



Board Meeting

Wednesday, August 10, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.



RNDC | 3 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 310 Mankato, MN

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

August 10, 2022 at 4:30 p.m. | Region Nine Development Commission

AGENDA

	<u>Time</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Action</u>
I. Call to Order	4:30		
II. Roll Call – <i>Secretary Sturm</i>			
III. Approval of new Blue Earth County Commissioner			<u>Action</u>
IV. Approval of Agenda		1	<u>Action</u>
V. Approval of June 1, 2022 Minutes		2	<u>Action</u>
VI. Treasurer's Report – <i>Treasurer Dranttel</i>	4:40	7	<u>Action</u>
VII. Election of Officers – <i>Chair Laven</i>	4:45		<u>Action</u>
VIII. Finance Director's Report – <i>Ky Battern</i>	5:00	11	
IX. Chair's Report – <i>Chair Laven</i>	5:15		
X. Executive Director's Report – <i>Nicole Griensewic</i>	5:30	12	
A. Staffing Updates			
XI. Other Business	5:50		
A. Commissioner Updates			
B. Meeting Evaluation		Handout	
XII. Adjournment	6:00		<u>Action</u>

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rohlring called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. at RNDC in Mankato, MN.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrea Boettger, Marie Dranttel, Christian Lilienthal, Blair Nelson, Kevin Paap, Steve Rohlring, Phil Schafer, Gary Sturm

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Tom Loveall

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Laven

OTHERS PRESENT: Elroy Glidden, Ky Battern, Nate George, Corree Johnson, Nate George

There was a quorum.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Lilienthal moved to approve the agenda as presented, Dranttel seconded. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Schafer moved to approve the May 11, 2022 minutes as presented, Paap seconded. Motion carried.

V. TREASURER'S REPORT

Dranttel presented the Treasurer's Report.

Lilienthal moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Boettger seconded. Motion carried.

VI. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Battern shared the Budget & Personnel committee met on May 25th.

Battern noted that looking at the current budget for this year, RNDC will be underbudget for expenditures within the General Fund.

Battern shared that he will be working to provide the board with a monthly Budget to Actual Year to Date summary in FY23 with in the new adopted budget as part of the Treasurer's Report.

Battern noted that starting in July, RNDC will no longer be outsourcing the payroll process. This change will result in minimal added duties for the Finance Director and provide better system detail along with some cost savings.

Battern noted that interviews have been conducted for the Lending Specialist position. Battern noted that further discussions will be had regarding the position and potential future needs due to the small number of applications received.

Battern shared the remaining CARES Act RLF funding to distribute is \$211,380. Several loan applications are out for consideration and the deadline to commit the remaining funds is June 30, 2022.

Battern shared that RLF recently had two loans closed.

Battern shared that there has been no activity within RNAI at this time.

Battern asked the board if there were any questions on the Finance Director's Report.

Chair Rohlifing asked Battern if the CARES Act RLF funding is not completely distributed by June 30, 2022, if an extension would be granted. Battern stated that he does not feel an extension would be granted.

VII. BUDGET REVIEW & RECOMMENDATION

Battern noted that during the Budget & Personnel Committee meeting, it was approved to have a 1 step increase with the notion that the steps were at 2.5% each. Battern mentioned to the board that the step increase is at 2% for each step. Discussion followed.

Sturm moved to approve recommendation of 1 Step (2%) and 4% COLA increase. Boettger seconded. Motion carried.

Battern shared documents showing the current budget outlook and asked the board if there were questions. Battern then presented his recommendations for the FY23 Proposed Budget. Discussion followed.

Schafer moved to accept and recommend the FY23 Proposed Budget to the Full Commission. Dranttel seconded. Motion carried.

Battern shared that the Budget & Personnel Committee approved and recommended the 3% Levy increase. Chair Rohlifing asked Battern to share with the board how the decision of 3% was

reached. Commissioner Schafer noted that the levy discussion needs to proceed with caution as the topic of levies are becoming contentious with taxpayers.

