

# UMVRDC

UPPER  
MINNESOTA  
VALLEY  
REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION

# 2004 Annual Report

04-0397

## BIG STONE COUNTY

Dave Torgerson, Clinton  
County Board  
Shirley Finberg, Clinton  
Municipalities  
Harold Dimberg, Ortonville  
Townships

## CHIPPEWA COUNTY

Jim Dahlvang, Montevideo  
County Board  
Ron Anderson, Milan  
Municipalities  
Rudolph Larson, Montevideo  
Townships

## LAC QUI PARLE COUNTY

Merril Johnson, Dawson  
County Board  
Greg Thole, Madison  
Municipalities  
Dean Sather, Madison  
Townships

## SWIFT COUNTY

Richard Hanson, Clontarf  
County Board  
Bill Fliflet, Appleton  
Municipalities  
Warren Rau, Appleton  
Townships

## YELLOW MEDICINE COUNTY

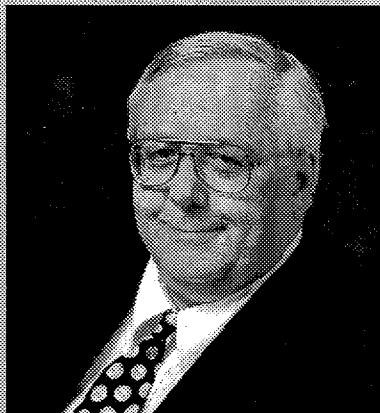
Gary L. Johnson, Montevideo  
County Board  
Thornton Pronk, Porter  
Municipalities  
Erling Albin, Hanley Falls  
Townships

## SCHOOL BOARDS

Paul Pillatzki, Dawson  
Dawson/Boyd

## PUBLIC INTEREST

Jaunita Laurtisen, Milan  
Workforce Council  
Gary Hendrickx, Appleton  
Prairie Five CAC  
Teresa Peterson  
Upper Sioux Community



Ron Anderson, 2004 Chairperson

Like most other government bodies, the Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission (UMVRDC) has had an interesting and tumultuous year due to the recession, state budget deficit, federal budgetary shortfalls and program requirement changes. Proper planning, scheduling and administration of programs were adversely affected by the inability of the Minnesota State Legislature to expeditiously solve the budget deficit, determine bonding projects and funding, establish priorities and set policies required for/by governmental agencies and local units of government. **PROBLEMS SOLVED, PEOPLES' NEEDS MET** are the reasons for the existence of regional development commissions. The staff and Commission of Region 6W pledge to continue offering

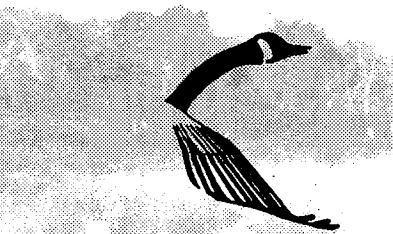
quality service to OUR local units of government as expeditiously and professionally as financial resources will allow.

Region 6W is proud of our dedicated, professional and well-trained staff. Some of the programs/services offered include Aging issues and services, Tourism, Economic Development, Transportation Planning, Revolving Loan Fund, Grants/Fiscal Administration, Zoning, Ordinance creation, Hazard Mitigation Planning and Disaster Grants applications/administration. GIS services provide the digital data necessary to function in today's technological world. A new economic development tool identified as JOBZ zones has involved staff time and fiscal resources. Local units of government requested that Region 6W be actively involved in the JOBZ program. Various meetings, memos, correspondence and staff time have been expended to serve our clients on this issue as quickly, judiciously, and as correctly as possible. The Commission and staff felt the JOBZ program deserved and required this amount of commitment. The region hopes to economically benefit from this program.

Region 6W needs COMMITMENT by local units of government if we are to survive and maintain our fine staff and programs. If you have a need/question, look to US for the answer. Our staff are local citizens in/of our area. Their goal is to make your community better because they are part of your community. Five counties comprise Region 6W; each county has three representatives - county commissioner, municipal representative and township official. One school board member and two public service representatives serve on the Commission. The Upper Sioux Community has appointed a representative also. Any questions, complaints, etc. will be handled by someone you know and represents YOUR COMMUNITY'S best interest.

"TRY US, YOU'LL LIKE US!!"

