



REGION NINE



**DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION**

Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, May 14, 2025 4:30 p.m.



AGENDA

	<u>Time</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Action</u>
1. Call to Order	4:30		
2. Roll Call – Secretary Branstad			
3. Committee Member Introductions			
4. Approval of Agenda		2	Action
5. Approval of Consent Agenda Items		3	Action
a. Approval of February 12, 2025 Minutes			
b. Approval of March 18, 2025 Minutes			
6. Approval of Resolution 2025-02 RDC Transportation Planning Grant - Joel Hanif		8	Action
7. RNDC Delegation to Aachen, Germany Overview – Vice Chair Boettger	4:40		
8. Out of State Travel Request Approvals	4:55	20	Action
a. NADO Summer Board Meeting			
b. Aachen Delegation			
9. Finance Areas of Work Overview & Budget Update/ Discussion- Jessica Beyer, Marie Dranttel, Jazmine Flores	5:00	24	
10. Information/Discussion Items	5:20		
a. Chair’s Report – Chair Laven			
1. Resolution 2025-03 Proposed FY26 Meeting Dates		31	Action
2. Commission Nominating Process & Officer Elections			
3. Commissioner Absence Discussion		32	
b. Executive Director’s Report – Jessica Beyer			
11. Other Business	5:40		
a. Commissioner Updates			
b. Meeting Evaluation			Handout
12. Adjournment	6:00		Action

1. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Boettger called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrea Boettger (virtual), Jim Branstad (virtual), Marie Dranttel (virtual), Christian Lilienthal, Steve Rohlfsing, Phil Schafer, Rob Wilkening

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Mike Laven

OTHERS PRESENT: Nicole Griensewic, Jessica Beyer, Sarah Janovsky, Tom Loveall

There was a quorum.

3. INTRODUCTIONS

Mark Plotz, RNDC's Road Safety Transportation Planner, introduced himself to the board. He provided an overview of his background in transportation planning, highlighting his prior experience and expertise in the field.

4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Lilienthal motioned to separate the Out of State Travel Requests from the consent agenda.

Discussion followed regarding the funding sources for these requests. Moving forward, the board expressed a preference for travel requests to be presented as individual action items.

Wilkening moved to approve the consent agenda. Rolfsing seconded. Motion carried.

5. LEGISLATIVE DISCUSSIONS & POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS

Nicole included the item on the agenda to address funding uncertainties and potential impacts. She reassured the board of RNDC's diversified funding sources—local, state, federal, and foundation—and highlighted the team's adaptability. While noting concerns about federal programs like "Safe Roads and

Streets for All" and USDA regional food system grants, she advised the team to focus on state and foundation grants to maintain stability.

6. APRIL COMMISSION AGENDA

The April Commission meeting will include committee caucusing, and a presentation from the Center for Transportation Studies.

7. STRATEGIC PLAN SCORECARD

Jessica provided an update on the strategic plan scorecard, which aligns with the strategic plan approved at the January Commission meeting. She explained that she and Nicole have begun working with the team to introduce the scorecard, discussing how to track progress both individually and as a team. The strategic plan includes four overall goals for Region Nine Development Commission, each with several supporting objectives. The team is in the early stages of mapping out quarterly progress, with a plan to present an update at the April Commission meeting.

8. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Finance Director's Hiring Update- An offer has been made to a candidate, pending reference checks and a background verification. While the candidate's identity cannot yet be disclosed, Nicole and Jessica are excited about the hire.
- b. Chair's Report – n/a
- c. Executive Director's Report – Nicole Griensewic

Nicole rebooked a previously approved flight at a lower price.

Nicole will not be attending the Cuba delegation through MCAP as originally planned. The trip has been postponed, and the focus seems to be shifting.

Tom Polich will be joining RNDC as the Food Recovery Coordinator later this month.

The Taylor Family Foundation is concentrating on playground equipment this month.

Tomorrow, RNDC and GMG will host a workforce event at Pioneer Bank.

Giselle, RNDC's, Connection Corp member, has left the organization.

The June Commission meeting may include caucusing (if needed), succession planning, and budgeting.

The succession plans for both Nicole and the Finance Director position have been signed.

Nicole will begin medical leave on March 21st and most of the month of April so Jessica will be covering the April Commission meeting.

Nicole brought up a concern regarding the treatment of staff, particularly in relation to interactions with the governing board and full Commission. She expressed difficulty addressing staff concerns, as it is not within the executive director's role to follow up on commissioner-related issues. While there is a code of conduct in place, Nicole noted that there are no clear steps outlined for handling inappropriate behavior. She shared that there have been instances of staff concerns in the past, and emphasized the need for the board to address this issue. Nicole conveyed that it is challenging for her to ensure respect for both herself and the team, especially given past instances of a hostile work environment. She requested that the board work on improving this situation, as it is beyond her control.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Commissioner Updates

Commissioners shared updates from their communities.

b. Meeting Evaluation

10. ADJOURNMENT

Wilkening moved to adjourn. Dranttel seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Laven called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Marie Dranttel (virtual), Mike Laven, Tom Loveall, Steve Rohlfig, Phil Schafer, Rob Wilkening (virtual)

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Andrea Boettger, Christian Lilienthal, Jim Branstad

OTHERS PRESENT: Jessica Beyer, Sarah Janovsky, Samuel Sharp, Lisa Callahan, Andrew Austreng, Nigel Pickering

There was a quorum.

3. INTRODUCTIONS

Two new RNDC staff members were introduced and provided a brief overview of their backgrounds. Tom Polich serves as the Food Recovery Coordinator, and Melissa Reintjes is the Finance Director.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Loveall moved to approve the agenda. Schafer seconded. Motion carried.

5. APPROVAL OF LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON MINNESOTA RESOURCES (LCCMR) RESOLUTION 2025-01

RNDC, in partnership with Andrew Austreng from Aspect Consulting and Nigel Pickering from GeoSyntec, is seeking \$400,000 to develop a regional Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP) planning tool. This tool will evaluate ground source energy site locations through extensive data collection and analysis, providing critical insights into potential project considerations across the nine-county region. By enhancing resilience to Minnesota's volatile weather and climate patterns, the tool will help mitigate financial risks, improve long-term project security, and drive cost savings by optimizing site selection, reducing inefficiencies, and improving overall system performance.

Schafer moved to approve the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) Resolution 2025-01. Loveall seconded. Motion carried.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Rohlfing moved to adjourn. Schafer seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Memo

To: RNDC Board of Directors

From: Joel Hanif

Date: May 7, 2025

Re: RNDC Application for MnDOT Planning Grant (FY 2026–2027)

The Region Nine Development Commission (RNDC) is applying for a Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Planning Grant to support transportation initiatives across its nine-county region for Fiscal Years 2026 and 2027.

The grant would provide \$150,000 in state funding, supplemented by a \$26,470 local match, to advance RNDC's efforts in developing long-range transportation plans, improving infrastructure, and supporting community connectivity. These efforts are part of RNDC's broader mission to foster economic, social, and governmental growth through coordinated regional planning.

Key goals of the project include:

- Carrying out RNDC's 2026–2027 Work Plans focused on building strong, future-ready transportation systems.
- Utilizing MnDOT's financial and technical resources to support local priorities.
- Meeting state requirements for regional transportation planning under Minnesota law.
- Strengthening partnerships with cities, counties, and other local entities to promote sustainable and effective transportation solutions.

