

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
May 23, 2016
WORKUP, Willmar**

Present: Donna Boonstra, Shari Courtney, Jean Geselius, Ann Winge Johnson, Heather Koffler and Mike Negen

Excused: Julie Redepenning

Absent: Caroline Chan, Lindsey Donner and Sarah Isdal

Guests: Betsy Bonnema and Jayme Sczublewski of REDstar Creative/WORKUP

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director

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

Heather Koffler called the meeting to order at approximately 12:06 p.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Shari Courtney, SECONDED BY Ann Winge Johnson, to approve the minutes of the April 25, 2016 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

2016 Marketing Plan. Backman reviewed a draft of the spring newsletter (see attached). This quarter the newsletter will be digital only. It was suggested to do a press release to area newspapers and radio stations highlighting key articles and to send the newsletter to the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce to include in its email newsletter. Committee members questioned priority 5 identified at the EDC's Planning Retreat, which states "Enhancing the EDC's marketing and public relations activities." Backman will provide additional information at the next meeting. The committee reviewed background information highlights on the MinnWest Technology Campus (MWTC) (see attached) that Backman intends to incorporate for marketing the Campus and a brochure template (see attached) that will be used to feature particular areas of the community, such as MWTC and the Willmar Industrial Park. The brochure template was done through Canva, a free online program (<https://www.canva.com>). Discussion included keeping the template clean with minimal text and possibly do info graphics on the back with more details. Backman gave an update on the shovel-ready process for the Willmar Industrial Park.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

Information for newcomers. Donna Boonstra reported Vision 2040 goal groups have discussed a website that would contain community information for new residents. The City of Coon Rapids' website was shown as an example of a site with good community resource information <http://www.ci.coon-rapids.mn.us/>, under the How Do I tab. Chairperson Koffler stated the Vision 2040 Marketing Committee is working on a redesign of its website and have discussed ownership of the willmar.com domain. The City of Willmar's website is <http://www.willmarmn.gov>. The owners of the willmar.com domain are aware of the Willmar community's interest in purchasing the domain. Committee members indicated a community portal has been discussed for many years with limited success in obtaining collaboration from area organizations/communities. Justin Mattern put the current information on willmar.com and is on the Vision 2040 Marketing Committee. Chairperson Koffler believes the EDC's website contains what it should and contains information pertinent to the EDC. It was noted that if there is a community portal website, there would need to be someone who could update it on a regular basis and that person would need to be paid. The consensus was a community portal informational website would be a great resource. It was suggested that contact be made with the City of Willmar about this as it is currently updating its website.

Social Media Rockstar. Chairperson Koffler stated the 2016 Social Media Rockstar Event is seeking sponsors. She will provide sponsorship information to the committee for it to decide if the EDC could again be a sponsor. Last year, the event had more than 150 business people attend. This year's event will be at the Willmar Conference Center.

County video. The committee received a first draft of the script for Kandiyohi County's online video. Backman stated the video will include a variety of areas, including education, tourism and economic development.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:23 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **12 noon, Monday, June 27, 2016** at WORKUP, 1601 Technology Drive NE, Willmar.



EDC PLANNING RETREAT HIGHLIGHTS

ADVOCACY
RETENTION
EXPANSION
MARKETING

A Message from the Executive Director

Since starting my new role on February 24th, I have been meeting with businesses and getting to know the City of Willmar and Kandiyohi County. People have been very welcoming. Thank you!



Aaron Backman

The EDC is here to help our current businesses as well as new businesses grow within our communities. We continue to put significant efforts into promoting the development of the Willmar Industrial Park and assisting in the development of the MinnWest Technology Campus. We are blessed with a business community that offers innovative technologies.

We hope that you find the EDC's quarterly newsletter informative and that it provides insights into our activities in the area. Also, thanks for visiting the EDC's updated website, www.kandiyohi.com. It provides information about local communities and the six-county area around the City of Willmar, a region of over 103,000 people.

I'm delighted to report that on April 21st the EDC held a strategic planning retreat at the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center in Spicer (See related article). It was a productive session that focused on a new Vision Statement, organizational priorities for the next 3 to 5 years, and action items for the near term.

