



Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, June 7, 2023 | 4:30 p.m.



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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

June 7, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. | RNDC

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 May 10, 2023 Minutes		2	Action
V. Treasurer's Report – <i>Treasurer Dranttel</i>		7	Action
VI. Finance Director's Report – <i>Ky Battern</i>	4:35	11	
VII. Budget Review & Recommendation	4:45		Action
VIII. Chair's Report – <i>Chair Laven</i>			
A. Resolution 2023 – 07 - Proposed FY24 Meeting Dates	5:20	12	Action
IX. Executive Director's Report – <i>Nicole Griensewic</i>	5:30		
A. Manufacturing Resolution 2023 – 08		13	Action
X. Other Business	5:50		
A. Commissioner Updates			
B. Meeting Evaluation		Handout	
XI. Adjournment	6:00		Action

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Boettger called the meeting to order due to Chair Laven's scheduling conflict at 4:30 p.m. at RNDC in Mankato, MN

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrea Boettger, Jim Branstad, Marie Dranttel, Lyle Femrite, Tom Loveall, Steve Rohlfsing, Phil Schafer

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Christian Lilienthal

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

MEMBERS LATE: Mike Laven, Blair Nelson

OTHERS PRESENT: Nicole Griensewic, Ky Battern, Kristian Braekkan, Joel Hanif, Nate George, Heather Bartelt, Dr. Tom Horan, Mattie Anders

There was a quorum.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Griensewic requested that the Finance Director's report be moved to before the Treasurer's Report

Rohlfsing moved to approve the revised agenda. Femrite seconded. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF APRIL 12, 2023 MINUTES

Schafer moved to approve the April 12, 2023 minutes as presented. Femrite seconded. Motion carried.

V. TREASURER'S REPORT

Dranttel presented the Treasurer's Report

Schafer asked for clarification on Wells Fargo late charges. Battern noted he could not comment at this time and will follow up with the board on this matter.

Branstad moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Schafer seconded. Motion carried.

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

A. Manufacturing Resilience

Kristian Braekkan started off Dr. Tom Horan's presentation by sharing with the board a Manufacturing Resilience study conducted with funding provided by the EDA and BUSH Foundation.

Vice Chair Boettger introduced the presenter, Dr. Tom Horan, Dean of the School of Business & Society at University of Redlands. Dr. Horan contacted RNDC because of RNDC's medical device supply chain plan.

Dr. Tom Horan presented preliminary findings from an ongoing study on Minnesota's medical device manufacturing clusters. The study is a collaboration between Redlands University, University of Minnesota, and ESRI to which RNDC serves as technical advisors. Dr. Horan explained the critical role of Greater Minnesota communities – including Region Nine – in supporting these industries and the complexity of their supply chains as they are embedded in nearly all of Minnesota's 87 counties. All of Region Nine's counties contribute to the more than \$13 billion of annual exports and Dr. Horan explained how the research will continue to expand in partnership with RNDC over the next year.

Braekkan shared that a resolution will come before the board at the June 7th meeting to accept the plan, giving the commissioners time to review. Discussion followed.

VII. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Battern shared that he is in the process of having audit-ready monthly statements for the board to review at the monthly meetings.

Battern noted that the transition to MAGIC Fund and US Bank is near completion.

Battern shared that RNDC Staff has been working hard at integrating Monday.com into current projects. Battern directed the board to look at the Gantt Chart presented in the packet for all current RNDC projects.

Battern shared that the RLF has been very active in outreach. Battern noted that RNDC has approximately \$2.1 million dollars available for loans. Rohlfing asked Battern how the interest rate for the MAGIC Fund is calculated. Discussion followed.

A. Budget FY24 Planning Update

Battern shared that RNDC directors will be looking at the FY24 budget soon and will be presenting the FY24 Budget to the Board of Directors in June.

VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Griensewic requested the board to give their feedback on the new Board of Directors meeting packet layout. Griensewic is interested in hearing if the information provided was helpful and/or what revisions could be made.

Griensewic noted that more information has been added to the Board Portal as requested by the Budget & Personnel Committee.

Griensewic highlighted the news article in the Star Tribune, that the City of Duluth received a \$700,000 grant from the Department of Energy. This grant is the first in the nation and would be taking solid waste and converting it into heat for the entire city.

Griensewic shared that she gave an interview to the Star Tribune newspaper on a story they had about childcare.

Griensewic shared that Saint Peter Herald newspaper will be running a story on Commissioner Omar as an MYLAP participant and included an interview from Griensewic.

Griensewic noted the Finish Ambassador will be in town in the upcoming weeks, however, Griensewic will not be able to attend. In lieu of her absence, Griensewic has requested Commissioner Boettger to attend in her place.

Griensewic noted that Susan Brehm, Chicago Regional Director of EDA was able to travel to the region. Griensewic shared that Brehm was very complimentary of the RNDC team and RNDC partnerships. Griensewic did share with Brehm the news regarding the impending Windom pork plant closure. Griensewic noted that even though the facility is not in the RNDC area, potential effects will be felt around the entire region.

Griensewic shared that RNDC was awarded a Local Foods Grant for \$18,000 for the next 3 to 5 years. Griensewic noted that Sabri Fair would be leading the grant and she will have the exact details regarding the grant at the next board meeting.

Griensewic noted that the next Budget & Personnel meeting will be held on May 31. Griensewic shared she will continue to work with Battern to get the board the most updated budget possible by the June 7th Board of Directors meeting.

Griensewic shared that she has reached out to Steve Etcher, from MarksNelson to facilitate the upcoming May 31st Budget & Personnel meeting. Griensewic made this request in the best efforts of the committee to have an engaging conversation for all to participate.

Griensewic noted that Cheryal Hills, Executive Director of Region 5 Development Commission, will be joining the May 31st Budget & Personnel meeting to share her experiences as they transitioned from the DMB to performance-based pay.

