Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corporation

The Brainerd Lakes Area, like most regions of the United States, continues to face the most difficult economic times in the past 75 years. The Great Recession which technically ended in June 2009, has refused to ease its grip and allow the region to experience a normal cycle of job growth and recovery. As a result, searching out new businesses to locate to this area has never been more important nor more challenging. BLAEDC is evolving and changing its response to this challenge. And like many organizations, BLAEDC has been asked to meet this challenge with more limited resources. To be successful BLAEDC has had to become more efficient. Leveraging technology, implementing cost reductions, seeking one time grants, etc., has led to a leaner yet more effective organization.

This past year, BLAEDC reassessed the organization’s strengths and weaknesses to determine how to best position the area for future economic prosperity. The result was a new brand. In addition, BLAEDC leaders understood our organization and regional growth into the future. A new brand and strategic work plan were developed with specific goals identified to meet the needs of our community.

For over 20 years, BLAEDC has served as a unified voice and effective leader in helping to attract, grow, and attract businesses to this area. BLAEDC along with the support of its governmental partners, broad with 220 jobs retained

10+ Projects
• Capital Investments
• Promoting, Marketing and Assisting...
• Entrepreneurial and Start-Up Companies
• Retention and Expansion of Existing Companies
• Attraction of New Business
• Community Projects

Accomplishments to Date
• 105 Projects
• $310 Million Dollars in Capital Investments
• 3,800 Jobs

2010 Accomplishments
• Community Projects
• Entrepreneurial and Start-Up Companies
• Retention and Expansion of Existing Companies
• Attraction of New Business
• Community Projects

We’re ready. Let’s grow!

Expanding Business, Building Community, and Growing Jobs in Crow Wing County. In collaboration with investors and community stakeholders, the Brainerd Lakes Area Economic Development Corporation exists to strengthen Crow Wing County’s diverse economy, to compete in a global marketplace, and to position our region as Greater Minnesota’s premier business location. We do this by connecting resources and creating a can-do environment while communicating the area’s lifestyle, value, and identity through one unified voice.

2011 BLAEDC Work Plan

BLAEDC’s Economic Development Strategy

Planning, Marketing, and Assisting:

- Entrepreneurial and Start-Up Companies
- Retention and Expansion of Existing Companies
- Attraction of New Business
- Community Projects

Accomplishments to Date 105 Projects

$310 Million Dollars in Capital Investments

3,800 Jobs

2010 Accomplishments

10+ Projects

$40 Million Dollars in Capital Investments

130 Jobs generated in the Community

These efforts have provided Crow Wing County communities with an estimated:

$17 million/year in wages

3.5 million/year in local property taxes

Nearly 7.5 million in grant funds

2010 Inquiries, Community Activities:

- Entrepreneurial/Start-Up: 43
- Business Retention & Expansion: 62
- Attraction Opportunities: 33
- Other Community and Economic Development Initiatives: 99

BLAEDC is a private non-profit 501C3 organization with a mission to energize the Brainerd Lakes Area economy and job growth and is funded by local units of government, economic development communities, local employers and the State of Minnesota, individuals who believe it is important to build our own destiny and make a difference in our community.

BLAEDC Marketing

During 2010, BLAEDC teamed up with area marketing consultants to better assess the direct impact marketing of the organization, as well as to position the region for economic vitality and growth.

The outcome of these efforts was a marketing campaign, including a new organizational name, strengthened mission statement and progressive, promotional tie-in. The web site was also launched as growbrainerdlakes.org.

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2011 BLAEDC Work Plan

With a concise message and direction, BLAEDC’s work plan includes entrepreneurs, business retention and expansion and attraction strategies with emphasis on strengthening networks with individuals from various regional state and national economic development entities, while also expanding the area’s presence on the web to position Crow Wing County as a market that is ready to grow. Specific targeted industries includes: technology services, manufacturing, healthcare, energy and...
Economic Development

Cooperative Mineral Resources and the Emily Manganes Project

City of Emily

Crow Wing Power hosted a meeting of the BLAEDC Board of Directors and presented information on the Emily Manganes Project opportunity. This project provides significant export and investment opportunities and BLAEDC has provided a letter of support for the project. BLAEDC’s number one priority is to lead our area through a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) to develop economic development opportunities further and to consolidate their marketing efforts. City of Emily officials are considering this investment. Mike Aulie.

