



**VOYAGE FORWARD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
MARKETING PARTNERSHIP
AUGUST 17, 2016 10:00 AM BACKUS
MEETING MINUTES**

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

KEDA Executive Director Paul Nevanen welcomed the attendees who introduced themselves.

Members Present: Sonja Pelland, Jerry Struss, Sherril Gautreaux, Shawn Mason, Pete Shultz, Tammy Riley, Sue Natysin, Carol Helland, Mike Turenne, Marta Lindemanis, Ken Anderson, Paul Nevanen, Mike Hanson, Bob Anderson, Allen Rasmussen, Brian McBride, Mike Wellcome

II. BACKGROUND – KEDA

Mr. Nevanen gave the group background information on KEDA which was formed in 2000 and is primarily funded by Cold Weather Testing and IRRRB. Koochiching County and the city of International Falls have not funded KEDA since 2012. Nevanen went through the organizational chart describing the numerous partnerships associated with KEDA emphasizing that partnerships are important in our rural area. Nevanen also reviewed a KEDA project timeline with various projects since the creation of KEDA.

III. BACKGROUND – VOYAGE FORWARD

Mike Wellcome presented background information on the Voyage Forward Economic Development Partnership Destiny Driver which was borne out of the Newmark Grubb study and the community engagement survey. The number one recommendation from the Newmark Economic Development Strategy was to develop a regional economic development partnership with broad government, business and citizen representation presenting one message.

IV. PARTNERSHIP PURPOSES AND OUTCOMES

Mr. Nevanen spoke of the importance in developing a message and brand that all associated organizations can use. KEDA worked on branding ideas and a marketing plan with CH Consulting in 2007-2008 which helped to establish a database to market the FTZ. Nevanen referred back to the Newmark Grubb study asking where do we spend our energy – on new business recruitment or nurturing entrepreneurship and business retention.

Voyage Forward Vision

We are one community focused on the future which values our citizens, environment, and unique culture. We are open to all ideas and value the input from our citizens. We understand to improve, we must look to the future and invest in community and economic development



Mr. Wellcome emphasized that the Destiny Driver outlines the desired outcome which is developing a unified brand and messaging which reflects the entire county to be used in all communications, marketing materials and initiatives. The challenges of this goal are recognized, yet development of a brand and unified message is an important first step.

A healthy discussion ensued regarding what this brand would look like. Several members agreed that the existing Voyage Forward logo and tagline “Voyage Forward – Journey to Success” can be that essential simple message. Each community can use this logo on their website with a link to KEDA.

Adopting the logo and tagline is only one is one part of developing a brand. We still need to focus on developing a county wide message to be used on websites, correspondence, etc. while still maintaining our unique individualism and autonomy.

The Visit Cook County process was discussed. Visit Cook County was an initiative designed to bring the tourism industry together under one brand, one message with individual stories within Cook County (www.visitcookcounty.com). Further discussion on this will happen at the next meeting while developing the unified message.

V. IDENTIFY NEXT STEPS

The next step is for each community and organization to discuss incorporating the Voyage Forward logo/tagline within their website and marketing materials. Each community/organization would use the logo while retaining their unique identity and develop their individual story. Christa Heibel of CH Consulting will be invited to address the group at our next meeting to discuss the process and importance of creating a brand and one unified message.

VI. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be scheduled for late September and will be held in Littlefork or Big Falls.

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