

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
**MINUTES**  
February 24, 2020  
WORKUP, Willmar

Present: Donna Boonstra, Jesse Gislason, Melissa Knott, Pam Rosenau, Joanna Schrupp and Brittany VanDerBill

Excused: Shari Courtney and Emily Lien

Guest: Lindsey Donner, REDstar Creative

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

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc.

Chair Brittany VanDerBill called the meeting to order at approximately 12:00 p.m.

**MINUTES—**

IT WAS MOVED BY Jesse Gislason, SECONDED BY Melissa Knott, to approve the Minutes of the January 27, 2020 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**Social Media Statistics.** Lindsey Donner provided the Facebook statistics for January 25 to February 23, 2020: total likes 659, total reach 11.9K (↑239%), post engagement 3.2K (↑671%), page clicks 2.4K (↑2197%), total fans 46 (↑820%) and posts published 27. There were two unlikes during this period. Total fans increased 7.15%. Active fans are highest between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., which stays consistent each month. The audience is mostly female. The highest post performance over the last 14 posts was The Munchies Stop, which had 187 likes, 69 shares, reach of 8,435 and 20% engagement. The top popular posts were: The Munchies Stop, Lakeland Elementary cooks (likes 15, reach 1717), CEO students at the Capitol (likes 15, reach 205) and What's Up Willmar video on Potpourri Health Foods (likes 6, reach 167). There was good content overall.

Donner provided the website analytics showing the top 10 landing pages for February were the home page, news, transportation, major employers, 2017 article on Hjelle fishing spears, city of Kandiyohi, city of Prinsburg, 2016 article on the University of Minnesota Extension's report on the Economic Composition of the Mid-Minnesota Region, city of Blomkest and the Cities landing page. The top locations for users were: MN (446), IL (264), TX (19), CA (17), VA (16), ND (10), MI (8), NE (8) and NY (8). It was noted that some users could be as a result of the Opportunity Zone Prospectus that was sent recently to site selectors. Top cities in Minnesota where users are located: Willmar (123), Minneapolis (90), St. Cloud (22), New London (19), St. Paul (16),

Montevideo (8), Apple Valley (7), Hutchinson (6) and Mankato (6). The bounce rate for Minnesota users was 69% with an average duration per session of 00:01:38.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS—**

**Kandiyohi County/Community Videos.** Connie Schmoll reported the community video has been completed and was given to Donner to post on the EDC's website. At this committee's suggestion, the end of the video was shortened. Schmoll will show the video to the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce Board on Wednesday.

**2020 Marketing Plan.** Aaron Backman reviewed the proposed 2020 Marketing Plan. Backman reported last week a Small Business Administration roundtable was held in response to a news article on Willmar's downtown Renaissance Zone. Backman explained the difference between the Opportunity Zone and Renaissance Zone. Marketing may be needed in regard to the Renaissance Zone and will be added to the Plan under Goal 3. Backman reported about 15 employers have registered for the West Central Minnesota Job Fair on March 19<sup>th</sup>. Donner felt LinkedIn could be utilized to promote the Opportunity Zone. Connie Schmoll reported the Willmar Assembly of God Church is tripling its budget for childcare and increasing its capacity to 90. Melissa Knott reported Eagle's Nest is adding a toddler room. It was suggested to give a community update on childcare via a press release. Knott suggested the article link to a particular web page to track the responses—possibly in the next newsletter. Schmoll stated the Kandiyohi County Rural Child Care Innovation Project has ideas for increasing childcare as well. Recent contacts include a group from Chaska that heard about the Renaissance Zone and visited Willmar; a New Mexico company interested in Willmar's Industrial Park and wanted site and utility information within five days, which was provided. A proposal was prepared for a business interested in the MinnWest Technology Campus. The EDC needs to be ready to respond to those types of requests.

IT WAS MOVED BY Donna Boonstra, SECONDED BY Melissa Knott, to adopt the 2020 Marketing Plan and recommend to the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Joint Operations Board that it also adopt the Plan. MOTION CARRIED.

Backman reported the EDC boards will hold their annual strategic planning session in March. Chair VanDerBill and Knott will attend. Donna Boonstra noted the Marketing Plan could change dependent upon the outcome of the boards' planning session.

