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## Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Report

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





## Message from the Executive Director

In Fiscal Year 2016, Region Nine Development Commission focused on innovative ways to promote the development of the region through opportunities ranging from dementia-friendly communities to climate change adaptation.

This innovative, forward thinking is highlighted throughout the 2016 annual report.

Region Nine has worked diligently to continue our purpose and serve as a connector throughout the region. Connecting our communities, businesses and organizations to resources and assistance has been vital to ensuring the region's growth and prosperity. The expertise and passion of Region Nine's Commissioners and staff have been instrumental in this effort. Our organization's successes are a direct result of our organization's team and partners.

Looking forward, Region Nine will continue to be responsive to the region's needs. By continued partnerships, you can expect to see Region Nine being a *partner in progress* throughout the region.

*Nicole Griensewic Mickelson*  
Executive Director



## Message from the Chair



This last year I had the amazing opportunity to represent elected officials as Chairman of the Region Nine Development Commission. I am grateful to the Region Nine Commissioners for their dedication to serving their residents and all of those in the region.

As elected officials, it is great to have an organization as strong as Region Nine to assist in promoting the development of the region. By taking the services provided back to our communities it strengthens and provides sustainability throughout the region.

Region Nine has had a very successful year in bringing the many services that Region Nine provides into our communities. We continue to provide comprehensive planning, Safe Routes to School plans, grant writing, technical and communication services, transportation planning and emergency management planning.

The work that Region Nine produces comes from a very talented staff. Their skills and training are shown in the top quality work that they produce. They ensure they are providing a top notch product, delivered in a timely fashion.

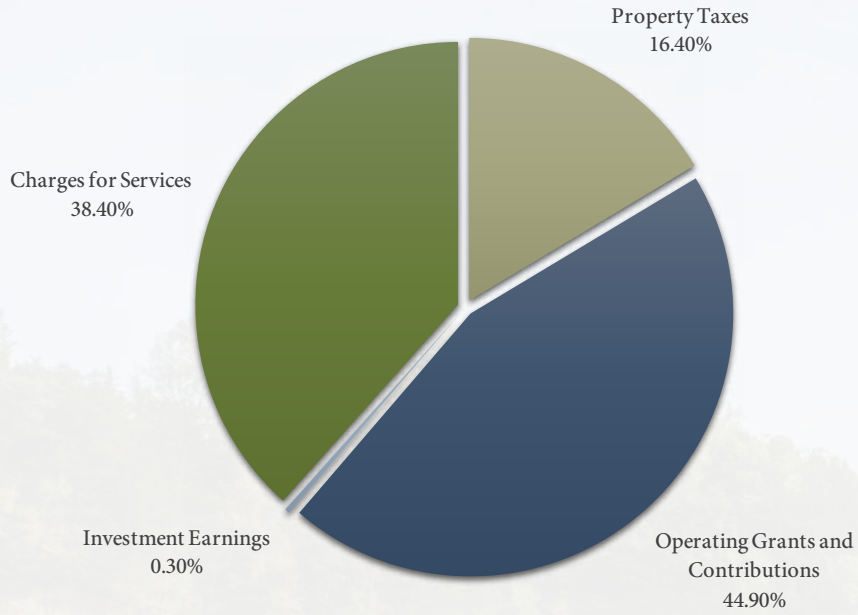
The success of this past year is presented in this annual report for 2016. On the outside it represents the projects and services that we provide our clients and communities. On the inside is a talented staff and a dedicated commission working to bring success to the entire region.

Thank you for a successful year.

*Brad Alvenstorff*  
Chairman

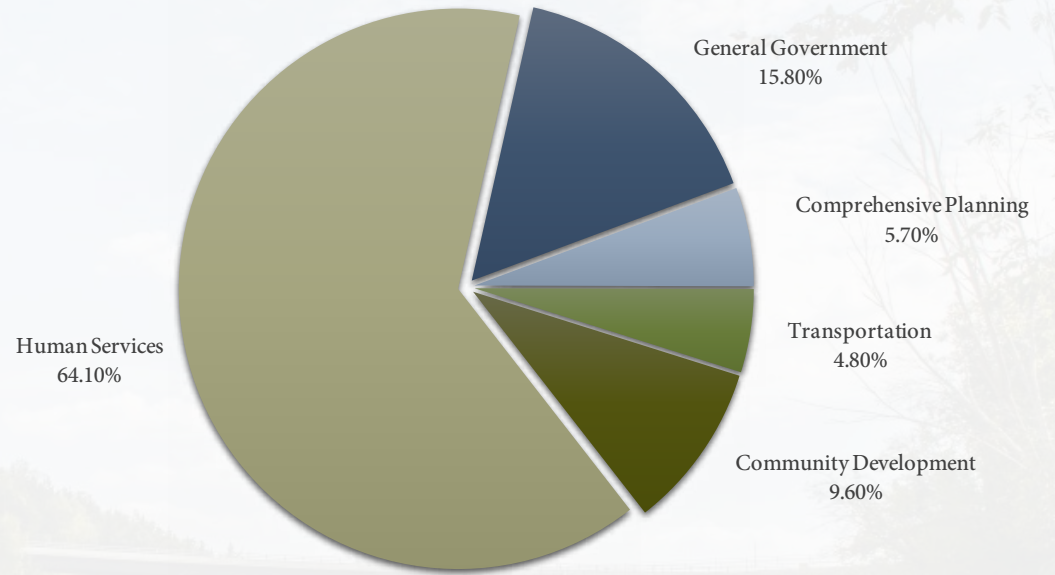
### Actual FY2016 Revenue by Sources

Total Revenue \$1,866,825



### Actual FY2016 Expenditures by Department

Total Expenditures \$1,866,825



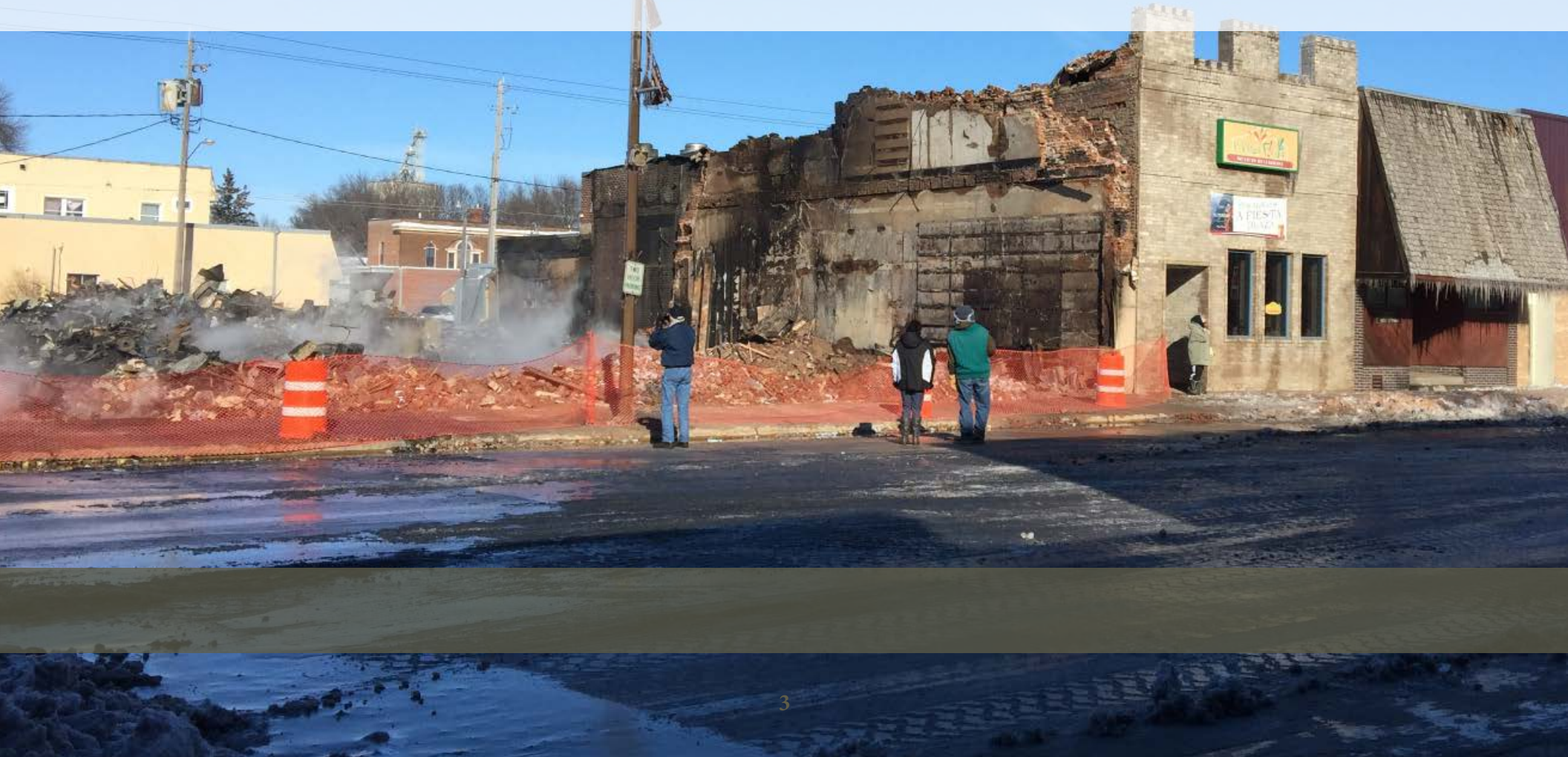


## Madelia Fire Assistance

As the smoke faded on February 3, 2016 in Madelia, it was clear the community would need all the help it could find to recover. The destruction of eight businesses by fire did not only leave a hole in the middle of downtown, but also in the hearts of Madelia residents.

Region Nine Development Commission was quick to inform area and state legislators of what had happened. This timely outreach started a flow of information and potential resources to the community. Region Nine continued to connect Madelia to all available opportunities to enhance the community's economic resiliency as well as assisting with media relations, data gathering, meeting facilitation, grant research and packaging and consultations.

“As I reflect on the fire and the role Region Nine Development Commission has played in assisting the community of Madelia, the significance of collaboration has become clear,” stated Nicole Griensewic Mickelson. “The future of Madelia will be vibrant thanks to those who have shown their support to the community.”





## Regional Bus Tour

On July 8, 2015 Region Nine held its Third Annual Regional Bus Tour. Traveling through Blue Earth, Watonwan, Martin and Faribault Counties, tour participants learned how Region Nine was able to assist, through Region Nine Area Inc., in the Town Center Inc., Sherburn Community Park and Sherburn Theatre projects. Included in the day's activities was a tour of Revolving Loan Fund Client, Winnebago Manufacturing. Winnebago Manufacturing's loans were used to purchase equipment to help expand the business.

