

**The Economic Alliance**  
**Board Meeting**  
February 27, 2013  
Koala Street Grill, Omak

**Attending Board Members:**

Rich Watson, Chairman  
Nan Kallunki, 1st Vice Chairman  
Coleen Couch, Treasurer  
Lael Duncan, Past Chairman  
Gail Howe  
Andy Lampe

Arnie Marchand  
Mary Watson  
Alison Gillette  
Kurt Danison  
Steve Kreider  
Sheilah Kennedy

**Absent Board Members:**

Kyle Desautel, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman  
Amanda Jackson, Secretary  
John Andrist  
Melanie Wyss  
At Large #1

George Brady  
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  
Mark Berreth, Employment Security Dept.  
Leah McCormick, County Treasurer

Ray Campbell, County Commissioner  
Jim Detro, County Commissioner  
Chris Branch, city of Oroville  
Scott Goodman, Winthrop

Chairman, Rich Watson, called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. Roni Holder-Diefenbach asked for a moment of silence for Board member Art Himmler. Art recently passed away in a car accident. He was the Omak School Superintendent and very dedicated to the kids.

Agenda was changed to remove Amanda Jackson as a Guest Speaker, as she was ill. Lael Duncan made a motion to approve the minutes from January 23, 2013. Gail Howe seconded. Motion passed.

**Guest Speaker**

Mark Berreth, Regional Labor Economist with the Washington State Employment Security Department, spoke about the economy in Okanogan County. The unemployed population has slowly been leaving the county, which is unusual during a recession. Usually people move from the metro areas back to the rural area during a recession. Mr. Berreth stated that private employment is picking up with retail and leisure/hospitality showing marginal growth. Tourism has had a large impact. He stated that the retirement workers will soon need to be replaced and the state average age is the 45 – 54 age group, but in Okanogan County it is the 55 – 64 age group, which shows that people are holding on to jobs longer. People are not retiring at age 65 because of the effects of the economy on retirement income, i.e., 401k and cost of living has increased so much. Annual wages have lost momentum in recent years and have leveled off in 2011 and 2012. Lower and middle household income brackets dominate in Okanogan County. He has also see a trend of workers taking jobs out of Okanogan County, leaving the area for work, but still retaining their residence in the county. Retail sales have dropped, but are leveling out and poised for growth. Canadian and other tourists have kept retail sales up and the Canadian dollar has gained strength over the last few years. The Highway 97 corridor will be used more for freight and a number of jobs will be created. It was questioned how business growth will be effected by the new

health care regulations. Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that the Economic Alliance's Small Business Development Center has not seen a reduction in the number of people requesting information about starting their own business. But we don't really have a good source for finding out how many actually started businesses, other than those that have been working with the SBDC.

### **Executive Director Report**

Roni Holder-Diefenbach distributed her monthly report. (Attachment #1). She stated that we have been focusing on getting all contracts renewed for 2013 and plan to meet with the county commissioners next month to give them an update on the Economic Alliance's activities. She also met with our insurance agent regarding renewal of our employee medical and dental insurance. She has also been working on scheduling a meeting with the Colville Tribes and Kinross Gold. A tour of the mine site is scheduled for March 1. Roni reported that she will again be an advisor at next week's Okanogan-Omak Business Week. She felt this was a very good program for introducing students to the world of business.

We had a large turnout at the two recent seminars presented by Michael Nash. Over 100 people registered for both of these seminars. Upcoming seminars are scheduled for March 19, Women Owned Small Business Certification (Koala Street Grill 9 – noon) and Doing Business with the Federal Government (Whistler's Restaurant 1 – 4). These seminars will be presented by the PTAC out of Spokane. Roni stated that she is looking at taping the seminars so we could do webinars.

The Job Fair is scheduled for February 28 at the Omak Community Center. Last year there were over 200 people that came through the doors looking for jobs? This year there will be an area for people to actually do interviews and people can leave resumes. On March 7 there will also be a Job Fair in Twisp at the Methow Valley Community Center.

### **Board Business**

Vacant Positions: There are still two vacant positions for the Coulee Dam/Nespelem Area and due to the recent death of Art Himmler, the At-Large A#1 position is also vacant.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

**Treasurers Report:** An updated cash flow projection was distributed to Board members with actual through January. Coleen Couch reported we were in a good cash position at the end of year and January's income and expenses were all as projected.

