Region Nine
Development Commission

Annual Report 2015

Message from the Executive Director

Region Nine Development Commission has worked diligently in Fiscal Year 2015 to ensure the region is aware of the programs and services that Region Nine has to offer. As we strive to be the regional partner for progress, these efforts have been recognized both at the local and national level.

Collaboration plays a key role in the prosperity of our region. Region Nine has continued to form new partnerships throughout the year to assist the region in areas of local foods, aging, transportation, and community and economic development. We continue to explore areas where we can expand our services to provide valuable resources into the coming year.

This annual report highlights some of Region Nine's accomplishments throughout the past year. These accomplishments are made possible not only by our staff, but by the continued support of our commissioners and partners in the region. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to them. With their participation and engagement, Region Nine is able to stay at the forefront of regional issues and continue to promote the development of the region.

Nicole Griensewic Mickelson
Executive Director

Message from the Commission Board Chair

Region Nine Development Commission has had another successful year as it continues to expand its services throughout the region. Our executive director continues to promote Region Nine and expand our influence with more partners. The organization has had growth in personnel which has brought new talents and expertise that can be shared with our local entities. We have seen a big expansion of the Safe Routes to School program to many of our area schools, with Region Nine being the lead. Staff continue to be working more with hazardous mitigation plans for counties, as well as comprehensive planning for cities. What has been very important to us is that projects are getting done well and in a timely manner. This is a real credit to our directors and the staff they supervise.

The engagement of the commissioners on our committees and Board of Directors has continued to be strong. It is important that we continue educating our commissioners on the activities of Region Nine so we can all take advantage of the services in our communities. The regional bus tour is a great way to see the work completed with the help of Region Nine in our region.

As I complete my term as the chair of Region Nine, I look back with great pride in the progress the organization has made. It is a thriving organization because of the excellent skills and leadership from our staff, and from the engaged commissioners. Through everyone's continued commitment to excellence, Region Nine will be the go-to organization.

