

**JOINT MEETING OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (WDC) and the
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (EDF)
TEAMS CALL/VIDEO MEETING
Wednesday, December 16, 2020
10:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.**

TEAMS VIDEO CALL – Members of the Workforce Development Council, Economic Development Foundation, and Commerce staff – **roll call was not taken.**

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

**Dave Farnsworth
and Lyn James**

Chairs Lyn James and Dave Farnsworth welcomed members from the WDC and the EDF.

COMMERCE DEPARTMENT ROADMAP

James Leiman

Going into the 2021 legislative session the Department of Commerce will focus on four themes.

I. Economic Resiliency and Diversification

- Diversification of the economy has widened innovative development within value added activity and innovative development within value added nonactivity, along with the creation and retention of high-tech jobs.
- Successes within the Innovation Loan Technology Fund (LIFT) program, resulting in attraction of private equity and debt leveraging firms to the state. Reorganization of the Development Fund, addition of venture capital and private equity investment.
- A Foreign Direct Investment strategy, working in close partnership with the ND Trade Office.

II. Community Development

- Updating the Renaissance Zone Program.
- Moving the HOME program, along with two full time employees (FTEs) from the Commerce Department to the ND Housing Finance Agency (NDHFA)
- Housing rehab, and community action success stories.
- The new North Dakota New Development Calculator (ND2C); enabling local decision makers to estimate fiscal impacts to their community.
- The new [Economic Development Ecosystem Map](#) gives community leaders the resources in their community and economic development.
- Rural Development Council (RDC) produced comprehensive surveying of businesses and communities in the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. These surveys provided direction for the North Dakota Smart Restart protocols.

III. Elevation of ND's image

- Focus on small businesses and tourism – position for long term growth.
- Demographics – Canadian investment
- Brand unification – ND Logo being used currently by 26 state agencies
- Improve image and awareness of our state – marketing activities

IV. The new workforce

- Telework has accelerated, need to be prepared to leverage and retain workers here.
- The WDC and the OLR has developed recommendations to improve talent recruitment and company growth prospects.
- Technology skills grant, WDC, operation intern, technology skills grant, industry that has leveraged these grants and programs.

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET 21-23 biennium

Celeste Engelhard

Celeste gave an overview of the Governor's budget for the Commerce Department, that will start in the Senate for the 2021 legislative session.

- Moving the Home program and 2 FTEs from Commerce to NDHFA – \$8.3 million in funding
- 1 FTE transfer to NDIT Department for Information Technology Unification.
- Destination marketing - \$ 2million with another \$200 thousand for brand extension
- Unmanned Aerial System Test Site - \$2 million
- Workforce Technical Skills Grant - \$1million
- LIFT program - \$30 million
- Beyond Visual Line of Sight - \$20 million
- Grand Sky - \$7 million

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (WDC)

Katie Ralston

Dave Farnsworth, Chair for the WDC gave background information to the council and the four themes covered under the 13 recommendations that will be presented and addressed this legislative session. Dave then addressed the TEAMS Live Event that will be recorded online tomorrow and made available on the Commerce website, www.commerce.nd.gov/workforce

WDC four themes presented by each subcommittee chair:

Don Shilling - *Earlier and More Diverse Career Exploration and Addressing the Technical Skills Gap*

Bryan Klipfel - *Removing Barriers to Employment*

Katie Ralston - *Occupational Licensing Reform*

Pt Bertagnolli - *Recruitment and Retention of Workers*

Meeting ended at 12:15 p.m.