

KARIE KIRSCHBAUM

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SKILLS

Communication Skills

- Tailoring an effective message: Exceptional abilities in marketing, writing, and editing.
- Various medium experience: Media background including journalism, press releases, editing, photography, social media, and basic web design.
- Public speaking: Effectiveness in conveying messages to diverse audiences on a variety of subjects.

Project Management

- Proficient in managing projects of various scales, from small to multi-million-dollar initiatives involving complex partnerships with government, nonprofit, and local agencies.
- Demonstrated capability in handling multiple layers of project management, with strong organizational and coordination skills.

Community Engagement

- Strong mobilization and collaboration skills and the ability to build partnerships and engage with diverse stakeholders including businesses, nonprofit organizations, universities, and government bodies.
- With over two decades of experience both stateside and overseas, I have honed strong leadership skills in facilitating conventions and administering events aimed at bringing people together for common goals.

Fundraising and Grant Writing

- Proven record in grant writing, fundraising, disbursements, and reporting.
- Financial acumen and the ability to secure resources for projects and initiatives.

Administrative Skills

- Extensive experience in staff and volunteer management with strong leadership and organizational skills.
- Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint to address administrative and data management.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

September 2022-Current Crookston, MN

Position: Community Development Director

Description: Oversight of the Economic Development, Housing, and Funding initiatives within the community. This role encompasses directing the Economic Development Authority (EDA) and Housing (HRA) divisions, driving innovative projects, and providing strategic leadership. Responsibilities include managing staff and consultants, coordinating economic development planning, overseeing HUD homes and Public Housing Units, collaborating with various stakeholders, and securing funding through grant writing and strategic partnerships. Effective communication with city departments, council members, businesses, and funding entities are essential for project viability and success.

June 2021-September 2022 Mahanomen, MN

Position: City Administrator

Description: The role as city administrator encompassed a wide range of tasks aimed at ensuring the smooth functioning of the city government, fostering collaboration with diverse stakeholders, and promoting the well-being of the community. It entailed a diverse array of responsibilities, requiring both administrative acumen and a strong grasp of governmental functions. Duties included:

- **Execution of Governmental Functions:** Oversaw the execution of the city's governmental functions, ensuring operations run smoothly and efficiently.
- **Administration Direction:** Directed the administration of the city government involving managing various departments and ensuring they work in tandem to achieve the city's objectives.
- **Financial Management:** Oversight of technical accounting and finance functions, maintaining fiscal records and systems in accordance with council action and state and federal statutes. This involved managing bonding, budgets, financial investments, financial reporting, and compliance.
- **Policy Setting and Goal Establishment:** Under the guidance of the City Council, set policies and goals for the city, aligning them with the community's needs and aspirations.

- **Collaboration with White Earth Tribe:** Given Mahnomens location within the White Earth Reservation, the administrator works closely with the White Earth Tribe, fostering collaboration and addressing issues pertinent to both the city and the tribe.
- **Staff Development and Retention:** Recognized the importance of staff development and retention, responsible for organizational supervision of all personnel within the city, ensuring they receive adequate training and support to excel in their roles.
- **Departmental Supervision:** Supervised city departments, including the financial director, city clerk, public works, and the fire department, among others. This involved ensuring efficient operations, adherence to regulations, and effective coordination.
- **Community Engagement:** Engaged consistently with residents, landlords, outside organizations, and local businesses. Addressed questions, concerns, and feedback from stakeholders, fostering a sense of community.
- **Coordination with Law Enforcement and Emergency Services:** Coordinated with the contracted police department and ensured public safety needs were met effectively daily and events such as high waters or storms.

February 2020 – May 2021 Soyko International Gary, MN

Position: Operations/Sales manager

Description: This operation is owned by Ms. Jade In, born in So. Korea, now a U.S. citizen and resident of Gary. She is fueled by her desire to feed her home nation and the world with organic and non-GMO foods. Responsibilities included a blend of strategic leadership, operational management, regulatory compliance, and relationship building, all aimed at driving the growth and success of the business.

