REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, November 4, 2026 4:30 pm



3 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 310, Mankato, Minnesota

REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
November 4, 2026 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**		2	Action
	Closed Session Closed meeting pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §13D.03, Subd. 1(b) – Labor Negotiations Strategy			
4.	**Approval of September 9, 2026, Meeting Minutes**	4:45	3	Action
5.	**Financials Review**		7	
6.	**RNDC Draft AI Policy Review** - *Nathan George, Communications Manager*		13	
7.	**Finance Transition Update** – *Jessica Beyer, Interim Executive Director and Nate Winter, CLA*			
8.	**Action Items**	5:15		
	a. Kavira Plan Consideration		29	Action
	b. Succession Plan Review, Discussion & Potential Approval		31	Action
9.	**Reports**	5:35		
	a. Chair's Report – *Chair Boettger*			
	b. Interim Executive Director's Report – *Jessica Beyer*		37	
10.	**Topics for Next Meeting**			
11.	**Other Business**	5:45		
	a. Commissioner Updates			
	b. Meeting Evaluation			Handout
12.	**Adjournment**	6:00		Action

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrea Boettger, Jim Branstad, Marie Dranttel, Mike Laven, Christian Lilienthal, Patty O'Connor, Steve Rohlfing, Phil Schafer, Rob Wilkening

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Tom Loveall

OTHERS PRESENT: Jessica Beyer, Stephanie Hilpipre, Sarah Janovsky

There was a quorum.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The closed session related to labor negotiations was removed from the agenda as it was no longer needed.

Laven moved to approve the agenda. Wilkening seconded. Motion carried.

4. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 12, 2026, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Schafer moved to approve the August 12, 2026 Regular meeting minutes. Rohlfing seconded. Motion carried.

5. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 25, 2026, SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Wilkening moved to approve the August 25, 2026 Special meeting minutes. O'Connor seconded. Motion carried.

6. APPROVAL OF FINANCIALS

Staff reviewed monthly financial activity, grant revenues, and expenditures associated with the Thriving Communities Grant. Discussion included grant timelines and funding status.

Schafer moved to approve the financials as presented. Dranttel seconded. Motion carried.

7. GRANT/PROGRAM REVIEW

Staff reviewed current grants, contracts, and applications in progress, including potential agricultural assistance funding opportunities and updates on major grant activities. Extensive discussion occurred regarding the commercial kitchen project and food-related initiatives.

8. ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of IT Service Contract Proposals

Staff presented a comparison of IT service providers, including cost analyses, insurance recommendations, and reference checks. Following discussion, the Board supported a local provider that met organizational cybersecurity and budgetary needs.

Lilienthal moved to approve the proposal presented by Computer Technology Solutions (CTS) at the Gemini service level. Branstad seconded. Motion carried.

B. Approval of Bylaws

Staff reviewed proposed bylaw revisions, including governance, committee structure, commissioner responsibilities, and code of conduct provisions. Significant discussion occurred regarding Board of Directors language, committee structure, and misconduct-related removal provisions. The Board agreed additional clarification was needed before Commission consideration.

It was further agreed that the proposed bylaws would be reviewed by the Budget & Personnel Committee at its September 16, 2026 meeting, with any recommended revisions brought forward prior to consideration by the Commission at its October meeting.

Lilienthal moved to recommend the Bylaws to the Commission for approval once clarification regarding Board-related provisions is completed. Branstad seconded. Motion carried, with Lilienthal noting concerns regarding commissioner responsibility and misconduct language.

C. Approval of Code of Conduct Policy

The Board reviewed the proposed standalone Code of Conduct Policy with minimal discussion.

Wilkening moved to present the Code of Conduct Policy as presented to the full Commission for approval. Schafer seconded. Motion carried.

D. Approval of Conflict-of-Interest Policy

The Board discussed policy acknowledgment requirements and signature documentation.

O'Connor moved to present the Conflict-of-Interest Policy, with the addition of signature and date lines, to the full Commission for approval. Dranttel seconded. Motion carried.

E. Approval of Legislative Updates to the RNDC Handbook

Staff reviewed employee handbook updates needed for compliance with current legal requirements, including leave and break policies. Discussion focused on statutory references and future handbook revisions.

Rohlfing moved to present the legal updates to the RNDC Handbook to the full Commission for approval. Schafer seconded. Motion carried.

9. REPORTS

Chair's Report – *Chair Boettger*

Chair Boettger reported on ongoing governance matters, labor negotiations, and anticipated bylaw review work, and the executive director search planning. Appreciation was expressed for Board and staff efforts during organizational transitions.

Interim Executive Director's Report – *Jessica Beyer*

Jessica Beyer provided updates on labor negotiations, the FY2025 audit process, IT contract review, grants and organizational operations. She also provided an update on the RLF position vacancy/recruitment. It was also noted that the audit remains in progress, with a draft report anticipated in the coming weeks that will be circulated to the Commission for approval ahead of the extended deadline with the Office of the State Auditor on September 30, 2026.

Finance Director's Report – *Stephanie Hilpipre*

Stephanie Hilpipre reported on audit-related work, accounting system cleanup, invoicing activities, revolving loan fund staffing needs, and fiscal host contract updates. Discussion included recruitment considerations for the Revolving Loan Fund position with Board member direction to seek Budget and Personnel Committee feedback at an upcoming meeting along with recommendations to post the position both internally and externally.

10. TOPICS FOR NEXT MEETING

Topics discussed for future meetings included food recovery initiatives, organizational structure considerations, regional program updates, and additional strategic presentations highlighting RNDC program impacts.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

Board members shared updates related to housing, food distribution efforts, family resource center planning, workforce challenges, building inspection shortages, food recovery initiatives, and community grant opportunities. Discussion occurred regarding the future role and sustainability of regional food recovery programming. Jessica Beyer noted that it would be beneficial for Tom to present on food rescue efforts to date to educate the Board and/or Commission on how the program has evolved as well as showcase current and next steps in working with counties, landfills, and new partners.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.

Financial Report
October 14, 2026 - Full Commission Meeting

CASH BALANCE - August 31, 2026			**$ 582,597.14**
Cash Receipts	$	220,520.00	
Bank Interest	$	1,901.04	
Total Receipts	**$**	**222,421.04**	
Payroll and Benefits Disbursements	$	(86,736.76)	
Accounts Payable	$	(61,437.02)	
Credit Card Charges	$	(3,094.16)	
Total Disbursements	**$**	**(151,267.94)**	
CASH BALANCE - September 30, 2026			**$ 653,750.24**

Region Nine Development Commission Accounts		
R9 MAGIC	$	624,519.86
Wells Fargo - Payroll Account	$	29,230.38
TOTAL:	**$**	**653,750.24**

Region Nine Development Commission
September 2026 - Summary of Cash Receipts
FY 2027

Date	Description	Amount
DATE: 9/10/2026		
	Windward Foundation - Convivencia Hispana	$ 100,000.00
DATE: 9/14/2026		
	Charles K. Blandin Foundation	$ 100,000.00
	City of St. James - Convivencia Rebate	$ 200.00
	Centerpoint Energy - Convivencia Rebate	$ 19,800.00
DATE: 9/28/2026		
	State of MN - MSU - SBDC Contract	$ 520.00
	September 2026 Total Cash Receipts:	**$ 220,520.00**

Region Nine Development Commission
September 2026 - Summary of Disbursements
FY 2027

