

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)  
BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT (BRE/R) COMMITTEE  
TECHNOLOGY TASK FORCE  
MINUTES  
January 3, 2008  
EDC Board Room, Willmar**

Present: Dean Bouta, Ron Erpelding, Don McGrath, Charles Oakes, Jeff Roiland, Dave Sisser and Jean Spaulding.

Excused: Bill Fenske and Jim Millard

Guest: Nicole Franzwa

Staff: Steve Renquist, Executive Director

Secretarial: Allison McGeary, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Task Force chairperson, Jean Spaulding, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 a.m.

**MINUTES—**

IT WAS MOVED BY Dean Bouta, SECONDED BY Charles Oakes, to approve the minutes of the December 6, 2007 meeting as mailed or e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS—**

**Mapping service area.** Nicole Franzwa reported Bonnema Surveys Inc. will not collect the information for updates to the map, but Mid-Minnesota Regional Development Commission (MMRDC) will gather the information. Franzwa stated the next mapping service area meeting will be January 9, 2008. **Franzwa** will find out what the \$500 fee includes from Bonnema Surveys Inc. for updates it will make to the map.

Steve Renquist informed the task force that Kathy Schwantes has accepted a position at Ridgewater College and is no longer with the EDC.

**Get Broadband residential goals.**

**Training sessions.** Franzwa distributed the “Local-e-Connected” Residential Work Plan-Time Line (see copy attached to original minutes). Franzwa went through the time line and stated due to the marketing pieces the task force is behind on some deadlines. Spaulding stated changes requested by the task force have been made to the logo. Franzwa stated statement stuffers will go out in February with technology providers and bank statements. Franzwa distributed the Residential Training places (see copy attached to original minutes). The task force’s residential training program is a combination of MMRDC and the Willmar Senior Citizens Center information. Franzwa stated the Willmar Public Library has only every other Friday available. Ridgewater College charges \$50 per hour and can only give the task force two days per week. Franzwa stated the Senior Citizens Center is free to use. Spaulding stated the goal is to have two training sessions in Willmar and two training sessions outside

of Willmar in Kandiyohi County every month. Spaulding stated New London High School's computer lab is available after 3:30 p.m. **Franzwa** will confirm with New London High School. Franzwa stated one class is confirmed at the Willmar Senior Citizens Center. Franzwa stated each class consists of four sessions each two hours. Spaulding stated it is important to have locations confirmed before completing statement stuffers. Franzwa suggested participants could double up on computers, if the task force has enough people who register for the classes. Franzwa stated participants will call the EDC number to register so the task force will know when to close the class and suggested a waiting list be created for those who are not able to attend due to a full class. Ron Erpelding suggested the task force have another option during winter months due to weather. Franzwa stated Betsy Bonnema is going to be providing her the registration sheet. Erpelding suggested having a map with directions into the MinnWest Technology Campus (MWTC) and where to park. Spaulding stated the goal to increase usage by 10% will be determined by a survey once the task force has completed the project based on the first survey that was done before the project was started. Dean Bouta suggested a questionnaire be filled out by participants on how the class was and do you have or plan to get broadband? Erpelding suggested directing those unable to attend a session to an online tutorial to help the task force with its goal.

**Marketing.** Franzwa showed the task force the options for the window cling (see copy attached to original minutes). Franzwa stated the Marketing and Public Relations Committee agreed "Local - e-Connected Get online here" was a better fit. Franzwa stated she is having trouble finding a company that will make just 100 for a minimum order; the lowest amount she has found is 400. The task force agreed to discuss the window clings at its next meeting. **Franzwa** will come to the next meeting with more information on window clings.

