

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

**MINUTES**

**August 17, 2016**

**EDC Board Room**

Present: Jim Ellingson, Les Nelson and Ranae Rahn

Guest: Dan Hanson

Excused: Sam Bowen and Roger Imdieke

Absent: Jean Marthaler

Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist (filling in for Aaron Backman)

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

Chair Les Nelson called the meeting to order at approximately 11:10 a.m.

**MINUTES**—As there was not a quorum in attendance, the April 20, 2016 minutes were received, but not approved.

**REPORTS**

**BRE visitation program update.** Connie Schmoll highlighted progress on two BRE visitation program outcomes: 1) Workforce: the Vision 2040 EDC BRE/R Workforce Subcommittee is planning a Manufacturer's Day event. On August 30<sup>th</sup>, the Willmar High School teachers are touring eight local manufacturers with each manufacturer contributing a \$250 sponsorship for bus transportation. Willmar High School 10<sup>th</sup> grade students will tour the same eight manufacturers on October 12<sup>th</sup>. Schmoll shared a video the Subcommittee developed featuring local manufacturers. 2) Higher reliability and speed for broadband: A feasibility study was conducted this spring/summer and findings support the need for rural broadband in Kandiyohi County. According to the feasibility study findings, the total cost for a broadband project is estimated at \$60-68 million. Kandiyohi County will apply for a share of the state's \$35 million Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant. Matching funds will be required to apply for the grant and may be secured by bonding by Kandiyohi County to supply a loan to the private partner, Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC). The selection of a service area for the project is critical and will be decided prior to submittal of the grant application.

**Atwater BRE program update.** Schmoll gave a presentation to the Atwater Chamber of Commerce on April 25, 2016. The Atwater EDA has cancelled follow-up meetings as the Atwater BRE study revealed there were no critical issues at this time. Atwater is currently covered by the county BRE program and may continue with this coverage for the time being.

**Business visits/tours.** Schmoll commented Aaron Backman has prepared a report listing approximately 50 businesses he and Schmoll have visited since March 2016.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**BRE/R Committee meeting locations.** This agenda topic will be tabled until next year. Chair Nelson asked that selection of a new BRE/R Committee Chair be on the September 21, 2016 agenda.

**Update 2016 goals.** Schmoll shared and reviewed the EDC 2016 benchmarks and goals and distributed Backman's ideas for 2016 BRE focus and goals:

1. Target key industries: Precision Manufacturing, BioScience, Logistics/Warehousing, Medical, etc.
2. Build relationships with local businesses, prospects, property owners and site developers.
3. Participate in at least one site selector event (e.g., in Minneapolis, St. Louis, Chicago) each year.
4. Collect and update land, building and community information for prospects, developers and businesses.
5. Sponsor and help facilitate a Transportation Summit in Willmar regarding the Highway 23 four-lane expansion.
6. Sponsor and help facilitate a Willmar for a Day at the Capitol in St. Paul for the 2017 Legislative Session.

After discussion, committee members suggested the BRE/R Committee focus on the following goals:

- No. 2: Build relationships with local businesses, prospects, property owners and site developers.
  - Jim Ellingson commented goal No. 2 and No. 4 are a continuous process.
- No. 5: Sponsor and help facilitate a Transportation Summit in Willmar regarding the Highway 23 four-lane expansion.
  - Chair Nelson feels more involvement is needed from regions and counties north (Stearns) and south of Willmar along Highway 23.

Ranae Rahn commented all six BRE goals are good and suggested forming a smaller subcommittee to review the goals to identify individual goals, objectives and timelines using the format of the 2016 EDC goals. Schmoll concurred this would be an excellent idea. Schmoll,

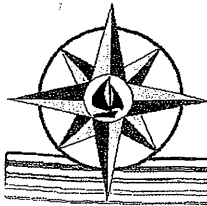
Ellingson and Rahn volunteered to serve on the subcommittee to review the 2016 EDC goals along with the suggested 2016 BRE goals and come up with recommendations to present to the BRE/R Committee on September 21, 2016. Schmoll will send a Meeting Wizard to schedule the subcommittee meeting. Schmoll commented one goal not included in the draft goals is conducting a BRE survey with another city and suggested a survey not be conducted at this time. Committee members concurred.

**Transportation infrastructure update.** Schmoll provided an update on the Highway 23 four-lane expansion completion. If the bonding bill is passed, it may provide \$50-60 million to complete the gap. Also waiting for the decision by MnDOT as to what highways are considered “Critical Rural Freight Corridors.”

