

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT POWERS BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
MINUTES
April 26, 2018
EDC Office, Willmar, MN**

Present: Fernando Alvarado, Roger Imdieke, Harlan Madsen, Roland (Rollie) Nissen, Andrew Plowman and Kathy Schwantes

Guest: Donna Boonstra, President, EDC Joint Operations Board

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director and Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist

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

Chairperson Kathy Schwantes called the meeting to order at approximately 11:37 a.m.

AGENDA—Added to the Agenda under New Business was item 3, grant application for Simply Shrimp.

IT WAS MOVED BY Rollie Nissen, SECONDED BY Andrew Plowman, to approve the revised Agenda. All present voted unanimously in favor by roll call.

MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke, SECONDED BY Rollie Nissen, to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2018 annual meeting of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission Joint Powers Board of Commissioners as e-mailed. All present voted unanimously in favor by roll call.

TREASURER’S REPORT—Aaron Backman presented the financial reports for periods ending January 31, February 28 and March 31, 2018. The board reviewed the Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss as of March 31, 2018 and comparisons were made to the reports as of January 31, 2018.

IT WAS MOVED BY Andrew Plowman, SECONDED BY Rollie Nissen, to accept the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission financial reports for periods ending January 31, February 28 and March 31, 2018, subject to audit. All present voted unanimously in favor by roll call.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Willmar/Willmar Industrial Park. Backman reported on the following:

- Construction of the Kwik Trip on east Highway 12 has started;
- Demolition of the former Mills building on south First Street site is occurring for construction of a Kwik Trip;
- PetSmart is close to completing its renovation of the former Best Buy;
- He toured the new Willmar Surgery Center this morning; plans are for it to open in two weeks;
- A couple of prospects are interested in the Willmar Industrial Park—one a trucking-related business in need of 15 to 20 acres and another a medical product company generated through the EDC's membership in the Community Venture Network, Willmar is one of three communities being considered by this company.

Little Crow Golf Resort. Backman reported construction of the GrandStay Hotel continues. It will complete the event center first followed by the hotel. Weather has delayed paving the parking lot, which will delay opening of the resort until June or early July.

Highway 23 Coalition. Backman reported the Highway 23 Coalition held its annual meeting on March 9th with over 80 members attending. Congressmen Collin Peterson and Tom Emmer attended, as well as Lt. Governor Michelle Fischbach. The Coalition currently has 89 members, including 63 businesses and 11 communities. The Coalition is awaiting the announcement of Corridors of Commerce funding. The Legislative Committee is planning its Washington D.C. fly-in and scheduling meetings with Senators Klobuchar and Smith; lunch with Congressman Peterson and meetings with U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. Backman reported the EDC Joint Operations Board approved his and Donna Boonstra's participation in the fly-in. Backman showed a new flyer that includes an inset of the railroad Wye project and business testimonials, which has been used by Mel Odens (see attached).

Spicer. Connie Schmoll reported visiting Spicer businesses, including Urban Escape, Coffee & More, Family Roots Chiropractic and Central Minnesota Credit Union. Lone Tree Board & Paddle will be moving into Urban Escape's location once it moves to its new location.

Railroad Wye. The Master Agreement is still being finalized and the project may not happen until next year.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Boards' Strategic Planning Session. Chair Schwantes thanked the board for attending the strategic planning session on March 29, 2018. Backman reported the Joint Operations Board voted to change the wording of the EDC's Vision Statement based upon suggestions made at the planning session. The board discussed the proposed changes.

IT WAS MOVED BY Rollie Nissen, SECONDED BY Andrew Plowman, to revise the Vision

Statement of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission to read as follows: "To provide economic development leadership creating growth, prosperity, innovation and international competitiveness to enhance our quality of life." All present voted unanimously in favor by roll call.

Backman read comments made at the planning session as to the Mission Statement. The Joint Operations Board decided to leave the Mission Statement as is.

IT WAS MOVED BY Harlan Madsen, SECONDED BY Rollie Nissen, to leave the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Mission Statement as is. All present voted unanimously in favor by roll call.

2018 Goals. Chair Schwantes stated the boards discussed 2018 goals at the planning session and staff identified four major goals: Childcare, Diverse Business Initiative, Opportunity Zones and Transportation Infrastructure (see attached).

