



Annual Report | 2009



Letter from the Commission Chair and Executive Director

Dear Citizens, Communities and Partners,

The year 2009 has been a tumultuous time for the region. Changes in the economy, population shifts, and tough financial times continue to mark the need for Region Nine Development Commission (RNDC) to focus on creating value in the region.

RNDC had a successful year for several reasons, including strengthening its staff capacity, focusing on the value of its work, and challenging itself to work in a sustainable manner. We believe that partner communities, businesses, organizations, and citizens that we have worked with over the past 12 months are doing better, or are in a position to do better, in the coming year.

This year has been a year of building capacity for success during a very tough year for many Minnesotans. RNDC focused on greater integration of collaboration into the way it behaves and interacts with partners throughout the region. We believe that how partners in the region do business, and being strategic on the business they do, will be two key factors driving success in the next two to three years.

Integrating collaborative behavior starts inside first for RNDC. RNDC moved most of its offices from the Blue Earth County Nichols building (precipitated by Blue Earth County building closure) to the City of Mankato Intergovernmental Center. This transition has served as an opportunity for staff and Commissioners to design a space that fosters community, collaboration, transparency and innovation. RNDC's new office is designed around open space, doorless offices and see-through spaces, which foster departments learning, innovating and working in new ways together. This perspective allows RNDC to live out the change it seeks to help create in others.

In this Annual Report, you will read stories of collaborative efforts in community development, aging services, business development, economic development, transportation and others. The stories and reports are intended to demonstrate RNDC "doing" as testimony of its work in past years, as well as its belief that collaboration is critical to success in the behavior of organizations, businesses, local units of government, and communities in the region.

RNDC closed its fiscal year financially stable. Tough financial times place risks on federal, state, and local budgets, which financially affect RNDC. However, during financially challenging times RNDC offers an alternative approach to doing business for some of its partners. RNDC will need to continue monitoring changes in community contracts and unexpected changes in State funding because these two are most volatile during difficult financial times. In 2010, RNDC will seek to develop innovative strategies for organizational sustainability as a model for government entities. We look forward to reporting on this endeavor at the end of 2010.

Respectfully yours,

Timothy Strand,
Commission Chair

Reginald M. Edwards,
Executive Director



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Area Agency on Aging

AAA Provides Information and Links to Support Services

The Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc. (MnRAAA) was designated by the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) to administer federal Older Americans Act programs in Big Stone, Blue Earth, Brown, Chippewa, Cottonwood, Faribault, Jackson, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Martin, Meeker, Murray, Nicollet, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Sibley, Swift, Waseca, Watonwan and Yellow Medicine Counties.

MnRAAA works in collaboration with other organizations

- Information and Assistance: MnRAAA provides older adults, family caregivers and service providers with information about a variety of services (such as transportation, caregiver support, housing, Medicare, prescription drug coverage) through the Senior LinkAge Line® - a service of the aging network supported statewide in partnership with the MBA. MnRAAA also provides individual and community education, long-term-care options counseling and in-depth, one-to-one assistance.

- Program Development and Coordination: MnRAAA collaborates with and provides technical assistance to communities, counties, faith-based organizations, businesses and health and social service providers to address the needs of the aging population. This is accomplished through coordinated development and/or enhancement of caregiver supports, volunteer-based services and community resources.
- Administration: MnRAAA administers federal Older Americans Act funding. It awards grants and contracts for services that help ensure a continuum of care is in place to best meet the needs of older adults and their caregivers. Examples of services that are funded include congregate and home delivered meals, caregiver respite, chore services, transportation, medication management, and legal services.
- Older adults and their families cannot make good decisions unless they have good information. In order to improve access to information, Internet and database technologies must be maximized and when necessary, "linked" to one-on-one assistance.
- Administrative capacity will be ensured at the same time the development and information and assistance capacities are strengthened and expanded.

For more information contact:

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What does the future hold for Area Agencies on Aging

- A major focus of the aging network for the next several years will be reshaping and expanding home and community-based service options for older adults. This will ensure choice is available when an individual's long term care needs are being addressed.





Community & Economic Development

Communities become proactive for jobs and business

How can communities in South Central Minnesota facilitate private sector investment?

- Plan smart
- Strategize for a solid return on investment
- Partner with others to leverage resources

Looking for opportunities to work together

The key is to collaborate. All communities across South Central Minnesota should be exploring economic development opportunities. These opportunities can vary and be at different levels of intensity, but the important part is to actively plan and look for collaboration opportunities.

