

REGION NINE

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DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Annual Report 2004



Your Regional Partner For Progress



region nine
development commission

Your Regional Partner For Progress

P.O. Box 3367 Mankato MN 56002-3367
507.387.5643 800.450.5643 Fax 507.387.7105 www.rndc.org

December 2004

Honorable Commissioners, Public Elected Officials, Citizens, and Partners:

On behalf of the Region Nine Development Commission, we respectfully submit the Region Nine Development Commission's 2004 Annual Report. This report is intended to convey successes and progress in the various areas of focus, as well as a financial overview of the year.

The Region Nine Development Commission takes great pride in working with and on behalf of counties, cities, townships and schools throughout south central Minnesota. Since 1972, being a partner for progress has led to the development of programs and identification of solutions in the areas of aging, economic development, healthy communities, small business development, transportation, community development, and leveraging regional resources.

The year 2004 may best be described as a year of transition. Through collaboration and partnering with three adjacent regions, including Regions 8, 6E, and 6W, the area agency on aging transitioned to become the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging, serving the 27 county area. Human service oriented programming such as youth development and drug prevention continue to be severely impacted by federal and state financial constraints. As a result, Region Nine began exploring different partnership arrangements for programs such as youth development, drug prevention and health outreach. Key partners may play a more prominent role in the future for these areas including the possibility of hosting a program. The Small Business Development Center set an all time record high for the number of clients served in a year and the amount of money invested in the region. The Saludando Salud program charted new waters by bridging the gap between private businesses and the health needs of a diverse workforce. Region Nine began exploring new and valuable areas of focus for its communities including areas of telehealth, alternative energy, and transit coordination.

We are very pleased with the work completed by the Region Nine Development Commission in the year 2004. Without the hard work and commitment of Region Nine Commissioners, staff, partners and volunteers, such progress would not have been possible. The success stories and progress outlined in this report are all part of ensuring citizens abilities to experience, participate in and enjoy a high quality of life in south central Minnesota.

Respectfully yours,

James J. Broich
Chair (Year 2004)

Reginald M. Edwards
Executive Director



History

Who are we?

- Forty-three leaders from across the region serve on the Commission; including:
- Thirty-four elected officials representing nine counties, 72 cities, 147 townships, school districts and soil and water conservation districts.
- Eight representatives of special interest groups include: agriculture, commerce, crime prevention, environmental quality, health and human welfare, minority populations, tourism and recreation and transportation. The Minnesota Valley Council of Governments is also represented.

Where do we serve?

- Region Nine is comprised of nine south central Minnesota county areas including: Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, LeSueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca and Watonwan. Their combined population is 222,790 of the state's 4,919,479 people according to the 2000 Census. Fairmont, North Mankato, New Ulm and Mankato are the four largest cities.

A history in progress

The Region Nine Development Commission was authorized by the Regional Development Act of 1969, and was organized by local officials in 1972. The purpose of regional development commissions "is to work with and on behalf of local units of government to develop plans or implement programs to address economic, social, physical and governmental concerns of each region of the state."

According to state statutes,

"The legislature finds that problems of growth and development transcend the boundary lines of local government units and not a single unit can plan for their solution without affecting other units in the region; and assistance is needed to make the most effective use of local, state, federal and private programs in serving the citizens of urban and rural regions."



"Region Nine plays a critical role in helping local communities access federal resources for needed services such as economic development and aging."

**-U.S. Senator
Norm Coleman**

"I thank Region Nine for bringing important agricultural issues, such as crop rotation and value-added products, to the attention of federal lawmakers. Region Nine provides a good service for our local communities."

**-U.S. Representative
Gil Gutknecht**

"Townships and small cities can use the services and expertise available through Region Nine Development Commission. These services can be a valuable tool to small units of government in this time of shrinking tax base and tight budgets."

**-Sandy Hooker,
Medo Township Supervisor and
Chair of the Blue Earth County
Township Association**

Mission



Our Mission

The mission of the Region Nine Development Commission is to promote the development of the region through intergovernmental cooperation, community and human development, long-range planning and technical assistance.

Our Value Statements

Vision/Goals

We will maintain a future-oriented perspective that helps to facilitate decisions which result in healthier and more prosperous communities that are better equipped to move forward into the future.

Accountability

We are accountable to the public, our funding agencies and to each other for the quality of our work, promoting development of the region and being fiscally responsible.

Professionalism

We promote, encourage and provide opportunities for development, leadership and mentoring at all levels of participation within the organization. We expect professionalism to be demonstrated by our behavior, conduct and loyalty.

Communications

We value timely, open and honest communication to enhance organization effectiveness.

Adaptability

We embrace change and celebrate new challenges, are able to identify problems, look at the options and evaluate the consequences with a sense of purpose and future.

Diversity

We value and respect the diversity of the region and of our organization.

Teamwork

We support teamwork across the organization, lending knowledge and skill as needed to be successful and efficient.

"I am impressed by the Region Nine Development Commission's innovative work to coordinate transit services. I wish the federal government would provide significantly more funding for both highways and transit."

U.S. Senator Mark Dayton

"Region Nine not only works to help out smaller communities today, but it looks ahead to where communities will need help in the future, which is why I wrote a letter supporting its USDA-Telehealth grant proposal for the cities of Gaylord and Henderson."

U.S. Representative Collin Peterson

"Region Nine is very important in solving the problems of small towns in my legislative district."

