

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

**MINUTES**

April 5, 2019

EDC Board Room, Willmar

Present: Jim Ellingson, Les Heitke, Les Nelson, Dean Steinwand, Dan Tempel and Kelly TerWisscha

Excused: Sam Bowen, Roger Imdieke and Ranae Rahn

Guest: Jennifer Mendoza, CLUES Navigator

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director

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

Vice Chair Les Nelson called the meeting to order at approximately 9:01 a.m.

**AGENDA**

IT WAS MOVED BY Kelly TerWisscha, SECONDED BY Dean Steinwand, to approve the Agenda as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**MINUTES**

IT WAS MOVED BY Les Heitke, SECONDED BY Kelly TerWisscha, to approve the Minutes of the March 1, 2019 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**Strategy for Moving Forward with Tasks Identified in 2015 BRE Survey.** Aaron Backman shared the format of the BRE/R Committee meetings will focus more on planning and less on reports. The committee will begin to work on tasks identified in the 2015 BRE Survey.

**Willmar Lakes Chamber of Commerce Video.** Backman presented an interesting slide show “2018 Economic Outlook” prepared by Bill Blazer, formerly with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce Grow Minnesota! Partnership and Vicky Stout. Backman distributed a Kandiyohi County profile of Labor Force Estimates 2000-2018 updated on February 1, 2019 (see attached). Overall, the labor force in Willmar is growing faster than the population. Reasons could include more employees commuting into Willmar, new people entering the workforce, new residents in the community. The report will be updated in the near future. Discussion was held on how the labor force can be maintained, i.e., addressing the housing and childcare issues. Dan Tempel commented demographics are needed to entice businesses to build/move to Willmar. There is a need for

Ridgewater College and other entities to promote their programs/businesses. Backman provided an update on Kohl's coming to the former K-Mart site.

**Community Marketing Strategies.** Backman inquired how to define community marketing strategies. Suggestions included highlighting what we have, coordination of agencies/groups trying to market themselves, coordinating with entities, expansion of existing businesses and developing a campaign to speak positively about successes of businesses, which would be an external draw for other businesses; need to be more methodical on marketing and to whom and form an engaging presence in order to interact with businesses and make them feel important. Backman shared examples of three company's successes: 1) Kiel's uses community marketing, word-of-mouth and free product trials. 2) Harley Davidson ensures customers feel valued and has programs to make customers part of its community; 3) Starbucks, the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest fast food chain in the world, has created a high-end brand and listens to customer's suggestions.

What can this community/County work on to promote Willmar's successes? Suggestions were as follows:

- Network, research and learn.
- Contribute like an expert, providing tips and how-to's to reach the audience.
  - Provide basic how-to-information on financing a business, etc.
- Be accessible. Focus on customers and their needs, find solutions and opportunities.
- Turn influencers into ambassadors.
  - Word-of-mouth is one of the better avenues to help a business.
- Community advertising in new and different ways, i.e., press releases and social media.

Heitke stated there is not a positive drive to promote local businesses and suggested a video be prepared. TerWisscha shared the incentives need to be spearheaded and felt the EDC (BRE/R Committee) can aide in this effort.

## REPORTS

**Retail Business Design Workshops.** Backman gave an update of the Kandiyohi County Retail Business Design Workshops, which was a 10-week intensive program (five workshops and five coaching sessions) covering retaining management, inventory management, target marketing and social media marketing (see attached). Over 20 small businesses participated in the program and favorable feedback has been received. Backman suggested participants meet monthly as a group.

**CLUES Update/Employer Round Table (Training Needs/Gaps).** Jennifer Mendoza reported she recently testified at the State Capitol for additional funding for the CLUES program. Program success stories were shared with legislators. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) gave a presentation on graduation rates for Mexicans. Approximately 40% of Mexican males do not graduate from high school. Mendoza commented there are cultural barriers to deal with and felt the presentation was beneficial.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

**West Central Minnesota Area Job Fair Recap.** Backman reported the West Central Minnesota Area Job Fair held on March 26<sup>th</sup> at Ridgewater College was a positive location change with a good environment and adequate signage. Attendance was approximately 370, which was a substantial increase from the previous Job Fair and location. TerWisscha felt this was a testament to the BRE/R Committee for encouraging the location change.

