

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

Attending Board Members:

Rich Watson, Chairman
Amanda Jackson-Mott, Secretary
Coleen Couch, Treasurer

Arnie Marchand
Alison Gillette
Melanie Wyss

Absent Board Members:

Nan Kallunki, 1st Vice Chairman
Kyle Desautel, 2nd Vice Chairman
Lael Duncan, Past Chairman
John Andrist
Andy Lampe
Sheilah Kennedy
Steve Kreider
Gail Howe

George Brady
Kurt Danison
Joe Pakootas, Colville Tribes (CTFC)
Mary Watson
At Large #1 -- Vacant
Nespelem/Coulee Dam Position #2 -- Vacant
Nespelem/Coulee Dam Position #1 -- Vacant

Staff & Guests:

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

Sam McKee, NCW Business Loan Fund
Jon Wyss, Gebbers Farms
Dr. Erik Swanson, Omak School Superintendent

Chairman, Rich Watson, called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. A quorum was not established and this will be an informational meeting only.

Guest Speaker

Amanda Jackson-Mott, director with the Methow Arts Alliance, spoke about the organization. MAA was established over 30 years ago, solely to represent artists, but the organization has grown over the past 30 years. They now do education, presentations, promotions, and provide leadership. The Methow Arts Alliance facilitates partnerships with the Okanogan region schools and other partners to bring quality arts programs to students. They serve over 5,765 students and hire artists to go into the schools to perform and teach art. Art and music are one way children, especially at-risk kids, can express themselves.

The MAA also does comprehensive marketing of the arts, artists and arts organizations in the Methow Valley. The Methow Arts Alliance also acts as an advocate for the arts and networks for the arts locally, regionally, and nationally. They also bring in performers, such as the Nomadis Massive, which is scheduled for February 1, 2014. This group from Montreal has firmly established itself as a group of premier performers and skilled musicians. These musical nomads represent an open-minded Hip-Hop which finds its inspiration in the traditions of the past. The Methow Arts Alliance provides free tickets to social service agencies to provide an opportunity for those that might not be able to attend. Amanda stated that "Art is a Business". They try to measure the jobs that go into the Arts. They also manage the www.MethowValleyArts.org website, a monthly E-NEWS, and the Methow Valley Arts magazine, which is printed quarterly. Amanda's phone number is 509 997-4004, if anyone has any questions.

Guest Speaker

Alison Gillette is an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer and currently works at Twisp Works. There are four VISTA volunteers at Twisp Works. The Twisp Works campus is a 6.4 acre property in downtown

Twisp that served as the USFS Twisp Ranger Station for most of the 20th century. She gave a brief history of the purchase of the Twisp Ranger Station by the Twisp PDA to help increase economic vitality in the Methow Valley through agriculture, education, innovative/green technology, and arts and culture. Ninety percent of space ready for lease is leased out. They are still renovating some of the buildings. The Twisp Works community includes tenants and partners ranging from individuals and businesses to community organizations. A ten-year master plan describes the development of the campus in three phases, with phase three to be completed in 2020.

Some of the projects that are currently being worked on are the Spartan Art Project, a 1951 travel trailer that has been transformed into a free mobile art gallery on the Twisp Works campus; Methow Made, a collaborative marketing program to help Methow Valley food and beverage producers reach new customers; the Artist in Residency program, that invites outside artists to visit Twisp and interact with the local arts community and provides space for local artists to develop their talents; educational partnerships with Seattle University, UW, WSU and the Methow Valley School District; and Solar Education, through a state incentive program, members of the Okanogan PUD #1 purchased solar panels that were then installed at Twisp Works, which gets about 20% of its power from the panels.

Alison's phone number at Twisp Works is 509 997-3300 and the web site is www.twispworks.org if anyone would like additional information.

Executive Director Report

Roni Holder-Diefenbach distributed a report for October (see attachment #1). She reported that the Omak Wood Products has started production and have hired 87 employees. The Economic Alliance has applied for funds from the Department of Commerce's Work Start Program to help the mill train people for the second and third shifts. The next 3 – 6 months will provide the training and grow the labor force to 200. The Economic Alliance has also had contact with two other businesses who are looking at relocating to the Omak area.

