

**The Economic Alliance**  
**Board Meeting**  
August 22, 2012

**Attending Board Members:**

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

Arnie Marchand  
Kurt Danison  
John Andrist  
George Brady  
Alison Gillette

**Absent Board Members:**

Kyle Desautel, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman  
Amanda Jackson, Secretary  
Andy Lampe  
Steve Kreider  
Art Himmler

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

**Staff & Guests:**

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Executive Director  
Carolyn Davis, Admin. Assistant  
Nancy Nash, WorkSource  
Sheila Kennedy, Commissioner Candidate  
Lisa Hathaway, WorkSource/Omak Chamber  
Pamela Bob, Colville Tribal Member  
Debi Condon, CTFC  
Ron Best, Colville Tribal Member

Jennifer Korfiatis, EDD  
Mark Berreth, Employment Security Dept.  
Jim Detro, Ok Co. Commissioner  
Perry Huston, Okanogan County Planning Director  
Laura Clark, Colville Tribal Conservation  
David Kaluta, Winthrop Chamber  
Ray Dobbs, North Cascades National Bank  
Cindy Gagne, Mayor, city of Omak

Chairman, Rich Watson, called the meeting to order and asked for introductions. The agenda was approved as presented. Lael Duncan made a motion to approve the minutes of July 25, 2012. Gail Howe seconded. Motion passed.

**Guest Speaker**

Debi Condon, Human Resource Manager for the Colville Tribal Federal Corporation (CTFC), spoke about the business arm of the Colville Confederated Tribes. The CTFC is headquartered in Coulee Dam and currently manages 13 enterprises that include gaming, recreation and tourism, retail and construction. CTFC continues to be an economic leader in the region. The corporation employs over 550 people and generates over \$100 million in revenues each year. The gaming division employs close to 300 people and benefits the local economy with over \$12 million in payroll each year. Profits from gaming have enabled the Tribe to retain programs and services which were previously funded by governmental sources. They do have a green light to move forward with the new Omak casino, but are still waiting on the financing package. This project would also include a 72 room hotel and events center and would provide about 150 jobs. The industrial park at the old mill site is being looked at for a bulk fuel storage site. It is also being considered by Dragon Tech Manufacturing, which makes fire resistant gear for the armed forces. Debi stated there are lots of different business options for this property. They are also looking at several solar power sites and the main market for the power would be California. You can contact Debi at 509 634-3220 or 634-3258 for any further information.

**Executive Director Report**

Roni Holder-Diefenbach distributed her monthly report. (Attachment #1) Roni reported that we switched web designers and she met with the new company yesterday and is excited to get the new site up and going. The most recent newsletter was sent out yesterday and if you did not receive it please leave your email address and you will be added to the list. This newsletter will also be posted on the web site as well as Facebook and Twitter. The web site will also have new technology that will allow us

to show business success stories via YouTube, a picture slideshow and demographic information with automatic updates from the U.S. Census.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach attended the Omak Stampede Kickoff barbeque dinner and was able to make contact with County Commissioners and new members of the Tribal Council. She will be assisting in coordinating a government-to-government meeting with the county and the tribe.

The rescheduled government contracting seminar is tentatively set for September 25. She is also working with Earth & Sky Studios in Twisp to schedule training for social media training that would be "Beyond Facebook & Twitter". This would target retail businesses and e-commerce type businesses.

She also had another meeting with County Planning Department Director, Perry Huston, to continue to discuss the potential opportunity of developing certified sites in Okanogan County. Perry Huston stated that certified sites were not a new idea, but a way to get property ready and more marketable for potential buyers. They hope to get a meeting schedule with city planners.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach also spoke about an upcoming training offered through Inland NW Partners. This will be held in Pullman on September 13 and the topic is "Building Successful Communities". She encouraged anyone that is interested in attending to contact her. Rich Watson also stated that these trainings provided by the Inland NW Partners are well worth the time, as they usually have very high quality speakers.

