

Coming Attractions

News From the
Cass County Economic Development Corporation

October, 2008

Backwoods Furniture, Inc. Begins Operations in Cass County

Owners, Kris and Shar Johnson, recently relocated their furniture manufacturing operations to Sylvan Township in southern Cass County. Their four year old business was formerly in a leased building and they needed more space. They found an existing building that they purchased and operations began August 1st.

Backwoods manufacturers and wholesale's a variety of finished and unfinished furniture styles. The move will allow them to expand their up-north and log furniture lines. The EDC worked with the company on business planning, financing and securing permits with Sylvan Township. The total project cost was \$406,000 and was financed by Bremer Bank in Brainerd. They project hiring twelve workers.

"EDC assistance we received was very good"

Kris Johnson - Backwoods Furniture



Northwood's Marine & Power Sports

Mark and Jennie Birkeland are completing construction of two storage buildings, 60' x 104' located east of Walker on Hwy 200. They service boats, motors and sport equipment and will soon offer storage and shrink wrap for, boats, pontoons, snowmobiles and other outdoor sport equipment. Financing for this \$140,000 project was provided by the First National Bank of Walker. The EDC worked with Mark on completing his business plan and financial cash flows. The Birkeland's plan to employ two.

Former Pine River Library Building Rehabbed

The former Pine River Library, located on Barclay Avenue, recently received a facelift from new owner, Christopher O'Dell. The building had been empty for a number of years and is now home to a new business.



O'Dell sought EDC assistance before purchasing the building to determine if rehabbing it would be cost effective. *"The EDC's assistance was an integral part of this project - it gave me great ideas and the confidence to proceed,"* stated Mr. O'Dell. Pine River Mayor Jim Sabas stated, *"The project was a plus for the city. It took a dilapidated building that needed tender loving care and turned it into a building that is now bringing in new business."*

Kenwood Enterprise, LLC

Owner Dan Witt, is in the process of completing construction of a granulated plastics recycling facility in Sylvan Township near Pillager, MN. Mr. Witt will obtain raw materials from secondary suppliers and recycle them into a granulated product to be sold to other businesses who make products such as lawn edging. Dan constructed a \$220,000 new building and plans to hire four workers.



"The EDC did a great job,"

Dan Witt

Soaring Eagle Providing Needed Transportation

This medical transportation business recently began operations in the Cass Lake area providing transportation to medical appointments statewide. The three owners worked with the EDC over a six month period to create a business plan and secure financing. They plan to purchase four vehicles and employ three drivers and on coordinator for their newbusiness. Financing was by Western Bank of Cass Lake and NCEDA.

Board Members

Terry Freeman
Heather Schmit
Howard Prushek
Cy Struss
Jay Cline
Vicki White
Kent Eveland
Dave Cribb
Julie Hofius
Neil Smith
Skip Duchesneau, Jr.

Ex Officio's

Jeff Peterson
Bob Kangas
Bob Yochum

Advisory Board

Dave Johnson
John Wetrosky
John Grimley
John Weins

Staff

Gail Levenson
Rachel Krumwiede



Cass County Economic Development Corporation

PO Box 142
Backus, MN 56435

Phone: 218.947.7522
Fax: 218.947.7528

We're on the Web! www.co.cass.mn.us/edc

Your Annual Meeting

Yes, your 5th annual meeting will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 5, 2008. "Working Together – A partnership for a Vibrant Cass County Economy" will be at Northern Lights Casino and starts at 5:30 PM. This is your organization and Cass County residents, EDC members and friends are invited. Keynote speaker Jim Hoolihan, President and CEO of Blandin Foundation, will address the benefit of small, rural com-

munities collaborating to improve the economic well being to all. Steven C. Olson, President of Leisure Hotel Corporation will speak about the development of The Chase Hotel, Resort and Spa – located in Walker. Jani Wiebolt, President and CEO of St. Joseph's Medical Center will speak about the development process of The Hackensack Family Clinic. Both projects received coordination assistance from the EDC

and represent very important amenities in Cass County. Come and hear a summary of this year's activities! A business meeting will be held with election of officers for voting members. Tickets are \$20 each and reservations are requested. Please contact the EDC office at 218-947-7523 or cass.edc@co.cass.mn.us to RSVP.



Note From The Executive Director

With the current economic environment, businesses may think that this is a difficult time to take on a start up, expansion or relocation. There are still great oppor-

tunities and financing for business development. Some of the common tools we use in loan packaging include SBA and gap financing and guarantee programs. All programs work with commercial lender participation. Business loans will require at least 20% owner equity in these economic times.

The SBA has the 504 program for larger projects that include real estate acquisition. They have recently added the Patriot Express guarantee program to the Community Express and

Express programs. The Patriot Express is available for veterans, active military, reservists and National Guard members. They have also added the Small and Rural Advantage Program for leaders and businesses in rural communities like us.

Gap programs are consistently available for a variety of state, regional and local sources. Nearly all of the loan packaging that we prepare includes a gap or a SBA tool. In the past year, we have assisted 12 businesses in completing their projects and most have included assistance in financing.

Please call to discuss your project if you have any questions. There may be more opportunities available than you expect.

Welcome New Members

- Jim Tertin
- Lakewood Health System
- Mann Lake LTD.
- Weizenegger-Engel Insurance

THANK YOU
TO OUR SPONSORS

- First National Bank of Walker
- Minnesota Power

CASS COUNTY EDC MISSION STATEMENT

"To improve the business environment of Cass County by encouraging a strong, diverse and sustainable economy and to build better relationships between businesses, government agencies and local communities"