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ANNUAL REPORT

Calendar Year 2007

MID-MINNESOTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

*Serving the People of Kandiyohi, McLeod,
Meeker, and Renville Counties
Since 1974.*



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MID-MINNESOTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Serving the People of Region Six East



DuWayne Underthun

To Those We Serve:

We are pleased to provide you with the 2007 Annual Report of the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC). This report describes achievements of the Commission and its staff in carrying out the Commission's mission. The report highlights the programs and projects of the MMDC during Calendar Year 2007. The enclosed year-end financial data is for Fiscal Year 2007 (July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007).

2007 has been another year full of activities for every one of the Commission's departments. Technical assistance has been given to many of the Region's local units of government as well as to some organizations and businesses. This report highlights the major activities of the Commission during 2007.

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departments.

New governance requirements from the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) were worked on throughout 2007, with full implementation of these changes taking place in January of 2008. For MMDC to continue our federal role as an Economic Development Planning District, new regulations on governance structure needed to be made. While keeping the majority of Commission Board members as elected local officials, the Commission has created additional governing board member positions that represent private business interests. Board member positions representing higher education, Chamber of Commerce, job training, and private businesses have been added to the Commission's governing board. We hope that these changes will improve our efforts in working in the Region with our economic development efforts. Bylaw changes have been made in 2007 to reflect these changes, including creating a Board of Directors level to our governing structure.



Donn Winckler

Significant changes are also underway with the Commission's partnership with neighboring Regions to provide Area Agency on Aging services. The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging[®] Inc. (MNRAAA) that covers 27 counties in South-west Minnesota, including Region Six-East, has been changed from a Joint Powers Board of the four Regional Development Commissions in the area to an incorporated non-profit governance board. The Commission will continue to be partners on MNRAAA and help staff the agency. The establishment of a non-profit agency will hopefully add a whole new possibility of funding various projects — many foundations only fund non-profit organizations. More changes will likely occur in 2008 to how MNRAAA operates.

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State Certified Building Inspection Services

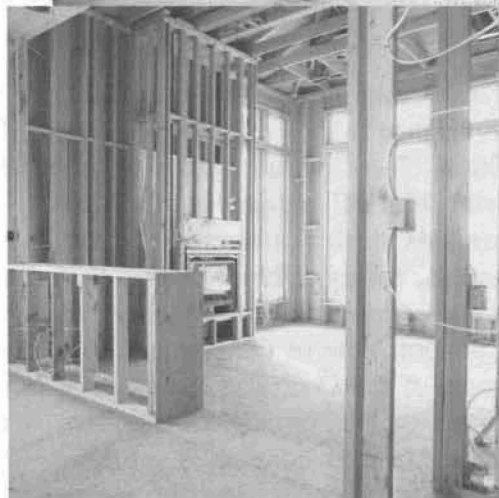
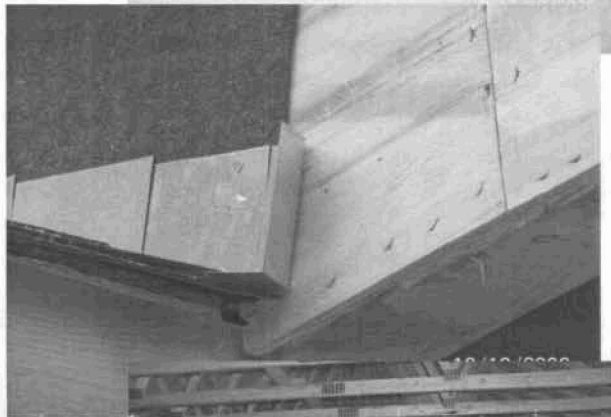
The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) has one fully certified State Building Official on its staff that provides inspection and plan review services for communities that have adopted the State Building Code. The Commission's Economic Development Director is also a fully certified State Building Official. This gives the Department the added ability to use his assistance on occasions when work gets very busy. The State Building Code sets construction standards to assure the health, safety, comfort, and security of building occupants.

MMDC had contracts with 16 local units of government in providing this service during the calendar year. These jurisdictions included: in Kandiyohi County: Atwater, Blomkest, Dovre Township, Kandiyohi, and Penneck; in McLeod County: Brownton and Stewart; in Meeker County: Cosmos, Darwin, Dassel, and Grove City; in Renville County: Bird Island, Fairfax, and Hector; in Wright County: Cokato; and in Stearns County: Richmond. The combined population for these jurisdictions served is over

15,000 persons.

Additional inspections are being made in the communities of Buffalo Lake, Sacred Heart, Hector, and Lake Lillian under the State Hazardous Building Act. Staff also provides accessibility inspections on occasion for Renville County.

Department staff have received training and provided service with lead-based paint inspections and risk assessments. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations require these inspections in housing projects that they participate in. As few persons have both the training and equipment to provide this service in Southwest Minnesota, MMDC provides this service within and outside of our four-county Region. Analysis of asbestos concerns is another service the Department offers. Lastly, the Building inspectors provide housing rehabilitation inspection services for both the Hutchinson and Willmar HRAs.



(Continued on page 12)

Transportation Planning

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) receives an annual grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation, matched with the local tax levy, to provide transportation planning services within the Region's four counties for principally activities involving the state trunk highway system and to participate in the Southwest

Meeker County Engineer, Ronald Mortensen was the Commission's County Engineer representative. The Commission holds an annual public informational meeting on the proposed Area Transportation Improvement Program. Staff provides assistance for this activity as well as serving on an ATP Committee that makes Enhancement Project funding recommendations.

and access needs along the corridor.

