



Commission Meeting

Wednesday, January 8, 2025 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 – Secretary Branstad			
IV. Approval Consent Agenda	6:10	3	Action
A. Approval of October 9, 2024 Minutes			
B. Treasurer’s Report – To be provided		Handout	
V. Finance Director’s Report – Marie Dranttel	6:15	5	
A. Audit Presentation – Layne Kockelman, Abdo			Action
B. Pay Equity Report – Jessica Beyer			Action
VI. Chair’s Report	6:25		
A. Recognition of Outgoing Commissioners (Femrite, Hilpipre, Milbrath)			
VII. Approval of RNDC Strategic Plan –Dan & Meredith, Playbook Strategies	6:30	6	Action
VIII. Approval of Policy Manual – Commissioner Ayan Omar, Committee Chair of Budget & Personnel	6:45		Action
IX. Denmark Delegation Presentation – Commissioners Stephanie Hilpipre & Dave Borchert	6:50		
X. Waseca County Workforce Development Center – Kristian Braekkan			
XI. Executive Director’s Report – Nicole Griensewic	7:40		
XII. Other Business	7:45		
A. Commissioner Updates			
B. Meeting Evaluation		Handout	
XIII. Adjournment	8:00		Action

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Laven called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. at South Central Service Cooperative.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Elliot Belgard, Andrea Boettger, Dave Borchert, Steve Cooling, Chris Dalton, Marie Dranttel, Lyle Femrite, Robert Goblirsch, Stephanie Hilpipre (Virtual), Dawn Kratzke, Mike Laven, Mary Milbrath, Bob Nielsen, Shanon Nowell, Patty O'Connor, Ayan Omar, Mike Pfeil, Gary Richter, Pam Rodewald, Steve Rohlfig, Phil Schafer, Scott Schlueter, Julie Tesch (Virtual)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lee Baarts, Sarah Berry, Paul Harris, Katelynne Kratz, Matt Peterson

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Jim Branstad, Elroy Glidden, Brad Krause, Christian Lilienthal, Tom Loveall, Rita Rassbach, Rob Wilkening

OTHERS PRESENT: Ky Battern, Alejandra Bejarano, Jessica Beyer, Kristian Braekkan, Sabri Fair, Jazmine Flores, Nate George, Nicole Griensewic, Joel Hanif, Sarah Janovsky, Samuel Sharp, Lisa Callahan, Giselle Lo

There was a quorum.

IV. APPROVAL OF NICOLLET COUNTY, SMALL CITIES COMMISSIONER, PAM RODEWALD

Rolfing moved to approve Pam Rodewald as Small Cities Commissioner for Nicollet County. O'Connor seconded. Motion carried.

V. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Dalton moved to approve the consent agenda. Pfeil seconded. Motion carried.

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Laven introduced the new RNDC team members: Jessica Beyer (Deputy Director), Lisa Callahan (GreenCorps Member), Giselle Lo (American Connection Corp Fellow), and Jazmine Flores (Lending Specialist).

With Jessica's appointment as Deputy Director, the Executive Director Succession Plan required updates to incorporate her new role.

Hilpipre moved to approve the Executive Director Succession Plan. Tesch seconded. Motion carried.

Meredith Vadis from Playbook Strategies presented an overview and update on the RNDC strategic planning process.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Nicole attended the America's Competitiveness Exchange in Armenia, where she noted several similarities between our region and Armenia, particularly in agriculture. She had the opportunity to give a presentation on sustainable agriculture, highlighting innovative practices in Region Nine. Nicole also shared a video that summarized two days of the exchange.

Due to an ongoing relationship with the Royal Danish Embassy, RNDC was invited to participate in the Denmark Clean Energy Trade Mission later in October. Commissioners Borchert and Hilpipre will attend, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark will cover all associated costs.

VIII. HOUSING

Saint Peter City Administrator Todd Prafke opened the meeting with a focus on housing by presenting the various housing projects developed for the Saint Peter community. He noted that housing needs have evolved significantly over the past few decades and credited the city's progress to the flexibility and support of the city council and Saint Peter residents.

He then posed several questions for group discussion.

IX. BREAKOUT DISCUSSIONS

The various groups gathered to discuss housing-related topics. After productive discussions, each group shared a summary of their key points and insights with the larger group. Feedback from these discussions will help guide future conversations.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Elliot Belgard was honored for his twelve years of service to RNDC as he chose not to seek election to the county board.

Commissioners shared updates from their communities.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Belgard moved to adjourn. Dalton seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Finance

Finance Director, Ky Battern, provided his notice to Region Nine Development Commission and on December 27 departed the organization to return to his previous role at Le Sueur-Henderson Public Schools.

Executive Director Nicole Griensewic and Deputy Director, Jessica Beyer have been working on execution of a transition plan to ensure the organization has areas of work covered until the position is filled.

Throughout the interim, Jazmine Flores will be following the Region Nine Development Commission Succession Plan in handling day-to-day essential operations such as payroll and accounts receivable/payable. Additionally, to support accounting and higher-level Finance needs during the interim, Mary Bogie, a professional consultant with specific government agency experience will be providing limited consulting services approximately 8 to 10 hours per week (as needed) to ensure financial reporting and accounting components are kept up with and set deadlines are met.