Strum moved to approve recommendation 3% Levy increase to the Full Commission.
Lilienthal seconded. Motion carried.

VIII. CHAIR'S REPORT

A. Resolution 2022 – 04 – Proposed FY23 Meeting Dates

Chair Rohlfing asked Corree Johnson to go over the proposed FY23 Meeting Dates with the board. Commissioner Lilienthal noted one spelling error on the proposed Resolution.

Paap moved to approve Resolution 2022 – 04 Proposed FY23 Meeting Dates. Boettger seconded. Motion carried.

B. Nominating Committee Recommendation on Executive Board

Chair Rohlfing noted that the Budget & Personnel Committee recommended Mike Laven for Commission Chair.

Boettger moved to approve the recommendation for Mike Laven as Commission Chair.
Dranttel seconded. Motion carried.

IX. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Griensewic asked Corree Johnson to fill in for the Executive Director's Report as she was invited to attend the Governor's Ambassador Reception this evening at the Governor's Residence.

Johnson noted that Griensewic has stayed closely connected to the MN Trade Office since the Governor's Trade Mission in November. Griensewic has had continued conversations with the Finnish Embassy in D.C. regarding the delegation visit and how it relates to our region.

Johnson shared that Griensewic invited Guido Wallraven and Sabine Engel to present in New Ulm at Turner Hall. Wallraven and Engel's visit was due to RNDC's connection with the CSM group and interest on how New Ulm or another city in Region Nine could be the next "Saerback".

Johnson noted that Griensewic was asked by Thad Shunkwiler, from the Center for Rural Behavior Health at MSU-M, to be part of his newly created advisory board. The board will meet two times per year, for a minimum commitment of two years. Griensewic is looking at having him present to the Board or Commission in September or October to share updates from the Center.

A. Staffing Updates

Johnson noted that RNDC is looking to fill up to three Associate Planner position as well as one Loan Specialist position. Currently interviews are taking place and hope to have a few new team members soon. Johnson shared that currently RNDC has been utilizing consultants to help with the current capacity, however this is not a long-term solution.

Johnson shared that as you are aware, RNDC is behind on expected expenditures as the current FY23 budget states. This indicates that we have more work scheduled/planned than the capacity of our current team size.

Johnson shared conversations are being held with Budget & Personnel to revise and/or relax our current dress code.

Johnson shared that RNDC held two staff training sessions. In May, staff took the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) led by Region Five's Executive Director and Planner. This month, staff participated in a Strengths-Based Professional Development with Executive Coach Diana Gabriel along with one-hour individual training sessions.

Johnson shared Griensewic's Out of State Travel Requests as of now:

- NADO Annual Conference
- NADO Policy Conference
- NADO Summer Board Meeting
- ACE Fall and ACE Spring
- CSM Saerback Renewable Energy & Welcoming Communities Exchange

Johnson noted that Griensewic wanted to remind the board that once the budget is approved those out of state travel requests are included. Griensewic noted that is this was started last year as it saves time for Budget & Personnel, Board, and staff. Commissioner Lilienthal asked if the budget is approved, if these Out-of-State Travel Requests, are automatically approved. Chair Rohlfing noted, that Griensewic was informing the board what the travel intent was for the year for budgeting purposes and once the details are more finalized, they will be brought before the board. Discussion followed.

Johnson shared that at the June meeting, we will need to caucus for committee assignment by county.

Johnson shared that RNDC does have several commissioner vacancies including College Age Youth, Nicollet, Sibley, and Waseca Townships.

Johnson asked the board to save the dates of August 3 & 4th. Steve Etcher of Marks Nelson will be hosting a training for staff, the Board and Budget & Personnel. **The dates were stated incorrectly. Please note the actual dates: August 10 & 11th.**

Lastly, Johnson noted that at the June Commission meeting, Budget & Personnel will serve as the nominations committee per our by-laws. They will present their recommendations for Chair during that meeting.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Rohlfing asked Nate George to give a brief update on the June 15th Bus Tour.

