

UMVRDC



2007 Annual Report

BIG STONE COUNTY

Brent Olson, Clinton
County Board

Shirley Finberg, Clinton
Municipalities

Harold Dimberg, Ortonville
Townships

CHIPPEWA COUNTY

Jim Dahlvang, Montevideo
County Board

Ron Anderson, Milan
Municipalities

Rudolph Larson, Montevideo
Townships

LAC QUI PARLE COUNTY

Harold Solem, Montevideo
County Board

Greg Thole, Madison
Municipalities

Tim Patzer, Marietta
Townships

SWIFT COUNTY

Gary Hendrickx, Appleton
County Board

Ron Ronning, Appleton
Municipalities

Warren Rau, Appleton
Townships

YELLOW MEDICINE COUNTY

Gary L. Johnson, Montevideo
County Board

Dan Jahn, Clarkfield
Municipalities

Erling Albin, Hanley Falls
Townships

SCHOOL BOARDS

Paul Pillatzki, Dawson
Dawson/Boyd

TRIBAL COUNCIL

N. Scott Larsen, Granite Falls
Upper Sioux Community

PUBLIC INTEREST

Jaunita Lauritsen, Milan
WorkForce Council

Bruce Swigerd, Ortonville
Prairie Five CAC



Gary Hendrickx, 2007 Chairperson

How often have we heard a child say I want to be a doctor, lawyer or even the president of the United States! Most people will comment that the child has great aspirations. As the chair of the Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission (UMVRDC), I believe we have to have aspirations. We have to decide what we want to be known for. On what do we want to spend our time, expertise and energy? What are we passionate about? What will people seek us out for to allow us to pay the bills? I believe that the UMVRDC's aspiration is to provide unparalleled service to our citizenry and local units of government. I believe that if we deliver strategic as well as excellent service, the UMVRDC will thrive.

This past year the staff along with commission members have been given the task to formulate the direction of the UMVRDC's aspiration. This means that we have to look at our core mission and make sure we are on the right track. We have discovered that we are doing some excellent work in developing our region, and we have also found out that we need to change in order to improve our mission. These discussions have been good for both the staff and the board. We need to align ourselves with our core mission which can be difficult when so many situations can veer us off course. I have faith in the staff as well as the board that we can devise a plan that will develop our region economically.

I would like to thank the staff, our commission members as well as the people and entities that we work with. Success comes to those who work together towards a common goal!

Gary Hendrickx



FINANCIAL REPORT

UPPER MN VALLEY REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE COMPARISON CURRENT FY 2007 AND PROPOSED FY 2008

	FY 2007 CURRENT BUDGET	FY 2008 PROPOSED BUDGET		FY 2007 CURRENT BUDGET	FY 2008 PROPOSED BUDGET
REVENUES:			EXPENDITURES:		
Agency Revenues			Salaries/Fringe	\$646,000	\$611,856
Interest/Levy/Misc/Reserve	229,000	272,500	Commissioners Expense	26,100	26,100
Aging	139,859	126,368	Audit	10,000	10,000
Grants Administration	89,660	55,947	Copy Charge/Xerox Lease	7,000	7,000
EDA/Community Development	159,993	136,128	Computer Technical Assistance	20,000	20,000
GIS Contracts	27,526	29,500	Contract for Services	9,500	1,000
Regional Tourism	136,000	116,000	Data Acquisition	500	500
Transportation/Natural Resources	99,411	92,750	Depreciation	14,400	14,400
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 881,449	\$ 829,693	Dues	6,500	6,500
			Equipment	1,000	1,000
			Insurance	3,500	3,500
			Lease/Service Agreement	5,000	4,000
			Legal Fees	1,500	1,500
			Miscellaneous/Employee Morale	4,000	4,000
			Office Rent	9,200	9,200
			Postage	11,000	11,500
			Printing/Advertising	5,000	5,000
			Registration	3,500	3,500
			Repairs/Maintenance	1,000	1,000
			Software/Software GIS	7,500	8,000
			Subscrip./Publications	1,300	1,000
			Supplies	8,000	8,500
			Telephone	8,000	8,600
			Tourism Trade Shows/Ads/Art Crawl	41,000	30,000
			Training/Training GIS	3,000	3,000
			Travel (Staff)	25,000	25,000
			TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$878,500	\$825,656
			EXCESS REV.		
			OVER (UNDER) EXP.	\$ 2,949	\$ 4,037

The latest audit of finances performed October 2006 by the firm of Lee & Berner, LTD covered the Fiscal Year 2006 finances. No negative findings were reported in that audit.

