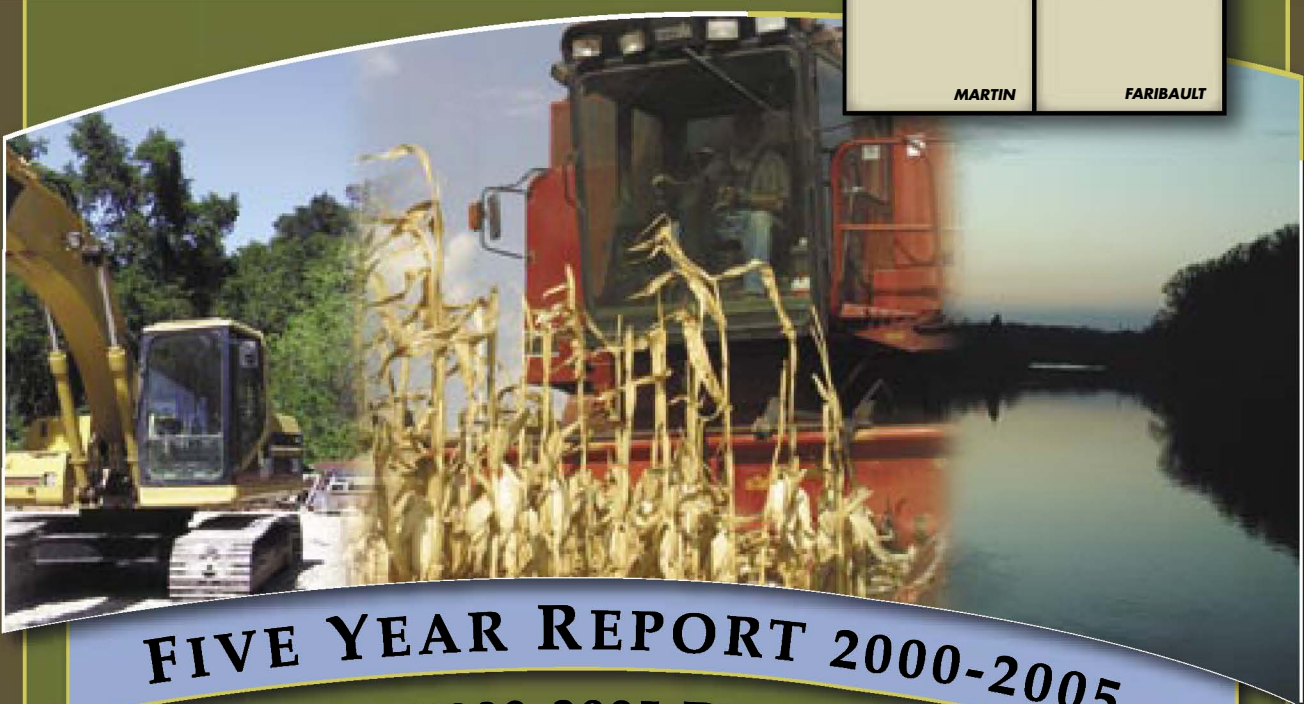
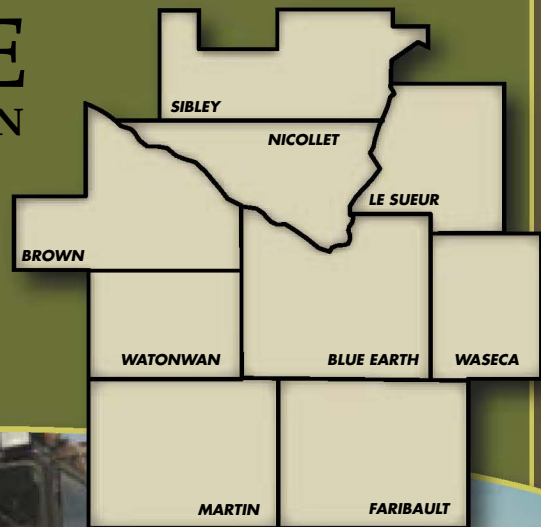


REGION NINE

DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



FIVE YEAR REPORT 2000-2005
INFORME 2000-2005 DE CINCO AÑOS
www.rndc.org

INDEX

YOUR REGIONAL PARTNER FOR PROGRESS



region nine
development commission

Your Regional Partner For Progress

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LETTER FROM THE COMMISSION CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

December 31, 2006

Honorable Commissioners and Citizens of Region Nine:

On behalf of the Region Nine Development Commission, we respectfully submit the Region Nine Development Commission Proposed Five Year Report.

Over the past five years the annual reports have outlined the fiscal, policy and programmatic status of the Region Nine Development Commission. Messages over the years have served as tools that set direction for the Region Nine Development Commission in the areas of budget and financial management, organization goals and department alignment, financial and outcome alignment, budget cycle and salary synchronization, and budget development dialogue.

Over the years, highlights from those reports are:

“Service programs are successful and serve as state and federal models. Employees are committed to professionalism and personal development. Region Nine remains committed to inter-governmental cooperation.” Year 2000

“Region Nine identified “stakeholders” of services during it’s internal planning process to better understand how its services were delivered. Through discussion and surveying the understanding of Region Nine from those stakeholders the following mission statement was developed – 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.” Year 2001

“A focus in this year was one of entrepreneurship. Joseph Schumpeter was quoted at the time for saying, an entrepreneur is one who introduces economic innovation such as new commodities or qualitatively better versions of existing ones; finding new markets, new methods of production and distribution and the like. A couple living in the City of Gaylord received funding from Region Nine to start up and operate a needed convenience store in the area.” Year 2002

“Region Nine coined the branding term ‘Your Regional Partner for Progress’ as its guiding light. Region Nine Prevention and Healthy Community Network partnered with the New Ulm Police Department and newly formed New Ulm Youth Council to reduce underage drinking by placing stickers (Students Performing on Tough Situations or S.T.O.P.) on alcohol packages at local stores.” Year 2003

“Transitioning from changing funding formulas, Region Nine entered new partnerships and collaborations including working with adjacent regions 8, 6W and 6E to develop a new model to serve as the Area Agency on Aging. The scope of service delivery of home delivered meals and legal counseling would grow from a nine county area to a 27 county area. Ninety-four (94) year old Inez Hammond of Sleepy Eye appreciated chore service assistance provided by the local program, the Brown County Faith in Action, which is funded by the Area Agency on Aging.” Year 2004

“On the rebound, the Commission set its sight on recovering from an economic downturn, state and federal funding shortfalls, and a tightening of resources for nearly every organization across the various sectors. Rebounding came in the form of pursuing new regional projects in the areas of transportation/transit and renewable energy.” Year 2005

Each year the budgets and annual reports illuminated progress while addressing regional challenges. Focus areas over the years included:

- Strengthening and growing areas of core competency
- Building new partnerships
- Leveraging resources
- Committing to quality services
- Strengthening board leadership
- Growing strategically

Planning and establishing clear direction for the Region enables the citizens, board members, and staff to work in harmony. In carrying out direction set forth in policy general fiscal principles were developed to manage the daily resources of the organization including:

- Building funding stability
- Growing fund balance
- Capping indirect rates
- Aligning strategic initiatives and funding alignment
- Enhancing employee morale
- Creating a positive image and program awareness

The Region Nine Development Commission progresses into the future with this thought in mind, "maintaining a future-oriented perspective that helps to facilitate decisions which result in healthier and more prosperous communities that are better equipped to move forward in to the future."

Through Region Nine's facilitation of integrating ideas, resources, and efforts of federal and state legislators, local elected officials, the public, businesses, and non profits, prosperity can be realized throughout south-central Minnesota. Each of the components provides a critical piece to the success of the overall effort and vitality of the region.

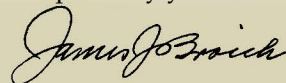
Region Nine has taken on challenges in the past that have helped the region respond to critical issues such as tornadoes, drug abuse among youth, and manufacturing plant shut-downs. During such times the region rallied together to exemplify small town hospitality and strength. In a similar fashion Region Nine goes forward together with partners to carve out new paths of vitality. It seeks new paths of a diversifying economy, creating an entrepreneurial environment, taking advantage of its diversifying population and investing in new infrastructure and technology.

Region Nine seeks a path that leads to national and global competitiveness, while maintaining a high quality of life for its local citizens.

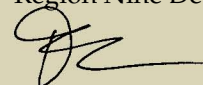
Only by working with its partners will the region realize its full potential and vision for the future.

We are very pleased with work and differences made in the lives of people in the region over the past years. We are proud of overcoming fiscal challenges that created hardships for organizations both here and across the nation. The success stories and progress outlined in this report are all part of ensuring that local citizens have the ability to experience, participate in and enjoy a high quality of life in south-central Minnesota.

Respectfully yours,



Jim Broich,
Region Nine Development Commission, Chair



Reginald M. Edwards
Executive Director



Mission



Moving Forward to meet the Region's changing needs

Our Mission

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

Our Values

We recognize and value the diverse economic and human resources within the region. By utilizing the collective strengths of many intergovernmental and private resource and working together in a collaborative, innovative and respectful way to bring the region's resources together, we create a dynamic environment where small business development can thrive.

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
2004

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

Representative Bob Gunther
District 24A
- 2004

Regional Transit



Historically, Region Nine has focused its transportation efforts on road and bridge policies. However, that changed in the late 1990's, when Region Nine began taking a broader, regional approach to transit issues, recognizing that as the demographics of the region changed and business development opportunities increased, a coordinated and integrated transportation network would be vital to the region.

Transit Challenges Identified

According to a 2001 County Gap Analysis, seven out of the nine counties in the region (Blue Earth, Faribault, Martin, Le Sueur, Nicollet, Sibley and Watonwan) identified transportation as a high develop-

ment need, especially for older adults. In Le Sueur County, it was one of the highest development needs identified. Through this study, it became clear that one of the most pressing transportation challenges facing the area in the coming decades will be the aging population and the need for transportation for medical care across traditional transit system boundaries.