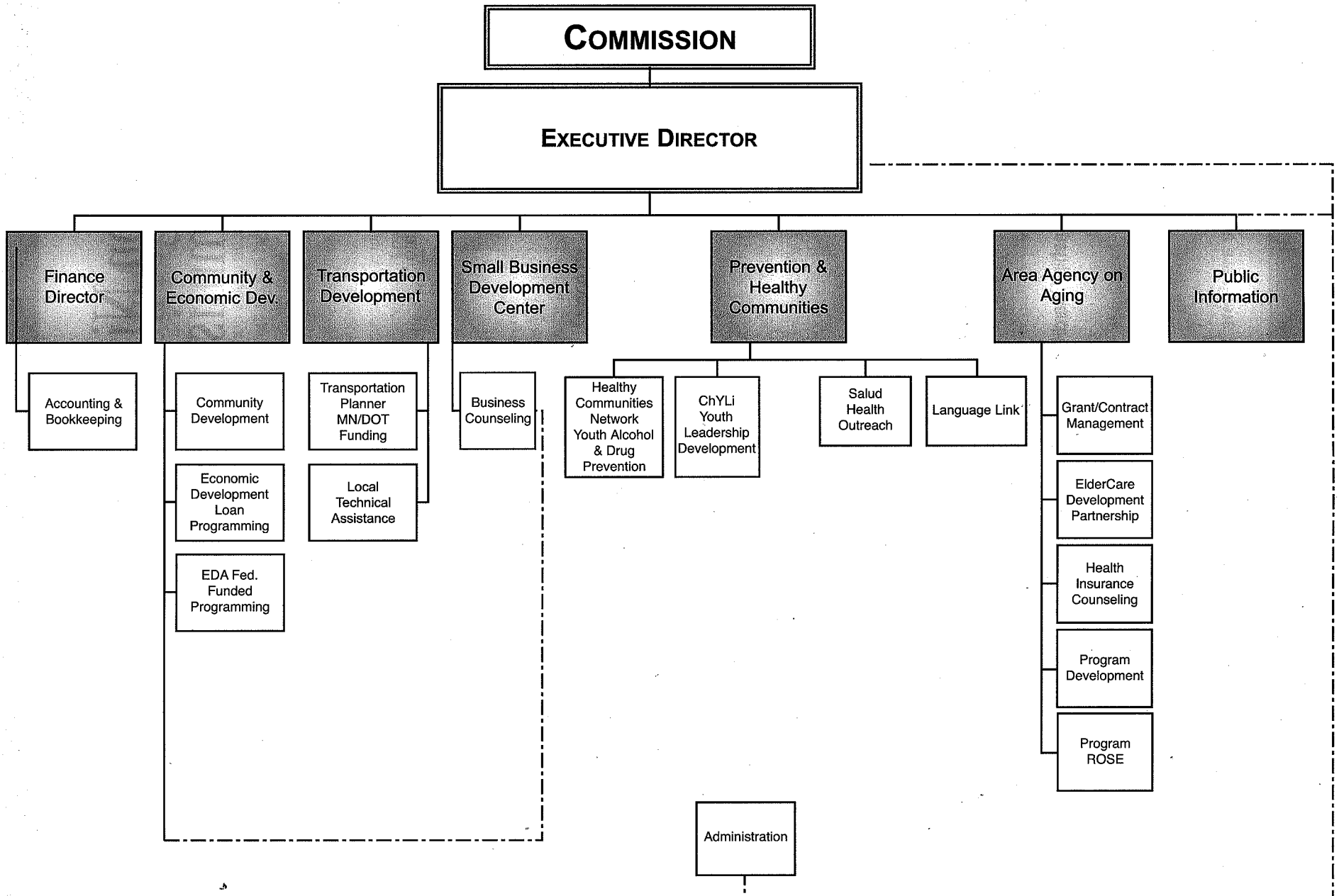
**Representative Bob Gunther
District 24A**

"By R-9 Commissioners going to the capitol each year to visit area representatives and senators, we keep our concerns and issues current and expect results!"

**Wendell Armstrong,
Waseca County Commissioner**

Region Nine Development Commission

Organization Chart



Region Nine Development Commission Members

Blue Earth County

Beal, Jim - Cities under 10,000
Bruender, Kip - County Commissioner
Kagermeier, Jeff - Mayor, City of Mankato *
More, Alvis - Agriculture *
Phelps, Ray - Township Board

Brown County

Berg, Jim - County Commissioner
Broich, James (R9 Chair) - Cities under 10,000 *
Juni, Frederick - Township Board *
Webster, Ruth Ann - New Ulm City Council

Faribault County

Anderson, Larry K. - Commerce
Loveall, Tom - County Commissioner
Nelson, Dennis - Township Board
Oldfather, Roger - Cities under 10,000 *

LeSueur County

Dietz, Alvin - Environmental Quality
Holicky, Janet - MN Valley Council of Governments
McGuire, Mick - Cities under 10,000
Smith, Jr., Pat - Crime Prevention
Rohfling, Mary Jean - School Board
Stangler, Bill - County Commissioner
Stangler, James (R9 Vice Chair) - Township Board *

Martin County

Gorath, Harlan - Fairmont City Council
Hanson, Kenneth - Township Board
Roesler, Bob - Cities under 10,000 *
Schmidtke, Dan - County Commissioner

Nicollet County

Gonzalez, Francisco - Minority Populations
Prosch, John - Township Board
Hawbaker, Jerry - Mayor, City of St. Peter *
Sieberg, Lowell - Mayor, City of North Mankato*
Stenson, James - County Commissioner

Sibley County

Bauer, Leo - County Commissioner *
Kaufmann, Norbert - Township Board
Pautsch, Brenda - Cities under 10,000
Steckman, Patricia - Tourism & Recreation

Waseca County

Armstrong, Wendell - County Commissioner
Brandenburg, Eldo - Township Board *
Christiansen, Mark - Cities under 10,000
Fitzsimmons, Jack - Transportation

Watonwan County

Fenske, Candace - Health & Human Welfare
Firchau, Dennis - Cities under 10,000
Froslan, Janet - Township Board
Krenz, Dwayne - County Commissioner *
Martin, Lynette - School Board

Note: * Board of Directors

Area Agency on Aging

"To live into your 90s is really something — oh my!" exclaimed 94-year-old Inez Hammond of Sleepy Eye as she clapped her hands together. Inez, born in Morgan in 1911 and the last survivor of eight siblings, has been a recipient of the Faith in Action Brown County Peer Counseling and Volunteer Services programs since experiencing the loss of four significant people in her life within ten months. In addition, her physical health did not allow her to continue with some of the more challenging household chores, therefore, Inez also utilized the services of a Faith in Action Brown County volunteer to assist in cleaning her windows. Since Inez does not have family members living in the area, Faith in Action Brown County has also connected her with support through volunteer Friendly Visitors.

Faith in Action Brown County Executive Director, Stacy Daub and Caregiver Educator, Lida Rollof, first became acquainted with Inez when her husband Sam participated in Adult Day Services, which gave Inez a much-needed respite from taking care of her husband. It also gave Inez some free time to tend to her flower and vegetable garden, which Inez loved to do, but missed due to her declining health. Following the death of Inez's husband, Lida and Stacy recognized that Inez could benefit from some of the services that Faith in Action Brown County provided.

An ad in the Sleepy Eye Herald from Faith in Action Brown County recruiting volunteers caught the eye of Sleepy Eye newcomer, Connie Ibberson. Connie had provided care for her own parents and recognized the importance of friendly visitors for family members and also caregiver respite. Without hesitation Connie placed a call to Stacy Daub in response to the ad and was immediately matched with Inez. Connie and Inez meet at least once a week plus Connie makes a phone call to Inez every other day. Connie says, "Inez is a honey. She is such an inspiration at age 94 and has a great sense of humor." Their time together consists of visiting at each other's homes and going out to eat. Inez loves eating out and loves most types of food.

The compassion, warmth and love are apparent between Connie and Inez and go far beyond the role of volunteer/recipient. When asked about her friendship with Connie, a teary eyed Inez responded, "Connie has filled an empty spot in my life."

Faith in Action Brown County is funded through the Older Americans Act and the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging as part of an Area Plan approved by the Minnesota Board on Aging. "Programs such as Faith In Action Brown County play a vital role in the long-term care system," according to Linda Giersdorf, Executive Director of the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging.

When asked about her philosophy on life, Inez explained, "You will always have pain and feel down, but you can always manage to smile." At the Faith in Action Brown County's Celebrity Fundraiser Dinner, peer counselor Connie Ibberson and her friend Inez Hammond were asked to tell about their experiences. Inez did not hesitate to take advantage of the microphone that was placed in front of her and proclaimed to the attendees, "Love life, love people. There just isn't enough love in the world." We all could do well to follow Inez's lead.

Pictured, from left to right: Stacy Daub, Inez Hammond and Connie Ibberson



"Faith in Action is one of the better programs around and we need to keep getting the word out about its services," says Connie.



Congregate Meals served: 151,460

Home Delivered Meals served: 53,266

Clients assisted with Medicare issues and questions: 1,517

Caregivers served: 4,438

Community Development

The Ten Vision Statements

Infrastructure Vision Statement: The Waseca County community will plan for, construct and maintain quality infrastructure that is safe, affordable, environmentally sound, aesthetically pleasing and allowing managed growth.

Transportation Vision Statement: The Waseca County community will have a transportation system that facilitates and strengthens its economic vitality and effectively moves people to and from required destinations.

Sustainable Agriculture Vision Statement: Two trends are of intense concern: the loss of productive agricultural land to urban, industrial, and other development and the conversion of marginal lands and underdeveloped areas to agricultural use. In general, land should not be converted from those agricultural uses, which protect long-term resource productivity. Comprehensive land-use planning is necessary to ensure a balance of lands for all purposes.

Technology Vision Statement: The Waseca County community will encourage the development and maintenance of state-of-the-art telecommunications and Internet services that meet our citizens' needs and keeps our businesses competitive.

Population Growth Vision Statement: The Waseca County community will strive for steady growth in population while maintaining a unique quality of life.

Integrated Services Vision Statement: The Waseca County community governmental jurisdictions will provide integrated services in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible.

Economic Strength Vision Statement: The Waseca County community will be an economically sound and business-friendly community emphasizing the need to retain and expand current and new businesses as the base for economic strength and employment growth.

Multicultural Population Vision Statement: The Waseca County community represents a multicultural population that will aspire to live and work together in harmony through public awareness and appreciation of cultural differences.

Education Systems Vision Statement: The Waseca County community will continue to strive for and support world-class education systems that emphasize the importance of life-long learning.

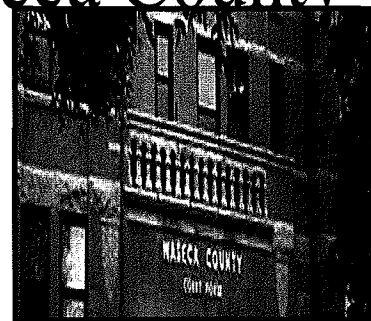
Positive Image Vision Statement: The Waseca County community will portray a strong positive image as a place to live, work, play and do business.

Region Nine Development Commission worked over the past two years with Waseca County in developing its comprehensive plan. The last comprehensive plan adopted by the County was in 1970. The primary purpose of the Plan is to provide a "vision" for growth, development and community sustainability and vitality by outlining what Waseca County residents would like to see occur in the future.

The Waseca County Comprehensive Plan focuses on growth and development issues for the next 20 years, or until approximately the year 2025.

The Waseca County comprehensive planning process was designed from the start to have strong citizen participation and intergovernmental cooperation. The County Board appointed a Citizen's Task Force to assist with the development of the Comprehensive Plan. The Task Force participants included citizen representatives, elected and appointed officials from the county, cities and townships.

Waseca County

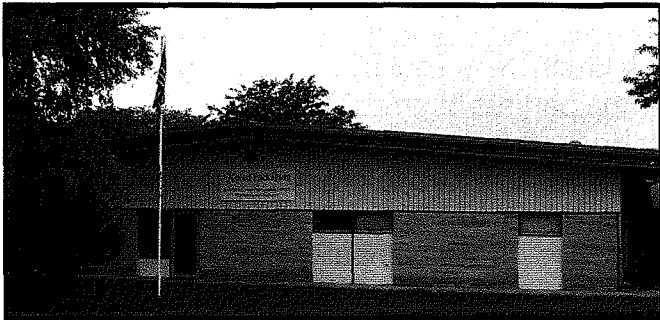


Court House

Economic Development



PROGRESS



Exceed Packaging

Exceed Packaging, a contract packager and assembler of food products, electrical components, and medical supplies, officially opened its new 50,000 square foot St. Peter facility on January 5, 2004. The company revamped a manufacturing building that had been used for storage after the previous tenant moved. It brought 15 new jobs to the city, such as supervisors, sales positions, production and plant managers, as well as administration and production positions. Exceed invested more than \$1 million in capital into its new headquarters.

Region Nine Development Commission's Revolving Loan Fund Program, in partnership with a local lending institution, provided the necessary additional capital so this start-up business could hit the ground running. "Access to capital is key for existing and start-up businesses and Region Nine provided that necessary assistance," said Exceed President, Mark Steele.

The Region Nine Development Commission, as the designated Economic Development District for the nine county area, prepared the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Its approval maintains eligibility to receive continued financial assistance from the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Dept. of Commerce.

The CEDS helps create jobs, foster stable and diversified economies and enhance quality of life. It coordinates the efforts of individuals, organizations, local governments and private industry concerned with economic development. The CEDS provides a positive impact in numerous ways for:

- Leveraging financial capital
- Expanding uses for revolving loan funds
- Value-added agriculture and new agriculture
- Providing a solid infrastructure

Region Nine Development Commission's Revolving Loan Fund Program works in partnership with local lending institutions, economic development organizations and government agencies to help "fill the gap" between available and necessary financial resources. Since inception, Region Nine's RLF has closed 159 loans with start-up and expanding businesses and has disbursed over \$9.2 million. Over 1,700 jobs have been created or retained.

"We are fortunate in southern Minnesota to have Region Nine as a resource to assist business start-ups and expansions. Region Nine's RLF program is a valuable partner to the City of Sleepy Eye to help make economic development happen. Their staff is always professional and truly interested in knowing about your community and economic development projects."

**-Rob Anderson, City of Sleepy Eye
Community Development Director**

Prevention & Healthy Communities Network

Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth: New Ulm Area (HC/HY) is one of the thirteen coalitions in the Prevention and Healthy Communities Network. During Spring 2004, HC/HY conducted a community wide campaign to address alcohol use by minors, vehicle safety and supplying alcohol to minors. This annual campaign was held during April and May to raise awareness during the prom and graduation season.

