

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
May 3, 2019
EDC Board Room, Willmar

Present: Jim Ellingson, Roger Imdieke, Les Nelson, Ranae Rahn, Dean Steinwand, Dan Tempel and Kelly TerWisscha

Absent: Les Heitke

Excused: Sam Bowen

Guests: Jennifer Mendoza, CLUES Navigator; Dr. Craig Johnson and Michelle Gauer, Ridgewater College and Sarah Swedburg, City of Willmar

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director

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

Self-introductions were conducted.

Vice Chair Les Nelson called the meeting to order at approximately 9:10 a.m.

AGENDA

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

MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED BY Dan Tempel, SECONDED BY Dean Steinwand, to approve the Minutes of the March 1, 2019 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

[Aaron Backman was excused from the meeting.]

REPORTS

Retail Business Design Workshops. Sarah Swedburg reported nine partners, including the EDC, sponsored the workshops (University of Minnesota (U of M), U of M College of Design, Ridgewater College, Spicer Economic Development Authority, Willmar Area Community Foundation, Willmar Main Street, United Way of West Central Minnesota, and the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of

Commerce). The five workshops and five coaching sessions were conducted at various locations in the community. The coaching sessions included store layout, inventory management, target marketing and social media marketing and were led by Neil Linscheid of the U of M Extension, Center for Community Vitality. Twenty-two retail businesses participated of which three-fourths were women-owned and three were diverse businesses. Swedburg shared participants have given positive feedback and are making changes in their businesses as a result of the workshops. Collaborative conversations and knowledge-sharing continue between the businesses. Michelle Gauer shared the collaboration efforts were encouraging and the workshop presentations were very professional. A post workshop meeting will be held in early June. Swedburg shared participants were eligible to apply for additional technical assistance to work one-on-one with a U of M graduate student and reported 11 participants applied and four businesses were selected. Ellingson asked if Gauer has implemented any changes from the Retail Business Design Workshops for their Big Kahuna Fun Park in Spicer. Gauer shared she learned numerous tips they plan to incorporate into their business, including promotion on Facebook. Swedburg stated other counties have inquired about having similar workshops.

CLUES Update/CNA and Welding. Mendoza reported the current CNA class is wrapping up and shared 9 of the 11 students passed the exam on the first try. Students will begin working on resumes and cover letters. Mendoza mentioned there are some issues with language barriers. Mendoza plans to travel to the Twin Cities to meet with CLUES staff at the main office to obtain updates and information sharing. She is working on updating the Willmar CLUES office on Third Street and would like to obtain some artwork from the CLUES main office. She plans to take pictures of former CLUES students and display their success stories. She will contact Ridgewater College for signage for the office and possible artwork. Mendoza reported she is working on the next welding course and shared a few individuals may be interested in returning to the class.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

EDC Planning Sessions Goals/Workforce Development Objectives Discussion. Vice Chair Nelson shared there is a local committee working on workforce development issues. He also reviewed the April 29th email from Backman regarding this committee's input along with Aaron's suggestions regarding Workforce Development and Business Support Objectives. Additional suggestions and questions regarding Workforce Development Objectives were:

Objective 1: Establish a Workforce Development Committee to focus on specific initiatives

- 1) What would be the impact if both priorities (Workforce Development and Business Support) are handled by the current BRE Committee?
- 2) Would this be two projects within the current structure or two committees?
- 3) Could there be two co-chairs for the BRE Committee—one for each priority? [The Joint Operations Board and Joint Powers Board are looking for direction from the BRE Committee regarding committee structure.]
- 4) A member commented he wasn't sure but do think it is wise to have partners with the schools and workforce agencies. The committee is fortunate to have Sam Bowen a part (and Chair of) the committee.

Objective 2: Promote Ridgewater College, working with partners to improve enrollment and student success

- 1) We can be very proud of Ridgewater and the successful programs they have, but we need a better strategy for publicizing those successes and strengths and turning those into higher enrollments and almost-guaranteed student successes.
- 2) Is there data on where students are coming from and which programs they are going into?
- 3) To turn around enrollment at Ridgewater will require more partnerships. Which ones should we reach out to? Does that include faculty/administration?
- 4) Should there be community/household surveys undertaken to find out people's opinions of Ridgewater College? Should there be surveys of high school students who are in their post-secondary education decision-making phase?
- 5) Should the EDC team up with Ridgewater College recruiters?
 - President Johnson stated the stronger the college is the better it is for the community and region. There is a need to determine a big picture between employers and college programs and what is the responsibility of the college to determine what is needed in the community.
 - President Johnson shared there is a customized training program between Ridgewater College and St. Cloud Technical and Community College and hopefully St. Cloud State College in the future. Tempel inquired if technical program graduates stay in the community. President Johnson stated approximately 80% or more of the graduates stay in the community. Gauer added the internship programs are highly successful.
 - President Johnson noted Ridgewater College will look at accelerated/intermittent classes that lead to a degree.
 - Imdieke mentioned the need for soft skills. Johnson felt with online training becoming more popular, students are not learning the needed soft skills and suggested Ridgewater College look at a career development program. Gauer mentioned the laddering classes within the Business Department where students obtain certification in various classes in addition to other Business Department programs that are available. Discussion held regarding the cluster approach between programs. Johnson reported in the future there may be a shift from for credit classes versus non-credit classes.