A. Commissioner Updates

Commissioners shared updates from their municipalities.

B. Meeting Evaluation

Chair Rohlfing reminded the members of the Board to participate in the evaluation that will be emailed out at the conclusion of the meeting.

XI. Adjournment

Nelson moved to adjourn. Paap seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 5:29 p.m.

Steve Rohlfing, Chair

Gary Sturm, Secretary

REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
TREASURER'S REPORT
June 30, 2022

CASH BALANCE May 31, 2022 **\$ 2,796,111.32**

Cash Receipts - Checking	384,952.20	
Cash Receipts - Savings	-	
6 County deposits and interest	1,110.20	
9 County deposits and interest	6,627.93	
Tornado deposits and interest	5,383.23	
Cares deposits and interest	4,414.08	
Micro deposits and interest	1,286.79	
Interest	622.83	
TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$ 404,397.26
Payroll Disbursements		(62,237.06)
Accounts Payable & Other Disbursements		(38,240.21)

CASH BALANCE June 30, 2022 **\$ 3,100,031.31**

Region Nine Checking and Savings	
Checking	\$ 780,027.45
Savings	19,995.44
Total	\$ 800,022.89

Revolving Loan Funds	
6 County	\$ 151,486.37
9 County	835,050.13
Tornado	391,347.87
Cares Act	112,737.98
Micro	809,386.07
Total	\$ 2,300,008.42

CASH BALANCE June 30, 2022 **\$ 3,100,031.31**

REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
June 2022 CASH RECEIPTS
FY 2022

Description	Amount	
DATE: 6/7/22		
EDA Treasury - CARES RLF Reimbursement	200,000.00	
TOTALS		200,000.00
DATE: 6/8/22		
Le Sueur County Settlement - #69228	41,417.51	
Emma's Bakery & Eats - Origination Fee - #3003	1,000.00	
Le Sueur County Settlement - #69187	3.65	
TOTALS		42,421.16
DATE: 6/21/22		
Scott County Settlement ACH	4,843.18	
TOTALS		4,843.18
DATE: 6/23/22		
Sibley County Settlement	29,317.50	
Waseca County Settlement	21,512.82	
Watonswan County	20,116.47	
Southern MN Intititave Foundation	48.42	
TOTALS		70,995.21
DATE: 6/24/22		
Brown County Settlement ACH	32,783.95	
TOTALS		32,783.95
DATE: 6/24/22		
Faribault County ACH	33,908.70	
TOTALS		33,908.70
June 2022 TOTALS		384,952.20