Attendees also traveled to the City of Wells to highlight the community's active living projects, which resulted from an Active Living Plan written by Region Nine. The day concluded with a visit to Envision Lab in Mankato. Envision Lab is a co-working space that provides a shared environment for entrepreneurs, freelancers and telecommuters.



## Blue Earth Parking Study

The City of Blue Earth reached out to Region Nine to assess the current parking situation in their downtown area. This assessment would help determine if their current allotment of parking spaces was meeting the community's needs.

To assess the parking climate, Region Nine conducted on-street and off-street parking counts during three separate weeks in May and June of 2015. Additionally, surveys of the downtown businesses, customers and residents of Blue Earth were conducted to supplement the information gathered during the on-site occupancy counts.

Region Nine developed a parking study report that informed the City of Blue Earth about current parking conditions, including occupancy, capacity, user feedback and estimated future demands. The study also offered recommendations to the city to maintain or improve existing conditions.



## Mankato/North Mankato Act on Alzheimer's

In August 2014, Region Nine was awarded funds from ACT on Alzheimer's to begin the Mankato/North Mankato Act on Alzheimer's toolkit for making the community dementia-friendly. ACT on Alzheimer's is a volunteer-driven, statewide collaboration working to prepare Minnesota for the personal, social and budgetary impacts of Alzheimer's disease and other related dementias. The initiative was not a top-down approach, but rather brought numerous community residents together ranging from city officials to caregivers, all with a common goal of increasing dementia awareness and improving the quality of life for all that dementia touches. This initiative is a proactive step towards addressing the current and growing challenges the region will face as cases of Alzheimer's disease and other related dementias increase with the aging population.