Thanks To All For
Your Participation,

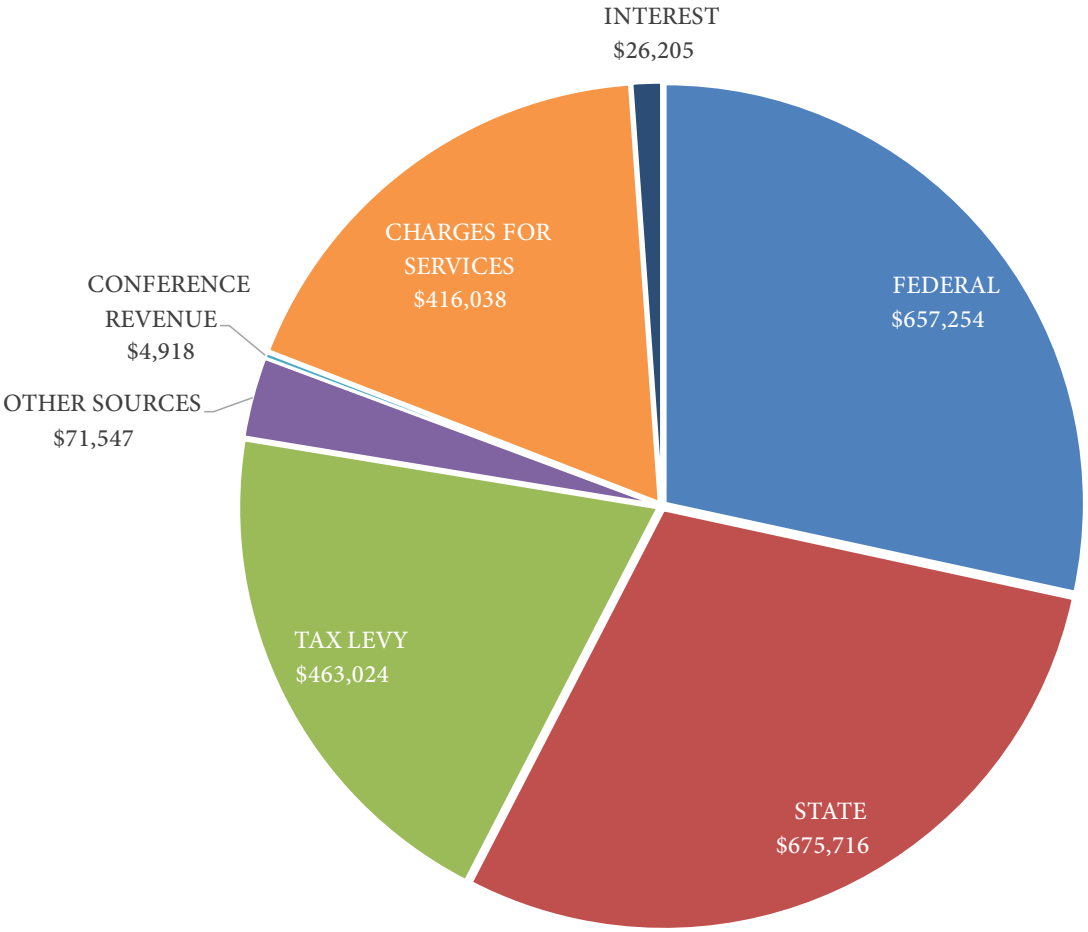
Jim Swanson
Commission Chair

Our Mission

Promote the development of the region through intergovernmental cooperation, community and human development, long-range planning and technical assistance.

Revenue Actual 2015

$2,314,702



Expenditures 2015

Personnel	$1,288,781	Errors & Omissions Insurance	$11,721
Fringe	$326,830	Maintenance	$4,659
Finance/Central Services	$18,201	Legal	$12,076
Copying/Printing	$27,703	Auditing	$30,175
Public Notice	$15,014	Equipment/Depreciation	$41,428
Postage	$11,483	Service Contracts	$20,252
Telephone	$14,526	Capital Outlay	$2,040
Travel - Staff	$81,308	Marketing	$11,515
Travel - Other	$26,333	Program & Staff Development	$6,263
Registration	$19,828	Commission Expense	$32,227
Supplies	$62,050	Fund Balance Recovery	$119,540
Public/Subscrip/Member	$27,034	Office Space	$75,990
Miscellaneous	-$6,327	Transfer RNAI	$10,000
Consultant	$19,035	Prior Year Adjustment	$446
Insurance	$4,571	**Total Expenditures**	**$2,314,702**

Indirect Rate for 2015 was 10.567%

Fringe Budget was 33.78%, actual was 25.45%

Feast! LOCAL FOOD NETWORK

Feast! Local Food Festival & Tradeshow

Region Nine was a regional partner for the first annual Feast! Local Food Festival in Rochester, MN. Feast! was held at the Mayo Civic Center and featured local food vendors from Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa. The goal of the festival was to promote local foods to the public as well as create a space where vendors could network and learn how to grow their business.

The Feast! Local Food Festival and Tradeshow gave Region Nine the opportunity to continue its intent to support local foods by expanding the direct marketing relationship between farmers and institutional food buyers, wholesale and food service. Region Nine was able to accomplish this by providing marketing campaigns including: articles on local vendors in the Region Nine area attending the event, social media, radio spots, press releases and community outreach.

L to R: Bernie Semanko, Jerry McGee, LuAnn Vanderwerf, Donnie Rudolph, Randy Grupe

Town Center Project

On May 18, 2015, almost five years after the project was proposed, Town Center officially broke ground. Region Nine Area Inc. has served as the Town Center project's fiscal sponsor since 2012. Region Nine's Finance Director, Lu Vanderwerf, was on site to witness the event. Town Center, located in Trimont, will bring much needed businesses to the area including a grocery store, gas station, and a hardware store. Town Center demonstrates how collaboration between the public and private sectors can drive both economic development and improve a community's quality of life.

