

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT (BRE/R) COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
November 2, 2018  
EDC Board Room**

Present: Sam Bowen, Jim Ellingson, Les Heitke, Les Nelson, Dan Tempel and Kelly TerWisscha

Excused: Roger Imdieke and Ranae Rahn

Absent: Dean Steinwand

Guest: Jennifer Mendoza, CLUES Navigator

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

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

Chair Sam Bowen called the meeting to order at approximately 9:04 a.m.

**AGENDA**—Chair Bowen presented the Agenda.

IT WAS MOVED BY Les Nelson, SECONDED BY Jim Ellingson, to approve the Agenda.  
MOTION CARRIED.

**MINUTES**—

IT WAS MOVED BY Kelly TerWisscha, SECONDED BY Les Nelson to approve the October 5, 2018 Minutes as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**REPORTS/PROJECT UPDATES**

**BRE Survey.** Connie Schmoll shared once the research is complete, it will be scheduled for a future meeting.

**October Business Visits/Tours.** Backman reported his attendance at the following:

- WCCO's Governor Candidate Debate at MinnWest Technology Campus
- Rural Retail Revitalization meeting at Mid-Central Research and outreach Center (MCROC)
- Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) Board meeting in St. Paul
- Business Development meeting with Joanna Schrupp and Connie Schmoll

- AMC Local Government Workplace Symposium at Willmar Conference Center
- Distributed a new EDC brochure entitled A Collaborative, Out-of-The-Box Approach to Education (see attached)
- Presentation at housing event in Meeker County

**Business Visits/Tours.** Schmoll reported her attendance at the following:

- SCORE regional training in St. Cloud with John Soderholm who is training to be a SCORE mentor; Schmoll attended the training in order to train other mentors and Schmoll reported it was a worthwhile training.
- AMC Local Government Workplace Symposium at Willmar Conference Center. Highlights included:
  - Target area of biggest needs
  - Provide workshops for local providers, etc.
  - Collaborate with churches, etc.
  - Need a community of champions
  - Provider recruitment
- Childcare Appreciation Event at Lakeland School. Approximately 80 attendees. Schmoll reported Dr. Craig Johnson of Ridgewater College attended the event and offered assistance
- Blandin webinar
- Conference call with Arvig regarding broadband
- Toured Bayer Built Woodworks, Inc. in Belgrade with the Central Minnesota Manufacturers Association (CMMA)

#### **CLUES UPDATE—**

**Diverse CNA Program.** Jennifer Mendoza, CLUES Navigator, reported class time is complete and clinicals will begin. Mendoza shared the approximate wages of the CNA classes:

- First CNA class (8 students):
  - Average hourly wage prior to the CNA class was \$6.53/hour. After a year of employment, wages averaged approximately \$13.46 hour.
- Second CNA class (10 students):
  - Average hourly wage prior to the CNA class was \$7.60/hour. After a year of employment, wages averaged approximately \$12.40/hour.

Mendoza reported she will send out verifications later this month.

**Diverse Welding Program.** Mendoza reported two welders have dropped out of the class (one for medical reasons). Thirteen graduates are awaiting certifications; six students have been certified so far.

- Average hourly wage prior to the welding class was \$12.31/hour and after certification, wages are approximately \$13.09/hour; however, the classes only ended four months ago.

Backman asked Mendoza to prepare a report containing the wage information, etc. Mendoza may hold a class reunion for the CNA and welding classes.

A New Welders Meet & Greet session will be held November 13 and 19, 5:00-5:45 p.m. at Ridgewater College. Schmoll will check with Nancy to send out the flyer (see attached).

