

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)**  
**MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**MINUTES**  
**October 24, 2016**  
**WORKUP, Willmar**

Present: Donna Boonstra, Shari Courtney, Lindsey Donner, Ann Winge Johnson, Mike Negen and Julie Redepenning

Excused: Jean Geselius, Sarah Isdal, Heather Koffler and Ashley Queenan

Guests: Jayme Sczublewski of REDstar Creative/WORKUP

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 12:09 p.m.

**MINUTES—**

IT WAS MOVED BY Julie Redepenning, SECONDED BY Lindsey Donner, to approve the minutes of the September 26, 2016 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**2016 MARKETING PLAN—**

**Willmar Industrial Park Flyer.** The committee reviewed the most recent draft of the Willmar Industrial Park flyer (see attached). The committee recommended the following additional changes:

- First sentence change 95-acre to 181-acre
- Recommended changes to the map:
  - Change City to Public Works
  - Change color of 'sold' text to white
  - Increase the font size of the street names
  - Leave the map shading, but add the lot lines for 3<sup>rd</sup> Addition
- Add Available above the stats
- Change 43 platted lots to 36
- Remove the word 'available' from the 1.4-29.0 acre lots

Backman stated in speaking with Bruce Peterson, he recommends the map legend be changed from 4<sup>th</sup> Addition Unplatted to Available Unplatted. Discussion was held on whether the flyer should only refer to Fourth Addition or include all Additions. It was the committee's opinion that interested parties will be more concerned with what property is available and the location of roads rather than whether it is 3<sup>rd</sup> Addition or 4<sup>th</sup> Addition and suggested all lots be shown. It was the committee's recommendation to not add the names of key businesses to the map.

**Medical or Educational Flyer.** The committee discussed whether the next flyer should focus on the healthcare field or education. The consensus was to focus on education and include all area school districts plus Ridgewater College. Backman noted there is significant construction of educational facilities happening this year.

**Retail.** Backman noted he would like to focus on a retail flyer once the Kandi Mall has progressed with its construction, possibly in late summer 2017.

Mike Negen suggested doing community-based brochures rather than specific ones on education, healthcare or retail. Each brochure could include some of the same information, but in general, make it specific to each community. Committee members noted it may be difficult to do a retail flyer for all communities, but felt Willmar, New London, Spicer and Atwater could have their own brochures. It was suggested to create brochures that are more promotional than competitive between the communities.

**Fall Digital Newsletter.** The committee reviewed a draft of the fall newsletter (see attached), which is currently two and three-quarter pages. More content is needed to fill the third page. Jayme Sczublewski suggested the first column feature committee members or Connie Schmoll. Schmoll stated the “Manufacturing as a Career” article needs to be changed to indicate the students have toured the manufacturers. Schmoll will forward photos of the manufacturer tours to REDstar. Sczublewski noted they intend to change the broadband article into more of an infographic. It was suggested to include more information on the broadband project and a map of the broadband application area. Schmoll can provide a Google Earth map of the area, which would make the newsletter interactive. Backman corrected the name Steward to Stewart in the Kandi Mall article. Possible photos for inclusion were discussed. Changing the title “West Central Angel Fund” to possibly “Business Financing Opportunities Expand in Kandiyohi County” was mentioned. Schmoll stated the correct name to use in the article is West Central Angel Fund I. Schmoll suggested a photo of the student manufacturer tours could be used in the main header. Once all changes are made and the newsletter is complete, a copy will be emailed to the committee to review and submit comments.

**EDC Brochure and Booth Displays.** The committee viewed the current panel brochure and various booth displays that were setup in the common area at WORKUP. The newest display was created for the table display and features area agriculture. The large floor display does not have any current information, which Backman would like developed. The committee suggested using the large floor display when the EDC wants to make an impact at a conference. Another option now used is a TV monitor. The committee also suggested finding a new “give away” to make Kandiyohi County stand out. Negen stated the newest popular item is a Yeti cup. Negen will provide information on the Yeti cup to Backman.

**Chamber ADvantage.** It was the committee’s consensus to not do another Chamber ADvantage.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:28 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next committee meeting is **12 noon, Monday, November 28, 2016** at WORKUP, 1601 Technology Drive NE, Willmar.



