

Kandiyohi
County
and the
City of
Willmar,
Minnesota,
EDC seeks a
forward-
looking catalyst
with strong
communication,
convening and
collaboration
skills to serve
as its ...



Executive Director

THE COMMUNITY

Kandiyohi County and the Willmar Lakes area is a vital, growing regional center in West Central Minnesota. [Kandiyohi County](#) has surpassed a population of 42,000; [Willmar](#) is the fastest growing, non-metropolitan city in the state.

Local Economy. Kandiyohi County's local economy ranges from major companies with a global presence to new business start-ups. In 2014 there were 1,346 business establishments in Kandiyohi County employing 22,825 people with the greatest number of establishments being 224 in retail trade, 180 in construction, 153 in education and health services, and 95 in leisure and hospitality. The county is home to 12 municipalities; the largest is Willmar with a population of 19,680, which also serves as the county seat.

Willmar is centrally located at the intersection of U.S. Highways 12 and 71 with connections to St. Cloud via Minnesota 23. Railroads have dominated Willmar's history and continue to provide an important economic connection for Willmar's farm and non-farm products through the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway. The Willmar Municipal Airport, newly constructed in 2006, has a 5,500-foot runway with future plans to extend the runway to 6,500 feet and an all-weather instrument navigation system; it services a variety of aircraft from large business jets to single-engine airplanes.

Willmar functions as a regional center for retail trade, medical care, education, and small manufacturing. Agriculture, the region's leading industry, accounts for the city's largest employer, Jennie-O Turkey Store, owned by Hormel. The MinnWest Technology Campus, formerly the Willmar Regional Treatment Center, is now home to a vibrant and ever expanding technology park serving the needs of innovators in bioscience, renewable



energy, and technology. Willmar is well-positioned for continued growth with the establishment of a 200 acre city-owned, shovel-ready industrial park. Rail access to the industrial park is anticipated; efforts to obtain a \$15 million TIGER grant to construct a spur to the industrial park in 2017 are under way.

THE COMMUNITY CONT'D

Education. Post-secondary education programs are provided by [Ridgewater College](#), which offers two-year associate degree programs and comprehensive general education that is transferable to four-year colleges and universities. Through its campuses in Willmar and Hutchinson, Ridgewater College serves more than 5,500 students offering over 100 educational programs. The college has been named by the Aspen Institute as one of the top 120 community colleges in the country, ranking it in the top ten percent.

The [University of Minnesota Mid-Central Research and Outreach Center \(MCROC\)](#) is a partner and anchor for the MinnWest Technology Campus. A regional hub for research, education, and engagement, MCROC advances public-private research collaborations and problem-solving partnerships strengthening the regional economy and promotes innovation, economic growth, and workforce development, particularly in bioscience, biotechnology, agribusiness, and renewable energy.

Healthcare. As the hub for healthcare services in western and southwestern Minnesota, Willmar residents have immediate access to highly-skilled physicians and medical technicians providing a continuum of patient care. Anchored by the city-owned [Rice Memorial Hospital](#), many specialized healthcare services are available. The hospital's partnership with the University of Minnesota has led to its designation as the host site for the Southern Minnesota Area Health

Education Center, which provides health care to students in a 26-county area. Health care services are also provided by [Affiliated Community Medical Center \(ACMC\)](#), the area's largest multi-specialty healthcare network and the [Family Practice Medical Center](#).

Tourism. Kandiyohi County takes pride in being "where the lakes begin." The Willmar Lakes Area attracts tourists and vacationers who come to enjoy the recreation lakes, attesting to the popularity of fishing and other water sports. Golfing is available at the area's one 27-hole, two 18-hole and two 9-hole courses. The area boasts over 41 city, county, and state parks, many with trail systems for hiking, biking, and horseback riding. In winter, over 200 miles of groomed trails are available for snowmobiling and cross-country skiing while Sibley State Park and the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center are favorite spots for snowshoeing.



ORGANIZATION

The [Economic Development Commission \(EDC\)](#) offices are located in Willmar. This structure for economic development was adopted in July 2003 through a Joint Powers Agreement between Kandiyohi County and the City of Willmar. The EDC's Joint Powers Board of Commissioners consists of six members; Kandiyohi County and the City of Willmar each appoint three elected representatives to serve for three-year terms. EDC operations are led by a seven-member Joint Operations Board; members are appointed by the Joint Powers Board and include representatives from communities throughout the county, education providers, businesses, and consumer groups. Joint Operations Board member terms are for three years; members are limited to three full three-year terms.

The EDC has many community volunteers who participate in one or more of its committees. Committees include: Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development, Broadband and Advanced Technology, Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment, Finance, and Marketing and Public Relations.

The EDC's mission is to be a catalyst for economic growth of the greater Kandiyohi County Area.

The EDC's 2015 strategic priorities are:

- Develop, invest in and support programs and activities that increase business development, particularly agriculture-based businesses;
- Increase business retention and expansion;
- Provide leadership for industrial park development;
- Enhance marketing to prospective businesses, residents, investors, and site selectors; and
- Work with service providers to enhance broadband infrastructure, access and utilization in the county.

