



Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, May 10, 2023 | 4:30 p.m.



RNDC | 3 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 310, Mankato

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

May 10, 2023 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 Branstad</i>			
III. Approval of Agenda		1	Action
IV. Approval of April 12, 2023 Minutes		2	Action
V. Treasurer's Report – <i>Treasurer Dranttel</i>		4	Action
VI. Chair's Report – <i>Chair Laven</i>	4:40		
A. Manufacturing Resilience – <i>Dr. Tom Horan</i> <i>-Dr. Tom Horan, Dean of School of Business & Society at University of Redlands</i>			
VII. Finance Director's Report – <i>Ky Battern</i>	5:20	8	
A. Budget FY23 Planning Update			
VII. Executive Director's Report – <i>Nicole Griensewic</i>	5:30		
A. Resolution 2023 – 06 Approval of the FY23 MnDOT Transportation Work Plan – <i>Joel Hanif</i>	5:40	12	Action
B. Social Media – <i>Nate George</i>	5:45	Handout	
VIII. Other Business	5:55		
A. Meeting Evaluation		Handout	
IX. Adjournment	6:00		Action

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Laven called the meeting to order at 4:51 p.m. at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, MN.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrea Boettger, Jim Branstad, Marie Dranttel, Lyle Femrite, Mike Laven, Christian Lilienthal, Tom Loveall, Blair Nelson, Steve Rohlfig, Phil Schafer

MEMBERS EXCUSED: None

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Nicole Griensewic, Ky Battern, Heather Bartelt, Layne Kockelman

There was a quorum.

III. APPROVAL OF REVISED AGENDA

Nelson moved to approve the revised agenda. Boettger seconded. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF MARCH 8, 2023 MINUTES

Branstad requested an amendment to the March 8, 2023 minutes to reflect the following change:

“Rohlfig moved to approve Out-of-State Travel request for Alejandra Bejarano to attend the Welcoming Interactive Conference. Branstad seconded. Motion carried. Loveall and Nelson opposed”.

Boettger moved to approve the March 8, 2023 minutes with the amendment as presented. Branstad seconded. Motion carried.

V. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Audit Presentation

Battern introduced Layne Kockelman from Abdo, who presented the audit report to the Board. There were no findings. The audit was clean.

Battern noted that Layne Kockelman would also be presenting at the Full Commission meeting directly following this meeting.

B. Recommend Audit to Full Commission

Rohlfing moved to approve the audit to the Full Commission. Nelson seconded. Motion carried.

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Laven informed the Board that he has conducted some research and found that RNDC currently does not have a Code of Conduct policy in place for members of the Commission and RNDC staff. Laven suggested that it would be beneficial for RNDC to adopt a Code of Conduct policy to clearly outline the expectations for everyone going forward.

Nelson made a motion for a Code of Contact policy to be drafted. Rohlfing seconded.

VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Griensewic noted that Susan Brehm, Chicago Regional Director of EDA, is unable join the RNDC Full Commission due to an illness. Griensewic shared that she hopes to schedule another time for Susan to visit the region and the planned conversations can still take place.

A. Resolution 2023 – 04 – Application to Federal EDA

Griensewic shared the resolution to the Federal EDA for a planning and technical assistance grant with partners such as the MSUM President, SCC President and the City of Mankato for the Center for Global Partnerships. If awarded, the grant would be \$97,756 for 18-months. Griensewic shared the work on this grant would utilize Ferrario's time and be part of the goal to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Griensewic shared that FDI has always been a priority of the EDA, however due to staffing and financial limits, FDI has never been tackled. Discussion followed.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Dranttel moved to adjourn. Boettger seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Mike Laven, Chair

Jim Branstad, Secretary

REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
TREASURER'S REPORT
March 31, 2023

CASH BALANCE February 28, 2023 **\$ 2,784,497.93**

Cash Receipts - Checking	14,910.13	
Cash Receipts - Savings	-	
6 County deposits and interest	1,110.20	
9 County deposits and interest	8,724.54	
Tornado deposits and interest	4,273.03	
Cares deposits and interest	9,499.09	
Micro deposits and interest	451.96	
Interest	1,839.00	
TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$ 40,807.95

Payroll Disbursements		(126,037.73)
Accounts Payable & Other Disbursements		(41,432.23)

CASH BALANCE March 31, 2023 **\$ 2,657,835.92**

Region Nine Checking and Savings	
Checking	\$ 326,971.51
Savings	19,539.21
Total	\$ 346,510.72

Revolving Loan Funds	
6 County	\$ 161,441.72
9 County	709,766.17
Tornado	432,852.55
Cares Act	189,985.58
Micro	817,279.18
Total	\$ 2,311,325.20

CASH BALANCE March 31, 2023 **\$ 2,657,835.92**

REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MARCH 2023 CASH RECEIPTS
FY23

Description	Amount
DATE: 3/7/2023	
Check #69336219 NADO Overpayment Reimbursements	440.00
Check #001486 MADO Reimbursement ECRDC	993.96
Check #51385 MADO Reimbursement MMDC	993.96
Check #141236 MADO Reimbursement ARDC	567.98
TOTALS	2,995.90
March 2023 TOTALS	2,995.90