Board Payment Listing

Region Nine Development Commission
Check Date from 6/1/2022 to 6/30/2022

Run Date: 7/22/2022
Run Time: 1:21:06 pm
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Check#	Check Date	Vendor Name	Check Amount	Description
115327	06/24/2022	Lola Inc	1,003.91	Catering Services for Commission Bus Tour - June 15, 2022 - INV 522
115328	06/24/2022	Neubau Holdings LLC	3,024.00	July 2022 Office Rent
115329	06/24/2022	CenturyLink	290.05	Phone Line Charge - May 8 to June 7 - INV 296859333, 4/8 to 5/7 - 292612686
115330	06/24/2022	Verizon Wireless	219.58	Cell & Hotspot Services - 4/9 to 5/8, 5/9 to 6/8 - INV #9908331559 & 9905994940
115331	06/24/2022	Further	24.75	Further Participant Fees - 6/1 to 6/30 - INV 16115318
115332	06/24/2022	The Journal	32.57	Public Hearing Notice Posting
115333	06/24/2022	Faribault County Register	14.70	Public Notice for FY23 Annual Budget - ACCT L17198
115334	06/24/2022	Mankato Parking, City of	129.45	Parking - 3 Months
115335	06/24/2022	Spectrum	119.98	Internet Service - 5/23 to 6/22 - INV 0820665052322
115336	06/24/2022	Xcel Energy	113.00	Electric Utilities - 4/16 to 6/14 - INV 780263366 and 784275508
115337	06/24/2022	Bethany Lutheran College	702.70	Catering for 4/13 - Commission Meetings - Acct 162371
115338	06/24/2022	Consolidated Communications	1,495.49	Phone Service - 5/15 to 7/14 - Acct 507-387-7105
115339	06/24/2022	Principal Life Insurance Company	880.44	Life Insurance Premiums - Acct 1125885-10001
115340	06/24/2022	The Free Press	14.93	Public Notice for FY23 Budget - Acct 112310
115341	06/24/2022	Bartelt, Heather	67.22	Reimbursement - Breakfast for Staff Training (HyVee), Coffee for Training (Caribou Coffee)
115342	06/24/2022	Griensewic, Nicole	60.20	Staff Working Lunch- La Bamba via DoorDash - 5/24/22
115343	06/24/2022	Griensewic, Nicole	362.20	Flight Reimbursement for Cambridge School Attendance - Delta Airlines - September 10, 2022 Flight
115344	06/24/2022	GMS	180.00	May Accounting Software License - INV 273557, 272847, 272848
115345	06/24/2022	Equifax Information SVCS LLC	75.96	Credit Report Runs for RLF - Invoice #2052572221
115346	06/24/2022	Metro Sales Inc	377.25	Copier Contract Lease Charge - 5/27 to 6/26
115347	06/24/2022	GHG Corporation	75.00	Clockwise Timesheet Software - INV 90850
115348	06/24/2022	Vanderberg Cleaning Services LLC	350.60	June Cleaning Services - INV 13847
115349	06/24/2022	Spirited Journeys LLC	900.00	USDA Work for May, 2022
115350	06/24/2022	Region Five Development Commission	1,840.98	Intercultural Development Inventory Group Assessment & Meeting - 5/12/22
115351	06/24/2022	MarksNelson LLC	6,000.00	Deposit for Organizational Consulting Engagement - INV MN1021939
115352	06/24/2022	George, Nathan	38.40	Reimbursement - Riverbend Express - Printed Material for Bus Tour

Board Payment Listing

Region Nine Development Commission

Check Date from 6/1/2022 to 6/30/2022

Run Date: 7/22/2022

Run Time: 1:21:07 pm

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Check#	Check Date	Vendor Name	Check Amount	Description
115353	06/24/2022	Karen Stevenson/Security Storage Syst	210.00	Offsite Storage - INV 20098, 20099
115354	06/24/2022	Kruse, David	96.00	Dashboard Hosting - INV KT2122
115355	06/24/2022	Belgard, Elliot R	86.80	5/25/22 B&P Meeting & Mileage
115356	06/24/2022	Boettger, Andrea S	241.72	5/2, 5/11, 5/12 CSM & Board Meetings
115357	06/24/2022	Branstad, Jim	86.80	5/25/22 B&P Meeting & Mileage
			442.55	3/8, 4/13, 5/1, 5/2 Reimbursements
115358	06/24/2022	Dranttel, Marie	51.70	6/1/22 Board Meeting & Mileage
115359	06/24/2022	Femrite, Lyle	49.36	5/25/22 B&P Meeting
115360	06/24/2022	Lilienthal, Christian	83.29	6/1/22 Board Meeting & Mileage
			83.29	5/25/22 B&P Meeting & Mileage
			83.29	5/11/22 Board Meeting & Mileage
115361	06/24/2022	Loveall, Tom H	80.95	5/11 Board Meeting & Mileage
115362	06/24/2022	Paap, Kevin	65.74	6/1/22 Board Meeting & Mileage
115363	06/24/2022	Richter, Gary	102.01	5/25/22 B&P Meeting & Mileage
			102.01	6/15/22 Commission Meeting
115364	06/24/2022	Rohlfing, Steve J	24.52	6/1/22 Board Meeting Mileage
			64.57	5/11/22 Board Meeting & Mileage
			24.57	6/25/22 B&P Meeting Mileage
115365	06/24/2022	Schafer, Philip H	113.13	6/1/22 Board Meeting & Mileage
			113.13	5/11/22 Board Meeting
115366	06/24/2022	Srp, Roy	40.00	5/25/22 B&P Meeting
115367	06/24/2022	Sturm, Gary L	40.00	6/1/22 Board of Directors Meeting
115368	06/29/2022	Washburn, Chance	412.50	27.50 Hours Worked towards USDA Grant
115369	06/29/2022	Dosan, Payton	448.25	29 Hours towards USDA Grant, Supply Reimbursement at St Peter Food COOP
Check Total			21,539.54	
Report Total			21,539.54	

