

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT (BRE/R) COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**January 4, 2019**

**EDC Board Room**

**Present:** Sam Bowen, Jim Ellingson, Les Heitke, Roger Imdieke, Les Nelson, Dean Steinwand and Kelly TerWisscha

**Excused:** Ranae Rahn and Dan Tempel

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

**Secretarial:** Diane Beck, Legal & Administrative Assistants (LAA)

Chair Sam Bowen called the meeting to order at approximately 9:05 a.m.

**AGENDA**—Chair Bowen presented the Agenda.

IT WAS MOVED BY Les Nelson, SECONDED BY Kelly TerWisscha, to approve the Agenda as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**MINUTES**—

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke, SECONDED BY Les Nelson to approve the December 7, 2018 Minutes as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

[Connie Schmoll joined the meeting.]

**REPORTS/PROJECT UPDATES**—Aaron Backman mentioned he, Kathy Schwantes and Rollie Boll will conduct three interviews today at the EDC office for a new EDC attorney as Mike Burgett closed his law office in Willmar. The recommendation will be brought before the EDC Joint Operations Board on January 10, 2019.

**December Business Visits/Tours.** Backman reported the following:

- He attended the Housing Subcommittee meeting as to the Herzog 72-unit housing project on the northwest side of Willmar off of County Road 5. The units will be 80% market rate and 20% income-restricted. A turn lane will also be installed. Next steps include a public hearing at the Willmar City Council meeting next week.
- Zack Mahboub applied to Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) and Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF) for financing to install an elevator in the Midtown Plaza. Nelson reported he toured the basement area where Mahboub plans to hold weddings and other

events; plans are to have fitness equipment in another area of the basement. By the end of January, more information will be available regarding the funding.

- Bethesda is interested in building a 95,000 sq. ft. multi-level senior housing project on 11 acres in New London near ACMC in 2019. The facility will include independent living, assisted living and memory care units that would employ approximately 50-60 employees and may include a childcare center for employees.

Schmoll reported the following:

- She attended a review of the Simply Shrimp Feasibility Study.
- AgProfessionals will hold a banquet February 1, 2019 at Willmar Conference Center. Schmoll encouraged BRE committee members to attend. Scholarships will be awarded to students going into Agriculture.
- The EDC continues to work on Broadband in the county.
- The workshop held November 15<sup>th</sup> on industrial hemp was well attended. With the passing of the 2018 Farm Bill, future discussions will be held to secure a local facility to process hemp.
- She made a presentation to Willmar Sertoma.
- She is working with Leslie Valiant, Spicer City Administrator/EDA Director, regarding possibilities for expansion of DI Labs in Spicer.
- She continues to work on childcare issues.
- Follow up with possible future businesses, i.e., restaurants, taxi service and beauty salon.

**BRE Survey.** Schmoll reported she, Dan Tempel and Kelly TerWisscha met on December 27<sup>th</sup> to review past BRE surveys and the findings of the Kandiyohi County Business Retention and Expansion Visitation Program in 2014-2015 (see attached minutes). It was determined that significant work has been conducted on all suggested projects; however, there is more that could be done. Next steps include interviewing a few business leaders to determine if another BRE survey is warranted. TerWisscha commented in order to attract employees to the community, a good selling point is needed.

TerWisscha recently met with John Vornholt, Manager of the Kandi Mall in Willmar. TerWisscha feels community partnerships (a grass roots campaign) is needed to help the mall expand and improve. This committee could assist with marketing the mall and suggested developing a marketing strategy to attract shoppers from other demographic areas. TerWisscha suggested a few committee members attend a national conference with Kandi Mall representatives. Backman recommended putting together a community video as well. Dean Steinwand commented when he came to the area, he could not find any information on Willmar. Heitke mentioned the former Community Marketing Coalition was fairly successful and feels there is value and a need to resurrect the Coalition. Backman is open to collaborate with RockStep/Kandi Mall and assist with joint marketing activities, as well as attend a national event to promote the community. Schmoll suggested contacting other entities regarding a community video. Imdieke suggested the possibility of using parts of the former video prepared for Kandiyohi County. Schmoll commented it depends on the ownership of the video. Imdieke will check with Larry Kleindl.