**Region Nine Development Commission
Board Payment Listing - March 2023**

Check#	Check Date	Vendor Name	Check Amount	Description
115803	03/01/2023	Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota	1,770.92	Grant Award Billable Hours and Mileage 9/14/22 to 1/31/23
115804	03/01/2023	Boettger, Andrea S	194.06	Per Diem and Mileage for February Meetings
115805	03/01/2023	Frame It Gallery	197.95	Custom Frame for Region 9 2022 Bus Tour Photo
115806	03/01/2023	Nielsen, Robert	281.13	Per Diem and Mileage for 1/31, 2/3, and 2/21 Meetings
115807	03/01/2023	Milbrath, Mary	53.10	Per Diem and Mileage for 2/21 Commissioner Orientation Meeting
115808	03/01/2023	Wilkening, Rob	80.61	Per Diem and Mileage for 2/21 New Commissioner Orientation Meeting
115809	03/01/2023	O'Connor, Patty	40.00	Per Diem for New Commissioner Orientation Meeting 2/28/23
115810	03/01/2023	Friedrichs Law Office, PA	250.00	Legal Fees RLF
115811	03/01/2023	Richter, Gary	109.43	Per Diem and Mileage for 2/28 B&P Meeting
115812	03/01/2023	Lilienthal, Christian	88.47	Per Diem and Mileage for 2/28 B&P Meeting
115813	03/01/2023	Nelson, Blair	79.30	Per Diem and Mileage for 2/28 B&P Meeting
115814	03/01/2023	Loveall, Tom H	85.85	Per Diem and Mileage for 2/28 B&P Meeting
115815	03/01/2023	Tuck, Brigid	85.85	Per Diem and Mileage for 2/28 B&P Meeting
115816	03/01/2023	Omar, Ayan	58.34	Per Diem and Mileage for 2/28 B&P Meeting
115817	03/01/2023	Femrite, Lyle	50.48	Per Diem and Mileage for 2/28 B&P Meeting
115818	03/07/2023	Spirited Journeys LLC	1,372.50	USDA Grant Expenditures 2/2/23 to 2/28/23 - Invoice # 1288
115819	03/07/2023	Xcel Energy	64.89	Electricity Charges 1/17/23 to 2/15/23 - Statement # 816743221
115820	03/07/2023	Spectrum	119.98	Business Internet 2/23/23 to 3/22/23 - Invoice # 0820665022323
115821	03/07/2023	Vanderberg Cleaning Services LLC	388.35	March Janitorial Services - Invoice # 15275
115822	03/07/2023	Thriveon Inc	3,460.45	Progress Billing for Microsoft Modern Workplace (Project #4962) - Invoice # 172271
115823	03/07/2023	Thriveon Inc	3,736.58	March IT Support - Invoice # 172325
115824	03/07/2023	DM Stamps & Specialties	90.90	Commissioner Name Plates (3) - Invoice # IV00541305
115825	03/07/2023	Principal Life Insurance Company	327.46	Life Insurance Premiums 3/15/23 to 4/14/23 - Account # 1125885-10001
115826	03/07/2023	Karen Stevenson/Security Storage Systems	100.00	March Storage - Reference # 24537 - Reg9Dev
115827	03/07/2023	American Solutions for Business	120.06	Region 9 Envelopes - Invoice # INV06558062
115828	03/07/2023	American Solutions for Business	44.22	Business Cards Paola - Invoice # INV06585818
115829	03/07/2023	American Solutions for Business	29.29	Business Cards Sam Sharp - Invoice # INV06517501
115830	03/07/2023	Metro Sales Inc	377.25	Copier Lease Payment 2/27/23 to 3/26/23 - Invoice # INV2231580
115831	03/07/2023	League of MN Cities Insurance Trust P&C	9,357.00	Property/Casualty Coverage Premium 12/20/22 to 12/20/23 - Account # 40006411
115832	03/07/2023	GHG Corporation	80.00	Clockwise Timesheet Software Support March - Invoice # 94200
115833	03/07/2023	Friesen's LLC dba Wooden Spoon	114.19	Catering for 10/26/22 Grower's Network Meeting - Invoice # 000147
			103.35	Catering 11/8/22 Grower's Network Meeting - Invoice # 000148
115834	03/08/2023	Wells Fargo	158.20	Radisson Hotel St. Paul, MN - CGMC Conference/Nicole - 1/26/23 - HB
			11.15	Package Mailed to St. James - 2/3/23 - HB
			79.45	Hy-Vee Mankato - Refreshments for Climate Smart Meeting - 2/17/23 - HB
			39.00	Late Payment Fee for January Statement - 2/18 - HB
			7.46	Periodic Finance Charge - 2/16 - HB
115835	03/08/2023	Wells Fargo	235.80	AP Checks for General Fund Account - 2/6 - KB
			657.80	Airfare to Tampa for GMS Conference in June 2023 - 2/7 - KB
			40.41	Hy-Vee Mankato, MN - Fuel for Traverse - 2/10 - KB
			15.05	Pizza Ranch Waite Park, MN - Finance Director's Meeting 2/10 - KB
115836	03/08/2023	Wells Fargo	45.21	Hy-Vee Mankato, MN - Fuel and Car Wash for Traverse - 2/13 - JH
115837	03/08/2023	Wells Fargo	18.19	Flight Insurance for Washington NADO Conference - 2/2 - PF
			279.80	Airfare for NADO Washington Trip - 2/2/23 - PF
115838	03/08/2023	Wells Fargo	251.50	National Custom Insignia Lapel Pins - 1/24/23 - NG
			154.43	Encore Coffee St. James, MN - Lunch Guido Wallraven Visit - 2/16/23 - NG Ok'd by Nicole
			57.94	Hy-Vee Mankato, MN - Fuel for Traverse - 2/17/23 - NG
115839	03/08/2023	Wells Fargo	825.00	BEA RIMS II Multipliers for Year 2020 - 2/3/22 - LP
			75.00	BEA RIMS II Multipliers for Animal Processing - 2/14 - LP
			92.40	Mileage and Per Diem 3/8 Board Meeting
115840	03/14/2023	Branstad, Jim	148.03	Voice Service 2/8/23 to 3/7/23 - Invoice #632616238
115841	03/14/2023	CenturyLink	150.00	NEH Grant Writing Discussions 1/23 and 2/23 - Invoice #230308
115842	03/14/2023	Colin Scharf	60.48	Mileage and Per Diem 3/8 Board Meeting
115843	03/14/2023	Femrite, Lyle	101.09	Mileage and Per Diem 2/28 Orientation and B&P Meeting
115844	03/14/2023	Harris, Paul	91.09	Mileage and Per Diem 3/8 B & P Meeting
			96.00	MADO Dashboard Hosting - Invoice #KT2145
115845	03/14/2023	Kruse, David	40.00	Per Diem 3/8 Board Meeting
115846	03/14/2023	Laven, Mike	88.47	Mileage and Per Diem 3/8 Board Meeting
115847	03/14/2023	Lilienthal, Christian	95.85	Mileage and Per Diem 3/8 Meetings
115848	03/14/2023	Loveall, Tom H	258.90	Mankato Place Parking Ramp Fees - Invoice #16354
115849	03/14/2023	Mankato Parking, City of	80.61	Mileage and Per Diem 3/8 Board Meeting
115850	03/14/2023	Nelson, Blair	3,115.00	April Office Lease Payment
115851	03/14/2023	Neubau Holdings LLC	59.65	Mileage and Per Diem 3/8 Board Meeting
115852	03/14/2023	Omar, Ayan	109.43	Mileage and Per Diem 3/8 Board Meeting
115853	03/14/2023	Richter, Gary	27.51	Mileage 3/8 Board Meeting
115854	03/14/2023	Rohlfing, Steve J	121.88	Mileage and Per Diem 3/8 Board Meeting
115855	03/14/2023	Schafer, Philip H	85.85	Mileage and Per Diem 3/8 Board Meeting
115856	03/14/2023	Tuck, Brigid	140.00	Shirts for Commissioners - Invoice #7198
115857	03/14/2023	United Team Elite	25.00	Late Charge for January Statement - 2/16
115858	03/16/2023	Wells Fargo	1.00	Periodic Finance Charge - 2/16/23
			75.00	Timesheet Software September 2021 - Invoice # 87313
115859	03/17/2023	GHG Corporation	90.00	Timesheet Software January 2023 - Invoice # 93480
			80.00	Timesheet Software February 2023 - Invoice 93844
			100.97	Interpretation Services and Mileage 3/14/23 St. James
115860	03/17/2023	Guerrero, Maria	2,137.50	RLF Consulting January 2023 - Invoice #5
115861	03/17/2023	Klaseus, Susan	600.00	MAPCED Commission Membership Dues 2023 - Member ID 13252
115862	03/17/2023	MAPCED	2,270.60	Progress Billing for Modern Workplace Project #4962 - Invoice # 172815
115863	03/17/2023	Thriveon Inc		