Griensewic noted that she presented each board member with a drafted Code of Conduct at this meeting. Griensewic requested the board members to review the document by the next Board of Directors' meeting.

A. Resolution 2023 – 06 – Approval of the FY24 MnDOT Transportation Work Plan

Griensewic introduced Joel Hanif to share the spreadsheet of the MnDOT activities that RNDC is expected to execute for FY24. Hanif shared that a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting was held recently. At the meeting, TAC and MnDOT District 7 both reviewed the outlined plan and recommended it to the board for approval.

Femrite moved to approve the FY24 MnDOT Transportation Work Plan. Boettger seconded. Motion carried.

B. Social Media

Chair Laven introduced Nate George to share his presentation on social media within RNDC. George went over website metrics with the board. George noted that the website traffic is currently on track with the same metrics of 2022. George did note there has been an increase in traffic beyond the headlines to learn more about the various topics. George noted that the highest website traffic is the "Who We Are" tab and the "Resources" tab.

George noted that he prioritizes grant opportunities, considering them a top-tier commitment in RNDC work.

George mentioned that RNDC is proactive in website posting, staying ahead of industry standards. However, he expressed the need to assess whether the current frequency is optimal or if it should be reduced.

George shared that the newsletter is showing an increase in click rates from the past year, however, is trailing slightly by industry standards.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioners shared updates from the municipalities.

A. Meeting Evaluation

Chair Laven reminded the members of the Board to fill out the meeting evaluation handout.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Nelson moved to adjourn. Boettger seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Mike Laven, Chair

Jim Branstad, Secretary

DRAFT

REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
TREASURER'S REPORT
April 30, 2023

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

Cash Receipts - Checking	24,197.13	
Cash Receipts - Savings	-	
6 County deposits and interest	1,110.20	
9 County deposits and interest	17,830.10	
Tornado deposits and interest	4,273.03	
Cares deposits and interest	9,499.09	
Micro deposits and interest	451.96	
Interest	2,005.10	
TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$ 59,366.61
Payroll Disbursements		(100,340.42)
Accounts Payable & Other Disbursements		(55,952.26)

CASH BALANCE April 30, 2023 **\$ 2,560,909.85**

Region Nine Checking and Savings	
Checking	\$ 196,013.53
Savings	19,516.49
Total	\$ 215,530.02

Revolving Loan Funds	
6 County	\$ 162,621.59
9 County	728,032.55
Tornado	437,363.95
Cares Act	199,152.10
Micro	818,209.64
Total	\$ 2,345,379.83