The components of the campaign included a billboard, Sticker Shock, a mock car crash, a brochure to graduates parents, and three presentations by Medical Legal Death Investigator, Jill Romann, called "In Your

Face". The target audiences were High School youth, parents of High School students and community members. In the brochure it outlines the laws and penalties for providing alcohol to minors. With graduation open houses in mind, the brochure is sent by High Schools Principals to the parents of graduates.

Each year there is a different combination of strategies used to promote the campaign messages. HC/HY collaborates with several agencies on the campaign: New Ulm Police Department, New Ulm Area Schools, New Ulm Medical Center, New Ulm Area Youth Council, PRO Kinship for Kids, and Brown County Public Health.

Chicano Latino Youth Leadership Institute

Region Nine continued in 2004 to conduct the Chicano Latino Youth Leadership Institute (ChYLI). ChYLI is a culturally based asset-building program with follow-up training and assistance from bi-lingual role models, facilitators and trainers. School-aged youth, grades seven to twelve who participate in this program learn about their culture and leadership skills. This project strives to decrease alcohol and other drug abuse in Chicano Latino youth; build assets and leadership skills; construct a network of leaders in the Chicano Latino community; and empower Chicano Latino youth to be active participants in community decision-making and vision setting.

Chicano Latino youth, their families, schools and communities in Region Nine also continue to connect through Project Reconnect, which incorporates the nationally known culturally

specific education curriculum "CADA CABEZA UN MUNDO" (Each Mind is a World). This curriculum is used in three area high schools in Region Nine in an effort to address the disconnection of Chicano-Latino youth and their parents. The project targets Chicano-Latino youth, grades seven to twelve who are most at-risk for school failure, suspension and expulsion. Parents and educators of the youth participants are also serviced through this curriculum.

Outcomes:

The high school graduation rate among participating ChYLI youth is 73% compared to the 35% graduation rate for Latino Youth in south central Minnesota. Eighty-five percent of those graduating pursue post-secondary education.

PROGRESS

Saludando Salud



ChYLI PROGRESS

Identified outcomes include:

1. Number of youth who participated in the program. There were approximately 40 youth from three schools that participated. More than 350 youth have participated in ChYLI since 1996.
2. Increase school connectedness among students with low levels of connectedness. The percentage of youth participants who felt they had a good knowledge of their culture increased from 11% to 48%.
3. Help remove or reduce barriers to school engagement such as poor school climate. The percentage of youth participants who felt they knew how to be a leader increased from 13% to 46%.
4. Help youth connect with alternative resources to complete their education. The percentage of youth participants who felt they could develop an action plan increased from 4% to 34%.
5. Increase involvement of Chicano-Latino parents. A total of 13 parents participated in this program.

Two-Year Summary Data:

- **Importance of Education:** 89% of youth participants rated this class good to excellent.
- **Values:** 83% of youth participants rated this class good to excellent.
- **Educational Goals:** 89% of youth participants rated this class good to excellent.
- **College Visit:** 94% of youth participants rated this class good to excellent.
- **Dream Job:** 83% of youth participants rated this class good to excellent.
- **Educational Resources:** 83% of youth participants rated this class good to excellent.
- **Self-acceptance:** 83% of youth participants rated this class good to excellent.
- **Reflection:** 100% of youth participants rated this class good to excellent.

(Project Reconnect to Learning Data Summary Report, December, 2004)

Healthy workforces are making the news in companies across the nation. Corporations, large and small, are recognizing the need to reinforce their bottom line by making sure they have a healthy and productive workforce, especially in these trying times of downsizing and downward economic trends. How can that be done and who is cutting a path through the waning mindset of corporations of the 80's and 90's that tended to get the most out of the employee without regenerating that employee? Who is helping workforces move into the emerging trend toward good health and therefore increased corporate profits? Community Health Workers are performing outreach in greater and greater numbers. Saludando Salud is a leader in health promotion in south central Minnesota, helping corporations understand and recognize that it is not only the expectations of employees working sixty hours or more a week that causes a slowing of production and low moral, but it is also the employee taking responsibility for their own health through education. Along with that ingredient come other factors that play a role in good health and productive workforces such as the support of the companies themselves, the community at large, the medical community and the families of the employees. It takes everyone working together to make a healthy and productive community and workforce.

Saludando Salud, which means, "greeting health" in Spanish, is working within several companies in south central Minnesota including Tony Downs Foods to grow healthier communities, corporations and profits, and individuals. Saludando Salud's current outreach is to the Latino population. Tony Downs Foods, a forward thinking company, employs Latinos at the rate of approximately 70% of its total employee population. Each of those persons has the

Saludando Salud



PROGRESS

4 Worksites offering Saludando Salud health promotion/education services (**150** participants).

Worksite health screenings for:

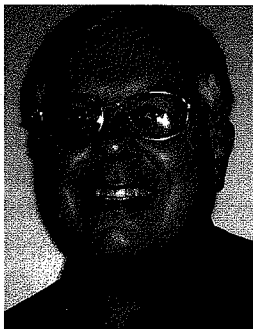
Blood pressure
Cholesterol
Blood sugar

Mass outreach continues with weekly radio show, **Su Salud**.

“Improving the health of our employees is a top priority of our entire management team. Saludando Salud has been an important part of our over all employee wellness program. Slowing the increase of health care costs and increased productivity is a nice side benefit of assisting our employees lead a healthier life style. Gloria Thulien and Teresa Schumann have work with Saludando Salud to make the program a success at Tony Downs Foods and Butterfield Foods.”

**Roy
Krull**

Tony Downs Foods



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opportunity to take part in bilingual, culturally and linguistically appropriate health education in their workplace. Tony Downs Foods understands the benefits to them, such as reduction of healthcare costs and increased productivity, so well that they pick up the costs and offer this unique opportunity at no charge to all of their employees. They know the average national return on investment reports \$3.00 in benefits per \$1.00 spent. Tony Downs Foods head management also understands that their investment carries over to family and improved health of future work forces, which increases their potential for bigger and longer-term savings. The only reductions that Tony Downs Foods is bound to see, as well as other companies that engage health education such as offered by Saludando Salud, are absenteeism and healthcare costs.

As part of the health education program on diabetes and cardiovascular disease, the Madelia Community Hospital has been an active and supportive partner and is a resource for Tony Downs Foods employees for health screenings such as cholesterol and blood sugar. Underscoring their bond in becoming healthier together, employees and Tony Downs Foods share the cost of the screenings.

An outgrowth of hiring Saludando Salud and the focus on good health at Tony Downs Foods is the initiating of its own in-house blood pressure screening administered by plant staff.