This funding opportunity is critical to ensuring Region Nine remains proactive in shaping transportation strategies that benefit residents, businesses, and communities throughout the region.



RESOLUTION

Region Nine Development Commission

2025 – 02

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION TO ENTER INTO A GRANT AGREEMENT FOR MNDOT PLANNING FUNDS AGREEMENT NUMBER 1058791

BE IT RESOLVED that **Region Nine Development Commission** enter into an Agreement for Distribution of MnDOT Planning Funds, under Agreement Number 1058791 with the State of Minnesota, Department of Transportation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the chair and executive director of the Region Nine Development Commission are hereby authorized to execute such agreement and amendments.

Dated this 14th of May 2026

Signed:

Mike Laven, Chair

Jim Branstad, Secretary

CERTIFICATION

State of Minnesota

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution is a true and correct copy of the Resolution presented to and adopted by the Region Nine Development Commission at a duly authorized meeting thereof held on the 14th day of May, 2025, as shown by the minutes of said meeting in my possession.

Notary Stamp

Sarah Janovsky, Notary Public

STATE OF MINNESOTA
GRANT AGREEMENT
(FISCAL YEARS 2026 AND 2027)

This Grant Agreement is between the State of Minnesota, acting through its Commissioner of Transportation ("State") and the Region Nine Development Commission (hereinafter "Grantee").

RECITALS

1. Minnesota Statutes § 174.01 designates the Minnesota Department of Transportation ("MnDOT") as the principal agency of the state for development, implementation, administration, consolidation, and coordination of state transportation policies, plans, and programs; and
2. Minnesota Statutes § 462.383, subdivision 2, and 462.39, subdivision 3, authorize Regional Development Commissions ("RDCs") to work with and on behalf of local units of government to develop plans or implement programs to address economic, social, physical, and governmental concerns and to develop comprehensive plans for local units of government; and
3. Minnesota Statutes § 174.03, subdivision 5, requires RDCs to develop regional long-range transportation policy plans in cooperation with MnDOT and local governments; and
4. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes § 174.03, subdivision 4(2), MnDOT may provide financial assistance to RDCs for transportation planning; and
5. The Grantee is an RDC eligible to receive MnDOT funds.
6. The parties to this Agreement mutually agree as follows:

AGREEMENT TERMS

1. Term of Grant Agreement

- 1.1 **Effective date.** This Agreement will be effective on July 1, 2025 or the date the State obtains all required signatures under Minnesota Statutes § 16.98, subdivision 5, whichever is later. **The Grantee must not begin work under this grant agreement until this agreement is fully executed and the Grantee has been notified by the State's Authorized Representative to begin work.**
- 1.2 **Expiration Date.** This Agreement will remain in effect until June 30, 2027, or until all obligations have been satisfactorily fulfilled, whichever occurs first.
- 1.3 **Survival of Terms.** All clauses which impose obligations continuing in their nature and which must survive in order to give effect to their meaning will survive the expiration or termination of this Agreement including, without limitation, the following clauses: 8. Indemnification; 9. State Audits; 10. Government Data Practices and Intellectual Property; 11. Workers' Compensation; 12. Publicity and Endorsement; 13. Governing Law, Jurisdiction, and Venue; and 15. Data Disclosure.
- 1.4 **Exhibits.** Exhibit 1, Financial Assistance, and Exhibit 2, Invoices, are attached and incorporated into this agreement.

2. Duties

- 2.1 **Grantee's Duties.** The Grantee, who is not a state employee, will:
 - a) Perform the work activities defined in July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026, and July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, RDC Transportation Planning Grant Agreement Work Plans (hereinafter "RDC Work Plans") as approved by the State and which are on file at Grantee's office and incorporated herein by reference.
 - b) The RDC Workplans defines the scope of work and particular tasks to be completed by the Grantee.
 - c) All work must be performed in a satisfactory and timely manner.

- b) Provide 15% local matching funds, which is equal to up to \$13,235 for FY 2026 and \$13,235 for FY 2027 (\$26,470 for the contract period).

2.2 State's Duties. The State will:

- a) Review and monitor progress of work activities defined in the Grantee's FY 2026 and FY 2027 RDC Work Plans.
- b) Furnish the Grantee, at its request, all data that is in the State's possession that is considered pertinent by the State to the work to be performed.
- c) Advise the Grantee of the anticipated availability of funds and assist in the development of the Grantee's FY 2026 and FY 2027 RDC Work Plans.

3. Time

The Grantee must comply with all the time requirements described in this Grant Agreement. In the performance of this Grant Agreement, time is of the essence.

4. Consideration and Payment

- 4.1 Consideration.** The State will pay for all services performed by the Grantee under this Grant Agreement as follows:

- a) **Compensation.** The Grantee will be paid on a Lump Sum basis as follows upon receipt of invoice:

For July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 (hereinafter FY 2026)

- i. 25% upon execution of this Agreement and acceptance of the FY 2026 RDC work plan (must be on or after July 1, 2025);
- ii. 20% after March 31, 2026, and acceptance of the FY 2026 mid-year work report; and
- iii. 5% after June 30, 2026, and acceptance of the FY 2026 final work report;

For July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 (hereinafter FY 2027)

- iv. 25% after July 1, 2026, and acceptance of the FY 2027 RDC Work plan;
- v. 20% after March 31, 2027 and acceptance of the FY 2027 mid-year work report; and
- vi. 5% after June 30, 2027 and acceptance of the FY 2027 final work report.

- b) **Total Obligation.** The total obligation of the State for all compensation and reimbursement to the Grantee under this Grant Agreement will not exceed \$75,000 in each fiscal year (\$150,000 over two fiscal years).

- 4.2 Advance Payment.** All grant payments will be made as reimbursements unless advance payment approval has been granted before grant encumbrance and not be made without a complete justification form.

4.3 Payment: Invoices

The State will promptly pay the Grantee after the Grantee presents an invoice and the State's Authorized Representative accepts the invoice. Invoices must be submitted according to the schedule identified in Clause 4.1.a

- 4.4 Grant Monitoring Visit and Financial Reconciliation.** During the period of performance, the State will make at least one monitoring visit and conduct annual financial reconciliations of Grantee's expenditures. The State's Authorized Representative will notify Grantee's Authorized Representative where and when any monitoring visit and financial reconciliation will take place, which State employees and/or contractors will participate, and which Grantee staff members should be present. Grantee will be given at least seven calendar days of notice before any monitoring visit or financial reconciliation. Following a monitoring visit or financial reconciliation, Grantee will take timely and appropriate action on all deficiencies identified by State. At least one monitoring visit and one financial reconciliation must be completed before final payment is made to Grantee.

- 4.5 Closeout.** At its sole discretion, the State will determine whether a closeout audit is required prior to final payment approval. If a closeout audit is required, final payment will be held until the audit has been completed.

5. Conditions of Payment

All services provided by the Grantee under this Grant Agreement must be performed to the State's satisfaction, as determined at the discretion of the State's Authorized Representative and District Planner and in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, rules, and regulations. The Grantee will not receive payment for work found by the State to be unsatisfactory or performed in violation of federal, state, or local law.

6. Authorized Representatives

6.1 **State's Authorized Representative.** The State's Authorized Representative is:

Bryan McCoy, State Program Administrator
Minnesota Department of Transportation
395 John Ireland Blvd MS 440
St. Paul, MN 55155

or their successor, and has the responsibility to monitor the Grantee's performance and the authority to accept the services provided under this grant agreement. If the services are satisfactory, the State's Authorized Representative will certify acceptance on each invoice submitted for payment.