CASH BALANCE April 30, 2023 **\$ 2,560,909.85**

**Region Nine Development Commission
Board Payment Listing
April of 2023**

Check#	Check Date	Vendor Name	Check Amount	Description
115657	04/19/2023	Wells Fargo	(20.91)	Walgreen's Chicago, IL - Index Cards and Printer Paper - 11/9 - PF
115882	04/03/2023	Wells Fargo	(1,688.22)	Delta Air Refund for Ecuador Flight - 11/23 - NG
			0.99	Apple.com iCloud - 11/25 - NG
			1.04	Uber Trip Tip Berlin - 11/29 - NG
			9.84	Uber Trip Berlin - 11/29 - NG
			172.59	Hampton Berlin Hotel Stay - 11/29 - NG
			13.86	Uber Trip Berlin - 12/1 - NG
			81.86	Ouzeri Danke Muenster - Meals for Delegation - 12/7 - NG
			21.76	Uber Trip Dusseldorf - 12/9 - NG
			18.36	Uber Trip Dusseldorf - 12/9 - NG
			13.98	Autogrill Dusseldorf - Meal - 12/10 - NG
			11.01	Quickers Ebene Dusseldorf - Meal - 12/10 - NG
			0.99	Apple.com iCloud Storage - 12/25 - NG
			45.92	Lakes Sports Bar, Lake Crystal, MN - Meal Nicole and Paola - 1/9 - NG
			84.40	NaKato Bar and Grill, North Mankato, MN - Meal CSM Presentation - 1/13 - NG
			507.80	Delta Air Flight to Washington D.C. NADO - 1/17 - NG
			6.35	MNSU Paylot Mankato, MN - 1/20 - NG
			0.99	Apple iCloud Storage - 1/25 - NG
			30.93	La Grolla St. Paul, MN - Meal - 1/26 - NG
			60.64	Lyft Rides (4) St. Paul - 1/27 - NG
			10.40	McDonald's Jordan, MN Transp. Legislative Studies Mtg - 2/3 - NG
			49.59	Accidental Personal Charge to Reimburse RN - 2/4 - Nicole
			35.10	Accidental Personal Charge to Reimburse RNDC - 2/9 - Nicole
			131.76	Accidental Personal Charge to Reimburse RNDC - 2/9 - Nicole
			49.00	Infographia Software Subscription - 2/11 - NG
			19.00	Infographia Software Upgrade Vector Icons - 2/11 - NG
			61.02	Accidental Personal Charge to Reimburse RNDC - 2/15 - Nicole
			0.99	Apple iCloud Storage - 2/25 - NG
			17.00	Metro Transit Arlington, VA - 3/11 - NG
			264.73	The Warehouse Alexandria, VA - Meal Nicole, Paola, Mike, Andrea - 3/11 - NG
			70.06	PF Chang's Edina - Meal Nicole Andrea Paola Mike - 3/11
			20.01	Lyft Ride Arlington, VA - 3/12 - NG
			21.16	Lyft Ride Arlington, VA - 3/12 - NG
			5.00	Lyft Cancel Fee - 3/12 - NG
			248.30	Hank's Oyster Bar - Washington D.C. - Meal Nicole Andrea Paola Mike - 3/12 - NG
			97.50	Sign of the Whale Washington D.C. - Meal Nicole Andrea Paola Mike - 3/13 - NG
			15.01	Uber Trip Washington D.C. - 3/13 - NG
			17.83	Lyft Ride Washington D.C. - 3/14 - NG
			150.40	Hunan Gate Arlington, VA - Meal Nicole Andrea Paola Mike - 3/14 - NG
			24.36	Lyft Ride Washington D.C. - 3/15 - NG
			153.31	Old Ebbitt Grill Washington D.C. - Meal Nicole Andrea Paola Mike - 3/15 - NG
			20.70	Culver's Shakopee, MN - Meal Nicole Paola - 3/15
			140.58	McCormick & Schmick's Arlington, VA - Meal Nicole Andrea Paola Mike - 3/15 - NG
			80.00	Timesheet Software - Invoice #94573
			57.50	Programming Services - Homepage Video - Invoice #23146
115883	04/07/2023	GHG Corporation	6,048.85	USDA Grant Expenditures November 2022 to March 2023 - Invoice #1011
115884	04/07/2023	Lime Valley Advertising Inc	377.25	Copier Lease Payment 3/27/23 to 4/26/23 - Invoice #INV2251905
115885	04/07/2023	Living Earth Center	200.00	Training Meetings and Board Buildout - Invoice #23-0001-03
115886	04/07/2023	Metro Sales Inc	1,305.00	USDA Grant Expenditures 3/3/23 to 3/16/23 - Invoice #1297
115887	04/07/2023	Sharp, Kelten	3,360.20	IT Support Monthly Billing for April 2023 - Invoice #173603
115888	04/07/2023	Spirited Journeys LLC	1,082.25	Final Billing for Project #4962 - Invoice #173562
115889	04/07/2023	Thriveon Inc	388.35	Janitorial Services for April 2023 - Invoice #15447
115890	04/07/2023	Vanderberg Cleaning Services LLC	4,078.00	FY23 Audit Progress Billing - Invoice #470217
115891	04/14/2023	Abdo	186.33	PD and Mileage Meetings 2/28, 3/8, 4/12
115892	04/14/2023	Belgard, Elliot R	39.30	Mileage Meeting 4/12/23
115893	04/14/2023	Borchert, Dave	102.40	Mileage and Per Diem Meetings 4/12/23
115894	04/14/2023	Branstad, Jim	416.88	Germany Event Reimbursements 3/26/23
115895	04/14/2023	Cooling, Steven	72.75	Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
115896	04/14/2023	Femrite, Lyle	60.48	Mileage and Per Diem Meetings 4/12/23
115897	04/14/2023	Glidden, Elroy	118.60	Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
115898	04/14/2023	Goblirsch, Robert	224.80	Mileage and Per Diem Meetings 3/8/23, 3/10/23, 4/12/23
115899	04/14/2023	Griensewic, Nicole	67.63	Fuel for Traverse Reimbursement
115900	04/14/2023	Harris, Paul	100.44	Mileage and Per Diem Meetings 4/12/23
115901	04/14/2023	Kratzke, Dawn	85.85	Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
115902	04/14/2023	Kruse, David	96.00	MADO Dashboard Hosting April 2023 - Invoice #KT2147
115903	04/14/2023	Laven, Mike	50.00	Per Diem Meetings 4/12/23
115904	04/14/2023	Loveall, Tom H	95.85	Per Diem and Mileage Meetings 4/12/23
115905	04/14/2023	Milbrath, Mary	50.48	Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
115906	04/14/2023	Nelson, Blair	88.75	Per Diem and Mileage Meetings 4/12/23
115907	04/14/2023	Neubau Holdings LLC	3,115.00	Office Lease Payment May 2023
115908	04/14/2023	Nielsen, Robert	113.36	Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
115909	04/14/2023	Norton, Lisa	43.87	Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
115910	04/14/2023	Nowell, Shanon	47.86	Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
115911	04/14/2023	O'Connor, Patty	40.00	Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23

