

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

Present: Donna Boonstra, Shari Courtney, Deb Geister, Jean Geselius, Melissa Knott, Joanna Schrupp and Brittany VanDerBill

Excused: Kim Augeson, Emily Lien and Pam Rosenau

Guest: Ann Winge Johnson, Heritage Bank and Jayme Sczublewski, REDstar Creative

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director

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

Vice Chair Melissa Knott called the meeting to order at approximately 12:04 p.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Shari Courtney, SECONDED BY Jean Geselius, to approve the Minutes of the October 22, 2018 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

[Deb Geister joined the meeting.]

Social Media Statistics. The committee reviewed the EDC’s Facebook statistics over the past month: 44 posts (up 52%), post reach 7,224 (up 33%), impressions 13.2k (up 36%), clicks 112 (up 348%), reactions 253 (up 40%), engaged users 715 (up 39%), page and post engagements 1,038 (up 34%) and new fans 7 (down 50%), total followers 522.

Top Posts						
Topic	Clicks	Reactions	Comments	Shares	Impressions	Reach
Celebrate the Light of the World	76	12	3	10	1,649	1,236
Joanna Schrupp named General Manager	90	62	16	1	1,279	806
Annexation of land approved by Willmar	178	4	2	3	937	683
Community Conversation on childcare	12	1	0	4	725	511
First Children’s Finance childcare survey	5	2	0	2	550	402
Ridgewater College You. Me. We. program	20	3	0	3	420	300

LinkedIn is getting more engagement and building followers. There were 17 posts, 187 interactions, 9 new connections with 87 total connections. The top LinkedIn posts were the Vitals App, closing of Paper Place, Ridgewater College ranked the top public college for students pursuing auto mechanics certificate, bicycle program coming to Willmar and Salvation Army bell ringing.

Chair Deb Geister requested a breakdown from where are the EDC's connections. Chair Geister also recommended tracking the landing page for the new ad that will be in the 2019 Willmar Lakes Area visitors guide.

Aaron Backman reported Bailey Hovland, who manages the Highway 23 Coalition website and Facebook page, just installed a monitoring program for the website. Jayme Sczublewski reported posts are cross shared between the EDC's and the Highway 23 Coalition's Facebook pages. The tag line on the Highway 23 Coalition website now references Connecting Greater Minnesota. About 14 articles have been posted for the Coalition in the last year. Also, newly added to the Coalition's website was a membership application/renewal form. Chair Geister suggested a popup opt-in form be added when the website comes up requesting name and email address, if visitors would like to receive future newsletters. Backman noted information under the three columns of Community, Growth and Industry on the home page need to be updated. Also added to the bottom of the home page was Member Materials.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

Education Flyer. Backman distributed the latest version of the educational flyer (see attached) that incorporates the changes recommended by this committee last month. Sam Bowen of Ridgewater College informed Backman that the *Jumpstart* program referred to in the second paragraph on the front of the flyer was changed to MAP (Manufacturing and Production) course. Backman forwarded the flyer to all of the schools and shared comments he received from some schools, including:

- Ridgewater College—replace “low student to instructor ratios” with a reference to a flexible and customizable training program for business and industry;
- ACGC was okay with the information;
- DREAM Technical Academy—requested all be changed to: “1. Student-driven small learning community, 2. Hands-on, student directed learning, 3. Project-based learning opportunities focused on life skills and 4. College readiness, career preparedness and civic engagement;”
- NL-S—add “including robotics” after technology in item 3 and remove 100% graduation rate in item 4;
- Willmar—in item 1 add “curricular and” after “high number;” however, the committee recommended it be changed to “high number of course offerings and extra-curricular activities.”

Five schools have not responded. Chair Geister volunteered to contact CMCS, CCS and KMS. Sczublewski will contact MACCRAY.

Comments from committee members as to changes were:

- BOLD—Danube should be added and the spelling of Lake Lillian needs to be corrected;
- CMCS—there should not be an ‘s’ at the end of the school’s name;
- KMS—should be moved before MACCRAY so it is in alphabetical order; and
- Dashes should be used between the community names for the combined schools.

Highway 23 Coalition. Backman distributed the folders used for membership recruitment. The committee had the following recommendations as to the information in the folder:

- replace the copy of the website home page;
- remove the postcard as that information is in other information; and
- include how to become a member;
- at the top of the page with membership levels state it is annual membership;
- use a consistent letterhead on each item that includes contact information and website address;
- change the website address on the folder to lower case 'h'; and
- on the back of the folder either use all caps to match the front of the folder or use initial caps.

[Joanna Schrupp was excused from the meeting.]

NEW BUSINESS—

The Buzz Videos. Sczublewski showed the most recent video of *the buzz* by Sarah Swedburg, Planner for the City of Willmar, and a video by What's Up Willmar on the Spurs Bar & Grill.

2019 Marketing Plan. Backman reported he contacted the Community Venture Network representative as to the committee's request for statistics from the program. Chair Geister recommended the EDC also obtain the length of sale cycle from the first contact to a decision. To measure goals more effectively, Chair Geister recommended the committee identify goals as to the number of events and contacts, and number of businesses with which the EDC partners.

Knott requested clarification on the expectations of committee members for each meeting, such as specific assignments to gather information and researching what exists, rather than just approving minutes of meetings.

Ann Winge Johnson stated the *West Central Tribune* is developing a physician's guide so the EDC could possibly obtain information from the newspaper to use in a healthcare flyer or it may not even need to develop its own healthcare flyer. Knott volunteered to look into this.

The committee was encouraged to come with ideas for next year and to prioritize projects for 2019.

December Meeting. As the next meeting is Christmas Eve, the committee changed the meeting to December 17 at 12 noon.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:17 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next meeting is **12 noon, Monday, December 17, 2018**, at WORKUP [Note: the December meeting was subsequently cancelled].

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.

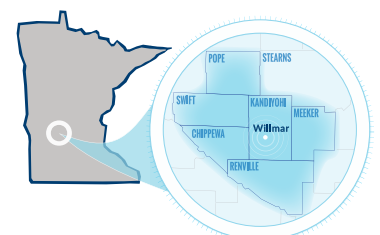
Many schools have partnered with local businesses to develop unique programs such as *Kandiyohi CEO* and *Jumpstart*. *KCEO* is a year-long class for high school juniors and seniors that immerses students into the business world; allowing them to learn by touring over 100 local businesses and even launching 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

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

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

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



Dream Technical Academy 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

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

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

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

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

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

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