

The Economic Alliance
Board Meeting
September 25, 2013
Koala Street Grill, Omak

Attending Board Members:

Rich Watson, Chairman
Nan Kallunki, 1st Vice Chairman
Kurt Danison
Sheilah Kennedy

Gail Howe
Andy Lampe
Arnie Marchand

Absent Board Members:

Kyle Desautel, 2nd Vice Chairman
Coleen Couch, Treasurer
Amanda Jackson, Secretary
Lael Duncan, Past Chairman
John Andrist
Melanie Wyss
Steve Kreider

George Brady
Alison Gillette
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
Jennifer Korfiatis, EDD

Sam McKee, NCW Business Loan Fund
Jay Hirst, Tonasket
Dennis Carlton, Carlton Financial
Ros Jennings, Minnesota

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

Dennis Carlton, Carlton Financial in Omak, spoke about the Affordable Health Care Act. He stated that he has been in the investment and insurance business for 38 years and is a New York Life representative. His son, Drew is also a New York Life agent and works with him in the business. Mr. Carlton was one of the first agents to represent Blue Cross insurance. Individual and small groups insurance is changing and the Affordable Health Care Act is making them change. Twenty-five percent of people in Okanogan County are not insured. This will be a new way to purchase health care insurance. The Health Insurance Exchange is supposed to create more competition and some will get subsidized if they are low income. This is supposed to kick off on October 1. The Health Care Exchange will have navigators hired by the Insurance Commissioner to help people through the system. Beginning on January 1, 2014, if you don't have insurance you will be penalized and fined. Fines will be small to start with, but will increase. The IRS is the oversight organization for this Health Care Act. He felt that our local hospitals will be better off and should receive more payments and will not have to write-off as much debt. Mr. Carlton spoke about where the funds will be coming from to provide the subsidized health insurance. It is felt that new taxes on the sale of property, as well taxes on various products and services will provide the funds.

Jennifer Korfiatis asked if there had been any discussion about the barriers to getting in to see doctors. Usually there is a 2 to 3 month wait now, but if another 25% of the population is added it will take even longer. Rich Watson stated that uninsured people average slightly over one visit per year, while Medicaid patients seek medical assistance over five times per year, thereby significantly increasing the demand for medical services.

This new Affordable Health Care Act is still ill-defined and will transform the way health care is provided. Mr. Carlton stated that it is a tough subject with lots of unknowns.

Executive Director Report

Roni Holder-Diefenbach distributed a report for the past three months (see attachment #1) and spoke about working with Sally Harris with the Department of Commerce Work Start Program. They are working to put together a training program for the Omak Wood Products to increase training for employees. Omak Wood Products will need to train an additional two or possibly three shifts, when they are in full production. The focus of this program is to increase employment. Roni reported that she has also spoken with Gebbers and Reman & Reload about possible training programs.

The Omak Wood Products will be starting production very soon and have hired about 80 employees. They worked with WorkSource to fill job orders. There is an Indian preference, but they want the best possible person for the job. They will be holding a ribbon cutting ceremony on October 7, noon to 2, and have invited the governor to attend, as well as local officials and those that have help to get the mill up and operating.

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.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach also reported that the Economic Alliance’s ADO business plan was finalized and submitted to the Department of Commerce. The Department has gone away from the overall “cookie-cutter” approach for deliverables for ADO reports and has let each ADO select from a guideline of activities.

She also met with Pateros Council member George Brady, who shared a flyer that Pateros has developed to attract potential new businesses. She felt this would be a good template for other communities in our area. We are also looking at a new way of providing information about our area, which would be a simple fact sheet and very condensed and easy to access.

Board Business

Vacant Position: There are still three positions that are vacant on the Economic Alliance Board. Nesplem/Coulee Dam Area #1 & #2 positions and an At-Large Position. Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that Roxanne Best is interested in one of the Nespelem/Coulee Dam Area positions, but wants to attend a few meetings. Also the new Omak School Superintendent is also a possible person for the At-Large position. No action taken.

Rich Watson also stated that we need to select a Nomination Committee, which will bring forward a slate of officers for 2014 and Board members for the upcoming Board positions that expire at the end of the year.

Standing Committee Reports

Treasurers Report: Carolyn reported that the current cash flow projections look good. We did receive our first half of the funds from the Okanogan County PUD in August and also received a contribution from Kinross Gold in September.