- **International Export Management:** Oversaw the export of soybeans to key markets such as Japan, South Korea, and Mexico, ensuring compliance with international trade regulations and maintaining strong relationships with overseas buyers.
- **Domestic Market Development:** Nurtured the company's presence in the domestic market, involving sales strategies, customer relationship management, and market expansion initiatives.
- **Administrative Oversight:** Managed day-to-day operations, including human resources, bookkeeping, invoicing, accounts payable/receivable, and other administrative tasks critical to the smooth functioning of the business.
- **Government Compliance and Paperwork:** Handled regulatory compliance and paperwork related to various government agencies such as the USDA, FDA, MN Dept. of Ag, and MCIA.
- **Grant and Government Finance Projects:** Managed grant projects and government-funded initiatives, which involved securing funding, managing budgets, and ensuring compliance with loan and grant requirements.
- **Grower Contracts and Payments:** Managed contracts with soybean growers, coordinating deliveries, and oversaw payments to suppliers, ensuring smooth and efficient supply chain operations.
- **Partnership with the City of Gary:** Leveraged my position as the mayor to foster partnerships between government, non-profit entities and Soyko, aimed at business expansion, marketing, and gaining recognition.
- **Recognition as Minority-Owned Business of the Year:** Secured accolades including the Small Business Development Center Minority-Owned Business of the Year award in 2021, which highlighted Soyko's successes and contributions to the community.

January 2013- April 2021 Gary, MN

Position: Mayor

Description: This opportunity included a diverse array of responsibilities aimed at enhancing the city's infrastructure, economy, and well-being. Overall, my tenure as Mayor of Gary was marked by proactive leadership, strategic decision-making, and collaborative efforts aimed at driving positive change and sustainable growth for the city and its residents.

- **Leadership and Governance:** I presided over council meetings, providing direction and leadership to ensure effective decision-making and addressed community and legal conflict resolutions. We actively sought input from constituents, translating their feedback into actionable measures at the council level. Through sound business decisions, steered the city towards financial stability and growth.
- **Representation and Collaboration:** Served as the official representative to various local, county, state, and federal agencies and fostered collaborations and partnerships to advance the city's interests. By engaging with organizations like the Northwest Minnesota Rural Development Commission and municipal advisors, we leveraged resources and expertise to address challenges, pursue opportunities and updated infrastructure.
- **Financial Management:** Upon taking office, I inherited a challenging financial situation. Through collaborative efforts with the council and partnering organizations, we rectified the city's finances, ensuring it remained in the black. Establishing an annual budget process and working closely with staff and stakeholders, we prioritized expenditures, set goals, and implemented public policies that aligned with the city's needs and aspirations.
- **Project Management:** Oversight of Request for Proposals (RFPs) was a key aspect of my role, ensuring the selection of qualified professionals for various projects such as infrastructure development, comprehensive

planning, and park development. Securing funding through government donations, private businesses, grants, or assessments, we executed projects that contributed to the city's growth and enhancement.

- **Community Engagement and Promotion:** Established partners and spearheaded efforts to promote Gary's arts, recreational opportunities, and businesses, enhancing its appeal and economic vitality. Through marketing initiatives including website development and social media updates, we effectively communicated with residents and external stakeholders, fostering a sense of community, and attracting investment.
- **Compliance and Oversight:** Upheld accountability and transparency, in partnership with the council and staff, I ensured all official documents, audits, and regulatory requirements were met. Additionally, oversight of water and sewer testing, as well as correspondence and payment schedules with contractors and volunteers involved in various projects, ensured adherence to quality standards and timelines.

August 2013 - September 2018 – Publisher

Position: Owner/Publisher/Editor of the Twin Valley Times, Fertile Journal and Red Lake Falls Gazette newspapers

Description: Title: Editor-in-Chief/Managing Editor

Job Description: Responsible for overseeing all aspects of publication in communities, which sometimes had polarized ideas, while ensuring timely delivery while maintaining high-quality content published to the benefit of, and to highlight, communities and events. This role demanded strong leadership, organizational, and multitasking skills to successfully navigate the challenges of small communities in a fast-paced publishing environment. Additionally, my ability to collaborate with diverse communities and adapt to evolving priorities, enabled me to effectively manage all facets of newspaper production while meeting tight deadlines. Duties included:

Editorial Responsibilities:

- Reporting on local events, issues, and news stories.
- Conducting interviews and research to develop engaging content.
- Writing, editing, and proofreading articles to uphold journalistic standards.
- Curating photographs and graphics to complement written content.
- Planning and coordinating editorial calendars to meet weekly deadlines.

Business Operations:

- Sales and advertising management, including soliciting advertisements and maintaining client relationships.
- Budgeting and financial management to ensure the newspaper's profitability.
- Distribution logistics, overseeing delivery routes and ensuring timely distribution.

Administrative Duties:

- Human resources management, including hiring, training, and supervising staff across three locations.
- Providing leadership and guidance to foster a cohesive team environment.
- Implementing policies and procedures to streamline operations and enhance efficiency.