Ron Anderson



# FINANCIAL REPORT

## UPPER MN VALLEY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE COMPARISON CURRENT FY 2004 AND PROPOSED FY 2005

	FY 2004	FY 2005		FY 2004	FY 2005
	CURRENT	PROPOSED		CURRENT	PROPOSED
	BUDGET	BUDGET		BUDGET	BUDGET
<b>REVENUES:</b>			<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>		
Agency Revenues			Salaries/Fringe	\$639,167	\$584,594
Interest/Levy/Misc.	214,662	236,000	Commissioners Expense	24,600	26,100
Aging	141,636	138,243	Audit	10,000	10,000
Grants Administration	64,000	45,000	Certificate of Indebtedness	20,000	0
EDA/Community Development	127,438	168,738	Certificate Interest on Loan	500	0
GIS Contracts	137,900	33,760	Copy Charge/Xerox Lease	7,000	7,000
Regional Tourism	59,923	75,000	Computer Technical Assistance	6,000	6,000
Transportation/Natural Resources	97,000	61,000	Contract for Services	0	2,000
			Data Acquisition	500	500
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 842,559</b>	<b>\$757,741</b>	Depreciation	10,000	10,000
			Dues	6,500	6,500
			Equipment	1,000	1,000
			Insurance	2,500	2,500
			Lease/Service Agreement	4,000	4,000
			Legal Fees	2,000	1,500
			Miscellaneous/Employee Morale	5,000	4,000
			Office Rent	9,000	9,200
			Postage	11,000	11,000
			Printing/Advertising	5,500	5,000
			Registration	3,500	3,500
			Repairs/Maintenance	1,000	1,000
			Software/Software GIS	7,000	6,000
			Subscrip./Publications	1,500	1,000
			Supplies	9,000	8,000
			Telephone	9,000	8,000
			Tourism Trade Shows/Ads	13,144	11,000
			Training/Training GIS	3,000	3,000
			Travel (Staff)	27,000	25,000
			<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$838,411</b>	<b>\$757,394</b>
			<b>EXCESS REV.</b>		
			<b>OVER (UNDER) EXP.</b>	<b>\$ 4,148</b>	<b>\$ 347</b>

The latest audit of finances performed October 2003 by the firm of Lee & Berner, LTD covered the Fiscal Year 2003 finances. No negative findings were reported in that audit.

# COMMUNITY/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Region 6W JOBZ Application Approved

Much of fiscal year 2004 involved work on a new economic development program called Job Opportunity Building Zones (JOBZ). The following provides a summary of how the JOBZ program developed in 2003, became reality in 2004 and the UMRDC's role in that process.

**February - April 2003:** The UMRDC held informational meetings on the proposed JOBZ legislation on February 28 and April 10 for local units of government in Region 6W. At these meetings, nearly all attending voted in favor of having a JOBZ application submitted from within Region 6W. Those in attendance also requested the UMRDC take a lead role in the application process.

**June 2003:** JOBZ legislation was passed during the spring Minnesota Legislative session. The JOBZ legislation, which is closely modeled after similar programs in Pennsylvania and Michigan, allowed tax-free zones to be created for businesses in distressed areas of rural Minnesota as a way to help encourage economic development and job creation. The legislation allowed for up to ten tax-free zones to be created in greater Minnesota. Each of the ten tax-free zones designated could contain up to 5,000 acres of tax-free property. Each zone could also have an unlimited number of subzones (i.e., several tax-free zones located within a county or

region). The maximum duration of a designated tax-free zone is 12 years starting January 1, 2004.

**July 2003:** The UMRDC hosted a JOBZ application workshop for local units of government in Region 6W. Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and Minnesota Department of Revenue staff attended the workshop to provide information about the program and the application requirements.

**August 2003:** JOBZ applications became available. The UMRDC began working with local units of government on preparing the application.

**September 2003:** The UMRDC hosted a regional JOBZ meeting with Governor Tim Pawlenty and DEED Commissioner Matt Kramer on September 25 in Appleton. The meeting was well attended and provided local units of government a chance to discuss the JOBZ program with Governor Pawlenty and Commissioner Kramer.

**October 2003:** The JOBZ application was submitted to DEED by October 15. The application totaled approximately 1,000 pages of maps, development plans and marketing strategies for the region's JOBZ program.

**December 2003:** The UMRDC received approval from Governor Pawlenty that the

region's JOBZ application was approved. A total of 1,801 JOBZ acres were approved in Region 6W.

**January - June 2004:** The UMRDC held a workshop on February 19 for Region 6W local units of government participating in the JOBZ program. Information on JOBZ

*JOBZ continued on p. 4*

### Clarkfield Receives Grant for Housing Rehabilitation

The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) announced in early April that the city of Clarkfield was awarded a \$561,000 grant to do housing rehabilitation activities. The grant was from the Small Cities Development Program (SCDP). The project will rehabilitate 22 single-family, owner-occupied homes and nine rental units. Other public and private funds will be matched with SCDP grant funds to pay for the project.

