



Quarterly Meeting Minutes
January 25th, 2017
Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board
Highway 53, Eveleth
www.ireamn.org

The mission of the IREA is to create a collaborative environment for economic prosperity in Northeast Minnesota by providing leadership, fostering partnerships and employing professional economic development strategies.

Meeting Participants:

Name	Company/Organization	Name	Company/Organization
Tamara Lowney	APEX/IEDC	Jeff Borling	Great River Energy
Randy Long	Bois Forte Band of Chippewa	Chris Ismil	IRRRB
Andy Datko	Bois Forte Band of Chippewa	Drew Digby	IRRRB
Martha Faust	MN Brownfields	Whitney Ridlon	IRRRB
John Fedo,	City of Ely EDA	Mike Birkland	Lake Country Power
Harold Langowski	City of Ely	Arik Forsman	Minnesota Power
Deb Sakrison	City of Gilbert	Alex Bastien	Northland Foundation
Mary Sommis	City of Grand Marais	Michael Colclough	Northland Foundation
Connie Christenson	Carlton County	Karl Schuettler	Northspan Group
Lori Fedo	Chamber of Commerce	Bill Spang	Northern State Bank
Jeff Crower? Spelling	Cook County	Ida Rukavina	Office of Senator Klobuchar
Erin Welle	MN-DEED	Steve Giorgi	RAMS
Deb Deluca	Duluth Port Authority	Shaun Germolus	Range Regional Airport
Curt Anttila	East Range Joint Powers Board	Betsy Olivanti	UMD CED
Patrick Hughley	Enbridge Energy	Mike Valentine	Valentine Mgmt. & Consulting
Laura Kircher	Enbridge Energy	Joe Buttwieler	Consolidated Telecommunications Company
Stephen Peterson	Entrepreneur Fund		

I. Welcoming Remarks

- A. **Jeff Borling, IREA Chair**, opened the meeting at 9:30 am.
 - a. **Welcome to new members:**
 - b. Reviews upcoming events

II. Administration

- A. Approval of the Meeting Minutes tabled until next meeting
- B. Approval of the Financials as of January 1st, 2017
 - i. Motion to approve: Connie Christenson
 - ii. Second: Steve Peterson
- C. IREA will no longer be a part of MN Marketing Partners
- D. IREA is considering EDAM, pricing has increased from \$800 to \$1200 approximately. Need to determine if we want to be a member. It would allow us to send someone to the EDAM events. It would give us exposure at a legislative level. It could be more structured, and if anyone has any interest in being involved. Because it is the 50th anniversary of EDAM, it will have a great deal more coverage.
 - i. Motion to be a Bonze Level Member: Tamara Lowney
 - ii. Seconded: Steve Peterson

III. Regional Success Lake and Cook County, Joe Buttweiler, Partnership Development Manager, Consolidated Telecommunications Company

Highlights:

CTC is a Co Op, and they work very well with municipalities as their focuses align. They are looking for growing communities. Missions, goals and objectives must align. They seek out partners that have champions in the community and a mutual trust.

Arrowhead Electric Cooperative: Successful project due to: 100% Board support, their business model, CTC, 2nd Engineering firm hired, local champions, and utility and construction knowledge and resources.

Challenges: When we didn't know which questions to ask, it lead to hiring the wrong engineering firm. The timeline requirements for stimulus didn't slow down, even though they had issues to deal with.

20-20: Choose more experienced engineering firm, use realistic timelines, dedicate resources to community communication (PR), Sales and Marketing is extremely important.

Measurable Successes: 2500 premises and growing with access to 1GB symmetrical internet, businesses have access to best in class HPBX, mobile service is improved, increase values to the Co Op, creation of new FTE, indirect job creation as well as business retention and economic growth. Ongoing partnership between Arrowhead and CTC.

What made Lake Connections Successful: County Board Support, heavy demand for service from property owners and businesses, perseverance.

Challenges: Overpromised business plan, some issues with engineering company, competitor reactions (political, regulatory, competitor).

20/20: Construction Management, don't over promise timelines, sales and marketing efforts need to be in place.

Measurable Success: 2300 premises, businesses have access to best in class HPBX, increase options for new services an products.

Lake Connections: Lake County Fiber Network. Stimulus awarded in 2010. CTC began managing 2 months ago.

- **What is the take rate?** It is a little bit over 50% for Arrowhead and similar for Lake County. Needs a stronger Sales & Marketing Effort.
- **What is a high-level number per household?** It is all over the board, and very difficult to answer. Northeast Service Cooperative; going to every community in northern MN. CTC can provide TV services over the NESC network.
- **What we not doing this in St. Louis County?** Great questions, not sure. Looking for the right contact.
- **Do you think it is more difficult because there is an Urban center in SL County?** Yes, that could be part of the issue. But, if there is local support it can still be done.
- **What is the deal with City of Duluth being underserved?** It is all driven by the providers. Maps aren't always 100% and may be being reported inaccurately.

IV. **Ready for Action: Broadband in St. Louis County, Whitney Ridlon, Community Development Representative, IRRRB**

Broadband is essential for business and economic development

Highlights:

- There have been multiple sessions in the IRRRB area to address the issues around broadband. IRRRB has partnered with Blandin to help 6 communities in the service area. It will help communities identify what their needs are and how to address those needs and have a unified voice. Hibbing, Chisholm, Mt. Iron-Buhl, Cook, Aitkin, Ely all have active groups talking about where to go with broadband.
- Projects under way to propel us forward: Century built out in Side Lake and Balkan. NE Service Partnered with Frontier 4500-5000 people served in the Meadowland and Crane Lake areas. 30 town halls/firehalls are now connected.
- The middle mile network goes through many of the Range Communities.
- Paul Bunyan, largest gigabit network in the nation has a huge project in Itasca County (Blandin Broadband Community).
- State Border to Border Broadband Fund has been critical to help with the funding of these projects to get them going and keep them going.