Kandiyohi County is conducting a roadway jurisdictional study to be completed in early 2008. The Commission is assisting the county with this study. The project involves the examination of each roadway segment and objectively determining which level of jurisdiction should logically own and maintain it. Roadway significance, tax capacity, and spacing, among other variables, are all being examined to make the determinations.



Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP) process. The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) makes recommendations to the Commission on these transportation activities.

The Commission annually participates in the Area Transportation Partnership's decision-making process of which projects receive Federal funding through the State's Transportation Improvement Program. MMDC's voting members on the ATP are Sheldon Nies and Ron Kutzke.

The Commission has provided assistance to the Highway 15 Coalition. The Coalition was formed, with MMDC assistance, to work towards raising awareness of the access, safety, and capacity challenges facing the Highway 15 Corridor. One of the primary first goals of the Coalition is to seek a Congressional allocation of dollars to be able to conduct a corridor study to identify specific safety

The Commission is assisting Mn/DOT with updating the Roadway Functional Classification System within the Region. Staff worked with County and City Engineers in recommending changes to the system. Mn/DOT is expected to develop a statewide draft functional classification early in 2008 for review, before it becomes a final document.

(Continued on page 12)

Economic Development Assistance and Revolving Loan Fund

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission's economic development program is designed to assist local units of government and businesses in the Region with activities that create or support the creation of jobs and investment. Program activities are funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, and the local tax levy. The Commission operates a \$1.4 million Revolving Loan Fund program within the Region's four counties. Two separate advisory committees assist the Commission with the economic development activities. The first committee provides recommendations to the Commission on the priorities and goals of economic development in the Region. The second advisory committee provides review and recommendations on the Commission's Revolving Loan Fund program.

(continued on page 13)

Economic Development Activities During Past Fiscal Year:

- Provided technical assistance on the State of Minnesota Job Opportunity Building Zone (JOBZ) Initiative.
- Assistance was provided to the Renville County HRA for rehabilitation projects and Section Eight Audit inspections.
- Technical assistance was provided to the Douglas County HRA regarding workforce housing issues.
- Authored annual update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as required by the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA).
- Received invitation and authored Economic Development Planning Grant Application. The application was approved and funded.
- Staff served as a member of the Kandiyohi County Economic Development Partnership finance Committee.
- Staff gave a presentation to a business capital seminar for Kandiyohi County.
- Staff prepared for changes to the Regulations at the Federal Economic Development Administration by attending a forum at the EDA Chicago Regional Office. Changes include District Governing Board membership modifications.
- Approval was given to two Commission Revolving Loan Fund loans and the RLF received ongoing management.
- Staff provided technical assistance to the City of Hutchinson-Housing Redevelopment Authority and City of Willmar-HRA for home rehabilitation efforts.
- Staff served as an ex-officio member of Kandiyohi County Economic Development Partnership Operations Board.
- Staff is serving on the Kandiyohi County Food Systems Steering Committee.
- This year two loans were approved and funded, and the total amount of jobs created and retained is 25.





Area Agency on Aging

The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (MnRAAA) is dedicated to helping older people in Southwest Minnesota lead comfortable, independent lives. MnRAAA is governed by a Joint Powers Board of the four Regional Development Commissions in a 27-county region of Southwest Minnesota. The goal of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is to support the development of community based services in accordance with Title III of the Older Americans Act. The 2007 AAA budget for MMDC is \$187,687. Activities of the AAA are conducted by the Program Director and Senior Outreach Specialist.

Older Americans Act

The Older Americans Act (OAA) was reauthorized, amended, and signed into law by President Bush in December 2006. This action represents the 16th reauthorization of the OAA. The OAA promotes policy that ensures older American's full

participation in society and fosters their overwhelming desire to choose the homes and communities in which they wish to live throughout their later years. Other provisions to the OAA include:

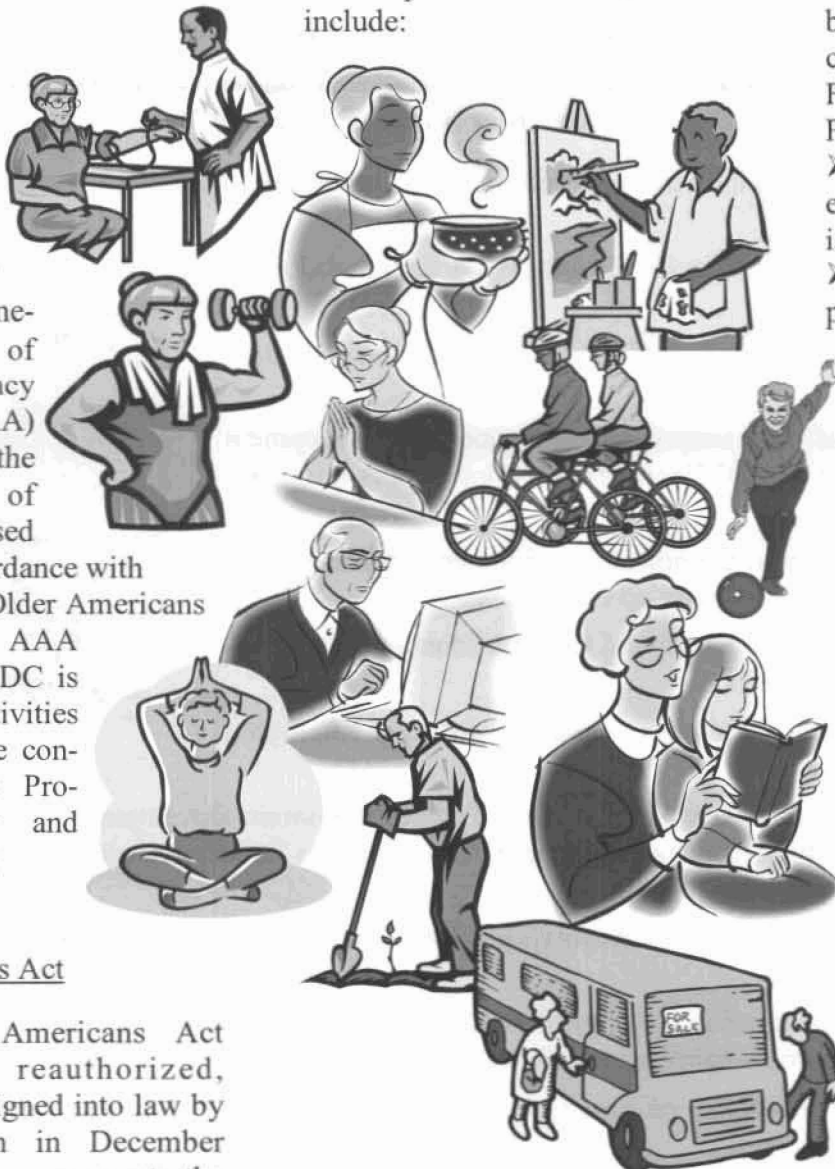
term care needs of the baby boom generation.

