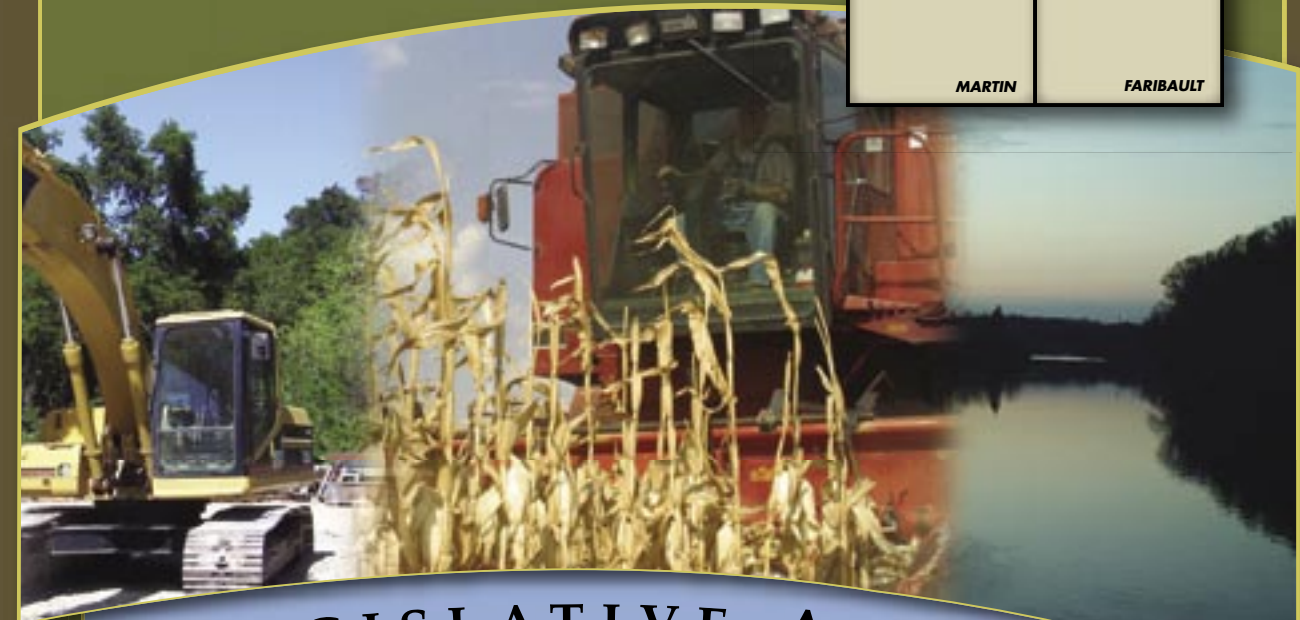
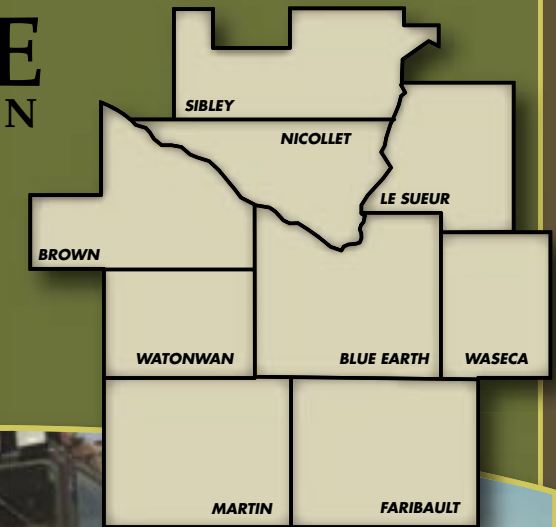


## Region Nine Development Commission Supplemental Supportive Legislative Items

1. Medicare Reimbursement for Ambulance Services:
  - Support equitable reimbursement across the state.
  - Oppose additional reductions of reimbursements which impact ambulance services disproportionately in rural areas.
2. Local Government Aid:
  - Support restoration of Local Government Aid.
  - Oppose additional cuts or shifting of funding from one group of jurisdictions to another.
  - Support development of and retaining an equitable funding formula.
3. Funding Local Infrastructure and Regulations:
  - Support adequate funding for housing and affordable housing development, which is a critical component of economic development.
  - Support development of mixed income housing projects, support increased funding for affordable housing, and support strategies to educate new populations on home ownership.
  - Support state funding assistance for any increase regulation on testing for water entering into storm water systems.
  - Support providing state emergency funds to assist small communities with existing ground water and drinking problems. The costs associated with corrections of water systems are beyond the financial capacity of small rural jurisdictions.
4. Student Entrepreneur Center:
  - Support effort to diversify rural economies by investing in young college students and new minority populations as entrepreneurs and small business owners.
5. Transit:
  - Support increase funding for transit planning and coordination across regional areas among all transit services in rural areas.
6. School Funding:
  - Support equitable referendum taxation across various property classifications and geographical areas.
7. Early Childhood Education:
  - Support increase funding for early childhood education as a means to increase positive development of children, increase productivity capacity and reduction in anti-social behavior treatment.
8. Unfunded Mandates:
  - Oppose service requirements at the State and Federal level that does not provide adequate and equitable funding for delivery of corresponding services.
9. Jails:
  - Supports increase funding for assisting counties develop and operate correctional facilities.
  - Support funding to pilot multi-jurisdictional approaches in designing, building and operating correctional facilities.
  - Oppose mandates to house State and Federal inmates without adequate funding needed to house the inmates.

# REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



## LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

[www.rndc.org](http://www.rndc.org)

**YOUR REGIONAL PARTNER FOR PROGRESS**

**INPUT PROVIDED BY OVER 70 LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT**

# 2006 Legislative Priorities: Transportation

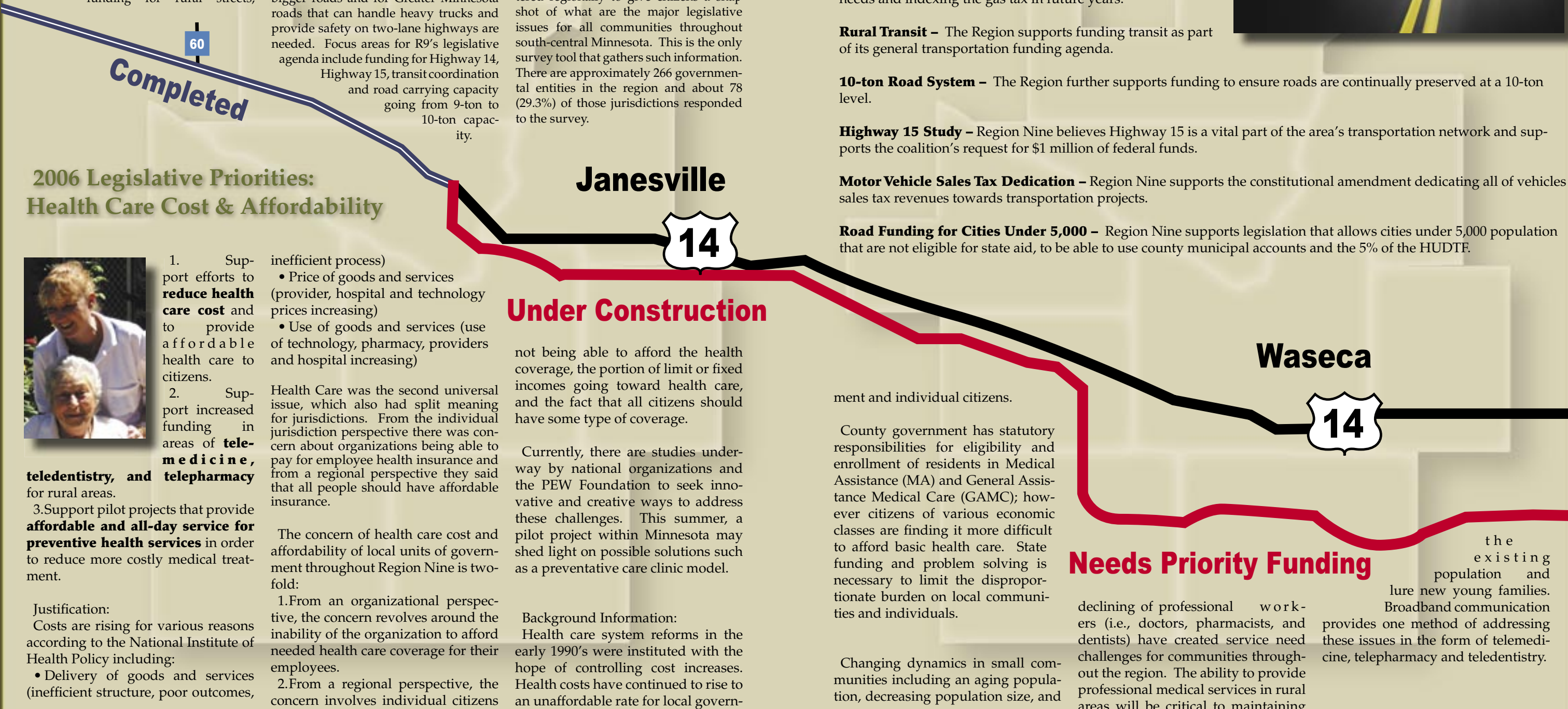
Region Nine Development Commission administered its fourth annual legislative issues survey. A survey is sent annually to all townships, cities, school districts, counties, and higher education institutions throughout the Region. Top issues identified across all jurisdictions are Transportation and Health Care, which became the base for R9's state and federal legislative agenda.