While there are excellent public transit systems throughout Region Nine, most operate within limited service areas defined by county boundaries. Transit across multiple counties in southern Minnesota was not possible without a personally owned vehicle or by spending an excessive amount of money for taxi service;

something that is out of reach for many of the area's seniors living on a fixed income.

Because of this, many people who are dependent on public transportation services have difficulty reaching destinations beyond their public transit system's service area. This is especially problematic for older adults and persons with disabilities who may need to access specialty medical services in other parts of the region or state.

Compounding the transit challenge is the fact that current transit funding in Greater Minnesota goes to target a specific city only and does not provide transit service funding for broader rural areas. Ad-



ditionally, 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.

Collaboratively Solving Transit Issues

By working with Mn/DOT, local and state units of government as well as private and non-profit entities, Region Nine has lead several key initiatives for a broader system-wide approach to addressing regional transportation issues. The goal has been to identify the many transportation assets that already exist and, in a coordinated, collective and strategic manner, bring those resources together to address the region's transportation challenges.

Significant progress has already been made in developing a comprehensive, coordinated transit system utilizing existing transportation assets.

Recently, a diverse group of local units of government, transit providers and transportation-interested entities have been working to develop a coordinated regional transit system.

This group has facilitated discussions across a variety of interested parties, surveyed various transit users, helped establish transit services in areas where service did not exist, developed the first regional network of coordinated volunteer driver services, developed and mapped transit corridor plans and moved forward with a plan for regional training for drivers.

R9 Shows Results in Meeting Transportation Needs

More than just a planning body, Region Nine Development Commission has seen progressive results in addressing the region's transportation issues over the past five years. Specific results include:

- Participated in the Area Transportation Partnership (ATP) which allocates approximately \$25 to \$27 million in annual transportation funding in District 7, which includes Region Nine.
- Served on the ATP Transportation Enhancement Committee, which is re-

sponsible for recommending disbursement of federal enhancement funds. These funds can be used for trail development, landscaping, historical preservation of transportation resources, and preservation of railway corridors, among other uses. The ATP disperses approximately \$1 million annually to fund projects of this nature. In the Region Nine area, these dollars have been used to construct several miles of trail, preserve historic buildings and bridges, create interpretive recreation areas, and make landscape improvements.

- Prepared regional significance ratings for projects submitted to the ATP for federal funding for years 2002-2011. These ratings are used by the ATP in scoring applications and help ensure funded projects meet regional objectives such as economic impact and safety improvements.

- Served on a Technical Advisory Committee for the creation of the State [US] Hwy



169 Corridor Management Plan. The plan assessed current conditions along the corridor, identified potential capital investment projects and recommended management strategies for the entire corridor. The report is hosted on Mn/DOT's website at this address: <http://projects.dot.state.mn.us/srf/169/index.html>



- Assisted in the efforts to obtain High Priority Project funding for Highway 14 to speed up construction through communication with policy-makers. In late 2006, the state announced an award of \$65 million to Mn/DOT District 7 to assist and accelerate the construction of Highway 14 between Waseca and Owatonna.

- Worked with Mn/DOT, the nine counties, and the six state-aid cities on an update of the functional classification system, a process aimed at ensuring all roads in the region are classified based on the actual function they provide to the public.

- Worked with the Highway 14 Partnership, and the area's cities and counties to obtain funding to upgrade the highway to four-lane from Rochester to New Ulm. As of December 2006, Highway 14 is functioning as

an expressway between North Mankato and Waseca and various segments between Owatonna and Rochester. Current Partnership efforts are focused on completing the

“Region Nine helps bring important transportation needs to the attention of state and federal legislators and the Minnesota Department of Transportation.”

-Wendell Armstrong
Waseca County
Commissioner, Mn/DOT Area
Transportation Partnership and
R9 Transportation Advisory
Committee Member - 2003

Mankato to Rochester link and beginning the expansion of Highway 14 between North Mankato and New Ulm.

- Prepared a transit coordination plan for the region at the

request of Mn/DOT and Minnesota Department of Human Services. The plan focuses on strategies for improving coordination among all transit providers in the region and opens access to federal funds designated for certain transit programs. The plan is available on Region Nine's website: http://www.rndc.org/documents/final-plan12_31.pdf

- Served on the Trunk Highway 15 Coalition, an advocacy organization dedicated to the improvement, expansion, and preservation of this vital north-south corridor. The coalition is currently pursuing federal money to conduct a corridor study between St. Cloud and Fairmont and purchase land for right-of-way preservation.

- Participated in the Mankato/North Mankato

Transportation and Planning Study which developed a 20-year transportation plan for the greater Mankato area.

- Investigated funding sources for planning and development of greater transit services for persons who are elderly or handicapped and those without other transportation.

- Worked with Mn/DOT and Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties on updating the counties Functional Classification System.

- Worked with the National Association of Development Organizations to increase federal funding for transportation in rural areas and to increase the voice of rural elected officials in the transportation planning process.

- Worked collaboratively with other regional development commissions on statewide transportation planning issues including a new memorandum of understanding clarifying the roles and responsibilities of Mn/DOT and the RDCs in the planning process.



- Worked with the region's cities and counties for increased funding for highways and county roads.

- Established a program that coordinates volunteer drivers in LeSueur County, which resulted in over 400 rides per month for residents needing transportation for medical care.

- Entered into a contract with public transit providers (5310) in Waterville to utilize their handicapped accessible vehicle to provide rides one day per week in Montgomery and Le Center, which previously

had no such service.

- Worked closely with VINE Faith-in-Action program to coordinate and expand services of its volunteer driver program to include the nine county region.

- Began discussions with U-Care and other Twin City hospitals to potentially broaden their transit services to include medical patients from Region Nine.



Renewable Energy

A key component to any successful economic development plan must include energy resources. That fact, combined with the desire to preserve the natural landscape while harnessing the region's abundance of agricultural products, led to the creation of the Region Nine Renewable Energy Task Force or RETF in 2005.

Although RETF is not a program under Region Nine, it is a founding organization member and has now completed its first year of development. Several partners in the region including higher education institutions, local government entities, environmental agencies, utility companies, Region Nine Development Commission and others from throughout the region have come together to support, promote and advocate for advanced use of renewable energy.

RETF Mission Statement

RETF's mission is *"To explore and support renewable energy uses in the Nine County Area to enhance our quality of life."*

The efforts of the RETF include informing and engaging

all local jurisdictions with the viability of the ethanol industry in the area. RETF developed a resolution supporting the further development and use of renewable energy fuels by various units of government in the state as its first public policy effort. Specifically, the resolution states that all units of government support the use of renewable energy; encourage the State and all units of government to increase the use of renewable fuels for transportation to 25% by 2025; and encourage units of government to purchase new flexible fuel vehicles with biodiesel and E85 use capabilities.

The RETF is multi-faceted in terms of the benefits to the region. With 83% of the rural communities in Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca and Watonwan counties having populations of less than 2,500 people and



revenue generating capacity on a per capita basis decreasing each year, it is imperative that local communities look at the future and work differently with regard to economic development opportunities.

This same region has the agricultural capacity to efficiently produce and process crops suitable for our transportation fuel needs, thus creating new jobs and strengthening rural communities.

Engaging in this initiative has the following benefits:

- Leverages regional agricultural resources
- Enhances regional economic development
- Protects the environment
- Addresses national energy interests

Prevention & Healthy Communities

A healthy workforce is vital to the economic development of any region. RNDC has been at the forefront of many area health initiatives by focusing on prevention, health advocacy and working collaboratively to promote health and well-being throughout the region.

Starting in 1991, **The Healthy Communities Network** was born as a result of changing demographics in the region and the knowledge that many of the uninsured and underserved did not have affordable access to primary healthcare. Governed by RNDC, an advisory body was established called – *Region Nine Prevention and Healthy Communities Network Advisory Committee*.

During the 1990's, a large influx of immigrants came to the region to seek employment opportunities in the region's agricultural industry. In fact, from 1990 to 2000, the Latino population of Blue Earth County increased 205% (1990 and 2000 U.S. Census). This trend is expected to continue.

The objectives of **The Healthy Community Network**



are:

- To promote positive youth development,
- To prevent the abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs,
- To build strong and healthy rural communities,
- To develop a strong regional network,
- To celebrate community diversity

Through funding from local, state, federal and private sources, **The Healthy Communities Network** developed numerous initiatives to improve health education and awareness. During the past five years, some of the significant initiatives have included (by county):

Blue Earth County

Mankato Area Healthy Youth – this program funds out-of-school enrichment programs for children within ISD 77; youth asset building plan; Mankato Mardi Gras (4,000 participants); puppet troupe; annual intergenerational meeting and the summer arts program.

Maple River Community Network - this program offers parenting classes such as “Parents in the Know”; multi-town community building events; Family Fun Day in Minnesota Lake; Halloween celebration in Good Thunder; planted Peace Trees and hosted other events



focused on non-violence; hosted asset building/art activities; funded police liaison officer in schools; "Baby Think It Over" dolls; fatal Vision Goggles; Summer arts program in all focus communities.

Brown County

Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth (New Ulm area) – provides after school activities for youth; Youth Blast; Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth newsletter; Asset of the Month; speaker's bureau; Youth Council; summer arts program.

Faribault County

United South Central One Healthy Community - provides a summer arts program; asset building activities including quarterly "I Care" breakfasts; puppet troupe; summer festivals; weekly publication

of "Asset of the Month"; skateboard park and mentoring programs.

LeSueur County

LeSueur-Henderson Healthy Communities, Inc. – offers an active mentoring program; summer arts program; education and training for day care providers; asset building campaign.

Montgomery Safe and Friendly Environment (SAFE)

– provides after school activities; community based

"Project Reconnect was a tremendous success from start to finish. When you give kids a good opportunity, they can create wonderful things."