TerWisscha stressed it is important to coordinate efforts and Chair Bowen suggested hiring a marketing firm. Chair Bowen suggested the committee move forward with TerWisscha's suggestions and discuss them at the next committee meeting.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Rural Child Care Innovation Program.** Schmoll shared the Kandiyohi County Child Care Innovation Program - Community Conversation was held with over 90 in attendance. Kandiyohi County turned in approximately 1,200 surveys. The end result of the survey and subsequent meetings were to create a community action plan. The core group will meet on January 11, 2019 to determine a local solution to the childcare issue.

**West Central Job Fair Update.** Chair Bowen shared REDstar is working on marketing materials for the West Central Job Fair to be held March 26, 2019 at Ridgewater College.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Region 3's Employer Workforce Strategies Summit.** Chair Bowen referred to the Region 3 Employer Workforce Strategies Summit flyer and agenda (see attached), which is scheduled for January 8, 2019 at Ridgewater College. The Summit is oriented to businesses recruiting new employees and to learn about workforce trends, etc. The Summit is sponsored by Ridgewater College, Region 3 Leadership Planning Board, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services. Currently there are 56 registered and it is hoped that 70-75 may attend. Chair Bowen shared the agenda and encouraged committee members to attend.

Backman reviewed the Kandiyohi County Retail Business Design Workshops flyer (see attached). The workshops are a 10-week intensive program designed for small retail businesses beginning February 6, 2019. The sessions include: Store Presentation, Inventory Management, Social Media Marketing, Target Marketing and Key Issues and Trends in Rural Retailing. Backman will email the flyer to committee members.

Heitke inquired if there are plans for the vacant lot east of the Elks/EDC building. Backman stated Stacy's Nursery may expand and another business is also looking at building. Backman would like signals installed near Kwik Trip as traffic in the area has increased dramatically.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:15 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next regular committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., February 1, 2019**, in the EDC Board Room.

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT (BRE/R) COMMITTEE  
**BRE SURVEY PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**MEETING NOTES**  
**December 27, 2018**  
**EDC Board Room**

Present: Connie Schmoll, Dan Temple and Kelly TerWisscha

The BRE Survey Planning Subcommittee met on December 27, 2018 at the EDC. Connie Schmoll reported that the following BRE surveys were conducted in the past five years:

2014—New London-Spicer Business Retention and Expansion Strategies Program with assistance from the University of Minnesota (U of M) Extension

2014-2015—Kandiyohi County Business Retention and Expansion Visitation Program with assistance from the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce (WLACC) Grow MN! Team

2015- 2016—Atwater Business Retention and Expansion Visitation Program

2017—Kandiyohi County Ag Producer BRE Program

2017—BRE Program for Diverse Businesses in the Willmar Area

Schmoll suggested asking U of M staff about general guidelines on a timeframe to conduct a new BRE survey. Schmoll will make the inquiry of U of M BRE Program staff.

Subcommittee members reviewed the findings of the Kandiyohi County Business Retention and Expansion Visitation Program conducted in 2014-2015. The section on “Projects Identified” was reviewed together to assess if there is work yet to be completed and if a focus on that work is needed instead of a new survey. It was determined that significant work has been conducted on all suggested projects, yet there is more that could be done. For instance:

1. **Under-utilized workforce.** Several programs were implemented to bring in unemployed or underemployed workforce and help them acquire new skills in areas where workforce is needed, i.e. CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) courses for three groups, welding courses for two groups, hospitality services training for one group.

These efforts need to continue. More could be done to assess what other jobs exist that need entry-level trained staff; perhaps checking Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) data or by conducting a new BRE survey.

2. **Enhance perception of our area—as a community that embraces diversity.** Community-wide efforts have been done to value the diversity of our area. The EDC has been involved with a BRE survey of diverse businesses and has shared the survey information with the community and broadly to others through Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF), DEED, television and news articles. EDC staff has supported and assisted Willmar’s new Community Integration Center by helping with grant applications and marketing materials and has attended its events. EDC staff participates in the Vision 2040 Steering Committee and committees that address diversity and assists start-up and existing diverse businesses.

This work needs to continue.

3. **Excellence in our schools.** The EDC developed a flyer to summarize the strengths of the educational institutions in the area.

Contacts could be made to assess what is available at the schools for career and guidance counseling. The EDC could promote familiarity with the industries and specific jobs available in our area with the guidance counselors.

4. **Stabilizing our workforce—now and into the future.** The EDC has worked to support the KCEO (Kandiyohi Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) Program, West Central Minnesota Area Job fair (with a location change to Ridgewater College) and connecting businesses with the College's CNA and welding class cohorts. The EDC has also worked to promote housing, transportation access, broadband and childcare, which are all helpful for stabilizing our workforce.