Date	Description	Amount
Payroll and Benefits Disbursements		
9/1/2026	Life Insurance	$ (309.42)
9/1/2026	Wex Health	$ (495.00)
9/1/2026	Wex Health	$ (669.22)
9/1/2026	Health Insurance	$ (9,197.64)
9/8/2026	Missionsquare	$ (488.95)
9/9/2026	Dental Insurance	$ (264.88)
9/10/2026	Wex Health	$ (1,730.70)
9/10/2026	Payroll	$ (31,663.43)
9/11/2026	iSolved Fee	$ (130.56)
9/14/2026	PERA	$ (4,558.27)
9/15/2026	Wex Health	$ (475.00)
9/15/2026	Wex Health	$ (599.99)
9/21/2026	Missionsquare	$ (488.95)
9/24/2026	Payroll	$ (30,152.80)
9/25/2026	Wex Health	$ (85.25)
9/28/2026	PERA	$ (4,351.71)
9/29/2026	Wex Health	$ (475.00)
9/29/2026	Wex Health	$ (599.99)
	Total:	**$ (86,736.76)**
Accounts Payable		
9/1/2026	Phil Schafer	$ (145.76)
9/2/2026	Creative Ad Solutions	$ (25.50)
9/2/2026	Andrea Boettger	$ (88.00)
9/2/2026	Creative Ad Solutions	$ (498.21)
9/8/2026	Steve Rohlfing	$ (31.92)
9/8/2026	Mike Laven	$ (50.00)
9/8/2026	Joel Hanif - HSA resolution	$ (180.76)
9/8/2026	Neubau Holdings - Office Rent	$ (3,404.00)
9/8/2026	Neubau Holdings - Office Rent	$ (3,404.00)
9/9/2026	River Bend Business Producs	$ (20.85)
9/9/2026	Andrew Haefner	$ (76.82)
9/9/2026	Lime Valley Advertising Inc.	$ (79.00)
9/9/2026	TeamKeeper	$ (90.60)
9/9/2026	League of MN Cities Insurance Trust	$ (250.00)
9/9/2026	Reichel Insulation, LLC	$ (7,481.40)
9/10/2026	Mike Laven	$ (50.00)
9/10/2026	Xcel Energy	$ (72.21)
9/10/2026	Vanderberg Cleaning Services	$ (360.00)
9/11/2026	Steve Rohlfing	$ (31.92)
9/11/2026	Patty O'Connor	$ (50.00)
9/11/2026	James Kotewa	$ (129.04)
9/11/2026	Star Eagle	$ (132.00)
9/14/2026	Jim Branstad	$ (104.72)
9/14/2026	Neubau Holdings - Office Rent	$ (3,404.00)
9/15/2026	Andrea Boettger	$ (88.00)
9/16/2026	Bank Fees	$ (354.61)
9/16/2026	Thriveon	$ (5,757.09)
9/21/2026	Tom Polich	$ (224.20)
9/21/2026	Lisa Callahan	$ (8,175.00)
9/21/2026	Lisa Callahan	$ (13,180.00)
9/22/2026	Mike Laven	$ (50.00)
9/22/2026	Jim Branstad	$ (104.72)
9/22/2026	South Central Service Coop	$ (130.00)
9/22/2026	United Team Elite	$ (150.00)
9/22/2026	Community & Economic Development Association	$ (500.00)
9/23/2026	Patty O'Connor	$ (100.00)
9/23/2026	Security Storage Systems	$ (110.00)
9/23/2026	Christian Lilienthal	$ (110.80)
9/23/2026	Metro Sales Inc.	$ (468.71)
9/23/2026	Blethen Berens	$ (860.00)
9/24/2026	Van Hee Media LLC	$ (92.94)
9/24/2026	Phil Schafer	$ (195.76)
9/25/2026	City of Mankato	$ (258.90)
9/28/2026	Steve Rohlfing	$ (77.36)
9/28/2026	CliftonLarsonAllen LLP	$ (10,288.22)
	Total:	**$ (61,437.02)**
Credit Card Charges		
8/11/2026	Alejandra - Walmart	$ (647.22)
7/22/2026	Jessica - Kwik Trip	$ (78.84)
7/24/2026	Jessica - Allianz Insurance	$ (11.00)
8/17/2026	Sabri - Land to Air Express	$ (80.00)
8/17/2026	Sabri - United Airlines	$ (328.40)
7/27/2026	Jazmine - Lola New Ulm	$ (20.74)
8/15/2026	Jazmine - Dino's Pizzeria	$ (42.11)
7/22/2026	Nate - Canva	$ (54.39)
7/28/2026	Nate - USPS	$ (16.00)
7/28/2026	Nate - Insty Prints	$ (63.30)
7/30/2026	Joel - Corky's Pizza	$ (83.44)
7/30/2026	Joel - Kwik Trip	$ (34.53)
8/6/2026	Joel - Lyric Kitchen	$ (29.83)
8/7/2026	Joel - Duluth Holiday Inn	$ (411.76)
7/23/2026	Stephanie - The Free Press	$ (26.31)
8/11/2026	Stephanie - Spectrum	$ (160.00)
8/13/2026	Stephanie - Internet Connections	$ (330.00)
8/18/2026	Stephanie - ESRI Software	$ (1,400.00)
7/31/2026	Sarah - Walmart	$ (14.23)
8/16/2026	Sarah - Amazon	$ (9.98)
8/19/2026	Sarah - Amazon	$ (29.94)
7/23/2026	Tom - Impark	$ (17.00)
8/4/2026	Tom - Kwik Trip	$ (33.41)
8/19/2026	Kristian - Lucid Software Refund	$ 702.99
8/20/2026	USBank Thank You Rebate	$ 125.28
	Total:	**$ (3,094.16)**

Revolving Loan Fund - Cash Balance Report
October 14, 2026 - Full Commission Meeting

CASH BALANCE - August 31, 2026			**$**	**1,879,208.58**
Legacy RLF Loan Payments	$	17,898.60		
Legacy RLF Bank Interest	$	4,905.64		
Legacy RLF Loan Closing Fees	$	-		
CARES RLF Loan Payments	$	11,674.30		
CARES RLF Bank Interest	$	944.22		
CARES RLF Loan Closing Fees	$	-		
Total Receipts	**$**	**35,422.76**		
New Loans	$	-		
Returned ACH Payment	$	(187.80)		
Service Charges	$	(55.64)		
Total Disbursements	**$**	**(243.44)**		
CASH BALANCE - September 30, 2026			**$**	**1,914,387.90**

Revolving Loan Fund Accounts		
Legacy RLF - MAGIC	$	1,604,058.66
CARES RLF - MAGIC	$	310,329.24
TOTAL:	**$**	**1,914,387.90**

RNDC Funding Summary

Department/Program	Contract Source	Money Source	R9 Lead	Full Award	Pass - through	$ for R9 Operation Expenses FY27	FY28	FY29	FY27 Match	Start	End
General Fund											
Levy	Nine Counties	Levy	Jessica			$740,942	$763,170	$786,065			
Bank Interest		Interest	Stephanie			$20,000	$20,000				
Revolving Loan Fund											
Legacy Revolving Loan Fund	De-Federalized	Interest	Jazmine			$121,000	$125,000	$128,750			
CARES Revolving Loan Fund	Economic Development Administration	Interest - Federal	Jazmine			$34,000	$35,000	$36,000			
Loan Closing Fees	RLF Clients		Jazmine			$6,000	$6,000	$6,000			
Economic Development											
EDA Planning Grant	Economic Development Administration	Federal Funds	Alejandra	$210,000		$52,500			$70,000	4/1/2024	3/31/2027
UofM - Center for Transportation Studies (TPEC)	University of Minnesota	State Funds	Kristian	$20,000		$20,000					
SBDC Contract Work	Small Business Development Center (SBDC)	Local Contract	Nate	$4,062		$4,062				7/21/2026	12/31/2026
Blandin - FY27/FY28	Blandin Foundation	Private Foundation	Jessica	$200,000		$100,000	$100,000			7/1/2026	6/30/2028
CEDS Community Engagement	University of Minnesota/Southwest RSDP	State Funds	Alejandra	$7,000		$7,000				7/1/2026	5/31/2027
Madelia Rural Health Care Roundtable	Taylor Family Farms Foundation	Private Foundation	Alejandra	$2,500		$2,500				10/21/2026	Until Exhausted
Transportation											
Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)	Federal Highway Administration	Federal Funds	Mark	$340,000		$133,733	$133,733		$33,433		6/30/2028
MnDOT Planning Grant	MnDOT	State Funds	Joel	$150,000		$75,000			$13,235	7/1/2025	6/30/2027
Shooting Star Scenic Byway	MnDOT District 6	State Funds	Joel	$74,305		$37,113				12/23/2025	6/30/2027
Apple Blossom Scenic Byway	MnDOT District 6	State Funds	Joel	$74,445		$37,253				12/23/2025	6/30/2027
Historic Bluff Scenic Byway	ECRDC - subcontract of MnDOT funds	Out of Region Contract	Joel	$15,000		$15,000				3/19/2026	12/31/2026
Rural EMS - Empowering Small Communities	University of Minnesota Extension	State Funds	Joel	$8,000		$8,000					Until Exhausted
Tri-County Solid Waste Management Plan	Le Sueur, Nicollet & Sibley Counties	Local Contract	Joel	$5,000		$2,500					12/31/2026
Environment & Sustainability											
McKnight FY27-FY28 Contract	McKnight Foundation	Private Foundation	Jessica	$800,000	$700,000	$50,000	$50,000			7/1/2026	6/30/2028
Resource Rural - Windward Fund, St. James	Resource Rural	Private Foundation	Sabri	$150,000	$100,000	$50,000				1/1/2025	12/31/2026
Resource Rural - Windward Fund, St. James	Resource Rural	Private Foundation	Sabri	$100,000	$50,000	$50,000				8/1/2026	7/31/2027
Thriving Communities, St. James	Minneapolis Foundation - Federal Subgrantee	Federal Funds	Sabri	$350,000	$302,375	$20,000				4/31/2025	12/31/2027
Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG)	MN Department of Commerce	State Funds	Sabri	$100,000	$60,660	$26,841				7/1/2024	11/30/2026
Local Foods Month	Minnesota State University	State Funds	Sabri	$27,500		$15,750				4/1/2025	10/31/2026
MPCA - R9 Community Resilience Plan	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	State Funds	Sam	$85,000		$85,000			$8,500	4/15/2026	6/30/2027
MPCA - Waseca Climate Resilience Hub	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	State Funds	Sam	$50,000		$50,000			$2,500	6/26/2026	6/30/2027
MPCA - Henderson Stormwater/Wastewater Plan	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	State Funds	Sam	$135,000		$12,000				3/31/2026	6/30/2027
BRIDGE the Gap - CERTs Seed Grant	University of Minnesota Extension	State Funds	Sam	$5,000		$2,500				1/28/2026	1/12/2027
Bright Ideas for Comfrey - CERTs Seed Grant	University of Minnesota Extension	State Funds	Sam	$10,000		$2,700					1/12/2027
Local Climate Action-Children's Museum Southern MN	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	State Funds	Sam	$47,505		$3,150				7/24/2025	10/31/2026
Initiative Foundation - MCAP Matching Funds	Initiative Foundation / McKnight	Private Foundation	Jessica	$75,000		$37,500				10/1/2024	9/30/2026
Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership (MCAP)	University of Minnesota Extension	State Funds	Jessica	$63,492		$59,097				9/23/2024	8/31/2026
Community Energy Collaborative	MN Department of Commerce	State Funds	Sabri	$5,000		$5,000				1/15/2026	12/31/2026
MDA Commercial Kitchen	MN Department of Agriculture	State Funds	Sabri	$24,750	$7,250	$17,500				8/24/2026	12/31/2026
Food Recovery											
Regional Food Rescue Coordination: FY27-FY29	Mankato Area Foundation	Private Foundation	Sabri	$300,000		$100,000	$100,000				Until Exhausted
Taylor Family Farms - Food Recovery	Taylor Family Farms	Private Foundation	Sabri	$20,000		$20,000					Until Exhausted
Mankato Clinic Foundation	Mankato Clinic Foundation	Private Foundation	Sabri	$10,000		$10,000					Until Exhausted
Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation	Passthrough of Taylor Family Farms Foundation	Private Foundation	Sabri	$40,000		$20,000	$20,000				Until Exhausted
Region Nine Area, Inc.	**Region Nine Area, Inc.**			**Hosting**							
Waseca Community Investment Group	Waseca Community Investment Group	Fiscal Host	Sabri	$25,000							10/31/2026
Mahkato Okiwataya	Mahkato Okiwataya	Fiscal Host	Stephanie							2/28/2024	
South Central Minnesota Food Recovery	South Central Minnesota Food Recovery	Fiscal Host	Stephanie							6/1/2025	
Food Recovery by Wooden Spoon	Food Recovery by Wooden Spoon	Fiscal Host	Stephanie							11/13/2024	
Aging Transit	Aging Transit	Fiscal Host	Stephanie	$28,613							
Community Projects - Sherburn	Community Projects-Sherburn	Fiscal Host	Stephanie	$1,668							
SURGE Youth Leadership Program	SURGE Leadership Program	Fiscal Host	Stephanie	$7,482							
					Totals:	$2,053,641	$1,352,903	$956,815	$127,668		
						FY27	**FY28**	**FY29**	**FY27 Match**		