- Paul Peterson
St. Peter High School
Principal 2003

prevention / asset building planning; summer arts program; sponsored "Turn off TV" week; co-sponsored the "Yellow Ribbon Program"; completed search survey; provided financial support for "The Place" youth center.

Waterville, Elysian, Morristown Drug Prevention Coalition – sponsored car crash simulation; ATOD education;

after prom activities; school operated thrift store and computer lab.

Martin County

Martin County Networking – provides after school and summer activities for youth; open gym for roller skating during summer months; parenting classes, asset building activities; Family Fun Fair; summer arts program.

Nicollet County

St. Peter Healthy Community Alliance – provides for a summer arts program; youth center; sponsored After School Arts Club and Swing Dance programs; asset building campaign; Asset of the Month in St. Peter Herald; asset promotion in the workplace and in congregations.

Waseca County

Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton Together Everyone Achieves More (TEAM) Task Force – provides for a summer arts program; technical and financial support for after prom activities; displayed crash car in conjunction with prom; ropes course; community based prevention/asset building planning; after school activities; hosted "Focusing on the Future: community meeting where MN Student Survey re-

sults were presented and community members gave input to an action plan for TEAM; “Boys Night Out”/“Girls Night Out”; community based prevention/asset building planning.

Waseca Healthy Community/Healthy Kids Initiative – provides after school activities; involve youth in the art center active speakers’ bureau; summer arts program; asset development in youth educational forum; work with JWP TEAM Task Force on the county-wide Asset of the Month media campaign.

Watsonwan County

Madelia Coalition for Healthy Life Choices – puppet troupe; after prom party; after school activities; summer theater provided through community collaboration; ATOD education in the school; produced materials in English/Spanish on the consequences of selling or giving alcohol to a minor and/or minor with possession; hosted town forum to present results of the Search Survey of Youth Assets to 650 people—Spanish language interpretation was provided by Saludando Salud trained interpreters.

St. James Chemical Health/Violence Prevention Advisory Council – provides technical

support; grant to purchase “On Applebee Pond” Puppets; funds for Yellow Ribbon Campaign; alternative youth activities; summer arts program.

Other Significant Health Initiatives

Chicano Latino Youth Leadership Institute – Chicano Latino youth, their families, schools and communities in Region Nine are reconnecting and changing lives through the Region Nine Chicano Latino

PROJECT RECONNECT PROGRESS UPDATE

More than 350 youth have participated in ChYLI since 1996.

High school graduation rates are 73% among ChYLI participants vs. 35% for Latino youth in south-central Minnesota; 85% of those graduating pursue post-secondary education.

The percentage of youth participants who felt they had a good knowledge of their culture increased from 11% to 48%.

The percentage of youth participants who felt they knew how to be a leader increased from 13% to 46%.

Youth Leadership Institute’s (ChYLI) Project Reconnect. Project Reconnect is based on a highly successful model from California that targets youth most at-risk for dropping out of school.

The project was created after a need to connect youth to their schools was identified in a 2001 Minnesota Student Survey. It was designed as a bridge to connect students to their school to help alleviate cultural and language barriers and other things that keep the students from participating in school.

During the two-day training, Latino youth are involved in learning about leadership, planning and decision-making, teamwork, culture and presentation skills. They developed a community action plan to implement and help their communities.

ChLYI’s goals include building a network of young leaders in the Chicano-Latino community, involving youth in community decision-making, empower Chicano/Latino youth to be active participants in community decision-making and vision setting and to increase their understanding of their culture. ChYLI staff provides the opportunity and means to help schools link families with local resources, encourage parents to participate in school events and provides students with mentors and role models.



Saludando Salud

Healthy workforces are vital to companies large and small across all industries. Corporations and small businesses are challenged by the rising cost of health care, yet want to ensure their workforce remains healthy and productive. This can be especially challenging within the Latino community where greater numbers of Latinos are without adequate health insurance.

Saludando Salud, which means, “greeting health” in Spanish, has been 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 per week that causes a slowing of production and low moral,

but it is also the employee taking responsibility for their own health through education.

Impacting Health

“Improving the health of our employees is a top priority of our entire management team. Saludando Salud has been an important part of our overall employee wellness program. Slowing the increase of health care costs and increased productivity has been a nice side benefit of assisting our employees to lead healthier lifestyles.”

Roy Krull

Tony Downs Foods – 2004

It takes all partners in the equation working together to make a healthy workforce: the organization, the employee and their family, the community at

large and the medical community. That’s where Saludando Salud has been making a difference by working with several companies in south-central Minnesota including Tony Downs Foods to grow healthier communities, corporations and profits and individuals.

Tony Downs Foods understands the importance of a healthy workforce and have taken steps to be forward thinking in terms of its approach to a healthy workforce. With approximately 70% of its workforce being Latino, Tony Downs Foods has partnered with Saludando Salud to offer employees culturally and linguistically appropriate health education right in the workplace – all at no cost to the employee.

Another significant outcome of Saludando Salud was an outreach project in Brown and Le Sueur counties. Funded by a federal Rural Health Outreach grant received by the Le Sueur County Department of Human Services (DHS), a collaborative partnership that included Le Sueur County DHS, Le Sueur County Family Services Collaborative, New Ulm Medical Center – Allina System, Minnesota State University, Mankato (MSU-M) Dental Hygiene Program and Saludando Salud,

was formed.

The goal of the collaborative partnership was to improve access to and better utilization of healthcare services for the growing Latino population in the region. To accomplish this, a bilingual *Saludando Salud* Community Health Advisor (CHA) or Promotora was housed in each county to provide outreach services, health education and promotion, and assistance with coordination of medical interpreter services.

An example of how this program benefited area Latinos was the collaborative partnership to address the current oral health crisis among the uninsured and underinsured Latino population. *Saludando Salud* staff acted as liaisons between Latino patients and various counties within the region to provide additional low-cost dental access points.

One of those access points was *Saludando Salud's* dental outreach clinic in Madelia. Partners included the Madelia Area Healthcare Center, MSU-M Department of Dental Hygiene, area dentists, and *Saludando Salud*. Preventative and restorative dental services were offered three days per week through Madelia Dental Clinic utilizing MSU-M Dental

Hygiene staff and students. *Saludando Salud* provided a trained medical interpreter for those patients needing interpreter services.

Through the collaborative partnership forged with this project, thousands of uninsured and underserved Latinos in the region were afforded access to dental care that they may not otherwise have had.

Regional Health Profile

Providing Access to Dental Care

"The clinic is a valuable resource for those who cannot access dental care due to cost or the lack of providers seeing new MA patients. The partners are committed to sustaining this community-based clinic which not only serves the general population but also strives to meet the needs of the underserved, including uninsured and underinsured Latino populations."

Lynnette Engeswick, RDH, MS
Chair of Dental Hygiene
Minnesota State University,
Mankato 2003

The Regional Health Profile (RHP), conducted in 2002, was designed to monitor health status, identify health problems and establish health promotion priorities in 27 counties in south-central and southwestern Minnesota.

Nearly 10,500 residents (52%



of the original, random sample of 20,000) in these counties responded to the survey. The survey included questions on general physical and mental health status, access to health care, lifestyle habits and receipt of health screening exams.

RHP is part of an ongoing collaboration among health care providers, local public health agencies and the Center for Health Statistics at the Minnesota Department of Health. Regional and county-level survey information has been used by project sponsors, individuals and organizations that serve the underserved, to improve the health status throughout south-central and southwestern Minnesota.

Assessing the Region's Health

Information gathered as a result of the RHP survey has been critical for local units of government to get a true assessment of individual health needs and concerns within their respective communities.



The survey has helped to determine health needs, existing barriers and the efforts that are necessary to improve the overall health of the community.

The RHP found several interesting trends in the data:

- Almost 27% of the respondents had not been to a dentist or dental hygienist in the past 12 months,
- More than 15% of respondents indicated they currently smoke cigarettes; 36% used to smoke, but had since quit.
- Respondents who reported eating five or more fruits and vegetables the day before the survey was taken was 32.3%, up from 29% in 1998,
- The percentage of respon-

dents who indicated they always wear a seat belt while driving or riding in a motor vehicle was more than 62% in

Regional Health Profile

“The RHP is a valuable tool that helps us develop and implement programs and activities to serve our citizens.”

Nita Aasen
Nicollet County Public Health
Director - 2003

2002, up from 55% in 1998,

- Half of all male survey respondents have never had a prostate exam; just 24% of respondents report having an annual prostate exam,
- Nearly 40% of all female respondents reported getting an annual mammogram,

• Nearly 7% of those responding did not have health insurance, up from 4.8% in 1998,

• Roughly 25% of all respondents were classified as binge drinkers (consumed five or more alcoholic drinks on one occasion during the last month). In 1998, 22% were binge drinkers.

Conferences

- Annual network training
- Presentations
- Rural Health Conference
- Annual Program Sharing Conference
- Prior Lake/Savage School District puppet training

Awards

- National Association of Development Organizations Innovation Award

Area Agency on Aging



For Helen Roe, home delivered meal service in Winnebago is a very important lifeline. She's familiar with the service as a former meal delivery volunteer with her husband and now as a regular recipient of the meals. Helen appreciates the service that allows her to stay in her hometown of Winnebago. She's lived there all her life and in her cozy apartment for 26 years.

Delivering more than Meals

"I'm 93 and proud of it," Helen said with a big smile. She's been a widow for 17 years, but decided in 2003 to take advantage of the home delivered meal service. "Until recently, I cooked things," Helen said. "But now I am going to use the service and eat a balanced and hot, cooked meal."

The home delivered meal service is operated by Nutrition Services, Inc. which sub-contracts with Parker Oaks

Retirement Community to cook and provide meals in Winnebago. Local churches volunteer to deliver meals every Monday through Friday. Eligible recipients contribute whatever they can afford to pay.

