

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
August 25, 2014
EDC Board Room, Willmar

Present: Lindsey Donner, Jean Geselius, Sarah Isdal, Ann Winge Johnson, Mike Negen, Julie Redepenning

Excused: Caroline Chan, Shari Courtney, Mitra Engan and Heather Koffler

Guest: Betsy Bonnema, REDstar Creative, Mark Peterson, Peterson Photography and Jim Walton, Brand Acceleration, Inc.

Staff: Jean Spaulding, Assistant Director

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

Jean Spaulding called the meeting to order at approximately 12:04 p.m.

Brand Acceleration, Inc. A telephone conference was held with Jim Walton, CEO of Brand Acceleration, Inc., who gave an overview of his company, which does marketing solely for economic development organizations. Brand Acceleration, Inc. uses an economic dashboard that instantly updates website data, such as data from the Census Bureau; the dashboard can be customized. Site selectors constantly want current information so updating data is important. Every website built by Brand Acceleration, Inc. is custom built. Content could be pulled in from the EDC's current site. The cost of most sites for 16-20 pages are in mid-\$20,000 to mid-\$30,000 and would include the dashboard. The process can take from 90 days to 6 or 7 months. Walton writes a strategic plan for the site, which the customer reviews. The second step is writing copy and then the design concept. Sites are built in WordPress. Brand Acceleration, Inc. provides training. They will also set up a company's social media pages so they are branded the same as the websites. Spaulding noted the EDC is in an information gathering stage and needs to look at some community pages as well. The EDC also needs to review its analytics as to what pages are used on the current website. The following sites were done by Brand Acceleration, Inc.: <http://www.thencalliance.com/>, <http://booneedc.org/> and <http://altavistava.com/>.

[The teleconference with Walton ended.]

Spaulding reported on a conversation she recently had with Vision 2040 representatives as to what should be contained on the area's community websites. There is a concern that a marketable website is not available. It is not known what Vision 2040 is looking for or wants. Spaulding voiced a concern for creating another website and who would update it; a new site will not solve the current websites integrating better. Spaulding announced the Community Marketing Coalition is being dissolved and will instead be a marketing committee under Vision 2040.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Lindsey Donner, SECONDED BY Julie Redepenning, to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2014, meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

EDC fall insert. Betsy Bonnema showed a flyer used for a recent site selector visit (see attached). The fall insert will focus more on business stories with the “Jump In” theme. The 2014 visitors’ guide was the catalyst for developing the new theme and using less text. New photos are also needed for the EDC’s pullouts. The committee discussed potential content for the fall insert, including using manufacturing statistics as October is manufacturing week; the Animal Science Conference; University of Minnesota (U of M) Office of Technology showcase that will be directed toward seed companies and will also include the U of M’s new Office of Economic Development; include photos of all area business construction and construction statistics (it would good for construction to be ongoing to show the construction phase and the completed building); include events on the front of the insert and construction updates on the back. Julie Redepenning will obtain statistics on construction and manufacturing in the county. Donner stated she has the city of Willmar’s statistics for commercial and residential construction. Mark Peterson stated he is able to take the construction photographs. It was suggested to get a jumping/action photo during the Pat Boros Trail Run at Sibley State Park, which Peterson indicated he could do. Sarah Isdal will provide Spaulding with the printing deadlines for the insert. Bonnema will email a draft of the insert to the committee.

NEW BUSINESS

Marketing plan. Committee members indicated their companies put together a social media marketing plan monthly and schedule postings through Hootsuite. Scheduled posts can also be done through Facebook. The EDC posts business-related information, but does not have a plan in place. The EDC will try to come up with a schedule and social media marketing plan. Spaulding stated the EDC’s website needs to be updated and asked the committee how to approach it and in what time frame. Bonnema stated the EDC’s current site is in Joomla, which is a complicated version of WordPress. A number of committee members use WordPress, including Bonnema and Conway, Deuth & Schmiesing (CDS) has hired Vivid Image of Hutchinson. The cost to transfer the EDC’s site from Joomla to WordPress is unknown. CDS was told to have a button with responsive rather than mobile.

Social Media Rockstar event. Mike Negen indicated 200 people are registered to attend the Social Media Rockstar event and suggested the EDC give away six higher priced items, such as 900 hour device chargers, blue tooth speakers, backpack or iPad carrier. The committee recommended the chargers.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:35 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is 12 noon, Monday, September 15, 2014, in the EDC board room.