**Communication Committee:** Roni Holder-Diefenbach encouraged everyone to "like" the Economic Alliance on Facebook. She posts information on the site and all of the seminars are posted. If you have any information that you would like to share, please send to Roni or Carolyn.

**Infrastructure Committee:** Chris Branch reported that there is no funds allocated for the city, county, or for the emerging opportunities accounts as funds are being spent on the East Lake Sewer project bond.

**Business Education Committee:** Mary Watson reported that the Entrepreneur Series is getting a lot of interest, as is the SEAP (Self Employment Assistance Program). She stated that WorkSource has a new program, which will be a good opportunity for businesses. It is called the WOW Free Computer e-learning. Nancy Nash-Mendez, with WorkSource, will be giving us an update at the April Board meeting.

## Old Business

No report.

## New Business

Success Stories: Rich Watson, Director of the NCW Business Loan Fund, share that they have received six requests for financing in the last two weeks – five of these are from Okanogan County. He also reported that the Main Street Bar & Grill, which is owned by the Loan Fund, has been cleaned up and they are starting a new program and will be using the facility as an artist studio. He hopes this will make an impact on downtown Omak. The building next door is also owned by the Loan Fund and used to be a creamery and needs to be cleaned up too.

Steve Kreider reported that he has started production of his Quickie Vault for water wells. This can be delivered to the job site in a pickup truck and installed in an open ditch. They are now manufactured in the Methow Valley and he is in the production and marketing stages.

Mary Watson reported that Wenatchee Valley College has picked a VP of Instruction. They did a nationwide search and hired a young woman, Dr. Carli Schiffner. She is to begin June 1 and will be a good addition as administrator for the Omak Campus.

Chris Branch reported that two new businesses in the Oroville area – one is an ice cream/hot dog business and the other is a second hand store. The old Pastime Tavern, which is currently being renovated, is slated to open in the spring and the Peerless is being renovated as a Mexican Restaurant and expected to open in the near future. He also reported that Oroville Reman and Reload is continually upgrading its facility and he hopes to schedule a tour of their facility. Chris also reported that the Whistler Canyon and Similkameen Trails were a big hit at the recent Wenatchee Sportsman Show that he attended on behalf of the Okanogan County Tourism Council.

Kurt Danison reported that the Omak Downtown Association group is considering becoming a Main Street Program applicant. He also spoke about the lawsuit with the Okanogan County PUD over the Enloe Dam hydroelectric project. He also stated that the people that developed the trail are not part of the lawsuit. He stated that it is a real possibility that they might have to pull out the Dam, which would be a major undertaking and would affect all PUD customers.

Rich Watson reported that Dr. Yoram Bauman will be our guest speaker at the next Economic Alliance Board meeting, scheduled for March 27. Dr. Bauman is billed as the World's First and Only Stand-up Economist. His presentation is very good as well as hysterically funny. We would like to invite guests to attend this meeting and it would be well worth attending. Depending on how many people we get to attend the location of the meeting might change.

Meeting adjourned 12:50.

**Next Meeting March 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**  
**February 2013**

**Meetings Attended February:**

- Senator Smith-Conference Call Ok County Commissioners
- Impact Washington/Local Business
- Methow Valley Arts Alliance
- Carlton Financial-Medical Insurance
- NCW CEDS Update Conference Call

**Upcoming Meeting/Activities (March):**

- Kinross Tour
- Business Week
- County Commissioners Update
- NCW Economic Development District
- PTAC Classes
- NCW Business Loan Fund Board Meeting
- NCW Workforce Development Council Annual Meeting
- Omak Chamber Presentation

**Contract Renewal:**

- Okanogan County (Waiting for resolution)
- SBDC (verbal-no changes in funding should see the contract in May)
- PUD Contract (Sent-waiting for signed contract back)
- ADO (Renew June 2013)
- OCTC (MOU will be at March 7<sup>th</sup> board mtg)

**Business Education classes:**

- February 13, 2013 Michael Nash (Behavior Styles 100) (Internal Customer Service (94)
- Eastern Washington PTAC-Spring Series WOBC currently have 15 individuals signed up, Gov 101 we have 5 registered.

**2012 Year End Data: Direct client Services offered by the Economic Alliance/SBDC**

<b>CLIENTS</b>	<b>HOURS</b>	<b>JOBS CREATED</b>	<b>JOBS SAVED</b>	<b>CAPITOL Invested</b>
130	416.5	27	5	\$4,605,365