

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

**MINUTES**

**March 17, 2017**

**EDC Board Room**

Present: Sam Bowen, Roger Imdieke and Dean Steinwand

Excused: Bob Carlson, Jean Marthaler, Les Nelson, Ranae Rahn and Kelly TerWisscha

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director

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

The meeting began at approximately 9:05 a.m.

**MINUTES**—As there was not a quorum in attendance, the February 17, 2017 minutes were received but not approved.

**REPORTS**

**Business Visits/Tours.** Aaron Backman reported he recently gave a presentation to the Association of Minnesota Counties regarding WORKUP and co-working space in Willmar. He shared aerial photos of the Willmar Public Schools construction projects: 1) The new gym and weight room at the high school; the project is on schedule; 2) The new Lakeland Elementary School which is approximately 40 days behind schedule; and 3) The new science wing at the middle school. Backman shared that Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC) will conduct three Meet & Greet events on March 20, March 23 and April 4, (5:00-6:30 p.m.) at Dethlefs Center, 217 Hillcrest Avenue in Spicer. The meetings will be an opportunity for residents to meet representatives of CTC, ask questions and sign up for future broadband services. The EDC Broadband Committee will personally contact individuals within the project area. Individuals who do not know if they are in the project area are encouraged to attend or visit the CTC website [www.connectctc.com](http://www.connectctc.com).

**BRE Grant for Diverse Businesses.** Backman provided an update on the BRE Grant for Diverse Businesses and stated the goal of the BRE grant is to conduct 16 site visits by June 2017. To date, Backman has visited four diverse businesses. Backman reported the \$15,000 grant funds were received from Southwest Initiative Foundation upfront. Backman will provide a report to Southwest Initiative Foundation at the end of June 2017. In addition to financing, some businesses have inquired about technical assistance, workforce training, signage and expansion, etc. The businesses are typically smaller with one to six employees.

**Midtown Market.** Backman shared he is working with Zack Mahboub, owner of West Central Interpreting and Consulting Services, LLC, to form a multi-cultural business center in the former

Erickson Furniture building on Litchfield Avenue in Willmar. The total project cost to renovate the first floor is approximately \$400,000. The second floor has been renovated. New Minnesotan Realty will own the property and manage the tenants. Currently six leases have been signed by new tenants. The EDC's Finance Committee approved a \$30,000 Revolving Loan Fund loan. Financing partners include Home State Bank, Southwest Initiative Foundation and Mid-Minnesota Development Commission.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Highway 23 Coalition.** Backman shared that the Highway 23 Coalition is planning a Transportation Summit and will invite Minnesota Department of Transportation Commissioner Zelle. Backman distributed a flyer (see attached) listing benefits of completing the gaps from north of New London to Richmond.

**EDC brochure.** Backman distributed a revised EDC brochure (see attached). Bowen suggested adding "community and technical college" to the Ridgewater College photo and the BRE Committee concurred. Backman will contact REDstar to make the change.

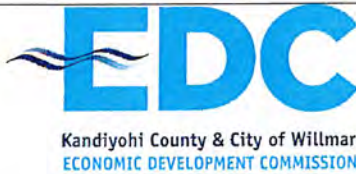
**Atwater Retention of Businesses.** Connie Schmoll has been having meetings with the city of Atwater regarding a potential new manufacturing business and a current business.

**Willmar Wye Project.** Backman provided an update.

**Other.** Backman shared an update on the Willmar Industrial Park. There are three business prospects for Industrial Park sites: Site 1: a medical product manufacturing business; Site 2: A trucking firm based in Fargo, ND for a less-than-load trucking company and maintenance facility (two-phase project). Less-than truckload shipping is the transportation of relatively small freight. Site 3: A value-added agricultural production company which would be a major investment if selected. A proposal was submitted last week. Backman announced the EDC annual boards' planning session including EDC committee chairs will be held Thursday, March 23, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. at the Westby Observatory at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:55 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next regular committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., Friday, April 21, 2017** in the EDC Board Room.



## Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment (BRE) Committee 2017 Goals and Projects

### Board Goal 1. Expansion of High-Speed Broadband in Rural Kandiyohi County

#### Strategy 1.1 Business Retention and Expansion

Objectives/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Facilitate and support a shovel-ready broadband project in Kandiyohi County.	Connie, EDC Broadband Committee, Kandiyohi County	Throughout 2017/2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>State of Minnesota awarded CTC (Consolidated Telecommunications Company) of Brainerd, a grant award of \$4.94 million, which will be matched with loan funds from Kandiyohi County in the amount of \$4.94 million. Construction in northern Kandiyohi County is planned to begin in spring of 2017</li> </ul>
B.	The EDC will facilitate efforts to market the broadband options to residents and businesses in the project area. A take-rate surpassing 45% is necessary to pay loans and provide a positive ROI for CTC.	Connie, EDC Broadband Committee		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subcommittee formed to plan marketing efforts</li> </ul>
C.	Continued planning for broadband deployment in unserved areas of Kandiyohi County, including legislative networking, securing stories and letters of support, adoption and utilization projects, securing private partnerships for the next stage of deployment, and securing public and private partnerships for funding.	Connie	Throughout 2017/2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted meeting with Rep. Dave Baker on 12/28/2016</li> <li>Conducted meeting with Senator Andrew Lange on 1/13/2017</li> <li>Securing team to participate in first Broadband Day on the Hill on 3/15/2017</li> </ul>
D.	Submit a Phase II Border-to-Border Broadband Grant Application to Office of Broadband/DEED	Connie, EDC Broadband Committee, Kandiyohi County	October 2017	



**Board Goal 2. Transportation Infrastructure—Improve, Maintain and Expand  
Kandiyohi County's Transportation Infrastructure through Increased Collaboration**

**Strategy 2.1 Willmar Municipal Airport**

Objectives/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Support efforts of the City of Willmar to market the airport to existing and prospective businesses within the city/region	Aaron	Throughout 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider developing a new marketing piece/brochure for Willmar Airport in conjunction with Airport Commission.</li> </ul>
B.	Participate in Airport Master Plan Committee and assist with goals and objectives	Aaron	Throughout 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attending meetings of Master Plan Committee at the airport.</li> </ul>
C.	Examine opportunities to create linkages that might expand the utilization of the airport	Aaron	Throughout 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather information and explore opportunities to extend fiber optic cable for high-speed broadband to the Willmar Airport.</li> </ul>

**Strategy 2.2 Railroad**

Objectives/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Assist efforts of BNSF, City of Willmar and Kandiyohi County on all funding opportunities through the TIGER federal grant program, MnDOT and DEED for construction of a rail bypass west of Willmar	Aaron	Throughout 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EDC participates in weekly conference calls for the railroad Wye Project.</li> <li>Attend public engagement sessions for project, including at the Willmar Library.</li> </ul>
B.	Coordinate with BNSF, City of Willmar and Kandiyohi County a design build for a rail-serviced Industrial Park loop for land west of the expanded Willmar Industrial Park	Aaron	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In July 2016, developed another preliminary version of the Willmar Rail Park and provided it to the Willmar Wye partners.</li> </ul>
C.	Coordinate with BNSF marketing outreach to rail-serviced customers that are in need of expanded building development opportunities with the Willmar Industrial Park	Aaron	Ongoing	

**Strategy 2.3 Highway 23**

Objectives/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Engage Highway 23 Coalition and Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce to hold a Transportation Summit in the Willmar area to promote with MnDOT the development of passing lanes along Highway 23 corridor from Willmar to I-90 and completion of planned 4-lane along Highway 23 between New London, Paynesville and Richmond	Aaron	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing discussions with Ken Warner and Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce regarding and Highway 23 Coalition Transportation Summit.</li> <li>Tentatively plan for Transportation Summit or Rally in early April 2017.</li> <li>Develop new brochure as to filling in the gaps on Highway 23.</li> </ul>

**Board Goal 3. Industrial Park Development****Strategy 3.1 Mapping of Industrial Development Within  
Kandiyohi County for Infrastructure and Services**