One such collaboration is taking place in Brown County. Residents expressed a desire to elected officials for the pursuit of an opportunity for communities to work together on economic development. Officials convened existing county-wide organizations and began talks. Region Nine Development Commission was brought in to consult and facilitate the initiative.

Definable outcomes were identified:

- Bring together the economic development resources of all communities in Brown County,
- Eliminate geopolitical boundaries
- Develop a new approach to solving growth issues
- Create jobs within the county

Seeking a diverse group and identifying agencies

Officials from Brown County and the cities of Cobden, Comfrey, Hanska, New Ulm, Springfield, and Sleepy Eye went through an 18 month economic development planning process. A kickoff meeting of interested communities discussed how to involve a more diverse and comprehensive group of stakeholders. As part of this discussion, Region Nine facilitated an exercise in identifying the components of the Brown County Economic Model.

In the first portion of the exercise, participants were asked what elements make up an economic development system. These elements were collected and grouped. Three clear groups emerged: Economic Influencers, Quality of Life, Workforce/Education. They became the plan's core activities.

The second portion of the exercise identified which agencies influence these core activities. Subsequent planning team meetings were topic driven, based upon these identified core activities. Agencies that influence these activities were invited to provide practical insight into how elements of these core activities can be enriched to capitalize on economic development opportunities. The attendance of these agencies has broadened membership of the planning group and has given a qualitative component to the topic discussions.

Establishing a benchmark for ongoing efforts

Brown County and its communities now have a new tool for collaborating with each other. The document, entitled "Brown County Economic Development Initiative: Driving to Collaboration," is a report which serves as a benchmark of cooperative efforts among the cities and the county. The report documents consensus items for follow-through and provides a focus of collaborative economic development efforts. The report presents two specific and intertwined initiatives for cross-jurisdictional collaboration: Tax Base Sharing and Renewable Energy. The report also presents key economic characteristics of the county and its opportunities and threats. The county and the cities have signed memorandums of understanding to participate in the continuation of this planning initiative and follow-up on opportunities for collaboration as they arise. What is great about this initiative is that it is ongoing. The plan is not just sitting on the shelf. To review the report, please contact Region Nine Development Commission.



Transportation

City, county and state partner to develop transportation systems

Compounded by Local Government Aid (LGA) cuts from the state, are driving partnerships between communities and various levels of government.

This concept is not new to the communities in southern Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Transportation District 7 office, located in Mankato.

A success story in the Mankato area

In 1996 Mankato-area governments decided that a transportation plan was needed. This resulted in a coordinated effort to produce the Mankato Area Transportation And Planning Study (MATAPS). An update of the plan was completed in 2003 and the partners have come together once again to conduct another update in 2009-2010. The purpose of MATAPS is to allow area jurisdictions to plan together to advance the existing

transportation system to provide safe and efficient movement of goods and people.

MATAPS is the region's vision for the future of its transportation system. The 2009-2010 plan update will provide a renewed vision for a multi-modal transportation system that improves mobility, enhances quality of life, supports continued economic development, and protects the environment.

The update provides an opportunity for area residents, businesses, agencies, and institutions to develop a vision and action plan for roads, transit, pedestrian facilities, air travel and freight services.

Partners involved in the MATAPS process include:

- City of Mankato
- City of North Mankato
- Blue Earth County
- Nicollet County
- Le Sueur County
- Minnesota State University, Mankato
- Region Nine Development Commission
- Minnesota Department of Transportation, District 7 office, Mankato

Way of the future

As local governments face the challenges of changing populations, increased need for services, and reductions in local government aid, it has become increasingly more important for them to consider regional collaborations.

Over the past few decades, collaborative arrangements have become more popular throughout all levels of government due to increased demands and decreased funding. Regional collaborations facilitate a more effective and efficient way of continuing to provide quality services to residents.

South Central Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

Laura's Candy expands to retail location in upper North Mankato

Powered in part by a sugar buzz, Laura Duyvetter and her family and staff are stepping up to the next rung on the entrepreneur ladder by expanding their business into retail "candy land." Laura's Candy & Coffee expects to open in early March 2010 at 1745 Commerce Drive in North Mankato.