From May 2015 through December 2015, the Mankato/North Mankato ACT Team completed the following:

- Created a resource guide that specifically identifies local and statewide Alzheimer's and dementia-related resources
- Trained volunteer presenters on two Alzheimer's Association presentations: *The Basics: Memory Loss, Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease* and *Know the 10 Signs*
- Hosted the Alzheimer's Association *Get the Facts* education series
- Created and hosted a Community Conversations series
- Implemented an awareness media campaign

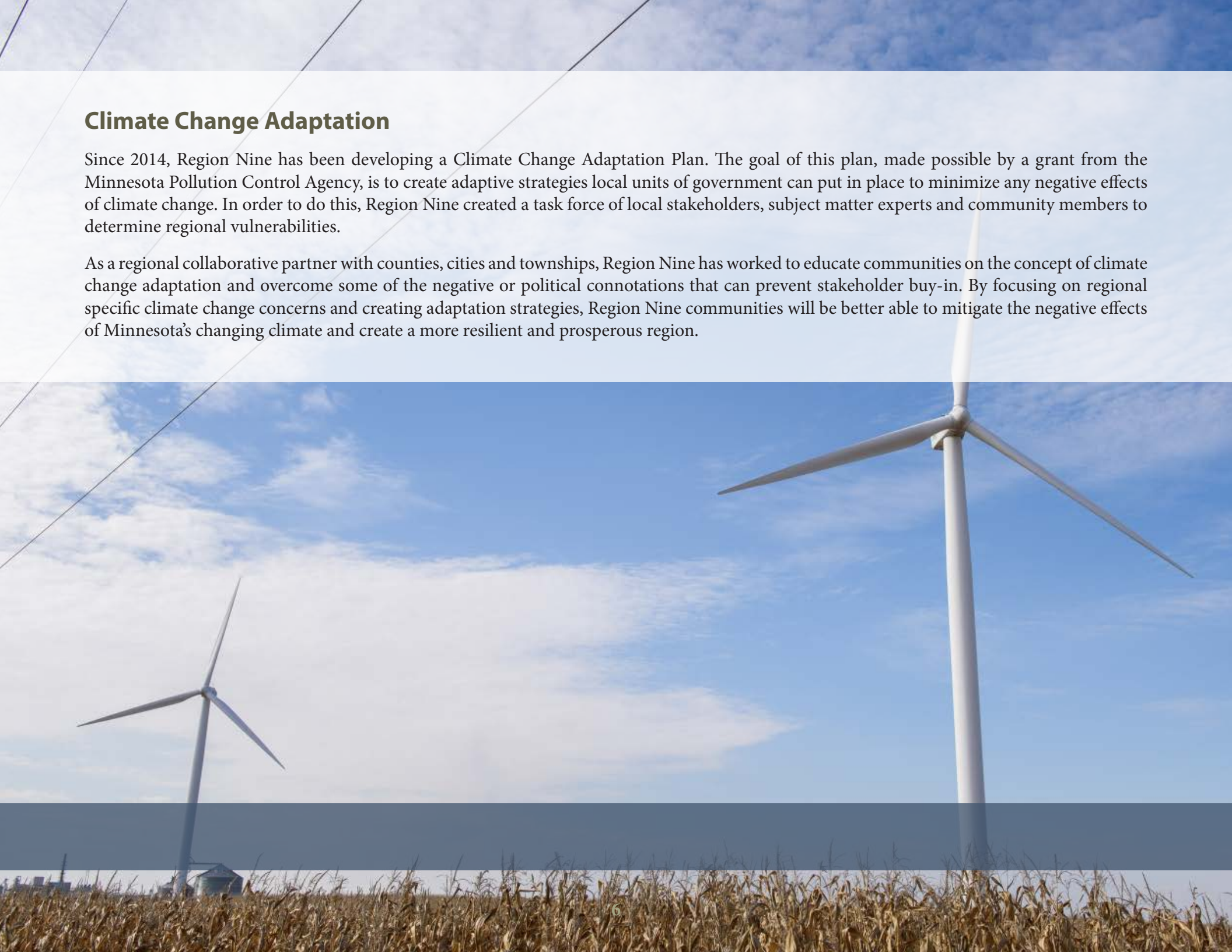
At the time of this project, Minnesota was the only state in the nation seeking to make communities dementia-friendly. Since then, a national initiative has been started, built upon the 34 dementia-friendly communities in Minnesota. Region Nine is currently the only regional development organization in the nation to have worked on a program of this type. In doing so, Region Nine has been able to increase cross-sector engagement while forming new partnerships within the region.



## Climate Change Adaptation

Since 2014, Region Nine has been developing a Climate Change Adaptation Plan. The goal of this plan, made possible by a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, is to create adaptive strategies local units of government can put in place to minimize any negative effects of climate change. In order to do this, Region Nine created a task force of local stakeholders, subject matter experts and community members to determine regional vulnerabilities.

