



# R9

## REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION Your Regional Partner for Progress

2013  
ANNUAL REPORT

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### MISSION

*Promote the development of the region through intergovernmental cooperation, community and human development, long-range planning and technical assistance.*

## from the Board Chair



Jim Swanson

Region Nine Development Commission (RNDC) has had a successful year and continues to expand its services to the region. We are on the second term of our executive director who continues to get the face of RNDC out to people which can help us expand on our influence with more partners. What has been very important to us is contracted projects are getting done well and in a timely manner. This is a real credit to our directors and the staff they supervise.

I continue to be impressed with the engagement of the commissioners on our committees and Board of Directors. We need to continue educating our commissioners on the activities of RNDC so we can all take advantage of RNDC services in our communities. The actions of the Budget and Personnel Committee have made RNDC much stronger. I am grateful for the commissioners and the time and energy they contribute to RNDC.

RNDC is a thriving organization, in part, because of the excellent skills and leadership from our staff, and from the engaged commissioners. Through their continued commitment to excellence, RNDC will be the go-to organization.

Thanks to all for your participation,  
Jim Swanson, *Board Chair*

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## from the Executive Director



Nicole Griensewic

I am pleased to present RNDC's 2013 Annual Report. This has proved to be quite a successful year for the commission. Inside you will find examples that help illustrate the changing work of the commission.

As the region's needs change, RNDC adapts to accommodate those new needs. RNDC added more programs and services to respond accordingly to the region.

For instance, we have expanded our transportation services by providing planning for Safe Routes to School in the region. RNDC also worked closely with Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) on a federal grant to improve a major economic corridor to the region, Highway 169. This partnership helped bring in \$9.8 million to the region.

We look forward to 2014 as we continue to be the *Regional Partner for Progress* in our nine county service area.

Sincerely,  
Nicole Griensewic, *Executive Director*

## Active Living Plan: Le Sueur

Active Living communities make it easy for people to include physical activity in their daily lives. Walking to work, school, the store or just for fun would be safe and convenient in an active living community. Roads here are built for all forms of transportation, not just for vehicles. Recreational opportunities are accessible and parks, playgrounds, and sports facilities are located near people's homes and are open to all residents. Overall, the goal is to promote development of environments that offer the opportunity to integrate physical activity into daily life.



In early 2013, the Le Sueur Community Trails and Pedestrian Walkway Committee and the City of Le Sueur began working with RNDC to create an Active Living plan. The goal is to see a fully developed trail system throughout the region that would connect to the City of Le Sueur. Within the City of Le Sueur, a more walkable and bikeable community would benefit not only the residents, but also the local businesses and the Le Sueur-Henderson school district. To coincide with the Active Living plan, the City of Le Sueur has begun identifying how to address, replace and upgrade the sidewalk network within its community.



## Safe Routes to School



RNDC completed three successful applications, amounting to \$50,000, for Safe Routes to School Planning Assistance. The RNDC will facilitate and write plans for the following school districts:

- Tri-City United
- Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial
- Le Sueur-Henderson

RNDC will work with district and school staff, city elected officials and staff, MnDOT, county public health and other key stakeholders to complete the plans in the upcoming fiscal year.

## Federal EDA Grant: Highway 169



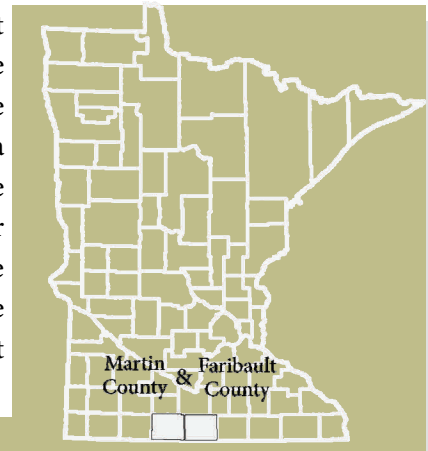
Water covers a flood-damaged section of Hwy 169 a few miles north of St. Peter. Photo by Thomas Zimmerman

On June 12, 2013 the U.S. Commerce Department’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) announced a \$9.8 million grant to MnDOT for rebuilding portions of State Highway 169 near Mankato. The rehabilitation of the highway will support the creation of 500 new jobs in the region and attract an additional \$10 million in private investment, according to grantee estimates.