The Emily manganes is the richest known deposit of its type in the world, according to some fund at 70% pure. Manganes production is being accomplished by the small mining industry.

Wausau Paper

City of Brainerd

In early 2010, Wausau Paper announced a $70 million investment plan to rebuild paper machine #7 at the Brainerd mill to extend the machine’s capabilities. In addition to producing high-quality paper and printing and writing products, the machine will be repurposed to also produce high-quality paper for several key automotive, medical and transportation products. Wausau Paper, along with city and state officials, submitted support and official assistance to the Wausau leadership team as they considered this investment. Wausau Paper credits the community’s willingness to work with them in making their decision.

They expressed gratitude for the assistance that they have received from the local government, the state governments, elected officials and others, since they purchased the Mill in the fall of 2009. This investment offers security for Wausau Paper and an additional 185 employees and their families. “Contribution of the community was key in making significant investment decisions. The easy response and willingness was a demonstration of BLAEDC’s commitment to helping us find the resources to be successful in the Brainerd Lakes Area.”... Jeff Verdoorn, Wausau Paper

Brainerd Lakes Beer

City of Brainerd

In the fall of 2009, BLAEDC hired John Rhodes, a site selector and economic development consultant, to lead our area through a SWOT analysis, to better understand the unique economic development opportunities the community has to offer. The company’s vision is to be the go-to player in the regional bottling and distributing a beverage company. By moving the Brainerd Lakes Beer area as a tourism destination, and the support of the North Central Lakes Area Association, the BLAEDC desires to create a more robust market for Brainerd Lakes Beer in the Northern Pacific Center in 2010. This craft beer beverage, which currently bottles the beer in Duluth, will have a microbrewery and location and the community to be the center of the region.

Business partners Jerris Grant and Dan Carlin, along with area investors and the support of the North Central Lakes Area Association, are looking to positively impact housing and share resources among the community, and positively impact housing and share resources in our area’s economic development efforts.

Downtown Commercial Redevelopment Initiative

Downtown Brainerd property owners currently have access to DEED Small Cities Program funds to revitalize their properties, address code violations and energy efficiencies.

Pequot Lakes Planning

City, property owners and residents are currently exploring options to develop programs and initiatives to improve the lakes area. The city has a project area called the Lakes Area Planning and Development

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Doorwood Economic Development

The restoration of the historic Doorwood Hotel in Pequot Lakes, which is located next to the scenic Doorwood Drive, will be a key in developing the Doorwood area as a tourism destination. Opportunities for a new business may extend the hotel’s appeal and provide additional support and improving efforts.

Lakes Area Housing Initiative

The Crow Wing County Housing Authority is leading an effort to develop affordable housing throughout the region. The Lake Country Development Corporation is working with the city to build affordable housing. Existing community efforts to develop affordable housing and other resources to facilitate this project are being considered by the city and the region.

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Silent Power

City of Baxter

Silent Power was formed with the vision to increase our nation’s electrical grid efficiency by empowering businesses, consumers, and utilities to utilize their renewable energy resources more efficiently through the use of a new distributed energy storage technology. A Minnesota Renewable Energy Grant was received, in addition to loans from Dnawood Bank, the Initiative Foundation, the North Central Economic Development Association and the City of Baxter to assist Silent Power with increasing production and broadening the nation-wide distribution of its soon-to-be-released renewable energy storage devices.

The economic impact of this investment includes the addition of up to 50 positions, including 20 new high-wage manufacturing positions, 10 engineering positions and several other administrative and sales jobs over the next five years. BLAEDC provided assistance with accessing capital and is excited at the unique opportunity for the region as Silent Power becomes an industry leader in distributed energy storage for utility and retail customers.

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