- **Childcare:** Schmoll reviewed the goal, action steps and benchmarks and recommended childcare be a goal working in partnership with other agencies. Comments and questions included:
 - Childcare has not been a focal point of the Kandiyohi County Board, however, it is a topic brought up as an issue by surrounding counties when commissioners attend district meetings.
 - Statistics show a need and Kandiyohi County is third in the state in needing childcare.
 - Where can citizens voice complaints as to the need for childcare so it becomes an issue?
 - Mention of a Child Care Aware report and study done by a southwest Minnesota partnership.
 - Does Lyon County have more corporate support than other counties?
 - What are the issues creating childcare shortages? Schmoll stated the benchmark includes the research needed to identify why there is a shortage.
 - Swift County is holding a community meeting on childcare.
 - Employers are losing workers, who must stay home with their children or grandchildren and losing potential employees who do not move into the area because they cannot find childcare.
- **Diverse Business Initiative:** Backman reviewed the goal, action steps and benchmarks. Backman provided information on the EDC possibly taking over the Willmar Area Multicultural Business Center's loan portfolio, which would increase the EDC's lending potential by 30% to 50%. It was recommended to also identify Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services (CMJTS) for this goal. Backman reported Cathy Baumgartner of CMJTS has attended BRE Committee meetings as to workforce.
- **Opportunity Zones:** Backman reviewed the goal, action steps and benchmarks and gave background information on the Opportunity Zones tax-incentive program. The EDC submitted three census tracts for consideration by the Governor and the Governor submitted one census

tract in Willmar for federal consideration. The Governor recommended more than one tract for some counties. Imdieke voiced his concern as to using Opportunity Zones, TIF, etc. and use of more than one program. Backman stated the City of Willmar did submit a letter of support for the program. The county should establish rules for the county level so it becomes less of an issue on the city level. Chair Schwantes recommended Backman be included in conversations on local rules. Schmoll noted that studying the rules is a part of the suggested benchmarks. Letters of support for the program were received from the West Central Angel Fund.

- Transportation and Infrastructure: Backman reviewed the goal, action steps and benchmarks. Imdieke reported on a recent trip to Washington D.C. as to support for the railroad Wye project. Wording is being changed from summer or fall to this construction season.

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke, SECONDED BY Fernando Alvarado, to approve 2018 goals as presented for Childcare, Diverse Business Initiative, Opportunity Zones and Transportation Infrastructure. All present voted unanimously in favor by roll call.

NEW BUSINESS

Vacation and Sick Leave for Business Development Specialist. The board reviewed vacation and sick leave comparisons between the EDC, Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar. Backman presented recommended changes to the vacation and sick leave policy for EDC staff. Staff was directed to research the fair labor act as it relates to termination for cause.

IT WAS MOVED BY Rollie Nissen, SECONDED BY Andrew Plowman, to revise the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Employee Handbook, section IV, Personnel, paragraph C, Vacation Time, as follows:

2. Full-time employees shall accumulate vacation on the following basis:
 - a. Employees with less than 3 years of full-time employment shall earn vacation at the rate of 3.67 hours per pay period (semimonthly) (88 hours per year).
 - b. Employees with more than 3 years, but less than 5 years of full-time employment shall earn vacation at the rate of 4.33 hours per pay period (semimonthly) (104 hours per year).
 - c. Employees with more than 5 years, but less than 7 years of service, shall earn vacation at the rate of 5 hours per pay period (semimonthly) (120 hours per year).
 - d. Employees with 7 years or more of service, shall earn vacation at the rate of 5.67 hours per pay period (semimonthly) (136 hours per year).

Changes in the rate of accumulation shall be effective on January 1 of each calendar year.

And revise section IV, Personnel, paragraph D, Sick Leave, paragraph 2, as follows:

2. Full-time employees shall be granted 4 hours of sick leave with pay for each pay period of service. Sick leave not used shall be carried forward from one year to the next year up to a maximum accumulation of 160 hours.