Minnesota Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council

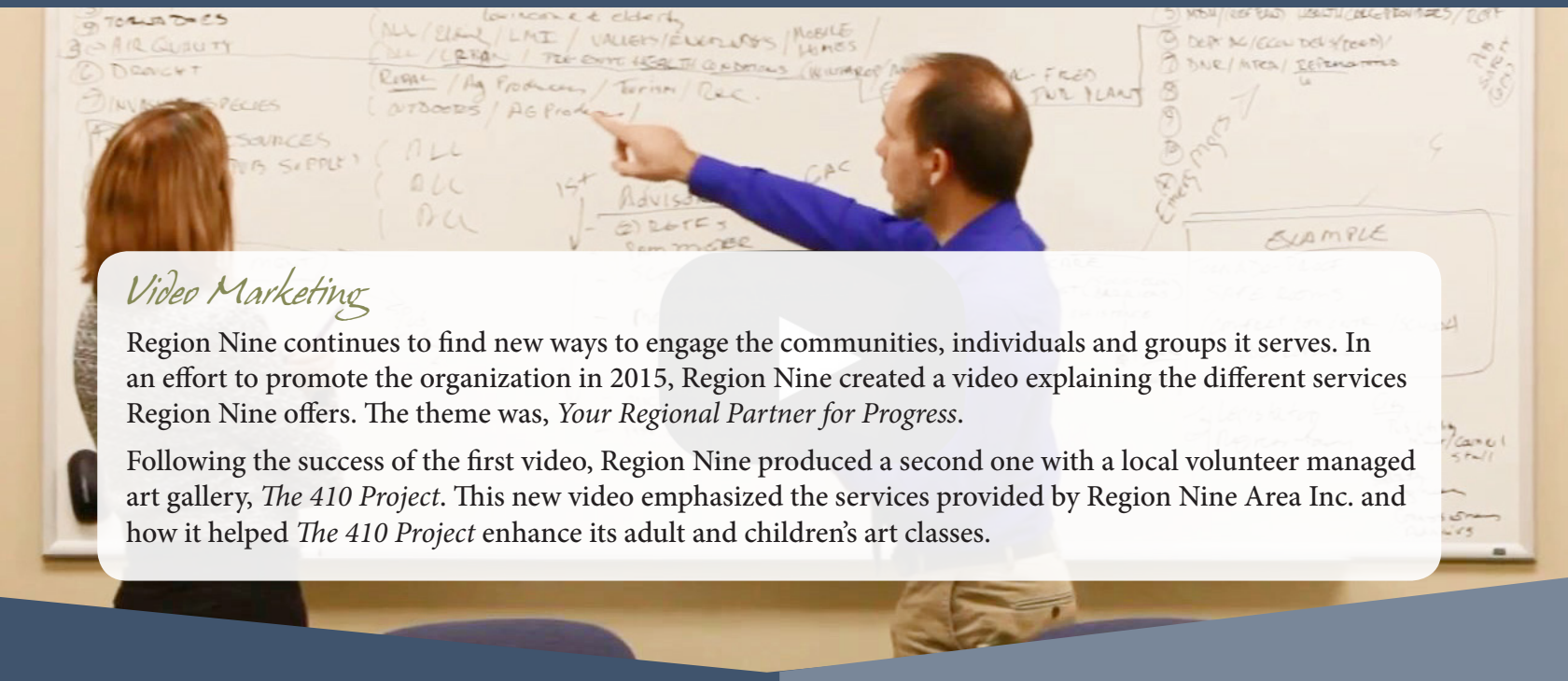
In January 2015, Region Nine's Regional Development Planner, Danielle Walchuk was appointed to serve on the Minnesota Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council. Walchuk is the only member on the advisory council representing a local unit of government for Greater Minnesota.

The purpose of the council is to improve services statewide through the coordinated, affordable, reliable and effective use of GIS. It is comprised of multiple organizations including counties, cities, universities, businesses, nonprofit organizations, federal and state agencies, tribal government, and other stakeholder groups that benefit from geospatial technology.

Griensewic Mickelson appointed Treasurer of the Greater Minnesota Partnership

In February 2015, Nicole Griensewic Mickelson, executive director of Region Nine, was appointed the treasure of the Greater Minnesota Partnership's Board of Directors.

The Greater Minnesota Partnership is a nonprofit corporation devoted to advocating for state economic development policies and resources that benefit Greater Minnesota. The Partnership consists of businesses, chambers of commerce, economic development authorities, cities and nonprofits from throughout Greater Minnesota. The board determines the Partnership's priorities and sets its legislative agenda.



Video Marketing

Region Nine continues to find new ways to engage the communities, individuals and groups it serves. In an effort to promote the organization in 2015, Region Nine created a video explaining the different services Region Nine offers. The theme was, *Your Regional Partner for Progress*.

Following the success of the first video, Region Nine produced a second one with a local volunteer managed art gallery, *The 410 Project*. This new video emphasized the services provided by Region Nine Area Inc. and how it helped *The 410 Project* enhance its adult and children's art classes.

Active Living Plans

Active living communities make it easy for people to include physical activity in their daily lives. The purpose of the planning process is to articulate a strategic vision in a community for active living over the next one to five years. The plan can be used to support grant applications and give voice to what the community desires. Communities that implement these plans successfully are taking positive steps to cut down on obesity, health issues like heart disease and high blood pressure, and promote the overall well-being of its citizens.

In FY2015, Region Nine worked with multiple cities in Martin County to develop active living plans. By conducting walking and biking assessments, surveys and meetings, Region Nine staff were able to create an action plan for each community to implement. The planning process led to efforts that support active living in the communities of Trimont, Truman and Sherburn. Region Nine also developed active living plans for the cities of New Prague, Kiester, Montgomery and Lafayette.

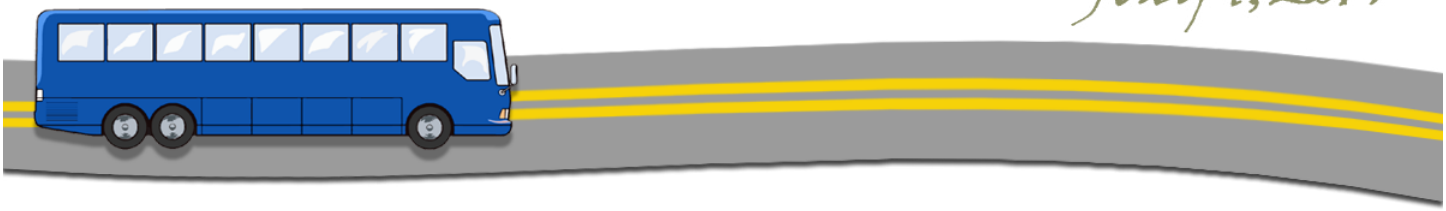
Safe Routes to School

In an effort to encourage more physical activity in children to combat childhood obesity, communities and schools are looking for ways to make walking and biking to school safer and easier. Many communities struggle with safety challenges such as traffic congestion and inadequate infrastructure around schools. Safe Routes to School (SRTS) encourages children to walk and bike to school more often through infrastructure improvements, education and promotional activities. SRTS is more than just a program, it is a comprehensive strategy to instill life-long habits that support physical activity and health.

FY2015 saw almost four times as many cities requesting SRTS plans. In the past year, Region Nine has completed SRTS plans for the cities of: North Mankato, Eagle Lake, Madelia, Blue Earth, Fairmont, New Ulm and Tri-City United. Through community outreach and research, Region Nine was able to develop action plans that addressed each community's unique challenges.

Brown, Nicollet, Sibley Regional Bus Tour

July 9, 2014

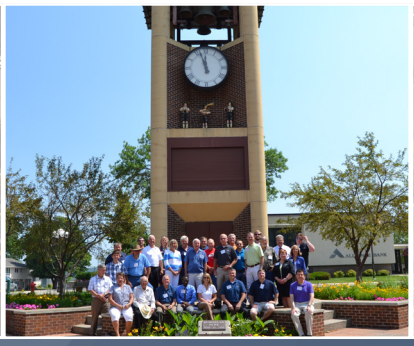


On July 9, 2014, Region Nine held its second annual Regional Bus Tour. The tour showcased Nicollet, Sibley, Brown and Le Sueur Counties. Those in attendance were county commissioners, city officials, state legislature representatives and key partners involved with Region Nine and the service area.

