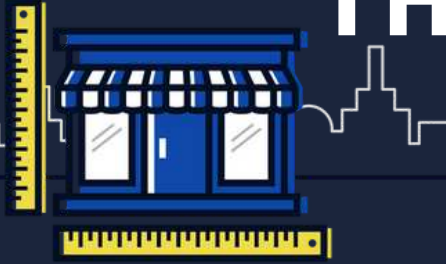


THE BUSINESS LEAD



SPRING 2022



OPEN FOR BUSINESS

WELCOME!

Welcome to the first issue of **The Business Lead** newsletter created specifically for Caledonia business owners and presented by the Caledonia Economic Development Authority!

In each issue you will find helpful articles for building your business, discover the latest trends for small business owners, and learn about various incentive and funding opportunities.

We are excited to be able to provide an informational tool in support of Caledonia businesses and hope you find the newsletter helpful and enjoyable!

BY MICHELLE ELLINGSON
ASSISTANT TO THE CITY
CLERK/ADMINISTRATOR

To subscribe to the Business Lead Newsletter, contact City Hall at cityhall@caledoniamn.gov or call 507-725-3450

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EDA BUSINESS ASSISTANCE & CITY OF CALEDONIA INCENTIVES

Funding for various projects is available through a number of incentives and business assistance sources. Below is an explanation of each funding source.



1) EDA Revolving Loan Fund

The Caledonia EDA Intermediary Revolving Loan Program provides low-interest loans to businesses and individuals to promote job creation and retention, reduce blight, increase the tax base, and provide needed services in the community. These loans provide gap financing and may be used for land acquisition, new construction, site improvements, renovations, machinery, and fixtures. Loan amounts are generally available for up to \$25,000, but vary depending on the extent of the public purpose served by the project and the economic feasibility of the project.

2) Commercial Rehabilitation Loan (Facade Improvement)

The EDA offers assistance to commercial property owners in the Downtown Redevelopment Area who want to make physical improvements to the exterior of their building. Up to 33% of the project cost will be a forgivable loan; 33% percent of the project cost will be a 3% low-interest loan, and 34 % of the project cost will be owner's equity. The Commercial Rehab Loan Program is administered by the Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA).

3) Tax Abatement

The City of Caledonia offers tax abatements for economic development purposes. A tax abatement allows a property owner to receive a refund on a portion of their yearly property tax for a parcel. The abatement is usually based on the increase in a property's value from a construction or renovation project. The yearly percentage of the abatement and duration vary based on the amount of the business investment and job creation.

4) Tax Increment Financing

For qualified applicants the City of Caledonia may institute a tax-increment financing district (TIF), in which the city would use the additional property taxes that a new real estate development project generates to assist with the costs of the development.

A Business Assistance Application can be downloaded from the City of Caledonia website at www.caledoniamn.gov or contact Adam Swann, City Clerk/Administrator for more information at 725-3450. Visit the City's website at www.caledoniamn.gov under the Economic Development header, Recent Projects link to see current renovation photos.



Old Buildings Renewed

The building located at 126 W. Main street was built by A. Sprague in 1889 to use as a temporary bank while the original bank on the SE corner of Main and Kingston was being rebuilt after a fire. In 1904, the bank moved back to it's original location.

From 1904 to 1915, the use of the building is somewhat unclear but records indicate that during that period, it housed a millinery (women's hat maker) business. From 1915 to 1940, the City of Caledonia's post office was located in the building and by 1941, Reinke's Tavern opened for business in the building after the post office moved into their new building located on Grove Street. Local residents also recall the building being used as Manley's Pool Hall sometime in the 1940s.

In later years, the building included the use for a medical doctor's office and in 1976, Dr. Rolf Jore moved his Caledonia Veterinary practice to the building. In 1992, Dr. Jore sold the business to Dr. Michael McCormick who purchased the building from the Sprague family. Drs. Travis and Naaren Kingsley bought the Caledonia Veterinary business and the building in 2010. In 2016, Geoff and Stephanie Mell purchased the building and it is now home to Mell Chiropractic.

source: Houston County Historical Society

**Mell Chiropractic
2022**



**Caledonia Post Office 1915-1940
photo provided by HCHS**



Caledonia Veterinary Clinic 2010



BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS BRAND

As a small business, you may be competing against big brands with devoted customers and unlimited marketing budgets so finding ways to stand out with a solid brand building process is crucial.

Brand Building will generate awareness about your business using strategies and campaigns with the goal of creating a unique and lasting image in the marketplace.

Branding can be broken down into three high-level phases:

- **Brand Strategy**
- **Brand Identity**
- **Brand Marketing**

Brand Strategy will map out how you are different, trustworthily, memorable, and likeable by your ideal customer. It will convey your purpose, promises, and how you solve problems for people. This is the first step you need to take when creating a brand from the ground up (whether you are just starting or already established)

You wouldn't build a house without a plan or blueprint right? It's the same with your brand. You can think of brand strategy as how you want the world to see your business.

Brand Identity is how you convey yourself using visuals and messaging. Your elements of brand should be applied across all channels consistently. Its the way your business becomes recognizable. Elements can include logos, colors, fonts, patterns, icons, website design, advertising, and printing and packaging.

Brand Marketing is the way that businesses and organizations highlight and raise awareness to products or services by connecting values and voice to the right audience through strategic communication.

Amplification of your brand image can be done effectively through various digital marketing activities including user experience (i.e. your website), content, social, and email marketing and through paid advertising. Together these channels are fundamental to gaining brand awareness and growth.