And to add a new paragraph 4 under Sick Leave as follows:

4. Any employee who is separated from EDC employment by layoff, resignation, leave of absence or death shall be paid for the working hours of unused sick leave accumulated to his/her credit. The payment shall be computed by multiplying the employee's current hourly rate of pay by the number of accumulated sick leave hours. Payment of sick leave time shall not exceed 160 hours.

These changes shall be retroactive to January 1, 2018. All present voted unanimously in favor by roll call.

Executive Director's Annual Review. Chair Schwantes reported 8 out of 13 surveys were returned with an average score of 3.5 or higher. The review committee met March 23rd. Chair Schwantes noted there were very positive comments given in the surveys and read a few. Backman exceeded or met expectations in all areas. Backman requested the boards' support of EDC projects and attendance at meetings. The committee recommends a 3% increase, which was approved by the Joint Operations Board.

IT WAS MOVED BY Harlan Madsen, SECONDED BY Andrew Plowman, to approve renewing the Employment Agreement with Aaron Backman as Executive Director of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission and a 3% salary increase in 2019 and that compilation of survey results be filed in Backman's personnel file. All present voted unanimously in favor by roll call.

Ratify Actions by Joint Operations Board. Chair Schwantes reported at its March 8, 2018 meeting, the Joint Operations Board approved support of the Opportunity Zones.

IT WAS MOVED BY Harlan Madsen, SECONDED BY Fernando Alvarado, to ratify the Joint Operations Board's support of the Opportunity Zones program and the designation of census tracts. All present voted unanimously in favor by roll call.

Chair Schwantes provided information on a loan to Pep's Sports Barber Shop, which the Finance Committee and Joint Operations Board recommend be written off as uncollectible.

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke, SECONDED BY Rollie Nissen, to ratify the recommendation of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's (EDC) Joint Operations Board to write off the note with Pep's Sports Barber Shop as being uncollectible and that the remaining balance of \$7,766.95 be written off.

Voting in favor: Rollie Nissen, Fernando Alvarado, Harlan Madsen, Roger Imdieke and Kathy Schwantes.

Abstaining: Andrew Plowman.

MOTION CARRIED.

Certificate of Deposit Renewal. Chair Schwantes reported a Certificate of Deposit at United Prairie Bank came due on April 12, 2018 and the Joint Operations Board recommended its renewal for six months.

IT WAS MOVED BY Andrew Plowman, SECONDED BY Fernando Alvarado, to approve the renewal of a Certificate of Deposit in the original amount of \$103,970.62 at United Prairie Bank for six months at 1.50% interest. All present voted unanimously in favor by roll call.

USDA grant. Schmoll reported the EDC received a request to be the applicant for a USDA Rural Business Development Grant application on behalf of Simply Shrimp LLC to do a feasibility study (see attached). The application is due April 30, 2018.

IT WAS MOVED BY Harlan Madsen, SECONDED BY Rollie Nissen, to approve the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission being the applicant of a USDA Rural Business Development Grant and complying with all USDA requirements. All present voted unanimously in favor by roll call.

[Fernando Alvarado was excused from the meeting.]

COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

Ag Committee. Schmoll reported on Ag conferences she and committee members have attended, including AURI and International Cheese Tech Expo in Wisconsin. Schmoll spoke with Loren Corle at the International Cheese Tech Expo and also representatives of the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association and gave folders on Kandiyohi County to individuals who indicated they could distribute the information to cheese processors. Contacts have been received following this conference. Plowman stated he will be exhibiting and giving a presentation at the World Dairy Expo this fall. There is a push to localize production to the scale needed and to centralize processing to be more efficient. The board discussed the current farm crisis. Chair Schwantes reported the

University of Minnesota Extension Farm Information Line is available for people to call and speak with individuals who can help. Backman reported China has imposed a 179% tariff on sorghum, which has severely affected U.S. growers.

Business Visits. Schwantes stated staff's reports are included in the board packets and thanked staff for providing the written summaries. Backman noted the hiring of Dr. Craig Johnson as Ridgewater College's new president. Madsen thanked Backman and Schmoll for participating in the Vision 2040 Refresh event; participation by Backman and Schmoll has been positive and changes are being implemented.

Finance Committee. Backman reported the Finance Committee and Joint Operations Board approved a loan to Eryn Hannig to purchase the Marketing Concepts building in Spicer.

Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee. Schmoll reported the Broadband Committee continues to work on potential broadband services by Hiawatha Broadband Communications. State funding being proposed for broadband is \$15 million. Imdieke reported contact was received from a citizen following receipt of a letter from TDS. Schmoll is contacting TDS.

Imdieke reported the farm to table restaurant may be opening soon at Goat Ridge Brewing Co.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business,

IT WAS MOVED BY Rollie Nissen, SECONDED BY Andrew Plowman, to adjourn the meeting.
MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:47 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular board meeting is 11:30 a.m., Thursday, July 26, 2018, at the EDC office.



Roland Nissen, Secretary

APPROVED: 7/26/2018:



Kathy Schwantes, Chairperson



COLDSPRING (Granite Company)

"Highway 23 is considered a lifeline to Coldspring's success. To satisfy customers, Coldspring moves over three million lbs. of stone, equipment and supplies on Highway 23 each week."

Theresa Cervantez,
Director of Purchasing and Logistics

JENNIE-O

"Minnesota Highway 23 is a vital corridor for Jennie-O operations. Yearly over 20,000 truckloads of live animals and finished product are shipped by the company on Highway 23. Jennie-O is concerned about safety at many of the intersections along the corridor."

Mike Brown,
Director of Supply Chain Operations

DOOLEY'S PETROLEUM

"...The timely shipment of our products is crucial for our customers. Our company's future growth depends on adequate infrastructure on Highway 23. It's time for the State of Minnesota to show its commitment to this region of the State."

Dan Selander,
Chief Operating Officer

RAMBOW

"Over 75% of Rambow's sales of embroidery/promotional materials is shipped north on Highway 23 to customers in St. Cloud, Duluth, and other points north. And the lionshare of our employees use Highway 23 to come to and from work. I have no doubt that if the four-lane gaps are completed my sales and shipments will increase significantly."

Steve Rambow,
Owner

CENTRACARE HEALTH

"...Highway 23 is a major route through several of the communities in which we have facilities and through a major recreational area of Minnesota. We support the Highway 23 Coalition's efforts AND encourage the state to upgrade the remaining 2-lane sections for Highway 23 between St. Cloud and Willmar to 4-lanes."

Kenneth Holmen, MD,
President and CEO

DUININCK

"Highway 23 has been an important corridor to our operations. Yearly we supply over 20,000 truckloads of material to our customers on Highway 23. Lack of continuous four-lane from Willmar to Interstate 94 creates economic disadvantage to our region and increased potential for injury and loss of life that can be prevented. It is time to make a commitment to the Highway 23 corridor."

