



*Oakes Enhancement, Inc.*

*PO Box 365*

*Oakes, ND 58474-0365*

Oakes Enhancement, Inc. (OEI) registered with the state of North Dakota, November of 1989. Signing the Articles of Incorporation were: Ethel Day, Brad Ness and LaVonne Kunz. Bylaws were signed by President Elmer Smith, Vice President Tom Skarp and Secretary Vickie Kelly.

Strategic Planning began in the late 1990's and was adopted in the early 2000's. The mission and vision statements tell the story of what the group has done, continues to do and will always do while striving to maintain the integrity and goals of the organization taking Oakes into the future.

#### ***Mission Statement***

***Oakes Enhancement, Inc. shall create an environment that stimulates commercial, industrial, and residential growth and development while enhancing the quality of life in the greater Oakes (ND) trade area.***

#### ***Vision Statement***

***To be the economic and cultural hub for Southeast North Dakota***

The Strategic Plan is reviewed and benchmarked to make sure progress is being made to fulfill the mission. (The Strategic Plan along with Bylaws and OEI programs are available on the internet.)

The purpose and work of OEI is constantly being designed and redesigned, but the focus remains constant making sure Oakes is viable for generations to come.

Programs OEI had been involved in to fulfill these statements: \*\*

\*\*Assisting businesses by providing GAP financing

- Gap financing is when a business has a deficit in their financing. Their lender has the figures, but the business is coming up short to meet the financial institution criteria. Once all those pieces are in place OEI can now work out a solution – most likely with an interest buydown or CD secured loan at a financial institution.

To that end:

Projects OEI has worked on throughout the years include, but are not limited to: Oakes Manufacturing, Material Handlers, Inc., LULL, Mahto, JLG, OmniQuip, Abigails, Performance Centers, Harris Machine, J & J Harris, Harris Industries, Harris Manufacturing, Gabrielle's Better Half, General Irrigation, Grand Theatre, Great Frontier Meats, Harvest Inn, Kustom Machine, Tiny Tornadoes, Shafer Seed, Buck Cotter DDS, Baglady Construction, Growing Small Towns, R & R, Donna's Diner, Prairie Printing, Kelly Welding, Dialysis Center, Ethanol Plant, Great River Energy, Alco, Oakes Community Hospital, McCarthy Property, A-1 Property, Oakes Housing Authority, Shadow Lanes, Oakes Swimming Pool, The Jim, Tourism, Wind Energy, H & D Cycles, Body by JoJo, Little Professors, Novak Electric, Oakes Feed, Oakes Golf Course, Rudy's, Potter's Way, Studio D, Tara's, Yellow Shutter, Sundby Chiropractic, Oakes Dollar Days, PJ's Framing and Floral, Sweets 'N Stories, Kelsen's Bakery, Quilted Blessings, Bohnenkamp/Heimbuch, Guelph Strategic Plan, Infrastructure, Oakes Area Chamber of Commerce, Oakes Food Pantry, Cornerstone Learning Center, Engine Rebuilders, Oakes Bowling Lanes, Oakes Industries, Scholarship program,

Renaissance Zone, Oakes Fire Department, Water Treatment Plant and more... These businesses were assisted mainly through interest buydowns, bonds and other available programs.

From the list you can see, OEI is diligent in their efforts to bring primary sector and secondary jobs to Oakes. Oakes Enhancement, Inc. has touched almost every aspect of life and livelihood in Oakes. They wisely use the funds entrusted to them to do what is necessary to keep Oakes thriving and active. Maintaining their vision and mission statements of being the economic and cultural hub of southeast North Dakota, OEI takes a proactive approach and works diligently with all aspects of life.

**\*\*Progressive programs also include:**

- Property Tax Exemptions: The City of Oakes offers different property tax exemption for commercial use.
- Renaissance Zone: The City of Oakes has an established Renaissance Zone. Property located in this area may qualify for different tax benefits on approved projects.
- OEI works with the city to review and endorse Renaissance Zone applications following all the rules set forth in the designations.

