



Proud to serve the Barnesville area!



Shelly Dunham
LAKES COUNTRY
INSURANCE AGENCY, INC.
218-863-1800

105 S Broadway, Pelican Rapids, MN
shelly@loretel.net
License #6559

BRAATEN ACCOUNTING 

Income Taxes • Accounting
Bookkeeping • Payroll

Jason Braaten

PO Box 717 Barnesville, MN 218 354-2474
PO Box 99 Dent, MN 218 758-2910

braatenltd@gmail.com

“Proud to serve the Clay Country area”



Representative Paul Marquart

Prepared and paid for by the Marquart Volunteer Committee: P.O. Box 151, Dilworth, MN 56529

EDA Continues To Build Momentum In 2020

By: Michael Stein

If the last two years is any indication, Barnesville’s Economic Development Corporation will continue to see progress in 2020 with many of the seeds planted over those recent years.

“The EDA has a two-pronged approach,” said EDA Director Karen Lauer. “Our focus is on housing and business development. That was the case in 2019, and that will continue in 2020.”

Looking back on 2019, Lauer said it was a banner year for housing.

“We were very pleased with the number of lots sold and the number of homes constructed,” she said. “As the year was coming to an end, we were surprised to find we were running out of lots. We scurried around to put things in place for a third addition to Del Acres-Gilbertson, where we expect to see a lot of activity this year. There’s a lot of pieces to the puzzle with putting a project like this together. Most people don’t see how much work is involved.”

Lauer said countless housing committee meetings and a myriad of details regarding infrastructure items like sewer and water, coordinating with the county on land issues, and the bidding process are just a tip of the iceberg when it comes to new housing developments.

“Also in 2019 we contracted with Maxfield Research & Consulting to develop a comprehensive housing needs plan,” Lauer said. “We see it as a guide for the housing committee and city council as they consider the city’s housing needs over the next five years.”

The EDA is also looking at multi-family housing units and senior housing needs.

“The research document will help us determine what type of housing we should be pursuing,” Lauer said. “Trends are changing. Traditional apartment buildings, for example, are not necessarily what’s being done these days.”

On the business side, there were significant success stories.

“The Dobmeier Funeral Home moving to the former Wells Fargo Bank location on Front Street was a significant event in 2019,” Lauer said. “Many communities have had major businesses like a bank close up and end up with a prime building on the main street sitting empty for a long time. We’re fortunate this didn’t happen here, but it’s also something

that just doesn’t happen overnight.”

The EDA assisted in putting the deal together that led to the Dobmeier purchase of the building.

“We are willing to make that investment in time and energy,” Lauer said. “So now, rather than a vacant building on Front Street, we have a long established business with a good location and the necessary space to service their clients. This was truly a key business success story for the community in 2019.”

As this edition of Streetlights goes to print, another project in another formerly empty building is taking shape.

The former antique and collectible store is being renovated by Erin and Andrew Boyum. Erin will operate her photography business and hair salon in that location. She’s also sub-letting space to other businesses.

In early March, Boyum announced that Hope Braton LMT and Amy Reep will share a space at One Ten. Braton is a Barnesville native with 16 years of experience as a massage therapist.

Reep operates District 72 Yoga Healing Therapies out of an old town hall near Lawndale. She also offers healing massage, reflexology and other therapies.

“The location where Boyum is operating was another empty building taking up valuable Front Street real estate,” Lauer said. “We worked with Erin and her plan to renovate the building, and that went well. We assisted in negotiations on the sale and worked with the Small Business Development Center. Erin invested a significant dollar amount in renovating and creating more downtown office space.”

2019 EDA Highlights

Housing/Community

- Closed on sale of 15 lots in new housing addition and construction of 11 new homes in the community
- Continued to develop relationship with Adams Development resulting in construction of 5 new spec homes.
- Administered Free Utility Incentive Program, approving incentives for 7 new Barnesville homeowners
- Participated in Fargo-Moorhead Home & Garden Show, which generated 5 housing leads
- Administered \$500 Existing Home Incentive Program, which paid out 39 incentives
- Contracted with Maxfield Research to complete Comprehensive Housing Plan with \$7,500 grant from WCI
- Completed planning for Del Acres Gilbertson 3rd Addition; purchased property from Gilbertson family
- Coordinated “Choose Barnesville” TV and radio campaign to recruit young families to Barnesville
- Coordinated the Giving Hearts Day campaign which raised \$35,528 for school projects
- Worked with variety of stakeholders to address shortage of Childcare providers in Barnesville
- Wrapped up the 2018-2019 Leadership Barnesville program with 21 participants graduating in March