Jason Duinick,
Business Development



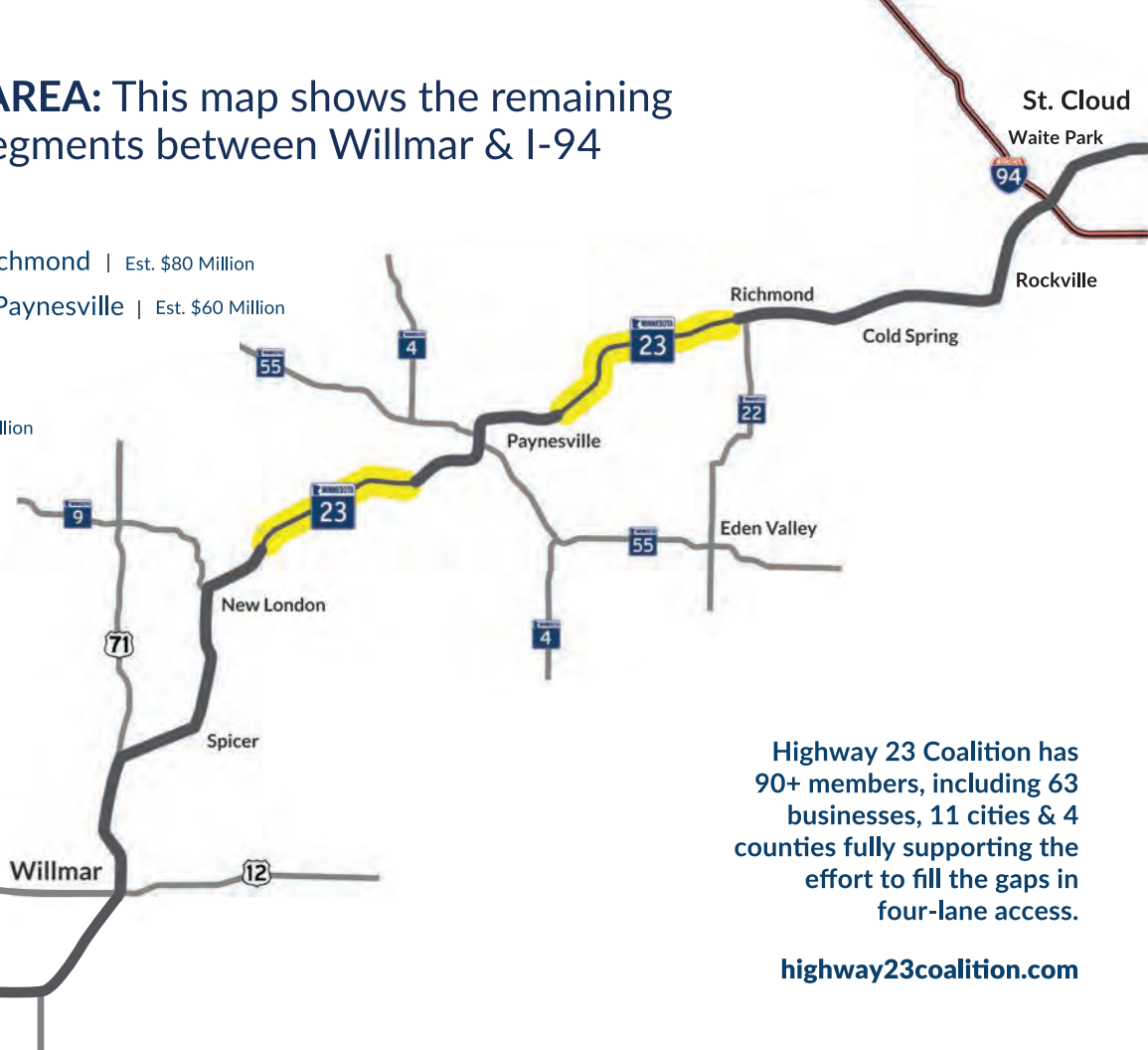
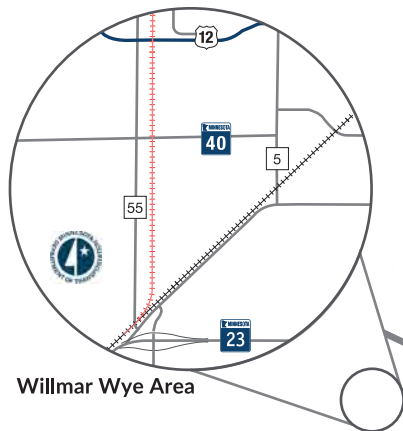
PROJECT AREA: This map shows the remaining two-lane segments between Willmar & I-94

9-mile gap from Paynesville to Richmond | Est. \$80 Million

7-mile gap from New London to Paynesville | Est. \$60 Million

72% of the 53-mile stretch has
four-lane accessibility

Willmar Railroad Wye | Est. \$48 Million



Highway 23 Coalition has
90+ members, including 63
businesses, 11 cities & 4
counties fully supporting the
effort to fill the gaps in
four-lane access.

highway23coalition.com



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Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC 2018 Plan

Benchmarks: Childcare

1) What do we want to accomplish? (New Goal)

- Increase the number of childcare options, including diverse childcare options, available for the workforce in Kandiyohi County and in the region.
- Secure sustainable solutions for existing and new childcare centers and family childcare providers, including diverse childcare.

2) What should be done to begin? (Data Needed or Action Steps)

- Participate as economic development representative, in community stakeholder meetings to define the current situation and potential solutions.
- Identify local leaders in the childcare industry.
- Bring family providers together to seek their ideas about what might be helpful for them locally.
- Research policy and proposed legislation that could support local childcare businesses.

