



REGION NINE



**DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION**

Commission Meeting

Wednesday, October 11, 2023 | 6:00 p.m.



South Central Service Cooperative - 2075 Lookout Drive, North
Mankato, MN 56003

COMMISSION MEETING

October 11, 2023 | South Central Service Cooperative

Dinner / Networking – 5:30 – 5:55 p.m. | Meeting at 6:00 p.m.

AGENDA

	<u>Time</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Action</u>
I. Call to Order	6:00		
II. Pledge of Allegiance			
III. Roll Call – <i>Secretary Branstad</i>			
IV. Approval of Agenda		1	Action
V. Approval of June 21, 2023 Minutes		2	Action
VI. Approval of New Commissioner			Action
VII. Treasurer's Report – <i>Treasurer Dranttel</i>		6	Action
VIII. Finance Director's Report – Ky Battern	6:10	9	
A. Audit Update			
IX. Chair's Report – <i>Chair Laven</i>	6:25		
A. College-Age Youth Commissioner Katelynne Kratz		10	Action
B. Commissioner Recognition – Blair Nelson & Richard Peterson			
X. Executive Director's Report – <i>Nicole Griensewic</i>	6:45		
A. Agriculture and Manufacturing Resilience: Where do we go from here? – <i>Kristian Braekkan, Jason Bruns & Michael Johnson</i>			
B. Out of State Travel Requests	7:30	12	Action
XI. Other Business	7:45		
A. Commissioner Updates			
B. Meeting Evaluation		Handout	
XI. Adjournment	8:00		Action

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Laven called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. at Kato Ballroom, Mankato, MN.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Elliot Belgard, Andrea Boettger, Dave Borchert, Steve Cooling, Marie Dranttel, Lyle Femrite, Elroy Glidden, Robert Goblirsch, Mike Laven, Tom Loveall, Mary Milbrath, Shanon Nowell, Patty O'Connor, Keira Oeltjenbruns, Mike Pfeil, Gary Richter, Phil Schafer, Scott Schlueter, Doug Trytten, Rob Wilkening

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Paul Harris, Dawn Kratzke, Richard Peterson, Steve Rohlfig

MEMBERS ABSENT: Steve Holmseth, Michele Miller, Jim Whitlock

MEMBERS LATE: Jim Branstad, Chris Dalton, Christian Lilienthal, Bob Nielsen, Lisa Norton, Ayan Omar

OTHERS PRESENT: Brad DeVos, Michelle Markgraf, Sarah Berry, Nicole Griensewic, Ky Battern, Sabri Fair, Sam Sharp, Paola Ferrario, Joel Hanif, Alejandra Bejarano, Nate George, Heather Bartelt

There was a quorum.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Belgard moved to approve the revised agenda as presented, Nowell seconded. Motion carried.

V. APPROVAL OF APRIL 12, 2023 MINUTES

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

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT

Dranttel presented the Treasurer's Report.

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

VII. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Battern noted that due to Frances Long's departure from RNDC, there will be a slight difference in the budget to accommodate the increased salary for the revised Loan Specialist position. Battern noted the Loan Specialist position is not at the same decision making level as the Finance Specialist position.

Battern shared that Abdo will be conducting the RNDC audit in August 2023 and should have a completed report by the end of September 2023.

Battern shared that there is a line item for a new RNDC vehicle as the current one has high mileage and deferred maintenance will be needed.

Battern shared he has completed the framework and the treasurer reports will have a new layout in the upcoming board & commission packets.

Battern shared that with the departure of Long, the RLF Program may take a pause as his focus will be on the Finance Director duties.

Battern noted that The Picklebarn has closed on their loan with RNDC.

Battern noted there are funds available to loan out and requested the commissioners to spread the word.

VIII. CHAIR'S REPORT

A. Approval of Public Interest Commissioner – Health & Human Welfare

Laven invited Michelle Markgraf and Sarah Berry, the candidates for the Public Interest Commissioner – Health & Human Welfare vacancy to introduce themselves and explain why they are interested in the position.

Laven asked the commission to vote for one candidate. Votes were counted and Sarah Berry was pronounced the winner after initially having a tie vote.

IX. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Griensewic shared that Frances Long's last day with RNDC will be June 23rd.

Griensewic shared that RNDC will be posting a position for a Lending Specialist. The Lending Specialist position will exclusively work with the loan program.

Griensewic shared the current Full Commission vacancies.

Griensewic thanked the Commissioners who were able to attend the bus tour earlier today. Griensewic requested feedback from the Commissioners on how to structure future bus tours to maximize interest and participation.

Griensewic highlighted the stops for this year which included the City of Eagle Lake, JR's Barn and Pleasant Grove Pizza Farm.

Griensewic highlighted Local Foods Week will be taking place July 24 – 30, 2023.

Griensewic shared that she will attend the NADO Board of Directors Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT, June 26 – 28th.

Griensewic shared the State Competitiveness Fund with the Commission. Griensewic noted that RDO's would be able to apply for up to \$300,000 to use for technical assistance for municipalities regarding clean energy, and climate resiliency work. Discussion followed.

Griensewic shared that RNDC is looking to apply for the International Economic Development Council's (IEDC) Economic Recovery Corps. If selected, RNDC would be able to support a recovery position at no cost to RNDC for two years.

Griensewic shared that the Budget & Personnel Committee is currently working on drafting language for Code of Conduct, Executive Director position goals, along with creating a more formalized processes.

Griensewic noted that RNDC will be revising and updating the Policy Manual this fall.

Griensewic highlighted a handout in the commission packet, which shows how the RNDC Tax Levy dollars are distributed throughout the region and provides a visual representation of what a 0 – 3% increase looks like. Griensewic raised concerns that if a 3% levy increase is not passed, RNDC will not be able to recoup those funds to stay current in the future and could create a future budget deficits. Discussion followed.

Battern shared documents showing the current budget outlook and asked the commission if there were questions.

Battern noted that the largest shift in the budget is that several larger grants are expiring.

Commissioner Loveall requested clarification on the current grants RNDC is pursuing. Griensewic asked Ferrario for an explanation regarding the grant she wrote for the technical assistance grant, offered by the Federal EDA. In response, Ferrario highlighted that this grant would enable RNDC to actively seek out valuable qualitative and quantitative information about the region, with the goal of enhancing its competitiveness both nationally and internationally.

X. PUBLIC HEARING OF FY24 BUDGET

A. Call for Opening Public Hearing

Cooling made a motion to Open Public Hearing at 7:15 p.m.. Norton seconded. Motion carried.

B. Approval of FY24 Operating Budget

Lilienthal made a motion to approve the FY24 Operating Budget. Wilkening seconded. Motion carried.

C. Approval of Preliminary Levy

Loveall made a motion to approve the Preliminary Levy of 1%. Lilienthal seconded. Discussion followed. Motion failed. Berry, Boettger, Borchert, Dranttel, Laven, Milbrath, Nowell, O'Connor, Oeltjenbruns, Omar, Pfeil, Richter, Schlueter, Trytten, Wilkening opposed.

Boettger made a motion to approve the Preliminary Levy of 3%. Nowell seconded. Motion carried. Belgard, Cooling, Femrite, Glidden, Goblirsch, Lilienthal, Loveall, Nielsen, Schafer opposed.

D. Call for Close Public Hearing

Femrite made a motion to Close Public Hearing at 7:45 p.m. Belgard seconded. Motion carried.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Commissioner Updates

Chair Laven asked for updates, if any. Commissioners shared updates from their local jurisdictions.

