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Upper Minnesota Valley  
**REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION**

Helping Communities Prosper

# Annual Report 22'

Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission



**Helping Communities Prosper**

Providing technical assistance to the five county region: Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift and Yellow Medicine County

*“A great leader’s courage to fulfill his vision comes from passion, not position.”*

- John Maxwell

# Message from the Executive Director

*Dawn Hegland*

Enclosed in this report is a digest of summaries about work we do to serve this region. It includes work from across the region and on a variety of issues and projects that were priorities for the local governments we serve. There are so many pressing needs and issues that our local communities are responsible for we feel honored to be part of helping them with their work.

All of the projects we work on require courageous leaders that identify and respond to needs in their community. Each need takes significant time and energy from local leaders to collect background data and look at solutions, impacts and costs. Making decisions to act on these needs requires taking some political will and financial risk. Most community projects take years to complete from start to finish and this also requires patience and perseverance.

On page seven of this report you will see a list of top needs in the region as reported by local regional leaders in our annual survey. Our team has been active in providing information or technical assistance in all of the top 10 identified areas. Throughout this annual report you can read about the work we have done marketing communities and the region; look for the grants we have written supporting critical infrastructure, housing rehabilitation, broadband, and park and trail infrastructure; and you can find examples of numerous local plans that help cities and counties set goals for things like natural disaster mitigation, capital investment, transportation, economic development and recreation. All of this work was done in conjunction with other committed and courageous local community leaders. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your solution!

*Dawn E. Hegland*





## Message from the Board Chair

*Ben Bothun*

This past year has definitely been a learning experience for me. Having first joined the UMRDC board in January of 2021 and then being elected board Chairman in July of 2021 didn't allow me much of time to wrap my head around all of the things the UMRDC staff does to help our local units of government and our five-county area. (I'm still learning) I greatly appreciate Dawn and her team's patience with me and their willingness to answer my questions.

Our area returned to a sense of "normal" with Covid-19 restrictions ending for our area businesses and schools. But I feel a few of the things we did to adapt during the pandemic are here to stay such as remote work and Zoom calls. Which I believe are good things to help with staff recruitment, staff retainment as well as overall efficiency.

Over this past year we've had staff members leave while also adding some new ones. Despite the changes, the staff has worked their tails off to keep up with the increasing requests from our local units of government - for this they should be applauded.

Staffing has been first and foremost on my mind this year and I feel we've made some changes that should benefit the UMRDC and the area they serve. Dawn and staff have completed a compensation study that should lead to our pay being more competitive for job seekers as well as current staff. The Board of Directors have been looking at making changes to the remote work policy and these changes should allow for more flexibility for current staff and hopefully making job openings more attractive for job searchers. These changes are a big step away from the current policy and I appreciate the Board of Directors members for being willing to go against the normal way of doing things to keep the UMRDC as competitive as possible in these new days of trying to attract and retain employees.

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# Meet Our Team!