The Regional Bus Tour highlights the work Region Nine has done in the region while giving a face to those who have benefited from the programs and services. Whether it is celebrating a revolving loan fund success by having a slice of pie at the Prairie House in Gaylord, or learning more about the towns that fill the nine counties of Region Nine, these tours are an opportunity to connect with the communities and local partners that the organization serves.

The July 2014 tour highlighted:

- The Highway 14 Project to Nicollet including the bypass interchange and the impact on the City of Nicollet
- The success of the City of New Ulm's SRTS program
- A tour of revolving loan fund success story, *A to Zinnia Florals and Gifts*
- *Social Media Breakfast-New Ulm* which Region Nine co-hosts
- *The Prairie House* in Gaylord, a revolving loan fund participant
- The impact of floods and mud slides on the City of Henderson



2014 NADO Innovation Award

During the 2014 National Association of Development Organization (NADO) Annual Training Conference in Denver, Colorado, Region Nine was honored for their work securing a grant for the Highway 169 Reconstruction Flood Mitigation Project. On June 12, 2013 the U.S. Commerce Department's Economic Development Administration (EDA) announced a $9.8 million grant to MnDOT for rebuilding a portion of Highway 169 near Mankato. This project will not only contribute to the region's economic vitality by keeping Highway 169 open to travel when the Minnesota River floods, but it will also support the creation of 500 new jobs in the region and attract an estimated $10 million in private investments.

The NADO Innovation Awards are given to regional development organizations that demonstrate a commitment to economic development in rural and small metropolitan communities across the country. "Award recipients have created innovative solutions that build on the unique strengths and challenges of their regions, all while continuing to promote sustainable economic growth not only now, but for many years to come," said NADO President Peter Gregory.

L to R: RNDC Chair Jim Swanson, NADO Presdient Peter Gregory, RNDC Executive Director Nicole Griensewic Mickelson

City of Henderson Comprehensive Plan

In February 2015, Region Nine began a year-long planning process with the City of Henderson to update their comprehensive plan. The goal of the plan was to create a blueprint for Henderson's future growth and development while still focusing on preserving its historic landmarks and charm. The residents of the City of Henderson have been actively involved in the planning process and in contributing to the plan. The City of Henderson Comprehensive Plan Update will be completed in early 2016.

Revolving Loan Fund Success Story – Mr. Monogram

Owen Dundas might have been new to the screen printing business when he took over Mr. Monogram in 2004, but he was not a stranger to the product. Dundas was active in local sports organizations, serving on the Mankato Area Girls Fastpitch Softball Board, and frequently used Mr. Monogram's custom printing services. During one of his visits to the store, his friend, and then owner, asked Dundas if he would be interested in buying the business. The timing happened to be perfect as Dundas and his wife Lori were both ready to try out a new career as business owners.

The decision was made and Dundas sought to secure financing from a local bank. Dundas had also heard of Region Nine Development Commission and how it provided loans to small businesses in the region. He was pleased to find that he qualified for a loan from Region Nine's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). "Mr. Monogram is an example of the type of business the RLF program is designed to support," said Lu Vanderwerf, Finance Director for Region Nine. The funding Dundas received from Region Nine helped him finance the purchase of Mr. Monogram and redo the storefront, which included a new awning.

Over the years, Dundas has expanded his business-to-business sales while still maintaining a hometown feel to the store. While Mr. Monogram is not the only screen printing business in Mankato, Dundas likes that his store offers a unique sales floor option where customers can pick up one of Lori's, I❤Mankato shirts, or show off their high school pride. Dundas is proud of his commitment to delivering a quality product, and credits Region Nine with helping begin his successful journey with Mr. Monogram.

America's Competitiveness Exchange

The Third Annual Americas Competitiveness Exchange on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (ACE) tour invited Region Nine Executive Director, Nicole Griensewic Mickelson, to give a presentation on the Highway 169 Flood Mitigation Project. Griensewic Mickelson's presentation highlighted Region Nine to local, national, and international leaders from 28 different countries. The goal of ACE is to strengthen personal and professional relationships among the countries in the Western Hemisphere in order to encourage collaboration, share best practices and ultimately strengthen the economy of the Americas.

