

## Don Merkes

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**From:** Eric Hjortness [eric@hjortnesscpa.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 13, 2013 4:30 PM  
**To:** Don Merkes  
**Cc:** Cal Watters (cwatters@wattersplumbing.net); Adam Graf  
**Subject:** Ignite Fox Cities Business Initiative

Dear Mayor Merkes:

I am the director of the Menasha Business Development Group. Our group is focused on assisting Menasha businesses to grow via monthly "meet and greet" meetings and speakers who focus on business growth.

We asked Larry Burkhardt of Ignite Fox Cities to speak at our meeting in October of 2012, to explain the Ignite Fox Cities initiative. In my opinion, he was professional, eloquent, has significant experience in this type of work, and understands what needs to be done.

We are strongly behind this program. The main purpose of this program is to communicate to the business world that the Fox Cities is a major business center that deserves to be taken seriously. The program is funded by contributions from the various towns and cities that make up the Fox Cities. Each municipality benefits from their efforts, so it is logical that each municipality would share in providing contributions to this organization.

Ignite Fox Cities is aligned with the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce, which is overseeing this program. Common sense will tell you that the Chamber has a vested interest in this program, and would not support it unless it met and continues to meet their requirements. The businesses sponsoring this program include Miron, Bergstrom, Appleton, ThedaCare, Affinity, WE energies, US Bank, Boldt, and others. Obviously this initiative is important to the community and garnered the support of these major corporations due to it's mission. These corporations all have significant advertising budgets, and yet they chose to assign some of this budget to this program. They expect that this will result in their businesses growing and prospering, and as that happens other businesses within the Fox Cities community and Menasha will also benefit.

For these reasons, the Menasha Business Development Group supports any contributions made to this organization.

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"Rather than asking whether or not we can, ask how can we"

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