Public Relations:

- Drafting press releases to promote and support the community organizations, cities, counties, and their initiatives.
- Cultivating relationships with community stakeholders to move the message of the region forward.

August 2006-July 2013 – SupplyOne Packaging

Position: National Account Executive

Description: Duties included business development, sales and budget forecasting, client needs analysis, bid proposals/sales presentations and total customer satisfaction. In addition, it included identifying new vendors and manufacturers for specific products, conducting bids for new and ongoing business, and awarding contracts. This position served as the primary point of contact and liaison between manufacturing, shipping, suppliers, warehouses, management, and clients. As accounts expanded, it was necessary to develop, hire staff for, and oversee two out-of-state warehouses to serve my national customers in Kentucky and Virginia.

Education:

- Gary Public Schools, Gary, MN
- Moapa Valley High School, Overton, Nevada
- Dixie College, St. George, Utah, with a focus on Journalism and Graphic Arts.
- UNLV, Las Vegas, Nevada with a focus on Social Work and Community Development

References provided upon request.

Karie Kirschbaum Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Sept. 2018 – Jan. 2024 . Chairperson, Norman County Economic Development Authority

- An initiative undertaken by the mayors, city leaders, and Norman County Commissioners resulted in the establishment of an Economic Development Authority (EDA). This created a functional network for the county to model a proactive approach to fostering economic growth and development.
- There was a launch of over \$100 million worth of industry in the county in 2021, including significant ventures such as a 10,000 head dairy and a 6000 head hog operation, indicates substantial investment and job creation opportunities. These new businesses not only contribute to the economic vitality of the county but also provide employment opportunities for the local community.
- Secured revolving loan funds to support existing businesses demonstrated a commitment to nurturing the growth of local enterprises and ensuring their sustainability. By providing financial assistance, the county helped businesses thrive and contribute further to the local economy, including during the pandemic.
- Moreover, the efficient management of CARES Act and ARPA funds by the EDA board during the pandemic highlights its effective governance and stewardship during challenging times. These funds played a crucial role in supporting individuals, businesses, and community organizations adversely affected by the pandemic, ensuring resilience and recovery for Norman County.
- Overall, this collaborative effort between local leaders and the EDA has been instrumental in driving economic development, supporting businesses, and managing resources effectively for the benefit of the county's residents.

Jan. 2021 – March 2024 . Norman County Planning Commission/Board of Adjustment

This board plans, directs and controls the functions and services administered by the Norman County Land Use Planning Department. In partnership with the director, this board approves or develops and administers the comprehensive program of the County planning, permitting and inspection activities to ensure the implementation of County policy, organizational effectiveness, and fiscal accountability. This board ensures effective planning, land use, and onsite wastewater services.

2013 – 2020 . City of Gary

- As mayor, my role included both administration and community development. Given the city's constrained budget, I took on the responsibility of securing grants to fund and oversee various projects. The city staff was minimal, consisting only of a part-time clerk, a part-time public works staff and a contracted water supervisor.
- In 2015, with assistance from the NW Regional Development Commission, the council and I spearheaded the creation of Gary's inaugural Comprehensive City Plan. This plan aimed to accurately gauge the community's needs and desires.
- Subsequently, working closely with both the community and council, the city successfully executed the projects outlined in the plan. The efforts led to significant enhancements across the city. These include the installation of natural gas, road pavements, park updates, property annexations for service expansion, removal of dilapidated structures, and the completion of a new water system, featuring a treatment center and water tower, finished in 2020.
- One standout project was the development of Gary Pines, a 160-acre forest owned by the city. Through collaborative efforts with the council, volunteers, alumni, residents, and various organizations such as the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Northwest Minnesota Foundation (NWMF), University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development, Northwest Minnesota Arts Council, and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), we transformed this area into a vibrant recreational space. The project, which included the creation of six miles of trails and parks, garnered widespread attention, being featured in state, national, and media publications. This success was made possible through a combination of grants, donated time, equipment, and finances from multiple parties. More information about this project can be found at www.garypines.com.

2019-2020 . Board Member, Northwest Regional Development Commission

The Northwest Regional Development Commission (NWRDC) is a body of 23 local elected officials and eight public interest members that represent counties, cities, townships, school districts and special interest groups who have formed a special purpose unit of government, as authorized by the Regional Development Act of 1969, to "develop plans and implement programs which address growth and development issues" in Northwest Minnesota. www.nwrdc.org

2020 – 2022 . City of Mahnomon

The city actively pursued partnerships and projects to improve various aspects of the community. These initiatives were a proactive approach by the administration and city council to address various aspects of community development, infrastructure, economic growth, cultural enrichment, environmental sustainability within the City of Mahnomon, located in the White Earth Reservation, in the poorest county in the state of Minnesota, ranking 87 of 87.