## NEW BUSINESS

**EDC Planning Sessions Goals.** Backman distributed the draft 2019 Strategic Priority Areas and Potential Objectives developed at the EDC Boards' planning session on March 14<sup>th</sup>: 1) Workforce Development, 2) Business Support, 3) Childcare, 4) Agricultural Innovation and 5) Broadband (see attached). Backman and Connie Schmoll are sharing the 2019 Strategic Priority Areas with the EDC's committees to obtain input, prioritize and concurrence. The input from EDC committees will be brought to the EDC Joint Operations Board and EDC Joint Powers Board for final adoption.

**Workforce Development/Business Support Objectives.** Backman distributed the 2019 Action Planning Worksheets for Business Support and Workforce Development, which pertain to the BRE/R Committee's focus.

**Workforce Development Objectives.** Backman reviewed the potential objectives (see attached).

1. Establish a Workforce Development Committee to focus on specific initiatives.
2. Promote Ridgewater College, working with partners to improve enrollment and student successes.
3. Continue to expand diverse workforce training programs like Diverse CNA/Welding
4. Establish a Teacher of Color pipeline program.

Discussion was held and suggestions included:

- Expand the diverse training programs
- Create focus groups of business sectors
- Prepare a video highlighting the business community

**Business Support Objectives.** Backman reviewed the potential objectives (see attached).

1. Engage in focused one-on-one visits with existing businesses to inform of resources and streamline complications/challenges they may have.
2. Develop a business support group of "like-minded businesses" and/or "emerging entrepreneurs;" consider the 1 Million Cup model; specific mention of support for businesses started within the past 5 years and those in the retail sector.
3. Invite bankers/accountants to a gathering to learn of EDC resources and shared business needs.
4. Develop a "community" marketing campaign to distribute EDC offerings broadly in the area.

Discussion was held and suggestions included:

- Ellingson is in favor of the coordinated community effort idea and inquired if the EDC informational flyers are posted on the website. Backman will check if the flyers are posted on the EDC website.
- Heitke doesn't feel the BRE/R Committee can handle both the workforce development and business support goals.
  - Discussion was held regarding if/how the BRE/R Committee could work on both business support and workforce development
    - Suggestion was made to hire an intern to focus on a specific committee project.

Backman encouraged committee members to send him additional input/suggestions and prioritization for the Business Support and Workforce Development objectives.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:45 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., Friday, May 3, 2019**, at the EDC Office, Willmar.

# Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar Economic Development Commission

## 2019 Strategic Priority Areas

EDC boards and committee members and other participants explored and considered several potential priority areas for the EDC, including Agriculture, Broadband, Business Retention & Expansion, Business Visits, Childcare, Diverse Workforce Training, Energy, Entrepreneur Support, Marketing, Opportunity Zones, Retail Service/Amenity Recruitment, Ridgewater College Enrollment, Transportation and Workforce Development. A key to success is collaboration, which the group feels is a strength of the EDC. Following small group discussion and various voting methods, the group narrowed the focus to five major areas (listed as ranked by the group):

1. **Workforce Development:** Develop and expand workforce availability and skills to support the growth and expansion of businesses.

### Potential Objectives:

- Establish a workforce development committee
- Expand diverse workforce training, building on the success of CLUES
- Work with Ridgewater College to improve enrollment and student success
- Support a Teachers of Color Pipeline Initiative in partnership with K12 and Ridgewater College
- Bring like-type industries together (focus groups by industry sector) to discuss workforce needs and explore additional employer-driven initiatives, such as MAP that might be supported/started
- Create a video highlighting Kandiyohi County businesses and the workforce skills/needs; host on the EDC website and promote via social media
- Develop a “Bring Them Back Campaign” with positive messaging of opportunities in the area and telling the stories of why they should want to return

### Vision of Success:

Skill enhancement of potential labor market tied to local needs. Higher levels of people gaining greater employment and entering pathways that lead to careers with greater earning potential.

2. **Business Support:** Building relationships with area business, with a key intent to inform them of available resources through the EDC, better understand their challenges/needs and help them share their successes.

### Potential Objectives:

- Engage in focused one-on-one visits with existing businesses to inform them of resources and streamline complications/challenges they may have
- Develop a business support group of “like-minded businesses\*” and/or “emerging entrepreneurs;” consider the 1 Million Cup model; specific mention of support for businesses started within past five years and those in the retail sector
- Invite bankers/accountants to a gathering to learn of EDC resources and share business needs
- Develop a “community” marketing campaign to distribute EDC offerings broadly in the area

### Vision of Success:

Businesses owners are able to streamline operations and resolve barriers they may have and learn from each other’s successes and challenges. Our communities know and understand how the EDC can help businesses.

