

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
June 25, 2018
WORKUP, Willmar

Present: Kim Augeson, Shari Courtney, Deb Geister, Jean Geselius and Brittany VanDerBill
Excused: Donna Boonstra, Melissa Knott, Emily Lien, Pam Rosenau and Joanna Schrupp
Guest: Jayme Sczublewski, REDstar Creative
Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director and Thor Figenskau, Summer Intern
Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Chair Deb Geister called the meeting to order at approximately 12:00 p.m. A quorum was not present. Aaron Backman introduced the EDC's summer intern Thor Figenskau.

MINUTES—The Minutes of the May 29, 2018 meeting were received for information.

Social Media Statistics. The committee reviewed the EDC's Facebook statistics over the past month: 39 posts (up 22%), post reach 15.4k (up 217%), impressions 24.9k (up 195%), clicks 238 (up 57%). The top posts in the past month were:

1. Lone Tree Board & Paddle—impressions 10.1k, likes 116, clicks 1,214, shares 37, reach 5.8k
2. Family Roots Chiropractic—likes 13, clicks 210, shares 6, reach 1.3k
3. Willmar City Council approves move of Celebrate the Light of the World Christmas light display to Robbins Island—likes 11, clicks 202, shares 2, reach 1.1k
4. Happy Family Asian Grocery Store—likes 11, shares 4, reach 1.0k
5. Governor Dayton signs Bonding Bill—likes 24, clicks 89, shares 1, reach 789
6. Aaron sharing economic development news—likes 29, shares 3, reach 763
7. Coffee & More—likes 6, clicks 26, shares 2, reach 674

LinkedIn increased to 10 posts, 48 interactions and 46 connections, which is caused by the Facebook posts being also posted to LinkedIn.

Sczublewski reported in the last seven days, the Highway 23 Facebook page gained 3 followers, had 22 page views, 3 page likes and reach of 33.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

Spring Newsletter. Backman reported the spring newsletter received good results, which was shown by the Facebook statistics linking to articles. Sczublewski showed the newsletter had an open rate of 46% and click-through rate of 40%. Clicks on articles were: EDC goals—47; Coffee &

More—22; Family Roots Chiropractic—13, Highway 23 funding—18, Lone Tree Board & Paddle—26, Midtown Plaza—35 and Urban Escape—42. Chair Geister requested that future newsletters include tracking and include an offer or a white paper, such as “tips and tricks to starting your business” to gather more information. Include something to get the EDC’s brand image out that the EDC is here to help. Jean Geselius stated Accounting Today has information that could be used. Chair Geister suggested future newsletters include meaty content about topics that affect businesses and tie it to a call to action. Chair Geister has had several businesses question the new county tax and how it impacts their business, which would be a good topic.

Ag Committee Talent & Technology Workshop. Sczublewski reported an email notice on the Talent & Technology Workshop and Ag & Animal Science Conference was sent late this morning via Constant Contact and already had a 30% open rate and a 17% click rate with 23 clicking on the EDC’s workshop. The goal is to have 80-100 Ag producers attend the workshop. Geselius reported radio ads will be recorded soon. The Ag Marketing Subcommittee is attempting to get free publicity and will be on KWLM’s Open Mic show. The Ag Marketing Subcommittee will have one more meeting before the event. Backman recommended Connie Schmoll speak with Canada and Mexico representatives about tariff issues. Geselius noted Thor Figenskau has been making personal contacts with potential attendees.

Highway 23 Coalition. Backman reported thank you ads were purchased in the *West Central Tribune* and *St. Cloud Times*. Backman showed a front-page article printed in the *St. Cloud Times* about the Bonding Bill funding. Backman will be making a presentation to the Benton County Commissioners, which is now interested in becoming a member. Backman stated the Coalition was encouraged by federal legislators to extend the endpoints to Duluth and Sioux Falls, which will affect the marketing done to date. Backman is currently polling counties as to their top two or three projects along Highway 23. In order to get federal dollars, Highway 23 must be designated a critical rural freight corridor via the National Highway Freight Network.

Business in Focus. Backman showed the half-page ad placed in last year’s *Business in Focus* magazine, which was shared with the City of Willmar and Willmar Municipal Utilities. This year, the publisher is giving the EDC a full-page ad at the same price as last year’s half-page ad and the City of Willmar and Willmar Municipal Utilities are willing to participate in the ad again. A copy of the proposed ad on West Central Minnesota’s Business Hub was shown (see attached). The ad will have a unique link in order to track the effectiveness of the ad. Chair Geister recommended a call to action be included in the ad, such as, “Find out why Kandiyohi County is outpacing the rest of Minnesota. . .” and with the link include a form for the user to enter their contact information before they can access information on the EDC’s website. The committee discussed the photo and layout of the proposed ad and it was the consensus that the photo and layout were good. Chair Geister recommended using an extension on the phone number in the ad and create a unique landing page on the EDC’s website to assist in tracking.

Backman stated as to additional marketing, Schmoll will be attending a FAM (familiarization) tour with other Minnesota representatives to Chicago and a food technology trade show.

2018 MARKETING PLAN—

Goal 1 Tactics. Backman stated he and Schmoll have asked Figenskau to work on gathering information for an education flyer. Figenskau will be contacting area schools and Ridgewater College. Backman stated another flyer to be done later will focus on retail. Sczublewski suggested that as Figenskau contacts the schools, he also obtain updated information for the Education page of the EDC's website. Chair Geister suggested Figenskau interview some students and obtain their photo, which could be used in the next newsletter. Chair Geister recommended topic ideas for the newsletter be brought to the next committee meeting, including businesses that comment on the trade tariffs. Geselius will speak with tax accountants at Conway, Deuth & Schmiesing as to the new taxes.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:12 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next meeting is 12 noon, Tuesday, July 23, 2018, at WORKUP.

WEST CENTRAL MINNESOTA'S BUSINESS HUB



From startups to national and global leaders, Kandiyohi County has become a destination location for businesses. Our thriving economy draws commerce and workforce from all six surrounding counties, creating a vibrant and growing business community in the heart of Minnesota lakes country.



OPEN *for* **BUSINESS**

866.665.4556 Kandiyohi.com/business