115912	04/14/2023	Oeltjenbruns, Keira	40.00 Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
			47.86 Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
115913	04/14/2023	Peterson, Richard L	47.86 Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
			66.20 Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
115914	04/14/2023	Pfeil, Mike	66.20 Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
			171.70 Mileage and Per Diem Meetings 3/15/23, 4/12/23
115915	04/14/2023	Principal Life Insurance Company	171.70 Mileage and Per Diem Meetings 3/15/23, 4/12/23
			327.46 Life Insurance Premiums 4/15/23 to 5/14/23 - Account #1125885-10001
115916	04/14/2023	Richter, Gary	327.46 Life Insurance Premiums 4/15/23 to 5/14/23 - Account #1125885-10001
			410.52 Germany Event Reimbursements 3/26/23
			119.43 Mileage and Per Diem Meetings 4/12/23
115917	04/14/2023	Rohlfing, Steve J	410.52 Germany Event Reimbursements 3/26/23
			119.43 Mileage and Per Diem Meetings 4/12/23
115918	04/14/2023	Schafer, Philip H	77.51 Per Diem and Mileage Meetings 4/12/23
			77.51 Per Diem and Mileage Meetings 4/12/23
115919	04/14/2023	Schlueter, Scott A	133.84 Mileage and Per Diem Meetings 4/12/23
			133.84 Mileage and Per Diem Meetings 4/12/23
115920	04/14/2023	Smith, Corrina	72.75 Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
			72.75 Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
115921	04/14/2023	Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota	400.00 Grower's Network Webinar 5/16/23
			400.00 Grower's Network Webinar 5/16/23
			685.49 Grant Award Billable Hours and Mileage 2/1/23 to 2/28/23 - Invoice #20230228-R9
			177.99 Grant Award Billable Hours and Mileage 3/1/23 to 3/31/23 - Invoice #20230331-R9
			685.49 Grant Award Billable Hours and Mileage 2/1/23 to 2/28/23 - Invoice #20230228-R9
			177.99 Grant Award Billable Hours and Mileage 3/1/23 to 3/31/23 - Invoice #20230331-R9
115922	04/14/2023	Thriveon Inc	2,104.52 Smart-UPS Installation - Invoice # 173654
			2,104.52 Smart-UPS Installation - Invoice # 173654
115924	04/14/2023	O'Connor, Patty	40.00 Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
115925	04/14/2023	Oeltjenbruns, Keira	47.86 Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
115926	04/14/2023	Peterson, Richard L	66.20 Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
115927	04/14/2023	Pfeil, Mike	171.70 Mileage and Per Diem Meetings 3/15/23, 4/12/23
115928	04/14/2023	Principal Life Insurance Company	327.46 Life Insurance Premiums 4/15/23 to 5/14/23 - Account #1125885-10001
115929	04/14/2023	Richter, Gary	410.52 Germany Event Reimbursements 3/26/23
			119.43 Mileage and Per Diem Meetings 4/12/23
115930	04/14/2023	Rohlfing, Steve J	77.51 Per Diem and Mileage Meetings 4/12/23
115931	04/14/2023	Schafer, Philip H	133.84 Mileage and Per Diem Meetings 4/12/23
115932	04/14/2023	Schlueter, Scott A	72.75 Mileage and Per Diem Meeting 4/12/23
115933	04/14/2023	Smith, Corrina	400.00 Grower's Network Webinar 5/16/23
115934	04/14/2023	Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota	685.49 Grant Award Billable Hours and Mileage 2/1/23 to 2/28/23 - Invoice #20230228-R9
			177.99 Grant Award Billable Hours and Mileage 3/1/23 to 3/31/23 - Invoice #20230331-R9
115935	04/14/2023	Thriveon Inc	2,104.52 Smart-UPS Installation - Invoice # 173654
115936	04/24/2023	Belgard, Elliot R	92.40 Mileage and Per Diem 4/19 B&P Meeting
115937	04/24/2023	CenturyLink	143.76 Toll Free and Long Distance Line Charge - Invoice #636436215
115938	04/24/2023	Extended Human Resources LLC	1,802.50 Job Descriptions - Invoice #2377
115939	04/24/2023	Femrite, Lyle	50.48 Mileage and Per Diem 4/19 B&P Meeting
115940	04/24/2023	Lilienthal, Christian	176.94 Mileage and Per Diem Meetings 4/12 and 4/19
115941	04/24/2023	Loveall, Tom H	85.85 Mileage and Per Diem 4/19 B&P Meeting
115942	04/24/2023	Lynn, Andrea	599.00 Grower's Network Presentation 4/19/23
115943	04/24/2023	Nelson, Blair	79.30 Mileage and Per Diem 4/19 B&P Meeting
115944	04/24/2023	Omar, Ayan	59.65 Mileage and Per Diem 4/19 B&P Meeting
115945	04/24/2023	Richter, Gary	109.43 Mileage and Per Diem 4/19 B&P Meeting
115946	04/24/2023	Thriveon Inc	2,808.72 Laptop for Sam - Invoice #174402
			3,002.86 Laptop for Heather - Invoice #174403
115947	04/24/2023	Verizon Wireless	126.76 Cell Phone Charge 4/9/23 to 5/8/23
Check Total			46,794.48
Report Total:			46,794.48

REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
April 2023 CASH RECEIPTS
FY23

Description	Amount
DATE: 4/6/2023	
McKnight Foundation Sponsorship for Germany Event Dinner	1500
DATE: 4/7/2023	
MBFFA ACH Deposit	3960.93
DATE: 4/10/2023	
Check #10419 Germany Event Dinner/Commissioner Spouse	100.00
Check #27522 Germany Event Dinner/Commissioner Spouse	100.00
Check #16005 Germany Event Dinner/Commissioner Spouse	100.00
Check #2995 Germany Event Dinner/Commissioner Spouse	100.00
Check #000476 Eagle Lake Strategic Planning Services	15,153.85
Check #14308648 Principal Dividend Payment	2,309.12
Check #44761020 CEEM Sponsorship Germany Event	500.00
DATE: 4/12/2023	
Renewing the Countryside ACH Deposit	373.23
TOTALS	24,197.13
April 2023 TOTALS	24,197.13

Finance

- The request has been made to our auditors, Abdo, to move up field work to mid/late July of 2023 for the auditing ending June 30, 2023. The goal will be to have a final report issued by the end September. Auditing firms who specialize in government and school district audits experience a busy season in the fall of the year as they work to complete all the June 30 year ends. In requesting to have our fieldwork done sooner the hope would be to be completely done with our audit prior to the start of this busy season that they experience. After struggling through and learning the year end process for last year's audit, I am very comfortable with the shortened timeline.
- Within the budget to be presented at this meeting there is a line item for the purchase of a new Region Nine fleet vehicle. There is approximately \$80k sitting within the auto-fund to cover the cost of the purchase. If the budget is approved by the Board, we will look to order a cross-over SUV hybrid of some sort under the state's negotiated contract pricing. The current vehicle, a 2014 Chevy Traverse with 100k miles, will be offered in as trade-in.
- Ongoing and extensive work has been done to create a framework for the compilation of monthly financial statements. The plan for these statements would be to show YTD actual expenses and revenues on a modified-accrual basis calculation out the month end fund balances. This steps in this process are the same as would normally occur as part of our year end audit preparation, but once the first initial month is closed out maintenance should be relatively simple.

Revolving Loan Fund

- The loan committee met on two different occasions to discuss an application of a particular loan client and I am please to inform the group that the application for the Picklebarn has been approved. The Picklebarn is located here in Mankato and is a tournament grade pickleball facility. This recreation facility is a great addition to our R9 community and I would encourage anyone interested in learning about the fast growing sport to stop in and meet with the owners, Mitch and Sidney Elofson.
- Upon the final approval of the FY24 budget and the finish of the monthly financial statements build, I plan to resume marketing RLF by visiting bankers within the area. Frances has created a spreadsheet mapping out those bankers of which to visit at each bank within our nine-county area.
- Frances and I have a schedule of existing loan client site visits on our calendars, and we've been meeting with one to two loan clients weekly to touch base and meet many for the first time. These meetings were very informative and have become one of the more enjoyable aspects of our work.
- Currently, there is approximately \$1.9 million available to lend out. We have several projects that we anticipate to see applications coming over the next few months.

