

ANNUAL REPORT

Calendar Year 2019

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

To Those We Serve:

On behalf of the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC), we respectfully submit this 2019 Annual Report. We thank you for taking the time to review this report. This report highlights key achievements of the Commission and its staff in carrying out the Commission's mission during calendar year 2019. The enclosed year-end financial data is for Fiscal Year 2019 (July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019).

Please take some time to read through the 2019 Annual Report to gain an understanding of the variety of tasks we perform. Further information about the Commission may be found at the MMDC web site: www.mmrdc.org. Please contact staff if there are projects that you need assistance. You may also contact the Commission if you would like staff to attend one of your meetings to either discuss a specific project, or just to receive a general update from the Commission. Through the services we offer, we pledge that we will not consider a job complete until the client is satisfied. Through our Board's leadership, and our talented staff, we will continue to strive to make a strong positive impact on the Region.



Respectfully yours,

Kevin Crowley

Kevin Crowley
Chairperson

To Those We Serve:

With my pending retirement slated for January 31, 2020, this is my last opportunity to address MMDC's local units of government, partners and clientele. It has been a privilege to have worked for the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission since the Spring of 1986 and as the Executive Director since 1999. I wish to thank all our current and past Board of Commissioners. I thank MMDC's first Executive Director, Eugene Hippe. I wish to thank all the current and past dedicated, hard-working staff that served with me through the years. Lastly, I wish to thank all of you that have partnered and/or utilized the services of the Commission. I have built countless relationships that will last a lifetime through working at MMDC.

I am very proud of the Commission's services throughout the years. The Commission has assisted with bringing in millions of grant dollars for needed projects and services throughout the Region. Countless plans, studies, ordinance work, etc. have been prepared for our customers

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that all end up serving all citizens by maintaining and improving the Region, county, city/township in which they live. Through the years the Commission has also administered many programs and projects that benefited the Region and provided business loans that have created hundreds of jobs. I know the future of the Commission will be in good hands, and they will continue to provide Region Six-East with needed service.

This Annual Report highlights the major activities of the Commission over the past year. One article will be an update on the Commission’s phase 2 work with the Mid-Minnesota Regional Transportation Coordination Council. Other articles will highlight some of the major planning documents we have assisted with during the year, such as the Kandiyohi County Parks Plan, the Meeker County Trails Plan, City of Spicer’s Active Living Transportation Plan and Safe Routes to School Plans for Litchfield and ACGC School Districts. Thank you for reading through this report to better understand the various types of projects we can provide to your community.



Respectfully yours,

Don Winckler

Executive Director

2019 Commission Members

Kandiyohi County Representatives

Kevin Crowley, Chairperson.....
 Municipalities / Public Interest
 Gary Danielson.....Public Interest
 Rick Fagerlie City of Willmar
 Robert Moller, *Secretary.....Public Interest
 Shawn MueskePublic Interest
 Rollie NissenCounty
 DuWayne Underthun, Vice-Chair Townships

McLeod County Representatives

Robert Anderson.....Townships
 Doug Krueger County
 Tracy Montgomery Municipalities
 Dave Sebesta City of Hutchinson

Renville County Representatives

Jeff Benson..... Public Interest
 Doug Erickson, Treasurer County
 Sue Hilgert, **SecretaryMunicipalities
 Francis Schweiss Public Interest
 Paul Simonsen..... Townships

Meeker County Representatives

Frank Eder..... Municipalities
 Eric Day Public Interest
 Maureen Melgaard-Schneider Public Interest
 Lorallen Schmeling..... Townships
 Steve Schmitt..... County

* Denotes office held until June 26, 2019

** Denotes office held after June 26, 2019

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission and its area served is designated as a Federally Certified Economic Development District (EDD) by the U.S Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA). The EDA and its Planning Program provides essential investment support to the District Organizations.

The planning funding assistance provided by EDA assists MMDC in providing economic development activities in the Region. Eligible activities under this program include, but are not limited to, the development, implementation, and maintenance of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Region and related short term planning activities.