**New Highway 23 Coalition Banner.** Donner showed the Highway 23 Coalition's new banner (see attached) compared to the old banner. The banner will be displayed at the Coalition's annual meeting on March 13<sup>th</sup> at the Willmar Conference Center.

#### **NEW BUSINESS—**

**Resignation of Jean Geselius.** Backman reported following last month's meeting, the EDC received Jean Geselius' resignation from this committee and as this committee's representative on the Ag

Committee's Marketing Subcommittee. Backman asked if a replacement for Geselius should be sought. Jesse Gislason suggested Erin Hannig of Urban Escape; he will contact her.

IT WAS MOVED BY Jesse Gislason, SECONDED BY Donna Boonstra, to accept with regrets the resignation of Jean Geselius from the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Marketing and Public Relations Committee.  
MOTION CARRIED.

**Website.** It was recommended that Development be added between Business and Data on the main menu of the EDC's website under which Willmar's Opportunity Zone could be placed. The new community video could be placed under the Features tab. It was suggested to possibly add the Opportunity Zone to the scrolling banner. Donner reported she has started looking at new images to scroll on the banner. It was also suggested to have a Childcare page with standing information and possibly include links to existing childcare facilities. Donner reported she has 20 new graphics related to the Opportunity Zone that can be used on the website.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next meeting is **12 noon, Monday, March 23, 2020**, at WORKUP.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:58 p.m.



## Marketing and Public Relations Committee

# 2020 MARKETING PLAN

### WHO WE ARE:

We are a governmental agency with a mission to be a catalyst for economic growth of the greater Kandiyohi County area. Our focus is on supporting new and existing businesses and marketing our community to companies outside of our region.

### TARGET AUDIENCE:

- Kandiyohi County:** Educating our area regarding our purpose and activities. Making our services and expertise known/available to local businesses that need help starting or expanding.
- Outside Region:** Marketing our area outside of our county to attract new business and talent. Promoting our brand and showcasing our quality of life.

### 2020 GOALS:

- Create awareness of EDC activities and services in our local/regional community.
- Concentrate on focus areas involving workforce training, housing and childcare.
- Attract new businesses.

<b>GOAL 1:</b> Create awareness of EDC activities and services in our local/regional community.		
<b>STRATEGY:</b> Be an agent of positive messaging about our business community and economy.		
<b>Tactics</b>	<b>Assigned To</b>	<b>Status/Completed</b>
1. Complete healthcare flyer	Marketing Committee	Revised/completed by 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter 2020
2. Website updates as needed	EDC/Marketing Committee	Ongoing
3. Actively promote Kandiyohi County via social channels	EDC/REDstar	Daily/weekly
4. Create/email digital newsletter as sufficient topics of interest arise	EDC Staff/ Marketing Committee/REDstar	
5. Assist with marketing and promotional materials for Partners in Ag Innovation workshop	Connie/Joanna/Jean/Ag Marketing Subcommittee and Marketing Committee	
6. Support WORKUP programming for startups	EDC/Marketing Committee	Link added to EDC website to Business Assistance page; scholarships available for bootcamp
7. Sponsor/Support community organizations (KCEO, West Central Minnesota Area Job Fair)	Marketing Committee	West Central Job Fair 3/19/20 Willmar H.S. Job Fair West Central Job Fair 9/15/20

**GOAL 2:** Concentrate on focus areas involving workforce training, housing and daycare.

**STRATEGY:** Assist businesses in identifying and recruiting talent and collaborate with community partners to fill open positions.

