

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

March 1, 2019

EDC Board Room, Willmar

Present: Sam Bowen, Jim Ellingson, Les Heitke (via phone), Roger Imdieke, Les Nelson, Dan Tempel and Kelly TerWisscha

Excused: Ranae Rahn and Dean Steinwand

Guest: Jennifer Mendoza, CLUES Navigator

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

Chair Sam Bowen called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m.

AGENDA

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

MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke, SECONDED BY Dan Tempel, to approve the Minutes of the February 1, 2019 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

REPORTS

BRE Survey Research Subcommittee. Connie Schmoll reported on the subcommittee's research as to conducting another BRE survey. Seven projects were identified following the 2015 survey and the subcommittee believes there are still tasks that can be completed from that survey. Schmoll reviewed the seven project areas and possible tasks identified by the subcommittee (see attached Research Report and Recommendations). Jennifer Mendoza reported she spoke with the human resources representative of Nova-Tech Engineering about workforce needs. Mendoza volunteered to assist with any tasks related to workforce. The subcommittee looked at the video done by Kandiyohi County and the possibility of having a new video done, but the cost estimates were quite expensive. Roger Imdieke commented that United Prairie Bank sometimes uses a videographer, which could be a connection. Other videographers were mentioned and could be contacted. Dan Tempel noted ACMC has a hard time recruiting doctors and a video could be used for recruitment. Tempel suggested this committee view the video done by the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce. It was the consensus to view the video at the April meeting.

IT WAS MOVED BY Sam Bowen, SECONDED BY Roger Imdieke, to accept the recommendation of the subcommittee not to do another business survey, but to work on tasks from the 2015 survey. MOTION CARRIED.

The next meeting agenda will include how to move forward with the tasks identified. Chair Bowen noted that workforce and education would be tasks that might fall to this committee and others could be brought in to work on task forces.

Aaron Backman noted the EDC boards will be holding their annual planning session on March 14th at Kandiyohi Power Cooperative's Community Room. Also invited to attend are the EDC's committee chairs, vice chairs and community partners. Chair Bowen stated he will be attending the planning session and requested any concerns by this committee be voiced to him. Two tasks (marketing our area and broadband availability) would fall under other EDC committees and Chair Bowen recommended they be forwarded to those committees. It was suggested these goals be brought to the boards' planning session.

Childcare Initiative. Schmoll reported the core group has established goals. Schmoll and Les Nelson are working on the goal to identify access to capital on behalf of childcare. The other goals are diversity and mentoring, local training opportunities and business support and legislation. Schmoll reported the YMCA is looking at two locations for a daycare in Spicer. The YMCA is looking at three other possible locations with one being specifically for infants and toddlers at Calvary Lutheran Church. Several area churches have contacted Schmoll about available space for a daycare. The Willmar Child Care Center plans to close its loan with the EDC today.

Retail Business Design Workshops. Backman provided information on the presenters for the Kandiyohi County Retail Business Design Workshops, which are mainly from the Twin Cities area. Eighteen businesses registered for the workshops with most being very small. The EDC's role was to market/promote the event. Topics thus far have included inventory control and store layout. Seven businesses have submitted applications to work one-on-one with a University of Minnesota (U of M) graduate student. Half of the participants are from Willmar. Schmoll stated the registration fee was \$250 each; \$3,000 was set aside for scholarships. The cities of Spicer and New London paid the fees for businesses from their respective communities. This is the first time the U of M Extension has done this type of training. A report will be prepared at the end of the workshops, which the U of M will use to decide on future workshops around the state. Each workshop is being videoed and can be viewed by the participants, if they are unable to attend a session. It has been a great networking opportunity for the retailers. Jim Ellingson suggested a similar program would be good for service businesses as well. Tempel asked if there will be followup with the businesses to see if they implemented anything they are learning. Backman stated the EDC will followup with each business. Mendoza stated SHIP also does some work with businesses on marketing and has funds available.

Business Visits/Tours. Schmoll reported she attended a meeting last night on the New London Food Cooperative where most attendees were younger. Its fund-raising goal is \$250,000. It is seeking 200 members to invest \$100 each plus grants. The Co-op will have paid staff. Craig Edwards is willing to sell his building (approximately 1800 square feet) on Main Street on a Contract for Deed. The Co-op will be open to the public. Members will receive a discount and be issued a fob to enter the Co-op at anytime. The Co-op is working closely with Model Citizen

restaurant. It plans to have organic food provided from farmers within a 50-mile radius. The Co-op does not have funds for marketing and is requesting \$900 from the EDC for marketing purposes (see attached). Schmoll recommends approving a \$900 grant to the Co-op for marketing.

