

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

October 23, 2017
WORKUP, Willmar

- Present: Donna Boonstra, Shari Courtney, Deb Geister, Jean Geselius, Melissa Knott and Emily Lien
- Absent: Sarah Isdal and Ryan Thielen
- Guest: Jayme Sczublewski, REDstar Creative and Brittany VanDerBill, B. VanDerBill Consulting, LLC
- Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director and Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist
- Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Aaron Backman called the meeting to order at approximately 12:01 p.m. Backman welcomed Brittany VanDerBill, who is considering membership on this committee, followed by self introductions.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair. Backman stated Deb Geister has indicated a willingness to chair the committee and a vice chair would also be welcome.

IT WAS MOVED BY Donna Boonstra, SECONDED BY Jean Geselius, to elect Deb Geister as chair of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Marketing and Public Relations Committee. MOTION CARRIED.

IT WAS MOVED BY Shari Courtney, SECONDED BY Emily Lien, to elect Melissa Knott as vice chair of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Marketing and Public Relations Committee. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Donna Boonstra, SECONDED BY Jean Geselius, to approve the September 25, 2017 minutes as e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Social Media Statistics. Jayme Sczublewski provided the following comparisons for the EDC's Facebook page: overall fan base 354 compared to 344 last month; posts 24 (up 85%); post reach 8,805 (up 178%); post impressions 14.4k (up 236%); post clicks 597 (up 629%); reactions 104 (up 182%); engaged users 53 (up 358%); page and post engagements 160 (up 73%) and new fans 11 (up 175%). Newsletter articles will be directed to the EDC's website, but are not at present. The posts with the most engagement were "Willmar City Council approves site plan for new development along First Street;" groundbreaking for the new Grand Stay Hotel in New London; opening of Mr. B's Chocolates; and Kwik Trip approvals by the Willmar City Council. LinkedIn involves more strategic posts. Sczublewski can provide statistics for LinkedIn next month. Twitter is mainly reposts of what is on Facebook and Instagram is not used at this time.

Fall Digital Newsletter. Sczublewski showed a rough outline of the EDC's digital newsletter that will be emailed via Constant Contact. Chair Geister recommended the heading of the newsletter be a video message by Backman. Articles planned for the newsletter include the Highway 23 Transportation Rally, the article published in the *Business in Focus* magazine, the 15th Street Flats housing project and the BRE study of diverse businesses. The frequency of newsletters was discussed. Chair Geister suggested adding a business spotlight column and Connie Schmall recommended linking to the *Impact* magazine featuring agriculture in the county. Sczublewski stated the EDC's open rate in Constant Contact is 40%, which is really good.

Tradeshow Display. Backman showed the first two display panels that were printed and feature expanding Ag Innovation & Technology and building Entrepreneurial Culture. The third panel should be done this week and features growing Industrial Development and will include a photo of a welder.

2018 Visitors Guide Ad. Backman showed the ad used in last year's visitors guide ad ([see attached](#)). Sczublewski stated an ad is being developed around a tourism theme rather than a business theme at the committee's request. Possible themes include the diversity of local businesses, microbrews, Mr. B's Chocolates and destination businesses. The ad deadline is this week.

NEW BUSINESS

Highway 23 Coalition Landing Page on EDC Website. Backman stated REDstar Creative has been developing a landing page on the EDC's website for the Highway 23 Coalition. Sczublewski showed a draft of the web page, which gives an overview of the project and has logos of the platinum members with drop down links for other membership levels. The photo used is a stock photo and was used on a banner created for the Transportation Rally. It was suggested to possibly include a PDF of the map on the landing page.

[Boonstra was excused from the meeting.]

Membership in the Coalition includes 15 units of government—4 counties, 9 cities and 2 townships and 30 businesses.

Impact Magazine. Backman showed the most recent *Impact* magazine that featured agriculture in the county. Schmoll stated the magazine shows how far-reaching and diverse ag is in Kandiyohi County. Page 52 of the magazine includes statistics from the EDC's Ag BRE Study. The magazine can be accessed as a link on the West Central Tribune's website.

Other. Backman showed the *Business in Focus* magazine and the six-page article on Kandiyohi County and Willmar. Backman explained TIF (tax increment financing) districts. The EDC provides technical assistance and information on the economic impact of a TIF project, but the decision is made by the lead governmental entity and other districts then also approve it. In the case of tax abatements, each taxing jurisdiction decides separately whether or not to participate.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business,

IT WAS MOVED BY Emily Lien, SECONDED BY Melissa Knott, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:09 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is 12 noon, Monday, November 27, 2017 at WORKUP, 1601 Technology Drive NE, Willmar.

location,

Home of the Midwest's premier technology park with 400,000 sq. ft. of commercial space used by Agribusiness, Bioscience & Technology companies.



location,

Offering a new 181-acre area for industrial development recently certified Shovel-Ready by the State of Minnesota.



location.

Featuring a new airport, an east/west & north/south railway hub and access from both MN Highway 23 & US Highway 71.



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SHOVEL-READY WITH ROOM TO GROW

WILLMAR INDUSTRIAL PARK

Businesses ready to expand and build should consider the expanding industrial park in Willmar, Minnesota. It recently gained shovel-ready status, a certification by the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), that means the planning, zoning, surveys, title work, environmental studies, soils analysis and infrastructure engineering are complete to start construction.

The park is just two miles from the Willmar airport, which has available hangar space and a modern terminal building. It is also a transportation hub with north/south connections via US Highway 71 and MN Highway 23 and east/west connections via US Highway 12. Plans to add direct rail car access to the Willmar Industrial Park were also recently announced. The site is close to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe switching yard connecting Chicago to the Pacific coastal states. Over 30 companies already call Willmar Industrial Park home, including Jennie-O Turkey Store, Willmar Poultry Company, Mills Parts Center, Willmar Electric Service, RELCO and Chappell Central.

One of only 34 shovel-ready industrial parks in Minnesota



Zoned I-1 Light Industry



Easy access to US Highways 12, 71 and MN Highway 23



36 platted lots available



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