More could be done to connect businesses and students to encourage internships and job shadowing. Work needs to continue to increase workforce and middle-income housing, childcare, broadband and transportation access. Perhaps more could be done to revitalize blighted residential areas of the cities in the county. There is a great need for single-family housing, workforce housing and to clean up housing stock that is run down.

5. **Marketing our area.** The EDC was of assistance to create and post a video about Kandiyohi County on Kandiyohi County's website. Information has been written about the area; the resources for businesses and the quality of life amenities for site selectors and interested companies. Other marketing materials have been developed to promote Willmar's Industrial Park, the MinnWest Technology Campus, WORKUP, our ag industry and our schools.

The video could be further assessed to see if it has been effective in bringing people to the area to work. Perhaps a video with such an outcome is still needed—one that includes concrete cost-of-living data and showcases the area for its beauty and things to do in both summer and winter. Working directly with human resource personnel in the area may also be effective for marketing our area to bring in new workforce. The EDC could work to market our area for retail businesses and specifically target franchise retailers to come to our area. Dan Tempel will check with the WLACC to see if it has any plans to do a video.

6. **Broadband availability.** Efforts to secure high-speed broadband throughout the county has been continuous. The cities that are considered served with at least east minimum standards have seen continually increasing speeds provided by incumbent providers.

The rural areas that were unserved are largely able to access wireless broadband, but still do not have access to adequate upload speeds necessary for business and precision agriculture. The focus for securing broadband in the rural areas needs to continue.

7. **Increase availability of job qualified workers.** In addition to tasks already mentioned, the EDC sponsored Manufacturing Day tours to area manufacturing businesses for teachers and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students of Wilmar Public Schools. Willmar Public Schools has continued this program on its own.

Manufacturing Day tours could be arranged for all communities with teachers and students of all schools. An assessment of what is being done may be needed.

Subcommittee members suggested that a review of “Projects Identified” shows that we already know what the businesses still need. However, since we do not know for sure that business leaders feel the same, we decided to do a preliminary survey to find out. Each of the subcommittee members agreed to bring the names of five business leaders to interview. We will review the options together and decide on a list 5 to 10 business leaders to survey. The questions to ask them will be geared at discovering if we really know what our businesses need most at this time, or if a BRE survey should be conducted at this time to assess the current needs of the businesses in Kandiyohi County. Schmoll will bring a draft questionnaire to the next planning meeting.

Tasks for subcommittee members to complete for the next meeting:

1. All members will view the video that is posted on the Kandiyohi County website.
2. All members will bring contact information on five area business leaders to survey.
3. Schmoll will inquire of U of M staff about a suggested timeframe to conduct the next BRE survey.
4. Tempel will check with Ken Warner about any pending plans for a video of the area.

NEXT MEETING—January 9, 2019, 10 a.m. at the EDC.

# Region 3's Employer Workforce Strategies Summit

## Innovative Workforce Solutions

**Partners:** Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar EDC  
Ridgewater College  
Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board  
Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc.  
Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

**Date:** Tuesday, January 8, 2019

**Location:** Ridgewater College  
Student Services Building | 2101 15<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW  
Willmar, MN 56201

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. – Noon  
*A light continental breakfast will be served*

**RSVP:** [della.ludwig@state.mn.us](mailto:della.ludwig@state.mn.us) or 320.308.5364

### The Purpose of Employer Strategies Summit:

Is to provide examples of successful employer programs available to assist participants in developing, attracting, and retaining their workforce. Walk-aways will include information on:

- Regional labor market data and workforce trends
- Apprenticeship Opportunities
- Incumbent Worker Programs
- Grant Opportunities
- LYFT CTE Program

### The Summit will Feature:

- A review of the labor market in our region that highlights current occupational data including wages, supply and demand.
- A look into current area trends, as well as regional workforce successes. There will be sharing of talent attraction and retention strategies to assist employers in engaging their peers in what is currently working in their organization. Presentations will include current state and local programs available to assist with shortages.
- A panel of Representatives participating in LYFT for CTE Partnerships.

### Who Should Attend?

Representatives from businesses, industry associations, and education who want to make connections between workforce, education, and the regional economy.

### Why Should you Attend?

To participate in advancing the conversation on key workforce issues, hear about workforce resources available to employers, and engage in solution-based industry sector strategy approaches. Walk away with new ideas and connections.