Integrate your brand into every aspect of customer experience: to your storefront, to your website, to your personal interactions!

source: freshsparks.com



kick marketing, LLC

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

With over 25 years of marketing experience, Dane Lamb has helped numerous businesses create their brand presence and enhance their marketing strategies.

Dane's focus is to create a a long-term relationship with his customers entrusting him to deliver satisfaction with personal attention to their specific marketing needs.

Kick Marketing LLC, located at 131 S. Marshall Street includes services such as website tune-ups, custom displays for digital signage, assistance with trade show material, and retail advertising including direct mailings and brochures along with email template design and message content.



6 EFFECTIVE WAYS TO ATTRACT EMPLOYEES TO YOUR BUSINESS

To acquire the best workers in today's competitive world, you need a good strategy. Here are six creative and effective ways to attract employees to your business:

Create a Consistent Message: Your business began as a vision. By identifying the values driving this vision, create your unique business message. Clearly explaining the "why" behind a vision is important for attracting customers, but it's also a built-in pre-screening tool for recruitment. By creating a message that is well-known and consistently expressed, candidates who align with your values and business purpose will be more likely to apply to your open positions.

Define Your Company Culture: Company culture is the day-to-day modeling of values aligned with your message and brand. With a defined company culture, you can provide the right environment for employees to meet their needs while working toward business goals. A healthy company culture will retain employees and create an attractive space for new talent.

Treat Your Employees with Respect: When you respect your employees, you honor their contributions and foster their individual differences, talents, and interests. Without respect, employees are less likely to be motivated and commitment and innovation suffer. A positive moral will help you attract new employees who want to feel valued.

Offer Competitive Benefits/Perks: While health-related coverage and paid vacation remain the workplace benefits that employees find most essential, it's the little perks that many businesses offer that enhance company culture and make employees feel valued and invested in. Some ideas could include customized care packages of the employee's favorite snacks, candle scents, or coffee flavors, or recognizing an employee's favorite charity and hosting a "Giving Day" where co-workers donate or volunteer their time to the cause. Birthday or anniversary celebrations are popular ways to honor employees, and freebies like movie passes or car wash tokens are well received too. The most important benefit a business can offer however, is the easiest to do and only requires two words: saying "Thank You."

Host an Open House: By hosting an open house, you can showcase the very best of your business and engage in conversations that go beyond job postings and mission statements. An open house also has the benefit of attracting varied talent including backgrounds and skills not currently matched to a vacancy or anticipated position. Interacting with individuals in a less formal setting gives you space to consider new potential.

Be Active on Social Media: Even when not searching for work, people engage with businesses on social media. If your business provides customer (and potential employees) content that goes beyond promotion, you'll build an affinity with your audience. Being active on social media gives your audience something to react to and may start conversation that will further engage them. Word of warning however, social media is only helpful if done well. Decide on the platform(s) that best communicate to your audience and keep content on a consistent schedule.

source: www.uschamber.com

"RESEARCH INDICATES THAT WORKERS HAVE THREE PRIME NEEDS: INTERESTING WORK, RECOGNITION FOR DOING A GOOD JOB, AND BEING LET IN ON THINGS THAT ARE GOING ON IN THE COMPANY."— ZIG ZIGLAR



Tips for Using Social Media to Recruit Employees:

Take advantage of Linked-In's features: Don't simply post job openings but also join industry groups on Linked-In related to your business where you can share information about any openings you might have.

Get your current employees involved: Encourage employees to share job openings with their network. This will extend your reach and show a more authentic behind-the-scenes look at your business.

Check out your competitors: Research what larger industry-like businesses are using for social media platforms and recruitment and gather ideas for social media features you haven't considered.



Upcoming Events

Career Fair: A Career Fair sponsored by the Bluff Country Collaboration and the Houston County Economic Development is planned for March 9th at the La Crescent Area Event Center. Students and the general public are both invited to attend. All businesses in Houston and Fillmore counties may participate for free. Contact Houston County EDA Director Allison Wagner at EDA@co.houston.mn.us to learn more.

Battle in Bluff Country Omnium: The University of Minnesota Cycling Team will be peddling their way in and around the City of Caledonia Saturday, April 30th. The group will be hosting 3 races that will likely bring 300+ cyclist to the community. What a great opportunity to welcome visitors and promote your business!



Founder's Day Celebration: Founders Day will be celebrated June 17th through June 19th with a parade, car show, 5K run/walk, vendors, and music. More information will be provided as plans progress.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



The property at 115 E. Main is undergoing some impressive improvements. Owned by Joshua and Clare O'Brien, the project includes new windows and doors, roof repair, a new addition to the back of the building, and a fresh coat of paint.

The Caledonia Historic Inn located at 135 E. Main is adding 4 more guest rooms with private baths. One of the new rooms will feature access to an outdoor patio.

The Wired Rooster located at 131 E. Main Street will be expanding to include a relaxing space to enjoy specialty cocktails, wine, and craft beers. The 20's era theme includes a brilliant chandelier and red carpet.

Mell Chiropractic located at 126 W. Main utilized a Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) Grant dollars to remove the Stucco on the exterior of their building and bring back the original brick facade.

Richard's Sanitation raised the roof of their current building located at 162 Bissen Street to accommodate larger trucks. In addition, a lean-to is being added along with a new tin roof.

Eitzen State Bank located on Hwy 44/76 is in the process of expanding their building to offer more office space.