



annual report



2016

# MARTIN COUNTY EDA...

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The Martin County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA) partners with the Regional Center for Entrepreneurial Facilitation (RCEF) to provide one-on-one free and confidential business consulting, training, and mentorship to individuals, start-ups, and established business across many industries in Martin County through a business facilitation program called IGNITE. Our mission is to Inspire, Grow, and Nurture Innovative Talent through Empowerment. We have access to a large network of resources to connect entrepreneurs and business owners with the right people at the right time to move their project forward. MCEDA supports and assists the communities and townships in Martin County with their economic development efforts. We also engages in many entrepreneurial focused projects and events to bring value to the county.

## Services Provided:

*Needs, Goals, & Business Assessments*

*Business Plan Writing/Development*

*Feasibility Studies*

*Sales & Marketing Plans*

*Market Research*

*Start-up & Expansion Assistance*

*Financial Analysis*

*Strategic Planning*

*Professional Management Advice*

*Community Development Support*

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# ABOUT US...

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## What is IGNITE?

In 2007, the Martin County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA) partnered with the Regional Center for Entrepreneurial Facilitation (RCEF), a non-profit entrepreneur and business development organization to develop, brand, and implement an economic development program called IGNITE. The mission is to Inspire Growth and Nurture Innovative Talent through Empowerment, which mirrors the unique and established RCEF business model. The IGNITE program was put in place to provide individuals, entrepreneurs, and existing businesses in Martin County with the resources, support, and inspiration they need to prosper in the competitive marketplace. All the IGNITE services are confidential and of no cost to the client. Some of the business consulting services provided are business plan writing and development, feasibility assessments, start-up and expansion assistance, sales and marketing, market research, financial analysis, and strategic planning.

## Mission:

The mission of the Martin County Economic Development Authority is to Inspire Growth and Nurture Innovative Talent through Empowerment (IGNITE).

## Vision:

IGNITE strives to facilitate, support, and encourage entrepreneurs, start-ups, and existing business owners with their ideas working from the bottom up to grow and sustain our vibrant community for the future.

## Values:

The core values listed below shape and guide the actions we undertake every day.

- Integrity – we demonstrate the highest level of ethics and honesty in all we do.
- Innovative – we stay on the cutting edge of industry trends and information to pass to our clients.
- Caring – we treat every individual distinctly and with the respect they deserve.
- Excellence – we ensure quality in every aspect of our work. We continuously strive to further our education to provide expert advice to our clients.

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# 2016 YEAR-END SUMMARY...

Our key objectives are to start, stabilize, and grow businesses; retain and create jobs; increase tax revenues; and create a welcoming environment for innovation and economic development. In 2016, MCEDA successfully provided technical business assistance to 41 entrepreneurs and spent more than 485 hours in performing services. Adding to our notable highlights, there were five businesses that we helped open, stabilize, or expand. Utilizing the RCEF business model creates exceptional cost savings for Martin County. Year after year, we are able to produce tremendous results off very little expenses.

In an effort to help promote our services and involvement, we participated in several community development activities and events such as the Martin County Fair, Southern Minnesota Partnership for Regional Competitiveness, Area Career Exploration (ACE), MAPCED (Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers), Martin County Leadership Program (MCEDA provided scholarships for people to attend program), EDA Strategic Planning, Fairmont Convention & Visitor's Bureau, Fairmont Schools (partner in the Blandin Broadband Community project), 15/90 Group, and Bureau 14. Community visits that were started in 2011 were continued in 2016, and MCEDA succeeded in working with local legislators for continued funding for business and entrepreneurial services.

In efforts to create awareness and better serve our communities, we continue to host a talk radio programs on the KSUM 1370AM radio station. The programs are called "Monday Morning Interview with Bryan Stading", "EDA Business Talk", and "Shop Local". The purpose of the programs is to provide listeners with relevant business information and to discuss economic development topics. Some subjects covered include interviews with EDA Board members, a bank's perspective of our current economic landscape, and spotlight on current clients from around the county.

In addition, Ignite was able to offer BizPitch to the community's entrepreneurs. BizPitch is a program designed to provide feedback to entrepreneurs from experienced business professionals. Entrepreneurs give a short pitch, and then answer questions and get feedback from the panel of experts. This process not only provides valuable feedback and suggestions, but gives the entrepreneur an opportunity to "pitch" their business.

We are tremendously pleased with our success. We continue to strengthen and grow our strategic partnerships to facilitate the success of our clients. Our Business Facilitators are continuously trained on the latest trends in business to ensure our clients are being served by the very best.