The Finance Director position is currently posted on the Region Nine Development Commission website and all other recruitment channels. Please help share information about the opportunity.

Revolving Loan Fund

- Most Current Balance:
 - Principal Outstanding = \$2,121,778
 - Dollars Available for Lending = \$1,864,252
- See Jazmine Flores's report for more RLF specifics.

Region Nine Area, Inc.

- No updates at this time.

Executive Summary

Region Nine Development Commission last drafted a strategic plan in 2022 alongside its 2022-2026 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan and has consistently worked toward the goals outlined in those two documents. This update to the RNDC strategic plan is designed to focus the organization's work as it concludes and updates the CEDS plan and to focus its energies in areas of the greatest intensity and need.

The main priorities identified by commissioners, staff, and partners for the 2025-2027 strategic period are:

1. Enhance technical assistance for local government economic development initiatives.
2. Devote more resources to expanding broadband, childcare, and housing options as key policy areas to unlock many of the other goals outlined in the CEDS action plan.
3. Increase RNDC visibility, engagement, and communication with the goal of spurring increased community-level action and highlighting organizational impact on the region.
4. Streamline internal operations and update RNDC governance to enhance accountability and transparency for staff, commissioners and constituents.

Summary of Strategic Plan Creation Process

The 2024 RNDC Strategic Planning Survey had an exceptional response rate, generating insights from over half of the invited participants. The responses emphasized the need for strengthened community engagement, strategic clarity, and an almost micro-targeted focus on economic development. This, and feedback in subsequent interviews, reflected that while RNDC has made progress, stakeholders see an opportunity for RNDC to solidify its impact, especially in rural areas, through clear objectives and improved alignment with regional needs. Key themes from the survey include:

- **Community Engagement:** Strengthen ties with smaller cities and rural communities, improve public visibility, and expand proactive communication about the Commission's work, available services, and accomplishments.
 - **Leadership and Accountability:** Implement structured processes for CEDS and strategic plan execution and ensure clear benchmarks for success.
 - **Strategic Focus on Economic Development:** Prioritize essential economic and infrastructure support for communities, particularly in the areas such as broadband, housing, childcare, and corporate/foreign investment, where RNDC's influence in both public policy and funding attainment is vital to community success.
 - **Regional issues with board support:** Concentrate RNDC's resources on the nonpartisan, core economic needs that most impact communities in the region.
 - **Opportunity to access RNDC services:** Enhance RNDC's value to smaller communities by setting aside resources necessary to ensure smaller communities can fully participate in future economic development opportunities.
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Goals and Objectives for 2025-2027

Because much of RNDC's work is ongoing and never complete, some of the goals and objectives below represent refined versions of previous plans. In other areas, clarity provided by those who engaged created more narrow, nuanced work to be accomplished in the next few years. This strategic plan prioritizes actionable, community-driven goals, measurable outcomes, and consistent updates to the board to ensure alignment and accountability throughout the 2025-2027 period. Specific staff assignments to support implementation will follow adoption of this plan by the Commission.

Goal	Objectives	Tactics	Measurement of Success	Implementation Details
1. Help communities individually and collectively achieve the 16 economic development aims contained in the CEDS plan by maximizing RNDC's technical assistance to local units of government within the region	1.1 Provide support to every community that requests grant writing assistance and assertively encourage more communities to apply for specific funding opportunities	• Increase grant writing support and training for local government staff. • Launch consolidated grant opportunity / funding availability newsletter • Create and publish a list of 'grant readiness basics' that communities can work through ahead of time with technical assistance from RNDC staff. • Proactively contact communities when a grant opportunity is closely aligned with that community's specific needs, plans and/or character.	• Number of requests for assistance with funding applications RNDC staff were able to fulfill / Total number of requests for assistance • Annual amount of money + in-kind contributions RNCD helped the region obtain to supplement public dollars • Frequency of funding availability newsletter and open rate • Year over year growth rate of funds + in-kind support applied for with RNDC's	Quarterly Written Update to Board: Includes updates on measures of success as well as anecdotal evidence and stories. Highlights impediments to success and requests board engagement to remove impediments and/or bolster efforts. Budgeting: Annual budgeting process and any budget amendments identify relevant objective(s) and tactic(s) as well as funding needed to achieve goals as outlined in this plan.

			assistance and/or encouragement.	
	1.2 Deliver strategic and/or comprehensive planning support that meets the varied needs of communities within the region and provides a foundation for funding attainment	• Provide region-specific training sessions planning. • Pre-write plan templates for smaller communities to easily implement.	• Annual number of complete strategic and/or comprehensive development plans.	
	1.3 Conduct regional and/or local studies that provide foundational evidence and are supportive of local applications to receive state and federal funding	• Annually outline priority feasibility studies and needs assessments for key economic areas. • Assign studies to staff internally or budget for and hire external consultants to complete studies. • Publish studies to RNDC board and communities for their awareness and use.	• Percent of annual work plan complete • Usage of studies in efforts to obtain state, federal and foundation funding.	
	1.4 Update the CEDS plan in accordance with US EDA requirement	• Plan and budget for update work in 2026-2027, consistent with UDEDA guidance.	• Timely CEDS update so no gaps in federal funding eligibility exist.	