115864	03/17/2023 Verizon Wireless	126.82	Cell Phone and Hot Spot Service 2/9/23 to 3/8/23 - Invoice # 9929595970
115865	03/29/2023 Boettger, Andrea S	75.37	Per Diem and Mileage 3/8/23 Board Meeting
		794.80	Per Diem and Expense Reimbursements NADO Conference 3/11/23 through 3/15/23
		336.81	Mileage, Per Diem, Expenses for German Delegation Event 3/26/23
115866	03/29/2023 Brennan Properties of Minnesota	100.00	Lunch and Learn 5/25/22 - Invoice # 216
		100.00	Staff Training 5/31/22 - Invoice # 217
		100.00	Lunch and Learn 6/29/22 - Invoice # 367
		100.00	Lunch and Learn 8/31/22 - Invoice # 1307
		100.00	Lunch and Learn 9/28/22 - Invoice # 1308
		100.00	Lunch and Learn 10/12/22 - Invoice # 1310
		100.00	TAC Meeting 2/3/23 - Invoice 1303
		100.00	Lunch and Learn 2/9/23 - Invoice # 1304
		200.00	Germany Recap 2/20/23 Full Day Rental - Invoice # 1305
115867	03/29/2023 Karen Stevenson/Security Storage Systems	100.00	Storage Rental April 2023 - Reference # 24538
115868	03/29/2023 Laven, Mike	1,969.30	NADO Washington, D.C. Conference Reimbursements - Flight, Hotel, Travel
115869	03/29/2023 River Bend Business Products	39.50	Questionnaire for MBFFA Printed on Cardstock - Invoice # 384957-00
115870	03/29/2023 SFM	1,032.00	Work Comp Audit Adjustment 3/6/22 through 3/6/23 - Invoice # 2980554
115871	03/29/2023 Sharp, Kelten	800.00	Monday.com Implementation for RNDC - Invoice # 23-0001-01
115872	03/29/2023 Shred-It, C/O Stericycle Inc	122.89	Shredding Service 2/22/23 - Invoice # 8003540121
115873	03/29/2023 Spectrum	119.98	Business Internet 3/23/23 to 4/22/23 - Invoice # 0820665032323
115874	03/29/2023 Xcel Energy	68.39	Electricity Service 2/15/23 to 3/19/23 - Statement # 820842066
115875	03/31/2023 Wells Fargo	95.00	Flight from Baltimore to D.C. for NADO - 2/23 - PF
		825.00	Business Retention and Expansion Training Baltimore - 2/23 - PF
		965.00	Economic Dev. Credit Analysis Training Baltimore - 2/23 - PF
		49.49	Taxi Ride Baltimore - 3/8 - PF
		24.14	Renaissance Hotel Restaurant Baltimore, MD Meal - 3/8 - PF
		49.61	Phillip's Seafood Baltimore, MD Meal - 3/9 - PF
		8.00	Airport Shuttle Ride Baltimore, MD - 3/10 - PF
		36.54	Miss Shirley's Baltimore, MD - Meal - 3/10 - PF
		45.36	Phillip's Seafood Baltimore, MD - Meal - 3/10 - PF
		1,028.27	Marriot Hotel Stay Arlington, VA NADO - 3/11 to 3/15 - PF
		379.49	Renaissance Hotel Baltimore, MD for Training 3/8 to 3/10 - PF
		11.97	Uber Ride Arlington, VA - 3/12 - PF
		18.25	Uber Trip Arlington, VA - 3/13 - PF
		102.30	Epic Smokehouse Arlington, VA - Meal - 3/14 - PF
		10.00	Metro Transit Ride Arlington, VA - 3/15 - PF
115876	03/31/2023 Wells Fargo	545.00	EDAM Membership RNDC - 3/6 - LP
115877	03/31/2023 Wells Fargo	126.00	USPS Postage Stamps 2 Coils - 3/7 - KB
		500.00	Welcoming America Membership Dues RNDC - 3/21 - KB
115878	03/31/2023 Wells Fargo	192.00	Survey Monkey Professional Subscription - 3/9 - JH
115879	03/31/2023 Wells Fargo	251.90	That's Great News Celebration Plaque for 50th Anniversary - 2/28 - NG
115880	03/31/2023 Wells Fargo	10.00	Global Minnesota Membership Alejandra - 3/13 - AB
		75.00	Global Minnesota Membership RNDC - 3/13 - AB
		128.90	Delta Air Flight to Denver 4/21/23 - 3/17 - AB
115881	03/31/2023 Wells Fargo	258.84	Bosphorus Gyros Mankato, MN Catering Wallraven Visit - 2/20 - HB
		14.99	Hy-Vee Mankato, MN Cookies for Commission Meeting - 2/27 - HB
		47.49	Amazon Copier Paper - 3/1 - HB
		19.01	USPS Mailings Business Cards Paola and CEDS Report LuAnn - 3/2 - HB
		54.57	Amazon Office Supplies - 3/4 - HB
		969.00	Constant Contact Marketing Software Subscription - 3/6 - HB
		22.30	USPS Commissioner Appreciation Plaques - 3/9 - HB
		868.32	Marriot Hotel Stay Arlington, VA for NADO Nicole - 3/11 to 3/15 - HB
		1,252.20	Marriot Hotel Stay Arlington, VA - Andrea Boettger 3/11 to 3/15 - HB
		249.95	Amazon Commissioner Plaques - 3/12 - HB
		(20.91)	Walgreen's Chicago, IL - Index Cards and Printer Paper - 11/9 - PF
116657	03/10/2023 Wells Fargo		
Check Total	52,404.50		
Report Total:	52,404.50		

Finance

- Paperwork and authorizations are progressing with the move from Wells Fargo to US Bank and the MAGIC Fund.
- I'm working to create fully monthly financials to serve as the replacement of the current treasurer's report. Aiming to have these built by the end of April and ready for presentation at the next board meeting.
- R9 staff have been working to incorporate Monday.com into daily work routines. Monday.com will provide R9 staff with the ability to review the status of projects in real time. This platform will also be able to provide summary reports that can be provided to the board and commission level of the organization.

Revolving Loan Fund

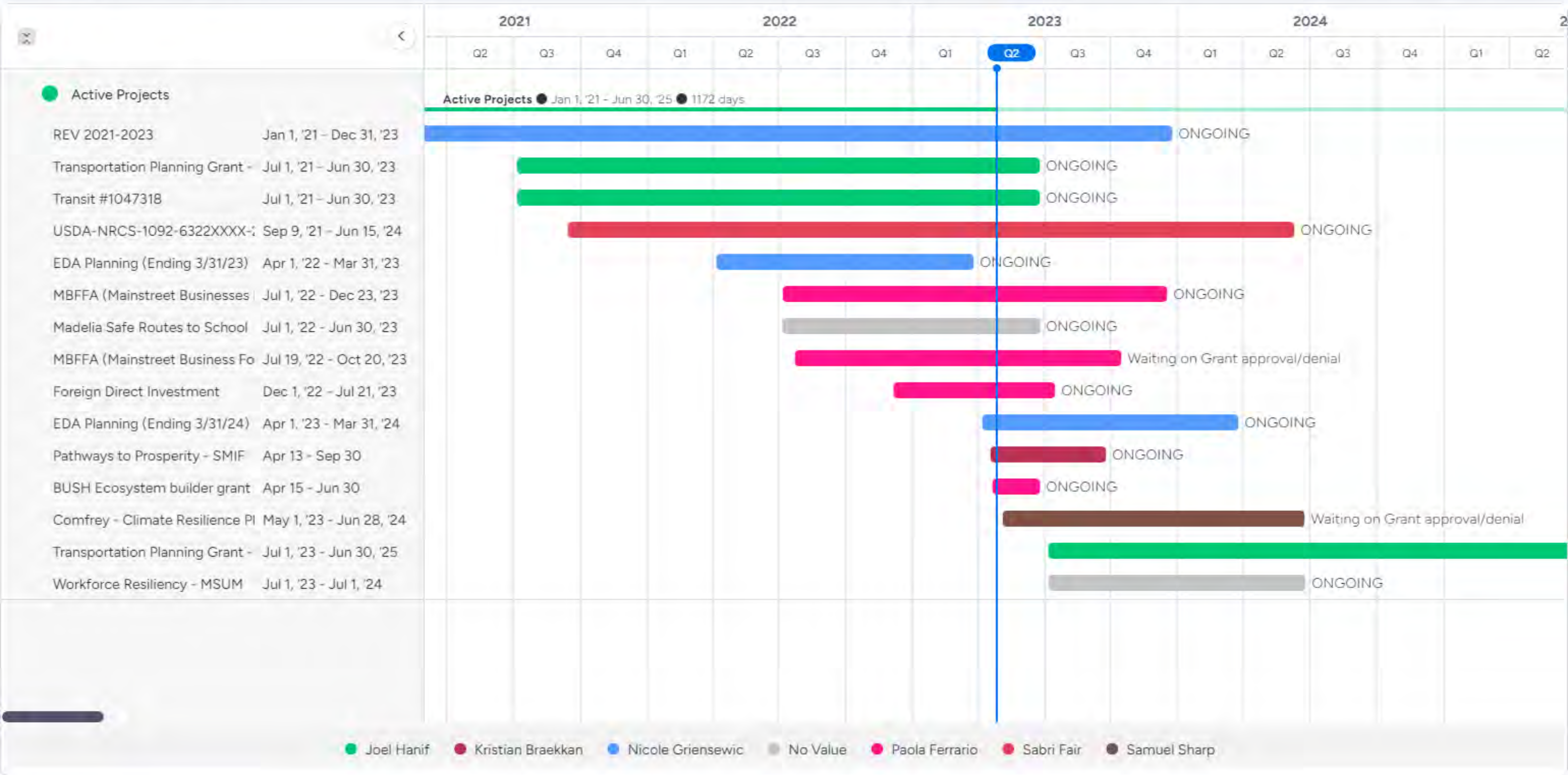
- The commission voted to approve the consolidation of our recently defederalized revolving loan programs. Work will be done to update our current RLF Plan to reflect this move.
- I have visited banks in St Peter, Le Sueur, and New Ulm and have networked with approximately 15 different bankers because of that outreach. Promising loan leads were obtained with these conversations. I plan to visit banks on a near weekly basis in hopes of speaking with bankers and or leaving our RLF and contact information.
- R9 currently has approximately \$2.1 million available to be lent out.
- Presentations on R9's RLF program are being scheduled with the county boards to better increase exposure and promotion of the program.