Please give us a call, stop into our office, or send an e-mail. The EDC stands ready to assist your business.

Recently the EDC held a Strategic Planning Retreat at the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center near Spicer, MN. The 14 attendees included board members, EDC staff, an Ex Officio member, and Bruce Miles, the facilitator from Big River Group.

The EDC's current Mission Statement is "to be a catalyst for economic growth of the greater Kandiyohi County area." Participants also felt it was important to develop a Vision Statement for the EDC. They developed the following:

To provide visionary economic development leadership creating growth, prosperity, innovation, international competitiveness, and enhanced quality of life.

The EDC's Planning Retreat identified five major priorities that the organization should pursue in near term: 1) Broadband infrastructure throughout the county, 2) Transportation infrastructure in the Willmar Lakes Area, 3) Promotion of the Willmar Industrial Park, including obtaining Shovel-Ready Certification, 4) Expanding funding options for local businesses and entrepreneurs, and 5) Enhancing the EDC's marketing and public relations activities. More information regarding the EDC's goals and action steps will be forthcoming this spring.

EDC USES COWORKING TO BOOST COMPANIES CREATED BY KCEO STUDENTS

Two new companies started by students participating in the Kandiyohi Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (KCEO) program, will be able to use WORKUP to help grow their businesses.

The EDC is a founding member of WORKUP, a coworking community on the MinnWest Technology Campus. WORKUP provides cutting-edge office space, conference rooms and other amenities to its members, who include freelancers, consultants, start-ups and other business professionals. With its founding membership, the EDC received two transferable badges that allow for full-time access to WORKUP.

The EDC has been working with the KCEO program, which teaches high school students what it takes to become a successful entrepreneur and create their own start-up companies.

Charlotte Ammermann is a social media management expert and Chloe Halvorsen is a graphic designer. They were selected by the EDC to use the WORKUP badges, which will give their businesses a home and a creative environment for networking. Allowing start-up companies access to WORKUP where they can thrive and grow falls in line with the EDC's mission.

The Willmar Area Community Foundation (WACF), the Southwest Initiative Foundation, and fifty local businesses provided the initial program funds to establish the KCEO program. WACF and the EDC continue to be involved in administering KCEO.



EDC Marketing Committee and KCEO Students - (front row): Charlotte Ammermann, Chloe Halvorsen; (2nd row) Sarah Isdal, Ann Wings-Johnson; (3rd row) Nancy Birkeland, Heather Koffler, Shari Courtney; (4th row) Mike Negan, Aaron Backman, Julie Redepenning, Emily Lien

BUSINESS UPDATES | PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Peaceful Thymes Garden & Gift Center

Elsie Kashmark, owner of Peaceful Thymes in Atwater, knows the value of diversifying. Since starting the greenhouse and gift shop in 2005, Kashmark has added a bait shop, coffee shop, café and hardware items to meet the needs of her customers. When the town's only grocery store recently closed, Kashmark once again looked to the needs of her customers and now carries grocery items, focusing on local products like meat from Wick's Meat Shoppe, cheese produced in Litchfield and bakery items from Cold Spring Bakery, to name a few.

In addition to support from her family, many of whom work at the enterprise, area people and agencies like the EDC have been there throughout the process to assist, encourage, support and provide financing to make it all possible, including a move to expand and carry hardware after a fire destroyed Atwater's hardware store.

Peaceful Thymes is located on Highway 12 in Atwater and is open from 7am - 5:30pm Monday through Friday and from 8am to 2pm on Saturdays.



Elsie Kashmark

Bonnema Hardware & Flooring

There's a new owner and a new name for Vegdahl's Hardware, a 60-year old institution in Spicer. Mark Bonnema bought the store in January and renamed it Bonnema Hardware & Flooring. He has added new products and is planning a renovation that includes a new roof, new heating and ventilation systems and an interior and exterior facelift. "I'm so glad I made the jump into business ownership," Bonnema says. "I have people waiting at the door when I arrive most mornings."

The EDC assisted Bonnema in providing a loan through its Revolving Loan Fund Program toward the acquisition and operation of the business. Bonnema says community members tell him frequently they are so glad that the hardware store remains open for business in the small community.