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# Commission Board Members

## Big Stone County



**Jay Backer**  
County Commissioner



**Michele Backer**  
Graceville  
Municipalities



**Harold R. Dimberg**  
Ortonville Township

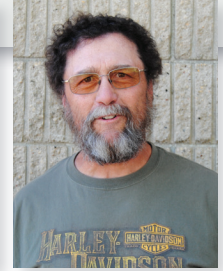
## Chippewa County



**Bill Pauling**  
County Commissioner



**Erich Winter**  
Montevideo  
Municipalities



**Jim Schmaedeka**  
Louriston Township

## Lac qui Parle County



**Ben Bothun**  
County Commissioner  
(Chairman)



**Jeff Olson**  
Dawson  
Municipalities



**Mark Bourne**  
Hamlin Township

## Swift County



**Gary Hendrickx**  
County Commissioner



**Aaron Koosmann**  
Hegbert Township



**Lucas Olson**  
Benson  
Municipalities

## Yellow Medicine County



**Gary L. Johnson**  
County Commissioner



**Denise Hanson**  
Canby Municipalities



**John Cole**  
Fortier Township

## Tribal Community



**Chuck Swanson**  
Upper Sioux Community

## Public Interest



**Carrie Bendix**  
SW MN Private  
Industry Council



**Diane Kepner**  
Prairie Five CAC, Inc.  
Board



**Scott Marquardt**  
Southwest Initiative  
Foundation



**Dawn Regnier**  
MN West Community &  
Technical College

## School Board



**Brett Buer**  
Dawson-Boyd School  
Board



**Bill McGeary**  
Benson School  
Board

# Financial Report

## *Expenses*

	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY23</b>
Salaries/Fringe	868,719	1,058,452
Commissioner's Expense	19,600	22,300
Audit	14,000	14,000
Contract for Services	41,160	25,200
Copy Charge/Xerox lease	4,000	4,000
Depreciation	6,700	6,000
Dues	3,000	5,000
Insurance	1,300	1,300
Legal Fees	2,000	2,000
Miscellaneous	1,000	1,000
Office Rent	12,210	12,210
Postage	3,500	3,500
Printing/Advertising	6,500	4,500
RDC Marketing	2,000	2,000
Registration	2,000	4,000
Repairs/Maintenance	1,600	1,000
Software	9,150	9,150
Sub./Publications	2,000	2,000
Supplies	3,500	4,500
Telephone/Internet	5,000	5,000
Staff Travel	10,000	15,000
Morale	2,000	2,000
Wellness	2,000	2,000
Web Hosting/Maintenance	3,500	3,500
Byway Partnership Project	29,800	
EDA Cares	50,000	20,000
Meander	23,000	23,000
Prairie Waters Ads	23,700	23,700
Swift County Environmental Services	7,000	
	<b>\$1,159,939</b>	<b>\$1,276,312</b>

pass through

# Revenues

	FY22	FY23
Local Contracts	490,516	574,240
Levy	339,500	346,500
Misc. & Interest	4,250	7,500
Ongoing Programs	343,000	349,690
	<b>\$1,177,266</b>	<b>\$1,277,930</b>

## FY22 Ending Account Balances

General Checking	469,636
Money Market	22
CD	368,207
Scenic Byway	22,113
Auto	48,354
Equipment	20,413
RLF Available for Lending	637,293

# \$19,453,566

The amount of money invested in our region as a result of the UMRDC's Work in FY22

## \$834,766

Contractual services the UMRDC provided to the region

+

## \$18,618,800

Funds brought to the region as a result of our work



## UMVRDC Regional Annual Survey

The UMRDC conducted an annual survey in December 2021 to find out what the biggest issues and needs are for the region. The top ten most important issues that need attention are listed below.

1. Marketing/Promoting our Community/Area to Attract New Residents, Visitors, and Workforce
2. Housing Rehabilitation
3. Childcare Accessibility & Affordability
4. Improving broadband
5. Sewer, Sanitary Sewer, Storm Water, Drinking Water Infrastructure Planning or Funding
6. Rental Housing
7. Comprehensive or Strategic Planning
8. Capital Improvement Planning
9. Demolition of Dilapidated Housing & Commercial Properties
10. Trails and Parks Planning or Funding

*The list above drives our workplans each year, which you'll see examples of throughout this report.*

# Improving our Region's Infrastructure

## Broadband Grant for Chippewa County

The UMRDC is in the midst of writing a grant application to the MN DEED for broadband improvements in rural portions of Chippewa County. The application is for Minnesota's Border to Border Broadband Grant program and will be completed by August 2022.

## Broadband Grants Successful for Madison & Appleton



The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development announced \$34,656,956 in grants to 15 Minnesota cities and counties across the state from the Small Cities Coronavirus Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG-CV). Grant funds will be used to support residents by offering increased connectivity for telework, telemedicine, telelearning, and tele visits.

As part of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Minnesota received a special allocation to address community needs to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The City of Appleton received \$3,699,000 for broadband improvements and commercial rehabilitation. The City of Madison received \$2,560,000 for broadband improvements.

### *Grants Awarded*

#### City of Appleton

**\$3,699,000**

#### City of Madison

**\$2,560,000**

Appleton will install broadband infrastructure main fiber lines to residents and businesses within the city of Appleton. The grant also included a commercial rehabilitation component for at least 12 businesses to update new or repaired Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning systems with good ventilation and safe air circulation. The total project cost for Appleton is \$5,774,000 and includes the grant of \$3,699,000.

Madison will also use funds to install broadband infrastructure main fiber lines to residential and non-residential properties within the city limits. The total project cost for Madison is \$4,560,000 and includes the grant of \$2,560,000.





## Transportation

The UMRDC continues to provide local transportation planning assistance to the region through a contract with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). Staff participate in the West Central and Southwest Minnesota Area Transportation Partnerships (ATPs) in MnDOT Districts 4 and 8 respectively. The ATPs review and prioritize federally funded road, bridge, public transit, and transportation alternative projects.

Staff continue to reach out to communities with opportunities to update or complete Safe Routes to School plans, encourage bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure

improvements coinciding with school or street construction projects, meet with trail advocates in the region, and keep the UMRDC website current with road construction news and resources to help communities develop transportation projects.

The UMRDC also works with MnDOT and other Regional Development Commission's transportation planners across Minnesota with statewide planning, such as the Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan, Electric Vehicle Planning Study, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Data Task Force.

## Safe Routes To School

The Lac qui Parle Valley School District and the Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley School District each received awards from MnDOT to help provide safe ways for youth to walk, bike, and roll to school. The Lac qui Parle Valley Elementary School in Appleton was awarded \$55,000 for new signage and striping on the school property.

The Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley (CGB) School District was awarded \$38,515 from MnDOT for Safe Routes to School (SRTS) planning assistance. This planning assistance grant is to develop a comprehensive SRTS plan that will include an analysis of existing conditions, public outreach and identification of potential infrastructure and non-infrastructure solutions to help more children walk and bicycle safely to school. The UMRDC is excited to work with the City of Graceville, the City of Clinton, and the CGB School District as the SRTS planning process begins in late summer 2022.

# \$41.9M

The total federal transportation investment for projects using federal funds in our five-county region for the next four-year time period from 2022 to 2025



## Benson EDA Flood Mitigation and Wastewater Grant Funded

In 2021 the UMRDC submitted a grant for the City of Benson to the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration for the construction of a new flood protection berm/levee around the existing wastewater treatment facility to protect it from flooding from the Chippewa River. The project was funded in October 2021 for a total project cost is \$1,767,105. The UMRDC is currently working with the City of Benson to provide grant management and financial support for this project.

## EDA Grants for Swift County and the City of Madison

In January 2022, the UMRDC assisted Swift County and the City of Madison in submitting applications to the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) competitive grant programs.

Swift County applied for funding under the ARPA Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Program for improvements to the Appleton Area OHV Park. The County requested funding to carry out many of the identified projects listed in their recently adopted 2021 Appleton Area OHV Park Master Plan. Proposed activities include the creation of a day use beach area for swimming, fishing, and kayaking; walking trails; improved parking areas; permanent restroom facilities; new wells; vehicle wash stations; and improved signage. The County applied for \$1,181,393 in federal funds. The total project cost is estimated to be \$1,477,424.

The City of Madison applied for funding under the ARPA Economic Adjustment

Assistance Program to expand and improve infrastructure to the newly expanded industrial park area in the northwest corner of the community. The improvements will address infrastructure deficiencies in the area for Ziegler, Inc. and the Madison Hometown Lodge, as well as provide capacity for future development. Proposed activities include improvements/expansion of the City's wastewater collection system, water distribution, stormwater, and some street repair. The City applied for \$1,812,720 in federal funds. The total project cost is estimated at \$2,265,900.

Unfortunately, mid-summer of 2022 it was announced that the City of Madison's application was not considered for funding due to extreme competitiveness of the program and large volume of applications submitted from around the country. Funding announcements for the Swift County application is expected to be made in late summer/early fall of 2022.



## Granite Falls Memorial Park

The UMRDC continues to assist the City of Granite Falls with improvements to Memorial Park, which was designated a regional park in 2016 by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC). The UMRDC has helped with funding requests, environmental review, and master planning process. The UMRDC continues to assist Granite Falls in implementing their master plan.

This past year, the UMRDC assisted with two grants to help fund Phase IV of the master plan, both successful.

A grant was written to the DNR Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program to address invasive species removal around the lake area. This grant of \$33,863 was funded and will be completed in the summer of 2022, and will help with the Wetland Trail project outlined in the Phase IV project.

A grant was written to the GMRPTC to rehab the Entrance Gates, add amenities to the Picnic Area, and to complete a Wetland Trail. This grant of for \$569,973 was funded and planned to start in 2022 and be completed in 2023.

Implementing a master plan takes time. Here is a timeline of the planning and grant writing that the UMRDC has done for Memorial Park.

Master planning started in 2014 and finished in 2016:

Phase I: New restroom, main Park Shelter roof rehab, parking renovation and crosswalk improvements. Received \$595,613 from GMRPTC in 2017. Work is complete.

Phase II: Invasive species removal in campground area, signage, trail improvements, a nature-based playground, and renovation of the RV campground. Received \$732,261 from GMRPTC in 2018. Work is complete.

Phase III: Additional rehabilitation on the main Park Shelter. Received \$150,000 from GMRPTC in 2019. Work is in progress.

**\$595,613**

GMRPTC in 2017

**\$732,261**

GMRPTC in 2018

**\$150,000**

GMRPTC in 2019

**\$569,973**

GMRPTC in 2022

**\$33,863**

Conservation Legacy in 2022



# Plans for our Region's Future

## Big Stone Solid Waste

Big Stone County has contracted with the UMRDC to assist in updating its 2012 Solid Waste Management Plan. UMRDC staff and the Big Stone County Environmental Department will work to develop a policy-based road map for how the County intends to reduce waste, increase recycling, and divert waste from landfills. These plans are required by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to be updated every ten years. Work on the plan has just begun with completion anticipated in late summer/early fall 2022.

## Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Over the course of the past year, UMRDC staff updated the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) which helps guide the economic development work of the agency between 2022 and 2026. The CEDS is a regional economic road map that helps map out economic development goals and includes an action plan to address the issues and opportunities highlighted in the plan. The strategies in the plan were developed by a combination of the CEDS Strategy Committee made up of representatives from all over the region, public engagement, and UMRDC staff.

Following the adoption by the UMRDC Board in late January 2022, the CEDS was submitted to the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) Chicago Regional Office for review and official approval. The UMRDC received notice in May that the CEDS was approved by EDA. The full document can be viewed on the UMRDC website.