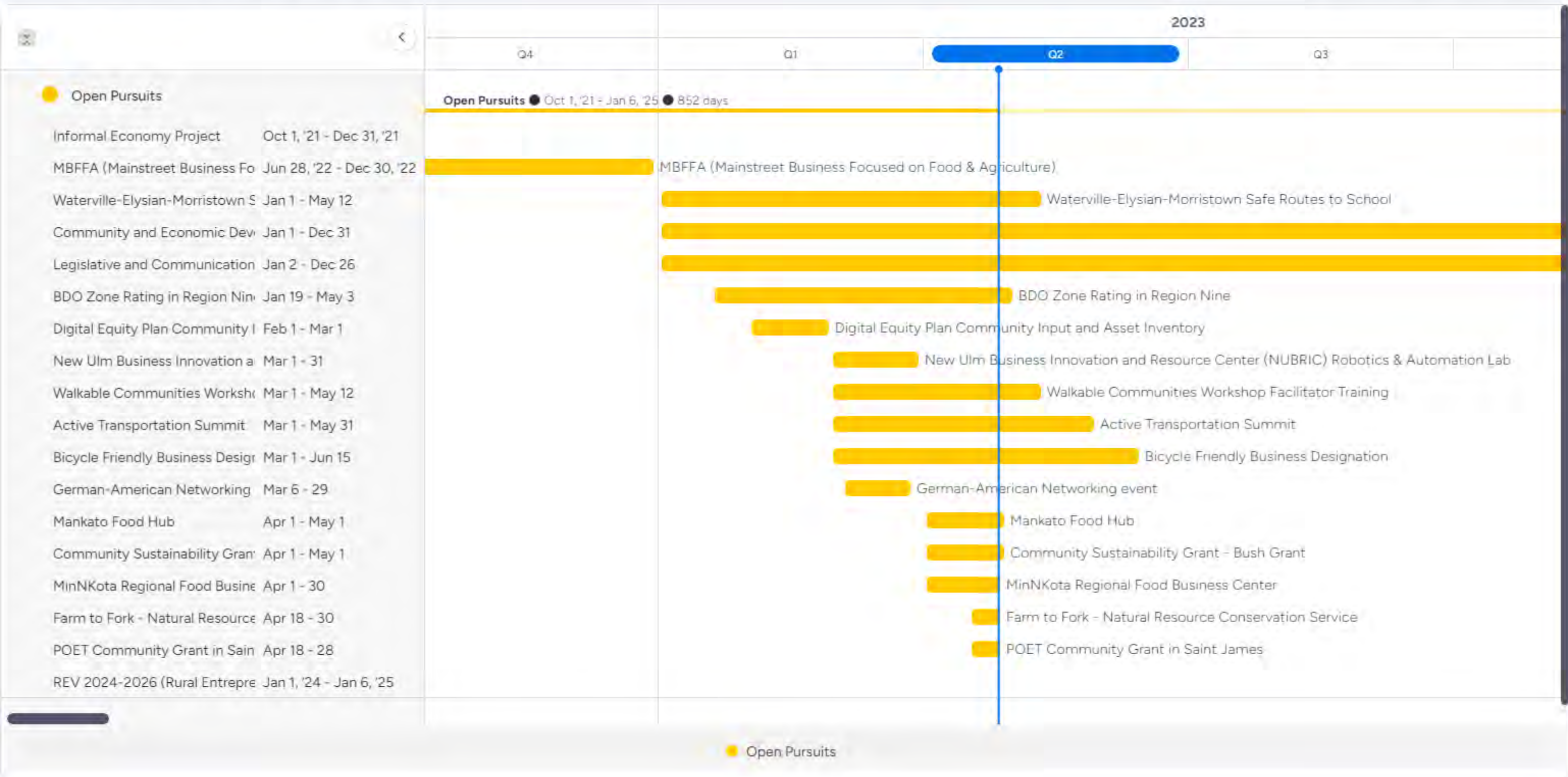
Region Nine Area, Inc.

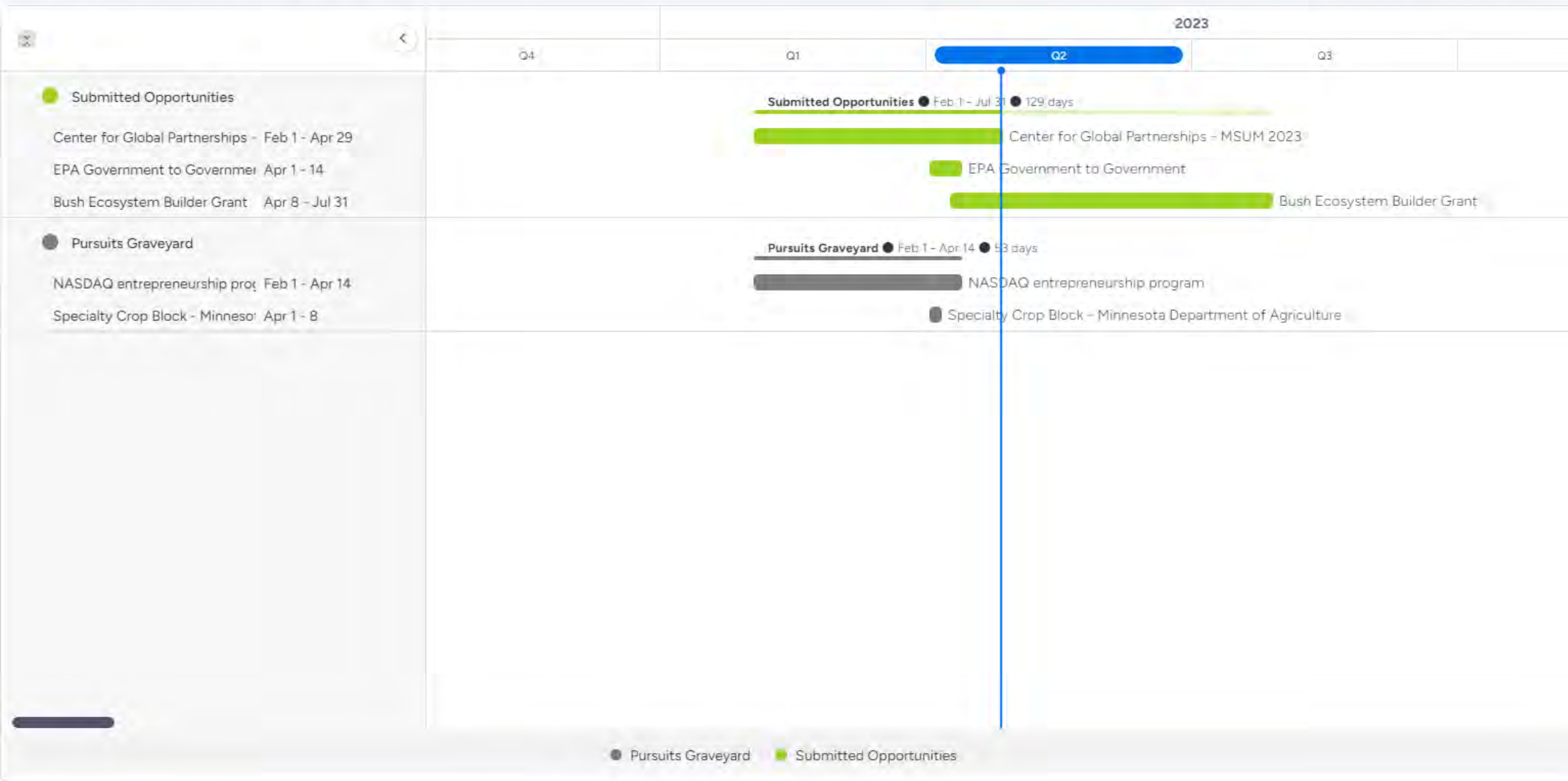
- 990 Tax Return Completed.

