

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: September 19th, 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 Chair, L. Neuens. Committee members L. Neuens, J. Bomberg, R. Erickson, J. Halada and D. Gardner were present. Director W. Gehlhoff was also present.

2. Approve agenda

The agenda was approved on a motion by D. Gardner, J. Halada 2nd, motion carried.

3. Approve minutes

The minutes were approved on a motion by R. Erickson, J. Halada 2nd, motion carried.

4. TIF District (discussion and/or action)

Final paperwork will be submitted to the state once we receive last forms from R&R Assessing. The final copy of the TIF District plan document was distributed to members.

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

There are currently 15 loans being serviced for businesses in Fence, Fern, Florence, Tipler and Long Lake. The loan fund has \$133,000 available to loan out to new clients. One loan client is behind with payments.

6. EDC Projects Summary

Director updated group on current projects – summary list is attached below. County has been told that Niagara Telephone towers are on hold until the business is sold. Director distributed summary of promotional budget and asset locations for the Dept. of Tourism JEM Destination grant application that was submitted by the September 1st deadline. If the grant is successful, FCEDC will receive \$19,860 to promote the new Wild Rivers Tour. Many signs have already been installed on this 100 mile loop that includes Hwy 101, forest service roads, Hwy 139 then looping back via Hwy 70. This promotion of this tour will bring new visitors to our Pine and Popple state-designated Wild Rivers and our surrounding towns.

7. EDC draft 2014 Budget (discussion and/or action)

Director shared draft Economic Development budget with members. On a motion by J. Bomberg, J. Halada 2nd the 2014 budget was approved. Motion carried.

8. Board Member Concerns

L. Neuens asked group if it was ok to serve senior meals 3-4 days/week at the NWTC Kitchen Incubator. This is being done since there were building issues at Homestead Town Hall. Aging is in charge of this and working through NWTC for arrangements.

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 9/19/13

- **RLF Loan Program**
 - Currently 15 RLF loans being serviced for businesses in Fence, Fern, Florence, Tipler, Long Lake
 - Current Balance available to loan out is \$133,000. Current loans created 64 jobs, leveraged \$1,787,200
- **Forest Products Industry Support**
 - Waiting for Florence Hardwoods to share details of their expansion project for TIF and/or WEDC funding
 - WEDC approved our regional proposal to use Stewardship program to harvest more wood from CNNF
 - Attended bill signing with Rep. Swearingen for Michigan axle trucks to haul on US 2 (Hwy 139 as well).
 - Organized 8 counties to create/ implement strategy to promote business opportunities for Wood Products businesses. Gathering final sawmill surveys to quantify wood products output and raw material input. Then developing marketing strategy with 2 regional EDC groups.
 - Survey of our 5 sawmills: 82 jobs, \$2.6 Million payroll, 32.3 million board feet lumber produced
 - Facilitated WEDC grant for Stewardship contracting project across CNNF to harvest more wood
- **Business Development and Entrepreneur Support**
 - Family Dollar: developer said this is a long process. Likely spring 2014 construction of 8320 sq ft building
 - Gathered reports/info for SuperValu bus dev mgr who has 2 interested retailers. Met with Andy too
 - Have had 11 entrepreneurs request business counselor and/or RLF loan assistance this year to date
 - Working with Green Bay SBDC group to bring entrepreneur boot camp or similar business program
- **TIF District Creation (TID)**
 - Passed all local steps, working with assessor to get remaining forms to send to State for final approval
- **Northwoods Rail Transit Commission (NRTC)**
 - Goal is for CN to operate Hwy 8 line or lease/sell to short line operator to grow our economies
 - Now 11 Wisconsin Counties, gave 2 presentations in MI. 5 MI Counties are in process of joining
 - Working with WCG to get survey data from the larger sawmills and papermills that didn't do survey
 - WI-DOT Northwoods Rail Market Study final report will be published in Sept with Ashland County added
 - Working with Tiffany to determine ore shipment route to help open Hwy 8 line. Next meeting 9/27/13
- **Tourism and Website**
 - 800+ people at Badwaters Bash and Bass Tourney July 13th, 2013 at Vagabond Park. Hit 50 boat max
 - 672 people from outside Florence County attended the event. Firemen made \$2900 net on beer.
 - Based on Dept of Tourism average expenditure data, the event had a FC economic impact of \$34,944
 - Wrote JEM grant final report. Received \$6881 check from State Tourism for promotion.
 - Held event review meeting, all groups and attendees very happy. Will host again next year on 7/12/14.
 - We hit over 3000 likes for Florence County page during Badwater facebook and ad campaign (was 700)
 - County sales tax revenue up \$9000 through July. On pace to be \$222,000 vs. \$206,000 last year
 - Attending 9/23 Assoc. of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers show to promote Florence County story ideas
- **Signage Projects**
 - DNR paid \$1700 for over 70 WI Wild River signs. Some signs on state highways are up, rest up soon
 - Lori and I drove route and marked down additional signs needed off hwy and number signs at 15 assets
 - Wrote \$19,800 Dept of Tourism JEM Destination grant to develop/implement promotion for Wisconsin Wild Rivers Tour. If successful spending would start in December 1st on brochure, app, shows, etc.
 - New visitor center/website sign next to Ski-TERS billboard at Vagabond to replace Badwater billboard
 - Redoing winter billboard on Hwy 141 that was damaged by wind. It was the oldest wrap of the 3
- **Other Projects**
 - Utility Lands group RV Dump station work at visitor center this fall, researching grants: trails/dog park
 - Gathering 5 business owners to be advisory cmte for metals teacher at FHS (jobs, info, equip, materials)