

COMING ATTRACTIONS

NEWS From the Cass County Economic Development Corporation

Cass County Manufacturers Association Invite

The first meeting of this group is being planned for September 9th at the Red Pine in Pine River. If your business makes and wholesales a product, you are invited! Networking will begin at 11:30 with lunch and a speaker to follow. Anthony Schaufauser, of the Bemidji Workforce Center, will speak on the correlation of a quality workforce and wages. Cost is \$10 per person. Call EDC Board member Lynn Hunt at 218-587-4880, to reserve a spot.

JOBZ Changes in Place

State legislators have made some changes to the JOBZ program. These changes will strengthen the program in 2006.

- Relocating businesses must show an employment increase of 5 to become a qualifying business.
- The wage floor for qualifying businesses is now 110% of the poverty guideline for a family of four, which is \$10.23 per hour in Cass County.
- Retail businesses will not be allowed to participate in JOBZ. Retail use has been discouraged since the programs inception, as the quality of job creation was not strong enough to warrant use of JOBZ. DEED will be releasing a definition for retail very soon, although it is commonly defined as a business that derives a majority of its income from the end user of their product.

USDA Grant Awarded

Cass County will benefit from increased business development assistance thanks to a grant from USDA. The \$30,713 will provide classes and counseling for prospective businesses and stretch the EDC budget so we will be able to offer quality technical assistance into 2006.

"This funding will help Cass County give current or potential businesses the resources necessary for an expansion or start-up ventures," stated Steve Wenzel, State Director for USDA.

Universal Shoreline

Universal Shoreline is a new business that is locating just north of Backus on Highway #371. In 2004, Blair Ecker came to the Cass County Economic Development Corporation (EDC) at the request of his lender. He and a partner had operated a cabin maintenance business, Universal Cabin Care, for a few years and Blair wanted to expand.

Blair decided to expand into dock sales to build year round revenue and he felt the new location would be a perfect place to attract new customers traveling north. The EDC assisted with business counseling and preparation of the loan package. Construction of the \$200,000 building began in early summer and financing is being provided by First National Bank of Walker.

Bear Pause Theatre is a Reality

The much anticipated theatre development in Hackensack broke ground on August 3rd. Bear Pause Theatre, owned by Denny Wickham and Kevin Larson, is estimated to take four months to construct. It will have 4 screens and seating for 512 and is located just east of Highway #371 on #5. It is being financed by Centennial National Bank and the Initiative Foundation. The EDC provided technical assistance to the projects development.

Congratulations Denny and Kevin!

Whalen Woods Log Furniture

The EDC was happy to assist Jim Whalen in the relocation of his manufacturing plant to Sylvan Township. The business will relocate eight jobs and create five new jobs by his estimated operations start date. He anticipates hiring five additional employees during the first year at his new location. His building project, being constructed by Kuepers Construction, is underway and is expected to cost \$530,000. Sylvan Township approved a JOBZ designation in July.

Whalen Woods Log Furniture operates retail outlets in Pequot Lakes, Becker and Baxter. They feel that moving the manufacturing plant from its retail locations will make the company more efficient.



Universal Shoreline