IT WAS MOVED BY Sam Bowen, SECONDED BY Les Nelson, to approve \$900 from the countywide business development line of the EDC's budget to the New London Food Cooperative for marketing purposes. MOTION CARRIED.

Backman reported he attended the Agcellence banquet hosted by Agprofessionals in February; he talked with a reporter from *Minnesota Daily* on the Retail Business Design Workshops; attended a legislative reception hosted by the Highway 23 Coalition Legislative Committee in St. Paul; and chaired the meeting of the Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers and gave a housing presentation. Backman passed around photos showing the progress of the 15th Street Flats construction. Backman and Schmoll met with Marcus Construction on a proposed \$13.5 million senior living campus to be done by Bethesda north of ACMC in New London to include assisted living units, a memory care unit, senior living apartments, wellness center, underground parking. There are no known roadblocks at present. Bethesda is looking at potential TIF assistance and plans to start building this spring. The City of New London is working with David Drown & Associates on the financial aspects. Imdieke reported eight patio apartments are being built in New London and there is a waiting list so another project is being considered. Backman stated a Sioux Falls housing developer visited Willmar this week and is looking at a mixed-use development near downtown Willmar. Chair Bowen commented he would like to speak with Michelle Haefner about innovative training that could be done through Ridgewater College.

CLUES. Mendoza presented her report showing the Willmar program from November 2017 through December 2018 (see attached). The national certification process for welders is difficult so not many welders have been certified. Some local businesses prefer to do their own training of welders so certification is not necessarily a requirement like it is with the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. Mendoza noted some participants do not have the language skills necessary. Chair Bowen stated Ridgewater College learned from the Latino Service Providers Network that it is a cultural aspect for Latino youth to graduate from high school, but not go for additional schooling. Mendoza questioned what other programs could be developed through CLUES? She has heard the community would like forklift certifications, but that is mainly done through employers. Mendoza would like the local human resource group to send her a list of open positions. Schmoll suggested contacting United Community Action Partnership about childcare positions. Ridgewater College could develop other programs if a need is found, such as assembly, soldering, heavy equipment operator, etc. It was suggested to bring together employers to have a group conversation as to what training needs there are and training gaps. It was questioned if there is a need for post-secondary continuation of the Manufacturing and Production highschool program. A survey of employers could be a starting point. Backman suggested the EDC could host a round table discussion.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Job Fair. Backman reported the West Central Minnesota Area Job Fair will be held March 26, 2019 at Ridgewater College. Chair Bowen will be on Open Mic to promote the event.

Education Flyer. Backman distributed the EDC's new flyer on education in the county (see attached).

Highway 23 Coalition. Backman announced the Highway 23 Coalition will hold its annual meeting on March 22, 2019 at The 400 Club Restaurant & Lounge at Rockville. Transportation Commissioner Margaret Anderson Kelliher has been invited to attend.

Community Marketing Strategies. This topic was tabled until the April meeting.

Other. Schmoll announced the EDC's Ag Committee is partnering with MinnWest Technology Campus on a new event to be held August 1, 2019. It was noted Kohl's applied for permits to locate in the Kandi Mall. The main entry to Kohl's will be on the east side of the mall. Backman stated the logistics company withdrew from purchasing land in the Willmar Industrial Park stating it was re-evaluating its capital investments.

Chair Bowen recommended this committee's future meetings be officially scheduled for one and a half hours, which was approved by the committee.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:20 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., Friday, April 5, 2019**, at the EDC Office, Willmar.

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION SURVEY SUBCOMMITTEE
RESEARCH REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS
March 1, 2019**

In 2015, the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission (EDC) and the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce Grow Minnesota! Partnership team joined together to implement the Kandiyohi County Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Visitation Program. Surveys were conducted at 82 different Willmar Lakes Area businesses.

The survey data was used to assess the business climate in Kandiyohi County at that time. The findings of the data were used for strategic planning and creating goals for enhancing the business environment.

Objectives of a BRE program include:

- ✓ Show gratitude to local businesses and demonstrate continued support
- ✓ Help to solve immediate business concerns
- ✓ Increase ability of local businesses to compete in the global economy
- ✓ Establish and implement strategic plans for economic development
- ✓ Build community capacity for businesses to sustain growth and development

The EDC BRE Survey Planning subcommittee conducted research to assist in making a recommendation about future BRE surveys.