With a creative plan to pair gourmet coffees with handmade chocolates, and her now-famous gourmet marshmallows, and other delightful traditional candies, Laura also plots out unique treats for her customers. Imagine sitting at your own booth roasting s'mores! Or a lovely quiet date with your special someone for dessert and coffee without the kids or without the cell phone ringing. Laura's Candy & Coffee will feature later hours for Fridays and Saturdays. She will be

hiring ten more people. Another unique marketing strategy is to offer a "Candy Registry" for folks who want to be gifted with the gourmet goodies on special occasions.

How did she do it?

The answer is with hard work, smart work and collaboration. Laura knows when to mobilize resources. Laura has worked with the South Central SBDC on various aspects of her business since 2005. And with this newest venture drafted, she returned to the SBDC for some teamwork on financing and marketing. This newest collaboration brought together Region Nine Revolving Loan Fund, ProGrowth Bank of Mankato, and the Port Authority of North Mankato.

Assistance from the SBDC has come primarily in the form of financial counseling, marketing ideas, and connections to other sources of finance that Laura says she was not aware of. It has been an honor to work with Laura. She exemplifies the true entrepreneurial spirit!

COLLABORATING IN NEW WAYS

Project GATE II (Growing America Through Entrepreneurship) is a collaborative effort of the Work Force Center and the SBDC. At the SBDC, Project GATE II consultants train participants in the fundamentals of starting and managing a small business, evaluate the potential of the proposed business, and guide participants through the steps of business planning. The program is offered at no charge.

To be eligible you must be unemployed through no fault of your own, at least 45 years old, and eligible for the federal Dislocated Worker Program. Those interested may apply for the program at any Work Force Center.

Participants go through a five-stage process that includes preassessment and orientation, a business readiness assessment, business consulting, classroom training and financial assistance through organizations that help finance new ventures. Project GATE II services are offered through Minnesota Work Force Centers and the statewide network of Small Business Development Centers.



SBDC Data for Service Provided in 2009

- A total of 335 clients were served, 252 of them were new clients.
- 1,019 individual counseling sessions totaling 2,294 hours
- \$6,940,444 in loan packages were approved!
- 45 seminars with 232 attendees. Included in the seminars were a series of special Entrepreneur Readiness orientations hosted at the Minnesota WorkForce Center in Mankato as part of Project GATE.
- 130 women in business or starting a business; a total of 933 counseling hours were provided.
- 17 minority clients; a total of 77 counseling hours were provided. NOTE: Not everyone responds to the "Race" field on the form, so this is an estimate.
- Organizational Matching funds were contributed by more than 40 organizations, including lenders, economic development organizations, cities, counties, and strategic partners.
- 84 out of 91 (92.3%) surveyed would recommend the South Central SBDC to others. 76 out of 115 were very satisfied with the service they received.

Region Nine Area Incorporated (RNAI)

2009 Overview

- Facilitated two grant opportunity forums - attendance continues to grow
- Wrote several FEMA grants – have not seen response yet
- Researched and wrote several Renewable Energy grant applications
- Contracted with small businesses to write industry specific grant applications
- Awarded CERTS grant for Renewable Energy Inventory
- Awarded SMIF grant supporting Community Wind Project
- Awarded Spectrum Trust grant to develop unique business development model for diverse populations
- Working with communities, at their request, to develop local nonprofit organizations
- Developed format to help people understand and navigate grants.gov website
- Served as a connecting point among people, communities, local government and resources

Mission: Help develop a successful, prosperous region

To serve citizens of the region by accessing resources in support of Region Nine Development Commission, local governments and other community organizations that serve those in need.

Outcomes: Serve immediate needs, sustain rural communities

Immediate Outcome – Serve as a mechanism for Region Nine Development Commission, local units of government and small organizations. Access resources to support the mission of Region Nine Area Inc.

Short-term Outcome – Partner with regional organizations to access resources for programs, projects and endeavors that support the mission of Region Nine Area Inc.

Long-term Outcome – Develop a regional community fund that can receive gifts for sustaining small rural communities, and give grants to community organizations that support the mission of Region Nine Area Inc.

What RNAI does

1. Develop strategies to better retain, sustain, develop and improve small rural communities in the region.
2. Build on and grow regional community capacity.
3. Create dialogue with community and business leaders in the region.
4. Increase philanthropic giving throughout the region.

RNAI Contact

Sarah at RNAI: 507-389-8880
or sarah@rncd.org

RNAI is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that can act as a fiscal agent for local communities and other philanthropic groups.





