



Bio 2006 Featured Southwest MN

Providing opportunities for economic and community development in Swift County

Volume 15, Issue 2

Summer 2006

Important Notes:

- RDA Board meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7 a.m.
- GROW Board meets quarterly following the RDA Board meeting.
- The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) of St. Cloud State University is in Swift County the first and third Tuesday of each month. Call the Swift County RDA office for an appointment.
- Office hours 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and other times by appointment.

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April 10th through the 12th marked the dates of a huge conference and trade show in Chicago, IL, attended by Susan M. Pirsig, the Executive Director of the Swift County RDA. Pirsig, along with economic developers from Redwood County (Julie Rath) and Kandiyohi County (Steve Renquist), Sarah Libbon, Communications Director and David Paskach, Vice President for the Southwest Initiative Foundation, all representing the Renewable Energy MarketPlace™. The event took place at the McCormick Place Convention Center.

The Renewable Energy Market Place™, a program of the Initiative Foundation intended to promote the area's abundance of renewable fuels and products, was the theme for our portion of the Minnesota Pavilion at *Bio 2006*. Minnesota had one of the 1,700 booths representing nations and businesses from around the world at the trade show which more than 19,000 people attended.

On Monday afternoon, a press conference was held at *Bio 2006* that featured renewable energy and products of southwest MN. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Gene Hugoson, Southwest Initiative Foundation Vice President David Paskach, and Swift County RDA Executive Director Susan M. Pirsig were featured speakers.

The first evening of *Bio 2006*, Minnesota hosted a reception in the Hyatt McCormick Place Hotel, adjacent to the Convention Center. The reception, "Movers and Shakers of Biotechnology" featured Shakers Vodka, manufactured in Benson, as well as a spread of elegant finger food, and a live band. More than 300

people were in attendance and were able to get better acquainted with the opportunities and products of the state and region.

Rath, Renquist and Pirsig were able to attend *Bio 2006* because of the generosity of the Southwest Initiative Foundation. Each of their organizations was given a \$500 grant to help defray the cost of travel, meals and hotel expenses. An equal match

was required of each organization which was raised locally from donations by CVEC, FibroMinn, Stony Ridge Foods, and the Benson EDA. Swift and Redwood County's economic development organizations were each given grants of \$5,000 through the Renewable Energy



This CD, distributed at *Bio 2006*, includes information on our renewable businesses

MarketPlace™ for marketing material to be used during and after the trade show.

Swift County was also represented by Jan Lundebrek. She is a Chippewa Valley Ethanol Company (CVEC) Board Member and is on the Citizens Advisory Panel for FibroMinn.

The *Bio 2006* event was a great opportunity to expose the world to our leadership in renewable energy and products. Much of the *Bio 2006* event focused on the pharmaceutical industry, but renewable energy and products were well represented and brought many people to our pavilion. Visitors were handed a mini CD which contained information about the renewable businesses in Swift County, called "Swift County, Where Renewable Businesses Thrive." Many of the visitors to the Renewable Energy Market Place™ area of the Minnesota Pavilion asked for further local information to be sent to them after the *Bio 2006* conference ended.

Photos from Bio 2006 appear on page 4 of this newsletter.

Swift County RDA Has New Web Page

www.swiftcountyrda.com. That's where you can find us on the Internet these days! In an effort to keep the Swift County RDA accessible to all entrepreneurs, local and distant, we have had a new web page designed.

BackStreet Media, of Benson, undertook the project in March and has recently completed the basic work to create an all new appearance for our web presence. Visitors to our page will be able to learn about what the Swift County RDA is and does, who is on our Board of Directors and staff, what goes on at our

Board meetings through agendas and minutes, read our newsletters and press releases, and get acquainted with some of our local business projects.

We hope this will offer entrepreneurs with another means to make contact with us, beyond traditional methods. For readers without access to the web, our toll free telephone number (1-888-843-4769) offers another means by which you can easily access our staff from outside the Benson, Clontarf, Danvers, and DeGraff area. Local calls to 842-4769 will also reach our office.

RDA Moves to New Office in the Courthouse

At the beginning of June 2006, the Swift County RDA began operating in new office space in the Swift County Courthouse. In an effort to better utilize space in the lower level of the building, offices were consolidated and moved.

The RDA now occupies the space previously occupied by the Swift County HRA.

Extension consolidated into the north offices they already had, vacating the south offices. Youth Programs joins them on that side of the building.

The Veterans' Service Office and the HRA will be located where the main Extension office was previously.

Visit us soon to see our new space.

You may have noticed our new logo on the right and on the front page of this newsletter and, on our new web page, business card, and stationary. It too, along with our new web page, was designed by BackStreet Media.

We're proud of our new look and hope it becomes easily recognizable to all.



New Board Member Sought for RDA/GROW

Kyle Chase, of Appleton recently left the community as he accepted a new job in Blue Earth. He served as the Chief Financial Officer for the Appleton Hospital, and was a member of the Swift County RDA and GROW Boards. We will miss him on the Boards, as he was a valued representative of the economic development interests of the entire County. He represented County Commissioner Gary Hendrickx's District. Thank you Kyle!

In order to fill out the nine members of both the RDA and GROW Boards we need a replacement from any of the County Commissioner Districts, except that of Doug Anderson from the Kerkhoven area, because there are already a maximum of three members from that district: Doug Anderson, Jon Erickson, and Carlton Nelson.