Business

- Completed contamination cleanup allowing for construction of new Dean’s Auto location on south Front Street
- Provided ongoing support and guidance to Dobmeier Funeral Home leading up to Grand Opening in June
- Negotiated the sale of former Front Street Antiques to Erin Boyum who is presently renovating building
- Worked with Clay County HRA on implementation of the \$937,725 Small Cities Grant Application
- Approved small business loan to assist Barnesville EDA with new Shops and Storage project
- Worked closely with Main Street Program to officially open CoLoft coworking space
- Oversaw infrastructure installation for Shops and Storage project; closed on the sale of 5 lots!
- Assisted Ace Gregg with the purchase of “The 34” property and required zoning changes with Clay County



EDA Director Karen Lauer addresses a group at the Leadership Barnesville program.

Nordic Oaks Vineyard and Winery is a year closer to harvesting its first crop. In 2018, the EDA assisted in the sale of the property west of Dollar General to Aubree and Kai Martinez.

“There’s a lot of excitement about this business,” Lauer said. “Many communities now have breweries and wineries, and those attract visitors. It was great to see a local family make an investment with a vision for not only wine growing, but to create a huge business opportunity and become a magnet for tourist attraction.

Several residents helped plant the vines—about 700 in all.

“The next steps for the vineyard should be exciting,” Lauer said.

Another seed is being planted in that same area, or more specifically, the former Dairy Queen location on the corner of Highway 9 and 34. It’s a critical area for making a good first impression on people coming into town.

“We are actively working with that property and possible prospects for it,” Lauer said. “We want to determine the best use of what is an entrance to the community and the visual impact it makes on people. Care is needed on what will serve Barnesville best for decades to come.”

Another success story was Barnesville Shops and Storage, located in the commercial park.

“This was an idea that was in our think tank for about four years,” Lauer said. “In 2019 we pulled the trigger with the infrastructure. We sold five lots and expect 2020 to be a massive traffic jam, in a good way, out there with construction.”

Lauer said this project was a case of “build it and they will come.”

“It came true and we are very pleased with the results.”

The EDA was also influential in cleaning up a piece of tax forfeiture property on the south end of town.

The land was cleaned up to the satisfaction of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and an old steel building was removed. Dean’s Auto constructed a new steel building for their business. Dean Julsrud and his son Josh re-opened their business on that site in February.

Also in 2019, the EDA wrapped up the Small Cities Grant program, a multi-year project that resulted in nearly a million dollars spent upgrading Front Street business and nearby residential homes.

On the business side, but also

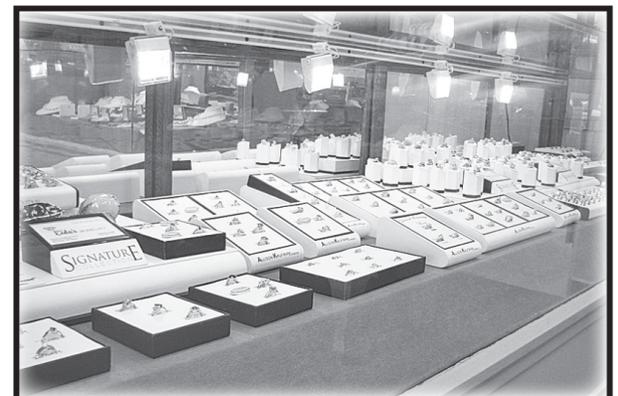
related to housing and young families, is the community’s current child-care shortage.

“The EDA is engaged with the shortage,” Lauer said. “In 2019 we held a training session for people wishing to be a home-based provider. We’ve done a survey, which is giving us a clearer picture of the child-care needs and strategies we should adopt to address those needs.”

With new families continually moving to or expressing an interest in Barnesville, child-care is a complicated issue. The school district is creating a before- and after-school

care center for school-age children. That will help immensely, but it doesn’t address the entire issue.

“We still have families with a child in school and another at home,” Lauer said. “And with the school remodeling and expansion project starting this year, that will create even more interest in young families moving here. It’s been found that when a school district does a project like this, there is a significant increase in families moving there. Child-care availability is tight right now, so it will be a major focal point for the EDA this year and beyond.”



Eide's JEWELRY

Highway 10 • EasTen Shopping Center
Located between Moorhead and Dilworth

218-287-1411

Mon. - Fri. 10 - 6 • Sat. 10 - 5 • Closed Sunday

Muscatell-Burns
Hawley, MN




Buy Your Next Ford From Ward!

www.muscatellburnsford.com On Highway 10 218 483-3356