

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

Present: Donna Boonstra, Deb Geister, Emily Lien and Mike Negen

Excused: Shari Courtney, Jean Geselius, Julie Redepenning and Ryan Thielen

Absent: Sarah Isdal and Ashley Queenan

Guest: Jayme Sczublewski, REDstar Creative

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director

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

Chairperson Mike Negen called the meeting to order at approximately 12:07 p.m. Aaron Backman announced a quorum was not present so no actions can take place. Backman read an email from Julie Redepenning stating her position with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) has been eliminated and resigning from this committee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ag Committee Trifold Display. Backman showed the new trifold display recently done for the EDC's Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development (Ag) Committee. Backman noted there is already a change on a panel as Willmar Poultry merged with another company and is now called Select Genetics.

EDC Marketing Brochure. Backman distributed the EDC's new marketing brochure (see attached), which the EDC distributed at the West Central Minnesota Area Job Fair booth last week.

Highway 23 Coalition Flyer. Backman distributed a draft of the most recent version of the Highway 23 Coalition flyer and named some of the individuals/entities who represent the Coalition. Backman has obtained statistical information from DEED that can be used on the flyer. The committee reviewed the information under the columns of Community, Growth and Industry and suggested the following:

Community—change the first bullet point to read: “MnDOT District 8 completed environmental reviews, but does not currently have funding to complete the 15-mile gap.”

Growth—change the second bullet point to read: “This project will attract skilled professionals to our community due to easier access to hub cities.” Backman stated a bullet point will be added to include the Wye project.

Industry—Backman stated the second bullet point was added as the Coalition wanted safety concerns to be included. The third bullet point may be changed to include the number of individuals employed

(nearly 13,000) by the 585 businesses. It was suggested to clarify that the 585 businesses are transportation-related businesses as just saying businesses does not have much impact.

It was recommended to include any large numbers on the flyer as that makes more of an impact. Suggested language to include: (1) a four-lane highway is a critical component to attracting and retaining businesses in this area, and (2) a reference to MnDOT's commitment to completing the project. Backman distributed information from the Minnesota Department of Transportation as to project costs since 2000 (approximately \$150 million) and projected costs to complete the two gaps (see attached). Approximately 72% of the miles has been completed.

2017 Marketing Plan. The committee reviewed the Marketing Plan updated by Backman for 2017 (see attached). It was suggested encouraging people to sign up for broadband services would be a good item to include in the next newsletter. Jayme Sczublewski stated she and Lindsey Donner have been working on a social media plan for the EDC. Backman reported the EDC purchased targeted advertising through the West Central Tribune using geo-/micro-fencing for the broadband project area. Discussion was held on how to create a sense of urgency for people to sign up. The following were suggested:

- Do a Facebook ad that links to simple, easy to read details about the project on the EDC's website;
- Do an article for LinkedIn;
- Mail a flyer to the 149 businesses in the target area; and
- Create a visual, such as a goal chart and include a goal date.

Deb Geister suggested it is always good to measure the effectiveness of advertising. Sczublewski will add measurables for the EDC's social media campaigns.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **12 noon, Monday, April 24, 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:

- 

Developing the MinnWest Technology Campus
- 

Expanding the Willmar 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

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Business Development Specialist

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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 assist 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 best suited to our local economy: healthcare, manufacturing, value-added agriculture, renewable energy, biotechnology and retail.

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 communities:

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

AREA HIGHLIGHTS



REGIONAL HEALTHCARE CENTER



COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE



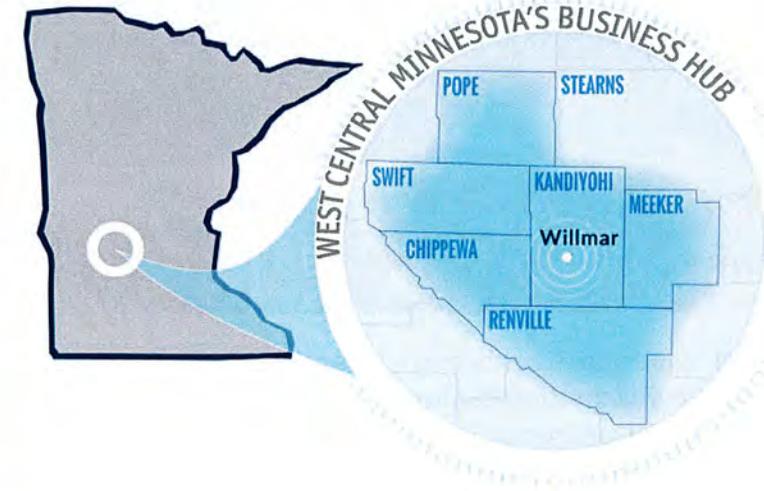
RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS



COWORKING SPACE



REGIONAL AIRPORT & RAIL HUB



Kandiyohi County / Willmar Lakes Area is a vital, growing, regional center in the heart of West Central Minnesota. The total population of the region 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, technology and ag-related industries as well as tourism in the area.