B. Meeting Evaluation

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Norton moved to adjourn, Nelson seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Mike Laven, Chair

Marie Dranttel, Acting Secretary, & Board Treasurer

Region Nine Development Commission

Balance Sheet

As of August 31, 2023

	<u>General</u>	<u>Legacy RLF</u>	<u>CARES Act RLF</u>	<u>Auto Fund</u>	<u>Total</u>
Assets					
Cash	\$ 599,392	\$ 1,861,967	\$ 92,686	\$ 81,113	\$ 2,635,158
Receivables					
Taxes - Current	308,545	-	-	-	308,545
General Accounts Receivable	29,464	-	-	-	29,464
Grants Accounts Receivable	329,256	-	-	-	329,256
Revolving Loan - Current	-	139,298	116,982	-	256,280
Revolving Loan - Long-Term	-	1,053,126	748,608	-	1,801,734
Revolving Loan - Delinquent	-	24,747	29,000	-	53,747
Capital Assets, Net of Depreciation	14,201	-	-	-	14,201
Prepays	21,108	-	-	-	21,108
Total Assets	<u>1,301,966</u>	<u>3,079,138</u>	<u>987,276</u>	<u>81,113</u>	<u>5,449,493</u>
Liabilities					
Accounts Payable	26,190	-	-	-	26,190
Due to Other Funds	(49,629)	70,732	(21,587)	156	(328)
Accrued Wages Payable	-	-	-	-	-
Accrued Payroll Liabilities	9,785	-	-	-	9,785
Unearned Revenue	-	-	-	-	-
Accrued Leave Payable	29,450	-	-	-	29,450
Variance to be Reconciled	-	-	-	-	-
Total Liabilities	<u>15,796</u>	<u>70,732</u>	<u>(21,587)</u>	<u>156</u>	<u>65,097</u>
Deferred Inflows of Resources					
Property Taxes Levied for Subsequent Year	304,006	-	-	-	304,006
Delinquent Taxes	4,539	-	-	-	4,539
Total Deferred Inflows of Resources	<u>308,545</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>308,545</u>
Fund Balances					
Non-Spendable - Prepaid Items	21,108	-	-	-	21,108
Restricted for Future Loans	-	3,008,406	981,872	-	3,990,278
Restricted Fund Balance	-	-	-	80,957	80,957
Unassigned	956,517	-	26,991	-	983,508
Total Fund Balances	<u>977,625</u>	<u>3,008,406</u>	<u>1,008,863</u>	<u>80,957</u>	<u>5,075,851</u>
Total Liabilities, Deferred Inflows of Resources and Fund Balances	<u>1,301,966</u>	<u>3,079,138</u>	<u>987,276</u>	<u>81,113</u>	<u>5,449,493</u>
	-	-	-	-	-

Region Nine Development Commission
Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes
As of August 31, 2023

	<u>General</u>	<u>Legacy RLF</u>	<u>CARES Act RLF</u>	<u>Auto Fund</u>	<u>Total</u>
Revenues					
Levy					
Taxes	-	-	-	-	-
Federal Grants					
EDA Planning Grant	44,221	-	-	-	44,221
Other Federal Grants	22,888	-	-	-	22,888
Transportation					
Transportation - MnDOT Contract	18,074	-	-	-	18,074
Transportation - Other	-	-	-	-	-
Other Grants	100,310	-	-	-	100,310
Contract Revenue	7,337	-	-	-	7,337
Deposit Interest & Dividends	3,318	3,219	409	-	6,946
Loan Interest Earned	-	9,920	1,174	-	11,094
Transfer Funds	-	-	-	-	-
Other Revenue	219	-	44	-	263
Total Revenues	<u>196,367</u>	<u>13,139</u>	<u>1,627</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>211,133</u>
Expenses					
Salary & Wages	113,881	4,300	-	-	118,181
Fringe Benefits	33,673	1,416	-	-	35,089
Indirect Costs	29,947	1,319	91	-	31,357
Consultants	11,309	-	-	-	11,309
Staff Travel	2,743	-	-	251	2,994
Supplies	689	26	-	-	715
Copying	834	-	-	-	834
Postage	25	-	-	-	25
Phone	187	-	-	-	187
Staff Development	3,697	671	-	-	4,368
Software	3,001	280	-	-	3,281
Dues, Membership, Registration	263	-	-	-	263
Marketing & Publication	3,426	-	-	-	3,426
Rentals	200	-	-	-	200
Bank Service Charges	1,160	685	253	-	2,098
Service Fees	201	-	-	-	201
Insurance	-	-	-	-	-
Legal Fees	312	-	-	-	312
Catering & Event Meals	169	-	-	-	169
Equipment	-	-	-	-	-
Commission					
Per Diems	320	-	-	-	320
Travel	1,696	-	-	-	1,696
Catering	6	-	-	-	6
Other	-	-	-	-	-
Bus Tour	7	-	-	-	7
Miscellaneous	367	-	248	-	615
Total Current	<u>208,113</u>	<u>8,697</u>	<u>592</u>	<u>251</u>	<u>217,653</u>
Debt Service					
Copier Lease Payment	1,132	-	-	-	1,132
Total Debt Service	<u>1,132</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,132</u>
Total Expenditures	<u>209,245</u>	<u>8,697</u>	<u>592</u>	<u>251</u>	<u>218,785</u>
Net Changes in Fund Balances	(12,878)	4,442	1,035	(251)	(7,652)
Fund Balances, July 1, 2023	<u>990,503</u>	<u>3,003,964</u>	<u>1,007,828</u>	<u>81,208</u>	<u>5,083,503</u>
Fund Balances as of August 31, 2023	<u>\$ 977,625</u>	<u>\$ 3,008,406</u>	<u>\$ 1,008,863</u>	<u>\$ 80,957</u>	<u>\$ 5,075,851</u>