RNDC played a key role in MnDOT’s application for the EDA grant. MnDOT spokeswoman Rebecca Arndt said, “MnDOT made the application but the Region Nine Development Commission especially [Transportation Planner] Ronda Allis made us aware of the dollars and helped us through the application process.” The flood mitigation projects will involve raising the southbound lanes of the highway to be above the 100 year flood mark, which would remain open to two lane traffic when the northbound lanes are flooded.

## Solid Waste Management Plan

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) requires that solid waste management jurisdictions revise their solid waste management plans every 10 years to address existing and future solid waste management issues. Prairieland Solid Waste Board, a Joint Powers Board for Faribault and Martin Counties, with the help of RNDC, is revising their plan which includes strategies for waste reduction, reuse and recycling for the next 10 years. The revision of this plan also makes both counties eligible to receive their annual Select Committee on Recycling and the Environment (SCORE) dollars.



## Mapping: River Valley 100



Region Nine has Geographic Information Systems (GIS) trained staff that can provide access to thousands of demographic, health, economic, education and business data variables that can help analyze unique community characteristics for any geographic region. With this information RNDC staff can produce customizable presentation-ready reports or maps of specific location including congressional districts, block groups, census tracts or ZIP codes.

In June 2013, RNDC staff created a 100 mile bike route map to be used during the River Valley 100. The River Valley 100 is a non-supported century ride that will go through Mankato, Kasota, St. Peter, Le Sueur, Elysian, Madison Lake, Eagle Lake and St. Clair.

## Farmamerica

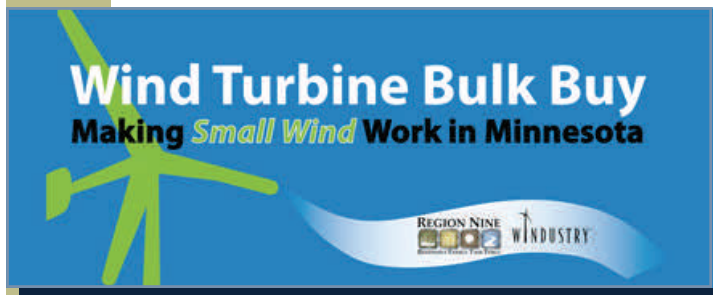
The Minnesota Agricultural Interpretive Center (Farmamerica) was established in 1978 to preserve Minnesota's rural agricultural heritage. In January 2013, Renewable Energy Task Force (RETF) began providing technical assistance to Farmamerica for application to Xcel Energy's 2014 Renewable Development Fund. Each year Xcel Energy transfers \$24.5 million to the fund to support development of new renewable energy technologies and renewable energy projects. Farmamerica is requesting \$600,000 from this fund. If awarded, Farmamerica will install 120 kilowatts of solar and wind capacity on their campus and achieve a net zero non-combustion based energy production system.



## Small Wind Bulk Buy Program

In December 2012, RETF completed the Small Wind Bulk Buy Program. The program was designed for small organizations, businesses and agricultural enterprises interested in small wind generation. The overall goal for this project was to minimize obstacles faced by local groups seeking to develop small wind projects in rural, southern Minnesota. The marketing efforts for this project consisted of radio interviews, appearances at the Springfield Ag &

Energy Expo, the New Ulm Farm Show, the South Central Minnesota Home and Builder Show, and several community meetings in Fairmont. This program was made possible through several different funding partners including Windustry, Southeast Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs), West Central CERTs and Southwest CERTs.



## Envision 2020

Envision 2020's Energy Conservation Task Force (ECTF) merged with RETF in January 2013. This merger united resources and knowledge of both task forces to advance renewable energy and promote energy conservation and sustainability in southern Minnesota. As a result of the merger, Leigh Pomeroy of ECTF has been appointed to the RETF Executive Committee.



