

Benton Development Group

Board of Directors Meeting – March

The monthly meeting of the Benton Development Group was held Wednesday, March 28, 2006, at the Van Horne Legion Hall, Van Horne, Iowa. The following directors, staff and visitors were present:

Marty Junge – Benton County; Ron Buch – Benton County; Rod Kubichek – Benton County; Dave Coulter – Benton County; Eldon Zumbach – Benton County; Dave Becker – Atkins; James Daily – Belle Plaine; Jeff Sasek – Garrison; Lynn Author – Mt. Auburn; Richard Grovert – Newhall; Duane Eldred – Urbana; Jim Magdefrau – Van Horne; Frank Van Steenhuyse – Vinton Unlimited; Ranae Tharp – Executive Director; and advisory members/guests: Greg Pavelka – East Central Iowa REC.

- I. Dave Coulter called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.
- II. Quorum determined.
- III. January 31, 2007 meeting minutes. With a correction to the Newhall community report, Richard Grovert made a motion to approve; Ron Buch second. Unanimously approved.
- IV. The treasurer's financial report for January and February:
Ranae reported that there was \$5,350 raised from the fundraiser and that a reimbursement bill for \$3,150 being presented to the Benton County Community Foundation.
Marty Junge made a motion to approve; Dave Becker second. Unanimously approved.

V. *Business / Committee Reports*

A. *Internal Business*

Ranae provided the board with a copy of the 2006/2007 budget and explained that some line items were changed but the operating expense total would not change.

Ranae presented two economic development applications to the board and explained that there was \$5,870 left to use. The Vinton Unlimited application was applying for \$4,575 for a promotional project that included a DVD and a 13 week ad. The IBSSS Business Incubator application was applying for \$10,000 for the current accelerator and expansion project. There was discussion about both projects and how they fit the focus of the Benton County Economic Development grant. Jim Magdefrau made a motion to give Vinton Unlimited \$1,870 and the IBSSS Business Incubator \$4,000; Dave Becker second. A board vote passed the motion.

The current officers are Dave Coulter, President; Marty Junge, Vice President; Rod Kubichek, Treasurer; and Dell Hanson, Secretary. Eldon Zumbach made a motion to approve the officers as currently read; Dave Becker second. Officers agree to another year term; unanimously approved.

The board asked Ranae to leave the room for the director review. After much discussion, Richard Grovert made a motion to increase the yearly director salary by \$3,150; Dave Becker second. Motion was carried. Ranae thanked the board for their support.

B. *Community / County Projects*

The Benton County Community Foundation received 26 applications. Each member will review and score all the applications, return their scores to Ranae by mid-April, and meet for final award.

Ranae attended the following community meetings with the following updates:

The BC Courthouse 100th Anniversary committee is working on celebration details for 07/07/07 on the courthouse lawn. The committee is still looking for community item ideas to be placed into the new casket.

Vinton Unlimited is working on CD to encourage new residents.

Workplace Learning is looking for assistance in interviewing intern and has asked Ranae to participate on April 25th at Kirkwood.

Visitors to the www.bentoncountyiowa.com website are 2,581 for February and 2,760 for March. Ranae told the board that the website needed a new look and that she would be doing some research to get that done soon.

Iowa Connections met earlier today to work with Strategic America (the marketing firm) on the marketing plan. The Department of Labor awarded \$250,000 for a regional analysis; a meeting is to be held tomorrow. The next regional meeting planned will be February 16th in Marshalltown.

Ranae will meet with Priority One and Kirkwood for an update on current corridor programs. She will also meet with Priority One on April 10th to determine a partnership/role understanding.

LOIS (Location One Information System) still needs the buildings and sites updated. Lisa Nolan contacted BDG to say thank you; after putting her building on the LOIS database she got a sale.

The Highway 30 Coalition was scheduled to meet on March 9th in Tama; however, Ranae could not make the meeting and Ron Buch said nobody was there.

Small Business Projects / Grants / Marketing - (Commercial/Industrial)

There were 12 tourism requests sent; Pennsylvania, Iowa, Ohio, and Illinois to name a few.

Small business packets and assistance was given to the following:

Benton Township – someone looking for zoning information.

Vinton – still working a little with a potential new e-bay, consignment and wholesale resale

business is looking to locate and is looking for start up financials.

- a gentleman is looking to build a cabin for a recreational business.

IDED – four new ventures were presented with no fit for Benton County.

BDG was contact to be a part of a small town series called Business and Beyond; \$19,700 is needed for licensing. The board agreed not to participate.

C. Upcoming Events / Conferences / Workshops

Ranae will be attending training for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) on April 13 and 14th in Des Moines; there will be a reimbursement for costs of this training. This would be a resource Ranae/BDG could provide to our businesses and military residents with only a few hours served a year.

Small Communities for Success will be held on April 5th in Decorah.

The next BDG board meeting will be April 25th in Urbana.

VI. Announcements

Ranae announced she would be getting married June 30, 2007.

VII. *Community Reports*

Benton County	There has been a few calls to fix the roads. Ron talked about the Time 21 and supporting the road tax
Atkins	Another development area is in the process with 100 lots to be available. Medical clinic building is now for sale.
Belle Plaine	The city is waiting for FEMA reimbursement to come to assist with storm damage. A new Park & Recreational director has been hired. The Belle Plaine Community Development Group is looking to hire a director.
Blairstown	Work is being done on the park.
Garrison demolition	Work on the trail from Garrison to Dysart is beginning. There has been some interest in the of the Old Creamery building.
Keystone	The new Turner Hall is getting done.
Luzerne	The bridge will be out the end of May and by October is to be passable.
Mt. Auburn	Clean up and park work is ongoing.
Newhall	There are a few buildings still for sale. The concession stand is close to being done.
Norway	No Report.
Shellsburg	No Report.
Urbana	There is a new building in the business district (Wood Street) looking for tenants. The process has started for a 5-phase sewer system. East-Central Iowa REC will be doing aerial photos and offer it to anyone interested for \$150.
Van Horne	The old Huggy's building has been sold. The 3 rd of 12 lots has been sold.
Vinton	In the planning for Party in the Park in June. Frank brought the brochures that were funded by the Benton County Economic Development fund. The High School is a head of schedule.
Walford	No Report.
Watkins	No Report.
Youngville	The 1 st of May will be open until October and the Farmers Market will be open May 3 rd . Youngville Café is now recognized on the National Registry of Historic Places.

VIII. *Adjournment* - Richard Grovert made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 pm;
Dave Becker second. Unanimously approved