FY27 Grants in Progress

RNDC Grants Outstanding			
Name of Grant /Organization	Value of Request	Submitted	Expected Response Date
MPCA Food Rescue	$884,815	Yes	**Approved; final contract details expected in early 2027.** **Known details:** 3-year grant totaling $351,794 $98,620 for RNDC staff time and van $300,000 from SCMNFR $50,000 in Waseca County Food Shelf staff time contributions
Rural Climate Partnership (RCP)	$100,000	Yes	Mid September
HFFI Food Fund (Mankato Farmers' Market)	$150,000	No	January 2027
MDA Specialty Crop	$125,000	Yes	Pending USDA Approval
Food Systems Credit Enhancement	$103,000	Yes	Early 2027

Regional Assistance Grants Outstanding			
Name of Grant /Organization	Value of Request	Submitted	Expected Response Date
Congressional Directed Spending (CDS)/Divine Providence Community Center	$1.9M	Yes	Divine Providence passed 1st wave-should know more mid-November
EPA Assessment Grant / Le Sueur	$350,000	Yes	unknown
Enpowering Small Communities/South Bend Township	$50,000	Yes	Awarded - 7/22/2026
MPCA Market Development Grant/GreenTech Recycling	$250,000	Yes	Awarded - August 2026

Region Nine Development Commission
Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

Adopted: TBD
Last Revised: TBD
Responsible Department: Administration
Written by: Nate George for Region Nine Development Commission

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Background

Artificial intelligence (AI) encompasses technologies that enable computer systems to perform tasks commonly associated with human intelligence, including generating and interpreting language, identifying patterns, analyzing information, and assisting with decision-making.

Tools such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Claude, and similar AI-enabled services are increasingly accessible through the internet and integrated into commonly used workplace applications. These technologies can provide valuable assistance with tasks such as drafting and editing content, summarizing information, brainstorming ideas, analyzing data, and improving efficiency. At the same time, their use introduces new considerations for organizations, particularly those working with public resources, community information, and data that may be sensitive or confidential.

AI-generated content should be viewed as a tool to support, rather than replace, employee knowledge, professional judgment, and decision-making. AI systems can produce information that is inaccurate, incomplete, outdated, misleading, or lacking appropriate context. Employees are therefore responsible for reviewing and verifying AI-generated content before using it in RNDC work, communications, reports, or other official materials.

The use of publicly available AI services also presents potential privacy, confidentiality, security, legal, and ethical concerns. Information entered into an external AI service may be collected, stored, processed, or otherwise used according to the service provider's terms and practices. As a result, employees must take care to avoid submitting confidential, private, restricted, proprietary, or

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otherwise protected information unless the use of that information has been specifically authorized and appropriate safeguards are in place.

This policy establishes a framework for the responsible use of AI at RNDC. It is intended to help employees make informed decisions about when and how AI tools may be used while protecting RNDC's information, maintaining public trust, and ensuring that AI-assisted work continues to meet the Commission's standards for accuracy, accountability, transparency, and professional judgment.

1. Purpose

The Region Nine Development Commission (RNDC) recognizes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies have the potential to improve productivity, efficiency, accessibility, communication, and customer service. At the same time, AI presents legal, ethical, security, and privacy considerations that require appropriate governance.

The purpose of this policy is to establish standards for the responsible, ethical, secure, and transparent use of AI by RNDC employees, contractors, interns, volunteers, and consultants while maintaining public trust and complying with applicable federal and Minnesota laws.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals acting on behalf of RNDC who utilize AI technologies during the course of Commission business.

This policy applies to publicly available AI services (such as ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, Claude, and similar technologies) as well as future AI applications approved for organizational use.

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3. Definitions

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Computer systems capable of performing tasks that normally require human intelligence, including generating text, images, audio, video, code, data analysis, or other content.

Generative AI: AI systems that create new content based upon user prompts.

Public AI Service: An AI application available through the internet where information entered may be retained or used by the service provider.

Protected Information: Any information classified as nonpublic, private, confidential, proprietary, or otherwise protected under federal law, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13 Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA), contracts, or Commission policy. Information on MGDPA can be found at https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/practice/resources/chsadmin/data-mgdpa.html

4. Guiding Principles

Artificial Intelligence is a tool intended to enhance the work of RNDC employees, not replace their expertise, judgment, or accountability. Every employee remains responsible for ensuring that Commission work is accurate, lawful, ethical, secure, and in the best interest of the communities RNDC serves.

RNDC will use AI in a manner that:

- Supports the Commission's mission and public service responsibilities.
- Protects confidential and nonpublic information.
- Maintains transparency and accountability.
- Enhances human expertise and professional judgment.
- Promotes fairness and accessibility.
- Complies with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Preserves public confidence in Commission operations.

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5. Acceptable Uses

Employees may use approved AI tools to assist with work including:

- Drafting communications and correspondence.
- Taking notes during public or non-confidential meetings.
- Editing reports and documents.
- Preparing newsletters, social media, and website content.
- Brainstorming ideas and project concepts.
- Summarizing public documents.
- Conducting preliminary research using publicly available information.
- Creating outlines, presentations, and meeting materials.
- Improving readability and accessibility.
- Translating public-facing materials.
- Assisting with coding, spreadsheets, and data organization when appropriate.

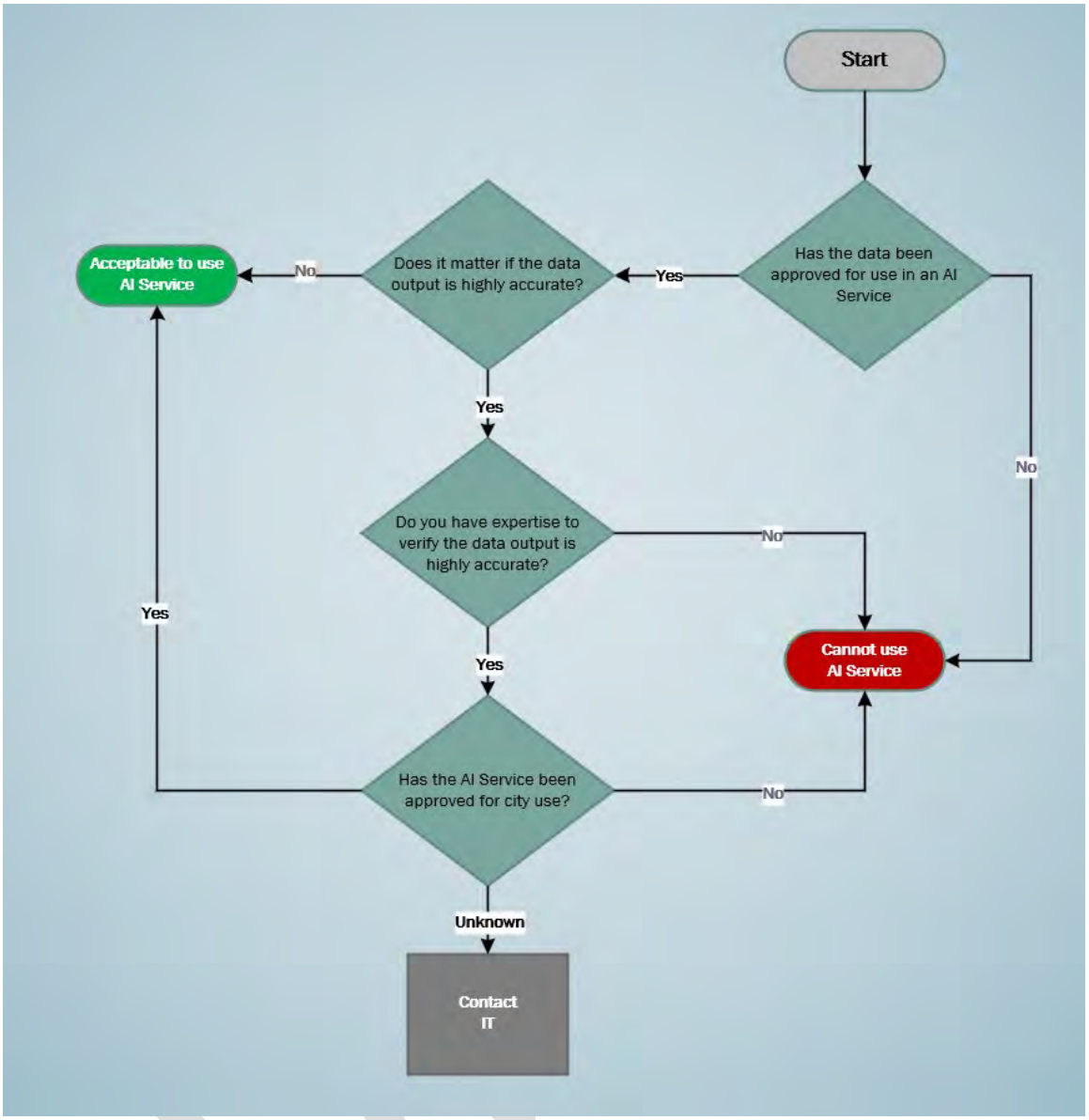
AI-generated work should always be considered a draft requiring human review.