Revenues & Expenditures

Revenue Sources:

Federal	636,541	39.7%
State	243,041	15.2%
Tax Levy	448,283	28.0%
Other Sources	89,652	5.6%
RLF	3,500	0.2%
Charges for Services	56,000	3.5%
Interest	123,500	7.7%
Carryover Reserve	3,000	0.2%
	1,603,517	100.0%

Expenditures by Line Item:

Personnel	828,429
Fringe	279,914
Copying/Printing	31,923
Public Notice	5,200
Postage	15,282
Telephone	21,840
Travel - Staff	51,204
Travel - Other	27,319
Registration	14,255
Supplies	17,707
Membership/Dues	15,880
Miscellaneous	333
Consultant	7,000
Insurance	9,279
Errors & Omissions Insurance	13,700
Maintenance	9,875
Legal/Audit	26,520
Capital Outlay/Equipment	15,750
Staff Development	7,893
Marketing	15,408
Office Space	67,897
Fund Balance Recovery	6,050
Total Expenditures	1,488,749
Pass Thru	1,554,536

Expenditures By Department:

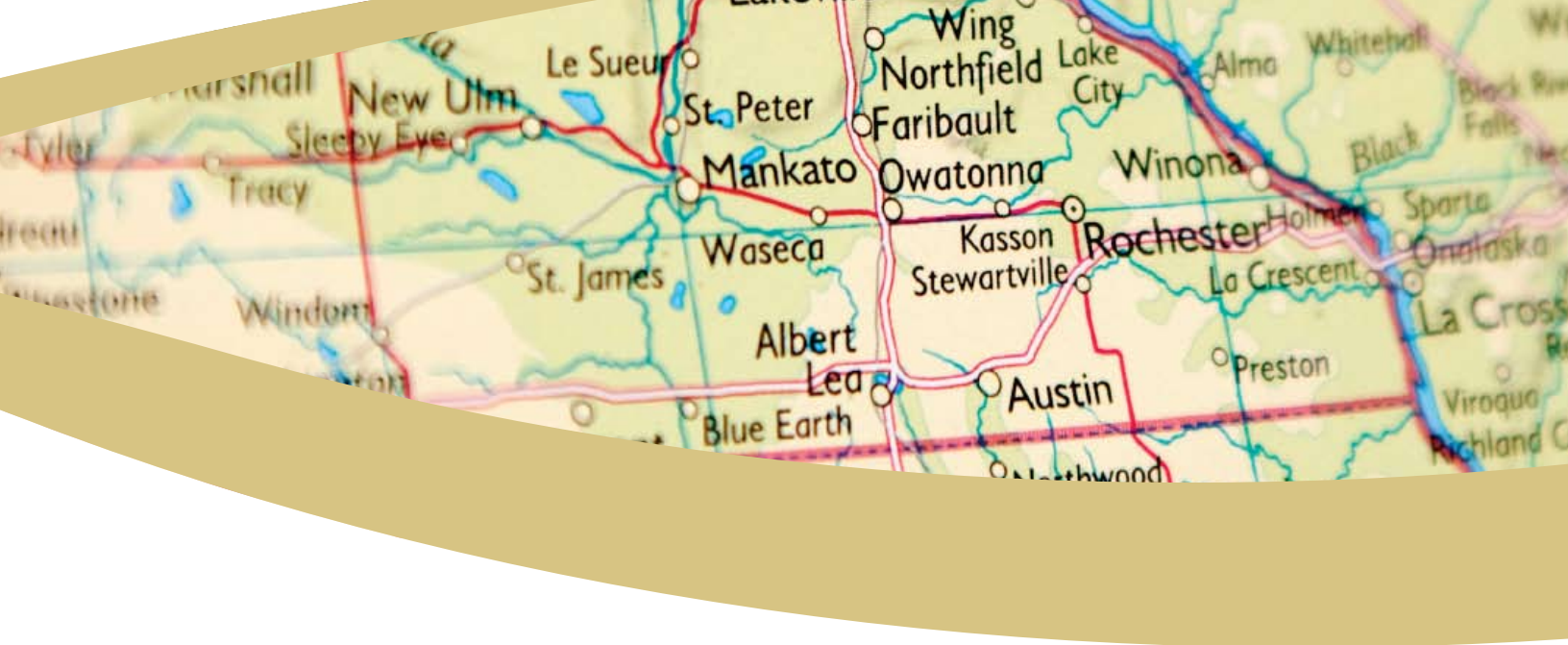
Aging	656,295	40.9%
Community Development	57,318	3.6%
Economic Development	101,440	6.3%
RLF	123,500	7.7%
SBDC	288,000	18.0%
Transportation	82,906	5.2%
General Fund	287,058	17.9%
RNAI	7,000	0.4%
	1,603,517	100.0%

