



annual report



2018

# 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, Growth, 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*

*Succession Planning*

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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.

# 2018 YEAR-END SUMMARY...

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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 2018, MCEDA successfully provided technical business assistance to 29 entrepreneurs and spent more than 351 hours in performing services. Adding to our notable highlights, there were 8 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 with very little expense.

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, Sponsorship of the Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce events - Area Career Exploration (ACE) and Martin County Leadership Program, MAPCED (Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers), EDA Strategic Planning, Fairmont Convention & Visitor's Bureau, Martin County Broadband Committee, 15/90 Group, and Bureau 14. Community visits that were started in 2011 were continued in 2018.

In efforts to create awareness and better serve our communities, we continue to host 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.

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.

In addition we continue to work with local legislators for continued support and funding for the entrepreneurial and business services provided by RCEF.

## 2018 YEAR-END SUMMARY...(CONT'D)

ACTIVITY & CLIENT RESULTS	2018
Entrepreneurs Consulted	29
Consulting Hours	262.25
Economic Development Hours	88.75
New Businesses Created/Stabilized/ Expanded	8
New Jobs Created	19
Capital Raised	\$35,000
Cost of Job Created	\$1,119

Source: MN Department of Employment and Economic Development; based on calendar year 2018; all figures are approximate

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS...

2018 saw the continuation of several programs established with the help of various grants. These include:

- Community Calendar
- Digital Responsibility - cyberSMART classes to better educate students, residents, and businesses on digital resources.

**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 nine-month curriculum designed to engage and build leaders in the community. Area residents apply for a spot in the program.

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

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

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS...(CONT'D)

**Martin County Broadband Initiative/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. The purpose of the initiative is to expand broadband service via fiber-optic technology to 1,844 unserved or underserved rural households at a minimum of 25/3mbps. The areas include Cedar Hansen, Fairmont, Fox Lake area, Lair Road, Lake Aires Road, Perch Lake, Big Twin Lake, Ceylon, East Chain, Northrop, Ormsby, Sherburn, and Truman.

**Establishment of Opportunity Zones in the County:** The EDA submitted an application to establish Opportunity Zones in the county. Opportunity Zones are a new community development program established by Congress in the Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017 to encourage long-term investments in low-income and urban communities nationwide.

**Sponsorship of "Destination Small Town":** Our Story Production Television Show (Fairmont, MN), spotlighting small towns and counties we call home and what each community offers.

**Connect Rural Broadband Summit:** Hosted by Region Nine Development Commission, members of the EDA assisted in the planning of the Connect Rural Broadband Summit and served as a panelist. Purpose of the summit was to address the local broadband issues and to assess the challenges, share success stories, and identify action steps for the future in improving broadband in the rural areas of the region.

**Sponsorship of Bacon Capital USA:** Local promotional campaign in Martin County - "Bacon Capital USA". Martin County is the number one hog-producing county in Minnesota and the sixth-largest in the U.S.

# CLIENT SUCCESS STORIES...

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## China House Cafe

Through a collaboration of Martin County, Martin County EDA Ignite, Truman Development Corporation, the City of Truman, and the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF), the City of Truman avoided another empty storefront on Main Street. Their struggling café was destined to close but is now a vibrant and thriving restaurant serving the regional community and employing over a dozen local residents.

This project started in early 2018 by recognizing the needs of the City of Truman, Truman Development Corporation, Martin County EDA Ignite, and a Chinese immigrant couple. The city was struggling with running a café they didn't own in a building they also didn't own. While the town residents (and city officials) wanted to keep the café open, the city no longer wanted to be responsible for running the business. The City of Truman looked to the Martin County EDA Ignite team.

Around the same time, a client - Johnny Voung - and his wife were referred to MCEDA Ignite to get assistance with their dream of opening a Chinese restaurant in Martin County. The couple was working as servers at a restaurant in Fairmont, and had developed a loyal following of customers. With over 25 years of experience in restaurants, mostly Chinese restaurants, the couple felt confident they could make their concept work. But money was a bit tight, and they didn't want to be burdened with a large amount of debt from the start. So, some creative thinking was needed.

