

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)**  
**MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**MINUTES**  
**February 27, 2017**  
**WORKUP, Willmar**

Present: Donna Boonstra, Deb Geister, Jean Geselius, Ann Winge Johnson, Mike Negen and Ryan Thielen

Excused: Shari Courtney, Ashley Queenan and Julie Redepenning

Absent: Sarah Isdal

Guest: Emily Lien, Digital Media Specialist, Heritage Bank, N.A. and Jayme Sczublewski, REDstar Creative

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

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Chairperson Mike Negen called the meeting to order at approximately 12:10 p.m. followed by self introductions. Ann Winge Johnson noted plans are for Emily Lien to replace her on this committee in the future.

**MINUTES—**

IT WAS MOVED BY Mike Negen, SECONDED BY Donna Boonstra, to approve the minutes of the January 23, 2017 Marketing and Public Relations Committee meeting as emailed.  
MOTION CARRIED.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Marketing Assistance to EDC Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development Committee.** Jean Geselius reported she and Connie Schmoll met as to the EDC's Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development (Ag) Committee marketing to the ag community. The Ag Committee will have a booth at the Willmar Ag Show March 13-14, 2017 and will use the EDC's trifold display. The Ag Marketing Subcommittee will meet tomorrow at 12 noon to discuss a tradeshow strategy and a strategic marketing plan. REDstar Creative has been asked to create an ag flyer. Schmoll has been working with Willmar Municipal Utilities to update energy production information for the flyer, as well as gathering other data to use. Geselius feels the Ag Committee's information for the trifold display needs to be larger and updated. The Ag Committee has \$500 designated for marketing. Marketing Committee members suggested using a digital display rather than a printed display. Jayme Sczublewski will check on the schedule for the ag flyer.

**EDC Marketing Brochure.** A copy of the revised brochure was shown (see attached). Sczublewski noted REDstar Creative has aligned the look to make it more consistent with other recent marketing pieces, i.e. more visual highlighting main features and graphics for key industries. Aaron Backman stated the photos used on the cover were changed to include agriculture. Ryan Thielen suggested adding the website to the brochure cover. Using a photo of robotics rather than a crane on the cover was mentioned. The goal is to have the brochure finalized by the end of March. It was commented that recruiting residents could be a separate flyer and could include leisure and school information, etc.

**Booth/Displays.** Negen provided information on retractable banners. Sczublewski showed examples of trio displays from the following website, [www.designstrategies.com/more.html](http://www.designstrategies.com/more.html) (see attached). Retractable banners are more flexible and can be used alone or with several using a central theme. Retractable banners are 31.5" or 33.5" wide x 80" high and cost between \$300-\$450 each. The committee discussed what messaging and content are important. It was felt the top of each panel should have the EDC's logo and website—any copy should be at the top of each panel so the banners can be partially displayed on a tabletop, if needed. The center panel could have Open for Business and separate panels could be done for Advocacy or the Willmar Industrial Park or Features and Leading Industries. Using large pictures was recommended and using the "less is more" idea.

**2017 Marketing Plan.** Backman indicated the committee's 2017 budget is approximately \$27,000. Backman highlighted areas of the 2016 Marketing Plan (see attached), including the Situation Analysis and Target Audience Groups.

#### Strategy 1

##### Objective 1

Projects: Backman suggested possibly adding schools and healthcare. Highlight the area school districts, including Willmar and New London-Spicer and Ridgewater College under the title of "We invest in our schools." The school districts are investing more than \$70 million. Backman toured the Willmar High School, Middle School and the new Lakeland Elementary School construction sites and took photos. Healthcare additions include Rice Memorial Hospital's new Rehabilitation Center and the Willmar Surgery Center that will be completed in 2017.

##### Objective 2

Projects c) and e) will be removed and a possible addition will be target marketing. Backman noted the EDC is judged on projects that look to job creation and add to the county's tax base. Benchmarks can be variable and hard to measure. The EDC's marketing should have clear metrics, such as website statistics or collecting a certain number of email addresses each month. The EDC's social media presence was discussed. Content must be interesting. Facebook posts should be informational; articles could be written for LinkedIn; and Twitter is generally reposts from other venues. Sczublewski noted she and Lindsey Donner have been going through the EDC's social media platforms to determine a focus and strategy. Backman stated in 2016, the EDC spent \$11,000 on two ads with no known contacts being generated since publication.

