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January 10, 2024

Mayor Tom Ross  
City of Minot  
515 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Southwest  
Minot, North Dakota 58701

**RE: Report to City of Minot Regarding the Contractual Obligations of MACEDC**

Dear Mayor Ross:

Thank you for the opportunity to present at the January 16 City Council meeting to share what the Minot Area Chamber EDC has accomplished in the second half of 2023 and how it has performed according to the contractual obligations set forth in Exhibit 1 of the Professional Services Agreement. According to Section 3 of the Services Agreement between the City of Minot and the Minot Area Chamber EDC (MACEDC), a written report must be provided to the City biannually. This correspondence serves to ensure a comprehensive overview of July 1 through December 31, 2023. The obligations stated in Exhibit 1 of the Services Agreement are bolded in the sections that follow, along with the corresponding actions of MACEDC.

**1.a. MACEDC shall execute its comprehensive Strategic Plan which includes pillars for Economic Development, Workforce Development, and Military support.**

In 2022, Minot Area Chamber EDC developed a five-year strategic plan to guide the deployment of resources toward certain pillars, goals, and tactics that will remain a focus of MACEDC through 2027.

Throughout the strategic planning process, there were five key pillars identified:

- Economic Development
- Community Development
- Workforce Development
- Member Investor Services
- Military Support

The full strategic plan can be found in Attachment A.

The fourteen-member board and MACEDC team who have worked to deploy the pillars in 2023 are listed in Attachment B.

**1.b. MACEDC shall conduct business retention and expansion interviews or surveys, with the goal of achieving 65% of the MACEDC primary sector business list, which equates to about five (5) interviews a month.**

MACEDC works to preserve and strengthen the Minot area's existing primary sector businesses through the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Program. The BR&E Program enables MACEDC to actively engage with Minot area existing primary sector businesses to ensure stability and long-term success. MACEDC serves as a resource for existing businesses by facilitating local, regional, state, and federal resources as well as connecting businesses with the right tools to address their needs.

The BR&E list is reviewed throughout the year to make sure all contact information is up to date and that all relevant primary sector businesses are included.

From July 1 through December 31, 2023, 20 BR&E interviews took place with local and regional primary sector businesses. There are currently 90 total businesses on the list, covering the manufacturing, energy, engineering, construction, distribution, and value-added agriculture sectors.

In 2023, 66% of the MACEDC primary sector business list was pursued. Of the 66%, 50% completed the interview, 13% did not respond or stated they were unable to meet this year, and 3% needed to schedule in early 2024.

The data collected in the second half of 2023 interviews can be found in the report in Attachment C. Consistently connecting with these businesses allows MACEDC to understand and respond to their needs as well as ensure they stay committed to the community.

**1.c. MACEDC shall market and promote the City for the purposes of the attraction of new primary sector businesses and employment opportunities consistent with the City's overall goal of a sustainable, diverse economic base and economy. MACEDC will further seek business retention and expansion of existing primary sector businesses in the Minot area.**

It is the mission of the Minot Area Chamber EDC to advocate for and invest in business activity by being a collaborative partner in the community, focused on improving quality of life for all. To do this, MACEDC is committed to marketing and promoting the Minot area to attract new primary sector businesses and employment opportunities for a sustainable, diverse economic base and economy.

- MACEDC maintains regular service at the Intermodal Facility at the Logistics Park of North Dakota (LPND), working closely with Rail Modal Group (RMG), the operator of MACEDC's facility. No other rail facility is performing intermodal operations in North Dakota. The current service is between three and four unit-trains a month, with direct dockside service at terminals in Seattle, Washington. MACEDC works closely with other strategic partners including the State of North Dakota, BNSF Railway, and The Northwest Seaport Alliance.
- MACEDC was awarded the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant in 2019, which is being used to conduct research on approximately 800+ acres of the LPND, north of County Road 12. The objective of the CRISI grant is to

reasonably quantify the potential size of the market and type of industry that would use the LPND. A full market assessment report was completed in May 2022 and is being followed by the conceptual design and environmental documents. MACEDC and CRISI stakeholder partners continue to meet and move this project forward.