What is next for Saludando Salud? Certainly they will continue to work with companies in south central Minnesota that employ Latinos helping both the employee and employer partner for better health. It will be of great interest to watch Saludando Salud to see if in the years to come the mission is broadened and mainstream populations are added to the program.

Small Business Development Center

Opening a dance studio in Montgomery was a natural step for Diane Domine. She had been teaching dance in the Twin Cities since 1980 and wanted to bring her passion for dance to a smaller community. In 1993, she opened her own studio in Montgomery with 87 students.

Today, the beat of the music fills the air when students at Center Stage Dance in Montgomery focus on their routines. This year, approximately 325 students (ages 4-18) participate in tap, jazz, ballet and pointe classes. Another 50 children (ages 3-5) participate in the Tumbling and Fun Program. She offers "Boys Only" classes as well as Yoga classes for adults.

"We've been fortunate, enrollment has increased each year since we opened," Diane said. "We outgrew the facility downtown and in January of 2003 my husband, Troy, and I bought a 7,000-square-foot building in Montgomery."

Diane learned about the Region Nine Small Business Development Center (R9 SBDC) from Troy. Diane said she likes the independence and flexibility of owning her own business. "I believe in what I do," she enthusiastically declared. "Being a small business owner provides me with the creative license to develop and carry out a teaching program based on what I believe to be the best philosophies regarding dance instruction."

Troy said he understands the value of the SBDC and tells everyone he knows about it. "When people are exploring their options, the SBDC is an asset because you can discuss business issues with someone who has a business perspective. The SBDC is essential for any new or existing business. Another important fact is that the R9 SBDC is funded by banks, cities and government agencies. Their contributions are vital and make a huge difference to entrepreneurs and their communities."

"The SBDC helped us in so many ways. They helped us create a business plan and a financing package. The business plan created a clear picture of what we could do and prepared us to meet with the bank."

**Diane Domine, Center Stage Dance Studio,
Montgomery, MN**

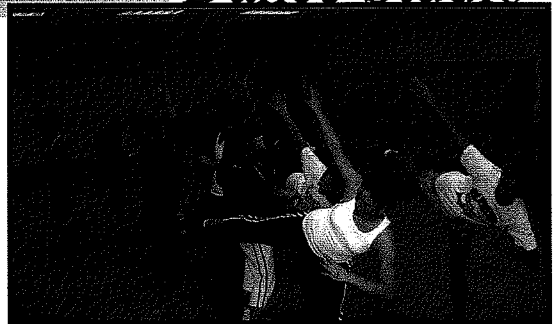


PROGRESS

Clients	303
Hours of Counseling Services	2,553
Seminars	8
Attendees	172
Women Clients	96
Hours (Women Clients)	801
Minority Clients	27
Hours (Minority Clients)	180

- Loan Packages approved and invested in the Region – **Over \$11 million**
- Benefit to Cost Ratios:
 - For every **\$1 spent** on the SBDC operations there was **\$4.65 generated** in tax revenue.
- Responses from the 2003 ASBDC/MNSBDC Economic Impact Study for Minnesota:
 - Client satisfaction rate **90%**.
 - **91%** would recommend Region Nine SBDC to others.
- Local Match funds were contributed by **more than 50 organizations**.

Center Stage Dance Studio



Transportation



- Coordination of services with volunteer drivers has been established in LeSueur County, which previously did not exist. There have been over 200 rides/month, which is more monthly than rides coordinated by the county all of last year.
- A new entity in LeSueur County that provides volunteer driver services in October 2004. Approximately 200+ medical rides for LeSueur County residents per month.
- New contract with 5310 provider in Waterville to use their handicapped accessible vehicle to provide rides one day a week in the communities of Montgomery and Le Center. No other services are provided in these areas.
- Blue Earth County VINE (Faith-in-Action Program) – met its volunteer driver capacity and expanded services.
- Contracted with VINE to serve as the volunteer driver program coordinator in the nine county areas.
- Coordination of riders has informally started between Brown County Transit Services and Blue Earth VINE volunteer driver services as a result of this initiative. During the next phase, this will become a formal process and will incorporate all other county areas.
- Public transit providers (5310) were brought together to identify key issues.
- Dialogues have occurred with U-Care and other Twin City hospitals that provide a single service transit system for their patients only.
- Outreach is being conducted with health care providers in the region.

Region Nine has historically focused its transportation efforts on road and bridge policies; however, it has broadened its efforts to include transit.

An increasing challenge for the region in the coming decade will be quality of life for its aging population. Older adults living in rural areas of Minnesota are more likely to experience deficiencies in accessing healthcare due to transportation problems. According to the 2001 County Gaps Analysis, seven out of the nine counties in the region (e.g. Blue Earth, Faribault, Martin, LeSueur, Nicollet, Sibley and Watonwan) identified transportation as a high development need for older adults. In LeSueur County, it was one of the highest development needs identified.

Transit service across multiple counties in southern Minnesota is not possible without a personally owned vehicle or by spending an excess amount of money. A private paid ride may cost \$80 round trip to travel from, for example, the city of St. Peter to the city of Mankato, which is approximately 20 miles round trip. This is the norm for most rural areas. Current transit funding in Greater Minnesota goes to target a specific city area only and does not provide transit service funding for broader rural areas. There is no funding for transit coordination within Minnesota that meets the needs of the non-driving populations for job, medical, social or personal business related purposes.

A number of transit assets already exist in rural areas that could be utilized, including personally owned vehicles, non-profit vans, assisted living facility vans, church buses/vans, school buses, city buses, etc. A transit advisory group, along with staff has been attempting to develop a comprehensive transit system that utilizes these assets in a coordinated manner. This system will incorporate elements such as an integrated dispatch system, vehicle sharing plan, and provide coordination of volunteer driver recruitment, driver training, and inter-county transportation. A coordinated system will potentially save funds used for transportation by counties, non-profits, U-Care, Blue Plus, and other groups.

Regional Initiatives

Region Nine Development Commission partnered with Minnesota State University Mankato (MSU) sociology department to explore several key issues in the region including transit, alternative energy, regional indicators, and Telehealth. Highlighted on this page are two of those issues which are alternative energy and Telehealth.

Highspeed Technology (Broadband):

The R9 Northern Technology Corridor Initiative is a collaborative effort to increase vitality and quality of life in rural communities. The initiative is to develop a Telehealth and Distance Learning pilot project in three core communities (e.g. the Cities of Henderson, Gaylord, and Arlington). The goals of the broader initiative are to:

- 1. Provide integrated, accessible and affordable broadband infrastructure to small rural communities throughout southern Minnesota.**
- 2. Promote and educate citizens on uses of broadband technology and services.**
- 3. Provide some level of service delivery in the areas of Telehealth, Education-Distance Learning, and Economic Development.**
- 4. Integrate investment and development opportunities of businesses, government, education institutions, medical institutions, and community service providers.**
- 5. Aid communities in retaining and luring residents.**
- 6. Create niche or cluster industry.**
- 7. Create an entrepreneurial spirit and environment.**

Like many United States rural communities throughout the Mid-west, rural communities in Minnesota are experiencing rapid aging of its population, out migration of young families, a decline in total population, and personal income. The rippling effects of these trends result in a loss of services, technical professionals, and community infrastructure. Ultimately, they challenge the sense of vibrancy and

mere existence of many small rural communities.