3) What should we see happening within 90 days? (Benchmarks)

- Support legislation to provide relief for providers and address the overreach of regulations while still ensuring safety for children and families in childcare environments.
- Communicate with leaders in the childcare industry about our desire to participate in conversations and planning, as an economic development entity, regarding the childcare issue.
- Assist childcare industry leaders with gathering information from businesses about the current need for childcare for reports and grant applications.



Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC 2018 Plan
Benchmarks: Diverse Business Initiative

1) What do we want to accomplish? (New Goal)

- Implement a Diverse Business Retention Expansion (BRE) Phase II Program during 2018-2019, including businesses located outside of Willmar.
- Consider receiving and administering the Willmar Area Multicultural Business Center (WAM-BC) loan portfolio. WAM-BC has seven active loans around Kandiyohi County. WAM-BC prefers to focus on technical assistance and less on financial assistance.
- Seek to establish a self-sustaining diverse workforce training program in partnership with Ridgewater College, CLUES, Rice Memorial Hospital, Bethesda and others.

2) What should be done to begin? (Data Needed or Action Steps)

- The EDC will track a diversity bill in the 2018 Legislative Session. If passed and signed by Governor Dayton, this bill could provide an estimated \$75,000 in grant funding to SWIF/DEED for Diverse BRE Phase II Program in the Willmar area.
- The EDC should continue discussions with Bush Foundation staff regarding a Community Innovation Grant for capacity building for diverse entrepreneurs in the Willmar area.
- The WAM-BC loan portfolio transfer is predicated on WAM-BC updating its financial documents for all of its outstanding loans. So far, they have updated five out of the seven loan documents. WAM-BC expects to complete the loan document updating by June of 2018. The EDC will continue to discuss the loans with WAM-BC leadership.
- Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio (CLUES), a Latino non-profit organization based in the Twin Cities, with EDC assistance, is considering leasing space near downtown Willmar for office and training space. It is currently interviewing a new Navigator lead and should be finalizing a new lease in the next 30 to 60 days.
- New contracts for diverse CNA and diverse welding programs are expected to be signed by Ridgewater College and CLUES in the next 30 days.

3) What should we see happening w/in 90 days? (Benchmarks)

- The EDC will stay in communication with funders regarding the Diverse BRE Phase II Program.
- Once WAM-BC loan documents are updated, the EDC will present the loan portfolio transfer opportunity to EDC Board members for final approval. If approved, the EDC would create a new RLF for diverse businesses in Kandiyohi County.
- The EDC will remain in communication with CLUES and Ridgewater College regarding the diverse training programs and will promote the program as needed.



Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC 2018 Plan
Benchmarks: Opportunity Zones

1) What do we want to accomplish? (New Goal)

- Designate Opportunity Zones, for one to three tracts in Kandiyohi County to encourage development of housing or commercial businesses in low to moderate income areas that are considered eligible.
- Encourage investment for new commercial and housing projects in designated Opportunity Zones in Kandiyohi County.
- Facilitate and secure new commercial and housing projects in Kandiyohi County Opportunity Zones.

2) What should be done to begin? (Data Needed or Action Steps)

- Submit recommendations to DEED stating priority for each of three eligible tracts in Kandiyohi County to be considered for the designation of "Opportunity Zones."
- Track the processes and determinations made by the Minnesota Governor's Office and the final Opportunity Zones determinations made by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.
- Study the rules and processes of Opportunity Zones as more information is published.

3) What should we see happening within 90 days? (Benchmarks)

- Development of Opportunity Zone marketing materials.
- Present Opportunity Zone information to county, city and other potential partners.
- Invite potential investors and developers to community discussions about opportunities in the designated zones.



Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC 2018 Plan
Benchmarks: Transportation Infrastructure

1) What do we want to accomplish? (New Goal)

- Implementation of Willmar Railroad Wye project on the west side of Willmar bypassing the downtown and installation of rail spur to Willmar Rail Park by 2021.
- Completion of the Minnesota Highway 23 four-lane corridor between Willmar and I-94, including the two gaps north and south of Paynesville by 2024.
- Construction of the County Road 5/55 bridge over railroad tracks just north of new Highway 23 bridge on the southwest side of Willmar.
- Increase operations at Willmar Municipal Airport by 25% by 2020.

