

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

MINUTES

April 6, 2018

EDC Board Room

Present: Sam Bowen, Jim Ellingson, Les Heitke, Roger Imdieke, Les Nelson and Kelly TerWisscha

Excused: Dean Steinwand and Ranae Rahn

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director

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

Chairperson Sam Bowen called the meeting to order at approximately 9:05 a.m.

AGENDA—The agenda was approved as emailed.

MINUTES—Chair Bowen presented the January 5, 2018 minutes.

IT WAS MOVED BY Kelly TerWisscha, SECONDED BY Les Nelson, to approve the January 5, 2018 minutes as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

REPORTS/PROJECT UPDATES

Highway 23 Coalition. Backman reported there are a total of 87 members (including 18 platinum members); he also noted revenues exceed the budget. The city of Waite Park recently became a member of the Coalition. Backman mentioned the Highway 23 Coalition hosted a very productive legislative reception on March 7th at the State Office Building in St. Paul. Approximately 25 legislators and 15 staffers attended. Plans are underway to attend the Washington, D.C. fly-in on May 22-24th to meet with Congressman Tom Emmer, U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar and other U.S. legislators, if possible to try and lobby for additional federal funding. Backman provided highlights of the well-attended Highway 23 Coalition annual membership meeting on March 9th in Cold Spring. Backman noted Kandiyohi and Stearns Counties have submitted their applications and resolutions of support for Corridors of Commerce funding. Patrick Weidemann, Minnesota Department of Transportation Planning Director is expected to announce the project list soon. Roger Imdieke mentioned the Willmar Wye project is also a viable project to tie into the Highway 23 project and an April meeting is scheduled in Washington, D.C. to meet with the Federal Department of Transportation and other pertinent stakeholders.

Business Visits/Tours. Backman reported on a few recent business visits and tours:

- attended the County Planning Commission meeting to rezone property on County Road 9 for Black Bear Fish Houses;
- participated in Open Mic with Bruce Peterson;
- attended the Opportunity Zones initial meeting;
- participated in Ridgewater College's interviews of candidates for president;
- attended the Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers (MAPCED) quarterly meeting;
- participated in the Highway 23 Coalition annual meeting in Cold Spring;
- attended the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) meeting;
- participated in the EDC Boards Planning Session;
- attended the Area Transportation Partnership (ATP) meeting for District 8 in Granite Falls.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

CLUES Update. Chair Bowen reported that CLUES will have a greater presence in the community and is looking for an office location in Willmar and is planning to hire a full-time navigator. Interviews for the position will be held soon. TerWisscha asked that Chair Bowen send him the job posting as he may have a person who may wish to apply for the position.

Diverse CNA. Chair Bowen noted another diverse CNA class of 10 students will begin soon and reported most of the graduates from the first CNA program have been hired, mostly by Rice Memorial Hospital. Carris/Health/Rice Memorial Hospital is also a partner in the CNA program.

Diverse Welding. Chair Bowen reported CLUES will offer a diverse welding program for 10 students soon and is looking for additional cohorts. It is a goal of the program for graduates to receive national welding certifications. Discussed possible additional cohorts.

West Central Job Fair Update. Backman, Chair Bowen and job fair partners have discussed ways to generate more enthusiasm and better attract students, more well-suited job seekers and more businesses. Chair Bowen reported there has been some opposition to moving one of the job fairs to Ridgewater College due to location, signage and parking. A suggestion was made to hold the job fair at the Kandi Mall being it is centrally located and has ample parking. The manager of Kandi Mall is open to the idea and would not charge the vendors to have tables throughout the mall hallways. A final decision will be made following the upcoming West Central Job Fair. Backman commented it would be beneficial to hold a student job fair at Ridgewater College as well.

NEW BUSINESS

Manufacturing Week in October (*Minnesota Dream It. Do It*). Backman shared the community tour guide containing information on organizing and hosting a successful community manufacturing tour. The last manufacturing tour, held in 2016 was a success; however, some businesses expressed concerns about the public touring their facility due to proprietary information.

2018 Goals. Backman distributed four benchmarks/goals developed at the EDC Boards' Planning Session on March 29th (see attached).