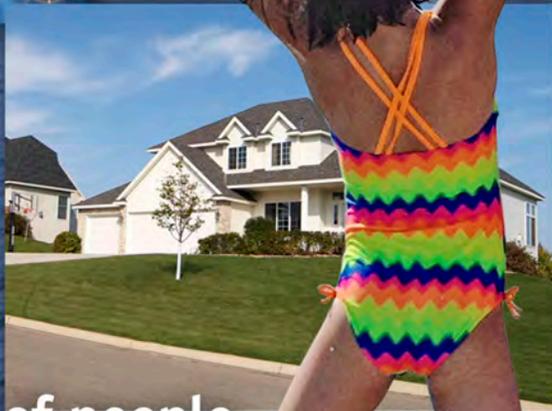
JUMP IN



Wages are up in 2014

Kandiyohi County is known for having a strong economy. Our wages have always been very stable and often above average for outstate Minnesota.

Source: DEED QCEW Program



Over 73% of people own their home

According to the most recent census, Kandiyohi County has a higher rate of home ownership than the Minnesota average.

Source: U.S. Census 2013

Over 4,500 businesses enjoy a lakes area lifestyle

Our community ranges from entrepreneurial startups to small businesses to world leaders in agribusiness. Most would tell you that they locate here because of our area's unique lakes area, outdoor-friendly lifestyle and unmatched quality of life.

Over 400 people work on the MinnWest Technology Campus

The Campus is also home to 30 companies.



WILLMAR LAKES AREA

Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar
Economic Development Commission

www.kandiyohi.com | (320) 235-7370



JUMP IN

Kandiyohi County is home to Willmar and is a nationally-known headquarters for some of the world's largest agribusinesses companies. It also offers over 100 lakes within 100 miles, a major factor in our area's unique ability to attract, maintain and nurture businesses who place a high priority on quality of life for themselves and their employees.

SECONDARY EDUCATION: Ridgewater College

Number 1 best community college in Minnesota for Career Preparedness - ACT

41st best community college in the nation - *Washington Monthly*

94% job placement rate - *Ridgewater College*

FEATURED COMMERCIAL PROPERTY: Willmar Industrial Park

80 acres available for industrial development

U.S. Highway 12, Minnesota Highway 40 and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway provide transportation access to the Willmar Industrial Park

220 additional acres are available for industrial development at the site of the former Willmar airport

FEATURED COMMERCIAL PROPERTY: MinnWest Technology Campus

30 majestic buildings & 500,000 square feet of space for lease

Over 30 business tenants with over 400 full time employees on Campus each day

TRANSPORTATION: Willmar Airport

Five 500-foot runway with plans to extend the runway to 6,500 feet in the future

An all-weather instrument navigation system

A 6,000 square foot terminal includes a passenger waiting area, conference room for 60 people and 2,000 square feet of expansion space

A 12,000 square foot aircraft service facility

TRANSPORTATION: Highways

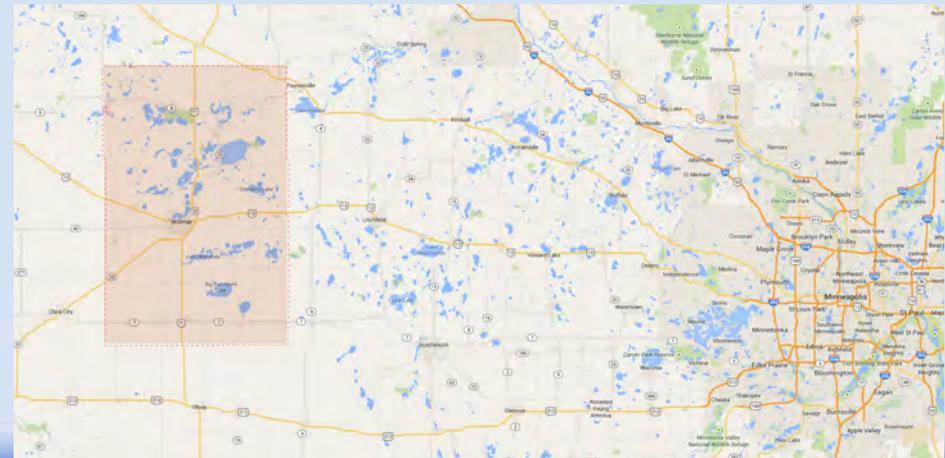
U.S. Highway 12 and U.S. Highway 71/State Highway 23 both run directly through Willmar

WORKFORCE: Demographics

Willmar is the 7th largest non-metro city in MN

At 42,239 people, Kandiyohi County has experienced constant growth over the last two decades

Kandiyohi County is the largest employment center in the region, drawing workers from surrounding counties



WILLMAR LAKES AREA

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Willmar
Lakes Area