Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance (KEDA)

Executive Director Position

Keweenaw Peninsula

This position is located in the tip of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula on the shores of Lake Superior. The area is noted for its lakeshore, rivers, streams, waterfalls and northern hardwood forests that allow ready access to water sports, hunting and fishing, road and mountain biking, hiking, rock collecting and more. It is also home to two universities - Michigan Technological University and Finlandia University - to two national parks - Isle Royale National Park and Keweenaw National Historical Park - and to two hospital systems – Portage Health/Lifepoint and Aspirus Keweenaw Hospital.

The local economy has evolved from one dependent on tourism, mining and logging to a more diversified economy characterized by manufacturing and technology companies with national and international markets, and by larger, downstate companies such as GE Aviation, Dematic and Jackson Life Insurance that have established satellite engineering and software design offices.

Organizational Overview

KEDA, a 501(c)(4) private, non-profit, membership-based, economic development corporation in the Keweenaw Peninsula in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, is recruiting a full-time Executive Director to help in efforts to expand the regional economy and to specifically create family-sustaining jobs for local residents. KEDA was formed in 1969 to take a leading role in creating a strong local economy, and provides economic development services to Houghton, Keweenaw and Baraga County entrepreneurs and companies.

KEDA’s provides customized business assistance to both start-ups and established companies in the manufacturing, technology and service sectors. KEDA serves as a lead agency in attracting companies to the region. It also takes on special projects that create the conditions for future growth of the regional economy. KEDA operates a small business revolving loan fund, and holds monthly meetings of its membership.

KEDA is in the process of aligning its operations with the Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region (WUPPDR) leading to a possible formal merger of the organizations. WUPPDR services a six county region in the Western Upper Peninsula. This position will report to KEDA’s 9-member Board of Directors. Considering an eventual merger into WUPPDR and extend economic development services to the six-county Western Upper Peninsula region a 3-phase transition plan has been adopted by both organizations’ Boards of Directors. This plan as well as relevant career path options under a prospective merger can be discussed with prospective applicants upon request.
**Position Summary**

The Executive Director: assists entrepreneurs to start up new companies; assists in the retention and expansion of existing companies; attracts companies to the region; and leads or participates in special projects that will create the conditions for future economic expansion and job growth.

The Executive Director will be responsible for: managing a small business revolving loan fund; managing a membership of 250 including companies, municipalities, educational institutions, banks and utilities; conducting an annual membership/fundraising campaign and developing strong working relationships with other economic development-related organizations as well as local, state and federal officials.

**Principal Duties and Responsibilities**

- Conduct business retention visits with established companies to maintain high level awareness of general company needs and to identify companies in need of retention or expansion assistance, and to provide such assistance and implement activities that address general needs.
- Assist entrepreneurs to start up new companies by assisting with feasibility analysis, business and marketing plans, financial packaging, connection to resources, and other assistance.
- Coordinate efforts to attract companies to the region including organizing attraction teams, company incentives, location, tax incentives, employee recruitment, and other tasks as necessary.
- Administer the revolving loan fund including promoting the availability of the funds, assisting companies to apply for loans, evaluating loan applications, coordinating RLF committee meetings, working with attorneys to create loan documents, recommend loan modifications, and manage the portfolio, including direct counseling of businesses with outstanding loans to ensure repayment.
- Develop and maintain excellent, constructive, and collaborative working relationships with local, state and federal economic development agencies, Michigan Technological University and other educational institutions, and maintain current information on economic development programs and assistance.
- Develop special projects that will increase opportunities for economic growth.
- Organize and sponsor workshops of interest to the business community, such as MIOSHA health and safety workshops.
- Conduct monthly meetings of the membership to inform them of economic conditions and developments, and to showcase local economic successes.
- Conduct an annual membership campaign to retain and bring on new members and to raise operating funds.
- Coordinate quarterly Board of Director meetings, and keep the Board informed of economic developments and conditions.
Qualifications

This position requires a minimum of a Bachelor’s degree in a field related to business development in addition to at least 3 years of demonstrated private or public business development experience. Applicants with National Development Council (NDC) or International Economic Development Council (CedC) certification are preferred.

Current Economic Development Issues

Continued growth of Base Industry
KEDA has utilized an economic gardening strategy to grow manufacturing, technology and service companies that sell their products outside the region, thus bringing in new dollars and generating payroll that, in turn, supports the retail and local service sectors. The regional economy has become more diversified with new start-ups and company expansions. There is considerable potential for entrepreneurs to start up new companies and for stage one companies to grow into stage two companies.

Attraction of DA Glass America
KEDA successfully attracted this Polish manufacturing company to the Keweenaw region in early 2013, and continues to work with the company to meet its power needs, recruit employees, arrange for intermodal rail transportation, tax abatement and other needs. The company will begin hiring in the 4th quarter of 2014 and over the next few years will increase employment to 200 or more employees with KEDA’s continued assistance. DA Glass American is expected to become one of the region’s largest employers and will likely require continued assistance as it establishes and expands its local operations.

Growth of the Technology Sector
KEDA was a founding member of the Michigan Tech Enterprise Corporation SmartZone in 2002, a regional, 501(c)(3) organization that assists technology entrepreneurs to start up new companies, existing tech companies to expand, and that attracts outside tech companies to establish satellite engineering operations in the region. KEDA is a permanent SmartZone Board member assisting with strategic direction and business advice.

Greenforces
KEDA is a founding member of this initiative to assist technology companies in applying their military and research expertise in ground vehicles to aerospace applications. Greenforces is organized as an LLC and has recently hired a CEO to market member companies expertise.

Annual membership campaign
KEDA conducts an annual membership campaign to raise operating monies which constitute a majority of KEDA’s annual budget. The Executive Director is primarily responsible for running the membership campaign with support from the Board of Directors.
Closer Working Relationship with WUPPDR
The two organizations are entering into a relationship that could result in merger. A draft transition plan includes Phase 1 beginning January, 2014 in which WUPPDR will provide administrative support for KEDA. The Executive Director will be directly involved in leading the development of a mutually beneficial relationship with WUPPDR and developing and implementing detailed plans for expanded collaboration and eventual merger in close consultation with the KEDA membership and Board.

Compensation & Benefits
Commensurate with experience

Contact
Please forward letter of application, resume and salary history or refer any questions to baker.jimr@gmail.com or to:

KEDA
Recruitment Committee
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