\*Note: There was mention of global marketing too, however, not sure where/how it fits with local business support. The group discussed creating a marketing piece/video about the area’s quality of life and drawing in businesses by redefining demographics and information as a regional draw for national businesses.

**Table 12. Total Available Labor Force Estimates**

	Kandiyohi Co.	Minnesota
2003 Annual Avg.	23,557	2,874,663
2004 Annual Avg.	23,162	2,880,427
2005 Annual Avg.	23,214	2,879,759
2006 Annual Avg.	23,206	2,887,831
2007 Annual Avg.	23,434	2,906,389
2008 Annual Avg.	23,576	2,925,088
2009 Annual Avg.	23,968	2,941,976
2010 Annual Avg.	23,568	2,938,795
2011 Annual Avg.	23,643	2,946,278
2012 Annual Avg.	23,494	2,946,355
2013 Annual Avg.	23,445	2,958,595
2014 Annual Avg.	23,581	2,973,073
2015 Annual Avg.	23,881	2,998,352
2016 Annual Avg.	24,065	3,036,278
2017 Annual Avg.	24,296	3,063,604
2018 Annual Avg.	25,259	3,099,006
2003-2018		
Numeric Change	1,702	224,343
Percent Change	7.2%	7.8%

Source: DEED LAUS program

**Table 13. Annual Unemployment Rates**

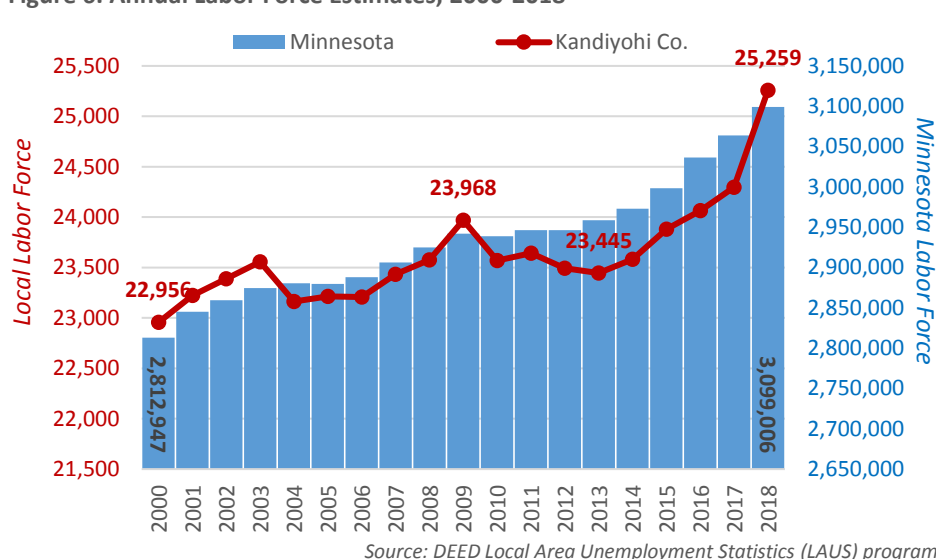
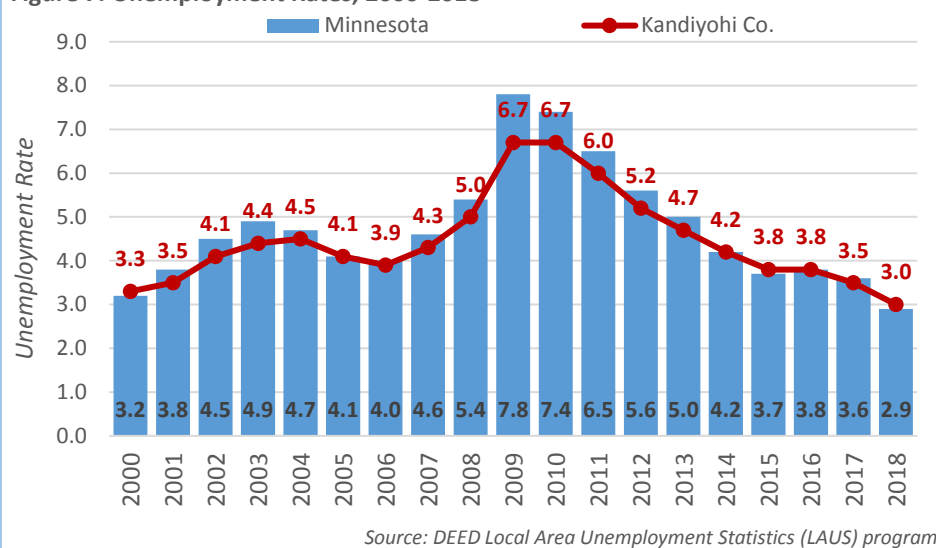
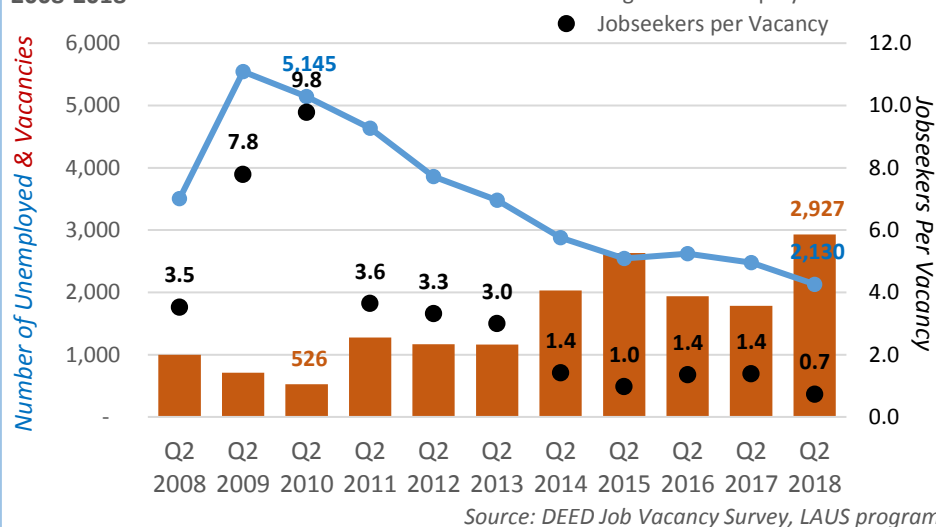
	Kandiyohi Co.	Minnesota
2003 Annual Avg.	4.4	4.9
2004 Annual Avg.	4.5	4.7
2005 Annual Avg.	4.1	4.1
2006 Annual Avg.	3.9	4.0
2007 Annual Avg.	4.3	4.6
2008 Annual Avg.	5.0	5.4
2009 Annual Avg.	6.7	7.8