## Local Human Services Transit Coordination Plan

The UMRDC has worked in partnership with Prairie Five Community Action Council to update Region 6W's Local Human Services - Transit Coordination Plan. This plan is completed every five years to assist stakeholders as they determine ways to improve transportation for non-drivers and others with transportation challenges, especially seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income people. It serves as a blueprint for regional transportation coordination.

The Local Human Services - Transit Coordination Plan:

- Describes regional demographic conditions
- Provides an updated inventory of existing transportation providers
- Highlights gaps in service/unmet transportation needs
- Outlines goals and potential strategies to improve transportation services
- Has incorporated significant public engagement



Photo credit: Naomi Powers-Baker

## The City of Appleton Capital Improvements Plan

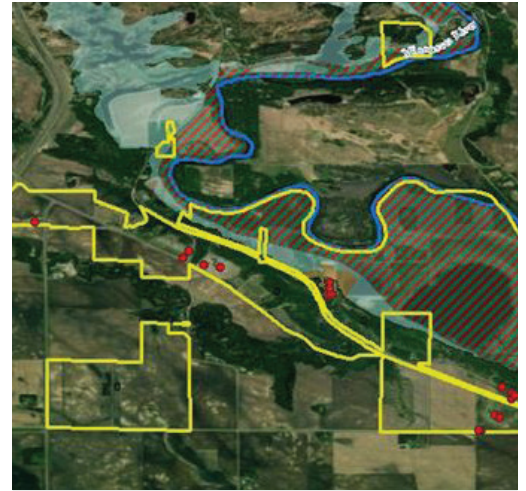
The City of Appleton has been working with the UMRDC to create a Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).

The CIP is meant to identify needs and projects for city-owned properties and to identify how to pay for capital projects. It will serve as a planning tool for the city council to make fiscal decisions that impact their overall budget in the coming years.

Over the past few months, a draft plan was created to develop a list of all needs and potential projects. Additional research is needed to make decisions on what projects should move forward. Once the research is completed, the next step will be to meet with a committee to determine goals and a project list of all items in the plan. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2022.

There are many benefits to a city having a capital improvements plan:

- Identify the most economical means of financing capital projects
- Increase opportunities for obtaining federal and state aid
- Coordinate projects with other development to increase efficiency and reduce duplication
- Keep the public informed about future needs and projects
- Encourage careful project planning and design to help a community reach desired goals



## Upper Sioux Community All-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

As a result of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires that local units of government must first have in place a multi-hazard mitigation plan to be eligible for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds. The UMRDC was contracted in the spring of 2021 to complete the update for the Upper Sioux Community (USC).

The planning process included multiple meetings with USC staff, public input through a survey and review of draft copy, and research. All data and historical information needed to be updated. New hazards needed to be cataloged. All changes and completed strategies were documented. New strategies were developed based on changes in climate or other new local conditions to mitigate the negative impacts of those hazards. These strategies were prioritized.

After FEMA reviews the plan, the Tribal Council will be able to adopt it in the coming months. This project will be completed in the summer of 2022.



## Chippewa County Hazard Mitigation Plan

The UMRDC is currently working with Chippewa County Emergency Management to update the County's Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. Hazard mitigation planning helps identify strategies and projects to prevent or lessen the impacts of disasters on communities, infrastructure and natural environments, making them more resilient against future disasters and thus reducing the costs of recovery. Jurisdictions with plans in place are also eligible to apply for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) hazard mitigation grant funding. Hazard Mitigation plans are required by FEMA to be updated every five years. The planning process recently kicked off with a virtual meeting on June 23rd, 2022. UMRDC staff will be meeting with Chippewa County municipalities as well as County departments, agencies, and stakeholders over the coming year for input on the plan.



# Responding to Critical Issues

## EDA CARES Grant

The UMRDC received a Supplemental CARES grant through the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) in 2020 to work on projects addressing the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of the work covered under this grant is nearing completion, with all activities scheduled to conclude by the end of 2022.

**Regional Redevelopment Fund Feasibility** - The UMRDC contracted with U of M Extension to prepare a study which looked at the potential funding sources to establish a regional fund as well as examples of similar programs in Minnesota and across the country. Work continues on this project and will include gathering more input from our local governments as well as partnering with a public finance consultant to study the parameters of a potential fund.

**Regional Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E)** - A regional BR&E two-day training workshop was held in the winter of 2021-22.

**Child Care Industry Outreach and Education** - Case studies were prepared and shared via email, social media.

**Digital Marketing and E-Commerce Transition Support** - UMRDC partnered with Vivid Image to offer several online classes targeted to small businesses and entrepreneurs in the region.

**Broadband Access Analysis and Outreach** - Staff continues to stay

informed of local broadband issues and funding opportunities, sharing relevant information to jurisdictions and partners.

