



2024—Year in Review

Battle Lake Economic Development Authority
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2024 Economic Development Commissioners: Randy Dorn, Rob Nudell, Sean Belmont, Josie Thomopolous, Steve Young, Richard Bullard, Mayor; Majorie Quammen, Council Member; Val Martin, Secretary & EDA Director
EDA Minutes and information are available on our web-site: www.BattleLakeMN.org

"The mission of the Battle Lake Economic Development Authority is to promote diverse Economic Development and enhance quality of life through the retention and growth of business, industry & services in the Battle Lake area."

Hatchery Row—Looking Towards Completion

The work is almost complete and it has been a long eight years to get to this point. It's fun to look at the before and after photo and to remember the history that was once there.

From meeting with the property owners to convince them to sell, to working through the environmental requirements and abatement to applying for grants, and on to working with the developer and the TIF agreement along with the requirements of the City for stormwater management and other utilities; it's been a daunting task but one that has been worth the effort. This beautiful building houses some new businesses along with some relocated businesses. We are so happy they picked Battle Lake.

We mourn the loss of MacKayla Schicker, bakery owner who died in a tragic car accident just as she was getting her business up and running.

We are happy the apartments are filling up and we see new residents in our community. We were sure this project would work in Battle Lake and here we are with the end result. We couldn't be happier and we appreciate everyone who has been involved. Thanks for your support.

Highpoint Homes are in the process of building a 10-unit complex on the site west of the Baptist Church to be completed in 2025. These apartments are possible through a grant from MN Housing and with the help of the Otter Tail County CDA, who purchased the property and demolished the old church to make it ready for a developer. Because of the grant funds, the rent at these apartments will be considered affordable and lower in cost than most comparable apartments.



The Hatchery



ONGOING GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Goals

- Foster the relationship with area townships for economic development growth – invite members of Everts and Clitherall Townships to participate in EDA meetings by sending email packets and inviting them to attend meetings.
- Continue Business, Retention and Expansion Process
 - ◇ Continued communication with Network Battle Lake – work with them on projects as needed.
 - ◇ Continued communication with the Lakes Area Community Center Board.
 - ◇ Business communication – hold an annual business appreciation lunch each year in February and follow up with a newspaper article detailing the work of the EDA.
 - ◇ On-going yearly surveys to businesses.
- Continued work on a group advertising & marketing campaign.
- Keep the website up to date with information on the EDA.
- Assist businesses with staffing needs by working with Otter Tail County's job opening portal.
- Provide training opportunities for area businesses.
- Fully utilize all real estate within City limits for residential and commercial expansion.
- Housing – work on both single-family and multifamily options including new locations to expand housing. Look at public/private partnerships for development.

Ongoing Priorities

- Keep an inventory of available commercial property on the City's website by including a link to area realtors.
- Reach out to prospective businesses when members have heard of possible interest in the community.
- Identify business gaps in the community and seek prospective business owners.
- Broadband – continue to work with the County on options and reach out to internet suppliers to hear about future projects and priorities.
- Support the school.
- Parking – educating the businesses and public on availability – keep a map in the Battle Lake brochure.
- On-going training for business owners.
- Continue the working relationship with surrounding communities, employers, and partners - i.e., Tri-City Living, Otter Tail Tourism, Otter Tail County Community Development Agency and Live Wide Open.
- Continue to meet quarterly with the business/community collaboration and the LACC

Business Surveys—Action Items

Thank you for the businesses, nonprofits and other entities that fill out the surveys that we send to you. This provides us valuable information to set goals and to provide future opportunities for our businesses.

Some of the projects that came from the survey include:

- Quarterly business meetings
- Business training
- Marketing—Social media videos/Facebook promotions
- Group advertising—working with Network Battle Lake on Calendar coupons and coupon book
- Continue work on housing
- Continue support of the school
- Continue work with LACC on Marketing

SAVE THE DATE
Battle Lake School Career Fair
March 26th Media Center

Community Roundtable

(Formerly called Breakfast and Brainstorming)

Serves as an informal gathering for residents, businesses, nonprofits, and local leaders to come together and share their perspectives. This quarterly forum focuses on generating ideas and input to shape economic initiatives and social events that strengthen the community and businesses.