KEY INDUSTRIES



Ag Technology



Medical



Advanced Manufacturing



Retail / Restaurants



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

COMMUNITY

- MnDOT District 8 completed environmental reviews, but doesn't have funding to complete the four-lane gaps.
- Willmar is the largest outstate city without four-lane access.
- A four-lane connection to the interstate is essential to West Central Minnesota's economy.

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 and the traveling public.
- In the six-county region, 585 businesses will directly benefit from filling the gaps



Contact us at kandiyohi.com or
toll-free at **866.665.4556**



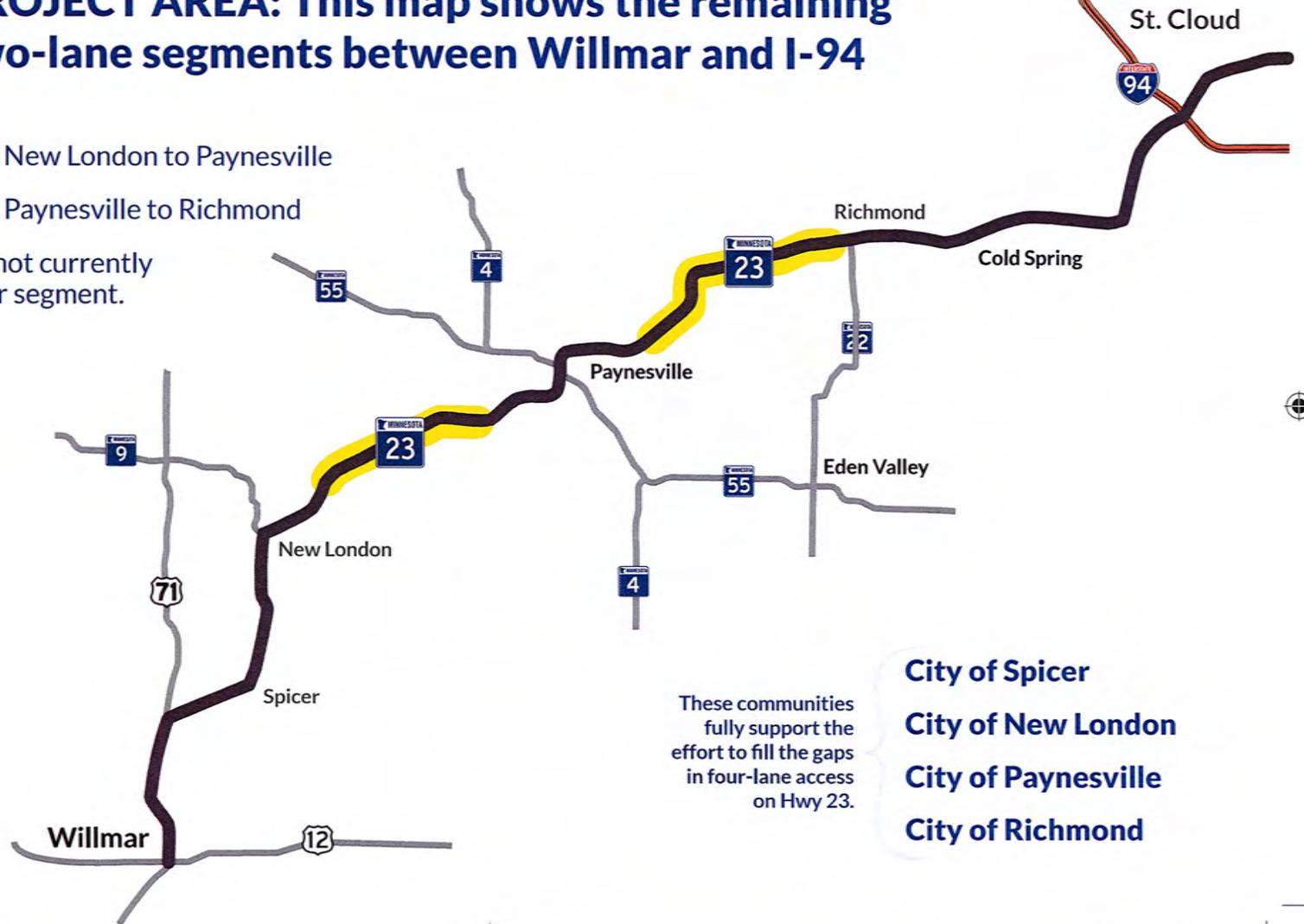


PROJECT AREA: This map shows the remaining two-lane segments between Willmar and I-94