Home delivered meals in Winnebago are made possible, in part, under the Federal Older Americans Act

Helping the Elderly

"Without this service I wouldn't eat like I should. Food is a big thing and so is the price. I aim to eat everything they send. I'm full and very happy with the quality of the meal. Plus, it's nice to see someone every day. I would recommend the service to anyone."

Helen Roe - 2003

through a contract between Nutrition Services, Inc. and the Region Nine Development Commission/Area Agency on Aging as part of an Area Plan approved by the Minnesota Board on Aging.

Coordinated Transit Systems

Although serving nutritious meals to seniors is a critical component of the Area Agency on Aging, it is by no means the only initiative the agency

focuses on. For example, during the summer of 2003, Region Nine staff began working with a Transportation Workgroup in LeSueur County because transportation was identified as one of the major gaps in services for older adults. There was no public transportation system that served all of LeSueur County.

While there had been attempts over the years to develop a county-wide system, there was no "hub" community in the county and no set pattern of transportation so it would be a challenge to develop a centralized county-wide system. Over the course of the next several months, workgroup participants focused on identifying the resources that were available in different parts of the county, how to develop a cooperative model, and a method of coordinating the systems. The group also addressed "out of county" transportation needs when county residents needed specialist medical appointments or other services not available in LeSueur County. This work has resulted in over 400 rides per month for residents needing transportation for medical care.

Region Nine Secures Resources

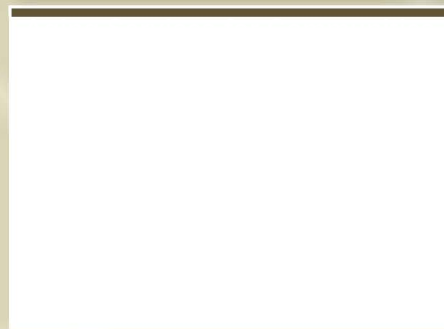
Meanwhile, the Caregiver Support & Respite Program that had been funded through the Region Nine Aging Pro-

gram was in jeopardy of losing support in LeSueur County due to a change in the mission focus of the sponsoring agency. During this time, the Minnesota Department of Human Services issued a request for proposal for the development of community support services for older adults.

Region Nine recognized that this funding opportunity could provide the group with the necessary start up funds to create an organization that could potentially meet both the transportation needs and continue the work of the Caregiver Support & Respite Program.

As a result of Region Nine Development Commission's efforts, two grants were awarded through the Minnesota Department of Human Services that resulted in the development of an organization called Aging Services for Communities (ASC) located in Montgomery, MN.

Thanks to the generosity and community minded spirit of John Grimm, ASC received donated office space, further leveraging the grant resources. Mobilize Montgomery agreed to become the fiscal agent of the grant funds until ASC could develop its non-profit status and become incorporated. Shelly Barnett who had worked with the former caregiver program interviewed for the Director position and established her office at ASC in October 2004.



Area Agency on Aging
- Progress Update 2000 - 2005

Congregate Meals served:
876,428

Home Delivered Meals served:
348,132

Clients Assisted with Medicare
issues and questions: 10,320

New Caregivers served: 2,488

Today, Aging Services for Communities is an incorporated non-profit organization providing almost 400 volunteer driver rides monthly. ASC has

contracts with Blue Rides and UCare to provide medical assistance rides and has recently taken on the coordination of the Senior Ride program funded through LeSueur County.

Another positive outcome has been ASC working with LeSueur County Human Services and Public Health Nursing to become certified with the Minnesota Department of Health as a Home Management Services provider. Older adults can purchase home management services such as meal preparation, light house keeping and laundry service. Services are provided by trained ASC staff in the home and are often the solution in helping frail older adults remain in their own homes.

Economic Development



Access to funding sources is the catalyst that drives economic development. However, for small, rural communities, it can be especially challenging to gain access to state and federal funding sources to improve infrastructure. And without infrastructure, there's little opportunity for further economic development. That's where the strategic initiatives from Region Nine's Economic Development staff have benefited many rural communities in the region.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Implemented

One strategic initiative fostered by Region Nine Development Commission has been the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Its purpose is to maintain eligibility to receive financial

Economic Development

- Progress Update

Revolving Loans

- Total Business Loans – 155
- Total Business Loan Dollar Value – \$9.5 million
- Total Jobs Created – 1,768

Revolving Loans

- 9 County RLF # Loans – 79
- 6 County RLF # Loans – 31
- Tornado Loans – 16
- Rural Outbuilding Loans – 29

assistance from the Economic Development Administration within the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The CEDS has helped to create jobs, foster stable and diversified economies and enhance quality of life within the region. 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

Revolving Loan Fund Fills the Funding Gap

Region Nine Development Commission's Revolving Loan Fund Program (RLF) 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 155 loans with start-up and expanding businesses and has disbursed over \$9.8 million. Over, 1,700 jobs have been created or retained.

Economic Development in Action – Making a Difference

Vern and Helen Olson started Rolco, Inc. in 1980 as a venture into manufacturing small plastic components. Vern was then a 40-year old sales representative in the packaging business and envisioned he and his wife could produce plastic injection molded components as a way to stay financially independent

in retirement. Rolco started with a single molding machine, operated out of the Olson's home.

Twenty years later, Rolco has 85 employees working three shifts a day and the Olsons are far too busy to retire. Rolco now operates as a custom injection molding company with a niche specialty known as "multishot" molding. The company has a single 27,000 square foot manufacturing facility in Kasota and operates 24 injection-molding machines.

When Rolco planned an expansion to its building and operation, Helen worked through the logistics with assistance

Adding Value

"Region Nine's Economic Development program is a valuable part of the economic development efforts in the region."

Russ Wille
City of St. Peter
Community Development
Director 2003

from Minnesota Technology. Region Nine was brought to the table to facilitate the loan process.

"First of all, the loan from Region Nine's Revolving Loan Fund as well as loans from other public funding sources, helped Rolco put together the complete financial package that

was acceptable by our bank and affordable to the company," said Helen Olson. "Secondly, the loan from Region Nine, specifically, was applied to the purchase of equipment needed to facilitate the efficient operation of an expanded organization."

In 2003, the Olsons won a Minnesota Entrepreneurial Champion Award. The award is based upon their demonstrated business uniqueness, innovation and understanding of the critical relationship between entrepreneurial success and community support.

Community Development



Developing healthy and vibrant communities encourages further growth and expansion. Through Region Nine's visionary leadership and technical assistance, several local units of government now have compre-

hensive plans in place that address growth and development issues in a strategic manner.

Specifically, over the past 5 years, Region Nine's Community Development

program has provided assistance to local units of government in the areas of land use planning and zoning, infrastructure development, and project financing and technical

assistance. Finally, the Region Nine Community Development program provides access to a variety of loan programs that allow local units of government to compete for scarce state and federal funding for local projects.

Region Nine Community Development responds to Tornado Disaster

Because of the 1998 tornado disaster including portions of Brown, Nicollet and LeSueur Counties, a regional response was required. Region Nine accepted the challenge from the MN Recovers Task Force

to coordinate that response. The Region Nine Disaster Assistance Team helped the communities of St. Peter, Comfrey, and LeCenter and households in the rural areas with their applications for assistance. Region Nine also placed a full-time staff person in Comfrey City Hall almost immediately after the tornados to help with disaster assistance and housing issues. R9 also helped the city of Comfrey with a comprehensive land use planning effort and then worked on helping the city find the gap financing required to replace their 26 units of subsidized housing as well as the new Municipal Facility.

Waseca County gains Comprehensive Plan

Region Nine Development Commission worked with Waseca County for several years to complete its comprehensive plan, which lays out a vision for growth and development for the next 20 years. The last comprehensive plan was adopted in 1970, so the need for an updated plan was important for future growth. From the beginning, the plan sought 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 outcome is a comprehensive plan that provides a "vision" for growth, development and community sustainability through the year 2025.

City of Truman gets

Redevelopment Plan

Another example is with the City of Truman, where Region Nine assisted the City in writing a redevelopment plan for their business community. An analysis of the residential and commercial surveys in the community was conducted. Region Nine staff researched Minnesota Department of Economic Development and Employment (DEED) grant applications for rehabilitation or demolition costs.

City of Sherburn creates Capital Improvement Plan

The City of Sherburn worked

Helping Communities

"The process was valuable to us. Region Nine helped us work together and kept us focused on our priorities. It was beneficial for us to have the local staff at Region Nine help our mayor and city council identify our priorities and not get bogged down with the details."

- Bob Roesler

Sherburn City Council 2003

closely with Region Nine's Community Development program to create a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). This five-year blueprint creates and guides major capital expenditures for the future, with each expense in the CIP representing a unique need over the next five years.

Capital improvement projects are the "bricks and mortar"

of the city. Some of the things that fall under capital improvements include: streets, water, wastewater, equipment, buildings, parks and major, one-time acquisitions.

In addition to guiding expenditures, the CIP is an important communications tool. It gives residents and businesses a clear and concrete view of the city's long-term direction for capital improvements and an understanding of the city's ongoing needs for stable revenue sources to fund large, multi-year capital projects.

One of the specific recommendations in the report was that the CIP should be updated annually. In doing so, the CIP becomes a continuous fiscal planning tool and provides a planning foundation for Sherburn's future needs.

Regional ENS Team Develops Supply Chain

In 2005, a group of municipal and regional EDA officials met on a regular basis to develop a "supply chain" list that would provide local businesses a number of suppliers throughout the country for materials they need to product their products. The list also provides businesses a list of their vendors whom they can sell their products to nationally. Ultimately, both lists have been used to recruit large businesses and jobs to south-central Minnesota.

Small Business Development Center

The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) exists to serve small and developing businesses within Region Nine, providing consulting services in the areas of marketing, finance, advertising, etc. The purpose is to assist small businesses at a critical time; the early stages of development and growth with the goal of seeing small businesses become successful.



