

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)
BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT (BRE/R) COMMITTEE
TECHNOLOGY TASK FORCE
MINUTES
May 18, 2007
EDC Board Room, Willmar**

Present: Dean Bouta, Bill Jagow, Don McGrath, Jim Millard, Ron Nelson, Jeff Roiland, Dave Sisser, Jean Spaulding and Jeff Tengwall

Excused: Ron Erpelding

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Task Force chairperson, Jean Spaulding, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 a.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Don McGrath, SECONDED BY Jeff Roiland, to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2007 meeting as mailed or e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

2007 Goals—

Meeting with Service Providers. Discussion was held about receipt of the survey results. Dean Bouta reported he was surveyed as a business and Nancy Birkeland reported she was surveyed as residential. **Birkeland** will ask Steve Renquist if he will be following up on the survey results or if task force members should.

The task force reviewed the list of providers from the April 20 minutes.

Wireline Providers: Bouta stated Gene South is not the contact for Qwest and that CloudNet, as an agent for Qwest, could provide information. **Bouta** will check on a contact for Frontier and will contact CloudNet relative to information on Qwest. Sprint was removed as the closest service area is Benson.

Wireless Ground Based (cellular): Bouta stated Bennett sold its Internet services to CloudNet and Bennett should be removed as a provider. Charter Communications should be moved from Wireless Ground Based to Wireline Providers and the contact is Jeff Tengwall. RedRed should be added with Joe Barron as the contact. MVTV can be removed.

Wireless Terrestrial: Tengwall stated he uses wireless terrestrial and the level of service is great; he uses Dish Network for television and Wild Blue for wireless. **Tengwall** will obtain information on Wild Blue. Information on Dish Network could be obtained from its web site.

Cellular Providers/Carriers: **Dave Sisser** will obtain information on Unicef and Midwest Wireless. Bouta recommended finding out what kind of Internet service the cellular providers have. **Sisser** will ask what Unicef and Midwest Wireless have for broadband. **Jeff Roiland** will obtain a contact for

Sprint. **Spaulding** will contact the Willmar retail store (Wireless World) regarding services provided by Verizon.

When to hold a meeting with service providers will be planned and the specific topics to discuss will be decided once the *Get Broadband* survey results are received. Spaulding recommended personal (telephone) invitations be done rather than written.

NEW BUSINESS

Get Broadband Grant. It was the consensus of the task force that determining use of the grant dollars will be difficult until the survey results are received. Discussion was held on how businesses can be more efficient in using broadband, number of area web hosting providers and educating individuals in the use of broadband were mentioned as possible uses for the grant dollars. It may be possible to have educational programs through the University of Minnesota Extension Service, Blandin Foundation, Ridgewater College's Customized and Continuing Education program or Willmar's Community Education. It was the consensus of the task force that most of Kandiyohi County is covered by really good services. **Tengwall** will provide the EDC office with the name of a nonprofit business that does education. Information on what Blandin has done through the *Get Broadband* program can be found on its web site (http://www.blandinfofoundation.org/html/public_broadband.cfm). **Bouta** will check on educational programs through the University of Minnesota Extension Service. **Jim Millard** will contact Bill Coleman relative to educational opportunities through Blandin Foundation and also ask about the survey results. The task force discussed whether Kandiyohi County's diverse population has enough access to the Internet and computers for who do not have computers and whether there is training for those individuals. Conducting a survey of the county's library system on use of its public computers was mentioned, as well as contacting Jennie-O Turkey Store. Because of the diverse population, there may be language barriers with which to work, however, language can be changed on Internet Explorer. It may be most beneficial to have a basic Internet class that can be applied to both residential and business use. The gap in education is more likely found in small businesses rather than large businesses as large businesses will have in-house staff dedicated to computer technology. Possible topics for small businesses may be "How to use the computer to expand and grow your business," general Internet use, obtaining a web site and what to do with a web site.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business,

IT WAS MOVED BY Dean Bouta, SECONDED BY Jim Millard, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:50 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular committee meeting is **7:00 to 8:00 a.m., June 15, 2007** at the EDC Office, however, if the *Get Broadband* survey results are not received by that date, a meeting will not be held until those results are received.