7-mile gap from New London to Paynesville

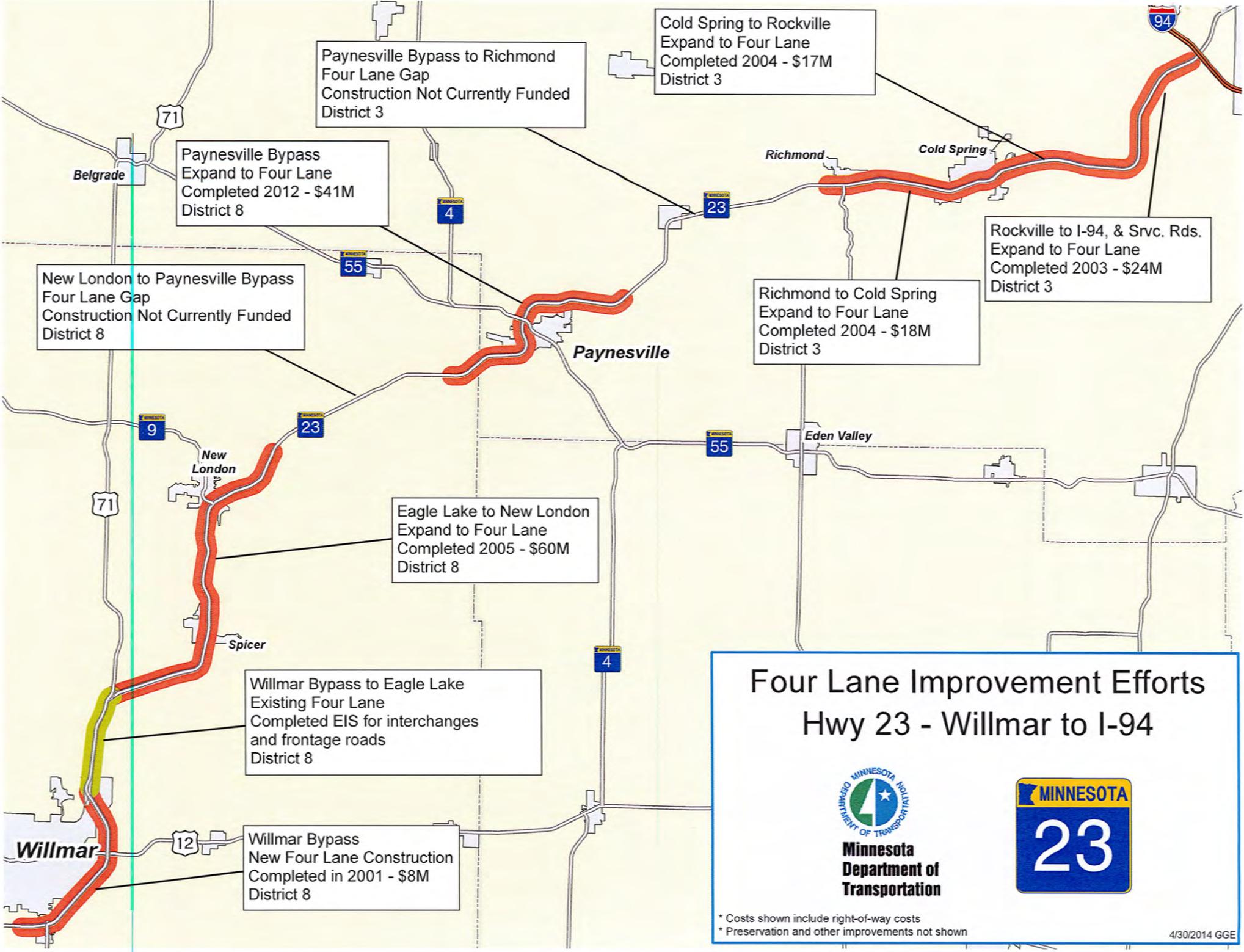
8-mile gap from Paynesville to Richmond

Construction is not currently funded for either segment.



