

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)

MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

MINUTES

February 25, 2019

WORKUP, Willmar

- Present: Kim Augeson, Donna Boonstra, Shari Courtney, Jean Geselius, Jesse Gislason, Melissa Knott, Pam Rosenau and Brittany VanDerBill
- Excused: Deb Geister, Emily Lien and Joanna Schrupp
- Guest: Ann Winge Johnson, Heritage Bank and Jayme Sczublewski, REDstar Creative
- Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director and Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist
- Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Vice Chair Melissa Knott called the meeting to order at approximately 12:04 p.m. and announced a quorum was present. The committee welcomed new member Jesse Gislason, who recently was appointed to the EDC's Joint Operations Board. Gislason introduced himself followed by self introductions.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Brittany VanDerBill, SECONDED BY Shari Courtney, to approve the Minutes of the November 26, 2018 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

Social Media Statistics. The committee reviewed the EDC's Facebook statistics for February 1-25, 2019: 37 posts (up 43%), impressions 17.9k (up 71%), clicks 270 (up 48%), page and post engagements 1,538 (up 114%) and new fans 13 (up 160%). The top posts were: Kandiyohi County pulls snow plows, Kandiyohi County statistical data, Kelly TerWisscha new EDC board president, Willmar's Small Cities grant application, Ali Werder/Ali J Boutique, Bethesda Cycling Without Age Program and Distribution center project stopped.

Aaron Backman provided information on the logistics company withdrawing its purchase of lots in the Willmar Industrial Park. The company is reevaluating its capital investments. The Industrial Park is being marketed through a magazine ad and personal contacts. Connie Schmoll will be attending a site selector forum in June and will market the Industrial Park while there. Backman reported Kohl's plans to build out the east side of the former Kmart location at the Kandi Mall.

Jayme Sczublewski reported the EDC's LinkedIn continues to slowly grow. There were 14 posts, 120 interactions and 1 new connection. The top LinkedIn posts were: Bethesda Cycling Without Age program, Kohls coming to Kandi Mall and winter hard on Willmar water pipes.

Top website pages visited were the Home Page, Your Team, Major Employers; an old news article on Loren Hjelle, who custom designs spears for spear fishing; Kandiyohi County stats and Retail Business Design Workshops.

Backman and Schmoll provided information on the Retail Business Design Workshops that are co-hosted by the EDC. The workshops are held each Wednesday from 8-9:30 a.m. Speakers have been provided by University of Minnesota Extension and College of Design. Workshops are held at Bremer Bank, Willmar Library and WORKUP. The committee suggested these workshops would be a good story for the future.

Backman provided statistics on the Highway 23 Coalition website: 62% is direct traffic; length of stay is 3 minutes, 20 seconds; 80% of the visitors are using a PC; the bounce rate is 18%; the age of visitors is 25-30 years old; new users was 27. Traffic is increasing. Backman submitted a press release on the 2019 project priorities to 18 newspapers along the corridor and several have printed an article.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

Education Flyer. The committee reviewed the final version of the education flyer (see attached) and recommended the following additional changes.

- On the first page:
 - Kandiyohi CEO should be spelled out; and
 - MAPS should be changed to MAP.
- On the back side of the flyer:
 - the heading on the upper right for Community and Technical College should use the ampersand rather than “and.”
 - just the abbreviation KCEO should be used.
 - for each school that has College in the Schools Courses, change courses to program (lowercase).
 - Under BOLD, item 2, technology should be in lowercase.
 - DREAM, item 1, it should be corrected to student-driven, small learning community.

2019 Visitors’ Guide. The committee received a copy of the 2019 Visitors’ Guide in which the EDC’s ad is located on the left inside back cover (see attached). The ad has a website link that will be tracked. Vice Chair Knott recommended each story be a clickable link on the EDC’s website.

Highway 23 Coalition Circle Map. The committee viewed the four circle map (see attached) which shows the 2019 priority project areas and describes the projects on the back side. The map was distributed at the Coalition’s Legislative Lunch Reception held in January at the State Office Building.

Other. Backman spoke with a representative of the *Twin Cities Business* magazine this morning about a possible free article on Kandiyohi County in the future.