- Greater focus on prevention and treatment of mental disorders.
- Outreach and service to a broader universe of family caregivers under the National Family Caregiver Support Program.
- Increased focus on civic engagement and volunteerism.
- Enhanced coordination of programs that protect elders from abuse, neglect, and exploitation (*AoA website, March 20, 2007*).

Long Term Care Activities

Minnesota's goal to re-balance long-term care continues to be a primary focus for the Minnesota Board on Aging and Area Agencies on Aging. The development of services that support people who wish to age in place, continues to be a priority for policymakers. The Gaps & Regional Analysis activities conducted throughout 2001-2003 provided a foundation for further work in 2006. Thus, the Transform 2010 Project was launched as a partnership between the MN Department of Human

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- Support for State and community planning to address the long-

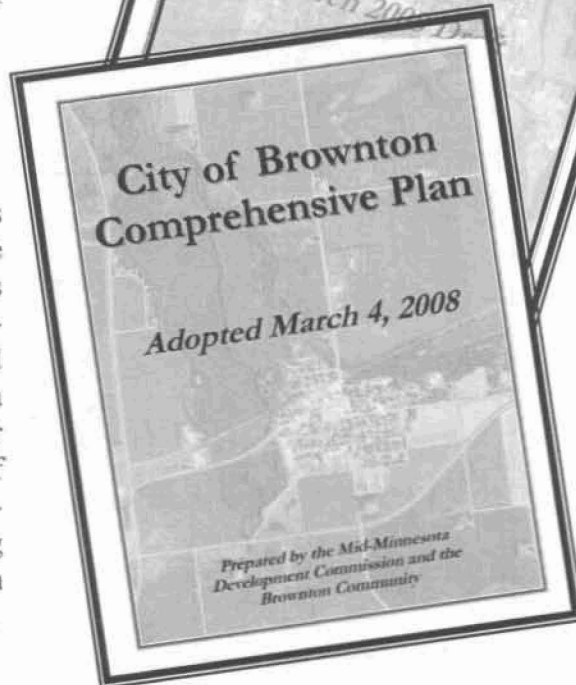
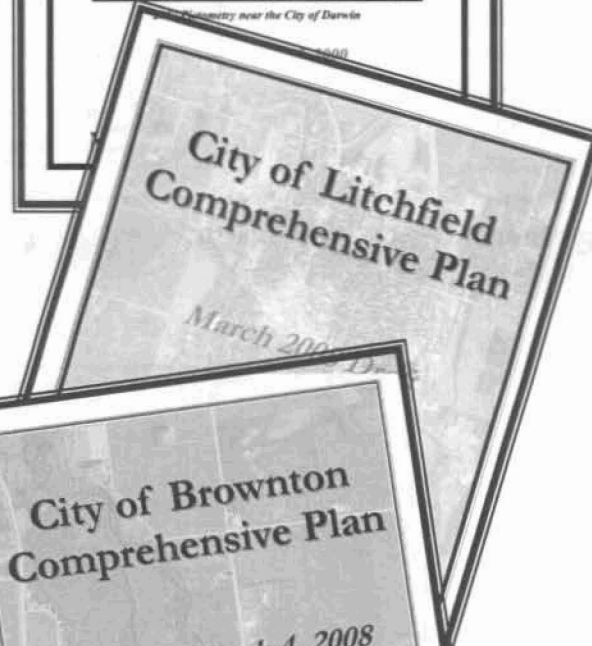
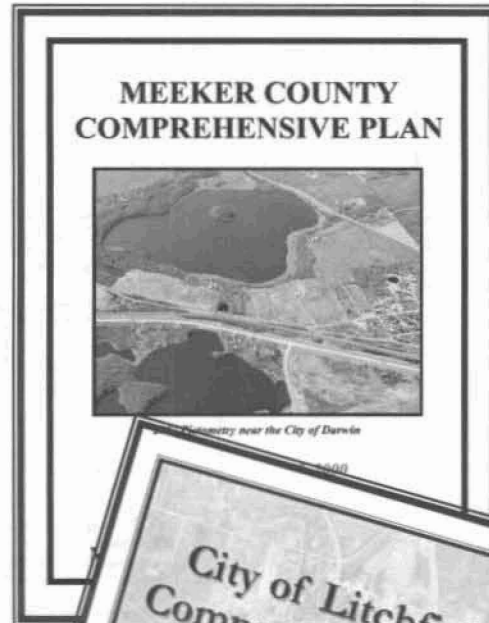
Community Development and Planning Technical Assistance

The Community Development Department is able to provide a wide array of community development planning projects and miscellaneous activities for local units of government. Typically this particular program area is not tied to any State or Federally funded program, but funded through service charges that are subsidized by the use of the Commission's general fund. Consequently, the Commission primarily provides technical services where they are most needed to local units of government.

