

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

**MINUTES**

September 6, 2019

EDC Board Room, Willmar

Present: Aaron Backman, Jim Ellingson, Les Heitke, Roger Imdieke, Les Nelson, Ranae Rahn, Dean Steinwand and Kelly TerWisscha

Excused: Sam Bowen and Dan Tempel

Guest: Samantha Crow, Century 21 Kandi Realty; Eric Day, Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services; and Jennifer Mendoza, CLUES Navigator

Staff: Aaron Backman Executive Director and Connie Schmoll, Business Development Manager

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

Following self-introductions conducted., Vice Chairperson Les Nelson called the meeting to order at approximately 9:09 a.m.

**AGENDA**—Vice Chair Nelson presented the agenda. Ranae Rahn asked to add Bring Them Back Home program research.

IT WAS MOVED by Kelly TerWisscha, SECONDED BY Dean Steinwand, to approve the Agenda with the addition of Bring Them Back Home program research under Unfinished Business. MOTION CARRIED.

**MINUTES**

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke SECONDED BY Les Heitke, to approve the Minutes of the July 19, 2019 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**REPORTS**

**CLUES Update.** Aaron Backman gave an overview of the CLUES program and its CNA and diverse welding program.

**Next Steps for Program-Diverse Soldering Program.** Jennifer Mendoza reported she looked into the possibility of incorporating the diverse soldering program with the welding program and was informed there is no certification available for the soldering program in Willmar. The next diverse welding class has not been scheduled. Mendoza stated her supervisor is interested in adding a phlebotomy course as a second step for CNA students. Mendoza shared all but one CNA student was certified in the last class. The partners involved in the CLUES program in Willmar are Carris Health-Rice Memorial Hospital and Bethesda and they are the largest employers of CNA graduates. Mendoza shared CLUES eligibility criteria includes students being 18 years of age, out of high school and English skills. She announced a Hispanic Heritage Month event will be held next month. Backman asked Eric Day if Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services has student internship opportunities; Day feels there may be opportunities for on-the-job training. Les Heitke inquired if soldering is a fulltime position; Day responded that there are positions where soldering is an employee's prime job. Vice Chair Nelson suggested CLUES develop its own soldering curriculum and testing program. Day will contact Sam Bowen at Ridgewater College for training/internship opportunities; Mendoza will contact the CLUES headquarters in St. Paul to inquire if the diverse welding and soldering program can be incorporated. Mendoza reported CLUES is working on a program for English verbal skills. Day commented the English fluency skills may be an education piece for employers as the level of English may be different for manufacturing versus corporate workforce. Backman mentioned GogyUp, a program which helps employers remove workplace communication barriers caused by low employee literacy or English proficiency by embedding in-the-moment reading assistance into existing training materials. A representative of GogyUp may be invited to a future BRE/R Committee meeting.

Schmoll reported work continues on childcare efforts in the area. One childcare facility will be in the Green Lake Mall in Spicer with space for 90 children including 24 infants. The Willmar Child Care Center is located in the former Peart and Associates building. It will have a total of 120 slots (60 slots in the daytime and 60 in the evening). The Willmar Child Care Center is working on funding for playground equipment. Mendoza mentioned SHIP may be a resource for funding. Heitke inquired about the workforce required for the new childcare facilities; Schmoll shared there is a plan to obtain the needed workforce. There two upcoming childcare classes available at Ridgewater College: Early Childhood Career Exploration Class beginning September 23-October 25, 2019, and early Childhood and Childcare certification classes beginning January 2020.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **EDC PLANNING SESSION GOALS**

**Workforce Development Objectives.** Backman reported he and President Dr. Craig Johnson continue to meet each month to work on Ridgewater College issues identified at the EDC's annual planning session, i.e., enrollment, strengths and marketing opportunities, etc. Ridgewater College's enrollment has increased this year for the first time in eight years. Backman shared a meeting will be held with the MNSCU Chancellor, his cabinet and all MNSCU institutions on September 10<sup>th</sup> in the Student Center at Ridgewater College. Backman will provide introductory comments.

**Kandiyohi County/Community Video Preview.** Schmoll reported Tory Norling developed a pre-video and has compiled a second video that will be narrowed down to approximately two to three

minutes. The EDC's Marketing & Public Relations Committee viewed the video at its August meeting and provided feedback; their suggestions were shared with Norling. Schmoll showed the draft video to the BRE Committee and asked for input. Suggestions included: more ethnic businesses, Ridgewater College War Hawk's hockey team, Barn Theatre, additional winter activities, Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, Dorothy Olson Aquatic Center, new splash pad in Willmar, MinnWest Technology Campus and interviews with diverse citizens as to why they like Willmar. Committee members suggested omitting the Willmar water tower as it is a Kandiyohi County video. Schmoll noted some of the narration will be reduced. Imdieke felt the Marketing & Public Relations Committee is on the right track.

