# Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 3, 2025 4:30 pm

3 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 310, Mankato, Minnesota

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**
December 3, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. | RNDC

## AGENDA

| | | Time | Page | Action |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | **CALL TO ORDER** | 4:30 | | |
| **2.** | **ROLL CALL** – *Secretary Branstad* | | | |
| **3.** | **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** | 4:31 | | ACTION |
| **4.** | **APPROVAL CONSENT AGENDA** | 4:32 | | ACTION |
| | NOTE: All items listed under the Consent Calendar will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items. If a Commission Member wishes to discuss any of these items, they may ask that the item be removed from the Consent Calendar. Removed item(s) will be discussed and acted upon by separate motion | | | |
| | a. Approval of November 12, 2025, Meeting Minutes | | 3 | |
| | b. Financials | | 5 | |
| **5.** | **ACTION ITEMS** | 4:35 | | ACTION |
| | a. Resolution 2025-05: RNDC Signatory | | 7 | |
| | b. Resolution 2025-06: RNDC Financial Signatory | | 8 | |
| **6.** | **INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS** | 4:45 | | |
| | a. Executive Director Succession Plan Update & Discussion | | | |
| | b. Organizational Finance Update & Solvency Discussion | | | |
| | c. Office of the State Auditor Request Follow-Up | | | |
| | d. LMCIT Insurance Claim Update & Discussion | | | |
| | e. RNDC Bylaws Review Next Steps | | | |
| **7.** | **REPORTS** | 5:35 | | |
| | a. Finance Director's Report– *Stephanie Hilpipre* | | 9 | |
| | b. Chair's Report – *Chair Laven* | | | |
| | c. Interim Executive Director's Report – *Jessica Beyer* | | 11 | |
| **8.** | **OTHER BUSINESS** | 5:45 | | |
| | a. Commissioner Updates | | | |
| | b. Meeting Evaluation | | | Handout |
| **9.** | **ADJOURNMENT** | 6:00 | | ACTION |

*Members may participate either in person or via Microsoft Teams, provided they can be both seen and heard.*

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**
**UNAPPROVED Meeting Minutes**
November 12, 2025

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. ROLL CALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrea Boettger (virtual), Jim Branstad, Marie Dranttel, Mike Laven, Tom Loveall, Christian Lilienthal, Patty O'Connor, Steve Rohlfing, Rob Wilkening (virtual)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Phil Schafer

OTHERS PRESENT: Nicole Griensewic, Stephanie Hilpipre, Sarah Janovsky, Shanon Nowell, Billeye Rabbe, RNDC Staff

There was a quorum.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Addition of an agenda Item 3.1 *Employee Statement to Board of Directors*

**Rohlfing moved to approve the amended agenda. O'Connor seconded. Motion carried.**

Staff members presented a statement to the Board of Directors, which is attached to the official minutes

**4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Lilienthal requested that the financials be removed from the consent agenda for separate discussion.

**Wilkening moved to approve the October 8, 2025 Special Board Meeting Minutes. O'Connor seconded. Motion carried.**

The financials as presented were narrative in nature and did not contain line items for approval.

Following discussion, **Lilienthal moved to not accept the financials as presented in the packet. Loveall seconded. Motion carried.**

**5. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

a. Finance Director's Report

Along with items noted in her enclosed report, Hilpipre stated that her current priority is cleaning up the indirect cost fund for the past fiscal year in preparation for the audit. This process requires numerous individual journal entries to correct prior errors. She noted that completing these corrections will provide a clearer picture of the organization's actual financial position. Loveall commented that the finance department may benefit from additional staffing when feasible, as had occurred in the past.

b. Chair's Report

c. Executive Director's Report

**6. CLOSE MEETING PER MINN. STAT. §§ 13D.03 AND 13D.05, SUBD. 3**

**Loveall moved to close the meeting per Minnesota Statue. Rohlfing seconded. Motion carried.**

The meeting was closed at 4:45PM in accordance with Minn. Stat. §§ 13D.03 and 13D.05, subd. 3, which permitted a public body to close a meeting for the purpose of evaluating the performance of an individual under its authority.

**7. OPEN MEETING**

When the open meeting resumed, Vice Chair Boettger was no longer present.

**Loveall moved to direct the Chair of Budget & Personnel and the Chair of the Board of Directors to initiate an immediate separation of the Executive Director. Lilienthal seconded.**

Commissioner Loveall indicated that he was satisfied with the information reviewed and stated that the recommended action would best address current challenges and position Region Nine for future success.

