

The Economic Alliance
Board Meeting
January 23, 2013
Koala Street Grill, Omak

Attending Board Members:

Rich Watson, Chairman
Nan Kallunki, 1st Vice Chairman
Amanda Jackson, Secretary
Lael Duncan, Past Chairman
Gail Howe

Arnie Marchand
Melanie Wyss
Alison Gillette
Kurt Danison
Steve Kreider

Absent Board Members:

Kyle Desautel, 2nd Vice Chairman
Coleen Couch, Treasurer
John Andrist
Mary Watson
Andy Lampe
County Commissioner Rep. –Vacant

George Brady
Art Himmler
Joe Pakootas, Colville Tribes (CTFC)
Nespelem/Coulee Dam Position #1 -- Vacant
Nespelem/Coulee Dam Position #2 – Vacant

Staff & Guests:

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Executive Director
Carolyn Davis, Admin. Assistant
Lew Blakeney, SBDC
Jennifer Tate, Okanogan Co. Tourism

Bonnie Waude, Center for Entrepreneurship, WVC
Nancy Nash, WorkSource & Omak Chamber
Ralph Malone, City of Omak

Chairman, Rich Watson, called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. Agenda was approved as presented. Gail Howe made a motion to approve the minutes from December 5, 2012. Lael Duncan seconded. Motion passed.

Guest Speaker

Jennifer Tate with Earth and Sky Studios works as a consultant for the Okanogan County Tourism Council (OCTC). She gave a brief overview of the activities for the Tourism Council and explained how they are working to promote Okanogan Country. The tag line “Friendly, Affordable, and Open for Adventure” is being used on all advertising. Jennifer presented a PowerPoint that showcased some of OCTC’s activities over the past year such as development of a new Rack Card that is being distributed on the I-5 corridor, updated website (www.okanogancountry.com), and the “Find Your Awesome” workshop that helps businesses understand their brand and marketing. OCTC also continues to work on placing full page co-op ads with its members and recently placed ads in publications such as Sunset, Outdoors NW, Master Skier, Cross Country Skier, NW Horse Source, Washington Trails, Oregonian Travel Pages, Outdoors NW, Salmon & Steelhead Journal, Wenatchee World Foothills Wine Magazine, NW Travel, and Canadian publications Outpost Magazine and One World Media. OCTC has also placed billboard ads at the Spokane International Airport and the Wenatchee Airport and have again placed exterior panel ads on buses in the Seattle Metropolitan area. Jennifer reported that OCTC also has ongoing social media advertising with Face book and Google. This past year OCTC made revisions to and reprinted the official County Travel Planner Guide, which is sent out to all the VICs as well as to phone and web site requests. This guide is also distributed through Certified Folder in NCW. We are building name recognition and working a lot on social media like Face Book. If you are not a friend, please like Okanogan Country on Facebook. OCTC also uses the Google calendar to post events and if

you have an event or tourist activity, please send to Carolyn Davis and she will post on the web site. OCTC has also set up and staffed a booth at trade shows such as the Puyallup Sportsman Show, Vancouver Outdoor Adventure Show, and the Electric Vehicle Show at Seattle Center. Over the past year OCTC has completed a kiosk and signage at the Twisp VIC. Jennifer stated that OCTC hopes to work with all the VICs in the county to have cohesive signage with the blue sign “i” to direct visitors to the centers. Jennifer spoke about itineraries that are posted on the web site and that OCTC is looking for additional suggested in county trips for motorcycles or bicycles or for great hiking spots. We need people to talk about their experiences on these trips or spots. OCTC will also again produce the Agricultural Guide. This guide is done every other year and is designed as a guide to Okanogan Country’s growers, producers, fruit stands, wineries, etc.

Kurt Danison stated that as a volunteer at the Loup Loup he talks with people and sees a lot of people bringing their families and kids to the area because it isn’t crowded. Amanda Jackson with Methow Arts Alliance mentioned that they targeted the Bellevue area through their social media for a concert and found that a quarter of the audience was from that area and also the first time they had been to a production.