2) What should be done to begin? (Data Needed or Action Steps)

- The Master Cooperation Agreement between MnDOT, City of Willmar, Kandiyohi County and BNSF needs to be completed before the Design-Build bid letting process for final design and construction can proceed.
- Willmar Wye project partners have solid relationships and the partners remain optimistic for a summer or fall of 2018 construction start for the Wye project.
- Continue to make investments in support of long-term, collaborative regional approaches, such as the EDC being active in the Highway 23 Coalition.
- Support Corridors of Commerce funding to finish the four-lane gaps on Highway 23.
- Support federal and state funding for Highway 23-related projects, such as the County Road 5/55 bridge over the BNSF railroad tracks.
- Recruit business prospects interested in locating at the Willmar Industrial Park or Willmar Airport.

3) What should we see happening w/in 90 days? (Benchmarks)

- Interact with the Willmar Railroad Wye partners to understand the status of the Master Agreement and construction timeline.
- In April, MnDOT is expected to announce the Corridors of Commerce projects that will be funded. Based on that announcement, the Coalition may seek additional state bond funding.
- In late May, the EDC should send two representatives to participate in the Washington D.C. fly-in to meet with Congressional representatives and federal Department of Transportation staff regarding the funding of transportation priorities in Willmar and West Central Minnesota.

USDA Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG)

Simply Shrimp LLC Proposal Summary and Request for EDC Participation

Simply Shrimp LLC (SSL) grows and processes shrimp at the site of a former family dairy farm near Blomkest, MN. It is located in Kandiyohi County at 14580 US Highway 71 South, Blomkest, MN 56216.

Using 17 tanks of warm salt water in a 40' x 160' structure, it obtains 33,000 post larvae shrimp per month. Then after 120 days of regular feeding in a controlled water environment, fully grown shrimp are ready to be processed for sale. SSL sold its first successful shrimp batch in July 2017, they now produce approximately 500 lbs of shrimp per month for direct-to-consumer sales. SSL has had requests for contracts to provide upwards of 10-15,000 lbs per month of shrimp to wholesale and consumer markets and is developing strategies that would enable it to grow its value-added business to that level and beyond.

As one of the first and largest private shrimp operations in the midwest, SSL is continuously innovating its aquaculture enterprise to meet growing demand for its fresh products. SSL is considering adding two facilities at its farm to increase capacity to grow vastly more shrimp. For that to be feasible, it must also increase the reliability of its larvae and feed suppliers. Thus, SSL may develop a hatchery to procure post larvae shrimp directly, in lieu of unpredictable out-of-state suppliers. Shrimp feed is critical to product quality, so this expansion would also analyze procuring shrimp feed from local feed mills. Age and maturity of water can limit the speed of business growth, those aspects of expanding would occur first, with other aspects needing up to 12-24 months to complete.

These potential expansion projects could occur at or near SSL's existing farm site. But growth comes with its own challenges, and must be pursued prudently.

As such, we are inviting the Kandiyohi County EDC to apply for a Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) from the USDA in the amount of \$90,000 to pay for a qualified consultant to provide technical assistance to Simply Shrimp LLC (SSL) for an economic development opportunity. This opportunity consists of the potential for SSL to expand its current aquaculture business. **\$35,000 in matching funds will be provided by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Value-Added Feasibility Study Program.** There would not be Cost-Share for the Kandiyohi County EDC. Christianson PLLP would prepare the application and ready it for submission on the EDC's behalf. Its burden to approve the application (signing forms, providing background information about its organization). The EDC's benefit would be an opportunity to serve as a conduit that will catalyze potential economic growth in its region. If awarded, the EDC would have brief a report to submit upon completion of the project regarding the final disposition of the funds and the result of the study.

The proposed study will identify and analyze risks and opportunities related to economic feasibility of expanding a MN aquaculture business. It will evaluate market opportunities including wholesale, direct-to-consumer, and others. As an emerging industry, adequate supply of inputs is vital and will be assessed.

The RBDG grant would allow the Kandiyohi County EDC to provide technical assistance to SSL through the development of a Feasibility Study and Business Plan provided by a qualified consultant. The Feasibility Study and Business Plan would provide in-depth technical and other analyses of the major elements involved in SSL's proposed project.

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