- MACEDC has 386 of the 800 LPND acres designated as BNSF site certified, the only location in North Dakota. BNSF certification ensures a site is ready for rapid development with an extensive analysis of existing and projected infrastructure, environmental and geotechnical standards, utility evaluation and site availability. By selecting a BNSF certified property, businesses greatly reduce development time, increase speed to market, and reduce upfront development risk of rail-served industrial sites. The Minot location is marketed on BNSF Railway website. MACEDC regularly meets with BNSF economic development team and responds to development project inquires.
- The LPND Committee promotes and markets intermodal service and development opportunities at the LPND to increase the value and economic growth throughout Ward County and the State of North Dakota. LPND Committee members are listed on Attachment D.
- MACEDC facilitates and engages with over a dozen volunteer-based committees and numerous programs, including those focusing on agribusiness, energy, governmental affairs, military affairs, and infrastructure. These committees are possible because of member investors who are willing to volunteer their time and effort and range from 6 members per committee up to 100 members. Each committee supports and promotes a different sector of the regional economy.
- MACEDC supports new business development and entrepreneurs through our Start Up Minot program. Start Up Minot has seen success in its first two years with its the two-pronged community effort offering a cohort-based 10-week class called Start Up Minot Academy powered by CO.STARTERS and a monthly business showcase/networking event that focuses on sharing the stories of new and growing companies while connecting like-minded business leaders. More than 50 graduates have participated in the 10-week course, while attendance for the monthly networking event is over 600 people for two dozen meetings. Start Up partners include ND Small Business Development Centers, Souris Basin Planning Council, The Good Talk Network, Dakota Business Lending, and Minot State University (MSU).
- Task Force 21 (TF21) is an activity of MACEDC that educates the local community, North Dakota officials, members of Congress, and the public on national security issues, particularly ones that affect Minot Air Force Base (MAFB), the U.S. Air Force (USAF), U.S. Department of Defense (US DoD), and our nuclear deterrent.
  - TF21 works diligently to ensure the existence of MAFB and advance mission-related and health and morale projects. TF21 came into existence in the late 1990s, following the successful efforts of Task Force 96 which had a mission to ensure the MAFB existed and had two wings following the 1995 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) round. TF21 members are nominated and appointed to their positions; current members are listed on Attachment E.
  - TF21 hosts an annual Nuclear Triad Symposium in Washington, D.C. Nationally, TF21 has individuals tied to Secretary of Air Force and Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC) civic leader groups. Other critical partners include the US DoD, USAF, and AFGSC in communicating the upcoming Ground Based Strategic Deterrence/Sentinel project. The Minot Area Chamber EDC also belongs to the

National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) and was a founding member of the Northern Tier Chapter, covering a five-state region.

- On a statewide level, TF21 members serve on North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum's Task Force on Military Issues in North Dakota (TF MIND) with a focus on ensuring North Dakota is aligned with the Top 10 Department of Defense initiatives. This work includes various legislative and workforce related topics.
- TF21 members lead the advocacy work for MAFB on a local, state and national level. In addition, MACEDC offers three specific programs that engage the broader business community through Military Affairs Committee, the Honorary Commanders program, and Adopt An Airman – and raises funds for MAFB through the Minot Prairie Warrior auction and supports military through ongoing military appreciation events.
- MACEDC partners with dozens of entities throughout the Minot area, the State of North Dakota, and at the national level to achieve objectives laid out under economic development. Strategic partners that support MACEDC's role in the Minot community include the City of Minot, Ward County, Visit Minot, Minot Park District, Minot Public Schools, MSU, Dakota College at Bottineau, State of North Dakota (including the departments of agriculture, commerce, and transportation), North Dakota Trade Office (NDTO), North Dakota Petroleum Council (NDPC), Economic Development Association of North Dakota (EDND), Greater North Dakota Chamber (GNDC), BNSF Railway, the Northwest Seaport Alliance (NWSA), and many others. MACEDC also has numerous military strategic partners.
- MACEDC attends and supports trade shows and conferences that are aligned with MACEDC's mission, vision, and values. MACEDC was brought in to speak at many of these events covering topics from intermodal shipping to workforce development to economic and community development. These include:
  - Agriculture Transportation Coalition (AgTC)
  - Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE)
  - EDND
  - GNDC
  - International Economic Development Council (IEDC)
  - Main Street Summit
  - North Dakota Department of Commerce (ND DOC)
  - North Dakota Department of Agriculture
  - North Dakota League of Cities (NDLC)
  - NDPC
  - NDTO
  - Northern Pulse Growers Association (NPGA)
  - Numerous military events, symposiums and engagements supporting MAFB
- MACEDC has numerous business leads and inquiries that are being vetted or recruited to the Minot area. MACEDC is currently engaged with one major primary sector business that is interested in the Minot area. City and Council representatives have been involved in meetings with the project developer.
- MACEDC continues work to educate entrepreneurs, businesses and developers of economic development tools and resources that support business growth in our community.