Roll Call Vote: Drantell-Abstain, Laven-Yes, Loveall-Yes, Lilienthal-Yes, O'Connor-Yes, Rohlfin-Yes, Wilkening-No, Branstad-Yes

**Motion carried.**

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

a. Commissioner Updates

Commissioners gave preliminary levy updates for their jurisdictions.

b. Meeting Evaluation

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

**O'Connor moved to adjourn. Dranttel seconded. Motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

REGION NINE
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Your regional partner for progress.
3 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 310, Mankato, MN 56001
507.387.5643

# FINANCIAL STATEMENT

**To:** RNDC Board of Directors
**From:** Stephanie Hipipre, Finance Director
**Date:** November 26, 2025
**Re**: Financial Statement – Board of Directors Meeting, December 3, 2025

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At this time, I am unable to certify a complete balance sheet or full statement of accounts for presentation at the Board of Directors meeting on December 3, 2025. I am currently in the process of verifying and reconciling each line item on the Balance Sheet generated by our accounting system (GMS) to ensure accuracy.

During this review, I have identified some issues that require resolution. While a full financial statement is pending, I am providing below a disclosure of cash balances held in RNDC's bank accounts as of November 26, 2025, to offer visibility into our current liquidity position.

**<u>Region Nine Development Commission</u>**

| | |
|---|---|
| R9 MAGIC Account: | $935,664.31 |
| Wells Fargo Payroll: | $69,956.42 |
| **Total Cash:** | **$1,005,620.73** |

I have identified an issue where the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) ACH loan payments have been deposited into the R9 MAGIC account instead of their respective RLF accounts. I'm currently working to reconcile and resolve this issue. So far, I estimate there is about $264,030.18 in our R9 MAGIC account that is money owed to the revolving loan funds.

Furthermore, a lot of funds currently held in the R9 MAGIC account are money paid in advance and owed as pass-through funds to external projects and initiatives such as McKnight Foundation, Food Recovery, Convivencia Hispana, Resource Rural, and Community Energy Innovation Prize. As we continue reclassifying incorrectly coded accounts payable items, I'm still working to reconcile the exact value of the pass-through commitments and liabilities held in our accounts.

**Legacy Revolving Loan Fund**

| | |
|---|---|
| MAGIC Account: | $1,511,781.43 |
| US Bank 'sweep' account: | $27,990.60 |
| Outstanding Principal: | $1,394,816.43 |

**CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund**

| | |
|---|---|
| MAGIC Account: | $84,142.65 |
| US Bank 'sweep' account: | $22,110.10 |
| Outstanding Principal: | $751,669.14 |

**Region Nine Area Inc.***

*Pass through funds held for other entities

| | |
|---|---|
| Wells Fargo Checking: | $169,773.63 |
| Wells Fargo Savings: | $3,120.24 |

As requested last month, an updated accounts payable listing will be provided at the board meeting. Moving forward, the report will be included in the posted board packet. However, due to the short timeframe between current meetings, accounts payable has not been processed in time to be included with this packet.

**RESOLUTION**

Region Nine Development Commission

**2025 – 05**

**DESIGNATING JESSICA BEYER AS AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY**

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

**WHEREAS**, the Commission routinely enters into contracts, agreements, grant documents, financial instruments, and other legally binding documents necessary to carry out its programs, projects, and administrative operations; and

**WHEREAS**, Jessica Beyer serves as Interim Executive Director/Deputy Director, and the Commission finds her qualified and appropriate to act as the authorized signatory for the organization;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Region Nine Development Commission that:

1. Jessica Beyer is hereby designated as the Authorized Signatory for the Region Nine Development Commission as allowed by Article VII, Paragraph III of its Bylaws.
2. As Authorized Signatory, Jessica Beyer is empowered to sign, execute, and deliver, on behalf of the Commission, all contracts, grant agreements, financial documents, certifications, correspondence, and any other official documents required for the Commission's operations and programs.
3. This authorization shall remain in effect unless and until modified or rescinded by further action of the Commission.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the officers and staff of the Region Nine Development Commission are directed to take any necessary actions to implement this Resolution.

