

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
February 26, 2018
WORKUP, Willmar

Present: Shari Courtney, Melissa Knott, Emily Lien, Pam Rosenau, Joanna Schrupp and Brittany VanDerBill

Excused: Donna Boonstra, Deb Geister and Ryan Thielen

Absent: Jean Geselius

Guest: Jayme Sczublewski, REDstar Creative

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

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

Vice Chairperson Melissa Knott called the meeting to order at approximately 12:00 p.m. and declared a quorum was present.

New Members. Vice Chair Knott welcomed new members Pam Rosenau and Joanna Schrupp, who provided their background information, followed by self introductions.

IT WAS MOVED BY Brittany VanDerBill, SECONDED BY Shari Courtney, to approve the addition of Pam Rosenau and Joanna Schrupp to the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission Marketing and Public Relations Committee. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Emily Lien, SECONDED BY Brittany VanDerBill, to approve the minutes of the October 23, November 27 and December 18, 2017 meetings and the minutes of the January 22, 2018 meeting. MOTION CARRIED.

Social Media Statistics. Jayme Sczublewski showed an overview of the Facebook statistics for the past month. Total fans continues to slowly increase each month. There were 23 posts, post reach 3,536, post impressions 5,931, link clicks 83, reactions 109, engaged users 290, page and post engagements 160 and new fans 3. The top posts were:

1. Marcus Construction receiving an award—1,535 post impressions
2. Lettuce Abound aeroponics farm—832 post impressions
3. Carmike Cinema purchased by Reel-Lux Cinema—339 post impressions

The EDC's LinkedIn page is growing followers and now has 10 posts, 49 interactions and 29 connections. The committee asked Sczublewski to provide Highway 23 Coalition Facebook statistics in the future. Those with Facebook were encouraged to invite their friends to like the Highway 23 Coalition Facebook page. Joanna Schrupp suggested that next month the committee review who shared the posts.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2018 Goals/Marketing Plan. Aaron Backman reviewed 2017 goals that were completed and presented the proposed 2018 Marketing Plan (see attached). The proposed Marketing Plan includes three goals:

- Goal 1. Create awareness of EDC activities and services in our local/regional community.
- This goal includes updating the website and annually updating the major employers and statistics. It was announced that Vaxxinova acquired EpiTopix, which will be moved from under the LSI umbrella and become more international. Melissa Knott reported she shared the acquisition on her LinkedIn page. The corporate office will remain in Willmar. It was suggested a social media calendar be done with an outline of what is promoted. The calendar could include an update of the acquisition one-year from the transfer date.
- Goal 2. Concentrate on areas of focus involving workforce training, housing and daycare.
- Backman stated these three goal areas are what he and Connie Schmoll hear about the most lately.
 - More than 700 slots are needed for children in local daycare. Backman reported the EDC has been working with a Somali individual, who would like to open a diverse childcare center in Willmar. Pam Rosenau mentioned a childcare center in Clarkfield, Minnesota, that is charging a flat fee of \$140 per week/per child to keep its facility open. Minnesota West Community and Technical College in Granite Falls intends to open a childcare center this summer using the same plan as Clarkfield.
 - The housing study may need to be updated in 2018-2019. Schmoll stated the last housing study covered the entire county. Raymond is very interested in senior housing.
 - Backman would like to see more events/programming in partnership with Ridgewater College as to workforce training. Rosenau offered to speak with Ridgewater College as to working with them. The West Central Minnesota Area Job Fair has been hosted by KWLM Radio at the Willmar Conference Center and is a revenue generating event for the radio station. Some employers have been reluctant to pay the higher registration fee. Ridgewater College, the EDC and the WorkForce Center have sponsored the Job Fair. The sponsors are unaware of any responsiveness to evaluations gathered. Rosenau suggested holding a job fair at Ridgewater College and possibly the high school to reach different age groups. Backman suggested job fairs could also focus on specific sectors. Schmoll stated the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce sponsors a job fair at the Willmar High School, which was well attended last year.

Goal 3. Attract new businesses.

Backman noted Chair Deb Geister would like to see the committee's goals tied to benchmarks.

Backman announced the Highway 23 Coalition is sponsoring a legislative reception on March 7th in St. Paul and its annual meeting will be held March 9th in Cold Spring. This ties into Goal 1, Objective 2: Participate in public forums and with others to promote EDC activities. The Coalition has 79 members. Backman distributed a revised post card developed for the Coalition and showed a map displaying highway usage.

Backman asked the committee to review the proposed 2018 Marketing Plan and send any suggested changes to Backman or Schmoll before the next meeting.

Committee Membership. Vice Chair Knott asked if any members had identified other potential new members. Backman announced Ryan Thielen has a new position at ProCore and he has been unable to attend this committee's meetings. Thielen asked that he be removed from this committee, however, he would like to attend meetings as a guest as his schedule allows. Thielen recommended Kim Augeson of ProCore be invited to join the committee.

NEW BUSINESS—

Ag Committee Workshop Marketing. Schmoll reported the results of the Ag Producer BRE survey included topics that producers identified as areas on which they would like to have more information; thus, the Ag Marketing Subcommittee is planning a one-day workshop for Ag producers. Schmoll showed a draft of a flyer for the workshop that is covering talent and technology in crop production. The title of the workshop and marketing materials are yet to be completed. The subcommittee's budget includes \$3,000 for advertising expenses and \$2,000 in sponsors. It was suggested to add a couple of bullet points on the workshop topics and to include a website link to speaker bios. Melissa Knott offered her assistance with the flyer. Knott stated Christianson PLLP uses past attendee lists for marketing. Schrupp voiced concern that this workshop could cause confusion for attendees of the Ag & Animal Science Conference hosted by MinnWest Technology Campus each fall. Schmoll noted the Ag & Animal Science Conference, historically, has not been focused primarily on Ag producers and invited further discussion with Schrupp.

