

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
 MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
**MINUTES**  
 September 24, 2018  
 WORKUP, Willmar

Present: Kim Augeson, Donna Boonstra, Shari Courtney, Deb Geister, Emily Lien, Pam Rosenau and Brittany VanDerBill

Excused: Jean Geselius, Melissa Knott and Joanna Schrupp

Absent:

Guest: Jayme Sczublewski, REDstar Creative

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

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

Chair Deb Geister called the meeting to order at approximately 12:11 p.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Donna Boonstra, SECONDED BY Emily Lien, to approve the Minutes of the August 27, 2018 meeting. MOTION CARRIED.

Social Media Statistics. The committee reviewed the EDC’s Facebook statistics over the past month: 15 posts (down 50%), post reach 3,207 (down 69%), impressions 5,510 (down 73%), clicks 41 (down 44%), reactions 51 (down 72%), engaged users 361 (down 65%), page and post engagements 492 (down 69%) and new fans 4 (down 81%).

Top Posts						
Topic	Clicks	Reactions	Comments	Shares	Impressions	Reach
Highway 71 detour ends	85	11	2	11	1,417	931
Public/private partnership between local companies and Willmar Public Schools for new Manufacturing and Production course	32	8	0	2	440	302
Trade & Tariffs informational meeting	14	3	0	2	431	298
1 <sup>st</sup> Street Station	67	1	2	1	359	261
Road construction on Highway 23	32	1	0	1	299	217

Demographics for the EDC's Facebook page are: Willmar 232, Spicer 46, New London 33, Atwater 12, Belgrade 10; women 35-44 and men 25-33; people reached: Willmar 923, New London 279, Spicer 244, Minneapolis 231, St. Cloud 115; and people engaged: Willmar 62, New London 18, Spicer 13, Belgrade 6 and Minneapolis 4.

The landing pages most accessed on the EDC's website were the Home page, Transportation, Major Employers, News and Blomkest. There were 14 new users on the website.

Statistics for the Highway 23 Facebook page were 76 followers, 72 likes, average of approximately five new followers a month. Posts are cross shared between the EDC's and the Highway 23 Facebook pages.

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

Fall Newsletter Topics/Ideas. Aaron Backman reported the topic suggestions from the August meeting were taken into consideration. Jayme Sczublewski showed a draft of possible articles: Connie goes to Chicago, Talent & Technology for the Progressive Farm Manager, Highway 23 Improvements Moving Ahead, Kwik Trip Comes to Town and Little Crow Resort Up and Running.

[Kim Augeson joined the meeting.]

#### NEW BUSINESS—

2019 Willmar Lakes Area Guide. The committee viewed the ad placed in the 2018 Willmar Lakes Area Guide (see attached), which used the location, location, location format and featured area artisans, the Willmar Destination Playground and small businesses. It was suggested to add the business name to any photos used so they do not appear to be stock photos. A possible new ad was shown focusing on small business owners (see attached). Comments on the two ads included:

- the location, location, location ad has more information for the readers;
- possibly feature businesses that visitors would like to visit;
- like action photos;
- it is good to change the layout and photos;
- should the ad showcase what the EDC has done?
- the ad should encourage people to come to Kandiyohi County and visit local businesses and our features;

The objective of the ad was questioned. Chair Geister felt there should be a call to action—the ad should be more purposeful to measure outcomes. Chair Geister recommended having a landing page on the website and include a data collection form. It was the consensus that the objective is to invite visitors to stay in Kandiyohi County long term. It was noted Alexandria's tag line is "come for a visit, stay for a lifetime." Does the visitors' guide have a theme, such as recreation/wellness?

Suggested changes included:

- "Like what you see? You could be home now."
- feature diverse businesses in downtown Willmar with the line "come join the mix."

- feature the newest businesses that have opened.
- include photos of several businesses.
- feature three cool short stories on how a business was started and do longer stories on the website, i.e. Little Crow Golf Resort, Model Citizen, Goat Ridge Brewery—a business the EDC assisted with would be the best.

Highway 23 Coalition Map. Backman provided updated information on the Highway 23 Coalition and showed previous maps used by the Coalition in marketing to potential members. A new map is being considered as membership is being extended from border to border. The committee reviewed drafts of two maps, one listing cities from Pipestone to Mora and one listing counties from Rock to Kanabec (see attached). Comments on the maps included:

- change the heading “Connecting Greater MN from border to border” to “Connecting Commerce in Greater MN” as that better fits the objective and omit “from border to border;”
- add a dotted line to show the continuation of Highway 23 as a scenic byway after I-35; and
- use both versions of the map and print it back to back.

Backman noted the map will be used to sell a transportation freight highway designation.

Other. Chair Geister would like the committee to review what has been done this year and how it plays into the objectives of the EDC; she would like to start thinking of a plan for 2019.

Educational flyer. Sczublewski showed a draft educational flyer based on the information gathered by Thor Figenskau. Comments were as follows:

Page 1

- remove “nearly” in the second line on the first page, so it reads “We have 10 private. . .”;
- add College to Ridgewater in the second paragraph on the first page;
- next to the school icon, change Willmar Lakes Area to Kandiyohi County;
- change the website to [kandiyohi.com/living/education](http://kandiyohi.com/living/education);
- add some stylized print to “Jumpstart” to set it off;
- pare down the text, if possible or highlight some text; and
- the two small photos on the bottom row are similar to the photo at the right and should be changed.

Page 2

- all schools should be included on the flyer; thus, the following need to be added: ACGC, BOLD, Community Christian School and MACCRAY.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, it was moved, seconded and carried to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:22 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next meeting is 12 noon, Tuesday, October 22, 2018, at WORKUP.