## 2016 YEAR-END SUMMARY...(CONT'D)

ACTIVITY & CLIENT RESULTS	2016
Entrepreneurs Consulted	40
Consulting Hours	400
Economic Development Hours	85
New Businesses Created/Stabilized/ Expanded	17
New Jobs Created	23
Jobs Retained	20
Capital Raised	\$535,000*
Cost of Job Saved or Retained	\$1028

Source: MN Department of Employment and Economic Development; based on calendar year 2016; all figures are approximate

\* Total amount from Fairmont Butcher Block, Timberlake Orchard, Eytcheson Roof Products

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS...

**Blandin Broadband Community:** MCEDA was chosen to be a part of the 2015/2016 Blandin Broadband Community - a group of cities that come together to learn strategies to strengthen and leverage partnerships in order to build better broadband communication in their area. They commit to defining technology goals, measuring current levels of broadband access and use, engage the broader community, and promote opportunities such as training and refurbished PCs. Ultimately, Blandin Broadband Communities design and drive initiatives that position their communities and every resident for greater success.

2016 saw the continuation of several programs established with the help of various grants. These include:

- Community Calendar
- Technology Training Sessions (Coffee Connections) for the public
- App Camp: MCEDA was instrumental in offering a week long app development summer camp for students. 15 teenagers participated and were taught by a technology teacher from the twin cities.
- PCs for People: This programs connects donated computers with those in the community in need of a computer.
- County-wide Broadband Feasibility Study (to begin in 2016)
- Digital Responsibility - cyberSMART classes to better educate students, residents, and businesses on digital resources.

MCEDA also provided a final presentation to Blandin Foundation Board and staff members to wrap up the two-year Blandin Broadband Community commitment.

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS...(CONT'D)

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**Brain Gain:** Martin County EDA has joined this initiative aimed at luring young families back to rural Minnesota. MCEDA has worked with the City of Fairmont and the Fairmont Chamber of Commerce to create a campaign “Back Home Again” that targets 30-49 year olds, and is meant to enhance the image of small town living. Demographic data was collected and used to show a trend of this age group moving back to small rural towns for high quality of life. More work needs to be done to keep high school graduates in these towns, as they represent a trainable workforce which local businesses are in need of. There are plans for a website, and to engage in social media.

**Area Career Exploration Event (ACE):** A day long opportunity for the area youth to experience a wide variety of careers. MCEDA has been a huge supporter of this event since its inception, and participates each year.

**Martin County Leadership Program:** MCEDA uses a year-long curriculum designed to engage and build leaders in the community. Area residents apply for a spot in the year long program.

**Sponsorship of:** Top 20 Community Fairmont Public Educational Seminars.

**Shop Local Ad Campaign:** This was an initiative of the MCEDA to promote local businesses.

**BizPitch:** A program designed to provide feedback to entrepreneurs from experienced business professionals. The entrepreneur gives a short “pitch” and then answers questions and gets suggestions from the panel of experts.

**Fairmont Convention & Visitors Bureau:** Providing funding allocation to Fairmont CVB for promoting tourism in the county.

**Border To Border Grant Award:** An outcome of the Martin County / Blandin Broadband Citizen’s Committee, was the awarding through the MN DEED Office of Broadband of a \$1,677,823 Border to Border Broadband grant. \$3,355,646 will be the total project budget with partnering with Frontier Communications Inc. This effort will improve broadband access and speed in various parts of the county.

# CLIENT SUCCESS STORIES...

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## **Eytcheson Roof Products**

Marcus Eytcheson came to Ignite with the beginnings of a business. Eytcheson had an extensive background in the construction/roofing industry, and noticed a problem with steel roofing. Homeowners complained about noise during rainstorms, and not having the ability to walk on the roof without denting the shingles. So Eytcheson set out to solve those problems and developed the Vivid Shake roofing product. Vivid Shake is a stone-coated steel shake that is insulated for sound and sturdier to walk on. Although having the roofing experience and some manufacturing knowledge, Eytcheson came to Ignite for feedback on his idea. He participated in BizPitch, a program designed to provide feedback from experienced business professionals. In addition, Ignite was able to facilitate a connection with a seasoned owner of a manufacturing firm. The owner has become a valuable mentor to Eytcheson.

## **Core Technologies**

Andrew Reiter, a Fairmont native and student at St. Olaf College, started a company focused on turning some of life's complex problems into simple solutions. Core Technologies' first product is a unique cell phone charger. Reiter developed a flat cell phone charger that can slip into a wallet. Reiter believes anyone who carries a cell phone should be carrying a portable charger, so one is never caught with a dead cell phone. But most of the portable chargers on the market are bulky, and not able to slip into a pocket or wallet comfortably. Enter Core Technologies' solution - an ultra-portable, flat charger. Reiter came to Ignite for marketing assistance, and when he heard about BizPitch decided that was a great opportunity to get feedback. He participated in BizPitch, and Ignite was able to provide Reiter with a marketing consultant for some additional help.