6.2 **Grantee's Authorized Representative.** The Grantee's Authorized Representative is:

Nicole Griensewic, Executive Director
Region Nine Development Commission
3 Civic Plaza, Suite 310
Mankato, MN 56601
(507) 387-5643.

If the Grantee's Authorized Representative changes at any time during this grant agreement, the Grantee must immediately notify the State.

7. Assignment, Amendments, Waiver, and Grant Agreement Complete

- 7.1 **Assignment.** The Grantee may neither assign nor transfer any rights or obligations under this Grant Agreement without the prior consent of the State and a fully executed Assignment Agreement, executed and approved by the same parties who executed and approved this Grant Agreement, or their successors in office.
- 7.2 **Amendments.** Any amendment to this Grant Agreement must be in writing and will not be effective until it has been executed and approved by the same parties who executed and approved the original Grant Agreement, or their successors in office.
- 7.3 **Waiver.** If the State fails to enforce any provision of this Grant Agreement, that failure does not waive the provision or its right to subsequently enforce it.
- 7.4 **Grant Agreement Complete.** This Grant Agreement contains all prior negotiations and agreements between the State and the Grantee. No other understanding regarding this Grant Agreement, whether written or oral, may be used to bind either party.
- 7.5 **Electronic Records and Signatures.** The parties agree to contract by electronic means. This includes using electronic signatures and converting original documents to electronic records.
- 7.6 **Certification.** By signing this Agreement, the Grantee certifies that it is not suspended or debarred from receiving federal or state awards.

8. Indemnification

In the performance of this Grant Agreement by Grantee, or Grantee's agents or employees, the Grantee must indemnify, save, and hold harmless the State, its agents, and employees, from any claims or causes of action, including attorney's fees incurred by the state, to the extent caused by Grantee's:

1. Intentional, willful, or negligent acts or omissions; or
2. Actions that give rise to strict liability; or
3. Breach of contract or warranty

The indemnification obligations of this section do not apply in the event the claim or cause of action is the result of the State's sole negligence. This clause will not be construed to bar any legal remedies the Grantee may have for the State's failure to fulfill its obligations under this Grant Agreement.

9. State Audits

Under Minnesota Statutes § 16B.98, subdivision 8, the Grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices relevant to this Grant Agreement are subject to examination by the State and/or the State Auditor or Legislative Auditor, as appropriate, for a minimum of six years from the end of this Grant Agreement.

10. Government Data Practices and Intellectual Property

10.1 **Government Data Practices.** Grantee and State must comply with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, [Minn. Stat. Ch. 13](#), as it applies to all data provided by the State under this grant agreement, and as it applies to all data created, collected, received, stored, used, maintained, or disseminated by the Grantee under this agreement. The civil remedies of [Minn. Stat. §13.08](#) apply to the release of the data referred to in this clause by either Grantee or the State.

10.2 **Intellectual Property Rights.** State owns all rights, title and interest in all of the intellectual property rights, including copyrights, patents, trade secrets, trademarks and service marks in the Works and Documents created and paid for under this agreement. "Works" means all inventions, improvements, discoveries (whether or not patentable), databases, computer programs, reports, notes, studies, photographs, negatives, designs, drawings, specifications, materials, tapes and disks conceived, reduced to practice, created or originated by Grantee, its employees, agents and subcontractors, either individually or jointly with others in the performance of this agreement. Works includes Documents. "Documents" are the originals of any databases, computer programs, reports, notes, studies, photographs, negatives, designs, drawings, specifications, materials, tapes, disks or other materials, whether in tangible or electronic forms, prepared by Grantee, its employees, agents or subcontractors, in the performance of this agreement. The Documents will be the exclusive property of State, and Grantee upon completion or cancellation of this agreement must immediately return all such Documents to State. To the extent possible, those Works eligible for copyright protection under the United States Copyright Act will be deemed to be "works made for hire." Grantee assigns all right, title and interest it may have in the Works and the Documents to State. Grantee must, at the request of State, execute all papers and perform all other acts necessary to transfer or record the State's ownership interest in the Works and Documents.

10.3 Obligations

- a) **Notification.** Whenever any invention, improvement, or discovery (whether or not patentable) is made or conceived for the first time or actually or constructively reduced to practice by the Grantee, including its employees and subcontractors, in the performance of this agreement, the Grantee will immediately give the State's Authorized Representative written notice thereof, and must promptly furnish the Authorized Representative with complete information and/or disclosure thereon.
- b) **Representation.** The Grantee must perform all acts, and take all steps necessary to ensure that all intellectual property rights in the Works and Documents are the sole property of the State, and that neither Grantee nor its employees, agents, or subcontractors retain any interest in and to the Works and Documents. The Grantee represents and warrants that the Works and Documents do not and will not infringe upon any intellectual property rights of other persons or entities. The Grantee will indemnify; defend, to the extent permitted by the Attorney General; and hold harmless the State, at the Grantee's expense, from any action or claim brought against the State to the extent that it is based on a claim that all or part of the Works and Documents infringe upon the intellectual property rights of others. The Grantee will be responsible for payment of any and all such claims, demands, obligations, liabilities, costs, and damages, including but not limited to, attorney fees. If such a claim or action arises, or in the Grantee's or the State's opinion is likely to arise, the Grantee must, at the State's discretion, either procure for the State the right or license to use the intellectual property rights at issue or replace or

modify the allegedly infringing Works or Documents as necessary and appropriate to obviate the infringement claim. This remedy of the State will be in addition to and not exclusive of other remedies provided by law.

11. Workers' Compensation

The Grantee certifies that it complies with Minnesota Statutes § 176.181, subdivision 2, pertaining to workers' compensation insurance coverage. The Grantee's employees and agents will not be considered State employees. Any claims that may arise under the Minnesota Workers' Compensation Act on behalf of these employees and any claims made by any third party as a consequence of any act or omission on the part of these employees are in no way the States' obligation or responsibility.

12. Publicity and Endorsement

12.1 **Publicity.** Any publicity regarding the subject matter of this Grant Agreement must identify the State as the sponsoring agency and must not be released without prior written approval from the State's Authorized Representative or District Planner. For purposes of this provision, publicity includes notices, informational pamphlets, press releases, research, reports, signs, and similar public notices prepared by or for the Grantee individually or jointly with others, or any subcontractors, with respect to the program, publications, or services provided resulting from this grant agreement.

12.2 **Endorsement.** The Grantee must not claim that the State endorses its products or services.

13. Governing Law, Jurisdiction, and Venue

Minnesota law, without regard to its choice-of-law provisions, governs the validity, interpretation, and enforcement of this Grant Agreement. Venue for all legal proceedings arising out of this Grant Agreement, or its breach, must be in the appropriate state or federal court with competent jurisdiction in Ramsey County, Minnesota.

14. Termination; Suspension

14.1 **Termination by the State.** The State may terminate this Grant Agreement at any time, with or without cause, upon 30 days' written notice to the Grantee. Upon termination, the Grantee will be entitled to payment, determined on a pro rata basis, for services satisfactorily performed.