Goal	Objectives	Tactics	Measurement of Success	Implementation Details
2. Intensely focus RNDC's resources, human capital, and organizational influence on opportunities to make local and regional progress on keys to regional competitiveness identified in the CEDS plan – especially broadband, childcare, housing and foreign direct investment.	2.1 Utilize both commissioner and staff time to advocate at the state and federal level for public policies and funding to support RNDC's needs	- Seek out high ROI opportunities for testimony, speeches, interviews and small group or 1:1 engagement with lawmakers, agency decision makers, and Key Opinion Leaders around these specific topics - Develop and regularly update RNDC's talking points with relation to the urgency of developing solutions in these three policy areas. - Seek out novel solutions employed by other communities nationally and globally to solve these challenges and provide opportunities for staff and commissioners to be educated about these potential solutions.	- Year over year, track RNDC resources allocated to broadband, housing, and childcare projects. - Annual study or data review to determine how significantly access has increased within RNDC to high speed internet, affordable & high quality childcare providers, and expanded housing units. - Growth in foreign direct investment to the region, year over year.	Biannual Board Meeting Review: Present progress on policy impacts and partnership outcomes as well as resulting action from high ROI opportunities. Discuss potential for resource reallocation based on community feedback and gaps in support. Other communications vehicles: See Goal #3 for additional opportunities to promote and define this Goal and highlight outcomes.
	2.2 Connect communities with resources, expertise, and cross-sector / foreign partnerships in these areas to solve challenges			
	2.3 Direct RNDC resources (staff time, funding, authorities) toward finding solutions to challenges communities face in these areas and other emerging areas of need.			

Goal	Objectives	Tactics	Measurement of Success	Implementation Details
3. Champion RNDC's ongoing work and achievements internally and externally to raise visibility and ensure strategic alignment of efforts	3.1 Expand communications strategy to "report back" regularly on past initiatives, trips, financial commitments and other significant RNDC resource uses	- Conduct an assessment and/or SWOT analysis of RNDC's current communication vehicles, audiences and effectiveness of each method reaching each target audience. - Write and implement a plan to enhance communication with target audiences, close gaps, and improve message consistency. - Partner with private and nonprofit sector leaders and organization, as well as other governmental organizations to amplify RNDC's voice specifically on the three policy topics identified in Goal #2. - Develop core RNDC messaging aligned with CEDS plan and this strategic plan and update quarterly.	- Communication plan written by end of Q1 2025 - Metrics of success included in communications plan, including in-person and virtual engagement targets.	Quarterly Written Communication Report: Provide board updates on the reach and effectiveness of RNDC messaging. Highlight any partnership opportunities that resulted from increased visibility.
	3.2 Promote RNDC's core message and work locally, nationally and internationally with an eye toward developing partnerships that deliver tangible outcomes			
	3.3 Define the value RNDC provides and communicate that message clearly and consistently.			

Goal	Objectives	Tactics	Measurement of Success	Implementation Details
4. Expand upon the continuous improvement culture within RNDC	4.1 Establish standardized annual review process for Executive Director	- Formalize ED review standards with the Budget Committee. - Develop a documented, consistent project management approach for use by staff and to help communicate with partners. - Maintain transparent progress tracking (i.e. a scorecard) of strategic goals. - Intentionally budget for staff and commissioner professional development and education opportunities. - Conduct an annual risk assessment of the organization. - Establish an RNDC Governance Review Committee to conduct a complete review; going forward, establish an annual or biannual timeline for review and smaller modifications as needed.	- Timely completion of ED annual review. - Strategic plan and CEDS updates completed on-time. - Positive self-audit results on project management consistency. - RNCD Staff Leadership adjusts staff annual reviews to include assigned strategic planning implementation tasks and project management expectations. - Governance Review Committee of	Annual Review and Ongoing Monitoring: Report on Executive Director performance developed and finalized during Q2 annually.
	4.2 Create implementation plans & staff assignments for the strategic plan and CEDS plan as well as a regular reporting schedule to the board. (Implementation plans should align with staff goals & annual review process)			Commission and/or Executive Board receives periodic implementation updates on CEDS and this plan in written form and for discussion as warranted.
	4.3 Build an RNDC project management process and apply it consistently			
	4.4 Offer staff professional development opportunities specific to continuous improvement in their role and/or focus areas of this plan. Ensure			Executive Board received a verbal briefing of the annual risk mitigation report and discussed appropriate actions with

	professional development includes technical education as well as development of skills to further enhance the RNDC culture, organizational development and to meet future needs.		the Commission presents findings and recommendations for adoption during 2025.	RNDC Staff Leadership Team. Commission received a governance report and recommendation for its consideration in 2025.
	4.5 Review organizational governance, by-laws and policies as they relate to leadership, succession planning, code of conduct, for the purposes of risk mitigation, transparency, and accountability.			

STAFF UPDATES | January 2025

Nicole Griensewic

Nicole participated in a board of directors meeting with the Greater MN Partnership, GMNP. Discussions included the upcoming legislative session. The committee leadership list was reviewed, as well as an update on changes with the state's legislators was provided. This is Nicole's final year on the board, per the bylaws.

MADO Executive Directors met in Hutchinson for the quarterly meetings. MADO's contact for the McKnight Foundation met with the group to better understand how the foundation can support the work they have funded in the clean energy and climate resiliency space.

