



Visions Northwest Regional Economic Development Group
A Division of the Wisconsin Business Innovation Corporation

MEETING MINUTES
VISIONS NORTHWEST REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP
WITC - Hayward
March 8, 2017

1. Meeting called to order at 10:04 AM by Chairman Kelly Klein.
2. **Roll Call/Introductions:** Scottie Sandstrom – Representing Bayfield County (ITV), Kelly Klein – Representing Iron County, Dale Heikkinen – Representing Price County (ITV), Jenice Meyer (for Renee Wachter) – Representing Education (NorthWERD Group- ITV), John Will – Representing Education (WITC), John Richards – Representing Burnett County, David Minor – Representing Douglas County (ITV), Dale Kupczyk – Representing Economic Development Organizations, Andy Albarado – Representing Rusk County (ITV), Melissa Burris – Representing NWWIB, Joel Zimmerman – Representing Washburn County, Ken Maki – Representing Sawyer County, Leo Naumann – Representing Private Industry (Jeff Foster Trucking), Geri Dresen – Representing Chambers of Commerce, Ruthe Batulis (for Becky Haase) – Enbridge

Members Absent: Mike Bebeau – Representing Private Industry (Xcel Energy), Brent McFarland – Tribal Representative

Others: Marie Steenlage – WEDC, Thomas Michels – Department of Workforce Development, Jim Miller – Outreach Representative – Congressman Duffy, Ruthe Batulis – Enbridge, Leo Abramoff – Inspire, Crystal Rohde – Visions Northwest Administrator

Vacant Seats: Ashland County, Taylor County

3. **Approval of January 11th, 2017 Meeting Minutes**
A motion to approve the January 11th, 2017 meeting minutes was made by John W.; a second was made by Dale H. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **Inspire Presentation – Leo Abramoff, Account Lead, Inspire (via live web)**
Crystal R. briefly explained the [Inspire](#) initiative as a cloud based platform that connects education and industry with employer profiles, career coaches, work-based learning experiences, communication tools, local events and social networking. Inspire is a “next level” to the Department of Public Instruction, Career Cruising platform that all school districts throughout the state will be required to implement by Fall of 2017 as part of Academic Career Planning (ACP). She explained that there is currently a proposal in front of the Regional Leadership Council (RLC) from Inspire that would include a regional licensing of the platform. At this time, it is our understanding that if a regional license is pursued, all K-12 school districts within the 10-county region would have access to the platform at no cost to them. Discussions between the RLC and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) currently are being coordinated regarding WEDC reimbursing each region for the license cost.

Leo A. gave a high level overview of Inspire including goals of the program, features, and benefits.

After the presentation, group discussion led to questions regarding cost, implementation, and sustainability. Considering that no firm commitment has been made at WEDC’s level to our knowledge, Crystal R. assured members that she would keep them informed as discussion continues at the state and RLC level. Next steps will be to hold a regional stakeholders meeting between Visions Northwest, Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board, CESA, WITC, and others to further discuss this initiative and potential implementation.

5. 2017 RIsE Sessions – Final Details

Crystal R. reminded members that the focus of the [2017 RIsE Sessions](#) will be young professionals, talent, and attraction. She explained that registration invitations has been emailed out to 354 subscribers on Friday, March 3rd. The presentation being offered at the sessions will be given by UW-Madison graduate students focusing on gaining and retaining young people in WI rural communities. The study takes a look at communities that are gaining and retaining a younger population rather than those losing them. Crystal R. emphasized the importance of sharing the information with member's contact lists, etc. to help spread the word. The cost of the event was reduced from \$12 to \$10 due to sponsorships received from Enbridge and WITC. Young professional panelists and facilitators had been confirmed for both the Shell Lake and Hurley events. Final details regarding Ladysmith in June are still a work in progress.

6. Wood Industry Group Collaborative

Crystal R. referenced notes from the 2/2/17 collaborative meeting included in the meeting packet. The collaborative continues to gain momentum with the [Grow North](#) Region. At the last meeting, a purpose statement to clarify efforts was approved. The statement explains the effort to connect the wood products industry with economic development, workforce development, and public agencies to encourage growth in investments, training, and jobs throughout the region. Discussion of a potential workshop continued as well as a marketing collaboration with other agencies. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 28th in Minocqua and will incorporate key stakeholders into the collaborative from Great Lakes Timber Professionals and Wisconsin County Forests Association.

7. Around the Table – Other Business

Geri D. discussed Governor Walker's visit to Cable for a "cabinet on the road" session. Some of the highlights and emphasized points focused on education and the funding into schools, Norvado's placement of fiber into the area, and social programs and eligibility to programs. Geri D. also mentioned Iron River's concentration on beautification and business attraction, as well as bringing new events into the idle fairgrounds.

Scottie S. mentioned the [Business on Stage](#) event coming up in Bayfield County during [Young Professional \(YP\) Week](#) on April 25th. Melissa B. continued by mentioning YP Week as a statewide initiative involving 25+ communities. Locations hosting events in our area include the Chequamegon Bay, Hayward, Price County, and Superior.

Marie S. with WEDC mentioned the upcoming State Tourism Conference being held in Milwaukee, WEDC's development of a Rural Economic Development Strategy. Dale K. emphasized the importance of input from rural economic development for the strategy. John R. asked the status on the Fab Lab applications and Marie responded that award announcements would likely come in April. She said there were 90+ applications again this grant cycle.

8. Confirm Next Meeting Date

The next Visions Northwest meeting will take place on May 10, 2017 following the RIsE Session in Hurley at the Iron County Board Room.

9. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:30AM was made by Dale K.; with a second by Geri D.