



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Part 1: LADA Defined

Battle Lake, MN, April 30, 2008 – This article is the first in a series from the Lakes Area Development Association (LADA) to raise community awareness and support for the economic development that is planned in this region. In this article, we will explain why the Lakes Area Development Association was formed, how it is funded, and how it will impact area residents. LADA is a not-for-profit, member association that was formed in March of 2008 to positively affect economic development in Battle Lake and the surrounding area. Specifically, the mission of LADA is to:

*“Enable economic development and growth in the lakes area
with business expansion services, new investments, and community enhancements
while preserving our quality of life.”*

LADA was formed to address three primary factors affecting our area. First, we currently face a challenging economy in the region. Job creation is down, commuting to employment centers is costly, and working families find it difficult to relocate to the area which has a negative impact on school enrollment. Over the years, the lakes area economy has become increasingly dependent on the disposable income of people that are residing in the area, which swings radically during the tourism months. In the summer, spending is high, but during the off-season local retailers, restaurants, and service businesses are solely dependent upon the spending of the population located in the area, which is significantly lower.

It is a primary goal of LADA to **diversify the lakes area economy** with businesses that are capable of exporting goods and services that produce a corresponding return of outside dollars to the area, without any correlation to seasonal population.

A second reason for LADA is to **address emerging opportunity with intention**. One only needs to look to the north and south to understand why this is such a critical point. The Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area has expanded rapidly, which has brought significant growth to Detroit Lakes and has now moved into the Perham lakes area. Alexandria and Brainerd areas experienced a similar swell from the metro areas to the south.

The Battle Lake lakes area is wedged between these two sprawling movements. Our pristine lakes and parks, the availability of land, and our proximity to major transportation trunks will make our area uniquely attractive during the next decade. Community, city, township, and business leaders intend to **ensure this expansion does not happen in random fashion**, but that we are cooperative, selective, and intentional regarding how such development occurs.

This leads to a third point, related to our deep affinity to the environment and our quality of life. LADA was formed to preserve those values during expansion. In subsequent articles, you will see how LADA intends to **pursue “clean and green” industry** for the area, rather than seeing our city and townships spattered with any type of business that is drawn to the lakes area.

LADA's important role will be dependent upon **strong collaboration**. The association has already experienced notable teamwork among the surrounding townships and city officials. Many men and women have spent countless hours working together to make sure we get this right.

Because LADA is member driven, its funding is derived primarily from donations and membership fees. Occasionally, LADA expects to receive grants – like the recent \$5,000 grant from the West Central Initiative Fund. It may also receive proceeds from contract services it provides to cities and townships related to economic development. However, to be very clear, LADA is **not a government entity**, and has no authority to tax residents to support its activities.

During the past several months, community residents may have seen several articles in the Battle Lake Review reflecting the enthusiasm around the formation of LADA. At the same time, it is unrealistic to expect residents who haven't attended those meetings to share that same sense of clarity or excitement. Over the next few weeks we hope to **broaden community awareness** and support on this very important topic.

About Lakes Area Development Association

Lakes Area Development Association enables economic development in the lakes area with business expansion services, new investments, and community enhancements while preserving a superb quality of life. The association's address is P.O. Box 895, Battle Lake, MN 56515.

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