

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
BROADBAND AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES

March 7, 2016

Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services Building, Willmar

- Present: Mark Boeschen, Travis Bonnema, Donna Boonstra, Dean Bouta, Bruce DeBlicke, Kathy Dillon, Scott Froemming, Linda Kacher, Larry Kleindl, Brian Mort, Les Nelson, David Sisser and Donn Winckler
- Excused: Wes Hompe and Jean Marthaler
- Absent: Larry Handlin, Mike Malone, Justin Mattern and Paul Smith
- Guest: Michelle Marotzke
- EDC Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist
- Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Dean Bouta called the meeting to order at approximately 12:00 noon and introduced Michelle Marotzke, who wishes to join the committee. Marotzke is employed by Willmar Municipal Utilities and is a former employee of Federated Telephone Cooperative (FTC).

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Larry Kleindl, SECONDED BY Donna Boonstra, to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2016 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

REPORTS

Blandin Hack₂0 grant. Connie Schmoll reported two apps are being worked on and they hope to have the remaining grant funds spent by the end of March. Plans have started to possibly hold another hackfest this fall.

Blandin WiFi grant. Schmoll reported approximately \$6,000 of grant funds are unspent and may be used to install additional hotspots around the county. Larry Kleindl reported the county is determining where to place the MVTV Wireless hotspots and many communities are very excited about receiving the hotspots. The county is first working with community libraries; each community would like a hotspot located at their town hall.

Request for Proposal task force. Chairperson Bouta reported four companies responded to the request for proposal (RFP). The committee was informed Brian Mort excused himself from the task force as his nephew works at one of the responding companies. Donn Winckler created a score sheet used by the task force and it was a random selection. Each task force member scored the companies

the same so they felt comfortable with their selection. Three of the respondents could do the job, but their recommendation that scored the highest is Communication Network Engineering, Inc. (CNE) of Fargo. CNE has a New London office, which may be beneficial. Linda Kacher stated three of the company's scores were very close. Chairperson Bouta stated he and Schmoll joined the evaluation meeting to see if the task force had any questions or to check if anything had been missed. The task force had a couple of minor questions they answered. Schmoll will compile the notes from the evaluation meeting and a report and recommendation will be made to the County Board on March 15. CNE had very strong engineering and a complete marketing proposal. Winckler stated CNE's quote was \$59,000 with a caveat that focus groups would be an additional \$2,750. The task force felt this committee could handle any possible focus groups with some input by CNE. Schmoll noted Kevin Beyer stated FTC has never done focus groups. Dave Sisser reported the task force's second choice was CNS (Cooperative Network Services) at a cost of \$49,500.

IT WAS MOVED BY Donn Winckler, SECONDED BY Bruce DeBlieck, to recommend to the Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners that Communication Network Engineering, Inc. (CNE) of Fargo be awarded the county's broadband feasibility study. MOTION CARRIED.

Winckler believed August 2, 2016 was the timeline to complete the study. Chairperson Bouta stated this task force will now transition into the feasibility study task force.