District staff participated in an event held at Ridgewater College campus in Willmar. The seminar was sponsored by Ridgewater and Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services among others. The seminar provided education on at least five different jobs and employment programs provided by different agencies in the Region.

The Minnesota Association of Development Organizations held a statewide economic development professionals meeting in Monticello. There was discussion regarding the statewide development plan titled DEVELOPMN.

Staff provided professional technical assistance to a new child care initiative in Kandiyohi County. The goal of the initiative is to increase child care slots in the county.

An Opportunity Zones workshop was held in Redwood Falls. The workshop, which staff attended provided education and information on this valuable economic development tool. There are three Opportunity Zones in the Region. One each, in Kandiyohi, Meeker, and Renville Counties.

Staff authored and completed various reports due to the Chicago Office of the Federal Economic Development Administration including the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Performance Report.

The Kandiyohi County/City of Willmar Economic Development Commission held a day long planning session, which staff attended and provided input on future programming and work planning.

Staff attended a seminar sponsored by Enterprise Minnesota, a technical assistance provider to Minnesota Manufacturers. Staff was informed about a survey on how manufacturers viewed the economy in the next year.

The State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development held an information meeting in Spicer. The meeting included an educational curriculum, as well as, a round

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robin of events and happenings regarding economic development in the area. A MMDC staff member was in attendance.

All Regional Development Organization staff met in Mankato in June to Discuss the DevelopMN Plan and discuss bringing forward a dashboard of success.

Staff provided professional technical assistance to a housing study in its infancy in the county of Renville. The early July meeting discussed possible venders for the study

An Intelligent Communities Forum was held in Appleton in late August. Staff of the Commission participated in the forum. The forum centered around broadband and internet access and to what extent communities are connected to broadband. The program was mainly sponsored by the Blandin Foundation.

The State of Minnesota – Department of Employment and Economic Development Workforce Centers was changed to “Careercenters”. Staff attended an open house and presentation at the Willmar office to stay abreast of details and issues with the changes.

Staff participated in a Financial Resource Symposium that was held in late September. The symposium featured financial resources available to small businesses in the Renville County area.

A core committee was formed in Meeker County in late September. The committee had a major focus on creating child care slots in Meeker County. The Committee partnered with First Children’s Finance and the Southwest Initiative Fund. Commission staff is serving on the Committee.

A Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development employee, a Southwest Initiative Fund employee, a Renville County Economic Development person, and a staff person from the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission participated in a full day familiarization tour of all the cities in Renville County. The mission was to gain insight into economic development efforts ongoing in the communities.

A Minnesota Association of Development Organization held a staff retreat in Brainerd. Attendees were educated on various activities that partner organization are working on and other educational seminars. The retreat was well attended with upwards of 80 employees.

A Kandiyohi County Bankers Association meeting was held in Willmar. Many banks were represented. Commission staff made a presentation on the Commission’s Revolving Loan Fund.

A Tigerpath Program was held in Hutchinson. An outcome of the meeting was focused on the transferability of the program to other school districts in the Region.

Staff also participated on various committees in the Region dealing with, childcare slots, broadband issues, finance committees, and business retention and expansion.



The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) receives an annual grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), matched with the local tax levy, to provide transportation planning services within the Region's four counties for activities principally involving surface transportation and to participate in the Southwest 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 in 2019 were Doug Kruger and Rollie Nissen. Renville County Engineer, Jeff Marlowe 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 the ATP Committee that makes Transportation Alternatives program (TA) funding recommendations. The TA program funds such activities as trails and other bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects, Safe Routes to School infrastructure funding, and Scenic Byway funding. Staff continues to be involved with developing application materials for this grant program.



