

November 18, 2014

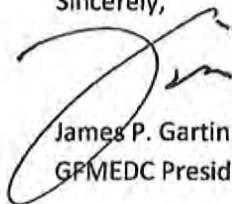
Heather Worden
Administrative Assistant, Cass County
211 Ninth Street South
Fargo, ND 58103

RECEIVED
NOV 18 2014
CASS COUNTY COMMISSION

Dear Ms. Worden;

Please accept my formal request to be placed on the agenda for the December 1, 2014 Cass County Commission meeting. It would be my pleasure to update the Commission on the Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation's activities through the second half of 2014 and to request the first half of our 2015 funding. We would also like to request to modify the Growth Initiative Fund board appointment structure.

Sincerely,



James P. Gartin
GFMEDC President

GREATER
Fargo Moorhead
Economic Development Corporation
Executive Summary

Year to Date 2014

2014 included progress on numerous GFMEDC initiatives to grow and diversify the economy of the Fargo Moorhead MSA. The GFMEDC follows a plan of work that is approved each year by its board of directors as well as both the Cass County Commission and the Clay County Commission. The following is a summary of those activities year to date for 2014.

Year to date, GFMEDC staff has conducted 173 business retentions visits and assisted 96 companies relating to expansion and retention needs. Staff attended numerous county and city economic development meetings.

Business development activities for the year-to-date included 17 new business projects and the current management of 14 existing projects which could potentially create more than 500 new jobs, along with capital investments of over \$80,000,000 and more than 1,000,000 square feet of commercial space.

Regarding its workforce initiatives, GFMEDC staff led eleven separate community tours of the Fargo Moorhead Metro. Staff continues to follow a marketing strategy to recruit people to the area and continues its partnership with area higher education institutions. In October 2014, GFMEDC coordinated the third manufacturing tour event for 160 area high school students. In 2014, more than 200 students participated in the manufacturing tour events. Staff continues to promote CareerFM website as a resource for area employers and to job seekers from other markets. The Teachers in Industry program completed its fourth year in 2014, with seven teachers and one professor. The Smart Connections event has been rebranded with local ambassadors meeting and greeting new residents to the area. The GFMEDC is participating in a follow up series of meetings to recruit IT professionals as a take away from the IT Summit.

GFMEDC continues to support the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the area through active engagement with entrepreneurs and other key community members. This year, focus areas of a collaborative workspace and angel fund development gained traction with the opening of CoCo in September and an announcement of a new angel fund expected in December. GFMEDC assisted numerous startup companies with resources, connections and guidance, as well as involvement in Startup Weekend, 1 Million Cups, E-Commerce breakfasts, CULTIVATE.you, Midwest Mobile Summit, Health Pitch and Startup Drinks. Events like these highlight the smart people and smart things our community is doing. The GFMEDC supports and continues to build on the EDC's initiative to expand air service.

In addition, staff participated in more than 80 investor and EDC partner meetings and events. To connect with investors, businesses and the public, the GFMEDC publishes a monthly electronic newsletter, contributes to a blog that is highlighted on InForum and manages social media content. We also maintain a robust digital and print marketing campaign to market the region.

A more detailed report of the GFMEDC staff activities follows. Thank you for your continued support of the GFMEDC and our region's economic development.



Activity Report Year to Date 2014

Objective 1: Retain and expand existing major employers

- **Conducted 173 business retentions visits**
- **Assisted 96 companies relating to expansion and retention opportunities**
- Assisted companies with primary sector certification process – 29
- Assisted companies with property tax exemption process – 16
- Assisted companies with corporate income tax exemption process – 13
- Assisted companies with sales tax exemption process – 31
- Assisted companies with automation tax credit process – 26
- Assisted companies with ND New Jobs Training Program – 33
- Assisted companies with state financing programs – 40
- Casselton JDA
- Moorhead EDA
- Moorhead Business Association- including a presentation
- West Fargo EDA
- Clay County EDA
- Cass County Diversion Meeting
- Flood Diversion Board of Authority Meeting
- Business Leader's Taskforce for Permanent Flood Protection
- Attended North Dakota Economic Development Incentives Presentation
- Participated in 4 ground breaking events

Objective 2: Attract new businesses to Fargo Moorhead and help entrepreneurs start new businesses

- The GFMEDC assisted in 17 new business development projects, and is currently managing 14 existing projects which could potentially create more than 500 new jobs, along with capital investments of over \$80,000,000 and more than 1,000,000 square feet of commercial space. The new projects in 2014 were in the following industries:

