



Community

Economic Development Director Chosen

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Dellinger To Begin His Duties On June 30

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After a nationwide search, the Yankton Economic Development Council announced Friday that an Indiana man has been hired to fill the city's economic development director position.

Mike Dellinger, of Edinburgh, Ind., will begin his duties June 30. He is currently the director of business development for the Indy Partnership, a regional economic development organization based in Indianapolis, Ind.

"Yankton is very attractive, and I'm extremely excited," Dellinger said in a phone interview with the *Press & Dakotan* Friday.

Dellinger is no stranger to the region, having worked briefly in 2002 with the Siouxland Initiative, based in Sioux City, Iowa. However, as Dellinger pursued career opportunities elsewhere and traveled the world working on business deals, his wife, Kim, and their three-year-old daughter, Jillian, stayed in Sioux City. That's where Kim owns Solid Quality Solutions, a human resources consulting firm.

Dellinger said he and his wife had reached a crossroads where she was going to have to leave behind a successful business for the Indianapolis area, or he would have to move back to this area.

That's when the economic development director position opened up in Yankton.

"The stars aligned," Dellinger said.

Randy Johnson, chairman of the Economic Development Council, said the organization is convinced he will make a great fit for Yankton.

"He's got the enthusiasm and excitement in his personality. He's got sales skills that we think are going to be necessary to go forward," he said. "From the community's perspective ... this candidate is going to take us to the next level. We're extremely excited by it."

"With the recent hiring of a city manager, the community's successful YES! campaign, and Dellinger's acceptance of the economic development director position, it should leave Yankton's citizens excited about the future growth of the Yankton area," added Mayor Dan Specht in a media release.

According to Yankton Area Progressive Growth Chairman Rob Stephenson, Dellinger has the leadership skills necessary to implement the visions of the YES! campaign, which has raised more than \$2 million for economic development efforts.

"Mike's knowledge of all facets relating to economic development, and his experience dealing with regional, national and international companies certainly position Yankton to move to the next level," he said in a media release.

Dellinger has 20 years of economic development experience, which includes managing local and regional efforts in the retention and expansion of existing industry and the attraction of new capital investment projects. He is a native of Noblesville, Ind.

While Dellinger said he is quick to joke about himself, he takes economic development very seriously.

"The one thing I look to do as an economic developer is, how can we be more competitive in helping existing companies look at Yankton as the first place they should expand versus other locations?" he said. "Secondly, one of the things that will be key to us is expanding our capability of taking our product — the community — to the national market so that national real estate brokers and site selection consultants and companies recognize that, in South Dakota, we want Yankton to be their first consideration."

Yankton has a diverse economic foundation in place, Dellinger added.

"I look forward to bringing my experience from a national level and helping to sell some dirt, build some buildings and bring new job opportunities so folks will have a chance to enhance their skills and make a little more money," he said. "I'm walking away from the 13th largest city in the country with a service territory of two million people in 10 counties to come to Yankton because when I met with the folks in Yankton, I could see that the community believes in itself and what it wants to do — and I think I have something to offer."

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