**\*\*Through their **BUMP** program (Building Upkeep and Maintenance Program) the businesses have spruced up their locations. Being aided by this program (which is an ongoing program) Angry Beaver Lodge, Twin Pines Inn, Dr. Brian Dethlefsen Chiropractic, Village Mall, Sweets 'N Stories, Ptacek Financial, Oakes Drug, R & R, JJLC-LLC, Ron's heating and Appliance, the Loft, Hill's, Quilt and Sew, Total Home, Oakes Family Pharmacy, Computer Express, 502 Flair, Domine Sales, Shadow Lanes, Back to Health, Moving Mountains, Tornado Stop, Tiny Tornadoes. Close to \$90,000 has been disbursed through this program.**

**\*\*In the past 20 years, OEI has been able to grant to non-profits through their charitable gaming. Over half a million has been awarded. Some of the recipients include: City of Oakes, Oakes Park & Rec., Oakes Endowment, Oakes Linebackers, Oakes Area Foundation, Commercial Vegetables, Dakota Ethanol, American Legion, Oakes Baseball Boosters, National Guard Family Gathering, Woman's Song, Picnic Tables, Southeast Vocational School for equipment, Monango Community, Dickey County Fair, We Care Campaign, Willian Ptacek Scholarship, Counter Act Program, Northern State (scholarship), NDSU (scholarship), Oakes Soft Ball Association, Literary Expression, Rural Leadership, Oakes Gun Club, Fullerton Betterment, Verona Park Beautification, Oakes Basketball Boosters, Post Prom, American Cancer, Oakes Good Samaritan Center, Golden Age Club, Bear Creek Roughriders, Oakes Boy and Girl Scouts, Oakes Public School, ONC Bright Beginnings, Dickey County Daycare Association, Tornado Watch, NDSCS(nursing students), Sargent County Senior Center, Friends of Fine Arts and Academics, Oakes Area Food Pantry, Relay for Life, NDSU Extension, Dickey Sargent Irrigation District, Oakes Area Chamber of Commerce.**

**\*\*OEI has been involved with City Beautification: Flowerpots, Walking Path, Pole Banners, Garland, and the like.**

**\*\*OEI has conducted studies in Wind Energy, Labor and Housing Surveys.**

**\*\*OEI and the City of Oakes offer a range of programs to assist businesses to cost-effectively locate and expand their operations within our community. These programs are designed to aid in the form of tax incentives, business financing, infrastructure development, employee recruitment and training and general assistance.**

**\*\*In addition, a network of economic development assistance organizations, staffed by experienced professionals at the state and regional level are ready to utilize all available resources to confidently**

develop a comprehensive incentive proposal that will enable a business to locate and operate its facility in Oakes.

\*\*Oakes took the lead and held meetings traveling to communities in southeast North Dakota, crossing the border to reach into South Dakota to work together. Board members realized that if the area thrives – so will all the communities. As a result, Dakota State Line Regional Alliance was founded and continues to this day. The organization is mainly used to channel funds as a 501 © 3. Oakes maintains the funds and acts throughout the region.

\*\*OEI filed mountains of paperwork to become an Empowerment Zone which would qualify Oakes for government funds and, as a result, was named a Champion Community.

\*\*For COVID-19 Relief, 36 Oakes businesses were assisted with the total grant amount exceeding \$51,000.

\*\*OEI is dedicated to students. If you remember the “McCarthy” project – a house was built by the students in the construction classes at the vocational school. Funding from OEI made this project possible. OEI also grants funds to the Southeast Region Career and Technology Center making it easier for students to attend National competitions.

\*\*A newly developing program is scholarship assistance for businesses to send applicants to train and then return to provide learned skill sets to the business that employs them.

Notable names for their faithful diligent service include: Geri Coyne, Otter Tail Power, Colette Gross, Gary Schnell, as well as all past president and board members. Making OEI successful is a total team effort. Be sure to check out the listing of these amazing leaders, past board members and presidents found on the Oakes web site.

#### Economic Development Directors

- In the past much of this work was done by Geri Coyne through Otter Tail Power.
- Karla Hoeslcher served as an employment advisor.
- Serving as Economic Development Directors: Charlie Kraemer, April Haring, Emily Ptacek, Brittany Jorgenson.

#### Current Board and Officers for 2020:

- President: Art Conklin
- Vice President: Matt Hill
- Treasurer: John Zetocha

#### Board Members,

- Becki Thompson
- Alison Peterson
- Gary Schnell
- Jeff Forward
- Dan Spellerberg



#### Advisory:

- Mayor Monty Zimmer
- City Auditor Zasha Johnson: as needed for questions related to civic matters.
- Toni Ptacek, CPA: as needed for financial questions.

As you can see, Oakes Enhancement, Inc. holds the interests of the residents of Oakes first and foremost in their thought and actions. They strive diligently to make Oakes “the best place to live, work and be in business.”