U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Matt Erskine, RNDC Executive Director Nicole Griensewic Mickelson

Senior Linkage Partnership

The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging developed and executed a plan to form partnerships for the purpose of increasing Senior LinkAge Line® outreach to diverse populations. Initial targeted partners included organizations and businesses such as the Mankato Community Education and Recreation Center, community leaders in Lyon County, Mankato Refugee Services, Downs Food Group in Madelia, Open Door Health Center and Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services. Various strategies were utilized including partnership meetings, co-sponsoring educational events, hosting lunch and learn sessions and participating in health fairs. Planning meetings were held, partnerships were developed and plans were put into place to provide these partners and the consumers they serve with education, printed materials and training (for staff, employees and consumers).

Commission Members

BLUE EARTH COUNTY

Brad Ahrenstorff, *(Vice Chair) Cities under 10,000*

Eric Anderson, *City of Mankato*

Drew Campbell, *County Commissioner*

Vacant, Township Board

BROWN COUNTY

Jim Berg, *County Commissioner*

James Broich, *Cities under 10,000*

Frederick Juni, *Township Board*

Charles Schmitz, *City of New Ulm*

FARIBAULT COUNTY

Tom Loveall, *County Commissioner*

Darwin Olson, *Township Board*

Bryant Stiernagle, *Cities under 10,000*

LE SUEUR COUNTY

Richard Peterson, *Township Board*

Steve Rohlfing, *County Commissioner*

Vacant, Cities under 10,000

MARTIN COUNTY

Elliot Belgard, *County Commissioner*

Terry Anderson, *City of Fairmont*

Jeff Ross, *Cities under 10,000*

Phil Schafer, *Township Board*

NICOLLET COUNTY

Marie Dranttel, *County Commissioner*

Terry Genelin, *Township Board*

Pam Meyer, *Cities under 10,000*

Diane Norland, *City of North Mankato*

Tim Strand, *City of St. Peter*

SIBLEY COUNTY

Peggy Evenson, *Township Board*

Doug Munsch, *Cities under 10,000*

Jim Swanson, *(Chair) County Commissioner*

WASECA COUNTY

Blair Nelson, *County Commissioner*

Gerri Lienke, *Township Board*

Vacant, *Cities under 10,000*

WATONWAN COUNTY

Ray Gustafson, *County Commissioner*

Gary Sturm, *Cities under 10,000*

Bill Yock, *Township Board*

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Candace Fenske, *Health & Human Welfare*

Jim Grabowska, *School Boards*

Mike Pfeil, *School Boards*

Abdi Sabrie, *Minority Populations*

Vacant, *MN Valley Council of Governments*

Administration

Nicole Griensewic Mickelson
Executive Director

Ashley Aukes
Communications Specialist

Finance

LuAnn Vanderwerf
Finance Director

Linda Wallace
Senior Financial Accountant

Community Development

Byron Jost
Community Development Director

Brent Pearson
Resource Development Planner

Danielle Walchuk
Regional Development Planner

Jacob Thunander
Project Development Planner

Scott Reiten
Regional HSEM Planner

Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging

Linda Giersdorf
Executive Director

Brianna Schmitt
PAS Administrative Assistant

Bridget Schwebach
Senior Outreach Specialist

Brenda Roemhildt
Return to the Community Specialist

Debbie Bauleke
Senior Outreach Specialist

Denae Forstner
PAS Review & Resident Specialist

Elaine Spain
Program Developer

Erica Schott
Project & IT Coord./Admin Assistant

Gail Gilman-Waldner
Program Developer

Joyce Prahm
Fiscal Manager

Judith Blume
Administrative Assistant

Kelly Wolle
Administrative Assistant

Kim Madsen
Lead Program Developer

Kristen Mullen
PAS Review & Resident Specialist

Paula Traphagen-Bossert
PAS Specialist

Rhonda Hiller Fjeldberg
Grant/Contract Manager

Robin Thompson
Contact Center/Comm. Outreach Coordinator

Sarah Reiman
Volunteer Coordinator

Sarah Tackett
PAS Specialist

Sherry Orth
First Contact Nurse Supervisor

Commission and staff as of June 2015

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www.rndc.org