

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
July 31, 2009

Committee Members Present: Jake Goering, Kim Jamtgaard, Jim Millis, Mike Ives, Loren Solberg, Rich Utech, Margie Ritter, Bill Eckblad

Advisory members present:

Present via Conference Call:

Chamber Staff: Bud Stone, Renee Thompson

Jake Goering called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mike Ives made a motion to approve the May 29, 2009 meeting minutes. Jim Millis seconded the motion. Motion carries.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

QUESTIONS FOR SENATOR TOM BAKK

Prior to the meeting, Bud sent an email to the committee asking them to think about topics of discussion for the Senator Tom Bakk meeting.

Al Rudeck was unable to attend today's meeting, but sent Bud his topic ideas via email. Bud read Al's topics to the committee.

After committee discussion, the following "talking points" were decided upon:

The Cross Range Expressway has long been a priority of the Chamber. The biggest barrier to completing it has always been the inability to attain the twenty percent state match for federal funding. While this project has been important to economic development and jobs in the past, the new initiatives that are planned for northeast Minnesota make its completion critical now. Assuming that you are in favor of finishing this project, what is your plan to get it done?

World Class Education is one of the most important components for good jobs and economic development. As you know, quality education in the State of Minnesota is faltering because of a number of things. How would you propose to support the education system in our State and make it more affordable for students, and how important do you feel is offering four year programs in engineering, medicine and other venues in northeast Minnesota?

Moving businesses from one community to another is not economic development and it does not improve the business climate of our State. What is needed in Minnesota is a plan to retain and expand existing businesses and industries, and a plan to attract the development of new businesses and industries to our State. What ideas do you have that would accomplish these goals?

ACTION: No further action necessary.

MEMBER UPDATES

Kim Jamtgaard discussed additional zoning changes the DNR is proposing.

Rick Utech talked about their continuing efforts to market the Ainsworth property.

Jim Millis informed the committee that he was appointed to the Western Mesabi Planning Board and gave the committee an update regarding the last meeting.

Bud Stone reported on the Chamber's First Annual Walleye Classic and raffle, golf outing and upcoming Chamber luncheon.

Representative Solberg talked about the importance of the census. Representative Solberg also suggested inviting Dr. Tom Stinson and State Demographer Gillaspay to speak at a Chamber luncheon.

Mike Ives spoke about a convention that was here for four days and the economic impact it had on the area lodging properties. Mike also spoke about the increased number of uninsured patients that are being seen at Grand Itasca.

Bill Eckblad spoke about the impact Evergreen Terraces payroll has on the community.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be at 7:30 a.m. on Friday, August 28, 2009.

Jim Millis made a motion to adjourn. Rich Utech seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Meeting minutes submitted by Renee Thompson, Administrative Assistant, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce.