

Florence County Economic Development COMMITTEE MEETING

MISSION: EDC will retain, expand and recruit a diversified business population which provides broad and varied job opportunities while safeguarding the area's natural surroundings.

Date: December 3rd, 2013

Time: Thursday, 4:00 pm - 2nd Floor Conference Room – Courthouse

1. Call to order and roll call

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair, J. Bomberg. Committee members J. Bomberg, R. Erickson, and D. Gardner were present. G. Steber was present as alternate. J. Halada was excused and L. Neuens was absent. Director W. Gehlhoff was also present.

2. Approve agenda

The agenda was approved on a motion by G. Steber, D. Gardner 2nd, motion carried.

3. Approve minutes

The minutes were approved on a motion by D. Gardner, R. Erickson 2nd, motion carried.

4. WEDC Community Investment Grant project (discussion and/or action)

Naletta Burr, WEDC Regional Community Account Manager, discussed the new WEDC Community Development Investment Grant. This program offers limited funding on a first come first serve basis for 3 project types. A Tier 2 grant ranging from \$50,000 - \$250,000 (requires 75% match) could help the Town of Florence fund new street lights and Florence County could use this grant to redevelop the former grocery building. Scoring for the grant is based on impact to the community, ROI, and if the project is shovel-ready showing proof of financing. The approval process takes 4-6 weeks. Grant awards pass from WEDC to the municipality and then to a developer if applicable. On a motion by D. Gardner, R. Erickson 2nd, two grants will be pursued, one by the Town for street lighting and one by the County via Economic Development Committee to help redevelop the former grocery building. Motion Carried.

5. Industrial Park project (discussion and/or action)

Director and B. Friberg updated the committee on the sawmill expansion project in the industrial park. Details will need to be gathered and brought back to next EDC committee meeting including what the business is requesting, how many jobs it will help create, a site plan and time line.

6. RLF Loan Program Update (discussion and/or action)

a. Discuss/approve RLF Loan Application #2013-57

Clean Kill Pest Control is requesting a \$10,000 loan at 4% interest for a 10 year term to purchase a 2nd Argo used for their expanding invasives species control government contract work. This will add 2 jobs bringing their total to 16 jobs. This loan will leverage \$11,924 of owner investment. The County has done three loans for Clean Kill and they have never missed a payment. On a motion by R. Erickson, D. Gardner 2nd, the loan is approved contingent on all paperwork as required by the Florence County RLF Loan Manual. Motion Carried.

7. EDC Projects Summary

Director reviewed the attached EDC Project Update report. Shared FHS intern position will need to go through personnel committee process since 1 of the 4 entities sharing the student is a county department.

8. Board Member Concerns – none

9. Adjournment

On a motion by J. Bomberg, D. Gardner 2nd, the meeting was adjourned. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Gehlhoff – FCEDC Director

EDC Project Update 12/3/13

- **RLF Loan Program**
 - Currently 15 RLF loans being serviced for businesses in Fence, Fern, Florence, Tipler, Long Lake.
 - Balance available to loan out is \$143,000. Current loans created 64 jobs, leveraged \$1,787,200.
- **Forest Products Industry Support**
 - Florence Hardwoods expansion underway. Taxable amount won't provide enough increment for grant.
 - Facilitated \$49,000 WEDC grant for Stewardship contracting project on CNNF to harvest more logs.
 - Leading 5 northern counties for \$50,000 WEDC Capacity Grant to market our wood products industry.
 - Attending Governor Walker's Forestry Economic Summit 12/12-13/13 with Pat Smith.
 - Planning committee has started work on the 10th Annual Sustainable Forestry Conference for 4/10/14.
- **Business Development and Entrepreneur Support**
 - Family Dollar: Phase II environmental soil samples 12/5 - spring 2014 construction of 8320 sq ft building.
 - WEDC Community Investment Grant opportunity to redevelop the empty grocery building.
 - Connected 17 entrepreneurs with business counseling and/or loan assistance info this year to date.
 - Partnering with Iron and Dickinson Counties to create Manufacturer's Roundtable/Network event.
 - Working with WIIBC from Rhinelander to bring 3 entrepreneur classes for Jan, Feb and March.
- **TIF District (TID)**
 - Final forms sent to State DOR. Will find out if we are officially "Certified" before February deadline.
 - Wrote letters to 2 Assisted Living/Senior Housing companies. Have 1 meeting scheduled for 12/17.
- **Northwoods Rail Transit Commission (NRTC)**
 - Goal: CN to operate Hwy 8 line or lease/sell to short line for more economical raw and finished forest products transportation in our county and region. Other industries in our trade region will also benefit.
 - Now 13 Wisconsin Counties and 3 MI Counties have officially joined. Others in the process of joining.
 - WI-DOT Northwoods Rail Market Study final report published September is now on DOT website.
 - Working with WCG and their CN endorsed shipper template to gather more detailed volumes by county.
 - Tiffany intro to Gogebic Taconite Pres re their likely ore shipment route. South to Hwy 8 line then east to Escanaba port which is open longer. If mine opens, CN will invest for high volume long-term contract.
- **Tourism and Website Projects**
 - 4th Annual 12/7/13 Christmas in Florence Planning Committee publicity work and business decorating.
 - Created Party Planning Business List for website and to mail out to Keyes Peak Lodge renters.
 - Am drafting 2nd year Tourism JEM Grant for Badwaters Bash to submit by 1/1/14 for July 12th event.
 - Website has shifted to winter colors/pictures. Continuing to add content as time allows.
- **Signage Projects**
 - Wrote JEM Destination grant and was awarded \$18,935 from Dept of Tourism to promote new Wild Rivers Tour. Official check presentation 12/4. Work will start soon on brochure, mobile app, ads, shows.
 - Most of the 70 WI Wild River signs have been installed now, including 15 numbered spots.
 - Grand opening of the new tour will be in April or May including visit by Secretary Klett and others.
 - Developed new winter billboard on Hwy 141 to replace oldest wind damage wrap.
 - Working with Blue Ox Trail Riders, Chamber and Don Egelseer for Hwy 2 banner re great snow here.
- **Other Projects**
 - Teaching Junior Achievement – Economics of Success to FMS 8th graders (6 class long sessions).
 - Utility Lands group RV Dump station work at visitor center this fall, researching grants: trails/dog park.
 - Gathered 4 business owners for lunch and learn to advise metals teacher at FHS (jobs, info, equip, etc).
 - Doing administrative work for shared FHS intern for Visitor Center, DNR, Forestry & EDC projects.
 - Wrote November Chamber Connections Newsletter inserted into 2000 Mining Newspapers.