2010 Annual Avg.	6.7	7.4
2011 Annual Avg.	6.0	6.5
2012 Annual Avg.	5.2	5.6
2013 Annual Avg.	4.7	5.0
2014 Annual Avg.	4.2	4.2
2015 Annual Avg.	3.8	3.7
2016 Annual Avg.	3.8	3.8
2017 Annual Avg.	3.5	3.6
2018 Annual Avg.	3.0	2.9

Source: DEED LAUS program

**Table 14. Jobseekers Per Vacancy**

	Q2 2018
Region 6E Unemployed	2,130
Region 6E Vacancies	2,927
Jobseekers per Vacancy	0.7

Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, LAUS

**Figure 6. Annual Labor Force Estimates, 2000-2018**

**Figure 7. Unemployment Rates, 2000-2018**

**Figure 8. Jobseekers Per Vacancy, 2008-2018**




# KANDIYOHI COUNTY

## RETAIL BUSINESS DESIGN WORKSHOPS

### NEED HELP WITH YOUR BUSINESS?

A customized technical assistance program  
for **small retailers** in Kandiyohi County



10 week intensive-program designed to help you take your storefront to the next level.

Technical assistance program for area businesses with a series of 5 workshops launching in February.

Receive assistance from Industry Mentors, U of M students and retail coaches to help your business succeed.

Total cost of \$250

Scholarships available on an as-needed basis.

5 workshops and 5 coaching sessions covering retail management, inventory management, target marketing and social media marketing.

Info and registration:  
[kandiyohi.com/retail](http://kandiyohi.com/retail)

Flip over for Workshop details on back of flyer.