Projects Tracker

April 27, 2023 | 13:41:09









Resolution

Region Nine Development Commission
2023 – 06

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION TO ENTER INTO A GRANT AGREEMENT FOR MNDOT PLANNING FUNDS AGREEMENT NUMBER 1052919

- Whereas,** Minnesota Statutes §174.01 designates Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) as the principal agency of the state for development, implementation, administration, consolidation, and coordination of state transportation policies, plans, and programs; and
- Whereas,** Minnesota Statutes §462.383, subdivision 2, authorize the establishment or regional development commissions (RDC) to work with and on behalf of local units of government to develop plans or implement programs to address economic, social, physical, and governmental concerns of each region of the state. The commissions may assist with, develop, or implement plans or programs for individual local units of government; and
- Whereas,** Minnesota Statutes §174.03, subdivision 5, requires RDCs to develop regional long-range transportation policy plans in cooperation with MnDOT and local units of government; and
- Whereas,** Minnesota Statutes §174.03, subdivision 4, MnDOT may provide technical and financial assistance to RDCs in the regional transportation planning process; and
- Whereas,** Minnesota Statutes §462.39, subdivision 2, the RDC is authorized to receive public and private funds for purposes including, but not limited to program administration, multicounty planning, coordination, and development.
- Whereas,** The Grant agreement is for two years; starting July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2025;
- Whereas,** The total obligation under this Grant Agreement is \$150,000 over two fiscal years and requires a local match of \$26,470.

Now therefore, be it resolved that the Region Nine Development Commission authorizes entering into an agreement for distribution of MnDOT planning funds, under agreement number 1052919 and any amendments, with the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Be it further resolved that the chair and executive director of the Region Nine Development Commission are hereby authorized to execute such agreement and amendments.

VII. Executive Director's Report
A. Resolution 2023 - 06

Dated this 10th of May, 2023

Signed:

Mike Laven, Chair

Jim Branstad, Secretary

Certification

State of Minnesota

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution is a true and correct copy of the Resolution presented to and adopted by the Region Nine Development Commission at a duly authorized meeting thereof held on the 10th day of May, 2023 as shown by the minutes of said meeting in my possession.

Notary Stamp

Heather Bartelt, Notary Public

REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

LEARNING EXCHANGE WITH GERMANY

OUTCOMES AND OPPORTUNITIES



DECEMBER 2022

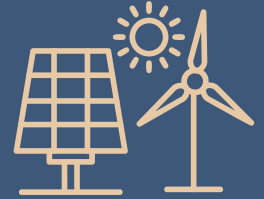
REGION NINE DELEGATION PARTICIPATES IN LEARNING EXCHANGE WITH NRW, GERMANY

This exchange was funded by the Bush Foundation and provided the delegation the opportunity to see a clean energy economy in action. It also created a dialogue between local elected officials and German city leaders which led to international interest in Southern Minnesota.

FEBRUARY 2022

WORLD RENOWNED CLIMATE PLANNER TOURS REGION NINE AND PRESENTS TO AREA RESIDENTS

Technical Director of Saerbeck, Germany's Bio-energy Park, Guido Wallraven traveled to multiple cities in Region Nine. During his time he led discussions with regional business and agricultural leaders, community stakeholders, and students to answer questions and address concerns.



FEBRUARY 2022

GERMAN-AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ATTENDS WALLRAVEN'S DISCUSSION IN NEW ULM

Norma Henning, Vice President of the German American Chamber of Commerce (GACC) - Midwest Chapter, traveled to New Ulm to attend Wallraven's discussion and learn more about the city. This led to a direct connection between the city and the GACC. Henning invited Region Nine to participate in the ICATT apprenticeship program. This program allows students to apprentice at local manufacturers and receive their associates degree without taking on debt and has a proven record of supplying businesses with access to a sustainable pipeline of talent and higher retention rates.



MARCH 2022

REGION NINE HOSTS B2B NETWORKING EVENT

GACC expressed interest in meeting directly with business and community leaders from Region Nine. This led to hosting a business-to-business event which put German and Minnesotan elected officials and investors in direct contact with each other. RNDC acted as the conduit for these connections.



LOOKING AHEAD

REGION NINE IS ON THE MAP!

Since the delegation has returned from Germany, other countries have expressed interest in learning more about Region Nine including Finland. Through RNDC's connection with GACC, the organization has the opportunity to participate in many trade missions and programs that will keep the region competitive when looking at attracting businesses. German airline Lufthansa is also considering a direct flight from Frankfurt to Minnesota which will help draw more German companies to the area.

BENEFITS OF TRANSITIONING ENERGY ECONOMIES

According to a 2021 Rocky Mountain Institute study, the transition to a circular energy economy will produce an estimated \$2.7 billion in annual tax revenues for local governments in 2030. \$2.2 billion is the estimated annual land lease payments to rural landowners hosting turbines or panels on their property. It will also create construction, operations, and maintenance jobs with estimated combined wages of \$6 billion annually by 2030. There are currently 57,931 Minnesotans working in clean energy and nearly 40% of these jobs are in Greater Minnesota.

Clean Energy Economies Minnesota released its 2023 Minnesota Energy Factsheet. This study found that 55% of Minnesota's power came from zero-carbon sources, 31% of electricity was provided by renewables, and renewable generation has risen 75% in the last ten years*. Minnesota is ranked first in the Midwest and 10th in the country for its overall energy efficiency programs according to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy.

DRAFT

GERMANY (event organized)

Leads:

1. Comfrey:
 - a. **1** Guido Wallraven (Event Hosted)
 - b. **3** Community Conversations (Follow-up)
 - c. Quote for solar power for the waste water treatment plant
2. St. James
 - a. **1** Guido Wallraven (Event Hosted)
 - b. **4** Community Conversations (Follow-up)
 - c. Environmental Justice Government to Government joint grant application
3. New Ulm
 - a. **1** Guido Wallraven (Event Hosted)
 - b. Evergreen and New Ulm Public Utility started collaborating (follow-up Paola)
 - c. Interest in learning about Energy projects by the City of Le Sueur
 - d. Generated interest from IHK (German-American Chamber of Commerce in NRW) to visit Minnesota
 - e. German-American ICATT- Apprenticeship program
4. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency-
 - a. IRA funding added RDO eligibility to obtain funding
 - b. Funding for Grant writing included as a possible competitiveness resource with Academia
 - c. Opportunity presented to bring Danish Anaerobic Biodigester (Follow-up Nicole)
 - d. Region 9 invited to participate in the State Wide Climate Action Plan
5. CEEM (Clean Energy Economy Minnesota)
 - a. Bio Economy Development Opportunity Zone Certification exploration
 - b. Collaboration with the Department of Agriculture to certify Region 9 as BDO Zone
 - c. Collaboration with the USDA on rural development and BDO Zone
 - d. Grow MSP collaboration and possible funding for BDO Zone Certification
 - e. CHS Transportation collaboration on BDO zone certification

New Ulm (Event Organized) -March 26th

Leads:

6. **Economic Impact of hosting delegation**
 - a. Total event revenue \$5,000
 - b. Hotel: 2,625

- c. Bus: \$1,000/day
 - d. per day event **\$8,625 aprox**
- 7. St. James
 - a. **1** Christof Wetter (Event Hosted)
 - b. Visit to Morris to learn about learn about Energy use
- 8. New Ulm
 - a. **1** Christof Wetter (Event Hosted)
 - b. Visit to St. Cloud Biodigester/Solar/Hydrogen Electrolyzer
 - c. Interest in exploring energy efficiency projects by City of Le Sueur
 - d. **New German delegation to visit New Ulm in September (Delegation of 15, aprox, \$6,000 tourism revenue for New Ulm)**
 - e. Schell's Brewery- Ted/Wetter
 - f. Blackfrost Distillery- Jace/Wetter
- 9. Waseca
 - a. Christof Wetter (Event Hosted)
- 10. VORTREX-Todd Scheifer- Waseca Startup request for assistance on funding grant opportunities
 - a. MPCA- IRA funding
 - b. GEN GLOBAL- Venture Capital/ Angel Investors
 - c. Department of Agriculture
 - d. Minnesota State University
 - e. EDA Build to Scale Funding/Venture Challenge
- 11. Invitation to host Finnish Delegation (Declined due to short notice)
- 12. Invitation to host a new German delegation from the IHK in September Invitation
- 13. 2G- setup office - 1 job to start off - In Region 9
- 14. Lufthansa- 1 direct flight to Frankfurt joint request with MAC

Staff Updates – May 2023

Nicole Griensewic

Commissioners,

You will notice this month's board has a different layout. The aim of the new layout is to better gauge what information you, as a commissioner, find to be most helpful. As always, we ask that you complete the meeting evaluation after or during the meetings to provide us with better insight on what is most important to help you effectively and productively lead as a commissioner. We as a team take the feedback very seriously. We constantly strive to improve and ensure our work's relevancy through clear communication.