**Other.** Schmoll provided an update on the Willmar Wye project. Although the project is not anticipated to begin for a while, partners are moving forward with the planning process. Rahn distributed postcards of Baker Graphics’ customer appreciation open house scheduled for August 24, 2016, 3-6 p.m. at 4166 18<sup>th</sup> Street NE, North of Willmar.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:50 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next regular committee meeting is **11:00 a.m., September 21, 2016**, in the EDC Board Room.



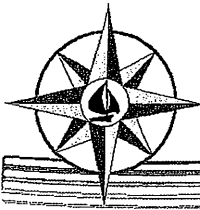
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**Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC  
Spring 2016 Planning Retreat • April 21, 2016  
Session Results**

<b>Recent Successes &amp; Issues</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Vision, Mission, &amp; Priorities</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Types of Future Work</b>	<b>3</b>
<b><u>Benchmarks for New Priorities</u></b>	
• Broadband	4
• Transportation Infrastructure	5
• Industrial Park Development	6
• Expand Funding Options for Businesses	7
• Marketing & Public Relations	8
<b>Session Evaluations</b>	<b>9</b>



## **Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC 2016 Plan** ***Benchmarks: Broadband***

### **1) What do we want to accomplish? (*New Goal*)**

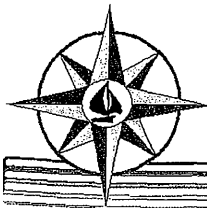
Expand a robust high-speed broadband network, utilizing fiber to the premise (FTTP) networks wherever possible and a mix of other communication technologies where fiber is not possible, to attain broadband access to every home, farm and business in Kandiyohi County.

### **2) What should be done to begin? (*Data Needed or Action Steps*)**

- Complete the Kandiyohi County Broadband Feasibility Study.
- Continue to identify specific needs for broadband access and speed including current and future communication needs.
- Advocate for state and federal legislative action that secures helpful policies and adequate funding to support robust high-speed broadband development.
- Identify and secure funding sources to proceed with implementation of broadband in Kandiyohi County.
- Secure partnership with one or more broadband provider(s) to move forward with broadband network deployment in Kandiyohi County.

### **3) What should we see happening w/in 90 days? (*Benchmarks*)**

- Completion of the Kandiyohi County Broadband Feasibility Study and a full report provided to the Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners.
- A provider or providers will begin planning for a shovel-ready broadband deployment project for Kandiyohi County.
- A grant writer will be secured to begin to draft a Border to Border grant application.



## **Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC 2016 Plan** **Benchmarks: Transportation Infrastructure**

### **1) What do we want to accomplish? (*New Goal*)**

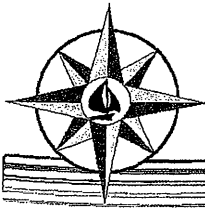
- Completion of MN Hwy 23 four-lane corridor between St. Cloud and Willmar; including the two gaps north of New London by 2024.
- Implementation of the Railroad Wye on the west side of Willmar bypassing the downtown and installation of rail spur to Willmar Rail Park by 2020.
- Improvements to US Hwy 12 in Willmar, inc. the realignment for the Wye project and enhancements to Hwy 12 thru Downtown Willmar.
- Increase operations at Willmar Municipal Airport by 25% by 2020.

### **2) What should be done to begin? (*Data Needed or Action Steps*)**

- Work with MnDOT, City, County, BNSF & other stakeholders to help facilitate the process; Travel to St. Paul and other locations as needed.
- Explore funding options for undertaking the rail spur project, inc. state funding such as Greater MN Business Development Public Infrastructure (BDPI) or Transportation Economic Development (TED) grants, and federal funding such Economic Development Administration (EDA) Public Works and Economic Adjustment grants.
- Make investments in support of long-term, collaborative regional approaches, such as being active in the Hwy 23 Corridor Group.
- Recruit business prospects interested in locating at Willmar airport or industrial park.

### **3) What should we see happening w/in 90 days? (*Benchmarks*)**

- Interact with the Railroad Wye stakeholders to understand the parameters and timelines of the project, funding needs, and what additional funding may be required; pursue funding on behalf of City as needed.
- In early June a group of 16 area reps will be flying to D.C. to meet with FHA and elected officials to seek additional federal funding for the Wye project, CR5/55 overpass, Hwy 23, etc.
- Continue discussions with business prospects regarding the status of the Railroad Wye Project and rail spur.



