Joint Operations Board approved her attendance at The Site Selectors Guild Fall Forum in October. Also, DEED is bringing in eight site selectors to the state for FAM tours September 13-16, 2015. The EDC will host one of the site selectors on September 14 and then the individual will travel to Windom on September 15.

NEW BUSINESS

DEED advertisement. Spaulding informed the committee the Joint Operations Board approved up to \$5,000 to place an ad in a new statewide marketing publication being created by DEED. MWTC is interested in partnering in the ad. This publication will be distributed by DEED at all events it attends and it anticipates distributing approximately 10,000 copies. This ad would fall under Strategy 2 of the Marketing Plan. Ad costs are: 2/3 page \$4,245, half page \$3,665 and full page \$4960. Jean Geselius suggested the EDC may want to do a publication similar to *Business Central*, a publication done by the St. Cloud Times and St. Cloud Chamber. Spaulding will check into this suggestion.

August Chamber ADvantage. Spaulding reported the next deadline for the Chamber ADvantage is July 22, which would be delivered after Steve Renquist's retirement open house on July 29. The committee suggested the flyer could focus on Renquist's accomplishments.

EDC brochure. Discussion of the EDC's brochure was tabled.

Resignation of committee member. Spaulding informed the committee that Mitra Engan resigned from this committee.

Other. Bonnema announced the grand opening of WORKUP is July 30, 2015.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:20 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **12 noon, Monday, July 27, 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 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 market our area outside of our region for the purposes of attracting new businesses and talent to our 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
 - 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

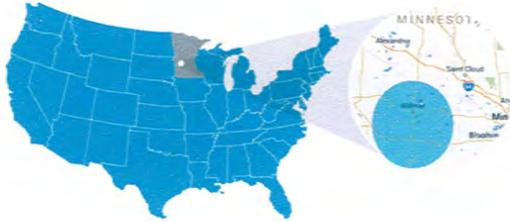
- a) Finish website tools
 - b) Create updated, customizable proposal template
2. Create customized packages to attract business interest:

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



WEST CENTRAL MN REGIONAL

HUB for BUSINESS



Willmar is a regional employment, business, medical and

retail hub for the West Central region of Minnesota. It's also located in the heart of pristine Minnesota lake country. That combination creates a powerful draw for talent, entrepreneurs, start-ups and businesses seeking critical resources complimented by an unbeatable lakes area quality of life.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| <p>infographic</p> | <p>STATISTIC HERE Kandiyohi County and Willmar are home to the MinnWest Technology Campus which is a community of companies with a special focus on agribusiness, bioscience and technology. Together, they are creating a culture of innovation and a setting for collaboration.</p> |
| <p>infographic</p> | <p>STATISTIC HERE Kandiyohi County is known for having a thriving economy that caters to innovators in bioscience, agribusiness and technology. In fact, we've had significant job growth in those areas! We also have a strong manufacturing base. It's no surprise that jobs and wages in this category are up as we prepare to honor Manufacturing Week in October.</p> |
| <p>infographic</p> | <p>STATISTIC HERE New London was recently awarded a 30-month grant to bring community art projects to its popular downtown area. The grant application was a joint effort between the New London Arts Alliance, City of New London, New London Communities in Action and the New London EDA. Their first project under the grant was a mural of a vintage photograph painted on the side wall of a downtown merchant. It was completed with the help of over 125 community participants.</p> |
| <p>infographic</p> | <p>STATISTIC HERE Willmar is home to Ridgewater College, an award-winning post secondary institution. Ridgewater supports our business community by offering comprehensive workplace training which can be customized to meet an organization's unique needs. They are a national leader in medical simulation training.</p> |



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SUBMIT A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL, CONTACT:

Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar Economic Development Commission
222 20th Street SE | P.O. Box 1783 | Willmar, MN 56201
866.665.4556 | 320.235.7370 | www.kandiyohi.com