Outmigration Study in Southwestern Minnesota

An in-depth analysis of the issue of outmigration in southwest Minnesota was completed in collaboration with Region 8. The majority of counties in Regions 8 and 6W as well as select counties in 6E and 9 have experienced continuous, ongoing outmigration

of population for approximately the last 30 years. It is believed that this significant socioeconomic situation is disguising the current economic situation of many of our counties. The report identified the economic distress that outmigration causes in southwestern Minnesota

and recommended using outmigration as a measure of economic distress factor.

The report analyzed typical data evaluators such as unemployment and income and showed they are skewed for southwest Minnesota.

City of Nassau Looking to Build a New Fire Station

The city of Nassau, located in Lac qui Parle County, is currently researching opportunities to help build a new fire station. The Nassau Fire Department serves a regional area with a radius of 30 miles. The department coordinates with neighboring

state South Dakota to provide fire and EMS services to the region. The current fire station just barely holds three of the city's four fire trucks used in fighting area fires along with all of the EMS equipment. The city is looking to build a new fire station that

would hold all four of their trucks and EMS equipment. The city has contracted with the UMRDC to assist them in completing a 2008 Capital Grant application from the state and a Rural Development application for potential funding for the project.

Community & Economic Development Projects in FY 2007

It is the intent of the Community/Economic Development division of the UMRDC to assist local units of government and communities in their planning efforts. *Staff provided the following community development services in 2007:*

- Prepared Small Cities Development Program pre-applications for Maynard and Clara City.
- Completed comprehensive plans for Swift County and the city of Canby.
- Completed the Environmental Review Report for Odessa for the USDA Rural Development application.
- Provided community development staffing to the city of Maynard for grant writing, website design, and a community profile.
- Started work on the Watson Environmental Review Report for USDA Rural Development application for water system improvement funds.
- Facilitated strategic planning for the

Montevideo Chamber of Commerce.

- Finished the Upper Sioux Community's All-Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Administered grants for the cities of Benson, Appleton, Granite Falls, Watson, Clarkfield and Browns Valley.
- Started facilitation for Granite Falls and Montevideo and the MN Sesquicentennial Committee.
- Member of the planning committee for the fifth Center for Small Towns Symposium.
- Completion of a State Capitol USDA Rural Development Facilities Bonding Application for the city of Nassau's new fire hall.

Staff provided the following economic development technical assistance:

- Assisted Lac qui Parle and Swift Counties with their economic development authorities in searching for staff and in interim capacities.
- Assisted the city of Maynard with eco-

nomic development business consulting services.

- Served as the JOBZ Administrator for the Upper Minnesota Valley (Region 6W) JOBZ.
- Convened quarterly meetings of the economic development professionals in Regions 6E and 6W.
- Completed the region's Economic Development Administration's planning grant and met reporting requirements to maintain the region's status as an economic development district.
- Provided technical assistance to several businesses seeking WesMN RLF dollars or seeking consulting services.
- Convened a series of renewable energy forums for the region.
- Prepared Granite Falls Housing Data and Assessment of Senior Housing Needs report for EDA.
- Provided Minnesota Small Business Development Center contacts.

COMMUNITY/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Current JOBZ Activity in Region 6W

The UMRDC continued serving as the JOBZ administrator for Region 6W. As JOBZ administrator, the UMRDC assists the JOBZ subzone communities with their administrative responsibilities, works with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

and provides information to businesses regarding requirements for using the program. In September 2005, the UMRDC held a workshop for Region 6W JOBZ subzone administrators providing them with information on changes to the JOBZ law. The JOBZ program provides tax incentives to a new or expanding business that

locates on JOBZ approved land. The tax incentives include exemption from sales tax, property tax (for buildings only) and income tax for owners. Job creation is a requirement

JOBZ are North Star Rail Intermodal LLC and J&D Construction - Montevideo; Twin Rivers Technology - Milan; Granite Falls Energy - Granite Falls; Madison Implement -

Madison; Great Plains Lamb & Veal - Dawson; and Call Center Services - Beardsley.