The UMRDC prepared the grant application and will do the general administration for the grant. The project administration will be completed by the Prairie Five Community Action Council, Inc.

## Community & Economic Development Projects in FY 2004

Some of the community development projects completed by UMRDC staff in Fiscal Year 2004 included:

- Prepared a successful Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) application for the city of Clarkfield to rehabilitate 22 single-family and nine rental housing units. Through this application, Clarkfield was awarded a \$561,600 grant from SCDP. Other public and private funds will also be used to match the SCDP grant.

- Economic development activities for the city of Milan were started in the spring of 2003 and were completed in August 2003. The activities included:

- creating a city website ([www.milanmn.com](http://www.milanmn.com));
- completing Milan's community and property profiles on the MNPRO (DTED) website; and
- assisting Milan in establishing an economic development authority.
- Completed a zoning and subdivision ordinance for the city of Madison.
- Completed draft All-Hazard Mitigation plans for the counties of Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Chippewa and Yellow Medicine. The UMRDC also started work on All-Hazard Mitigation plans for Swift County and the Upper Sioux Community.

- Provided technical assistance to the city of Granite Falls on flood mitigation activities.
- Prepared a successful Job Opportunity Building Zone application for 16 cities and two townships in the region.
- Assisted the city of Holloway in applying for \$536,000 from USDA - Rural Development to do repairs and improvements to the community's water system.
- Co-sponsored business planning and marketing workshops in March and April 2004 with the Private Industry Council and Minnesota Small Business Development Center.

## Community & Economic Development Services and Assistance

The Community and Economic Development Division of the UMRDC is able to provide local units of government with a wide variety of services in a cost-effective manner. The following is a list of community development services the UMRDC staff can provide:

- Community profile and website design to use for an informational resource, community marketing, economic development and other activities;
- Comprehensive plan creation or updates;
- Land use planning activities including establishing future land use plans, urban growth boundary identification and annexation procedures;
- Goal, objective and policy development for guiding local government decision-making processes;
- Ordinance creation or updates;
- Grant and loan applications and fiscal administration for projects including water, sewer, single-family and rental housing rehabilitation, new housing development, commercial building rehabilitation, community facilities and others;
- Special studies/plans including housing, economic development, business retention/

- expansion, natural resources, downtown planning, community needs assessment, agriculture, technology, population, demographic analysis and other topics;
- Survey creation, distribution and analysis;
- Business loan funds available for new or expanding businesses;
- Business consulting services including information for new business start-ups and expansions, business assessments, business plans, financial analysis, loan packaging and marketing; and
- Mapping projects including maps identifying parcel information, land use, zoning, water/sewer infrastructure and addresses.

Please feel free to contact the UMRDC to find out more about the community development services that can be provided.

*Available at the UMRDC!*

**MINNESOTA SMALL BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT CENTER  
(SBDC)**

**One-on-One Business Consulting**

Consultants are available to meet with you at the UMRDC office in Appleton.

**Free Business Consulting Services!**

Call the SBDC at 1-800-642-0684 Ext. 7386 to schedule an appointment!

**SBDC CONSULTING SERVICES INCLUDE  
Business Information, Business Assessment,  
Business Plan, Financial Analysis, Loan  
Packaging, and Marketing**

*JOBZ continued from p. 3*

program administration and marketing was discussed with members of the JOBZ subzone communities. On March 23 the UMRDC hosted a JOBZ marketing meeting to discuss ways to market the program to businesses in an effort to create jobs in the region.

The UMRDC will be serving as the JOBZ administrator for Region 6W. As JOBZ administrator, the UMRDC will be assisting the JOBZ subzone communities with their administrative responsibilities, working with DEED on JOBZ administration and assisting with regional JOBZ marketing efforts.

To date several businesses have inquired about JOBZ or are in the process of working with subzone communities in the region to expand or start new businesses with the assistance of the JOBZ program.

If you are interested in learning more about the JOBZ program, visit DEED's website at [www.dted.state.mn.us/jobz-f.asp](http://www.dted.state.mn.us/jobz-f.asp).

## The Western Minnesota Revolving Loan Fund



Revolving Loan Fund dollars are available through the Western Minnesota Revolving Loan Fund (WesMN RLF) for new or expanding businesses in Region 6W. The WesMN RLF is a gap financing lender that requires local bank financial participation with each loan made. Secured loans ranging in size from \$5,000 to \$100,000 may be made for fixed assets and working capital. The maximum WesMN RLF participation rate is 33 percent on manufacturing projects and 20 percent on all other types of loans.