Each year the staff offers assistance to local units of government on a wide range of services, including comprehensive land use plans, zoning and subdivision ordinances, ordinance codification, grant and loan writing, community surveys, public facilities planning, housing studies, and mapping projects as well as many other technical services. As one of Minnesota's State Data Centers, the MMDC regularly provides businesses, non-profit agencies, private citizens, and units of government data from the Census and other informational sources free of charge. Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping services are highlighted in another section of this report.

In 2007, the Commission provided a wide variety of assistance to the Region's counties and cities. One of the largest projects was the continuation of work in developing Hazard Mitigation plans for Kandiyohi, Meeker, McLeod, and Renville Counties. The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, passed by the United States Congress, requires that all states and counties prepare comprehensive All-Hazard Mitigation plans to identify risks and develop strategies to reduce losses. These plans are based on prioritizing the likelihood of damage to life and property from natural or technological disasters, then laying out steps to minimize those risks. In preparing these plans, staff is working with county, city, and township officials, emergency managers, police chiefs, fire fighters, planners, and others. Grants were received to conduct these plans.

Staff assisted the Buffalo Creek Watershed District in writing a successful BWSR Clean Water Legacy Act Grant. The \$190,000 grant will be utilized for streambank stabilization projects, riparian buffer strips, and a sediment basin for Lake Allie.



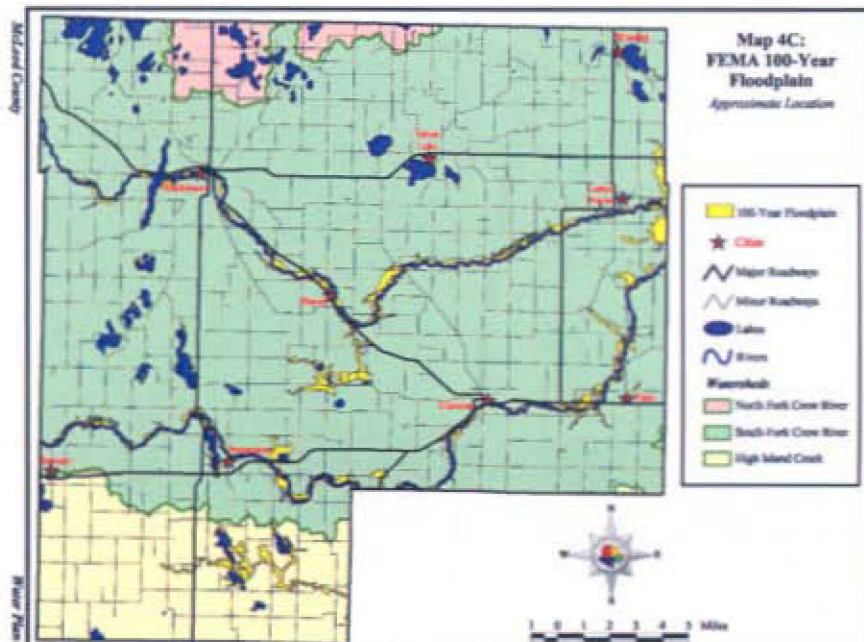
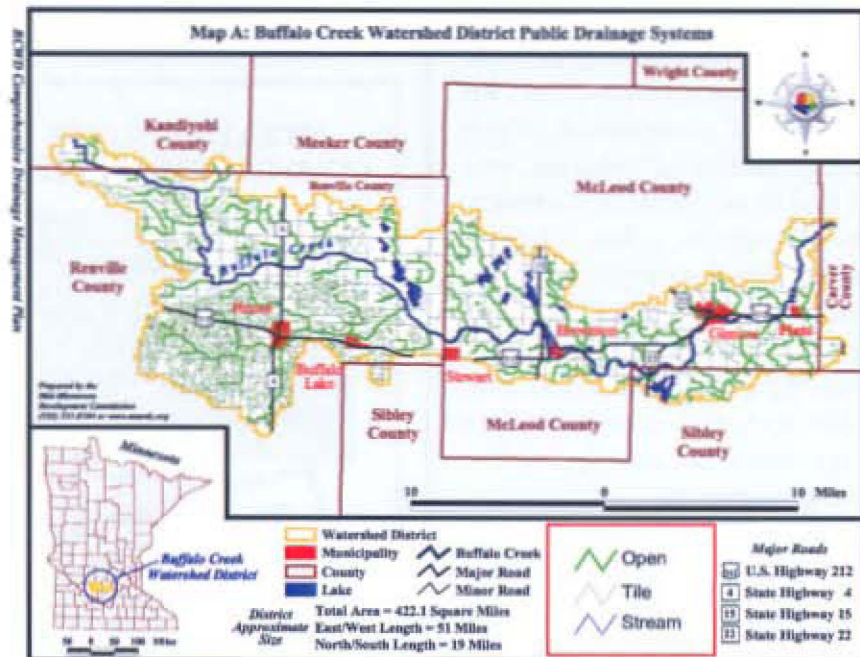
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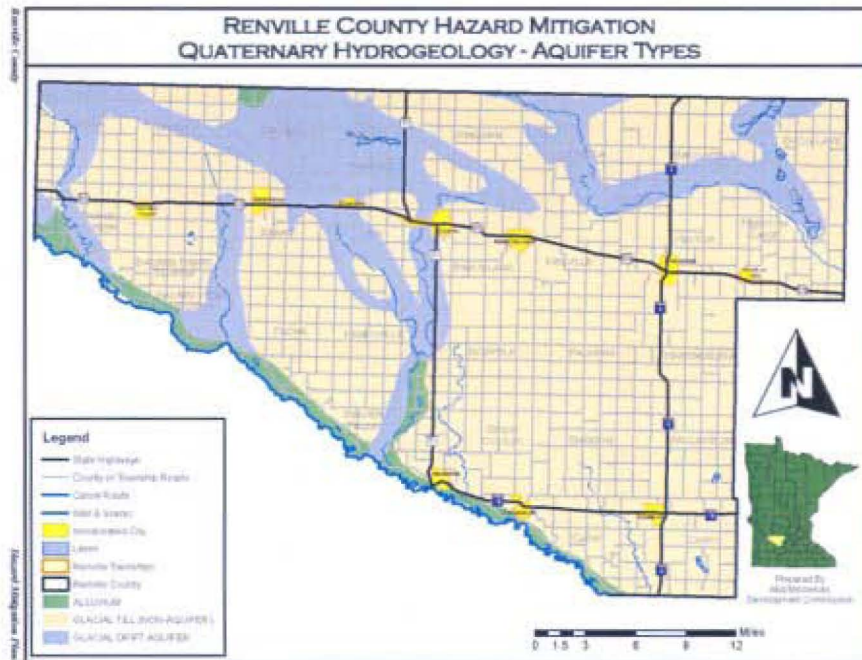
Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Through the years of operation, the Commission has always provided a means of assisting clientele with their mapping needs. The Commission began offering GIS mapping services back in 1996. Since that time the Commission has made over 500 specialty maps for a variety of clients. By moving into GIS, the Commission offers a much more sophisticated level of computer map-making that is tied to databases. Thus, not only can staff quickly and easily update maps, but can use the software program to make in-depth analysis. GIS is a "computer-based tool for mapping and analyzing things that exist and events that happen on earth. GIS technology integrates common database operations such as query and statistical analysis with the unique visualization and geographic analysis benefits offered by maps." (ESRI)