*Indirect Rate Of 25.13%

**Conservative expense figures have been used with respect to possible adjustments to revenue.

Region 9 Development Commission Levy History

Year Payable	Base	Percent Increase	Levy Amount	Percent Increase	Year Payable	Base	Percent Increase	Levy Amount	Percent Increase
2009	435,227	3%	448,283	3%	2003	364,495	3%	375,430	3%
2008	422,550	3%	435,227	3%	2002	353,879	3%	364,495	3%
2007	410,243	3%	422,550	3%	2001	343,572	3%	353,879	3%
2006	398,294	3%	410,243	3%	2000	343,572	3%	343,572	0%
2005	386,693	3%	398,294	3%	1999	343,572	3%	343,572	0%
2004	375,430	3%	386,693	3%					



History and Mission

The creation of regional development commissions

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

Background on Region Nine

The Region Nine Development Commission was authorized by the Regional Development Act of 1969, and was organized by local officials in 1972. The purpose of regional development commissions "is to work with and on behalf of local units of government to develop plans or implement programs to address economic, social, physical and governmental concerns of each region of the state". Working regionally, being challenged by the rapid changes in our communities. Finding ways to help citizens navigate those changes. Focus on problem solving and creating value.

Region Nine is comprised of nine south central Minnesota counties including: Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca and Watonwan. The area includes 72 cities and 147 townships. Their combined population is approximately 222,790 of the State's 4,919,479 people, according to the 2000 Census.

Region Nine Development Commission

Forty-three leaders from across the region serve on the Commission including:

- Thirty-four elected officials representing nine counties, 72 cities, 147 townships, school districts and soil and water conservation districts.
- Eight representatives of special interest groups, including agriculture, commerce, crime prevention, environmental quality, health and human welfare, minority populations, tourism and recreation and transportation. The Minnesota Valley Council of Governments is also represented.

Because of the strategic and collaborative approach to planning over the years, Region Nine Development Commission is well positioned to be a valuable resource for small business growth. RNDC's vision and leadership will work to ensure the economic vitality of this region into the future.

Mission and vision

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

What we value

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.

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

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.

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

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

Region 9 Development Commission Members

Brown County

Jim Berg, County Commissioner
James Broich, Cities Under 10,000
Frederick Juni, Township Board
Charles Schmitz, New Ulm City Council

Martin County

Jerry Boler, County Commissioner
Bob Roesler, Cities Under 10,000
Phil Schafer, Township Board
Harlan Gorath, Fairmont City Council

Blue Earth County

Drew Campbell, County Commissioner
Juanita (Janie) Flores, Minority Populations
Alvis More, Agriculture
Doug Schaller, Township Board
Doug Westphal, Cities Under 10,000
Charlie Hurd, Mankato City Council

Le Sueur County

Chris Collins, Mn Valley Council of Gov'ts
Alvin Dietz, Environmental Quality
Kermit Heldberg, Township Board
Mick Mcguire, Cities Under 10,000
Bill Stangler, County Commissioner
Mary Jean Rohlfing, School Board

Waseca County

Cindy Coy, Cities Under 10,000
Jack Fitzsimmons, Transportation
Daniel Kuhns, County Commissioner
Gary Owens, Township Board

Watsonwan County

Lance Mikkelson, Township Board
Candace Fenske, Health & Human Welfare
Denny Jahnz, Cities Under 10,000
Dwayne Krenz, County Commissioner

Nicollet County

Terry Genelin, Township Board
Judy Hanson, County Commissioner
Bob Schabert, Cities Under 10,000
Tim Strand, St. Peter Mayor
Diane Norland, N. Mankato City Council

Sibley County

Norbert Kaufmann, Township Board
Brenda Pautsch, Cities Under 10,000
Jim Swanson, County Commissioner

Faribault County

Tom Loveall, County Commissioner
Roger Oldfather, Cities Under 10,000
Greg Young, Township Board

Region 9 Development Commission Staff

Administration

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Small Business Development Center

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Thank You

Region 9 Advisory Council on Aging

On behalf of the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc., I would like to thank the Board, Advisory Councils on Aging, Senior LinkAge Line® volunteers, other volunteers, and staff for the work they do on behalf of older adults and caregivers. Each of you is very much appreciated!

