

Quarter 4, 2022 Newsletter

A Year's End Brings New Beginnings

Letter from the President

“You are not your resume, you are your work.” -Seth Godin, Author

2022 has been a year of putting plans into action and working as a team to elevate our programming to meet the needs of our community. We were thrilled to finally kick off construction of The Forge after an unanticipated delay of a large grant. This propelled us into action with Phase I Construction and Phase II Design. The Forge has challenged our team to think broadly about workforce development and the training needs of our area businesses along with availability of incubator space to foster entrepreneurs and small businesses as they start their business journey. It is exciting to finally put all of our planning into action and shift our focus to the vast programmatic opportunity for that location.

In addition to The Forge, we continue to work with Huber by providing local organization and support to their project. They face challenges to propel their project forward, and our ongoing engagement is critical. The Huber Project will be an incredible asset to our community as we face the transition of our coal fired powerplant and promote a diverse business economy.

Energy Transition Planning has also been an integral part of my work in 2022. I participated in the Energy Transition Advisory Council (ETAC) as the Vice Chair, and engaged in a series of outreach and education. The work was broad and included visiting the transition communities throughout Minnesota, learning about energy transitions from other states and communities, learning about related issues around taxes, workforce, community engagement, etc. While the ETAC Plan was extensive, it is truly just the beginning of the work that lies ahead. It is critical to pull together as a



community, hear from all voices, and develop a strategy that will help our community to thrive rather than decline through this transition.

2022 was yet another year of growth for IEDC. We had our highest levels of engagement through supporting area businesses, hosting events, and outreach to clients both new and old. I am incredibly proud of our results. Economic and community development is challenging work, but with your continued support, we are up to the task!

Sincerely,

Tamara Lowney
President, IEDC

SBDC Updates

SBDC has a very strong final quarter to 2022, with 4 new business starts, bringing out total for the year to 11! This was a great year, with many markets represented from retail, contractors, service and manufacturing all being included in the business we assisted in 2022.



Overall, 2022 represented a rebound in activity for clients, focused more on growth and innovation, marketing, and transition planning for the future. We again were blessed to have 180 clients work with us, and allow us to assist in their business ventures!

As we look forward to 2023, with a strong team we are continuing our adaptation to meet the needs of the business community, and develop strategies for our current environment. Supply chain, cost of capital, and space being some of the major topics businesses are working to address, we will continue to work on solutions for these areas! Thank you again for putting your trust in our consulting team, and we look forward to working with more businesses in 2023.



Forge Updates

We are underway! Construction contracts have been awarded, and we are pleased to share that Hawk Construction has

been selected for phase 1, the education center of the building. The contract was awarded in November, and December kicked off with demolition, and the beginning of construction of the new facility.

Design is in full swing and wrapping up on phase 2, with the intent of being open for tenants Summer 2023. Start up manufacturers, artists and project specific areas have

been defined within this phase, and bids are expected to be concluded and awarded in Q1 of 2023. Our key partners, Minnesota North Colleges, Jet and Career Pathways are busy developing operational programming, and complete development of the facility.

Watch for changes, and updates coming rapidly, as we approach the Grand Opening Summer 2023.

10-21-2022 Talon Mine Tour

In October our team headed out to Tamarack to see the Talon Mine. Talon is focused on high-grade nickel and developing a process to potentially produce nickel sulfates responsibly for batteries for the electric vehicles industry.

Tamarack is currently the only development-stage high-grade nickel project in the US. Talon's Chief Exploration and Operations Officer showed us samples of the green nickel and explained their focus on environmental concerns such as water protection. It was fun to see how each employee is engaged and excited about this work.



10-24-2022 October Lyceum

October's theme was "The Importance of Physical Work." Area Manager of the Boldt Company, Josh Kostiuk, and Career Counselor of JET and 218 Trades, Dave Cook, gave an eye-opening speech to all attendees.

Josh and Dave both shared personal stories of their upbringing and what they see now as employees within the trades industries. It provided strong insight to attendees of the work that tradesmen and tradeswomen put in to make a strong living with great project outcomes.

As always, this event took place at Rapids Brewing Co. from 6:00 - 7:30 pm. Food and beverage was provided. Donations were encouraged.





10-26-2022 North Reimagined

In partnership with coHaus and The Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce hosted North Reimagined, a new event in Itasca County. North Reimagined was a night where makers, business-owners, and residents came together and...