<b>Objectives/Actions</b>		<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Status/Update/Comments</b>
A.	Complete shovel-ready process for Willmar's Industrial Park 4 <sup>th</sup> Addition and portion of unplatted area. Invite site selectors to visit Kandiyohi County.	Aaron Bruce Peterson	July 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Application submitted to DEED 6/7/2016.</li><li>• John Rhodes, DEED Consultant, visited on 6/15/2016.</li><li>• On 6/30/2016 notified 181-acre site approved by DEED.</li><li>• Completed flyer for Willmar Industrial Park on 10/27/2016.</li><li>• Invited 10 site selectors from around the country to visit Willmar.</li><li>• On November 15 and 16, 2016, Deane Foote, site selector from Arizona, visited Willmar and toured the Industrial Park.</li></ul>
B.	Assist other cities in county to map industrial properties and/or consider shovel-ready process	Aaron	Ongoing	
C.	Contact service providers (utilities, broadband, telcos) for cooperative mapping programs for Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar	Connie		
D.	Work with countywide community officials and real estate professionals to create and maintain a compilation of available commercial and industrial property	Connie	Ongoing	
E.	Update Community Profile information in searchable database on EDC website. Ensure that Location One Information Services (LOIS) is current on EDC website.	Connie	June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Entered all available platted sites for Industrial Park into LOIS database.</li><li>• Update shovel-ready information regarding the Willmar site on DEED's website</li></ul>



Board Goal 4. Expand Funding Options for Businesses in Kandiyohi County				
Strategy 4.1 Economic development programs, including WAM-BC, downtown development and community development throughout Kandiyohi County				
Objectives/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Attend WAM-BC board meetings as liaison to promote collaboration and EDC programs and services	Aaron	Ongoing	
B.	Encourage co-location of WAM-BC with EDC, utilizing vacant office of former EDC Assistant Director	Aaron	March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During Fall of 2016, ongoing discussions with WAM-BC Board members, EDC Joint Operations Board and Elks Board officers.</li> <li>At the January 2017 EDC Joint Operations Board approved the sublease.</li> <li>Sublease signed by all parties.</li> <li>WAM-BC moved into the EDC office on 2/1/2017.</li> </ul>
C.	Provide outreach to city councils within county to promote collaboration and EDC programs and services	Connie	Throughout 2016/2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attended Atwater EDA meeting 10/2016.</li> <li>Currently working on locating a site for business that may expand in city of Atwater within next two-three years.</li> <li>10/2016 worked with New London Mayor and EDA members to accommodate visit with Sen. Franken Field Rep., Carson Ouellette.</li> </ul>
D.	Initiate BRE Program for diverse businesses	Aaron and Connie	June 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In November 2016, discussions held with Scott Marquardt of Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF), regarding \$15,000 grant to EDC on program to assist minority business owners.</li> <li>SWIF approved and EDC signed the Grant Agreement in early January 2017. The grant runs until June 2017.</li> <li>The EDC developed a Diverse BRE Site Visit Form and has begun scheduling visits.</li> </ul>
E.	Facilitate startup of angel investment group—market the fund and assist businesses in apply for angel funds	Aaron and Connie		





## 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.
- A four-lane connection to the interstate system is essential to the regional vision for West Central Minnesota

### GROWTH

- Accessibility is required to attract and retain manufacturing jobs; our area has lost countless jobs due to companies choosing to locate their facilities on four-lane highways.
- 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.