If you are interested in learning more about the JOBZ program, visit DEED's website at <http://www.deed.state.mn.us/bizdev/jobz.htm>. If you have

questions about the program, please contact Dawn Hegland at 320.289.1981.

Region 6W Communities with JOBZ Approved Land

Big Stone County

- City of Ortonville (including Ortonville Township)

Chippewa County

- City of Milan
- City of Clara City
- City of Montevideo
- City of Maynard
- City of Granite Falls
- Camp Release Township

Lac qui Parle County

- City of Madison
- City of Dawson

Yellow Medicine County

- City of Granite Falls
- City of Clarkfield
- City of Porter
- City of Canby (including Hammer and Norman Townships)

Swift County

- City of Appleton
- City of Benson
- City of Danvers
- City of Murdock
- City of Kerkhoven
- Torning Township
- Clontarf Township

of a business that uses the JOBZ program. The JOBZ program is for manufacturing, technology and other businesses that pay higher wages. JOBZ cannot be used for retail development. The JOBZ program started January 1, 2004 and runs for 12 years until December 31, 2015.

Projects in Region 6W that have used



The Western Minnesota Revolving Loan Fund

The Western Minnesota Revolving Loan Fund (WesMN RLF) was established on December 5, 1988. The eligible lending area is all of Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift and Yellow Medicine Counties.

Revolving loan fund dollars are available through the WesMN RLF for business retention, expansion, or entrepreneur endeavors in Region 6W. The WesMN RLF is a gap-financing lender that requires bank financial participation with each loan made. Secured loans ranging in size from \$5,000 to \$100,000 may be made for fixed assets and working capital. The maximum WesMN RLF participation rate is 33 percent on manufacturing projects and 20 percent on all other types of loans.

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

essential goods and services. Job creation and retention are top priorities for the WesMN RLF.

The WesMN RLF has portfolio standards of one job created or saved for every \$10,000 of WesMN RLF funds loaned and a minimum of two private dollars borrowed to every one WesMN RLF dollar loaned.

Two loans were made in this fiscal year and another has been committed but will not be disbursed until July. The combination of these loans added approximately 14 fulltime jobs to the region with anticipation of additional jobs being created as businesses become established.

Loans are made by the WesMN RLF Loan Board with staff support coming from the UMRDC. For more information on the WesMN RLF or to obtain an application, please contact Jacki Pillatzki at 320-289-1981.



Swift County Blue Ribbon Commission

The UMRDC was able to provide facilitation and technical services to the Blue Ribbon Commission this past year. As a result of businesses such as the Chippewa Valley Ethanol Company and FibroMinn, the Swift County Board decided to convene a group to research and name opportunities to further expand value-added business development opportunities. The nine volunteers of the Blue Ribbon Commission started working together in the summer of 2006 to find ways to bring economic progress to Swift County. This group contracted with the UMRDC in November 2006 to help complete the report.

The Blue Ribbon Commission met with various businesses in Swift County and asked what was needed to retain and recruit businesses committed to locate in Swift County and ideas to stop the population decline that threatens the economic stability of Swift County.

The four recommendations that the Blue Ribbon Commission presented to the

county board revolved around renewable energy. These recommendations and a full report is available on the UMRDC website.

Recommendations:

1) It is recommended to put resources towards hiring a skilled person to manage and advance renewable energy and value-added opportunities and to execute projects as they arise. This person should educate and promote renewable energy throughout the county. This person will build the bridge from industry connections to Swift County and understand what details need to fall into place to move Swift County forward as a progressive energy center. This recommendation is crucial to the success of the remaining recommendations.

2) It is recommended that Swift County create an environment that promotes all aspects of the wind industry to locate in Swift County. Community-owned large and locally-owned small wind development should be examined, including service and maintenance, manufacturing and construc-

tion, and all professional services associated with the wind industry.

3) It is recommended that, with the expanding market in renewable energy, Swift County form a task force to research the future development of the biodiesel industry in Swift County and initiate a feasibility study for a biodiesel plant or soybean processing plant. The findings from such a study should be used to implement a biodiesel plant or soybean processing plant project.

4) It is recommended that Swift County participate fully in the development and implementation of new biofuels to capture the benefits of a local system of renewable, efficient energy. Federal incentives are driving this industry and new technology will provide for more efficiency in the way we produce energy for consumers.