GIS has become widely used in recent years. There are limitless applications for where and how it can be used. Major areas of application include: urban planning, zoning, plan reviews, transportation planning, environmental impact and management analysis, vehicle routing, public facilities management, and business location analysis to name just a few.

The Commission has purchased software that will allow staff to set up Internet mapping within the Region. The ability to publish

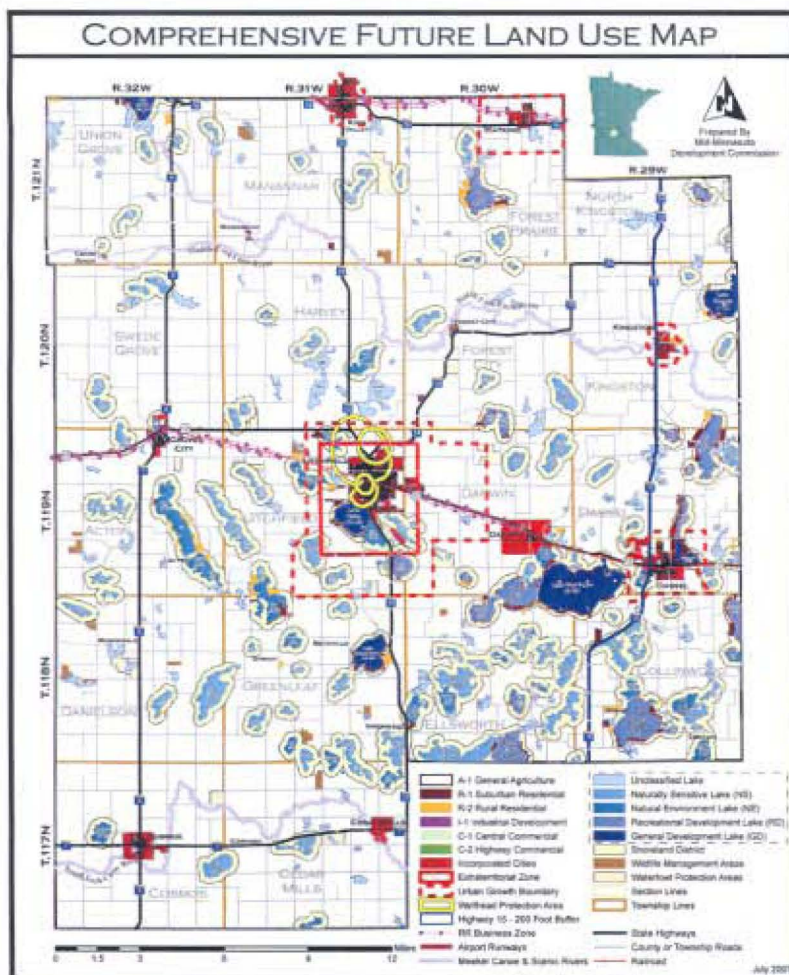




spatial data and maps to the Internet allows MMDC and each county in the Region to create dynamic web sites reflecting certain mapping purposes.

GIS activities during the past calendar year include:

- ◆ Work continued on the Meeker County Parcel Map.
- ◆ GIS Staff provided maps for the Buffalo Lake Watershed District Plan, which included the digitization of buffers around ditches and streams.
- ◆ Various hazard mitigation maps were created and being used to help in preparing each of the counties' Hazard Mitigation Plans.
- ◆ Maps have been made for the Meeker County Comprehensive Plan Update as well as for city comprehensive plans the MMDC are assisting with.
- ◆ Maps were produced for Kandiyohi County's Economic Development Commission to assist with determining good locations for wind generators.
- ◆ GIS staff created shapefile layers of airport boundaries and air space safety zones for the Renville County Airport Ordinance.