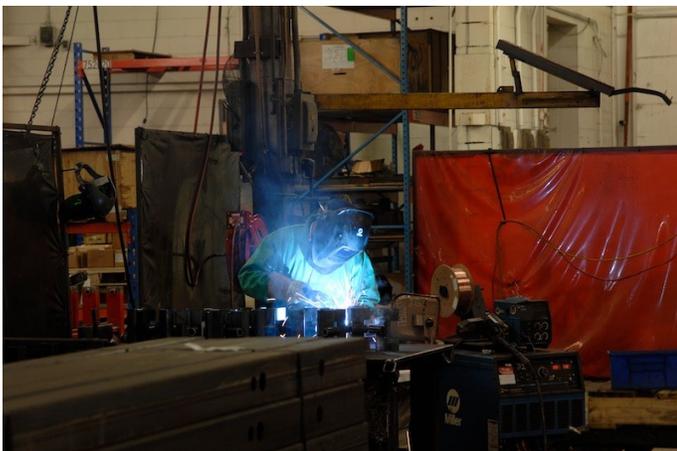
The EDC staff includes an Executive Director, Assistant Director and a Business Development Specialist; administrative services are contracted. The 2015 EDC budget is \$543,871. Revenues for the EDC come from a special economic development property tax levied by Kandiyohi County and the City of Willmar.

POSITION PROFILE

The EDC's Executive Director takes a leadership and coordinating role among area local governments, business development groups and others to collaborate and support the retention and expansion of existing businesses and the recruitment of new businesses to Kandiyohi County. The position is responsible for leading retention, expansion and location of businesses in Kandiyohi County.

Major responsibilities include:

- Act as a “one-stop shop” for information on all aspects of economic development, including financing, tax policies, business counseling and general information on community facilities and amenities.
- Work actively and in concert with others to retain and facilitate the expansion of current businesses.



- Actively recruit targeted industries in cooperation with other groups, with a focus on recruiting industries that compliment Kandiyohi County's economic base.
- Support decision-making by the Joint Powers Board and the Joint Operations Board with information, reports, and recommendations.
- Make presentations to business groups, public-private partnerships, educators and the general public on economic development accomplishments and initiatives.
- Build upon and enhance a “business-friendly environment” within Kandiyohi County and its municipalities.
- Develop and implement financial packages to retain, expand, recruit and /or relocate businesses.
- Oversee the daily operations of the EDC; coordinate and implement the annual work plan; and prepare and administer the annual budget.
- Recruit and hire EDC staff, provide work direction and performance feedback, and when necessary, take disciplinary action.
- Encourage and promote professional development and build the capacity of EDC staff.
- Network with local, regional, state, and federal partners that provide technical and/or fiscal support to the EDC's economic development efforts.

DESIRED PROFESSIONAL CAPABILITIES

- Outgoing and engaging; a dynamic leader with a genuine passion for building the area's economic development capacity.
- Forward-looking and proactive, open to new ideas and change.
- Provides the leadership to create a compelling vision for the future and the energy to accomplish the vision.
- Strong presentation skills; effectively communicates to a wide range of audiences.
- Inspires confidence in the business community; is regarded as the “go-to” person.
- Builds effective relationships within the local and regional business communities and with government officials.
- Highly collaborative, readily shares information and listens to ideas.
- Skilled in navigating the political environment without being political or promoting personal political views.
- Brings a well-developed network of business and development contacts.
- Builds and participates in effective work teams; delegates appropriately.
- Comfortable with diversity; recognizes and ensures that cultural differences contribute to the common vision.
- Adept at handling different points of view, building consensus, and negotiating compromise.
- Advocates for economic development projects, understanding that some projects may become contentious.
- Demonstrates familiarity with development financing tools and incentives.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Building relationships. The Executive Director will make it a priority to get to know the community and meeting with business owners, educators, government leaders, and others to learn about the area's economic development accomplishments, needs and long-term goals. The Executive Director will cultivate these relationships to stay in touch with the pulse of the community and to foster support for economic development initiatives.

Focus on BRE. Retaining existing businesses and helping them expand is a major focus of the EDC. The EDC and the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce conducted a survey of businesses earlier this year to identify needs and concerns. Consistent speed, quality and access to broadband, workforce development and housing, and anticipated regulatory changes in health care were among the concerns identified. The Executive Director will develop strategies to meet regularly with business owners to understand and address retention and expansion issues and opportunities.

Connect with DEED. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) is an important conduit to a variety of economic development resources. The Executive Director will get to know DEED and become familiar with data and resources to support the EDC's strategic plan.

Challenge the board. Hiring an Executive Director will bring new ideas and fresh perspectives to the EDC. The Executive Director will develop strong working relationships with the Joint Powers Board and with the Joint Operations Board and will challenge conventional thinking with new ideas and opportunities.



EDC staffing. The Assistant Director position is currently vacant, giving the Executive Director the ability to consider overall staffing capabilities and needs and to configure and recruit the position accordingly.

Next generation engagement. The Executive Director will reach out to and engage next generation entrepreneurs to ensure their involvement and support in economic development initiatives. In addition, the Executive Director will work with secondary and post-secondary institutions to keep them informed of current and future employment skills and opportunities.



EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE



Bachelor's degree in business or public administration, economics, finance or a field related to commercial-industrial development and three or more years of public and/or private work-related experience in economic development. Certified Economic Developer preferred. Equivalent education and experience will be considered.

Must have knowledge of business recruitment and expansion and demonstrated ability to recruit new business developments and develop financing incentives. Knowledge of development processes and experience working with a wide range of business groups and local, regional, and state officials required.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Salary up to low \$90,000s, depending upon experience and qualifications. Benefit plan available, including retirement benefits through PERA.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Qualified candidates submit your cover letter and resume online by visiting our website at <https://waters-company.recruitmenthome.com/>. This position is open until filled; however, interested applicants are strongly encouraged to apply no later than November 6, 2015. For more information please contact Sharon Klumpp at sklumpp@waters-company.com or by calling 651.223.3053 (office) or 651.270.6856 (mobile).

EDC of Kandiyohi County and the City of Willmar is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