- CELEBRATED: our thriving local businesses
- ENJOYED: live music by Vocal Perspective
- SUPPORTED: local food trucks and craft spirits
- DISCOVERED: valuable information & resources
- EXPLORED: local vendors
- TOURED: Itasca's new Collective Workspace, CoHaus

The night was a huge success. There were seven local vendors selling their goods, three food vendors, and a variety of community resources with booths available to the public. Rapids Brewing and Hotel Rapids were on site serving craft beer and spirits!

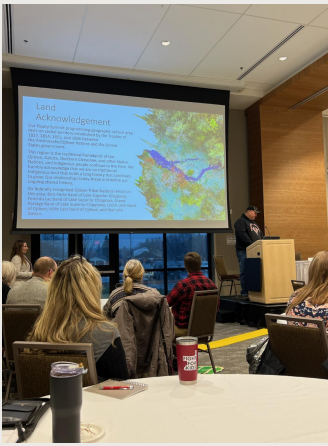
We had over 160 people in attendance throughout the night. Due to the overwhelming success of a first time event, North Reimagined is an event that we look forward to hosting in the years to come.

11-9-2022 Digital Footprint Summit

IEDC has hosted the Social Media summit for many years. We hosted it virtually during the pandemic and transitioned back into in-person in 2021. This year, IEDC partnered with Visit Grand Rapids to bring a new and improved Digital Footprint Summit that included four excellent presentations:

- Content that Connects: The Authentic Way to Get Better Leads Online
 - Presented by: Cari O'Brien, Custom Content Solutions
- Geofencing & Geo Targeting "Cliff" Notes
 - Presented by Cliff Ward, Orange 142
- 2023 Website & Digital Marketing Tips for Business Owners
 - Presented by: Katie Pieper & Julie Kaczmar, SandPieper Design
- 7 Reasons Why Video Marketing is so Important & Video Creation Tips
 - Presented by: Autumn Ricke & Stacey Sundvall, Pinnacle Marketing Group





11-10-2022 Northspan Equity Summit

On November 11, 2022 Northspan put on a very thought provoking Equity Summit at the Iron Trail Sports Facility in Virginia, MN. The Keynote and breakout sessions were mentally challenging to hear and process.

It's crazy how much our region has experienced with this pendulum swing! We are being challenged and called to lean into discomfort and embrace the difficult subject of discrimination. Fostering true belonging for everyone requires humility by all. The tone of this Summit was to embrace diversity and lean into the unknown of learning what we don't know and make it our business to ask the questions that will promote making everyone feel like they belong. Ask someone who is struggling what they need to feel more successful and lean into helping them achieve this success. Discrimination will always exist- courageously do what you can to learn more about what folks are independently feeling and make them feel heard and welcomed in our community.

11-17-2022 Engage

In the November Engage session, we talked with six local business owners who walked us through the different holiday promos that they have going on November through Christmas Eve!

We wanted this to help serve as a reminder to shop local during the holiday season! Our local small businesses have been through a lot over the past three years, so making sure they feel supported is always our goal.

This event was pushed out on social media and a recap of the promotions was sent out in an email for them to share within their networks. We are excited about the possibility of taking this to an in-person event in the future where we highlight new businesses in town.

- Rapids Brewing Co
- Gypsy Creek Boutique
- Fit Foodie Meal Prep
- Benders
- 218 Style
- North in Bloom
- Thousand Lakes Sporting Goods



IEDC hosts quarterly Engage sessions that feature topics targeted towards community and economic development.

This month's topic will be all about shopping LOCAL this holiday season. Hear from area business owners on their holiday deals and why it's important to shop local.

"When you support small business, you support a dream."

Shop Local this Holiday Season
November 17th | 2 pm | Zoom
Join: <https://bit.ly/iedcengage2022>



11-28-2022 November Lyceum

The theme for November's Lyceum was *Religion and Democracy*. We had Bryan Boone as our speaker. He is currently the mayor of Bigfork and the Lead Pastor at the Bigfork Assembly of God.

Bryan spoke about how he manages both roles and needs to keep them separate but uses all of himself to lead. It was a healthy conversation on how you can talk about politics and religion at the same table.

There were great table sprouts, toasts, and commissions from each group. It was good to see different people in our community sit down at each table to discuss this month's topic! The next Lyceum will take place on January 23rd from 6-7:30 pm at Rapids Brewing Co. The theme will be *How is Modern Media Changing the Way We Think?*

11-29-2022 The RINK Pitch Comp.