### Objective 3

Projects: The EDC will continue participation in the Kandiyohi County CEO loan program, Job Fair, Animal Science Conference and University of Minnesota Showcase. West Central Angel Fund I will be a new project. Deb Geister stated 99% of her digital marketing is done via webinars and suggested the EDC could do virtual business classes and have a library of classes available. It was noted the EDC has links on its website to the Center of Rural Entrepreneurship and SCORE, which have business webinars.

Backman indicated he will prepare a draft 2017 Marketing Plan for the committee to review at its next meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Highway 23 Coalition Flyer.** Backman stated one EDC priority is to encourage infrastructure, including transportation with a priority being to fill the gaps on Highway 23. Draft flyers prepared for the Highway 23 Coalition were shown (see attached). The Coalition plans to invite Charles Zelle, the Minnesota Commissioner of Transportation, elected officials and businesses to a transportation summit this spring.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:42 p.m.

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





The Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar EDC has **built collaborative relationships** with our city and county governments, private industry and community organizations. We are funded by a local levy, allowing us to address economic development for West Central Minnesota's business hub.

The EDC has provided **visionary leadership** in several regional projects:



Development of the MinnWest Technology Campus



Expanding current industrial park and getting it certified "shovel-ready"



Supporting alternative energy projects



Spearheading a broadband initiative that was awarded a \$5 million grant in 2017



Promoting a locally-based multicultural market



**Aaron Backman**

Economic Development Director

aaron@kandiyohi.com



**Connie Schmoll**

Business Development Specialist

connie@kandiyohi.com

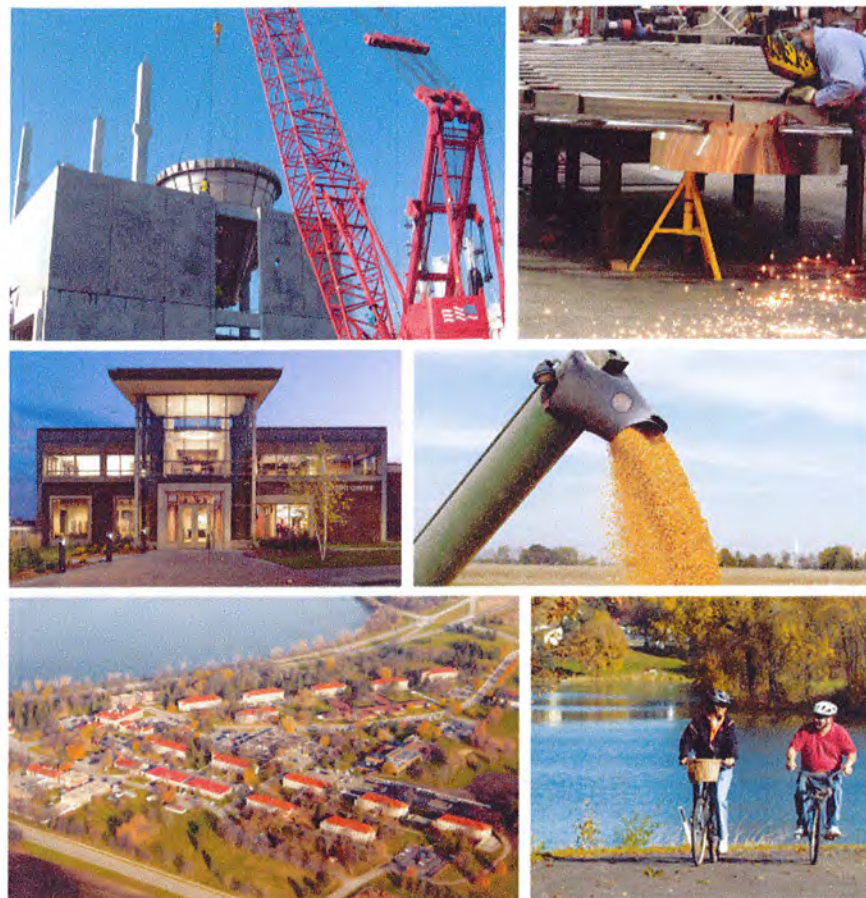
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Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



OPEN *for* BUSINESS



## OUR FOCUS

### ADVOCACY

We advocate for the local business community by providing customized support, consulting and mentoring programs. We also provide access to critical funding sources and aid in the application process.