## **Martin Luther High School:**

Martin Luther High School came to Ignite seeking assistance with a strategic plan. Administrators wanted to first assess the community's opinion of the school, and then develop a strategic plan addressing student enrollment - attracting new students and retaining current students. Ignite was able to leverage an ongoing collaboration with an experienced marketing consultant who worked directly with MLHS. Together they developed, implemented, and analyzed a survey. With the results of that survey the marketer was able to come up with a strategic plan for the high school.

# 2016 YEAR-END SUMMARY...

Number of Clients: 40  
Total Number of Hours: 485

## **New Businesses:**

- Eytcheson Roof Products
- Fairmont Butcher Block
- Core Tech
- Best Bet Construction
- MCOrganics
- Intelligent Hire
- B&D Repair
- TerraGen
- Finstad Custom Pumping

## **Expanded Businesses:**

- AdMfg
- Mid-America Distributing
- Timberlake Orchard
- Custom Computers and Software
- Restoration Specialties
- Devenish Nutrition
- Jordan Lampman Cabinetry
- George Klug

## **Economic Development Activities:**

- Blandin Broadband
- Brain Gain
- MC County Fair
- Fairmont EDA
- Fairmont Manufacturing
- Tech Ed
- Martin Co. Leadership
- City of Truman
- Presentation College
- 15/90 Group
- Bureau 14
- BizPitch
- EDA Outreach meetings
- Fairmont CVB
- Martin County / Blandin Broadband  
Citizens Committee

# 2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS...

The Martin County EDA Board of Directors all have unique backgrounds and contribute to the strategic direction of the organization in different ways. They oversee all the activities of the Martin County EDA and take an active role in economic development activities. The Martin County board of Directors is appointed by the Martin County Board of Commissioners. Board Directors service a three-year term and meet on a monthly basis to conduct business.

NAME	POSITION	OCCUPATION	AFFILIATION
Christopher Pierce	President	Commercial Lender	USBank
Randy Grupe	Vice President	School Superintendent (Retired)	Martin County West School District
Jerry Clark	Secretary / Treasurer	Business Intermediary, Commercial Real Estate Sales	SealedBid Owner / Manager
Elliot Belgard	Board Director	Commissioner & Boekkett Lumber Yard	Martin County
Larry Baarts	Board Director	CEO/President	Baarts Trucking
Brent Schultze	Board Director	Chief Credit Officer	Bank Midwest
Dan Schmidtke	Board Director	Commissioner & Nuway Coop	Martin County
Scott Higgins	Board Staff	County Coordinator	Martin County

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## Martin County Business Facilitators...

A large part of the Martin County EDA's success is contributed to Bryan Stading and Wes Pruett who work diligently with entrepreneurs, business owners, and community leaders in Martin County on a regular basis to create a strong business environment.

**Bryan Stading**  
Senior Business Facilitator/  
Consultant



**Wes Pruett**  
Consultant

The Martin County EDA has a very focused strategic plan set for 2017. We have full intentions of maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of the IGNITE business facilitation program. We will spend most of our energies toward assisting entrepreneurs and helping small businesses prosper in Martin County.

We are increasingly poised to create greater awareness of our program. We will continue to provide relevant information to the communities in Martin County through our “Monday Morning Interview with Bryan Stading”, “EDA Business Talk”, and “Shop Local” radio programs and campaign on KSUM. We will also continue to make exciting new updates to our website to provide clients with relevant information at their fingertips. We plan to continue leveraging social media to create awareness of our services. We will also remain very active in attending community related events to leverage networking. In addition to these objective, the IGNITE staff will continue to focus on the main street businesses of area towns, as well as offering relevant business planning classes for the communities we serve.

Partnering with Frontier Communications Inc. on improving broadband access and speed throughout Martin County, for a total project of \$3,355,646 with grant funding from DEED in the amount of \$1,677,823 dollars.

In addition, we will continue in 2017 to support the Brain Gain program aimed at bringing 30-49 year olds back to Martin County.

Lastly, we will focus on building new relationships and grow on existing relationships with local and non-local entities to provide a stronger network of resources for our clients. The Martin County Board of Directors and Business Facilitators look forward to an exciting year and growing on our previous success in serving as a catalyst for economic development in Martin County.

## ***Thanks to the Martin County Board of Commissioners***

*The Martin County EDA is funded by Martin County and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).*

*Thanks to our 2016 Partners: Regional Center for Entrepreneurial Facilitation, Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Fairmont Economic Development Authority (FEDA), City of Fairmont, Fairmont Chamber of Commerce, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF).*

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*The Martin County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA) performance data provided above is a snapshot for the reporting period of January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016. The reader should understand that the grassroots economic development strategy is continuously evolving and clients are constantly moving from various structures, forms, locations, and stages of development. This report is also inclusive of the client activity performed for the Martin County EDA.*