6. Unacceptable Uses

AI shall not be used to:

- Make final policy decisions.
- Approve expenditures.
- Approve grants or loans.
- Conduct employee evaluations.
- Make hiring or disciplinary decisions.
- Provide legal opinions.
- Replace subject matter expertise.
- Publish content without human review.

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Start
Has the data been approved for use in an AI Service
Yes
Does it matter if the data output is highly accurate?
No
Acceptable to use AI Service
Yes
Do you have expertise to verify the data output is highly accurate?
No
Yes
Has the AI Service been approved for city use?
No
Yes
Unknown
Contact IT
No
Cannot use AI Service

7. Human Oversight

RNDC employees remain responsible for all work products created using AI.

Before any AI-generated content is published, distributed, submitted, or relied upon for decision-making, staff shall:

- Review the content for completeness and accuracy.
- Verify factual statements using reliable sources.
- Confirm citations, statistics, and quotations.
- Ensure the content complies with Commission policies.
- Correct any errors, bias, or misleading information.
- Exercise professional judgment before approval.

AI shall assist human work and shall never replace human accountability.

8. Data Privacy and Security

Protecting Commission information is a primary responsibility.

Unless specifically approved by the Executive Director or designated technology authority, employees shall not enter into publicly available AI services:

- Nonpublic government data.
- Personally identifiable information (PII).
- Personnel information.
- Financial records not intended for public release.
- Procurement information prior to public release.
- Legal advice or attorney-client communications.
- Confidential business information.
- Grant applications that have not been publicly released.
- Passwords, credentials, security information, or network details.
- Any information protected by federal or state law.

Employees should assume that information entered into a public AI service may be retained by the service provider and should treat prompts as if they were publicly disclosed.

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9. Data Classifications

Low (Public Information) – May be used in approved AI services
Examples:

- Public reports
- Newsletters
- Website content
- Meeting agenda
- Published Plans
- Social media posts
- Event promotions
- Internal announcements
- Flyers
- Marketing materials

Moderate (Nonpublic information) – Shall not be entered into public AI services.

- Internal emails
- Draft grant applications
- Personnel information
- Nonpublic contact information
- Procurement documents

High (Protected) – Prohibited unless specifically authorized

- Social Security numbers
- Financial account information
- Protected health information
- Attorney-client communications
- Criminal justice data

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10. Compliance with Minnesota Law

AI use shall comply with all applicable federal and state laws, including but not limited to:

- Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13)
- Minnesota Official Records Act
- Minnesota Open Meeting Law
- Applicable copyright and intellectual property laws
- Applicable procurement requirements
- Applicable grant and contract requirements

Where AI use creates official government records, those records shall be retained according to applicable records retention schedules.

11. Ethical Standards

AI shall not be used to:

- Misrepresent facts.
- Create deceptive or misleading communications.
- Fabricate quotations or references.
- Generate discriminatory or biased content.
- Circumvent professional or ethical responsibilities.
- Replace required professional expertise.
- Make autonomous governmental decisions affecting individuals.

Staff should actively evaluate AI output for fairness, bias, accessibility, and inclusiveness before use.

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12. Public Communications

AI may assist in preparing communications; however:

- All public communications require staff review and approval.
- Staff remain responsible for all published content.
- AI-generated images, graphics, or multimedia should accurately represent Commission activities and should not intentionally mislead the public.
- When appropriate, RNDC may disclose that AI assisted in developing materials to promote transparency.

Any work product created using AI during Commission business should be considered an official government record if it otherwise meets Minnesota records retention requirements.

AI-generated images, photographs, video, audio, or other synthetic media shall not be presented as authentic photographs, recordings, events, people, locations, or activities when doing so could reasonably mislead the public. Staff should use appropriate disclosure when AI-generated or substantially AI-altered media could reasonably be mistaken for authentic material.

13. AI Notetaking and Meeting Assistant Use

RNDC recognizes that Artificial Intelligence (AI) notetaking and meeting assistant tools can improve efficiency by recording, transcribing, summarizing, and organizing meetings and other conversations. These tools may also create privacy, security, accuracy, and public records risks because meeting content may be transmitted to, processed by, and stored on third-party platforms.

AI notetaking and meeting assistant tools shall therefore be used cautiously and in accordance with this policy, applicable Minnesota law, and RNDC's records retention and data protection requirements.

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Approved Tools Only

AI note-taking and meeting assistant tools may only be used for RNDC business if the tool has been reviewed and approved in accordance with RNDC's AI software approval process.

This includes tools that:

- Record meetings or conversations.
- Transcribe audio or video.
- Generate meeting summaries or notes.
- Identify speakers or participants.
- Extract action items or decisions.
- Analyze meeting discussions.
- Automatically generate follow-up communications.

Employees shall not independently introduce or authorize an unapproved AI meeting assistant to participate in an RNDC meeting.

Notice and Consent

When an AI notetaking or meeting assistant will record, transcribe, or otherwise process a meeting, participants should be informed at the beginning of the meeting that the tool is being used and, when appropriate, provided an opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns.

For meetings involving sensitive, confidential, personnel, legal, procurement, or other nonpublic information, staff shall not use an AI note-taking or meeting assistant unless the tool and specific use have been expressly approved for the applicable data classification.

Where consent or other authorization is required by law, contract, or organizational policy, the meeting organizer is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate requirements are satisfied before recording or processing begins.

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Data Protection

Employees shall not use public or unapproved AI notetaking services to process Moderate or High data under Minnesota's data protection framework.

Examples of information that should not be submitted to an unapproved AI meeting assistant include:

- Personnel or employment matters.
- Confidential or protected business information.
- Attorney-client communications.
- Nonpublic financial information.
- Sensitive grant, loan, or procurement information.
- Personally identifiable information.
- Information protected by state or federal law.
- Confidential discussions with clients, applicants, partners, or other stakeholders.

Staff should assume that meeting audio, transcripts, notes, and summaries submitted to an external AI service may be retained by the provider or processed outside RNDC's systems.

Public Meetings and Government Records

The use of an AI notetaking tool does not change the legal status of a meeting or the information discussed during that meeting.

AI-generated transcripts, notes, summaries, recordings, or other outputs created in the course of RNDC business may constitute government records and shall be handled and retained in accordance with applicable Minnesota law and RNDC's records retention requirements.

AI-generated meeting notes are not a substitute for official minutes or other records that RNDC is legally required to create or maintain.

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Human Review

AI-generated transcripts and summaries shall be considered draft work products until reviewed by an RNDC employee.

Before an AI-generated meeting summary or transcript is relied upon, distributed, or incorporated into an official record, staff should verify:

- Names and speakers.
- Dates and times.
- Motions, decisions, and action items.
- Numerical information and other substantive facts.
- Context and meaning of statements.
- Any information that could materially affect RNDC decisions or public communications.

AI systems may omit, misinterpret, or inaccurately attribute statements. Human review is therefore required before AI-generated meeting content is treated as an authoritative account of a discussion.

Appropriate Uses

Subject to approval and applicable data restrictions, AI meeting assistants may be appropriate for:

- Internal meetings involving only public information.
- Creating preliminary meeting summaries.
- Identifying action items.
- Organizing discussion topics.
- Preparing draft notes for staff review.
- Assisting with accessibility through transcription.
- Summarizing public presentations or informational sessions.

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Prohibited or Restricted Uses

Unless specifically approved, employees shall not use AI meeting assistants for:

- Closed or confidential meetings.
- Personnel discussions.
- Attorney-client communications.
- Sensitive financial or procurement discussions.
- Meetings involving protected or restricted information.
- Meetings where recording or transcription is prohibited.
- Any meeting where use of the technology would conflict with applicable law, contract requirements, or RNDC policy.