- Back Office – 1
 - Distribution - 4
 - IT – 3
 - Manufacturing – 7
 - Physical Sciences - 1
 - Value Added Ag – 1
- GFMEDC serves as the City of Fargo representative for the 38th city State Small Business Credit Initiative (ND Opportunity Fund), as well as serving as a member of the Loan Committee. For local program outreach, GFMEDC facilitated meetings with three local banks and the Fund administrator (Fund based out of Mandan, ND).
 - Facilitated a discussion regarding the creation and administration of local angel funds. Follow up meetings are currently in progress.
 - Assisted 27 startups with programs and business assistance.

Objective 3 Workforce Attraction and Development

- GFMEDC led 11 separate community tours.
- Continuing to find and deliver new activities for recruitment, retention and development.
- Developed and continue to refine CRM HR survey tool.
- Continue to attend monthly FMHRA meetings.
- Continued participation in the ND STEM Network as part of the executive committee.
- Continued attendance of MSUM sector breakfasts.
- Attended Venture Youth Alliance meetings, serving as board chair for the community board, where focus is on area youth and five different components, one being work readiness.
- Continuing to work with Concordia, MSUM, and NDSU to find ways we can connect with their alumni. Also exploring homecoming activities as a way to reach alumni.
- Met with 20 HR professionals to discuss various programs, CareerFM.com and any workforce related issues.
- The GFMEDC's manufacturing committee continues to promote the Minn-Dak meetings to counselors to gain awareness of manufacturing occupations. A total of 24 teachers and counselors have attended the Minn-Dak meetings.

- The GFMEDC helped sponsor the fourth year of the Teachers in Industry program, growing to seven participating companies and eight teachers. The program also expanded to include an MSUM professor. She went through the program with the teachers.
- Coordinated and co-sponsored the third manufacturing touring event. Four companies and 165 students from Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo attended the spring event. 257 total students participated in the two manufacturing touring events held in 2014.
- Met with NDSU & NDSCS to continue conversations regarding academically suspended students.
- Continued participation in the Education that Works committee. The committee includes leadership at the public schools in Moorhead, Fargo and West Fargo as well as the United Way. Assisted with various projects that are a part of this initiative.
- Presented workforce information at three conference and four small group meetings.
- Met with five individuals who are seeking employment in Fargo Moorhead.

Objective 4: Build regional capacity/implement Cass/Clay Economic Plan

- Collaborative participation in planning and sponsorship for Start-Up Weekend 2014, a 54 hour exercise for entrepreneurs. James Gartin served as the host for the Sunday Evening Pitch Finale. GFMEDC is co-organizing the next Startup Weekend (March 2015) again and the planning began in September for this event. To see the 2014 highlight video, go to <http://vimeo.com/90891846>.
- Partnered with Arthur Ventures to hold the 2nd Annual Cultivate.you event. More than 700 people attended this event.
- Attended the Midwest Chat, a gathering of community entrepreneurship supporters, representing communities from 8 states.
- Helped launch and continue to organize, market and attend the 1 Million Cups events. These weekly events promote and engage the entire community and have been averaging approximately 120 attendees at each event, with a high attendance of 350. Of the over 50 cities participating in 1 Million Cups across the country, 1 Million Cups Fargo has been the largest and most successful, with other cities approaching Fargo for advice. Also attended the 1 Million Cups Organizers Event in Kansas City.

- Participated on advisory committee and sponsored the Midwest Mobile Summit.
- Participated in the planning of the 2014 Health Pitch as well as sponsorship of the event.
- Participated in the monthly eCommerce Breakfasts.
- Represented the Fargo community at the international UP Global Community Leader Summit.
- Worked alongside Emerging Prairie in establishing a collaborative space in downtown Fargo. Minneapolis-based CoCo was engaged in the process and ultimately opened CoCo Fargo (122 ½ N Broadway, Fargo) in September.
- 20 Bank visits
- Hosted coding school development meeting organized by Emerging Prairie. Collected local coding school/curriculum information from area providers to continue research into assessing local supply and gaps.
- Organized "Fargo's Hottest Startup Poll" for Tech Cocktail's national Celebrate event. GFMEDC supported two local startups to represent our community in the pitch competition at the October event in Las Vegas.
- GFMEDC organized and facilitated an angel fund creation focus group. A group is currently in the fund formation process and has hired a managing director. Marketing and fundraising should begin in December.
- Attended the monthly Startup Drinks.
- Participated in the monthly E-Commerce Breakfasts.