# WORKSHOPS & COACHING SESSIONS

Meet with other rural retailers and learn from industry experts



## STORE PRESENTATION

February 6th | 8:00am - 9:30am | Bremer Bank

Understand the basic methods and techniques used for merchandise layout. Recognize effective design principles for merchandise displays and learn the many factors that contribute to a successful store layout.



Coaching Session | Feb 13th



## TARGET MARKETING

February 20th | 8:00am - 9:30am | Bremer Bank

Study how demographics influence merchandising decisions and customer profiles. Find out how to determine which types of customers your store wants to attract and the type of experience those customers will expect.



Coaching Session | Feb 27th



## INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

March 6th | 8:00am - 9:30am | Willmar Library

Learn diverse functions related to the tracking and management of stock.



Coaching Session | March 13th



## KEY ISSUES AND TRENDS IN RURAL RETAILING

March 20th | 8:00am - 9:30am | Willmar Library

We'll discuss the current key issues and trends in rural retailing. Plus, an overview on the roles of store owners and managers.



Coaching Session | March 27th



## SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

April 3rd | 8:00am - 9:30am | WORKUP

Dive into how social media can help build your brand, grow your customer base and generate more foot traffic in your storefront.



Coaching Session | April 10th

Info and registration: [kandiyohi.com/retail](http://kandiyohi.com/retail)





# Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar Economic Development Commission

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### 1. **Workforce Development:** Develop and expand workforce availability and skills to support the growth and expansion of businesses.

#### **Potential Objectives:**

- Establish a workforce development committee
- Expand diverse workforce training, building on the success of CLUES
- Work with Ridgewater College to improve enrollment and student success
- Support a Teachers of Color Pipeline Initiative in partnership with K12 and Ridgewater College
- Bring like-type industries together (focus groups by industry sector) to discuss workforce needs and explore additional employer-driven initiatives such as MAP that might be supported/started
- Video highlighting businesses of Kandiyohi County and the workforce skills/needs; Host on EDC website and promote via social media
- Develop a “Bring Them Back Campaign” with positive messaging of opportunities in the area and telling the stories of why they should want to return

#### **Vision of Success:**

Skill enhancement of potential labor market tied to local needs. Higher levels of people gaining greater employment and entering pathways that lead to careers with greater earning potential.

### 2. **Business Support:** Building relationships with area business, with a key intent to inform them of available resources through the EDC, better understand their challenges/needs, and help them share their successes.

#### **Potential Objectives:**

- Engage in focused one-on-one visits with existing businesses to inform them of resources and streamline complications/challenges they may have
- Develop a business support group of “like-minded businesses\*” and/or “emerging entrepreneurs”; consider the 1 Million Cup model; specific mention of support for businesses started within past 5 years and those in the retail sector
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#### **Vision of Success:**

Businesses owners are able to streamline operations and resolve barriers they may have and learn from each other’s successes and challenges. Our communities know and understand how the EDC can help businesses.

\*Note: There was mention of global marketing too, however not sure where/how it fits with local Business Support. The group discussed creating a marketing piece/video about the area's quality of life and drawing in businesses by redefining demographics and information as a regional draw for national businesses.

### 3. **Childcare:** Continuing with the goals set forth by the Child Care Core Team

#### **Potential Objectives:**

- Increase the number of childcare options, including diverse childcare choices, available for the workforce in Kandiyohi County and in the region
- Secure sustainable solutions for existing and new childcare centers and family childcare providers, including diverse childcare

**Objectives: (Insert from current)** Adequate childcare viewed as essential for the economic success of the region. Group noted the tie between workforce development and childcare.

#### **Vision of Success: [Enter info from current committee work]**

Family incomes increase and existing childcare businesses are profitable. Additional childcare jobs will be filled, and more jobs become available in the child development field.

### 4. **Agricultural Innovation:** Understanding and responding to the ever-changing food and agriculture sectors

#### **Potential Objectives:**

- Collaborate with other agriculture and producer groups to host community conversations and/or educational forums that support producers and dispel myths around agriculture
- Recruit additional value-added agriculture processors, businesses and markets
- Create a local vision statement for agriculture as an economic driver in Kandiyohi County and share vision broadly
- Revisit the Ag BR&E results and respond with training, workshops, education

#### **Vision of Success:**

Agriculture is recognized as a healthy, strong and vibrant industry that strengthens our area. Producer living wages improve and they feel valued and supported.