The emphasis of the WesMN RLF is to help finance business start-ups and expansions with a priority given to industrial/manufacturing businesses. Commercial/retail business projects, while eligible for WesMN RLF financing, must fulfill a local need for essential

goods and services. Job creation is the first priority of the WesMN RLF dollars while job retention is the second priority. The WesMN RLF has portfolio standards of one job created or saved for every \$10,000 of WesMN RLF funds loaned and a minimum of two private dollars borrowed to every one WesMN RLF dollar loaned.

In Fiscal Year 2004, the WesMN RLF made \$365,000 in loans to new and expanding businesses in Region 6W. These RLF loan dollars helped leverage an additional \$2.2 million in private lending and owner investments for projects that created new business and job growth. These loans will result in nearly 30 jobs being created.

Loans are made by the WesMN RLF Loan Board with staff support coming from the UMRDC.

## All-Hazard Mitigation Planning



Hazard mitigation planning for Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle and Yellow Medicine Counties started on May 1, 2003. As a result of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, FEMA now requires that any township, city or county wanting access to future Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds must have in place or be in the process of completing an All-Hazard Mitigation Plan by November 2004. Grant funding from FEMA has been initially geared towards completing county-wide all-hazard mitigation plans. All cities and townships are eligible to participate in the county plan instead of completing one on their own.

Hazard mitigation planning is meant to

break the cycle of disaster-repair-disaster in a community and prepares it for a more sustainable future. All-Hazard Mitigation Plans are required to include an extensive public participation process and hazard risk assessment of the county and all its communities. The first public meetings for all four counties were held in the summer of 2003. Each county has assembled a task force made up of representatives from the county, cities and townships to assist in the planning process. Draft plans for Chippewa, Lac qui Parle and Yellow Medicine Counties were completed and submitted to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety -- Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management in

May 2004. Big Stone County's Plan was submitted in July 2004.

The UMRDC has also started work on All-Hazard Mitigation plans for the Upper Sioux Community and Swift County. These plans will be completed in fiscal year 2005.

## Region 6W CEDS Completed

During the summer and fall of 2003 the UMRDC completed a comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) for Region 6W. Updates to the CEDS are done annually with major revisions done every five years. A major revision to the Region 6W CEDS was completed in 2003 and submitted to the U.S. Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration (EDA) in September. EDA reviewed and approved the Region 6W CEDS in October.

A CEDS is required to qualify the region for EDA grants under its public works, economic adjustment, and most planning programs. EDA funding supports the formulation and implementation of economic development programs designed to create or retain full-time permanent jobs, reduce unemployment and under-employment and increase incomes in areas of economic distress.

A CEDS is the result of a local planning process designed to guide the economic growth of an area. A CEDS process will help create jobs, foster more stable and diversi-

fied economies, and improve living conditions. It provides a mechanism for coordinating the efforts of individuals, organizations, local governments, and private industry concerned with economic development.

The CEDS must be the result of a continuing economic development planning process, developed with broad based and diverse community participation, and contain the following:

- An analysis of economic and community development problems and opportunities including incorporation of any relevant material or suggestions from other government sponsored or supported plans;
- Background and history of the economic development situation of the area covered, with a discussion of the economy, including as appropriate, geography, population, labor force, resources and the environment;
- A discussion of community participation in the planning efforts;
- A section setting forth goals and objectives for taking advantage of the opportunities of and solving the economic development problems of the area serviced;

## New Community Development Planner

Connie Nygard has been hired as a community development planner in the UMRDC's Community/Economic Development Division. Previously she had served as the Area Agency on Aging director at the UMRDC. Connie recently had been employed with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Some of the items Connie will be working on at the UMRDC will include community planning projects and grant applications. Welcome back Connie!

Connie is replacing Kristi Fernholz as community development planner. Kristi resigned in April to pursue other interests and spend more time with her family. The UMRDC would like to thank Kristi for all her hard work and wish her the best of luck.

Please feel free to call if you have any questions about the types of community development services the UMRDC can provide for your community.

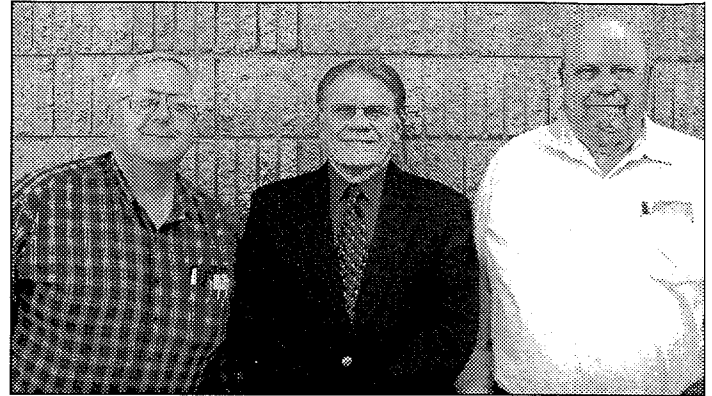
- A plan of action, including suggested projects to implement objectives and goals set forth in the strategy; and
- Performance measures that will be used to evaluate whether and to what extent goals and objectives have been or are being met.

