

Recap of East Downtown Council's Business Forum
Thursday, March 20, 2014
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
American Red Cross, 1201 West River Parkway
Downtown East Neighborhood of Minneapolis

- ***Welcome and introductions***

EDC President Dan Collison introduced himself and explained that the EDC is an organization that is committed to the economic vitality of the East Downtown District. The EDC believes its value proposition is strengthening the district through private and public initiatives; working to become a critical source of information for its constituents; and collaborating with all of the parts of downtown Minneapolis for the common good.

Dan then announced the two new members who recently joined: Howard Young, an Elliot Park resident; and the American Red Cross, the host of today's business forum.

Dan noted that today's business forum is a celebration of two March events: Women's History Month to celebrate the leadership and accomplishments of women across the United States; and, since World War II, American presidents have declared March American Red Cross Month. Clara Barton and a circle of her acquaintances founded the ARC in Washington, D.C. on May 21, 1881 (<http://www.redcross.org/about-us/history>) and it has become a profound part of the American fabric.

The ARC has grown into a nationwide network of more than 650 chapters, approximately half a million volunteers, and 30,000 employees who annually mobilize relief to people affected by nearly 70,000 disasters of small and large scale from as local as when the 35W bridge collapsed to earthquakes and other major disasters affecting large areas of the country. ARC trains almost 12 million people in necessary medical skills and exchanges more than a million emergency messages for U.S. military service personnel and their family members.

Dan then announced that the host has provided giveaways to be drawn via business cards from non-board members, i.e.: a first aid kit; a mini first aid kit; and two ARC-branded water bottles.

Thereafter the audience introduced itself then Dan introduced the host and gave a brief description of his background (<http://www.redcross.org/mn/minneapolis/about/leadership>).

- ***Disaster Preparedness for Businesses and Employees***

Phil Hansen, CEO, American Red Cross – Northern Minnesota Region, distributed a red ARC folder of informational materials then gave an overview of the organization (reference his East DT Council PowerPoint document). As a result of the disaster preparedness program, he hopes the audience would takeaway some good tools and techniques to help prepare their facilities and employees for emergencies before they happen and, because they are community leaders, encouraged them to take action for their families and communities as well.

The ARC's five lines of service are: Disaster Relief; Biomedical; Preparedness, Health and Safety; International (they are the local keeper of the Geneva Convention); and Services to the Armed Services. As head of the Northern Minnesota Region, Hansen has six offices across the northern two-thirds of the state and is responsible for all lines of service except Biomedical although he promotes and supports it.

Of the seven principles of the organization (<http://www.redcross.org/about-us/mission>), primarily the biggest one is Voluntary Service because everything is predicated on volunteers. The idea of the organization is that as paid staff they build the platform from which volunteers do the work in our communities. At Hansen's facility there is a 45 to 1 ratio of volunteers to paid staff. In Disaster Relief there is a 100 to 1 ratio of volunteers to paid staff. Their job is to train, develop, and place volunteers into position to deliver good services to the people of our community.

In the past they tended to focus heavily on the respond part of the operation, but increasingly they are focusing more energy on prepare and recovery via fairs, presentations to community leaders, schools, and canvassing door-to-door throughout communities.

Hansen explained that they have a charter from congress but are not a government agency so a quarter of their funding comes from monetary contributions from corporations, foundations and individuals; another quarter comes from some of the classes they charge for under Health and Safety services; and half of their funds come from Biomedical services.

Globally, the trend line for significant disasters is growing, but the trend line for deaths from significant disasters is declining as a result of strong efforts over the last 10 years to prepare communities before disasters happen. An important upcoming event is the Minnesota Severe Weather Awareness Week, Monday through Friday, April 21-25, 2014 (<https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/hsem/weather-awareness-preparedness/pages/severe-weather-awareness-week-program.aspx>).

The three important steps businesses can prepare for a disaster are: (1) make a kit that contains emergency supplies and an Automated External Defibrillator (AED); (2) make a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to minimize damage and increase resiliency; and (3) be informed and stay apprised of local broadcasts about emergencies that could be happening in your area. The ARC has all the resources and programs needed to help prepare for disasters (see Resource & Program Contact Guide included in the ARC folder).

Thereafter, Hansen entertained questions from the audience that included describing ARC's partnership and relationship with Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), fire chiefs, shelters, churches, hospitals, businesses, etc.

- **Conclusion**

After the prize drawings, Dan thanked Hansen for his presentation and the audience for attending, then announced:

- Monday, March 31st, 4:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.: I94 to 7th Street Ramp Project open house by City of Minneapolis and the Minnesota Department of Transportation at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Main Hall, 720 13th Avenue South;
- Tuesday, May 13th, 8:45 a.m.: Ryan Companies' East Downtown project groundbreaking; and
- Thursday, May 15th, 6:00 p.m.: Joint neighborhood community meeting at Open Book regarding Ryan Companies' East Downtown project.

Also, the next three business forums all to be held on Thursdays at 11:30 a.m.:

- April 17th Annual Meeting at the Normandy Inn: "Introduction of new CEO Dr. Jon Pryor, plus update on Downtown Medical Office Building, and 5-year Strategic Plan";
- May 15th at 1010 Metrodome Square: "The Minnesota Vikings: The New Game Day Experience" with Steve LaCroix, Chief Marketing Officer, and Lester Bagley, Vice President of Public Affairs; and
- June 19th at TBD: "Meet the Three East Downtown City Council Members, plus a downtown Crime and Safety Update".