

MEMBERS PRESENT

Teran Doerr
Shawn Kessel
Gwen Crawford
Jay Doan
KayCee Lindsey
Megan Laudenschlager

Dawn Mandt
Antoinette Heier
Lindsey Lipp
Carol Peterson
Janne Mirdahl
Daniel Stenberg

GUESTS PRESENT

Maria Effertz
Melinda Padilla Lynch
Tammy Heick
Emma Cook
Rich Garman
Katie Ralston Howe
Sherri Frieze

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Chairperson Dawn Mandt called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m., welcoming members and guests.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Minutes

MOTION: It was moved by Megan Laudenschlager, seconded by Lindsey Lipp to approve the Rural Development Council minutes of August 19, 2022. Motion carried.

RDC QUARTERLY MEETING DATES FOR 2023

Sherri Frieze

Due to 2023 being a legislative session year, it was decided to wait until the first of the year to set quarterly meeting dates with the council.

GOVERNOR LED JAPAN TRADE MISSION

Cortnee Jensen

Shawn Kessel

The Governor led trade mission to Japan was conducted the first week in October, emphasizing agriculture, energy, technology, and investment. The 35 – member delegation included ND Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring, leadership and staff from the North Dakota Trade Office (NDTO), ND Department of Commerce, ND Governor's Office, Bank of North Dakota, North Dakota State University, and representatives from several ND companies. The mission achieved a host of new partnerships between ND business professionals, the private sector, and government entities. Solidifying these relationships will bring about positive change for both ND and Japan.

Throughout the mission, Governor Burgum highlighted the technology and innovation blossoming in ND for a variety of industries. Eight export-focused companies met one-on-one with interested buyers and associations to build relations and showcase ND products. Each company represented the state well in its key export industry. The delegation was welcomed warmly throughout, and it was a privilege to have such gracious hosts during the week-long mission.

MAIN STREET SUMMIT FOLLOW UP

Shawn Kessel

- 880 attendees, 423 new attendees
- 27 states engaged online
- 9 different countries

Members discussed pros and cons of the summit.

Pros:

- Free admission
- Booth traffic was good
- Youth panel was good

Cons and Suggestions for next year:

- Low attendees by more locals could have been to the late harvest, taking priority.
- ND legislators had many meetings currently planned during this time.
- Bring back the room hosts
- More table discussion created from the speakers
- More ways to wrap speaker discussion back around rural community vs big city
- Nominees for MSI awards – more communication to be given ahead of time
- Recognition of all nominees on the stage for MSI awards
- More communication about community projects that were awarded – could be done in writing or after the summit.
- Planning Committee or Steering committee to be created for MSI outside of Commerce employees
- RDC subcommittee to field MSI topics for 2023
- Deeper dive into workforce for next year
- More focus on remote and hybrid jobs for next year
- Focus on People Attraction – use this term instead of workforce. Inclusion of families

LEGISLATIVE POLICY

Community Development – Maria Effertz
Economic Development – Shawn Kessel
Workforce – Katie Ralston Howe

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Focus on **Energizing Our Communities plan**, announced by Governor Burgum during the Main Street Summit. Multiple proposals totaling over \$20 million. The plan is to energize towns, cities, and counties as they work to enhance smart, efficient infrastructure to create healthy, vibrant communities, diversifying the economy to attract new residents to ND and help retain our youth and existing workforce.

The “**Energizing Our Communities**” plan includes:

- \$10 million for a **Rural Revitalization and Redevelopment Grant Program** to promote in-fill development in cities with 5,000 people or less, especially in blighted areas hit hard by population and business loss.
- Encouraging investment in city centers through **Renaissance Zone 2.0**, which will build on the 23 years of success of the existing Renaissance Zone Program by allowing communities and projects to rejoin the program and expanding the benefit and renewal periods.
- Renaissance Zones offer **income and property tax incentives** to taxpayers for engaging in qualifying zone projects that improve properties and build tax base.
- \$5 million for a **Rural Workforce Housing Program** as recommended by regional planning councils to increase workforce housing options through the reuse of blighted infrastructure with private sector collaboration. Grants would be used to acquire and transform land into market-ready parcels.
- \$5 million for **Local Parks and Recreation Grants**, building off the success of the existing Park District Facility Renovation Grant and expanding it to make counties and tribal partners also eligible for the matching grants.
- \$800,000 to expand the **Partners in Planning and Vibrancy Grants**.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Want to look more at industrial park project creation, reducing costs for project development, sharing of all infrastructure.

- NIMBY challenge will be lessened
- Big initiative this legislative session
- The state can help with de-risking of the project

RED TIRE PROGRAM

A program that was considered three years ago for North Dakota but was let go with the onset of Covid. The program works to link graduates from universities to existing businesses in their state. A graduate will take over a business that could be going through an owner retirement and would like the business to continue on. The program is not a broker system, but a marketing program to list businesses for sale.

WORKFORCE

Recommendations from the Workforce Development Council (WDC) were addressed during a special meeting on the last day of the Main Street Summit. The recommendations, totaling over \$50 million, focuses on five key concepts,

1.) career exploration and preparation; 2.) addressing the technical skills gap; 3.) recruitment and retention; 4.) removing barriers to employment; and 5.) occupational licensure reform.

Career Exploration

- \$171.3M for expanding area Career & Tech Centers & CTE programming
Create and train Work Based Learning, Coordinators, & Career Advisors
Hire Apprenticeship Coordinator

Recruitment and Retention

- \$50 m for local workforce solutions
- \$15 million for talent attraction and retention initiatives
- Create Global Talent Task Force
- Endorsement – NDUS Re-energize ND

Occupational Licensure Reform

- Develop a central directory of all licensing boards
- Endorsement for polices that expedite pathway to licensure for current and new North Dakotans

Removing Barriers

- Develop job placement pilot program for formerly incarcerated individuals
- Leverage federal Digital Equity Act (DEA) funds to advance digital skill training opportunities for adult learners, job seekers, and workers.

Endorsement:

- Supporting Working Families Childcare Plan

RURAL HOUSING TASK FORCE

Dawn Mandt

Housing needs assessment discussion included:

- Impediments and Solutions
- Housing Incentive Fund Findings
- Case Study – building a 4 plex apartment

Conclusions

- 1.) Without subsidy, rent is unaffordable in most rural communities on small-scale projects
- 2.) The ROI is too low without a subsidy to attract a private developer.
- 3.) Gap funding is required to reduce bond debt and achieve marketable rents
- 4.) A shared equity (EDC, JDA, corporate partner) can increase ROI

Housing Incentive Fund (HIF) – Recommendation to support rural housing construction

NEXT MEETING

Not all agenda topics were covered during the meeting and could be brought forward at the next quarterly meeting.

Those items not covered to be brought forward:

Policy Recommendations – view through a rural lens

- Do the policy recommendations address rural community issues in the key areas

Rural Capacity Systems

- Regionally driven solutions and assisting small towns
 - RWIP model applied to other complex issues

Subcommittee membership

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Annette Heier and seconded by Daniel Stenberg to adjourn the meeting at 3:10 p.m.