

The Economic Alliance
Board Meeting
February 25, 2015
Koala Street Grill, Omak

Attending Board Members:

Kurt Danison, City Planner
Janet Wilson, City of Okanogan
Lael Duncan, OCCAC
Sheilah Kennedy, County Commissioner

Jeff Brender, NCW Business Loan Fund
Chris Branch, OCTC Rep
George Brady, Cascade Biological Supply, Pateros
Arnie Marchand, Oroville VIC

Absent Board Members:

Melanie Wyss, Gebbers Farm
Amanda Jackson-Mott
Dr. Erik Swanson, Omak School Superintendent
Ted Piccolo, NNDF
John Andrist, No. Cascades Broadcasting
Central County Area #1 – Vacant

Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board, Ok County
Alison Gillette, Twisp Works
Stacey Luckenmeyer, WVC
Colville Tribal Fed. Corp. -- Vacant
Nespelem/Coulee Dam Position #2 – Vacant
Methow Valley #2 -- Vacant

Staff & Guests:

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Executive Director
Carolyn Davis, Admin. Assistant
Gloria Flora Sustainable Obtainable Solutions

Julie Muyllaert, Winthrop Mountain Sports
Bryon Miller, Gaming/Casino Manager, Colville Tribal Casinos
Patrick Tonasket, Deputy Director, CCT

Kurt Danison, Chairman, called the meeting to order and asked for introductions.

Approval of Minutes

Chris Branch made a motion to approve minutes from the January 28, 2015. Lael Duncan seconded. Motion passed.

Guest Speaker

Gloria Flora, Executive Director for Sustainable Obtainable Solutions, spoke about the movement to bring BioChar to Okanogan County. She worked for the forest service for 23 years in Montana and Nevada. They have received a participation grant to look at the forest biomass and do public education. BioChar would turn agricultural or forest biomass waste into a usable product, which could improve soils, enhances a community's economy and would be a good way to manage natural resources. Biochar is a form of charcoal produced from super-heating biomass. It is found naturally in soils around the world as a result of vegetation fires, but can also be created and used by humans in traditional agricultural practices. Dark, charcoal-rich soil creates productive farms in areas that previously had poor, and in some places, toxic soils. She will be holding meeting around Okanogan County, starting with a meeting with the county commissioners at 1:30. Additional meetings will be held in Twisp, March 11 and March 25 at Twisp Works, Omak, March 12 and March 26 at Havillah Road Business Center, Tonasket, March 31 and April 14 at the Community Cultural Center, Oroville, April 1 and April 15 at Vicki's Backdoor Club, and in Nespelem, April 7 and April 21 at the Tribal Longhouse. They don't take large trees or lumber that can be used for other things. It was questioned if this could be profitable because of the distance to bring product to a plant to burn, especially in Okanogan County. For additional information about BioChar <http://biochar-us.org> or on Facebook under NE Washington BioChar. You can also call Gloria Flora at gflora@biochar-us.org or 406 459-3486.

Board Business

Signatures on Checking Account

Carolyn Davis reported that new officers have all been to the bank and signed and those currently still on the account have signed today.

Vacant Positions

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that there are currently five vacant positions on the Board at this time. They are:

- Nespelem/Coulee Dam Representative #2 (term expires 2017)
- Methow Valley Representative #2 (term expires 2017)
- Colville Tribal Federal Corporation Representative (term expires 2016)
- Central Okanogan County Representative #1 (term expires 2015)
- Colville Confederated Tribes (term expires (term expires 2015))

Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that today we have three people that are interested in a vacant position. Bryon Miller, Gaming/Casino Manger for the Colville Tribal Casinos is interested in the Colville Tribal Federal Corporation representative position, Julie Muyllaert, owner of the Methow Cycle & Sport and with the Winthrop Chamber, is interested in the Methow Valley representative #2 position, and Patrick Tonasket, Deputy Director for the Colville Confederated Tribes, is interested in the representative from the Colville Tribes position.

Chris Branch made a motion to seat these three, Bryon Miller, Julie Muyllaert, and Patrick Tonasket to the positions. Jeff Brender seconded. Motion passed.

Executive Director's Report

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the monthly report for February was on the back table. (see attachment #1). Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that she has been working with Omak Wood Products and will tour the new plywood mill on March 2 at 12:45 and if you are interested in attending, please let her know.

Roni also reported that the "Fact Sheet" needs to be updated and if you have anything you would like changed or added please let us know by the end of March. George Brady stated that on the back, it needs to say, "Big Horn Sheep were re-introduced" instead "introduced".

Roni Holder-Diefenbach also reported that she is working on getting updated contracts with the county and the Okanogan County PUD. She also testified before the legislature in support of an economic recovery allocation for the areas affected by the Carlton Complex Fire. Funds will probably have to go through the Economic Alliance and she is working with the state to make sure there is some administration fee attached to these dollars, because there is a lot of time and energy spent on this.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach spoke about the Colville Tribes employment number not being reported to the state and is not included in the overall numbers for unemployment. This changes the actual numbers and makes it difficult to get an accurate reflection of Okanogan County's employment and unemployment.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the Infrastructure Committee will meet to review projects submitted on March 3. There have been seven projects submitted for ranking for Public Facility Funds. Although there are no funds at this time, it is good to see what projects are out there and prioritize them in case funds become available.