A copy of the CEDS may be obtained at the UMRDC office.

# UMVRDC COMMISSIONERS



**Big Stone County** (left to right)  
 Shirley Finberg, *Municipalities*; Dave Torgerson, *County Board*; Harold Dimberg, *Ortonville Townships*



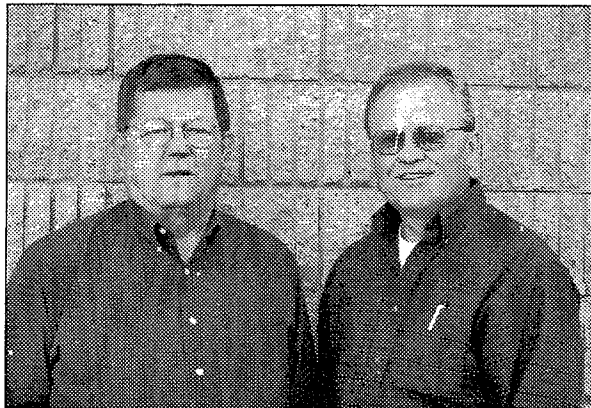
**Chippewa County** (left to right)  
 Ron Anderson, *Municipalities*; Jim Dahlvang, *County Board*; Rudolph Larson, *Ortonville Townships*



**Lac qui Parle County** (left to right)  
 Greg Thole, *Municipalities*; Merrill Johnson, *County Board*; (Not pictured: Dean Sather, *Townships*)



**Public Interest** (left to right)  
 Jaunita Lauritsen, *Workforce Council*; Gary Hendrickx, *Prairie Five CAC*; Paul Pillatzke, *School Board*; Teresa Peterson, *Upper Sioux Community*



**Swift County** (left to right)  
 Richard Hanson, *County Board*; Warren Rau, *Townships*; (Not pictured: Bill Fliflet, *Municipalities*)



**Yellow Medicine County** (left to right)  
 Thornton Pronk, *Municipalities*; Gary L. Johnson, *County Board*; Erling Albin, *Townships*

# UMVRDC STAFF

(As of June 30, 2004)



**Back row, left to right**

Connie Stotesbery, *Secretary*  
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Arlene Tilbury, *Division Director, Financial*  
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Barb Jordahl, *Planner Assistant, Financial*  
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**Front row, left to right**

Kay Koosman, *Office Manager*  
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Paul Michaelson, *Executive Director*  
paul.michaelson@umvrdc.org



**Left to right**

Michelle Bouta, *SAIL/EDP Planner*  
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Berit Skurdahl, *Planner, Aging*  
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**Left to right**

Julie Drietz, *Regional Tourism Planner*  
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Dawn Hegland, *Division Director, Transportation/  
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Steven Sterud, *Planner Assistant*  
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**Left to right**

Abel Federico, *GIS Technician*  
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Kristi Fernholz, *Planner, Community Development*  
kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org

# TOURISM, TRANSPORTATION & NATURAL RESOURCES

## Tourism Benefits From Marketing Diversity

Western Minnesota Prairie Waters (WMPW) uses a variety of marketing tools to be effective in generating tourism to western Minnesota. In 2003-2004, projects included: redesigning the Regional Visitor's Guide, placing print advertisements in regional and national publications and attending local and Midwest sport shows and women's expos. The majority of WMPW's advertising is done throughout the Midwest, but this summer also watch for advertising in your local newspapers!

The year began with the creation of a new, full-color Regional Visitor's Guide for 2004-2005. The guide includes a new section titled Planned Itineraries, in response to travelers' needs for a simple, easy-to-plan vacation. These two pages consist of travel itineraries for visitors to make trip planning convenient and more enjoyable!

The Visitor's Guides were ready to be in the hands of tourists just in time for sport show season! WMPW was represented at the Sport Shows in Des Moines, Milwaukee

and Minneapolis, as well as the St. Cloud Women's Expo, Itineraries Minnesota Group Tour Operator Showcases in St. Paul and Fargo and the Montevideo Women's Expo.