**Regional Marketing** - Prairie Waters/Get Rural - Continued to coordinate the Prairie Waters Regional Tourism and Marketing program by developing marketing and promotional materials for our region. The new 2022 Visitor and Relocation Guide was published and distributed throughout the state. Community lifestyle toolkits were created for 11 of our communities on the Prairie Waters website as well as a new regional job listing resource that was recently launched.

**Meander Art Crawl** - The Meander was held again in person last fall. CARES dollars were used to develop an online marketplace development, training for artists to set up their own e-commerce sites, and provide for online marketing featuring live video.

**Comprehensive Planning with Focus on Resiliency** - Strategic planning for local units of government addressing proactive planning leading to more resilient communities.

## Child Care Resources

Child care continues to be a top issue in our annual regional survey. The UMRDC has completed research on child care resources and examples of child care models and shares this information with the region. The UMRDC created and updated case studies highlighting child care facilities in the area, which include start-up info, budgets, enrollment numbers, staffing info, etc. The case studies are an essential guide for other communities to view while considering starting up and/or expanding their child care facility.

# Helping our Region's Businesses

## UMVRDC Revolving Loan Fund

The UMVRDC Revolving Loan Fund is designed to provide gap financing for business and industry starting up or expanding in the five-county region of Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift and Yellow Medicine. The primary focus of the program is manufacturing and industrial-related businesses that will create or retain jobs.



**\$163,500**

Donner's Garage  
Clara City

**\$200,000**

Donner's Garage  
Clara City

**\$101,008**

Handeland of Granite Falls LLC  
Granite Falls

**\$50,000**

Montevideo Riverside Autobody  
Montevideo

**\$188,820**

10th Avenue Rebuilders LLC  
Montevideo

In June 2020 the UMVRDC received \$1,720,000 to provide gap lending to businesses in the region that were impacted due to the COVID pandemic. Those dollars provided seventeen businesses in our region additional dollars to start or grow their business.

In late June 2022, the UMVRDC was also awarded additional federal funds to create \$500,000 in additional gap funding for area businesses and we look forward to supporting more growth and expansion projects in the region.

Over the last year a combination of 96 full and part time jobs were created or retained as a result of the 5 new business loans closed by the UMVRDC during this last year. In total, the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) lent \$703,328 to businesses in the five-county region this year. Loans for the businesses listed below were approved for equipment, inventory, fixed assets, and real estate. The RLF funds were added to \$3,241,680 in other public and private sector financing for these 5 loans.



## UMVRDC Revolving Loan Fund Portfolio as of 6/30/22

Total Loan Funds | **\$3,750,570**  
Loans in portfolio | **44**  
Total Available for Lending | **\$637,293**

# Revitalizing our Communities

## Small Cities Development Program Grant Management

UMVRDC staff continue to author grant applications and provide general administration of the MN DEED Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) which helps cities and communities with funding for housing rehabilitation for owner occupied and single-family rental homes along with multi-family rental unit rehabilitation, public infrastructure, and commercial rehabilitation projects.

Granite Falls and Clarkfield will both be finishing up their grant this fall after being extended for one year. **Granite Falls** will rehab 10 owner-occupied homes along with four single family rental homes and six commercial properties. Almost \$900,000 in project funds will provide a significant amount of impact throughout the community.

**Clarkfield's** \$1,104,520 grant will rehab 11 owner-occupied homes and five commercial properties. The grant also pays \$600,000 of the water tower project. The water tower is part of the \$23.4 million dollar infrastructure projects in Clarkfield.

Milan/Watson and Canby's grants will also be ending at the end of September. **Milan and Watson's** total improvements will be close to \$1.1 million. The grant will rehab 11 owner-occupied homes along with eight multi-family rental units and four commercial properties.

**Canby's** grant funds will allow 11 owner occupied homes and seven commercial businesses to receive needed rehabilitation totaling over \$1 million.

Appleton and Clara City are in the second year of their grants.

**Appleton's** goal is to rehab 18 owner occupied homes and five commercial properties, totaling \$1,057,530 in improvements.

**Clara City's** goal is to rehab 10 owner occupied homes, eight single-family rental homes, and four commercial properties. The total funds that will impact the city is \$902,209.

Benson and Dawson are in their first year of the grant. All the policies and procedures and other start up documents have been completed. Applications are being received and projects are just starting.

**Benson** plans to rehab 20 owner occupied homes and 10 commercial properties. Benson's total project will impact the community by \$1,194,700.

**Dawson** plans to rehab 18 owner occupied homes and four commercial properties. The total impact to the community is \$769,300.

The UMRDC wrote one Small Cities Development Program grant application during 2022. The community of Ortonville is waiting to be notified from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development if they were awarded a grant.

**Ortonville's** grant would rehab 20 owner-occupied homes and four commercial properties. The total project will be over \$900,000. Twenty-four projects will make a huge impact on the community.

The UMRDC provides general administration for all the grants. Prairie Five Community Action County and Swift County Housing and Redevelopment Authority provides field administration. If the City of Ortonville is awarded a grant, the UMRDC will contract with Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership for inspections, but the UMRDC will be doing most of the field administration.





