

The Economic Alliance
Board Meeting
October 24, 2012
Koala Street Grill, Omak

Attending Board Members:

Rich Watson, Chairman
Kyle Desautel, 2nd Vice Chairman
Coleen Couch, Treasurer
Amanda Jackson, Secretary
Alison Gillette

Arnie Marchand
George Brady
Andy Lampe
Gail Howe
Kurt Danison

Absent Board Members:

Nan Kallunki, 1st Vice Chairman
Lael Duncan, Past Chairman
Art Himmler
John Andrist
Steve Kreider

Bill Black
Mary Watson
Okanogan County Tourism Council Rep -- Vacant
Nespelem/Coulee Dam Position #2 – Vacant
At Large Position #2 - Vacant

Staff & Guests:

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Executive Director
Carolyn Davis, Admin. Assistant
Nancy Nash, WorkSource
Melanie Wyss, Gebbers Farms & JBM Orchards
Mark Barreth, Labor Economist & Emp. Security
Curtis Beus, WSU Extension

Perry Huston, Okanogan County Planning Director
Lisa Hathaway, WorkSource & Omak Chamber
Benny Marchand, Colville Tribal Council
Ben Rouse, County Planning
Angie Hubbard, County Planning

Chairman, Rich Watson, called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. The agenda was approved as presented. Kurt Danison made a motion to approve minutes from August 22 and meeting notes from September 26. Arnie Marchand seconded. Motion passed.

Guest Speaker

Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that she has been meeting with city and county planners regarding Certified Sites. She introduced Perry Huston, Okanogan County Planning Director, who spoke about the advantages and pitfalls of developing certified sites or development agreements. These development agreements are used as an economic development tool. They provide easy access to information about the “project ready” commercial and industrial sites available within the area. Time is money and uncertainty can make investors pull out of a project. Across the nation, regions compete against each other for the attention of industrial and manufacturing businesses. Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that the Economic Alliance receives leads from the Washington State Department of Commerce and having certified sites or development agreements would give us a way to market some of our sites. Mr. Huston stated that having a development agreement or a certified site does not avoid any steps, but it does front load the process for things such as zoning, SEPA, or timetables. Regions with an inventory of sites increase their competitive advantage and can reduce time a company needs to locate sites that are ready for development and can match the construction completion date with customer product delivery demands. These development agreements are marketable and valuable to the land owner. The Economic Alliance can also market the sites on its website. Kurt Danison felt that it was a good idea for the county, but not necessarily for some of the cities, such as Omak which has already done some planning for development.

Executive Director Report

Roni Holder-Diefenbach distributed her monthly report. (Attachment #1). She also distributed information about upcoming workshops. Workshops sponsored by the Economic Alliance, WorkSource, Wenatchee Valley College, WorkSource, Career Path Services and Department of Social

& Health Services will be held on November 8 from 1 to 5 and the topic is “Behavioral Interviewing. Other workshop include “Creating a Positive Workplace Environment” (9 to noon) and “Giving Feedback to Employees Without Lowering Morale” (1 to 4) will be held on November 16. All of these will be at the Okanogan County PUD auditorium. You can register for any of these at www.economic-alliance.com. She has also been working with Earth & Sky Studios to put together a workshop on eCommerce, social media, blogs, and social media management tools. It is hope to have this one in early spring.

Roni also reported that she attended the ADO/export training in Wenatchee. She learned about current programs available to businesses who are interested in exporting and some techniques and evaluation criteria to determine if a business is ready for exporting.

Board Business

Board Meeting Date: Rich Watson stated that because of the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays we usually combine out November and December Board meetings. He asked if anyone had any conflicts with December 5 for our combine monthly Board meeting. It was a consensus to hold the next meeting on December 5.

Nomination Committee: Rich Watson also stated that we need to form a Nominating Committee to bring nominations forward for officers for 2013 and for expired Board member terms. Rich asked for volunteers to serve on the nominating committee. Kurt Danison volunteered.