**1.d. MACEDC shall provide needed support to the MAGIC Fund Screening Committee including receiving, reviewing and conforming all applications with a primary sector nexus for the MAGIC Fund with a recommendation of disposition to the MAGIC Fund Screening Committee; and regularly meet with the MAGIC Fund Screening Committee to assess the overall progress in use of the MAGIC Fund and the status of MAGIC Fund projects.**

MACEDC has consistently received, reviewed, and conformed all MAGIC Fund applications with a primary sector nexus. MACEDC brought one application forward in the second half of 2023:

- MACEDC supported a \$215,384.65 request from Hot Switch Heating Systems, LLC as the community's portion in a PACE interest loan buydown. MAGIC Fund Screening Committee and City of Minot City Council both approved the application in September/October.

MACEDC board members and staff worked with City of Minot staff and elected officials to thoroughly review and update the MAGIC Fund guidelines to fit today's economy and needs of our area. The revised recommended guidelines were presented by the MAGIC Fund Ad Hoc Committee to the City Council and were approved at the December 18, 2023 City Council meeting.

**1.e. MACEDC shall advise the City of Minot on the development of economic development policies and strategies for the City, specifically the MAGIC Fund General Policy Guidelines.**

MACEDC has continued to work closely with the City of Minot to discuss economic development policies and strategies, including the MAGIC Fund General Policy Guidelines.

- The MACEDC team communicates regularly with City staff and elected officials.
- The MACEDC president | CEO has a monthly standing meeting with the City manager.
- The MACEDC president | CEO attends a monthly standing meeting with community economic development stakeholder partners.
- The MACEDC economic development specialist hosts a semi-monthly economic developers gathering where community partners discuss economic strategies and current activities and events. City staff are in regular attendance at this meeting.
- The MACEDC economic development specialist regularly attends the City's Development Review Team (DRT) meetings.
- The MACEDC economic development specialist sits on the Renaissance Zone Review Board.
- The MACEDC president | CEO and board members served on the MAGIC Fund Ad Hoc Committee to review and update the guidelines that hadn't been revised since 2018. City Council approved the revised guidelines at the December 18, 2023 City Council meeting.

**1.f. MACEDC shall provide access to and professional analysis of demographic-based workforce and consumer data as indicated in the Economy at a Glance.**

MACEDC provides a monthly Economy at a Glance document by email to all member investors. The information can also be found on the MACEDC website under the News section. This service provides access to and professional analysis of this data.

MACEDC is a member of the Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER). Through this organization, a MACEDC team member collects data each quarter for the cost-of-living analysis of the Minot area. This information is submitted to the C2ER which compiles the nationwide data and puts together side-by-side comparisons. The Economy at a Glance includes a regional comparison every quarter. According to the 2023 third quarter cost of living report by the Council for Community and Economic Research (C2ER), Minot's cost of living is 7.3% under the national average (U.S. Average Composite Index = 100%), sitting at 92.7%.

**1.g. MACEDC shall stand up a committee or task force for workforce by December 31, 2023, which must include at least one representative from the City of Minot.**

MACEDC created a committee among the board of directors and staff that leads the workforce development effort. The following measurements are tracked by the committee:

- Establish a task force or committee
- Find the Good Life tracking
- Legislative session solutions
- Tactical engagement tracking
- Assessment of childcare needs

This group produced an external committee to find workforce solutions which includes at least one representative from the City of Minot. The MACEDC president | CEO, economic development specialist, and workforce development specialist | military liaison are all active members of both the board committee and the external committee.

**1.h. MACEDC shall development a platform to support the Find the Good Life initiative and track engagements.**

In April 2023, MACEDC launched a new talent portal to attract newcomers nationwide. Attracting top-tier talent to the Minot area is a major priority for our employers, and a new talent attraction program is here to help. Launched in partnership with RoleCall, a national talent attraction agency, the Minot WayFinders Talent Portal is a digital service designed to make the process of relocation to the Minot area even easier. Minot WayFinders creates a personalized connection for newcomers and potential newcomers to the Minot area, helping them access the information, assistance, and support they need during their relocation process. This can be found by visiting [www.magicinminot.com](http://www.magicinminot.com).