MADO will also be releasing an RFP for a consultant to lead strategic planning. One goal of MADO leadership is to determine how the group can better work together to make it easier for funders like McKnight, who look for one point of contact instead of nine, for instance.

Nicole attended her first monthly *Free Press* Advisory Board meeting. Editor Joe Spear had asked for her perspective on questions the paper has, such as what stories should be getting covered and how to be most relevant in their readership area. This new board involvement pairs well with the draft RNDC Strategic Plan. Being more intentioned with community outreach

Ky Battern, Finance Director had his last day with RNDC on December 27th. Battern is returning to his previous position with the Le Sueur / Henderson School District. The team honored his contributions to the organization with Holiday cheer on December 23. Jessica and Nicole organized a catered breakfast for the team as a show of appreciation.

Mary Bogie has been contracted to provide transitional finance and accounting support while RNDC hires and onboards a new Finance Director. Bogie was recommended by Playbook Strategies as she previously served as CFO for the regional government organization, Met Council. Bogie created her LLC to assist LUGs with fractional finance contract work.

The federal EDA was reauthorized by the Senate in late December. In March, Nicole was in D.C. with the NADO Executive Committee, when the legislation to reauthorize passed out of the House's Transportation & Infrastructure committee. This is the first time in 20 years that EDA was reauthorized. This is a huge win, as NADO and other national orgs that serve rural districts have been advocating for reauthorization, due to the department's importance in funding infrastructure and disaster recovery projects in rural areas.

Alejandra Bejarano

As part of the rural childcare initiative that the City of Eagle Lake is completing, Alejandra attended and helped organize a Town Hall Event in Eagle Lake's American Legion with the purpose of assessing childcare needs in the city. During the event, the core team that leads the initiative, which includes Alejandra, met with childcare providers and community stakeholders. The team presented the results of a survey that had been done to determine childcare needs addressed to parents, providers, and employers in the region. All the information will be used to set goals for 2025.

In relation to workforce, Alejandra finished the Global Talent report and has started planning a launch event in February to present it to the taskforce and employers. Alejandra also participated in a presentation of the Global talent report for the South-Central Minnesota Workforce Council. Alejandra and other RNDC staff have been planning a Workforce Summit to be carried out in Mankato in May 2025. She met several times with Greater Mankato Growth staff to determine the details.

Alejandra finished the Annual Performance Progress Report and submitted it to the EDA. She also presented it, along with the changes that the EDA has introduced compared to previous years, to the rest of the RNDC staff and to the South-Central Minnesota Workforce Council.

Lastly, Alejandra and Kristian met with the City of Springfield's EDA to discuss the Springfield Housing Study. The purpose of the meeting was to start the planning process which will launch in January, and to plan for engagement and timeline.

Jessica Beyer

Jessica wrapped up work on the Policy Manual with legal counsel from Blethen and Behrens and presented a high-level overview to the Budget & Personnel Committee in December. Additionally, she has been working with Nicole on the Strategic Planning process with Playbook Strategies.

In early December, Jessica represented Region Nine at the Association of Minnesota Counties Conference in Bloomington where she attended meetings focused on economic development, conference sessions, visited exhibitors including the MADDO booth, and took part in networking opportunities as mechanism to continue to cultivate and support relationships in local government.

Jessica worked with team members to get the new Road Safety Transportation Planner position, new Food Recovery Coordinator position, and Finance Director positions posted in addition to reviewing applicants and taking part in interviews for the Road Safety position in early January. Jessica has also been actively involved in transition/interim planning for the Finance Director role as we work to cover duties and plan to fill that position.

Ongoing efforts continue with the Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership and Jessica took part in the University of Minnesota end of the year staff planning sessions. Other work with communities includes conversations with Martin County on economic development strategies, the Le Sueur County zoning plan, and working with Waterville partners on gearing up for a potential EDA application in coordination with Kristian Braekken.

Kristian Braekkan

Kristian is working on a housing study for the city of Springfield (Brown County) and is currently assessing the existing housing inventory. The timeline for this study is to be done in early May 2025. He is also conducting fourteen in-depth interviews with stakeholders in SMIF's REV communities as part of an assessment that RNDC is conducting on their behalf. These assessments will conclude by March 31, 2025.

Kristian is assisting with industry cluster studies in agriculture with the U of M's Transportation Policy and Economic Competitiveness program, which also includes the possibility of an ask of the federal EDA to support the work (as described by Aaron).

Lisa Callahan

Lisa, along with Sam Sharp, sent out community readiness and outreach materials to many communities within Region Nine. These materials include improvement opportunities, resources, and a survey.

She met with the City of Lake Crystal to offer support from RNDC and to explore energy efficiency strategies. She went to the City of Gaylord and met with the economic development director. We discussed Titlow Lake improvements and various solutions to Gaylord's old elementary school. She went to the City of Le Sueur and met with city leaders to get an update on their anaerobic digestion plant and offer support for other resilience initiatives. Lastly, she met with the City of St. James to discuss clean energy opportunities including items outlined in their Land Use Plan.

She is part of the team at RNDC working on the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) program. Currently, the team is working with the City of Fairmont. There are five other communities that can take advantage of the EECBG program. These funds can be used for planning energy efficiency initiatives like adding solar panels and weatherization programs. There are many opportunities under the EECBG program.

