

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
AGRICULTURE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT (AG) COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**February 16, 2017**

**Christensen, PLLP, Willmar**

- Present: Rollie Boll, Jon Folkedahl, Dustin Kotrba, Larry Konsterlie, Kim Larson, Dan Lippert and Dan Tepfer
- Excused: Arvind Auluck Wilson, Ian Graue, Kevin Halvorson and Bruce Reuss
- Absent: John Duevel and Keith Poier
- Guests: Jean Geselius, EDC Marketing and Public Relations Committee, and Carolyn Lange, West Central Tribune
- Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist

Chairperson Dan Tepfer called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 a.m.

**AGENDA**

IT WAS MOVED BY Kim Larson, SECONDED BY Dustin Kotrba, to approve the agenda as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**MINUTES**

IT WAS MOVED BY Dan Lippert, SECONDED BY Rollie Boll, to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2017 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**EDC Marketing and Public Relations Committee Assistance.** Jean Geselius, Director of Marketing for Conway, Deuth & Schmiesing and a member of the EDC's Marketing and Public Relations Committee, distributed Marketing/PR Committee Discussion—draft 2-14-17 (see attached), which summarizes information and ideas she gathered from the December 15, 2016 Ag Committee meeting. Geselius provided suggestions on how to move forward, including support for a proposed goal to select a marketing subcommittee. This subcommittee could be the liaison between the Ag Committee, the EDC's Marketing and Public Relations Committee and REDstar.

Geselius stated more input is needed from the committee to complete an Ag-focused flyer and tradeshow materials, as well as photographs. Geselius asked the committee to consider a more regional focus and members were in agreement that this is important and in line

with the EDC's website. She said that videos depicting agriculture and/or the Ag BRE survey process would be helpful.

Geselius spoke about tradeshows and the importance of having a strategy for each show, including goals for the number of people to reach, what to leave with people and measurements of success. A written plan is beneficial and she is willing to help with a plan for the West Central Ag Sales Ag Show booth. Other suggestions are included in the handout.

Chairperson Tepfer noted that consumer choice is driving ag practices so attention to that is necessary, i.e. demand for cage-free chicken eggs caused McDonalds to secure the product and market accordingly. Larson noted another trend is headlining news articles with a negative slant to secure the attention of readers. Larry Konsterlie added that using social media is necessary today to get the message out and also suggested using KWLM's "Open Mic" show, regional cable and YouTube—especially for videos. Lippert spoke of the lamb industry and how it is trying to do positive promotions. He stated the area is a thriving, economic hub with diversity in agriculture, retail and tourism and suggested promoting the diversity with a celebratory stance. He added that Kandiyohi County is such a good example of diversity and coexisting and that story could be told. Tepfer added that using REDstar for all marketing items is important to keep the look professional.

The following volunteered to serve on the marketing subcommittee: Dustin Kotrba, Dan Tepfer and Connie Schmoll with the assistance of Jean Geselius.

Schmoll asked Carolyn Lange to report on the promotion of agriculture promotion she is doing. Lange reported an upcoming issue of the *Live it!* magazine will focus on women in agriculture and the next issue of *Impact* will also focus on agriculture in the region. Schmoll stated the Ag BRE survey volunteers are trying to secure farm families to participate in videotaping their interviews for this purpose and for promotion of the Ag Producers' BRE project.

## REPORTS

**West Central Angel Fund I.** Schmoll reported the members met in early February and are scheduled to meet again on February 24<sup>th</sup>. The base PPM (private placement memorandum) went through major revisions and was updated with the help of an attorney secured by the members.

**Ag Producers' Survey Subcommittee.** Schmoll reported the volunteer teams have nearly completed their visits. A few producers decided to either not participate at this time or returned their completed survey by mail forgoing an onsite interview. Larson and Schmoll stated the questions allow opportunity for major issues to be raised throughout the document and often the last question, "Are there any other issues you would like to address?" is not needed. A review of the process and the survey form is necessary after all surveys are completed so feedback can be recorded for future Ag BRE projects.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**2017 Ag Committee Goals.** The committee reviewed the 2017 proposed goals (see attached). One suggestion was for the broadband goal to clarify that needs among agriculture and renewable energy related businesses and personnel are to be identified. The 2017 goals as revised were accepted by all in attendance. Chair Tepfer reported he will be attending the EDC boards' strategic planning session and would welcome additional issues and suggestions to bring to the EDC boards. Members can bring such items to the next committee meeting, which will be before the strategic planning session.

**Willmar Ag Show.** Rollie Boll reported the number of vendor applications are substantially less than other years. Members reported that staffing the show is difficult and has to be decided carefully based on participation at the event. Schmoll reported a booth was secured for this committee and a sign-up sheet was passed around.

**BRE Visit with West Central Bait.** Schmoll reported she and EDC Executive Director Aaron Backman visited West Central Bait in New London, which is now raising shrimp. Shrimp are received in a quart size bag (4,000 can fit in a hand) and as they grow are transferred to large saltwater tanks. Committee members requested a tour of the business be set up in the near future for the committee.

