

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT (BRE) COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 4, 2019
EDC Board Room, Willmar

Present: Sam Bowen, Samantha Crow, Jim Ellingson, Les Heitke, Roger Imdieke, Les Nelson, Ranae Rahn and Kelly TerWisscha

Excused: Dean Steinwand

Absent: Dan Tempel

Guest: Jennifer Mendoza, CLUES Navigator (via teleconference)

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

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

Chairperson Sam Bowen called the meeting to order at approximately 9:07 a.m.

AGENDA—Chair Bowen presented the agenda.

IT WAS MOVED BY Kelly TerWisscha, SECONDED BY Les Nelson, to approve the Agenda as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED BY Les Heitke, SECONDED BY Kelly TerWisscha, to approve the Minutes of the July 19, 2019 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

REPORTS

CLUES Update. Jennifer Mendoza provided an overview of the CLUES CNA and diverse welding program statistics.

CNA Program. Mendoza reported since 2017, 76 individuals have participated in the CNA program with 49 completing the class. Of the 49 participants, 39 became certified and 9 entered the workforce at approximately \$11.76/hour. The average hourly wage for participants prior to the class was approximately \$5.91/hour; after the class the average wage was \$8.86/hour; a 42-50% income growth. Six students moved on to further training in the nursing program.

Diverse Welding Program. Mendoza reported there have been 27 participants in the welding program with 11 receiving American Welding Certification. Five participants entered the workforce at an average salary of \$12.04/hour. Prior average wages for participants was \$9.75/hour and after the class \$11.80/hour; a 21-21½ % income growth. Mendoza stated some welders have entered the workforce without taking the certification exam.

Mendoza is looking into incorporating a phlebotomy course as a second step for CNA students and a mixed-skills course that includes soldering. Chair Bowen stated the mixed-skills class would include soldering plus basic welding, forklift operation and industrial worker skills to help participants enter the workforce.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

West Central Minnesota Job Fair, September 17, 2019 Recap. Chair Bowen reported September was the second time Ridgewater College hosted the West Central Job Fair (previously it was at the Willmar Conference Center). There were approximately 40 vendors and 225-240 attendees. Bowen has received many positive comments with the only negative comments being about the warm temperature in the gym. Ridgewater College will address this issue. Chair Bowen stated typically fall job fairs are smaller. Aaron Backman has also heard positive feedback. A number of vendors were impressed with qualified candidates. Backman inquired of the number of students versus public; Chair Bowen reported it was a 60-40 split, with 60% being students. Kelly TerWisscha inquired if there will be follow up with the vendors as to how many employees came out of the job fair. Chair Bowen said surveys are sent to vendors, but is unsure of the questions. A follow-up meeting will be held on Monday, October 7th, to review the September 17th job fair and discuss how to grow the effectiveness of the job fair.

Backman shared information regarding his monthly meetings with Ridgewater College President Dr. Craig Johnson, i.e., positions open and the range of skills needed in various companies in Kandiyohi County and other area counties. Mendoza shared someone will help the CNA and diverse welding students prepare resumes.

EDC PLANNING SESSION GOALS

Workforce Development Objectives. Chair Bowen reported on the Workforce Development Potential Objectives, specifically, the excellent work Backman and Dr. Craig Johnson are doing to promote Ridgewater College. Ridgewater College's enrollment is up 2.5%; it is one of only a few Minnesota colleges with growth this year. Chair Bowen shared Ridgewater College is the second largest in Minnesota in terms of revenue and volume for customized training. Chair Bowen reported Minnesota Jobs and Training has received two grants to expand diverse training programs. Ridgewater College has hired a new Director of Marketing and a new Instructional Dean. Open forums will be held next week and Chair Bowen encouraged members to attend and provide feedback.

Revised Kandiyohi County/Community Video Preview. Schmoll met with Tory Norling about the community video and provided him with feedback from this committee and the EDC's Marketing and Public Relations committee. Schmoll showed an updated video which was 4.3 minutes in

length; the length of the final video will be approximately 3 minutes. Additions to the video will include people of color, other businesses and Ridgewater College. Committee members suggested adding crowd views from a Stingers game and Rockin' Robbins, and including the Destination Playground, MinnWest Technology Campus, WORKUP, diverse businesses, hunting, fishing, winter sports and high school sports, and to reduce the narratives. Chair Bowen inquired how the video will be disseminated and who is the target audience? Suggestions included YouTube and the EDC's website. TerWisscha commented the video is intended to entice people to move to Kandiyohi County.

Business Support Objectives—Banker/Accountant Meeting. Backman indicated he will follow up with Dean Steinwand regarding a meeting with county bankers and accountants.

Bring Them Back Home Campaign. Ranae Rahn visited with Ken Warner of the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce (WLACC) regarding the Bring Them Back Home Campaign and researched archives at the West Central Tribune and Kandiyohi County Historical Society. Rahn noted two articles were published in the *West Central Tribune* in June 1999 and March 2000. Rahn will review the EDC's files on the past campaign and visit with individuals who were involved. TerWisscha volunteered to work with Rahn in setting up a meeting with Warner, Kathy Schwantes and previous partners/participants and move forward from that point. Samantha Crow inquired if the program could be incorporated in the WLACC NeXt program. Crow will send Rahn a contact for NeXt.

