

BUSINESS

9 TO 5

The Journal welcomes ideas for stories about people in our community who are starting a business or changing an old one.

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Locals represent Borderland at DEED summit

BY SPENSER BICKETT
Staff Writer

Borderland was represented at a statewide economic summit Wednesday, as an economic director and small business owner spoke on panels about their experiences.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development held its State Economic Competitiveness Summit Wednesday in St. Paul, which allowed community economic developers, civic and government leaders, educators, and others to meet for a discussion on innovation, globalization, and talent as drivers of economic growth.

International Falls Economic Development Authority Director Shawn Mason spoke on a panel titled, “Minnesota’s Economic Development Toolbox,” the goal of which was to inform attendees about the various DEED programs available to help business owners, she said.

One of these programs is the new Job Creation Fund, which provides businesses with a rebate if they meet certain criteria, Mason said. The two major benchmarks for the program are adding 10 full-time jobs to an expanding business, and putting down a \$500,000 capital investment, she said.

A new DEED program designed to connect project planners and developers with relevant state departments is Minnesota Business First Stop, Mason said. Staff members or experts from various state agen-

cies, like the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the Minnesota Department of Revenue, meet twice a month as a group to hear directly from developers, planners, officials, and economic development authority directors about proposed projects. Then, once a month, the commissioners of each of these agencies meet to discuss the projects that have been presented.

“In fact, we have our proposed developer for the multimodal district that’s going before this group and presenting his project proposal,” Mason said.

Having officials from different departments hear proposals at the same time benefits rural communities by helping them navigate the myriad regulations required to move forward with their projects, Mason said.

“This is a homerun in how we approach compliance with the variety of regulations that sometimes really have us handcuffed,” she said.

Mason said she didn’t know why exactly she was asked to be on the panel, only that she was grateful for the opportunity.

“I’m humbled I was asked to be a part of this panel,” she said. “I’m hoping that they admire the community of International Falls.”

What she learned from the panel, Mason said, was community leaders need to



Shawn Mason

make more opportunities to talk with people who “are in a position to make things happen in their communities.” Continually talking about DEED programs that can help expanding businesses will help those businesses realize the help they need to expand is there, she said.

In addition to the panel she served on in the morning, Mason said she attended a panel in the afternoon titled, “Attracting and Growing Foreign Direct Investment.” Mason said she thought the session would be packed, however, there were only about 20 people in attendance.

The panel featured representatives from the Minnesota Trade Office, including Ning Shao, from the Shanghai office, and Fritz Speller, from the Dusseldorf, Germany office. Speller said German investors are looking at Minnesota projects to fund centered around life science and the Mayo Clinic; agriculture and agriculture machinery; and renewable energy projects, Mason said.

The summit provided the short-term benefit of being able to create new business relationships, Mason said, while also hearing straight from DEED officials about the programs that can help communities and businesses in the long-run.

“The relationships will come in handy right away, and it behooves EDA officials to understand more about the different programs that are available,” Mason said.

Small businesses
Rae Anne Conat, owner

of Swanky Sweet Pea, spoke on a panel titled, “Supporting Minnesota’s Small Businesses.” The panel talked through a lot of the issues facing small business owners, Conat said, as well as the issues economic development centers are running into.

An issue for newer, growing, small businesses is being approved for loans to fund expansion, when a bank doesn’t want to take a risk on a new business, Conat said. A struggle is getting banks to look at the increased orders and demand and not personal credit scores when determining if it should give someone a loan, she said.

One thing she took away from the panel, Conat said, was the importance of practicing proper bookkeeping and keeping your business’s books straight.

“When you’re seeking capital, it’s important to have your books and finances in order so banks take you seriously and see you as a valuable person to lend to,” Conat said.

As a creatively-driven person, sitting down and learning how to do proper bookkeeping was difficult, Conat said, and has already made some changes in her bookkeeping practices thanks to things she learned at the summit. There’s also many DEED programs that can ease some of the stresses of running a small business.