Lisa attended the AURI Energy Roundtable, where she explored topics such as electrification of ag processing, net zero plans, and emerging technologies. She met with the MCAP team from the University of Minnesota to learn ways we can increase outreach and community engagement for the MCAP program. Finally, Lisa's been supporting MPCA grant applications like the Local Action Climate Grant for the Children's Museum in Mankato and for the City of New Ulm.

Sabri Fair

Sabri Fair and project partners from Convivencia Hispana attended the Department of Energy's Community Energy Innovation Prize Summit in Chicago on December 4th and 5th to showcase their impactful work. From the presentation and work, RNDC received an additional \$100,000 to continue advancing energy efficiency and clean energy solutions in St. James.

On December 10th Sabri presented the findings from his Regional Food Recovery Plan. The event was well attended with about 20 people attending in person and another 10 attending online.

Sabri began coordinating with other RDO's about a coalition application for the grant opportunity titled Energy Improvements in Rural and Remote Areas. This grant opportunity would provide \$10-\$50 million in funding for grid resilience, energy efficiency improvements, and renewable energy projects that benefit communities of less than 10,000 people. RNDC hopes to package together projects from across Minnesota in partnership with our RDO colleagues, local governments, and electric utility partners.

community while paving the way to a resilient energy system, improving quality of life, and building a stronger local economy.

Sabri successfully received \$25,000 from SMIF's grow a farmer opportunity. These funds will be split between support the Living Earth Center's Emerging Farmers program and direct grants to disadvantaged farmers across the region. He anticipates releasing the application in early 2025.

Sabri presented the initial findings of the community engagement for a permanent location for the Mankato Farmer's Market. The data collected highlighted if farmers and vendors support this endeavor and what would make such a space accessible and beneficial to them. Sabri will continue working on the plan in the spring with the goal of having a final document before summer.

Jazmine Flores

Jazmine and Alejandra collaborated with Lourdes Menjivar from HACER to prepare discussion points for a segment on a Spanish-speaking radio station, aiming to promote the RLF program to a broader audience.

Jazmine also conducted a site visit to JR's Barn. Renae, the owner, was excited about potentially expanding the barn and would like to see if we would be interested in partnering up with her.

Efforts to conduct more routine site visits with existing RLF clients are ongoing. Jazmine is also focused on strengthening relationships with loan committee members.

Operationally, Jazmine processed all incoming RLF payments, ran the monthly tickler report in GMS, and ensured all collateral was in good standing.

Jazmine has been working closely with Ky as he transitions out of his current role, ensuring that day-to-day activities such as accounts payable and payroll are completed after his departure.

Nathan George

Nathan has been working on the International Student Hiring Toolkit with Alejandra and Mercedes. He has submitted the first draft of a four-page summary of the toolkit and has begun laying out the full toolkit. He is editing, typesetting, and designing the document which will provide readers with easy-to-follow steps and information on hiring and retaining international students.

Nathan has been managing the posting, promotion, and incoming applications for the three open positions. He has also been reaching out to potential applicants and answering questions when they arise.

Nathan finished a four-class course on current marketing and branding trends and techniques with a focus on storytelling through branding. With the completion of this course, he has earned a branding specialization certificate.

Nathan has been going through the RNDC website pages to update the information available. This has included going through the grants and resource pages as well as gathering media placements and posting them on the website. Keeping the information on the website current and relevant helps visitors get to the information quickly. He will also update the elected official's pages when the new terms officially start.

Joel Hanif

Joel participated in the Highway 169 Coalition winter meeting in Prior Lake. There, the coalition and other presenters spoke about priorities for the 169 corridor and current projects underway.

Joel and Kristian met with Joe Holtmeier and other stakeholders to talk about how RNDC could possibly assist with their plans to convert the Holtmeier quarry into a mountain bike trail park and campground.

Joel and Sabri participated in a Southcentral Minnesota Clean Energy Council board meeting where we discussed the group's future and strategic direction. Joel and Sabri also met with Recharge America and several stakeholders in St. James to discuss a Recharge EV event in St. James this spring.

Joel has been assisting Nicole and Jessica with application review and resume scoring for the Road Safety Transportation Planner position. Joel and Jessica will conduct the first round of interviews during the first week of January. Joel is also working on the SS4A grant agreement paperwork with USDOT since hiring will take place very soon.

Completion of the Waterville-Elysian-Morristown is still delayed while logistics surrounding the closure of the Morristown campus and housing of all grades in Waterville are fully fleshed out. The superintendent will provide Joel with guidance on this so that the plan can be revised to appropriately reflect any procedural changes that may impact student safety during arrival and dismissal.

Sarah Janovsky

Sarah has been assisting with various day-to-day operations, including scheduling meetings, preparing for, and completing meetings, following up on action items, and helping with hiring processes as needed. The 2024 RNDC Wellness Program has concluded, and she will be meeting with SCSC Wellness Representatives in January to plan for 2025.

Giselle Lo

In early December, Giselle attended the American Connection Corps (ACC) Winter Institute, where she engaged with a diverse lineup of speakers covering topics such as leadership development, trauma-informed curriculum and justice-involved individuals, facilitating inclusive conversations, and more. She also participated in a digital divide simulation and connected with ACC alumni. During the institute, Giselle presented her listening tour findings, sharing insights on broadband challenges and opportunities in her community with her peers.

one meetings with individuals from diverse backgrounds to gain further insights into broadband needs and experiences in the community.