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed CDL Program at Ridgewater College. Chair Bowen distributed a flyer (see attached) from Ridgewater College regarding a fund-raising campaign to expand CDL (Commercial Driver's License) training to address the critical CDL driver shortage. Ridgewater College is hoping to invest in two mobile simulators at a cost of \$200,000. Chair Bowen shared he has received interest for CDL instructors. Discussion was held regarding simulator training versus driver proficiency. Chair Bowen shared he is confident it will be a unique training opportunity. Backman stated the EDC sent a letter of support for the CDL training equipment and suggested the EDC be a bronze supporter.

IT WAS MOVED BY Les Nelson, SECONDED BY Les Heitke, to recommend to the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's (EDC) Joint Operations Board that the EDC be a Bronze Supporter of Ridgewater College's Commercial Driver's License simulator fund-raising effort in the amount of \$2,500.
MOTION CARRIED.

Backman will present the motion to the EDC's Joint Operations Board at its meeting on October 10, 2019.

Other. Heitke inquired how the Kandiyohi County Fair did this year. Roger Imdieke reported Spicer Mayor Dennis Baker commented the fair did well; however, there are repairs needed to the fairgrounds, which current funds do not cover. Backman reported Bethesda will hold a groundbreaking for its senior lifestyle campus in New London at 10 a.m., October 9th, and the Highway 23 Coalition will hold its general membership meeting on October 18th at Prairie's Edge Casino and Convention Center with Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka as the keynote speaker.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:40 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., Friday, November 1, 2019**, at the EDC Office, Willmar.



Addressing the critical need for expanded CDL training

www.ridgewater.edu/transportation

Ridgewater fundraising campaign to expand CDL training capacity

Ridgewater College is working to address the driver shortage by purchasing Commercial Driver's License (CDL) simulators. We invite YOU to be a partner in the solution!

WHY SIMULATION?

- Simulation experiences are used in many specialized fields to provide training without actual user risks
- Broad-spectrum training opportunities for high school students to become engaged in basic truck-driving skills or for current industry drivers to practice and build upon their skills
- Provides more opportunities for users to practice when hazards occur like blown tires and slips from icy roads and to learn from mistakes
- Full simulation for any type of heavy vehicle including dump trucks, fire trucks, tractor-trailer and school bus
- Use of mobile simulation technology can help keep training costs affordable and accessible

FUNDRAISING GOAL: \$50,000

MORE INFO:

Steve Haataja, Ridgewater Customized Training & Continuing Education
steve.haataja@ridgewater.edu • 320-234-8542



Customized Training & Continuing Education

PLATINUM SUPPORTER	\$10,000
GOLD SUPPORTER	\$7,500
SILVER SUPPORTER	\$5,000
BRONZE SUPPORTER	\$2,500

All sponsorship levels will include company logo recognition on the outside of the simulator trailer and preferential pricing and scheduling for use of the simulator. Donations can be made with one-time contributions or over a two- or three-year span.

The trucking industry is the backbone of the U.S. economy. Trained, professional drivers are critical to connecting goods to consumers. **But our region and country are in dire need of trained drivers with a Commercial Driver's License (CDL).**

CRITICAL DRIVER SHORTAGES

- In Minnesota, there are 4,477 vacant truck driving positions, a job vacancy rate of over 8%.
MN DEED Q42018
- In 2018, the US trucking industry was short roughly 60,800 drivers, which was up nearly 20% from 2017's figure of 50,700.
2019 ATA Truck Driver Shortage Analysis
- If current trends hold, the shortage could swell to over 160,000 by 2028.
- Federal regulation changes in 2020 require approved training programs for all new drivers.

Commitment form on back

HELP US RAISE \$50,000 FOR TRUCK DRIVER SIMULATORS!

Yes, I Will Contribute!

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Platinum | \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Bronze | \$2,500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gold | \$7,500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Silver | \$5,000 | | |

Contact Person: _____ Phone: _____
Company Name: _____ Cell: _____
Email Address: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

All contributed funds will go towards purchasing one or more CDL truck driving simulators or other related CDL training program development expenses to be used for driver recruitment and training. The Ridgewater Foundation is pleased to coordinate this fundraising initiative for Ridgewater College.

Select Your Payment Option

I will pay my total commitment (as shown above) as follows:

- One-time contribution Check enclosed Please invoice me

* If check, make payable to Ridgewater College Foundation (check # _____) Add Memo: CDL Simulator

- Two-year pledge Annual installments of \$ _____ to be paid annually on _____ [date]
 Three-year pledge Annual installments of \$ _____ to be paid annually on _____ [date]

+ Payment reminders will be sent 30 days prior to your payment date

- I want to pay by credit card Visa MasterCard

Credit Card #: _____ Expiration Date: _____ Back CSV Code _____

Cardholder Address: _____

Name on Card (print please): _____

Cardholder Signature: _____

Send this contribution form and your check to: Stephenie Sommerfeld Phone: 320-222-6095
Ridgewater College Foundation Fax: 320-222-5212
2101 15th Ave NW stephenie.sommerfeld@ridgewater.edu
Willmar, MN 56201

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



Ridgewater is a member of Minnesota State and an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer and educator.

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Consumers with speech or hearing disabilities may contact us via their preferred Telecommunications Relay Service.