*There is no cost to attend this event.*

If you need an alternative format to read this document or if you need an accommodation to attend this event, please contact Della Ludwig at (320) 308-5364.



# **Tuesday, January 8, 2019**

## **8:30am - 12pm**

*8:00-8:30am*

### **Continental Breakfast/Networking**

*8:30-8:45am*

### **Welcome**

**Craig Johnson**, President, Ridgewater College

**Barbara Chaffee**, Chief Executive Officer of Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services, Inc.

*8:45-9:05am*

### **State of the Region:** Labor Market Analysis of Central MN - Today and in the Future

**Luke Greiner**, Regional Labor Market Analyst for Central & Southwest Minnesota, Department of Employment and Economic Development

*9:05-9:20am*

### **Workforce Trends:** Key Strategies to Recruit and Retain Workers in Today's Market

**Della Ludwig**, Workforce Strategy Consultant, Department of Employment and Economic Development

*9:20-9:40am*

### **Minnesota Job Skills Partnership (MJSP)**

**Tammy Anhalt-Warner**, Director of Workforce Development and Welcome Center, St Cloud State University

**Tonya Fuller**, Senior Human Resources Generalist, Park Industries

*9:40-10:00am*

### **Minnesota Private Investment, Public Education, Labor and Industry Experience (PIPELINE) Program**

**Dan Solomon**, PIPELINE Program Consultant

*10:00-10:20am*

### **Incumbent Worker Program**

**Eric Day**, Business Service Coordinator, Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services, Inc.

**Steve Barber**, Controller, K&M Manufacturing

*10:20-10:40am*

### **Regional Customized Training and Continuing Education Partnerships**

**Sam Bowen**, Dean of Customized Training and Continuing Education, Ridgewater College

*10:40-10:50am*

### **Break**

*10:50-11:50am*

### **Launch Your Future Today (LYFT) Panel:** Question and Answer

**Moderator:** Cheryl Glaeser, Owner/President, Achieve TFC

### **Panelists:**

**Bruce Bergeson**, Director, MN River Valley CTE Collaborative

**Jason Duininck**, Partner and the Director of Business Development, Duininck, Inc.

**Thomas Hoff**, Career and Technical Project Coordinator, SWWC Service Cooperative

*11:50am-12:00pm*

### **Closing Remarks**

**Aaron Backman**, Executive Director, Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission



# KANDIYOHI COUNTY

## RETAIL BUSINESS DESIGN WORKSHOPS

### NEED HELP WITH YOUR BUSINESS?

A customized technical assistance program  
for **small retailers** in Kandiyohi County



10 week intensive-program designed to help you take your storefront to the next level.

Technical assistance program for area businesses with a series of 5 workshops launching in February.

Receive assistance from Industry Mentors, U of M students and retail coaches to help your business succeed.

Total cost of \$250

Scholarships available on an as-needed basis.

5 workshops and 5 coaching sessions covering retail management, inventory management, target marketing and social media marketing.

Info and registration:  
[kandiyohi.com/retail](http://kandiyohi.com/retail)

Flip over for Workshop details on back of flyer.





# WORKSHOPS & COACHING SESSIONS

Meet with other rural retailers and learn from industry experts



## STORE PRESENTATION

February 6th | 8:00am - 9:30am | Bremer Bank

Understand the basic methods and techniques used for merchandise layout. Recognize effective design principles for merchandise displays and learn the many factors that contribute to a successful store layout.



Coaching Session | Feb 13th



## TARGET MARKETING

February 20th | 8:00am - 9:30am | Bremer Bank

Study how demographics influence merchandising decisions and customer profiles. Find out how to determine which types of customers your store wants to attract and the type of experience those customers will expect.



Coaching Session | Feb 27th



## INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

March 6th | 8:00am - 9:30am | Willmar Library

Learn diverse functions related to the tracking and management of stock.



Coaching Session | March 13th



## KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS IN RURAL RETAILING

March 20th | 8:00am - 9:30am | Willmar Library

We'll discuss the current key issues and trends in rural retailing. Plus, an overview on the roles of store owners and managers.



Coaching Session | March 27th



## SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

April 3rd | 8:00am - 9:30am | WORKUP

Dive into how social media can help build your brand, grow your customer base and generate more foot traffic in your storefront.



Coaching Session | April 10th

Info and registration:  
[kandiyohi.com/retail](http://kandiyohi.com/retail)