In addition to Anderson, Erickson and Nelson, the current Board members are:

- John Chattin (Dick Hanson's District),
- Belinda Sanders (John Baker's District),
- Ed Ulmaniec (Dick Hanson's District),
- Tim Wengler (Gary Hendrickx's District), and
- Rob Wolfington (Pete Peterson's District).

If you or someone you know would be interested in economic development, have a global view of the community of Swift County, and would like more information about these Boards, you are strongly encouraged to contact the RDA office immediately. We can be reached by either phone (local or toll free), e-mail, or fax. Please check Page 4 of this newsletter for our contact information.

We look forward to hearing from you soon!

County Creates Blue Ribbon Commission

In March, the Swift County Board, at the request of the Swift County RDA Board, established a Blue Ribbon Commission to study the opportunities that might exist locally as a result of the business development taking place. The RDA Board saw the potential for further business development to service our growing manufacturing sector's needs, thereby creating new and/or expanding existing businesses in the County to meet those needs.

FibroMinn alone expects that up to 100 additional jobs will be created outside their plant solely dedicated to serving their local business facility. Other growing local businesses also have the opportunity to grow and will also need support services and additional products to accomplish their company's goals and objectives.

With renewable energy and products in vogue across the country these days there also may be many opportunities for growth and development of new manufacturing and service businesses in our area.

Due to the growth of businesses in Swift County of agriculture related value added concepts such as CVEC, FibroMinn and Dublin Dairy, numerous opportunities exist for future business development. Between now and June 1, 2007 a select group of not more than 12 people will be charged with researching and naming opportunities to further expand value added business development opportunities related to these and other similar projects in Swift County.

The Blue Ribbon Commission will be made up of eight people who were chosen because they applied to serve on the Commission. They are:

- Jim Falk, Murdock
- Duaine Flanders, Benson
- Clark McDonald, Benson
- Pam Mansfield, Murdock
- Allen Smith, Holloway
- Tom Walsh, Murdock
- Jedd Wennerberg, Kerkhoven
- Harmon Wilts, Kerkhoven

This Blue Ribbon Commission is asked to complete their work by June 1, 2007. They have a budget of up to

\$10,000 to hire experts, consultants, and/or facilitators, to help them in the process. In the end, they will present a report to the Swift County Board that outlines their work and their recommendations for naming the opportunities at hand.

Funding for the work will be provided by the Benson EDA, City of Appleton, City of Danvers, City of DeGraff, City of Kerkhoven, City of Murdock, Swift County Board, and Swift County RDA.

Appleton Negotiating JOBZ Agreement with ECONAR Energy

At their May 17th meeting, the Appleton City Council approved the modification of their Job Opportunity Building Zone (JOBZ), to allow approximately 3.3 acres to be removed from one already designated parcel in the North Industrial Park to land adjacent to the current ECONAR Energy System, Inc. manufacturing plant, on the north end of downtown Appleton. The Swift County Board and the Lac qui Parle School District Board also approved the modification at their May meetings, as required.

ECONAR is the only manufacturer of cold climate ground source heating and cooling systems in North America. Demand for their products is on the rise as we become more conscious of the use of fossil fuels to heat our homes and power our transportation.

ECONAR plans an expansion in the near future and is examining the benefits of JOBZ as a tool to help

them with their project. One of the many legal requirements of a modification of a JOBZ is that at least five new jobs must be created in the first year of the project in question. The pay scale for the new and existing jobs is \$10.58 per hour, including benefits.

There will be a public hearing on June 14th at 7:00 p.m. at the Appleton City Council meeting where the Business Subsidy Agreement that is required between the City and the business will be discussed.

If the City and ECONAR agree to pursue JOBZ for this project it will mark the second JOBZ project in Swift County. The City of Murdock approved JOBZ for a local business which subsequently chose to expand without it.

The Swift County RDA is the sub-zone administrator for JOBZ in Swift County. The UMVRDC in Appleton is the zone administrator.

Swift County RDA

Swift County Courthouse
301 14th Street North
Post Office Box 288
Benson, MN 56215-0288

Phone: 320-842-GROW
Toll Free: 888-843-GROW
Fax: 320-843-4850
Email: grow@co.swift.mn.us

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
Paid
Permit #10
Benson MN
56215

We're on the web!
www.swiftcountyrda.com

GROW With Us!



The Minnesota Pavilion

Bio 2006 Photos



SW MN delegates (left to right): Jan Lundebræk, Sue Pirsig, Sarah Libbon, Glen Thuringer (Worthington), Steve Renquist, Chris Huisinga (MN West Tech Campus), Andy Butler (HomeFarm Technology), Julie Rath



1/4 of the trade show floor

Information and Training Opportunities

Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Swift County: Mark Stiegel, CPA, from the SBDC in St. Cloud is available by appointment the first and third Tuesday of each month. He can meet with you at your business or at the Courthouse. Contact the Swift County RDA office for an appointment at 320-842-4769 or 888-843-4769 (toll free) or e-mail at grow@co.swift.mn.us.

Swift County Fair: August 17th through 20th, Appleton. Come visit us at the Swift County RDA and HRA booth in the Commercial Building. While you're at it visit all the other businesses there and see the terrific exhibits around the fairgrounds. Enjoy the shows and the midway, too.