



## Itasca Economic Development Corporation November/December 2011 Newsletter

### Key Performance Indicators

	YTD	2011 Annual Target
<b>Total Clients Served at IEDC Facility</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>Business Recruitment Leads</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Total Project Investment – Completed (&gt; 10 MM)</b>	<b>\$75 M</b>	<b>\$75 M</b>
<b>Total Project Investment – Completed (&lt; 10 MM)</b>	<b>\$6.7 M</b>	<b>\$5 M</b>
<b>IEDC Assisted Project Investment – Completed (&gt; 10 MM)</b>	<b>\$5 M</b>	<b>\$5 M</b>
<b>IEDC Assisted Project Investment – Completed (&lt; 10 MM)</b>	<b>\$4.9 M</b>	<b>\$5 M</b>
<b>Total Project Investment – In Progress (&gt; 10 MM)</b>	<b>\$750 M</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>Total Project Investment – In Progress (&lt; 10 MM)</b>	<b>\$16.8 M</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>IEDC Assisted Project Investment – In Progress (&gt; 10 MM)</b>	<b>\$30 M</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>IEDC Assisted Project Investment – In Progress (&lt; 10 MM)</b>	<b>\$10.2 M</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>Actual or Projected New Jobs – Completed Projects</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Actual or Projected New Jobs – Projects in Progress</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Jobs Retained</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>25</b>

### February Strategic Partner Meeting – Save the Date!!

IEDC will be hosting a Strategic Partner Meeting at 5:00 pm on Wednesday, February 29<sup>th</sup> at the Timberlake Lodge. Matt Lehtinen, Magnetation President and COO, will be the keynote speaker. More information will follow. Please mark your calendars!

### Midwest Manufacturing

As demand for commodities globally remains strong, opportunity abounds for mining companies and mining-related suppliers. One of those suppliers is Midwest Manufacturing in Nashwauk, Minnesota.

IEDC assisted Midwest Manufacturing with growth-related financing and other business needs during the second half of 2011. The result was \$550,000 in approved loans, including the IRRRB approving \$273,800 in a participation loan. This funding will help to expand the company's building by 6,000 square feet and purchase more equipment. Midwest Manufacturing plans to hire 17 additional workers allowing them to meet the current market potential.

In addition to its work with Midwest Manufacturing, IEDC has also engaged with several other mining-related suppliers in recent weeks, in an effort to better support the significant growth required among our small- to mid-sized

manufacturers as the region's large-scale mining projects continue to gain momentum. The majority of these suppliers are local companies dealing with cash-flow constraints, building expansion projects, workforce recruitment needs, and a whole host of other growing pains as they work to ramp-up their operations on a relatively short period of time. Through its network of seasoned consultants, IEDC is able to provide the support needed to help these companies manage growth effectively and position themselves to compete well in the global marketplace for many years to come.

IEDC is also hearing more from mining-related suppliers from outside the area, many of whom are interested in expanding or relocating portions of their operations into Itasca County to be closer to the large customers they serve in Minnesota's Iron Range communities. However, as these companies work to set up their operations in Itasca County as quickly as possible, they are challenged by the lack of vacant, high-bay manufacturing buildings in the range of 10,000-30,000 square feet. To address this concern, IEDC is working to support new construction projects throughout Itasca County, while further developing strategies aimed at converting the former Terex/ASV building in Cohasset into a multi-tenant lease space for several small- to mid-sized manufacturing operations.

If you know of a company interested in doing business in Itasca County which may benefit from the comprehensive support offered through IEDC, please have them contact [Jeff Borling](#) at: 218-326-9411, ext. 23

## Technology Advisory Committee

During the final months of 2011, IEDC worked with consultant Sandy Layman to begin the process of developing a comprehensive strategy for expanding the IT/computer sciences business cluster in Itasca County. Sandy began by interviewing business owners and IT professionals from throughout the county and surrounding region to learn more about our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as they relate to our ability to nurture and grow the tech-based business opportunities in Itasca County.

As a result of these interviews, IEDC was able to build a short list of business owners and IT professionals willing to devote their time to assisting in the development of this strategy, and a series of kick-off meetings were held to form the IEDC Technology Advisory Committee (TAC). With strong representation from large employers, small businesses, entrepreneurs, and public sector partners, IEDC is confident that we have the right people at the table to advise and inform the strategies we develop.

Although the development process is still in the early stages, the committee succeeded in identifying two clear areas of opportunity for IEDC to focus on after only two meetings: 1) Help build and define the local pool of high-tech talent, and 2) Work to educate local businesses on the impact investments in new technology can have in strengthening their bottom line. These examples of clear, practical action items represent the starting point for IEDC to engage with the local business community and work to position Itasca County on the cutting edge of new technology deployment.

Going forward, the Technology Advisory Committee will meet regularly throughout 2012 as IEDC continues to hone its strategy for expanding and attracting tech-based businesses in Itasca County. If you would like to learn more about this process, or participate in the TAC meetings, please contact [Teri Heikkila](#) today at: 218-326-9411, ext. 20

## Itasca Area Business Roundtable

Jeremy Smolich, the Plant Manager of Unites States Steel's Keetac operation, spoke at the November Business Roundtable meeting. With attendance down due to the Thanksgiving holiday, IEDC plans to invite Mr. Smolich to come to a future meeting to share the exciting activity taking place at Keetac.