- **USDA Streetscape Grant:** Secured a \$600,000 grant for streetscape improvements aimed at enhancing the aesthetic appeal and functionality of public spaces on Main Street.
- **Fire Hall Renovation:** Completed a \$2 million renovation of the fire hall aimed at improving facilities for firefighters and emergency services.
- **Water, Sewer, and Street Update:** Completed updates to essential infrastructure such as water and sewer systems, as well as street improvements, to ensure the city's infrastructure meets current needs.
- **City Hall and Library Renovation:** Renovated City Hall and the Library to modernizing facilities and improve services for residents.
- **Comprehensive Plan Update:** Contracting a consultant to update the Comprehensive Plan, ensuring that the city's long-term vision and goals were aligned with current community needs and initiatives.
- **City Municipal Liquor Store Renovation:** Renovated and realigned management and staff at the City Municipal Liquor Store, resulting in a significant turnaround profit within one year.
- **Playground Installation:** Installed new equipment in the center of downtown, funded by profits from the municipal liquor store to create a family space with amenities for residents and visitors.
- **Manoomin Arts Initiative:** Established the Manoomin Arts Initiative with community and tribal partners with a focus on promoting arts and culture within the community through events, installations, and collaborations.
- **Community Co-op Property Annexation:** Annexed the Community Co-op property on Hwy. 59 and Hwy 200 intersection to meet business needs, expand the city's tax base, and encourage economic development.
- **Emerald Ash Borer Survey and Tree Management:** Conducted a survey of the Emerald Ash Borer disease and mapped all city trees in partnership with the University of Minnesota Bemidji, leading to the removal of diseased trees and planting replacements where necessary as a part of the community commitment to environmental stewardship and beautification efforts.

2023 Initiators Fellowship Finalist

- In 2023, I was chosen as one of 16 state finalists for the Initiators Fellowship across the state, one of four to represent NW Minnesota (Northwest Minnesota Foundation Region) I was not awarded the fellowship, but it was an honor to be chosen as a finalist.

2013 – 2018 . Publisher

In 2016 I was chosen to participate in the Minnesota News Media Institute 12th Cohort of the Editors & Publishers Community Leadership Program. This intensive, months-long program was modeled after the successful Blandin Community Leadership Program. The Times, Gazette, and Journal were operated with a focus on promoting and working with the communities using this philosophy. The philosophy encourages newspapers to develop community social capital and to use the power of the pen responsibly. To do this, papers must frame issues, mobilize action, and ultimately advance the health and vibrancy of all facets of their communities.

April 2011- Jan. 2024 . Founding Member and President, Gary Cares

In 2011, seven community-minded alumni and residents came together to prepare an event to celebrate 125 years as a city and an all-school reunion. It was decided we should form a non-profit for the event and in the future, to serve and partner with the city and other non-profit clubs and/or organizations in the area. It continues to be a great success. In 2023 Gary Cares won the Quality of Place award from the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, Bemidji, MN. www.GaryCares.org

April 2010 - Jan. 2024 . Overseer and Navigator of Shock & Awe Youth Philanthropy

This group was established in 2008. The focus is to develop a generation of community aware young people who, through finances and volunteer efforts, are empowered to affect the direction of their city, area, and county. The grants funds and management of the group are handled by Gary Cares and grants to the county range from \$35,000-\$50,000 annually. www.shock-awe.org

1997-present . Vice President GCM

My husband, Jeff, and I co-founded this outreach mission in 1997 in Fontana, CA. GCM started as an inner-city community development group working with young high school and college age individuals. We partnered with local government, law enforcement, social workers, churches, lawyers, and residents to make successful changes in the city. What was formerly called "felony-flats" is now noted as the "20th safest city of its size in America" because of the partnerships created and maintained before our time there and after. In 2006, our role changed to advisors.

In this role, we continue to travel periodically across the U.S. and in various nations as a speakers, consultants, and liaisons. In the past it included Europe, North America, the West Indies, Kenya, and the Philippines. Some projects established include micro-finance, development of ranches and family farms, a trauma and orthopedic center, a nationally accredited sewing and tailor school, and a boy's home addressing the challenges of homeless youth.