Objective 3: Continue to expand diverse workforce training programs like Diverse CNA/Welding

- 1) These diverse training programs have been very successful, particularly the CNA classes. Can these diverse training programs be more publicized in the media?
- 2) Does Jennifer have the authority to issue press releases and social media postings?
- 3) Can the diverse training programs be broadened to include more than nursing assistant and welding, e.g. childcare, carpentry, food service, soldering, etc.?
- 4) Is there ongoing funding for the CLUES programs in Willmar?

Objective 4: Establish a Teacher of Color pipeline program

- 1) Although it may be nice to have a teacher population that matches the demographic make-up of our community, this is a longer term goal affecting a small number of individuals and is probably not under the purview of the EDC.
- 2) Understanding that Ridgewater College would take the lead in this activity, how would the EDC address this objective?

- Dr. Johnson shared Marshall has an organization for teachers of color and other ethnic groups and shared he and Jeff Holm of Willmar Public Schools are heading up an effort to begin a similar program in the Willmar area.

[Dean Steinwand, Kelly TerWisscha and Roger Imdieke were excused from the meeting.]

[Aaron Backman returned to the meeting.]

Backman inquired about the ‘capped’ programs at Ridgewater College. President Johnson shared some of the reasons for the capped programs, i.e., Cosmetology, Non-Destructive, Nursing and Welding programs. Backman asked if there could be a welding/soldering program. Mendoza felt this would be beneficial to the CLUES program. Johnson shared the reason the Nursing program is capped is due to lack of locations for clinicals. Backman inquired if Ridgewater College has reached out to other area communities to secure additional clinical locations. Johnson shared there is a need to work on these issues.

[Ranae Rahn was excused from the meeting.]

Backman asked if other business entities should be invited to participate in the BRE Committee meetings. Committee members concurred this would be a good idea. Backman mentioned adding an area at future Job Fairs to include resume writing, etc.

EDC Planning Sessions Goals/Business Support Objectives Discussion. Vice Chair Nelson shared additional suggestions from the BRE Committee’s input and Backman’s suggestions regarding Business Support Objectives.

Objective 1: Engage in focused one-on-one visits with existing businesses to inform them of resources and streamline challenges

- 1) While it sounds nice to have one-on-one visits with businesses, I think the reality is most businesses have neither the time nor inclination to have such meetings.
- 2) Most businesses either know who the EDC is or have challenges that are outside the realm of the EDC’s bailiwick. However, the EDC could contact them via e-mail and inform them of the resources and expertise it has. There are certain businesses for whom one-on-one visits are a good idea.
- 3) Continue to participate in the Willmar Chamber’s Grow Minnesota visits.
- 4) We could recruit some seasoned business people to help organize and/or lead discussions in small groups with topics and questions supplied by the EDC.

Objective 2: Develop a business support group of “like-minded businesses” and/or “emerging entrepreneurs”

- 1) Perhaps we could reach out to businesses that have operated for less than five years and/or small businesses that might not have a business network and encourage them to join a group of business owners/managers who meet regularly.
- 2) Building on the success of the Retail Business Design Workshops, the EDC could continue working with that small retailer group and perhaps expand it.

Objective 3: Invite bankers/accountants to a gathering to learn of EDC resources and share business needs.

- 1) Because bankers and accountants are two groups that any small business needs for decision-making, it would be wise to try to get them together to discuss EDC resources and the local banking environment.
- 2) The EDC could ask about presenting regarding its funding programs to the Kandiyohi County Bankers Association.
- 3) There could be a technical assistance/financial assistance forum that is held for small businesses that could include the EDC, Southwest Initiation Foundation (SWIF), Mid-Minnesota Development Commission, Willmar Main Street, etc.
- 4) Bankers and accountants may not want to pass on sensitive information to their competitors, so EDC staff could make presentations at their offices during lunch meetings.

Objective 4: Develop a “community” marketing campaign to distribute EDC offerings broadly in the area.

- 1) The BRE Committee could spearhead a continually updated multi-media marketing campaign.
- 2) The EDC should focus on a marketing campaign that informs local residents, as well as individuals and businesses outside of Kandiyohi County, as to the activities the EDC undertakes.