TerWisscha suggested more advertising is needed on Ridgewater College's Associate of Arts degree to raise potential students' perception of the college; he felt Ridgewater College is missing a lot of students. TerWisscha commented it is also important to have high school guidance counselors promote the benefits of attending Ridgewater College the first two years. Day shared information on the EPIC event held at St. Cloud Community and Technical College; an event will also be held at Ridgewater College Hutchinson Campus and possibly in Willmar. Jim Ellingson inquired of Ridgewater College post-secondary numbers. Discussion was held on the benefits of high school students enrolling in the PSEO classes.

**Business Support Objectives/Retail Business Design Workshops Update.** Schmoll reviewed the Retail Business Design Workshop program held earlier this year and reported with over \$8,000 left in funds, the planning team members decided to offer funds to participating retail businesses to work with a University of Minnesota Retail Design Program representative to offer marketing strategies, recommendations and possible action plans to the business owners. Four businesses were selected to work with the representative: 1) Rustic Designs Flower Farm near Belgrade, who used the \$1,700 funding for drone and still photography; 2) Terry and Tanya Smith, Patina Marquet, a business in the Kandi Mall, who used the \$1,650 funding to update its Point of Sales (POS); 3) Heather Koffler, River Valley Arms and Ammo in Morton, who used the \$1,600 funding to use influencer advertising due to limits on marketing firearms with traditional advertising outlets; and 4) Misty Watkins, Beauty Box Boutique in Willmar, who used the \$1,600 funding for radio ads and social media marketing.

**Business Support Objectives—Banker/Accountant Meeting.** Backman suggested a meeting with the local banks to share EDC's services/programs. Steinwand shared the Kandiyohi County bankers meet quarterly and felt it would be beneficial to share EDC programs and services at a future meeting. The next meeting will be held at PrinsBank in Prinsburg; Steinwand will contact PrinsBank to include a presentation from the EDC on the next Kandiyohi County Bankers quarterly agenda.

**Bring Them Back Home Program.** Rahn reported the Bring Them Back Home program was between the EDC and school districts with advertising in the *West Central Tribune*. The EDC assembled informational packets which were sent out by the school district. There was an insert placed in the *Twin Cities Business* Monthly magazine entitled "Life in the Fast Lane or Life in the Vast Lane" containing information on Kandiyohi County's strong workforce, ready financing, training and other assistance. TerWisscha felt a campaign through social media would be beneficial or social media page announcing people who have moved back to the area. Rahn will contact Ken Warner for

additional information on the former Bring Them Back Home program and Schmoll will ask Nancy Birkeland to research EDC records for information.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**West Central Minnesota Job Fair, September 17, 2019.** Day announced the West Central Minnesota Area Job Fair will be held from Noon to 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup> at Ridgewater College. Day shared approximately 24 booths have registered with a potential of 40 booths by September 17<sup>th</sup>. Social media blasts will go out today. He announced KDJS has hired a new General Sales Manager.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

IT WAS MOVED BY Kelly TerWisscha SECONDED BY Dean Steinwand, to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:22 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., Friday, October 4, 2019**, at the EDC Office, Willmar.

# EDC 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, Boker/Owner, Glacial Ridge Realty
<b>Phone/Email:</b>	320-403-5404

<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:</b> <b>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...**

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDC Marketing Committee</li> <li>• EDC Staff</li> </ul>	<p><b>Challenges</b></p> <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>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break down barriers with other groups</li> <li>• Programs like SCORE, One Million Cups</li> <li>• Mentoring/coaching arrangements</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <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/Photos, PWELC as resources; mention of “Bring Them Home” campaign that was also added to the Workforce Strategy

# EDC 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, Ridgewater College
<b>Phone/Email:</b>	320-905-2269

<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
<b>OTHER NOTES</b>	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>	

<p><b>Expected Outcomes:</b></p> <p><b>The impact we seek: What will be different as a result of our efforts?</b></p>	<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"> <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>
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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	<a href="mailto:eday@cmjts.org">eday@cmjts.org</a>	320.241.1747
Sam Bowen – Ridgewater	Customized Training	<a href="mailto:sam.bowen@ridgewater.edu">sam.bowen@ridgewater.edu</a>	320.222.5206
Dayna Latham – Ridgewater	Customized Training	<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 Duinck – Duinck Inc.	Bus. Develop., Legislative	<a href="mailto:jasond@duinck.com">jasond@duinck.com</a>	320.212.9330

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

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <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 HS class sizes</li> <li>• Diverse economic landscape</li> </ul>	<p><b>Challenges</b></p> <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>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <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>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Automation, technology and robotics may eliminate some jobs and increase skills 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>