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



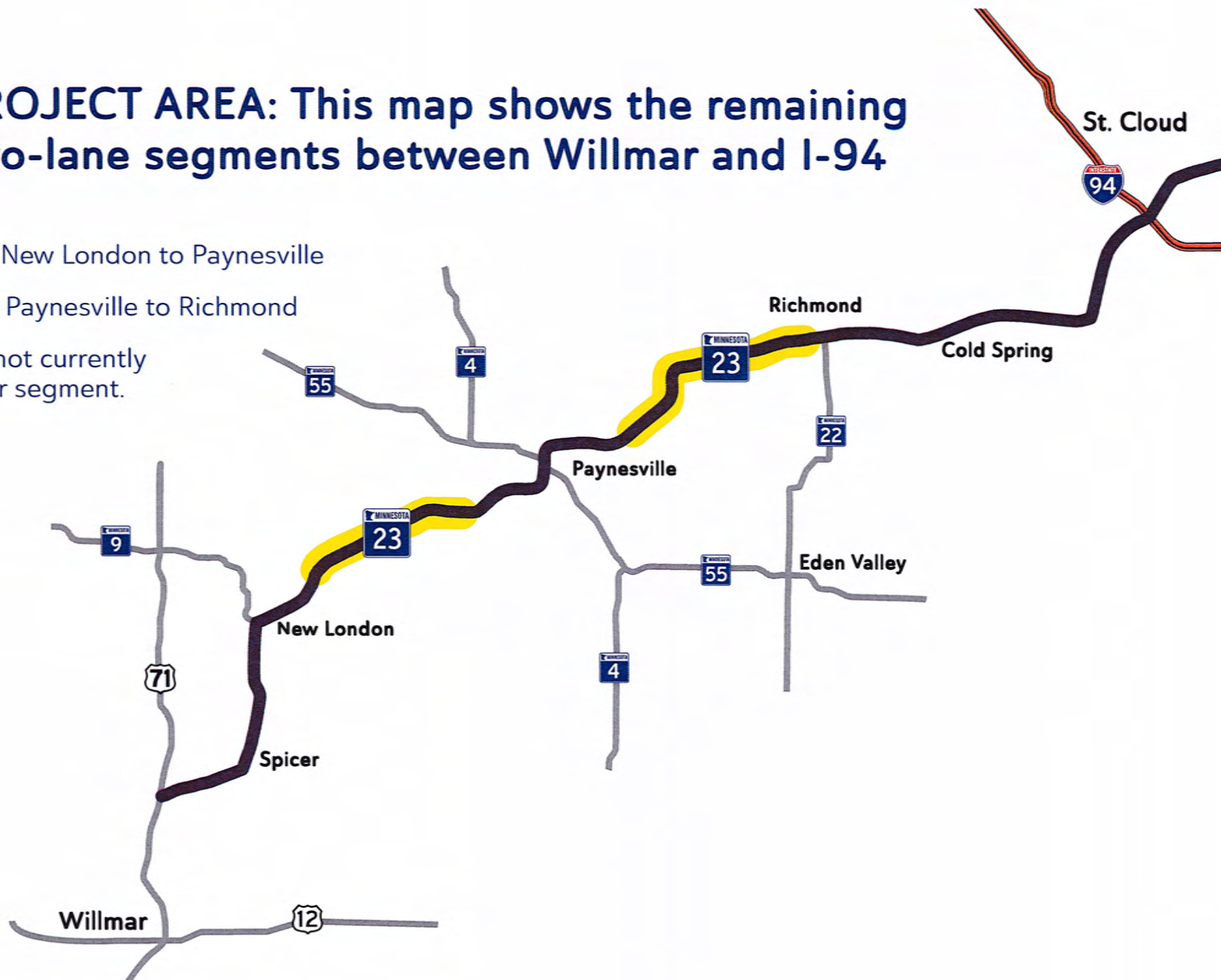


## PROJECT AREA: This map shows the remaining two-lane segments between Willmar and I-94

**7-mile gap** from New London to Paynesville

**8-mile gap** from Paynesville to Richmond

Construction is not currently funded for either segment.







**Aaron Backman**

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Development  
Director

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**Connie Schmoll**

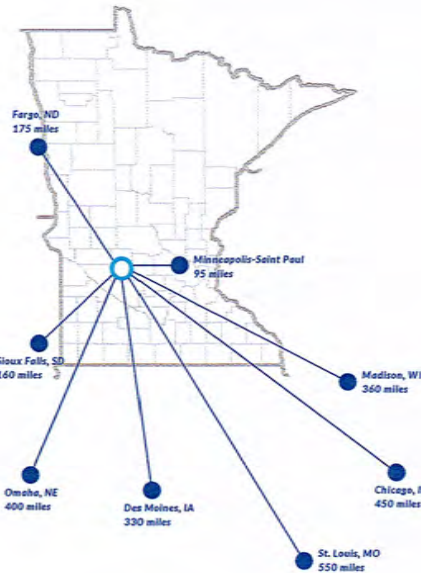
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The Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar EDC has **built collaborative relationships** with our city and county governments, private industry and community organizations. We are funded by a local levy, allowing us to address economic development for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



**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



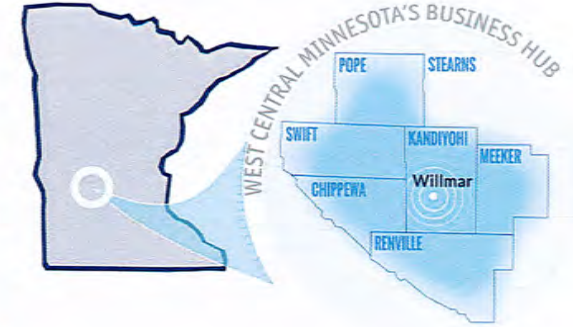
RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS



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