After more than two decades in business, the confidence to follow downs. "My biggest challenge has

Supporting Small Business

"I think its great there are SBDC services you can plug into. It's professional, it's credible, and it's the best information you can get," she says. "Sometimes you feel like you're all alone in the world of AHHH! You need that support."

Deb Miller
 Owner
 Cabinets and Kitchen Design
 2005

Helping Small Business Grow – SBDC Provides the Expertise

After the local grocery store in Lewisville MN closed in 2002, Lindsay Scheeler saw an opportunity. Scheeler knew the small, rural community needed a store that carried a variety of convenience items. She saw a building for sale on Highway 15. After she asked the price of the building, word traveled that she was interested in opening a convenience store. Calls began pouring in from the community supporting her idea.

Scheeler turned to the Region Nine Small Business Development Center for help with marketing plans, cash flow projections and more. She is pleased to report the projections are on target. "The SBDC staff was professional and knew what they were talking about,"

Scheeler says.

Today, Scheeler's convenience store, Outbound Express Travel Center in Lewisville carries just about every product a person could need. You will find gardening gloves, arts and crafts, cat food, school supplies, cake mix and Lewisville Fire Department t-shirts.

There are movies, lottery

other towns. "I love small town life," Scheeler says. "Everyone is good to me. I need them and they need me."

The store currently has five part-time employees and one full-time employee. Scheeler hopes that business will continue to increase and she can add more employees.

SBDC Progress Update: Since 2000

Clients assisted: **1,597**

Hours of Counseling Services: **13,225**

Investment Average: **\$6.5 million**

Funded Organizations: **50**

Clients receiving services stating they would recommend services to other small businesses: **93%**

Local matching funds were contributed by more than **50** public and private organizations.

90% Satisfaction rating among surveyed clients, over the past five years.

tickets, kitchen gadgets, and fresh flowers in the spring and much more.

Lewisville residents have shown their support of the convenience store by buying gas from her station, even if it is a few cents cheaper in

SCHEELER UPDATE: 2005

Despite all of the research and planning, there are always things a small business owner has no control over. For example, the rebuilding of a highway that causes a shift in traffic patterns for several months or the fact that local patrons may not switch their shopping patterns to "buy local" as quickly or consistently as hoped for. Regardless of "why", small business is fragile and this one was no exception.

We extend our congratulations to the Scheelers for their efforts and offer this comment. There is no shame in a project that does not work out, when you have done your homework and put your best foot forward.

The statistics of new business survival are:
 New businesses every year-672,000
 Businesses that closed in 2005-545,000
 Survival rate...
 66% survive two years
 44% survive four years

Lending Technical Expertise

"I am impressed with every aspect of the SBDC, and would highly recommend it to others. Region Nine is an awesome place to get technical advice about business plans."

Lindsay Scheeler
 Owner, Outbound Express
 Travel Center
 Lewisville, MN 2003

Transportation



A healthy transportation network is vital to the economic growth of any region and Region Nine has worked hard over the years to advocate for the infrastructure necessary to ensure strong economic growth that will meet the region's needs well into the future.

The overall objective of the Region Nine Transportation Program is to work with Mn/DOT and local units of government to maintain and improve the transportation network. This includes highway, transit, railroads and aeronautics.

Some of the major transportation initiatives that Region Nine has been involved in include:

Highway 15

Region Nine is part of the Highway 15 Coalition, a group advocating for improvements to the Highway 15 corridor, which stretches from Fairmont to St. Cloud. Recent efforts involved securing federal funding to conduct a full corridor study.

Safety is a primary concern for the committee and this project, but Region Nine is also advocating highway improvements for economic development purposes in communities along the corridor. Since transportation is essential for business growth and recruitment, Region Nine will have a pro-active role in Highway 15 improvements.

Highway 14 Expansion

Highway 14 has now been completed between Janesville and Waseca, allowing for improved safety and increased capacity between Mankato and Waseca. While this is a significant accomplishment, Region Nine continues to support funding of the acceleration of Highway 14 expansion to a four-lane expressway on all segments between North Mankato and New Ulm. This long-overdue project will cost in excess of \$300 million. Ultimately, the goal is a four lane expressway from New Ulm to Rochester, providing a strong regional



transportation corridor.

Rail

Region Nine worked with the Minnesota Valley Regional Rail Authority and the Minnesota Prairie Line to complete a study on non-bulk grain logistic rail services. Seventy six firms expressed a high or moderately high potential of using rail for their services. Region



Nine is currently working with rail providers and others to develop a strategy to maximize rail service in the area.

Area Transportation Partnership (ATP)

Region Nine has worked with the District 7 Area Transportation Partnership to provide federal funding to counties and cities for improvement projects, preservation projects, safety projects and enhancement projects.

Advocating for Transit

“Region Nine helps bring important transportation needs to the attention of state and federal legislators and the Minnesota Department of Transportation.”

Wendell Armstrong,
Waseca County Commissioner,
Mn/DOT Area Transportation Partnership and R9
Transportation Advisory
Committee Member 2003

Other transportation related issues that Region Nine supports include:

Rural & Urban Funding Equity Region Nine supports legislative efforts that ensure funding is provided for rural transportation projects and supports equity between rural and metro funding.

Gas Tax & Indexing – RNDC supports increasing the gas tax by 5 cents in each of the next two years to pay for transportation needs and indexing the gas tax in future years.

Rural Transit – Region Nine supports funding transit as part of its general transportation funding agenda.

10-ton Road System – The Region further supports funding to ensure roads are continually preserved at a 10-ton level.

Transportation – Progress Update

Participated in the Mankato/North Mankato Transportation and Planning Study that developed a 20-year transportation plan for the greater Mankato area.

Coordinated volunteer drivers in LeSueur County where more than 200 rides per month for the elderly and those who do not have transportation services available to them.

Collaborated with VINE (Faith-in-Action Program) in Blue Earth County to develop TRUE (Town, Rural, Urban, Express) Transit. TRUE Transit provides access to a network of volunteer driver programs throughout the region. The goal is to maximize the region’s volunteer driver resources through ride sharing.

Public Transit providers (5310) were brought together to identify key issues.

Participated in the Mn/DOT Area Transportation Partnership which annually allocates approximately \$25 million in federal transportation funding.

Outreach is being conducted with health care providers in the region.

Motor Vehicle Sales Tax Dedication – Region Nine supports a constitutional amendment dedicating all vehicle sales tax revenue be directed toward transportation projects.

Road Funding for Cities Under 5,000 Region Nine supports legislation that allows cities under 5,000 in population that are not eligible for state aid, to be able to use county municipal accounts and the 5% of the HUDTF.

Survey Responses & Reporting from Local Units of Government & Commission Members

Over 65 jurisdictions (25% of all jurisdictions) from the total of 263 local jurisdictions (i.e. schools, cities, townships, and counties) participated in a region-wide survey regarding Region Nine's performance. Forty-three of the 63 respondents were elected officials, while 16 were administrators.

The region's jurisdictions responded in a representative manner to the proportion within the state for example 16 cities responded (25.3% of total responses), and there are a total of 72 cities in the region which equals 27.3% of the total number of jurisdictions within the region. Schools weighed in at 23.8%, Townships at 26.9% and counties at 100% participation of the total responders respectively.

General responses are as follows:

- Most were familiar with planning, business development, and aging and transportation programs.
- There were eight responses or 12.6% of the respondents who were not familiar with





Region Nine programs.

Jurisdictions identified working most directly with Region Nine programs in the areas of:

- Transportation;
- Comprehensive planning; and grant development.

There were 13 or 33% who indicated they had not worked directly with Region Nine.

Jurisdictions (66% of responders) rated satisfactorily the amount and quality of technical assistance provided by Region Nine. Communication of local concerns at the state and federal and knowledge of local concerns were rated greater than satisfactory.

Responses to program performances are as follows:

- 80% of responders rated the Aging program very important and performed

above satisfaction.

- 71% of responders rated the Economic Development program very important and performed above satisfaction.
- 82% of responders rated the Community Development program very important and satisfactorily performed.
- 80% of responders rated the Transportation and Transit program very important and performed above satisfaction.
- 81% of responders rated demographical and census data information and referral work of Region Nine important and performed satisfactorily.
- 83% of responders rated Intergovernmental Relations work of Region Nine very important and performed above satisfaction.
- 79% of responders rated

Legislative efforts very important and performed above satisfaction.

Responders also provided information regarding areas that could be improved in order to help local jurisdictions, communities, and the region be successful. The two primary areas are:

- Provide more communication on efforts and programs available.
- Provide general ordinance and zoning information that can be shared across jurisdictions in broad areas such as waste water treatment, infrastructure and grant language.

Looking Forward



Change Creates Opportunity

If there's one thing that's certain, it's that change is inevitable. As the baby boom generation ages and our region's cultures become increasingly diverse, providing for the social and economic vitality of the nine-county area is Region Nine's central focus. Region Nine is uniquely positioned and has the infrastructure present to address some of the region's most vital social and economic challenges. Through strategic and visionary leadership, Region Nine and its collaborative partners expect the challenges ahead will create new opportunities for economic development that will benefit the entire region.

One of the reasons Region Nine Development Commis-

sion exists is to improve the quality and appeal of life for citizens in the region by acting as a liaison with various local units of government. Through multiple strategic initiatives, Region Nine has become a voice for the region, seeing the bigger picture—identifying trends such as an aging population, increasingly diverse populations, the need for renewable energy, local and regional broadband communications, affordable health care and improved transit and transportation. Working collaboratively with various units of government, Region Nine is identifying ways to bring solutions to the challenges these trends bring.

Strategic Planning Task Team Developed

To begin to address some

of these issues, Region Nine developed a Strategic Planning Task Team in 2005 to review and make recommendations on a variety of regional issues.

The Task Team utilized two criteria: (1) what are the greatest needs (importance) in the region; and (2) what can be funded.