– Linda Geirsdorf MnRAAA Executive Director

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC):

Lisa Bigham, Mn/DOT
Jim Broich, Region Nine Commissioner
Drew Campbell, Region Nine Commissioner
Alvin Dietz, Region Nine Commissioner
Jack Fitzsimmons, Region Nine Commissioner
Al Forsberg, Blue Earth County Engineer
Terry Genelin, Region Nine Commissioner
Doug Haeder, Mn/DOT
Jeff Johnson, Mankato City Engineer
Norbert Kauffmann, Region Nine Commissioner
Steve Koehler, New Ulm City Engineer
Dwayne Krenz, Region Nine Commissioner
Dan Kuhns, Region Nine Commissioner
Tom Loveall, Region Nine Commissioner
Brian Malm, Bolton and Menk
John McDonald, Faribault County Engineer
Darrell Pettis, Le Sueur County Administrator/Engineer
Nathan Richman, Waseca County Engineer
Mark Scheidel, Mn/DOT

Thank you from Community & Economic Development Department

Jerry Boler, Chair	Brenda Pautsch
Chris Collins	Bob Schabert
Janie Flores	Charles Schmitz
Denny Jahnz	Greg Young

Thank you from Revolving Loan Fund

Jim Broich	Tim Regner
Jay Hanson	Bob Roessler
Don Hayden, Chair	Jerry Rollings
Jim More	Larry Thompson
Jim Paulson	

A very special thank you to the SBDC Board, that serves tirelessly to guide the organization

Marsha Danielson, South Central College
Jill Klinger, Greater Mankato Growth, Inc.
Diane Halvorson, South Central WorkForce Council
Pam Bishop, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation
Shane Bowyer, Minnesota State University, Mankato
Chuck Klimmek, Gaylord EDA

Thank You On The Renewable Energy Initiatives:

John Frey, MSU
Katy Wortel, Citizen Representative
Bob Schabert, City of Courtland
James Dontje, Gustavus Adolphus College
Bob Johnson, Private Consultant
Rick Goemann, Goemann Insurance Company
Paul Lindfors, MSU
Mark Kluender, South Central College
Byron Jost, Pettipiece & Associates
Brian Tohal, New Ulm Economic Development Corporation
John Baerg, Watonwan County
Judy Hanson, Nicollet County
Leigh Pomeroy, MSU
Jeff Brand, Midwest Realty
Jamie Lorentz, Today's Alternatives, Inc.
Connie Ireland, Department of Economic Development
Nancy Pehling, Private Consultant
Sam Roy, Easy Energy Systems
Gerald Boler, Martin County
Dave Sunderman, BENCO Electric
Kyle Hulbert, Gustavus Adolphus College
Rich Huelskamp, Sunswarmth
Lisa Buckner, Three Rivers RC&D
Patty Woodruff, City of Mapleton
Troy Haefner, Concepts in Power
Drew Campbell, Blue Earth County
Gregg Marg, MSU-M Biology Dept



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Fiscal Disparity Forum

On January 20th, 2009, Region Nine Development Commission facilitated a workshop entitled, "The Impact of Fiscal Hardship on Local Government. Representatives from cities, townships, school boards, and regional and state wide associations gathered at the civic center in Mankato to exchange dialogue about weathering the storm with an estimated state deficit of \$4.8 billion. The workshop focused on three key questions:

- "What impacts will the federal, state, and local fiscal hardships have on your community and organization?"
- "In these challenging times, what steps do you anticipate your organization taking in order to address these challenges now and in the future?"
- "What barriers do you envision that would prevent the steps you have outlined from being successful? Also, what opportunities do you envision that would aid in success?"

Clearly, in the minds of many, The Impact of Fiscal Hardship on Local Government Forum was a golden opportunity. Many suggested that a follow-up meeting is needed, and that the group must be brought back together.

Follow up Forum is planned!

On Thursday, May 13, the second Fiscal Hardship Forum will be held. The purpose of the Fiscal Hardship Forum is three-fold:

- Create a shared understanding that there are significant changes that will affect all communities in a significant way (it's not just a LGA issue) among all local leaders
- Develop real opportunities to find ways to change "how" business is done or "what" business is done
- Provide some tools to help with making change.

Tom Gillaspay, MN State Demographer will help set the tone with a message about changes in the State from a demographic, fiscal, and systems perspective. He will also weave in global and national trends that influence the condition of communities throughout Minnesota. Following Tom's message we will do a "deep dive" into getting at real changes that ought to be made and start setting up for those changes.