

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)  
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
October 24, 2008  
EDC Office, Willmar**

Present: Anna Gorres, Julie Redepenning and Diane Schulte

Guest: Shelley Paulson

Excused: Jean Geselius, Cameron Macht, Heather Thompson and Deb Van Buren

Staff: Jean Spaulding, Assistant Director

Secretarial: Allison McGeary, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Jean Spaulding called the meeting to order at approximately 8:15 a.m.

**MINUTES**—Approval of the September 24, 2008 minutes was tabled.

#### **MONTHLY REPORTS/UPDATES**

**Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development (Ag) Committee.** Spaulding stated the *Star Tribune* and *West Central Tribune* both had articles on the International 2008 BioEnergy Days (IBED). Bio-Business Alliance helped create meetings between international and United States companies. Swedish industries are more technologically advanced than the United States and attended IBED to look for a market to distribute their products. ÅFAB USA, which is a marketing entity and liaison for many Swedish companies, is considering locating at the MinnWest Technology Campus (MWTC). Spaulding went through the expenses for IBED (see copy attached to original minutes). The Willmar Area Development Corporation funded \$1,000 toward meals at the Holiday Inn/Willmar Conference Center and MWTC and the remaining expenses from the EDC's Ag Committee. Spaulding stated 11 people were on Wednesday's tour and 9 people on Thursday's tour. **Joy Baker, Betsy Bonnema, Chris Huisinga, Steve Renquist and Spaulding** will hold a wrap-up meeting for IBED to find out what the EDC's and MWTC's next steps are and where to send or what to do with contacts that are received by the EDC and MWTC.

**Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment (BRE/R) Committee's Aviation Dialogue.** Spaulding reported United Parcel Service (UPS) will be doing a trial run for UPS Air out of the Willmar Municipal Airport (WMA). Spaulding encouraged this committee to attend the BRE/R Committee's Aviation dialogue luncheon at 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Friday, November 14, 2008. The Marketing and Public Relations Committee is asked to RSVP to the EDC. The BRE/R Committee would like the Marketing and Public Relations Committee to help with marketing the WMA and making the UPS trial run a success. Spaulding stated WMA is currently without a manager.

**Finance Committee.** Spaulding stated **Bonnema** will design "This Business Financed and Supported by" flyer, which the Marketing and Public Relations Committee will review and the Finance Committee will approve.

**Technology Advisory Committee.** Spaulding stated the Technology Advisory Committee is asking the BRE/R Committee to fund the continuation of business seminars and website grants.

The Technology Advisory Committee and Ridgewater College are working together to develop the seminars. The **Marketing and Public Relation Committee** will help create marketing pieces for the seminars, including ads at the bottom of the *West Central Tribune* and statement stuffers. The business seminar brochure will include the EDC and Ridgewater College as partners.

{Shelley Paulson joined the meeting.}

**EDC website home page.** The current EDC website has been the same for four years and is a brochure site, which is not meeting the present needs of the EDC. Shelley Paulson proposed a redesign of the website to make it more functional. The usual browser size is 1024x68 pixels.

Paulson showed the following sites for ideas on redesigning the EDC's website

- [www.as.miami.edu](http://www.as.miami.edu)—has big photography, ability to update current activities
- [www.trale.com](http://www.trale.com)—reads like a newspaper, has a nice footer and drop down menus
- [www.jimolenbush.com](http://www.jimolenbush.com)—has good navigation
- [www.visitnorway.com](http://www.visitnorway.com)—has different feature areas using pictures
- [www.guidon-tech.com](http://www.guidon-tech.com)—has different features with a banner area
- [www.almanararesort.com](http://www.almanararesort.com)—instead using different photographs the EDC could use different links