Adopted this <u>3rd</u> of <u>December 2025</u>

Signed:

____________________________ ____________________________

Mike Laven, Chair Jim Branstad, Secretary

**RESOLUTION**

Region Nine Development Commission

**2025 – 06**

**DESIGNATING STEPHANIE HILPIPRE AS FINANCIAL SIGNATORY**

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

**WHEREAS,** the Board of Directors of Region Nine Development Commission (the "Commission") recognizes the need to designate an authorized financial signatory to execute financial transactions on behalf of the Commission;

**WHEREAS,** the Board has determined that it is in the best interest of the Commission to grant such authority to the Finance Director;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:**

1. Designation of Financial Signatory
   The Board hereby authorizes Stephanie Hilpipre, Finance Director of Region Nine Development Commission, to act as the Commission's financial signatory.
2. Scope of Authority
   Stephanie Hilpipre is authorized to:
   - Sign checks, drafts, and other instruments for the payment of money.
   - Endorse and deposit funds into the Commission's accounts.
   - Execute agreements and documents necessary for banking and financial transactions.
   - Access and manage all Commission accounts with financial institutions.
3. Effective Date and Duration
   This resolution shall take effect immediately and remain in force until revoked or amended by the Board of Directors.
4. Certification
   The undersigned certifies that this resolution was duly adopted at a meeting of the Board of Directors held in accordance with the Commission's bylaws and applicable law.

Adopted this 3rd of December 2025

Signed:

| | |
|---|---|
| Mike Laven, Chair | Jim Branstad, Secretary |

# Finance Director's Report

**December 2025 Board of Directors Meeting**

***Submitted by Stephanie Hilpipre***

## Finance

- We have been in contact with former Finance Director LuAnn Vanderwerf, who will be contracting with Region Nine to advise on the clean-up of the Finance Department and general office operations. I will be meeting with her on December 2 for a full-day work session and will provide a detailed update at the board meeting.
- I attended a two-day MADO Finance Training in Bloomington. The presenter was Bob Floyd, a leading expert on the Federal code for "Uniform Administration Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirement for Federal Awards". The training offered valuable insight into the complexities of federal funding compliance.
- As noted in last month's report, we continue the major effort of correcting incorrectly coded cash receipts and accounts payable items from FY2025. These issues remain the primary reason the audit is delayed. Sarah has been assisting with identifying items on credit card statements and coordinating with program managers to compile a list of transactions requiring reclassification. We are still working through the Indirect Cost Fund. Once complete, we will move on to the General Fund and then project-level corrections.
- Jessica, Sarah, and I have been ensuring continuity of operations following the Executive Director's departure. Key priorities include ensuring we have copies of all open and executed contracts and updating/removing login credentials and account access for bank accounts, employee benefits systems, and state/federal reporting sites.
- As previously reported, our indirect cost rate certification has not been submitted for several years, requiring us to use the de minimis rate for several contracts. Joel and I continue to work on the recertification process.
- My primary focus remains on audit preparation and GMS clean-up. However, January deadlines for FY26 budget amendments, quarterly reporting and invoicing for state contracts, 1099s, and other calendar-year-end reporting will also require significant attention.

## Revolving Loan Fund

- As noted in the Financial Statement, there is a large sum of money in the Region 9 MAGIC accounts that needs to be transferred to the appropriate RLF MAGIC accounts. Funds incorrectly deposited in the current fiscal year have been reconciled and transferred. Fiscal year 2025 still needs to be fully reconciled and verified before a transfer is executed.
- Separate US bank accounts were set up to receive the ACH payments for each plan. However, the automatic sweep function intended to move these funds into the MAGIC accounts is not functioning correctly. Jazmine continues to work with U.S. Bank to resolve the issue.

## Region Nine Area, Inc.

- Several contracts have been signed over the past year with Mahkato Okawitaya, Rockefeller Foundation in support of Waseca Community Investment Group, Food Recovery by Wooden Spoon, South Central Minnesota Food Recovery, and a $200,000 subgrantee award from the Minneapolis Foundation in support of Wooden Spoon's food recovery efforts.

- RNAI operates on its own GMS accounting system. The last completed monthly close-out was in June 2024. Finding time to service the contracts listed above and complete the work needed to get the accounting system up-to-date remains a challenge.
- As mentioned last month, a job listing for an intern has been posted with MSU. The intern will take on the administrative accounting tasks for servicing these RNAI fiscal sponsorships. The cost for this intern will be largely subsidized by the Federal Work Study Program. To date, we have only received one resume for the position. He subsequently withdrew from consideration due to securing other employment. We may need to consider raising the posted hourly wage to receive more applicants.
- We're working with Burkhardt and Burkhardt to file past due and current Form 990s.