**Region Nine Development Commission
Board Payment Listing
August 2023**

Check#	Check Date	Vendor Name	Check Amount	Description
116082	08/14/2023	Spirited Journeys LLC	720.00	July 2023 USDA NRCS Contracted Hours
116083	08/14/2023	Spectrum	119.98	Internet Service - 7/23/23 to 8/22/23
116084	08/14/2023	SFM	492.00	Work Comp Installment
116085	08/14/2023	Vanderberg Cleaning Services LLC	360.00	August Janitorial Service
116086	08/14/2023	Kato Moving & Storage Co	247.50	Equipment Move to Storage - Loan Collateral
116087	08/14/2023	Neubau Holdings LLC	3,115.00	Office Rent - August 2023
116088	08/14/2023	Security Storage Systems	100.00	August Storage Fee
116089	08/14/2023	CenturyLink	143.96	Toll Free Voice Service
116090	08/14/2023	Xcel Energy	64.33	Electric Utility - 6/17 to 7/17
116091	08/14/2023	Wolters Kluwer	2,203.16	ProSystem fx Engagement Software - 10/1/2023 to 09/30/2024
116092	08/14/2023	CenturyLink	143.96	Toll Free Charges - 7/8 to 8/7
116093	08/14/2023	GHG Corporation	80.00	TeamKeeper (clockwise) Software Charge
116094	08/14/2023	Blethen Berens	246.00	Legal Services - 7/28/23
116095	08/14/2023	Richter, Gary	69.43	Biodigester Meeting Mileage - 8/2/23
116096	08/14/2023	Dalton, Chris	47.16	Biodigester Meeting Mileage - 8/2/23
116097	08/14/2023	Branstad, Jim	52.00	Biodigester Meeting Mileage - 8/2/23
116098	08/14/2023	Branstad, Jim	92.40	8/9 Board Meeting
116099	08/14/2023	Schafer, Philip H	122.53	8/9 Board Meeting
116100	08/14/2023	Femrite, Lyle	50.48	8/9 Board Meeting
116101	08/14/2023	Laven, Mike	40.00	8/9 Board Meeting
116102	08/14/2023	Metro Sales Inc	377.25	Copier Lease/Contract Payment
116103	08/14/2023	Metro Sales Inc	833.61	Copeier Usage - 4/27/23 to 7/26/2023
116104	08/14/2023	The Free Press	160.75	Employment Add for Lending Specialist
116105	08/14/2023	River Bend Business Products	465.45	Printing Services - July 21 - Account #405603
116106	08/14/2023	Principal Life Insurance Company	280.87	Life Insurance Premiums - 8/15 to 9/14
116107	08/14/2023	Colin Scharf	600.00	Consultant Work - 15 Hours - NEA Grant Work July 2023
116108	08/14/2023	Brennan Properties of Minnesota	100.00	Space Rental for Diana Gabriel Training on 9/7/23
116109	08/14/2023	Gabriel, Diana	2,500.00	Half-Day Strenghts Facilitation Professional Development
116110	08/14/2023	Sharp, Samuel	132.36	50th Anniversary Attendance in Brainerd - Hotel Reimbursement
116111	08/14/2023	Living Earth Center	2,611.20	July 2023 USDA Program Charges
116112	08/16/2023	Wells Fargo	5.99	HyVee - Cookies for Meeting - 6/29 - NateG
			37.74	HyVee FF - Fuel for Traverse - 6/29 - NateG
			143.73	Facebook/Meta - MBFFA Needs Assessment & Waseca Le Sueur Library Event - 6/30 - NateG
			24.00	Ticketleap - 3 Farmfest Tickets - 7/6 - NateG
			42.84	Late Fee
116113	08/16/2023	Wells Fargo	26.00	Late Fee
116114	08/16/2023	Wells Fargo	143.88	Mentimeter - Subscription - 7/7 - AB
			27.03	Late Fee
116115	08/16/2023	Wells Fargo	6.99	Holiday Gas - Ice for Bus Tour - 6/21 - SF
			13.00	Cedar Crate Farm - USDA Supplies - 6/24 - SF
			12.00	Upbeet Acres - USDA Supplies - 6/24 - SF
			30.00	Le Sueur Gardens - USDA Supplies - 6/24 - SF
			9.00	My MN Farmer - USDA Supplies - 6/24 - SF
			5.00	Rebel Rooster Farm - USDA Supplies - 6/24 - SF
			1.17	Late Fee
116116	08/16/2023	Wells Fargo	22.01	No Name Saloon & Grill - Staff Travel Meal - 6/24 - NG
			30.30	Tekila Mexican Grill - Staff Travel Meal - 6/25 - NG
			30.31	Wasatch Brew Pub - Staff Travel Meal - 6/28 - NG
			55.09	Lyft - Ride from Airport - 6/24 - NG
			0.99	Apple - iCloud Storage - 6/25 - NG
			13.11	Sheraton Park City - Juice/Beverage - 6/28 - NG
			53.90	Late Fee
116117	08/16/2023	Wells Fargo	26.20	Office Depot - Name Plate - 6/20 - HB
			12.57	Zoom - Monthly Subscription - 6/22 - HB
			133.67	Amazon - Plaques, RLF Marketing Supplies - 6/24 - HB
			13.99	Amazon - Cleaning Wipes - 6/27 - HB
			23.14	Amazon - Peracetic Acide Test Strips - 6/27 - HB
			12.52	Amazon - Chlorine Test Papers - 6/27 - HB
			952.30	Sheraton UT - Nicole NADO Stay - 6/24-6/28 - HB
			2,988.00	Hootsuite - Team 3 Seats Annual - 7/6 - HB
			173.37	Pita Pit - Strengths Finders Staff Deve Meal - 7/11 - HB
			6.39	Fleet Farm - Bottled Water - 7/11 - HB
			65.26	Amazon - Paper, Envelope, Office Supplies - 7/16 - HB
			85.23	Late Fee
116118	08/16/2023	Wells Fargo	44.36	Late Fee
116119	08/16/2023	Wells Fargo	57.28	HyVee FF - Fuel for Traverse - 6/27 - KB
			13.29	Walmart - RLF Marketing Items, Office Supplies - 6/27 - KB
			86.23	Late Fee
116120	08/16/2023	Verizon Wireless	126.77	Cell & Tablet Phone/Internet
116121	08/16/2023	Blethen Berens	66.00	Legal Correspondence Regarding Position Posting
Check Total	22,192.03			
Report Total:	22,192.03			

Finance

- The banking conversion from Wells Fargo to US Bank/PFM MAGIC Fund is in the funding transfer process. Funds will be moved from Wells Fargo over to US Bank/MAGIC Fund the week of October 2nd. The General Checking account at Wells Fargo will be left open with the corresponding outstanding check dollar amount as those checks continue to post. Any remaining long-outstanding checks will be deposited at the state as unclaimed property.
- R9 has been in discussion with Blue Earth County regarding potentially taking over the administration of the area's Emergency Communications Board (ECB). Blue Earth County has served notice to the ECB stating they will no longer be assuming these responsibilities. The program works to ensure that emergency responders have the ability and bandwidth to reliability communicate in disaster or emergency situations. The coverage area for this program approximately matches the service area for R9. Member's of the ECB would pay a set fee to R9 to oversee the program and we would need to allocate approximately 500 hours of staff time. Headwaters Regional Development Commission in Northern Minnesota operate their area's ECB and we've had discussions with those that oversee the operation. R9 is currently waiting to hear back from Blue Earth County and the State regarding next steps.
- Quotes are being gathered for a new R9 vehicle to replace the 2014 Chevy Traverse. Our auto fund has a current balance of approximately \$80k. Discussion will be had regarding what to do with the remainder of the auto-fund after the new vehicle is purchased.
- Work will be done in the near future to add a YTD Actual vs Budget Page to the Financials as presented in this packet.

Revolving Loan Fund

- RLF
 - Current Principal Outstanding = \$2,111,761
 - Available to Lend = \$1,986,465

Region Nine Area, Inc.

- No information to report.

IX. Chair's Report

A. Approval of College – Age Youth Commissioner

Date																
09/21/2023																
Name																
Katelynne Kratz																
Phone																
(507) 220-2937																
Email																
katelynne.kratz@mnsu.edu																
Address																
Why do you wish to serve on the Region Nine Development Commission?																
I am very interested in the economic and community development of Region 9. As someone who has grown up and lived within the region for 21 years, the development and success of the areas that I am connected to are salient to me. Working towards the success of communities within Region 9 and providing input on the best ways to achieve this would allow me to help the region I grew up in stay productive and become a stronger force within the state. Due to my experience within different communities within the region, the growth of these areas are important to me.																
What makes you best able to represent college youth in the region?																
I have recently obtained a Bachelor's of Science in Political Science from Minnesota State University Mankato, and decided to continue my education there and am currently pursuing a Master's degree in Public Administration and Community Management. I have learned a plethora of information through my education that will help guide me through my involvement in the commission. My position as a college student will assist in making decisions regarding university-related matters. Aside from my college education, my residence within Region 9 for my whole life aids in my experience with the communities that reside within the region. The combination of my education and residence makes me best able to represent college youth in the region.																
Endorsements																
Click the plus icon to add another line.																
<table><tr><th>Name</th><th>Title</th><th>Organization</th><th>Phone</th></tr><tr><td>Teri Bode</td><td>Group and Individual Insurance Agent</td><td>The Canopy Group</td><td>5072201290</td></tr><tr><td>Kristian Braekkan</td><td>Economic Development Director</td><td>Region 9 Development Commission</td><td>5073898862</td></tr><tr><td>Scott Weilage</td><td>CEO</td><td>Wealth Centers of America</td><td>5076254810</td></tr></table>	Name	Title	Organization	Phone	Teri Bode	Group and Individual Insurance Agent	The Canopy Group	5072201290	Kristian Braekkan	Economic Development Director	Region 9 Development Commission	5073898862	Scott Weilage	CEO	Wealth Centers of America	5076254810
Name	Title	Organization	Phone													
Teri Bode	Group and Individual Insurance Agent	The Canopy Group	5072201290													
Kristian Braekkan	Economic Development Director	Region 9 Development Commission	5073898862													
Scott Weilage	CEO	Wealth Centers of America	5076254810													
Signature																

IX. Chair's Report

A. Approval of College – Age Youth Commissioner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathryn K...", is located within a rectangular box.