Jennifer Tate stated that she is working with the Economic Alliance to put together a workshop on Social Media. The first session will cover E Commerce, second session will be about social media and blogs, and the third session will cover social media management tools. This is tentatively scheduled for this spring.

Executive Director Report

Roni Holder-Diefenbach distributed her monthly report. (Attachment #1). She spoke about the review that the Economic Alliance’s SBDC program by Ted Schinzel with the SBA Spokane District Office and Duane Fladland, Associate State Director of the SBDC from WSU. In the written report they praised the work that Lew Blakeney does here in Okanogan County and felt it should be emulated by the SBDC Network.

Lew Blakeney, Certified Business Advisor, spoke about the Employment Security Department’s Self Employment Assistance Program (SEAP). Each area has its own program and there is an educational component to each program. Those on unemployment who desire to become business owners can apply for this program and when approved will begin training and technical assistance sessions. Technical assistance meetings will be scheduled by the SBDC Advisor and the SEAP client as needed during the program period. Wenatchee Valley College Center for Entrepreneurship is offering four online classes, Start Your Own Small Business, Creating a Successful Business Plan, Small Business Marketing on a Shoestring, and Accounting Fundamentals. After successful online class completion, WVC will issue a “Certificate of Completion for the WVC Entrepreneurship Series”. Advantage for those registered for this SEAP is that they don’t have to do weekly hunts for jobs while they are completing the requirements for starting their own business.

Board Business

Vacant Positions: There are still two vacant positions for the Coulee Dam/Nespelem Area. The Okanogan County Tourism Council would like to have Andy Lampe be the representative on the Economic Alliance Board. Kurt Danison made a motion to appoint Andy Lampe to the vacant Okanogan County Tourism Council representative position. Nan Kallunki seconded. Motion passed.

Standing Committee Reports

Treasurers Report: An updated cash flow projection was distributed to Board members with actual through December. We are in a good cash position at the end of December and are looking at investing some of the carryover funds. The annual 2013 budget was also presented. It was questioned if the current Board of Commissioners were supportive of the Economic Alliance. Nan Kallunki stated that they currently have the Economic Alliance in the budget and there is still a resolution in place to continue funding. Roni Holder-Diefenbach will be meeting with the new commission and giving them an update on the Economic Alliance activities. Amanda Jackson made a motion to accept the 2012 financial budget as presented. Nan Kallunki seconded. Motion passed. Gail Howe made a motion to accept the 2013 annual budget as presented. Melanie Wyss seconded. Motion passed.

Communication Committee: No Report.

Infrastructure Committee: No Report.

Business Education Committee: Roni Holder-Diefenbach spoke about the upcoming workshop with Michael Nash on February 13, 9:00 – Noon will be Behavior Styles: Managing Others with Trust and Respect and from 1:00 to 4:00 will be Internal Customer Service. These are free workshops and will be held at the PUD auditorium. She is also working on getting a workshop that will address the impact of insurance mandates. The PTAC will be doing another workshop on government contracting on March 19.

Steve Kreider stated that a QuickBooks class is scheduled for January 28, 29, 30, 6 – 8 p.m. at Twisp Works. Topics include setting up a chart of accounts and basic QuickBooks data entry. The cost is \$100.

Nancy Nash reported that the annual Job Fair is scheduled for February 28 at the Omak Community Center. It is free for businesses to set up a table. They will also hold a Job Fair on March 7 in Twisp.

Old Business

No report.

New Business

Kurt Danison reported that the town of Twisp has some new construction with the building of the Twisp River Suites and also has plans for a 17 unit cottage development geared towards senior citizens. He also reported that Linda Black in Tonasket is working on getting a splash park. Since the pool has closed she has been raising money for this splash park and has about 2/3 of the funds needed. They plan to call it the Tonasket Water Ranch. Kurt also reported that the city of Omak's application for a bike and pedestrian path and lighting along Main Street was ranked number one. He also reported that the Loup Loup Ski Hill will be having the Wolf Chase Race on February 9 & 10. There are usually about 150 kids that enter this race.