## Human Resources

- It is open enrollment season for our employee benefit programs. Sarah helped compile the necessary paperwork to ensure we remain compliant with enrollment requirements and deadlines. I presented an overview of benefits at a recent staff meeting to allow employees to review and adjust their elections for the upcoming year.
- We have employees who have reported missing deposits into their ICMA 457(b) accounts and HSA accounts. Investigating, reconciling, and correcting these issues is still on my to-do list.
- PTO leave accruals in the Teamkeeper timesheet system have not been calculating correctly. I believe the issue lies specifically with ESST (earned sick and safe time). Analysis and reconciliation of everyone's accruals is still on my to-do list.

# Interim Executive Director's Report

***Submitted by Jessica Beyer***

**December 2025 Board of Directors Meeting**

Jessica Beyer, Deputy Director, is currently carrying out the organization's succession plan of serving as the Interim Executive Director since the Executive Director position was vacated on November 12, 2025.

A top priority has been to work closely with the Finance Director and Board leadership including the Treasurer to pursue next steps with getting resources aligned to address necessary accounting system clean-up. This remains a top priority to ensure the organization has accurate information for operations and decision-making along with supporting important contingent financial work that needs to be completed, such as the audit.

Over the last few weeks, it has also been important to focus on team leadership with convening the RNDC staff to provide updates on the leadership transition as well as set a path forward for the future of the organization while ensuring operations and continuation of programs, services, and projects are kept on target and moving forward.

Jessica has also helped assist the Chair and Board leadership by providing assistance with the departure of the former Executive Director and the organizational oversight that comes with a leadership transition.

Additionally, Jessica is continuing efforts to provide outreach to members of the commission and stakeholders to ensure external work throughout the region and beyond is fulfilled. RNDC is hosting the MADO Directors Conference December 2 and 3 and has worked to finalize an agenda and logistics with bringing RDO leaders from throughout the state to our region.

Jessica is also working closely with the team on strategic priorities and avenues for our team to explore additional grants and projects that can bring resources and impact into the region as well as support our organization's efforts in addressing the needs of regional stakeholders.

Jessica will share further updates at the upcoming Board of Directors Meeting.

**PROGRAM UPDATES:**

**Rural Child Care Innovation Program in Eagle Lake (RCCIP)** – Alejandra
Alejandra is part of the core team leading childcare efforts in Eagle Lake. An appreciation basket and survey is planned for all providers in the city.

**Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota (CMSM) Programming Assessments** – Kristian, Nate
RNDC completed a four-month long assessment of existing and future programming with CMSM's leadership team, with particular focus on educational partners, "impact partners", and other stakeholders with a vested interest in the museum's long-term vitality. The project was funded by Compeer and presented to their executive team the week of December 1st.

**Regional Food System Supply Chains and Transportation Implications** – Kristian
RNDC completed the second phase of the University of Minnesota funded study on agriculture and food systems supply chains with an event in Red Wing on November 3rd that focused on regional collaborations across private and public sector partners. RNDC presented supply chain maps of agriculture and food manufacturing across the state, with the support of ESRI staff, identifying transportation paths for agriculture to food manufacturing/processing segments of these clusters.

**Regional Food Rescue** – Tom, Sabri
The running total for rescued food that RNDC has assisted with or organized for the year is 81,947 lbs. of food, worth approximately $129,277. Both of these figures now surpass Tom's goal set earlier this year of 75,000 lbs and $100,000 by year end. This food has been disbursed into the community through area partners, some of the largest recipients of the food are ECHO, SCMNFR, St. Peter Food Shelf, Waseca Area Food Shelf, and the various clinic produce programs. Some of the most common types of food rescued recently have included squash, chicken, pumpkins, potatoes, yogurt, and lettuce.

Tom and Sabri have secured use of the Wooden Spoon Van for out-of-town use through the Thriving Communities Grant for one year. Use is subject to van availability and scope of the project. The goal is still to get a small, refrigerated van or truck for sustainability and future use. There are grant opportunities through the MPCA that Tom will be working on with Natasha of Wooden Spoon to secure an eco-friendly hauling solution. These opportunities have not opened up yet; however, the use of the current van has been extremely successful with over 550 miles logged and 12,400 lbs. hauled.