Legislative subcommittee. Chairperson Bouta reported the final draft of legislative talking points (see attached) was presented to Rep. Dave Baker and Senator Lyle Koenen and will be presented to others. Michelle Marotzke reported attending last week's town hall meeting and it was good to hear what they are doing in broadband. Local broadband stories (see attached) were also submitted to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Minnesota Lt. Governor and legislators. It was noted this committee's work has been mentioned on the Blandin blog. Marotzke noted rural Hancock has had high-speed internet since 2000. Schmoll indicated 1 Gbps of symmetrical bandwidth noted in the Legislative Briefing was changed to a range of 100 Mbps to 1 Gbps per Beyer's recommendation. Chairperson Bouta reported on a meeting held between Beyer and Kandiyohi Power Cooperative as to possible opportunities with other entities in the county to speed up the process. Scott Froemming stated there was good dialogue between Kandiyohi Power Cooperative and FTC and how they each operate. Froemming believes he was able to change Rep. Baker's opinion about putting fiber on poles, which will not work in this area. Chairperson Bouta stated placing fiber on poles instead of in the ground is not cheaper so it may as well be done the best way right away. Beyer obtained information from Kandiyohi Power Cooperative as to the number of miles it covers in order to calculate the number of miles in the county. Froemming noted Kandiyohi Power Cooperative does not service the entire county but the information helped Beyer. Schmoll stated there has been some discussion on backup plans in case FTC is not able to do the project and the potential cost of a backup plan. Froemming stated other cooperatives in Minnesota are also looking at working with telephone cooperatives and Kandiyohi Power Cooperative is educating itself on what is happening. Chairperson Bouta reported on a meeting with Senator Matt Schmit and Rep. Baker. The purpose was to hear what the Senate side is doing as to broadband and to tell Kandiyohi County's story. Senator Schmit grasped onto the need for continual consistent funding and he had not heard about giving a company two years to accomplish a fiber project rather than one. Chairperson Bouta was encouraged with the dialogue between the Senate and House via Senator Schmit and Rep. Baker and noted Senators Schmit and Koenen are now working together. Ann Treacy's blog

mentioned Senator Schmit's meeting with Kandiyohi County. Schmoll and Donna Boonstra reported as this is not a funding year, the Legislature is looking at policy issues so the talking points provided to them were very important. Beyer has encouraged this committee to talk with other companies as he does not know if FTC will have time to do Kandiyohi County's project. Marotzke stated it would be good to include information about schools and students who cannot take classes or accelerated classes because they cannot complete their homework due to broadband issues. Mort suggested contacting school counselors as to students who do not have access to broadband. The committee was encouraged to share with this committee or the EDC any stories they may hear on local broadband issues.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—Schmoll reported the inside of the EDC's recent four-page newsletter was about the EDC's work on broadband (see attached) and was a good communication with the public. Kleindl reported the County Board of Commissioners adopted the resolution on broadband adopted by this committee last month.

NEW BUSINESS—Schmoll reported she and Boonstra will be attending a legislative meeting hosted by the Blandin Foundation on March 9 at the Carlson School of Management. Also, Schmoll, Boonstra and Travis Bonnema will testify at a legislative committee hearing on March 17. Kleindl stated they may have 15 minutes to testify so it is important to have information ready and hit the highlights. Chairperson Bouta stated it is key to have a real strong point that catches them. Kleindl recommended each committee member start talking with their inner circles and contacts about what this committee is trying to do. It was suggested it may be good to develop talking points about the feasibility study for this committee to use. Marotzke stated FTC got permission slips from Morris city residents to install fiber to the home; it is good to get ownership or partnership by community members. Chairperson Bouta noted the earliest anything could happen is next year and it may be two years just to do construction. Marotzke stated there could be an addition of some jobs to the community with this project. Chairperson Bouta encouraged communication between committee members and their circles to get the word out on what this committee is doing. This committee will need to help market the broadband service after installation and it was suggested to create a communications subcommittee on which Marotzke volunteered to serve.

IT WAS MOVED BY Brian Mort, SECONDED BY Larry Kleindl, to add Michelle Marotzke to the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee.
MOTION CARRIED.

NEXT MEETING—The next meeting is 12 noon, Monday, April 4, 2016, in Room 2055, Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services Building, Willmar.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:47 p.m.



2016 Legislative Briefing

Fiber to the Premise (FTTP); 100 Megabits per second (Mbps) to 1 Gigabit per second (Gbps) of symmetrical bandwidth is very important to education, telemedicine, telecommuting, precision agriculture, rural businesses, and more. There are 92 wavelengths of light in each strand of fiber and each wavelength can do 1 Gbps. The benefits of having 1 FTTP to each premise in any community are limitless. We believe that communities who do not have FTTP are underserved.