After collecting internal and external data, the Task Team identified several key program areas as being Region Nine's focus of expertise. These focus areas include:

Aging
Transportation
Economic Development
Community Development
Fostering Intergovernmental Relations

Within each of these areas, specific plans have been made and are being implemented to increase the effectiveness of helping local units of government work together as a region.

Region Nine Area, Inc. (RNAI) Formed

Recently, Region Nine Area, Inc. or RNAI was formed as a separate entity within Region Nine as a vehicle to assist other area agencies access and leverage existing resources. A board of directors is currently being formed and a budget has been established.

Transportation and Transit

A major legislative priority for the 2006 legislative session was regional transportation and transit. Region Nine has long been an advocate for the region when it comes to addressing transportation and transit issues. Based on results from its fourth annual legislative issues survey, transportation was identified as a vital issue to be addressed during the most recent legislative session.

Specific focus areas were Highway 14, Highway 15, transit coordination and road carrying capacity (going from 9-ton to 10-ton capacity). Region Nine also supported increased funding for transit planning and coordination across regional areas among all transit services. Having a coordinated, regional approach to transit, will not only save money, it will have lasting benefits for the area's aging population. As the new

transportation and transit leadership teams get started they will be able to fully implement successfully completed plans.

Health Care

The second legislative priority to be identified through the legislative issues survey was health care. Specifically, from an individual jurisdiction perspective, there was concern about organizations being able to continue to afford employee health insurance. From a broader, regional perspective, survey respondents stated that all people should have access to affordable medical care.

Despite some reforms in the early 1990's, healthcare costs have continued to rise to an unaffordable rate for local government and individual citizens alike. County government has statutory responsibilities for eligibility and enrollment of residents in Medical Assistance (MA) and General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC); however, citizens of various economic classes are finding it more difficult to afford basic health care.

In addition to spiraling costs, changing dynamics in small communities including an aging population, decreasing population size, the declining numbers

of medical professionals (i.e. doctors, pharmacists, dentists, etc.) have created service need challenges for communities throughout the region.

To begin addressing these issues, Region Nine has made health care cost and affordability a major legislative priority. Region Nine supported and advocated efforts to reduce health care costs and provide affordable health care to citizens. R9 also supported increased funding for telemedicine, teledentistry, and telepharmacy for rural areas. Finally, Region Nine supported pilot projects that provide affordable and all-day service for preventive health services in order to reduce more costly medical treatment.

In order to continue to provide adequate medical care to





the region's aging population, significant changes will need to occur within health care delivery. Region Nine continues to respond to the concerns of local units of government and advocate at the legislative level to foster changes in the health care system.

Renewable Energy Task Force (RETF)

Ensuring the region has reliable, affordable energy has been a priority for Region Nine. This, combined with the desire to preserve the natural landscape while harnessing the region's abundance of agricultural products, led to the creation of the Region Nine Renewable Energy Task Force or RETF in 2006.

Through Region Nine's strategic vision, the RETF created a resolution supporting and encouraging the use of renewable fuels for transportation. Specifically, the resolution supports and encourages local and state units of government to increase the use of renewable energy for transportation to 25% by 2025.

It also encourages each governmental entity to purchase new flexible fuel vehicles with biodiesel or E85 use capabilities whenever economically feasible and available.

To date, over 100 local jurisdictions have signed the E-85 Resolution. In addition, a citizen's version of the resolution has been created that allows individual citizens to pledge personal support to renewable fuels. Through continued education of the use of renewable

fuels, RETF hopes to achieve its goal by 2025.

By leveraging the region's agricultural resources in a "value-added" way, renewable energy not only benefits the environment, but also boosts economic development and adds jobs to the region through ethanol production and biodiesel facilities. The region not only provides a renewable energy source for its own use, it exports a value-added commodity to other states. This is one component of helping to address our national energy issues.



Lessons Learned & Recommendations

Looking back over the past five years the profound question of “what have we learned and how do we use that knowledge?” looms in the air. The response is not always so readily apparent. For example, in the early 1980’s a group of U.S. automakers visited Japan on a learning experience in an effort to broaden their horizon and increase capabilities. Upon their return, the automakers were asked “what have you learned?” They responded, “nothing... there was no inventory on hand or automotive parts seen.”

It would be a few short years later that those same U.S. automakers would come to know the term “just-in-time inventory.” Just-in-time inventory practices used by Japanese automakers years earlier became the norm for business practices throughout the world in various fields. What the U.S. automakers experienced years earlier became an emerging business practice. Unfortunately, they couldn’t “see” the full picture because they were bounded by what they already knew.

With that in mind, the lessons learned within Region Nine include:

- The future of local government acting regionally must be entrepreneurial based with regard to innovation

and risk-taking.

- Future direction and synergistic collaboration must come from local leaders acting regionally. Without ownership and the desire and effort to make it happen, prosperity will not flourish.

- Working regionally will be a way of life for governance in rural areas throughout the country. However, experience and desire to operate in such a manner will be a challenge for leaders and citizens. Championing such changes in lifestyle will require strong leadership from local to state to federal levels.

Recommendations:

- Lead in rallying the region to address quality of life, economic development, renewable energy and other regionally oriented issues, even though implementation may occur at the local level.

- Develop the capacity and skills of staff in order to provide top quality and marketable services.

- Seek ways to raise the visibility of work and offer more opportunities to work with jurisdictions. The outcomes of such efforts are enhanced communication with local jurisdictions, increased use of a regional framework,

and enhanced collaborative opportunities.

- Increase awareness of efforts underway and services available in order to increase working opportunities with local, state and federal agencies.

- Encourage the state, including all departments and the Governor’s office to utilize Region Nine and other RDCs across the state. While RDCs in Greater Minnesota are locally controlled, there is a strong need and role for the state to help strengthen RDCs. The State must invest in a model of regional work consistently and regularly if it is to become the norm for operations and have the capability of flourishing to its fullest potential. This means including regional staff in technical training, program development at the state level, regular communication from state agencies and Governor’s office as well as appropriate funding.

- Region Nine must continue efforts to increase the strength of the Minnesota Regional Development Organizations.

- Increase active participation at the federal level with the National Association of Development Organizations.

Finances

REVENUES:	5Yr Average Revenue
Federal	789,853.80
State	444,373.20
Tax Levy	375,758.20
Other Sources	207,640.00
Conference Revenue	2,775.00
Charges for Services	231,351.40
Interest	93,203.00
Carryover Reserve	1,799.40
TOTAL REVENUES	2,146,754.00

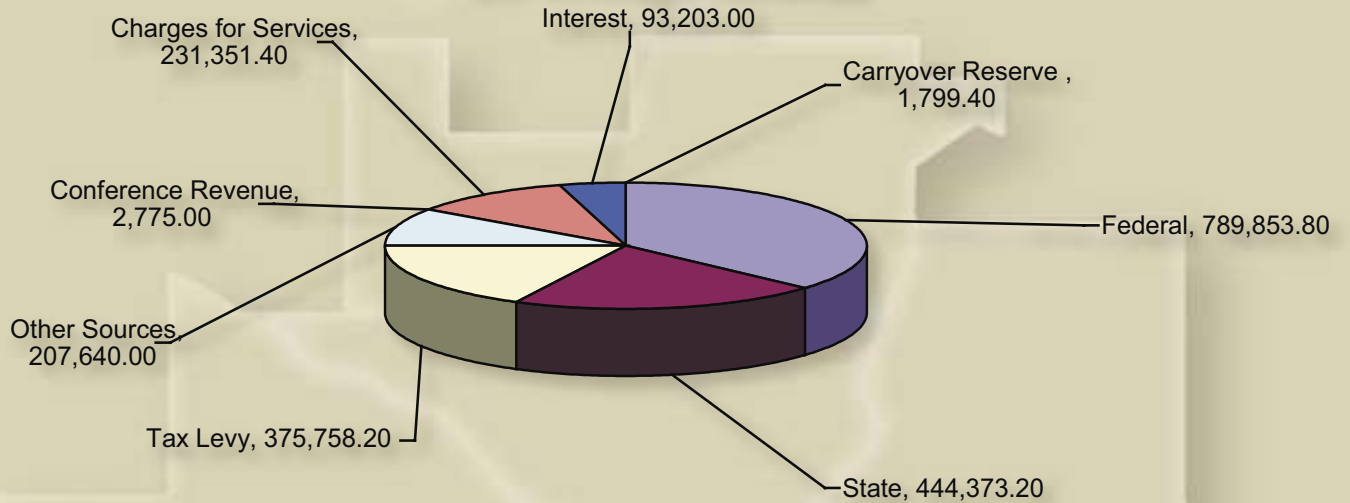
Revenues by Source

	FY'05	FY'04	FY'03	FY'02	FY'01		
Interest	102,000	94,578	96,034	81,228	92,175	93,203	4.40%
Federal	507,499	1,031,103	979,138	856,853	702,120	815,343	37.50%
Other Sources & Conf.Fees	310,305	300,336	129,826	153,828	157,780	210,415	10.20%
State	373,223	363,737	548,385	477,312	459,209	444,373	20.80%
Tax Levy	398,294	386,693	375,430	364,495	353,879	375,758	17.80%
Charges for Services	49,832	146,178	357,368	298,083	177,852	205,863	9.20%
Carryover Reserve	0	0	0	0	8,997	1,799	0.1%
	1,741,153	2,322,625	2,486,181	2,231,799	1,952,012	2,146,755	100.0%