Les Heitke shared he visited with Loren Corle regarding the demand for welders. Chair Bowen stated welders are highly in demand in the manufacturing industry.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Neighborhood Development Center (NDC) Update.** Schmoll provided an overview of NDC, a non-profit, community development financial institution that provides entrepreneur training, small business loans, business services/technical assistance and business incubators. The EDC has been meeting with NDC representatives regarding creating a similar program in Kandiyohi County. A listening session was held on October 5<sup>th</sup> on how the NDC's approach can be beneficial to the community. Kimberly Nagel of NDC will conduct another listening and planning session on November 16<sup>th</sup>. This session will be focused on the resources and providers/potential partners that have been identified.

**Rural Child Care Innovative Program.** Schmoll reported the childcare appreciation event, held on October 30<sup>th</sup> was a success—over 80 people attended. Childcare surveys are being sent to parents, employers and childcare providers. The deadline to return the surveys is mid-November. On November 29<sup>th</sup> a Child Care Challenge will be held at the Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services Building from 6:00-9:00 p.m. with free box lunches served. The event is the first of a series for the communities to discuss and develop solutions to the childcare shortage in the area. Schmoll will be marketing the event and promoting it on Open Mic. Backman commented he is impressed with the core team.

**West Central Job Fair Update.** Chair Bowen reported the 2019 West Central Job Fair is scheduled for March 26<sup>th</sup> at Ridgewater College. The committee will meet in mid-November to begin planning for the event. The EDC has allocated dollars in their budget to help with expenses. Chair Bowen will notify Backman if the funds will be needed.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Regional Workforce Summit.** Chair Bowen reviewed the highlights of a meeting in St. Cloud organized by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) regarding the recruitment of new employees. Bowen shared DEED will conduct an event on January 8, 2019 at the Ridgewater College cafeteria; he feels it

will be beneficial for businesses in the area and is anticipating a high attendance. They are currently looking for sponsors to help with costs, i.e., breakfast, etc. A tentative agenda will be put together and when DEED approves the agenda, Chair Bowen will send it to Backman. The EDC may help promote the event through Constant Contact.

[Chair Bowen was excused from the meeting]

**Other.**

**Willmar Area Multicultural-Business Center (WAM-BC).** Backman provided an update on the dissolution of WAM-BC.

**Midtown Plaza.** Backman provided an update on the improvements at Midtown Plaza with the addition of a childcare business on the first floor. The basement has been gutted and is ready for use; however, an elevator is needed. Price quotes have been obtained. Backman has discussed loan opportunities for the Midtown Plaza elevator project with Mid-Minnesota Development Commission and Southwest Initiative Foundation. In order to apply for a loan, a new building appraisal is needed, among other documents.

Heitke inquired about Spurs. Backman shared it is growing sales and has a good menu.

**Happy Asian Grocery Store.** Schmoll reported a positive conversation was held with the owners who are interested in expanding the business in the future.

[Kelly TerWisscha was excused from the meeting.]

**Other.** Backman announced a purchase agreement has been signed with a business coming into Willmar. It is interested in the Willmar location due to the access of a four-lane and central location. Backman provided a construction update of 15<sup>th</sup> Street Flats and reported construction of a KWIK Trip in downtown Willmar may be realized in 2019 or 2020. Kwik Trip is also looking at a location west of Willmar. The grand opening of Legacy on First will be held on Monday, November 5<sup>th</sup>.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:15 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next regular committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., December 7, 2018**, in the EDC Board Room.

# A COLLABORATIVE, OUT-OF-THE-BOX APPROACH TO EDUCATION



The wide variety of education opportunities in Kandiyohi County make our area unique. We have nine school districts within our county, one of the best community colleges in Minnesota and plenty of other alternative public and private learning options. One thing they all have in common, is their focus on creating innovative, hands-on curriculum.

Many schools have partnered with local businesses to develop unique programs such as *Kandiyohi CEO* and *Jumpstart*. *KCEO* is a year-long class for high school juniors and seniors that immerses students into the business world; allowing them to learn by touring over 100 local businesses and even launching a startup of their own. *Jumpstart* is a new course taught by area experts that introduces manufacturing careers to young talent. Ridgewater College also has an exceptional Customized Training & Continuing Education Program designed to help students and professionals of all ages receive ongoing training in their areas of interest.