The real benefit of fiber optic is what you do with it and how it is used; here are just a few examples:

- There are STEM Schools who are doing real-time Chinese lessons in their communities.
- Real-time data, improved response time, and better coordination for all emergency responders.
- Seniors will be able to stay in their homes longer with access to telemedicine.
- Property values will increase where the fiber is already there.
- Rural communities will be able to retain the businesses that are there and recruit new ones to the area.
- Precision agriculture requires higher upload AND download speeds for their mapping technology.
- FTTP is reliable future-proof technology that will be good for the next 50-60 years.
- The theme at the last Broadband conference was "Dig Once"...we'd like to be able to do this in our community...DIG ONCE!

The following talking points are key for us to bring FTTP in our community:

1. Construction Season – We would like to see the wording in the award policy be changed so that the contractors are allowed two full construction seasons to complete their project. One construction season is too short for Minnesota climate.
2. Prevailing Wage – When the project is outside of the seven county metro-area, we ask for elimination of or changes to the prevailing wage policy. In the rural areas prevailing wage categories could be changed to communications categories with data from the county or region in which the project resides. Also have the county or region conduct wage reporting on both union and non-union employees. Prevailing wage discrimination is illustrated as follows; In some cases, splicers, who have little more than a high school diploma are paid more than an electrician who must complete an apprenticeship and secure certification.
3. Long Term Funding – In the Border-to-Border Program, we ask that the funding be set at an amount per year where the larger projects can be completed; i.e. \$30 million a year for 3 years. Then we ask that there be another loan program with separate additional funds that do not take away from the Border-to-Border funding. We suggest that 20 to 30 year loans at a fixed rate of 3% or less would be very helpful.
4. Reliable Funding – We ask that you make multi-year funding commitments available so that applications for funding would be set up in equal increments per year so that the entire project would be assured of being completed.
5. Targets for Rural Funding – We ask that you include criteria where un-served and underserved communities rise to the top as a qualifier. Also, please include scarcity and density criteria for an entire community making the application; i.e. 10 customers per mile.
6. Economic Development – We believe that helping Rural MN with grant funding and low interest loans will allow our state to become even more economically viable and allow our entrepreneurs as well as business people to live and work in the rural areas and communities of their choice. The pay back will be far greater than any of us can ever imagine!!!

Kandiyohi County Broadband Stories February 2016

1. A medical professional/newcomer to the Willmar Lakes area purchased a house and small piece of land and planned to spend more time at home than he had in the past. He quickly discovered that would not be the case as internet access and speed issues were not adequate to conduct charting from home.
2. A rural Kandiyohi County business moved most of their operations and jobs to a central South Dakota area because of adequate broadband was not available to the manufacturing facility in rural Kandiyohi County.
3. Willmar attorney, Daniel Mohs, reported that he would not have bought the home he did had he known he would only have access with his hotspot on his cell phone and has to otherwise drive into Willmar for service.
4. Bruce Vruwink of Tracks USA reports he tried many things in the past to get adequate internet speed for his rural Lake Lillian business which promotes product throughout the nation. He opted for service with Frontier and for years stayed with unsatisfactory service that gradually got better and then last summer deteriorated beyond being usable. He worked with MVTW Wireless to find a new service that he says is "relatively functional." He put up his own tower and signed on to 10 MB download service. Tests of actual speed come in at 4.98 MB down and 2.7 MB up to 9 MB down and 3 MB up. He has days when equipment outages cause the MVTW Wireless service to fail. He pays \$128 a month for MVTW Wireless and maintains his Frontier account at \$93 per month for a back-up service when outages occur even though it is incredibly slow. He has access to greater MB service with MVTW Wireless but the cost is prohibitive. Bruce ended his conversation with this; "time is money, you know!"
5. Sam Romain of Haug Implement reports that in the new-age of Precision farming we deal with large amounts of data; field data, tractor data, weather data, and various other farm data, including aerial imagery. Many times farmers are not able to download this data at their home so they need to travel into town to stop at a local McDonalds, or coffee shop to get free Wi-Fi. The distance to do so is often ten to thirty miles from the farm locations. This can cause a lot of issues for efficiency and also adoption rate of new technologies that Haug has to offer. The headache of not being able to implement precision farming because your internet speed won't allow it is a true tragedy, when we think about having to feed a growing population with reduced inputs. The average consumer doesn't realize it but precision farming has been one of the best contributors to a greener and more sustainable commercial agriculture.
6. Truck Transport west of Willmar has poor DSL service, Dahmes Stainless in New London poor DSL, Bushmills Atwater had Mediacom run a Fiber to the plant because Frontier would not and Frontiers service is poor. This fiber is out of Mediacom's foot print for service and Bushmill had to pay the install. This affects the ability for these customers to have VPN's to other locations, poor reliability in transferring files for commerce with vendors and customers, lack of bandwidth so they cannot create reliable disaster recovery backups and reliable cloud services.