X. Executive Director's Report
B. Out of State Travel Request



Out-of-State Travel Request Form

Basic Information:

Name:	Andrea Boettger
Travel Reason/Event:	NADO Annual Training Conference
Travel Destination:	Cleveland, OH
Date of Departure:	Tuesday, November 7, 2023
Date of Return:	Saturday, November 11, 2023
Funding Source:	

Anticipated Costs:

	Departure Airport			Arrival Airport			Cost
Airfare (Roundtrip)	MSP		to	CLE			\$ 477.80
	Description						Cost
Registration							675.00
	Total Nights			\$ Per Night			Cost
Lodging	4		x	\$ 209.00		=	\$ 836.00
	Total Days			\$ Per Diem			Cost
Meals/PerDiem	4.00		x	\$ 75		=	\$ 300.00
	Total Miles			\$ Per Mile			Cost
Mileage	188.00		x	\$ 0.655		=	\$ 123.14
	Description						Cost
Other							
	Description						Cost
Other							
Total Anticipated Cost of Out-of-State Travel Request							\$2350.37

Employee Signature: _____ Date _____

Executive Director Signature: _____ Date _____

Justification:

Per Region Nine Development Commission Personnel Policy Manual:

6.5 OUT OF STATE TRAVEL

It is recognized that out-of-state travel is necessary for the effective operation of RNDC. It is further recognized that active participation in national organizations, effectively influencing federal legislation, and participation in national training programs will require and warrant out-of-state travel for RNDC staff members and officials. Finally, it is recognized that as a recipient of private foundation or federal funding, RNDC, is often required to participate in the training and development opportunities afforded by the funding authority.

Notwithstanding, as a local unit of government that is accountable to the citizens of the region, out-of-state travel will be limited to those instances determined to be prudent, appropriate and essential to the delivery of RNDC programs or services. Therefore, the Board of Directors must approve the out-of-state travel of both RNDC commissioners and staff, up to and including the executive director.

To assist in the development of an annual budget, staff and RNDC commissioners are to identify the out-of-state travel necessary and expected to occur during the budget cycle. The finance director and executive director will utilize the estimates for budgetary purposes. Inclusion of anticipated travel expenses within an annual budget is not to be construed as affirmation or approval of the Board of Directors.

Requests for out-of-state travel shall be submitted to the executive director a minimum of one month before the expected date of departure. Such requests shall be made in the manner prescribed by the executive director. At a minimum, requests for out-of-state travel shall include the following information:

- Staff/commissioner(s) requesting authorization;
- Travel destination;
- Date of departure/return;
- Anticipated costs of transportation, lodging, per diems, etc.;
- Source(s) of funding; and
- Written justification/documentation of necessity.

Requests for out-of-state travel, recommended by the executive director, shall be presented to the Board of Directors for authorization, a minimum of one month before the expected departure. To take advantage of reduced fares, earlier submission is encouraged. The Board of Directors shall either approve or deny requests without delay.

In those rare instances where it is deemed logistically impossible to abide by the notice requirements of this policy, the executive director and RNDC Chair shall be authorized to approve the out-of-state travel of staff members and RNDC commissioners. Following authorization by the executive director or RNDC Chair of the Board of Directors shall be notified at their next scheduled meeting.

X. Executive Director's Report
B. Out of State Travel Request



Out-of-State Travel Request Form

Basic Information:

Name: Samuel Sharp

Travel Reason/Event: NADO Annual Training Conference

Travel Destination: Cleveland, OH

Date of Departure: Tuesday, November 6, 2023

Date of Return: Saturday, November 11, 2023

Funding Source: EDA

Anticipated Costs:

	Departure Airport			Arrival Airport			Cost
Airfare (Roundtrip)	MSP		to	CLE			\$ 437.80
	Description						Cost
Registration							\$ 675.00
	Total Nights			\$ Per Night			Cost
Lodging	5		x	\$ 209.00		=	\$ 1,045.00
	Total Days			\$ Per Diem			Cost
Meals/PerDiem	5.00		x	\$ 75		=	\$ 375.00
	Total Miles			\$ Per Mile			Cost
Mileage	32.00		x	\$ 0.655		=	\$ 20.96
	Description						Cost
Other							
	Description						Cost
Other							
Total Anticipated Cost of Out-of-State Travel Request							\$ 2,553.76

Employee Signature:

Samuel Sharp

10/2/2023

Date

Executive Director Signature:

Date

Justification: Samuel will be attending the NADO Annual Training Conference in place of Nicole. This will be a great opportunity for Samuel to build relationships and expand his professional network.

Per Region Nine Development Commission Personnel Policy Manual:

6.5 OUT OF STATE TRAVEL

It is recognized that out-of-state travel is necessary for the effective operation of RNDC. It is further recognized that active participation in national organizations, effectively influencing federal legislation, and participation in national training programs will require and warrant out-of-state travel for RNDC staff members and officials. Finally, it is recognized that as a recipient of private foundation or federal funding, RNDC, is often required to participate in the training and development opportunities afforded by the funding authority.

Notwithstanding, as a local unit of government that is accountable to the citizens of the region, out-of-state travel will be limited to those instances determined to be prudent, appropriate and essential to the delivery of RNDC programs or services. Therefore, the Board of Directors must approve the out-of-state travel of both RNDC commissioners and staff, up to and including the executive director.

To assist in the development of an annual budget, staff and RNDC commissioners are to identify the out-of-state travel necessary and expected to occur during the budget cycle. The finance director and executive director will utilize the estimates for budgetary purposes. Inclusion of anticipated travel expenses within an annual budget is not to be construed as affirmation or approval of the Board of Directors.

Requests for out-of-state travel shall be submitted to the executive director a minimum of one month before the expected date of departure. Such requests shall be made in the manner prescribed by the executive director. At a minimum, requests for out-of-state travel shall include the following information:

- Staff/commissioner(s) requesting authorization;
- Travel destination;
- Date of departure/return;
- Anticipated costs of transportation, lodging, per diems, etc.;
- Source(s) of funding; and
- Written justification/documentation of necessity.

Requests for out-of-state travel, recommended by the executive director, shall be presented to the Board of Directors for authorization, a minimum of one month before the expected departure. To take advantage of reduced fares, earlier submission is encouraged. The Board of Directors shall either approve or deny requests without delay.

In those rare instances where it is deemed logistically impossible to abide by the notice requirements of this policy, the executive director and RNDC Chair shall be authorized to approve the out-of-state travel of staff members and RNDC commissioners. Following authorization by the executive director or RNDC Chair of the Board of Directors shall be notified at their next scheduled meeting.

