

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
AGRICULTURE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT (Ag) COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**March 16, 2023**

**EDC Board Room, Willmar and Via Zoom Video Conference**

Present: Rollie Boll, Kevin Halvorson, Dustin Kotrba, Dan Lippert, Chris Radel and Nate Reuss (via Zoom)

Absent: Abdulcadir Gaal, Larry Konsterlie, Kim Larson, Keith Poier and Dan Tepfer

Media: Shelby Lindrud, West Central Tribune (via Zoom)

Staff: Sarah Swedburg, Business Development Manager

Secretarial: Cathy Skindelien, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc.

Chairperson Kevin Halvorson called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 a.m.

**AGENDA**—Chris Radel added to the agenda item 4c, a report on a legislative breakfast.

IT WAS MOVED BY Chris Radel, SECONDED BY Dustin Kotrba, to approve the revised Agenda. MOTION CARRIED.

**MINUTES**—Kotrba requested that under Soybean crushing facility, the original statement of “Kotrba commented that the only reason to do a crushing facility is for the oil. He is trying to find more costs on feed,” be changed to “Kotrba commented that crude soybean oil coming from the crush facilities is the major driver right now. Local soybean prices will increase as basis strengthens to draw in soybeans. Soy crush expansion like we are seeing doesn’t typically decrease the price of feed over time. A number of plants have been announced to be built nationally with markets for the oil, but meal will need to find markets.”

IT WAS MOVED BY Dan Lippert, SECONDED BY Rollie Nissen, to approve the revised minutes of the February 16, 2023 meeting. MOTION CARRIED.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**EDC Fast Facts flyer.** Sarah Swedburg reported the Fast Facts flyer needs updated statistics on renewable energy. Previously reported were kilowatt hours produced by wind and solar energy equated to the number of homes powered in a year. Ethanol was calculated in the millions of gallons produced and the number of cars kept running. Updated numbers will be gathered so the flyer can be finalized in time to be displayed at the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI) New Uses Forum. Sources for information include Bushmills Ethanol, Willmar Municipal Utilities and Kandiyohi Power Cooperative.

**AURI New Uses Forum sponsorship.** Swedburg stated the Ag Committee approved sponsorship of the AURI New Uses Forum by email vote. Sponsorship includes one free registration and a table or booth. Swedburg and Aaron Backman will attend, and Ag Committee members are welcome. The event will take place on Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at the Marriott West in Minneapolis, Minnesota from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. The registration cost is \$100 in person and \$25 for virtual attendance. The event will feature speakers from across the finance, food, bio-

industrials and agriculture ecosystems, with in-depth industry knowledge in the areas of entrepreneurship, innovation, finance and capital investment.

**Legislative breakfast.** Radel reported the legislative breakfast held at Heritage Bank was well attended. Representatives Andrew Lang and Dave Baker, as well as a representative of United States Representative Michelle Fischbach, spoke at the breakfast. The legislators plan to complete the Farm Bill within six months. The majority of the bill is related to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which helps maintain urban interest in the bill and promotes food consumption. Other focuses include rural development programs, such as schools, hospitals, capital investment programs and immigration as it impacts farming. Representatives Lang and Baker spoke of difficulties with the legislature as a whole, citing no communication between parties. Bills are passed quickly without going through the legislative process. Issues with the Driver's License Law for All Bill and the Paid Family Medical Leave Bill were discussed. Representative Baker is concerned with fentanyl, stating that Minnesota has six deaths per day due to overdoses. A new spray drug has been developed to counteract the effects of fentanyl, and is saving 100 people per day. Broadband was discussed as part of the use of surplus dollars in the state. The legislators noted how well Kandiyohi County is using the funds for broadband purposes. Radel visited with Cory Ahrens, who is employed at Yost Farms. He recommended Ahrens be invited to a future Ag Committee meeting to discuss how young people get started in farming.

#### **NEW BUSINESS—**

**Downtown Willmar pop up.** Radel reported he is working with Willmar Main Street Coordinator Riley Kennedy and the Robbins Island Farmers Market to create four pop up farmers markets in downtown Willmar. The events will be held the first Saturday of July, August, September and October. The project is funded by the Kandiyohi County Soil and Water Conservation District and the USDA. Each event will have a theme, such as Somali Independence Day, Pollinator Day and Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center Day.