### RETENTION

We support our local business community by providing customized business retention, expansion and relocation support. It's our goal to assist startups by providing access to funding opportunities and our growing entrepreneurial network.

### EXPANSION

We actively recruit businesses to our area in the industries that are best suited to our local economy: healthcare, agriculture, renewable energy, biotechnology, retail and e-commerce.

### MARKETING

We work closely with our marketing committee to promote our community in order to attract targeted businesses and talent from all sectors.



Proudly serving these  
**Kandiyohi County** communities:

Atwater | Blomkest | Kandiyohi | Lake Lillian  
New London | Pennock | Prinsburg | Raymond  
Spicer | Sunburg | Willmar

## AREA HIGHLIGHTS



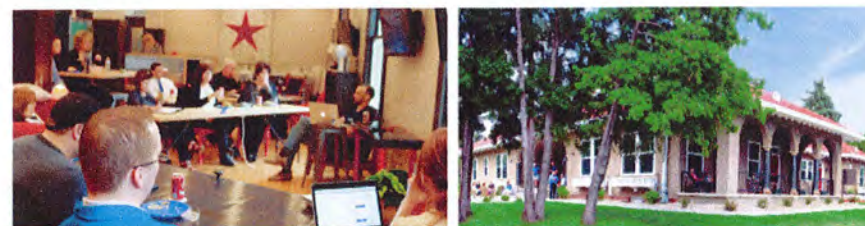
**REGIONAL HEALTHCARE CENTER**



**COMMUNITY COLLEGE**



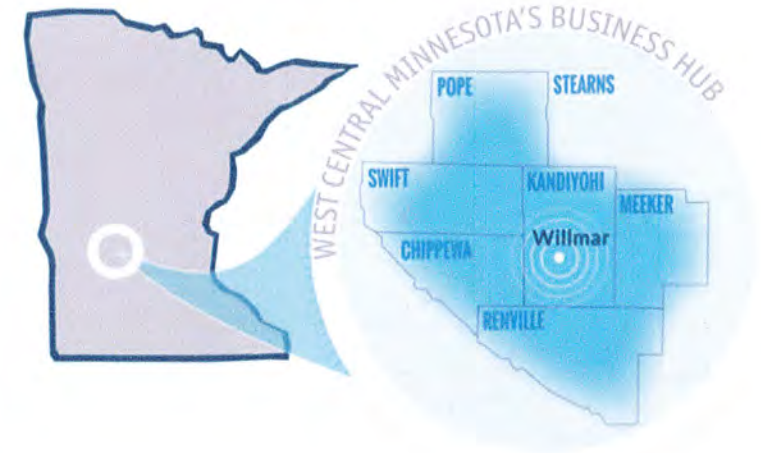
**RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS**



**COWORKING SPACE**



**REGIONAL AIRPORT & RAIL HUB**



**Kandiyohi County** and the **Willmar Lakes Area** is a vital, growing, regional center in the heart of West Central Minnesota. The total population of the county has surpassed 103,500 and is growing. Willmar is a diversified, growing, micropolitan city. The Minnesota demographer forecasts continued growth because of our diverse economy, expansion in smaller industries as well as tourism in the area.

### KEY INDUSTRIES



Ag Technology



Medical



Advanced  
Manufacturing



Retail /  
Restaurants



home case studies new client info about us team **portfolio** client feedback contact



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inches wide and 80 inches tall when set up. They're also so inexpensive that you can get several to really help make a professional statement at your next sales presentation, board meeting or lecture. At 7.5 pounds each, you can carry several without strain in a small duffel bag in a taxi, and look like a million bucks when you give your presentation.