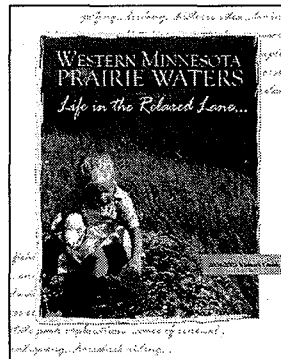
Itineraries Minnesota, Midwest Living and AAA Home & Away Magazines, Minnesota Explorer Newspaper, Explore Minnesota Statewide Guide

and Explore Southern Minnesota Visitor's Guides are a few of the publications where WMPW advertisements can be found over the past year. These ads created over 2,200 travel inquiries. Based on the interest of the inquirers, we responded with travel information, including the Regional Visitor's Guide, new Unique Shopping brochure, Birding brochure, HAT brochure, Calendar of Events, Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway brochure and community

information.

During National Tourism Week, WMPW distributed guides all over the region as part of an effort to educate our communities on the benefits of tourism and the Regional Tourism Program. This summer will bring a variety of local advertising, with the help of Western Minnesota Prairie Waters Advisory

Board Members: Bill Fliflet, Gary Hendrickx, Louis Sherlin, Donna Halvorson, Mavis Gustafson, Susan Lee, Maynard Meyer, June Lynne, Kevin TeBeest, Lori Evenstad, MaryAnn Ulrich, and Dave Torgeson. With their assistance, the Regional Tourism Program will place advertisements in local papers, implement a stronger program to distribute Visitor's Guides in local shops, gas stations and hotels and will be represented at our regional fairs, in Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift and Yellow Medicine Counties.



## Transportation Planning Assistance

The UMRDC continues to provide local transportation planning assistance to the region through a contract with the MN Department of Transportation. The region's Transportation Advisory Committee meets quarterly to review, discuss and recommend transportation projects including the prioritization of millions of dollars worth of road, bridge, rail crossing, public transit and trail projects. Recommendations are given to the UMRDC and to Area Transportation Partnerships (ATPs). ATPs develop prioritized lists of transportation projects for a multi-county area. Region 6W participates in two ATPs, each of which encompass a different 12 county area.

Transportation issues continue to be critical issues for our rural, agrarian region. We

rely heavily on the existing transportation system to get to work, school, medical appointments, vacation and to get commodities into and out of the region. The UMRDC would like to assist the local units of government to ensure its people and businesses of this region are adequately served by all modes of transportation.

Some of the transportation projects that were included in FY 2004:

- Participated on ATPs 4 and 8 as technical staff and as alternate voting members;
- Participated on the District 8 State Highway Turnback Committee;
- Compiled the fifth annual Surveillance and Monitoring Report for transportation and demographic characteristics in the region;

- Assisted Yellow Medicine and Big Stone Counties, Big Stone Natural Wildlife Refuge, Appleton, Benson, Dawson and other cities as requested regarding trail planning;
- Participated on the ATP 8 Transportation Enhancement Committee;
- Participated on the ATP 4 Transportation Enhancement, Discretionary and Safety Committees;
- Compiled the annual Region 6W Transportation Survey;
- Hosted four Transportation Advisory Committee meetings; and
- Coordinated with other RDCs on transportation issues.

If you have a transportation related comment or concern, we would love to hear it!



## Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway

The Alliance remained active last year encouraging economic development through the promotion, preservation and enhancement of the historical, scenic, natural, recreational, cultural and archaeological qualities of the Minnesota River Valley.

**Committee Structure** - Two Alliance committees were developed to more effectively utilize our time and talents for the benefit of the Byway.

- Interpretation Committee is responsible for creating the interpretive panel guidebook.

- Marketing Committee works on website enhancement, itineraries and the new Byway guide.

**Seed Grant** - The Alliance submitted a Byway grant for seed monies in the amount of \$31,250 and was awarded the grant in 2003. Some of these grant monies were used to send four members of the Alliance to the National Scenic Byway Conference in Albuquerque, NM and an interpretive writing workshop in Minneapolis for educational opportunities benefiting our Byway. Seed grant funds will also be used to develop an interpretative panel guidebook, a magazine



style guide of the Byway, purchase additional Byway signs, update our website ([www.mnrivervalley.com](http://www.mnrivervalley.com)) and investigate multi-byway marketing partnerships.

**Byway Partner Memberships** - In 2002 the Alliance worked on creating membership ideas for sustainability. In 2003, a membership brochure and drive were developed. A goal was to raise \$600 in memberships in 2003.

We are happy to report that our expectations increased four fold raising approximately \$2,400 dollars in the first year. Members receive different Byway incentives depending upon their level of membership.