The budget and personnel committee met recently to discuss goal setting for the Executive Director position. As partial follow up, I have been working on getting on all county board agendas, as Commissioners shared their interest in having RNDC presentations locally to ensure governing boards understand the work and our role in the region. The following county board presentations have been set up:

Blue Earth: May 30th; Faribault: Aug. 15th; Le Sueur: Aug. 22; Nicollet: Aug. 8th; Martin & Watonwan Counties to be scheduled in fall and have not heard back from Brown County. Presented to Sibley County Board on April 25.

Staff:

Introduced Paola to Pam Bishop, Vice President of Entrepreneurship for SMIF. Paola has a background in entrepreneurship. Once cities are selected for the next three-year REV cohort, RNDC will need to decide whether to continue having an employee be an assigned REV coach for a community within our region. The funding increased from \$5k to \$6k for at least 80 hours of work, plus mileage costs.

Presentations:

Asked to present to SMIF's board of directors and other regional partners re. Feb. 3rd, 2016, Madelia downtown fire and RNDC's role in the response, recovery, and ongoing resiliency work.

Presented to Sibley County Board on April 25th. Shared a very high-level overview of RNDC's work. Ky gave an overview of RNDC's revolving loan fund.

Events:

Participated in an MYALP (MN Young American Leaders Program) event for new regional cohort that includes two RNDC Commissioners: Omar and Dalton. Spoke to group as an alum

of the program and its impact. Served on Nominations Committee through the Itasca Project, that brought the program to MN from the Harvard Business School.

I had a personal invitation to an open discussion with Senator Klobuchar and Senator Boozman, ranking member of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee regarding the upcoming Farm Bill. The bipartisan event was April 21st in St. Paul at the Science Museum. Other participants included the commodity groups, soybean growers, dairy, lamb, corn as well as partners like USDA-RD State Director, Landkamer. I raised the concern from a commissioner regarding support with our corn producers as it relates to ethanol. Also shared the '3Bs of economic development' in greater MN: *Broadband, Bike Trails and Breweries*.

Upcoming:

MSUM's Center for Rural Behavioral Health Advisory Board Meeting will take place May 5th.

U of M's Center for Transportation Executive Committee will meet in Minneapolis on May 1st. Currently I serve as Chair and help represent greater MN. Attending the annual meeting, awards council and the All Councils meeting in the McNamara Center.

Hosting federal EDA's Regional Director Susan Brehm on May 8-9th in Mankato. Currently coordinating meetings with: President Inch, MSUMM, Dr. Parker, SCC, City of Mankato, Waseca County and Sibley County.

Will be attending an MYALP alumni event w. new regional cohort on May 23rd in Minneapolis.

Will be participating in the MN State Southern Agricultural Center of Excellence, (SACE) spring board meeting on May 4th.

Budget and Personnel Committee updates:

Creation of goals for the Executive Director position.

Creation of Draft Code of Conduct as requested by Board Chair.

Outreach was done w. LMC, AMC, MADO, and other counties.

New Projects:

Assisting a local developer who has three large infrastructure projects in Blue Earth County.

Another developer from Coldwell Banking also reached out for a meeting. They are interested in learning about our work and sharing their involvement with Twin Rivers for the Arts. The meeting will be in Mankato on May 3rd.

Have been having conversations with the German American Chamber of Commerce, Midwest, GreaterMSP and MSP regarding industry interest in Lufthansa adding a direct flight from MSP to Frankfurt. Connected w. Onsite Energy in Mankato, which is owned by Rolls Royce, a German-owned company.

The German American Chamber of Commerce, Midwest, (GAAC) will also be sharing information with Region Nine on an apprenticeship program they offer with German companies.

Organized various connections and communications regarding the “Right to Repair” legislation. Partners from Clean Energy Economy MN, (CEEM) reached out as agricultural equipment was left out of the current legislation’s language. Senator Frentz is the committee chair and has not been supportive of adding ag. equipment. Connected w. various commissioners involved in ag. for them to directly connect w. Frentz if in support. Group Reuse MN raised the concern w. CEEM. Held discussion with colleague from Kennedy School, who authored in the Colorado House the recently passed Nation’s first “Right to Repair” bill.

Continued conversations on getting the region designated as a Grade A BioZone. Meeting with GreaterMSP’s CEO Peter Frosch on May 3rd to discuss the opportunity.

Heather Bartelt

Over the past month, Heather has taken on a variety of important responsibilities. She has skillfully organized Board, Commission, and Committee meetings, while also diligently documenting their minutes. Heather has demonstrated her leadership abilities by continuing to spearhead Monday morning staff meetings, where she has invited staff and partner organizations to present updates on projects happening both in-house and in the wider region.

As a directive of the April 19th Budget & Personnel meeting, Heather was asked to prioritize contacting RNDC’s nine county boards to schedule a presentation from Griensewic on RNDC projects and updates. Heather’s diligent efforts have resulted in positive responses from County Administrators, who have worked with Heather to secure a spot for Griensewic on the County Board Agendas. To date Griensewic is scheduled to present in the upcoming months at the Blue Earth, Faribault, Le Sueur and Nicollet County Board meetings.

Heather, along side Nathan, Corree and Alejandra have been continuing to meet as the planning stage for the Annual Bus Tour is still underway. Nate was able to secure bus stop sites and the Bus Tour Committee is currently working on speakers.

Finally, Heather has continued to set appointments for Griensewic with partner organizations in the area who are interested in learning more about the RNDC.

Alejandra Bejarano

Alejandra continues leading the local taskforce around workforce resilience with Kristian's support. As part of this work, there have been a series of local events around employment of international students. In April, CEDA, Blue Earth's EDA, City of Winnebago and Kivu immigration law hosted an informational at the Ag Center Conference Room for area businesses to learn more about recruitment and hiring of international students. Alejandra is also working with MNSU and Global Minnesota on a series of events for the Fall and Spring semester geared towards regional employers and local students.

Alejandra was invited by the Mankato SBDC to become a FastTrack facilitator. The FastTrack program from the Kaufman Foundation is an entrepreneurial mentoring program designed to help startup founders and early-stage business owners. The program will be offered to local community members in the Fall and Spring of 2023.

The Prosperity Initiative through SMIF just received a new round of applications that Alejandra helped review along with other regional partners.

Last month, Alejandra also participated in the two-day MADO conference on clean energy and sustainable development.

Additionally, Alejandra will lead some of the initiatives that Leah was supporting such as the Digital Equity Plan Community Input and Asset Inventory with the Waseca-Le Sueur Regional Library System, 1 million cups, and the Community and Economic Development committee.

Alejandra attended the Welcoming Interactive conference opened to local economic development practitioners, city officials, non-profit employers, and other leadership to learn about local innovations from peer communities.

