



ANNUAL REPORT

2014

MARTIN COUNTY EDA...

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

ABOUT US...

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 not 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.

2014 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 2014, MCEDA successfully provided technical business assistance to 31 entrepreneurs and spent more than 308 hours in performing services. Adding to our notable highlights, we stabilized seven, expanded two, and facilitated the creation of three businesses.

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), Martin County Leadership Program (MCEDA provided scholarships for people to attend program), Martin County Strategic Planning, 15/90 Group, and Bureau 14. Community visits that were started in 2011 were continued in 2014, and MCEDA succeeded in working with local legislators for continued funding for business and entrepreneurial services.

Also in efforts to create awareness and better serve our communities, we continue to host a talk radio program on the KSUM 1370AM radio station. The program is called “EDA Business Talk” and is aired twice a month on Monday’s from 4:45pm-5:00pm. The purpose of the program is to provide listeners with relevant business information and to discuss economic development topics. Some subject 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.

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.

ACTIVITY & CLIENT RESULTS	2014
Entrepreneurs Consulted	31
Consulting Hours	358
New Businesses Created	3
Businesses Stabilized	7
Businesses Expanded	2

Source: MN Department of Employment and Economic Development; based on calendar year 2014; all figures are approximate

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS...

- **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.
- **Marketplace:** Martin County EDA has been involved in the efforts to create a community market area with small shops, entertainment, recreation, learning, social interaction, and local food and drink. MCEDA has counseled the group on their marketing and feasibility activities, including reviewing a SWOT analysis. The group has recently applied for grant money to fund this project.
- **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.
- **Commercial database:** MCEDA developed an on-line form for submitting available commercial properties into a database.
- **Blandin Broadband Community:** MCEDA was chosen to be a part of the 2015 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.

CLIENT SUCCESS STORIES...

Touch of Country:

Two friends started a consignment and alterations shop in 2012 in Fairmont. Their business operated as a partnership and the two worked hard to open and then manage their small shop. In 2014, that partnership ended. Although it was an amicable split, one partner wanted to keep the shop going while the other wanted to be bought out. Having no written partnership agreement to deal with this situation, they called in the MCEDA Senior Facilitator for assistance. The counselor helped the two come together and work out a transfer of ownership plan, and an informal dissolution of their partnership. On a follow-up visit after the split, the single owner is now operating her shop and adding some new services such as sewing classes. Through MCEDA's assistance, the current owner was able to resolve the partnership dissolution issues, keep the shop open, and avoid a vacant storefront in Fairmont.

Schultz Butchering:

Lance Schultz has operated Schultz Butchering in Sherburne since 1975. Some of his equipment, including much of his refrigeration, was from the 1950's. Needless to say, Mr. Schultz was ready for some updating. Contacting the MCEDA office in 2013, Mr. Schultz was looking for assistance in determining if he should update and expand at his current location, or move to another nearby town. The MCEDA Senior Facilitator worked with the client to gather demographic data on a few towns. Also, a visit with a very successful butcher in a non-competing town was arranged to get their advice. After much deliberation, Mr. Schultz decided to update and expand at his current location. At the client's request, MCEDA then stepped in to help gather information regarding upgrades and funding for the project. Funding was secured through the client's bank, and the MCEDA office helped the client seek out and apply for energy efficiency grants.

2014 YEAR-END SUMMARY...

Number of Clients Served: 31
Total Number of Hours: 308

New Businesses:

- RahmTek 99
- Dee's Floral & Hair Salon
- Raymond Miller Auto Repair

Stabilized Businesses:

- Touch of Country
- My Guy
- Many Hands
- Serenades By The Lake
- The Pour House
- Truman Flowers & Gifts
- Sommers Outdoors LLC

Expanded Businesses:

- Schultz Butchering
- Mid-America Distributing

2014 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)	Marting County West
Jerry Clark	Secretary/Treasurer	Business Intermediary, Commercial Real Estate Sales	SealedBid Owner/Manager
Steve Pierce	Board Director	Commissioner & CPA	Steve E Pierce LTD
Elliot Belgard	Board Director	Commissioner & Boek-kett Lumber Yard	Martin County
Larry Baarts	Board Director	CEO/President	Baarts Trucking
Brent Schultze	Board Director	Chief Credit Officer	Bank Midwest
Scott Higgins	Board Staff	County Coordinator	Martin County

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



Wes Pruett
Consultant



Dave Stougaard
Consultant

2015 OUTLOOK...

The Martin County EDA has a very focused strategic plan set for 2015. 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 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 "EDA Business Talk" radio program 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.

We are excited to begin work on being a Blandin Broadband Community, and look forward to increasing synergy with other community leaders as we create plans for projects to increase access to broadband networks throughout the county.

In addition, we will continue in 2015 to support and contribute to 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 2015 Partners: Regional Center for Entrepreneurial Facilitation, Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Fairmont Economic Development Authority (EDA), City of Fairmont, Fairmont Chamber of Commerce, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF).

The Martin County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA) performance data provided above is a snapshot for the reporting period of January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014. 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.