**Mankato Clinic Produce Place** – Tom
The second month has been completed and has been successful. Mankato Clinic will be looking into freezer solutions soon to have additional capacity. Seeing how this program has flourished, SHIP has provided SCMNFR funding for four freezers around Blue Earth County and locations for those will be announced soon. The total amount of food rescued and disbursed in the Mankato Clinic Produce Place has reached just over 2,400 lbs.

**Food Access Partnership Building** – Tom
Eastridge Mayo site has been awarded SHIP money to buy a freezer for the program. This will help increase capacity and longevity of the food for the program.

Mankato Area Foundation has networked with the Star Tribune to cover some of the partnership building that has taken place, and a story about food rescue in our region may be published soon.

**Alternative and Ethnically Relevant Rescued Food Sources** - Tom

Tom and Sabri met with a Halal meat processor to discuss more availability of ethnically relevant foods in the local food system. Potential to help network them into food recovery and Second Harvest Heartland.

The SCMNFR Advisory Council will be taking this on as a priority eventually and will come up with ways to procure more of these foods through growers and retailers.

**SCMNFR Advisory Council** – Tom, Sabri
As part of the Thriving Communities Grant that Sabri worked on with SCMNFR, an advisory council has been established to help plan for sustainability and growth in the region's food rescue program. The first two meetings have been held and, in the future, they will be working on the charter, culturally specific foods, next year's growing season, and serving/food data tracking. Next meeting is scheduled for December 8th.

**Communications** – Nate
In addition other projects noted throughout, Nate spent time exploring potential funding opportunities with Explore MN and is currently working on an RFP for a community marketing project. Nate organized a meeting with the MADO Communications professionals to share ideas and ways we can support each other. These meetings help establish best practices and effective ways to communicate.

Nate has begun a curriculum for communications training that will be shared with staff. The training will focus on community communications and ways to present information to stakeholders and residents.

Nate has begun promotion for the College-Age Commissioner position. The goal is not only to fill the position, but also to promote ways younger residents can get involved with their communities.

Nate has been updating the images and branding on the RNDC social channels to refresh the organization's profiles and create consistency. Along with this, he continues to go through the website to look for ways to create a more user-friendly experience and improve the SEO of the site.

Nate also worked with Alejandra to update the county profiles. They will be uploaded to the respective counties page on the RNDC website.

**Revolving Loan Fund** - Jazmine
Jazmine continued working on finalizing loan documents for the Care Corner Daycare loan in coordination with Julia from the SBA. The SBA must review the loan and partner documents before the closing can be scheduled.

She also met with a prospective client in Blue Earth—the owner of Heavy Lite—to explore potential financing options for the company's rapid expansion.

Jazmine presented on behalf of Region Nine at the Finance Resource Workshop held at St. James City Hall, where she provided an overview of the Revolving Loan Program. The event saw a strong turnout and generated meaningful follow-up conversations.

Additionally, she met with Pioneer Bank and SMIF regarding an ongoing project with Endless Adventure, as the business continues to refine its strategies and explore new directions.

Jazmine is also meeting with a couple from Rapidan Township who are interested in purchasing the former school building to transform it into a small event venue or loft-style lodging.

**Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant** – Mark
Planning is now underway for field work and road safety data collection in Martin and Faribault counties. Mark is identifying high crash intersections and corridors in the two counties and prioritizing any that are within 0.5 miles of schools for quick safety fixes. Such safety fixes may include trimming of vegetation to improve sightlines at crosswalks and intersections, additional warning signs for school zones and pedestrians, adjusting traffic signal timing, and staggering arrival and dismissal of students to reduce safety conflicts with drivers. Mark expects to complete road safety action plans for both counties within the next 6-9 months.

Mark continues to engage with MnDOT planners and engineers in the region to ensure that future transportation projects and their resultant detours are planning for the safety and mobility of all users.

**Transportation/MnDOT Regional Planning Grant** – Joel, Mark
On November 4 and 5, Joel attended the RDO transportation planners quarterly meeting in St. Cloud. Planners learned about regional transportation plans, land use and access management, right-of-way use, scenic byways, and more. Planners also received updates from MnDOT staff on the state transit plan and statewide EV infrastructure. Planners also participated in a discussion about forming an active transportation community of practice. Most importantly, planners and RDO executive directors participated in a special session to discuss the future of RDO state funding. There is a proposal to increase RDO MnDOT contract funding from $75,000 per year to $120,000. While it looks like this request has made it further than any efforts from recent years, it is still uncertain whether it will be included in the final state budget as so many programs have experienced funding cuts.