**Extension** - The Alliance was approached about extending the east end of the Byway.

After further discussion, it was decided that we would assist them with advice but to leave the actual work of the extension to interested parties on that end.

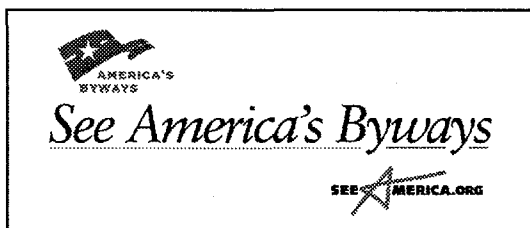
**Closing of Byway Sites** - The Minnesota Historical Society announced in 2003 the

closure of seven MHS sites. Two of these sites are located within our corridor - Lower Sioux Agency and Fort Ridgely. The Alliance fought through letters to legislators to keep these sites open. Combined efforts with area entities were temporarily successful. The Alliance remains interested and informed on this issue.

**Byway Art** - The Alliance applied for an \$80,000 byway grant for the development of an Art Crawl along the Byway to enhance the interest in local artists and locally made products. Unfortunately, it looks as if Minnesota will not receive enough funding to fund this project in 2004. We will wait to hear grant award announcements later in 2004.

The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway Alliance continues to work diligently to build a future for and maintain our Byway corridor. Our 2005 work plan will focus mainly on interpretation through the

development of interpretive panels and interpretive materials for the Byway.



## 2004 Transportation Survey Results

Each year the UMVRDC sends out a transportation survey to cities and counties to identify issues related to our transportation



network. This survey is then shared with the county engineers and MnDOT and is added to an annual transportation report. A sam-

pling of some of the needs in the 2004 survey are as follows:

- Increase funding to maintain and repair county roads/highways in rural areas;
- Increase transportation for the youth/elderly;
- Better design of railroad crossings and

bridge improvements;

- Adding wider shoulders and tonnage to county highways;
- Improve highways to larger urban communities (i.e., Twin Cities, St. Cloud, Fargo).

A complete summary of transportation issues is available.

# AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) Executive Committee approved the planning and service areas for Minnesota's Area Agencies on Aging. Regions 6E, 6W, 8 and 9 are one 27-county planning and service area (PSA). MBA then published for public review and comment, a proposed intrastate funding formula, with comments due to MBA by May 24. It is expected that MBA will adopt a new funding formula June 18. They will then publish a Request for Proposal (RFP) in the State Register in the

next couple of months for an entity to be designated as the AAA and provide service within the PSA. It is assumed there will be one AAA within a PSA. Full implementation of the reconfigured AAAs is expected January 1, 2005.

The staff of the Upper MN Valley AAA and UMRDC, remain committed to "expanding options and opportunities that support the independence and dignity of older persons as valued, full participants of society and one of Minnesota's greatest

resources."

Roles of the AAA include, administration of federal and state dollars for elderly services through grants or contracts, providing people with information and assistance, advocacy and services development and coordination.

Specific outcomes of the Upper MN Valley AAA are outlined in the Area Plan. The Older Americans Act of 1965 is the governing piece of legislation for the AAA.

## AAA Advisory Committee

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Advisory Committee is a volunteer committee that provides an essential service to the UMRDC. The members assure that Region 6W provides a continuum of care for elders by combining the Title III Older Americans Act dollars with other public or private aging service dollars.

Primary functions of the committee include development of the AAA Area Plan, administration of the Area Plan, identifying regional needs and priorities of the elderly that the Area Plan should address and awarding the Title III Older Americans Act dollars to meet those needs. The Area Plan is the region's grant agreement with

the Minnesota Board on Aging.

AAA Advisory Committee members include: Bonnie Dybdahl, Jackie Ast, Gilbert Bliss, Eva Stacey, Barb Nelson, Herb Rotunda, Judy Dahl, Barbara Lunde, Rosemary Schuelke and ex-officio members are Sheri Hansen and Gail Jerve.

## Information & Assistance

The Information & Assistance (I & A) program of the Region 6W Area Agency on Aging has had an eventful year. On October 1, 2003, the Southwestern Area Agency on Aging - Region 8 in Slayton became the Call Center for the four-region collaborative of Regions 6E, 6W, 8 and 9. The Call Center answers the Senior LinkAge Line® for the 27 counties Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Along with this change came the addition of RxConnect™, which helps people of all ages access free or low cost prescriptions directly from pharmaceutical manu-

facturers. RxConnect™ has allowed staff to assist a number of clients in receiving their prescriptions at a reduced cost and has made quite an impact on the lives of those we have assisted.