Mark Bonnema

Atwater Business Retention and Expansion Visitation Program

Starting in October of 2015, the EDC and representatives from the Atwater community conducted a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Visitation Program for Atwater businesses. Eighteen visits were conducted to get information and ideas from business leaders about the current business climate.

Highlights from the survey include:

- The greatest achievement for many Atwater businesses in the past three years was to keep their business open.
- The people of the community are one of the greatest assets, as they patronize the local businesses.
- Ambulance, fire and police received high scores in satisfaction from businesses.
- The utility services that have been around for decades received rave reviews, but newer technologies like cell service and internet access and their respective speeds show room for improvement.
- Access to workforce is a challenge for businesses in Atwater, much like the rest of the state.

The business data will be used by local volunteers and business leaders to select local projects that need to be implemented and improved.

Manufacturing as a Career

"We have a quality, stable and productive workforce in the field of manufacturing in Kandiyohi County."

That's the message local business leaders revealed during last year's Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Visitation Program. However, there is room for improvement in the area of workforce availability.

The BRE program was sponsored by the EDC and the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce GrowMN! Team. With that information in hand, those groups, along with Willmar Lakes Area Vision 2040 banded together to plan an event to introduce area teachers and students to the world of manufacturing.

In August, Willmar High School teachers will take a half day during their planning session for the upcoming school year to visit area manufacturers. In October, the 10th graders will tour the same manufacturers during Minnesota Manufacturing Month, followed by a presentation about local career opportunities. A video about local manufacturing jobs produced by a Ridgewater College communications student is also in the works and will be available for the school as well as through the EDC.

Manufacturers participating in the event include: Central Minnesota Fabrication, Chappell Central, Epitopix, Jennie-O Turkey Store, Nova-Tech Engineering, RELCO and West Central Steel.



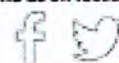
Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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find us on facebook



A Campus for Innovation & Technology



Highlights -

MinnWest Technology Campus is located on 100 serene acres (is it exactly 100??). Don't let that serenity fool you—there's a lot of economic activity flourishing in this lakeside campus, the only privately-owned technology campus in Greater Minnesota.

Currently, there are 30 buildings on the campus encompassing over 550,000 sq. ft. (actual number is 550,724). Fully 416,765 sq. ft. or 75.7% of the space is associated with the MinnWest Technology Campus. That number is expected to grow to 85.6% by the year 2017. MinnWest currently has 98,615 sq. ft. of space available for lease primarily in five buildings that can be customized to suit your business needs.

Begun in 2006, MinnWest Technology Campus boasts an array of R&D-focused technology, bioscience, and animal science companies. Anchor tenants include national and global leaders in agriculture and advanced manufacturing, including Nova-Tech Engineering, Epitopix, Life Science Innovations (LSI), Prinsco, and Syntiron.

Research & Development is a core competency of the MinnWest Technology Campus. It now has four R&D facilities covering a total of 53,859 sq. ft. or 22.9% of leased space on the campus. Tenants with R&D facilities include Nova-Tech, Epitopix, LSI, and the recently added University of Minnesota Mid-Central Research & Outreach Center (MCROC). The latter offers a Level II clean room, a receiving lab, and a teaching lab that will soon have a DNA sequencing machine, the only such device outside of the Twin Cities and Mayo Clinic in Minnesota.

Just as the campus has grown, so has the number of businesses and employees on campus. In the Spring of 2006 MinnWest Technology Campus had five businesses employing 107 full-time people on-site. At the beginning of 2011 MinnWest vaulted to 20 businesses employing 275 fulltime people. This year MinnWest has 33 businesses with 489 full-time and 67 part-time employees.

Many of the people that work on campus are well-trained professionals. For instance, there are currently 75? Engineers (I know of 56 so far, expecting more with LSI and Prinsco) and 20? software developers that associated with the campus. And they are

productive: Epitopix has garnered 40 U.S. patents and over 100 patents internationally; Nova-Tech has 7 U.S. patents and 104 patents internationally; Prinsco has 20 patents; LSI has 6 patents.