Renewable Energy and Value-Added Agriculture

Early in 2006 the UMRDC met with local units of government in Region 6W to discuss needs for working regionally in the areas of renewable energy and value-added agriculture. The consensus was that a regional effort was needed to assist with education and policy and procedure development in the areas of renewable energy and value-added agriculture to encourage these types of economic development opportunities in their jurisdictions.

In May of 2006 a regional meeting was held for units of government to review what is already happening in the region in the areas of renewable energy and value-added agriculture, identify what needs exist, and identify what steps should be taken to

address those needs on a local, county or regional basis. The following work was completed by this initiative:

Fall 2006

- Regional renewable energy interest survey sent to cities and counties

October 2006

- Wes Hompe – Willmar Municipal Utilities and Municipal Wind Energy Project
- David Paskach – Southwest Initiative Foundation
- Sue Pirsig - Fibrominn Regional Collaboration

February 2007

- Michael Sparby – AURI
- Home Farms Technology – Ken Birch

- Chuck Neece – FUMPA BioFuels

April 2007

- County commissioner meeting to review and discuss the progress for regional renewable energy cooperation

July 2007 – Scheduled

- ♦ Brian Antonich – Small Wind Program Analyst, Windustry
- ♦ State Representative Aaron Peterson
- ♦ Ottertail Power Company
- ♦ Brent Olson – Big Stone Wind

For more information contact Dawn Hegland at 320-289-1981 or dawn.hegland@umvrdc.org.

UMVRDC COMMISSIONERS



Big Stone County
 Brent Olson, *County Board*; Shirley Finberg,
Municipalities; Harold Dimberg, *Ortonville Townships*



Chippewa County (left to right)
 Rudolph Larson, *Townships*; Jim Dahlyang, *County Board*;
 (Not pictured: Ron Anderson, *Municipalities*)



Lac qui Parle County (left to right)
 Harold Solem, *County Board*; Greg Thole,
Municipalities; (Not pictured: Tim Patzer, *Townships*)



Swift County (left to right)
 Warren Rau, *Townships*; Gary Hendrickx, *County Board*;
 Ron Ronning, *Municipalities*



Tribal Council/School Board/Public Interest (left to right)
 Paul Pillatzke, *School Board*; Jaunita Lauritsen,
WorkForce Council; Bruce Swigerd, *Prairie Five CAC*; (Not
 pictured: N. Scott Larsen, *Upper Sioux Community*)



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

UMVRDC STAFF

(As of June 30, 2007)



Paul Michaelson, *Executive Director*
paul.michaelson@umvrdc.org

UMVRDC Mission Statement:

“Enable the region to thrive through assisting local governments.”



Front row: Kay Koosman, *Office Manager*, kay.koosman@umvrdc.org; Michelle Bouta, *Division Director, Aging*, michelle.bouta@umvrdc.org; Kristi Fernholz, *Senior Planner*, kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org; Connie Nygard, *Senior Planner, Community Development*, connie.nygard@umvrdc.org; Carrie Quast, *GIS Coordinator*, gisrdc@umvrdc.org.

Back row: Barb Jordahl, *Planner, Financial*, barb.jordahl@umvrdc.org; Connie Stotesbery, *Secretary*, connie.stotesbery@umvrdc.org; Arlene Tilbury, *Division Director, Financial*, arlene.tilbury@umvrdc.org; Dawn Hegland, *Division Director, Transportation/Recreation/Tourism*, dawn.hegland@umvrdc.org; and Jacki Pillatzki, *Planner*, jacki.pillatzki@umvrdc.org.

Prairie Waters Strives to Enhance Region's Economy



Western Minnesota Prairie Waters continued its efforts to promote the region as a great place to visit. Ad placements were scheduled in AAA/Home and Away, Midwest Living, local and regional newspapers and other midwest-focused magazines. Prairie Waters is also assisting again this year with the Meander Upper Minnesota River Art Crawl. We facilitated meetings and are handling marketing and mailings. This is a growing event, and we are proud to be part of it.

Prairie Waters continues to track responses from regional advertising in the form of inquiries requesting our visitor guide and other information. As of June 1, 2007, inquiries for the first half of 2007 are nearly 1,000 ahead of inquiries from last year. Our visitor guide and local regional promotional pieces are sent in response to these growing inquiries.

