

Red Wing Mayor's Blue Ribbon Panel on Economic Development
Meeting Location: SE Technical College
Minutes of February 24, 2010

Members Present: Scott Wordelman, Dennis Egan, Scott Adkisson, John Becker, Carolyn Hedin, Gary Iocco, Dan Massett, Denny Tebbe, Kathy Radmer, Duffy Schafer, Kenneth Bush, Michael Murphy, Linda Thiebar

Absent: Jim Johnson, Donna Anderst

Guest Speaker: Bill Blazer, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

Welcome

Scott Wordelman welcomed the panel and called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Bill Blazer, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

- Chamber of Commerce owns business retention. Visit businesses with Chamber exec. and other CEO or plant manager, peer to peer relationships, Grow Minnesota.
- Three parts
 1. Business retention
 2. Business assistance
 3. Market Minnesota
- 53 local chamber partners and affiliates
- Foundation needs to be public, but private really has to show results to stay in the business of economic development
- Need to know what is available for business assistance
- Marketing your community is at least a five year commitment
- Hastings and Winona are members (Winona is very active)
- Exporting is up, job growth ...attentive at best. Worker shortage even in a recession.
- USDA has loan guarantee program.
- Put in-between companies first, then small business, then fortune 500 companies.
- Small proto typing and specialized manufacturing and customer service.
- Greater than 50 less than 100 employees'company is loyal but increasingly mobile.

- Successes. Trucking company with specialize software to get merchandise / trucks in and out of Mexico.
- Meat packing house that tracks each individual animal.
- What it means to be Grow Minnesota.
- Retention of members - 5 percent of membership visits.
- Tracking of visits and sent to state office.

Questions –

- Bill Blazer need to work together, not against each other in the community.
- Self reliant - where does it lie? Bill Blazer private sector leads it.
- John Becker suggested identifying communities doing a really good job. Bill Blazer responded that Winona ready does a good job; Willmar does a good job, more retention visit than required; St. Cloud does a very good job; Fergus Falls does a good job; Owatonna and Faribault do a good job.
- Carolyn Hedin asked if we should start with retention. Bill Blazer said yes, there's nothing more important than job retention.
- Carolyn said we need to know more about all the businesses and market them
- Mayor how much is it to belong? Bill Blazer- \$1,000. per year membership
- John Becker asked how do you sustain the business,
- Gary locco asked what they think of the Red Wing business climate. Bill Blazer responded that most people think it is a nice place to have dinner.
- Mayor asked if there were any negatives associated with Red Wing. Bill Blazer responded that maybe just land & space, where would you place a business; otherwise, no big negatives.
- Scott Wordelman asked if having a Port Authority is better than having an economic development authority. Bill Blazer said yes, and explained the Port Authority probably has more power for having financial avenues available.
- Denny Tebbe - establish a vision on what the community can do; build strategic relationships that promote trust and help with common problem solving; know your resources and use them; do business retention.

- Gary – still 60 questionnaires to fill out? Bill Blazer - we boil it down to six categories, but we are more interested with the person as an individual and business.
- Carolyn Hedin asked if they would be able to teach us if we join.
- Bill Blazer- more about making the businesses that are here successful, retention and success would be much higher on the priority lists. Bring more net income into the community.
- Tom Brown asked if they track data points. Bill Blazer said yes, and referred to their website
- Scott Wordelman - support of the city and financial support. Political support of council.
- Two groups of works out. Get the work out. Independent facilitator that discussion. The expertise to put in a professional.