The projects selected as a result of the 2015 survey included the following:

- Project 1: Identifying, engaging and inspiring our currently under-utilized workforce**
- Project 2: Work to change local behavior so that outsiders will perceive our community as one that embraces diversity**
- Project 3: Excellence in our schools**
- Project 4: Stabilizing our workforce—now and into the future**
- Project 5: Marketing the area as a place of job opportunities and lifestyle**
- Project 6: Broadband expansion/availability in Kandiyohi County**
- Project 7: Increased availability of job-qualified workers; short-term training/diplomas K-12**

Three of the seven projects (1, 4 and 7) are specific to workforce, which we believe is still an issue for local businesses.

One goal includes marketing our area and the features that would bring people in to stay. Another concerns valuing the diversity in our area and making sure outsiders know that we do so. Broadband provisions and enhancing our schools are also goals of the project. The last four goals also speak to resources to keep people in the community, bring new people to the area and help to grow our next generation of workforce.

Projects and tasks have been completed in several ways for most of the goals, including:

1. **Workforce.** Several programs were implemented to bring in unemployed or underemployed workforce and help them acquire new skills in areas where workforce is needed, including CNA courses for three groups, welding courses for two groups, hospitality services training for one group. The EDC has worked to support the KCEO Program, the West Central Area Job fair—with a location change to the college, and connecting businesses with the college CNA and welding class cohorts. Work done to promote housing, transportation access, broadband and childcare are all helpful for stabilizing our workforce. The EDC

sponsored Manufacturing Day Tours to area businesses for teachers and 10th grade students of Wilmar Public Schools.

2. **Perception of our community.** Community-wide efforts have been done to value the diversity of our area. The EDC has been involved with a BRE survey of diverse businesses and shared the survey information with the community and broadly to others through SWIF, DEED and TV and news articles. The EDC staff has supported and assisted the new Community Integration Center by helping with grant applications and marketing materials and has attended its events. EDC staff participates with Vision 2040 leadership and committees that address diversity and EDC staff assists start-up and existing diverse businesses.
3. **Excellence of our schools.** The EDC developed a flyer to summarize the strengths of the educational institutions in the area. The flyer will be used in area promotions to site selectors and business consultants.
4. **Marketing our area.** The EDC was of assistance to create and post a video about Kandiyohi County on the Kandiyohi County website. Information has been written about the area; the resources for businesses and the quality of life amenities for site selectors and interested companies. Other marketing materials have been developed to promote the Willmar Industrial Park, MinnWest Technology Campus, WORKUP, our ag industry and our schools.
5. **Broadband availability.** Efforts to secure high-speed broadband throughout the county have been continuous. The cities that are considered served with at least minimum standards have seen continually increasing speeds provided by incumbent providers.

In addition, the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce President, Ken Warner, reported the following accomplishments:

2017 Projects Overview Summary

- Chamber Connection—21 years and 38 connections with an average of 45-50 attendees
- Leadership Perspectives—26 years and 771 graduates
- 4 Lunch with Leaders
- 7 neXt educational events
- Retaining Good Employees Workshop
- 6th year for neXt – created to attract and retain young talent in the community, while developing the next generation of leaders
- Student Job Fair & Career Expos

2018 Projects

- Three Ridgewater College Meet with the Presidential Candidates—March
- Tax Planning Workshop—January 26
- Lunch with Leaders—March 21
- Lunch with Leaders—May 17
- Minnesota Job Match—August 29
- Successfully Managing Change—September 18
- Successful Business Series—October 4
- International Trade & Tariffs—September 20

- Community Forum on Transportation Issues—September 20
- Lunch with Leaders—October 10; education which included leadership of Community Christian School, DREAM Technical Academy, NL-S Schools, Ridgewater College, Willmar Public Schools and the Minnesota State Chancellor

2019 Projects

Solidified position of the Business Education Network (BEN) by generating support from the superintendents and administration cabinets of NL-S and Willmar on the idea for 2019. BEN Committee Purpose Statement:

To develop our community’s future workforce by providing students with a deeper understanding of career opportunities and aligning skills with current workforce needs; engaging employers directly with students, education and training providers; and better aligning programs and curriculum to the realities of West Central Minnesota and overall Minnesota economy.