These communities fully support the effort to fill the gaps in four-lane access on Hwy 23.

- City of Spicer
- City of New London
- City of Paynesville
- City of Richmond



Paynesville Bypass to Richmond
Four Lane Gap
Construction Not Currently Funded
District 3

Cold Spring to Rockville
Expand to Four Lane
Completed 2004 - \$17M
District 3

Paynesville Bypass
Expand to Four Lane
Completed 2012 - \$41M
District 8

Rockville to I-94, & Svc. Rds.
Expand to Four Lane
Completed 2003 - \$24M
District 3

New London to Paynesville Bypass
Four Lane Gap
Construction Not Currently Funded
District 8

Richmond to Cold Spring
Expand to Four Lane
Completed 2004 - \$18M
District 3

Eagle Lake to New London
Expand to Four Lane
Completed 2005 - \$60M
District 8

Willmar Bypass to Eagle Lake
Existing Four Lane
Completed EIS for interchanges
and frontage roads
District 8

Willmar Bypass
New Four Lane Construction
Completed in 2001 - \$8M
District 8

Four Lane Improvement Efforts Hwy 23 - Willmar to I-94




* Costs shown include right-of-way costs
 * Preservation and other improvements not shown

4/30/2014 GGE

Highway 23 South Gap Project – New London to Paynesville

Overview

Highway 23 is an important interregional corridor that is a key artery for the economy in the region. It provides the primary east-west route connecting Willmar to Interstate 94 and beyond. The segment of Highway 23 between Willmar and Interstate 94 is a distance of approximately 53 miles. Of these 53 miles, all but approximately 15 miles have been constructed as a four lane roadway. The ultimate vision for Highway 23 between Willmar and Interstate 94 is a continuous four-lane rural highway. The segment between New London and Paynesville is a part of that vision and is one of two remaining sections of two-lane.

Benefits

Expanding Highway 23 from two-lanes to four-lanes will provide additional capacity, improve the movement of freight, and improve roadway safety. Expanding the highway would also provide the design consistency of a four-lane rural highway and help meet driver expectancy throughout the corridor. This corridor-wide consistency further enhances the mobility and safety benefits already provided by the expansion.

Status

In 2014, Highway 23 received funds through the Corridors of Commerce program to complete the environmental review and layout and to begin purchasing right-of-way for expanding the segment between New London and Paynesville from two-lanes to four-lanes. Once the environmental review and layout are complete, further right-of-way acquisition and detail design could begin if funds become available. Currently, there are no plans to construct the four-lane because there is no funding available for the construction at this time. The environmental review and layout for the New London to Paynesville segment began in the summer of 2014 and was completed in the summer/fall of 2016.

Anticipated Timeline

Aug 2014	Begin environmental review
Late Summer/Fall 2014	Gather data (surveys, field reviews, location studies, etc.)
Oct 2014-Jan 2015	Prepare and analyze alignment alternatives
Jan 2015	Public Open House #1
Feb-June 2015	Finalize preferred alternative
April 2015	Public Open House #2
July 2015	Public Open House #3
Jan 2016	Public Open House #4
Nov 15-June 2016	Finalize environmental review & hold public meeting
May 17, 2016	Public Open House #5
June 2016	MnDOT issues Findings of Fact & Conclusion document

Estimated Project Cost

Highway 23 Gap	Construction	Wetland mitigation, utility agreements, detour costs	Environmental review, surveys, engineering, contract administration, etc.	Right-of-Way	Total Project Cost Estimate
New London to Paynesville	\$37M to \$49M	\$2M to \$2.5M	\$7M to \$10M	\$4M to \$6M	\$50M to \$70M

Project Area



Website

www.dot.state.mn.us/d8/projects/hwy23gapsnewlondonpaynesville/index.html

For More Information

Contact: Ryan Barney
 Project Manager
 MnDOT District 8
 320-214-6324
ryan.barney@state.mn.us

Highway 23 South Gap (March 2017)

Highway 23 North Gap Project – Paynesville to Richmond

Overview

Highway 23 is an important interregional corridor that is a key artery for the economy in the region. It provides the primary east-west route connecting Willmar to Interstate 94 and beyond. The segment of Highway 23 between Willmar and Interstate 94 is a distance of approximately 53 miles. Of these 53 miles, all but approximately 15 miles have been constructed as a four lane roadway. The ultimate vision for Highway 23 between Willmar and Interstate 94 is a continuous four-lane rural highway. The segment between Paynesville and Richmond is a part of that vision and is one of two remaining sections of two-lane.