### Magna Timeshare collapsible trade show booth

Magna software needed a booth created for a trade show in Phoenix, Arizona. The trouble was, they needed it designed, manufactured and shipped to their location in only one week! We were able to quickly prepare all the artwork to create an eye-catching design, then found a booth manufacturing company in Arizona able to make the deadline. We sent the files to the manufacturer and the booth was shipped directly to the convention center in Phoenix a week later, just in time for the show. We can meet your deadlines too!





## **MARKETING PLAN**

**Updated as of 1/17/2017**

**Situation Analysis:** The Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission (EDC) is a government agency whose mission is to be a catalyst for economic growth of the greater Kandiyohi area. We do that in a wide variety of ways, including supporting existing businesses, assisting area entrepreneurs and recruiting targeted industries that are a fit for our region. While we have been successful in that mission, we face the ongoing challenge of educating our community, prospects and partners about how that is accomplished and what kinds of services we offer. We also lead area efforts to market our community to businesses outside of our region that are interested in locating or expanding here—a process that requires ongoing review and refinement in order to stay competitive.

### **Target Audience Groups:**

1. **Local/Regional:** The EDC must reach our local and regional community for two reasons. First, we must educate them regarding our purpose and activities as a government-funded, volunteer-driven organization. Second, we must make our services and expertise known and available to local businesses and entrepreneurs who need help starting or expanding.
2. **Outside Region:** The EDC must aggressively market our area outside of our region for the purposes of attracting new businesses and talent to our community. We need to promote our brand to enhance our economic development efforts, showcase our quality of life and bring more people to the community.

**STRATEGY 1:** *Create awareness of EDC activities and services in our local/regional community.*

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. Refine/remix EDC “brand”

### **PROJECTS**

- a) Update/create templates for marketing materials
  - 1) Panel brochure used in packets and booth displays
  - 2) Update booth display
  - 3) Update Finance brochure
  - 4) Update target industries brochures/flyers:
    - a. Advanced Manufacturing and Technology
    - b. Retail
    - c. MinnWest Technology Campus—completed July

2. Be an agent of positive messaging about our business community and economy

#### **PROJECTS**

- a) Review and update website and annually check major employers and statistics
- b) Create/publish social media content
  - 1) Facebook
  - 2) Twitter
  - 3) LinkedIn
- c) Create/publish monthly articles for the West Central Tribune business section (third Tuesday publish date, email to [business@wctrib.com](mailto:business@wctrib.com))

2016 publication dates:

  - 1) April 19—
  - 2) May 17—
  - 3) June 21—
  - 4) July 19—
  - 5) August 16—
  - 6) September 20—
  - 7) October 18—
  - 8) November 15—
  - 9) December 20—
- d) Create/distribute newsletter
  - 1) February 16

four-page insert in the *West Central Tribune* (full zone insertion 11,414)

REDstar	4,782.50
Print Masters (12,500 copies)	2,026.35
West Central Tribune	<u>627.77</u>
Total:	\$7,436.55
  - 2) May—spring 2016 digital only

REDstar \$1,056.33
  - 3) November 21—fall 2016 digital only
- e) Create advertising campaign and flight plan for full year
  - 1) Chamber ADvantage (850 copies)

<u>Mailing</u>	<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Topic</u>
February 1		new website (Print Masters \$360.17)
April 1		four-page newsletter
June 1	not done	
October 3	not done	
December 1	not done	
  - 2) Radio—monthly guest of Open Mic on KWLM

3. Educate community about services/resources of EDC

#### **PROJECTS**

- a) Sponsor WORKUP programming partnership targeting start-ups and entrepreneurs (includes WORKUP, Ridgewater, KCEO and Heritage Bank)