X. Executive Director's Report
B. Out of State Travel Request



Out of State Travel Request

Reason For Travel:

GreenLab Delegation to Denmark; Invitation from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark

Attendee:

Griensewic

Dates of Travel:

November 4-10th, 2023

Dates of Conference:

November 5-10th, 2023

Location

Copenhagen & rural areas

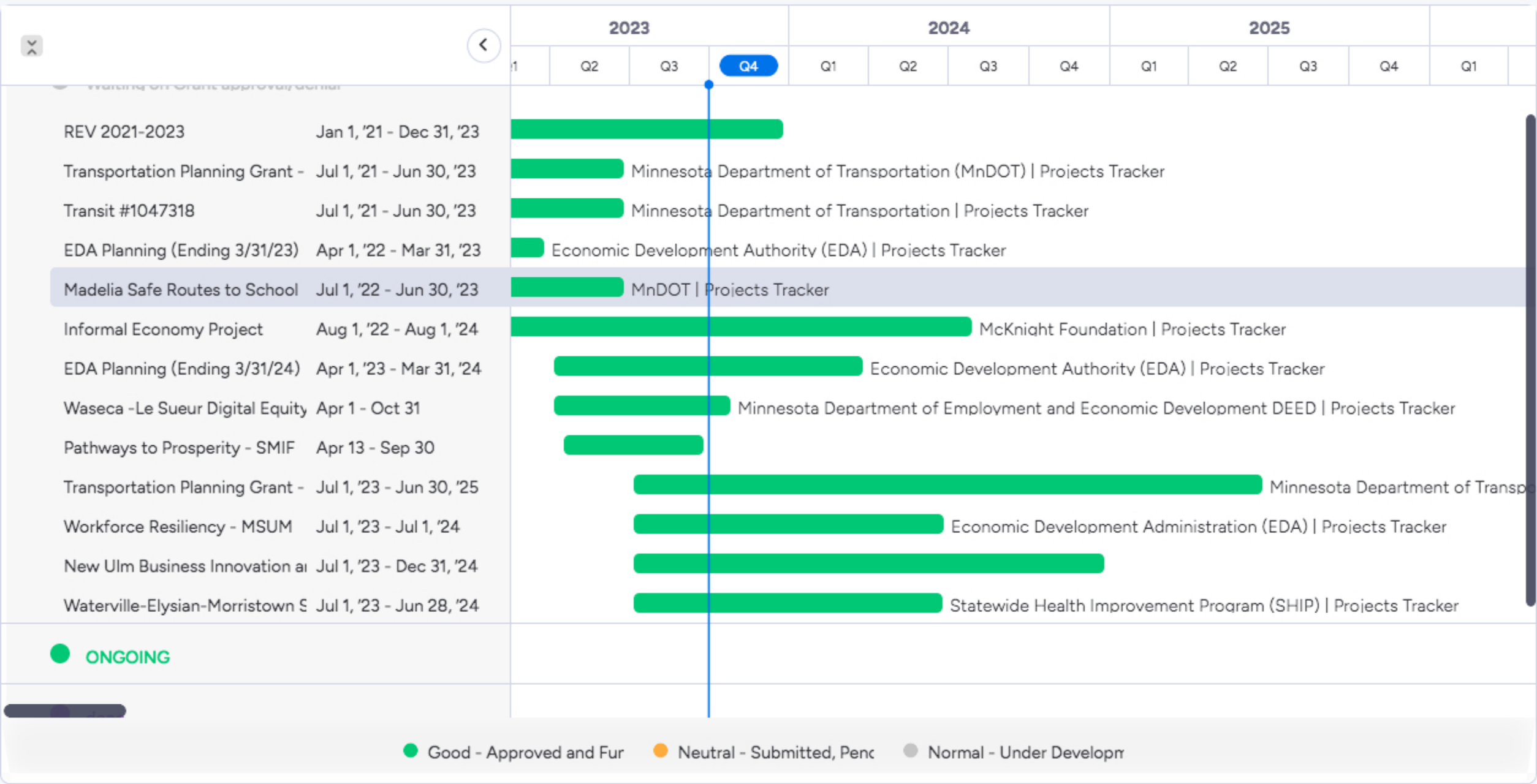
Delta flight: \$706.75

Add'l flights: 410.70

<u>Type of Expense</u>	<u>Project Charged</u>	<u>Direct Charge/ Reimb</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Registration	n/a	n/a	\$0.00
Airfare & Baggage	McKnight Foundation	Reimbursement	706.75
AMS-COP KLM flight	McKnight Foundation	Direct Charge	204.50
COP-AMS SAS flight	McKnight Foundation	Direct Charge	206.30
Parking/Mileage	McKnight Foundation	Direct Charge	65.00
Hotel	n/a	n/a	0.00
Estimated Meals	McKnight Foundation	Direct Charge	150.00
Misc.			
Estimated Total			\$ 1,332.55

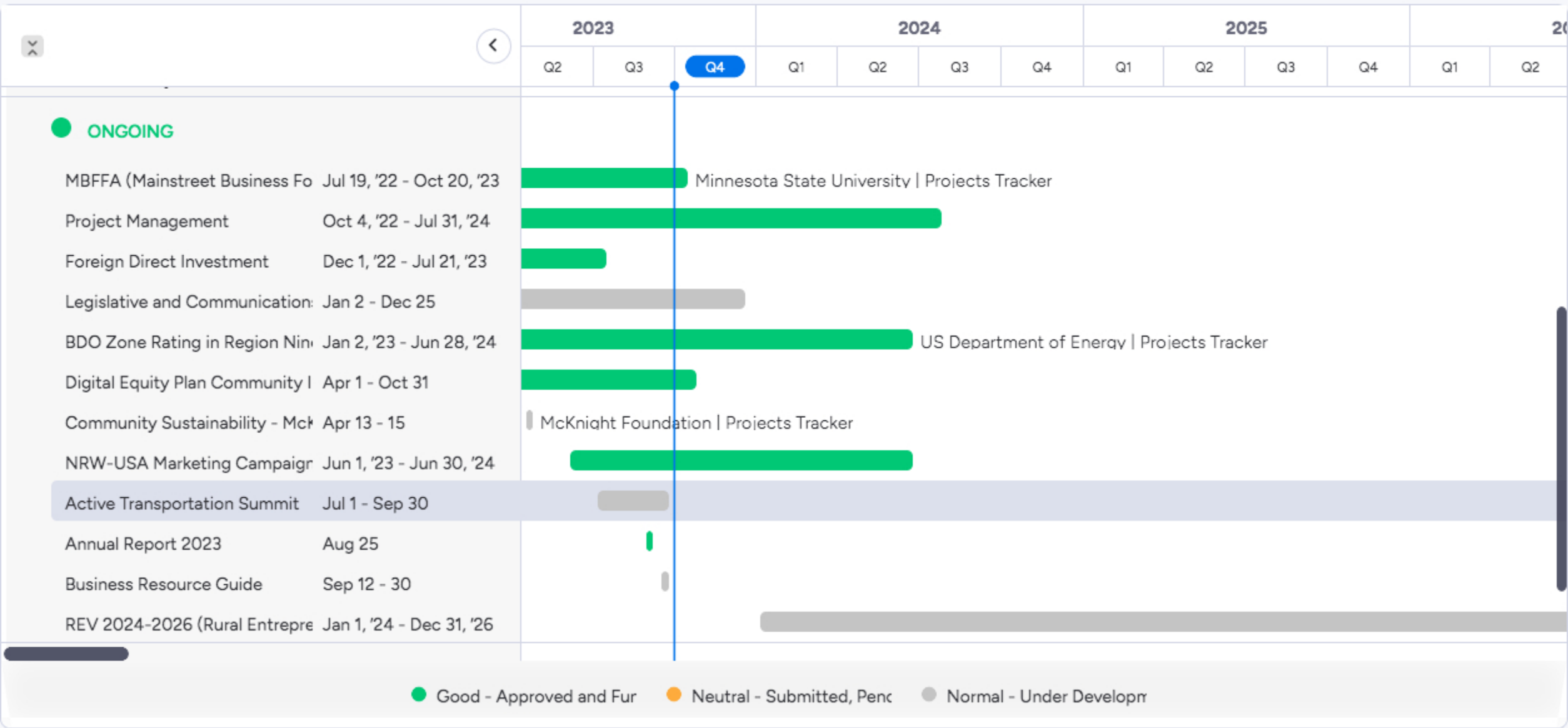
Additional Information:

*Booked main flight right away & on personal card for lowest price & to ensure seat was saved. *Booked short flights on RNDC card once outside funding was confirmed. Invited to participate as one of five Minnesotans on delegation covered by Federal Ministry of Danish government. Other participants are: MPCA Commissioner Kessler, Ever-Green Energy CEO Smith, Clean Energy Economy MN (CEEM) Ex. Director Maast and Olmstead County Commissioner Dave Senjem.



Commissioner Reporting

October 02, 2023 | 09:43:35



Staff Updates – October 2023

Nicole Griensewic

The Active Transportation Summit was held at SCSC on Friday, Sept. 29th and had a full house. Region Nine was one of the organizers of the event. Numerous attendees commented on what a talented team Region Nine has and how our work is appreciated. A special thank you to Chair Laven who kicked off the event with a welcome and shared his perspective as a local elected official on the need for active transportation planning in communities. The Mankato Free Press had a short write-up on the event in the Opinion section, giving it a Thumbs Up and commending the partnerships that were involved in the first-time summit.

Later that day, I was pleasantly surprised to hear from the McKnight Foundation regarding their interest in supporting my leadership as we build capacity for our team in the space of energy conservation and climate-smart practices. Our contact at the Foundation was excited to share that she was able to carve out \$10k specifically for my involvement in clean energy delegations and other professional development that otherwise would not be possible. This is a huge win for the organization as we recently declined an international delegation with the Governor. However, the foundation also funds the Energy Foundation, which is hosting a daylong event on Oct. 4th in Minneapolis. I was asked to serve on a panel in the afternoon to share updates on the work we are doing in communities around energy. This will be a great opportunity to share with leaders from across the state, including both Chairs of the Energy Committees as we collectively work to ensure that rural Minnesota is not left behind regarding the IRA and IIJA federal funds flowing to most states. It has been a great compliment to our work and team to be asked to serve on panels and other review committees. Numerous state agencies have been turning to us for input on future grant programs and projects. This is a big change, as historically the development commissions were forgotten or not specifically asked or invited to events. However, more partners are acknowledging the unique role RDOs play in our regions, having close connections to our municipalities. This past legislative session, the RDOs were even specifically called out to be eligible for the State Competitiveness Fund. While a great change of pace, it has added extra commitments and workload.

The McKnight Foundation is excited to support an upcoming delegation to Denmark that I was invited to participate in mid. November, titled, *GreenLab*. Because of this, I have asked Sam to attend the NADO Annual Training Conference, as I was previously budgeted and scheduled to attend but is the same week. This will be a great opportunity for Sam as he can build out his peer network and learn from other offices across the country on their Community Development projects. I was shocked yet ecstatic to be asked to participate in the Invite-Only event as Minnesota only has five spots. The other participants include the Commissioner of the MPCA, Katrina Kessler, Executive Director of Clean Energy Economy Minnesota (CEEM), Gregg Mast, CEO of Ever-Green Energy, Ken Smith, Olmstead County Commissioner (*and former State Senator who introduced Region Nine to CSM*) Dave Senjem, and me. Region Nine was asked to join in part because of the grassroots projects that have been popping up around the region since the December delegation, including Comfrey and

the City of New Ulm. I had assumed I would be asking the Commission to support the cost of the flights, as that is the only cost that is not covered by the Federal Ministry of Denmark. However, the McKnight Foundation came in at the 11th hour with the funding for not only reimbursing the flights but also for other upcoming events and opportunities. I cannot thank them enough as they acknowledge the role our organization is playing and the results and energy transformations our communities are seeking.

It has been an exciting time for the team as we have added capacity despite not adding any new staff. We have welcomed a Georgetown Fellow, Maggie Ahern, who will be assisting primarily with the Faribault County Strategic Economic Development Plan. We have also partnered for the first time with the Humphrey School on potentially having a student group work on a project for the city of New Ulm.

I have also been organizing the next MADO Executive Director meeting at the end of November. I have invited the Assistant Commissioner of MPCA to present as well as host the McKnight Foundation as we collectively work on strengthening that relationship with the funder. The MADO offices have all put in funding asks for the next calendar year to continue building capacity in the environment/energy space.

Alejandra and Kristian will also present to the MADO Executive Directors on the Region Nine *Workforce Taskforce* as well as how RDOs can hire individuals who have visas as all our offices have struggled to attract and retain talent.

Heather Bartelt

Heather has assisted in planning and organizing the Full Commission meeting, along with organizing new commissioner orientation sessions.

Heather was assigned the responsibility of creating and maintaining a comprehensive database of all elected officials contact information and term dates in the region. The goal is to use that database for RNDC marketing and outreach.

Heather has been working with Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission to learn how the process is handled as well as Corree on creating a place for living document reside.

Heather has been assisting with planning the MADO Executive Director's meeting which is set to take place on November 28 & 29th in the Twin Cities.

Heather attended the REDA meeting in St. Peter on September 13th. REDA is in their Phase 3 (out of 4) as they seek to build more insight and details about future actions. A series of focus groups will be taking place from late September to early October where regional stakeholders will have the opportunity to discuss the future of the Greater Mankato region.

Heather organized a staff development activity on October 6, funded by RNDC Wellness Dollars, in which team members participated in a high ropes course at Kerfoot Canopy Tours in Henderson.

Heather attended a virtual administrative meeting with her fellow Minnesota colleagues on September 29th.

Alejandra Bejarano

Alejandra is leading the annual update to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS) presented in the Annual Performance Report. As part of this process, a survey will be sent to commissioners and external partners. Moreover, the CED committee will convene in October to identify goals and strategies for the region. Beyond engagement, Alejandra is working with Mireille, the new economic development intern on collecting and analyzing data for the APR. Alejandra is also working with Mercedes to analyze qualitative data gathered at the youth meeting event at MNSU.

Alejandra attended the Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities Conference through the University of Minnesota, Extension, where she had the opportunity to connect with other economic developers from across the state.

Alejandra continues leading the workforce task force focused on international talent retention and attraction. Alejandra presented during the NADO visit to our region. The group is working on deploying surveys to local industry and student bodies to collect data that will inform them of the next steps. As part of this work, Alejandra is working with DEED's workforce consultants to host a session in November as part of their Workforce Wednesday initiative.

As part of the CEDS process, Alejandra was appointed by Governor Walz to represent District 1 on the Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs, a state-wide entity that advises the Governor on economic and community affairs in the congressional district. Alejandra helped organize and host a district visit to Mankato, where local organizations and elected officials convened.

Alejandra continues representing R9DC in the south-central Workforce Council and will upload meeting minutes on Monday.com for staff to access.

A new round of applications for the Prosperity Initiative program was received. Alejandra worked with committee members to review, accept, and deny applications.

