

CHAPTER 11 - Communications

Economic development won't happen if you sit in an office and wait for opportunities to come by! A key component of Economic Development is communication of all kinds. It involves building and becoming familiar with the economic development network, all stakeholders and the public. Technology is also increasing our capability to communicate through social media, distance conferencing and online meeting facilitation.

--Carol Goodman

Communicate With your Community

One of the first things a new developer should do is get to know the stakeholders, leaders and business people (maybe some of them are all three) in the community. At a minimum, developing relationships with the following stakeholders will help keep everyone tuned into your local economic development program.

- Your board of directors
- County and City Commissioners
- CEO's of utility, medical, educational and financial entities
- The press – local, regional and even statewide
- Chamber of Commerce
- Service organizations
- Faith community
- Other regional economic developers
- Regional Councils
- ND Department of Commerce
- State Office of USDA/Rural Development
- District Legislators

- Major leaders of business and agriculture
- North Dakota University System

CCJDA publishes a frequent column in the local paper, participates in a Community Billboard program on the local radio station once a month, and schedules one-on-one meetings with boards and organizations several times a year.

Conference Attendance

CCJDA has a long-time philosophy of supporting the attendance of their economic development director and/or the strategic plan coordinator at a variety of state-wide meetings and conferences because the board values the strength of being connected to a network and establishing relationships with state level agencies and organizations. Information from the events should be reviewed by your board of directors which will lead to understanding of an economic development program that works for your community. We have regularly participated in events connected to the Economic Development Association of North Dakota, North Dakota Chamber, Red River Research Corridor, North Dakota University System-sponsored events, North Dakota Department of Commerce, USDA/Rural Development, roundtable meetings sponsored by the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives and conferences sponsored by the energy and agriculture industries. We have had memberships with the Dakota Defense Alliance, Association of Un-manned Vehicle Systems International and Data Center World. The CCJDA Board of Directors also supports taking a leadership role and being involved in organizations and initiatives when appropriate and according to the workload of our local program.

You will not always come away from conferences with specific information that leads to *immediate* results, but in the big picture of economic development the networking will eventually pay off.

North Dakota Governor's Office and Congressional Delegation

Both of these entities are very supportive of economic development across the state, no matter how large or small the community. An effort should be made to become familiar with them and their in-state office staff. They never fail to do their best to answer your question or assist with your question, project or problem. Go to their websites for specific contact information.

Conference Calls

We use conference calls whenever possible to save on the travel budget. To set up a conference call, contact your local telephone company and they will direct you to their Conference Bridge Center to set up an account and get instructions. We also are increasingly using [GoToMeeting](#).

Testify at State Legislature

This doesn't have to be scary! -Carol

Preparation

- Prepare your remarks so they are precise and to the point.
- Less is more.
- Start with “Representative/Senator _____, members of the _____ Committee.”
I am here to support/oppose House/Senate bill number _____.
- For the record, my name is _____, and I represent _____.
- Wait for the chair to acknowledge and then proceed with your comments.
- At the end of your comments, state that you will be happy to entertain their questions.
- Try to anticipate in advance what some of those questions might be.
- To answer a question address the chair first (Representative/Senator _____), then the committee member who asked the question (Representative/Senator _____).
- Proceed with your remarks.
- Thank them for allowing time for you to speak.

Your office should obtain a copy of the “Lawmakers of North Dakota” handbook that is available for each session. Become familiar with the names of the legislators on the committee before which you plan to testify.

The North Dakota Motor Carriers Association is the publisher. Organizations often order several and make them available to members.

Writing Letters of Support

Several times a year CCJDA is asked to write a letter of support. Make sure the project you are asked to write a letter of support for is a fit with your Strategic Plan. It is also good to make sure the project is not in competition with another local project. In the letter it is always a good idea to reference that you are supporting the project because it falls under the _____ County Strategic Plan. Include which benchmark it falls under and any other relevant details. Below is a sample letter format.

November 30, 2011

Safe Routes to School

To Whom it May Concern:

As the Executive Director of the Cavalier County Job Development Authority (CCJDA), I would like to express my strong support for Langdon Area School's grant application for Safe Routes to School.

This project is important to the community because it will keep community children safe as they are walking to school by building sidewalks where they are currently none. This project will not only keep children who are currently walking to school safe, but may also encourage additional children who don't walk to do so.

In 2005, Cavalier County implemented a community wide health care program, Wellness Interventions Lasting a Lifetime, which continues to this day. A major focus of the plan has always been children. Past projects under this initiative have included programs such as youth safety days and various programs designed to encourage children to be more active. The Safe Routes to School Project will allow us to continue to encourage the community's children to be active and safe while walking to school.

CCJDA has a vested interest in this project as we oversee the Cavalier County Strategic Plan, which consists of seven benchmarks, two of which are Improvement of Health Care and Advancing Educational Opportunities for Cavalier County. We feel that this project is a fit for both benchmarks.

I am grateful for the opportunity you are providing with this program and I again strongly recommend the awarding of this grant to the Langdon Area School.

Sincerely,

Carol Goodman

Executive Director

Websites

Every economic development organization needs a website because everyone searches for information on the Internet. Grant programs also may ask for your website on their application materials to research your community economic development activity.

It is also important to keep your site updated so your current work is being shown.

Google Analytics

It is a good idea to use Google Analytics to measure traffic to your site and determine where your website visits are coming from.

You can sign up at <http://www.google.com/analytics/>. Your website developer/host should be able to embed the code from Google Analytics in your website and you can begin tracking.