Region Nine Area, Inc.

- 990 Tax Return Completed.



RESOLUTION

Region Nine Development Commission 2023 – 07

Resolution Establishing Region Nine Development Commission Meeting Dates for Fiscal Year 2024

Whereas, The State of Minnesota established the Region Nine Development Commission to work with an on behalf of the nine counties, seventy-two cities, and one hundred forty-seven townships on economic, social, physical and governmental issues of a regional nature, an

Whereas, the bylaws of the Region Nine Development Commission require that meeting dates of the Commission be set by resolution of the Commission.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Region Nine Development Commission establish the following as meeting dates for fiscal year 2024.

Full Commission

October 11, 2023
January 10, 2024
April 10, 2024
June 19, 2024

Board of Directors

August 9, 2023
September 13, 2023
November 8, 2023
December 13, 2023
March 13, 2024
May 8, 2024
June 5, 2024

Be it further resolved, that the meetings of the Commission shall be held at the principal office of the Commission in the City of Mankato, Blue Earth County, Minnesota and may establish such other locations for meetings, as it may deem appropriate.

Dated this 7th day of June, 2023

Signed:

Mike Laven, Chair

Jim Branstad, Secretary



RESOLUTION

Region Nine Development Commission 2023 – 08

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ADDITION

- Whereas,** The State of Minnesota established Region Nine Development Commission (RNDC) to work with and on behalf of the nine counties, seventy-two cities, and one hundred forty-seven townships on economic, social, physical and governmental issues of a regional nature; and
- Whereas,** RNDC aims to provide communities with eligibility for future federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) investments;
- Whereas,** The Regional Manufacturing Resilience Plan was created according to specifications outlined in a grants agreement with the EDA;
- Whereas,** The Regional Manufacturing Resilience Plan offers regional recommendations to complement general findings in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and the Annual Performance Reports to support economic and community development efforts in the nine-county region;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that Region Nine Development Commission hereby approves and authorizes the Regional Manufacturing Resilience Plan.

Dated this 7th of June, 2023

Signed:

Mike Laven, Chair

Jim Branstad, Secretary

Staff Updates – June 2023

Nicole Griensewic

Nicole has been prepping for the May 31st Budget and Personnel committee meeting. Have partnered with consultant Steve Etcher to facilitate the meeting to ensure all members can participate vs. leading the meeting. Coordinated with Region Five Executive Director Cheryal Hills to have her present on how their RDO transitioned from the Decision Band Method (DBM) to Performance-Based Pay.

Trying to look forward to ensuring the proposed budget meets the needs of the commission, esp. as it relates to staffing, out-of-state travel needs and sufficient professional development.

If voted by NADO peers in August, Nicole would be joining the Executive Committee as NADO's Board Secretary. This would be a six-year commitment to serving on the Executive Committee, as each year the member advances to the next position, e.g., Treasurer. In addition to the NADO conferences that RNDC annually participates in (fall annual training conference and March D.C. policy conference), Nicole would be expected to join for the annual April Fly-In in D.C. for Hill and White House meetings. This added travel has not been factored into the previously proposed FY24 budget.

Nicole is gathering draft language and documents to present to the Budget and Personnel Committee, including a draft Emergency Succession Plan, Code of Conduct, Executive Director evaluation timeline including the list of questions from an HR Consultant. The committee will be reviewing and discussing these items/topics at future meetings. The committee met recently and began discussion on goals for the Executive Director position.

Nicole was informed on May 26th that the Bush Foundation did not select our Ecosystem grant proposal. However, the federal USDA grant to support building out a local foods network across greater MN and the Dakotas was funded. Region Five is leading the project across the three states.

RNDC was turned down for SMC's Hub LEAP/Economic Inclusion Incubator program. Was part of the New Growth Innovation Network for Inclusive Economic Development. It would have been an opportunity to Mankato area leaders to participate in a learning exchange w. two other U.S. cities. RNDC was notified by MPCA that the grant for Comfrey was approved. The grant is focused on Storm Water & Climate Resiliency. RNDC will be awarded \$10k for our work in the grant.

Nicole will be attending the quarterly MADO Executive Director meetings in Bemidji June 12-15th. MADO directors will be discussing plans and projects including the USDA local foods grant as well as the State Competitiveness Fund, which the Regional Development Organizations were specifically listed as potential grant recipients.

Heather Bartelt

Over the past month, Heather has been immersed in bus tour planning, alongside Nathan, Corree, and Alejandra. Planning is well underway and finalized details should be announced soon.

Heather has continued to focus on planning and organizing the Board of Director's meeting as well as the Budget & Personnel Committee meetings.

Heather has organized a RNDC New Commissioner Orientation session that took place on May 25th. Lisa Norton, Dave Borchert and Shanon Nowell were in attendance.

Alejandra Bejarano

Besides taking some time off, Alejandra, with support from Nate, is working with the Waseca-Le Sueur Regional Library System on a grant they received from the Minnesota Office of Broadband. The grant aims to facilitate the development of a statewide digital equity plan to reduce gaps in access, device ownership, and digital skills. RNDC's primary responsibility is to create an asset inventory and lead community engagement efforts in Waseca and Le Sueur Counties, providing a general assessment of local digital strengths, needs, and goals. Alejandra has been working with the staff of the Waseca-Le Sueur Regional Library System to lead these efforts.

Additionally, Alejandra continues to lead the local task force on workforce resilience, with the support of Kristian. As part of this work, Alejandra is collaborating with DEED, Ramsey County, the Associated General Contractors of Minnesota, MNSU, and private industry in the construction management field. They are organizing and hosting an event in the fall for companies in the construction management field interested in employing and hiring international talent.

