



Economic Development Council Meeting Minutes
County Commissioners Meeting Room
March 25, 2009 – 7:30 a.m.

Call to Order – Grant Fenton presiding

Grant Fenton called the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

Introductions of members and guests

Members Present: Nancy Stahoviak, Darcy Trask, Grant Fenton, Randy Rudasics, Sarah Fox, Wendy DuBord, Jane Blackstone, Marsha Daughenbaugh, Laurie Good, Kate Nowak, Noreen Moore, Karl Gills, Brian Berry, Adonna Allen, Joyce Hartless

Members Absent: Donna Howell, Brian Bradbury, Jeff Minotto, Jamie Kingsbury, Bill Moser, Steve Moos, Tom Sullivan, Peter Perhac

Staff: Sandy Evans Hall, Meagan Coates, Alli Brook

Guests: Christina Haxton, Bill Gamber

Review & Approval of February 25th minutes – 7:33 a.m.

A motion to approve the February minutes was moved by Nancy Stahoviak and seconded by Jane Blackstone. All were in favor, no one opposed.

1. EDC Forum Series – Randy Rudasias

Handout – speakers will be great. SBA lending program has a stimulus package that will flow down into the community.

2. EDC Economic Summit – Grant Fenton and Sandy Evans-Hall

May 20-21, 2009. Wide range of speakers, Governor as potential keynote speaker (backup is Secretary of the Interior Salazar). Watch for email within the next week. Topics include: tracking social trends to help people see opportunities during recessionary times, break-out sessions on economic survival guidance, social networking and how to apply it to businesses (BYO laptop), one-on-one SCORE consulting. Brian Berry “www.websitesthatreallywork.com” how to maximize your website, looking at search engine optimization. Wrap-up speaker retired Broncos linebacker Karl Mecklenburg. New opportunity for sponsors and speakers to have a free booth in the expo/foyer area. Sponsorships at \$12,500, goal is \$19,000 feeling confident that it will be reached.

3. Entrepreneur of the month – Bill Gamber of BAP, Big Agnes and Honey Stinger

BAP is 20 years old, started in college, moved it out here. Make own apparel and sell others as well. Locally-tied vs. dependent on tourism, grew into being very tied to local economy. 1995 started retail, before that was just custom orders.

Big Agnes is 10 years old – specifically camping gear. Fortunate to have introduced it within a stale market with fresh ideas, won awards early and got great press, thus it exploded. Won Backpacker Magazine’s (bible of camping equipment) Editor’s Choice Award for a sleeping pad early on. Started doing business through REI, sold 10,000 pads just from the backpacker stamp. Won six Editor’s awards since then (one for Honey Stinger chews, another for green/recycled fabrics tent). Press has been great for the whole team, everyone’s input is given, keeps employees happy knowing they are with a company that is truly a player in the market/big companies compete against. 2008 vendor of the year for REI (#1 tent supplier to REI). All credit given to partners and staff.

Honey Stinger is 8 years old – all natural honey based foods, energy bars and chews. Tough market, slow growth. In last two years has really started to go.

Each have different business models and partnerships. Went from 1 to now 25 employees between all businesses. Fast growth with BA has been biggest challenge. Easy to get money when you’re

successful. Built own warehouse, offices in red house on Oak Street. Learned how to be a manager vs. entrepreneur. Great people/partners are important. Keeping a good, young, fresh group is important to what they do, yet it's a tough group to keep happy here. Employees watch out for each other and their own schedules and are accountable to each other. Mandatory to have high-integrity, hard-working employees. Yet they make too much money to qualify for affordable housing and own land they can't afford to build on, thus it's a big challenge to keep quality employees in light of the difficult housing market. Overall extra challenges have been brought on by wanting to live in this community (warehousing, challenging infrastructure such as cell coverage, wireless, public transportation). Yet it supports the customer base – niche, core-product category. Backyard location creates authenticity which is promoted and often sought-after for customers.

A few employees donated time initially has paid off (profit sharing, health insurance). Quality of employees has changed hugely in the last three years. Economically, BA has been affected, especially January and February because companies like REI and Cabella's are highly affected by the economy. March has picked up. BAP is way up, not sure why – most likely due to a strong, loyal customer base. Hoping media will calm down and get positive about the economy.

Big Agnes production in China is very easy. Wanted to keep it USA, but couldn't get CA company to work and networking brought a Quality Assurance consultant with great connections. Price was not the motivator – quality, timely-produced products was. Asia production challenge is money transfer, yet able to set own terms and establish a trusting relationship.

On the surface typical business managing, yet deeper shows care for employees, authenticity and trust, even with money.

4. Regional Outlook and Programs – 8:20 a.m.

a. Routt County Economic Development Cooperative – Noreen Moore

Handout – USDA Funding Opportunities: Overview for Value-Added Projects and Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Wednesday, April 1, 2009, 9-11am Bogue Hall Room 300. RSVP with Noreen 870-4461. Also ground -source and solar heat workshop Things you can do here locally. Looking at the new board for YVSC, have had great applications. Geothermal meeting had over 60 attendees. \$10,000 grants funneled into community on Colorado Carbon Fund.

Sarah Fox – Colorado Carbon Fund kick-off event at ski area last weekend. Getting programs implemented with businesses. Buy a portion/tag of carbon offsets – money stays within in state. Some used on large projects, small portion coming back to Steamboat to be used locally, most likely next year. Yampa Valley Electric also offers wind energy and carbon offsets. Money available for ranchers in the area.

b. Yampa Valley Partners – Kate Noviak

Handouts – Fueling Thought Energy Summit, May 14-15 Holiday Inn, Craig. Great speaker line up. Bill Owens, Richard Lamb debate on global warming Friday lunch. Panel from Department of Natural Resources. Strong agenda. Scholarship form available at www.yampavalleypartners.com. Advertising and sponsorship opportunities. Regional event. Community Indicator Report presentations are also going on.

c. Business Resource Center/SCORE – Randy Rudasics

Success Steps program in March with Steve Hitchcock was not heavily attended but those that did enjoyed it. Basic Government Contract program coming up in April for those who want stimulus money. Counseling activity with 2-3 calls and meetings per week involving creativity. People are wanting to buy and sell micro businesses. Next Steps workshops scheduling for late spring after Economic Summit. Contents will be altered to fit existing businesses. Next of the 6-part Leadership Series is April 17th. Vacancies on offices at incubation center in Bogue Hall, below market rate, good spot to downsize to.

d. Craig/Moffat County EDP – Darcy Trask

Energy summit registration will most likely be full – register early. Work and Life Skills program continuing (large grant) for high school students. Funded for 175-200 kids, only 95 registered, thus bringing in two speakers on work-skills for middle and high school students. Potential USDA Grant

in June to fund economic program in Moffat for one year. Recommendation for Malcolm Gladwell
Outliers book. Challenged in Moffat County with less resources yet enjoying the process.

5. Other Networking – 8:45 a.m.

Marsha Daughenbaugh – Defining local food and how to grow and distribute it. Putting together a point paper to give to all representatives and elected officials. April 2-3, 2nd annual Food Share and Expo to bring together local producers and retailers. Free event including meal. Leadership Steamboat group has helped hugely. Over 100 years of sustainable and adaptable agriculture in the community. Sarah Fox - April 8th 6-7pm at Harwigs & L'Apogee. Talking Green program on Home Resource and the services they offer.

6. Adjournment

Grant Fenton adjourned the meeting at 8:48 a.m.

Future meeting dates:

April 22