

**Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar Economic Development Commission (EDC)**  
**Joint Operations Board (OB)**  
**AGRICULTURE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT (Ag) COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES**  
**November 19, 2008**  
**EDC Office, Willmar**

Present: Gordon Behm, Ron Erpelding, Bruce Reuss and Sherm Schueler

Staff: Steve Renquist, Executive Director and Wade Gustafson, Agriculture Specialist

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

Chair Bruce Reuss called the meeting to order at approximately 7:45 a.m.

{Steve Renquist was excused from the meeting.}

**AGENDA**—By consensus the agenda was approved as mailed or e-mailed.

**MINUTES**—By consensus the minutes of the September 10, 2008 meeting were approved as mailed or e-mailed.

**PRIORITY INITIATIVES/ACTION PLAN**

a. **Research renewable energy opportunities to sustain and contain costs.** No report.

**Marketing Website.** No report.

b. **Position Kandiyohi County to turn wind energy into anhydrous ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>) as a way to store energy.** Reuss reported Renquist is meeting with Fagen, Inc. as a possible partner for an NH<sub>3</sub> production plant. Fagen, Inc. received the bid to build the pilot NH<sub>3</sub> plant at the University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM). Brad Saeger and Stan Simon attended a conference on NH<sub>3</sub> and found other possibilities to develop NH<sub>3</sub>. Discussion was held on other companies developing new technology for NH<sub>3</sub>. The NH<sub>3</sub> Steering Committee decided to wait for data from the UMM to decide if it will proceed. The preferred method to deliver NH<sub>3</sub> is as a liquid state. The NH<sub>3</sub> Steering Committee will meet with Collin Peterson to discuss tax issues and potential grants. The wind energy tax credit is only applicable when it hits the grid and would not apply to using wind directly to an NH<sub>3</sub> plant. The NH<sub>3</sub> Steering Committee hopes to build a capital investment within five-years to keep up with technology. The NH<sub>3</sub> Steering Committee is moderately proceeding with hopes to build a relationship with Fagen, Inc. and other companies.

{Ron Erpelding was excused from the meeting}

c. **Explore development of a soybean collection or processing facility.** No report.

d. **Establish a renewable energy commercialization center.** Wade Gustafson stated the University of Minnesota will have a satellite office at the MinnWest Technology Campus (MWTC). Gustafson suggested this committee use the satellite office as a resource and likewise be a resource for the satellite office. It is not feasible for this committee to have its own office.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS—**

**Strategic Animal Ag Conference.** Gustafson stated the conference is based on “The Health of Rural Minnesota” and will be held January 15 and 16, 2009 and gave an overview of the agenda and presenters. The Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce’s Ag Committee volunteered to help with registrations.

**2009 International Bioenergy Days.** Renquist will provide a report at the next meeting.

**Brokering locally-grown ag products to food suppliers.** Gustafson will attend the December meeting. Discussion was held on the goal of the brokering locally-grown ag products to food suppliers.

**Website including future layout changes.** Gustafson reported the Marketing and Public Relations Committee decided to redo the entire website. The new format will have drop down menus, a search box and possibly a button linking directly to the ag section on the home page. The ag section will contain information and link to contact the EDC regarding renewable energy.

There was no other unfinished business.

## **NEW BUSINESS—**

**Positive Energy Conference.** Reuss reported on the conference he attended November 18, 2008, which included a presentation on algae to bio fuel and Xcel Energy using wind energy. Discussion was held on West River Dairy’s methane digester.

{Sherm Schueler was excused from the meeting.}

**2009 Goals.** Tabled until next meeting.

**Possible 2009 strategic planning session.** Renquist suggested this committee hold another strategic planning session to develop more initiatives and/or action plans, because some of the current initiatives and/or action plan have become non-existent or need updating. Reuss gave an overview of the 2008 strategic planning session. Reuss suggested all Ag committee members and OB members attend the 2009 strategic planning session. Reuss suggested if the committee retains a facilitator, it should cost into consideration. Gustafson suggested the 2009 strategic planning session be held the end of January or beginning of February. It was the consensus of the committee to discuss the 2009 strategic planning session further at its next meeting.

## **REPORTS—**

**Ag Specialist.** No additional report.

**Wind Energy.** Gordon Behm reported Lake Country Wind Energy (LCWE) held its first investment meeting and is at the developmental stage. LCWE received the okay for its first Midwest Independent System Operator (MISO) study for the Atwater substation. Reuss stated Whirlwind Energy, LLC is moving forward as well. LCWE MET tower has two months of data already.

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING**—The next regular committee meeting is **7:30 a.m., Thursday, December 18, 2008 at the EDC Office, 333 Litchfield Avenue SW, Suite 100, Willmar.**

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 a.m.