

Destiny Driver: *Develop an organizational framework to lead and facilitate implementation of key economic development strategies.*

The number one recommendation from the Newmark Economic Development Strategy was to develop a regional economic development partnership. The rationale for this partnership was to provide for one message, one entity responsible for all economic development activity in Koochiching County with broad government, business and citizen representation.

Recognizing the legislative constraints in developing an economic development partnership, the recommended framework will provide broader public and private representation and participation from throughout the county while retaining and leveraging the significant state funding directed under statute to the Koochiching Economic Development Authority (KEDA).

The Voyage Forward Marketing Partnership will coordinate the marketing, branding, and communications for economic development entities in Koochiching County.

Each economic development organization within Koochiching County will remain autonomous with sole responsibility for implementation of any economic development project under their charter. Recognized partnerships between economic development organizations will be key to successful implementation of proposed or developing projects.

Name: Voyage Forward Marketing Partnership

Scope: The Voyage Forward Marketing Partnership will:

Develop a unified brand and messaging which reflects the entire county to be used in all communications, marketing materials and initiatives. This message should be used throughout Koochiching County, the communities and local organizations, such as Chambers and Tourism.

Continue relations with key recruitment and retention allies including: Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, Ft. Frances Chamber, Industry Associations, MN Power, MN Energy Resources, North Star Electric, North Itasca Electrical Coop, Regional Health Care Facilities, Midcontinent, Frontier, Paul Bunyan, Minnesota Energy Resources, Boise (PCA), MD&W, CN Rail, Northland Connection, Area Partnership for Economic Expansion (APEX), Commercial/Industrial Brokers in MN, and global site selection consultants.

Create positive news for the Voyage Forward Marketing Partnership and solidify positive impressions locally, as well as with regional businesses, news media contacts and regional/state economic development allies.

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.

Anticipated Partnership Representatives: Representatives should be selected by their respective city or organization and agree to serve a two-year term. In the event the primary representative cannot participate, an alternate should be identified.

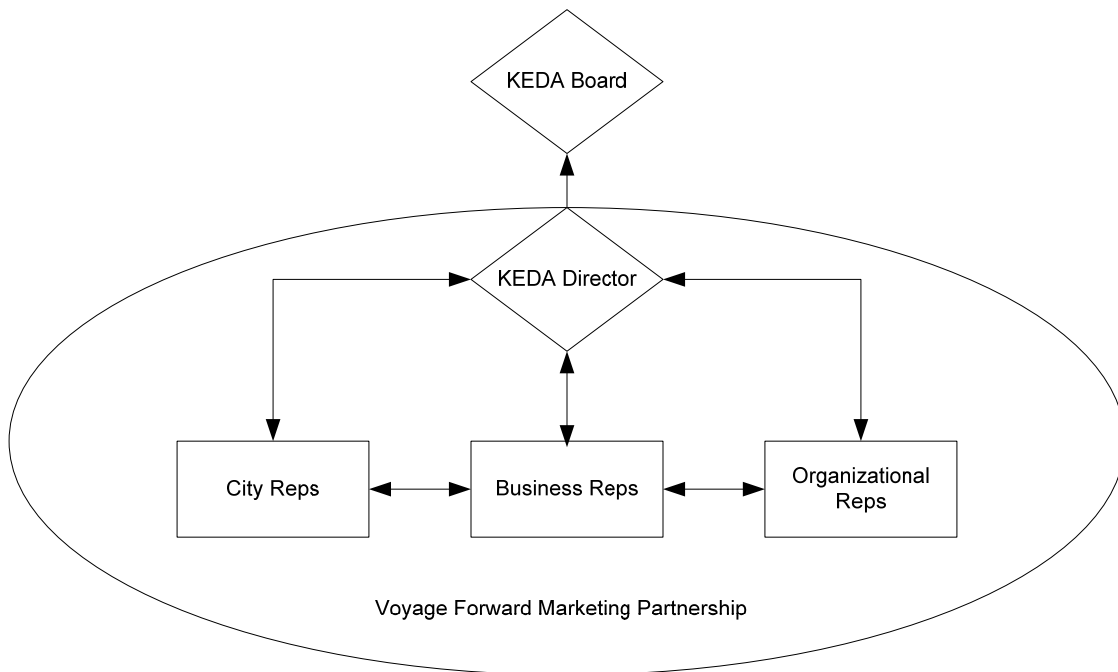
City Representatives

- Bigfalls
- Birchdale
- International Falls
- Littlefork
- Mizpah
- Northome
- Ranier

Business & Organizational Representatives

- Rainy River Community College
- Borderland Young Professionals
- Koochiching County Chambers
- Convention and Visitor Bureau
- Minnesota Workforce Center
- Financial institutions

Organizational Structure: The proposed organizational structure allows for dialog between partnership representatives and recruitment and retention allies identified in the scope. The KEDA Director should be the lead person and provide recommendations and feedback to the KEDA Board.



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Outcomes:

- Enhanced county-wide marketing and communications plan
- Development of a unified brand and messaging which reflects the entire county
- Broader representation and input to KEDA
- Better communications throughout the economic development process.
- Develop a comprehensive list of media contacts and a single point of contact. Media should include newspapers, radio, television and MPR.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- Assist in the implementation of the marketing and communications recommendations as outlined in the Newmark Grubb Knight Frank Economic Adjustment Strategy.
- Review current marketing initiatives of regional organizations such as Heart of the Continent, pertinent parts of the cities' strategic plans, Cross Border document, Voyageur Highway, etc.
- Support communications efforts of KEDA including a review of the Business Up North website and possible use of social media to tell our story.

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