Another result of the move to one Call Center among the four regions was the transition of I & A staff to a Senior Outreach Specialist position. This allowed staff to have more of a community presence and be available in the region for presentations, health fairs and one-on-one assistance with seniors needing more individual help.

The Senior Surf Day sessions were another hit this year. Staff held ten sessions

in the communities of Canby, Benson and Milan with about 50 seniors attending. These sessions teach the basics of computers and using the internet. The Pioneerland Public Libraries have been a great help in making these sessions so successful.

Currently the main focus of the I & A program is the Medicare-Approved Drug Discount cards that became available in May. Staff is busy giving community presentations, answering questions and providing one-on-one assistance to seniors interested in the cards.

# AREA AGENCY ON AGING

## EDP Project

This past year (2003) marked six years of ElderCare Development Partnerships (EDP), formerly known as Senior Agenda for Independent Living (SAIL) in Region 6W. EDP, a 13-county collaborative funded by a state grant through the MN Board on Aging (MBA), provides technical assistance to local providers to develop and implement service delivery models in line with long-term care systems rebalancing to ensure efficient and quality service, to promote consumer choice and to maximize local resources.

A priority activity for EDP is to work with counties and other long-term care service providers to collaboratively develop sustainable proposals for systems change, accessing the state's Community Service/Service Development (CS/SC) grant funds and/or other resources as appropriate.

Funding for the current EDP contract ends June 30, 2004, but it is anticipated there will be an extension of the contract, dating July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005. This contract was awarded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services to fulfill Mid-Minnesota EDP's mission, with Region 9 AAA being the lead agency.

EDP will continue to maximize the effectiveness and targeting of existing public and private long-term care dollars; make more strategic use of informal and family caregivers; and/or use

technologies appropriately to extend and improve service quality to meet locally identified long-term care needs.

### Title III Older Americans Act Grant Dollars

1/1/03 - 12/31/03

#### Title III-B

Prairie Five RIDES	\$ 29,000
Western MN Legal Services	\$ 22,000
Yellow Medicine East Chore	\$ 11,243
AAA - Information & Assistance	\$ 29,225
Prairie Five HOME	\$ 27,580
Monte Friendly Visiting/Chore	\$ 5,900

#### Title III-C1

Prairie Five Congregate Dining	\$128,509
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#### Title III-C2

Prairie Five Home Delivered Meals	\$ 67,183
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#### Title III-D

Countryside Public Health	\$ 2,475
Prairie Five NAPIS	\$ 7,833

#### Title III-E

AAA Information & Assistance	\$ 14,250
Prairie Five Project CARE	\$ 80,369

#### State Nutrition Award

Prairie Five Congregate Dining	\$ 60,897
Prairie Five Home Delivered	\$ 11,388

#### USDA

Prairie Five Nutrition	\$ 93,713
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# GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Service Bureau has been busy the last year on numerous projects for the region. We have been in the process of finishing the digital versions of the ditch maps for Yellow Medicine and Swift Counties. In this project, all of the paper maps are being changed into a digital format while adding all the information that pertains to each ditch. The end result will be that the county is able to use the information with other digital products that we have provided, such as the parcel-based map. Along

with this we have been turning the ditch profiles for Swift County into a digital format to be linked to each ditch. This will allow quicker access to all the ditch information without having to pick up a paper map.

Another project finished this year was a parcel map of Polk County. This project was one of the biggest projects the GIS Service Bureau has done. With mapping the county and the cities, there were roughly 16,500 parcels drawn along with the road right-of-ways.

The GIS Service Bureau also provided all the mapping for the Hazard Mitigation Plans for the counties of Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle and Yellow Medicine. The Upper Sioux Community and Swift County will be on the agenda for mapping next year.

This coming year looks to be a good one so far. Along with the Hazard Mitigation, we have also signed contracts for work in Yellow Medicine and Chippewa Counties.

## *Governor's Council on Geographic Information Update*

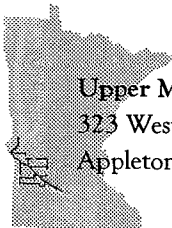
During the past year with the Governor's Council on Geographic Information, a number of accomplishments have been met. The state received the final version of 2003 color air photos of the state. Also, the Council helped secure funding for research to correct

distortions in published soils maps and to establish guidelines for a Minnesota Data Clearinghouse to provide access to almost 20 sources that provide more than 7,000 data downloads a month. The Council also supported the new geography standards for

schools.

If you have any questions about the Governor's Council or anything related to Geographic Information Systems, please contact the GIS Service Bureau.

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