# SHOVEL-READY WITH ROOM TO GROW

## WILLMAR INDUSTRIAL PARK

Businesses ready to expand and build should consider the 95-acre 4th addition of the 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



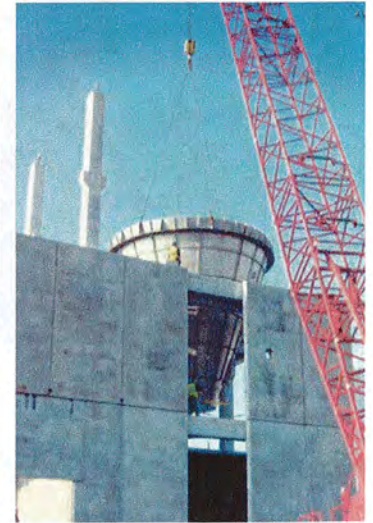
Zoned I-1 Light Industry



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



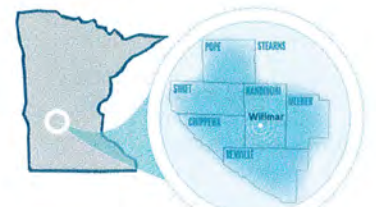
36 platted lots available



Contact us:  
kandiyohi.com  
toll-free 866.665.4556

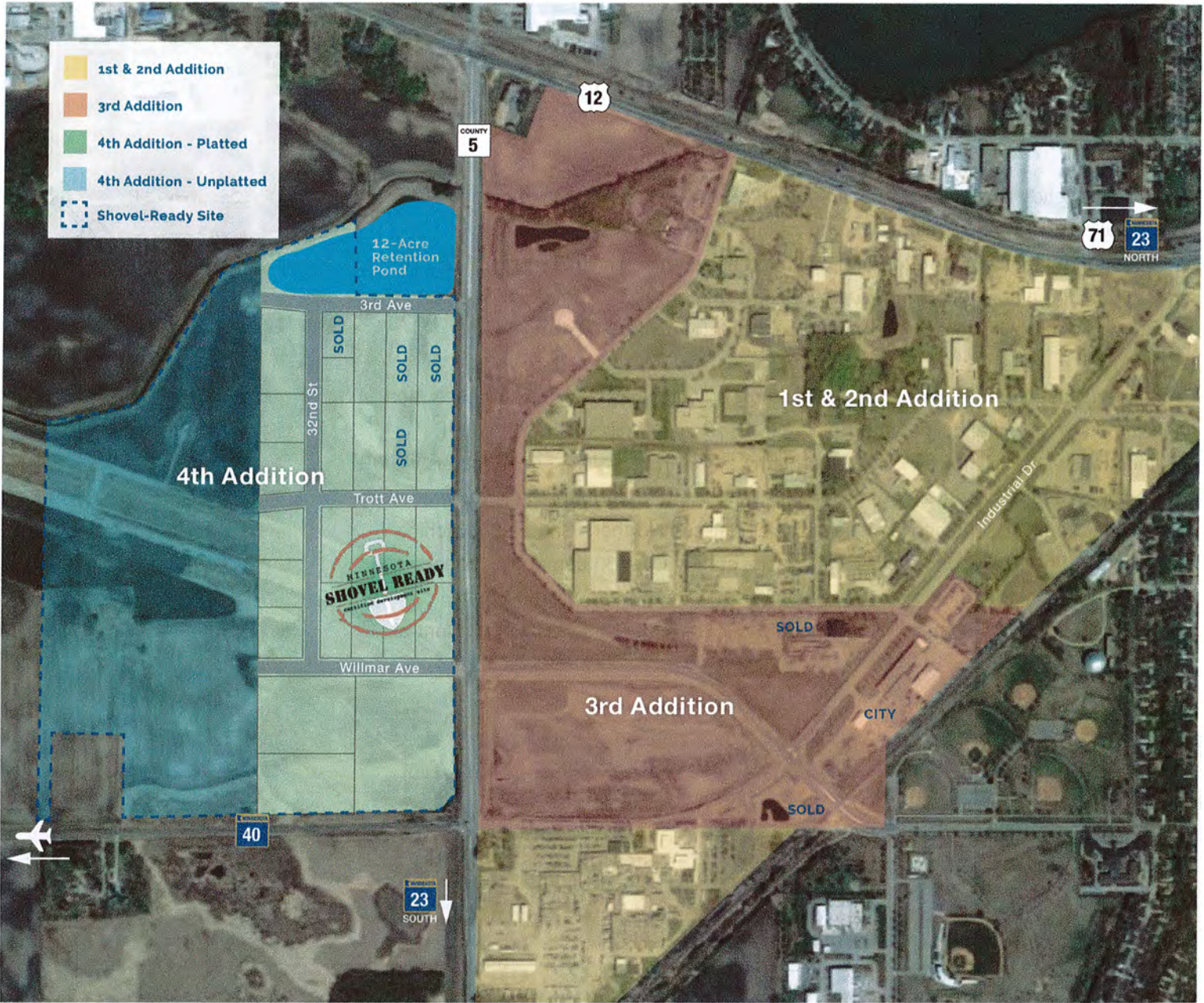


OPEN for BUSINESS



# A CLOSER LOOK

## WILLMAR INDUSTRIAL PARK



**303** acres

**181** acres Shovel Ready

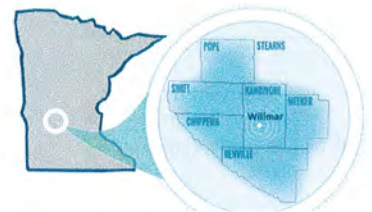
**43** platted lots

**1.4 - 29.0** acre lots available

Contact us:  
kandiyohi.com  
toll-free 866.665.4556



OPEN for BUSINESS



# EDC ENCOURAGES EXPANSION

ADVOCACY  
RETENTION  
EXPANSION  
MARKETING

## A Message from the Executive Director



Aaron Backman

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## SOMETHING TO CROW ABOUT

Plans for a 51-room GrandStay Hotel, 300-seat event center, 75-seat restaurant, and a new clubhouse are in the works on the property of the Little Crow Country Club (LCCC) south of New London, thanks to a lot of hard work and some help from the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar EDC.

The EDC facilitated and contributed financially to a hotel feasibility study with LCCC, which found a need in the New London-Spicer area for lodging to replace the many small resorts that have closed over the years.

LCCC has teamed up with David Harchanko, an experienced hotel developer and President of Apollo Development in Minnetonka, MN. Harchanko has worked on more than 40 hotel projects and says he's very excited about the LCCC project. "A new hotel and event center, in partnership with the golf club, will help turn New London into a destination," Harchanko said. "It will bring jobs and activity to the area."

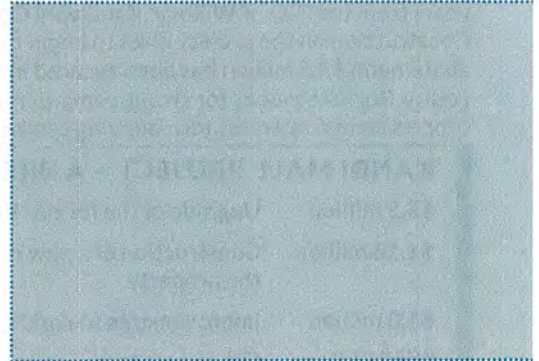
An investment entity, Glacial Ridge Hospitality LLC, was created to own and operate the hotel and event center. Together, LCCC and Glacial Ridge Hospitality have secured financing for the \$7.8 million project, which is the largest private capital investment in the New London area.