Kristian Braekkan

Kristian and his partners at New Ulm Business Resource and Innovation Center (NUBRIC) kicked off a federal EDA-funded planning grant in September. RNDC's deliverables include the development of a needs assessment and a feasibility study as it pertains to automation and robotics training and upskilling of the existing manufacturing workforce. The grant runs

through June 2024 and includes an implementation blueprint pending findings from the needs assessment.

Kristian also began the development of a strategic economic development plan for Faribault County with Mercedes (project lead) and Maggie Ahern – an economic development impact scholar at Georgetown University. The goal is to present the county with a finalized plan in late spring 2024.

Sabri Fair

Sabri was successful with his grant application to the Local Food Purchase Assistance Grant through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. This grant will provide \$91,000 over two years, to purchase food from local farmers and distribute it for free to local food shelves and HeadStart Programs throughout the region.

Sabri has been working with two local farmers to apply for the AGRI (Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation) – Value Added grants. Their combined applications will be ~\$150,000 to increase their market access, production capacity, and food safety.

Sabri has also been working with the St. Peter Area Food Shelf, St. Peter Free Clinic, and Lutheran Social Services to apply for a grant to upgrade the lights in the building they share from fluorescent to LED. The grant will cover materials and labor and save the organization money on utility bills making them more financially sound.

Sabri has started outreach for the Regional Food System Plan. He will be at local farmers' markets and community events learning about people's understanding of the regional food system and what would help them buy more regionally grown, produced, and processed foods.

In mid-September, Sabri hosted a farm transition meet and greet which drew 25 participants including eleven emerging farmers, five landowners, and service providers to learn about and share technical and financial resources to help keep farmland as farmland.

Sabri has also started work with three local businesses who are looking for help with applying for the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) which will provide 50% grants for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects at their rural, small, and agricultural businesses.

Paola Ferrario

At the beginning of the month, Paola was working on several different tasks and projects, which included: updating the format of the project management tool on Monday.com, working with a consultant on elaborating the Gantt chart for the commissioner packet, and working alongside Corree to develop a guide for navigating business in the region.

On September 13th, Paola set up a meeting for the Department of Agriculture to further explore funding opportunities for the supply chain. The following day, Paola received good news confirming her win of the NADO High Impact Award for the German-American Exchange program. She also attended the International Alumni Program on Exchanges in Public Diplomacy with Global Ties from the State Department on the same day.

In mid-September, Paola dedicated some time to edit a video expressing support for the partnership with Thuenen Germany on their 10th anniversary for social media content. In addition to these responsibilities, Paola took charge of coordinating assistance from representatives and sent out invitations for participation in the Smart Grid and Energy Storage event in Minneapolis with the German-American Chamber of Commerce.

She also collaborated with Sabri to create an asset map for agriculture entrepreneurship support in Region Nine, which was a collaboration with the MBFFA group. The same day she attended the delegation from Germany's conference Networking session on Smart Grid and Energy Storage in Chicago. She also participated in a meeting with the city manager and EDA of the city of Montgomery, contributing to future entrepreneurship planning efforts and setting an on-site follow-up visit.

Towards the end of the month, Paola worked with Sam to organize the Independent Review Committee Kickoff for the BDO zone. On the same day, she participated in the 'Building a Bigger Table' training with Welcoming America. She was assigned to initiate the State Competitiveness grant proposal for Region Nine that was scheduled to start on September 26. She also attended three webinars, the Minnesota Foreign Trade Zones, the Energizing Rural Communities Phase Two, and the SAF with Greater MSP. Paola conducted an interview with Katelynne Kratz, a possible intern candidate for Region Nine.

On October 5th, the Legislative and Communications meeting, which Paola organized, is scheduled to take place, which will feature guest speaker Scott McMahon and Liz Wefel from Greater Minnesota Partnership. Paola is scheduled to attend two webinars, the CSM webinar, and the Regional Development Organizations webinar. In mid-October, she is set to explore smart city initiatives in Morris and participate in the RND Commissioner Dinner and Meeting.

Nathan George

This month Nathan finalized and submitted the Annual Report to the state. The Annual Report highlights the previous fiscal year's finances and summarizes the work of RND during that time. The report is submitted to the state, legislators, and commissioners once the printed version is completed.

Nathan has been working with Alejandra and Mercedes on the Annual Performance Report. He has helped facilitate engagement events for students at MSUM and the Workforce Council at Bridge Plaza. He also created marketing collateral to promote the events. The

Annual Performance Report assesses the organization's performance as it relates to the CEDS. The information collected helps RNDC focus its efforts and enhance individual project performance.

He is also working with Alejandra and RNDC Intern, Mireille on International Student/Workforce Development initiatives. This includes creating marketing material, planning promotions, and creating and editing surveys to help drive community engagement.

Nathan has been coordinating with the media to increase coverage of RNDC events. This included coverage of NADO's visit to Mankato which was a featured story in the Mankato Free Press and was reposted on various news sites. He also worked with KEYC to encourage coverage of the Southern MN Active Transportation Summit which led to a full story highlighting the event. He also assisted The City of Waldorf in the promotion of a grant writing workshop. This included submitting a press release/media advisory and setting up registration for the event. His press release was picked up by various local news outlets.

RNDC was awarded a NADO Impact Award again this year for the Learning Exchange with North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. Nathan assisted Paola in the application process which led to receiving the award. He will be promoting the award in the e-newsletter and RNDC's social media.

RNDC was also awarded a Silver Designation from the League of American Bicyclists for being a bicycle-friendly business. Nate worked with Joel on the application and the promotion of receiving the award. The designation is given to organizations that encourage and promote bicycling in the community; both for recreation and commuting.

Joel Hanif

Along with a team of local advocates, public health workers, and RNDC staff, Joel helped plan and facilitate the Southern Minnesota Active Transportation Summit at South Central Services Cooperative in North Mankato on September 29. Participants learned about the demographic and economic cases for active transportation investment, how to advocate successfully for active transportation infrastructure, funding and planning opportunities, complete street design, demonstration projects, Safe Routes to School, and food security and transportation.

RNDC was recognized by the League of American Bicyclists as a Bicycle Friendly Business at the silver designation level. Joel worked with Nate to prepare the application. The designation is given to businesses and organizations that encourage and promote cycling among employees and the greater community they serve.

Joel connected Blue Earth Light and Water with a US DOT grant that refurbishes and/or replaces electric vehicle chargers. BELW is working on an application to replace an out-of-service charger, and Joel is providing assistance as needed.

Joel held a kickoff meeting for Waterville-Elysian-Morristowns' Safe Routes to School plan. There, the planning team (made up of a group of stakeholders from local governments, schools, public health, law enforcement, transportation, and more) was informed of the SRTS process, timeline, expectations of the team, and deliverables.

Joel had a follow-up meeting with Brown-Nicollet-Le Sueur-Waseca SHIP to see how July's Walkable Communities Workshop Facilitator Training can be built upon in St. Peter. While this is still in its beginning stages, the hope is that Region Nine and SHIP could co-host a Walkable Community Workshop in St. Peter in the fall or spring.

Corree Johnson

Working with Kristian Braekkan, Corree is finalizing the contractual work report for SMIF's assessments of REV and PI communities. She is also working with Paola Ferrario to develop a regional business guide that can be used as a resource and marketing tool for future grant applications.

Corree continues to monitor the RNDC website to improve SEO, navigation, and update site content as needed. Additionally, she is helping with writing letters of support, editing internal documents, and other miscellaneous tasks.