Best Practices

When using an approved AI notetaking or meeting assistant, staff should:

1. **Use the minimum amount of information.** Do not provide an AI tool with information it does not need to perform the intended task.
2. **Inform participants.** Clearly identify when an AI tool is recording, transcribing, or summarizing a meeting when appropriate.
3. **Verify the output.** Review transcripts and summaries for errors before relying upon or distributing them.
4. **Protect the original record.** Do not delete or alter an original recording or transcript when it is subject to a legal hold, records retention requirement, or other preservation obligation.
5. **Store records appropriately.** Save records that must be retained in RNDC's designated records systems.
6. **Avoid unnecessary duplication.** Do not retain multiple copies of recordings, transcripts, or summaries longer than required.
7. **Disable unnecessary features.** When possible, turn off features such as automatic training, external sharing, or data retention that are not necessary for the intended use.
8. **Report concerns.** Report suspected unauthorized recording, disclosure of protected information, inaccurate transcripts that could materially affect RNDC work, or other concerns to the Executive Director or designated technology administrator.

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Guiding Principle

AI note-taking tools should be used to **assist staff, not create an authoritative record without human review**. The person responsible for the meeting remains responsible for ensuring that meeting records are accurate, appropriately maintained, and handled in accordance with RNDC policy and applicable law.

14. Procurement and Software Approval

Employees may only use AI software that complies with Commission technology and cybersecurity requirements.

New AI software or subscriptions purchased with Commission funds or installed on Commission equipment shall be reviewed and approved before implementation to ensure appropriate security, licensing, privacy protections, and legal compliance. Approval is required before installing any software on RNDC computers or equipment by the Executive Director or designated technology authority.

15. Policy Violations

Failure to comply with this policy may result in corrective action consistent with Commission personnel policies and applicable law.

Improper disclosure of protected information may also result in legal consequences under state or federal law.

16. Review and Updates

Artificial Intelligence technologies continue to evolve rapidly.

This policy shall be reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect changes in technology, cybersecurity guidance, Minnesota law, and Commission operations.

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17. Recommended Security Settings

Protecting Partner and Organizational Data

On personal accounts in ChatGPT, Claude, and Copilot, your chats can be used to train the company's AI models unless you turn off that option. Before you put any partner/organizational information into an AI tool, turn off model training, or use a business account that excludes training by default.

Reference Guide

	Claude	ChatGPT	Microsoft Copilot
Personal plans	Free, Pro, Max	Free, Plus, Pro	Free Copilot, Copilot Pro (personal Microsoft account)
Training setting	"Help improve Claude"	"Improve the model for everyone"	"Model training on text" and "Model training on voice"
Covers past chats when turned off?	No, only new or reopened chats	No, only new chats	Yes, past and future (takes up to 30 days)
Private chat option	Incognito chat	Temporary Chat	None; use the opt-out
Excluded from training by default	Team, Enterprise, API	Business, Enterprise, Edu, API	Work or school login (Microsoft 365 Copilot), Microsoft 365 Personal and Family

Turn off training

Claude: Click your name or initials (bottom left) > Settings > Privacy > turn off Help improve Claude.
ChatGPT: Click your profile > Settings > Data Controls > turn off Improve the model for everyone. Voice mode has its own toggle on the same screen; turn that off too.

Copilot (personal account): On copilot.com, click your profile icon > your profile name >Privacy > turn off Model training on text and Model training on voice. In the Windows or Mac app: profile icon > Settings > Privacy. In the mobile app: menu > profile icon >Account > Privacy.

Good habits with any tool

Strip identifiers: Use "Partner A" or "an auto shop in Winnebago" instead of names. Leave out account numbers, SSNs, EINs, passwords and exact financials.

Use private chat (Claude incognito, ChatGPT Temporary Chat) for anything sensitive.

Skip the thumbs up and thumbs down on organizational chats. In Claude, rating a response keeps that chat for up to five years and may use it for training, even with training turned off.

Opting out isn't retroactive. Data already used in a trained model can't be pulled back, so turn the setting off before you start.

Check client agreements. If a partner's NDA or contract covers data handling, confirm AI use is allowed before entering their information. When unsure, leave it out.

DRAFT

3 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 310, Mankato, MN 56001
507.387.5643

Memo

To: RNDC Board of Directors

From: Jessica Beyer, Interim Executive Director

Date: October 29, 2026

Re: Kavira Health Benefit Option

In 2026, RNDC participated in a pilot program of Kavira Health as an employee benefit through the South Central Service Cooperative (SCSC). The program was provided at no cost to RNDC as a replacement for the organization's wellness dollars benefit. Kavira is a virtual primary care service that provides on-demand messaging, video visits, home visits, wellness exams, chronic disease management, laboratory services, imaging referrals, prescription renewals, and other primary care support. During the pilot period, 12 RNDC employees enrolled in the program.

During the first six months of 2026, employees utilized Kavira for 31 visits, generating a 43.1% utilization rate and an estimated $13,000 in value and 62 hours of time savings.

At the end of 2026, the no-cost pilot will expire and moving forward the cost of the program will be $27 per employee per month and includes coverage of family members. Based on RNDC's current staffing level of nine full-time employees, the estimated cost to continue the benefit would be $243 per month, or $2,916 annually. The benefit could continue to be available to part-time staff if applicable.

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Kavira can be added at any time, not just open enrollment. However, November is open enrollment for RNDC and it would make sense to consider this benefit ahead of the end of the calendar year.

Other local government jurisdictions are either utilizing or considering utilization of Kavira to help reduce the cost of premiums and future insurance rate increases.

I'm seeking consideration of enrolling RNDC in Kavira for an additional year, given the initial pilot of the program has been successful with being an alternative low-cost solution for the organization and employees for day-to-day health care needs.

Executive Director Succession Plan

DOCUMENT STATUS	APPROVAL AUTHORITY
DRAFT — pending RNDC approval	RNDC Commission
PLAN OWNER	**REVIEW CYCLE**
Commission Chair / Executive Director	Annual and after material personnel changes

This draft does not replace an adopted RNDC plan until approved by the designated governing body.

1. Purpose and scope

Maintain responsible leadership, legal authority, essential services, and stakeholder confidence when the Executive Director is temporarily unavailable, permanently vacates the office, or announces a planned departure. This plan is an operating framework, not an employment contract or a substitute for RNDC bylaws, personnel policies, or applicable law.

2. Activation and notification

- The Deputy Director, or another knowledgeable manager, promptly notifies the Commission Chair when the Executive Director cannot carry out essential responsibilities.
- The Chair confirms immediate coverage, informs the Board of Directors, and arranges any necessary governing-body action using meeting and notice procedures consistent with Minnesota Open Meeting Law and RNDC bylaws.
- The Board may oversee interim implementation under this Commission-approved plan; appointment of a permanent Executive Director remains with the Commission.

3. Interim leadership designations

Role	Proposed designation / condition
Primary Acting Executive Director	Deputy Director — Jessica Beyer (confirm name and position at annual review)
Alternative Acting Executive Director	Board of Directors recommends interim coverage and obtains the governing approval required by RNDC bylaws and personnel policies

The Board may distribute specified functions among qualified staff, but must name one accountable Acting Executive Director and document assignments. Interim appointment is temporary and does not confer permanent appointment or alter employment status.

4. Priority responsibilities and delegated authority

- Keep essential programs, grants, contracts, personnel administration, payroll oversight, and public services operating; maintain oversight of finances, legal obligations, risk, and security.
- Brief the Chair and Board on critical decisions, obligations, emerging risks, upcoming deadlines, and staffing constraints.
- Exercise only authority properly delegated under Commission resolutions, RNDC bylaws, financial policies, and law. Existing spending limits, dual approvals, check-signing rules, conflicts rules, and independent review remain in place.
- Coordinate any required banking, contracting, purchasing, and system-access changes through authorized officers and administrators; document effective dates and revoke temporary rights when coverage ends.

5. Extended temporary absence

When an absence is expected to exceed approximately three months, or sooner when operating demands require, the Board reviews workload, appoints temporary backfill for the Deputy Director or other affected role as permitted, and confirms the need for external services or additional budget capacity.

The three-month point is an operational review trigger, not a deadline for return or a medical determination. Decisions concerning leave, accommodation, fitness to return, and employment status must follow applicable law and RNDC personnel procedures, with HR/legal advice as appropriate. Upon return, the Chair arranges an orderly transfer of duties and termination of temporary authority.

6. Permanent vacancy and recruitment

- The Chair promptly places a permanent vacancy before the Commission and confirms interim leadership pending appointment.
- The Commission establishes a recruitment approach and may appoint a search committee. It may use qualified internal candidates, an open recruitment, and/or an outside adviser, subject to applicable law and policy.
- The recruitment process should review organizational needs; establish selection criteria; address compensation, budget, and conflict-of-interest safeguards; document evaluation; and provide equitable consideration of candidates.
- The Commission makes the permanent appointment. The Chair coordinates announcement, onboarding, transfer of delegated authority, and a structured transition with the Acting Executive Director.

7. Planned departure and continuity development

For an anticipated resignation or retirement, the Chair and Executive Director develop a transition schedule covering recruitment, advance documentation of critical relationships and decisions, funding and contract commitments, staff coverage, and introduction of the successor. The Deputy Director and alternate should periodically receive leadership cross-training and observe essential board, finance, and grant processes.

8. Communications, confidentiality, and records

The Chair directs official communications to commissioners, staff, governmental partners across RNDC's nine-county region, major funders, contractual partners, and other stakeholders when appropriate. The message identifies who is acting, how business continues, and the appropriate contact; it avoids disclosing unnecessary personal or medical information. Public communications and meetings follow applicable data-practices and open-meeting requirements.

Maintain the adopted plan with governance records. Protect sensitive operational attachments according to applicable data classifications and security policy; do not presume all plan content is legally confidential merely because it is labeled so.

