

2014 Annual Report



Do Business... Enjoy Life!



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Backus/Longville Small Cities Development Program

We obtained a grant for \$410,000 which will be used to rehabilitate commercial and residential homes in the two cities. We also obtained \$11,700 in accompanying grants from CERTS and Wells Fargo for additional local funding. Our goal is to help local community residents take care of their buildings and be more attractive for new business development.

Backwoods Furniture

This is a business we have worked with in the past on planning, financing, and securing permits to move to Sylvan Township. In 2013, owners Kyle and Char Stanish again sought our assistance to develop a new line of bedroom furniture. Backwoods Furniture sells wholesale and has six employees.

Bayside Cabins & Resort

New owners Ron and Eileen Heil sought our assistance to purchase this business in Backus. We helped with cash flow analysis and creating a business plan. "We would highly recommend Cass County EDC to any one who needs assistance with their business projects," states Eileen Heil.

Central Lakes College Satellite

CLC will be offering healthcare classes at their satellite site in Pine River during the spring semester. This is a project we helped start in 2011 and now is starting up again. They will offer NSGA 1110 Nursing Assistant starting in January and NSGA 1115 Home Health Aide starting in March. We helped this effort because there is a much lower rate of unemployment for people that have higher levels of education.

We coordinated a scholarship fund for students who will be attending at this satellite site.



The economy has been much improved in 2014! Eight projects were completed this year with our assistance that created or retained 39 jobs.

Overall, 697 jobs were created with EDC assistance since 2004. More than \$51 million was invested to broaden the tax base in our cities and townships. We are very proud of this return on investment of \$1,626 per job. Supporting economic development in this way is cost effective and produces results!

For the new year, we will continue to provide professional economic development services. **Again, our only goal is to help our communities prosper and grow!**

Thank you, Gail Levenson, Executive Director

The Cass County EDC is a community based non profit corporation (501c3). Operations are supported through membership investments, Cass County contributions and contracts for services.

Board of Directors

Bill Palmer

Essentia Health

Jay Cline

*First National Bank
of Walker*

Jim Tertin

Magnum Research

Darrel Thomas

*Anderson Brothers
Construction*

Jason Pederson

*Fuller, Wallner,
Cayko, Pederson &
Huseby, LTD*

Dave Holk

Cass Lake Lumber

Anna Hunstad

The Shante

Nathan Sauvageau

Individual member

Jeff Sheldon

Lake County Power

EX-Officios

Neal Gaalswyk

Bob Kangas



Office Personnel

Gail Leverson,
Executive
Director

Lisa Stenzel,
Office
Manager

De Vita Dialysis Center

We worked with this company for the past 18 months on site selection, expansion options, and financing. De Vita Healthcare Partners, Inc. will expand their operation in Cass Lake and build a \$1.4 million facility. This will retain four jobs and will create two new ones. The new facility will benefit the city and patients alike. Construction will start in early 2015.

Lee's Welding and Repair, LLC

This is a welding and repair shop owned by Lee Wangstad. The new building worth is \$275,000 and it is located in Lake Shore. This company will do general welding for the public, business to business, welding work to support manufacturing and boat repair. Two new jobs will be created by this business. "Gail modeled a plan that I could understand and a schedule that had believable milestone dates. Cass County EDC made the whole process work for me," states Lee Wangstad.

Northern Sales & Manufacturing, LLC

Owners Jeff Drexler and David Handeland worked us over three years to find a northern site to expand manufacturing of Ice Castle Fishhouses. They purchased a building in Pine River and will create 20 jobs in the next two years. They manufacture, service, and sell Ice Castle Fishhouses at this site. The financing was provided entirely by us at the EDC. This business creates living wage jobs so families can move to the area. "... always willing to help and answer questions," states David Handeland.

Pine River Bakery

John and Julie Sigafus saw a wonderful opportunity realize their dreams of owning a bakery when the Pine River Bakery came up for sale. They sought our assistance at the EDC while still living in Superior, Wisconsin. They developed a business plan, financial projections, and a loan structure with our help by phone before they came to Minnesota. They took over the Bakery on July 1, 2014. "... very helpful and thorough," states Julie Sigafus.

Letter to the EDC Members:

Our mission is "To attract and retain businesses in Cass County". It is with our mission in mind that I am pleased by the results we have been able to achieve this past year in creating and retaining jobs in Cass County. Each job is vitally important and benefits our community. The continued improvement we have seen in our unemployment rate is encouraging, and we are excited about our future.

I personally want to thank our Executive Director Gail and our Board of Directors for all their work and efforts this past year. They work tirelessly to create and retain jobs, and are committed to growth and economic development within our county. It has been a privilege for me to serve as President this past year, and I am honored to serve and work with such a committed group.



Lastly, we thank all of our member's for their support. Our work is only possible with our member's support. If you're not a member, we hope you will consider it and help us in supporting economic development. Our success is amplified when we all work together. Together, we can continue to build upon past successes and continue the positive momentum in economic development that's occurring in our county.

Sincerely, Bill Palmer, CCEDC President

MISSION: " To
attract and retain busi-
ness in Cass County."

VISION STATEMENT: Be the "Go
To" economic development organiza-
tion to increase jobs, growth, and tax
base in Cass County.

CORE VALUES: Professional-
ism, Integrity, Passion, Confi-
dentiality, Accountability, Per-
sistence