The current board of directors for Western Prairie Waters tourism are: Chairman, Brent Olson/Big Stone Co., Gary Hendrickx/Swift Co., Louis Sherlin/Yellow Medicine Co., Mark Dahl/Chippewa Co., Mavis Gustavson/At-large, Susan Lee/Lac qui Parle Co., Ed Hightshoe/At-large, June Lynne/At-large, Jackie Herfurth/City of Montevideo, Lori

Evenstad/At-large, Rachel Kimball/City of Granite Falls, Joan Fust/At-large; and Jennifer Knoblauch/At-large.

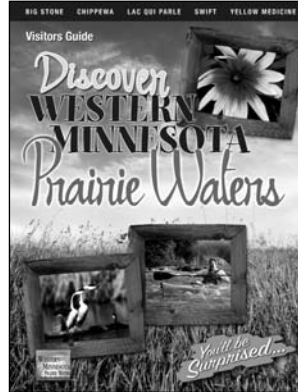
Western Minnesota Prairie Waters CVB continues to market the entire regional area as opportunities arise. Future projects include the 2008/2009

Visitors Guide, the re-development of website, local foods events, a regional bike tour, an art b a s e d sesquicen-

tennial promotion, self-guided tour pieces for wildlife viewing/birding, heritage and a regionwide hospitality education program for front line clerks.

A major key to the successful future of the regional tourism program will be the level and duration of sustainable funding provided by counties, cities, chambers, CVBs and business-

es. Thank you to the following units of government, organizations and businesses for supporting Prairie Waters in the last year: Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift and Yellow Medicine Counties; cities of Ortonville, Montevideo, Granite Falls, Appleton, Madison, Dawson, Clara City, Milan and Canby; Montevideo, Granite Falls and Benson EDAs; Montevideo CVB & Canby Chamber of Commerce; Explore Minnesota Tourism; Shooters, Klein Bank, Lac qui Parle Players, Prairie's Edge Casino Resort, Jake's Pizza, Minnesota's Machinery Hill, Lac qui Parle Co. Historical Center, Chippewa Co. Historical Society, Amish Creations, Inc., Dawson-Boyd Arts Assoc., Lakeshore RV Park, Inc., Schmidt's Landing, Jubilee Foods, Lund-Hoel House, Appleton Cenex Store, Appleton Subway, Granite Falls Bank, Cartwright Antiques & Collectibles, Curves of Madison, Montevideo County Market, Lac qui Parle Broadcasting Co., Bill's Supermarket, Appleton F&M Bank and Rekow Management.



Meander - Upper Minnesota River Art Crawl

Preparations are being made for the fourth annual *Meander ~ Upper Minnesota River Art Crawl* to be held from 2 - 6 p.m. Friday, October 5th; 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Saturday, October 6th; and 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Sunday, October 7th, 2007. The Meander is a regional self-guided tour of artist studios, galleries and shops featuring the work of more than 45 local artists.



"The *Meander* is a great fall getaway for people looking for an authentic rural experience," stated Dawn Hegland, Meander Coordinator and senior staff for the UMRVDC and Western Minnesota Prairie Waters. "We believe that visitors from the Twin Cities, Sioux Falls and the Fargo/Moorhead area are hungry for a 'trip

on a tank full' destination that combines scenic drives, a rich variety of artistic products, and the personal opportunity to connect with the local artists and the individual destinations."

In 2006 the *Meander* reported the following economic impacts:

- \$38,889 in art sales.
- 94% of the money raised to organize the *Meander* through sponsors and artists was spent on local products or services (printing, paper, advertising, graphic

See *Meander* p. 9

Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway

The UMVRDC continues to coordinate the efforts of the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway as the Byway continues to work toward the goal of encouraging economic development through the promotion, preservation and protection of the historic, cultural and natural qualities of the Minnesota River Valley. The Byway Alliance has representatives from chambers of commerce, CVBs, historical societies, economic development associations, elected officials and state agencies. They collaborate with other organizations to promote the valley and work on projects to improve access and information distribution about its wonderful attractions and resources.



The last year was filled with many exciting events and projects:

- The new magazine sized visitors guide featuring many discovery sites and local points of interest.
- Final design of 16 24"x 36" interpretive signs that will be installed at sites throughout the valley including Big Stone County Museum, Big Stone National Wildlife Refuge, Plover Prairie, Chippewa Prairie,

Swensson Farm Museum, Yellow Medicine County Museum and more!