7. Jennie-O Turkey Store: An area farm is located on two sides of a rural road. On one side, DSL service is available from a local ISP, however, the provider's service ends there. On the other side of the road, there is no service available. And, as part of increased bio-security efforts to reduce risk and spread of avian influenza, Jennie-O Turkey Store is adding on to its internal network. This allows the company to provide monthly training to employees and manage farms remotely, as well as view live video feeds from the farms. Slow internet speeds mean that 4G setups have to be used instead, which consumes excessive amounts of data each month. And from Jennie-O: "A large benefit of why we are currently working to network all of our farms is to decrease cross-contamination and improve bio-security should another outbreak occur. We've looked into the fixed wireless option in the past and it just won't work for us, there are latency issues and reliability is a concern when there are outages during bad weather. We rely on these systems to send out alarms when something is wrong. On the sites where we can't get DSL, we are choosing 4G setups as the alternative. Rural broadband is a concern for us statewide, not just Kandiyohi County, but obviously our home is here and we'd love to see improvements come to our county."
8. The Kandiyohi County / City of Willmar EDC Broadband Committee has been meeting for many years addressing the technology and connectivity needs of Kandiyohi County. For the past 4 years our focus has been on broadband connectivity in Kandiyohi County. Kandiyohi County has 2 main demographics with lakes areas to the north and agriculture to the south. The needs are different with the Ag industry. Everyone focuses on download speeds, which is important but there is a real need to have higher upload speeds because the farmers have huge amounts of data that they need to transmit. The only way to accomplish this is fiber to the end user.

Kandiyohi County is serviced by 3 incumbent telcos, Century Link, Frontier, and TDS.

Our committee has had discussions with the 3 main telco providers to try and partner with them to provide better broadband services in the County. They have made some small upgrades to outdated DSL services but the majority of the County has underserved inconsistent broadband service. Our committee has also met with various independent providers that offer broadband services in surrounding areas. All of the above are not willing to commit to providing Fiber to the Premises (FTTP) within the County. What our committee has found is there are providers that are willing to invest in FTTP in the County and are willing to have a longer ROI time frame to make it work. These providers are typically a Coop business model and have a successful track record in other parts of the State. They do need a consistent public / private grant partnership to help cover some of the initial infrastructure install cost.

2/9/2016

Kandiyohi County Economic Development Committee

Internet Service in Rural Area

It has been brought to our attention that there may be a possibility of broadband internet services extending into parts of rural Kandiyohi County and this may be of interest to us. We are a small business with approximately 20 employees. Our company was established in 1978 and have spent most of those years north of Pennock. Our business is based off of web and phone purchases that we ship out using a variety of carriers. Most of those years we spent trying to update our 60,000+ customers and 3,000 product website using a dialup connection. Recently we were able to get a T1 service however this still limits what we are able to do. Below are some of the items that we struggle with.

We cannot publish information to our website and purchase/print a shipping label at the same time without the chance of timing out and leaving our website with corrupt data.

Due to this we have to wait until there is a lull processing shipments or after hours to publish data to our store. This in turn concerns our customers because they aren't getting updates on their orders in a timely fashion.

At times our current internet is so slow that it is quicker to check your email on a mobile device rather than using our computers.