Nancy Warner spoke about the upcoming Success Summit sponsored by IRIS. She is planning to hold this year's summit either in Okanogan or Tonasket. It is tentatively scheduled sometime the week before Thanksgiving (tentatively scheduled for November 21 or 22).

Amanda Jackson reported that Cimarrón, an accomplished llanera group from Colombia, will be doing a performance at the schools. They will work with Bridgeport, Omak, Okanogan, Paschal Sherman, Methow Valley, Pateros, Brewster and will have public performances on March 22 at the Omak PAC and the 23rd in Winthrop.

Amanda Jackson also reported that the Methow Arts Alliance is also partnering with the Methow Valley Sports Trails to create 10 kiosks along the trails. The kiosks are comprised of an information board with a nice covered roof, maps and a bench that will entail public artwork from local artists. She will be sending out an RFP - call for artists soon to invite proposals. She will have her lobbying hat on February 6 in Olympia for the Arts and Heritage Day. She is organizing constituents from our district to lobby for funding for the arts - specifically arts education in our schools and art in public places.

Alison Gillette spoke about the renovation of the Civilian Conservation Corps building at Twisp Works and they are looking for funding for this. She also spoke about the development of a mobile arts center – the Spartan Art Project. A 37-foot, 1951 Spartan Imperial Mansion travel trailer has been stripped and the exterior paint has been restored to the original aluminum finish. The inside was gutted and was replaced with subflooring and insulated. They will use this Spartan as gallery space for local, regional and nationally ranked artists' works, with a focus on art that would seem unconventional in a typical gallery. Once finished the classic camper will use TwispWorks as its home base. Alison also spoke about a collaborative marketing campaign for Methow Valley products. The “Made in the Methow” is designed to increase sales of locally made and grown goods, both agricultural and art, in the Puget Sound and beyond. A grant will fund the development of a logo; provide advertising in Seattle-area publications as well as local media, placement of “Made in the Methow” product displays in local and regional stores, and website/social media marketing.

Gail Howe reported that the city of Pateros will be celebrating its 100th year centennial.

Meeting adjourned 1:00.

Next Meeting February 27, 2013, 11 – 1, at the Koala Street Grill. Please mark your calendars!

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Davis, Administrative Assistant



ATTACHMENT #1

ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

Economic Director Report

December 2012/January 2013

Meetings Attended December:

- NCW Loan Fund Board Meeting
- WSU Agro Tourism meeting
- NCW EDD

Meetings Attended January:

- Interview with FUND Consulting-Financial resources in area for small businesses
- Tourism Council Annual Meeting

Upcoming Meetings (January):

- Omak Downtown Meeting
- Job Fair Meeting

This month we received confirmation from the State SBDC Director that our contract will be extended through 2013 with no changes. Our annual Site Review was a success, the Economic Alliance and our SBDC advisor Lew Blakeney has the highest capitalization and job creation/saved numbers in the state.

We continue to work with small businesses and our local partners to identify what their needs are. The Economic Alliance has again partnered with the local LPA to market the HR/Business Classes and as of January 23rd we had over 50 individuals signed up for each session. We are also utilizing our Facebook page, email distribution lists and website to market other business resources available to our local businesses. We are also in the process of working with the Tribal HUD Housing program to identify specific trainings for their employees.

Business Education classes in the works:

- HR/Business Classes continued: Michael Nash returns to Okanogan on February 13, 2013 to present on “Behavior Styles: Managing Others with Trust and Respect” and “Internal Customer Service.” The series concludes on April 17, 2013 when Ellis Amdur of the Edgewood Crisis Intervention Resources presents his training, “De-Escalation of Aggressive and Mentally Ill Individuals.”
- Social Media: Beyond Facebook & Twitter (this class will touch on Social media platforms such as HootSuite, Sprout or Sprinklr to assist in marketing your business). This will be part one of three of a business education series and will be held in the spring.
- Eastern Washington PTAC-Spring Series (tentatively March 19)