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Area Agency on Aging

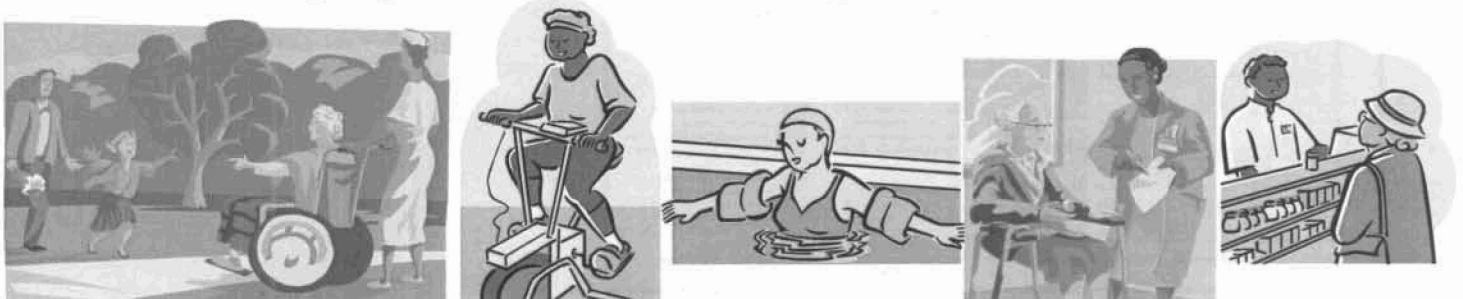


Services and the MN Board on Aging. The purpose of this partnership is to provide short and long term goals to transform infrastructures and services that will advocate permanent changes to support the coming age wave in the state's population.

Other AAA Activities

Staff also provides a wide variety of technical assistance to various aging organizations and causes. Some of the activities of the past fiscal year include:

- ♦ Conducted numerous Medicare Part D Plan Comparisons throughout the region for consumers during the annual open enrollment period that began November 15 and ended December 31. There were a total of 978 client contacts made in 2007.
- ♦ Provided 1,195 hours of counseling and education throughout the year through the expertise of twenty-two (22) health insurance counseling volunteers.
- ♦ Presented information about AAA services regarding Medicare Part D and the Senior LinkAge Line® Network.
- ♦ Participated in the Life Connections Expo, MN State Fair, and other area Senior Health Fairs.
- ♦ Co-sponsored 6th Annual Caregiver Event held in Willmar, October 2007.
- ♦ Provided grant writing assistance for Community Service Development grants to various organizations. Buffalo Lake Health Care Center received funding to add five (5) assisted living units onto an existing building.
- ♦ Secured Alzheimer's Demonstration Grant for region; focus on consumer directed model of service and increased linkage between physicians, family caregivers, and community based services. Project sites are located at Grove City CARE and Atwater Living at Home Block Nurse programs.
- ♦ Facilitated Eldercare Development Partnership (EDP) Long Term Care Coordinating Council for 16 counties. Goals focused on supporting community development of services to support elderly persons living independently. Secured grant funding for SFY 2008 continuation of EDP funds.
- ♦ Maintained the Memorandum of Understanding with Rice Memorial Hospital Health Insurance Counseling Program to share volunteer and training activities.



Advisory Council on Aging (ACA)

The AAA has an advisory council comprised of eight members and chaired by Maureen Melgaard-Schneider from rural Atwater. The ACA meets up to four times per year and has a responsibility for providing the link between MNRAAA, older adults, and their local communities. An additional function of the ACA is to establish Title III funding priorities, review applications, and make recommendations for funding.

In 2007, MNRAAA established a Funding Task Force comprised of Advisory Council members representative of the four ACAs. This committee reviewed applications, conducted interviews, and made final project awards to the Joint Powers Board. Following is a list of projects funded for calendar year 2007.

Transportation: Kandiyohi, Meeker, and Renville Counties

Legal Services/Education: Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services

Congregate Dining and Home Delivered Meals: Lutheran Social Services, Inc. (LSS).

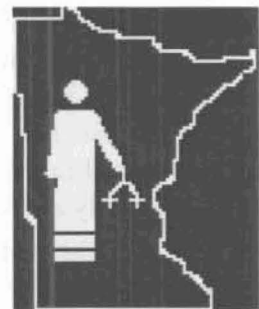
Caregiver Support and Respite Program: Lutheran Social Services, Inc. (LSS).



ElderCare Development Partnership (EDP)

MMDC received state funds to address telehealth, transportation, chronic disease prevention, and nursing home transition activities throughout the 6E region and twelve additional counties in the MNRAAA planning and service area. A primary activity of this funding is to provide technical assistance to agencies seeking Community Service Development Grants from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, or other funding sources, and promote coordination among community based providers.