From pre-school to college diplomas, Kandiyohi County has you covered.



Ridgewater College was recently ranked #31 of 851 best community colleges in America.





## Ridgewater College [ridgewater.edu](http://ridgewater.edu)

1. #31 out of 851 in the best Community Colleges in America
2. Job placement over 94%
3. Low student to instructor ratios (21:1)
4. Over 100+ degrees and certificates to explore

Community and  
Technical College



## ACGC Schools (Atwater Cosmos Grove City) [acgc.k12.mn.us](http://acgc.k12.mn.us)

1. Four-day school week (Tuesday-Friday)
2. National Blue Ribbon School for grades K-6
3. College in the Schools Courses
4. Participant in Kandiyohi CEO Program



## BOLD Schools (Bird Island, Olivia, Lake Lilian) [bold.k12.mn.us](http://bold.k12.mn.us)

1. Free Preschool Programs
2. Integrated Technology
3. College in the Schools Courses
4. Growing enrollment



## Dream Technical Academy [dreamta.org](http://dreamta.org)

1. Project-based learning (7-12th Grades)
2. Small class sizes (avg. 15-18 students)
3. Unique art/theatre groups
4. Partners with CMCS for athletics



## MACCRAY Schools (Maynard, Clara City, Raymond) [maccray.k12.mn.us](http://maccray.k12.mn.us)

1. Extensive extra-curricular activities
2. College in the Schools Courses
3. Free transportation for surrounding communities
4. Driver's education during the regular school day

Public  
Schools



## NL-S Schools (New London-Spicer) [nls.k12.mn.us](http://nls.k12.mn.us)

1. Participant in Kandiyohi CEO Program
2. 4-star Parent Aware Early Childhood Education Program
3. State-of-the-art facilities, fitness center & technology
4. Small class sizes and 100% graduation rate



## KMS Schools (Kerkhoven Murdock Sunburg) [kms.k12.mn.us](http://kms.k12.mn.us)

1. Excellent band & choral department
2. Adult/youth enrichment opportunities
3. KMS 4 KIDS
4. KMS Early Childhood Initiative (ECI)



## Willmar Schools [willmar.k12.mn.us](http://willmar.k12.mn.us)

1. High number of extra-curricular activities
2. Diverse performing arts (band/choir) opportunities
3. Participant in Kandiyohi CEO Program
4. Notable student ethnic diversity



## CMCS (Central Minnesota Christian Schools) [cmcschool.org](http://cmcschool.org)

1. Impressive student to teacher ratios (12:1)
2. Brand new facilities
3. Increasing enrollment
4. Strong performing arts

Private  
Schools



## CCS (Community Christian School) [willmarccs.com](http://willmarccs.com)

1. Low student to teacher ratios (15:1)
2. Specialized instruction for Elementary students
3. College in the Schools Courses
4. Foreign language opportunities

# YOU'RE INVITED TO A NEW WELDERS MEET & GREET



COMUNIDADES LATINAS  
UNIDAS EN SERVICIO

## MEET OUR STUDENTS AND FIND THE WELDERS YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR!

Join CLUES and Ridgewater College for a New Welders Meet and Greet, where you can get to know our welding program students and find the welders you've been looking for in a relaxed environment! You'll have the chance to see the work of the 13 students and tour Ridgewater's workshop. Many of the students will soon obtain their American Welding Society Certification.

CLUES has partnered with Ridgewater College to provide educational opportunities locally and advance the capacity of our students to prosper. Our efforts have been embraced by Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission – because we know that when our citizens do well, all our institutions and businesses do well!



Learn more about CLUES at [www.clues.org](http://www.clues.org).

November 13 & 19  
5:00 - 5:45 pm

Ridgewater College Welding Shop  
Customized Training &  
Continuing Education Bldg.



### Contact:

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320-403-2555

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creating opportunities. changing lives.