Objective 5: Monitor and research local, national and global economic conditions for purposes of reporting, forecasting and developing regional economic strategy

- Distribute monthly economic indicators.
- Collected and submitted the quarterly 2014 cost of living data.
- Continue to participate in meetings and phone calls regarding the Valley Prosperity Partnership (VPP).
- GFMEDC President Jim Gartin presented at The Chamber's Economic Outlook Forum.
- Responded to inquiries from over 50 organizations and individuals regarding demographic, employment, wage, local market, real estate and other general information.

- Conducted annual primary sector employment and capital expenditures survey. With a 70% response rate, the companies reported a total net full time employment growth of 584 jobs (4%) in 2013.
- Projected 2014 full time growth was reported at 1290 jobs (8%).

Objective 6: Development campaign

- Held GFMEDC Annual Meeting for Investors on May 8th at the Hilton Garden Inn.

Objective 7: Marketing and communications

- Participated in more than 80 investor and EDC partner meetings and events.
- GFMEDC continually updates and markets the website. We previously integrated the CareerFM website into the GFMEDC website, utilizing the SmartMove brand to emphasize the smart people and smart things happening in the Fargo Moorhead MSA.
- The GFMEDC distributes a monthly electronic newsletter and manages a blog that is featured on the Forum's online newspaper, InForum.
- Continue to build social media platforms, using Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and LinkedIn to reach influencers and promote the region and drive people back to the EDC website.
- Developed GFMEDC 2013 annual report, distributed at annual meeting and to investors. The report is also available electronically on our website.
- The GFMEDC released the 2014 Images Fargo Moorhead Magazine which highlights the quality of life and smart things happening in the Fargo Moorhead MSA.
- Presented an overview of the GFMEDC to the Chamber Leadership Class.
- Met with Forum Editorial board to discuss GFMEDC activities.
- Attended Clay County Intergovernmental Retreat.
- Participated in interviews for local, regional and national media. Met with area news professionals to provide updates on our overall activities and to strengthen relationships with the various outlets.
- Staff member participated in United Way Panel review committee.
- GFMEDC sponsored the Midwest Mobile Summit.

- Provide marketing support for the Education that Works initiative including a video, website and press conferences.
- Provided marketing and communication support to Valley Prosperity Partnership
- Provided media relations support during the launch of the Workforce Study
- Presented as part of a panel to MSUM students on Careers in Communication and Media.
- Provided media and marketing support for launch of CoCoFargo and Fargo Startup House.
- Created and released four videos that highlighted people who recently moved to Fargo.
- Updated Quality of Life brochure.
- Updated Quality of Life Video.
- Continue to work with the GFMEDC Marketing Committee.
- Put together editorial columns for Prairie Business Magazine to be in the July and December 2014 issues.
- Held two “ambassador lunches” with people who are new to the area. The lunches are a casual event in which we ask questions and engage in conversation about challenges moving to this area and perceptions about the metro.

Objective 8: Use the Growth Initiative Fund to further the region’s economic development strategy

- Approved eight PACE and Flex PACE loans approved in 2014. Two of the eight were also funded in 2014, with the remaining to be funded in early 2015.

GIF 2014 Loan Activity YTD

Company	GIF Approved	GIF Funded
Abbiamo Pasta (2013)		\$ 82,500
Fargo Brewing Co. (2013)		\$ 7,265
DCR, Inc.	\$ 55,000	
Discovery Benefits	\$ 162,000	
Integreon Managed Solutions	\$ 35,000	\$ 33,689
Midwest Coating	\$ 25,000	
Minnkota Windows	\$ 55,000	

Sienar Systems	\$ 6,000	
SJ Machine	\$ 32,000	
SpaceAge Synthetics	\$ 27,000	\$ 22,172
Total	\$ 397,000	\$ 145,626

Total capital investment from 2014 Approved:	\$ 12,856,100
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- Participated in a Bank of North Dakota programs focus group.

Objective 9: Influence state economic development policy

- Participated in the Diversion Project Legislative Open House at the capitol in Bismarck.
- Preparing economic development legislative agenda in conjunction with EDND for 2015 legislative session.
- GFMEDC President Jim Gartin participates in the Greater North Dakota Education and Economic Development subcommittees for the upcoming legislative session.