## **Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC 2016 Plan** **Benchmarks: Industrial Park Development**

### **1) What do we want to accomplish? (*New Goal*)**

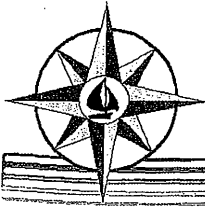
- Sell one-third of all buildable lots in the Third and Fourth Additions of the Willmar Industrial Park by 2020 and have facilities constructed on those lots within 18 months of sale.
- Prepare development and finance plans for the proposed Willmar Rail Park by 2019.
- Identify potential sites and seek City Council approvals to establish a new industrial park in the City of New London and/or City of Spicer by 2017.

### **2) What should be done to begin? (*Data Needed or Action Steps*)**

- Complete State of MN Shovel-Ready Certification Program for Fourth Addition of the Willmar Industrial Park by July of 2016.
- Develop marketing plan and materials for Willmar Industrial Park by October of 2016.
- Seek BNSF Shovel Ready Certification for the Willmar Rail Park by the end of 2020.
- Work with Regional Econ. Dev. Mgr. for BNSF to market the availability of railroad-served industrial park to industry; and continue to work with prospects in Minnesota interested in rail access.
- Support additional funding for rail and road components of Railroad Wye & Rail Park.
- Assist cities outside of Willmar to review and inventory their industrial properties, and to assess options to expand their industrial parks.

### **3) What should we see happening w/in 90 days? (*Benchmarks*)**

- Ensure that contractors complete Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) report, Geotechnical report, and final ALTA Survey by the end of May 2016.
- Fill out and submit Shovel-Ready Certification application to DEED by mid-June 2016.
- Working with City staff, continue to refine layout options for the proposed Willmar Rail Park.
- Introduce Marketing Committee to industrial park marketing needs; and develop marketing pieces.
- Review Willmar Wye schedule; participate in weekly Wye Partners conference calls; and support the implementation of the railroad bypass project.



## **Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC 2016 Plan *Benchmarks:* Expand Funding Options for Businesses**

### **1) What do we want to accomplish? (*New Goal*)**

- Expand funding options for local businesses and entrepreneurs.

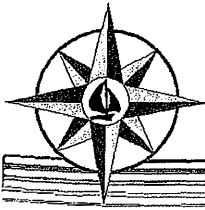
### **2) What should be done to begin? (*Data Needed or Action Steps*)**

- Collect details about the funding options that are currently available to businesses and entrepreneurs in the Willmar lakes area.
- Research and pursue additional loan funds to expand the EDC portfolio for small business financing.
- Research and seek advice on appropriate and effective guarantee level for business gap funding provided by the EDC.
- Continue the planning process for an Ag Investment Group.

### **3) What should we see happening w/in 90 days? (*Benchmarks*)**

- A list of current local funding options will be created and available for distribution as needed.
- An application seeking up to \$100,000 will be created to pursue a Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) through USDA. The grant will require an \$30,000 match from the EDC. This new \$130,000 revolving loan fund would be used to assist small and emerging businesses with less than 50 new employees and less than \$1 million in revenues.
- A final decision will be reached about the level of guarantee the EDC will provide for the Loan Guarantee Program.
- Local investors will have secured funds and enlisted a consultant for forming the Ag Investment Group.





## **Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC 2016 Plan** ***Benchmarks: Marketing & Public Relations***

### **1) What do we want to accomplish? (*New Goal*)**

- Maintain strong public relations with business and community representatives of the Willmar Lakes area.

### **2) What should be done to begin? (*Data Needed or Action Steps*)**

- Conduct regular visits with local manufacturing businesses, retail and service industries, workforce and education representatives and government officials to identify critical needs and offer assistance as appropriate.
- Market the EDC through the EDC's website, newsletter and social media sites; local cable TV channels, newspapers and radio; and by placing news items in the Chamber Advantage.
- Collaborate with MinnWest Technology Campus for targeted business recruitment events and activities, including joint membership with Community Venture Network (CVN).
- Support efforts to develop, engage, expand and promote WORKUP, a co-working facility, and the Mid-Central Research and Outreach Center (MCROC), a regional Extension Office for the University of Minnesota and a bio-science research laboratory.

### **3) What should we see happening w/in 90 days? (*Benchmarks*)**

- Successful completion of the shovel-ready certification Application, and once approved by the State of MN, incorporate the designation on the EDC's website and marketing pieces.
- As broadband milestones are met, issue press releases and hold press events.
- Participate in monthly the radio program, "Open Mic" on radio station KWLM.
- Participate in the Ag & Animal Science Conference at MinnWest Technology Campus, including setting up an EDC Agriculture and Renewable Energy Committee booth.

