



ANNUAL REPORT

MARTIN COUNTY EDA

YEAR 2020

MARTIN COUNTY EDA

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 businesses 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 engage 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

ABOUT US...

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 respect.
- Excellence – we ensure quality in every aspect of our work. We continuously strive to further our education to provide expert advice to our clients.

2020 YEAR-END SUMMARY

The year 2020 was a challenging year for all of us due to the Covid-19 worldwide Pandemic. 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 2020, MCEDA successfully provided technical business assistance to 99 entrepreneurs and spent more than 590 hours performing services. Utilizing the RCEF business model creates exceptional cost savings for Martin County. Year after year, we produce tremendous results with very little expense.

In an effort to help promote our services and involvement, the EDA sponsors or participates in several community development activities and events (which many did not take place due to the Covid 19 pandemic) 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 were started in 2011, but due to the Pandemic, we were not able to make the community visits.

In efforts to create awareness and better serve our communities, we continue to host talk radio programs on the KSUM 1370AM and FM radio stations. The programs are called "Monday Morning Interview with Bryan Stading", "EDA Business Talk", and "Shop Local". The purpose of the programs are 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 a 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.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

2020 SAW THE CONTINUATION OF SEVERAL PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED WITH THE HELP OF VARIOUS GRANTS. THESE INCLUDE:

The Martin County EDA received a two-year grant (FY19/20) in the total amount of \$300,000 from the State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development on behalf of the Regional Center for Entrepreneurial Facilitation (RCEF). Other funding counties for this grant include Blue Earth County, Martin County, and Watonwan County, and RCEF. Our Minnesota Legislative representatives- Representative Robert Gunther and Senator Julie Rosen were instrumental in their support for the grant legislation.

The EDA supported the grant application by BevComm to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Office of Broadband- Border-to-Border Broadband Grant Program for the installation of expanded broadband infrastructure for high speed, reliable, broadband services within Martin County.

The EDA was instrumental in formulating a county-wide tax abatement program policy for new construction of single and multi-family housing, which provided tax abatements for seven newly constructed single-family homes in Martin County.

Brain Gain: The EDA 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 a high quality of life. More work needs to be done to keep high school graduates in these towns, as they represent a trainable workforce that local businesses need. There are plans for a website, and to engage in social media.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (CONT.)

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

Continued 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.

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.

The EDA continues to promote its “Red Folder”, which provides information and business resources for new business start-ups.



A word cloud of Minnesota counties, with the text arranged in a roughly circular pattern. The words are in various shades of orange and red. The largest word is 'Fairmont', followed by 'Dunnell', 'Truman', 'Northrop', and 'Ceylon'. Other visible words include 'Ormsby', 'Trimont', 'Sherburn', 'Welcome', and 'Granada'.

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

LIVE FIT SPORT & WELLNESS CENTER LLC

Alex Schliesmann, head trainer/owner

The Live Fit Sport & Wellness Center is a full-scale commercial gym. Amenities include an Indoor Walking Track, Basketball Court, Indoor Turf, Parisi Speed School, Golf Simulator, a 7,000 sq. ft. Gymnastics Practice Facility, Infrared Saunas, and Massage and Chiropractor services.

The Live Fit facility is 50,000 sq. ft. with approximately 850 members. The cost of the entire project was \$2.2M. Initially, the plan was to construct a new building for Live Fit. However, with the support of the MCEDA and vision of repurposing buildings within its communities, RCEF was able to demonstrate to Alex and his family the cost savings and the vast potential for the facility vs. new construction.

RCEF's role was to guide Alex on how to turn his ideas into a reality. RCEF consultants served as advisors in developing the business plan and the operational plan, assembling financial projections, negotiating lease terms, and executing the build-out process. RCEF consultants met regularly with Alex and closely monitored progress to help make Live Fit a success.



SMALL BUSINESS CARES ACT AND RELIEF PROGRAM GRANTS

The County received \$2,403,965 from the Federal CARES Act Grant funding. The Board allocated \$750,000 of the CARES Act Funding for local businesses within the county. Grants were made of up to \$10,000 for qualifying businesses that were negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the first round, there were 41 county-allocated small businesses awarded grants in the amount of \$367,623.70. The remaining balance of the allocation was approximately \$382, 376. The County Board approved a second round for grant applications. The second-round County grant applications were due November 4, 2020.

Fifty-nine grant applications were submitted and 48 applicants were awarded grants totaling \$340,681.77. Additionally, the Chamber was paid \$15,000 for processing applications.

A total of 89 businesses were awarded grant funds.



2020 YEAR-END SUMMARY

99

Clients

590

Hours

Economic Development Activities

- Fairmont Manufacturing Training
- City of Truman
- From the Ground Up
- Tax Abatement Projects
- Fairmont EDA
- 15/90 Group
- Brain Gain
- Red Folders



MARTIN COUNTY EDA BOARD

The Martin County EDA Board Members 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. EDA Board members are appointed by the Martin County Board of Commissioners and serve a three-year term. The board meets monthly to conduct business.

BOARD MEMBERS

Brent Schultze	Chairman
Steve Fosness	Vice-chairman
Tim Terfehr	Secretary/Treasurer
Elliot Belgard	Board Member
Richard Koons	Board Member
Elizabeth Miller	Board Member
Wes Anderson	Board Member
Scott Higgins	Martin County Coordinator, EDA Staff Support

MARTIN COUNTY BUSINESS FACILITATOR

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

2021 OUTLOOK

In 2021, we look forward to working on main street revitalization by repeating the process that we used to give away the Cup and Saucer Cafe and The China House Cafe. We'll help communities identify buildings and replicate the giveaway process.

We will work with communities on repurposing vacant land to backfill buildings. Our goal is to maximize the community and buildings while minimizing building blight.

We will continue to work towards expanding all agriculture opportunities, including the most recent economic opportunity in the commercialization of fiber hemp.

The EDA will continue to work in promoting its free business consultation services in Martin County and its communities.

Thank you 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).

Thank you to our 2020 Partners: Regional Center for Entrepreneurial Facilitation, City of Fairmont, Fairmont Chamber of Commerce, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF).

The Martin County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA) performance data provided above is a snapshot for the reporting period of January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020. 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.