Vacant Board Positions: There are still three vacant positions on the Board, an At Large #2, the Nespelem/Coulee Dam Area #2, the Okanogan County Tourism Council representative. Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated Melanie Wyss is interested in the vacant At Large #2 position and did attend our Board meeting last month. Her businesses are Gebbers Farms and JBM Orchards in the south county area. Kyle Desautel made a motion to seat Melanie Wyss to the vacant At Large #2 position. Kurt Danison seconded. Motion passed. Kyle also suggested Ann Marchand for the vacant position from the Nespelem/Coulee Dam are #2.

Standing Committee Reports

Treasurers Report: An updated cash flow projection was distributed to Board members with actual through September. Coleen Couch reported that the anticipated funding from Kinross Gold was received in October. She reported that we also received about \$1,000 more in October from the Department of Commerce for ADO funding.

Communication Committee: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the new web site is now up. She was able to show some of the site and some of the new changes.

Infrastructure Committee: No Report.

Business Education Committee: No Report.

Old Business

Fall forum: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that we have had very little feedback or suggestions for a fall forum. No one has stepped up to help with this so we are going to be doing seminars and workshop shops instead.

New Business

Curtis Beus reported that the WSU Cooperative Extension will be holding an agritourism conference on December 8 & 9 in Pateros. Brent Warner from Sidney, B.C. is keynote speaker and there will be several sessions from different speakers to talk about how they were motivated to get started in agritourism, successes, major pitfalls and problems to avoid, marketing, liability issues, and potential for

developing a regional agritourism coordination and marketing effort. On the second day they will board a bus and take tours of several businesses in Chelan, Orondo, Manson, Winthrop, and Okanogan. To register for this conference go to www.okanogan.agritourism.wsu.edu or call 509 422-7245.

Amanda Jackson reported that the Washington Poet Laureate Kathleen Flenniken will share her poetry with the Methow Valley. After working in school districts throughout Okanogan County, Flenniken will, through collaboration between Methow Arts Alliance and the Methow Conservancy, hold a Friday night presentation on November 2 at 7 p.m. at the Merc Playhouse, with opening readings from local poets. She also reported that the Arts Program will expand to Oroville, Tonasket, and Bridgeport school districts.

Kurt Danison reported that the final tier for streetscape in downtown Omak is moving forward. There is also a meeting scheduled for October 25, at 7 pm at the Omak City Hall to discuss the Main Street Program. Sarah Hansen with the Washington Main Street Program will be here for a roundtable discussion with business owners and community members to assess the needs, challenges and strengths of the Omak community as they plan for the next steps in the Main Street model of community revitalization.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that Sunopta in Omak was awarded a grant to do lean manufacturing through Impact Washington. They are now in their second week of training and are being evaluated and Impact Washington will come back with suggestions to make them more efficient.

Meeting adjourned 12:40

Next Meeting December 5, 11 – 1, at the Koala Street Grill. Please mark your calendars!

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Davis, Administrative Assistant



Economic Director Report

October 2012

Meetings Attended:

- CCT Community Development Committee
- ADO/Export Training Wenatchee
- NCW EDD-Chelan
- USDA-Okanogan County region rep Ted Anderson

During the month of October the Economic Alliance had the opportunity to attend the ADO/Export Training in Wenatchee. At this seminar we learned about current programs available to small businesses who are interested in exporting. We also learned some techniques and evaluation criteria to determine if a business is ready to go global. If you are interested in learning more, I have the PowerPoint presentations and handouts that I can provide.

We have also been diligently working on getting the website up and going. Intrigue Communications have been a great company to work with and the site is now live, with a few updates and additions that will soon be added to complete the site.

The EA has also been working with several partner organizations to offer several business education workshops. We will have 2 in November, and have 3 planned for early spring with Earth and Sky Studios.

We will continue to work with Okanogan County Planning Department and the City Planners to see if the Certified Sites are a good fit for Okanogan County.

Business Education classes in the works:

- 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