Expenditures by Department

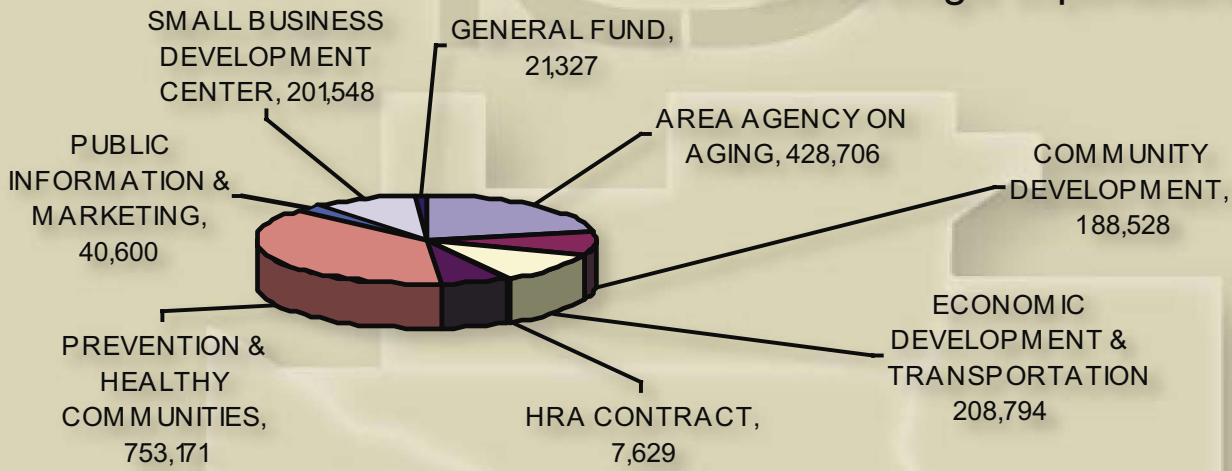
	FY'05	FY'04	FY'03	FY'02	FY'01		
Other	129,460	0	252,892	256,283	167,811	161,289.3	7.5%
Area Agency On Aging	462,785	469,938	463,103	410,290	358,809	432,985.2	20.5%
Community & Economic Dev	259,289	465,291	172,230	372,256	276,612	309,136	14.5%
General Fund	252,060	191,647	167,056	152,398	170,444	186,721.1	9.0%
Prevention & Healthy Communities	338,457	809,162	951,735	802,291	721,530	724,635.3	33.1%
Small Business Development Center	221,678	225,694	207,501	201,210	164,907	204,198.1	9.6%
Transportation	77,424	88,418	233,927	0	58,865	91,726.84	4.1%
Public Information & Marketing	0	61,962	27,657	26,199	23,135	27,790.61	1.3%
HRA Contract	0	10,513	10,080	10,872	9,899	8,272.803	0.4%
	1,741,153	2,322,625	2,486,181	2,231,799	1,952,012	2,146,755	100.0%

5Yr Average Revenue



REVENUES:	FY '05	FY '04	FY '03	FY '02	FY '01	5Yr Average Revenue
Federal	507,499	903,659	979,138	856,853	702,120	789,854
State	373,223	363,737	548,385	477,312	459,209	444,373
Tax Levy	398,294	386,693	375,430	364,495	353,879	375,758
Other Sources	306,305	295,086	125,201	153,828	157,780	207,640
Conference Revenue	4,000	5,250	4,625	0	0	2,775
Charges for Services	49,832	273,622	357,368	298,083	177,852	231,351
Interest	102,000	94,578	96,034	81,228	92,175	93,203
Carryover Reserve	0	0	0	0	8,997	1,799
TOTAL REVENUES	1,741,153	2,322,625	2,486,181	2,231,799	1,952,012	2,146,754

5Yr Average Expenditures

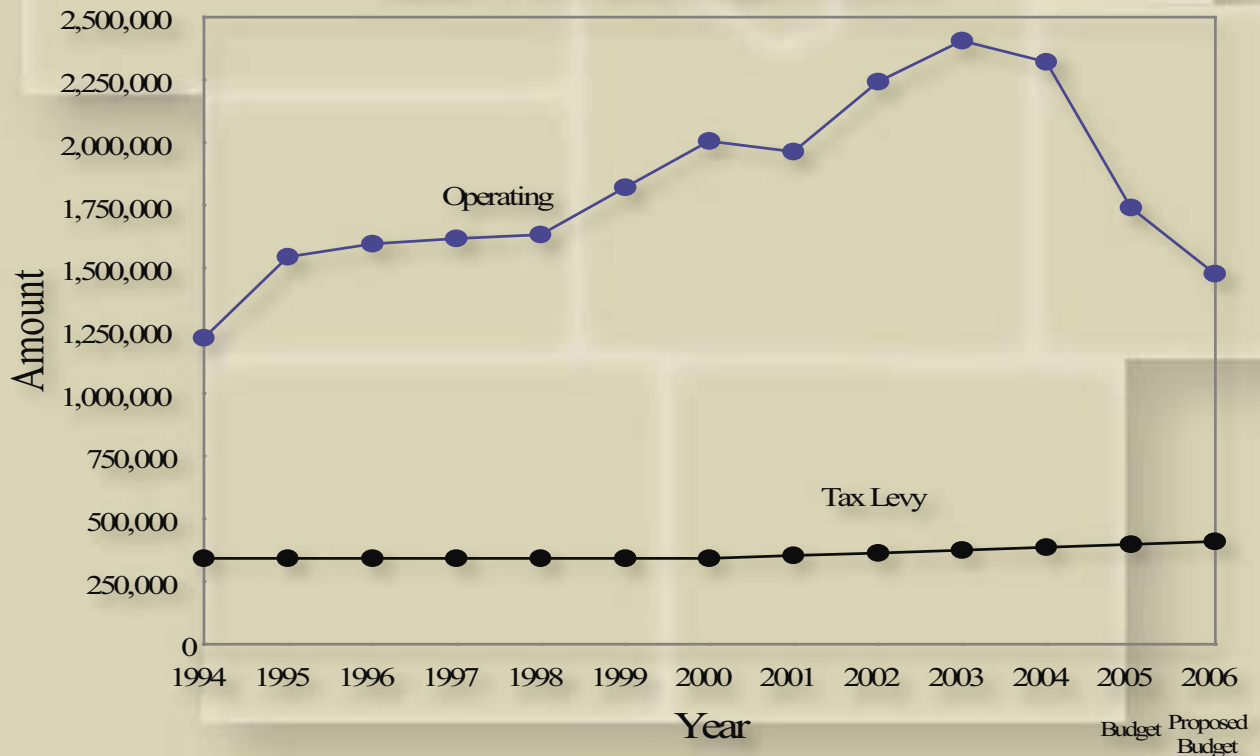


EXPENDITURES	FY '05	FY '04	FY '03	FY '02	FY '01	5Yr Average Expenditures
Area Agency On Aging	462,785	469,938	463,103	401,060	346,645	428,706
Community Development	259,289	253,380	172,230	151,125	106,615	188,528
Economic Development & Transportation	77,424	300,329	233,927	217,035	215,255	208,794
Hra Contract	0	10,513	10,080	7,312	10,240	7,629
New Projects	64,730	0	252,892	166,896	177,541	132,412
Prevention & Healthy Communities	338,457	809,162	951,735	907,465	759,036	753,171
Public Information & Marketing	64,730	61,962	27,657	25,423	23,230	40,600
Small Business Development Center	221,678	225,694	207,501	194,209	158,656	201,548
General Fund	252,060	191,647	167,056	164,720	144,239	21,327
	1,741,153	2,322,625	2,486,181	2,235,245	1,941,457	2,145,332

<u>Year Payable</u>	<u>Base</u>	<u>Percent Increase</u>	<u>Levy Amount</u>	<u>Percent Increase</u>
2007	398,294	3%	410,243	3.00%
2005	386,693	3%	398,294	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	3.00%
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%

Total Operating Revenue vs Tax Levy

Actual FY 1994-2004, Budget FY 2005-06



Region Nine Development Commission Members

Blue Earth County

Bruender, Kip
Hurd, Charlie
Lynch, Brian
Lynch, David
More, Alvis

County Commissioner
City of Mankato*
Cities under 10,000
Township Board
Agriculture*

Brown County

Berg, Jim
Broich, James (R9 Chair)
Fleischmann, Ron
Juni, Frederick

County Commissioner
Cities under 10,000*
New Ulm City Council
Township Board*

Faribault County

Loveall, Tom
Vacant
Oldfather, Roger

County Commissioner
Township Board
Cities under 10,000*

LeSueur County

Dietz, Alvin
Holicky, Janet
McGuire, Mick
Rohfling, Mary Jean
Stangler, Bill
Stangler, James (R9 Vice Chair)

Environmental Quality
MN Valley Council of Governments
Cities under 10,000
School Board
County Commissioner
Township Board*

Martin County

Gorath, Harlan
Hanson, Kenneth
Roesler, Bob
Boler, Jerry

Fairmont City Council
Township Board
Cities under 10,000*
County Commissioner

Nicollet County

Flores, Janie
Genelin, Terry
Boler, Jerry
McGee, Terri
Stenson, James
Schabert, Bob

Minority Populations
Township Board
Mayor, City of St. Peter*
City of North Mankato
County Commissioner
Cities Under 10,000

Sibley County

Bauer, Leo
Kaufmann, Norbert
Pautsch, Brenda
Steckman, Patricia

County Commissioner*
Township Board
Cities Under 10,000
Tourism & Recreation

Waseca County

Armstrong, Wendell
Brandenburg, Eldo
Fitzsimmons, Jack
Johansen, Matt

County Commissioner
Township Board*
Transportation
Cities Under 10,000

Watonwan County

Fenske, Candace
Krenz, Dwayne
Mikkelson, Lance
Devens, Sue

Health & Human Welfare
County Commissioner*
Township Board
Cities Under 10,000

*Board of Directors

Staff

Area Agency on Aging

Linda Giersdorf, Director
Erica Gahlon, Administrative Assistant
Rhonda Hiller Fjeldberg, Grant/Contract Manager
Elaine Spain, Project ROSE (Reaching Out to Support Elders) & EDP
(ElderCare Development Partnership) Planner/Transit Coordinator
Gail Gilman Waldner, Program Developer
Robin Thompson, Senior Outreach Specialist