We also send data back and forth to some of our customers like Cabela's, Gander Mountain, Scheels, etc. this can sometimes take up to a half hour to send them an invoice or print out their box labels.

We also send our catalog and other files to printing companies which can take up to 10 hours to send if it doesn't time out first.

It is no question that our business continues to grow and our customers expect a reply immediately whether that is a confirmation of order received or a message containing their tracking number. It would be great to have an internet service that we and our customers could rely on.

Thank you,
Minnesota Traplie Products, Inc,

EDC ADVOCATES FOR COWORKING

ADVOCACY
RETENTION
EXPANSION
MARKETING

New Executive Director Named

You'll be seeing a new face around the EDC offices very soon. The search for a new Executive Director is over. Aaron Backman, currently the Executive Director of the Economic Development Authority of Windom, MN, has accepted the position. He will begin on February 24.



Aaron Backman

A huge thanks to retired director, Steve Renquist, who graciously agreed to continue his advocacy for economic development while the search was underway.



website | www.kandiyohi.com
email | edc@kandiyohi.com
twitter | @KandiWillmarEDC
find us on facebook



In its quest to be a catalyst for economic growth in the greater Kandiyohi County area, the EDC was one of the first backers of WORKUP, a new coworking space on the MinnWest Technology Campus.

Coworking is work and meeting space shared by a community of individuals. It's a movement that's catching on around the world, thanks in part to the growing number of freelancers, independent contractors and entrepreneurs. In fact, by 2020, those individuals will account for 40% of the workforce in the United States, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Several factors go into a successful coworking space: a love for the community, a love of work, a culture of learning, a diverse membership and a great space to make it all happen. WORKUP has all five.

WORKUP owner Betsy Bonnema says the advocacy of the EDC has been invaluable in getting the business off and running.

"The EDC has been an incredible source of support and help in starting WORKUP. In fact, I'm not sure we would be here without them. They not only approved a low interest loan to help with startup expenses, but have been advocates and active participants in the success of our launch!"

- Betsy Bonnema



Photo credit: WORKUP

The 4,200 square foot cottage that WORKUP occupies was built in the early 1900s and still has many of its original features. It now also boasts a modern design with funky furniture, cutting-edge technology, conference space, a kitchen, coffee bar and unique work and meeting spaces.

But it isn't just about the building. To promote a culture of learning, WORKUP offers its members numerous networking opportunities along with the area business community the chance to take part in workshops, classes and roundtable discussions. The EDC contributes to those training opportunities whenever possible.

One of the goals of the EDC is to increase business development at the MinnWest Technology Campus. WORKUP is not only a result of that goal, the coworking space is also doing its part to bring businesses in, and then keep them in the area once they're established. If a start-up company utilizing WORKUP grows and needs to expand into its own office space, they don't have to leave the campus, but can work with MinnWest to create their own unique space in another historic building on the more than 100-acre campus. WORKUP is also a member of the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce. For more information about WORKUP and coworking opportunities, visit workup.cc.



Photo credit:
WLA Chamber
of Commerce



BROADBAND: THE NEW CORE UTILITY

It's this year's hot button topic and being touted as the new core utility, just as important as water and electricity. But what exactly is broadband and why is it so important to so many people?

In a nutshell, broadband is high-speed Internet via fiber optic cables. New technology is always on the horizon, but most experts agree that fiber is still the best option for broadband. Broadband offers high-speed download and upload capabilities. Download speeds are important to most home users, but upload speeds are equally important, especially for those in the field of agriculture technology. According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), broadband is defined by download speeds of 25 Mbps and upload speeds of 3 Mbps.



What does this mean for Kandiyohi County as a whole? There is a huge need for broadband countywide. It is a key component in economic development, both in bringing new business to the area, and also in keeping businesses here long-term. Professionals, graduates and entrepreneurs who want to live in the lakes area and work remotely need broadband. In some cases, precision ag specialists currently have to drive into city limits to process farm data. Rural business managers

are reporting difficulty in accessing email, online videos and online marketing opportunities. The list goes on.