- 1) QUP—third Wednesday of each month, 8:00-9:15 a.m.
- 2) MEETUP—fourth Wednesday of each month from 12:00-1:15 p.m.
- b) Support community organizations—be a part of messaging where appropriate
  - 1) Kandiyohi County CEO loan program—EDC is fiscal host, reviews loans and donated two memberships at WORKUP (year 3 of 3 in program investment \$1,000)
  - 2) TEDxWillmarLive—February 16 (silver sponsor \$500)
  - 3) Chamber Connection—March 4
  - 4) Hill Capital Corporation Small Businesses & Access to Capital presentation—March 7, MinnWest Technology Campus
  - 5) West Central Minnesota Area Job Fair—March 22  
(REDstar designed marketing materials \$431.25)
  - 6) HACK<sub>2</sub>0—in preliminary planning stage
  - 7) Animal Science Conference, September 20, 2016, MinnWest Technology Campus  
(2015—networking break sponsor \$2,000)  
(2016—networking break sponsor \$2,000)
  - 8) University of Minnesota Showcase—November 9 (refreshments sponsor \$100)

**STRATEGY 2: *Market our community outside of our region in order to attract targeted business and talent.***

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Deliver specific, sought-after area metrics such as workforce, demographics and accessibility
  - on website
  - presented to Joint Operations Board October 13

**PROJECTS**

- a) Update customizable proposal template to attract businesses
2. Create customized packages to attract business interest

**PROJECTS**

- a) Member of DEED's Marketing Partnership (2016—\$625)
- b) Advertise in DEED's statewide marketing publication  
(2016 edition full-page ad, inside left across from back cover \$4,960)  
(2017 edition full-page ad, inside left across from back cover \$6,435)
3. Support the recruitment efforts of area businesses for workers and talent

**PROJECTS**

- a) Work with human resource departments to develop online resources
- b) Create LinkedIn page for recruitment
- c) Develop a friends and family campaign
- d) Develop a formal Trailing Spouse Network
  - 1) Develop partnerships with area school foundations