### 5. **Broadband:** Lobby – Collaborate – Educate to provide broadband access throughout Kandiyohi County

#### **Potential Objectives:**

- Identify specific people in government that we could lobby for statutory changes that enable grants for rural Kandiyohi County
- Develop a coalition of Kandiyohi County townships willing to facilitate the investment of broadband for the benefit of their residents
- Increase our involvement in the Broadband Coalition at the state level to bring more awareness to Kandiyohi challenges (get the real story out about speeds/access) and increase opportunities for faster buildout of broadband services

#### **Vision of Success:**

Businesses are able to have employees work remotely from their homes, entrepreneurs have more opportunities to expand their businesses, students are able to do homework from home, seniors can take advantage of telemedicine healthcare, and house values increase.

# 2019 Action Planning Worksheet

## BUSINESS SUPPORT



<b>Priority Area</b>	Business Support
<b>Priority Summary</b>	Supporting existing businesses through access to information and awareness of the EDC's services.
<b>Project Coordinator:</b> (A person of interest/ champion to help EDC Staff)	Dan Tempel, Broker/Owner, Glacial Ridge Realty
<b>Phone/Email:</b>	320-403-5404 / glacialridgerealty@gmail.com

<b>Strategic Priority</b> (Stated as a goal with measurable results, not just effort)	EDC works to build relationships with area business, with a key intent to inform them of available resources through the EDC, better understand their challenges/needs, and help them share their successes.	
<b>Mission Connection</b> (How this goal aligns with the mission of the EDC)	EDC catalyzes economic growth by supporting area businesses so that they can prosper, innovate and be competitive.	
<b>Objectives</b> How might we address this goal? (i.e. What actions/milestones might be pursued?)  What resources may be needed?  <b>S – Specific</b> <b>M – Measurable</b> <b>A – Attainable</b> <b>R – Relevant</b> <b>T – Timebound</b>	<b>Potential Objectives</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>
	1. Engage in focused one-on-one visits with existing businesses to inform of resources and streamline complications/challenges they may have	TBD
	2. Develop a business support group of “like-minded businesses” and/or “emerging entrepreneurs;” consider the 1 Million Cup model; specific mention of support for businesses started within past 5 years and those in the retail sector	TBD
	3. Invite bankers/accountants to a gathering to learn of EDC resources and share business needs	TBD
	4. Develop a “community” marketing campaign to distribute EDC offerings broadly in the area	Center of influencers; marketing plan
<b>Expected Outcomes:</b>  <b>The impact we seek: What will be different as a result of our efforts?</b>	Businesses owners are able to streamline operations or resolve barriers they may have and learn from each other’s successes and challenges. Our communities know and understand how the EDC can help businesses.	

**Who are the people who may be interested in supporting/working together on this goal?**

Name	Skills/Resources	Email	Phone
Jesse Gislason	Business support	<a href="mailto:jessegislason@gmail.com">jessegislason@gmail.com</a>	320.295.6938
Melissa Knott	Marketing	<a href="mailto:mknott@christiansoncpa.com">mknott@christiansoncpa.com</a>	320.212.9505
Fernando Alvarado	City Government/Business support	<a href="mailto:falvarado@willmarmn.gov">falvarado@willmarmn.gov</a>	320.235.2577

**As you move further along, identify the key strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats for achieving this goal...**

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDC Marketing Committee</li> <li>• EDC Staff</li> </ul>	<b>Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too many businesses are not aware of what the EDC has to offer</li> <li>• Need to break down into smart goals; specific action steps</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break down barriers with other groups</li> <li>• Programs like SCORE, 1 Million Cups</li> <li>• Mentoring/coaching arrangements</li> </ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate time/capacity</li> <li>• Insufficient financial resources</li> </ul>

**OTHER NOTES:** Two remaining task in notes that did not fit neatly into this strategy could possibly be brought to the Marketing Committee:

1. Doing research and gathering data/demographics needed to market to restaurants and national retail so that they are drawn to Kandiyohi County
2. Being strategic in collaborating to promote the quality of life in Kandiyohi; mentions of Greg Harp's photos, PWELC as resources; mention of "Bring Them Home" campaign that was also added to the Workforce Strategy



# 2019 Action Planning Worksheet

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

<b>Priority Area</b>	Workforce Development
<b>Priority Summary</b>	Help build a skilled workforce that meets the needs of the local economy in order to grow and support businesses.
<b>Project Coordinator:</b> (A person of interest/ champion to help EDC Staff)	Sam Bowen, Dean of Customized Training and Continuing Education, Ridgewater College
<b>Phone/Email:</b>	320-905-2269 / sam.bowen@ridgewater.edu