9. Compensation, review, and readiness

Subject to applicable compensation policies, available appropriations, and required approvals, the Acting Executive Director receives the higher of (a) the entry-level Executive Director salary or (b) 110% of current salary while serving in the acting assignment. The written designation records the start date, end/reevaluation date, and approving authority.

The Executive Director and Chair review the plan annually (preferably ahead of the June Commission meeting) and after a material organizational change. Verify designees, contacts, delegations, bank-authority arrangements, cross-training, and access procedures. The Commission approves material revisions; the Board may recommend amendments and maintain an operational checklist consistent with the adopted plan.

Activation checklist — operational attachment

When	Action	Accountable lead
Immediately	Confirm vacancy/absence, notify Chair, arrange coverage; identify urgent deadlines.	Deputy Director / Chair
First 1–3 days	Document acting designation and limits; convene governing body as needed; review payroll, banking, programs, and contracts.	Chair / Board
First 30 days	Confirm staffing backfill, finance approvals, external communications, and recruitment decision if permanent.	Acting ED / Chair
At handoff	Transfer records and relationships; revoke temporary access; archive formal authorizations.	Chair / Acting ED

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Approval and acknowledgment

Approval is effective only upon action taken in accordance with RNDC bylaws and applicable meeting requirements. Signatures acknowledge the adopted plan and the responsibilities assigned; signatures do not replace formal governing-body action.

Role / name	Signature	Date
Commission Chair	_____	_____
Executive Director	_____	_____
Primary Acting Executive Director	_____	_____

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Finance Director Succession Plan

DOCUMENT STATUS	APPROVAL AUTHORITY
DRAFT — pending RNDC approval	RNDC Board of Directors
PLAN OWNER	**REVIEW CYCLE**
Executive Director / Finance Director	Annual and after material personnel changes

This draft does not replace an adopted RNDC plan until approved by the designated governing body.

1. Purpose and scope

Keep payroll, payments, financial reporting, cash management, and grant administration operating when the Finance Director is temporarily unavailable, permanently vacates the position, or plans a departure. This plan supplements RNDC financial policies and does not suspend internal controls, bank agreements, federal award conditions, or RNDC bylaws.

2. Activation and governance

- The Executive Director notifies the Commission Chair and Treasurer when the Finance Director cannot perform essential duties and documents activation of this plan.
- The Executive Director confirms temporary assignments, coordinates needed personnel and financial approvals, and updates the Board of Directors on continuity risks and significant decisions.
- Board or Commission actions, including any temporary approvals, must comply with RNDC bylaws and applicable public-meeting requirements.

Role	Proposed designation / condition
Primary acting coverage	Clifton Larson Allen (CLA), a firm working and familiar with RNDC Finance
Alternate coverage	Designate a trained qualified internal employee or engage an accounting professional through an approved arrangement. Identify the alternate in RNDC's annual continuity roster.
Oversight and review	Executive Director, Treasurer, and/or another authorized independent reviewer as prescribed by financial policy

3. Interim coverage and backup

The Executive Director must document who prepares transactions, who approves them, and who performs independent review. An interim assignee may receive a limited set of duties when one person cannot safely or practically perform the entire role.

4. Essential financial functions

- Process payroll, tax and benefit remittances, authorized vendor payments, deposits, and time-sensitive financial obligations.
- Maintain bank and account reconciliations, general ledger entries, cash-position monitoring, month-end closing, and reports to management and the Board.
- Meet federal, state, and contractual grant reporting, reimbursement, monitoring, and recordkeeping deadlines; document federal award expenditures and controls.
- Support budget monitoring, audit preparation, external accountant coordination, and finance responsibilities related to lending or revolving loan programs where applicable.
- Maintain a calendar of recurring deadlines and a documented list of vendors, banks, grant portals, systems, authorized officers, and escalation contacts.

5. Access, authority, and financial safeguards

- IT grants role-based, time-limited access only after documented authorization, using individual accounts and multifactor authentication where supported. Do not share passwords or store credentials in this plan or training videos.
- Bank-signing authority and transfers of funds require separate, authorized changes; access to accounting software does not itself grant approval or check-signing authority.

- Segregate initiation, approval, payment, custody, and reconciliation duties to the extent practicable. When staffing limits separation, require documented independent review by an authorized officer or qualified external party.
- Preserve records, audit trails, privacy safeguards, dual authorizations, and controls applicable to grants and public funds; revoke temporary privileges when coverage ends.

6. Extended temporary absence

If the absence is expected to last approximately three months, or earlier if workload or risk warrants, the Executive Director reviews whether to backfill, distribute tasks, or engage an external accountant or staffing provider. The Board receives a report on budget and control impacts. Any leave or reinstatement decision follows RNDC personnel policies and applicable law, separately from operational coverage decisions.

7. Permanent vacancy and recruitment

- The Executive Director promptly advises the Chair and Board and Treasurer, confirms interim coverage, and protects the continuity of banking, payroll, grants, and reporting.
- Recruitment and appointment proceed under RNDC personnel policies, budget authority, and approvals required by the governing body. Qualified external accounting assistance may be used.
- Before final handoff, complete a reconciliation and access review; transfer calendars, grant files, audit documentation, financial policies, banking contacts, and outstanding transactions; document approval of the transition.

8. Planned departure, training, and communications

For a known departure, establish a transition calendar and train at least one backup on payroll, payables, deposits, grant submissions, reconciliations, and monthly reporting. Maintain written procedures and optional training videos that exclude login credentials and protected personnel data.

The Executive Director coordinates targeted notifications to the Chair, financial officers, staff, auditors, banks, payroll and benefits providers, and grant administrators when needed. Communications should identify an authorized point of contact without revealing unnecessary personnel information.

9. Acting compensation and maintenance

The Executive Director reviews this plan annually, preferably in advance of the June Commission meeting, and after changes to staff, bank authority, systems, contracts, or major awards. The Board of Directors approves revisions. The annual confidential operational roster should record verified primary and alternate coverage, training completion, control assignments, and secure access contacts; the legal classification of records is governed by applicable law.

Activation checklist — operational attachment

When	Action	Accountable lead
Immediately	Notify Chair/Treasurer; identify upcoming payroll, payment, banking, reporting, and grant deadlines.	Executive Director
First 1–3 days	Document assignments and authority, arrange secure access, verify signers and independent reviewers.	ED / IT / Treasurer
First 30 days	Verify reconciliations, review outstanding grants, test backup processes, and plan backfill or recruitment.	Acting FD / ED
At handoff	Reconcile accounts, transfer records, end temporary access, and document control sign-off.	ED / independent reviewer

Approval and acknowledgment

Approval is effective only upon action taken in accordance with RNDC bylaws and applicable meeting requirements. Signatures acknowledge the adopted plan and the responsibilities assigned; signatures do not replace formal governing-body action.

Role / name	Signature	Date
Board Chair	_____	_____
Executive Director	_____	_____

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Role / name	Signature	Date
Treasurer	_____	_____
Primary Acting Finance Representative	_____	_____

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Interim Executive Director's Report

Submitted by Jessica Beyer

November 2026 Board Report

The following areas continue to be of focus as I continue serving as Interim Executive Director:

- **Leadership Transition & Organizational Stability**
  I've continued to serve as Interim Executive Director since the end of 2025 and will continue to serve in this capacity through direction given by the RNDC Board of Directors to extend and update the existing succession plan. I continue to provide leadership and operational oversight to support programs, services, and projects while supporting staff, enhancing organizational processes, continuing to address long-term financial solvency, and pursuing new opportunities that align with the needs of our region.

- **Identifying and Pursuing Funding, Grants & Strategic Partnerships**
  It has been exciting and rewarding to work with the RNDC team, as we continue to develop partnerships and relationships to bring opportunities and resources to our region. Recent examples have included me taking a lead role in fostering relationships with Blandin, representing RNDC as part of MADO discussions on long-term and broader regional capacity-building with McKnight Foundation, exploration of further State agency partnerships, and developing education and awareness about RNDC with existing stakeholders along with additional foundations, organizations, and new potential partners. Big news is that our team recently was awarded the MPCA grant which will support regional food access in communities throughout our region in addition to supporting RNDC with long-term resources towards our food rescue efforts including staffing dollars and funding for a van. Other partnerships have included facilitating meetings with Aachen region representatives that visited Region Nine, Rochester, and the Twin Cities in late October. RNDC provided an overview of the region nine economy, along with coordinating meetings and tours at the Mankato Regional Airport, City of New Ulm related to rural EMS, Mayo Clinic Health System, and Minnesota State University, Mankato.
- **Financial Oversight & Administrative Operations**
  An email was sent to all Commission members on October 8, along with an update provided at the October 14 Commission meeting related to a staffing announcement with the Finance Director position. Transition plans were shared related to continued work with CLA to assist with Finance needs. CLA has been on site weekly since the transition to help work with administration and support the team with Finance processes and needs. I have taken over payroll and involvement with day-to-day Finance work/oversight/needs in coordination with Sarah and the CLA team. Noteworthy updates include that all outstanding EDA/RLF reports have been submitted in addition to a current September report that was submitted by the October 30 deadline. We are also preparing to schedule the FY 26 audit which is due to OSA on December 31. We will likely need an extension into early 2027 and will learn more about schedules and planned needs with the audit in the coming weeks. Further information related to Finance items will be provided at the Board of Directors meeting and CLA will attend to address finance-related questions.
  Open benefit enrollment will take place for RNDC employees throughout November 2026. Sarah and I have been coordinating benefit enrollment with vendors and Sarah has been helping with the administrative side of organizing materials for the process. Health insurance renewals came in this fall at 15.9 percent. I had discussions with SCSC and with markets and all things considered we faired much better than many jurisdictions. It is intended to look at establishing an insurance committee in future years.
  The RLF Lending Specialist position has been posted since September 28 after input was provided from the Board of Directors and the Budget and Personnel Committee to post the position externally for all applicants. Interviews for the position will be taking place the week of November 2. Lisa Callahan continues to fill this position in the interim.