Note: Payment register does not include Wells Fargo credit card detail on this report. Payment of credit cards has been moved to an electronic payment method and the voucher detail has yet to be entered as we get caught up in our finance office. As of July 22nd, this process had not been completed. This activity will be available/included on the following treasurer's report for all months missing.

Finance

- As of July 18th, Frances Long has joined the Region 9 staff filling the role of our Finance Specialist. Frances' role will include accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll responsibilities, revolving loan activity and client maintenance, RNAI, and other duties as she grows into the position. Having Frances take on these roles will free up time for the Finance Director to continue leading the revolving loan fund process, forecasting, grant management & reporting, and budget assessment while also serving as a backup to those duties as now falling under the role of the Finance Specialist.
- Region 9's fiscal year end was on June 30th and as such Frances and I will be working to prepare for our FY22 financial/compliance audit. I would expect that much of August will be working to reconcile and close out 21-22 fiscal year. Abdo (auditing firm) is scheduled to be on site at Region 9 the September 6th through the 9th. I have expressed a desire to our auditing firm to have a report issued no later than the end of October.
- May and June were hectic months in terms of the CARES RLF administration and budgeting for FY23. Frances and I have been working to get our office caught up in areas that were deferred for higher priority tasks in those months.
-

Revolving Loan Fund

- Region 9 was originally sent guidance from the EDA stating that loans only needed to be committed by the July 27th deadline. However, final guidance (allowing for no exceptions) sent out at the end of June stated that all loans would need to be fully closed prior the deadline, drastically shortening our anticipated timeline. R9 staff, our organization's loan committee, as well as the applicants and their consultants, and Karl Friederich's Law Office were able to scramble to as needed to get those loans approved to closing.
- 4 loans were closed in June & July: Doppeleichen Vineyards, JJ's Beauty & Supplies, Aquatic Gardens, and Moonshot Enterprises (aka Revival on Main).
- The remaining CARES Act funding remaining after the April 1st deobligation was mostly distributed, thought a small portion remains undistributed.
- Given the needed demand of our Loan Committee in meeting the CARES deadline as well as wanting to reassess R9's internal processes, we plan to place a soft pause on the RLF loan process as we look to make program updates. The next meeting will focus on strategic planning, application expectations, and minimum requirements for loan consideration amongst other items.

Region Nine Area, Inc.

- Region 9 has been working with a start up organization to be known as 'The Reconciliation Learning Journey' that pairs up those of Dakota decent with Caucasian individuals from our area to take part in a bus tour of varying historical sites regarding Native American and settler conflicts in this area. This bus tour is expected to take place in September of 2022.

Staff Updates - August 2022

Alejandra Bejarano

Alejandra is leading the strategic planning for the city of Eagle Lake. The small group sessions were concluded last month with a total of 12 participants. A Community Planning Workshop took place on July 13th at Eagle Lake City Hall where Alejandra with support of Nate, Leah and Sabri shared the results from the Eagle Lake residential survey and conducted a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) to gather input from residents about different areas of opportunity and action. Alejandra is currently working on designing and writing the strategic plan.

Alejandra and Kristian are leading a local taskforce composed of local academic institutions and industry focused on talent retention and development of talent pipelines for international students coming to the region for education. Alejandra and Kristian are also working with South Central College to host seminars for local employers on sponsorship opportunities for international jobseekers, while also working on securing a pipeline of talent that can intern, do fellowships, and otherwise get more aligned with regional employers during their studies at the local colleges and universities.

