

**Grow North Regional Economic Development Corporation
General Membership Annual Meeting**

January 14, 2009

Northern Advantage Job Center
Rhineland, WI

Present:

Dan Kuzlik	Lee Swindall
Diane Hapka	Paul Knuth
Sue Bessert	Don Roberts
Bart Lamers	Bob Egan
Tera Fritz	Steve Agnoli
David Hibbard	Jim Kumbera
Mary Hardtke	Roger Erdahl
Steve Dennis	Tim Hintz
Mark Dennis	Sandy Bishop
Dennis Bahlmann	Cheri Wilson
Julie Berndt	Richard Hartmanh
Jeff Collins	Karen Graff
Jack Sroka	Sandy Kinney
Paul Hastreiter	Rob Krieghoff
Jodi Hanson	Jim Brown

I. Approval of November 12, 2008 minutes:

Motion: Bart Lamers

Second: Steve Agnoli

Motion Carried

II. Election of officers:

Slate of Officers for 2009:

President: Jodi Hanson

Vice President: Bart Lamers

Secretary: Jim Brown

Treasurer: Peter Otis

Motion to approve slate of officers: Dave Hibbard

Second: Mary Hardtke

Motion Carried

III. Treasurer's report: submitted by Pete Otis

2008 Summary

Total Expenses: \$ 978.65

Revenue: 6,600.00

Total Checking Balance: 7,440.60

IV. Membership update: Jim Brown

- The total membership for 2008 was 43 paid members

- The annual dues for 2009 are \$100 and membership renewal invoices will be mailed in the near future
- The membership committee is in the process of recruiting new members and would appreciate any help from the current members. Please direct prospective members to the Grow North website for information about the organization and the membership application: www.grownorth.org

V. **Broadband Committee Report** – Jack Sroka

- Jack Sroka introduced Jeff Collins as co-chair of the broadband committee
- The broadband committee currently has six members and a subcommittee structure for marketing, public relations, etc.
- Jack indicated that he is looking into a Wis. DOC planning grant and the possibility of implementation funds from the Obama administration’s stimulus package
- The broadband committee intends to meet monthly during the coming year and the February meeting will be announced in the near future

VI. **Business Development Updates:** Dan Kuzlik

A. Research summit:

- The second annual Research Summit is scheduled for February 12th, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm, at the Treehaven Environmental Learning Center. The facility can accommodate approximately 100 attendees
- The Summit is Supported by Grow North, Foth Engineering, Nicolet College, UW-Stevens Point, and the U.S. Forest Service
- The keynote address will be by Dr. John Greenler who will speak on applications for cellulosic materials. In addition, there will be speakers on sustainable business development and broadband infrastructure development.
- Half of the conference will have a structured agenda and the other half will be in the “open format,” where the participants identify the topics to be addressed.

B. Inventors’ & Entrepreneurs’ Club: Dave Hibbard

- The 2nd annual Business Expo is scheduled at the Quality Inn in Rhinelander on Feb. 11th.
- The event is sponsored by Grow North and Nicolet College
- \$500 awards will be given to the best *inventor* and the best *entrepreneur* of the show. Mel Davidson is in charge of judging the entrants.
- Tables for displays are available at \$25 ea.
- Ponsse USA will have one of their harvesting machines on display at the event.

C. Hodag Market Place: Dave Hibbard and Paul Hastreiter are working on the development of a facility in downtown Rhinelander for entrepreneurs to market and sell their product. The strategy is to support “homegrown businesses.”

VII. Infrastructure Update: Dan Kuzlik

Dan Kuzlik gave an update on the Tri-county Transit project. The majority of respondents to a survey indicated a need for a public transportation system in the tri-county region. Dan is heading up an effort to organize existing services into a coordinated system. His group identified major routes and drop off points such as Nicolet College, downtown shopping, medical facilities, and the Rhinelander Airport.

VIII. Tourism: Diane Hapka

Diane indicated several possibilities to increase tourism in the region. Among these ideas are:

- “Group Travel Packages” that are organized around themes such as photography.
- “Silent Sports,” which fits with the “Travel Green” initiative in Wisconsin.
- Coordinate regional Chambers of Commerce around a project to attract tourists to the Northwoods during the “shoulder seasons” by promoting assets such as art related businesses that are not the traditional “weather dependent” type of recreation.

Diane is also encouraging various organizations to apply for invasive species grants to help maintain the water quality in the Northwoods.

IX. Eco Park Update: Jim Kumbera

Jim informed the members about the following activities relating to the development of an Eco Business Park in Oneida County:

- Stakeholder information sessions were conducted on December 17th and 18th to hear about progress on the evolution of “green development.” Jim feels we are on the cusp of a switch to “sustainable development,” which will provide new opportunities for the generation of wealth. Natural resource based business have the potential to create new “living wage jobs” in the region.
- The Eco Park project is entering into the conceptual design phase in January 2009. The next step is the development of working drawings for the project.
- The project cost is estimated to be \$16.5M, and projections are that it will provide cash flow, with a long term ROI of 20 + years.
- Jim will be organizing another stakeholder meeting in the near future to identify the types of businesses and housing mix to include in the project.
- Jim Kumbera and Jim Brown will meet to discuss the creation of a regional taskforce on sustainability.

X. New Business:

- By-laws review: no action needed. Rob Krieghoff indicated that the by-laws have been updated with the following change of titles:
 - Executive Committee changed to Board of Directors and Board of Directors changed to General Membership.
- Community foundation proposal – Dan Kuzlik provided a handout on a mechanism to facilitate the transfer of wealth to communities by the creation of a community foundation. Dan and Jodi Hanson asked for a vote of support for Grow North to become the fiscal agent if a grant is received.

Motion: Cheri Wilson

Second: Dick Hartman
Approved

- XI. **Guest Speaker:** Lee Swindall, Marketing Director, Wisconsin Manufacturing Extension Partnership (WMEP), Madison, WI.
“Next Generation Manufacturing Study”
- The survey, completed fall 2008, is a SWOT analysis of manufacturing in Wisconsin, and the changes necessary for manufacturers to thrive in the year 2015
 - The WMEP will assist manufacturers in the identification of performance gaps and ways achieve the benchmarks
 - The full report and information about the WMEP are available at: www.wmep.org
- XII. The meeting adjourned at 9:45 am