Transportation, the first universal issue was split between the need for adequate funding for rural streets,

bridges, and transit services and the desire to have all transportation funding equitably distributed between Greater Minnesota and the Metro area. The issue of equity will rest on varying needs of the different geographical areas of the state for example in the metro the issue is congestion hence forth transit, the suburbs want bigger roads and for Greater Minnesota roads that can handle heavy trucks and provide safety on two-lane highways are needed. Focus areas for R9's legislative agenda include funding for Highway 14, Highway 15, transit coordination and road carrying capacity going from 9-ton to 10-ton capacity.



Each year this survey will be administered regionally to give citizens a snapshot of what are the major legislative issues for all communities throughout south-central Minnesota. This is the only survey tool that gathers such information. There are approximately 266 governmental entities in the region and about 78 (29.3%) of those jurisdictions responded to the survey.



## 2006 Legislative Priorities: Health Care Cost & Affordability



1. Support efforts to **reduce health care cost** and to provide affordable health care to citizens.

2. Support increased funding in areas of **telemedicine, teledentistry, and telepharmacy** for rural areas.

3. Support pilot projects that provide **affordable and all-day service for preventive health services** in order to reduce more costly medical treatment.

Justification:  
Costs are rising for various reasons according to the National Institute of Health Policy including:  
• Delivery of goods and services (inefficient structure, poor outcomes,

inefficient process)  
• Price of goods and services (provider, hospital and technology prices increasing)  
• Use of goods and services (use of technology, pharmacy, providers and hospital increasing)

Health Care was the second universal issue, which also had split meaning for jurisdictions. From the individual jurisdiction perspective there was concern about organizations being able to pay for employee health insurance and from a regional perspective they said that all people should have affordable insurance.

The concern of health care cost and affordability of local units of government throughout Region Nine is two-fold:

1. From an organizational perspective, the concern revolves around the inability of the organization to afford needed health care coverage for their employees.
2. From a regional perspective, the concern involves individual citizens

## Under Construction

not being able to afford the health coverage, the portion of limit or fixed incomes going toward health care, and the fact that all citizens should have some type of coverage.

Currently, there are studies underway by national organizations and the PEW Foundation to seek innovative and creative ways to address these challenges. This summer, a pilot project within Minnesota may shed light on possible solutions such as a preventative care clinic model.

Background Information:  
Health care system reforms in the early 1990's were instituted with the hope of controlling cost increases. Health costs have continued to rise to an unaffordable rate for local govern-

# What Transportation Issues does R9 Support?

**Highway 14 Expansion-** RNDC supports funding of the acceleration of Highway 14 expansion to a four-lane expressway on all segments between North Mankato and New Ulm. This long-overdue project will cost in excess of \$300 million.

**Rural & Urban Funding Equity** – Region Nine supports legislative efforts that ensure funding is provided for rural transportation projects and supports equity between rural and metro funding.

**Gas Tax and Indexing** – RNDC supports increasing the gas tax 5 cents each of the next two years to pay for transportation needs and indexing the gas tax in future years.

**Rural Transit** – The Region supports funding transit as part of its general transportation funding agenda.

**10-ton Road System** – The Region further supports funding to ensure roads are continually preserved at a 10-ton level.

**Highway 15 Study** – Region Nine believes Highway 15 is a vital part of the area's transportation network and supports the coalition's request for \$1 million of federal funds.

**Motor Vehicle Sales Tax Dedication** – Region Nine supports the constitutional amendment dedicating all of vehicles sales tax revenues towards transportation projects.

**Road Funding for Cities Under 5,000** – Region Nine supports legislation that allows cities under 5,000 population that are not eligible for state aid, to be able to use county municipal accounts and the 5% of the HUDTF.



ment and individual citizens.

County government has statutory responsibilities for eligibility and enrollment of residents in Medical Assistance (MA) and General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC); however citizens of various economic classes are finding it more difficult to afford basic health care. State funding and problem solving is necessary to limit the disproportionate burden on local communities and individuals.

Changing dynamics in small communities including an aging population, decreasing population size, and

## Needs Priority Funding

declining of professional workers (i.e., doctors, pharmacists, and dentists) have created service need challenges for communities throughout the region. The ability to provide professional medical services in rural areas will be critical to maintaining

the existing population and lure new young families. Broadband communication provides one method of addressing these issues in the form of telemedicine, telepharmacy and teledentistry.