



News Release
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For Immediate Release

Williston City Commission approves \$40,000 in Two STAR Fund Grants

Williston Economic Development
By Barbara Peterson

The Williston City Commission has approved STAR Fund grants totaling \$40,000 for two Williston organizations. The commission allocated \$15,000 to the Williston Downtowners Association (WDA) and \$25,000 to Summit Counseling Services at its meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 14.

The Williston Downtowners Association is a nonprofit group that promotes and supports events and businesses that make up the Downtown Shopping District. Some of the group's key events include Summer Nights on Main, the Farmers Market, Art and Wine Walk and decorating the district for the holiday shopping season.

Williston Economic Development Executive Director Shawn Wenko said WDA's efforts have helped revitalize Downtown Williston.

"The Downtowners Association has demonstrated it has done some great things for the downtown area. The grant approved at Tuesday's commission meeting was the final allocation of a three year commitment to assist this relatively new association," said Wenko.

The \$15,000 STAR Fund grant will help defray WDA's 2018 operational costs. The STAR Fund has given a total of \$65,000 to WDA in recent years;

\$35,000 in 2015; \$15,000 in 2016 and \$15,000 in 2017. The funds were earmarked for operational costs during WDA's startup years to help it become self-sufficient.

Meanwhile, Summit Counseling Services provides mental health and substance abuse services in northwestern North Dakota. The organization is seeking to add more staff and office space to meet the counseling needs in the Williston area.

Wenko said Summit Counseling has helped fill a void in Williston.

"Summit Counseling is also a step in the right direction. Anybody who has been associated with the demands for mental health services in this area will understand why assisting this business will pay dividends in the long run for the community," he said.

The commission approved a STAR Fund grant of \$25,000 to allow Summit to move forward with plans to add more therapists and office space in the 20/20 building.

In the future, Summit hopes to open a residential treatment facility in the Williston area.

"This is the first big step in our growing process. In the future we intend to open a residential treatment facility for substance abuse that is long term and provides opportunities for a step down approach to treatment that includes job and education training, family involvement with mentoring and long term engagement for recovery," according to Summit's STAR Fund application.

To learn more about the City of Williston STAR Fund program visit www.willistondevelopment.com.