Community & Economic Development

Troy Bonkowske, Director
Jon Noerenberg, Regional Development Planner

Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

Bob Klanderud, Director
Mary Oudekerk, Counselor

Transportation Development

Brent O'Neil, Regional Transportation Planner

Administration

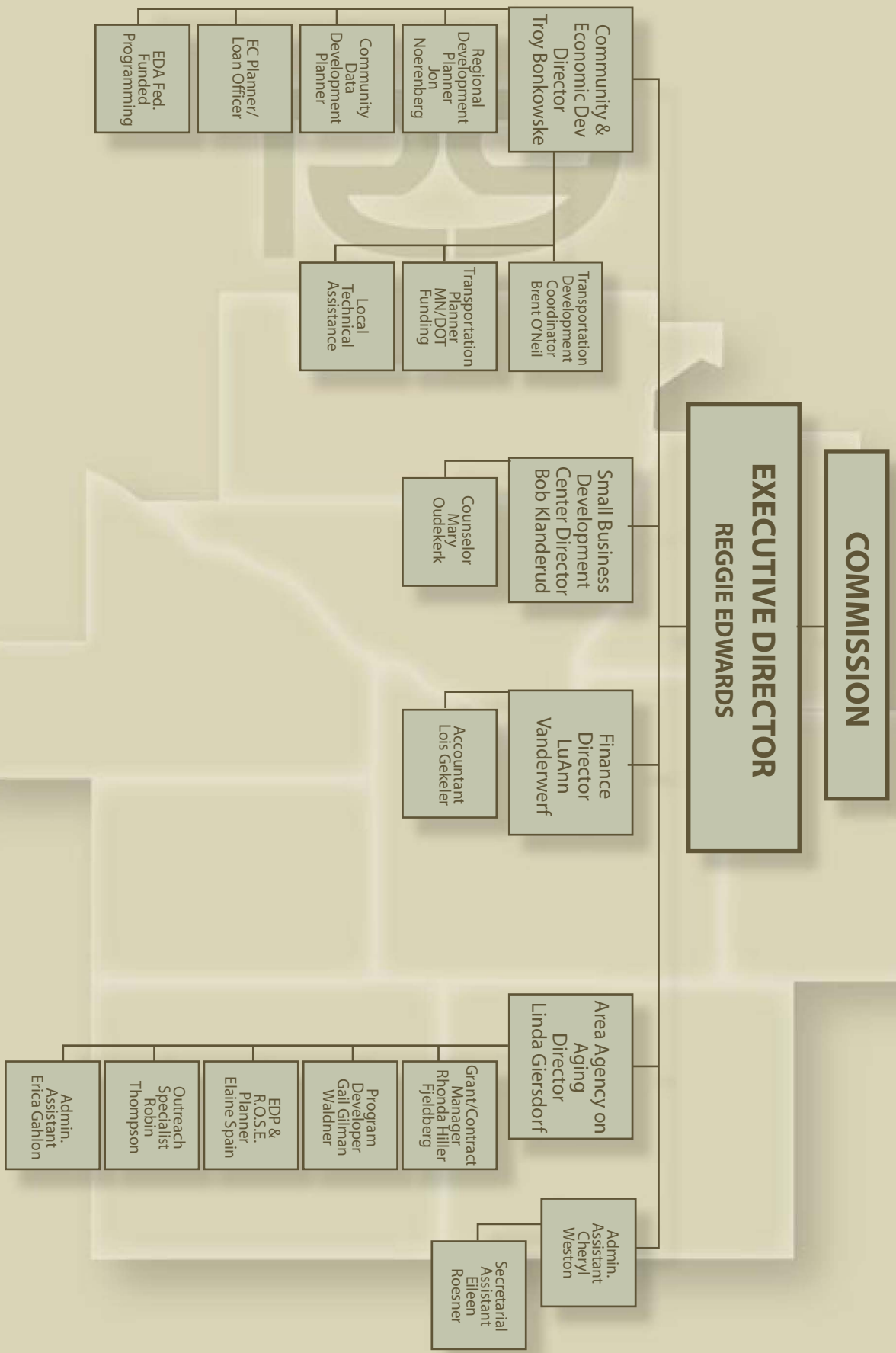
Reggie Edwards, Executive Director
Eileen Roesner, Secretarial Assistant
Cheryl Weston, Administrative Assistant

Office of Finance

LuAnn Vanderwerf, Finance Director
Lois Gekeler, Accountant

Region Nine Development Commission

Organization Chart - by Foundation



Gracias

Region Nine Advisory Council on Aging

Name	Category served	County/Community
Ahmed, Lul	At Large, Any Age	BE Co., Mankato
Attenberger, Vicki	County Social Service	Nicollet Co., N. Mankato
Baumann, Archie	60+	Faribault Co., Wells
Behne, Carroll	60+	Martin Co., Sherburn
Berg, Jim	RNDC Liason	Brown Co., New Ulm
Bliesmer, Mary	Public / Private Agency	Nicollet Co., N. Mankato
Cattrysse, Jo	60+	Nicollet Co., N. Mankato
Fenske, Candace	RNDC Liason	Watonwan Co., Madelia
Fox, Janice	60+	BE Co., Mankato
Griebel, Charlie	60+	Brown Co., New Ulm
Harrison, Phyllis	60+	LeSueur Co., LeCenter
Hawkins, Mindy (Chair)	Nursing Home Rep	BE Co., Mankato
Olson, Chris	County Social Service	Brown Co., New Ulm
Peterson, Richard "Dick"	60+	Sibley Co., Belle Plaine
Purcell, Ronald	60+	Waseca Co., Waseca
Schmiesing, Wally	60+	Brown Co., Hanska
Stangler, Bill	RNDC Liason	LeSueur Co., St. Peter
Viland, Bonnie	60+	Watonwan Co., LaSalle

Region Nine Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

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

Minnesota Department of Transportation District 7 Area Transportation Partnership

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

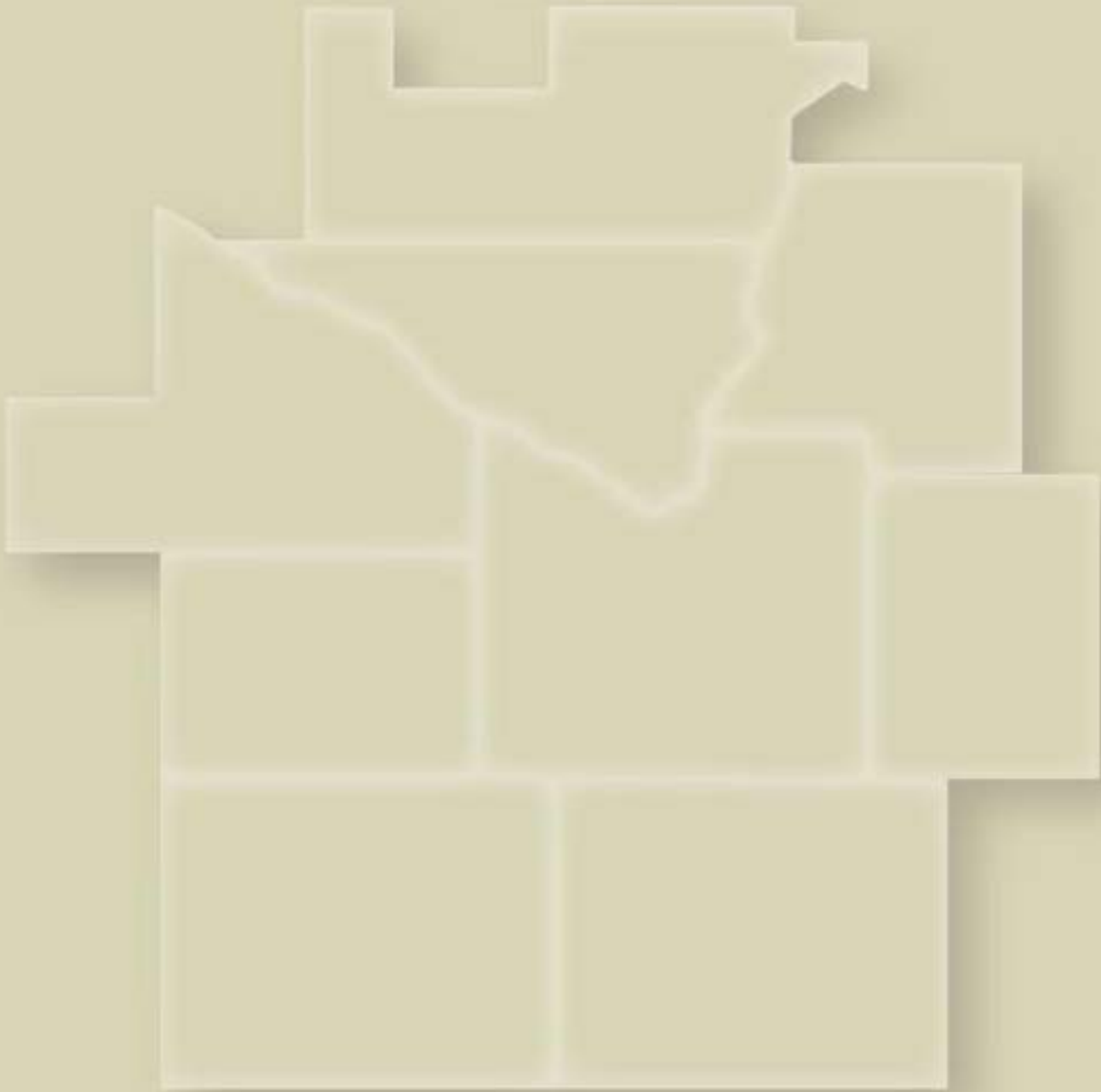
Prevention & Healthy Communities Advisory Committee & Coalitions

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

Revolving Loan Fund Review Committee

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

R9



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