Alejandra participated in conversations with Susan Brehm from the Region Director for the Chicago Region office EDA, while she visited our region. Her visit included conversations with staff from the City of Eagle Lake as well elected officials in Sibley County.

Furthermore, Alejandra and Kristian are preparing and organizing ongoing meetings with the Community and Economic Development Committee for the remainder of the year. Their goal is to engage the CED committee, the workforce council, REDA, and other groups to start collecting important feedback for the APR.

Alejandra continues her participation as economic development representative for the Workforce Council, and she also provides support to the Prosperity Initiative and the "informal to formal project" led by HACER with the support of the University of Minnesota Extension.

Kristian Braekkan

Kristian finalized the Manufacturing Resilience Study with assistance from Heather, Nicole, Sabri, and Nate in May. The study concluded a two-year planning grant with the Federal EDA with a partial match from the Bush Foundation. The final plan was presented to the BOD on May 10th and a final resolution to adopt the plan will be presented to the BOD on June 7th so regional stakeholders can utilize the plan as eligibility for future asks of the EDA. Kristian also began contractual work with the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation on May 1st to assess the needs for further expansion of SMIF's REV and PI programming. He is also in the process of finalizing a feasibility study for Neighbors' Meat LLC (New Richland) as part of the MBFFA grant, a project overseen by Paola at RNDC.

Sabri Fair

For Local Foods Week Sabri has organized a photographer to travel to all 16 (maybe 18) sites in June. The photos will also be made available to the participating farmers and restaurants to continue using as marketing and promotional material for their business.

Farmers at the community farm have started getting their plots organized and planted now that the rain and flooding have subsided. Many of the East African farmers are planting crops that are culturally relevant which they can't find in stores in our region like managu, a leafy green that is highly nutritious and has medicinal properties.

Sabri has been working with farmers and hunger relief partners to apply for the Local Food Purchase Assistance Grant through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. This grant will allow partners like South Central Minnesota Food Recovery and local Head Start programs to receive local fresh produce from farmers in their community and distribute it at no cost. Their current application will purchase close to \$60,000 worth of local products from farms across our region.

Sabri has continued supporting the Safe Routes to School Plan in Madelia. This month the planning team reviewed the draft plan and provided comments. One of the most valuable comments we got from the team was to make the plan clearer regarding how the community can turn the recommendations into a grant application with a high chance of success. We have done this by more closely tying our recommendations to supporting data from the survey and outlining more possible infrastructure items they could implement to solve the issues they are facing.

Sabri organized a meeting between employees and officials of the City of Comfrey with a solar installer to dig deeper into the opportunities solar might offer their wastewater treatment plant. One of the attendees was an employee of the Minnesota Rural Water Association, an organization that provides technical assistance to communities of less than 10,000 people on their drinking and wastewater systems. The conversation was very fruitful,

and all the attendees learned a lot about solar, batteries, and the Comfrey wastewater treatment plant. The next steps will include getting official quotes from installers.

Sabri and Joel deployed bike and pedestrian counters on trails in communities that have had Transportation Alternatives investments. In mid-May, a counter was deployed on the Sleepy Eye Lake Trail. In late May, a counter was deployed on the Stoltzman Road trail in Mankato. The trail counts will help MnDOT, and the communities see the level of usage their investments have gotten.

Paola Ferrario

In recent weeks, Paola has been actively involved in the Herox challenge grant writing, collaborating with the team to secure funding. She has also played a crucial role in bringing partners together and gaining support from key organizations such as MDA, Ecostrat, and Greater MSP. Their collective efforts are focused on achieving BDO Zone certification for Region Nine. This certification will enhance the region's ability to attract businesses that specialize in utilizing biowaste to produce biofuel, with potential customers including Greater MSP and the airline association. The program aims to position Region Nine as a biozone, targeting a specific market of sustainable and higher-paying jobs. Additionally, Paola has been dedicated to promoting the region, and her efforts have garnered interest from the German-American Chamber of Commerce.

Paola is also actively involved in the MBFFA project. She has worked closely with the team to launch a targeted social media campaign aimed at understanding the needs of ag entrepreneurs in the region. This ongoing campaign will span two months. If you know any ag entrepreneurs, we kindly request your assistance in connecting us with them. We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to conduct interviews and gather valuable insights to better support their businesses.

Monday.com, the project management tool, has been successfully deployed within the organization, and comprehensive training sessions have been conducted to ensure its effective utilization. As a result, the system is now fully functional and provides a centralized platform to track and manage pursuits, opportunities, and ongoing projects.

monday.com offers numerous perks and benefits for organizations, including:

1. **Enhanced Collaboration:** The platform fosters seamless collaboration among team members by providing a centralized hub where they can share information, communicate, and work together in real-time.
2. **Streamlined Project Management:** With monday.com, organizations can easily plan, track, and manage their projects from start to finish. The intuitive interface allows for clear visualization of project timelines, tasks, deadlines, and dependencies.

3. Customizable Workflows: The tool enables organizations to tailor their workflows according to their specific processes and needs. Customizable boards, columns, and automation features empower teams to create a system that best fits their unique requirements.
4. Increased Transparency: monday.com promotes transparency by offering visibility into project progress, task assignments, and individual responsibilities. Team members can easily stay informed and aligned on project updates, ensuring everyone is on the same page.
5. Improved Communication: The platform provides various communication features, including comments, notifications, and @mentions, facilitating effective and efficient communication among team members. This helps to reduce miscommunication and ensure important information is readily accessible.
6. Data Tracking and Analytics: monday.com allows organizations to collect and analyze valuable data related to their projects, tasks, and team.

Nathan George

Nathan spent the month finalizing projects and deploying marketing campaigns. First, he finished editing, laying out, and typesetting the Manufacturing Resiliency Plan. The purpose of the plan is to analyze the current state of manufacturing in the region and layout recommended steps for economic resiliency. The plan was submitted to the board on May 10.