**Get Broadband business goals.** Franzwa distributed the newspaper ad (see copy attached to original minutes). Franzwa distributed the seminar agendas (see copies attached to original minutes). Spaulding stated seminars 101 and 201 will be on Tuesday, February 5, 2008 and 301 on Tuesday, February 12, 2008. Franzwa stated the most recent confirmations were Sam Bowen of Ridgewater College, Marketing Concepts and Randy Czarnetzki of Hardware Hank. Czarnetzki sells his off season products online to make up what he would be losing. Franzwa stated Bremer Bank will have someone from Marshall cover legal issues, merchant credit cards and other information. Spaulding stated the task force wants to have people tell their stories of why and how they did it. The task force agreed on the information in the agendas. Spaulding stated Franzwa is in the process of mailing out confirmation letters to presenters with the time they are presenting and finding out what they need to present. Spaulding stated a list of small businesses from the James J. Hill Library was cut down to 500 businesses and will be mailed a save the date post card on Friday. Spaulding stated the Marketing and Public Relations Committee is developing a brochure to be mailed out Friday, January 11, 2008 to the 500 businesses on the James J. Hill Library list. Spaulding stated the brochure will be a condensed version of all the agendas. Spaulding stated Julie Redepenning and the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce (WLACC) will e-mail their clients the statement stuffers. Franzwa stated she will be presenting to the Willmar Design Center on January 11, 2008. Franzwa distributed the "Get Broadband" Conference Planner which shows the different ways the task force plans to market the seminars (see copy attached to original minutes). Franzwa stated the color newspaper ad will run on the first page of the *West Central Tribune* twice and the gray scale newspaper ad will run inside the newspaper four times. Franzwa stated Bonnema will check with other newspapers in Kandiyohi County on advertising prices. Franzwa stated posters and flyers will be put up at the YMCA and on its calendars. Spaulding stated the Marketing and Public Relations Committee is doing the marketing and will let the task force know when and where to place the ads. Spaulding stated the task force will have to rely on the Marketing and Public Relations Committee for developing radio ads.

**Grant application procedures.** Spaulding stated the grant application has been developed. Renquist stated a small business is determined by the Small Business Administration (SBA). Renquist stated the EDC has received five applications. Franzwa stated she has at least three more applications that are going to be sent in. Spaulding asked the task force for suggestions on determining procedures to

award the grants. Renquist stated 10 new and 10 existing website grants will be given out for a total of 20 grants. **Franzwa** will check with the Blandin Foundation to see what the task force can do on deciding who receives the grants. Franzwa stated the grant is a 50% match up to \$500. Discussion was held on the selection process for deciding what businesses would receive a grant. Roiland suggested the task force pay the grant after the business has turned in a receipt, and if a receipt is not turned in by a deadline then the task force moves onto another business that has been chosen. It was the Consensus of the task force to form a subcommittee to rate the applications received. David Sisser stated everyone who applies for a grant has to attend a session. Spaulding stated the criteria needs to be established by February 5, 2008. **Franzwa and Spaulding** will develop the criteria for the grants. Spaulding stated the grant can be awarded, but not paid until the business turns in an invoice. Confirmation of grant recipients will be done the week of February 18, 2008. Franzwa stated for a business to receive a grant it has not been promoted that the business would have to attend a seminar. Bouta suggested the subcommittee pick which businesses are going to be awarded the grants and decide a time line of when the businesses would receive confirmation and when the businesses need to have their website completed. Bouta suggested the criteria contain having the website completed within 45 days of being awarded the grant. Erpelding suggested the task force have alternates ready so if the first chosen fall through, the task force does not have to re-select. Roiland stated a business could turn in an invoice for \$200 and the EDC would have the extra amount left over and suggested the task force could possibly do another grant for the remanding amount. Spaulding stated a cover letter will be sent out containing criteria to apply for the grant and the deadline to those businesses that have applied already and also be handed out at the seminars. The task force agreed the deadline to turn in the grant applications will be February 15, 2008.

Suggested criteria:

1. Look at ratios between applications for new websites versus existing websites.
2. If the task force receives more than ten of each new and existing websites:
  - a. Random pick using bingo or a group that will pick.

The subcommittee to select businesses and alternate businesses for the grants to be awarded based on the need for a website will consist of Bouta, Franzwa, McGrath, Roiland, Sisser and Spaulding and will meet at 7:30-9:30 a.m. Tuesday, February 19, 2008. Spaulding suggested the task force have two applications; one with all the company's information and one with information for what the company would use the website. Renquist stated the task force has not received the funds from the Blandin Foundation. Renquist stated the EDC has committed more than the Blandin Foundation. Spaulding stated the task force will tell businesses at the seminars that the decision for awarding the grants will be decided at the end of the month. McGrath suggested the task force think about language translations for the business seminars. Discussion was held on what language translation materials would be provided. Renquist stated LAA has Somali and Spanish interpreters available. It was agreed by the task force that **Renquist** talk with the Willmar Area Multicultural Market (WAMM) and The Coalition of African Community Services of Kandiyohi County (CACSKC) to see if there is a need for the brochure to be translated. All materials and speakers at the seminars will be in English. If Renquist finds there is a need for the brochure to be translated, it will be handed out by WAMM, CACSKC and the Minnesota WorkForce Center.

**MWTC**—Renquist reported the MWTC has been working with the University of Minnesota. Renquist reported MWTC has over 200 jobs located at the campus and could cap out at 800 jobs someday.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next regular committee task force is **7:30 a.m., Thursday, February 7, 2008**, at the EDC Office.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