- Completed a major revision to our website www.mnrivervalley.com thanks in part to a wonderful intern- Kate Grabosky from New Prague through the University of Minnesota's Connecting Students to Communities Program. The website was greatly improved and we encourage you to visit often as you plan your trip throughout the valley....new discovery sites are added often as well as updated calendar of activities.

- Planning for new community kiosks in Ortonville, Montevideo, Granite Falls, Redwood Falls, and Morton.

- Hosted a bus tour of various historic sites near Granite Falls and Montevideo in conjunction with the Wood Lake Preservation Commemorative event last September.

- Sent a postcard to 5,000 people promoting Southern Minnesota Byways. As part of the "You'll Be Surprised!" promotion, we cooperatively joined forces with the Historic Bluff County and Great River Road Scenic Byways...our thanks to byway photogra-

pher Ron Bolduan for the excellent Minnesota river/canoe picture featuring our Byway on the postcard.

- Hikers enjoyed the 4th Annual Minnesota River Valley Tour by hiking rock outcroppings in the wild and scenic areas, enjoying wildflower identification, and learning about ancient volcanic activity in the Cedar Rock Mountain area.
- Byway members were instrumental in advising the Minnesota Historical Society to temporarily resolve staffing needs at both the Lower Sioux Agency site and Fort Ridgely Historic site.

Byway members supported and lead in specific communities the continued effort to develop the Minnesota River Valley State Recreational Trail that is being planned that will run throughout our valley bringing tourism dollars into our area and provide a healthy experience for families to get out and enjoy our treasure.

For more information, contact Dawn Hegland at 320-289-1981 or dawn.hegland@umvrdc.org.



from *Meander* p. 8

design, staffing).

- Artists reported a range of 100 to 1000 customers at their individual studios.
- Customers visited an average of eight studios.
- 79% of customers said the quality of the art was excellent
- 62% of customers said their overall experience was excellent
- Average Expenditures per Customer

- ♦ \$94.29 Meander Art
- ♦ \$19.70 Food
- ♦ \$10.79 Shopping (other than art)
- ♦ \$10.18 Lodging

The Meander is about making relationships, welcoming people and being connected to the history, culture and landscape where we live. By encouraging visitors to explore the region and by visiting artists in their own creative studio environments,

we are celebrating a lifestyle that represents the small, the handmade, and the personal and local culture of the Upper Minnesota River region.

For more information and to receive a brochure about the event, visit www.artsmeander.com or call Dawn Hegland, UMVRDC on the toll free Prairie Waters line at 866-866-5432.

TRANSPORTATION

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

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

Some of the transportation projects that were included in FY 2007:

- Participated on ATPs 4 and 8 as technical staff and as alternate voting members;
- Provided information to MnDOT on the statewide functional class study;
- Assisted Appleton, Granite Falls, Clara City, Benson and Ortonville as requested regarding trail planning;
- Participated on the ATP 8 Transportation Enhancement Committee;
- Participated on the ATP 4 Transportation Enhancement, Discretionary, and Safety Committees;
- Hosted four Transportation Advisory Committee meetings; and
- Coordinated with other RDCs on transportation issues.

If you have a transportation related comment or concern, we would love to hear it! Contact Dawn Hegland at 320.289.1981 or dawn.hegland@umvrd.org.

Region 6W Local Public Transit - Human Service Coordination Plan

As the result of Congress passing the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA - LU) in August of 2005, grantees under the New Freedom Initiative (53117), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC - 5316) and Elderly and Disable Transportation Program (5310) must meet certain requirements in order to receive funding for fiscal year 2007 and beyond. These programs are required to be part of a "locally developed coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan". MnDOT contracted with the UMRDC to complete this local plan.