## The Prairie House of Gaylord



The Prairie House, a unique restaurant with old fashioned home-style cooking, has served the community of Gaylord for over 30 years. RNDC's involvement with Prairie House began in 2003 when Shirley Meger decided to purchase the business with the help of a loan from RNDC.

Shirley Meger's love for cooking began at an early age. Growing up in a family of 10, she learned to cook by helping out. At the age of 15 she took all her personal experience and went to work at Ann's Café in Belle Plaine. She credits this position with teaching her how to deal with people of all ages. Later Shirley moved on to a larger volume restaurant where she learned how to manage and run a restaurant.

Shirley's vision for success in the restaurant business when she purchased Prairie House was a commitment to customer service, service to her employees, and service to her community. Today, she and her son David Waller run the restaurant based on those three principles.

In late 2009, the country was in a recession and Shirley was hit hard. Customer's weren't able to spend the money they once could. To add to the financial burden of declining sales, Shirley had recently moved from Belle Plaine to Gaylord and was paying a double mortgage. It was at this time that RNDC's loan officer, LuAnn Vanderwerf, and Shirley became very familiar with each other. Shirley kept RNDC updated on the status of her finances, and LuAnn worked with her to reduce and defer payments to keep enough cash flow to succeed in the slow economy. LuAnn says that during this process she developed a deep respect for Shirley because of her openness during the process. Shirley was happy that she could work so closely with the RNDC and keep her restaurant open during such a difficult time.



Shirley and David often work in the kitchen together preparing meals.



LuAnn Vanderwerf and Shirley Meger

Today Shirley and David have owned Prairie House for 11 years. They have 25 employees, offer a full menu, run a catering service and feed 125 seniors a day through their Meals on Wheels delivery service. They are thankful for the support of the local community.

*"Shirley's done a nice job here. Prairie House is a real asset for our town because it is a consistent place for people to come. You always know you can get breakfast, lunch and dinner."*

- Richard Hebeisen, a regular at Prairie House for many years.

### Revenue Actual 2013

Federal	553,223	Conference Revenue	1,402
State	283,491	Charges for Services	83,145
Tax Levy	469,168	Interest	60,131
Other Sources	105,203	Total Revenue	1,555,763

### Expenditures

Personnel	817,875	Errors & Omissions Insurance	18,894
Fringe	238,814	Maintenance	9,324
Copying/Printing	19,122	Legal	16,111
Public Notice	3,996	Auditing	24,670
Postage	6,817	Equipment/Depreciation	31,209
Telephone	18,863	Capital Outlay	40,596
Travel—Staff	48,478	Marketing	16,635
Travel—Other	13,747	Program & Staff Development	1,998
Registration	11,913	Fund Balance Recovery	82,502
Supplies	28,666	Office Space	62,756
Public/Subscrip/Member	13,589	Transfer RNAI	7,000
Miscellaneous	6,099	Prior Year Adjustment	6,418
Consultant	9,187		
Insurance	484	Total Expenditures	1,555,763

Indirect Rate for 2013 was 19.02%

Fringe budget was 34.8%, actual was 29.03%

### Levy History

Year Payable	Percent Base	Levy Increase	Levy Amount	Increase
2013	489,850	3.00%	504,546	3.00%
2012	475,583	3.00%	489,850	3.00%
2011	461,733	3.00%	475,583	3.00%
2010	448,284	3.00%	461,733	3.00%
2009	435,227	3.00%	448,284	3.00%
2008	422,550	3.00%	435,227	3.00%

## Veterans Transportation & Community Living Initiative

The purpose of the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative is to improve access to transportation resources for veterans, military families and other clients. This will be done by connecting customers in one place to rides and transportation options available from a variety of transportation providers and programs in their area. The U.S. Department of Transportation awarded \$34.6 million to local government agencies for 55 projects ranging in size from \$29,000 to \$2 million to finance capital costs of implementing, expanding or increasing access to local One-Call/One-Click Transportation Resource Centers.



Finding information about rides will be easy for veterans, military families, caregivers and others.

MnDOT with the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc. (MNRAAA), the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), and other partners, have utilized \$532,840 of the \$1.19 million grant to make transportation enhancements in southwestern Minnesota to the MinnesotaHelp™ Network, Minnesota's existing statewide One-Call/One-Click center. Clients of the MinnesotaHelp™ Network include veterans, older adults, and persons with disabilities.