14.2 **Termination for Cause.** The State may immediately terminate this grant agreement if the State finds that there has been a failure to comply with the provisions of this agreement, that reasonable progress has not been made, that fraudulent or wasteful activity has occurred, that Grantee has been convicted of a criminal offense relating to a state grant agreement, or that the purposes for which the funds were granted have not been or will not be fulfilled. The State may take action to protect the interests of the State of Minnesota, including the refusal to disburse additional funds and requiring the return of all or part of the funds already disbursed.

14.3 **Termination for Insufficient Funding.** The State may immediately terminate this agreement if it does not obtain funding from the Minnesota Legislature, or other funding sources; or if funding cannot be continued at a level sufficient to allow for the payment of the services covered here. Termination must be by written or fax notice to the Grantee. The State is not obligated to pay for any services that are provided after notice and effective date of termination. However, the Grantee will be entitled to payment, determined on a pro rata basis, for services satisfactorily performed to the extent that funds are available. The State will not be assessed any penalty if the agreement is terminated because of the decision of the Minnesota Legislature, or other funding source, not to appropriate funds. The State must provide the Grantee notice of the lack of funding within a reasonable time of the State's receiving that notice.

14.4 **Suspension.** The State may immediately suspend this Grant Agreement in the event of a total or partial government shutdown due to the failure to have an approved budget by the legal deadline. Work performed by the Grantee during a period of suspension will be deemed unauthorized and undertaken at risk of non-payment.

15. Data Disclosure

Under Minnesota Statutes § 270C.65, and other applicable law, the Grantee consents to disclosure of its social security number, federal employer tax identification number, and/or Minnesota tax identification number, already provided to the State, to federal and state tax agencies and state personnel involved in the payment of state obligations. These identification numbers may be used in the enforcement of federal and state tax laws which could result in action requiring the Grantee to file state tax returns and pay delinquent state tax liabilities, if any.

16. Discrimination Prohibited by Minnesota Statutes §181.59.

Grantee will comply with the provisions of Minnesota Statutes §181.59 which requires that every contract for or on behalf of the State of Minnesota, or any county, city, town, township, school, school district or any other district in the state, for materials, supplies or construction will contain provisions by which Contractor agrees: 1) That, in the hiring of common or skilled labor for the performance of any work under any contract, or any subcontract, no Contractor, material supplier or vendor, will, by reason of race, creed or color, discriminate against the person or persons who are citizens of the United States or resident aliens who are qualified and available to perform the work to which the employment relates; 2) That no Contractor, material supplier, or vendor, will, in any manner, discriminate against, or intimidate, or prevent the employment of any person or persons identified in clause 1 of this section, or on being hired, prevent or conspire to prevent, the person or persons from the performance of work under any contract on account of race, creed or color; 3) That a violation of this section is a misdemeanor; and 4) That this contract may be canceled or terminated by the state of Minnesota, or any county, city, town, township, school, school district or any other person authorized to grant contracts for employment, and all money due, or to become due under the contract, may be forfeited for a second or any subsequent violation of the terms or conditions of this Agreement.

(THE BALANCE OF THIS PAGE HAS BEEN INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK)

STATE ENCUMBRANCE VERIFICATION

Individual certifies that funds have been encumbered as required by Minnesota Statutes § 16A.15 and 16B.98.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

SWIFT Contract # _____

SWIFT Purchase Order # _____

GRANTEE

The Grantee certifies that the appropriate person(s) have executed the grant agreement on behalf of the Grantee as required by applicable articles, by laws, resolutions, or ordinances.

By: Nicole Griensewic

Title: Executive Director

Date: 5/14/25

By: Mike Laven

Title: Chairman

Date: 5/14/25

By: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

By: _____
(With delegated authority)

Title: _____

Date: _____

MnDOT CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

By: _____

Date: _____

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Region Nine Development Commission enter into an Agreement for Distribution of MnDOT Planning Funds, under Agreement Number 1058791 with the State of Minnesota, Department of Transportation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the _____ Executive Director _____ (Title) and
_____ Board Chair _____ (Title) of Region Nine Development Commission are hereby authorized to
execute such Agreement and any amendments.

CERTIFICATION

State of Minnesota

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution is a true and correct copy of the Resolution presented to and adopted by
the _____ Region Nine Development Commission _____ at a duly authorized meeting thereof held on the _____ 14th
day of _____ May, 2025 _____, as shown by the minutes of said meeting in my possession.

Secretary

Notary

EXHIBIT 1

Financial Assistance

Legal Name	Region Nine Development Commission
Contract Number	1058791
Contract Type / Program	Regional Development Commission Grant

Project Description	
Regional Development Commission Grant – State Planning Assistance	
Total State Award	\$150,000.00
Required Local Match	\$26,470.00

EXHIBIT 2

Invoices

**Regional Development Commission
Request for State Funds**

GRANTEE: Agency: Region Nine Development Commission
Address: 3 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 310, Mankato, MN 56601
Telephone: (507) 387-5643
Recipient Agency Authorized Representative: Nicole Griensewic, Executive Director

Invoice Period:

Standard Transportation Planning Funds

Payment Request:	☐ 25%	Expenditure:	Total=	_____
	☐ 20%		Local Match=	_____
	☐ 5%		(15%)	
			State Funds=	_____
			(85%)	

Amount of Requested State Planning Funds: _____

Signature: _____
Recipient Agency Authorized Representative or Designee

Date _____

MnDOT:

I hereby certify that the following is approved by MnDOT District 7:

☐ Annual work plan ☐ July-Dec work report ☐ Jan-June work report

Approval of MnDOT District Representative

Date _____

Approval by MnDOT OTSM RDC Planning Program Coordinator

Date _____

MnDOT use only:	
Contract #:	Fiscal Year:
Swift Contract ID #:	Purchase Order ID #:

Region Nine Development Commission Out-of-State Travel Request Form

Name:	Nicole Griensewic
Event:	NADO Summer Board Meeting
Travel Destination	Providence, RI
Date of Departure:	6/1/2025
Date of Return:	6/6/2025

Anticipated Costs:

	Departure Airport		Arrival Airport	Estimate	Funding Source
Airfare (Roundtrip)	MSP	to	BOS	\$ 625.00	General Fund
	Description			Cost	Funding Source
Registration	N/A				General Fund
	Total Nights		\$ Per Night	Cost	Funding Source
Lodging	5	x	\$ 125.00	\$ 625.00	General Fund
	Total Days		\$ Per Diem	Cost	Funding Source
Meals	6	x	\$ 75.00	\$ 450.00	General Fund
	Total Miles		\$ Per Mile	Cost	Funding Source
Mileage	182	x	\$ 0.70	\$ 127.40	General Fund
	Description			Estimate	Funding Source
Other	Incidentals			\$ 50.00	General Fund
	Description			Estimate	Funding Source
Other	Other			\$ 60.00	General Fund
	Description			Estimate	Funding Source
Other	Taxi/Shuttle			\$ 40.00	General Fund

Total Anticipated Cost of Out-of-State Travel Request	<u>\$ 1,977.40</u>
--	---------------------------

Employee Signature: _____

Executive Director Signature: _____

Notes:

Region Nine Development Commission Out-of-State Travel Request Form

Name: Nicole Griensewic
Event: Aachen Delegation
Travel Destination: Aachen, Germany
Date of Departure: 6/21/2025
Date of Return: 6/28/2025

Anticipated Costs:

	Departure Airport		Arrival Airport	Estimate	Funding Source
Airfare (Roundtrip)	MSP	to	Frankfurt	\$ 2,430.00	McKnight
	Description			Cost	Funding Source
Registration	N/A				McKnight
	Total Nights		\$ Per Night	Cost	Funding Source
Lodging	6	x	\$ 110.00	\$ 660.00	McKnight
	Total Days		\$ Per Diem	Cost	Funding Source
Meals	7	x	\$ 75.00	\$ 525.00	McKnight
	Total Miles		\$ Per Mile	Cost	Funding Source
Mileage	182	x	\$ 0.70	\$ 127.40	McKnight
	Description			Estimate	Funding Source
Other	Incidentals			\$ 150.00	McKnight
	Description			Estimate	Funding Source
Other					McKnight
	Description			Estimate	Funding Source
Other	Taxi/Shuttle				McKnight

Total Anticipated Cost of Out-of-State Travel Request
\$ 3,892.40

Employee Signature: _____

Executive Director Signature: _____

Notes:

Region Nine Development Commission Out-of-State Travel Request Form

Name: Jessica Beyer
Event: Aachen Delegation
Travel Destination: Aachen, Germany
Date of Departure: 6/21/2025
Date of Return: 6/28/2025

Anticipated Costs:

	Departure Airport		Arrival Airport	Estimate	Funding Source
Airfare (Roundtrip)	MSP	to	Frankfurt	\$ 2,430.00	McKnight
	Description			Cost	Funding Source
Registration	N/A				McKnight
	Total Nights		\$ Per Night	Cost	Funding Source
Lodging	6	x	\$ 110.00	\$ 660.00	McKnight
	Total Days		\$ Per Diem	Cost	Funding Source
Meals	7	x	\$ 75.00	\$ 525.00	McKnight
	Total Miles		\$ Per Mile	Cost	Funding Source
Mileage	182	x	\$ 0.70	\$ 127.40	McKnight
	Description			Estimate	Funding Source
Other	Incidentals			\$ 150.00	McKnight
	Description			Estimate	Funding Source
Other					McKnight
	Description			Estimate	Funding Source
Other	Taxi/Shuttle				McKnight

Total Anticipated Cost of Out-of-State Travel Request
\$ 3,892.40

Employee Signature: _____

Executive Director Signature: _____

Notes:

Region Nine Development Commission Out-of-State Travel Request Form

Name: Sam Sharp
Event: Aachen Delegation
Travel Destination: Aachen, Germany
Date of Departure: 6/21/2025
Date of Return: 6/28/2025

Anticipated Costs:

	Departure Airport		Arrival Airport	Estimate	Funding Source
Airfare (Roundtrip)	MSP	to	Frankfurt	\$ 2,430.00	McKnight
	Description			Cost	Funding Source
Registration	N/A				McKnight
	Total Nights		\$ Per Night	Cost	Funding Source
Lodging	6	x	\$ 110.00	\$ 660.00	McKnight
	Total Days		\$ Per Diem	Cost	Funding Source
Meals	7	x	\$ 75.00	\$ 525.00	McKnight
	Total Miles		\$ Per Mile	Cost	Funding Source
Mileage	182	x	\$ 0.70	\$ 127.40	McKnight
	Description			Estimate	Funding Source
Other	Incidentals			\$ 150.00	McKnight
	Description			Estimate	Funding Source
Other					McKnight
	Description			Estimate	Funding Source
Other	Taxi/Shuttle				McKnight

Total Anticipated Cost of Out-of-State Travel Request
\$ 3,892.40

Employee Signature: _____

Executive Director Signature: _____

Notes:

Finance Areas of Work Presentation



Finance Updates

- Finance Director Succession Plan
- Hiring Update for Finance Director
- Preliminary Budget Process Overview, Key Budget Elements, & Discussion

Finance Director Succession Plan

- Jazmine Flores
 - Day-to-Day Finance Activities
 - Accounts Receivable/Payable
 - Employee Benefits/Reconciliation
 - Clean-up/Problem Solving
 - Payroll (Rotating with Mary)
 - RLF Reporting
 - ESST Adjustments
 - RDO Assistance Coordination
- Mary Bogie (Consultant)
 - Month-end Reporting
 - Reconciliations
 - Financial Reporting
 - High-level Accounting Needs
 - Clean-up/Problem Solving Needs
- Jessica Beyer
 - Oversight and Coordination of Finance Work (supporting Jazmine, Mary, the team)
 - Approvals/Signatures
 - Financial Reporting Submissions
 - Employee Reviews
 - Thriveon IT Management
 - Monitoring Email Accounts
 - Office Oversight (copier, etc.)
 - Budget Planning Meetings/Activities
 - Year-End Preparation Coordination
 - Audit Preparation Coordination
 - Clean-up/Problem Solving Needs
- Marie Dranttel, Treasurer
 - Oversight on Resources Needed/Strategy

Hiring Update for Finance Director

- Re-posted position
- First-round Interviews Conducted
- Second-round Interviews Planned
- Discussions with Minnesota RDO's related to Position Postings
- Other

Preliminary Budget Process Overview, Key Budget Elements, & Discussion

- Budget Process Overview
 - RNDC Initial Budget Meetings Held
 - Administration/Finance/RLF
 - Community Development
 - Economic Development
 - Transportation
 - Energy/Sustainability
 - Ag, Environment/Sustainability, Food Recovery

Preliminary Budget Process Overview, Key Budget Elements, & Discussion

- Budget Considerations for FY 25/26
 - Consistent FTE's – no proposed changes to FTE count
 - Reduction in contracted positions through programs such as Americorps
 - Utilization of a consistent 3.5% increase to the RNDC Salary Schedule
 - Continued pursuit of grant and contract opportunities that serve regional needs in addition to providing RNDC funding support
 - Continuation of University of Minnesota MCAP, McKnight, EEGBC, State Competitiveness, and Community Energy Innovation Prize Funding into the next fiscal year
 - Two-awarded MPCA grants for projects in Brown and Blue Earth Counties
 - Anticipated Regional Food Business Center USDA Funds and Road Safety Transportation Funding will be released by the Federal Government
 - Continued and additional planning/consulting efforts serving stakeholders throughout the region with flexibility to meet customized community needs in areas such as housing, childcare, economic impact, resiliency, and safe routes to school planning
 - Potential EDA Grant Applications for Regional Workforce Recovery and Flood/Disaster Recovery Projects
 - Potential Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) Project Funding
 - Potential MPCA Waste Reduction and Reuse Grant
 - Potential Transportation Grant Awards from MAPO and AAA
 - Levy support to off-set potential Federal and State cost shifts to support our local communities and 9-county region

Preliminary Budget Process Overview, Key Budget Elements, & Discussion

- Next Steps
 - Special Budget & Personnel Committee Meeting focused on Specific Budget
(Late May/Early June)
- Discussion



RESOLUTION

Region Nine Development Commission 2025 – 03

Resolution Establishing Region Nine Development Commission Meeting Dates for Fiscal Year 2026

- Whereas,** The State of Minnesota established the Region Nine Development Commission to work with an on behalf of the nine counties, seventy-two cities, and one hundred forty-seven townships on economic, social, physical and governmental issues of a regional nature, an
- Whereas,** the bylaws of the Region Nine Development Commission require that meeting dates of the Commission be set by resolution of the Commission.
- Now, therefore, be it resolved,** that the Region Nine Development Commission establish the following as meeting dates for fiscal year 2026.