**Committee membership.** Swedburg requested a review of the Ag Committee configuration. Currently there are 11 members, with 6 required for a quorum. Noah Hultgren will be appointed to the EDC Joint Operations Board and could be invited to join the Ag Committee. Swedburg asked if it was time to invite other new members, and if any current members were ready to step down. It was suggested that committee members be asked to recommit every three years, giving members the opportunity to make a clean break if they are no longer able to participate. Discussion was tabled until the next meeting and Swedburg will send an email to all committee members regarding their commitment to future participation.

**Potential agenda guest speakers.** Swedburg presented a list of potential guests for upcoming meetings:

- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Ridgewater College
- University of Minnesota Extension Mid-Central Research and Outreach Center
- High school greenhouses (could do a tour separately from the meeting)
- Latino Economic Development Center
- Happy Halal

A tour of a high school greenhouse will be scheduled separately from the meeting. Danny Carranza, an instructor for the Elevate Community Business Academy, is employed by the Latino Economic Development Center, which has a department focused on agriculture. Jamey Cline was suggested to speak on the Inflation Reduction Act, which allows tax credits for carbon reduction. Ethanol plants typically score 57 on the carbon scale, and if they are able to reduce the score to 25, the credit value is \$.50 per gallon. Typical profit margins are \$.10-.20 per

gallon. Rick Vanderspek will be asked to update the committee on the progress of new turkey barns built in the area. Happy Halal and its ties to Ridgewater College's meat cutting program was discussed. Despite Ridgewater's program focusing on beef and poultry and Happy Halal specializing in goat and sheep slaughter, there is an opportunity to coordinate needs. Swedburg will schedule the guests, who will be chosen based on alignment with Ag Committee goals, for subsequent meetings.

## REPORTS

**Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee.** Swedburg reported the Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee did not meet in March. Current projects include working with AURI on a request for proposal for the European industrial hemp company for a feasibility study. The company, that has a facility under construction in Indiana, will return for a site visit in the near future.

**Ongoing Ag-related EDC work.** Swedburg reported two state Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant applications have been submitted, one including East Lake Lillian and Lake Elizabeth Townships and the other for Harrison Township. The East Lake Lillian and Lake Elizabeth project's application was for the pilot program, which covers 75 percent of the \$1.8 million cost. The proposal was strong due to the high concentration of farms and low population density in the area, that averages two properties per mile of fiber. Harrison Township's application was submitted as part of the original 50% grant program. There were 88 total grant applications and it is not known how many of these applications were for the pilot program. Other EDC projects include childcare activity, industrial hemp, the Nexyst360 project and the final capital stack for Happy Halal.

**Paid sick and safe time.** Kotrba reported the Minnesota legislature passed the Paid Sick and Safe Time Bill, which allows one hour of sick pay earned for every 30 hours of work. The Family Leave Bill, which creates a 12-week benefit for an employee's own health care or for taking care of a family member will be addressed in the summer. Both full- and part-time workers qualify for both programs. It may be very difficult for small businesses to comply with these regulations. The EDC has not taken a stance on this legislation.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business,

IT WAS MOVED, SECONDED AND CARRIED to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:37 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next meeting is **7:30 a.m., Thursday, April 20, 2023** at the EDC Board Room and via ZOOM video conference.



Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

# DIVERSE AGRICULTURE & RENEWABLE ENERGY OPPORTUNITIES

— AGRICULTURE & RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE —

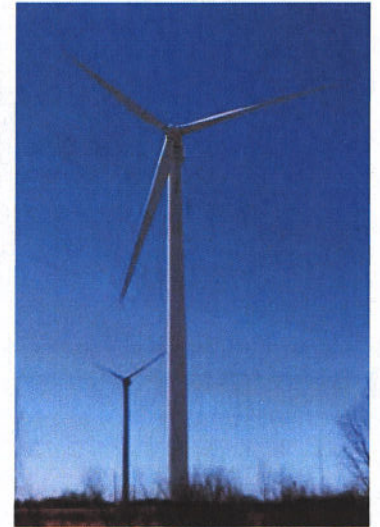
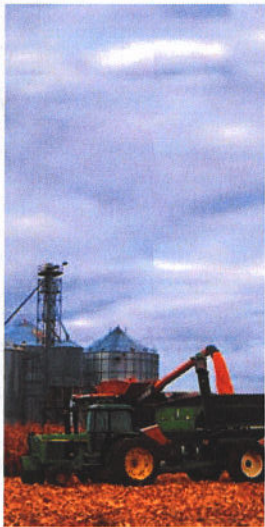
Kandiyohi County has deep roots in agriculture and a bright future as well. Our strong agriculture sector makes us a prime location for agribusiness, bioscience and technology businesses. Many industry leaders such as Nova-Tech Engineering, Select Genetics, RELCO and Jennie-O are headquartered here in West Central Minnesota's business hub. Recently, we've made some great strides towards creating a more eco-friendly business community by investing our time in renewable energy efforts.

The EDC is committed to working collaboratively with local farmers and ag-related industries through our Agriculture & Renewable Energy Development Committee. The committee's mission is "To sustain, identify and develop agriculture, agribusiness and renewable energy opportunities." It supports this mission by targeting activities that leverage Kandiyohi County's assets in agriculture, with a special emphasis on ag business, manufacturing, bioscience, technology, energy and research.

Diverse ag economy with over 1,300 farms



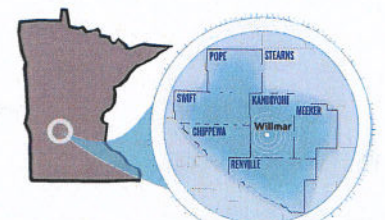
Produced enough wind & solar to power 1,280 homes



Contact us:  
kandiyohi.com  
toll-free 866.665.4556



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# IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

A PROFILE OF AG AND RENEWABLE ENERGY IN KANDIYOHI COUNTY

## Agriculture in Kandiyohi County



Farmland:	Land Area:	# of Farms:	Average Size:
<b>415,090 acres</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>1,310</b>	<b>317 acres</b>



Agricultural Marketing:  
**\$414 million** (2016) { Crops: **\$183 million**  
Livestock: **\$231 million**

## Renewable Energy in Kandiyohi County



Wind:	Enough to Power:
<b>7.7 million kwh</b>	<b>800 homes</b>



Solar:	Enough to Power:
<b>5.3 million kwh</b>	<b>480 homes</b>

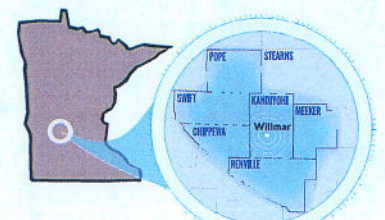


Ethanol:	Enough E-85 to Power:
<b>65 million gallons</b>	<b>190,000 cars</b>

Contact us:  
kandiyohi.com  
toll-free 866.665.4556



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4:06 PM  
03/07/23  
Accrual Basis

Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar EDC  
Profit & Loss Budget Performance  
February 2023

	<u>Jan - Feb 23</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>Annual Budget</u>
<b>Committee Expenses</b>			
<b>Ag/Renewable Energy Development</b>			
Ag Projects	0.00	583.34	3,500.00
Conferences/Seminars/Trainings	0.00	500.00	3,000.00
Meals/Meeting Refreshments	10.77	33.34	200.00
Mileage/Travel	0.00	166.66	1,000.00
Partners in Ag Innov. Sponsor	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
Professional Services			
General Administrative Services	410.00	450.00	2,700.00
<b>Total Professional Services</b>	<u>410.00</u>	<u>450.00</u>	<u>2,700.00</u>
Supplies (office or program)	0.00	41.66	250.00
Other	0.00	83.34	500.00
<b>Total Ag/Renewable Energy Development</b>	<u>1,920.77</u>	<u>3,358.34</u>	<u>12,650.00</u>