Phase I augmented technology links between transportation providers, veterans organizations in the 27 counties of southwestern Minnesota and the existing MinnesotaHelp™ Network. The grant covered the purchase of hardware, such as computers and Voice Over IP phones, and software that ensures smooth and secure data transfer. Training for software operations is another component of Phase I. The project has connected veteran service organizations and public transit services to the Veterans Linkage Line™, Senior LinkAge Line® and the Disability Linkage Line®, all three of which are housed under the MinnesotaHelp™ Network. This secure communications network allows for the secure transmission of sensitive documents between agencies and provides opportunities for agencies to better coordinate the delivery of services.

Thanks to this program 25 County Veteran Service Offices, Jefferson Bus Lines, Mankato Land to Air and eighteen public transit agencies in the 27 counties are now linked to the MinnesotaHelp™ Network.







Stay Connected!

[www.mnraaa.org](http://www.mnraaa.org)

 [Facebook.com/MNRAAA27](https://www.facebook.com/MNRAAA27)

 [@MNRAAA](https://twitter.com/MNRAAA)

## Volunteers are Stars: Public Service Announcements

On May 30th, several Senior LinkAge Line® volunteers became stars. MNRAAA was asked to assist the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) with the filming of MinnesotaHelp Network™ public service announcements. A small film crew and Chris Benson, MBA's Senior LinkAge Line® Training Coordinator, came to Mankato with cue cards and camera in hand.

Volunteer Jodi Weller was the first star of the day. She portrayed a working mother who finds herself caring for her aging father. This public service announcement (PSA) highlighted the Long Term Care Choices Navigator tool on the [www.MinnesotaHelp.info](http://www.MinnesotaHelp.info)™ website.

Another PSA starred volunteer Marilyn Dundas portraying an older adult happy to be back in her home after recovering from a fall. This scene informed viewers of the Senior LinkAge Line® and some of the services that can be provided. The third star of the day was volunteer Henry Kress. He did a wonderful job explaining not only how older adults can call the Senior LinkAge Line® to be connected to volunteer opportunities in their community, but also how volunteering with the Senior LinkAge Line® can be a great experience.

These PSAs were aired on our social media outlets and the MNRAAA website. A special thank you to Tandem Bagels for allowing us to film in their coffeehouse/bakery and to our talented volunteers!



Senior LinkAge Line® volunteer Jodi Weller filmed for a MinnesotaHelp Network™ PSA at Tandem Bagels in Mankato.

## Blue Earth County

Brad Ahrenstorff, *(Vice Chair)*  
*Cities under 10,000*  
Eric Anderson, *City of Mankato*  
Drew Campbell, *County Commissioner*  
Jim Grabowska, *School Boards*  
Ann Hendricks, *School Boards*  
Abdi Sabrie, *Minority Populations*  
Douglas Schaller, *Township Board*

## Brown County

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

## Faribault County

Tom Loveall, *County Commissioner*  
Darwin Olson, *Township Board*  
Bryant Stiernagle, *Cities under 10,000*

## Le Sueur County

Richard Peterson, *Township Board*  
Steve Rohlring, *County Commissioner*  
William Wencl, *Cities under 10,000*

## Martin County

Elliot Belgard, *County Commissioner*  
Jeff Ross, *Cities under 10,000*  
Phil Schafer, *Township Board*  
Darin Rahm, *City of Fairmont*

## Nicollet County

Marie Dranttel, *County Commissioner*  
Terry Genelin, *Township Board*  
Pam Meyer, *Cities under 10,000*  
Diane Norland, *North Mankato City Council*  
Tim Strand, *City of St. Peter*

## Sibley County

Peggy Evenson, *Township Board*  
Doug Munsch, *Cities under 10,000*  
Jim Swanson, *(Chair) County Commissioner*

## Waseca County

Cindy Coy, *Cities under 10,000*  
Laura Elvebak, *MN Valley Council  
of Government*  
Dan Kuhns, *County Commissioner*  
Gary Owens, *Township Board*