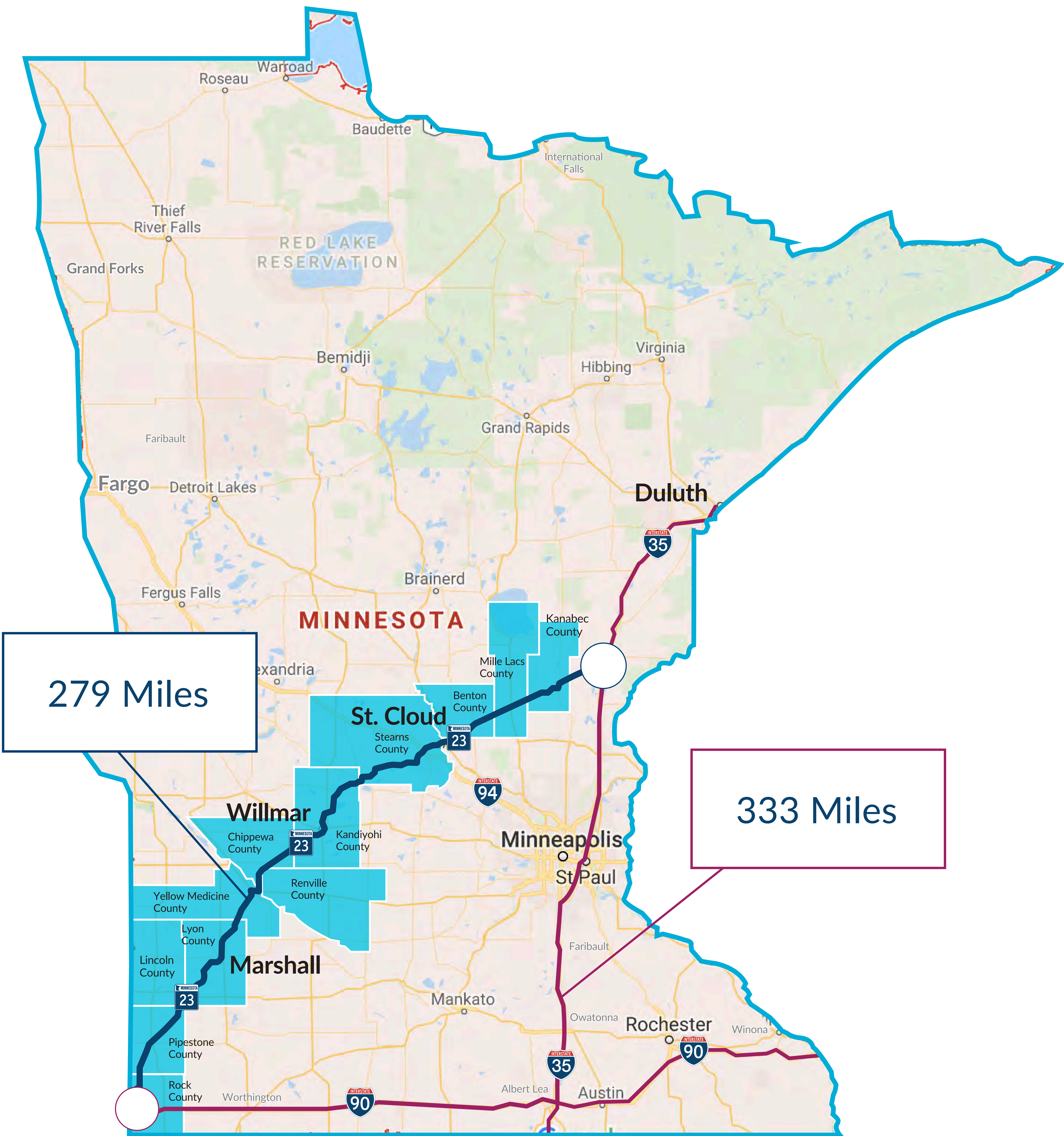
<b>Tactics</b>	<b>Assigned To</b>	<b>Status/Completed</b>
1. Expand the current county Workforce Marketing	EDC/Marketing Committee	
a. Hold/Sponsor quarterly recruitment events with others, including Ridgewater College	EDC	Community Video West Central Job Fair 3/19/20 Willmar H.S. Job Fair West Central Job Fair 9/15/20
b. Utilize LinkedIn to recruit	REDstar	
2. Assist with any marketing needs for the Kandiyohi County Child Care Innovation Project	Connie	Ongoing as needed

**GOAL 3:** Attract new businesses.

**STRATEGY:** Market our community outside of our region to attract targeted businesses.

<b>Tactics</b>	<b>Assigned To</b>	<b>Status/Completed</b>
1. Create list of prospective businesses	Aaron/Connie/ Marketing Committee	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2020
2. Design customizable proposal template to attract business for Willmar Opportunity Zone, etc.	REDstar/Golden Shovel	Prospectus 1/2020
3. Run social ads to targeted geographic areas	REDstar	
4. Assist with marketing materials and proposals to prospective businesses	Marketing Committee	Ongoing as needed
5. Assist with marketing materials when staff attends conferences	Marketing Committee	As needed

# Citizens advocating for a 4-lane MN Highway 23



[highway23coalition.com](http://highway23coalition.com)