### **Board Business**

**Vacant Board Positions:** There are still three vacant positions on the Board, At Large #2, Nespelem/Coulee Dam Area #2, the Okanogan County Tourism Council representative. Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that she has two possibilities for the vacant positions.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

**Treasurers Report:** An updated cash flow projection was distributed to Board members with actual through July. Coleen Couch reported that the anticipated funding from the SBDC was received in July as well as the ADO funding, which made the month look very good. Kinross Gold will be contributing \$10,000 to the Economic Alliance this year and we should have those funds by the end of September.

**Communication Committee:** No Report.

**Infrastructure Committee:** No Report.

**Business Education Committee:** No Report.

### **Old Business**

Mark Berreth spoke about the recent Labor Market Report. Okanogan County's preliminary unemployment rate of 7.2% is 1.5% points below June 2012 and .3% points below the July 2011 figures. All growth is contributed to agricultural employment during the height of the season. He also stated that wholesale trade has been increasing.

Rich Watson and Roni Holder-Diefenbach briefly spoke about the upcoming Business Forum, which has been moved to February 2013. There were several conflicts in time and February seems to be the best time. We are still trying to secure a date and speakers. Rich Watson again asked for any ideas for speakers.

## **New Business**

Jennifer Korfiatis spoke about the upcoming Business Startup Weekend, scheduled for October 5 – 7 in Wenatchee. This is a weekend-long, hands-on experience where entrepreneurs and aspiring entrepreneurs can find out if startup ideas are viable. She also spoke about the new NCW Connect web site – [www.ncwconnect.org](http://www.ncwconnect.org) – This is a cohesive point for information for the three county area. It has a customized business search application where you can search for assistance on specific business topics within so many miles. She encouraged everyone take a look at the site and provide feedback. There is also a business plan competition, New Venture Challenge. You can bring your new business ideas to compete in this regional business plan competition. Entrants can select to compete in one of three categories: Retail, Professional/Technical, or Student. There are prizes valued at over \$21,000 and letters of intent are due by September 1 and entries are due by October 15.

Gail Howe reported that she took Jon Wyss from Gebbers Farms up on his offer of a tour of their facilities. She was very impressed with the operations and found it very interesting.

Rich Watson reported that the NCW Business Loan Fund received a grant from the US Treasury for \$99,950. This was a highly competitive program and he is very pleased to have been selected. They will use part of the funds to hire a consulting firm to do a marketing study. This will help them ascertain the needs of the area.

Kurt Danison reported that the city of Tonasket has received a grant and will be able to do the sewer line which will connect 59 people in a residential neighborhood. He also suggested that someone develop a Stampede Zip Line or a White Water Park on the river. Anything that causes people to stick around and spend money is good for the economy.

Alison Gillette stated that Twisp Works applied for a Rural Business Opportunity Grant. They will hear hopefully by the end of October if they are approved. They plan to hold a series of classes held around TwispWorks' core focus -- art, agriculture, and innovation.

Lisa Hathaway reported that a Hiring Event will take place this Friday at the WorkSource office for Home Depot, from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Meeting adjourned 12:25.

**Next Meeting September 26, 11 – 1, at the Koala Street Grill. Please mark your calendars! Guest speaker, Omak Downtown Association.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Carolyn Davis, Administrative Assistant



**ECONOMIC ALLIANCE**

**Economic Director Report**

**August 2012**

The month of August has really flown by. This month we have made it a priority to finish our website by the 31<sup>st</sup>. We switched web designers and are well on our way to a September 1<sup>st</sup> launch date. The website will have a new look, with updated technology that will allow us to show business success stories via YouTube, picture slideshow, demographic information with automatic updates from the Census website as well as online registration and payment for events/classes. We are also able to use the new technology to link all the Social Networking including Constant Contact (newsletter software) to automatically update to the website. This should reduce the amount of time that is needed to keep the website accurate and current.

We also had the opportunity to attend the Omak Stampede Kick off barbeque which was a great networking opportunity. I had the opportunity to meet with some of the Colville Business Council and the Okanogan County Commissioners who again shared their interest in holding a government to government meeting which the Economic Alliance will assist in facilitating. The goal is to shoot for Early 2013 after the elections take place.

Business Education classes in the works:

- Government Contracting, we are shooting for a September 25<sup>th</sup> date here in Omak. Leslie Miller from PTAC will be the presenter.
- 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 October.