On November 7, RNDC hosted its quarterly TAC meeting in the Region Nine board room and on Microsoft Teams. The TAC heard a presentation from Dr. Nate Meyer with the University of Minnesota's Climate Adaptation Partnership. The TAC also reviewed and discussed proposed functional classification changes to roads throughout the region. Joel and Mark also discussed current open funding solicitations from MnDOT (including Transportation Alternatives, Carbon Reduction Program, PROTECT, and Active Transportation planning). Mark also gave an SS4A update to TAC members that included recent trends in crashes in the region.
Joel took part in another VINE Door2Door task force meeting on November 12 where participants took a deeper dive into financials and are still working to cut costs to reduce the operating deficit of VINE's paid and volunteer driving program.

Joel and Mark conducted reviews with communities that have submitted letters of intent for Transportation Alternatives and PROTECT funding. These include Transportation Alternatives LOIs from the City of Waseca and Waseca County and a PROTECT LOI from Dryden Township in Sibley County. These reviews check to see if the community is on the right track to submit a full application and ensures that they will be able to meet the federal requirements of these funding programs. The LOI review process also makes sure that the communities are taking the most appropriate and effective approach to solve the problems they are seeking funding to fix.

**St. James Energy Navigators - Sabri**
Sabri has continued work on this project hosting three community education events that have reached close to 90 community members. The project has moved into implementation with 28 households so far selected for installations. Between the foundation and federal funds secured the project aims to deploy $580,000 dollars in upgrades into 60 households in St. James.

**<u>REGIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:</u>**

**Fairmont Energy and Environmental Resilience Plan** – Sabri, Sam, Lisa, Nate
The group will be hosting a community open house to share the initial findings of the planning process and get community input on the goals and actions for the plan.

**Federal EDA Disaster Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)** – Jessica, Kristian, Mark, Alejandra , Sabri
RNDC has continued work to engage with counties and communities to help submit potential project applications for the Federal EDA Disaster Notice of Funding that was released in early June.

Technical assistance and grant administration work is underway for the following applications: Cannon River Watershed Project with Le Sueur, Rice, and Waseca counties (application pending); Martin County (grant submitted); New Richland, Springfield (grant submitted), Waterville; Farmamerica; Mapleton; the City of North Mankato; and through a joint project with Minnesota State University and RNDC (grant submitted). The RNDC/MSU application was submitted in October with a total budget of $3.5 million, with an anticipated allocation to RNDC of approximately $850,000.

Le Sueur County, in partnership with Waseca County and Rice County, and with the assistance of Region Nine, are developing a proposal to add 1,000 acre-feet of water storage projects in the Upper Cannon Watershed. It is expected that the proposal will be submitted to EDA before year's end.

Sabri and Alejandra have continued working with Farmamerica and Crystal Valley Coop to develop an application to the EDA Disaster NOFO that would address flooding issues at their test plots, invest in modern equipment for their test plots, and increase accessibility for farmers and the community to learn about the story of agriculture from past to present.

Springfield's $13 million construction application was presented to the federal EDAs investment committee on November 19 as the first application from the state of MN.

RNDC is currently assisting Mapleton with their disaster application.

**Blue Earth Solar on Public Buildings Grant** – Sabri
Sabri's work with Blue Earth Light and Water helped them secure two- 40 kw solar installations at their powerplant and utility warehouse respectively. The systems will each generate $6,000 worth of electricity annually and will be 100% covered through the grant and federal tax incentives. In total, the grants are worth $205,000.

They are still waiting to hear back about the third application submitted for their wastewater treatment plant.

**Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership (MCAP)** – Sam, Jessica
Sam is working with MCAP in developing an application to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Local Climate Action grants. The project will focus on creating resilience hubs for communities in the region. These hubs are designed to be a place of refuge for communities during extreme weather events – such as flooding – and offer resources to help communities and community members think resiliently about their development goals and preparedness efforts.

Sam is also working with a resilience specialist (who recently joined MCAP) in helping communities integrate resilience as a core facet of their planning goals – Hazard Mitigation Plans, Comprehensive Plans, and more. These efforts will focus on MCAP's Climate Adaptation Specialist (CAS) Training and will seek to train individuals and planning committees to incorporate these concepts into community and economic goals.