Kristian Braekkan

Enjoyed time off. *Will present in person at the board meeting.*

Sabri Fair

As part of Comfrey's continued interest in reducing their energy costs and increasing the sustainability of their community Sabri and Sam presented at a community meeting about solar opportunities for their wastewater treatment plant. The initial findings show that installing a 40kw AC system at their wastewater treatment plant would provide lifetime

savings of \$160,000 even before any grant dollars are acquired. Some grant opportunities that could apply for this project are the USDA wastewater grants and the USDA community facility grants. As a result of this meeting Sabri and Sam will be compiling an RFP to get official quotes for such a system. The community was also interested in transitioning the LP heating system at their plant to electric heat so the heating costs could also be covered by the solar system, further increasing their savings. Additionally, Sabri will be conducting research on financing mechanisms such as using the wastewater treatment plants repair and upgrade fund to finance this project. They hope to have bids from local installers for their next community meeting at the end of May.

Sabri has continued organizing Local Foods Week partnerships to help local farmers find new outlets for their products. So far this year he has connected 6 restaurants with 6 farms from across the region who offer a wide variety of products such as herbs, plums, pork, lamb, vegetables, and honey. The next step in this process will be compiling the marketing and educational materials which will share the story behind the food and make sure consumers know how to purchase more of these products for their homes.

Sabri has supported the Blue Earth County Farm in expanding the number of emerging farmers who will be growing at that location to 6 farmers. These farmers are people who wouldn't otherwise have access to the amount of land necessary to grow fruits and vegetables at a market scale. These farmers, mostly from East Africa, will focus on growing culturally relevant foods like okra, amaranth, and collard greens. These crops will be sold at the onsite farmstand, and some will be donated to local food shelves.

As part of the Safe Routes to School planning process for Madelia, the school wanted to find ways to continue walking and biking education for their students. Sabri connected their school staff with the Greater Mankato Bike Walk Advocates to host biking enrichment programming for students in summer school. Sabri will also work with the school to apply for a Safe Routes to School Boost Grant to cover staff time for the training and programming.

Paola Ferrario

Paola Ferrario was tasked with managing multiple foreign direct investment projects, including a Technical Assistance grant application to the EDA and follow-up communication with the German-American Chamber of Commerce. The business to business event for March 26th, 2023 in Minneapolis has yielded positive results, including a visit from Professor Wetter to St. James, New Ulm, and Comfrey. The German-American Chamber of Commerce plans to bring a delegation to Region Nine, focusing on Smart Grid and Energy Storage in September 2023.

In addition to her work on foreign investment projects, Paola has been involved in expanding partnerships in Latin America for MSU and contributing to the MBFFA grant, including collaborating with Sabri on a survey and working with Nate on a social media campaign. She

will be presenting marketing materials highlighting the entrepreneur's needs and the impact of Region Nine's work with Ag entrepreneurs.

Paola's responsibilities also include implementing an onboarding and tracking system using Monday.com, a project management tool that enables the team to visualize their workload, track deadlines, and prioritize tasks.

Nathan George

This month Nathan has been continuing work on the Manufacturing Resiliency Plan with Kristian, Sabri, and Aaron. The plan aims to answer the question, "How do we grow our economic, environmental, and social resilience in the region?". The plan will lay out steps for the foundation for economic resiliency and agility. Nate's part in the plan is the layout, combining different sections from multiple planners to create a unified voice, and editing the plan to conform to the plain language initiative.

Nathan has also been creating marketing plans for Local Foods Week and the Mainstreet Business Focused on Food and Agriculture (MBFFA) needs assessment survey. For Local Foods Week, he has been working with Sabri internally, and Gwenn Wolters and Hannah Hollingshead from MSU-M to create a plan that will maximize exposure for the participating farmers and restaurants. For the MBFFA needs assessment, Nathan is working with Paola to create a plan involving a social media and radio component to increase the number of responses to the MBFFA needs assessment survey.

To aid the marketing plans, Nathan and Sabri attended an agricultural marketing session. The interactive session provided some best practices and creative ideas on how to market an agricultural business. The session also provided insights on how to help farmers tell their stories.

Nathan worked with Nicole and Paola to apply for a Bush Foundation Ecosystem grant. The grant would provide funding for arts and cultural initiatives that are tied directly to sustainability practices. This grant would provide RNDC with the opportunity to promote sustainable practices and regional arts programs as they align with the CEDS.

Nathan is working with RNDC Bus Tour Committee to organize this year's event. The stops and hosts have been confirmed. The next step is organizing speakers, catering, and miscellaneous tasks. This year the bus tour will be visiting Eagle Lake City Hall, JR's Barn, and Pleasant Grove Pizza Farm. The Eagle Lake stop will highlight the strategic economic development plan. At JR's Barn, the focus will be the RLF program and the positive impacts it has had in the region. The Grower's Network will be highlighted at Pleasant Grove Pizza Farm.

The above tasks are in addition to daily tasks which include writing the e-newsletter, social media management, website administrative tasks, researching and promoting available funding opportunities, and internal and external communications.

Joel Hanif

Joel has been working on several projects, including the Madelia Safe Routes to School Plan, the regional Local Human Services Transit Coordination Plan, and various duties as prescribed by Region Nine's MnDOT planning grant. In this period, Joel completed a draft for the Madelia Safe Routes to School Plan based on data, stakeholder feedback, and guidance from the city's Safe Routes to School team (including school administrators, community health workers, local elected officials, law enforcement, and other residents). He held a local plan review meeting in Madelia on May 4 and will use the feedback from that meeting along with feedback from MnDOT engineering to complete the final plan. Joel has also met with MnDOT's staff and is helping Madelia Elementary School pursue some additional Safe Routes implementation funding to install bike racks by the end of June. Along with Sabri, Joel has also been working with the Madelia School district to pursue a Safe Routes Boost grant to help implement a summer bike enrichment program in the school district.

Joel submitted a draft of the Local Human Services Transit Coordination Plan for MnDOT to review. He will incorporate MnDOT's comments into the final draft. While that plan is out for review, Joel has still been engaging stakeholders on next steps based on the plan's findings. On April 13, he met with the Minnesota Riverbend Chapter of the National Federation for the Blind to discuss issues with accessing transit services for visually impaired people. This meeting, like many others, demonstrated a need for a Regional Transportation Coordination Council (RTCC) to better facilitate cooperation between multiple transit agencies (public and private) and human service providers and ultimately make mobility in the region easier.

Within the MnDOT planning grant, Joel has done a variety of work. He has been engaged with the Brown-Le Sueur-Nicollet-Waseca SHIP and Rice County SHIP offices on getting funding for a Safe Routes to School plan for the Waterville-Elysian-Morristown School District. While the contract is still pending, SHIP has committed to provide \$8,000 in funding between the two offices, and MnDOT District 7 will allow Region Nine to use planning grant dollars to cover the remaining costs. This project will begin in July.

Joel attended the Towards Zero Deaths Regional Roundtable in St. James on April 24. At this roundtable, he met with law enforcement, EMS workers, MnDOT personnel, and other stakeholders to discuss current trends in road safety and efforts to equitably serve the region's increasingly diverse population. Additionally, he participated in a SWOT analysis exercise to help assess current strengths and issues and guide future regional Toward Zero Deaths programming.

Joel held a Region Nine Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting on May 3. At that meeting, he presented the proposed workplan for next fiscal year's MnDOT planning grant

and committee members voted to recommend adoption of the workplan by the Region Nine Board of Directors. Guest Nichole Morris of the University of Minnesota's HumanFIRST Lab presented her research on optimal sight distance at rural intersections. Lastly, there was a roundtable session where TAC members could discuss current events and issues in transportation in their communities. In addition to the Region Nine TAC, Joel also participated in the Mankato-North Mankato Area Planning Organization (MAPO) TAC meeting on April 20. There, he participated in discussions and votes on multiple items: recommendation to approve Carbon Reduction Program project rankings, recommendation to approve amending the MAPO Transportation Improvement Program, and recommendation to approve the resolution adopting the Transit Asset Management Plan.

Finally, on April 21, Joel attended the newly formed PROTECT (Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation) subgroup as the representative for Regional Development Organizations in Minnesota. This group is a subset of a larger Climate Resilience Workgroup and will help MnDOT develop a Resilience Improvement Plan to guide the investment in PROTECT funds.