Lunch with Leaders—January 24—Law enforcement with the Sheriff and Willmar Police Chief

Establish an “I Have An Idea Fund” for business owners who sell their business and are looking for ways to leave a legacy for other business owners. The program will help identify that the Chamber can be one of those sources to assist future entrepreneurs to access dollars to help them be successful.

A review of The 2018 Economic Look slide presentation, prepared by Bill Blazar of the State Chamber and based on 2017 Grow MN! interviews, was another portion of the research. This presentation reported data from the Willmar area and the state of Minnesota in comparison. The research reveals issues with workforce as a main concern for businesses.

After several weeks of research and compilation of reports, the subcommittee made this determination:

It was the consensus that another survey or preliminary survey are not necessary at this time, however, tasks should be continued on the past goals.

Some additional tasks have been identified. More research would be needed as to what tasks should be done and if there are other organizations the EDC could collaborate with to complete the identified tasks.

It was recommended the EDC work with the Grow Minnesota! Partnership to include additional questions to its survey.

It was also recommended that the EDC continue to receive information from the local Grow Minnesota! Partnership, including the area’s summary data.

Other tasks that could be completed:

1. **Under-utilized workforce.** Assess what other jobs exist that need entry-level trained staff; perhaps checking Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) data or by conducting a new BRE survey. Develop programs to provide entry-level training.
2. **Enhance perception of our area—as a community that embraces diversity.** Continue to assist diverse business start-ups and existing diverse businesses.

3. **Excellence in our schools.** Contacts could be made to assess what is available at the schools for career and guidance counseling. The EDC could promote familiarity with the industries and specific jobs available in our area with the guidance counselors.
4. **Stabilizing our workforce—now and into the future.** More could be done to connect businesses and students to encourage internships and job shadowing. Work needs to continue to increase workforce and middle-income housing, childcare, broadband and transportation access. Perhaps more could be done to revitalize blighted residential areas of the cities in the county. There is a great need for single-family housing, workforce housing and clean-up of run-down housing stock.
5. **Marketing our area.** The video could be further assessed to see if it has been effective in bringing people to the area to work. Perhaps a video with such an outcome is still needed—one that includes concrete cost-of-living data and showcases the area for its beauty and things to do in both summer and winter. Working directly with human resource personnel in the area may also be effective for marketing our area to bring in new workforce. The EDC could work to market our area for retail businesses and specifically target franchise retailers to come to our area.
6. **Broadband availability.** The rural areas that were unserved are largely able to access wireless broadband, but still do not have access to adequate upload speeds necessary for business and precision agriculture. The focus for securing broadband in the rural areas needs to continue.
7. **Increase availability of job-qualified workers.** Manufacturing Day tours could be arranged for all communities with teachers and students of all schools. An assessment of what is being done may be needed.



What is the New London Food Co-op?

The New London Food Co-op is an organization working to build a democratically owned and operated grocery store in New London, MN. The organization seeks to foster local economic development through delivering a full-service small grocery store to the New London area as well as providing a market for local farmers and producers.

Where are you at in your process?

Our organization has worked to make the entire development process as grassroots and as democratic as possible. This intentionality has delivered strong community support and enthusiasm in our process. So far we have very solid market research (thanks to support from the EDC, the CVB, the Center for Small Towns, the New London EDA, and the Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships) that has driven an increasingly strong business plan. Our membership has played a key role in drafting the business plan and the draft set of bylaws. They have also been a key part of our ongoing building acquisition and the planning for the layout of the store. To this point we have collected about 80 memberships and are hoping to collect 120 more.

What would funding be used for?

One of our promises to our members is that their membership dues will not be used in the interested of starting the store until they vote to release it to us. Therefore, our startup and marketing resources have been fairly limited to out of pocket expenses (other than a grant from SHIP to develop our website). If our organization was funded, we would be able to significantly improve our public profile and membership experience.

Marketing & Promotion Wishlist:

- **Social Media Ads**
 - Up until this point our “organic reach” (no pun intended) has been fairly substantial. However, with additional dollars behind it we could reach more people outside of our personal networks.
 - Video ad development would also be a key part of online storytelling, particularly since social media is giving preference to video content.
- **Printing**
 - Our info flyers are out of date and need a reprinting with new information. We would also like to improve the quality of the printing to make a more professional presentation.
- **Member Events & Public Events**
 - The co-op is planning our first Quarterly Membership Meeting and a public Groundbreaking event this spring. We would like to be able to support a positive experience for the public and members through promotion and general event support (such as light snacks, event insurance costs, etc).