What are you hearing from the legislature for funding this year? 60 million was in a paper today, but it still not confirmed.

- **How do communities tap into the infrastructure that is moving up the main arteries?** NESC is focused on their members and aren't necessarily interested in doing it on their own. They really want to have a CTC or Paul Bunyan work with them on the final mile. Some providers are difficult to work with. It is hard to get joint trenching with you. It is the difficulty related to competing services. CTC has a consulting company that has done a survey talking about the needs of the private landowners. He would be willing to share it with our group.
- **How could our broadband communities get the information you need together to give to the broadband provider like CTC?** CTC is trying to build a generalized application form that helps communities realize what needs to be done to get fiber into that area. Carlton County has a survey on their website that could be helpful with information about the fiber process. You can contact NE Service Cooperative to find out who they are working with to get services to rural areas.

V. Emerging Project in Focus: Ely Area, Harold Langowski, City of Ely

Tanner and John Ott have purchased 12 buildings in Ely and 10 of them are in the downtown corridor. The majority of the buildings were empty and had been for many years. They have put several million dollars into the renovations of those buildings. They are historic preservation restorers and getting the building on the National Historic Registers. This spurred the interest in better internet services and pushed the City to pursue other options. The current system is unreliable and expensive.

Lake Connection Project: Ran out of money by the time they got to Ely and they stalled out. Currently, the City of Ely is working with CTC on a feasibility study. They have a Blandin Broadband Visioning Meeting coming up to help determine if this is feasible and how to make it happen. When you talk to your legislatures, tell them the maps provided by the service providers isn't accurate and reliability is a big issue. They are working to get the downtown portion of Ely. Starting the process and they are really focused on supporting existing businesses and helping them to expand.

- **Who else has been at the table that has been critical to the project?** Banks, retailers, hotels, and the manufacturing.

VI. Updated Northland Connection Website: Karl Schuetzler, Director of Marketing, Research & Analysis, Northspan Group, Inc.

The Northland Connection is an economic development portal. It has a database of all available properties in the region. It also has economic and demographic data for our region.

Vision: One – Stop Shop for business and economic development information, Fostering partnerships across the region with ED organizations and real estate agencies.

New website launched in November 2016 – provides a clearer site, very user friendly, including all of the former websites tools as well as new features. It is mobile friendly and search engine optimized. Sells the region as a whole and links to other key regional sites such as NORTHFORCE. Most popular tool is the Property Search tool which has new features such as featured properties, radius demographics, etc.

VII. State-Level Support for Brownfields Redevelopment Projects, Martha Faust, Executive Director, MN Brownfields and Erin Welle, Program Staff, DEED Office of Brownfields and Redevelopment.

- A. Mission: Tamara – get this from their website
- B. What we do: Workshops, training, on-call assistance
- C. Process:
 - i. Identify Brownfields: Visit the MN Pollution Control Agency's What's in My Neighborhood. Make a list or inventory of potential sites. Record info about suitability for redevelopment. Set your redevelopment goals.
 - ii. Investigate: Phase I and II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), Environmental Due Diligence.
 - iii. Brownfields Cleanup, low to moderate levels of contamination.
 - iv. Avoid the pitfalls – there are no shortcuts.
- D. Funding (Non-DEED) for Northern MN
 - i. MPCA Targeted Brownfields Assessment Program – in kind assistance, not a grant. They will hire contractors to perform assessments, including phase I and Phase II

Environmental Site Assessments and Response Action Plans at no cost to the participating communities.

- ii. MN Dept. of Commerce Petro Tank Release Cleanup Fund – Petrol fund
- iii. EPA Federal Grant Programs
- iv. Technical Assistance to Brownfields – National Program, funded by the US EPA. Workshops and Seminars. Land Recycling 101: Funding Finder, Land Recycling 101: Brownfield Resource Guide

E. DEED Funding

- i. Contamination Clean up and Investigation Grant Program
 - 1. Can be public or private owned site that has known or suspected contamination, development plan, resolution from applicant body and municipality, and a Response Action Plan.
- ii. Cleanup Revolving Loan Program
 - 1. Can be used to cover the same things as the Cleanup Grant Program, but none of the remaining costs can be included.
- iii. Redevelopment Grant Program
 - 1. Similar to Cleanup Programs.
- iv. Demolition Loan Program
 - 1. Don't have to have a developer ready to go but applicant has to owe the property. Must constitute a threat to public safety.

VIII. Regional Success: Duluth's Formula for Brownfield Redevelopment: Deb DeLuca, Government & Environmental Affairs Director, Duluth Seaway Port Authority

- A. Duluth Challenges:
 - i. Physical Challenges and Historic Industrial Downturn
 - ii. Brownfield Development Drivers: long-range planning
- B. Duluth Chronology of Success w/examples
 - i. City of the Duluth – Early EPA Grants and MN DEED Grants

IX. Brownfield Redevelopment on the Range: A Collaborative Approach: John Fedo, John A. Fedo & Associates, Richard Crum, President, Northeast Technical Services, Inc.

- A. See Presentation for more information

X. IREA Member Updates

Jeff Borling Adjourned Meeting at 3:30 PM