Aaron Pacheco

Aaron is presenting to faculty at Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU) on a development series focusing on forced displacement and migration among students and local communities. He is sharing his related work done with Region Nine Development Commission, through his doctoral research at Indiana University, and his own personal experiences with forced migration. As many of his previous projects have included the resources and faculty of MSU, the presentation is also an opportunity for open conversation with professors and professional staff to share ideas and expand our understanding of how forced displacement affects a surprising amount of southern Minnesotans.

Along with Aaron's smaller supplemental research role on Region Nine projects, he, along with Kristian Braekkan, are working on their larger industry diversity project and its impacts on the workforce and local innovation. The study has so far proven very useful in identifying correlations within demographic and income statistics. Decreasing employment diversity, low relative income, and a lack of promotable job opportunities have all been theorized to be major contributors to out-migration and labor shortages, but this project is generating data that measures the severity of these issues. Other variables such as education attainment are also showing strong correlations to industry diversity and are being considered in reference to a shrinking skilled job market relative to overall job growth.

Sam Sharp

Samuel has continued his work with the BDO Zone Initiative program by assembling an Independent Review Committee (IRC) comprised of regional stakeholders. The IRC will be responsible for providing regional context and information surrounding key economic

drivers such as manufacturing and agriculture to aid in the advancement of the BDO Zone assessment. Samuel will be attending the MN Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) Info Session hosted by GreaterMSP and will explore potential opportunities for collaboration and/or partnership through the alignment of the BDO Zone Initiative program.

Samuel has been working with Sabri to further develop the Community Climate Resilience Plan for the City of Comfrey. Objectives include community outreach, coordinating energy audits, and forming a community climate committee to ensure the planning efforts are reflective of community needs.

Samuel is working with SolSmart to form a pathway toward upgrading RNDC's silver placement to gold designation. Additional work with SolSmart includes inviting communities throughout the region to participate in this program and connecting them to free technical assistance as they navigate the solar energy landscape.

Samuel assembled a STEP Capstone project description for students attending the Humphrey School of Public Affairs which will focus on the City of New Ulm and their need to update the existing district heating from steam to a hot water-based system.

Samuel is working with Paola to develop an application for the State Competitiveness Funds which aims to fund staff time and build capacity to continue supporting communities interested in pursuing state and federal funding opportunities.

Samuel attended Global Minnesota's SDG Roundtable Event where a delegation of German professionals visited Minneapolis to share their insights and experience working with energy storage and smart grid innovations.

Samuel attended a virtual NADO Learning Session discussing strategic tools for bioeconomy development. During this session, Samuel was able to speak on RNDC's involvement in the BDO Zone program and learn about additional ongoing initiatives within the biofuels industry.

Samuel coordinated a visit to UMN Morris to witness firsthand and learn more about the innovative renewable energy projects and pilot programs taking place.

Toward the end of October, Samuel will be attending the MN DEED Brownfields and Beyond event to learn more about brownfields and redevelopment topics, projects, and opportunities applicable to communities in Region Nine.

Courtney Wright

September 12-13th Courtney attended the GMS-RLSS training in Denver, Colorado. RLSS is a software program used to track and maintain revolving loans.

On September 20th, Courtney attended the Multicultural Networking Meeting. The guest speaker at this event was Dr. Corine Omole, who spoke about accessibility in higher education. Liz Steiborn-Gourley was another guest speaker who spoke about Lead the Vote. Throughout the event, Courtney was able to network with other members of the community.

Courtney met with the Loan Committee members to present GO Property Management LLC's loan request. GO Property Management LLC has a purchase agreement for the Scholarship of America building in St. Peter. The purchase of the building has funding support from Pioneer Bank and the St. Peter EDA. Scholarship of America will remain in this building but as a tenant along with other service-based programs and organizations in the community. The business owners of GO Property have four organizations that will be housed at this building as well. These organizations will have programs that include mental health services, childcare, and education & wellness programs. The four organizations are The Hill (neuro-affirming therapy), Ivy + Sprout PLAYSchool (childcare center), The Growth Collective (center for wellness and education), and GO Therapy (offers physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, feeding & swallowing therapy). The Hill and Ivy + Sprout PLAYSchool are not established organizations yet but will develop within the next couple of years. The purchase of this building will help the community of St. Peter with the childcare crisis and will have a large amount of employment opportunities. We are thrilled to announce the Loan Committee has approved this loan request on September 27th.

Courtney is working with two other business clients to gather information for their loan applications. We are hoping to present one of those loans to the Loan Committee within the next couple of weeks.

Mireille Ghassan

On September 25th, Mireille attended the Grant Writing Workshop hosted by Rob Wilkening, Mayor of the City of Waldorf. It was a great event to learn more about grants. It had a good turnout with about 15 attendees. Kristian presented federal grants, sharing information about where to find grants, eligibility, identifying opportunities and tips for grant research, and applying for grants. Rob presented on grant writing and provided resources for grant research.

Mireille collected updated demographic data for the APR report in an excel spreadsheet and shared it with Nate to review. The data was collected from StatsAmerica.org and HeadwatersEconomics.org. However, there was a slight issue as some of the data has not been updated from 2021.

Mireille and Alejandra created surveys for the Workforce Task Force, a survey for international students and employers, which will help us get a better understanding of the current international student presence in the workforce in the region. The surveys will also help identify and address the many opportunities and challenges facing the community in terms of international student hiring and retention in the workforce. A flyer for the survey is

also being created with help from Nate. Hoping to add an incentive/prize for those who complete the survey (more to come with that).

Mireille attended the EF Fed/State Implementation meeting in Minneapolis on October 4th. There she had the opportunity to hear, learn, and participate in in-depth discussions with local experts on the climate opportunities and the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act as the 2024 Legislative session is coming up.

Terms & Abbreviations

APR – Annual Performance Reports (CEDs)
ATP – Area Transportation Partnership
AURI – Agricultural Utilization Research Institute
BDO – Bioeconomy Development Opportunity
CRP – Carbon Reduction Program
CEDS – Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
COPAL – Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Acción Latina (Communities Organizing Latino Power and Action)
CGMC – Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities
CSM – Climate Smart Municipalities
CSSJ – Climate Smart St. James
CTS – Center for Transportation Studies
DEED – Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
DHS – Minnesota Department of Human Services
DOE – Department of Energy
EDA – Economic Development Administration
EDD – Economic Development District
GAC – Gustavus Adolphus College
GIS – Geographic Information Systems
GMG – Greater Mankato Growth
GMDC – Greater Mankato Diversity Council
GMNP – Greater Minnesota Partnership
HACER – Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research
LGU – Local Government Unit
LMI – Labor Market Information
LMI – Low-to-Moderate Income
MADO – Minnesota Association of Development Organizations
MAPO – Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization

MCLA – Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs
MDH – Minnesota Department of Health
MnDOT – Minnesota Department of Transportation
MnSCU – Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System
MPCA – Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
MSA – Metropolitan Statistical Area
MSU-M – Minnesota State University, Mankato
MYLAP – MN Young America Leaders Program
NEA – National Endowment for the Arts
NEH – National Endowment for the Humanities
NUBRIC – New Ulm Business Resource Innovation Center
NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Services
PI - Prosperity Initiative
PROTECT – Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation
REDA – Regional Economic Development Alliance
REV – Rural Entrepreneurial Venture
RLF – Revolving Loan Fund
RNAI – Region Nine Area Inc.
RNDC – Region Nine Development Commission
SACE – Southern Agricultural Center for Excellence
SAF – Sustainable Aviation Fuel
SBDC – Small Business Development Center
SCC – South Central College
SHIP – Statewide Health Improvement Partnership
SMIF – Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation
SRTS – Safe Routes to Schools
STIP – State Transportation Improvement Program
TAC – Transportation Advisory Committee