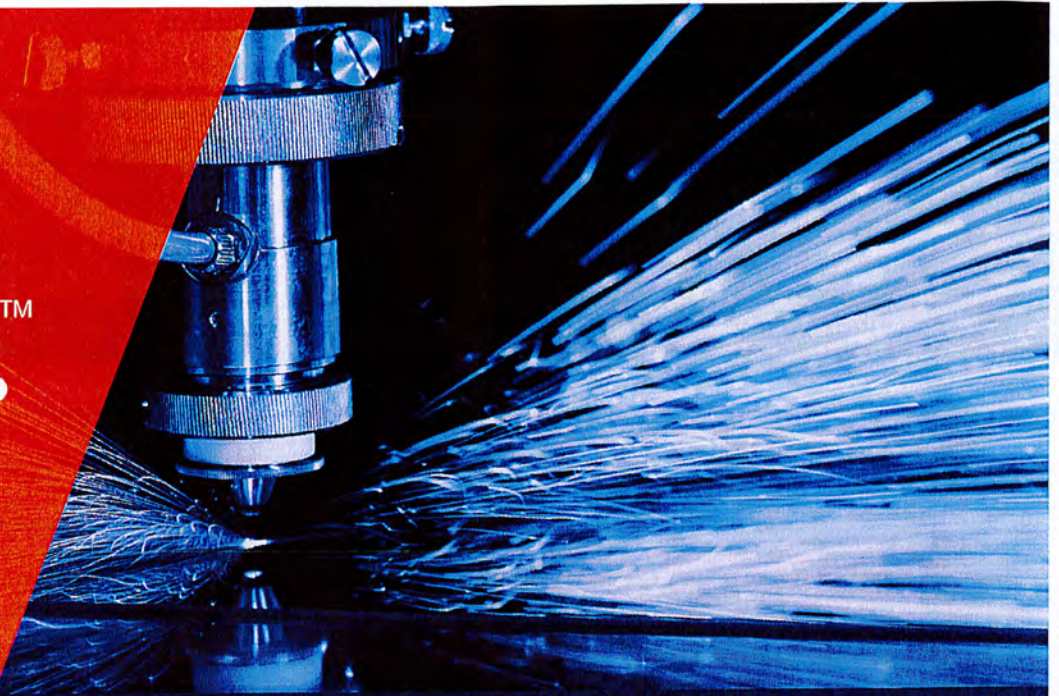
- Transportation Infrastructure
 - Discussion held regarding recruiting business prospects to the Willmar Airport. Les Heitke suggested a meeting with local airport staff and plane owners. Also discussed was utilizing the airport's conference room for various meetings.
- Opportunity Zones
 - Track the designation of Opportunity Zones to encourage development of housing/commercial businesses in low to moderate income areas that are considered eligible.
- Child Care
 - Increase the number of childcare options available for workforce in Kandiyohi County and secure sustainable solutions for existing and new childcare centers.
- Diverse Business Initiative
 - Backman reported discussions have been held on the EDC taking over WAM-BC's loan portfolio after WAM-BC has completed updating their financial documents for outstanding loans. Further discussions and a decision will be held in the future.

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

NEXT MEETING—The next regular committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., May 4, 2018, at the Willmar Municipal Airport Conference Room, 6600 Highway 40 West, Willmar**



**YOUR FUTURE
IS MADE IN
MANUFACTURING**



COMMUNITY TOUR GUIDE

By having a tour you are making students and parents aware of the manufacturing opportunities offered in your community!

You are so glad that you are interested in organizing your own Community Tour during the Dream It. Do It. Minnesota Statewide Tour of Manufacturing! This guide will provide you with an overview of what you need to do in order to have a successful Community Tour!

Q & A



WHAT IS A COMMUNITY TOUR?

