

## 2007 Executive Committee

We're proud to announce the 2007 Executive Committee:



**President**  
Jerome Ferson  
Aberdeen American News



**Vice-President**  
Joe Senger  
Dacotah Bank



**Secretary**  
Tom Seyer  
Rhodes Group



**Treasurer**  
Chad Evans  
Centennial Homes



**Marketing Chair**  
Paul McDonald  
Dacotah Bank



**Job Creation Chair**  
Todd Jordre  
NSU Foundation



**Executive Director**  
Trishna Batra

## Thanks, Ron Jacobson

Absolutely! Aberdeen thanks Ron Jacobson for his time, energy and wisdom during our first year. Ron served as Absolutely! Aberdeen's first President. He led our initial fundraising effort, and helped us reach our ambitious goal. Thanks to Ron we have a solid foundation with which to move forward. Aberdeen and this organization are fortunate to benefit from Ron's leadership and commitment.

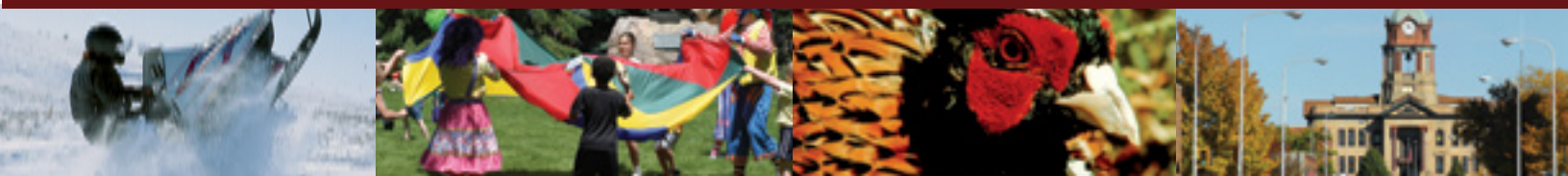
Ron Jacobson is the CEO of Avera St. Luke's, and we look forward to working with him and with Avera St. Luke's in the future.



**Ron Jacobson**  
Avera St. Lukes

## New Members

Thanks to Steve Pfeiffer, Western Printing Company, for investing in and joining our organization. Steve and his company are valuable members of the community and we look forward to his input and ideas.



## Message from the President

Greetings everyone.

2007 is off to a fast start and I am humbled by the confidence you placed in me to serve as 2007 Board President. I look forward to upholding the duties of this office, including working with our staff, officers, committee chairs, investors and volunteers. Together, we will move this community forward.

With the Catalytix benchmarks now in place, the Marketing, Job Creation, Prairie Vision and Executive committees are pursuing their missions more aggressively than ever.

For 2007, these committees will recruit workers, enhance the community's appeal to young people, stimulate entrepreneurship and work to strengthen our organization.

Please remain vigilant in our cause to promote community prosperity by being actively involved in Absolutely! Aberdeen. During my term as President, I am committed to leaving this organization in an even stronger position to encourage growth. Thanks again for the honor to serve.

Regards,

*Jerome Ferson*  
2007 Board President

## Message from the Executive Director

As spring is finally around the corner (I hope) I am proud to announce that I have successfully made it through a tough winter in Aberdeen! I am looking forward to a very bright and prosperous year for Absolutely! Aberdeen. I want to extend a warm welcome to our incoming President, Jerome Ferson, and also to our new Vice President, Joe Senger. Absolutely! Aberdeen is very fortunate to have these distinguished men serve on our board. I also want to extend a heartfelt thank-you to Ron Jacobson, Paul McDonald Chad Evans, Tom Seyer and Todd Jordre for their dedication and hard work last year. We are lucky to have Tom, Chad, Todd and Paul serve on our board this year as well.

Getting a new organization off the ground is not easy, and I wanted to thank everyone for their support and dedication. Absolutely! Aberdeen will be positioned to function as an "Umbrella" organization focusing primarily on:

- 1) Strengthening our organization both politically as well as within the community.
- 2) Recruiting new residents and businesses to our community, and preservation and enhancement of the existing community.
- 3) Creating wealth in the community.

Our Marketing, Job Creation, and Regional Development (prairie vision) committees will be working together on specific initiatives that support our main objectives for 2007.

Please stay tuned for more Absolutely!Aberdeen updates. Again, thank you for all of your support.

Sincerely,

*Trishna Batra*  
Executive Director  
Absolutely! Aberdeen

# Big Plans for 2007

Our 2007 Program of Work includes three general objectives.

## 1) Strengthen the organization

To accomplish this objective we will strengthen our stature within the state and with state agencies, increase our own membership, solidify Prairie Vision (including our effort to expand outside Aberdeen), seek new grant opportunities, and effectively work with other organizations in the community.

