



Membership Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, February 17, 2021
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.

Attendees on the Zoom Call hosted by University of MN, Extension

Name	Company/Organization	Name	Company/Organization
John Bennett	U of M Extension	Whitney Ridlon	Dept. of IRRR
Betsy Olivanti	Northland SBDC	Ida Rukavina	RAMS
John Sullivan	City of Virginia	Tamara Lowney	IEDC
Billie Isham	Dept. of IRRR	Shawn Herhusky	Essentia Health
Kate Ferguson	Duluth Seaway Port Authority	Amanda Lamppa	IEDC
Barrett Ziemer	Range Regional Airport	Danae Baudette	Dept of IRRR
Max Peters	City of Cohasset	Beth Pierce	IRTB
Brad Gustafson	St. Louis County	Karl Schuettler	Northspan
Rachel Loeffler-Kemp	Senator Klobuchar's Office	Amanda Vuicich	Northspan
Paul Gregersen	Laurentian Arts&Culture Alliance	Brian Hanson	APEX
Brad Brzezinski	DEED	Mike Korte	Entrepreneur Fund
Carson Gorecki	DEED	Rob Sjostrand	IEDC
Mark Phillips	Dept. of IRRR	Jeff Borling	Great River Energy
Jennifer Tarnowski	JPJ Engineering	Brad Dolinski	North Itasca Electric Cooperative
Matt Sjoberg	Dept. of IRRR	Beth Drost	Cook Co/Grand Marais EDA
Riki McManus	Upper Midwest Film Office	Holly Hansen	City of Cloquet
Tami Jacobs	Growth Innovations	Laura Kircher	Enbridge
Vicki Hagberg	Northland SBDC	Jessalyn Sabin	NHED
Scott Sundvall	IRRR	Shelly Hanson	Hibbing Area Chamber
Chad Ronchetti	Kraus-Anderson	Stan Gustafson	Growth Innovations
Mark Jeffers	Aitkin County	Arik Forsman	MN Power
Ian Vincent	APEX	Matt Shermoen	APEX
Shari Marshik	Upper Midwest Film Office	Brenda Nyberg	Carlton County
Claire Peterlin	MN Power	Candie Seppala	City of Hibbing
Roy Smith	Dept. of IRRR	Amber Lewis	LMN Fellow, Northspan
Teresa Applewick	Laurentian Chamber of Commerce	Lisa Mrnak	City of LaPrairie
Tony Jefferies	IRTB		

9:00 **Welcome – Virtual**

9:05 **IREA Administrative Business**

Minutes from November 17, 2021 – motion by Tony Jefferies, seconded by Ida Rukavina, passed unanimously

IREA Board Members

- Brad Gustafson Expires: 2022-2027
- Jennifer Sterbenz: 2022-2027
- Mark Jeffers: 2022-2027
- Laura Kircher: 2019-2024 *Current Secretary
- Tony Jeffries: 2019 - 2024
- Whitney Ridlon: 2018-2023 *Current Chair
- Betsy Olivanti: 2018-2023 *Current Vice Chair
- Karl Schuettler: 2017-2022
- John Bennet: 2017-2022
- Open – anyone who is interested in serving please reach out to Whitney Ridlon
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Election of Officers – Motion to approve the slate by Ida Rukavina, Second by Mark Jeffers, passed unanimously

Whitney Ridlon	Chair	2022-2023
John Bennet	Vice Chair	2022-2023
Betsy Olivanti	Secretary	2022-2023

Financial Report – motion by Jeff Borling to approve the report, seconded by Laura Kircher, passed unanimously

2022 Budget – motion to approve the budget by Brad Gustafson, seconded by Mark Jeffers, passed unanimously

2021 Website Update & Reimbursement Approval – motion to reimburse Whitney Ridlon for the cost of the website by Ida Rukavina, seconded by Arik Forsman, passed unanimously

2022 Northspan Contract – motion to approve the facilitation contract by Laura Kircher, seconded by Vicki Hagberg, passed unanimously (Karl Schuettler and Amanda Vuicich abstained)

Welcome new Members/Guests

Save the Dates for upcoming meetings in 2022:

- June 15, 2022
- September 21, 2022
- November 16, 2022

9:15 **NHED Merger Update & Empowering Good Jobs EDA Grant:** <https://www.nhed.edu/>

By President Mike Raich and Jessalyn Sabin, NHED

The Northeast Higher Education District formed in 1999, as a district of five independent colleges operating on six campuses. The new model will be one operational college operating on six campuses as Minnesota North College. This new model will take advantage of the benefits of working together, while maintaining the benefits of small campuses such as athletics and specific programming based on area resources. Each campus will be called Minnesota North College, Campus Name such as Minnesota North College, Mesabi Range. The new model should become official May 23, 2022.

Minnesota North is pursuing a Federal EDA “Good Jobs Challenge” grant and working with regional partners (Dept. of IRRR, Essentia, MN Power, etc.) to write it. There is an opportunity for participation as a Merit Reviewer for the EDA Good Jobs Challenge Competition that you can engage with at the following link: <https://eda.gov/arpa/good-jobs-challenge/>

9:45 **Upper Midwest Film Office:** <https://uppermidwestfilmtv.org/>

Shari Marshik, UMFO

In 2022, the predicted economic impact will be \$4.3MM in the region with 90% incentive funds allocated, already, and 70% of the activity located on the Iron Range adding up to \$430k average local spend. UMFO is an independent entity reporting that each \$1 in project operating funding turns into \$10.67 in regional economic activity. UMFO is the “easy button” for films in the region and have a database of local resources (hair, makeup, catering, electricians, etc.) needed to do film industry work in the area. MN has incentives for film production and sits as an island as no other surrounding states (except for Illinois) have similar funds. The various incentives are: MN State Tax Credit, MN Rebate, St. Louis Co. Rebate, and Iron Range Rebate. Typically a project qualifies for 47-58% of reimbursement of the 45% of their budget spent

locally. There is a process that each film project must go through to have expenses that are eligible for these incentives get reimbursed. In some cases, a CPA audit is required if the project is over \$1MM.