The purpose of the Local Public Transit-Human Service Coordination Plan is to create a comprehensive plan to help state and local community leaders, organizations and agencies involved in human service transportation and public transit services to cooperate and coordinate programs and develop action plans

for the delivery of services. Key elements to the plan include: an assessment of transportation consumer needs; an inventory of available transportation services that identifies gaps in service; strategies to address these gaps; identification of coordination amongst providers; and prioritization of implementation strategies. The plan is designed to identify the gaps between customer expectations and the current level of service. Coordination among providers and agencies could:

- Increase availability of services
- Improve service levels
- Increase access to jobs
- Enhance service quality
- Eliminate duplication
- Improve cost-effectiveness

The planning process included a local technical advisory committee to oversee the development of the plan. Public input was gathered through a stakeholder questionnaire, public plan-

ning workshop, a public comment period and public meeting before adoption. Priority strategies include:

- Create a local transportation coordination council to encourage inter-agency coordination to improve transportation services.
- Identify ways to implement extended service hours within the region.
- Identify and seek solutions to barriers at the local level that stop coordination.
- Continue to support and implement volunteer driver programs as a critical component to the network.
- Evaluate ways to defray cost of trips to keep rides affordable.

Anyone interested in reviewing the completed plan can do so at the UMRDC office or it is accessible on the website at www.umvrd.org by clicking on programs/transportation/special projects.

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (MnRAAA) is the designated area agency on aging for the Southwest Planning and Service Area of Minnesota. Regions 6E, 6W, 8 and 9 make up the 27-county planning and service area. The primary functions of an area agency on aging are advocacy and education, fund distribution, systems change, capacity building and information and assistance.

In Region 6W, staff provides technical assistance to increase individual agen-

cies' capacity to develop or expand priority services. Services provided also include high quality information, education and assistance through the Senior LinkAge Line™ that meets the needs of seniors and their families and helps them make informed choices about benefits and services. The UMVRDC remains committed to



“expanding options and opportunities that support the independence and dignity of older persons as valued, full participants of society and one of Minnesota's greatest resources”.

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

Advisory Council on Aging

This ten member volunteer committee provides an essential service to the UMVRDC. The members assure that Region 6W provides a continuum of care for elders by combining the Title III Older Americans Act dollars with other public or private aging service dollars.

Primary functions of the committee include identifying regional needs of the elderly that the Area Plan should address and awarding the Title III Older Americans Act dollars to meet these needs. The Area Plan is the region's grant agreement with the MN Board on Aging.

AAA Advisory Council members include Eva Stacey, Barb Nelson, Judy Dahl, Sheri Hansen, Dave Torgerson (chair), Barbara Lunde, Dick Wambeke, Dennis Viacrusis, Ron Anderson and Erling Albin. The committee currently has an opening for a representative from a public/private agency and would greatly appreciate suggestions. If you have any ideas, please call the MnRAAA - Appleton Office at 320-289-1981.

Health Insurance Counselors

The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging - Appleton Office, under the guidance of the Minnesota Board on Aging, offers health insurance counseling services to Medicare beneficiaries of all ages and their caregivers in Region 6W. Counseling is provided by state-certified Health Insurance Counseling staff

or volunteers and may take place over the telephone or in person at community sites or seniors' homes. Examples of assistance provided include assisting to understand the basics of Medicare and Medical Assistance, choosing a Medicare supplement, choosing a Medicare Part D plan or assisting with

health insurance forms.

We currently have ten Health Insurance Volunteers available to assist individuals throughout Region 6W. Individuals interested in becoming a Health Insurance Volunteer can call 320-289-1981 for more information.



Upper Minnesota Valley RDC
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APPLETON MN

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GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The GIS department at the UMVRDC during FY07 has worked with a variety of projects such as ditch mapping in Swift, Yellow Medicine, Lac qui Parle and Chippewa Counties and parcel map updates in Swift and Yellow Medicine Counties.

The list below gives a good representation of the different projects that were completed during the last year.

- Chippewa County ditches
- City of Canby parcels
- Lac qui Parle County ditches
- Swift County Comprehensive Plan
- Outmigration Study
- Swift County ditches
- Yellow Medicine County ditches
- Large-scale scanner
- Parcel map updates in Swift and Yellow Medicine Counties
- Variety of maps for:
 - ◆ Prairie Five
 - ◆ Pioneer Public TV
 - ◆ Cities and counties in Region 6W

There was also a push for Internet Mapping Service (IMS) use during the last year and education into different GIS practices such as parcel updates and data licensing. Carrie's experience has given her a wide knowledge of GIS and its applications, so please contact her with your GIS questions. Carrie can be reached at 320-289-1981 or by email at gisrdc@umvrdc.org.