On November 29, 2022 Innovate 218's 3rd pitch competition was held at Pier B in Duluth, MN. We opened the ideas submission in October and received 20 submissions.



Out of these submissions 5 were asked to share their enthusiasm about their business for 5 minutes in front of 5 judges. At the end of the night \$10k was given out in prize money to the top 3 presenters. Our \$5k, first place Hat Trick Award, was given out to Jon Francisco for his Francisco Hockey business in which he trains players in concussion matters! How to take a hit, fall and body posture are all tactics to help keep these athletes in the game longer and with less injury. Jon's professional presentation of his business idea was entertaining and well executed!

There were many wonderful submissions and it always amazes us to see and hear all the local talents and ideas brewing.

Going into business is a marathon and it is so fun to be able to give money to local entrepreneurs who are brave enough to share their business ideas for a chance to win some funds. We will be opening up our idea submission for the next The RINK pitch competition in April 2023. We are already planning the details for the next fun event. We hope to have it at Iron World in Chisholm sometime mid-May. If you have a business idea and would like to have a chance at winning some money just for sharing your ideas



12-1-2022 State of Manufacturing

IEDC in partnership with Entrepreneur Fund, hosted the State of Manufacturing Event in.... This event welcomes manufacturers from around the area to come together to learn the results of surveys conducted by Enterprise MN.

These surveys highlight major concerns and challenges for manufacturing as well as the optimism on the current business climate. Outlook is still positive, even through the hurdles of workforce and supply chain issues.

For more details on their report, visit:

<https://www.enterpriseminnesota.org/state-of-manufacturing/>.

12-2-2022 First Friday Art Walk

On Friday, December 2nd, IEDC hosted our fourth quarter art walk. This was one for the books. There were over 100 people in attendance and all were eager to hear music by Adessa & Keith of Adessa & the Beat perform as an acoustic duo. Featured artist, Lea Friesen was on site and painting live for all to see!



Aside from the live music, Four Season's Market catered the event. The compliments on their wild rice soup were heard loud and clear. Some went even as far to say, "This is the best soup i've ever had!" After a hot cup of soup, attendees enjoyed delicious truffles from Swanky Gifts on Rainy.

Our next First Friday event will take place on March 3rd, 2023. Follow our social media channels for more information!



12-6-2022 Annual SBDC Consultant Meeting

In December, Rob Sjostrand and Nichole Arbour attended the SBDC Annual Compliance Training at the regional SBDC office in Duluth, MN.

The agenda was as follows:

- Intrapreneurship where we learned from other SBDC consultants
 - Marketing highlights and trends
 - Employee engagement
 - New business management templates for clients
- Code of Conduct
- DEI work
- SBA and state priorities
- New SBDC mobile office! (pictured above)

12-22-2022 IEDC Holiday Party

Our team had a blast celebrating the holidays and the successful year at IEDC at our Holiday Party.



This year, we went to Rapids Brewing as a team with our spouses to ring in the season! We had a bags tournament, which Nichole and Steve Arbour won in a tight race against Matt and Bobbi Shermoen. As you can tell, Matt Shermoen won best dressed by a landslide. The team at Rapids Brewing Co. offered incredible service from start to finish. Aside from that, we played a white elephant dice game, found the pickle, and enjoyed a night of fun!



Welcoming Communities of Itasca County

The Welcoming Communities group has had an active 4th quarter. They have decided that collecting critical information from the community will help to determine strategic goals.

The Welcoming Community Survey was completed with a full report expected in early February and the Promise is You is conducting focus groups and one-on-one interviews.

Under the leadership of a steering committee, we will host a 6-month Welcoming Community Cohort. This group will be led by a facilitator, with the ultimate goal of developing a strategic plan, pursuing funding sources, and continuing to drive this very important issue forward.

If you are interested in more information, please contact Kayla Swanson at kswanson@itascadv.org.

Innovate 218 Updates

Innovate 218, a LAUNCH funded start up initiative, is also currently accepting applications for our 10 week



virtual lean canvas classes. These virtual classes are free to folks who apply and are chosen to participate.

If you have a business idea and just don't know where to go or even how to start...APPLY! You can take the time to dig into your ideas in the comfort of your own home through a series of weekly guided studies and activities which will help iterate your ideas.