Full Commission

October 8, 2025
January 14, 2026
April 8, 2026
June 10, 2026

Board of Directors

August 13, 2025
September 10, 2025
November 12, 2025
December 3, 2025
February 11, 2026
May 13, 2026

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

Dated this 18th day of June 2025

Signed:

Mike Laven, Chair

Jim Branstad, Secretary

May 14, 2025

Mayor Scott Carlson
1001 Belgrade Ave.
North Mankato, MN 56003

Dear Mayor Carlson,

On behalf of the Region Nine Development Commission, thank you for your partnership and support in advancing the goals of our region.

I am writing today regarding Commissioner Matt Peterson, who serves as Region Nine's representative for Nicollet County Cities over 10,000. Active and consistent participation by all commissioners is essential to ensuring effective regional collaboration. As outlined in Article IV, Section 7 of our bylaws:

"When any Commission member is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings, the Secretary shall notify the governmental units represented of that commissioner's absence."

Our records indicate that Commissioner Peterson has not attended the last three consecutive Commission meetings. In accordance with our bylaws, this letter serves as formal notification to the City of North Mankato regarding his attendance record.

We understand that personal and professional obligations can impact availability, and we are happy to work with commissioners on any scheduling challenges when possible. If Commissioner Peterson is unable to continue serving in this role, we kindly ask that a new appointment be considered to ensure ongoing representation for the City of North Mankato on the Commission.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further. We greatly appreciate the City's involvement and contributions to Region Nine.

Sincerely,

Jim Branstad
Secretary
Region Nine Development Commission

PROGRAM UPDATES:

Strategic Economic Development Plan for the City of Springfield – Alejandra

Alejandra is leading and executing the Strategic Economic Development Plan for the City of Springfield. Over the past few weeks, she has been analyzing the results of a community-wide survey in Springfield, which received 350 responses. She presented the survey findings at a Rotary Club meeting and will be hosting two focus group sessions with Kristian to collect additional feedback from residents.

Global Talent Workforce – Alejandra, Mercedes

RNDC received a contract through the Drive for Five grant from DEED, awarded to GMG, to design and deliver employer training on hiring international students. Alejandra and Mercedes developed and facilitated two online training sessions for regional employers, which included participation from local students, HR professionals, and legal counsel. Alejandra also presented at the Global Workforce Event hosted by GreenSeam in Mankato. Lastly, Alejandra and Mercedes designed a discussion with K-12 superintendents focused on addressing teacher shortages. There was significant interest in involving the South Central Service Cooperative in the ongoing conversation.

Rural Child Care Innovation Program in Eagle Lake – Alejandra

Alejandra is part of the core team supporting the Rural Child Care Innovation Program in Eagle Lake. She leads efforts within the workforce development goal area to promote paid work-study programs for students interested in working with childcare providers.

Community and Economic Development Committee – Alejandra

Alejandra leads the Community and Economic Development (CED) Committee and organized its April meeting in Waseca. The meeting focused on broadband access and featured a panel discussion with Barbara Dröher Kline (Minnesota Public Broadband Alliance), Brent J. Christensen (Minnesota Telecom Alliance), Elly Burroughs (Midco), and DeAnne "De" Malterer (Waseca County Commissioner, District 4).

Transforming Tomorrow Together Talent Hub – Alejandra

Alejandra serves on the Talent Hub Committee, which is working to develop a regional Talent Hub for Mankato and the surrounding area. The committee brings together local leaders, employers, and educational partners to strengthen workforce development and talent attraction strategies. Alejandra supports the committee's efforts to implement a welcome and retention campaign aimed at attracting and retaining young residents.

Childcare Steering Committee – Alejandra, Mercedes

The Childcare Steering Committee is focused on creating and developing a childcare association for the Greater Mankato area, which will serve and support childcare providers across the region.

CARES Childcare proposal to Springfield – Alejandra

Alejandra drafted a proposal for a childcare project with the City of Springfield to conduct stakeholder outreach and engagement with childcare providers and parents in the city.

Regional Food System Supply Chains and Transportation Implications – Kristian

RNDC co-directs an agriculture and food industry study with the University of Minnesota's Transportation Policy and Economic Competitiveness program, in partnership with Redlands University, ESRI, and

Georgetown University. RNDC has provided a cluster study of agriculture and food value creation in the context of transportation needs in the larger region (MN, Ill., IA, and WI). RNDC specifically provided a visualization of interrelated industries for this portion of the study. The programming is ongoing.

Regional Food Rescue – Tom, Sabri

Shortly after the last Staff Report, Tom received a call from FOCP that they received a food rescue much larger than what they were expecting. A total of eight pallets of nectarines and strawberries were dropped off at their facility to use for their spring break summer back-pack program. Of those, 6.5 pallets needed to be sent out to area partners or risk being spoiled. Tom was able to coordinate with six area food access partners to use up all of the produce and save it from entering the landfill. ECHO, SCMNR, LSS – Mankato, U of M Extension, St. Peter Food Shelf, and Mavrick Pantry collectively took in all 6,800 lbs of the produce.

Tom has also been searching for ways to solve the logistical hurdles with regional food rescue. The next steps will be to make agreements with area transportation services or procure funding for a regional solution such as a refrigerated truck or trailer cooling units.

Tom is continuing to reach out and network together all of the facets that make food rescue possible in the area. Most recently Tom met with Second Harvest to solidify the process of building up retail rescue efforts in the area. He also met with Amy from Hwy 19 Truck Repair/Wash to discuss solutions and create a plan to move forward.

Food Access Partnership Building - Tom

Outside of food rescue, Tom has been building relationships with area food access partners to help guarantee the strength of their operations in the community. Some examples of this include leading upcoming shifts at SCMNR, assisting FOCP with the creation of their Community Cupboard, and researching alternative or ethnically relevant food sources for Crossroads Campus Cupboard.

Make Hunger History Initiative in St. James – Tom

Second Harvest Heartland has identified St. James as one of the top communities that struggle with food insecurity within our state. With that, they have focused their efforts for the Make Hunger History Initiative to St. James and Fairmont. Tom has been attending, helping facilitate, and spreading the word about the workshops, with hopes to make food rescue and transportation part of the solution in that area.

Local Foods Month – Sabri

Local Foods Month, now in its fourth year, connects local farmers with local restaurants to develop a dish that highlights products they grow. For the event this summer there are so far 7 partnerships developed with a few more still in the works

Mankato Permanent Farmer's Market Pavilion – Sabri

This project worked with vendors and customers of the Mankato Farmer's Market to understand if a permanent covered location was of interest and what would make this space exciting and accessible for them. After the first year of data collection there is resounding support from vendors and customers. The project has now moved into sharing this information with possible partners.

Fairmont Energy and Environmental Resilience Plan – Sabri/Sam/ Lisa

The team hosted their first Energy and Environmental Resilience Plan meeting on April 24th. The committee has 10 members who will participate in meetings over the next 6 months to help identify issues and opportunities in the community.

Revolving Loan Fund – Jazmine Flores

The RNDC Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program continues to build momentum. Currently, two projects have received loan committee approval: a daycare center in Mankato and a new construction laundromat/car wash in St. James. Both projects are moving toward anticipated closings later this summer.

Several additional initiatives are in development, including potential support for a mental health clinic and an indoor playground adjacent to the Pickle Barn in Mankato. RNDC is also continuing its collaborative efforts with the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF).