“There are a lot of resources out there that can take that off your shoulders,” Conat said. “There’s so many great functions that want to see you succeed.”

RLMC gives babies a healthy start

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Rainy Lake Medical Center has been recognized by the March of Dimes for reducing the number of elective inductions and cesarean deliveries performed before 39 completed weeks of pregnancy.

According to the March of Dimes, this gives babies a healthier start in life, as babies delivered before full term are at increased risk of serious health problems and death in their first year. In order to qualify, RLMC submitted all four quarters of 2013 early elective deliveries data showing less than 5 percent of EEDs in 2013.

“We’re proud of our expert team of physicians and nurses who saw this opportunity to improve care in our community and put in place policies to avoid scheduling elective inductions or cesarean deliveries before 39 weeks of pregnancy, except when medically necessary,” Chief Nursing Officer Donita Ettestad said in a release.

RLMC also has a process to monitor the scheduling of cesarean sections and inductions of labor prior to 39 weeks gestational age.

Babies born a few weeks early have higher rates of hospitalization and illness than full-term infants. Recent research by the March of Dimes, the National Institute of Health, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration found although the overall threat is small, the risk of death more than doubles for infants born at

37 weeks of pregnancy when compared to babies born at 40 weeks, for all races and ethnicities.

“The last weeks of pregnancy are important,” Lawrence Massa, March of Dimes Board member and Minnesota Hospital Association president and CEO said in a release. “Babies aren’t just putting on weight. They are undergoing important development of the brain, lungs and other vital organs. I commend Rainy Lake Medical Center for being a champion for babies with their quality improvement effort.”

The March of Dimes’ campaign, “Healthy babies are worth the wait,” urges women to wait for labor to begin on its own if their pregnancy is healthy, rather than scheduling delivery before 39 completed weeks of pregnancy.

In Minnesota, March of Dimes worked with the Minnesota Department of Human Services to adopt policies against medically unnecessary deliveries before 39 weeks. This change went into effect January 2012. Minnesota Hospital Association data show the number of early elective deliveries has since decreased by 87 percent.

The March of Dimes offers professional and consumer education materials about the importance of a full term pregnancy and the critical development of the brain, lungs and other organs that occur during the last weeks of pregnancy.

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CITY OF INTERNATIONAL FALLS, MINNESOTA

MAYORAL PROCLAMATION

IN OBSERVANCE OF NATIONAL STALKING AWARENESS MONTH

JANUARY 2014

Whereas, under the laws of all fifty states, the District of Columbia, and federal government, stalking is a crime;

Whereas, 3.4 million people over the age of 18 are stalked each year in the United States, and nearly 75% of victims are stalked by someone they know;

Whereas, 3 in 4 women killed by an intimate partner had been stalked by that intimate partner;

Whereas, many stalking victims lose time from work and experience serious psychological distress and lost productivity at a much higher rate than the general population;

Whereas, many stalking victims are forced to protect themselves by relocating, changing their identities, changing jobs, and obtaining protection orders;

Whereas, many stalkers use increasingly sophisticated devices—such as global positioning systems, cameras, and computer spyware—to track their victims;

Whereas, there is a need for great public awareness about the nature, criminality, and potential lethality of stalking;

Whereas, criminal justice systems can enhance their responses to stalking by regular training of law enforcement officers and aggressive investigation and prosecution of the crime;

Whereas, laws and public policies must be continually adapted to keep pace with new tactics used by stalkers;

Whereas, Friends Against Abuse is joining forces with victim service providers, criminal justice officials, city officials and concerned citizens throughout International Falls, MN to observe **National Stalking Awareness Month**.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Robert Anderson as Mayor of International Falls, MN, do hereby proclaim January 2014 as **NATIONAL STALKING AWARENESS MONTH** and applaud the efforts of the many victim service providers, police officers, prosecutors, national and community organizations, and public supporters for their efforts in preventing stalking.

Robert W. Anderson, Mayor

BORDER COUNTRY

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R10951

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2013

CHEVROLET IMPALA LTZ

R10936

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10929

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2013

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