## Developable Properties

One of the recurring issues that we see in our region is that of vacant and dilapidated buildings and sites. These properties can be a public safety hazard, hinder development in their surrounding areas, and contribute little to the tax base, in fact, many are tax delinquent. UMRDC staff continue to look for ways to address this issue and one of the strategies that has been implemented with support from the EDA CARES Supplemental Grant is the Developable Properties initiative. Last year, staff and a U of M Morris intern collected data on available buildings and sites throughout our region and uploaded it to LOIS (Location One Information System). LOIS is a nationwide interactive database of available sites and buildings that developers and site selectors utilize. This data is housed on the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development site selector system, as well as our own Prairie Waters Site Selector page.



The data collection phase was completed last fall and then communities were asked to voluntarily select one of their properties to work with the UMRDC and an architectural consultant on a visioning process to think about how the site or building could be best utilized to fit the current and future needs of their communities. Benson, Dawson, Madison, Montevideo, and Ortonville chose to participate in this process.

To date, all five communities have met with UMRDC staff and the architect to brainstorm and provide feedback on design concepts. When complete later in the summer of 2022, representatives of the five communities will meet together to share their design concepts and how they plan to use the final product. It is our hope that the final product will result in bringing these buildings and sites back to productive uses while building excitement locally and addressing a persistent rural issue in our communities.

## Maynard Bank Building

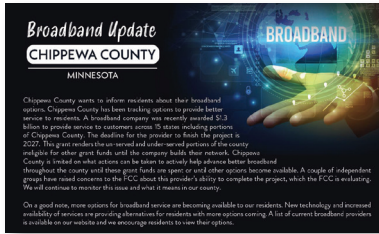
The UMRDC continues to assist the City of Maynard with their historic Maynard State Bank building. This past year has been focused on implementing the conditions assessment and preserving this historic building. Staff wrote a successful grant to the Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) in early 2021 for a Historical and Cultural Grant for \$10,000 to fund the development of architectural documents for a new roof for the building. These documents were completed and used to write a grant to replace the roof. The grant was reviewed in late 2021 and was not funded. In response, staff worked with the MNHS and the architect to identify what items needed to be clarified. A new grant was submitted in May of 2022.

## Dawson Armory Building

The UMRDC continues to assist the City of Dawson with this city-owned historic building which houses their library and apartments. A conditions assessment was completed for the Dawson Armory which set the stage for a series of improvements for the building. The UMRDC assisted with the grant to the Minnesota Historical Society for a Historical and Cultural Grant to fix the roof and repair interior water damage. This grant was approved in late 2019 for the amount of \$184,000. While this project was scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2021, some sections of the have been delayed. The UMRDC continues to assist with grants management as they are in the final stages to complete this grant and preserve this historic building.

# Promoting our Region's Assets

## Chippewa County Broadband Marketing



The UMRDC Staff worked with Chippewa County to create a direct mail piece to inform residents within Chippewa County about their broadband options. The county has been transparent about the different options they have been tracking and built out a webpage to keep residents informed of any updates. The county continues to work with UMRDC staff on seeking different grants and resources.

## Granite Falls EDA Marketing

The Granite Falls Economic Development Authority (EDA) asked the UMRDC to assist in creating marketing materials to use for recruiting new residents to the city of Granite Falls. The UMRDC created two stories highlighting resident's lifestyles and what they enjoy most about living in Granite Falls. In addition, information on the city's housing, healthcare, education, child care, employment, and things to do were collected and put into a brochure. These marketing pieces serve as a welcoming kit for potential newcomers. The EDA and City will use these marketing materials to entice new residents to move the community.



*"We feel blessed to live, work, and raise our children in this community."*  
- Kayla Anderson

## Swift County Environmental Marketing



The UMRDC assisted Swift County in developing and implementing a marketing plan to educate and promote recycling to residents and businesses in Swift County. The marketing consisted of billboard and newspaper advertising, creating location flyers and maps, managing an intern to go door to door with educational materials, building out content and the creation of a widget on the website that allows users to search an item and the widget will tell you how to recycle or dispose of the object.

Where goes Where?

 My Schedule	 What Goes Where	 Waste Sorting Game	 Glass Separation	 Need help?
-----------------	---------------------	------------------------	----------------------	----------------

Type the name of a waste item and we'll tell you how to recycle or dispose of it.

Batteries (alkaline)

Batteries (rechargeable)

Batteries (car)

Soap dispenser (automatic)

Sewing and weaving appliances

Powdered Drink Cans

Grease (small amounts)

Fats & oils

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# Western Minnesota Prairie Waters Regional Marketing

Western Minnesota Prairie Waters is a regional marketing effort promoting the four counties of Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Yellow Medicine, Swift and their communities. The purpose is to promote the area as a great place to visit, work, and live by highlighting the region's natural, cultural, scenic, historic assets, and lifestyle. The program is managed by the UMRDC and is funded by counties, cities, chambers, and economic development organizations in the region.