Citizens on the trail

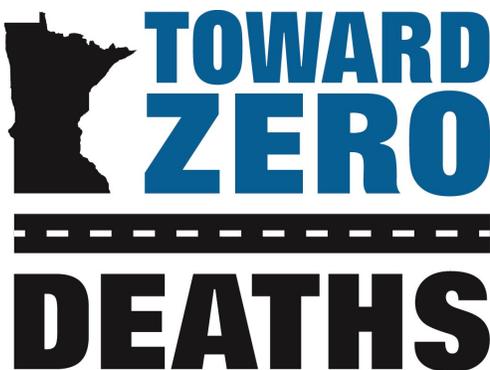
MMDC completed assistance in the preparation of Safe Routes to School Plans (SRTS) for the Litchfield School District and began working with the ACGC School District within the Cities of Atwater and Grove City. The SRTS program is an opportunity to make walking and bicycling to school safer for children and to increase the number of children who choose to walk and bicycle. SRTS is a nationwide program. MMDC is paid by MNDOT to provide technical assistance to school districts and cities that have successfully applied to the state to move forward in creating plans.

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Commission staff was also active in the following transportation activities during the 2019 Calendar Year:

- * Staff provided input into various MNDOT statewide plans. Staff assisted MNDOT District 8 in helping develop project scoping documents.
- * Staff were involved with District 8's Bicycle Plan project.
- * Staff participated with the District 8's Freight Plan process by staff being on the Plan's Advisory Committee and Technical Team.
- * Other MNDOT meetings staff attended on their planning efforts included: A meeting on equity; a CAV Scenario Planning Workshop; a TED solicitation meeting; and a Local Technical Team meeting.
- * Staff attended RDC Transportation Planners meetings during the past year. These quarterly meetings allow the planners to share information and coordinate planning efforts.
- * Staff completed the Meeker County Trails Plan.
- * Staff worked with the City of Litchfield with trails planning efforts.
- * Staff assisted the City of Spicer with the preparation of an Active Living Transportation Plan.
- * Staff continues to be part of the City of Willmar's Bicycle Friendly Community Committee. The City has previously earned bronze level "Bicycle Friendly Community" status. Assistance was provided this year for helping prepare a new application to maintain or improve the community's level.
- * Staff gave assistance to the Highway 23 Coalition. The Commission continues to serve as the Coalition's fiscal agent. A staff member served as an ex-officio member on the Highway 23 Coalition Board.
- * Staff is a member of the District 8 Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Committee and attended the annual Southwest Minnesota TZD workshop.



- * Staff oversees changes to the region's roadway functional classification system.
- * Staff worked with the City of Atwater to update their Transportation Chapter in the City Codes.
- * Staff attended a meeting of the Dassel-Cokato Trails group to discuss the newly adopted Meeker County Trails Plan. The group is interested in extending the trail to Darwin Dassel County Park.
- * Staff participated in a tour of Central Community Transit in Willmar.
- * Staff attended various transit related statewide meetings over the course of the year.

The Community Development Department assists with a wide variety of consulting and planning projects for local units of government, including cities, counties, townships, watershed districts, and school districts. This particular program area is not tied to any State or Federally funded program, however, many projects are funded through competitive grants. MMDC also charges a technical assistance rate, which is currently \$80 per hour. This amount is set at a rate that closely covers MMDC’s actual cost to provide consulting services.

In addition to the Community Development Department’s major projects, numerous questions are researched by staff on a regular basis for our Region’s citizens, elected officials, businesses and other stakeholders, without MMDC charging a fee. These types of phone calls and emails come in on a regular basis.

Although MMDC staff has experience with preparing several different types of planning documents, the Community Development Department specializes in the following types of projects:

Official Plans, including comprehensive plans, active living transportation plans, hazard mitigation plans, and other similar community development documents.

Official Controls, including zoning and subdivision ordinances, ordinance codification, rules and regulations, and other similar regulatory documents.

Environmental Reviews, including Environmental Assessment Worksheets (EAW) and Environmental Impact Statements (EIS).

Survey Research, MMDC staff has over 30 years of experience with designing and administering surveys. Although most current research is conducted online, paper surveys and survey interviews are still used to reach key populations.

Special Projects, including grant writing, public facilities planning, housing studies, mapping services, and many other types of technical assistance.

As one of Minnesota’s Data Centers, MMDC also regularly provides Census and demographic data free of charge to businesses, non-profit agencies, citizens, and other interested organizations.