The EDC's current website has different size banners below the fold. Spaulding stated information on the EDC website is buried and navigation to the information is difficult, for example, to find the Technology Advisory Committee's information you click on many items before getting to the Local-e-Connected program. Redepenning suggested a separate column for EDC. The committee liked the layout of [www.as.miami.edu](http://www.as.miami.edu). Redoing the navigation will make the EDC's website better. Paulson suggested a database orientated website, where the editing is done online (not as elegant as Contribute) would allow anyone to make changes to the website, such as giving the Ag Specialist access to just the renewable energy portion of the website and not the whole website. **Paulson** will provide Nancy Birkeland, Anna Gorres and Spaulding information on using an online web developer versus Contribute. Paulson will provide access information to [www.joomla.org](http://www.joomla.org), which will allow Birkeland, Gorres and Spaulding to view the demo. Paulson went through the features of the online editor. Paulson stated the EDC will need a new database to switch to the online editor, which would allow visitors to search within the website for specific information. Paulson suggested the committee ask Kandiyohi County and the city of Willmar to add an EDC banner to their websites linking to the EDC's website. Paulson stated to help improve engine optimization for the EDC's website requires having other websites linking to your website. Renewable energy and technology information should be a link on the home page. Spaulding stated Birkeland has been adding content to the Ag Committee's webpage for Paulson to upload. The website homepage should have a top and bottom footer with each section continuing to have the menu on the left and picture above the menu. Paulson suggested the EDC move its database to an online editor, because it is working with more active groups and would allow for more groups to make changes. The online editor allows for videos to be placed on the website, the ability to set the length a webpage will appear, for example, information about the Ag Conference, and then it will expire all relating pages when the time frame expires instead of manually taking it off. Spaulding stated the website updates will be a part of the EDC's 2009 budget. **Spaulding** will meet with Renquist to decide where funding for the website redesign will come from, either from the EDC's general funds or a portion out of each committee's budget. Paulson stated a facelift for the homepage will be around \$500, a redesign of the home page is about \$3,000 and a redesign of the whole website is \$6,000-\$7,000. Paulson was provided with the EDC's recent marketing materials to stay consistent with the EDC's theme. Paulson suggested if the EDC does online registrations for events they look into [www.zapevent.com](http://www.zapevent.com), which Wright County ([www.wrightpartnership.org](http://www.wrightpartnership.org)) uses for registrations. **Committee members** will research the benefits of having [www.zapevent.com](http://www.zapevent.com) for registrations to EDC events. **Paulson** will find out if the online editor would allow the EDC to send out e-mails to those who have registered for certain webpages that are updated, for example, when a new Bring Them Back Home Newsletter (BTBH) is updated it will

automatically send an e-mail to anyone who has registered to receive the BTBH newsletter. Spaulding suggested *LAA* use this feature for committee minutes instead of sending with meeting notice, which would reduce duplication of creating minutes for meeting notices and the website. Gorres suggested the website include a place for committee members to sign up for webpage updates for their committee and/or all committees. Diane Schulte suggested the homepage include a contact us button that would link to contact information for the EDC. Gorres suggested having a blog on the website. Paulson stated blogs require commitment and a hot topic or specific topic. Gorres suggested committees use an internal blog, which requires password protection. Paulson stated people can sign up to receive the updated blog by e-mail or an RSS which notifies the reader the blog has been updated. Gorres suggested the website include an automatic e-mail reply. **Paulson** will send website information to the committee for review.

{Shelly Paulson was excused from the meeting}

**LAA** will e-mail a recap on today's meeting to the committee. The committee will decide if a facelift of the homepage, redesign of the homepage or a complete redesign of whole site will be done. The consensus of members present was to do a complete redesign, which is around \$6,000-\$7,000. The committee will hold a separate meeting for its research done on community recruitment efforts before deciding what needs to be done on the website. The committee will then meet to discuss the website and create a subcommittee, which would include Jean Geselius, Gorres, Spaulding and Heather Thompson from the Marketing and Public Relations Committee, Gustafson from the Ag Committee, Dean Bouta from the Technology Advisory Committee, a Tourism Committee member and Birkeland from *LAA*. After the subcommittee decides the direction of the website, a meeting with Paulson will be set.

**Ag Conference brochure.** Spaulding distributed the Ag Conference brochure and asked the committee for its suggestions (see copy attached to original minutes). The committee suggested adding contact information in another place other than the back panel and adding copy and return on the registration form.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:15 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next committee meeting is **8:00 a.m., Wednesday, November 26, 2008**, at the EDC office, Willmar.