NEW BUSINESS—

Partners in Ag Innovation. Schmoll informed the committee that the EDC’s Agriculture and Renewable Energy Committee’s Talent & Technology Workshop and MinnWest Technology Campus’ Ag & Animal Science Conference will be combined into a new event, Partners in Ag Innovation. REDstar is working on

promotional materials. Schmoll explained the two events and the new partnership. The event planner for the Ag & Animal Science Conference is assisting with the new event that will be held August 1, 2019. Last year, 80 attended the Talent & Technology Workshop and 110 attended the Ag & Animal Science Conference.

2019 Marketing Plan. The committee reviewed its current goals: 1) Create awareness of EDC activities and services in our local/regional community; 2) Concentrate on focus areas involving workforce training, housing and daycare; and 3) Attract new businesses. Vice Chair Knott asked what is the executable product(s) for goal 2? Schmoll reported on the work being done relative to childcare and the formation of the Kandiyohi County Child Care Innovation Project. Committee members asked if employer training is needed relative to remote working? Schmoll stated the group is working on specifics that could result in a document that could be marketed.

Goal 1, Tactics:

- 1—the goal will be to have a draft of a healthcare flyer by June
- 4—the winter newsletter should be started as soon as possible
- Remove 5 and 6 as staff attends Open Mic and City Council/EDA meetings and is not committee related
- 7—change to “Assist with marketing and promotional materials for the Highway 23 Coalition.”
- 8—change to “Assist with marketing and promotional materials for the Partners in Ag Innovation workshop” with a start date of March 1 to be completed by August 1
- 10—add the West Central Minnesota Area Job Fair and remove the University of Minnesota Technology Showcase as it was not held last year

Goal 2, Tactics:

- Remove 1d, Create a friends and family campaign
- Remove 2, Participate in Vision 2040 Housing Subcommittee; the committee could assist with ways to market the community to proposed new residents
- Change 3 from “Participate in” to “Assist with any marketing needs for the Kandiyohi County Child Care Innovation Project”

[Kim Augeson was excused from the meeting.]

Goal 3, Tactics:

- Remove 4, Participate in DEED’s MN Marketing Partnership
- Remove 5, Participate in Community Venture Network
- Add assist with marketing materials and proposals to prospective businesses
- Add assist with marketing materials when staff attends conferences

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:34 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next meeting is **12 noon, Monday, March 25, 2019**, at WORKUP.

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.

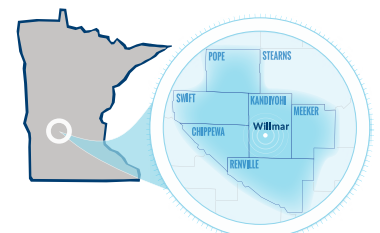
Many schools have partnered with local businesses to develop unique programs such as *Kandiyohi CEO* and *MAPS*. *KCEO* is a year-long class for high school juniors and seniors that immerses students into the business world; allowing them to learn by touring over 100 local businesses and even launching a startup of their own. *MAPS (Manufacturing & Production)* 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. Customized training for business and industry
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 Lillian-Danube) 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. A student-drive, small learning community
2. Hands-on, student-driven learning
3. Project-based learning opportunities focused on life skills
4. College readiness, career preparedness & civic engagement



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)

Public
Schools



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



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, including robotics
4. Small class sizes



Willmar Schools willmar.k12.mn.us

1. High number of course offerings & extra-curriculars
2. Diverse performing arts 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

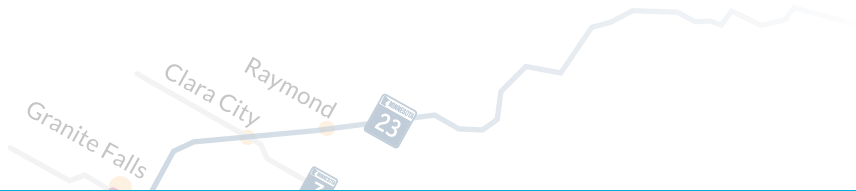
1. Low student to teacher ratios (15:1)
2. Specialized instruction for Elementary students
3. College in the Schools Courses
4. Foreign language opportunities



Highway 23 Projects

Status of Current Projects & Ongoing Corridor Needs

- ▶ The Highway 23 Coalition has expanded its coverage to 14 cities and 10 counties and now covers from I-90 in Southwest MN to I-35 in Northeast MN. The Coalition has over 100 business, government, and organizational members.