- **Governance, Bylaws & Organizational Development**
  We had two union negotiations sessions in October and an update will be provided to the Board at the meeting.
  After a 10-month process, the Bylaws and related Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policies were adopted at the October 14 Commission Meeting. Additionally, since then Nate will be presenting the AI Policy, and I will be brining forward updated Succession Plans for consideration to the Board.

- **Staff Engagement & Capacity Building**
  Weekly staff meetings and regular individual one-on-one meetings with staff members continue.
  Upcoming staff work anniversaries include Sam Sharp on November 21 – 4 years.

- **External Engagement & Regional Representation**
  I have continued to represent Region Nine at key local, regional, and statewide meetings and events. If there are meetings, events, or activities that Board members believe should be on my radar to attend or represent RNDC at, please let me know.

Notable Activities/Meetings/Events at a Glance
October 1 to November 4 (since the recent Commission Meeting):

10/8/26 – Negotiations
10/15/26 – Negotiations
10/19/26 – Onboarding with Computer Technology Solutions
10/23/26 - Waseca County Flood Grant Brainstorming
10/23/26 – Blandin Coordination Meeting
10/26/26 (evening) and 10/27/26 – Aachen Delegation
10/28/26 – EDA Economic Development District Quarterly Call
11/2/26 – SACE Meeting
11/2/26 – Bravo Zulu Event
11/4/26 – Board of Directors Meeting

STAFF UPDATES | NOVEMBER 2026

PROGRAM UPDATES:

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) – Alejandra, Nate
Alejandra is leading two local engagements events in Fairmont on November 5th , a facilitated economic development lunch for economic developers, elected officials, business owners, and local professionals involved in community and economic development facilitated by the University of Minnesota Extension. The second is a community evening gathering with art activities for residents, youth, and families in Fairmont. Nate and Jessica will attend and help support the event. Alejandra has conducted targeted outreach to schools, ELL programs, 4-H, nonprofits, faith groups, human services, local businesses, and other community partners, and has also done outreach to diverse residents to ensure their participation. Alejandra has also worked with two University of Minnesota graduate students to collect feedback from attendees, conduct 1-1 interviews, and create post-event summaries that will inform the CEDS update. To support these events, Alejandra has been working with the Fairmont EDA, the University of Minnesota Extension and Southwest RSDP, the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, and Visit Fairmont.

Nate has designed flyers, written copy for promotion on socials, website, and media outlets. He also sent emails to Martin County stakeholders about the event in Fairmont. He is promoting the event as well as managing the event's digital presence and registrations. Jessica and Nate will be attending the event in Alejandra's place. He will be assisting with set up, speaking with attendees, and creating all the RNDC print material.

Alejandra has been presenting to local groups like EDAs and chambers. Most recently, Alejandra presented of the 2027–2031 CEDS planning process to the New Ulm Partnership, which includes the City of New Ulm, Public Utilities Commission (PUC), Economic Development Authority (EDA), Chamber of Commerce, ISD 88, New Ulm Area Foundation, and NUBRIC. The presentation highlighted preliminary regional findings related to workforce, housing, childcare, business competitiveness, infrastructure, and quality of place. The meeting provided an opportunity to gather local perspectives and explore opportunities for collaboration to help shape the regional CEDS.

State of Healthcare Regional Event (CEDS) - Alejandra
As part of the 2027-2031 CEDS update, Alejandra is leading the planning of a regional healthcare event for South Central Minnesota scheduled for January. She has been working with Celia Viesselman, Economic Development Authority (EDA) Director for the City of Madelia, to identify speakers and develop the event agenda. Alejandra and Celia secured funding from the Taylor Family Farms Foundation to support the event, which will bring together city officials, economic development professionals, and healthcare leaders to learn about rural healthcare challenges and explore opportunities for local and regional collaboration.

The draft agenda includes presentations on healthcare access, workforce shortages, financial challenges facing healthcare providers, emergency medical services (EMS) gaps, and state policy. Alejandra has been working on venue and catering logistics. She has also reached out to potential speakers, panelists, and facilitators from healthcare organizations, public health agencies, state government, and University of Minnesota Extension.

Annual Performance Progress Report – Alejandra, Nate

Alejandra drafted the annual update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that RNDC submits each year. The report summarizes findings from regional surveys, CEDS Committee meetings, and stakeholder engagement events that Alejandra led throughout the year. Alejandra leads the CEDS Committee, which is composed of RNDC county commissioners, business owners, education representatives, chamber stakeholders, and other regional partners. Throughout the year, she convened committee members and regional partners to discuss economic development priorities and provide guidance for the 2027-2031 CEDS update. This report is part of the Partnership Planning Grant that RNDC receives every three years from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). It presents an update on regional needs and priorities and helps inform strategies that respond to the region's evolving economic landscape.

Nate has received the APPR and he submitted the first draft of the final layout. He edited the raw document, created the layout, typeset the final document, and made it compliant with ADA requirements.

Five-Year Assessment – Nate
Nate has begun the Five-Year Assessment required by the State. The assessment will analyze the last five years of annual reports and will review its activities and issue a report assessing its performance in fulfilling the purposes of the Regional Development Act. Nate will be working in coordination with Jessica to finalize and submit this report.

Regional Food Rescue – Tom, Sabri
The amount of food rescue in our region year to date is currently sitting at 128,599 lbs., valued at approximately $248,000. Some of the highlights this past month include 3,840 lbs. of bananas, 2,000 lbs of cucumbers, 1,960 lbs of cantaloupe, and 1,200 lbs of potatoes. Just over 2,000 lbs of our rescues this past month have been from local farmers/growers. Tom is planning to give an extensive presentation to the Board/Commission in January on food rescue efforts.

Sabri, Tom, and Natasha (SCMNFR) had a very productive meeting with the City of Mankato to identify opportunities for solutions.

Tom with the assistance of Zach Erickson (BE County SHIP), has been coordinating the disbursement of equipment from Crossroads Campus Pantry. They will be discontinuing operations at the end of November and want the equipment they have to go to area non-profits that are fulfilling the same mission of feeding those who are facing food insecurity.

Regional Food Access Groups – Tom
The SCMNFR Advisory Council is still meeting with no new updates at this time. They are awaiting the start of the MPCA grant before moving forward with any new initiatives.

Food Access Fridges & Freezers – Tom
Mankato Clinic Fridges are working well with no new updates. It has officially been a year since these have been operational, and in that year they have disbursed over 12,000 lbs of food.

Through the recommendation of Tom, the Heart of New Ulm and the New Ulm Public Library have applied for and have been awarded funding from Brown Co. SHIP to host a freezer and refrigerator in

New Ulm. This location has absolutely taken off in popularity and has been working very well in just the few weeks it has been operational. A very large social media presence has been made with this program, as well as a story featured on MPR News (10/15/26)

Communications – Nate
Nate submitted his second draft of the RNDC AI policy for staff review. This document will act as a "best practices" guide to the organization's AI usage. This will be the first policy written by a MN RDO and will be shared with the other organizations. Nate anticipates revisions to the draft before it is presented to the board for input in November.

One of Nate's photos won in NADO Photo contest. His photo was chosen for the "Building Vibrant Places" category. The award will be presented after the Annual Training Conference.

Nate has been posting and promoting the Lending Specialist position online and compiling applicant information for review.

Nate has been working with planners to promote two community events. One is the Waseca Area Food Coop's Grocery Planning event and the other is the Community Engagement event in Fairmont. This includes designing flyers, writing copy for promotion on socials, website, and media outlets. He also sent emails to Martin County stakeholders about the event in Fairmont.

Nate worked with iSpace design to troubleshoot issues with the RNDC conference room. Unfortunately, a key piece of equipment has failed and needs to be replaced. Nate looked at other options to find a more cost-effective setup, but the cost of equipment and labor hours for installation would be more than the quote for replacing the current unit.

Nate has been culling the contact lists on Constant Contact to avoid additional fees for a larger tier of contacts. He has removed over 500 contacts that were out of date or anyone who had unsubscribed.

Nate worked with Sam to update the MCAP webpage to include resources from the University of Minnesota. He also added "Success Story" links that leads to the MCAP website.

Nate created the plaques presented at the October Commission meeting recognizing Commissioners not seeking reelection.

Nate has continued to create the RNDC "Introduction" packets that the team has been taking to meetings with new or potential partners. They include general information about RNDC and its services, a Annual Report, food rescue information, and information about the 2026 CEDs.

Annual Report - Nate
Nate is waiting for the FY26 audit to be completed before submitting the document. He has contacted the Legislative Library to make them aware of the delay.

Small Business Development Center Consultations – Nate
Nate continued his work with the SBDC as a marketing consultant as part of a partnership contract between SBDC and RNDC. He is working with twelve clients as part of the contract. This work will tentatively continue until December 2026 and is expected to continue with additional contract extensions. The 2027 contract is tentatively set for 125 years over the year.