For more information about this series please visit:
<https://iltacademy.io/explore-programs/innovate218-winter-2023/>

Thrive Up North Updates

Live, work, and play in Itasca County. That's the end-goal for most who have come across the Thrive Up North Incentives program this year. What started as a rural recruitment campaign, has now turned into more. In 2022, we started the Luring You to Itasca County Incentives Program.



Throughout the year, we had over 20 applicants. Of those applicants, 14 have been accepted into the program in a variety of industries ranging from mental health, natural resources, business, manufacturing, and MORE! It's enlightening to hear about the applicants, their families, and all that they look forward to with "up north" living.

Aside from the incentives program, we have still been successfully branding Thrive Up North through storytelling. In 2022, we were able to tell the stories of three different families through seven videos done by Weisguy Images. It's incredible to hear from those of all walks of life and to showcase their lives. We hope that Thrive Up North continues strong in 2023 and anticipate more people moving to Itasca County, where we do more than live: we thrive!

To learn more, head to our website at:
www.thriveupnorth.com

APEX Updates



Note from the President

As APEX's new President and CEO, I have enjoyed getting to know APEX's regional partners this fall.



For nearly 20 years, APEX has built a voice for our region's private sector, and that voice has been curated by member input. APEX investor-members represent diverse industries across the entire region of northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. We are stronger and more impactful together, and APEX is proud to amplify that voice to bring



investment to the region.

APEX is the catalyst for business and economic development. We are focused on our three core pillars of business attraction, retention, and expansion. Yet, we are not working alone; our partner organizations like IEDC are leading efforts in other essential areas and together we are making a positive impact on our region - creating a destination for opportunities and quality of place. An overarching spirit of collaboration is key to strengthening and growing Itasca county and the APEX region.

Over the next year, I am planning to highlight the connection between business and industry and the prosperity of families. Growth and success in both areas are critical to our future. I believe that we can set the standard for Minnesota and beyond, and I look forward to working together to drive economic growth.

Wishing all a prosperous 2023!

Rachel Johnson, President of APEX

MN DEED's 'Build What Matters' Tour and Capstone Forum

In early October, 11 Minnesota Commissioners spent three days touring northeast Minnesota visiting companies, schools and public works projects on the 'Build What Matters' tour.

Follow this link for a compiled recap provided by the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).

The APEX Team participated in the tours and was tasked with ensuring a strong turnout from our investor-member business community at the 'Build What Matters' Tour Capstone Forum. Over two dozen APEX investor-members represented our region at the beautiful new ALLETE headquarters in downtown Duluth. The event was an opportunity to meet the Commissioners, hear their takeaways from the tour and discuss concerns and opportunities in our region.

One theme that stood out: the tremendous opportunity around our plentiful natural resources and the green energy economy and how that translates into APEX-targeted areas of sustainable forestry, mining and advanced manufacturing.

We appreciated the Commissioners' time and commitment to our region and are looking forward to what's next in partnership for sustainable growth and prosperity. Thank you to our investor-members who were able to participate and ALLETE for hosting the 'Build What Matters' Tour Capstone Forum. The one-on-one time spent between the business

community and Commissioners was mutually beneficial.

Follow this link to the full article.

CEDA Updates



CEDA continued to help with growth in Itasca County Communities and beyond in 2022. Regional Director, Sarah Carling provided us with her team's yearly impact numbers below.



By the numbers:

- CEDA assisted with securing \$2,703,318.5 in grant funds, plus in-kind donations and labor in 2022.
- CEDA supported 25 communities in 2022.
- CEDA assisted grants totaled \$2,703,318.50 in 2022. Includes Funds acquired Dec 21 of \$1,725,000/ Does not include ARPA funds or in-kind.

By the Projects :

- S.Lake Phase 2 Trail
- Blackberry trail development
- Day of Action Deer River
- Emergency crisis management / clean-up in Deer River
- Nashwauk Mt.Bike and Trailhead Committee
- Phase 1 Bovey park project



EF Updates

Our partners at Entrepreneur Fund ended the year strong. Find their impact numbers below.

Overall:

- Partnered with over 1,600 entrepreneurs
- Over 1,150 small businesses served
- \$24.5 million total in lending
- Average loan size was \$75,000
- Awarded Minnesota's 2022 U.S. SBA Microlender of the Year

In Itasca County:

- Partnered with 88 entrepreneurs
- \$1.8 million in lending to small businesses in Itasca County

Click Here to Visit Our Events Calendar Today for Future Events!

Itasca Economic Development Corporation | 12 NW 3rd St, Grand Rapids, MN 55744

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