Solutions to addressing such large-scale challenges of rural communities lie in communities working together, leveraging resources across communities, and tapping into the collective innovation and assets of multiple communities. An old phrase says it best "united we stand, but divided we fall." The future of rural development rests in the willingness of communities and sectors to stand together.

The R9 Technology Corridor Initiative sets out to work with multiple communities (i.e. businesses, governments, non-profits, and educational institutions) to leverage their assets and innovation, to spur new business and social opportunities, and to increase health and enhance labor skills in their communities. The framework of this initiative specifically lays the foundation for integrated development and use of broadband for businesses and residents in areas such as telepharmacy, distance learning, and training.

Telehealth: Rural Minnesota has experienced the closure of 102 pharmacies since 1996. In most cases these closing were not in conjunction with the opening of a new pharmacy. In fact, from 1996-1999, nine of the 38 pharmacy closures occurring in rural Minnesota leave the community without access to a local pharmacy.

An increasing danger of older adults aging in isolation in rural areas is mental illness. There is an increasing number of prescription drug overdoses and suicides among older adults. The youth have also experienced a similar pattern. For several years suicide has been listed as one of the top three causes of death among youth in Minnesota, as well as nationally.

Both of these health issues, in addition to a decline in and shortage of mental health professionals (psychiatrists and psychologists) as well as a lack of availability of hospital beds, have a devastating impact on small rural communities because it means a business lost, a family moving because of a lack of services, the death of a neighbor; and the spirit of hope in a community becomes a flicker.

This proposal would provide pharmacy and mental health services via broadband technology to aid in addressing these issues.

Distance Learning: This proposal would help the first online charter school authorized by the State of Minnesota to open its portals to kids throughout Greater Rural Minnesota through broadband technology. Declining student population throughout rural Minnesota has lead to state policy makers reducing the funding for public schools in rural areas, which has resulted in school closures or mergers. The growing distance from homes to schools are increasingly getting longer, which results in children spending more time on buses than with their families. Ultimately, this impacts the quality of life and health of families.

The uniqueness of this initiative is that it integrates multiple needs and resources of various communities (businesses, governments, non-profits and educational institutions) by using a central broadband infrastructure, thereby reducing cost both now and in the future for communities, increasing accessibility through broadband due to developing a cohesive market for providers, and improving the quality of life in rural communities.

This initiative is a collaborative effort by the City of Henderson, EdVision Technology, Sibley County, Minnesota State University Mankato—Department of Sociology, Region Nine Development Commission, Health Care and Document Inc., Gaylord Pharmacy, Closing The Gap Computer Technology, and City of Henderson Tourism.

Alternative Energy: A collaborative starting with the Minnesota State University, Mankato—Sociology Department, local experts and Region Nine Development Commission began exploring, researching and discussing what was happening in the field of renewable energy in southern Minnesota. Engaging in this initiative is important to rural communities for three primary reasons including rural community resources, protecting the environment, and national interest.

Community Resource: Approximately two-thirds of the rural communities in south-central Minnesota have populations less than 2,500 people. After extracting children and the retired elderly population from the total population, the workforce numbers become much smaller; and thereby its revenue generating capability on a per capita basis becomes limited. While

community financial resources become more limited, the cost of community maintenance and development continue to increase. In order to maintain community essential services, parks and schools communities must look for alternative revenue resources (i.e. alternative energy utility enterprise ventures). It is imperative that communities look at the future and work differently with regard to economic development. We must marshal and leverage our resources and knowledge to grow industries.

Environment: A character and one of the greater attributes of rural communities is the environment. Trees, lakes, prairie land, and indigenous animals and plants are all part of the beautiful landscape of rural communities. Seeking the development of renewable energy that preserves the rich land, lakes, and air we enjoy is important for many reasons, one of which is the myriad research demonstrating the relationship between health and environment.

National Interest: Renewable energy is a hot topic at the national and state level. At the national level issues ranging from the oil wells in Iraq, drilling in Alaska, record high gas prices and emissions control all contribute to a desire nationally to look at renewable energy for various reasons. In Minnesota, Governor Pawlenty has made greater commitments to the use of ethanol, south-east Minnesota continues to develop wind farms and methane digesters are being developed just to the north of the region. As a nation and state, there appears to be broad-based support for reducing the country's dependency on foreign oil. Development of wind farms or other alternative fuel sources is a step in that direction.

“Region Nine provides its cities the opportunity to make referrals to quality business loan programs and small business development services that would be extremely difficult for a small community to provide on its own.”

The Commission is also positioned well to assist communities in addressing regional issues, such as public transportation, in a much more comprehensive fashion than most communities could do on their own.”

Troy Domine
Community Development Director
City of Montgomery

“Gracias” Thank you for making a difference

Region Nine Advisory Council on Aging

Lul Ahmed, At Large Any Age, Mankato
Vicki Attenberger, County Social Service, North Mankato
Archie Baumann, Faribault County 60+, Wells
Carroll Behne, Martin County 60+, Sherburn
Mary Bliesmer, Public/Private Agency, North Mankato
Jo Cattrysse, Nicollet County 60+ Chair, North Mankato
Janice Fox, Blue Earth County 60+, Mankato
Charlie Griebel, Brown County 60+, New Ulm
Phyllis Harrison, LeSueur County 60+, Le Center
Mindy Hawkins, Nursing Home Representative, Mankato
Chris Olson, County Social Service, New Ulm
Richard “Dick” Peterson, Sibley County 60+, Belle Plaine
Ronald Purcell, Waseca County 60+, Waseca
Wally Schmiesing, At Large 60+, Hanska
Bonnie Viland, Watonwan County 60+, LaSalle
Jim Berg, RNDC Liaison, Brown County, New Ulm
Candace Fenske, RNDC Liaison, Madelia
Bill Stangler, RNDC Liaison, LeSueur County, St. Peter

Minnesota Department of Transportation District 7 Area Transportation Partnership

Bob Apitz, **Connie Swanson**, Transit
Steve Koehler, Cities
Wayne Stevens, **Steve Schnieder**, **Craig Rubis**,
Wendell Armstrong, Counties
Darrell Holmberg, Region 8
Jim Broich, Region 9
Lisa Bigham, **Greg Ous**, **Douglas Haeder**, **Jim Swanson**, MN/Dot