Aaron Pacheco

Aaron is working on expanding a project completed for SMIF on economic opportunity, to develop a new framework to identify economic resilience based on similar social and economic criteria for rural communities. Inspired by input by the EDA visit last month, the first stage is to build a preliminary study to present to the Federal EDA and build a proposal for further grant funding. The data will compile individual measures from across different public data sources to include the top four qualities (economic opportunity, health, human capital, and socioeconomics).

Additionally, Aaron is supporting a project to create an investment guide for potential partners of Region Nine. He has compiled the top firms and industries in the region, breaking down the results by employment statistics and gross receipts.

Sam Sharp

Samuel is working alongside Lisa to submit two separate applications for the MPCA's Local Climate Action grants. The first application will feature the Children's Museum of Southern MN and focus on energy efficiency improvements to offset lofty utility costs and improve building operations. The Children's Museum is undergoing an expansion process, incorporating clean technology and improved efficiency. If awarded, these funds will support that development.

The second application is with the City of New Ulm, focusing on the disadvantaged census tract and serving to provide energy efficient appliance upgrades and energy audits to disadvantaged individuals. The application is strengthened by partnerships with the city, New Ulm's PUC, MN Valley Action Council, and Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs).

Samuel is working to coordinate a tour to Hometown Bioenergy in an effort to leverage the growing interest in biofuels and bio-based processes. Samuel met with RISE building products featuring a funding opportunity focusing on the recycling of wind turbine blades and will be working with RISE to develop an application.