Congressman Newhouse will hold a town hall meeting on March 3, 1 – 1 at the Omak City Hall.

Standing Committee Reports

Finance/Budget Committee: An updated budget sheet was available on the back table.

Infrastructure Committee: Covered under Executive Director's Report.

Business Education Committee: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that a report from Stacey Luckenmeyer was on the back table. The Okanogan County Job Fair is scheduled for March 12 at the Omak Community Center from 10:00 to 2:00. The Omak/Okanogan Business Week is scheduled for March 6 – 20th at the Agriplex. They are still looking for volunteers to act as company advisors and judges. Call Greg Hamilton at 509 422-3030, if you are interested. The Economic Alliance is a sponsor of this program and Roni Holder-Diefenbach serves as a company advisor.

The WSU Rural Pathways to Prosperity Conference is scheduled for April 17 and there are currently three locations broadcasting in Okanogan County, Omak, Oroville, and Methow Valley. WSU provides the conference via internet, but local leaders are needed to participate and to create action plans for the communities. The cost is \$25 or \$30 per person and includes lunch and materials.

Old Business

Board members were asked to select a designated alternate for when they are unable to attend meetings. Julie Muyliaert stated that David Gottula would be her Methow Valley alternate.

New Business

Lael Duncan reported that Okanogan County Community Action Council is working with the Supportive Services for Veterans Families (SSFV), which helps to prevent or end homelessness for veterans and their families through payments of additional services needed to stabilize families and cover some rent expenses.

She also spoke about the "Getting Ahead" program. This is a 16 week workshop to help build resources for a more prosperous life for people who are just getting by. This is sponsored by the Rotary International, Americorps, and Community Action. Contact Faith at Community Action 422-4041.

Jeff Brender, Loan Officer for the NCW Business Loan Fund, spoke about a \$30,000 grant that was received from Wells Fargo to assist Latina businesses start or expand. \$5,000 was earmarked for each, but that isn't a definite amount and they could go higher or lower depending on the application.

Bryon Miller spoke about the new 12 Bands Casino and Resort, which will be having a grand opening in May. Carolyn Davis questioned if the Tribes would be paying into the county's Hotel/Motel Tax Fund for their nightly lodging. Patrick Tonasket said that the Tribe isn't required to pay this tax, but would be willing to listen to a presentation by the Tourism Council on how we can work together.

Meeting adjourned 1:00 p.m.

Next Meeting March 25 2015, 11:00 – 1:00, at the Koala Street Grill. Please mark your calendars!

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Davis, Administrative Assistant

Attachment #1



ECONOMIC ALLIANCE
February 2015
Executive Director Report:

February:

- NCW EDD
 - Representing the EA on the re visioning and the project selection committee. The EDD has applied for an EDA grant for those Communities directly impacted by the fire.
- Wenatchee Valley College-Omak Foundation
 - Attended the Magic Lantern Show in Oroville sponsored by the foundation and the Okanogan Highlands Historical Society. All proceeds will go to the student center in Omak.
- Job Fair Planning
 - Coordinated and scheduled an open line appearance to discuss the job fair. The Economic Alliance will be providing the flyers to market the event through our marketing contract with North Cascades Broadcasting.
- Rural Pathways to Prosperity Planning Conference
 - We continue to work with WSU and local communities on this event. Omak/Okanogan, Oroville, Nespelem, and Methow Valley will all be hosting this event in their communities.
- BrandQuery Conference Call-2nd part of Campaign
 - Continued to work with local communities who have events that they wish to highlight in the 2nd part of this campaign. We are gathering photos to be used in the campaign.
- Long Term Recovery-Carlton Complex Fire
 - Continue to work with Terry Lawhead and the Dept. of Commerce to assist the local long term recovery work. Attended and testified in Olympia in support of an Economic Recovery allocation.
- CTFC 12 Tribes Resort and Casino-Omak
 - Assist Geoff Miller, Casino HR Director with Customer Service Training.
- Community Meetings with the Department of Commerce and Governor's Office
 - Met in Pateros with communities affected by the fire, toured the fire site.
 - Met in Winthrop with community leaders to discuss their needs and Economic Development Priorities.
- Community update to Congressmen Newhouse-Roundtable
 - Provided information regarding Hub Zone concerns
 - Port Issues and how it is affecting our local businesses
 - UI and inconsistent data-not reflecting tribal unemployment rates and how it affects funding opportunities such as EDA/USDA/SBA. And state incentives.
- NCW Business Loan Fund
 - Latina Loan Program-available
- Infrastructure Committee
 - Solicited Projects

- Contacted Committee
- March 3-Ranking Projects