Region Nine Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

Wendell Armstrong, Waseca
Kip Bruender, Eagle Lake
Jack Fitzsimmons, Waseca
Terrance Genelín, LeSueur
Norbert Kaufmann, Belle Plaine
Wayne Stevens, New Ulm
John McDonald, Blue Earth
Mike Wagner, St. Peter
Alvin Dietz, New Prague
Alan Forsberg, Mankato
Doug Haeder, Mankato
Ken Hanson, Sherburn
Tom Loveall, Winnebago
Dwayne Krenz, Madelia

James Broich, Sleepy Eye Prevention & Healthy Communities Advisory Committee & Coalitions

Jeanell Aadahl, Advisory Committee Chair, At-Large
Carol Anderson, St. James Chemical Health/Violence
Prevention Advisory Council
Wendy Bachman, St. Peter Healthy Community Alliance
Latrice Brua, Montgomery SAFE
Kip Bruender, At Large-R9 Development Commission
Carol Dressler, Waterville-Elysian-Morristown Healthy
Communities
Roni Dauer, Martin County Networking
Harlan Gorath, At Large-R9 Development Commission
Rosalie Grams, Janesville Waldorf Pemberton T.E.A.M.
Task Force
Kristine Madsen, Maple River Community Network
Joe McCabe, Madelia Coalition for Healthy Life Choices
Barbara Penny, Waseca Healthy Community/Healthy
Kids Initiative
Erin Randall Rahman, LeSueur-Henderson Healthy
Communities, Inc.
Steve Schneider, At Large-Health Care
Carolyn Smith, United South Central One Healthy
Community
Anna Thill, Mankato Area Healthy Youth
Susan Ward, Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth New
Ulm Area

Revolving Loan Fund Review Committee

Larry Anderson, Center for Policy & Rural Development
Jim Broich, Mayor, City of Sleepy Eye
Don Hayden, Economic Development Director, Le
Center
Connie Ireland, Department of Employment & Economic
Development
Doug Miller, Nicollet County Bank
Dean Pederson, City of Winthrop Community
Development Director
Jim Paulson, Pioneer Bank, St. James
Bob Roesler, Sherburn City Council
Larry Thompson, Roundbank Waseca

Staff

Area Agency on Aging

Linda Giersdorf, Director
Erica Gahlon, Administrative Assistant
Rhonda Hiller Fjeldberg, Grant/Contract Manager
Missy Manderfeld, Senior LinkAge Line® Specialist/
Health Insurance Counselor Coordinator
Elaine Spain, Project ROSE (Reaching Out to Support
Elders) & EDP (ElderCare Development Partnership)
Planner / Transit Coordinator
Gail Gilman Waldner, Program Developer

Community and Economic Development

Lisa Hughes, Director
Jessica Burke, Research & Data Analyst
Gayle Jones, Economic Development Planner /
Loan Officer
Peggy Wiese, Community Development Planner

Prevention and Healthy Communities

Lisa Wojcik, Director

Prevention and Healthy Community Network

Katie Klanderud, Regional Prevention Specialist

Chicano Latino Youth Leadership Institute

Veronica Alba, ChYLI Coordinator
Linda Alvarez, ChYLI Specialist
Leo Arevalo, ChYLI Planner

Projects

Sharon Taylor, Project Coordinator

Saludando Salud

Gina Borchardt, Coordinator
Rosana Balboa, Community Health Advisor for
Brown County
Theresa Eckstein, Community Health Advisor
Ellen de la Torre, Health Promotion Specialist
Sylvia Pena, Community Health Advisor for
LeSueur County

Small Business Development Center

Bob Klanderud, Director
Christine Hall, Administrative Assistant
Mary Oudekerk, Counselor

Transportation

Wes Judkins, Director

Administration

Reggie Edwards, Executive Director
Eileen Roesner, Secretarial Assistant
Cheryl Weston, Administrative Assistant

Office of Finance

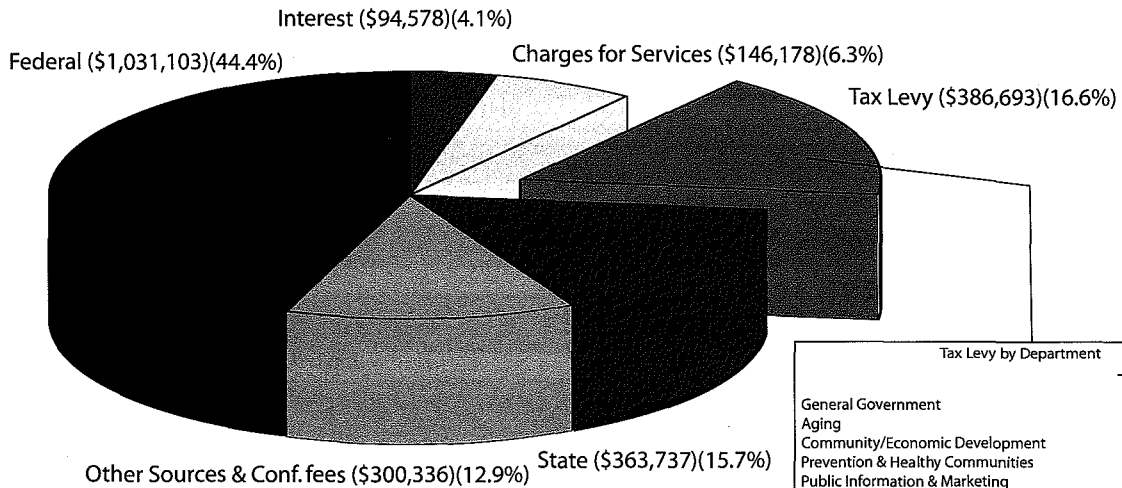
Susan Jaeger, Finance Director
Lois Gekeler, Bookkeeper
Linda Wallace, Accountant