Nathan has launched two social media marketing campaigns. One is promoting the Agricultural Entrepreneur Needs Assessment survey. This has been focused on running sponsored ads on Facebook which are being sent to users that have agricultural or restaurant interests between ages of 19 to 65+. The focus of the survey is to help align the services offered by RNDC and our partners with the needs of ag entrepreneurs. The campaign and survey are part of the MBFFA. RNDC is partnering with MSUM's Strategic Partnership Center, and U.S. Small Business Administration.

The second marketing campaign is to promote Local Foods Week, which will take place in July. Local Foods Week partners local growers with local restaurants to create dishes using locally produced ingredients. This campaign is again focused on Facebook which is where much of the intended audience and participants go for social media. The goal is to highlight these partnerships, promote the participants, and increase awareness of the South Central Minnesota Grower's Network. RNDC is partnering with MSUM's Strategic Partnership Center and Mogwai Collaborative.

Nathan is continuing his work with the bus tour committee to finalize the speakers, topics, and catering for the event. Registration is open for commissioners and Region Nine stakeholders. The goal of the bus tour is to highlight RNDC's work and the success stories of our partners.

Nathan is working with Alejandra on promoting a digital needs survey for the Waseca-Le Sueur Regional Library System. The goal of the survey is to assess the digital needs of the residents. This includes what equipment and training is needed to meet their needs.

He is also working with Joel and Sabri on the Madelia SRTS plan. Nathan's role will be to edit the report and format it to MnDOT's template. This will also include taking photos of Madelia for the layout. The goal of this report is to make recommendations to the city on possible steps to take to encourage biking and walking to school safely.

Nathan presented to the BOD on May 10 about website and social media metrics. He broke down the statistics and compared the results with the same period last year. Nathan also laid out some future plans and answered questions from the board.

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's work continues 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 revised the Madelia Safe Routes to School plan after meeting and discussing the draft plan with stakeholders. Joel also began the procurement process for acquiring new bike racks for Madelia Elementary School with additional implementation funds made available by MnDOT.

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. Many conversations have shown a renewed interest in 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 Minnesota State Transportation Conference in St. Paul on May 15 and 16. There, he attended a variety of sessions, including *Advancing Equity in Accessibility and Travel Experiences: The Role of Gender and Identity*, *The Minnesota Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan*, *Next Generation Highways: Energy & Transportation*, *MnDOT BIL Grant Prioritization*, *Local Experiences and Resources*, and *Developing a Crosswalk Policy*.

Joel also participated in the Mankato-North Mankato Area Planning Organization (MAPO) TAC meeting on May 18. There, he participated in discussions and votes on multiple items: a recommendation to approve FY 24 Carbon Reduction Program project rankings, a recommendation to approve amending the 2023-2026 MAPO TIP, and a recommendation to release the draft 2024-2027 TIP for 30-day public comment period.

Joel, with the help of Sabri, has deployed bike and pedestrian counters on trails in communities that have had Transportation Alternatives investments. In mid-May, a counter was deployed on the Sleepy Eye Lake Trail. In late May, a counter was deployed on the Stoltzman Road trail in Mankato. The trail counts will help MnDOT and the communities see the level of usage their investments have gotten.

Joel, along with co-chair Tony Klaers of the Headwaters Regional Development Commission, hosted a virtual quarterly meeting of the RDO transportation planners on May 23. This meeting included presentations on Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessments, the Carbon Reduction Program, implementation of the federal Justice40 initiative, an update on MnDOT planning contracts, and various committee updates and new committee assignments. The next convening of the RDO transportation planners will be in August in Fergus Falls. Joel will continue to organize and facilitate these meetings until his two-year co-chair term ends in February 2025.

Corree Johnson

Corree Johnson has worked on updating the RNDC website to improve search engine optimization and finalizing page details which will be completed by the end of May. She will continue to monitor the website and make updates as needed. Kristian Braekkan and Corree are reviewing what metrics RNDC should be used to evaluate the regional dashboard, aligning them with CEDS and Legislative Priorities. She created a site map for each page that will be used to provide more insights and resources and will begin adding the landing pages to the website.

Corree will be working with Kristian on three projects this summer. 1) Finalizing a feasibility study for Neighbor's Meat LLC as part of the MBFFA grant, 2) developing a framework for the New Ulm Business Resource Innovation Center (NUBRIC) EDA grant for the needs

assessment and feasibility study, and 3) creating a report for the contractual work for SMIF's assessments of REV and Prosperity Initiative (PI) communities.

Additionally, Corree gave a presentation to staff on the style guide and branding best practices and is helping with logistics for the upcoming Annual Bus Tour.

Frances Long

Along with Ky, Frances continues to participate in the Equitable Lending Leaders Cohort (ELLC). The two have begun the second phase of this training, which offers in-depth sessions covering loan underwriting processes and policies. These most recent sessions are designed to help lenders brainstorm ways to change the language in their current loan policies to be more flexible and inclusive. An example of one change that many lenders are making is to forgo a rigid reliance on traditional credit scores to determine risk, and to instead consider credit "stories". Now that Region Nine's loan funds are defederalized and there is more flexibility with these funds, Frances and Ky hope to use what they learn in these next ELLC sessions to rewrite the current Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) plan. The goal of the plan rewrite will be to make the process less daunting for applicants and for Region Nine's policies to reflect the changing needs of today's entrepreneurs more accurately.

On May 18, Frances and Ky had a meeting in Mankato with Diane Lewis and Marcia Haley from Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF). RNDC and SMIF have several loan clients in common. One objective of this meeting was to discuss the progress and well-being of shared loan clients. Ky and Frances also used this opportunity to ask questions and learn more about what SMIF does. There was much discussion regarding ways that the two organizations can collaborate more in the future, and they are planning to meet again for further discussion.

Frances and Ky have scheduled two site visits with active loan clients on May 30th. The first is with Mairs-Hagen, LLC. Ryan Mairs is a chiropractor, and Nyla Hagen is a financial advisor. They came to RNDC in early December for funding to purchase a building together in Waseca to accommodate their expanding practices. The second site visit will be Pleasant Grove Pizza Farm in Waseca. 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 RNDC is always available to offer support and help them find resources if there is anything they need to ensure their continued success.