The WayFinders website analytics for July 1-Dec 31, 2023 can be found on Attachment F.

**1.i. MACEDC shall track and monitor workforce proposals, opportunities and solutions during the 2023 legislative session.**

MACEDC fulfilled this requirement during the 2023 legislative session by tracking and monitoring all workforce-related bills.

MACEDC president | CEO chaired the GNDC Workforce Policy committee setting statewide business friendly policies for the legislative session. MACEDC met weekly with leadership from

GNDC and the EDND to align on which bills to each organization supported, which included a focus on workforce solutions.

The 2023 Regional Workforce Impact Program (RWIP) grants through the ND DOC were due the beginning of December. MACEDC submitted two applications, to support our work in providing workforce solutions and to support marketing and enhancements to the WayFinder program. The goal of RWIP is to empower locally led workforce solutions. MACEDC submitted the maximum number allowed by any one organization.

**1.j. MACEDC shall engage with community and statewide partners to assist in developing a workforce development strategy for the Minot region.**

MACEDC continues to address the workforce shortage by partnering with local and statewide partners in various efforts, including the City of Minot, ND DOC, Job Service ND, NDPC, Workforce Development Council, RoleCall, and Governor Doug Burgum's office.

- MACEDC added a workforce development specialist | military liaison position to address area needs in January 2023. This team member has played a critical role in supporting workforce development and military throughout 2023.
- Three MACEDC employees serve as Community Champions for Minot and our region. As Community Champions, MACEDC is asked to personally work with any individual who passes through the ND DOC relocation help desk with a desire to move to this area of North Dakota. To date, MACEDC has had 20 individuals reach out.
- To further attract top-tier talent to the Minot area, the Minot WayFinders Talent Portal, launched by MACEDC in partnership with RoleCall, is a digital service designed to make the process of relocation to the Minot area even easier. This program is a platform that creates a personalized connection for newcomers and potential newcomers to the Minot area, helping them access the information, assistance, and support they need during their relocation process. More information can be found at [www.magicinminot.com](http://www.magicinminot.com).
- MACEDC partners with the NDPC on the Bakken GROW program. MACEDC serves as the community liaison to tackle the workforce shortage issues in the oil and gas industry through legal immigration from the Ukraine. A total of 10 Ukrainians has come to Minot and 60 total in the state.
- MACEDC's workforce development specialist was appointed to the City of Minot's Childcare Committee, which also includes City Council members, parents, and licensed childcare providers. The committee is looking at city funds to see where money could be put towards childcare, investigating childcare provider needs, and thinking outside the box to find solutions.

**1.k. MACEDC shall lead efforts to respond to primary sector RFPs, which shall include determining RFP eligibility, drafting RFP responses, obtaining and compiling necessary information from City staff and others, and recommending strategies to City staff.**

MACEDC responds to all RFPs received from the ND DOC, with consideration to the requirements and if a community in Ward County can meet them. MACEDC has responded to two RFPs in the second half of 2023. Both of the RFPs came through the ND DOC, one was for a data center and the other was for a material processing plant.

Along with responding to RFPs, staff held multiple meetings with nationally-recognized site selectors over virtual meetings to review the region's strengths and weaknesses, as well as to introduce them to the available land at the LPND.

**1.l. MACEDC shall coordinate and provide touring services for prospective primary sector businesses visiting Minot, arranging transportation, local meeting space, presentations, and meetings with relevant City officials or staff.**

MACEDC has fulfilled and will continue to fulfill this contractual obligation. MACEDC is willing to host clients, partners, and businesses, which includes providing transportation, arranging for a meeting space (whether it be at the MACEDC office or another venue), giving presentations, and facilitating meetings with relevant City officials, City staff, community leaders, and/or state leaders, including the Bank of North Dakota (BND) and the ND DOC.

The MACEDC facility hosts and is open to other government entities for meetings. One example is how the Bank of North Dakota is housed within the MACEDC office. This is one of the many ways MACEDC supports its partners. The Minot Area Chamber EDC partners with dozens of entities throughout the Minot area, the State of North Dakota, and at the national level to achieve objectives laid out under economic development.