Public Information and Marketing

Joyce Allard, Director

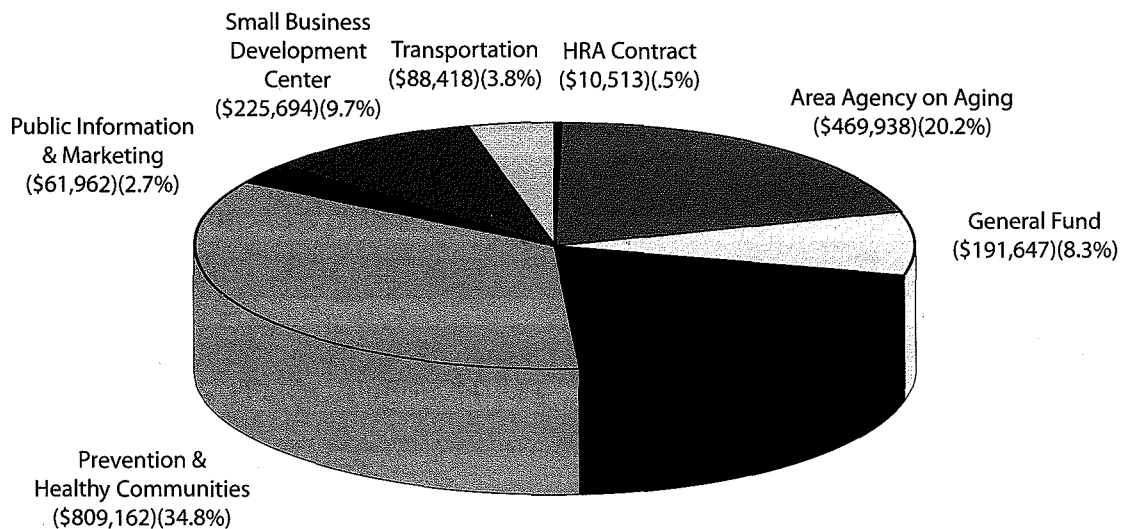
Revenues and Expenditures

FY 2004 Revenues by Source



	FY04	FY03
General Government	47.6%	40.5%
Aging	14.2%	14%
Community/Economic Development	12%	6.5%
Prevention & Healthy Communities	6.7%	7%
Public Information & Marketing	7.2%	6.4%
Research and Program Development	0%	15.3%
SBDC	6.5%	7.5%
Transportation	5.8%	2.8%
	100%	100%

FY 2004 Expenditures by Department



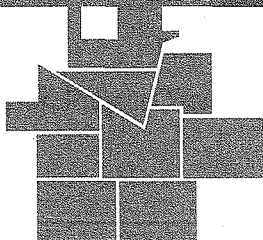
FY04 Budget by Programs



REVENUES:	
FEDERAL	903,659
STATE	363,737
TAX LEVY	386,693
OTHER SOURCES	295,086
CONFERENCE REVENUE	5,250
CHARGES FOR SERVICES	273,622
INTEREST	94,578
TOTAL REVENUES	2,322,625

EXPENDITURES:	
AREA AGENCY ON AGING	469,938
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	253,380
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TRANSPORTATION	300,329
HRA CONTRACT	10,513
PREVENTION & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES	809,162
PUBLIC INFORMATION & MARKETING	61,962
SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER	225,694
GENERAL FUND	191,647
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	2,322,625

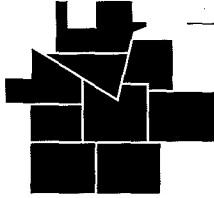
INDIRECT RATE	11.26%
PASS THRU	2,604,879



FY04 Budget by Line Item

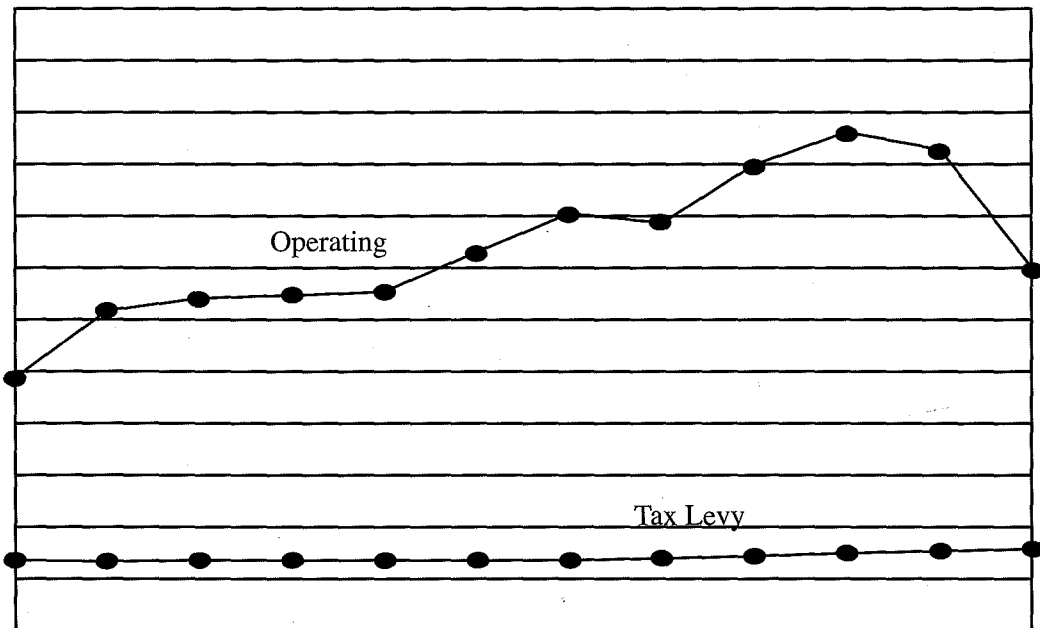
REVENUES:	
FEDERAL	903,659
STATE	363,737
TAX LEVY	386,693
OTHER SOURCES	295,086
CONFERENCE REVENUE	5,250
CHARGES FOR SERVICES	273,622
INTEREST	94,578
TOTAL REVENUES	2,322,625
EXPENDITURES:	
PERSONNEL	1,356,751
FRINGE	482,544
COPYING/PRINTING	37,901
PUBLIC NOTICE	5,060
POSTAGE	32,503
TELEPHONE	22,635
TRAVEL – STAFF	83,546
TRAVEL – OTHER	47,854
REGISTRATION	22,688
SUPPLIES	34,659
MEMBERSHIP/DUES	17,906
MISCELLANEOUS	250
CONSULTANT	15,250
INSURANCE	6,000
ERRORS & OMISSION INSURANCE	13,000
MAINTENANCE	11,800
LEGAL	2,300
AUDIT	10,450
EQUIPMENT/DEPRECIATION	10,000
STORAGE SPACE & CONFERENCE ROOMS	4,000
OFFICE SPACE	105,528
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	2,322,625
INDIRECT RATE	11.26%
PASS THRU	2,604,879

Region Nine Development Commission Levy History



Year Payable	Base	Increase Allowed	Levy Amount	Percent Increase
2005	386,693	3%	398,274	3.00%
2004	375,430	3%	386,693	3.00%
2003	364,495	3%	375,430	3.00%
2002	353,879	3%	364,495	3.00%
2001	343,572	3%	353,879	0.00%
2000	343,572	3%	343,572	0.00%
1999	343,572	3%	343,572	0.00%
1998			343,572	0.00%
1997			343,572	0.00%
1996			343,572	0.00%

Total Operating Revenue vs Tax Levy



Proposed Budget