What does the immediate future hold? The EDC has been working on the broadband issue for years and is currently in talks with various providers who agree the need is great. One interested party would provide broadband speeds of 1 Gigabit per second for both download and upload, well above industry standards.



Photo credits: Blandin Foundation

Funds have been secured to do a feasibility study in Kandiyohi County. The Blandin Foundation recently awarded the EDC a \$25,000 grant and the county will supply another \$25,000 in matching funds. Federated Telephone Cooperative offered \$12,500 for the study as well. It will take three to six months to complete and is a necessary step before applying for money from Minnesota's Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program. That grant application must be submitted by an Internet provider, not the county or the EDC, which makes the study an important component. It will give the providers the information they need in the application process.

The EDC has hosted five different listening sessions on the topic of broadband during the year 2015. U. S. Senator Amy Klobuchar, Minnesota Representatives Dave Baker and Tim Miller, Speaker of the House Kurt Daudt and Minnesota Senator Lyle Koenen have all participated and shown great concern about areas in Kandiyohi County that lack adequate broadband access. Each of the legislators have also committed to speaking in favor of expanding broadband in rural Minnesota. As Representative Baker noted, "We can't lose more residents and businesses to higher populated areas because the internet is 'too slow.'"

Check out our NEW website:

The EDC has a new look online! Visit www.kandiyohi.com to see our new website, complete with the latest demographics and business stats, searchable databases for buildings and property, and the latest news on economic development in Kandiyohi County.

Kandiyohi County is Designated as an Unserved Area

While most of the Willmar area has broadband access, much of Kandiyohi County has been designated as an unserved area. An unserved area has no wireless access with download speeds of 25 Mbps and upload speeds of 3 Mbps.

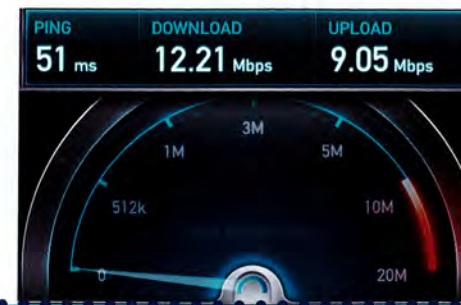
(Source: DEED)



Broadband in the News

The Minnesota Broadband Task Force met in January and finalized its recommendations to the Governor. The two hottest topics? Funding and speeds. The recommendations include \$200 million over two years for broadband funding and universal access and high speeds (25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload) for all Minnesota businesses, homes and institutions, including public schools, colleges and universities no later than 2022.

(Source: Blandin on Broadband)



Up to Speed?

Visit speedtest.net to see how your current upload and download speeds compare to the broadband standards of 25 Mbps for downloads and 3 Mbps for uploads.

The Blandin Foundation – Who are they?

Established in 1941, the Blandin Foundation is headquartered in Grand Rapids, Minnesota and addresses issues in rural communities in an effort to enhance economic viability and quality of life. One focus of the foundation is the Blandin Community Broadband Program. The goal is to increase rural broadband access and use, which will ultimately enrich the quality of life for residents in rural areas and boost economic development.



Photo credit: Blandin Foundation

The Blandin Foundation and Kandiyohi County

Kandiyohi County has already benefited from grant money from the Blandin Foundation. In July of 2015, they awarded a \$17,680 grant to create Wi-Fi access points on Central Community Transit (CCT) buses, NLS school buses, United Way Growmobile and at the Willmar Civic Center. Another \$10,000 grant provided funds for the Hack2O conference at WORKUP in September, and technology experts from Blandin were on hand to assist in the hackathon. The event was designed to give like-minded people a chance to work together to create new technologies and applications that will benefit the local area.