From Aaron Backman  
August 12, 2016

Here are some ideas for BRE Focus and Goals:

- 1) Target key industries, Precision Manufacturing, Bioscience, Logistics/Warehousing, Medical, etc.
- 2) Build relationships with local businesses, prospects, property owners, and site developers.
- 3) Participate in at least one site selector event (e.g. in Minneapolis, St. Louis, Chicago) each year.
- 4) Collect and update land, building, and community information for prospects, developers, and businesses.
- 5) Sponsor and help facilitate a Transportation Summit in Willmar re Hwy 23 four-lane completion, etc.
- 6) Sponsor and help facilitate a Willmar for a Day at the Capitol in St. Paul for 2017 legislative session.

**2015 Goals/Projects  
BRE/R Committee**

**Goal 1 Create, recruit, retain and expand businesses in Kandiyohi County**

**Strategy 1.1.3 Business Retention and Expansion**

Objectives/Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
Complete step 2, analyze data and create reports from 2014 Kandiyohi County Business Visitation program.	Connie & Visitation Program Participants	February 2015	
Initiate and move forward step 3, projects to respond to identified issues from the 2014 Kandiyohi County Business Visitation Program.	Connie & Visitation Program Participants	Through-out 2015	
Provide follow-up to individual businesses with expressed needs from 2014 visitation program.	BRE Program Directors and Coordinators	March 2015	
Introduce BRE program to cities in Kandiyohi County that were not part of 2014 programs and implement BRE Visitation programs in at least three of the cities. (Willmar, Spicer, and New London completed and a few businesses in Raymond, Atwater and Pennock.)	Connie	October 2015	

**Goal 1 Create, recruit, retain and expand businesses in Kandiyohi County**

**Strategy 1.1.7 Economic development programs, including WAM-BC, downtown development and community development throughout Kandiyohi County**

Objectives/Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
Serve on WAM-BC Board of Directors to promote collaboration and EDC programs and services	Jean	Ongoing	
Serve on WADC Board or committee to promote collaboration and EDC programs and services	Steve	Ongoing	
Provide outreach to city councils within the county to promote collaboration and EDC programs and services	Connie	Through-out 2015	

**Goal 1 Create, recruit, retain and expand businesses in Kandiyohi County**

**Strategy 1.1.8 Mapping of industrial development within Kandiyohi County for infrastructure and services**

Objectives/Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
Complete Shovel Ready process for Willmar's Industrial Park	Jean Bruce Peterson		
Assist other county cities in mapping their industrial properties and/or completing Shovel Ready process	Steve Jean Connie		
Contact service providers (utilities, broadband, telcos) for cooperative	Jean		

mapping and trench programs for Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar			
Work with countywide community officials and real estate professionals to create and maintain a compilation of available commercial and industrial property	Connie Jean	6/2015	
Update the Community Profile information in the searchable data base that is in the EDC Website. Ensure that Location One Information Services (LOIS) is made accessible on new EDC website.			

<b>Goal 2 Improve, maintain and expand Kandiyohi County's transportation infrastructure through increased collaboration</b>			
<b>Strategy 2.1.1 Willmar Municipal Airport</b>			
<b>Objectives/Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Status/Update/Comments</b>
Support efforts of the city of Willmar to market the airport to existing and prospective businesses within the city/region	Steve	6/2015	
Assist the city of Willmar with any funding opportunities to maintain, improve or expand the existing facility	Steve	6/2015	
Examine opportunities to create linkages that might expand the utilization of the airport	Steve	6/2015	
<b>Goal 2 Improve, maintain and expand Kandiyohi County's transportation infrastructure through increased collaboration</b>			
<b>Strategy 2.1.2 Railroad</b>			
<b>Objectives/Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Status/Update/Comments</b>
Assist efforts of BNSF, the city of Willmar and Kandiyohi County on all funding opportunities through the TIGER federal grant program, MNDOT and DEED for construction of a rail bypass west of Willmar	Steve	12/2015	
Coordinate with BNSF, the City of Willmar and Kandiyohi County a design build for a rail-serviced Industrial Park loop for land west of the expanded Willmar Industrial Park	Steve	12/2015	
Coordinate with BNSF marketing outreach to rail-serviced customers that are in need of expanded building development	Steve	12/2015	

opportunities with the Willmar Industrial Park			
Engage Hwy 23 Coalition to work with MnDOT on development of passing lanes on the Hwy 23 corridor from Willmar to I-90	Steve	Infinite	
Utilize resources of the Hwy 23 Coalition to advocate the completion of the planned 4-lane along Hwy 23 between New London, Paynesville and Richmond	Steve	12/2015	