## 2) Grow our community, including recruit people to live in our community, and retain current residents

Our ambitious goal is to show population growth by 2010, and to reach a city population of 30,000 by 2020. We must recruit a larger workforce, embrace ethnic diversity, foster higher rates of innovation, including patents, and support continued technological advances. We'll facilitate these efforts through the new website, by partnering with other organizations, by conducting research, and by developing a variety of projects and networks to welcome people to the community.

## 3) Increase community wealth and prosperity

The creation of new wealth in the community will lead to more jobs, more spending, more opportunities. We are poised to accomplish great economic achievements here, but we must continue to study and increase our understanding of the existing economic profile and assets. A key is encouraging young people to start businesses and careers here. We will advance entrepreneurial initiatives, including workshops, networking and other educational programs. We will also encourage competition in business, commercial and industrial development.

Absolutely! Aberdeen will continue to assist our community and this region to create new jobs and promote improved quality of life and economic development opportunities.

Here are some specific projects and campaigns for 2007.

- We are working with McQuillen Design to develop a customizable website with a target audience of newcomers, potential newcomers and existing residence. This website will allow members to view potential employees and assess their skills before others do. It will come online in 2007.
- We will continue the recruitment of mid-level employees under the Marketing Committee's "Boomerang" campaigns.
- We will promote the value of cultural diversity in our community.
- We will help focus the efforts of the many community groups working to improve Aberdeen by avoiding duplication of programs, and by adopting a comprehensive and seamless approach.
- We will encourage the construction of new "workforce" housing in the community.
- We will encourage stronger relationships between business and higher education, resulting in increased numbers of internships each year.
- We will continue to work with the "Northern Route to the Black Hills" organization as one of our regional development initiatives.
- We will facilitate development of a unified and strong political coalition serving this region.
- We will establish a networking group of young professionals in the community.
- We will work to improve the technological infrastructure of the community.
- We will plan and host an entrepreneurial event.

These and other programs and efforts will continue to require a fully engaged membership, additional fundraising, and an ongoing expansion of our membership. We have ambitious goals for 2007, but we are confident we can achieve them. In addition, we must be agile enough to respond to unforeseen opportunities and situations.

## Cross-Organization Forum

We are fortunate to have many organizations in this community that are working hard to advance our quality of life. Absolutely! Aberdeen invited development organizations in Aberdeen to participate in a special convening for the purpose of creating a set of possibilities for the organizations to work together and achieve a vital future for the Aberdeen area. A two day seminar was hosted by Absolutely! Aberdeen and facilitated by Beth Davis from the South Dakota Rural Enterprise Corporation. Over 50 board members from the following organizations participated:

Aberdeen Development Corporation  
Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce  
Aberdeen Convention and Visitors Bureau  
Aberdeen Downtown Association  
Absolutely! Aberdeen

## Investors support Beef Plant TIF

*Executive Committee contributes to Vote Yes campaign*

At the last investor council meeting, on February 15th the Executive Committee was requested to move prudently, but expeditiously and support the beef plant. The Executive Committee has contributed to the "Vote Yes for Regional Growth" campaign. Please encourage your friends and colleagues to vote YES on April 24. Absolutely! Aberdeen will support projects that promote growth and profitability in the community and region.

## 2006 Accomplishments Committee Updates

### *The Marketing Committee*

The Marketing Committee oversaw multifaceted job, business and resident recruiting campaigns in 2006, including the campaign to attract visiting hunters during pheasant hunting season and the holidays campaign that encouraged Aberdeen families to invite family members and relatives who have moved away from Aberdeen to return home. Also completed was benchmarking work with Catalytix, the Dr. Richard Florida Strategic Planning group.

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### *The Prairie Vision Committee*

The Regional Development Committee was actively engaged in a number of networking projects in 2006, including:

- Participated in town hall meetings held in Veblen, Eureka, and Redfield.
- Held a regional development summit in September-encouraging regional arts/culture organizations, housing developers and economic developers to think about ways to reverse population decline.
- Organized a regional presence at the FHLB conference in Sioux Falls. No area was better represented than ours.
- Participated in the NSU Town Hall meeting organized by the Rural Learning Center.
- Partnered with Northern Route to the Black Hills in 2006.

Many of these activities were made possible through funding from the Knight Foundation and in partnership with Fieldstone Alliance.

### *Job Creation Committee*

Interviews with CEOs were conducted, starting with the financial/ collective services sector. Information regarding day-to-day management and possible areas of expansion was gathered.

Alumni surveys researching labor and business interest and expansion were completed for Northern State University and Aberdeen Central High School. Additional surveys have been proposed for Presentation College and Roncalli High School.

Combining promotion and recruitment efforts with all job creation entities along with a coordinated vision through the marketing committee have helped to establish a baseline effort.