

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
**MINUTES**  
January 27, 2020  
WORKUP, Willmar

Present: Donna Boonstra, Shari Courtney, Jean Geselius, Jesse Gislason, Melissa Knott, Emily Lien, Pam Rosenau and Brittany VanDerBill

Excused: Joanna Schrupp

Guest: Lindsey Donner, REDstar Creative

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

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc.

Chair Melissa Knott called the meeting to order at approximately 12:03 p.m.

**MINUTES—**

IT WAS MOVED BY Donna Boonstra, SECONDED BY Emily Lien, to approve the Minutes of the December 23, 2019 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**Social Media Statistics.** Lindsey Donner provided the statistics for December 23, 2019 to January 27, 2020 for Facebook: Likes 613, total reach 3.3K (↓30%), post engagement 395 (↓21%), page clicks 212 (↓137%), total fans 5 and posts published 21. The top popular posts were: New resident to New London; Backman’s presentation on diversity to EDAM; Mayor Calvin’s State of the City address; MnDOT Wye project and DI Labs featured in *Twin Cities Business Monthly*.

Website statistics: Donner reported new users and users are consistent with each other. The top landing pages were City of Kandiyohi County, News and the Business/Transportation page.

Donner stated the newsletter was emailed to 2,110 people with 663 opens (39.9%) and 90 clicks, which is average for the EDC. There were 13 who unsubscribed and 450 emails bounced so the list will need to be cleaned up. It was suggested to add a subscription button to the next newsletter.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS—**

**Highway 23 Coalition Marketing.** Aaron Backman reported the Highway 23 Coalition hired Bob Byrnes as its coordinator and he will be in charge of marketing going forward. Donna Boonstra reported Byrnes was directed by the Coalition’s Marketing Committee to take care of the new pop-up banner and any other marketing needs for the Coalition.

**Opportunity Zone Prospectus.** Backman showed the final Opportunity Zone (OZ) Prospectus (see attached) and highlighted particular areas, including the Fast Facts and map on page 9 showing construction in the past three years. Backman noted that most of the construction in the OZ is west of First Street, which he would like changed with this program. The EDC has received calls as a result of the Prospectus. Backman thanked the team who worked on the Prospectus, which included Chair Knott and Donner. The Prospectus is on the EDC's website and to date, has been sent to 12 real estate developers, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and area legislators. It will also be sent to site selectors with whom Connie Schmoll has met at conferences. Boonstra recommended Highways 12 and 23 and the bypass be labeled on the map on page 9. Chair Knott stated that those in her office who have seen the Prospectus indicated that OZ is not defined in the Prospectus and suggested it be added, possibly to the References page and on the website. Backman stated it is hoped a local group will start an OZ fund. The OZ will mainly be housing, mixed use and commercial. Schmoll noted that when the Prospectus is sent to developers, they will see that Willmar has more areas for construction and not just the OZ. Backman provided information on the new Renaissance Zone the City of Willmar is looking at developing as an overlay district mostly coinciding with the Willmar OZ.

**Kandiyohi County/Community Videos.** Schmoll reported Torry Norling was engaged by the EDC's Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment Committee to develop a video showing the county's amenities and things to do for employers to add to their websites for use in recruiting. A 30 second teaser video, 4 minute video and a provider's video were created. Schmoll noted they are still looking for a hunting scene for the teaser video. Donner will contact Norling about using the same fonts and colors to stay with the EDC's brand. Chair Knott recommended the EDC start its own YouTube channel to host the video. Backman indicated a press release should be done to announce the video.

#### **NEW BUSINESS—**

**Ag Committee March Workshop.** Schmoll reported the EDC and Christianson PLLP will host a succession planning workshop for farmers in March. Chair Knott, on behalf of Christianson PLLP, will do the marketing for the workshop. The workshop will be similar to what Christianson PLLP has done with its tax seminars hosted with the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce. Schmoll noted a similar workshop hosted by Fladeboe Auctions and Bremer Bank was done in Golden Valley. The charge will be \$10 per person. The Chamber has been invited to participate.

**Partners In Ag Innovation Conference.** Schmoll reported planning has started for the July 30<sup>th</sup> Partners In Ag Innovation conference. The planning group, which includes Pam Rosenau and Jean Geselius, is working on speakers and sponsors. Rosenau noted that because of sponsorships this year, the event will be at no cost to attendees. The plan is to reduce the content so there is more time for attendees to network. This year's theme is economic development.

**2020 Marketing Plan.** Backman reviewed the 2019 Marketing Plan (see attached).

Goal 1/Tactics:

1. The healthcare flyer is taking longer to finalize; the medical community has offered no comments on the flyer.

2. Website—Backman recommended there be landing pages for the videos and the OZ.
4. Newsletter—Donner believes the newsletters are dictated by what the EDC has to share and may not fall on a regular schedule. Schmoll stated site selectors told her to contact them when the EDC has something to share.
5. Highway 23 Coalition component will be removed.
7. Support WORKUP—Schmoll reported the EDC has budgeted scholarships for entrepreneurs to attend bootcamp. A link to WORKUP's programs could be added to the website. Donner provided information on the Bootcamps.