Luce-Line Trail Bikers



Area Bike Clubs

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Main Community Development Projects during the Calendar Year

Kandiyohi County Parks Plan

The Kandiyohi County Board formally made the decision in August 2018 to create a Kandiyohi County Parks Plan. The County entered into a contract with the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission and Wenck Associates Inc. The consultants met with the County Administrator and determined, due to it being towards the ‘end’ of the camping season, it would be more ideal to delay the majority of the planning process until the summer of 2019. This allowed more input from seasonal campers and residents. The Parks Plan was facilitated by Matthew Johnson, Community Development Director from the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission, and Lucius Jonett, Landscape Architect from Wenck. The Kandiyohi County Board also appointed a Task Force to help guide the development of the parks plan.

A Public Open House was held on Thursday, August 22, 2019, to review the draft county park maps that displayed potential park projects. The Open House was advertised in local newspapers and on a local radio station (38 people participated in the event). After a brief presentation, participants were asked to rank their top three projects for each county park. Participants were also encouraged to discuss projects that were not previously identified. The information collected was used to help prioritize potential projects for each county park.

The primary purpose of the Kandiyohi County Parks Plan:

1. Create a planning process that was open to all stakeholders to assist with identifying issues and ranking park priorities.
2. Profile the existing parks in Kandiyohi County.
3. Identify potential park improvements, safety needs, new amenities (i.e. parking, benches, etc.), maintenance, and infrastructure projects.
4. Create an implementation plan for each county park that communicates priorities, timing and estimated costs.
5. Understand potential funding sources, including grants, budgeting, fundraising, stakeholder agreements, and other creative funding opportunities.

The Kandiyohi Parks plan was adopted by the Kandiyohi County Board on January 21, 2020

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**Kandiyohi
County
Parks Plan
Open House**

When? Thursday, August 22, 2019, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Coffee and refreshments will be served!

Where? Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services Building in the Multipurpose Room (lower level).
Address: 2200 23rd St. NE; Willmar, MN 56201

Why? Kandiyohi County is currently updating its Parks Plan. The purpose of the plan will be to identify park amenities and projects that will be implemented over the next 10-20 years. Your input is welcomed!

For more information on the open house or the parks plan, please contact
Matthew Johnson, Community Development Director at the
Mid-Minnesota Development Commission
Email: communityplanning@mmrdc.org ~ Phone: (320) 235-8504 Ext. 231





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City of Spicer Active Living Transportation Plan

The Commission assisted the City of Spicer with preparing an Active Living Transportation Plan that was completed in December 2019. The plan is the response to the community’s desire for improved non-motorized transportation amenities for its citizens and visitors. With improved pedestrian and bicycle amenities the community will help encourage a more active and healthier lifestyle for residents. The goal of the plan is to identify the infrastructure, policies and programs necessary to ensure safe, efficient, and effective transportation options within the community.

MMDC staff worked with the City’s Active Living Transportation Committee to inventory current assets and existing conditions. Strategies were prepared to improve the walking and bicycling alternatives, and implementation steps were devised to implement these strategies. One of the primary goals was to develop plans and implementation steps to improve the safety for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing State Highway 23 that runs through the heart of the community.



Safe Routes to School Plans

The **Litchfield Safe Routes to School Plan** was completed in June 2019. Map 4A shows where a School Safety Zone will be established around the Litchfield Middle/High School. The Safety Zone would have targeted implementation projects and enforcement of existing pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle laws. The plan was presented to the Litchfield City Council and adopted on July 1, 2019.

Proposed infrastructure projects in the Litchfield SRTS Plan include the following:

- The installation of School Safety Zone signs, media coverage, and handouts included in school mailings.
- New sidewalks and/or trails, helping students safely walk and bike between the two schools.
- A new roadway and trail between the Middle/High School and the District Office to allow for pedestrian movement and a modified bus route to mitigate traffic congestion.
- Needed crosswalk improvements, including proper paint and signage.
- Digital speed radar signs.

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The community has expressed interest in working with MMDC in the future to develop an Active Living Plan to further discuss pedestrian and bicycle improvements throughout the community. The **Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City (ACGC) SRTS Plan** was also started in August of 2019. In addition to ACGC school staff, city staff for both communities participated throughout the planning process. Maps 3A and 3C highlight the potential infrastructure improvements that were found when participating in the before school walk audits.