Revolving Loan Fund – Lisa
Lisa attended the Regional Economic Development Alliance (REDA) meeting in St. Peter, joining economic development professionals and regional partners to discuss business retention and expansion trends, workforce challenges, community development priorities, infrastructure needs, and economic growth opportunities across southern Minnesota. The meeting also provided valuable opportunities to strengthen regional partnerships and identify future project and financing opportunities

Work on the Endless Adventure loan project continues. RNDC has completed an extensive review of updated project materials, including revised financing commitments, appraisal information, construction financing structure, and operational projections. Staff are currently preparing materials and coordinating the scheduling of a Loan Committee meeting for project consideration.

The KinderCottage childcare project in Gaylord is in the final stages of closing. RNDC, the borrower, lender, title company, and legal counsel continue to work through final title, insurance, lease, and closing documentation requirements. Closing is anticipated in the coming weeks.

Marketing and outreach efforts continued in partnership with Hannah Bretz from the South Central Minnesota Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Lisa and Hannah conducted two full days of lender outreach visits across Watonwan, Martin, Le Sueur, and Nicollet Counties, meeting with financial institutions and community lending partners to discuss financing opportunities and strengthen awareness of RNDC's Revolving Loan Fund program. Also, we continue outreach efforts to identify candidates for the vacant Waseca and Sibley County RLF Committee seats.

Routine portfolio management activities continued throughout the month, including processing ACH loan payments, monitoring borrower accounts, reviewing collateral and insurance requirements, maintaining RLSS loan records, updating EDA reporting information, and servicing existing loans. Staff are also engaged in preliminary discussions with several prospective borrowers involving business expansion, commercial redevelopment, business acquisition, and startup opportunities throughout the region.

Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant – Mark
Mark continued developing road safety action plans for Sibley, Martin and Faribault Counties.
In October he shared his expertise in rural road safety with the team of consultants that will be developing Waseca County’s County Road Safety Plan. Mark also consulted with the Mankato Area Planning Organization which must develop road safety performance measures for injury crashes and vulnerable road users.

Mark and Joel continued collaborating across sectors to improve road safety. Most recently, they met with the Faribault and Martin County Health and Human Services, to discuss transportation safety trends and injury prevention.

Mark supported Walk to School Day in St. Peter on October 7, 2026. Mark continues to be impressed by St. Peter’s commitment to Safe Routes to School.

MnDOT released its crash data for third quarter 2026. For year-to-date (YTD), there were 74 fatal or serious injury crashes in the nine county region. So far it has been a safer year than 2024 and 2025 when there were 93 and 95 fatal or serious injury crashes (respectively) in our region during the period January 1 – September 30. The year 2019 was our safest with 59 fatal or serious injury crashes during that time

period. Vulnerable road users – motorcyclists, pedestrians and bicyclists – continued the worrying trend of being overrepresented in fatal and serious injury crashes with 35% in 2026.

Transportation/MnDOT Regional Planning Grant – Joel, Mark
Joel circulated a list of current open MnDOT transportation planning and infrastructure grants. Grants include: Safe Routes to School, Transportation Alternatives, and Carbon Reduction. RNDC offered assistance to any community or county interested in applying for these grants.

Joel led a mobile workshop during the statewide APA planning conference that was held in Mankato. The workshop examined current EV charging infrastructure in downtown Mankato.
Mark, Joel and Nate discussed creating a video documentary of St. Peter's Safe Routes to School program. The project was authorized by MnDOT and awaits further engagement with local stakeholders.

St. James Energy Navigators - Sabri
Progress continues on completing installations and submitting reimbursements.

MDA Regional Commercial Kitchen Report– Sabri
Sabri has started doing interviews with MDA and health department staff to understand kitchen licensing. It has become clear that MDA and MDH see sharing kitchens as a commonsense practice for businesses and for their licensing as they know the kitchens are already safe. Sabri has started identifying potential kitchens in the region and conducting interviews with them.

Blandin Rural Capacity Grant – Sabri, Alejandra, Lisa, Kristian, Sam,
City of Gaylord Business Attraction and Retention Plan
Aaron has begun work on a Business Attraction and Retention Plan for the City of Gaylord, meeting with city leadership to discuss local economic development priorities and refine the project's scope and work plan. Initial research has focused on Gaylord's business landscape, major employers, workforce and commuting patterns, and potential gaps in local services and amenities. This work will inform strategies to support existing businesses, attract new investment, and better align economic development with community needs and priorities.

Surveys have been deployed for the SCDP program to do homeowner and commercial rehab in Wells, Truman, and Eagle Lake.

Alejandra submitted a proposal to the City of Springfield to provide technical assistance related to the city's vacant former hospital facility. This project will support community engagement efforts to gather input on potential future uses, develop criteria for prospective buyers or tenants, and evaluate the advantages and challenges of selling versus leasing. The work will also include reviewing proposals for financial viability and long-term building maintenance while offering opportunities for City Council and residents to provide input. Alejandra also presented the 2027-2031 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) planning process to Martin County's Economic Development Authority (EDA). Following the presentation, county leaders expressed interest in partnering with RNDC to develop a Martin County Strategic Economic Development Plan focused on the manufacturing sector. In addition, Alejandra has been in discussions with the City of Mapleton regarding interest in conducting a housing study to better understand local housing needs and opportunities. RNDC would use funding received through the Blandin Rural Capacity Grant to offer these projects at a discounted rate to local communities.

REGIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Apple Blossom Road & Shooting Star Scenic Byways Corridor Management Plans – Mark, Joel, Sabri, Sam, Alejandra, Kristian, Sarah, Nate, Aaron

Joel and Mark convened Steering Committee meetings for both Byways in early October. The public maps for both Byways are currently open for collecting input on the Intrinsic Qualities that each Byway possesses – beyond what their names suggest. Joel and Mark went into the field to conduct a GIS-based sign inventory for each Byway. The inventory verified the location and condition of each Scenic Byways sign.

Empowering Small Minnesota Communities: South Bend Township – Sabri, Sam, Lisa
The project team is working to coordinate with the UMN and South Bend Township to begin initial stages of the project. The purpose of the project is to mitigate significant recurring flooding challenges that have impacted the community.

Empowering Small Minnesota Communities: Rural EMS – Joel
No new update at this time.

Tri-County Solid Waste Management Plan – Joel, Mark, Nate
No new update at this time.

Waterville Economic Development Technical Assistance – Alejandra
Waterville submitted a grant with support from Alejandra during the application process. The project will help Waterville develop a shared community identity and vision that will guide its future economic development efforts and support long-term recovery following the historic 2024 flood. Through community engagement and collaboration, the initiative will create an action plan to support year-round business activity and community prosperity.

The project is supported by a broad coalition of partners, including the City of Waterville, the EDA, Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, University of Minnesota Extension, CEDA, SMIF, and RNDC.

Technical assistance for this project was funded through the Blandin grant that RNDC received earlier in the year.

Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership (MCAP) - Sam, Nate, Jessica
Several communities will be working with Sam and MCAP within the Fall cohort of the FloodWise Communities Program. This program is designed to offer capacity and long-term planning and support related to flooding challenges. The communities involved in the Fall cohort include Madelia and Waterville, with additional interest from other communities for a Spring cohort early next year.

Humanity AI Proposal - Aaron
RNDC, in partnership with Minnesota State University, Mankato, completed and submitted a Phase 1 proposal to the Humanity AI funding opportunity. Aaron led the proposal development, working with

university partners to establish project roles, develop the research and engagement approach, and prepare the application. The proposed project would establish a worker-led council representing communities across Region Nine to examine how artificial intelligence is being introduced into workplaces and develop recommendations for regional employers and institutions. The proposal outlines a collaborative approach to workforce engagement, research, and implementation that would give local workers a direct role in shaping how AI is used in their communities.

New Richland and Waseca County Economic Development Technical Assistance - Aaron, Lisa, Alejandra, and Jessica

The team met with Waseca County economic development partners to discuss two local development priorities. The first focused on New Richland's significant flooding and drainage infrastructure challenges, including alternative financing strategies, project feasibility, and potential state and federal funding sources. The second focused on identifying seed funding and other resources to support the proposed workforce development center in Waseca, particularly its staffing and operational needs. To support these and future economic development efforts, Aaron also developed a local business dataset to help assess the potential economic impacts of flooding, identify workforce connections between area businesses and the proposed center, and strengthen future funding applications.

GRANT COORDINATION AND ADMINISTRATION:

Region Nine Community Resilience Plan – Sam, Lisa, Aaron
Sam and Lisa have been coordinating with MSU's Water Resource Center to work with students on regional climate resilience analyses. This work includes creating community resilience profiles that highlight risks, vulnerabilities, and project resources for various communities in the region. The students are also helping develop a repository of existing planning resources that have been completed with the region such as Hazard Mitigation Plans, One Watershed One Plans, and other similar documents to assist with risk and project prioritization. These insights will help inform the final planning document and outline resources for communities to leverage in funding applications.

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) – Sam, Sabri, Lisa, Nate
The first draft of the Lake Crystal Solar Report has been completed and under review. Staff will continue to refine and polish the report and will present to Lake Crystal upon completion.

MPCA Waseca Local Climate Action Grant – Sam, Lisa
No new updates at this time.

MPCA Prevention of Wasted Food & Food Rescue Grant - Sabri, Tom
RNDC was awarded the grant for furthering our region-wide efforts. This was a joint application between five other food access partners to build up the infrastructure and logistical needs of food rescue in our region. More information will be coming over the next few months as the project timeline starts in 2027.