Recognizing the need to turn vacant rural main street properties into opportunities, MCEDA Ignite connected the dots and showed the café to the Chinese couple. The couple was interested, if they could get the café at a reasonable price. Knowing the motivation of the City of Truman and the Truman Development Corporation to find someone to take over the cafe, MCEDA Ignite approached those two groups with an idea. If the Chinese couple would run the café, keeping American food on the menu and staying open for breakfast while adding Chinese food to the menu, would the city and Truman Development Corporation be willing to hand over the café at a reasonable price? The answer was "yes".

Working with SMIF, Martin County EDA Ignite spearheaded efforts to implement a marketing campaign for the restaurant's opening, aimed at garnering publicity on local, regional, and national levels. Media outlets covered a grand opening event in June, and articles appeared in local and regional publications. A national magazine on Asian American business – AList Magazine - is scheduled to write an article about the Voungs in their upcoming quarterly publication.

MCEDA Ignite continues to work with the Voungs and China House Café on managing their business and marketing. At the end of 2018, MCEDA Ignite helped to put on a trivia night to bring in more customers on slow nights.

## **TMeyer**

While being in business for several years machining and selling precision automotive parts, in 2018 TMeyer looked at changing their business model. The owner Tim Meyer developed a high-performance engine block. After designing the piece, Meyer talked to several potential customers and found a huge interest in the product. Needing money for tooling and casting, TMeyer contacted MCEDA Ignite for assistance. Around the same time, Fairmont EDA asked MCEDA Ignite to work with the client on financial management, as the client was approved for a loan with FEDA. Throughout the spring and summer MCEDA Ignite assisted with financial analysis and communication with the client's bank. MCEDA Ignite also facilitated conversations with the outside foundry Meyer had approached to make the new engine block.

## **Lori Bartels**

In early 2018 Lori Bartels came to MCEDA Ignite for help with assessing an opportunity. The Benjamin Moore paint store in Fairmont was to close soon, and Bartels wanted to open a similar store in a different location in Fairmont. She needed a business plan, financial projections, and assistance with the loan package. MCEDA consultants worked with Bartels to research the industry, analyze financials, review her business plan, formulate financial projections, and then help communicate her needs to the lenders. In late spring, the existing Benjamin Moore paint store decided not to close until later in the year, putting Bartels' plans on hold. In the fall another couple decided to purchase the existing paint store and hire Bartels to manage the store. Bartels is happy with the outcome.

# 2018 YEAR-END SUMMARY...

Number of Clients: 29  
Total Number of Hours: 351

## **New Businesses:**

- Brandon Poppe Concrete
- China House Cafe
- John Tarabania Painting

## **Expanded/Stabilized Businesses:**

- B & D Repair
- Camper Chris
- Car Parts Direct
- TMeyer
- EMS Training

## **Economic Development Activities:**

- Brain Gain
- Martin County Fair
- Fairmont EDA
- Fairmont Manufacturing Training
- Martin County Leadership
- City of Truman
- 15/90 Group
- EDA Outreach meetings
- Fairmont Convention & Visitor's Bureau
- From the Ground Up
- Area Career Exploration (ACE)

# 2018 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 serve a three-year term and meet on a monthly basis to conduct business.

NAME	POSITION	OCCUPATION	AFFILIATION
Brent Schultz	Chairman	Chief Credit Officer	Bank Midwest
Steve Fosness	Vice Chairman	Business Agent	International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Larry Baarts	Secretary / Treasure	CEO/President	Baarts Trucking
Elliot Belgard	Board Director	Commissioner & Boekkett Lumber Yard	Martin County
Dan Schmidtko	Board Director	Commissioner & Nuway Coop	Martin County
Tim Terfehr	Board Director	Businessman	Dan's Appliance
Wes Anderson	Board Director	Ag Producer / Township Supervisor	Fraser Township
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 our partnership with RCEF and our Business Facilitator, Bryan Stading, who works diligently with entrepreneurs, business owners, and community leaders in Martin County on a regular basis to create a strong business environment.

**Bryan Stading**  
Business Facilitator/Consultant



The Martin County EDA has a very focused strategic plan set for 2019. 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, and completion of the County Broadband Initiative in the projected cost of \$3,355,646 with grant funding from DEED in the amount of \$1,677,823 dollars.

In addition, we will continue in 2019 to support the Brain Gain program aimed at bringing 30-49 year olds back to Martin County as well as continued sponsorships for the various programs and events that the EDA has helped fund in previous years.

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 EDA 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 2018 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, 2018 to December 31, 2018. 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.*