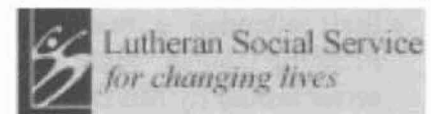
Southern MN Regional



Legal Services

MNRAAA Joint Powers Board

- ♦ During calendar year 2007, Eugene Short, Redwood County Commissioner, was Chairperson. Maureen Melgaard-Schneider and DuWayne Underthun served as voting members representing MMDC.
- ♦ Dorothy Lindstrom acted as Ex-Officio member to represent the 6E Advisory Council



(Continued from page 4)

Transportation Planning

Commission staff was also active in the following transportation activities during the 2007 Calendar Year:

- ◆ Working with Mn/DOT to process functional classification changes on a case-by-case basis.
- ◆ Preparing comprehensive plans that include transportation components and issues.
- ◆ Attending RDC Transportation Planners meetings during the past year. These quarterly meetings allow the planners to share information and coordinate planning efforts.
- ◆ Participating in this past year's ATP Enhancement Committee project review process.
- ◆ Provided information to consultants working on a Litchfield Transportation Study, and staff participation as a member of the Study's Technical Review Committee.
- ◆ Staff participated in Mn/DOT District 8's evaluation of Section 5310 applications which decided which projects may compete for state funding. The Section 5310 Program funds handicapped accessible vehicles for organizations that transport elderly and/or handicapped individuals.
- ◆ Assisted the City of Willmar with some trail planning activities on connecting the downtown with the north side lakes and Glacial Lakes State Trail.
- ◆ Staff attended a two day "Advanced Freight Planning Course" through a national educational series hosted by Mn/DOT.
- ◆ In January of 2007 staff submitted a final Plan to MnDOT for Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan.

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State Certified Building Inspection Services

ADMINISTERING THE MINNESOTA STATE BUILDING CODE

Mid-Minnesota Development Commission provides inspection services and plan review services for communities that have adopted the State Building Code.

Administering the Minnesota State Building Code involves the following activities:

- Responding to questions, concerns, and other inquiries about building code requirements.
- Issuing permits, collecting fees, answering inquiries about particular projects, and related activities.
- Reviewing the building plans for compliance with applicable requirements of the Building Code.
- Carrying out the field inspections for each building project. The number of field inspections varies from a couple of field inspections to many, depending on the project. Most of the building inspectors' time is devoted to this activity. Associated activities include notifying builders of problems, arranging for corrective measures, and so on.
- Enforcement activities related to building without required permits and issues that arise when permits are not in compliance.
- Preparing reports required as part of the Building Code.

(Continued from page 5)

Economic Development Assistance and Revolving Loan Fund

A major portion of the staff time in economic development is devoted to technical assistance and administering the Revolving Loan Fund. Businesses, individuals, and governmental units can request and receive economic development technical assistance. Requests range from business assistance information to business finance analysis, infrastructure improvements, tax increment financing, and grant and loan writing.

The Revolving Loan Fund was established to assist businesses within the Region with gap financing. Businesses must be deemed viable and involve job creation or retention. Loans are made for working capital, land, buildings, and equipment. The amounts given out as loans range from \$5,000 to a maximum of \$100,000. The Revolving Loan Fund was originally capitalized primarily through Economic Development Administration funds, but also from funds from the four counties, the State of Minnesota, the Southwest Minnesota Foundation, and from the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission.

(Continued from page 2)

Chairperson & Executive Director's Message

The Commission has begun to see some financial challenges in 2007, which will continue on into 2008. The national housing financial crisis has had a significant negative impact on the Commission's finances. The Commission's Building Inspections Department provides state building code officials to a number of communities. While costs to operate the department have gone up modestly, income has been way down due to the lack of new housing construction in the communities we provide this assistance. Staff have been developing new inspection services products as a way to help offset some of the financial losses, but nothing will help more than a rebound in new construction activity.

Please let the Commission know of ways we can assist your communities and organizations in the upcoming year. Through the years we have provided the citizens of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties with a wide array of technical assistance. As all local units of government in the region are considered a part of the Commission, we pride ourselves in not calling a project we assist on complete until the client is satisfied with the end product.

