Strut Your Stuff Tour

Blandin Broadband Communities
May 2020
Agenda
2 hour meeting

• Networking, informal discussion and virtual refreshments – What’s been your favorite take-out dish during the covid crisis?

• Welcome, introductions and check-in by local hosts/attendees

• Meeting purpose ~ Bernadine

• Community presentation

• Blandin response

• The future

• Adjourn
Community presentation

- Who is involved?

- What activities and projects are being implemented?
  - Applying a Covid-19 lens – how coronavirus did or may have impacted our projects
  - What are your teams’ plans or ideas for the future?
Who has been involved?

...the cool kids
Planning Outcomes
Online Camping Reservations

- Project goals: Develop an online tool to make camping reservations at County camping parks and County Fair Grounds. Options for cities to join.

- Progress to-date: Completed! Yet not fully rolled out/utilized now due to Covid-19.

- Features include Swift County GIS aerial photos, ability to choose by specific site and/or dates

- This was a 2018 visioning project idea that ranked high but struggled to find a champion. Ultimately required formal county leadership. Lesson Learned here.
PCs for People 2.0

- Project goals: Digital Inclusion & Personal Empowerment focused on providing laptops and internet access to 20 Elderly and/or Disabled clients of the Swift County HRA.

- This project was proposed as part of a home rehab grant targeting elderly and disabled focusing on aging in place and health and safety modifications to homes.

- Originally the hope was to provide instruction on basics like filling out the Census online, access library tools, county services and possibly telehealth services. With Covid-19 this project has the potential to make a greater impact as a necessity rather than a nice to have.

- Progress to-date: Computers have been secured with PCs for People.

- Looking ahead this project will work one-on-one to empower housing rehab grant recipients with basic instruction on how to utilize their laptop, and access low cost internet in their home/community to gain access to services.
Project goals: Address digital equity and equality by placing computers with 50 families in need.

Progress to-date: We struggled to provide computers working with schools but soon hit our stride working with the Swift County HRA and we were able to distribute computers to families in need via word of mouth.

It was interesting to hear about the need for computers when schools closed due to Covid-19. Families did seem to have access to a device but in some cases the device wasn’t great for doing homework or could not be shared effectively among families with parents working at home and several children.

From the original project: We are also looking forward to the opportunity to partner with PCs for People to offer a customized empowerment service addressing digital equality/equity as part of a home rehab program grant from FHLB (Financial Security Bank – Kerkhoven)
STEM Camp for Kids – Reboot 2020

• Before Covid-19 hit us KMS Community Ed was looking to expand it’s STEM Camp in 2020.

• The plan is still to move forward, although there may be some modifications.

• In year one: 38 kids from the KMS area entering 2nd through 7th grade participated in the National Inventors Hall of Fame program taught by two local teachers.

• Registration filled up in less than a week! For 2020 we are looking to include junior high aged students as well as grow the program so that KMS can become a regional hub as this is typically a national offering hosted in larger cities.
2019 STEM Camp for Kids
Presented by Terri Barrett, Project Lead

Project Goals:

• Provide low-cost access to an educational opportunity that will enhance tech skills such as robotics, computer coding and other science technology, engineering and math skills.

• Progress to-date: Camp is underway!

From Mr. Saint:

• “We are studying robot coding, farm tech, motors, gears, radio frequency, paleontology, ocean travel using star positioning, and innovation. This is all done with a lot of creative hands-on and team work.”

• Looking Ahead: This camp can be a feeder program for the KMS Robotics program.
Project goals:

- Enhance use of digital devices in Board Meetings
- Reminders of Board Meetings
- Easy access to Board Packets
- Incorporate Community Calendar via RDA Webpage – Two for one
- Share RDA News
- Progress to-date: App is developed and primary caters to board members/those we have a relationship with.
- Looking forward: Calendar possibilities/group marketing #SavorSwift
- There is also a Covid Resource page now.
Swift County 4-H Extension App is still going strong.

Project goals:

• Connect 4-H members and families across Swift County
• Provide quick and easy access for program updates & events
• Provide youth an opportunity to showcase talents by helping to teach or present on creating the app
• Community connectedness
• Progress to-date: App is developed!
• Looking forward: (Presentation)
Digital Marketing for Business 2.0

- **Project goals:** This project was also rebooted to provide a total of 10 Swift County business owners with professional digital marketing consulting to implement affordable strategies to strengthen their brand awareness and increase the likelihood of business success.

- **Progress to-date:** All 10 consultations are complete.

- **Looking ahead** we have discussed engaging Molly to do some webinars to assist with ecommerce/digital marketing during covid-19.
Digital Marketing for Business AND Community
Digital Marketing for
Communities & EDOs

Project Goals:

1. Learn and Share digital marketing strategies and tools
   Best practices for utilizing tools

2. Build a sustainable network of marketing peers

3. Strategically align marketing goals with peers

Progress to-date: Completed and held six shared webinars from using Virtual Reality – 360 video to market to using data to tell your story to creating compelling websites.

Looking forward: The group was smaller than I hoped (two people who worked solely in marketing were on maternity leave) so the networking never really took place. In the end, the handful of participants would rather review materials or webinars on their own time. No covid impact here.

Looking forward I would focus on businesses in communities rather than community people to network on marketing initiatives. Chamber/CVB style
CNH Weld Training
Presented by Kimberly Collins, CNHi - Benson

- Project goals: Develop individuals with skills necessary to fill Weld positions in the area

- Progress to-date: Course completed
CNH Weld Training
Presented by Kimberly Collins, CNHi - Benson

• Progress to-date (cont):
  Tooling U with Ridgewater

• What are you most looking forward to?
Community Websites

Presented by Jennifer Frost, Project Co-Lead

• Two Project goals:
  1. Provide a local community website customized for cities without websites, and
  2. Provide a comprehensive profile page on the County’s economic development website

• Progress to-date: We came up with a main page design that could be customized for each community to include: a scrolling announcement, banner photos, contact info, news feed, social media feed, business directory, bill pay, etc.
Community Websites cont.
Community Websites cont.

Progress to date cont. – Challenges:

- Implementing websites “live” at the City level
  - Larger role for the RDA than anticipated
  - “A website is not in my job description” – City Clerk

What are you *most looking forward to*?

- Having more time to roll out each site with each community.
- Finding out if Covid-19 has changed some minds and made a city website a necessity.
- App-based Community Calendar/Newcomer Group possibilities (RDA app – calendar feature for businesses – group marketing)
Going forward

• What challenges are you facing?

• How can the Blandin team be more helpful?

• Are you observing any community-wide impacts yet?

• Other feedback?