**Region Nine Development Commission
Board Payment Listing
November & December 2024**

Check#	Check Date	Vendor Name	Check Amount	Description
116477	12/17/2024	Xcel Energy	57.00	Electric - Account 51-0012085064-9
116478	12/17/2024	Lilienthal, Christian	98.24	Per Diem & Mileage - 11/13
116479	12/17/2024	Schafer, Philip H	138.00	Per Diem and Mileage - 11/13
116480	12/17/2024	Rohlfing, Steve J	28.14	Mileage - 11/13
116481	12/17/2024	Wilkening, Rob	82.16	Per Diem and Mileage - 11/13
116482	12/17/2024	Femrite, Lyle	60.72	Per Diem and Mileage - 11/13
116483	12/17/2024	Branstad, Jim	101.00	Per Diem and Mileage - 11/13
116484	12/17/2024	Upbeet Acres	185.00	LFPA - Inv 2120
116485	12/17/2024	City of Mankato	258.90	Parking Ramp Quaterly - INV 24726
116486	12/17/2024	Principal Life Insurance Company	290.04	Life Insurance Premiums - Account 1125885-10001
116487	12/17/2024	Omar, Ayan	50.00	12/12 - Per Diem
116488	12/17/2024	Richter, Gary	121.02	12/12 - Per Diem & Mileag
116489	12/17/2024	Hilpipre, Stephanie	448.24	12/12, 11/15, 10/27-11/1 - Per Diem & Mileage
116490	12/17/2024	League of MN Cities Insurance Trust P&C	9,567.00	Property & Casualty Insurance Premium 1/1/25 to 12/31/25 - Account 40006411
116491	12/17/2024	Regents of the University of Minnesota	500.00	Ryan Pesch UMN Extension Presentation - INV 0300035761
116492	12/17/2024	Johnson, Corree	4,095.00	October Consulting Services - INV 11
116493	12/17/2024	Greater Mankato Growth Inc	825.00	Membership - INV 73460
116494	12/17/2024	Minnesota U.I. Fund	40,306.39	Unemployment & Interest - Account 07919806
116495	12/17/2024	Femrite, Lyle	60.72	Mileage & Per Diem - 12/12
116496	12/17/2024	Creative Ad Solutions Inc	21.67	Name Plate - INV 27938
116497	12/17/2024	United Team Elite	240.00	R9 Sweatshirts (6)
117384	11/06/2024	United Team Elite	(120.00)	VOID Voucher 25147 & Check 117384
117436	11/06/2024	Thriveon Inc	3,669.19	November Monthly IT & Microsoft Services - INV 193935
117437	11/06/2024	Spirited Journeys LLC	270.00	USDA NRCS Work - Growers Network Consulting - INV 714A
117438	11/06/2024	Playbook Strategies LLC	3,500.00	October Strategic Planning Fee - Payment #2
117439	11/06/2024	Creative Ad Solutions Inc	13.39	Name Badges - INV 27635
117440	11/06/2024	Metro Sales Inc	404.82	Copier Usage - INV 2626585
117441	11/06/2024	MVAC	2,800.00	MPCA Energy Audits - Comfrey
117442	11/06/2024	Vanderberg Cleaning Services LLC	360.00	Janitorial Services - INV 18590
117443	11/06/2024	Living Earth Center	1,383.35	USDA NRCS Grant Management - INV 1049
117444	11/06/2024	Living Earth Center	8,241.62	LFPA - Produce Donation Reimbursements
117445	11/06/2024	SFM	1,074.00	Work Comp Quarterly Installment - INV 3439691
117446	11/06/2024	TeamKeeper, Harris Local Governement Solaris	86.25	Timesheet Software Monthly - INV 101225
117447	11/06/2024	National Lead for America Inc	20,000.00	Host Site Contribution - Giselle Lo - INV 745
117448	11/06/2024	Neubau Holdings LLC	3,304.00	November Office Rent
117449	11/06/2024	Spectrum	164.98	Internet Service - INV 0820665102324
117450	11/06/2024	Shred-It, C/O Stericycle Inc	142.34	Shredding Service - INV 8008659526
117451	11/06/2024	Greater Mankato Growth Inc	96.00	Regional Economic Development Alliance Registration - INV 72787
117452	11/06/2024	Laven, Mike	2,074.13	NADO Reimbursement - October 2024
117453	11/06/2024	Sempe, Mercedes	1,550.00	September & October Consultant Hours
117454	11/06/2024	Giselle Lo	104.26	Mileage to MADO
117455	11/06/2024	Rosin, Richard	53.14	Loan Overpayment Refund
117456	11/07/2024	New Ulm Business Resource & Innovation Center	5,788.71	NUBRIC Grant Reimbursement
117458	12/12/2024	Sempe, Mercedes	1,112.50	November Consultant Hours - Taskforce Work - INV 6
117459	12/17/2024	GMS	80.00	Monthly Accounting Software Fees - INV 309106,309969
117460	12/17/2024	Blethen Berens	1,064.00	Legal Services for November - ACCT Number 12541.003 STM 86
117461	12/17/2024	Minnesota State University Mankato	150.00	Reserved Pay Lot for 11/21 Event - INV 01338677
117462	12/17/2024	Security Storage Systems	100.00	Security - Customer Act Reg9Dev
117463	12/17/2024	Spectrum	164.98	Internet - INV 0820665112324
117464	12/17/2024	Thriveon Inc	489.15	New Docking Stations (3) - INV 194834
117465	12/17/2024	Playbook Strategies LLC	3,500.00	Strategic Planning Services - INV 1008
117466	12/17/2024	TeamKeeper, Harris Local Governement Solaris	85.00	Timesheet Keeper - Inv 100229
117467	12/17/2024	The Free Press	435.36	Newspaper - Act Number 123512903
117468	12/17/2024	Living Earth Center	1,075.41	USDA NRCS Grant Consultant - November Expenditures - Inv 1052
117469	12/17/2024	Ahern & Fruitman LLC	1,070.00	Ahern and Fruitman LLC - Transportation Study
117470	12/17/2024	Lime Valley Advertising Inc	115.00	Website Maintenance - INV 24120.09
117471	12/17/2024	Vanderberg Cleaning Services LLC	360.00	Janitorial Services - INV 18773
117472	12/17/2024	Metro Sales Inc	377.25	Copier Lease - Inv 2652766
117473	12/17/2024	TeamKeeper, Harris Local Governement Solaris	86.25	Timesheet Software Monthly - Inv 101526
117474	12/17/2024	Thriveon Inc	3,588.79	IT Services & Microsoft - InV 194194
117475	12/17/2024	Living Earth Center	913.49	LFPA Grant Reimbursement - November Produce - INV 1053
117476	12/17/2024	Southwest RDC	115.86	Booth Rent and Banner - INv 207
117477	12/17/2024	Neubau Holdings LLC	3,304.00	Office Rent - December
117478	12/17/2024	Neubau Holdings LLC	3,304.00	Office Rent - January
117479	12/17/2024	Battern, Ky	12.98	Board Meeting Snacks - Reimbursement
117480	12/17/2024	Lilienthal, Christian	99.58	Per Diem and Mileage - 12/4
117481	12/17/2024	Femrite, Lyle	60.72	12/4 - Mileage
117482	12/17/2024	Rohlfing, Steve J	28.14	Milege - 12/4
117483	12/17/2024	Schafer, Philip H	134.00	Mileage & Per Diem - 12/4
117484	12/17/2024	Wilkening, Rob	82.16	Mileage & Per Diem - 12/4
117485	12/17/2024	Boettger, Andrea S	80.82	Per Diem & Mileage - 12/4
117486	12/17/2024	Branstad, Jim	102.00	Per Diem & Mileage - 12/4
117487	12/17/2024	Laven, Mike	50.00	Per Diem - 12/4
117488	12/17/2024	Spirited Journeys LLC	540.00	Growers Network Hours - November
117489	12/17/2024	Borchert, Dave	300.00	Denmark Per Diems
117512	12/26/2024	Wooden Spoon	759.00	Wooden Spoon - Inv 4285
117513	12/26/2024	Verizon Wireless	131.33	Verizon - Inv 6100648684
117514	12/26/2024	Association of Minnesota Counties	800.00	2024 AMC Annual Conference
117515	12/26/2024	Fair, Sabri	100.00	Wellness - December
117516	12/26/2024	Wooden Spoon	759.00	Wooden Spoon - Inv 4285
117517	12/26/2024	Verizon Wireless	131.33	Verizon - Inv 6100648684