Respectfully yours,

DuWayne Underthun

DuWayne Underthun
Chair

Donn Winckler

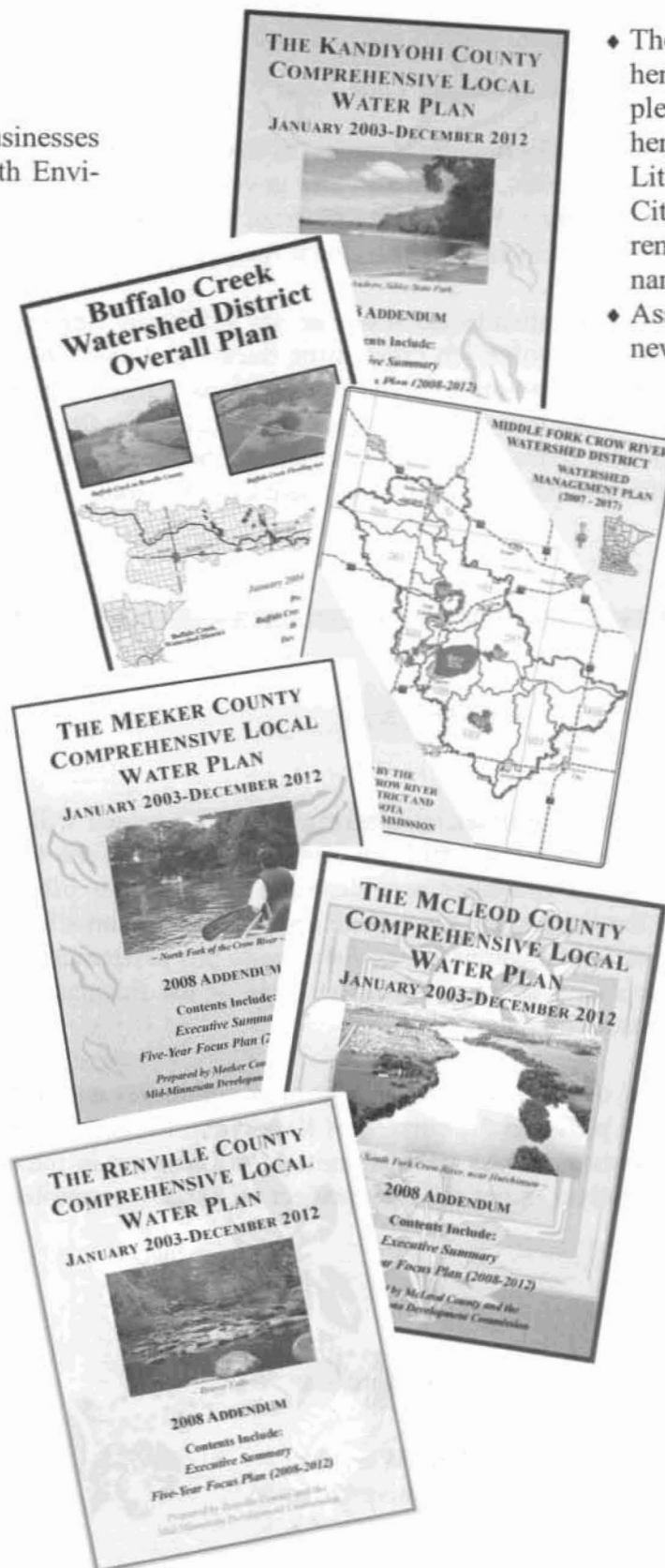
Donn Winckler
Executive Director

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Community Planning

The department assists businesses and local governments with Environmental Assessment Worksheets (EAWs) and Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). During 2007, staff worked with two businesses and the City of Willmar on EAWs, and one business with an EIS. An EAW is a document that is designed to assess the potential environmental effects associated with a proposed project. The EAW serves to determine if further environmental review, in the form of an EIS is needed. An EIS evaluates the potential for significant environmental impacts of a proposed project and investigates methods to reduce adverse environmental effects. An EIS is also used to consider possible alternatives to the proposed project.

Other principal accomplishments and activities that have been undertaken by the Community Planning/Development Department over the course of the past calendar year are highlighted below:



- ◆ The Meeker County Comprehensive Plan Update was completed, as was draft Comprehensive Plans for the Cities of Litchfield and Brownton. The City of Litchfield is also currently updating its Zoning Ordinance.
- ◆ Assistance was given to the newly formed Middle Fork Crow River Watershed District, including the creation of a new Watershed Management Plan.
- ◆ The Commission assisted both Meeker and Kandiyohi Counties with different EAWs.
- ◆ Each of the four counties was given assistance with county water plan revisions.
- ◆ Assisted the Buffalo Creek Watershed District with preparation of a Drainage Management Plan.
- ◆ Staff gave State Legislative testimony for funding the Greenleaf Recreational Area, as well as participated in meetings in support of the project.
- ◆ Staff participated as a member of a Data Collection and Analysis Committee for a Kandiyohi County Community Assessment of Needs Partnership Project headed by the United Way of Kandiyohi County.

Financial Report

Actual Figures Fiscal Year 2007

Original Budget Fiscal Year 2008

Revenues

Economic Development Administration	\$ 47,778		\$ 52,628
HHS - MNRAAA	78,311		105,096
Total Federal Sources		\$ 126,089	\$ 157,724
Agricultural Credit	\$ 23,100		\$ 21,642
Department of Transportation	50,000		50,000
Department of Transportation - Transit Study	18,858		--
HHS—MNRAAA	17,418		6,000
EDP/Sail	47,811		46,094
Total State Sources		\$ 157,187	\$ 123,736
Property Taxes	\$ 208,497		\$ 220,643
Interest and Dividends	19,224		19,014
Inspection Services	167,347		159,804
Technical Assistance	109,213		118,027
GIS Mapping	60,050		52,581
Other	129,455		56,801
In-kind	41,436		62,027
Total Local Sources		\$ 735,222	\$ 688,897
Total Revenues		\$ 1,018,498	\$ 970,357

Expenditures

Personnel	\$ 621,404		\$ 590,328
Supplies & Printing	16,239		14,627
Communications	25,522		23,358
Capital Outlay	12,195		3,300
Services	15,845		9,074
Volunteer Services & Other Uses	5,822		6,545
Travel & Training	44,197		49,339
Commission	18,055		22,016
In-kind	41,436		62,027
Indirect	217,569		235,474
Total Expenditures		\$ 1,018,284	\$ 1,016,088

Mid-Minnesota Development Commission

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Commission Members In 2007

Kandiyohi County Representatives

DuWayne Underthun, Chairperson Townships
Charles Diederich Municipalities
Les Heitke City of Willmar
Dennis Peterson County
Charly Leuze, Treasurer Public Interest
Shawn Mueske Public Interest

McLeod County Representatives

Bill Schaeve Townships
Charles Warner, Secretary Municipalities
Bill Arndt City of Hutchinson
Sheldon Nies County

Meeker County Representatives

Dale Fenrich Townships
Vernon Madson Municipalities
Ron Kutzke, Vice-Chairperson County
Maureen Melgaard-Schneider Public Interest
Dorothy Lindstrom Public Interest

Renville County Representatives

Delbert Wetzel Townships
Carl Colwell Municipalities
John Stahl County
Richard Loftness Public Interest
James Schafer Public Interest
Francis Schweiss Public Interest
Ken Anderson Public Interest

Commission Staff In 2007

Executive Director Donn Winckler
Financial Director/Office Manager Sue Gimse
Aging Program Director Kate Selseth
Senior Outreach Specialist Berit Skurdahl
Economic Development Director Les Nelson
Community Development Director Matthew Johnson
Natural Resource Planner Michael Sharp
GIS Planner Rick Moore
GIS Technician Natalie Hayenga
Planning & Administrative Assistant Teresa Westerman
Building Official Sid Fossan
Building Permit Technician Kristen Rosenboom