Local Projects include:

- Lost 40 Studios – Located in Chisholm City Hall, largest production stage in MN
- Catalyst Story Institute
- Zeitgeist Film Academy – partnered with the Minnesota Discovery Center and Matt Koshmurl on various educational opportunities
- AdvancedMN created 3 Day workshops to allow for work experience for the workforce to get into the industry. It's working because six of the individuals who took the workshop are now working on a local project.

Next steps: expansion of incentives, expansion of caps, elimination of sunsets, workforce development funding. Need to grow from movies to episodic filming as it's more stable for workforce, economic impact, etc. The sunsets of funding are stopping this from happening, right now.

How can IREA members get involved: talking about the industry and UMFO, encourage your local businesses to register in the UMFO guide, invest in the infrastructure projects, invest in the talent, invest your time in the Board of Directors or advisory committee

Website for UMFO: www.uppermidwestfilmtv.org

10:15 Infrastructure Bill Funding Opportunities: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law>
Whitney Ridlon, IRRR & Federal Staff Updates (as available)

*Handout Attached

Pete Makowski is available to assist anyone who is looking to apply for funding from these opportunities. Rachel Loeffler-Kemp also offered assistance from her office to do the same – this can look like letters of support, help in finding additional information, and connections to agencies who have funding, etc.

10:30 Launch MN & Innovate 218: <https://mn.gov/launchmn/> & <https://www.itascadv.org/innovate-218>
Amanda Lamppa, IEDC

Innovate218 launched in 2021 is housed at IEDC and leverages partnerships of the many regional economic development organizations in the Northland. Amanda Lamppa is the project lead going forward with support from Austin Miller. The work centers around: meeting the entrepreneurs where they're at, educational opportunities, networking opportunities, and mentorship opportunities.

Innovate218 Taskforce started with 16 members and now has grown to 38 members strong. Launch MN is now partnering with Kenetic state-wide to create a mentorship network for every entrepreneur that wants one.

2021 Milestones: LaunchMN and AIR Grants awarded, 38-member taskforce, 16 ILT Cohort Graduates, Website and Brand Development, first pitch competition held, and pitch toolkit developed.

2022 Strategy: applied for \$150k in LaunchMN funding, applying for other grants to support the work, grow the support network and taskforce, ILT workshops and start up cohorts, pitch competitions, mentorship programs, networking and specialist speaker events

New website: www.

IEDC is also working on the FORGE – “Where ideas take shape”. It's a collaboration of workforce, education, and economic development, housed in Grand Rapids, and received a Rise Grant from the Federal EDA. More will be coming on this in the future as it develops.

10:40 Member Updates

Ian Vincent – APEX, looking to attract advanced manufacturing and natural resources project. Also focusing on workforce and childcare advocacy and want to partner with folks who do this work to ensure that there's a full-court press.

Kate Ferguson – Duluth Port Authority. \$10.5MM grant funding towards a \$21MM dollar infrastructure project on warehousing and dock walls, had a great year in 2021 lead by the mining industry and expect a similar year in 2022, offered a new offering for containers by vessel and will be offering consumer goods by containers on the vessel, may be seeing their first container from Asia in the spring, new focus on workforce at the port will be coming up.

Tamara Lowney, IEDC – if you are wanting to engage in the Huber EAW, there are opportunities for showing support and the opportunity for letters of support will be closing on 02/24/2022. IEDC is leading the full-court press on assisting with this project. Reach out to tlowney@itascadv.org

Brad Gustafson – St. Louis Co. \$1.8MM in CDBG projects have been approved for 2022 and are the facilitator for the HOME ARPA dollars focused on homelessness and supportive services in the 5 County Northland Region. They have a survey at www.stlouiscountymn.gov/communitydevelopment for this funding.

Karl Schuettler, Northspan – they are hiring a business development and community development position. https://northforce.org/community/job_openings/view/16309

Arik Forsman, MN Power – working on quite a few confidential projects and will be lobbying on Child Care funding down at the Capitol. If you'd like to engage on this topic, here's how to get involved.

Chad Ronchetti, Kraus-Anderson – they are working on the sound stage project in Duluth, leaning heavily into encouraging housing development and bring in outside funding for that need.

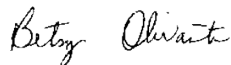
Jeff Borling, Great River Energy – regionally there is another E3 loan up for a manufacturer for advanced equipment, energy efficiency, and automation. Introduced Dan Cooper as the new business development manager for Lake Country Power.

Holly Hansen, Cloquet EDA – Cloquet is a Blandin Broadband Community in 2022 and working on some downtown projects. Also has a Small Cities Development grant request.

Barrett Ziemer, Hibbing Chisholm Airport – have a tenant with a 60 sq. foot facility who is looking to expand operations in the realm of recycling, green energy, and job creation

Motion to adjourn, Brad Gustafson, seconded by Karl Schuettler, Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Betsy Olivanti, Secretary of IREA