West Central Angel Fund I. Schmoll reported West Central Angel Fund I has requested assistance with a marketing brochure, which is being done by REDstar Creative.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:18 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is 12 noon, Monday, March 26, 2018 at WORKUP, 1601 Technology Drive NE, Willmar.



**MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE
2018 MARKETING PLAN**

Situation Analysis: The Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission (EDC) is a government agency whose mission is to be a catalyst for economic growth of the greater Kandiyohi County area. We do that in a wide variety of ways, including supporting existing businesses, assisting area entrepreneurs and recruiting targeted industries that are a fit for our region. While we have been successful in that mission, we face the ongoing challenge of educating our community, prospects and partners about how that is accomplished and what kinds of services we offer. We also lead area efforts to market our community to businesses outside of our region that are interested in locating or expanding here—a process that requires ongoing review and refinement in order to stay competitive.

Target Audience Groups:

1. **Local/Regional:** The EDC must reach our local and regional community for two reasons. First, we must educate them regarding our purpose and activities as a government-funded, volunteer-driven organization. Second, we must make our services and expertise known and available to local businesses and entrepreneurs who need help starting or expanding.

2. **Outside Region:** The EDC must aggressively market our area outside of our region for the purposes of attracting new businesses and talent to our community. We need to promote our brand to enhance our economic development efforts, showcase our quality of life and bring more people to the community.

Goal 1. Create awareness of EDC activities and services in our local/regional community

Strategy 1. Be an agent of positive messaging about our business community and economy

Objective 1. Create and update marketing materials and information

	Projects/Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Create flyer focusing on education			
B.	Create flyer focusing on healthcare			
C.	Update website regularly and annually check major employers and statistics			

D.	Publish social media content on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn			
E.	Create and distribute quarterly digital newsletter			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January—Winter 2018 (completed 1/24) • April—Spring 2018 • July—Summer 2018 • October—Fall 2018
Objective 2. Participate in public forums and with others to promote EDC activities				
Projects/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Radio—monthly guest on KWLM’s Open Mic	Aaron		
B.	Speak at City Council/EDA meetings outside of Willmar			
C.	Participate in Highway 23 Coalition	Aaron Connie		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EDC is a member of the Coalition; Aaron is a member of the board and its Secretary/Treasurer; Connie is a member of the Legislative Committee
Objective 3. Assist EDC Committees with marketing needs				
Projects/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Host Ag producer workshops in follow up of the Ag BRE Survey Report	Ag Marketing Subcommittee Connie Schmoll	August 2018	
Objective 4. Educate community about services/resources of the EDC				
Projects/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Support WORKUP programming targeting startups and entrepreneurs			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STARTUP • QUP
B.	Support community organizations—be a part of messaging where appropriate		9/25/2018 November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kandiyohi County CEO loan program—EDC reviews and administers loans • Ag & Animal Science Conference at MinnWest Technology Campus (networking break sponsor) • University of Minnesota Technology Showcase (refreshments sponsor)

Goal 2. Concentrate on areas of focus involving workforce training, housing and daycare

Strategy 1. Assist businesses in identifying and recruiting county residents and work with community assets to fill open positions

Objective 1. Create a plan to fill 25% of the difficult positions jobs by partnering with businesses, education, the WorkForce Center and other funding sources to inform, recruit and train potential employees. The role of the Marketing Committee is to support the EDC in developing the plan and creating education and advertising for the events to support the program.

Projects/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Hold/sponsor quarterly recruitment events with Ridgewater College to identify resources with skills or capabilities for retraining		3/20/2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Central Minnesota Area Job Fair
B.	Focus on a more comprehensive plan to expand the current workforce of the county			

Strategy 2. Market our community to attract talent

Objective 1. Seek workforce talent outside of our region

Projects/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Use EDC's LinkedIn page for recruitment			
B.	Develop a formal "trailing spouse" network			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop partnerships with area school foundations

Objective 2. Support the recruitment efforts of area businesses for workers and talent

A.	Work with human resource departments to develop online resources			
B.	Develop a friends and family campaign			

Strategy 3. Update the housing study and create a way to continually update numbers electronically to minimize costs.				
Objective 1. Work with the HRA to create a housing coalition to work within the current base of developers to commit to plans for XX number of housing units by the end of 2018				
Projects/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Continue to participate in the Vision 2040 Housing Subcommittee	Aaron		
Strategy 4. Create or expand additional daycare businesses to offer diverse daycare services for 100 slots by the end of 2018				
Objective 1. Create community sessions and awareness campaigns to generate interest in the business opportunity with articles, (thought leadership) and information sessions that bring in individuals interested in such a business opportunity. The sessions would require registration and would help guide prospective business owners on licensing requirements, startup requirements, expansion requirements, finding facilities and staff and other issues. This would be accomplished by working with other agencies that can help support the process.				
Projects/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.				
Goal 3. Attract new businesses				
Strategy 1. Market our community outside of our region in order to attract targeted businesses				
Objective 1. Deliver specific, sought-after area metrics, such as workforce, demographics and accessibility on the EDC's website and present to the EDC's Boards				
Projects/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Update customizable proposal template to attract businesses			
Objective 2. Create customized packages to attract business interest				
Projects/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Member of DEED's Minnesota Marketing Partnership		Annually	
B.	Member of Community Venture Network		Annually	