Some of the proposed infrastructure projects included in the ACGC SRTS Plan include:



ACGC Elementary School

- Parent drop off zone will be moved to north side of building with individual drop off slots.
- Bus drop off zone will be moved to the east side of building.
- Bike storage located inside of the east recess fence.
- Jr/Sr bus shuttle pick up location on northeast corner of the school. (Wyoming and 2nd)
- Sidewalk located on the east side of the school will be remodeled to fit ADA standards.
- Various infrastructure improvements around the school facility.

ACGC Middle/High School

- Added sidewalks and/or trails around school for increased walkability.
- Construct a sidewalk/trail that connects the school facility to Lindstrom Ave.
- Implement bike sharrows along Lindstrom Ave and an enhanced crosswalk on Lindstrom Ave just north of the school facility.



The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) received a Phase 1 Organization Planning Grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) beginning on July 1, 2018. The grant allows MMDC to develop an operational plan for the implementation of a Regional Transportation Coordination Council (RTCC). The formation of the Mid-Minnesota RTCC is being pursued by its member counties with the underlying belief that many of the Region’s growing transportation needs would be better addressed through regional cooperation. At the time of the grant application in March 2018, McLeod, Meeker, Kandiyohi, Renville, and Sibley Counties have all officially expressed interest in becoming member counties. In 2019, Sibley County opted out of the project. McLeod, Meeker, Kandiyohi, and Renville Counties remained supportive through 2019.

The following tasks were worked on during Phase 1:

Task 1 – Define the geographic RTCC Region (180 days) (finished)

Task 2 – Prepare an Operational Implementation Plan (finished)

- i. Describe RTCC membership
- ii. Bylaws
- iii. Continuing efforts of the Local Human Services Public Transit Coordination Plans
- iv. Goals and Objectives
- v. Clearly identify how partners and stakeholders will stay involved in the RTCC Implementation Phase 2
- vi. Workplan of activities to be undertaken for the first two (2) years of implementation
- vii. Describe organizational resources for RTCC Implementation
- viii. Provide budget proposal for the RTCC

Task 3 – Stakeholder Involvement Strategies for Implementation

- i. Public & Stakeholder Participation Plan (finished)
- ii. Public Meeting Plan (finished)
- iii. Website and Media Plan. (in progress)
- iv. Limited English Proficiency Plan (finished)
- v. A.D.A. Accessible Plan (on-going)

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RTCC Goals and Objectives - Phase 1 included the identification of the RTCC’s goals and objectives. The primary goals and objectives of the RTCC remain as follows (the RTCC will have the opportunity to expand the goals and objectives as it evolves):

RTCC Goal: Safe, convenient, and affordable transportation options for all citizens.

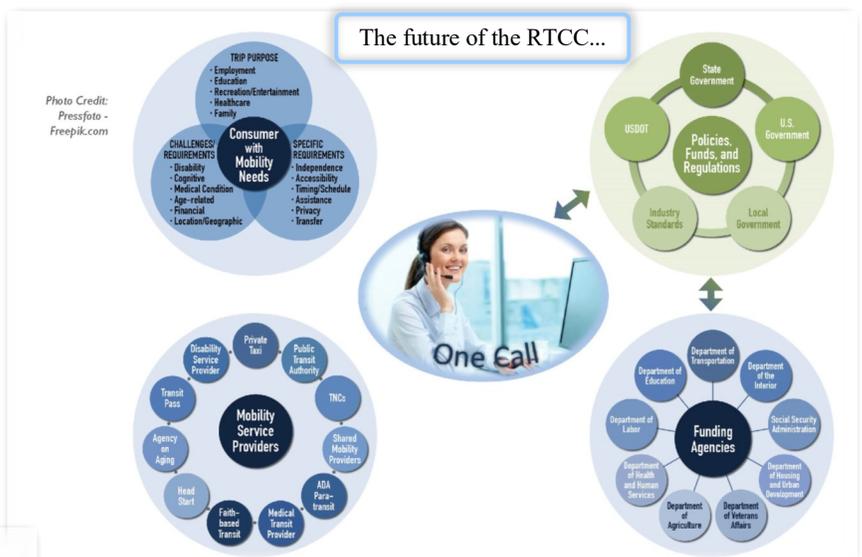
Objective 1: Mitigate obstacles for people who have transportation disadvantages, so they can safely, conveniently and affordably get where they need to travel, when they need to travel.

