

# Iron Range Large-Scale Projects Readiness Initiative

## *“A Coordinated Regional Response”*

Strategy Team Meeting II  
Monday, August 27, 2007 – 9:00 A.M.  
Iron Range Resources Board Room  
Eveleth, MN

### **OBJECTIVE**

*To organize and launch a coordinated regional strategy to prepare for and respond to the opportunities and needs associated with Range-wide large-scale development projects*

### **MEETING NOTES SUMMARY**

#### **Welcome, Introductions and Expectations**

Randy Lasky, Facilitator called the meeting to order and introduced Mike Lalich, Director of the Natural Resources Research Institute, and Andy Lisak, President of the Superior/Douglas County Development Association, the two newest members invited to participate on the Strategy Team. Members introduced themselves and the proposed meeting agenda was reviewed. Two additions were made to the agenda. Commissioner Layman asked to report on additional funding support interest, and Michelle Ufford and Mary Mathews asked to bring up a regional workforce funding development initiative that is seeking letters of support. Both items will be addressed.

Randy went on to review the major outcomes of the August 8<sup>th</sup> meeting and highlighted expected outcomes for today’s meeting as follows:

- To finalize and adopt the Organizational Framework including the amended purpose statements, addition of the Opportunities Development Work Group and initial memberships.
- To define major issues, opportunities and concerns that the respective Working Teams need to address as a starting agenda when launched.
- To define the next steps in launching the Working Teams.
- Define a communications approach and the tools needed.
- To begin addressing resource/budget needs and possible sources and uses.

#### **Funding Support Update**

Commissioner Layman reported that since the last meeting she had been contacted by several Strategy Team members offering funding support toward the facilitation services contract with the Northspan Group, Inc. Minnesota Power and the Northland Foundation have each offered to contribute \$10,000, the Blandin Foundation is considering a \$20,000 contribution and the Area Partnership for Economic Expansion (APEX) has also expressed interest and will be looking at some level of support yet to be determined. IRR has budgeted up to \$100,000 for this readiness initiative and was planning to support the facilitation work and other priority needs. These additional dollars provide IRR with more flexibility and resources that can be used to leverage other participation. Sandy thanked those members for taking the initiative to help support this important regional effort.

## **Finalize Organizational Framework**

A sub-committee organized at the last meeting completed their work and prepared a proposed purpose statement, membership list and initial issues and opportunities statement for the new Opportunities Development Work Team. Sub-committee members included Jack LaVoy, Mary Mathews, Elaine Hanson and the facilitator. The purpose statement was reviewed and the following changes made and finalized:

- Add reference to coordinated target marketing and recruitment... “site selection, recruitment and marketing”
- Add reference to the “education community”
- Add reference to “downstream customers”

In terms of the membership of the group, it was suggested that we add the East Range Joint Powers Board; eliminate reference to the IREA; and add “initially” to the list of community development professionals. It was also agreed that we would add Minnesota Technology, Iron Mining Association and Mining Minnesota to the membership. Several other organizations were referenced as key resources to call-upon as needed. These included a logistics professional, the Minnesota Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP) within the University of Minnesota, and the effected area Chambers of Commerce. It was emphasized that we must communicate with the Chambers as we move on with this business development process.

The facilitator reviewed other changes to the Organizational Framework made at the last meeting and asked members to review the framework for any other changes. The following changes were proposed:

- Under the Projects Team add “initially” to the Purpose Statement.
- Under the Community Readiness Work Team membership, consider adding the Northwest Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, like ARDC for NW Wisconsin, if Murphy Oil project moves ahead.
- Add Lake and Cook Counties to the Community Readiness Work Team.

Members felt that we have made very constructive changes to the framework and it’s time to move ahead with its implementation. A motion was made by Nancy Norr, seconded by Mary Mathews to adopt the Organizational Framework as amended to-date. Motion carried unanimously.

## **Work Team Strategic Focus and Direction**

The facilitator suggested that we conduct a small group exercise to more quickly define the major strategic issues and opportunities that should be the immediate focus for individual Work Teams. It was agreed that the outcome would be 1-3 priorities for each team. The process began with the Project Team.

### **A. Project Team Issues and Opportunity Priorities**

- Members felt that the Project Team must be the first priority to set-up and engage. We need the affected private companies to join each other and understand the value of a collaborative approach keying on common issues and needs.
- A small group of the Strategy Team should meet to create the “value proposition” to be communicated and used to convene the first team meeting. We must clearly demonstrate the value of getting together with a facilitator and having a conversation about critical readiness needs and roles they can play to help themselves.
- Immediate priorities we need or should be addressed are as follows:
  - Confirm the time schedule and status of each major project.