This is a joint effort between the EDA and the LACC. Four meetings were held in 2024 with over thirty attendees at some of these meetings. We had great discussions with several ideas coming from the meetings. It was also an opportunity for anyone to share information and future plans. Highlights of the three meetings included:

- The January meeting was held at City Hall with members providing updates and general discussion. Some ideas were brought up for new events and things to bring people to town.
- The April meeting was held at City Hall with Kristin Sawyer Lyman giving the group an update on her plan for activities related to books written by Jess Laurey that are based in Battle Lake. The coupon book and flyer was also discussed along with preliminary plans for summer events.
- The September meeting was held at First National Bank. Attendees gave updates and went over summer activities and events.
- The November meeting was at Neverbetter and Marie Noples-Wiebe was the guest speaker giving tips on marketing. Christmas events were discussed and several attendees gave updates.

The next meeting will be held on March 12th at First National Bank with Rikka Brandon speaking about recruiting, hiring and maintaining employees. It will be at noon with a lunch from Neverbetter provided by the EDA. RSVP to Val Martin if you wish to attend.



Mark your calendar for
future dates:
May 21, 2025
Sept. 17, 2025
Nov. 19, 2025



Welcome to all New Business & Business Owners

Of Interest:

1. Goals and priorities are reviewed more than once during the year. We'd love your input or ideas as we work on 2025.
2. Throughout the year, Martin spends some of her time working with Otter Tail Tourism, and Minnesota Explorer to promote Battle Lake along with events occurring throughout the year. Martin also serves on the Otter Tail County Community Development Agency (CDA).
3. Martin and Dorn are available, and have held numerous meetings with prospective business owners to not only answer questions, but to let them know that their business is welcome and important to our City.
4. The EDA worked with the LACC and Network Battle to create the calendar and coupon flyer. Volunteers from Network Battle sold ads for the back of the flyer and it was prepared and printed by the Battle Lake Review. We partnered with Otter Tail Tourism to deliver over 5000 copies of our Battle Lake brochure with the calendar flyer inserted.
5. Social media continues to be a strong tool and we are happy to share an appropriate post of yours to our site.
6. Please feel free to share our posts!

FUN FACT: SINCE 2015, 64 TOTAL HOUSING UNITS HAVE BEEN BUILT IN BATTLE LAKE (INCLUDES 2025 PROJECTS). ALL OF THESE HAVE MOVED FORWARD WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE CITY, EDA, AND/OR COUNTY CDA. 10 ADDITIONAL SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES HAVE ALSO BEEN BUILT SINCE 2015.

A message from EDA President, Randy Dorn

01-24-2025

To the Community of Battle Lake and surrounding area,

We are off and running in 2025! While the leadership in the community of Battle Lake stays the same with Rich Bullard retaining his mayoral seat, the leadership in Washington has changed. The newly appointed President Trump has started his term off with a barrage of executive orders covering a range of issues. This should make for an interesting year.

Battle Lake was able to get some projects across the finish line in 2024. The Hatchery Row project had its Ribbon Cutting Ceremony held on Friday, July 26th with over 100 people in attendance to celebrate the project's completion! The Battle Lake School continues to work through the planning of the enhancements that are set to start on the building in the Spring of 2025.

The Community did see some setbacks in the year. One large one being the loss of Stubs Restaurant which experienced a fire in September. It was a somber fall in Battle Lake with the loss of this business which provided so many memories and has served as a real economic driver in the community for so long!

Goals and priorities of the EDA continue to be reviewed and updated as some projects come to conclusion. Leigh Shebeck assisted the EDA this year on meeting with local businesses face to face to discuss the status of their business and in what areas they may want some assistance. The quarterly breakfast and brainstorming meetings have been renamed the Community Roundtable. These meetings are still going strong and we encourage more businesses to take the time to join in these constructive discussions! The first meeting is set for March 12th at Noon at the Bank. Join us for lunch catered by Neverbetter, please RSVP to Val at the City.

We continue to partner with the Otter Tail County CDA as well as the Battle Lake School to help address the work force issues. The Battle Lake School will once again hold a career fair in March of 2025 which many area businesses will participate in. The construction of a 10 unit apartment has started on the site of the old Open Door Youth Center and is expected to be completed this year. This project is intended to provide more workforce housing for the community.

The EDA hired Steve Henning in 2024 to provide some high quality videos to highlight some of the beautiful additions to the Battle Lake community as well as demonstrate the strong arts community and health services. You can find these videos on the Battle Lake Youtube channel and other social media outlets. As always, we encourage new and existing businesses to reach out to Val or any EDA commissioner to discuss what the City and the EDA can do for them.

Sincerely,



Randy Dorn

President/Battle Lake Economic Development Authority