Jessica has been providing oversight on MCAP initiatives. She and Sam have also been engaged in continued work to schedule/facilitate speaking engagements throughout the region to continue outreach and educational efforts to inform stakeholders and groups about MCAP.

**Tri-County Solid Waste Management Plan** – Joel, Mark, Nate
The project team has gathered GIS data and other additional data for the plan. Joel is working on a revised contract for the project as external factors beyond the control of RNDC and Tri-County Solid Waste have delayed the plan beyond the original contract dates.

**Apple Blossom Road and Shooting Star Scenic Byways Corridor Management Plans** – Mark, Joel, Sabri, Sam, Alejandra, Kristian, Sarah, Nate
RNDC has submitted a draft budget for the Scenic Byways CMPs and received some feedback and questions from MnDOT. RNDC has addressed most of the questions and submitted a more in-depth project workplan for their review.

**Empowering Small Minnesota Communities Rural EMS Project –** Joel
The University of Minnesota School of Public Health faculty that worked with RNDC on the rural EMS research project secured a Community Engagement to Advance Research and Community Health (CEARCH) seed grant to

build upon the research conducted through the Empowering Small Minnesota Communities program. This will include further research and policy development to make rural EMS sustainable in Minnesota. Joel, RNDC Commissioner Dave Borchert, South Central EMS Director Mark Griffith, Dr. Stuart Grande with the University of Minnesota, and Beth Labenz of University of Minnesota Extension RSDP will be presenting on the Empowering Small Minnesota Communities project at the AMC conference in December.

**Waterville – Rural Capacity Program** – Alejandra
The City of Waterville and local chamber have been exploring different grants and program opportunities to increase local capacity. Alejandra worked with them to submit an application for the Rural Capacity program.

**<u>GRANT COORDINATION AND ADMINISTRATION:</u>**

**Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG)** – Sam, Sabri, Lisa
No new updates at this time.

# Terms & Abbreviations

ACC – American Connection Corp

ACE - Americas Competitiveness Exchange on Innovation and Entrepreneurship

APPR – Annual Performance Progress Report (CEDS) ATP – Area Transportation Partnership

AURI – Agricultural Utilization Research Institute

BDO – Bioeconomy Development Opportunity

CRP – Carbon Reduction Program

CEDS – Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

COPAL – Comunidades Organizando el Poder y la Acción Latina (Communities Organizing Latino Power and Action)

CGMC – Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities

CPRG – Climate Pollution Reduction Grant

CSET – College of Science, Engineering & Technology

CSM – Climate Smart Municipalities

CSSJ – Climate Smart St. James

CTS – Center for Transportation Studies

DEED – Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

DOE – Department of Energy

EDA – Economic Development Administration

EDD – Economic Development District

EECBG - Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant

GAC – Gustavus Adolphus College

GIS – Geographic Information Systems

GMG – Greater Mankato Growth

GMNP – Greater Minnesota Partnership

HACER – Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research

IF – Initative Foundation

LGU – Local Government Unit

LMI – Labor Market Information

LMI – Low-to-Moderate Income

MADO – Minnesota Association of Development Organizations

MAPCED - Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers

MAPO – Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization

MCLA – Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs

MDH – Minnesota Department of Health

MPCA – Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

MSA – Metropolitan Statistical Area

MSU,M – Minnesota State University, Mankato

MYLAP – MN Young American Leaders Program

NEA – National Endowment for the Arts

NEH – National Endowment for the Humanities on Center

NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Services

PROTECT – Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation

REDA – Regional Economic Development Alliance

REV – Rural Entrepreneurial Venture

RLF – Revolving Loan Fund

RNAI – Region Nine Area Inc.

RNDC – Region Nine Development Commission

SACE – Southern Agricultural Center for Excellence

SAF – Sustainable Aviation Fuel

SBDC – Small Business Development Center

SCC – South Central College

SCSC – South Central Service Cooperative

SHIP – Statewide Health Improvement Partnership

SMIF – Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

SRTS – Safe Routes to Schools

SS4A – Safe Streets and Roads for All

STIP – State Transportation Improvement Program

SWCDs - Soil and Water Conservation Districts

TAC - Transportation Advisory Committee

WCI – West-Central Initative

TZD – Toward Zero Deaths