This month, Alejandra attended the Lead for Minnesota 2020 cohort graduation in Washington DC where she presented on the different projects that she has been working on since the start of her fellowship in July 2020 and once hired in August 2021.

Alejandra has continued to attend the Advisory Committee meetings for the Prosperity Initiative Program from the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation.

Kristian Braekkan

Kristian concluded the second portion of the federal EDA funded Manufacturing Resilience plan in June and July. This section included mapping of the region's manufacturing clusters, traded and local clusters with connections to other drivers of the regional economy, an assessment of global changes impacting local and regional manufacturing, and a comprehensive SWOT analysis. This work is scheduled to conclude in the summer of 2023. Kristian has also worked on federal EDA applications with Project Cultivate on a technical assistance/planning grant and NUBRIC on a planning grant. He continued to support the development of MSU's polytechnic programming with Dr. Leah Roue. Finally, Kristian presented with Jason Bruns (MSU Mankato) at the statewide 2MTEC Conference (manufacturing) at Anoka-Ramsey Community College on July 26th.

Sabri Fair

Over the past couple of weeks Sabri has worked diligently to get things in line for local foods week and filming with the local foods interns. Both of those projects are in a good place but

there has been a lot of learning through the process which will make the next round of filming and the next iteration of local foods week more robust. Sabri has also been connected with the farmland access hub which is a multi state collaborative that aims to support land transition and access for new farmers. The hubs goals and projects are well aligned with the goals of the USDA/NRCS grant which is focused on supporting emerging farmers. Thus being able to work on a team instead of alone is a welcome opportunity

He has also been working on the Manufacturing Resilience Plan with Kristian. Sabri is contributing a section on Green Manufacturing to highlight the opportunities this can offer for economic competitiveness and community vitality. He has so far conducted interviews with sustainability consultants, engineering firms, solar installers, and local manufacturers. He hopes that his work can provide a starting point for manufacturers to begin understanding what sustainable manufacturing is, resources available to them, and the benefits it can provide to their company.

Paola Ferrario

Paola started with Region Nine on June 20th. She started working on the sustainability trip to North Westphalia, Germany scheduled for December 2022. She has been working on outreach with key stakeholders to organize the agenda, arranging the logistics, and lining up the programing while abroad. Mrs. Ferrario has created a new concept named the ACE Unit, with intentions to develop a guide on doing business in Region 9 as well as a strategic unit to develop international partnerships to attract talent, investment and business to the region. She is working with Wilfredo Reyes of R. Miller. This is an effort to promote the region and fortify the relationship with the Economic Development Administration and the Organization of American State's star program. Paola is also working on the Agriculture Resiliency grant to develop a report with the team and is currently in the outreach stage. She has also offered our partners at LaunchMN Southwest the strategic international partnerships to develop the angel business investor network and ecosystem building for the region. Finally, she has also worked on finding new resources to help the team optimize and transition to remote working.

Joel Hanif

With the support of Leah, Sabri, and Nate, Joel completed the Mapleton Comprehensive Plan and held a public open house on July 19, followed by a public hearing at the Mapleton Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on July 26. Only two P&Z commissioners were present, and another joined by phone. Those three voted to recommend the plan for adoption by the City Council. Region Nine and the City of Mapleton are currently investigating whether that legally satisfies a quorum since one member was not physically present. If it is determined that it was not, another public hearing will be held before the plan moves on to the City Council for adoption.

Work is ongoing in the Local Human Services Transit Coordination Plan, with the next steering committee meeting occurring in August. Rider survey data will be finalized in August as well, and outreach will continue to transit providers that have not responded to the providers' survey.

Joel and Sabri held a meeting in Madelia with the Safe Routes to School Leadership team (comprised of Madelia's city administrator, the public school superintendent, and the county SHIP coordinator). There, they began building a list of contacts appropriate to make a larger SRTS steering committee. Additionally, Joel and Sabri met with Lourdes Menjivar of COPAL to talk about engaging with the Latino community in Madelia as the student body of Madelia's public schools is roughly half Latino.