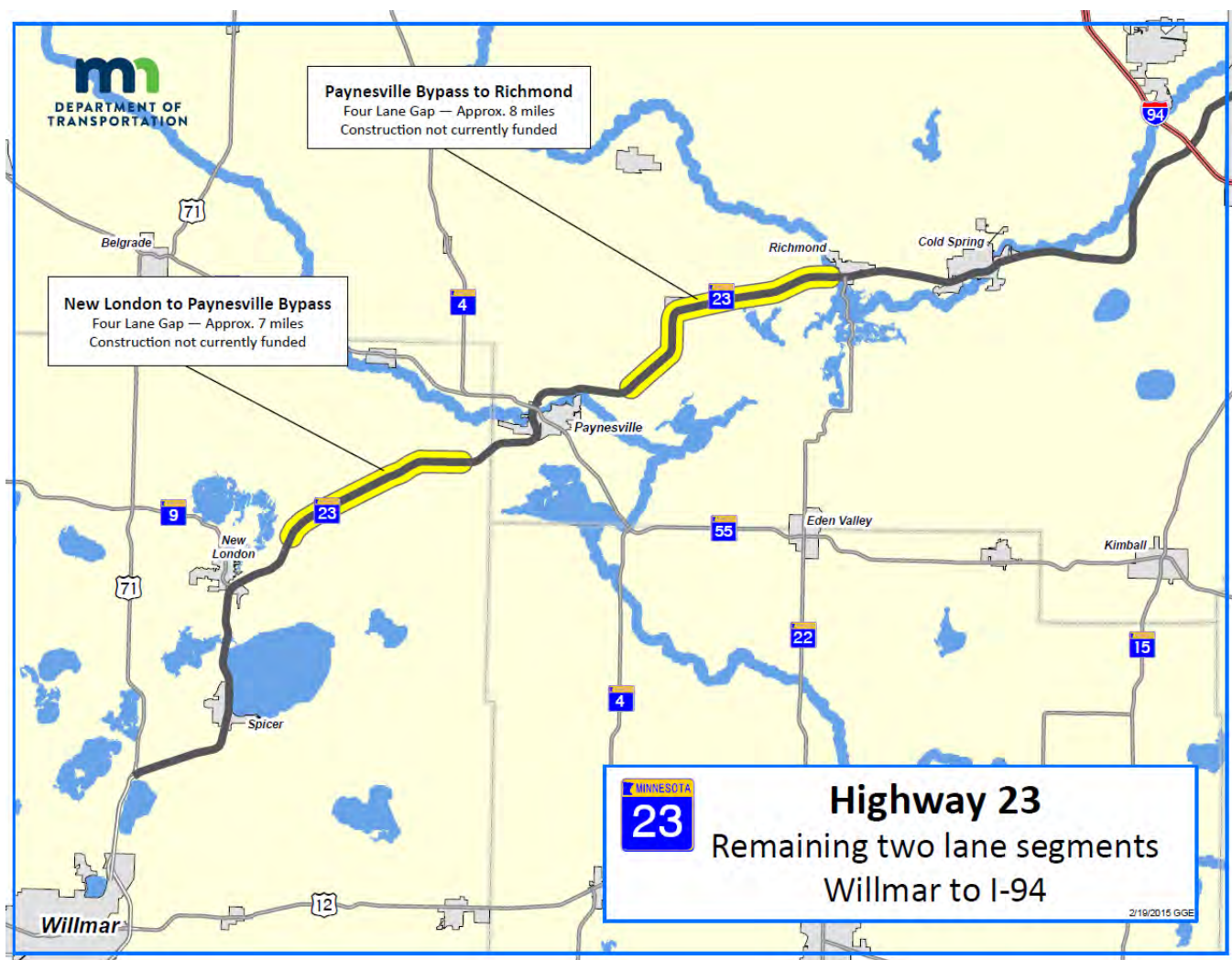


## OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE DEPENDS ON FOUR-LANE ACCESS AND FILLING THE GAPS FROM WILLMAR TO I-94

Highway 23 is part of an Interregional Highway System for the State of Minnesota. The goal of our Highway 23 Coalition is to communicate the immediate and imperative transportation access needs of our communities in an effort to fund the completion of the four-lane highway from Willmar to I-94.

- ☐ Our **economic future** depends on accessibility. The lack of accessibility has caused us to miss out on economic growth that other regional cities have enjoyed.
- ☐ The **regional community vision** for West Central Minnesota includes a four-lane highway tying into the Interstate system. Our communities have prioritized the need for four-lane accessibility into Willmar for a variety of reasons.
- ☐ Communities along the corridor **support** the project. This is a priority for all residents in order to maintain quality living conditions and access to larger cities.
- ☐ This project will **attract professionals** to our community. We have a large technology campus, a regional medical center as well as high-tech industries and manufacturing. People need safe transport access to these opportunities and facilities.
- ☐ Accessibility is required if we are to attract and retain manufacturing **jobs**. The lack of this transport access has cost Willmar 325 jobs when one manufacturer relocated to a community with four-lane access.
- ☐ Logistics and warehousing businesses with 'just-in-time' inventory models **require four-lane** accessibility.
- ☐ District 8 has **never received High Priority Funding** and Willmar is the largest outstate city without four-lane access. This is an issue of immediate need for us.

# MAKING THE CASE FOR FOUR-LANE ACCESS



\* Include statistics re: current capacity, use studies, etc?

Contact us at [kandiyohi.com](http://kandiyohi.com) or  
toll-free at 866.665.4556





**COALITION**

## **OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE DEPENDS ON FOUR-LANE ACCESS AND FILLING THE GAPS FROM WILLMAR TO I-94**

### **COMMUNITY**

- District 8 has never received High Priority Funding
- Willmar is the largest outstate city without four-lane access
- The regional vision for West Central Minnesota includes a four-lane connection to the Interstate system

### **GROWTH**

- Accessibility is required to attract and retain manufacturing jobs
- This project will attract professionals to our community

### **INDUSTRY**

- Logistics and warehousing businesses with just-in-time inventory models require four-lane accessibility
- Safe, reliable transportation is crucial for our key industries
- Lack of transport access cost Willmar 325 jobs

Contact us at [kandiyohi.com](http://kandiyohi.com) or  
toll-free at **866.665.4556**



**Paynesville Bypass to Richmond**  
Four Lane Gap — Approx. 8 miles  
Construction not currently funded

**New London to Paynesville Bypass**  
Four Lane Gap — Approx. 7 miles  
Construction not currently funded