December meetings featured Todd Christenson, Local Boy Waste Disposal, and a panel of retailers who discussed the current and future climate of the retail trade.

The Itasca Area Business Roundtable meets the first and third Monday's every month, 8:00 a.m. at the Timberlake Lodge. Check out their Facebook page for more information by searching for the Itasca Area Business Roundtable.

## Departing Board Chair

IEDC would like to express gratitude to Rick Lemonds for his five years of dedicated service on the IEDC Board. Rick has served as Board Chairman for the past three years. We wish Rick the best as he and his family relocate to Ohio. The baton now passes to Mark Glasnapp, former Caterpillar Inc. executive and COO of ASV Inc as new 2012 Chairman.

## Paul Bunyan – IEDC's First Platinum Level Contributor

2012 marks the beginning of a new partner contribution model for IEDC. Contributors will fall into the Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze or Patron level. We are excited to announce that Paul Bunyan Communications is our first Platinum Level Contributor, with a three year commitment of \$10,000 per year. More information on the partner contribution model will be announced at the February Strategic Partner Meeting.

As the year wraps up, IEDC would like to thank the following for their 2011 financial support: Blandin Foundation, Itasca County, GREDA, CEDA, Great River Energy, Jerry Miner, Minnesota Power, American Bank, Grand Rapids State Bank, Lake Country Power, Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital, First State Bank of Bigfork, Woodland Bank, Wells Fargo, Bigfork Valley Hospital, Blandin Paper Company, Hawkinson Construction, Industrial Lubricant, Midwest Manufacturing, Deer River Helathcare, MDI and North Itasca Electric Coop. In-kind contributions were received from JDI Contracts, Herald Review and KOZY.

## Entrepreneur Fund

### Entrepreneur Fund Offers On-line Business Plan Classes

This January the Entrepreneur Fund launched a free re-occurring one-hour business planning class. The online webinar training aims to inform aspiring entrepreneurs why planning for a business is critical and explain how to go about writing a business plan.

One of the leading errors people make in starting a new business is failure to plan. Developing a clear vision and roadmap of where the business is going and how to get there is the first step to business start-up success.

Entrepreneur Fund staff member Nicole Wilde says, "This class is intended to demystify the business planning process and provide access to resources and tools to help people begin researching their plan. The class also briefly explains the business loan process.

Classes are scheduled during regular business hours, as well as evening and weekends to accommodate various schedules. A full class schedule and registration can be found at <http://www.efbp.org>

### Women's Business Center at the Entrepreneur Fund Hosts Women's Strategy Retreat for Women Entrepreneurs – March 2-4, 2012

The Women's Business Center at the Entrepreneur Fund will host a unique Women's Business Strategy Weekend retreat at Larsmont Cottages March 2-4, 2012. The retreat is specifically designed to give women entrepreneurs time and tools to develop a growth mindset, a clear path to grow business income and resources to support growth. The retreat is for regional women entrepreneurs that have ability, desire and opportunity to increase business income.

Participants of the retreat will build a three-year plan for growth in an interactive session with other successful women entrepreneurs, building business skills of each women entrepreneur through group facilitation and interaction with their peers.

The retreat will cap at 15 participants. The cost for the all-inclusive weekend is \$600 per entrepreneur. Application is required for participation. For more information contact Women Business Center Director Nicole Wilde at 218-623-5729.

### **About the Entrepreneur Fund**

The Entrepreneur Fund and its initiative, the Greenstone Group, support local entrepreneurs and provide small-business financing throughout northeastern Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin. The organizations have helped start, stabilize or expand more than 1,200 businesses; provided \$12 million in loans to nearly 500 businesses; and served 11,000 people through training, coaching, consulting and lending programs. For more information contact the Entrepreneur Fund at 218-623-5747 or [www.entrepreneurfund.org](http://www.entrepreneurfund.org).

## **Industrial Space and Technology Space/Services Available**

Seven thousand square feet of flexible use space is available in the IEDC industrial building located on Airport Road in Grand Rapids. The space includes an office, lunch room, overhead truck access and a large open area that can be configured for a range of uses including manufacturing and assembly. IEDC has contracted with Rennix Corporation to manage the Airport Road Building and they can be reached at 326-3730.

Space is also available for business start-up or expansion at the Itasca Technology Exchange (ITE) located in Central Square Mall in downtown Grand Rapids. The 1,200 available square feet can be made available in various configurations to suit. Data Center services with secure multiple collocation cabinets are available with redundant network connectivity and power supply. You don't need to be an ITE tenant to utilize Data Center services. Please call Rennix Corporation at 326-3730 for more information.

***IEDC has two great sources of information about doing business in Itasca County. Check these out. Better yet, send links to a business decision maker you know and encourage them to consider the Itasca area for their next venture!***

[www.itascadv.org](http://www.itascadv.org)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xjQsb1T6smc>