Benefits

Expanding Highway 23 from two-lanes to four-lanes will provide additional capacity, improve the movement of freight, and improve roadway safety. Expanding the highway would also provide the design consistency of a four-lane rural highway and help meet driver expectancy throughout the corridor. This corridor-wide consistency further enhances the mobility and safety benefits already provided by the expansion.

Status

In 2014, Highway 23 received funds through the Corridors of Commerce program to complete the environmental review and layout for expanding the segment between Paynesville and Richmond from two-lanes to four-lanes. Once the environmental review and layout are complete, right-of-way acquisition and detail design could begin if funds become available. Currently, there are no plans to construct the four-lane because there is no funding available for the construction at this time. The environmental review and layout development for the Paynesville to Richmond segment began the summer of 2015.

Anticipated Timeline

June 2015	Begin environmental review
Summer 2015	Gather data (surveys, field reviews, location studies, etc.)
Sept-Dec 2015	Prepare & analyze alignment alternatives
Sept 2015	Public Open House #1
Dec 2015	Public Open House #2
Feb-May 2016	Finalize preferred alternative
May 2016	Public Open House #3
Jan 2017	Public Open House #4
Jan-May 2017	Finalize environmental review

Estimated Project Cost

Highway 23 Gap	Construction	Wetland mitigation, utility agreements, detour costs	Environmental review, surveys, engineering, contract administration, etc.	Right-of-Way	Total Project Cost Estimate
Paynesville to Richmond	\$49M to \$65M	\$2M to \$3.5M	\$10M to \$13M	\$12M to \$17M	\$74M to \$98M

Project Area



Website

www.dot.state.mn.us/d8/projects/hwy23gappaynesvillerichmond/index.html

For More Information

Contact: Lance Kalthoff
 Project Manager
 MnDOT District 8
 320-214-6352
lance.kalthoff@state.mn.us

Highway 23 North Gap (March 2017)



MARKETING PLAN

Updated as of 3/9/2017

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) Replace large, out-of-date trade show booth display with three lighter, smaller pull up units. Work on design in second quarter of 2017. Complete project by summer.
 - 2) Update EDC introductory brochure
 - 3) Prepare West Central Angel Fund marketing piece
 - 4) Update target industries brochures/flyers (Completed MinnWest Technology Campus July 2016; Willmar Industrial Park September 2016):

- a. Education—3rd quarter of 2017
 - b. Health Care—4th quarter of 2017
 - 5) Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development (Ag) Marketing Subcommittee will seek to:
 - a. Develop an overall marketing/public relations strategy with the EDC Marketing and Public Relations Committee
 - b. Distribute the Ag BRE Survey Report results and plan for implementation of strategies with the public
 - c. Update and enhance the trade show materials, including the trifold table top display and informational flyer. Both items will show the profile of agriculture and renewable energy in Kandiyohi County
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. Consider analytics (e.g. Number of likes, hits, % of pull through)
 - 2) Twitter. Post at events more.
 - 3) LinkedIn. Add articles.
 - c) Create/publish monthly articles for the West Central Tribune business section (third Tuesday publish date, email to business@wctrib.com)
2017 publication dates: March 21, April 18, May 16, June 20, July 18, August 15, September 19, October 17, November 21, December 19
 - d) Create/distribute newsletter
 - 1) April—Spring 2017 digital only
 - 2) July--Summer 2017 digital only
 - 3) November—Fall 2017 digital only
 - e) Participate in public forums to promote EDC activities
 - 1) Radio—monthly guest of Open Mic on KWLM
 - 2) Speak at City Council/EDA meetings outside of Willmar
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 reviews and administers loans; donated two memberships at WORKUP
 - 2) TEDxWillmarLive (2016 silver sponsor \$500)
 - 3) Chamber Connection—April at EDC?
 - 4) West Central Minnesota Area Job Fair—March 21 and September 2017 (REDstar designed marketing materials)

- 5) Ag & Animal Science Conference, September 26, 2017, MinnWest Technology Campus (2016—networking break sponsor \$2,000)
- 6) University of Minnesota Showcase—November (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
 - a) on website
 - b) presented to EDC Joint Operations Board

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 (2017—\$625)
- b) Advertise in DEED's statewide marketing publication. Re-evaluate the effectiveness of purchasing the full-page ad. Gather information from other cities (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