Assisted by the EDC, the project partners have obtained approvals for a nearly \$1 million tax abatement over 10 years from Kandiyohi County and the New London-Spicer school district. Aaron Backman, Executive Director of the EDC says the project is a key development in the area. "We think this can have a significant impact on northern Kandiyohi County and on the region."

## EDC HELPS BRING JOBS TO WILLMAR

Willmar will be seeing more than 230 new jobs and a \$1.5 million investment in the former Kandiyohi Power Cooperative Headquarters over the next three years, thanks to ERC Holdings, a Jacksonville, FL-based company. ERC is an international company with 2,000 employees and offices around the world, including Chicago and New Delhi, India. The Willmar facility will be an accounts receivable management operation.

The EDC prepared and submitted a Job Creation Fund (JCF) application to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) on behalf of ERC in late September. ERC was awarded more than \$560,000 dollars from the State of Minnesota for the Willmar project. The money will be used to offset costs associated with building improvements and hiring new employees.



This is a caption to describe the photo above.

This caption describes image at right.

# BUSINESS UPDATES | PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## Kandi Mall - A New Look

There's a major facelift in the works for Kandi Mall, the largest shopping center in the region. RockStep Capital, a Houston, Texas-based company bought the mall in October 2015 in partnership with RockStep Willmar, and a \$6.5 million rehab of the 450,000 44-acre property is being planned. The mall was built in 1973 and it's been decades since any major improvements have happened. "This is the largest capital investment the mall has seen in 32 years," says Aaron Backman, Executive Director of the EDC. "The mall needs upgrades to attract tenants and customers, especially national retailers."



Photo caption.

Tommy Steward, who handles property management and leasing for RockStep agrees. "These deals are very tough with these national buys. Major mall projects like the one planned for Kandi Mall can take three-plus years to be completed, when you include the time needed to enter into lease agreements."