Miscellaneous—Vice Chair Nelson passed around a magazine article regarding a Nashville buyer who bought the Fischer Laser Eye Center and Janning Ear, Nose and Throat Center Clinic on 19th Avenue in Willmar.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:50 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., Friday, June 7, 2019**, at the EDC Office, Willmar.

EDC Action Planning Worksheet



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

Strategic Priority (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.	
Mission Connection (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.	
Objectives How might we address this goal? (i.e. What actions/milestones might be pursued?) What resources may be needed? S – Specific M – Measurable A – Attainable R – Relevant T – Timebound	Potential Objectives	Resources Needed
	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"> • 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 • 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” – positive messaging of opportunities in the area; telling the stories of why they should want to return 	

Expected Outcomes: The impact we seek: What will be different as a result of our efforts?	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill enhancement of potential labor market • Higher levels of people gaining greater employment • People entering pathways that lead them to career with greater earning potential • Helping to fulfill local job market needs
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Who are the people who may be interested in supporting/working together on this goal?

NAME	Skills/Resources	Email	Phone
Eric Day – CMJTS	Funding/People	eday@cmjts.org	320.241.1747
Sam Bowen – Ridgewater		sam.bowen@ridgewater.edu	320.222.5206
Dayna Latham – Ridgewater		dayna.latham@ridgewater.edu	320.894.5169
Craig Johnson - Ridgewater			
Jason Duinink – Duinink Inc.		jasond@duinink.com	320.212.9330

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

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

EDC Action Planning Worksheet

BUSINESS SUPPORT



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

Strategic Priority (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.	
Mission Connection (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.	
Objectives How might we address this goal? (i.e. What actions/milestones might be pursued?) What resources may be needed? S – Specific M – Measurable A – Attainable R – Relevant T – Timebound	Potential Objectives	Resources Needed
	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
Expected Outcomes: The impact we seek: What will be different as a result of our efforts?	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	jessegislason@gmail.com	320.295.6938
Melissa Knott	Marketing	mknott@christiansoncpa.com	320.212.9505
Fernando Alvarado		falvarado@willmarmn.gov	320.235.2577

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

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

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/Photos, PWELC as resources; mention of "Bring Them Home" campaign that was also added to the Workforce Strategy

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.

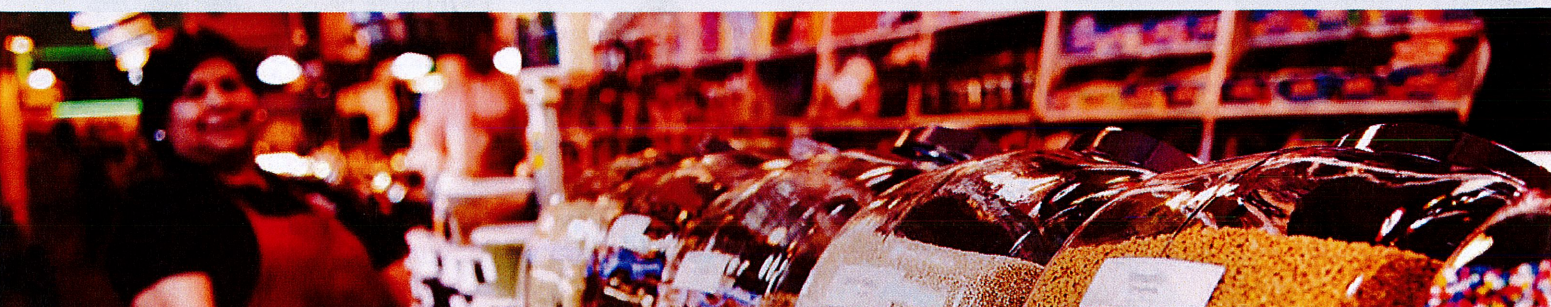
Total cost of \$250

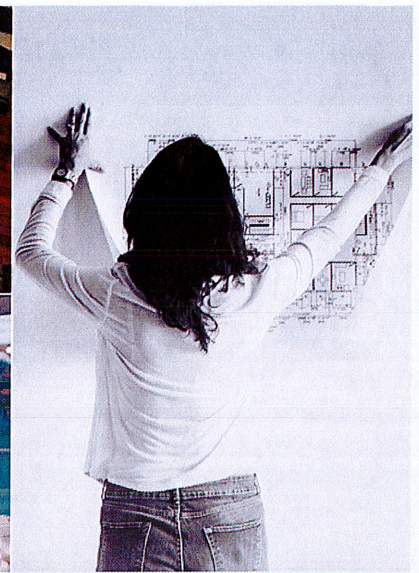
Scholarships available on an as-needed basis.

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

Info and registration:
kandiyohi.com/retail

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