## NEW BUSINESS

**2018 Farm Bill tour.** Schmoll and Tepfer attended Senator Klobuchar's staff visit in Willmar on January 24<sup>th</sup>. Staff members were here to take feedback and ideas concerning the current farm bill and suggestions for the content of the 2018 farm bill. More than 80 people attended and topics included broadband, livestock, CRP (Conservation Reserve Program), REAP (Reserve Educational Assistance Program), current government agriculture programs and more.

**Ag/Renewable Energy community happenings/projects.** Konsterlie invited anyone interested to attend a legislative forum at 1:30 p.m., Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup> at the MinnWest Technology Campus, sponsored by the Corn and Soybean Producers. Dave Fredrickson, Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, is secured for the forum and Congressman Collin Peterson has been invited.

Schmoll reported the Ridgewater College Farm Business Management Program is sponsoring Agriculture & Economics in 2017 & Beyond on February 22, 2017. Registration is due February 17 and the cost is \$40. Larson stated he has heard the speaker Dr. David Kohl before and recommended the event. Schmoll also noted a Workshop on Farm Business Succession & Estate Planning will be held March 7, 2017 at St. Cloud Technical College. The workshop is free, but preregistration is required.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:10 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next regular meeting is **7:30 a.m., Thursday, March 16, 2017**, at Christianson, PLLP, Willmar.

1. **Distribute Ag Survey BRE Report results and the plan and implementation strategies to the public**
  - Press release and/or report presented and shared with local and regional media including plan and implementation strategies immediately following the April 5 Workshops
  - EDC E-Newsletter article (quarterly publication designed by Red Star Creative and the EDC)
  - EDC Website article and graphic presentation of report information
  - Short farmer video interviews asking key questions in the report shared on social media (Facebook/Twitter)  
*This was a great suggestion from the West Central Tribune reporter at the December 2016 meeting.*
  - Open Mic – sharing results and implementation strategies moving forward
2. **Ag and renewable energy Marketing/PR assistance**
  - Establish a sub-committee
  - Develop an overall marketing/public relations strategy with Red Star Creative/Marketing and PR Committee and the Ag sub-committee
    - Showcase ag statistics from Ag BRE survey/gov't agency reports and local ag news on EDC website and in social media
    - Develop a trade show strategy with sub-committee for the Willmar Ag Show – March 13-14 and other upcoming trade shows
    - Develop ag/renewable energy EDC promotional materials for the Willmar Ag Show (if needed)
    - Update or create a new ag flyer using the new EDC template “Shovel-ready with Room to Grow”
      - i. Meet with sub-committee to determine which profile facts to highlight
      - ii. Review photo options with sub-committee
    - Customizable marketing ag/renewable energy packets for prospective businesses
    - Articles in quarterly online/print newsletter/submit ag articles to the West Central Tribune
      - i. BRE Survey Report with plan and implementation strategy
      - ii. Celebrating National Ag Day – March 21 (A snapshot view of agriculture; A day in the life of a farmer)
      - iii. i.e. Success stories from Angel Fund I
    - Youth Education and Public education on ag industry (Partnering with other groups)
    - Open Mic participation to promote EDC Ag initiatives and positive public image of agriculture in the region
    - Service group ag presentations/education
    - Support local/regional Ag conferences
    - Partnering with other ag groups to promote public image campaign of agriculture in the region
      - i. Determine key shared messages (if partner organizations)
      - ii. Create presentations/video (Ram Year of the Farmer Super Bowl 2017 ad was a great positive image for ag/farmers) (22 million views) Paul Harvey voiceover “so God made a farmer” over great images.
    - Update the EDC trade show booth/popup signage with ag/renewable energy in mind



## Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development Committee 2017 Goals

### *Mission*

To sustain, identify and develop agriculture, agribusiness and renewable energy opportunities.

### **Overall Goal of the Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development (Ag) Committee**

Target activities that leverage Kandiyohi County's assets in agriculture, with a special emphasis on Ag business, manufacturing, bioscience, technology, energy and research.

1. Bring agriculture or renewable energy related projects to the West Central Angel Fund I for consideration throughout the year.
2. Conduct an Ag Producers BRE Survey
  - a. Review and analyze the 2017 Ag Producers' Survey data
  - b. Plan and implement strategies from the 2017 Ag Producers' Survey
3. Support and conduct education, including developing a public relations strategy
  - a. Work with the EDC's Marketing and Public Relations Committee
  - b. Establish a subcommittee to lead efforts
  - c. Support and conduct a public image campaign of agriculture in the region
  - d. Promote our region as an area that supports renewable energy development
  - e. Distribute Ag Survey BRE Report broadly
4. Assist with deployment of broadband into rural unserved areas of Kandiyohi County
  - a. Continue to identify specific needs for broadband access and speed, including current and future communication needs
5. Invite and support development of value-added agriculture businesses in Kandiyohi County
6. Continue to monitor and promote Kandiyohi County's involvement in the Minnesota Turkey Research and Development Facility and Minnesota Dairy Training, Research and Consumer Education Facility