The EDC assisted RockStep with a \$1.23 million in property tax abatement over 10 years from the City of Willmar, Kandiyohi County and the Willmar School District. Construction on the project is set to begin this coming spring. In addition to the tax abatement, \$3.5 million has been secured in bank financing and \$1.76 million in owner equity. RockStep looks for strong communities with underdeveloped commercial properties and operates ten shopping centers and eight shopping malls in nine states.

### KANDI MALL PROJECT - A BREAKDOWN

<b>\$3.5 million</b>	Upgrade of the former Kmart, which closed in 2012
<b>\$1.15 million</b>	Construction of a new retail building on the southwest corner of the property
<b>\$1.0 million</b>	Improvements to parking lots and signage
<b>\$850,000</b>	Other expenses

## West Central Angel Fund

A new financing resource for entrepreneurs and early-stage businesses will soon be available, thanks to local investors. 30 people from the area are wrapping up formation of the West Central Angel Fund, and they hope to invite business pitches by the end of the year.

"Working collaboratively with local business leaders and the EDC to increase the level of funding available for innovative technology development projects represents a forward-looking initiative," says United FCS CEO and group member, Marc Knisely. "United FCS believes the Fund has the potential to positively impact its members along with their local communities."

The group was formed after the idea was promoted by members of the EDC's Agriculture and Renewable Energy Committee, and local investors had expressed their desire to financially contribute to start-up and early-stage projects in West Central Minnesota.



Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

website | [www.kandiyohi.com](http://www.kandiyohi.com)  
email | [edc@kandiyohi.com](mailto:edc@kandiyohi.com)  
twitter | @KandiWillmarEDC  
find us on facebook

REDSTAR NOTE: We can mimic the header if we have room, but will need an image & headline appropriate to the page content.

# BUSINESS UPDATES | PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

## Manufacturing as a Career

Eight area manufacturing businesses are teaming up with local educators to promote careers in manufacturing to local high school students. One in eight jobs in Minnesota is in manufacturing. These jobs tend to be high quality and pay well.

Before school started in August, Willmar High School teachers took a break from their in-service sessions to tour local manufacturing facilities. Many teachers said they were surprised by how brightly lit and clean the facilities were and also didn't expect the variety of jobs that were represented, including electrical, industrial and mechanical engineering, scientists, machinists, lab technicians, CNC operators, graphic artists and more.

Willmar tenth grade students will take similar tours in October, which is Minnesota's Manufacturing Appreciation Month. After the students' tours, the teachers will be better able to answer any questions, thanks to their own opportunity to learn about the industry firsthand.

Businesses that participated were RELCO, Nova-Tech Engineering, Inc., Lange Ag Systems, Inc., Epitopix, Jennie-O Turkey Store, Central Minnesota Fabricating, West Central Steel, and Chappel Central. The business leaders contributed to the event by paying for busing, providing tour guides and submitting material for a video that was created to further showcase local manufacturing. The tours were in preparation for career education and exploration training provided to all high school students and was planned and supported by the EDC's Business Retention and Expansion Committee and the Willmar Lakes Area Vision 2040 Goal Two, which is Economic Diversity. Willmar High School hopes to continue the tours in upcoming years.

REDSTAR NOTE: We are planning on many logos to accompany this story. Any photos of students?

## Broadband Feasibility Study

A recent broadband study in Kandiyohi County supports what many people have been saying for years – there is significant demand for more reliable and faster broadband/Internet than what is currently offered by existing providers.

The study also concluded that speeds of more than 5MBPS are rare outside of Willmar, New London and Spicer, and that deploying broadband as needed would take several projects with a total price tag of \$60 million or more.

The EDC and Kandiyohi County secured the services of Communication Network Engineering Inc. (CNE) out of Fargo, ND to conduct the study in the underserved and unserved areas of Kandiyohi County. The study components included engineering to provide understanding of the physical aspects of deployment and the related costs, a marketing study to provide information about existing infrastructure and services and the satisfaction level of those who subscribe, and a financial study to seek information about resources that may be available to support broadband deployment.

The study results made it possible to submit an application to the State of Minnesota for Border-to-Border Broadband funds. If funded, the grant would provide a portion of the funding needed to begin to deploy fiber broadband networks in the unserved areas of the county.

REDSTAR NOTE: Will this story have a large map?

## RESIDENT BROADBAND SURVEY RESULTS

82% of residents surveyed strongly support Kandiyohi County being involved with a broadband network construction initiative. 11% indicated they might support it and only 7% declined their support.

35% stated that broadband availability would allow them to build or expand a new or existing business, hire additional employees or telecommute for an existing employer. 37% of the people surveyed who currently subscribe to broadband service said they use their broadband for business purposes.

REDSTAR NOTE: This can be created as an info-graphic when we know how the final layout develops.



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