As a regional collaborative partner with counties, cities and townships, Region Nine has worked to educate communities on the concept of climate change adaptation and overcome some of the negative or political connotations that can prevent stakeholder buy-in. By focusing on regional specific climate change concerns and creating adaptation strategies, Region Nine communities will be better able to mitigate the negative effects of Minnesota's changing climate and create a more resilient and prosperous region.



## Success Story: Revolving Loan Fund

A dance studio, fitness center and pizzeria in Montgomery, MN all have one thing in common - owners Troy and Diane Domine. While this combination of establishments may seem surprising, it is the perfect fit for the Domines.

Troy Domine's journey began with an internship at Region Nine in the 1980s where he learned about the services available for small cities and businesses. As he advanced throughout his career, Troy often connected business and communities along his way to Region Nine's services. It wasn't until 2003 that Troy contacted Region Nine for assistance in the growth of his wife's dance studio, Center Stage Dance.

As Center Stage Dance was continuing to grow, the Domines felt it was time to find a higher-quality facility and diminish the risks associated with renting by purchasing a location. When a former grocery store became available, Troy and Diane wanted to take advantage of the opportunity but did not have enough cash to acquire and renovate the facility. Troy reached out to Region Nine to obtain a revolving loan fund which helped in the purchase and conversion of the building into a dance studio. The end result was a dance studio equipped with two dance floors and an office.



*L to R: RNDC Finance Director Lu Vanderwerf,  
Troy Domine and Diane Domine*

It is no secret that the Domines are passionate about the community of Montgomery. The quality of life the rural community offers for raising their five children was a key factor in keeping Troy and Diane in Le Sueur County. It was not a surprise when Montgomery residents reached out to Troy to open a fitness center in their building after a previous center closed. Around this same time the Snap Fitness Center Franchise was beginning to grow and Troy saw another opportunity. Again utilizing Region Nine's revolving loan, the Domines converted a storage area of their building into a Snap Fitness. In 2006, the Domines' fitness club was the 136<sup>th</sup> Snap Fitness to open.

“Using the loan program allowed a community member to become an owner and invest in Montgomery's quality of life,” shared Troy.





A new challenge came in 2008, Center Stage Dance lost its lease at a satellite location in a neighboring community mid-season. Renting another location wasn't ideal or affordable for Troy and Diane. For a third time Troy came to Region Nine for a loan to purchase and rehab a building at the satellite location.

"It was a benefit for us not to have all of our cash tied into the new building," stated Troy. "Region Nine's loan allowed us to still have cash flow." Following the success of Center Stage Dance and Snap Fitness, Troy and Diane decided to take on one more project - Pizzeria 201. This project, which took place in 2010, was completed without financing.

Troy and Diane are grateful for their partnership with Region Nine. During the latest recession, their relationship with Region Nine allowed the Domines to adjust payments to keep cash flow comfortable and keep the businesses alive. Now, the Domines look forward to the day when their children can take over the family businesses.

"Our children have gotten so much out of growing up in a small town and in the family business," expressed Troy.





## BLUE EARTH COUNTY

Brad Ahrenstorff, *(Chair) Cities under 10,000*  
Eric Anderson, *City of Mankato*  
Drew Campbell, *County Commissioner*  
Lyle Femrite, *Township Board*

## BROWN COUNTY

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

## FARIBAULT COUNTY

Tom Loveall, *County Commissioner*  
Darwin Olson, *Township Board*  
Richard Scholtes, *Cities under 10,000*

## LE SUEUR COUNTY

Robert Broeder, *Cities under 10,000*  
Richard Peterson, *Township Board*  
Steve Rohlfsing, *County Commissioner*

## MARTIN COUNTY

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

## NICOLLET COUNTY

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

## SIBLEY COUNTY

Doug Munsch, *Cities under 10,000*  
John Pioske, *Township Board*  
Jim Swanson, *County Commissioner*

## WASECA COUNTY

Blair Nelson, *County Commissioner*  
Gerri Lienke, *Township Board*  
Daren Arndt, *Cities under 10,000*

## WATONWAN COUNTY

Steven Cooling, *Township Board*  
Ray Gustafson, *County Commissioner*  
Gary Sturm, *Cities under 10,000*

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Candace Fenske, *Health & Human Welfare*  
Brian Gramentz, *MN Valley Council of Governments*  
Jim Grabowska, *School Boards*  
Olivia Lippert, *Youth*  
Mike Pfeil, *School Boards*  
Abdi Sabrie, *Minority Populations*



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