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 has been working on several smaller projects during this period, all aiding in the analysis and visualization of socioeconomic composition and income types in southern Minnesota. Along with SMIF, he is looking to understand how the demographics and socioeconomics of the region are responding to changes in industry and entrepreneurial markets. Statewide and in most counties, poverty overall has seen a slight decline which is reflective of similar growth in statewide income. Unfortunately, geographically, the boost in income was not experienced evenly across the state. In rural towns and communities in southern Minnesota, the wage gap grew across the region. This translated to positive growth in adjusted gross income in less populated census tracts, while higher populated census tracts in small towns were more likely to see a reverse with poverty density increasing.

Examining the relationship between this pattern of increasing poverty density to various regional phenomena is the next step of the project. Rural-to-urban migration, out- versus in-migration, and the composition of employing industries are three lenses the analysis will begin with. Furthermore, the balance of income from salary and wage positions versus fixed income (transfer payments, social security, passive income investments, etc.) is also being considered. How southern Minnesotans earn their income is important in understanding how employment-related policies and initiatives truly affect the local and regional economy. The goal of this study is to improve workforce resilience, boost worker retention, and improve local working conditions.

Sam Sharp

Samuel has been working extensively on a grant application funded through the DOE's National Resources Energy Laboratory (NREL) Energizing Rural Communities Prize, which serves to fund innovative rural energy projects that directly benefit communities with populations less than 10,000. The NREL Energizing Rural Communities Prize is split into two phases: Phase I which awards \$100,000 for project planning activities and preparation for implementation, and Phase II which awards an additional \$200,000 to leverage the progress achieved in Phase I and fund the implementation of projects plans conceived in the first phase. The project will focus on generating a Bioeconomy Development Opportunity (BDO) Zone Rating for the entirety of region nine - with a prioritization of meeting the NREL's criteria of communities under 10,000.

The BDO Zone Rating program is facilitated through Ecostrat a Toronto based company that specializes in identifying regional assets that can be then aggregated and converted into biofuels. If awarded funding, RNDC intends to allocate the entire \$100,000 to receiving the BDO Zone rating through a partnership with Ecostrat. If awarded the initial \$100,000 in Phase I, RNDC will then pursue the second round of funding in Phase II, in which the budget will be more allocated to RNDC to perform on the ground engagement and facilitation of stakeholder conversations.

Samuel has been instrumental in coordinating dialogue with Ecostrat and other stakeholders to develop an application package for this funding opportunity. Samuel has reached out to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and GreaterMSP to secure letters of support in this initiative. With the region's abundance of feedstock and agricultural residuals, we believe this opportunity could be monumental in transforming the region's energy landscape and generating exposure to the international market.

The BDO Zone rating consists of two major components: the rating itself and a widespread promotional marketing strategy facilitated by Ecostrat. Ecostrat has access to developers and investors worldwide and will promote the region's viability for hosting bioprocessing facilities upon completion of the rating. Samuel, Paola, and Sabri have played key roles in portraying the potential benefits of this rating to key stakeholders such as GreaterMSP and the MDA. With GreaterMSP's interest in developing a sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) hub, we believe there is a natural partnership between the region and GreaterMSP's mission to meet their emission standards and reform the current market of aviation fuels. Samuel has been involved in key conversations surrounding the potential for biofuels in the region, with communities such as Saint James and Comfrey expressing a strong interest in pursuing such initiatives. Samuel, Paola, and Sabri contributed immensely to the successful completion and submittal of the application and the award announcements are anticipated to occur in July 2023.

Samuel has been supporting the communities of Comfrey and Saint James as they strive to integrate more sustainable and renewable energy practices into their communities. Comfrey intends to construct a solar array for their wastewater treatment plant, and Samuel and Sabri have been facilitating conversations with utilities personnel, solar experts, and the Comfrey community to help bring this idea into fruition. Saint James has also been highly interested in pursuing sustainable practices and Samuel has been assisting them with navigating their options and connecting them with experienced professionals to support these endeavors. Specifically, the Climate Smart Saint James (CSSJ) community group, has been hosting monthly meetings to discuss methods of implementation, marketing strategies, and funding opportunities. Samuel has been in attendance for each meeting and has been working closely with members of CSSJ to gauge interest and offer insight on how to bring their ideas to the fore. Samuel assisted CSSJ and Meadowlark Prairies in grant writing efforts for a community resilience grant set forth by POET, an ethanol production company. Award announcements are anticipated to be released Friday May 26th of 2023.

In late 2022/early 2023, Samuel and Sabri, on behalf of RNDC, applied for the MPCA's Stormwater, Wastewater, and Community (SWC) Resilience funding opportunity with the intentions of putting together a resilience plan for Comfrey, MN. In March 2023, the MPCA awarded this funding opportunity for Comfrey and as of May 30th, 2023, the funding has been made available. These planning efforts will focus on providing the City of Comfrey with

a detailed set of guidelines relating to energy efficiency, sustainability, and overall community resilience to combat the effects of climate change. The recent flooding impacts have served as a sobering reminder that we must provide our communities with the knowledge and tools to better prepare themselves for natural disasters. Throughout the summer, Samuel and Sabri will be working with the Comfrey community through engagement efforts, meeting with utilities personnel, and providing educational resources that will inform community members on sustainable and resilient practices.

Lastly, Samuel helped develop an application for the BUSH Foundation's funding opportunity pertaining to sustainability and more efficient energy initiatives. This application took a region-wide approach to integrating educational resources, community outreach, and providing technical and grant-writing assistance to communities interested in these initiatives. Unfortunately, funding was not awarded for this application. However, the language and narrative developed in this application will be applicable to future funding opportunities as they are made available.

Terms & Abbreviations

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