These employees enjoy the many amenities offered at MinnWest Technology, including a dedicated data center with significant fiber capacity for business tenants, a campus cafeteria that can seat up to 200 people, an auditorium that be utilized by all the tenants, meeting spaces, a day care center, a fitness center, pool, and over two miles of trails and sidewalks.

The top ten businesses on campus in terms of space and employees:

- 1) Nova-Tech Engineering – 65,390 sq. ft. or 27.8% of leased space; 139 FT / 16 PT
- 2) Life Science Innovations – 41,349 sq. ft. or 17.5% of leased space; 59 FT / 9 PT
- 3) U of MN (MCROC) – 18,629 sq. ft. or 7.9%; 16 FT / 0 PT
- 4) Epitopix – 18,629 sq. ft. or 7.9%; 18 FT / 3 PT
- 5) Prinsco – 18,321 sq. ft. or 7.8%; 42 FT / 1 PT
- 6) Dream School – 17,576 sq. ft. or 7.4%; 15 FT / 0 PT
- 7) ProCore – 10,387 sq. ft. or 4.4%; 41 FT / 0 PT
- 8) Stay N Play – 4,482 sq. ft. or 1.9%; 18 FT / 8 PT
- 9) WORKUP – 4,452 sq. ft. or 1.9%; 14 FT / 3 PT
- 10) Bollig Engineering – 4,385 sq. ft. or 1.9%; 13 FT / 4 PT

The top 10 businesses employ 77% of the full-time employees and 66% of the part-time employees on campus.

Currently MinnWest is 74.2% filled!

Home to **53,859** square feet of R&D facilities, including an advanced wet laboratory.

Nova-Tech – 21,343 square feet.

Epitopix – 18,626 square feet. Entire building on campus.

LSI R&D Lab – 8,640 square feet

MCROC – 5,250 square feet.

Proven tenant success and satisfaction, with over 90% of campus employees reporting that “working on campus has benefited their career or company,” according to a recent survey.

Prolific generator of intellectual property, with over 73 U.S. patents active or owned by tenant companies.

Heart of the area's entrepreneurial culture with a premiere coworking facility, monthly meetups and annual events such as TEDxWillmar, Hack20 and the Ag & Animal Science Conference.

Proactive campus culture that nurtures collaboration and networking between tenant businesses.

Words that came thru the survey:

Inclusive, Community Focused, Vibrant, Driven, Progressive

At the center of West Central Minnesota's Business Hub with an available workforce of over 90,000?

There are _____ Professional Engineers that work on the MinnWest Technology Campus.

NTE -51

LSI – ?

Prinsco – ?

Anez Consulting – 1

Bollig Engineering – 3

Marsha Huddy – 1

The Minnwest Technology Campus is home to 33 Companies.

Technology Companies – (review these)

Jon Schmidt

ProCore

Agricultural Companies – (review these)

Anez

Prinsco

Ag Integrators

Related to turkey's – 4 (review these)

Life Science Innovations

Epitopix

Nova Tech

Ag Forte



RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY

MINNWEST TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS

The serene grounds of the 100-acre MinnWest Technology Campus are more than just lush green space and lakeside views. Inside the picturesque buildings of this historic campus are companies on the cutting edge of research and technology innovation - many of them pioneers in their respective industries. The campus boasts an array of R&D-focused technology, bioscience, and animal science companies, including national and global leaders in agriculture and advanced manufacturing such as Nova-Tech Engineering, Epitopix, Life Science Innovations (LSI), Prinsco, Inc., Syntiron and ProCore.

When the MinnWest Technology Campus opened in 2006, it had 5 businesses with 107 full-time employees. Today, there are 33 businesses with 489 full-time and 67 part-time employees. There are also 4 state-of-the-art R&D labs including a Level II clean room and a teaching lab with a DNA sequencing machine - the only one of its kind in Minnesota outside of the Twin Cities and Mayo.

home to national & global leaders in ag & advanced manufacturing



four R&D labs - Level II clean room - teaching lab with DNA sequencing



regional business hub with available workforce of 90k+



Info or tours:
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