Photo credit: WORKUP

Broadband in Healthcare

Kandiyohi County has always invested in cutting-edge technology for healthcare. Broadband is the next obvious step. Craig Settles, a broadband industry analyst, consultant, blog writer and radio host recently discovered firsthand what broadband means in healthcare after suffering a stroke. "When someone has a stroke, there is a three-hour window in which to get them serious treatment – and a person living alone in a community that lacks broadband means the start of their treatment has a high probability of falling outside of that window," he says. To read more about his story, visit www.govtech.com/opinion/Community-Broadband-Easily-Explained.html.



Photo credit: Blandin Foundation

In the Area

Swift County is investing heavily in broadband. The Minnesota Office of Broadband Development granted \$4.9 million to Federated Telephone Cooperative to build a fiber infrastructure in Swift County. The county is also pitching in with a \$7.5 million loan to complete the \$12.4 million upgrade. The project is expected to bring in more than 500 jobs related to farming, business start-ups and commercial expansion.



Photo credit: Blandin Foundation

Willmar Receives \$10 Million TIGER Grant

TIGER - Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery

Out of 627 applicants for this year's federal TIGER grants, only 39 were selected. The Willmar Wye project was one of the lucky few. The Willmar Wye project is a railroad bypass and proposed industrial park rail spur. In addition to the \$10 million TIGER grant provided by the US Department of Transportation, another \$40 million will be invested by BNSF Railway, MNDOT, Kandiyohi County, the City of Willmar and the EDC.



Photo credit: West Central Tribune

BUSINESS UPDATES | PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Willmar Industrial Park

The expansion of the Willmar Industrial Park is complete with more than 150 acres available for development. The shovel-ready park has great access to transportation networks, including future rail access thanks to a nearly \$50 million public-private collaborative project to add a rail switch into the park, making it one of the only industrial parks in the state to offer direct rail access. The EDC has been actively working with the City to attract businesses to the Industrial Park and advocated to keep the former airport land to expand Kandiyohi County's Industrial Park availability.



Photo credit: West Central Tribune

Foxhole Brewery in Willmar & Goat Ridge Brewery in New London



Photo credit: Foxhole Brewery

The chances of your next drink order being a craft beer have gone up considerably in Kandiyohi County, with the grand opening of not one, but two microbreweries. Goat Ridge Brewery and the Dam Taproom opened in New London in mid-April 2015 and seats 45 people. Foxhole Brewhouse opened in Historic 313 on Fourth Street in downtown Willmar in the fall of 2015. Foxhole's taproom seats 65 with additional seating outside during warmer weather. The EDC assisted Goat Ridge in creating business planning documents and securing funding. The EDC was also instrumental in securing funding for the redevelopment of the Historic 313 building, allowing for new tenants, one of which was Foxhole Brewery.



Photo credit: Goat Ridge Brewery

Meadow Star Dairy

With 8,500 cows producing eight semi-tankers of milk daily, Meadow Star Dairy near Pennock is the largest dairy farm in Kandiyohi County. Meadow Star opened for business in late October 2015. To advocate for economic development, EDC staff participated in township community meetings, assisted with permits at both the township and county levels, and worked with township officials to secure road improvement funding.



Photo credits: Meadow Star Dairy

Rambow's New Facility

An additional 15 full-time jobs and more than 12,000 square feet of space are a done deal at Rambow Inc. The New London-based company that specializes in custom embroidery and screen-printed apparel and promotional items, invested more than a half million dollars in the project. The EDC assisted by writing an application to DEED for the Job Creation Fund which allowed them to expand the scope of the project.



Photo credit: Rambow

Jennie-O Expansion

The 35,000 square foot expansion of the corporate offices of Jennie-O Turkey Store is complete. The more than \$8 million project added office space and parking, allowing Jennie-O to get its corporate employees under one roof. The EDC worked with Jennie-O and the City of Willmar to advocate for a tax increment financing program to make the project more feasible.



Photo credit: West Central Tribune



Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

website | www.kandiyohi.com

email | edc@kandiyohi.com

twitter | [@KandiWillmarEDC](https://twitter.com/KandiWillmarEDC)

find us on facebook