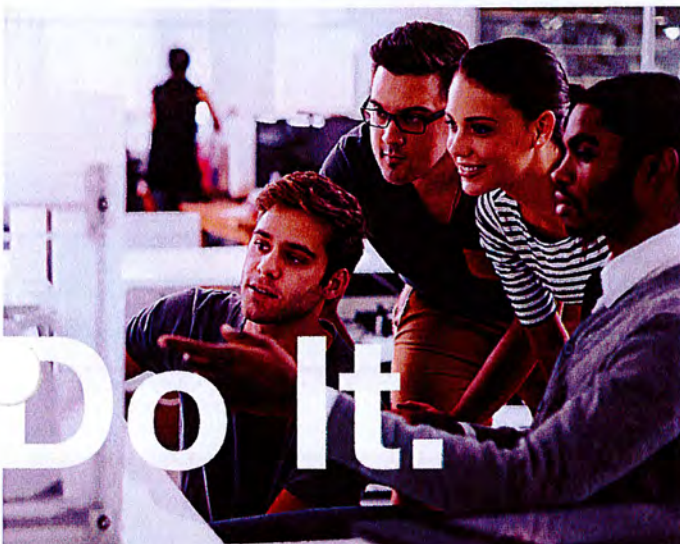
A group of manufacturers in a city/region come together to organize tours for the public. Manufacturers pool their resources to get the word out to the future workforce about modern manufacturing!

WHY HOST A TOUR?

Hosting a Community tour allows manufacturers to work together and get the word out that there are many career opportunities in the manufacturing industry.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

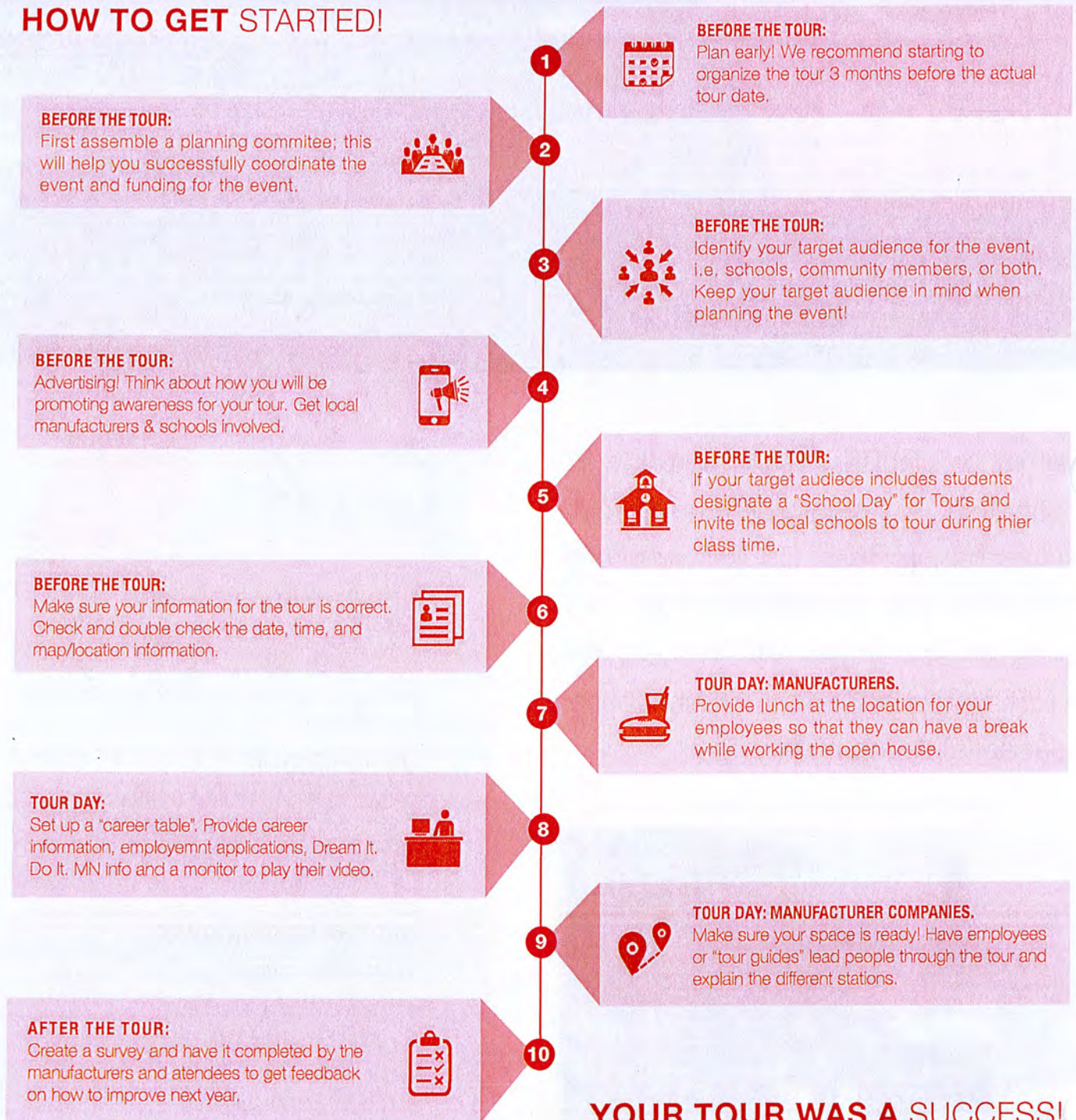
- Manufacturers
- Manufacturing Associations
- K-12 Schools & Colleges
- Chambers of Commerce
- City/Regional Agencies
- Media
- Funding/Sponsor Sources