2022 Prairie Waters Members include Chippewa County, Montevideo/CVB, Milan, Swift County, Benson, Kerkhoven, Appleton, Lac qui Parle County, Dawson, Madison, Yellow Medicine County, Canby, Clarkfield, Granite Falls/EDA.

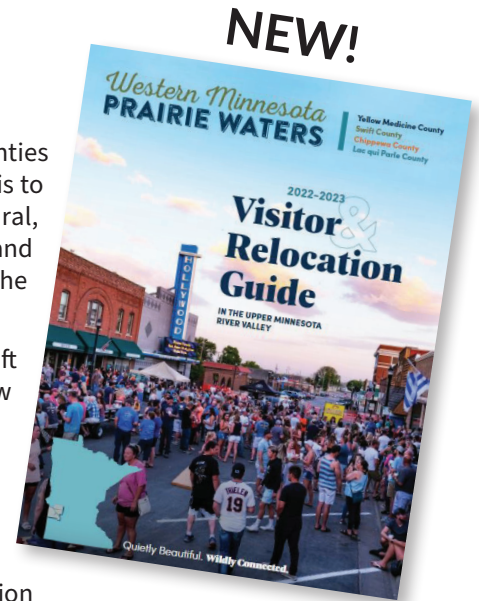
**Regional Website:** [www.prairiewaters.com](http://www.prairiewaters.com) The website is a one-stop-shop that includes information on employment opportunities, housing, education, healthcare, child care, things to do, etc.

**Annual Gathering:** Each summer staff hosts an annual gathering at a unique location throughout the region and invites visitors and locals to come enjoy free entertainment, food, and prizes while learning about the Prairie Waters program.

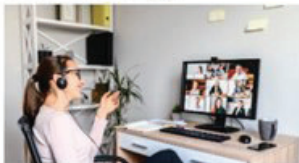
**Advertising:** In 2022, Prairie Waters received a total of \$10,000 in grants through Explore Minnesota Tourism to spend locally on advertising our communities and events.

**Live & Work Here:** The Prairie Waters website and social media pages highlight the region's lifestyle with information on the following: housing, healthcare, education, child care, cost of living, and things to do. The website also includes information on employment opportunities, technology/ broadband services, site selector, start/expand a business, and more.

**NEW 2022-2023 Visitor/Relocation Guide:** This new guide has a print distribution of 25,000 copies along with a digital version. The only regional visitor guide in our four-county region.



## Job Listings



Strong Broadband



Low cost of living



After Hours

Search Keywords

### Filtering

Clear Filters

By Company

By Location

- Appleton, MN
- Bellingham, MN
- Benson, MN
- Boyd, MN
- Canby, MN
- Clara City, MN
- Clarkfield, MN
- Clontarf, MN
- Danvers, MN

### Maintenance Technician - PURIS Proteins - Dawson, MN

PURIS Proteins | Dawson, MN | Posted 3 months ago

Ability to understand and work from complex mechanical and electrical diagrams, drawings, schematics, specifications, and flow diagrams and interpret them to...From Indeed - Tue, 08 Mar 2022 06:25:15 GMT - View all Dawson, MN jobs

View Listing

### Conditions Based Monitoring (CBM) Lead - PURIS Proteins - Dawson, MN

PURIS Proteins | Dawson, MN | Posted 3 months ago

Manage or deploy technology based on EMP, field inspections, data collection, and analysis as applicable, in accordance with best practice standards.From Indeed - Fri, 04 Mar 2022 18:33:37 GMT - View all Dawson, MN jobs

## Workforce Recruitment

### Employment Toolkit:

Created a toolkit that includes lifestyle information for an employer to send to a potential new employee as a welcoming package.

### Promoting Employment:

Created a new widget on the Prairie Waters website that pulls local employment opportunities from multiple different online job boards and local employers to one location where a user can filter by keywords, employer, and/or location. In addition we launched a four month Google Adwords marketing campaign to drive users to the new webpage.



*"I enjoy the yearly Tradition with friends"*

*"My favorite highlight is visiting the area, and all of the talent"*

- 2021 Meander Attendees

## 2021 Meander Art Crawl

The UMVRDC continues to provide technical and financial management for the Meander since its inception and is pleased to see continued growth and support for the event – 2021 was the Meander’s 18th event!

In 2021 Meander attendees purchased \$139,872 worth of art during the event. Event goers came from near and far to visit the 41 artists located throughout Big Stone, Swift, Lac qui Parle, Chippewa, and Yellow Medicine counties. The Meander is a great opportunity to showcase the area and provides a large economic boost to the small businesses in the region.



