

September 2010



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# Coming Attractions

## News from the Cass County EDC

### CEDAR STREET MARKET UPDATES

Owner, Bonnie Abear, recently consulted the Cass County EDC to assist with re-financing the Cedar Street Market in Pillager. She had determined that the financial set up could be improved upon by combining existing loans into one. This would allow her to retain her four workers and add new products. The bank manager at Pine River State Bank in Pillager referred her to the EDC to determine if the plan was viable. "It was very educational and the EDC was great to work with," Bonnie stated once the \$100,000 project was complete.



**Bonnie Abear, Owner**

### RREAL UPDATE

**Congratulations! Rural Renewable Energy Alliance, RREAL, a private nonprofit organization, works to make solar energy accessible to people of all income levels - especially those living in fuel poverty. They manufacture and install solar panels in an area located in Pine River as part of the Hunt Utility Group campus. The EDC originally worked with the owner, Jason Edens, in 2004.**

**RREAL recently received a \$536,000 grant from the Department of Energy for a manufacturing expansion. There will be 2-3 new jobs created as a result of the grant. "The EDC is very supportive and generous with time," stated Jason.**

**Welcome  
New Members**

**Scarcy  
&  
Associates**

"I'm proud to be a volunteer on the EDC Board knowing that the small investment of my time pays dividends towards positive results in job creation/retention and capital investment in our county."

Cy Struss

**EDC MEMBERS:** You are the heart of our organization. We value your memberships and they keep our revenue stream alive so we can continue to create jobs in Cass County. Early 2008 we set a goal to create 100 jobs in 5 years; to date we have created 135 jobs involving 30 separate businesses. These businesses have invested just north of \$6.5 million in investment in Cass County.

Jim Tertin, President

### Annual meeting is planned for Friday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>

The Cass County Economic Development Corporation annual meeting to recognize achievements and volunteers will be Friday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> at Chase on the Lake in Walker.

Social hour starts at 5:30 PM, buffet dinner and program begins at 6:30 PM. The recognition program will include an update of the corporation's activities and volunteers.

The public is encouraged to attend. Cost is \$25 each and advanced registration is requested. Call 218-947-7523 or email [cass.edc@co.cass.mn.us](mailto:cass.edc@co.cass.mn.us) to register.



## Note from the Executive Director

### Successful Business Advice

Individuals often ask me if their entrepreneurial idea has merit. There are a few key elements in each successful business. Simply put, they are money, market and management.

**\*Money** – Initial owner investment of 20% is needed, plus the ability to leverage more. Good credit, cash flow and other essential elements determine what can be borrowed. Owner investment is a must - so save up and be willing to spend it all.

**\*Market** – To prove your idea has a market, we will gather research and letters of intent. I will send you to similar companies to determine the competition and price. You will “sell” your product, even before it is built! This takes confidence and determination, but you will need both to succeed.

**\*Management** – If you do not give up in business planning, that demonstrates resilience. You will also need to effectively communicate with many types of people, work long hours and make decisions without much time to analyze.

What else is needed to succeed? Ask a business owner about their start up experience. They will most likely enjoy sharing and your alliance will be invaluable.



## Healthcare Study Update

The Cass County communities of Walker, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Leech Lake, Shingobee, Birch Lake and Turtle Lake Townships recently partnered on a healthcare study. The purpose of the study is to determine what options are available for a healthcare campus in northern Cass County.

The study will research and report on at least 10 like sized communities – the type of healthcare facilities, the services they offer and ownership and management options.

Economic projects of this size will require an element of public financing. The Cass County EDC has proudly coordinated this research to help local elected officials make good choices. Thank you, Blandin Foundation and Initiative Foundation, for assisting these communities with the cost of the study.

*Community Partnership for a Vibrant Cass County Economy*

## GROWING CASS COUNTY

Our last strategic plan took place in 2008. The EDC Board recently discussed the economic changes that have occurred since then. We determined the need to aggressively encourage the types of economic development that are vital in healthy, growing communities!

Our new areas of focus include: (1) Healthcare, (2) Manufacturing, including wood products, and (3) Renewable

Energy manufacturing. We are actively marketing Cass County to potential healthcare providers. Economic development efforts to encourage manufacturing include contacts and reaching out to wood manufacturing and renewable energy companies.

We are in the midst of developing new tools that will utilize our resources to attract a quality industrial base.

### Cass EDC Challenge Fund

You have an opportunity to help stretch your donation this year! Cass County utility companies offered to match any new or increased memberships received in 2010.

“We understand there is so much more that could be accomplished to improve the business environment of Cass County by encouraging a strong, diverse and sustainable economy,” states Jeff Sheldon of Lake Country Power.

This is a joint effort between Arvig, CTC, Crow Wing Power, Lake Country Power, and Minnesota Power. A strong grassroots membership leads to increased businesses by being the “eyes and ears” of our communities.

### A Community Non—Profit Corporation

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



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