Goal 2/Tactics:

- 1a. The new video falls under this area.
- 1c. Trailing spouse network remove.

Goal 3/Tactics:

1. Create list of prospective businesses—Schmoll asked for this committee's help in creating a list. Suggestions included indoor winter activities. Backman reported there is a group looking at entertainment activities for the former Herbergers location and has been negotiating with the Kandi Mall. What are your customers looking for was included in the BRE survey.
2. The Prospectus falls under this tactic.

**Election of Chair and Vice Chair.**

IT WAS MOVED BY Pam Rosenau, SECONDED BY Jean Geselius, to elect Brittany VanDerBill as chair and Emily Lien as vice chair of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Marketing and Public Relations Committee.  
MOTION CARRIED.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next meeting is **12 noon, Monday, February 24, 2020**, at WORKUP.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:22 p.m.



## Marketing and Public Relations Committee

# 2019 MARKETING PLAN

### WHO WE ARE:

We are a governmental agency with a mission to be a catalyst for economic growth of the greater Kandiyohi County area. Our focus is on supporting new and existing businesses and marketing our community to companies outside of our region.

### TARGET AUDIENCE:

- Kandiyohi County:** Educating our area regarding our purpose and activities. Making our services and expertise known/available to local businesses that need help starting or expanding.
- Outside Region:** Marketing our area outside of our county to attract new business and talent. Promoting our brand and showcasing our quality of life.

### 2019 GOALS:

- Create awareness of EDC activities and services in our local/regional community.
- Concentrate on focus areas involving workforce training, housing and daycare.
- Attract new businesses.

| <b>GOAL 1:</b> Create awareness of EDC activities and services in our local/regional community.               |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>STRATEGY:</b> Be an agent of positive messaging about our business community and economy.                  |  |   |
| <b>Tactics</b>  | <b>Assigned To</b>   | <b>Status/Completed</b>                         |
| 1. Design healthcare flyer  | Marketing Committee  | Drafts completed 9/2019                         |
| 2. Website updates as needed  | EDC/Marketing Committee  | Ongoing   |
| 3. Actively promote Kandiyohi County via social channels  | EDC/REDstar  | Daily/weekly                                    |
| 4. Create/email quarterly digital newsletter<br>January—Winter<br>April—Spring<br>July—Summer<br>October—Fall | Marketing Committee<br>REDstar   | Not done<br>5/10/2019<br>Not done<br>12/20/2019 |
| 5. Assist with marketing and promotional materials for the Highway 23 Coalition                               | Marketing Committee<br>REDstar   | As requested<br>Pop-up banner                   |
| 6. Assist with marketing and promotional materials for Partners in Ag Innovation workshop                     | Connie/Joanna/Jean/Ag<br>Marketing Subcommittee<br>and Marketing Committee | Begin 3/1/2019<br>Completed 8/1/2019            |
| 7. Support WORKUP programming for startups  | EDC/Marketing Committee  |   |
| 8. Sponsor/Support community organizations (KCEO, West Central Minnesota Area Job Fair)                       | Marketing Committee  | Job Fair held 9/17/2019                         |

**GOAL 2:** Concentrate on focus areas involving workforce training, housing and daycare.

**STRATEGY:** Assist businesses in identifying and recruiting talent and collaborate with community partners to fill open positions.

| Tactics   | Assigned To             | Status/Completed  |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Build comprehensive plan to expand the current county workforce  | EDC/Marketing Committee |                   |
| a. Hold/Sponsor quarterly recruitment events with others, including Ridgewater College                      | EDC                     |                   |
| b. Utilize LinkedIn to recruit  | REDstar                 |                   |
| c. Partner with Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and Vision 2040 to promote "trailing spouse" network | EDC/Marketing Committee |                   |
| 2. Assist with any marketing needs for the Kandiyohi County Child Care Innovation Project                   | Connie                  | Ongoing as needed |

**GOAL 3:** Attract new businesses.

**STRATEGY:** Market our community outside of our region to attract targeted businesses.

| Tactics  | Assigned To         | Status/Completed               |
|--|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Create list of prospective businesses                                   | Aaron/Connie        |                                |
| 2. Design customizable proposal template to attract business               | REDstar             |                                |
| 3. Run social ads to targeted geographic areas                             | REDstar             |                                |
| 4. Assist with marketing materials and proposals to prospective businesses | Marketing Committee |                                |
| 5. Assist with marketing materials when staff attends conferences          | Marketing Committee | Trifold brochure redone 8/2019 |