STEPS TO SUCCESS

Follow the steps below for a successful tour! We have outlined what you need to do and the order in which it is recommended for a smooth tour experience!

HOW TO GET STARTED!



YOUR TOUR WAS A SUCCESS!

MORE DETAILS

Here are some more ideas on what you can do to have a great community tour experience. Listed below are some best practice notes on planning, funding, and organizing your upcoming event!

"Think outside of the box to reach a broad audience. We've included a commercial grower, a large print plant, a metal manufacturer, etc. to increase our reach." - Carrie Johnston

Here are some more details on what to do before, during, and after your community tour:

BEFORE THE TOUR:

- Start close to home—promote to manufacturing employees that your events are a great opportunity to bring families and friends to see where they work.

Designated a "school day" for tours, and invite the local schools to tour during their class time.

DURING THE TOUR:

- Provide lunch for your employees in a private area on the day of the tour so they can have a break while working the open house.
- Set-up a "career table" with career information, employment applications, and Dream It. Do It. Minnesota brochures for tour attendees.
- Display a TV monitor showing the Dream It. Do It. Minnesota Career Video and your Company Video on an endless loop. Both the videos and career information could be made available at the end of the tour in a hospitality room.
- Set out a sign and brightly colored balloons in the on the Front Business entry.
- Set aside additional handicap parking places by your front door.

AFTER THE TOUR:

- Survey your employees who worked the Open House event to obtain their feedback and make note of what went well and what you could improve on the next time. Keep notes!
- Have your planning committee meet to discuss what worked and what can be improved for the next year while the information is fresh.

BEST PRACTICE ADVICE:

Make sure representatives from participating facilities are able to attend each planning meeting. Their input and work are key to a successful event!

- Not every manufacturer has to be involved every year. Because of time and commitment, it takes to participate, some manufacturers set up a rotation so they participate every two to three years, even though a community tour is organized every year. Let each manufacturer decide what times work best for them to host an open house.
- There are a lot of ways to promote manufacturing tours: connecting with robotics teams, workforce centers, job placement firms, or colleges, posting signs around town, sharing on social media, and more.
- Remember to think about who you want to attend and promote and plan accordingly. For example, if you want job seekers to attend, you may need to advertise outside of your area.

PLANNING & TIMELINE:

Most community tour planning starts at least three months (July), before the Dream It. Do It. Minnesota Statewide Tour of Manufacturing (October).

HOW DO YOU WANT TO PROMOTE YOUR TOUR?

There are lots of options, from newspapers to radio ads to public service announcements. You may find that media will offer non-profit rates or announce community events for free. Dream It. Do It. Minnesota offers a toolkit and templates to help organize and promote your tour as well.

MANUFACTURING TOUR ADVICE:

Make sure your tour space is ready. Have tour guides and/or employees ready at their stations to talk and demonstrate their work. If you are utilizing a self-guided tour, mark the pathway with brightly colored tape, providing a map that highlights what they will be seeing and station employees around the route to visit with the guests as they walk through.

More info on the back ►►

FUNDING & ADVICE

We recommend the following for funding your Community Tour and how you can get the most attention for your event!

YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE:

Who is your audience? Are you organizing tours for community members, schools, both, or others? Make your plans with your target audience(s) in mind.

FUNDING...

Typically, participating manufacturers contribute to the community tour, often \$1,000, to support advertising and promotion of the tour. Your planning committee may want to support other areas for tours as well, such as transportation for schools or job seekers.

You can seek additional funding from sources, such as foundations and associations. Dream It. Do It. Minnesota also has an application process to request funding for community tours.

HOW TO MAKE A BIG SPLASH IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

For example, some community tours purchase a newspaper insert to promote the participating manufacturers and recognize sponsors. Others have drawings for prizes if you attend a tour.

MAKE YOUR TOUR ATTENDEES FEEL WELCOME!

Ideas include having greeters or have a room at the end of the tour with snacks. When to hold tours. It can vary by community. Some areas find late afternoon and evenings on Thursdays work better than Saturdays; others may find Saturdays to work well. Staggering tour times may also help people attend numerous tours.

- Aligning tours with an event for manufacturers, such as a Manufacturing Breakfast.
- Make sure your information is accurate. Check and double-check any maps, tour times, or other materials that promote your tours.
- How will the work be done. Everyone contributes to the most successful community tours. Consider forming committees to help get the work done. In the Brainerd Lakes area, for example, they create five committees: advertising for newsprint (ads and inserts), advertising for radio, websites, school communications and outreach, and manufacturers event.

QUESTIONS? LEARN MORE FROM:

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THANK YOU

Our thanks to Deborah Hoel from Pequot Tool & Manufacturing, Carrie Johnston from Detroit Lakes Community Tour, and Abby Strom from Alexandria Area Economic Development Commission for their contributions to this guide.

"Great way for facilities to work together and show pride in their own community." - Carrie Johnston



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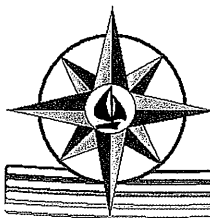
Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence | ATE Regional Center

Dream It. Do It. Minnesota is led by 360 Manufacturing & Applied Engineering Center of Excellence. Learn more at 360mn.org.



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Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC 2018 Plan
Benchmarks: Transportation Infrastructure

1) What do we want to accomplish? (New Goal)

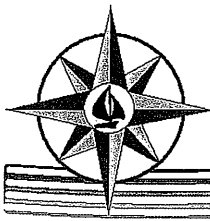
- Implementation of Willmar Railroad Wye project on the west side of Willmar bypassing the downtown and installation of rail spur to Willmar Rail Park by 2021.
- Completion of the MN Highway 23 four-lane corridor between Willmar and I-94; including the two gaps north and south of Paynesville by 2024.
- Construction of the CR5/55 bridge over railroad tracks just north of new Highway 23 bridge on the southwest side of Willmar.
- Increase operations at Willmar Municipal Airport by 25% by 2020.

2) What should be done to begin? (Data Needed or Action Steps)

- The Master Cooperation Agreement among MnDOT, City of Willmar, Kandiyohi County, and BNSF needs to be completed before the Design-Build bidletting process for final design and construction can proceed.
- Willmar Wye projects partners have solid relationships, and the partners remain optimistic for a summer or fall of 2018 construction start for the Wye project.
- Continue to make investments in support of long-term, collaborative regional approaches, such as the EDC being active in the Hwy 23 Coalition.
- Support Corridors of Commerce funding to finish the four-lane gaps on Hwy 23.
- Support federal and state funding for Highway 23-related projects, such as the CR5/55 bridge over the BNSF railroad tracks.
- Recruit business prospects interested in locating at the Willmar Industrial Park or Willmar Airport.

3) What should we see happening w/in 90 days? (Benchmarks)

- Interact with the Willmar Railroad Wye partners to understand the status of the Master Agreement and construction timeline.
- In April, MnDOT is expected to announce the Corridors of Commerce projects that will be funded. Based on that announcement, the Coalition may seek additional state bond funding.
- In late May the EDC should send two representatives to participate in the Washington D.C. fly-in to meet with Congressional representatives and federal Department of Transportation staff regarding the funding of transportation priorities in Willmar and West Central Minnesota.



Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC 2018 Plan
Benchmarks: Opportunity Zones

1) What do we want to accomplish? (New Goal)

- Designate Opportunity Zones, for one to three tracts in Kandiyohi County to encourage development of housing or commercial businesses in low to moderate income areas that are considered eligible.
- Encourage investment for new commercial and housing projects in designated Opportunity Zones in Kandiyohi County.
- Facilitate and secure new commercial and housing projects in Kandiyohi County Opportunity Zones.

2) What should be done to begin? (Data Needed or Action Steps)

- Submit recommendations to DEED stating priority for each of three eligible tracts in Kandiyohi County to be considered for the designation of "Opportunity Zones."
- Track the processes and determinations made by the Minnesota Governor's Office and the final Opportunity Zones determinations made by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.
- Study the rules and processes of Opportunity Zones as more information is published.

3) What should we see happening w/in 90 days? (Benchmarks)

- Development of Opportunity Zone marketing materials.
- Present Opportunity Zone information to County, City and other potential partners.
- Invite potential investors and developers to community discussions about opportunities in the designated zones.



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Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC 2018 Plan

Benchmarks: Child Care

1) What do we want to accomplish? (New Goal)

- Increase the number of childcare options available for workforce in Kandiyohi County
- Secure sustainable solutions for existing and new child care centers and family child care providers.

2) What should be done to begin? (Data Needed or Action Steps)

- Participate as economic development representative, in community stakeholder meetings to define the current situation and potential solutions.
- Identify local leaders in the child care industry.
- Bring family providers together to seek their ideas about what might be helpful for them locally.
- Research policy and legislation that could support local child care businesses.

3) What should we see happening w/in 90 days? (Benchmarks)

- Support legislation to provide relief for providers and address the overreach of regulations while still ensuring safety for children and families in child care environments.
- Communicate with leaders in the child care industry about our desire to participate in conversations and planning, as an economic development entity, regarding the child care issue.
- Assist child care industry leaders with gathering information from businesses about the current need for child care for reports and grant applications.



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Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC 2018 Plan Benchmarks: Diverse Business Initiative

1) What do we want to accomplish? (New Goal)

- Implement of a Diverse Business Retention Expansion (BRE) Phase II Program during 2018-2019, including businesses located outside of Willmar.
- Consider receiving and administering the Willmar Area Multicultural Business Center (WAM-BC) loan portfolio. WAM-BC has seven active loans around Kandiyohi County. WAM-BC prefers to focus on technical assistance and less on financial assistance.
- Seek to establish a self-sustaining diverse workforce training program in partnership with Ridgewater College, CLUES, Rice Memorial Hospital, Bethesda, and others.

2) What should be done to begin? (Data Needed or Action Steps)

- The EDC will track a Diversity bill in the 2018 Legislative Session. If passed and signed by Governor Dayton, this bill could provide an estimated \$75,000 in grant funding to SWIF/DEED for Diverse BRE Phase II Program in the Willmar area.
- The EDC should continue discussions with the Bush Foundation staff regarding a Community Innovation Grant for capacity building for diverse entrepreneurs in the Willmar area.
- The WAM-BC loan portfolio transfer is predicated on WAM updating their financial documents for all of their outstanding loans. So far, they have updated five out of the seven loan documents. WAM expects to complete the loan document updating by June of 2018. The EDC will continue discuss the loans with WAM leadership.
- Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio (CLUES), a Latino non-profit organization based in the Twin Cities, with EDC assistance, is considering leasing office space near Downtown Willmar for office and training space. They are currently interviewing a new Navigator lead and should be finalizing a new lease in the next 30 to 60 days.
- New contracts for Diverse CNA and Diverse Welding programs are expected to be signed by Ridgewater College and CLUES in the next 30 days.

3) What should we see happening w/in 90 days? (Benchmarks)

- The EDC will stay in communication with funders regarding the Diverse BRE Phase II Program.
- Once the WAM-BC loan documents are updated, the EDC will present the loan portfolio transfer opportunity to EDC Board members for final approval. If approved, the EDC would create a new RLF for diverse businesses in Kandiyohi County.
- The EDC will remain in communication with CLUES and Ridgewater College regarding the diverse training programs; and will promote the program as needed.