## Watonwan County

Candace Fenske, *Health & Human Welfare*  
Ray Gustafson, *County Commissioner*  
Gary Sturm, *(Treasurer) Cities under 10,000*  
Bill Yock, *Township Board*

## Administration



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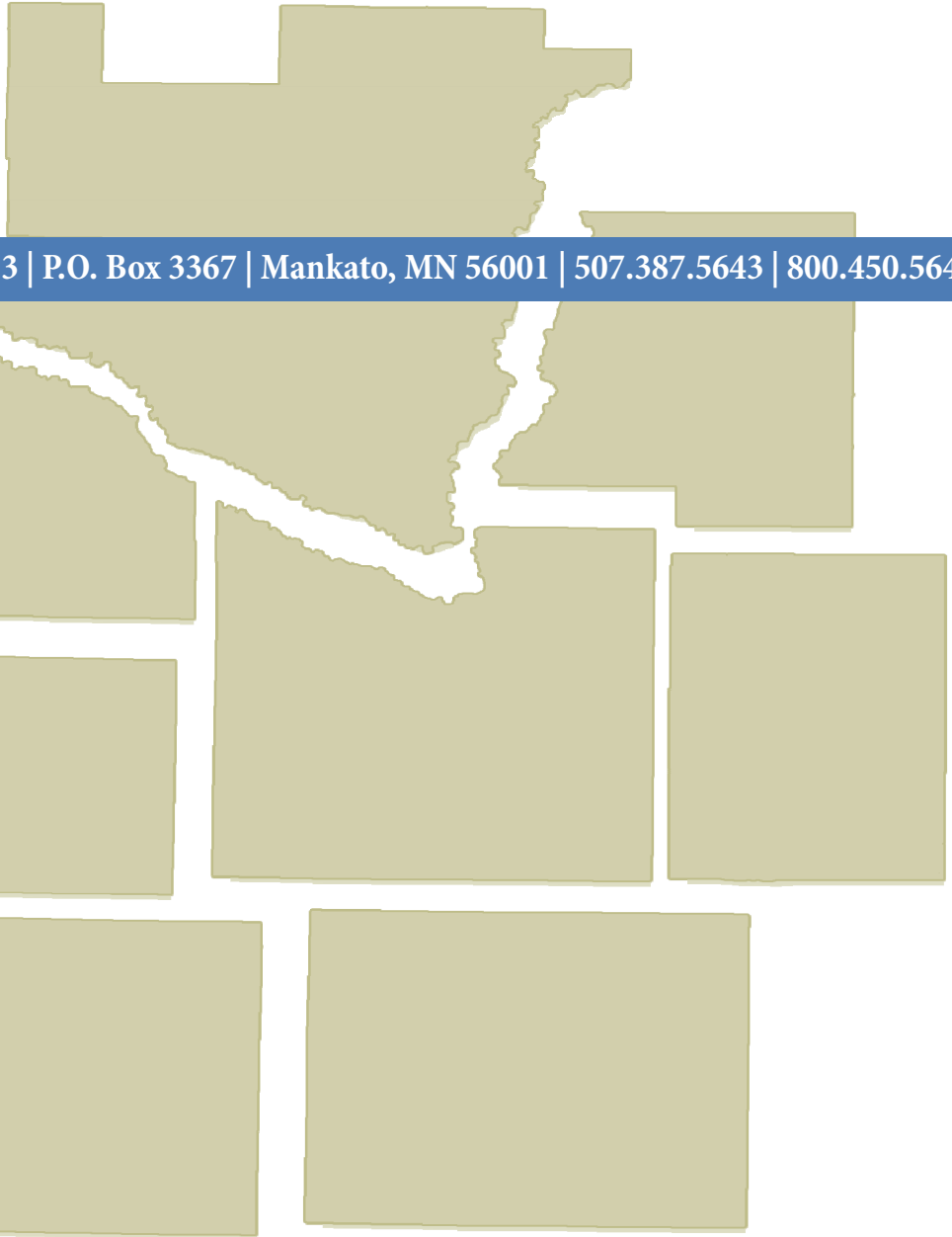
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