To enhance outreach, Jazmine is proposing the launch of annual or semi-annual banker breakfasts. These events would aim to inform area bankers about the complementary revolving loan programs offered by both Region Nine and SMIF.

St. James Energy Navigators – Sabri

The Energy Navigators have continued conducting energy audits with the final audits set to be completed in May. The team will then be moving into education and installation of case study projects this summer. The first community education event is set for June 30th

REGIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Faribault/Martin County – Economic Adjustment Assistance – Jessica/Kristian

RNDC has been coordinating conversations with the federal EDA regarding economic adjustment assistance opportunities in the counties of Faribault and Martin following requests from local and county representatives. RNDC and the county representatives are exploring opportunities to develop an economic recovery coordinator position or program to serve economically distressed communities in the counties. Ongoing conversations with the federal EDA are underway.

Le Sueur County/Waterville Flood Project Coordination – Jessica/Kristian

Ongoing coordination by RNDC is continuing to support Le Sueur County, Waterville, and potentially neighboring counties/communities impacted by the June 2024 flooding. Jessica and Kristian have been facilitating and supporting efforts to help Le Sueur County potentially apply for EDA funds when available for a regional project through special disaster funds. A meeting was recently held with the federal EDA to prepare for an application.

Economic Impact Analysis for the Children’s Museum of Southern Minnesota – Kristian/Nate

RNDC is preparing a comprehensive economic impact analysis for the museum, including an analysis of expected expansions. The study completed the first week of May and will be presented to the museum’s board of directors on May 21st.

Housing Study for the City of Springfield – Kristian

RNDC completed a housing study for Springfield in early May as part of a larger project funded by Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) and RNDC, which also included the ongoing Strategic Economic Development Plan which will conclude in May.

Rural Entrepreneurship Venture (REV) Assessments – Kristian/Nate

RNDC lead an assessment of SMIF's REV programs in partnership with their leadership team. These assessments took place in fourteen communities across the region and were conducted between January and April 2025. The goal of the assessments was to gain a comprehensive understanding of how REV programming has shaped the entrepreneurial landscape in southern Minnesota, identify best practices, and uncover lessons learned from program implementation. It also sought to provide strategic recommendations for enhancing future programming to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem across the region based on the qualitative data collected through these assessments and quantitative data analyzed as part of an economic opportunity assessment, which is documented in a related report. This effort was crucial not only to assess the successes and challenges of the current program but also to offer actionable insights that can guide future investments and initiatives aimed at supporting rural entrepreneurship. The findings were presented to SMIF's leadership team and REV coaches on April 23rd.

Eagle Lake Solar on Public Buildings Grant – Sabri

Sabri has continued work with Eagle Lake to submit an application for the Solar on Public Buildings Grant. Those applications are due May 5th and will seek funding to install solar at their Public Works building and City Hall.

Waseca Co-op Committee – Sabri

Sabri has been attending meetings with a group of community and economic leaders in Waseca County to explore opportunities for a co-op grocery store in the community. The group has visited and interviewed a number of co-ops across the state to learn about their process and experience.

Tri-County Solid Waste Plan – Joel/Mark

Joel and Mark met with Tri-County Solid Waste Director Al Christensen to discuss the new timeline for the plan. Joel and Mark are working on some background pieces for the plan while waiting for the first batch of data from TCSW. This project is anticipated to be completed in the fall.

MnDOT Regional Planning Grant – Joel/Mark

Providing transportation and land use planning expertise to communities with Region Nine's service area. RNDC recently completed revisions for the Safe Routes to School plan for the Waterville-Elysian-Morristown School District and presented the plan to the Morristown City Council. Further revisions were needed as the district changed its course on finalizing the decision to keep the middle school open, opting to do a study before making a final decision in May or June. Joel and Mark have been meeting with local bicycle and pedestrian advocates to ensure their inclusion in the transportation planning process. They have been meeting monthly with MnDOT District 7's Towards Zero Deaths coordinator to ensure that our Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A), once authorized, can start without delay. While the SS4A agreement is still not authorized, RNDC received word from FHWA of our project's categorical exclusion from National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements, suggesting that ours and other frozen grants in Minnesota may start soon.

RNDC held a quarterly TAC meeting on May 9. The TAC discussed RNDC's MnDOT workplan for the next grant cycle and recommended it for approval by the RNDC board. Mark gave an update on SS4A and showed some hazards he's encountered in the region as they wait to officially start this grant. A presentation from MnDOT on functional classification of roadways was also given at this meeting ahead of a statewide examination and reclassification of roads.

RNDC and MnDOT District 7 held an Area Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP) open house on the same day and location as April's full RNDC commission meeting. Pairing the two events was a massive success, and MnDOT staff remarked that this was the best attended open house they have had.

Age Friendly Mankato/North Mankato – Jessica/Joel

Jessica and Joel have been serving on the community project team for VINE's Age Friendly Mankato-North Mankato program. The consultant is working with the planning group on drafting an action plan for the program. At the most recent meeting, the project team also discussed structure and agendas for two May community forums for the plan. After receiving community feedback in the forums, the community project team will convene again in June to discuss finalization of the plan.

Empowering Small Minnesota Communities - Joel

The project team (Joel, Region Nine Commissioner Dave Borchert, South Central EMS Director Mark Mark Griffith, Southwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships Executive Director Anne Dybsetter, and University of Minnesota School of Public Health Professor Stuart Grande) reviewed the draft report *Building a More Sustainable Model for Rural EMS in Region Nine* and provided feedback. Stuart Grande and his graduate assistants finalized the report and began distributing it in early May. The project team hopes to present this for the full Region Nine Commission at a future meeting.

Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership (MCAP) - Jessica/Sam/Lisa

Jessica, Sam, and Lisa have been working with the University of Minnesota's MCAP team to develop a framework for addressing climate resilience and adaptation for rural Minnesota communities. This partnership aims to provide technical assistance and resources to aid communities in their development initiatives through a climate resilient lens.

Part of the workplan involves gathering community stories from across the region to enable cross-collaboration and the exchange of best practices. Additionally, a preferred outcome of this partnership is to establish Region Nine as a regional point of contact for communities seeking to implement preventative and climate-resilient initiatives. The project team is currently developing an outreach strategy geared towards addressing key audiences and personnel that can apply these practices to their work. Jessica and Sam will be attending an MCAP Awards event hosted at Bell Museum in St. Paul, MN, to celebrate the milestones achieved and continue spurring the dialogue to further these initiatives.

Lastly, Region Nine is collaborating with MCAP and other partnering RDOs to develop a submission for the Midwest Climate Resilience Conference in October 2025. The submission will focus on framing our language and approach to initiate meaningful dialogue with audiences less familiar with the effects and impacts of climate-resilience and adaptation.

GRANT COORDINATION AND ADMINISTRATION:

Community Readiness and School Outreach – Sam/Lisa

Sam and Lisa continue to reach out and offer support for the disadvantaged communities within Region Nine. They attended various engagements such as the Clean Energy Economy MN (CEEM) Factsheet and Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) annual meeting events to learn more ways to increase clean energy for the Region Nine region.

In Mankato, they attended South Central Service Cooperative Career Expo. About 2,000 10th grade students attended and participated in the MyStory event. Sam and Lisa had the opportunity to present career paths and what leads to sustainability endeavors. Together with academic institutions RNDP is working on a clean energy and sustainability educational video that focuses on green opportunities post high school. They plan on working with teachers in the Region Nine area to present it to students.