There is an upcoming webinar, which will take place on November 15, 8:30 – 3:00 at the Havillah Road Conference Room. This is sponsored by the WSU Cooperative Extension office. Title of the webinar is "Rural Pathways to Prosperity". The keynote speaker for this video conference is Becky McCray, she co-authored *Small Town Rules: How Big Brands and Small Businesses Can Prosper in a Connected Economy*. She will provide practical strategies to make communication and customer service with clients and consumers personal, relevant, and successful. She also writes the *Small Biz Survival* blog [<http://smallbizsurvival.com>] because she believes small town entrepreneurs have a lot to teach other businesses, and when local entrepreneurs prosper, they help their small town prosper, too. There will also be input from Washington State leaders and successful communities who have started down this path. The afternoon will be an interactive, engaging exercise that will move your community toward developing their own plan.

Also upcoming is the annual NCW Community Success Summit scheduled for November 20 at the Okanogan Middle School. The Economic Alliance is a sponsor and has two positions that are paid for if there are any Board members that would like to attend. Melanie Wyss and Arnie Marchand, both requested to be registered.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach also spoke about export assistance and stated that businesses are looking at diversifying and we have tried to link them with the resources to assist. The Washington Small Business Development Center's Export Assistance Center and the Export Assistance Center of Washington are two resources that we utilize to assist our customers.

Board Business

Vacant Positions: Roni Holder-Diefenbach is working to fill the vacant positions, as well as speaking to those whose positions are up for election and also working on the slate of officers for 2014.

Rich Watson also stated that the Nomination Committee will bring forward a slate of officers for 2014 and Board members for Board positions that expire at the end of the year at the December meeting.

Standing Committee Reports

Treasurers Report: Coleen Couch reported that the current cash flow projections look good and expenses are staying on track. We did receive a contribution from Kinross Gold in September to help support workshops, presentations, etc.

Communication Committee: No report.

Infrastructure Committee: No report.

Business Education Committee: No report.

Old Business

None

New Business

Jon Wyss spoke about a new project in Brewster, Gamble Sands. This will be an 18-hole golf course and it is hoped to have it opened next spring or summer.

Meeting adjourned 12:50.

Next Meeting December 4, 2013, 11 – 1, at the Koala Street Grill. Please mark your calendars! Guest speaker is Dr. Patrick Jones. He will speak about economic indicators and industry clusters.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Davis, Administrative Assistant



Meetings Attended October:

- Meeting with Sheilah Collins Gov Inslee Eastern WA Rep
- OWP Open House
- Conference Call-Sally Harris Workstart
- NCW Loan Fund Credit Committee Meeting
- Export Meeting with Private Company
- ADO/Workstart meeting in Quincy
- CTFC Meeting in Coulee Dam
- Business Recruitment mtg. potential business

Upcoming Meeting/Activities (November):

- NCW EDD
- 2014 Job Fair Planning Meeting
- Rural Pathways to Prosperity Conference
- Global Entrepreneur Week
- NCW Success Summit

October has been an extremely busy month for the Economic Alliance. It started off with a visit from Governor Inslee's Eastern Washington Representative who informed me of his expected attendance at the OWP grand opening. At the grand opening it was announced that OWP had received a Workstart grant of \$100,000 to be utilized for training in key technical positions that will assist the mill in starting their 2 and 3 shifts within 6 months.

We have also had an influx of businesses looking to relocate or start new businesses within Okanogan County. The Economic Alliance has been busy gathering information, making contacts with property owners and planning staff to help put together information that will assist the business in making their decision regarding if they want to relocate to Okanogan County.

We have also been providing Export assistance to a few businesses that have shown and interest in potentially exporting their products. The WSBDC Export assistance and the Export Assistance Center of Washington are the resources that we utilize to assist our customers.

The EA is also the sponsor organization for the upcoming Rural Pathways to Prosperity conference that will be held in Omak at Havillah Road Printing and Business Center. We have been promoting the event and lining up speakers for our local panel.