<b>Strategic Priority</b> (Stated as a goal with measurable results, not just effort)	Building a base of support and implementing innovative strategies that expand opportunities for building a skilled workforce that meets the needs of our local economy and helps businesses grow.	
<b>Mission Connection</b> (How this goal aligns with the mission of the EDC)	EDC would be a catalyst, providing leadership for workforce growth which increases potential for prosperity, international competitiveness and enhanced quality of life.	
<b>Objectives</b> How might we address this goal? (i.e. What actions/milestones might be pursued?)  What resources may be needed?  <b>S – Specific</b> <b>M – Measurable</b> <b>A – Attainable</b> <b>R – Relevant</b> <b>T – Timebound</b>	<b>Potential Objectives</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>
	1. Establish a Workforce Development Committee to focus on specific initiatives.	People and approval
	2. Promote Ridgewater College, working with partners to improve enrollment and student success.	Planning, Details, Funding
	3. Continue to expand diverse workforce training programs like Diverse CNA/Welding	Funding, Support, Partners
	4. Establish a Teacher of Color pipeline program	TBD
	OTHER NOTES: Insights from planning session (some could be tasks under the above Objectives) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring similar industries together (focus groups by industry sector) to discuss workforce needs and explore additional employer-driven initiatives such as MAP that might be supported/started</li> <li>• Video highlighting businesses of Kandiyohi County and the workforce skills/needs; Host on EDC website and promote via social media</li> <li>• Develop a “Bring Them Back Campaign” – positive messaging of opportunities in the area; telling the stories of why they should want to return</li> </ul>	
<b>Expected Outcomes:</b>  <b>The impact we seek: What will be different as a result of our efforts?</b>	These efforts will help grow and support businesses by addressing a major need in our regional economy—skilled workers. We will develop and implement innovative recruiting and training strategies that will set our region apart as a workforce development leader. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skill enhancement of potential labor market</li> <li>• Higher levels of people gaining greater employment</li> <li>• People entering pathways that lead them to career with greater earning potential</li> <li>• Helping to fulfill local job market needs</li> </ul>	

**Who are the people who may be interested in supporting/working together on this goal?**

Name	Skills/Resources	Email	Phone
Eric Day, Business Service Coordinator, CMJTS	Funding, People	<a href="mailto:eday@cmjts.org">eday@cmjts.org</a>	320.241.1747
Sam Bowen, Dean, Ridgewater College	Customized Training and Continuing Education	<a href="mailto:sam.bowen@ridgewater.edu">sam.bowen@ridgewater.edu</a>	320.222.5206
Dayna Latham, Training and Outreach Manager, Ridgewater College	Customized Training and Continuing Education	<a href="mailto:dayna.latham@ridgewater.edu">dayna.latham@ridgewater.edu</a>	320.894.5169
Craig Johnson, President, Ridgewater College	Leadership, Administration	<a href="mailto:craig.johnson@ridgewater.edu">craig.johnson@ridgewater.edu</a>	320-222-5202
Jason Duininck, Director of Business Development, Duininck Inc.	Business Development, Legislative	<a href="mailto:jasond@duininck.com">jasond@duininck.com</a>	320.212.9330

**As you move further along, identify the key strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats for achieving this goal...**

<b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ridgewater College</li> <li>• Kandiyohi County labor force growing faster than the region</li> <li>• Immigration/New diverse populations</li> <li>• Short-term growth of high school class sizes</li> <li>• Diverse economic landscape</li> </ul>	<b>Challenges</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tight labor market (.7 person available for each job vacancy)</li> <li>• Language barriers—comprehension and fluency</li> <li>• Labor market participation rates less than state average for some populations</li> <li>• Skills gap</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigrant workforce</li> <li>• Growth of labor force participation rate for some populations</li> <li>• Seniors/Retirees opportunities for additional careers/skills</li> </ul>	<b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automation, technology and robotics may eliminate some jobs and increase skill sets needed for new jobs</li> <li>• State/National policy decisions</li> <li>• Cultural norms related to Higher Ed/Post-Secondary</li> <li>• Lack of diversity in immigrant careers; lack of aspirations for different careers</li> </ul>