Communication Committee: No report.

Infrastructure Committee: No report.

Business Education Committee: No report.

Old Business

No Old Business

New Business

Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that the Initiative for Rural Innovation & Stewardship (IRIS) will be showcasing a variety of success stories when it teams up with partners to convene the 5th annual NCW Community Success Summit in Okanogan on November 20, 2013. "Okanogan - Small Town, Strong Community" is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Okanogan Middle School. Rich Watson encouraged anyone that hasn't attended one of these Success Summits in the past to attend, it will be very worthwhile.

Kurt Danison stated that Maury Forman will be at Chelan City Hall on October 10, 6 – 7:30 p.m. to discuss creating healthy communities and developing a culture of entrepreneurship in rural areas. Mr. Forman is also the founder and director of the award winning Northwest Economic Development course at Central Washington University. He currently serves on the Board for the Bollinger Foundation which provides grants to youth of a deceased parent that has worked in community or economic development. Earlier this year, he was recognized by the Teens in Public Service Foundation with the Unsung Hero Award for his work with "at risk" kids. In 2012, he became the first recipient of the Finkle Leadership Award in International Economic Development for his "integrity, tenacity, and philanthropic spirit in the profession". He also received the 2012 Governor's Performance Award for exceptional work in rural communities. Maury is the author and editor of numerous books on economic development. You need to RSVP to Peri Gallucci at pgallucci@cityofchelan.us by October 10, 2013 to reserve your seat!

Jennifer Korfiatis, EDD Coordinator, spoke about the "Plug-in" Charging Stations that are being installed around the NCW. The newest one is at the Pine Near RV Park in Winthrop. These travelers/tourist are high dollar visitors and we need to encourage them to visit by having these charging stations.

Rich Watson also spoke about an upcoming program at WVC for people working on these hybrid cars. Roni Holder-Diefenbach also asked everyone to "like" the Economic Alliance Facebook page, as she posts a lot of information about upcoming programs and activities on this page.

Meeting adjourned 12:40.

Next Meeting October 23, 2013, 11 – 1, at the Koala Street Grill. Please mark your calendars!

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Davis, Administrative Assistant

ATTACHMENT #1



April-June 2013

Economic Alliance Quarterly Report:

April:

- .09 Application and Funding (City of Tonasket Emerging Opportunity)
- CCT Presentation on the Industrial Park (Omak) collaboration
- 2013 IRIS Success Summit Planning Meeting (Okanogan HS)
- NCW Business Loan Fund Credit Committee Mtg.

May:

- Pine Meadows Open House (Affordable Senior Housing)
- Presented to the Omak City Council w/Tribe
- Assisted the City of Omak in coordinating presentation to the Tribal Council to discuss water rights on East Side Omak.
- ADO Meeting in Tacoma
- TERO-Logging Contractors/Employment Opportunity Meeting
- TERO, CCT Employment & Training, Worksource Okanogan, Tribal TANF, WVC at Omak, Tribal College & Economic Alliance met with Wood Resources to identify employment and training needs.
- Confirmed and promoted Social Meeting Training for June 4 & 11
- Met with Senator Smith to discuss Economic Development Opportunities for Okanogan County and how we can work together to assist businesses in meeting their needs.
- Met with Cascade & Columbia River railroad to discuss the current business and potential business expansion and infrastructure of the rail.

June:

- Social Media Class-14 Small Businesses represented at classes from throughout Okanogan County.
- Met with CCT Planning & City of Omak to discuss casino expansion
- NCW Economic Development District meeting
- Via 97-Tourism promotion for RV Travelers (signature experiences for NCW travelers)
- Confirmed and coordinated dates and location for Wood Resources training-June 27 & July 1 for the initial classes and screening.
- NCW Project Selection Committee- Okanogan County had 1 project submitted and it ranked number 3 for the region: Winthrop Ice Arena.

Direct Small Business Assistance:

April 1-June 18, 2013

32 clients seen, 4 of these had from 5 – 10 hours of direct assistance from our Small Business Advisor (with help on their business plan or financing applications).

Majority of businesses or proposed businesses were in the retail trade or accommodation and food services industry. One business received a \$200,000 line of credit and the owner had an investment of \$100,000 with two new jobs created.