Objective 2: Cooperatively work towards identifying and addressing the Region’s transportation needs and issues through public and private partnerships.

Objective 3: Use extensive citizen and stakeholder participation to develop sustainable relationships throughout the planning and implementation process.

Progress Report for Phase 2

- Heather King was hired as a full-time RTCC employee on August 6, 2019 with the title Transportation Resource Coordinator.
- Many stakeholder meetings have taken place and relationships developed, including with those who have been and will serve on the RTCC Subcommittee and the RTCC Advisory Council.



- The Stakeholder Database resource list has grown to over 200 entries.
- All research for the Transportation Resource Guide has been done and the document is in progress.
- The Gaps Analysis document is also in progress. Most of the data has been collected. As more data comes in, it will be added to the finalized Gaps Analysis in early 2020.
- The Volunteer Driver Coalition is in progress, with three of the four counties having a Volunteer Driver Program in place. Phase 3 will focus on promotion and marketing assistance for these programs.
- The Learn-Not-To-Drive and Travel Trainer programs have been pushed to Phase 3.

In 1995, MMDC received a grant from the U. S. Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration to initially create a \$1,200,000 Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The grant was partially matched by the Commission, local units of government, and the Southwest Initiative Foundation. Program goals include assisting businesses with gap financing and creating employment opportunities within Region Six-East's four-county service area. After due diligence, by the loan committee, loans are funded for working capital, real estate purchases, and equipment purchases.

The purpose of the RLF program is to strengthen and diversify the local economy. This is reached by providing a source of low interest financing to businesses, when credit is not otherwise available from other sources, and to ensure the successful completion of a project or activity. Job creation and retention are also a priority of the fund. Since inception the fund has loaned almost \$4,000,000 and leveraged over \$27,000,000 in private investments. The loans have created or retained over 800 jobs in the four counties.

Revolving Loan Fund Program



Featured Business — K-Traps

In 2019, the K-Traps business went up for sale. The business is located in rural Willmar, Minnesota. Shawn and Joy Henkel wanted to purchase the business. All of the traps are built by hand and individually manufactured. The Henkel's are especially proud of the quality of the finished products and their professional customer service. When you order from K-Traps you are ordering directly from the manufacturer. Along with a local bank, the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission was able to assist with providing financial assistance to the project.

More information on the business, ordering information and pictures can be found at <http://ktraps.com/>.