**1.m. MACEDC shall keep its website and marketing materials up to date with Minot-specific information, incentives, and contacts, and provide this information to Minot area businesses.**

MACEDC fulfills and will continue to fulfill this obligation.

MACEDC's website includes information on:

- Top key industries in the Minot region and Ward County
  - Value-added agriculture, energy, and distribution
- The LPND
  - A map of the area
  - Specific details about the property
- Infrastructure and transportation
- Talent and workforce, with an opportunity for MACEDC member investors to submit and post job openings
- Local and statewide workforce incentives
- Economy at a Glance and general data of the Minot area
- Information on MACEDC programs and committees, providing directions on how to get involved in the organization and the community
- Relevant news releases from partners, such as the City of Minot and Ward County
- Quality of life data, such as arts and culture, festival and events, outdoor activities, shopping, education, healthcare, and climate
- City, county, and community resources, such as contact information for community and state partners
- A link to Visit Minot's community calendar
- MACEDC incorporates Location One Information System's (LOIS) demographic database into the MACEDC website under the Do Business/Available Properties

section. The MACEDC team works with active and willing commercial realtors and property owners, as well as the Minot Multiple Listing Service (MMLS), to keep all commercial and industrial listings up to date. There are 37 buildings listed and 46 sites currently listed on the MACEDC LOIS site, with properties updated frequently.

MACEDC also utilizes social media to strategically promote the Minot area and everything that the organization and community have to offer.

**1.n. MACEDC shall continue to incorporate Location One Information System's (LOIS) building, site and community demographic database into MACEDC – website and MACEDC will work with active and willing commercial realtors and property owners to place all available industrial and manufacturing zoned land and buildings into the system on an ongoing basis.**

MACEDC incorporates the LOIS demographic database into the MACEDC website under the Do Business/Available Properties section. LOIS is a customizable site selection tool for economic development organizations. It is a national online location analysis tool designed to promote available industrial and commercial site and building inventory.

To gather information and keep the properties updated, MACEDC works with willing commercial realtors and the MMLS; reviews properties on Crexi, an online commercial real estate agency; and relies on updates from local businesses, property owners, and developers who are selling or leasing.

There are 37 buildings listed and 46 sites currently listed on the MACEDC LOIS site.

From July 1 to December 31, 2023:

- The average session length for users was 5 minutes 17 seconds.
- During this time period, every viewer used a desktop device to search.
- Visitors included ones from Minot, ND; Fargo, ND; and Chicago, IL.
- All visitors in this time period viewed buildings.

**1.o. MACEDC shall provide its monthly MACEDC board report and supporting documents to the City Manager/Mayor's Executive Secretary in electronic form and that report can be transmitted to the City Council, Community and Economic Development Director, and the MAGIC Fund Screening Committee by the City.**

MACEDC provides each monthly board packet to the City Manager's/Mayor's Executive Secretary by email and will continue that process.

**1.p. MACEDC shall establish and maintain a voting position on the MACEDC board of directors for the Mayor or his or her designee.**

MACEDC maintains a voting position on the MACEDC board of directors for the Mayor or his or her designee.

**1.q. MACEDC, by and through MACEDC's "Task Force 21", will coordinate a base retention campaign that provides resources to efforts that enhance and expand the mission of Minot Air Force Base (MAFB), thereby generating an economic benefit to the City of Minot. The Parties agree to the following in regard to the base retention services contemplated by this paragraph:**

- i. The City will provide MACEDC with seventy-five thousand (\$75,000) dollars of city funds (hereinafter "city funds") to be used exclusively for MAFB base retention services with payment due to February 15, 2023. These funds are included, and not in addition to, the total allocation of \$608,770 to MACEDC for Services rendered under their Agreement with the City. Any city funds not spent allocated to base retention services rendered by December 1, 2023 must be returned to CITY.**

This requirement has been and continues to be fulfilled.

- ii. The Mayor of the City will be a member of Task Force 21 throughout his/her term in office.**

This requirement has been and continues to be fulfilled.

- iii. The City will receive up to five positions with the Honorary Commander program, which shall include the Mayor of the City, City Manager, and up to three department heads. Military Affairs Committee annual dues for these individuals will be covered by MACEDC using city funds.**

This requirement has been and continues to be fulfilled.

The MACEDC Board of Directors and team appreciate the partnership with the City of Minot and look forward to what 2024 brings for our Magic City.

Sincerely,

Brekka Kramer, Minot Area Chamber EDC President | CEO