Corree Johnson

Corree Johnson has held meetings with each staff member to discuss website content and, based on their feedback on their current projects, has been updating the website to tell better RNDC's story and the services offered by the team. Updates will be completed by the end of May, with updates being made as needed.

In addition to the main website, Corree is updating the Board Portal to be more comprehensive, providing commissioners with materials they need before any meetings, etc. She has also developed a guide to help commissioners log in to the portal with the updated credentials listed to make accessing the portal easier.

Due to a third-party software update, the regional dashboard needs to be updated. This update will be completed by Dave Kruse, who originally created the dashboard and maintains the site. Kristian Braekkan and Corree will review the metrics to ensure they are aligned with the CEDS and Legislative Priorities and can be used to better reflect the progress happening in the region. Additionally, Corree will create landing pages on the website for each of the metrics that will provide more insights and resources.

To enhance internal and external communications, Corree has updated the style guide and templates as well as presented best practices on how staff can utilize these resources. Additionally, she is helping staff plan and prepare for the upcoming Annual Bus Tour.

Corree will be working with Kristian on a feasibility study for NUBRIC, based in New Ulm, starting in June.

Frances Long

Along with Ky, Frances has been participating in the Equitable Lending Leaders Cohort. This is a program designed to find ways to make the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program more robust and inclusive. The objective of this program is to help restore the regional economy by ensuring equal access to financing opportunities and building on the strength of our regional diversity. The first phase of this training is to set up interviews with small, local business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs. The purpose of these interviews will be to determine the barriers they have encountered, and the resources they feel would best support their continued success. Frances has been putting together a list of connectors – community leaders, spiritual leaders, and small business owners – to facilitate these conversations.

Along with outreach to the established list of connectors, Frances has been involved in interviews conducted by Sabri and Paola in their work with MSU. Their objective is also to determine the barriers faced by small businesses, and the resources they need to thrive in the region. This is in sync with the work the finance team is doing for the Equitable Lending Leaders Cohort.

Frances has been collecting the semi-annual financial reports of Region Nine's active RLF loan clients to ensure loan commitment compliance. She has also been scheduling site visits with all active clients. The purpose of these site visits is to provide excellent customer service and support. In person visits will allow the finance team to get a first-hand look at how these businesses are faring, and to remind clients face-to-face that Region Nine is always available to offer support and help them find resources if there is anything they need to their continued success.

In an effort to promote Region Nine's revolving loan fund, Frances has compiled a comprehensive list of bankers in the nine-county region. The list will serve as a reference for Ky to do outreach. The goal of this outreach will be to collaborate with other lenders and to gather information regarding potential loan clients. The bulk of Region Nine's active loan clients are in a limited number of counties, so priority will be given to counties that are currently underrepresented.

Ky and Frances will be joining an RLF roundtable discussion in St. Cloud on May 3rd. The meeting will be attended by RLF representatives from other development commissions around the state. The group will discuss a variety of revolving loan fund best-practices.

In addition, Frances continues to perform daily finance tasks: payroll, accounts payable, bank deposits, credit card reconciliation, bank reconciliations, and maintaining monthly RLF loan payment activity.

Aaron Pacheco

Aaron is finishing his work on the Manufacturing Resilience project. His work on data and visualization analyzes the demographics of the region and the greater manufacturing contributions to regional employment. In looking at who works and lives in Region Nine, the demographic components have shown growing diversity and a strong correlation to economic productivity. In agriculture, crop farming makes up a large percentage of economic output by square mile, but by employment, manufacturing is the main source of income for much of the population. This relationship between the big agricultural industries is further expressed as nearly half of all crop production (mostly corn and soy) is purchased by meat producers and food manufacturers.

Given the significance of manufacturing as a major industry in our area, Aaron has narrowed the analysis down to the nine counties to examine their relationships between one another and how Region Nine compares to the rest of the neighboring Minnesota and Iowa county data. Unlike the advancements of crop and farming science, manufacturing remains significantly reliant on labor, and with wage growth lagging behind other similar regions and industries, there has been a large amount of outmigration. To accommodate the losses of skilled labor, many large firms have unfortunately moved to deskilling jobs as a solution (either by intentional design or by following general industry trends). Through the Manufacturing Resilience project and his larger western corn belt economic development study, Aaron is examining how targeted investments including foreign direct investment in high-tech, skilled, and higher paid employment in the region could help promote upskilling, population retention, and restore rural communities. He asks, “in a world where multinational enterprises are making their presence felt, especially in less densely populated rural economies, where does southern Minnesota fit in, and can we shape investment to build up our communities?”.

Sam Sharp

Samuel has supported grant applications for multiple communities interested in reducing their energy costs and taking advantage of the available financing for clean and renewable energy. Two planning grant applications through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) were awarded funding for the communities of Saint Peter and Comfrey, where Samuel played a key role in the application development process.

Saint Peter will be consulting with ISG to perform an engineering study on their current wastewater facility and their filtration system surrounding a sediment retention pond. RNDC will remain uninvolved with the planning process. However, Samuel will be the main contact for the initial kickoff meeting and will offer support once the study is completed as implementation funds are sought out.

The City of Comfrey will focus on community-wide impacts as they relate to resilience and climate-based initiatives. Samuel has been helping facilitate community-driven conversations to identify areas of interest and explain opportunities for project financing. Planning activities are anticipated to begin in May 2023.

The MPCA approached RNDC with an opportunity to invest in a joint grant application facilitated by the Environmental Justice Government to Government (EJG2G) program. Samuel has corresponded with a representative at the MPCA to determine project ideas, application packages, and timelines associated with the grant application. This will take place in Saint James, focusing on workforce development curriculum and residential weatherization kits. The application is submitted, and award status is pending.

Samuel has been supporting a strategic development and resilience plan for Saint James, where he will be responsible for the sustainability component. Maps, figures, and recommendations will be integrated into the plan as part of the final deliverable and will be used to support funding opportunities for implementation once the plan is completed.

Additionally, Samuel has been corresponding with Ecostrat, a company specializing in biomass feedstock and supply chains, to explore opportunities for Region Nine to receive a Bioeconomy Development Opportunity Zone (BDOZ) rating. This rating assesses current feedstock production and existing infrastructure to measure capacity for hosting a biomass facility in the region. Ecostrat will then market the region to their global network of interested developers. The rating covers a 75-mile radius featuring most of RNDC's jurisdiction. If pursued, this opportunity would create dozens of local jobs and connect the region to the global market.

Terms & Abbreviations

APR – Annual Performance Reports (CEDS)	MCLA - Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs
ATP - Area Transportation Partnership	MDH – Minnesota Department of Health
AURI – Agricultural Utilization Research Institute	MnDOT – Minnesota Department of Transportation
CEDS – Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy	MnSCU – Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System
COPAL – Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Acción Latina (Communities Organizing Latino Power and Action)	MPCA – Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
CGMC – Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities	MSA – Metropolitan Statistical Area
DEED – Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development	MSU-M – Minnesota State University, Mankato
DHS – Minnesota Department of Human Services	MYLAP – MN Young America Leaders Program
EDA – Economic Development Administration	NEH – National Endowment for the Humanities
EDD – Economic Development District	NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Services
GAC – Gustavus Adolphus College	REDA – Regional Economic Development Alliance
GIS – Geographic Information Systems	REV – Rural Entrepreneurial Venture
GMG – Greater Mankato Growth	RLF – Revolving Loan Fund
GMDC – Greater Mankato Diversity Council	RNAI – Region Nine Area Inc.
GMNP – Greater Minnesota Partnership	RNDC – Region Nine Development Commission
HACER – Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research	SACE – Southern Agricultural Center for Excellence
HUD – Department of Housing and Urban Development	SBDC – Small Business Development Center
LCWM – Lake Crystal Welcome Memorial	SCBDN – South Central Business Development Network
LGU – Local Government Unit	SCC – South Central College
LMI – Labor Market Information	SHIP – Statewide Health Improvement Partnership
LMI – Low-to-Moderate Income	SMIF – Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation
MADO – Minnesota Association of Development Organizations	SRTS – Safe Routes to Schools
MAPO – Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization	STIP – State Transportation Improvement Program
	TAC – Transportation Advisory Committee