- ▶ The Highway 23 Coalition is appreciative of the Corridors of Commerce funding that was approved for the two four-lane gaps between Willmar and I-94 during the last legislative session. MnDOT District 8 is the lead entity for both gaps and is proceeding to develop and deliver these projects.

Recently District 8 has hired Isthmus Engineering to provide engineering services (e.g. final design, public engagement, permitting, etc.) for the North Gap. Land acquisition/ROW activities will begin in 2019. Construction of the first gap is expected to begin in 2022.

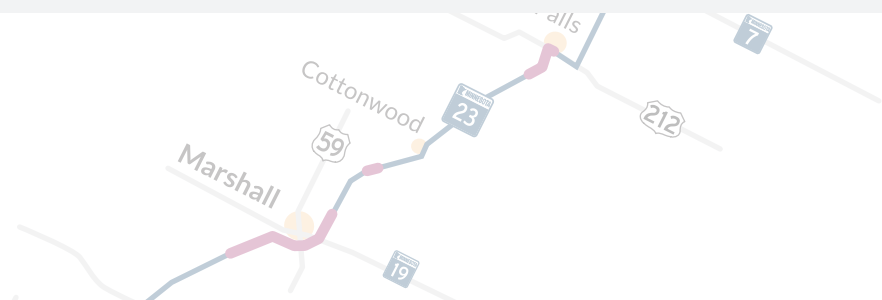
Promoting Safety, Mobility & Growth

- ▶ The Highway 23 Coalition has identified and supports the following corridor project priorities for 2019:

- Construction of a **Roundabout in the City of Foley at Highway 23 and 8th Avenue (near Foley Public Schools) and the undertaking of a Preferred Route Safety Study that would encompass Hwy 23 from Foley to Milaca.** This study would determine the best route for a four-lane road.
- Construction of a **CSAH 55 Overpass that would connect to the new Interchange at Hwy 23 and County Road 5.** This bridge over the BNSF railroad would tie into the new Willmar Railroad Wye project with a direct connection to the City's Industrial Park.

- **Undertaking an Intersection Safety Study at Highway 23 and Highway 7 in Clara City.** This study would determine what changes could be made to enhance safety at this intersection. The Coalition's Board approved providing \$5,000 toward the local match required by MnDOT. Chippewa County and the City, both members of the Coalition, would match the contribution.
- Construction of a **four-lane extension of Highway 23 north from the City of Marshall to the City of Green Valley,** a distance of 4.5 miles. This project would continue the four-lane infrastructure on the Hwy 23 Corridor and bring it closer to connecting with Highway 212.

- ▶ In addition, the Highway 23 Coalition has been supportive of an improved I-94/MN23 Interchange project, an important safety project near Waite Park. MnDOT District 3 is now in the process of moving up this project, if possible, from 2020 to this year. The Coalition appreciates District 3's efforts in this regard.





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.

GOAL 1: Create awareness of EDC activities and services in our local/regional community.		
STRATEGY: Be an agent of positive messaging about our business community and economy.		
Tactics	Assigned To	Status/Completed
1. Design healthcare flyer	Marketing Committee	
2. Website updates as needed	EDC/Marketing Committee	
3. Actively promote Kandiyohi County via social channels	EDC/REDstar	
4. Create/email quarterly digital newsletter January—Winter April—Spring July—Summer October—Fall	Marketing Committee REDstar	
5. KWLM Open Mic—monthly	Aaron/Connie	
6. Speak at City Council/EDA meetings outside of Willmar	Aaron/Connie	
7. Participate in Highway 23 Coalition	Aaron/Connie/Donna	
8. Co-host Partners in Ag Innovation workshop	Connie/Joanna/Jean/Ag Marketing Subcommittee	
9. Support WORKUP programming for startups	EDC/Marketing Committee	
10. Sponsor/Support Community Organizations (KCEO, University of Minnesota Technology Showcase)	Marketing Committee	

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	
d. Create a friends and family campaign	Marketing Committee	
2. Participate in Vision 2040 Housing Subcommittee	Aaron	
3. Participate in Kandiyohi County Child Care Innovation Project	Connie	

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. Participate in DEED'S MN Marketing Partnership (annual membership)	Aaron/Connie	
5. Participate in Community Venture Network (annual membership)	Aaron/Connie	