- Conduct a three phase “Needs Assessment” process in close cooperation with each company to identify factors critical to their success.
  - Pre-project/construction phase needs
  - Post construction needs for long-term
  - Identify the “show stoppers” that would be of major concern
- Identify common needs and unique project needs we can address and impact
- Identify key contacts for each project and get their buy-in to participating and/or providing key information for the Work Teams.
- Identify key messages and communication strategies to provide appropriate project support.
- The following members volunteered to meet in the next two weeks and develop the value proposition and next steps to convene the Projects Team:
  - Sandy Layman
  - Brian Hiti
  - Nancy Norr
  - Peter McDermott
  - Heather Rand
  - The small group will meet on Friday, September 14th, at 2:00 P.M. at the Itasca Economic Development Corporation offices in Grand Rapids.

**B. Community Resources and Readiness Work Team Issues and Opportunity Priorities**

- Assessments are needed on several fronts to position ourselves to respond effectively
  - Need clarity on all of the major project infrastructure needs.
  - Need a Readiness Assessment that inventories and identifies local community infrastructure capacity and readiness for development; building on the work going on with the Itasca County Readiness project. Define the gaps and set the stage for planned growth.
  - Need to identify regional and other resources to support local capacity building and prioritize infrastructure needs.
- Need to create a dialogue with local leaders about their appetite for growth and willingness to build capacity
- Need to communicate to communities about the importance of embracing these opportunities and why this is of value to the area.

**C. Housing Work Team Issues and Opportunity Priorities**

- On Tuesday, August 28<sup>th</sup> in Hibbing, a regional meeting called by the Minnesota Housing Partnership and Greater Minnesota Housing Fund will be held with communities and local and regional housing interests to talk about Iron Range housing issues related to large scale project development. Randy will be facilitating that meeting and several Strategy Team members have been invited to participate. We agreed that we would wait to address housing needs until after that meeting and would take up at our next meeting.

**D. Workforce Work Team Issues and Opportunity Priorities – To be determined**

**E. Opportunities Development Team Issues and Opportunity Priorities – To be determined**

**Other Business**

- A. National Emergency Grant** – a regional coalition of workforce development agencies including the Workforce Development Centers and WIB’s are preparing to submit a \$200,000 grant to the US Department of Labor to improve regional workforce development and business development

through a regionally coordinated effort. The region includes Northeast Minnesota and Northwest Wisconsin and is a follow-up to the WIRED grant request which was not successful. The group is seeking a letter or letters of support for this initiative. Michelle Ufford explained her role and how this grant could help support activities of the readiness efforts. Mary Mathews also has been involved and supports this grant request. Following discussion, the facilitator was directed to prepare a letter of support on behalf of the Strategy Team working in cooperation with Michelle Ufford. That will be sent out in the next two days.

## Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Strategy Team will be held on Tuesday, September 18, 2007 from 1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. at the Iron Range Resources Board Room. The agenda will focus on completing the Work Team focus priorities and will pick up the remaining agenda items from today’s meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 P.M.

Respectively Submitted,

Randy Lasky  
Facilitator

<b>ATTENDEES</b>			
<b>Name</b>		<b>Representing</b>	<b>Email</b>
Chell	John	ARDC	jchell@ardc.org
Collins	Sue	Northeast Higher Education District	sue.collins@ironworld.com
Dorry	Barbara	Kootasca	barbd@kootasca.org
Elden	John	Northland Foundation	eldenj@northlandfdn.org
Fauth	Wade	Blandin Foundation	wofauth@blandinfoundation.org
Hansen	Elaine	UMD Center for Economic Development	ehansen@umdcad.com
Hiti	Brian	Iron Range Resources	brian.hiti@state.mn.us
Lalich	Mike	NRRI	mlalich@nrri.umn.edu
Lasky	Randy	Northspan Group	rlasky@northspan.org
Layman	Sandy	Iron Range Resources	sandy.layman@state.mn.us
Lisak	Andy	Superior/Douglas County Development Assoc.	lisaka@developmentassociation.com
Mathews	Mary	Northeast Entrepreneur Fund	marym@entrepreneurfund.org
McDermott	Peter	IEDC	peterm@itascadv.org
Norr	Nancy	Minnesota Power	nnorr@mnpower.com
Rand	Heather	DEED	heather.rand@state.mn.org
Smith	Roy	Iron Range Resources	roy.smith@state.mn.us
Ufford	Michelle	Northeast MN Office of Job Training	michelle.ufford@state.mn.us