Check#	Check Date	Vendor Name	Check Amount	Description
117518	12/26/2024	Association of Minnesota Counties	800.00	2024 AMC Annual Conference
117519	12/26/2024	Fair, Sabri	100.00	Wellness - December
117520	12/26/2024	Flores, Jazmine	100.00	Wellness - December
117521	12/26/2024	Janovsky, Sarah	100.00	Wellness - December
117522	12/26/2024	Griensewic, Nicole	100.00	Wellness - December
117523	12/26/2024	Bejarano Cubillos, Maria Alejandra	99.95	Wellness - December
117524	12/26/2024	Giselle Lo	100.00	Wellness - December
117525	12/26/2024	Jessica Beyer	100.00	Wellness - December
117526	12/26/2024	Joel Hanif	100.00	Wellness - December
117527	12/26/2024	Battern, Ky	100.00	Wellness - December
117528	12/26/2024	George, Nathan	85.05	Wellness - December
117529	12/26/2024	Sharp, Samuel	86.48	Wellness - December
117530	12/26/2024	Xcel Energy	114.62	Excel Energy - Account Number 51-0012085064-9
117531	12/26/2024	US Bank	102.00	Board of Accountancy - Renewal Certificate - 11/05 - KB
			100.28	Diamond Dust Bakery - 11/22 - KB
			37.59	Diamond Dust Bakery - 11/21 - KB
			7.58	Family Fresh Market - 11/22 - KB
			16.33	Jackson Ramp - 10/29 - SS
			13.07	Jackson Ramp - 10/30 - SS
			13.07	Jackson Ramp - 10/31 - SS
			61.20	Michaels - 10/28 - SJ
			12.98	Hyvee - 11/13 - SJ
			1,240.00	Nado Registrations - 11/14 - SJ
			13.45	Hyvee - 11/15 - SJ
			3.15	USPS - 11/19 - SJ
			30.50	Holiday Gas Stations - 11/20 - SJ
			25.51	Hyvee - 11/21 - SJ
			60.33	Plaza Jalisco - 10/22 - SF
			10.00	Caseys - 10/22 -SF
			33.08	Hyvee - 10/28 - SF
			96.00	AGA Service - 10/30 - SF
			672.00	Amtrack - 10/30 - SF
			14.67	Hyvee - 11/21 - SF
			129.61	Herbsaint Bar - 10/21 - NG
			49.87	Link Restaurant - 10/22 - NG
			63.47	Basin Seafood - 10/22 - NG
			20.46	Lyft - 10/25 - NG
			23.43	Lyft - 10/25 - NG
			48.40	Basin Seafood - 10/25 - NG
			1,519.80	Marriot New Orleans - 10/25 - NG
			8.27	Lyft - 11/3 - NG
			0.99	Applecard - 11/01 - NG
			118.94	Hilton - 11/07 - NG
			27.63	Holmans - 11/08 - NG
			30.10	Joys Pattaya - 11/14 - NG
			48.10	Nolabelle Kitchen - 11/18 - NG
			15.00	Facebook - 10/31 - NateG
			63.65	Coursera - 11/01 - NateG
			28.18	USPS - 11/06 - NateG
			1,135.60	Constant Contact - 11/06 - NateG
Check Total	146,036.91			
Report Total:	146,036.91			

Terms & Abbreviations

ACC – American Connection Corp	MAPO – Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization
APPR – Annual Performance Progress Report (CEDS)	MCLA – Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs
ATP – Area Transportation Partnership	MDH – Minnesota Department of Health
AURI – Agricultural Utilization Research Institute	MPCA – Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
BDO – Bioeconomy Development Opportunity	MSA – Metropolitan Statistical Area
CRP – Carbon Reduction Program	MSU-M – Minnesota State University, Mankato
CEDS – Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy	MYLAP – MN Young American Leaders Program
COPAL – Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Acción Latina (Communities Organizing Latino Power and Action)	NEA – National Endowment for the Arts
CGMC – Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities	NEH – National Endowment for the Humanities
CPRG – Climate Pollution Reduction Grant	NUBRIC – New Ulm Business Resource Innovation Center
CSET – College of Science, Engineering & Technology	NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Services
CSM – Climate Smart Municipalities	PI - Prosperity Initiative
CSSJ – Climate Smart St. James	PROTECT – Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation
CTS – Center for Transportation Studies	REDA – Regional Economic Development Alliance
DEED – Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development	REV – Rural Entrepreneurial Venture
DOE – Department of Energy	RLF – Revolving Loan Fund
EDA – Economic Development Administration	RNAI – Region Nine Area Inc.
EDD – Economic Development District	RNDC – Region Nine Development Commission
EECBG - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant	SACE – Southern Agricultural Center for Excellence
GAC – Gustavus Adolphus College	SAF – Sustainable Aviation Fuel
GIS – Geographic Information Systems	SBDC – Small Business Development Center
GMG – Greater Mankato Growth	SCC – South Central College
GMNP – Greater Minnesota Partnership	SCSC – South Central Service Cooperative
HACER – Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research	SHIP – Statewide Health Improvement Partnership
IF – Initiative Foundation	SMIF – Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation
LGU – Local Government Unit	SRTS – Safe Routes to Schools
LMI – Labor Market Information	SS4A – Safe Streets for All
LMI – Low-to-Moderate Income	STIP – State Transportation Improvement Program
MADO – Minnesota Association of Development Organizations	TAC – Transportation Advisory Committee
MAPCED - Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers	WCI – West-Central Initiative
	TZD – Toward Zero Deaths