Approved 3/1/2019 by BRE Committee for \$900
Countywide Development Funds
www.newlondonfood.coop









New London Food Coop, 104 3rd Ave S.E., New London, MN 56273



COMUNIDADES LATINAS UNIDAS EN SERVICIO

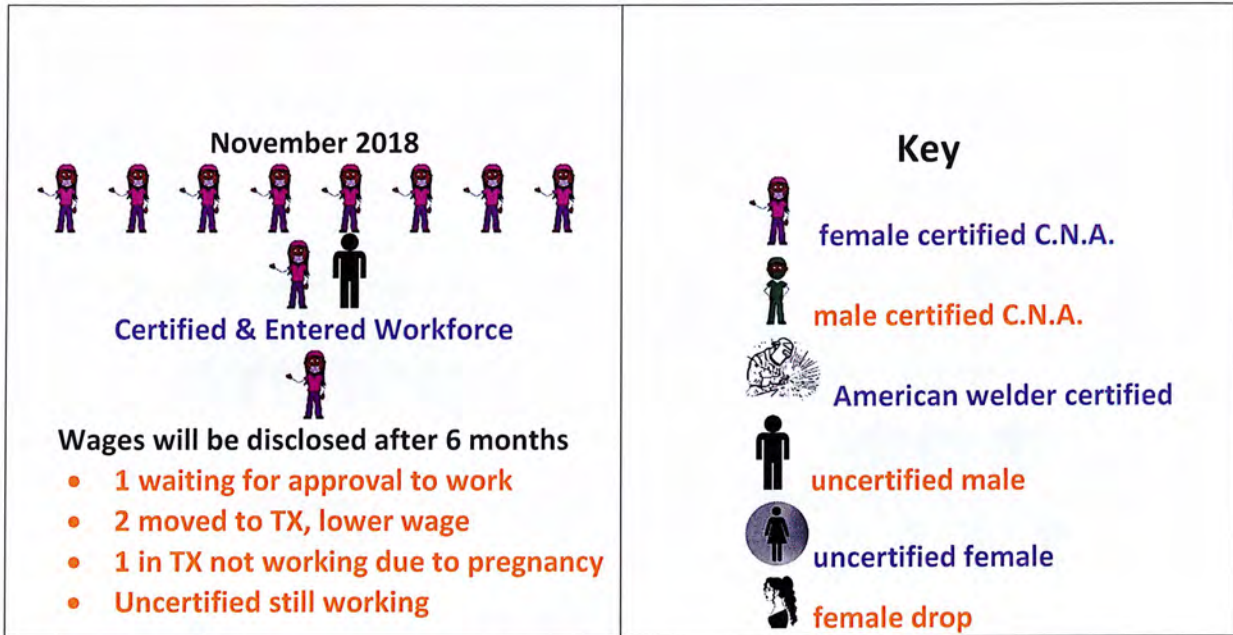
CLUES has made positive economic changes in Willmar since 2017 to present serving

63 participants

<p style="text-align: center;">Nursing Assistant 36</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Welding 27</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">November 2017</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Certified & Entered Workforce</p>  <p>Average wage \$\$\$\$\$ 5.67 before \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ 12.16 after</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 noncertified out of wage average due special circumstances • 1 deceased 	<p style="text-align: center;">June 2018</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Certified & Entered Workforce NONE</p> <p>Average wage \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ 11.54 before \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ 13.54 after</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many noncertified don't report wage • All but one enrolled noncertified worked, other in HS
<p style="text-align: center;">June 2018</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Certified & Entered Workforce</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Uncertified & Entered Workforce</p>  <p>Average wage \$\$\$\$\$ 6.27 before \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ 10.35 after</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 certified focusing on HS 	<p style="text-align: center;">December 2018</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Certified & Entered Workforce</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Uncertified & Entered Workforce</p>  <p>Average wage \$\$\$\$\$ 7.94 before \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ 11.63 after</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 participant not certified due to attendance



**COMUNIDADES LATINAS
UNIDAS EN SERVICIO**



Since arriving in Willmar, CLUES has had **14** participants who were out of the workforce re-enter the workforce.

CLUES has opened their services to non-Latino individuals when they have applied excepting the Somali, Native American, Caucasian and African American individuals, finding language can be a large barrier.

Over \$2,000,000
In Income Per Year Enters the Local Economy with Participants being
Employed Full-Time

We are currently working with local employers to continue to fill their
employment needs