Financials & 2020 Budget

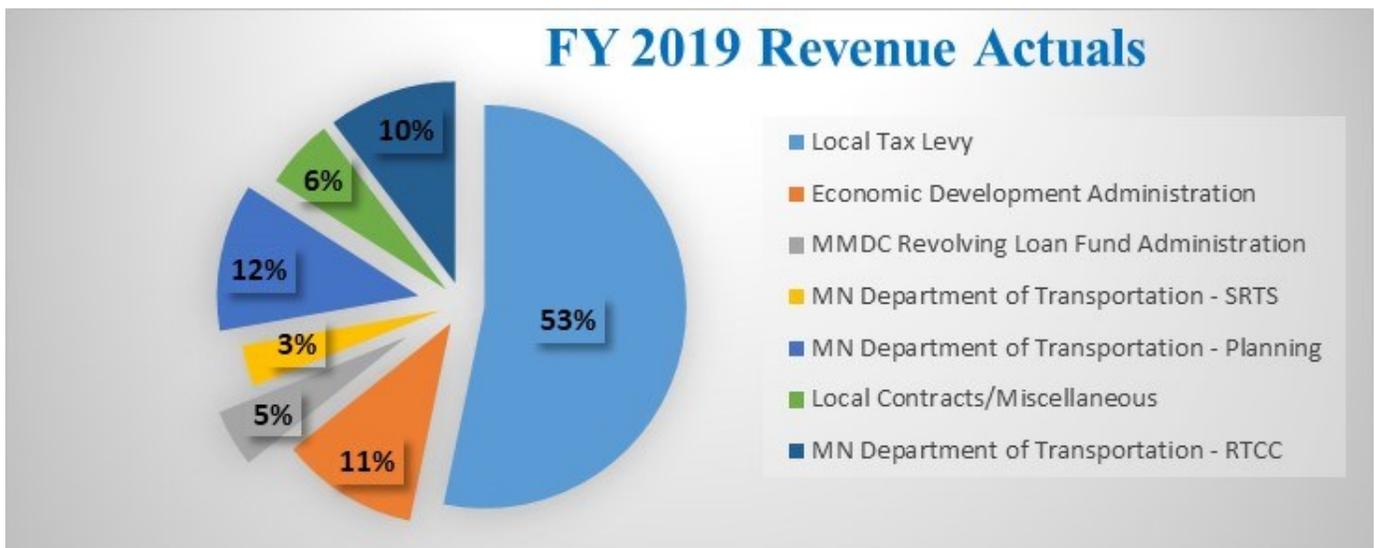
REVENUES

	FY 2019 Budget	FY 2019 Actuals	FY 2020 Budget
Local Tax Levy	\$ 335,807	\$ 337,742	\$ 342,523
Economic Development Administration	70,000	70,000	70,000
MMDC Revolving Loan Fund Administration	26,850	29,281	28,000
MN Department of Transportation - SRTS	21,013	21,013	19,220
MN Department of Transportation - Planning	75,000	75,000	75,000
Local Contracts/Miscellaneous	43,572	35,724	36,510
MN Department of Transportation - RTCC	66,750	65,537	196,822
	<u>\$ 638,992</u>	<u>\$ 634,297</u>	<u>\$ 768,075</u>

EXPENDITURES

	FY 2019 Budget	FY 2019 Actuals	FY 2020 Budget
Salaries & Fringe	\$ 533,628	\$ 467,463	\$ 647,897
Supplies & Printing	8,092	7,938	10,226
Communications	20,730	19,105	19,750
Services	49,701	40,535	49,058
Capital Outlay	3,550	28,991	3,550
Volunteer Services	1,005	-	1,934
Travel & Training	11,997	12,993	16,421
Commissioner Travel/Expenses	6,875	8,053	8,400
TOTAL	<u>\$ 635,578</u>	<u>\$ 585,078</u>	<u>\$ 757,236</u>

Fiscal Year 2019 Audit: The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission contracts with Conway, Deuth and Schmiesing, PLLP, Certified Public Accountants, Willmar, Minnesota to conduct an Annual Audit. The Fiscal Year 2019 auditors report expresses an unqualified opinion on the General Purpose Financial Statements of the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission.





Minnesota RDO's Come Together at Madden's On Gull Lake to Celebrate 50 Years



- RDOs are agencies that have been designated by the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration as Economic Development Districts. In Minnesota they include Regional Development Commissions (RDCs) and the West Central Initiative.
- RDOs were established by Minnesota State Statute in 1969 to provide technical assistance to the local units of government in their region.
- RDOs perform a variety of unique services based on the needs of their region.
- RDOs partner with numerous state and federal agencies to obtain and administer grants for programs and projects at the local level.
- RDOs are governed by a board of directors or commission composed of elected officials and special interest groups.
- RDOs are recognized for their fiscal responsibility and capabilities in professional program management.



Executive Director.....Donn Winckler
 Financial Director/Office ManagerSue Gimse
 Economic Development Director..... Les Nelson
 Community Development Director Matthew Johnson
 Community Development Planner Kyle Ten Napel
 Transportation Resource CoordinatorHeather King
 Admin Assistant/Tech Support Spec..... Terresa Westerman

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

MMDC Staff

Please visit us at:
<http://www.mmrdc.org>