In the USDA/NRCS Local Foods project, Joel is working with Anne Ganey on finalizing a report on barriers to accessing NRCS services. That report will be complete and submitted to NRCS in August. Joel has also been meeting with Sabri and the interns throughout the local foods filming process.

Aarón Pacheco

Aaron Pacheco has written deliverable papers for the recent collaborative studies with Antonia Bacigalupa Albaum of Minnesota State University, Mankato on higher education and the connection with local and state industries. Written to assist in the Minnesota Polytechnic program at Minnesota State University, the first study focuses on effects of specialized versus generalized education across the United States and how fields-of-study match state industries across different geographies. The second study looks at particular majors in higher education and how specialized versus generalized degrees fare and adapt to changes and shifts in the economy and their respective industry.

Aaron has also begun a study looking at employment solutions in rural counties regarding labor shortages and housing. He has been looking at the issues in relation to rural-to-urban migration and how an increased influx of foreign nationals has been utilized to compensate for the void in the labor market. Aaron is using his experience and connections in Germany to examine how immigration and refugee placement programs can facilitate this exchange in human capital while promoting positive economic and community development.

Leah Petricka

Much of the last month, Leah has been supporting other staff in their projects. As the Mapleton Comprehensive Plan has moved into the public review and adoption phase, Leah has supported Joel by reviewing the plan and attending community engagement sessions. In Eagle Lake, Leah co-facilitated the community workshop, provided technical support in a few of the focus group sessions, and was a general sounding board as Alejandra executes the

Economic Strategic Plan for the community. Lastly, Leah has been working with Paola to get her integrated into new and on-going projects.

Leah also represented Region Nine (with Corree) at the last Inclusive and Equitable Communities (IEC) cohort convening lead by SMIF, the grantor to ten grantees. Grantees presented program outcomes and participated in a stakeholder mapping exercise for future strategic planning. SMIF is in talks to offer the grant again and if Region Nine continues as a partner in this specific grant initiative.

Leah has continued to represent Region Nine in Wells as their coach. On July 12, the REV team hosted a digital marketing event in which 8 businesses representatives attended. The REV team partnered with SBDC and the local chamber to provide business education in the community which they plan to continue quarterly.

Up next is a feasibility study in the food and ag sector as part of the SBA hub and spoke grant as well as the ag resiliency report. Leah (with Paola) has been looking into tools for tracking metrics and progress for annual reporting and general project management for team communication.

Terms & Abbreviations

AURI – Agricultural Utilization Research Institute

CEDS – Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

CGMC – Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities

DEED – Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

DHS – Minnesota Department of Human Services

EDA – Economic Development Administration

EDD – Economic Development District

GAC – Gustavus Adolphus College

GIS – Geographic Information Systems

GMG – Greater Mankato Growth

GMDC – Greater Mankato Diversity Council

GMNP – Greater Minnesota Partnership

HACER – Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research

HUD – Department of Housing and Urban Development

LCWM – Lake Crystal Welcome Memorial

LGU – Local Government Unit

LMI – Labor Market Information

LMI – Low-to-Moderate Income

MADO – Minnesota Association of Development Organizations

MAPO – Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization

MDH – Minnesota Department of Health

MnDOT – Minnesota Department of Transportation

MnSCU – Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System

MPCA – Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

MSA – Metropolitan Statistical Area

MSU-M – Minnesota State University, Mankato

MYLAP – MN Young America Leaders Program

NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Services

REDA – Regional Economic Development Alliance

REV – Rural Entrepreneurial Venture

RLF – Revolving Loan Fund

RNAI – Region Nine Area Inc.

RNDC – Region Nine Development Commission

SBDC – Small Business Development Center

SCBDN – South Central Business Development Network

SCC – South Central College

SHIP – Statewide Health Improvement Partnership

SMIF – Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

SRTS – Safe Routes to Schools

TAC – Transportation Advisory Committee