New Ulm Local Action Climate MPCA Grant – Sam/Lisa

The City of New Ulm was awarded the Local Action Climate grant this month. In January, Sam and Lisa submitted the New Ulm Local Action Climate grant to the MPCA. The intent of this grant is to fund energy efficiency improvements for the environmental justice area in the city of New Ulm. The City of New Ulm, New Ulm Public Utilities (NUPU), Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC), Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTS), and Region Nine will work collectively to implement these energy improvement projects for this community.

Children's Museum Southern Minnesota Local Action Climate MPCA Grant – Sam/Lisa

The Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota (CMSM) was awarded the Local Action Climate grant this month. In January, Sam and Lisa submitted the Children's Museum Local Action Climate grant to the MPCA. The intent of this grant is to fund energy efficiency improvements, thus supporting their building expansion by freeing up resources, and ensuring the current building and property expansion operates efficiently and cohesively. With these improvements, the CMSM can dedicate more resources to educational and environmental programming. These upgrades directly support CMSM's mission, enabling greater investment in initiatives like outdoor and nature-based play. The CMSM is a vital resource for southern Minnesota residents, providing climate, conservation, cultural, and STEAM education.

Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) - Regional Ground-Source Energy Project Evaluation Toolkit Grant – Sam/Lisa/Jessica

Region Nine submitted the Regional Ground-Source Energy Project Evaluation Toolkit Grant to the LCCMR in March. The intent of this grant is to address the challenge of identifying optimal locations for ground source heat pump (GSHP) energy projects in Minnesota. The state's volatile weather and climate patterns necessitate resilient and adaptive energy solutions. Region Nine worked with Geosyntec throughout this development. Geosyntec is a consulting and engineering company that provides solutions to complex issues. If selected for further consideration, Region Nine will give a presentation before the LCCMR.

Region Nine MPCA Reuse Development Grant – Sam/Lisa

Sam and Lisa submitted the Region Nine Reuse Development grant to the MPCA in March. This grant is under the Statewide Waste Reduction and Reuse Program with the MPCA. The intent of this grant is to introduce Fix-It Clinics to rural communities served by RNDP. These clinics will educate residents about the benefits of repairing and maintaining items, helping promote sustainability, and promoting ethical consumption over unnecessary purchases. The project addresses the lack of education and resources in rural areas about the environmental and economic benefits of repair and reuse. By establishing Fix-It

Clinics, the project seeks to reduce waste, conserve resources, and minimize the carbon footprint associated with manufacturing new products.

Unfortunately, Region Nine was not selected for funding under this program. However, Sam and Lisa will continue to promote the benefits of reuse to the region and are currently developing alternative strategies to achieve this goal. Working with waste-to-energy providers and county waste management representatives to understand their priorities and perspectives will be critical to establishing reuse as a concept for communities in the region.

New Ulm Anaerobic Digestion Initiative – Sam/Lisa

Sam and Lisa continue to examine the feasibility of an anaerobic digestion plant for the city of New Ulm. They held meetings with New Ulm Public Utilities (NUPU) and Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI) to explore this opportunity. AURI is a nonprofit organization, unique to Minnesota and the upper Midwest, which fosters long-term economic benefit for Minnesota through value-added agricultural products. AURI performs detailed anaerobic digestion analysis. Sam and Lisa are still in the “assessment” stage of development which includes project-specific budget, energy off-take identification, and a thorough analysis of feedstock feasibility.

Food Access Grants – Tom

There are three grants and a matching program that Tom has been assisting area partners with, to expand their ability to receive food rescues. The first one is EFSP, which is currently on pause as part of the federal spending freeze. There are two community impact grants, one from Open Your Heart and one from POET that some area food shelves will be applying to. Tom will also be assisting a couple of area food shelves with signing up to be part of the Open Your Heart Summer Challenge, which is a fundraising matching award that takes place in the month of July.

Local Food Purchase Assistance Grant – Sabri

Work has continued on the Local Food Purchase Assistance Grant and are preparing for the growing season. So far this spring the has purchased excess spinach and eggs from farmers. Preparation has begin to purchase a cow from a local farmer.

Grow A Farmer Grant – Sabri

RNDC has distributed all \$50,000 of the Grow A Farmer grant to 18 farms and farmer support organizations across the region.

Carbon Reduction Program – Mark

Region Nine submitted a funding application for MnDOT’s Carbon Reduction Program. The proposed multiyear effort would coordinate and promote low carbon transportation (biking, transit, and walking) to reduce vehicle miles travelled in the Mankato area. The expected benefits will include greater safety for all road users by crash reductions, greater transit ridership, reduced congestion at area events, and better health outcomes from a more physically active population.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT – Nate

In addition to the department’s involvement in the some of the above projects, the Comms Department has been involved with the following:

RNDC Website Resource Page - Nate

We have been updating the RNDC website's Resources page to reflect changes in Federal and State funding and programs. This page will continue to be updated as new information and direction is received from our State and Federal partners.

RNDC Website Global Talent Page – Nate

Nate created a page for the Global Workforce initiatives that RNDC has been involved with. The page contains digital and printable versions of the student hiring toolkit, informational one-sheets, external resources for employers, and the webinars conducted by Alejandra and Mercedes.

Event Support and Promotion – Nate

The communications department has also been supporting Alejandra, Mercedes, and Greater Mankato Growth during the promotion and execution of various workforce events. These events will culminate on May 20th at the GMG Workforce Summit. RNDC and MSU,M have partnered with GMG for the event.

Bus Tour Planning – Nate/Jessica/Sarah/Tom/Mark

The bus tour committee have lined up three stops for the tour including the Camp Quarry Adventure Park, Henderson's Main Street, and the Sibley County Mobile Food Pantry in Gaylord. The committee is lining up speakers and invites to regional stakeholders went out in early May. Commissioners are reminded to register as soon as possible to ensure they get a seat.

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT – Jessica/Jazmine/Sarah

In addition to the department's involvement in assisting with components of all the work noted above, Administration and Finance has been involved with the following:

Execution of the Executive Director Succession Plan – Jessica

Execution of the Finance Director Succession Plans – Jazmine/Jessica

Commission Member Orientation – Jessica/Nate/Sarah

Regional/Community Outreach – Jessica/Kristian

Jessica and Kristian have participated as presenters for a few different meetings recently including the Blue Earth County Mayors and Clerks, in addition to Kristian presenting at the Gaylord Chamber of Commerce event.

Stakeholder Connection Meetings – Jessica

Jessica has recently coordinated various stakeholder connection meetings to update partners on project progress or explore ways to maintain or further develop relationships. An example includes Jessica coordinating a meeting with her and Kristian to connect with Tim Penny at the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation ahead of leadership transitions taking place. Similarly, Jessica facilitated a meeting with Mankato Area Foundation contacts, along with Sabri and Tom to provide Regional Food Rescue updates and to keep in communication/coordination with the funding partner.

Budget Preparation – Jessica

Jessica coordinated meetings with all RNDC staff teams in recent weeks to review and discuss preliminary budget information as part of formulating and preparing materials for the FY 25/26 Budget.

Finance Director Interviews – Jessica/Kristian/Jazmine

Recruitment is underway for the Finance Director after the position was briefly filled and vacated in March. Interviews are in process.

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