



Agreement approved with EDC

Cass County Board

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Cass County Correspondent

WALKER - The Cass County Board approved a service agreement Tuesday to continue a cost-free lease for office space in the county land department building and to provide annual payments for services of \$37,500 to Cass County Economic Development Corp.

The agreement comes in response to EDC concerns about how to budget operations after the county cut more than in half after the year began its initial 2010 contribution amount for EDC.

The county initially had allocated \$37,500 for EDC, but cut 10 percent from that, then later cut the balance in half, paying only \$16,875 total for 2010. This was in response to the county's anticipated loss of state aid funding.

Former EDC president Terry Freeman said Tuesday EDC will spend down reserve funds this year to cover the lost county revenue, but cannot afford to do that more than one year.

Cass EDC Director Gail Levenson reported to the board she received 120 requests for information and business assistance. She worked with 32 businesses, which have a potential to create 153 jobs and make \$42,674,731 in capital investments.

These include 19 potential new businesses, 10 expansions, two needing consulting services and one involving a purchase.

Of those, 15 were manufacturing enterprises, nine involved retail, six were health care-related and one provides other services. The largest number would be or are located in Pine River and Walker. The rest are scattered among Remer, Cass Lake, Longville, Backus and Hackensack.

A recently completed new business project where EDC assisted is Leech Lake Brewery at Walker. That business employs two people and made a \$250,000 investment to manufacture handcrafted beer.

Another is Cool Beans Coffee Shop and Mother Earth's Bounty in the Pine River area. That coffee shop and organic grocery store will employ seven people and made an \$89,500 investment.

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