

The Economic Alliance
Board Meeting
October 22, 2014
Koala Street Grill, Omak

Attending Board Members:

Coleen Couch, Treasurer,
Janet Wilson, City of Okanogan
Rich Watson, NCW Business Loan Fund
Lael Duncan, OCCAC

Sheilah Kennedy, County Commissioner
Stacey Luckenmeyer (for Mary Watson, WVC)
Arnie Marchand, Oroville VIC

Absent Board Members:

Kyle Desautel, Chairman, CCT Planner
Kurt Danison, City Planner
Amanda Jackson-Mott, Secretary
Dr. Erik Swanson, Omak School Superintendent
Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board, Ok County
Chris Branch, OCTC Rep
John Andrist, No. Cascades Broadcasting

Melanie Wyss, Gebbers Farm
George Brady, Cascade Biological Supply, Pateros
Ted Piccolo, NNDF
Alison Gillette, Twisp Works
Nespelem/Coulee Dam Position #2 – Vacant
Methow Valley #2 -- Vacant
Colville Tribal Fed. Corp. -- Vacant

Staff & Guests:

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Executive Director
Carolyn Davis, Admin. Assistant

Jeff Brender, NCW Business Loan Fund
David Niessner, General Mgr., Omak Wood Products

Colleen Couch, Treasurer, called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. There was no quorum, so this will be an informational meeting only.

Guest Speaker

The scheduled guest speaker was unable to attend, but hopefully she will be available to speak at the November/December meeting.

Executive Director Report

(see attachment #1). Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that during October she attended the three day Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council conference in Wenatchee. All the funding sources as well as the cities were in attendance and it was a great chance to network. Public infrastructure is very important for economic development.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach also reported that she and Economic Alliance Chairman, Kyle Desautel attended the recent Okanogan County Tourism Council's Board meeting to talk to them about the BrandQuery ad campaign. Kyle Desautel is also a member of the OCTC Board. Some of the social media posting would be posted by OCTC on their Facebook page. Some of the postings needed to be changed and she is working with BrandQuery to make the changes and get them to OCTC. In December a meeting will be held, asking for input for the next portion of the campaign. Twenty-five percent of the funds from the state were held back for a spring/summer advertising push.

Roni Holder Diefenbach reported that she has been working with Kinross Gold Mine to help them get the information out about the closure of the mine. They are holding meetings around the area to discuss the closure and what is expected and trying to mitigate the economic impact of the closure. Sixty-seven percent of those surveyed in Okanogan County stated that they didn't think the mine closure would have any impact. She felt that this is incorrect and that the mine closure will have a

significant impact, not only on the employees of the mine, but also on both Okanogan and Ferry Counties. Kinross will also be holding a series of entrepreneurial business development trainings in Republic to focus on entrepreneurial training and business support. These sessions are for businesses or proposed businesses and dislocated workers who have transferable skills. The Economic Alliance might provide some gas card for people from Okanogan County to attend these sessions in Republic. She will continue to work with Deana Zakar to get the word out about the upcoming trainings and meetings.

Board Business

Vacant Positions: We are still looking for someone for the Nespelem/Coulee Dam Area #2 position, the Methow Valley #2 position, and the Colville Tribal Federal Corporation representative. Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that Gene Nicholson, Board Chair for CTFC, might be interested the vacant position. She is also working with Ted Piccolo to see if he has some suggestions.

Standing Committee Reports

Finance/Budget Committee: Coleen Couch reported that the Economic Alliance is currently in a strong cash position. Kinross will not be contributing in 2015 and the ADO budget could expect a 5% to 10% decrease for the next funding cycle. We need to share our story and talk to our local state representatives about the importance of the Economic Alliance at the local level. Lael Duncan stated that it is also important that Board members discuss with our state representatives about the importance of economic development, the more they hear about it from different people the better.

Infrastructure Committee: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the committee should be meeting soon. It is hoped to collect project proposals from the cities to get a ranking of projects. Although we do not have funds at this time it is still important to rank projects.

Business Education Committee: Stacy Luckenmeyer reported that there is a Destination-based Sales Tax Workshop in Omak on November 17 from 2:30 – 4:30 at the Koala Street Grill. This will discuss the changes in sale taxes based on where the product is going. For those that ship products to areas outside of the area, this is an important workshop.

Old Business

Rich Watson gave an update on what is happening with the NCW Business Loan Fund. He will be retiring and Jeff Brender will take his place as Executive Director/Loan Officer. He also reported that the Loan Fund is doing a pilot project to teach entrepreneurial classes at the high school level. They will be starting with four schools. The Loan Funds has also received over \$1 million dollars in funding to lend out. This is a real affirmation for what the Loan Fund has been doing. Several Banks, Umpqua, Washington Federal and Wells Fargo have provided funding to loan out to businesses with equipment needs.

Coleen Couch and Roni Holder-Diefenbach expressed thanks to Rich Watson for his dedication to the Economic Alliance, not only as a Board member, but also as a two-term Chairman of the Board.

New Business

David Niessner with Omak Wood Products reported that they have started producing plywood as of last week. They do experience a little bit of turnover, because of people moving on to other construction jobs, but have been able to fill the positions.

Arnie Marchand reported that the Coordinator of the NCW Economic Development District, Jennifer Korfiatis, has resigned. Kyle Desautel and Chris Branch are developing a job description for this position and Roni Holder-Diefenbach is on the hiring committee. Discussion on the value of having a three county district. If you know of anyone that might be interested in the part-time position, please let us know.

Meeting adjourned 12:15.

Next Meeting December 3, 2014, 11:30 – 1:30, at the Koala Street Grill. Please mark your calendars!

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Davis, Administrative Assistant

Attachment #1



ECONOMIC ALLIANCE
October 2014
Executive Director Report:

October:

- IACC
- OCTC Meeting
- Meeting with Senator Murrays Staff
- Lt. Governor Meeting on Company Closures in rural communities
- NCW Business Loan Fund Board Meeting
- WVC at Omak Foundation Board Staff appreciation reception

I had the opportunity to attend my first Infrastructure Assistance Coordinating Council conference in Wenatchee. This was a worthwhile event and I plan on attending again in the future, a lot of networking with State and Federal agencies regarding funding opportunities for local municipalities occurred. In October we continued to work with BrandQuery on the State SRF Funds Tourism campaign. We are almost done with the first portion of the campaign, television commercials will run through October, and the social media campaign will continue through December. We will be hosting a meeting in early December and will invite the communities to participate as we start planning the final 25% spring campaign. As we have a longer period of planning time, this will allow those who would like to provide input the opportunity to do so.

In October I also had the opportunity to attend the Kinross closure meetings and the Lt. Governors meeting on company closures in rural communities. At this time I am also working with Deana Zaker to host a North County Social Closure plan, which is scheduled for October 29th from 6:30-8:30 to discuss their plan. We are also working with the NCW EDD and Wenatchee Valley College to provide a Business Education seminar on Destination Sales Tax on November 17th at the Koala Street Grill from 2:30-4:30.

In November we are working with Kinross and the Department of Commerce who are hosting a Entrepreneur series in Republic for those affected by the future closure of the mine, as well as the surrounding communities and youth who want to attend. Kinross is sponsoring the training and it will be at no cost for those who are interested in attending. The Economic Alliance will be working with local chambers and schools to communicate the information to them about when the trainings will occur as well as with transportation as needed. As soon as receive more information I will send it out to the entire board.