**\$18** | Customers spent an average on shopping outside of the Meander art

**77%** | of customers said the quality of the art was excellent

**80%** | of customers said their overall experience was excellent

**\$45** | Customers spent an average on food and gas

# \$139,872

Total Report Art Sales



## Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway

The UMRVDC has been providing staffing and fiscal services to the byway since 1996. The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway (MRVSB) is a partnership of committed individuals from the 287-mile byway corridor, representing a variety of interests including chambers of commerce, various attractions and historic sites, state parks, local and state governmental bodies, private businesses, and concerned individuals.

The Byway plays an important role in linking and promoting historical sites and stories to better tell the history of the Minnesota River Valley through a variety of efforts, including its programs, website, roadside signs, brochures, and other marketing materials.



### NEW Visitors Guide!

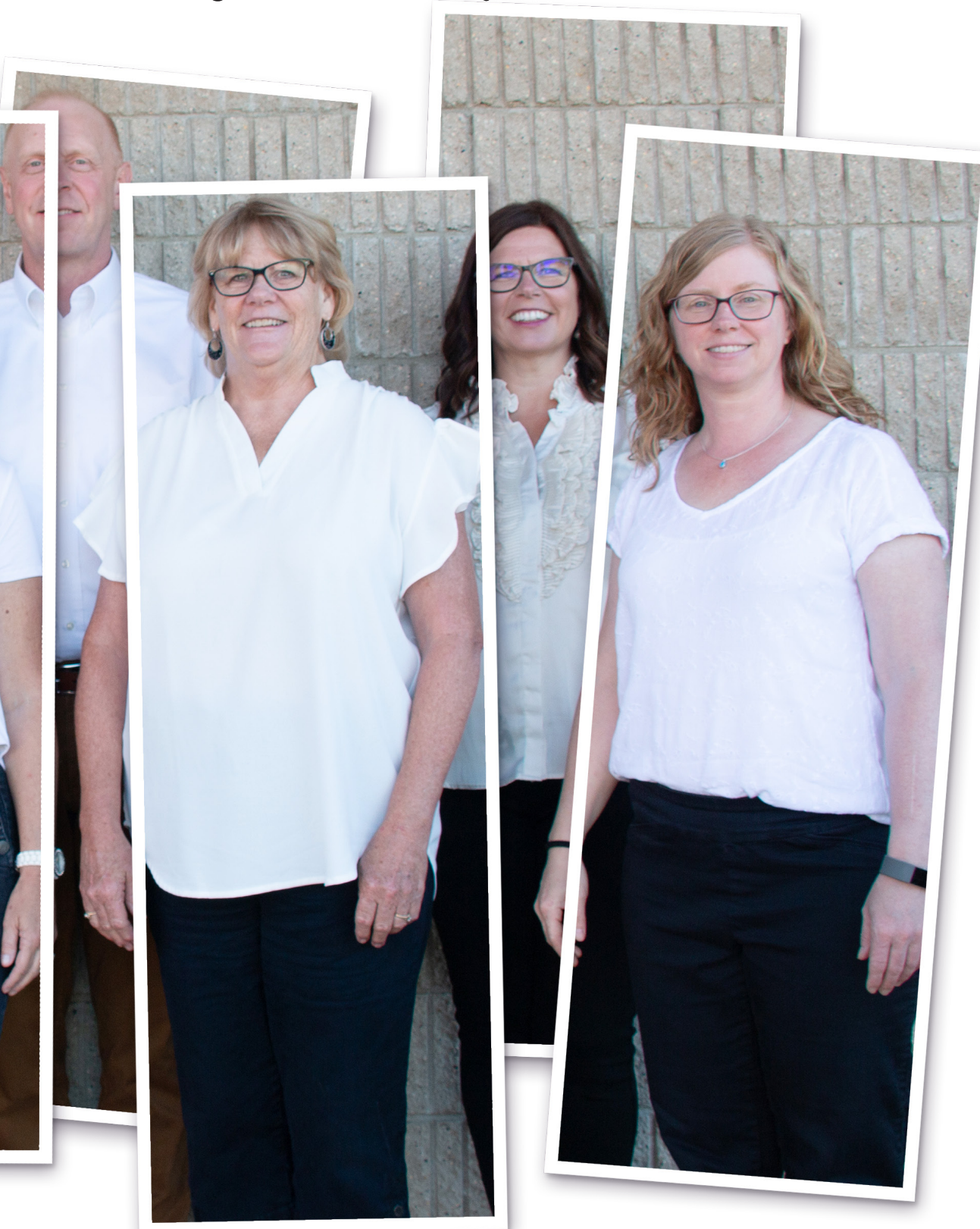
### 2021 Byway Highlights

- Wrote and received a new MNHS grant for new Byway Orientation Maps
- Hired an intern who delivered byway packets to most of the byway discovery sites and took photos of each site which were added to the byway website
- Coordinated the need to adjust byway route because of the Hwy 67 closure by Granite Falls
- Updated the Byway Website, Facebook Page continues to be managed by a volunteer
- Completed three itineraries and new Byway Visitors Guide

# Helping Communities



# unities Prosper





Upper Minnesota Valley  
**REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION**

Helping Communities Prosper

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