

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2023



Bridging Relationships & Resources



REGION FIVE
Development Commission

NCEDA
NORTH CENTRAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION
a Program of Region Five Development Commission

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Introduction

The purpose of the Region Five Development Commission (R5DC) is to ensure the orderly and harmonious coordination of state, federal, and local comprehensive planning and development programs for the solution of economic, social, physical and governmental problems of the state and its citizens.

The North Central Economic Development Association (NCEDA) is a local non-profit corporation established with federal and local dollars through the Region Five Development Commission. NCEDA's mission is to provide assistance to cultivate new skills and resources that unite communities and contribute to a prosperous economy. While providing financial assistance in the region, NCEDA provides technical assistance, entrepreneurship opportunities for small-business owners, increases manufacturing activity, and supports innovative products and processes.



Region Five Development Commission is a high-performing, regionally focused partner committed to enhancing the vitality and quality of life for all people in Region 5 through a resilient, collaborative, and inclusive approach to regional community development, economic development, and transportation initiatives.

executive director message



In July 2023, R5DC celebrated 50 years of regional service with over 100 guests and influential speakers. It was an amazing event that displayed accomplishments and regional relevancy. Last year was another staggeringly successful year.

Partner investments dedicated to staff capacity allowed R5DC to submit over a dozen Federal, State and Philanthropic climate mitigation funding proposals. These applications require expertise, time and years of established relationships that we are leaning into. The team completed 10 [Energy & Environment](#) plans with small rural Cities which is a statewide record.

Our 501(c)(3) the [North Central Economic Development Association \(NCEDA\)](#), delivered business, well water and septic system loans through 7 lending pools.

The R5DC & NCEDA finance department completed two successful audits and fiscally administered funds for the MN Department of Agriculture's "[Agriculture Mental Health program](#)", and for the "The Pillsbury Players" and the "Innovative Schools Project". Our marketing department published several [podcasts](#), managed over 4 websites, 5 different quarterly newsletters, and beautified over 30 presentations, grant proposals, and publications.

Our 15+ year partnership with our region's food hub "Sprout MN" continued through delivery of the AgVet program serving Veterans and Farmers. R5DC added a program in partnership with both Sprout and Central Lakes College to offer agriculture career exploration to 800+ students of sixteen regional School Districts.

R5DC continued our traditional transportation services and coordination of the [Regional Transportation Coordinating Council](#). This small but impressive team also delivered Comprehensive planning for municipalities, facilitation of watershed planning, Safe Routes for Schools planning, and completed a regional [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#) (CEDs).

We've had a few staff changes and are excited to experience the strengths and expertise of Candice Zimmerman and Savannah Winkler. After 10 years of remarkable service, Dawn Espe leaves the R5DC team. Dawn led R5DC's CEDs planning, the placemaking and our Welcoming Communities work. She was a teacher of [Wealthworks](#) and delivered hundreds of Intercultural Development Inventory assessments. Dawn's accomplishments showcase how R5DC can make a difference in people's lives, and we honor her legacy by continuing the delivery of equitable economic ecosystems. We look forward to next year's adventures.

In service,
Cheryal Lee Hills
Executive Director



board chair message

I have some good news to share with you. In July, we celebrated the 50th birthday of our Regional Development Commissions. It's been a long journey, and we've achieved a lot.

Our Commission has changed a lot over the years, and we keep getting better and better. I believe this is because of our great leader, Cheryal Lee Hills, and the amazing team we have, as well as the partnerships we've made in our area and beyond.

I've been a Commissioner for the Region Five Development Commission for 20 years, and I'm proud to be the Board Chair again. Our job is to help our region by providing resources and working hard to boost the local economy. It's a role that makes me happy because we're making life better for the people who live here.

Our organization started in 1973 with a clear goal: to make plans and programs to help our region with jobs, community, and government. I want you to know that we're still committed to that goal.

When you read our annual report, please let us know what you think about what we're doing now and any ideas you have for our future work. Your thoughts are important to us, and we're grateful for your support.

Thank you for being part of our journey and for helping us make our region a better place.

Robert Kangas
Chairperson



1 Army Camp
1 Tribal Nation
5 Counties
24 School Districts
65 Cities
151 Townships

Our Commissioners

Cass County

Bob Kangas, County Commissioner
VACANT, Municipalities
Brenda Bray, Town Boards

Crow Wing County

Rosemary Franzen, County Commissioner
Angel Zierden, Municipalities
Doug Kern, Town Boards
Tiffany Stenglein, City of Brainerd

Morrison County

Greg Blaine, County Commissioner
Rollie Johnson, Municipalities
Chuck Parins, Town Boards

Todd County

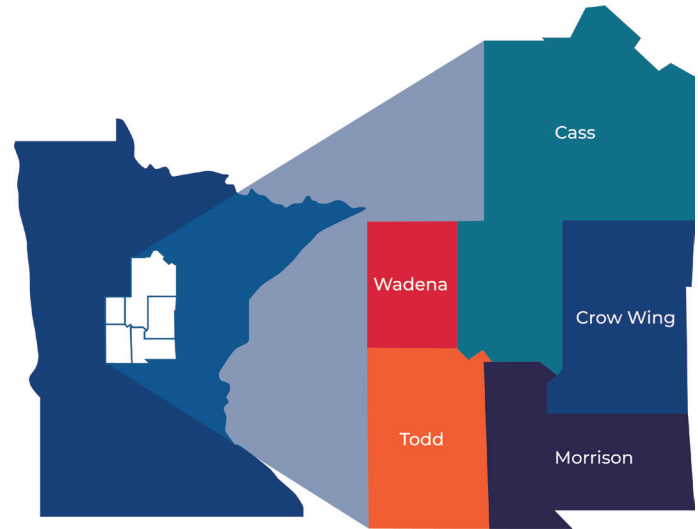
Barb Becker, County Commissioner
Debra Nelson, Municipalities
Julie Polak, Town Boards

Wadena County

Ron Noon, County Commissioner
David A. Anderson, Municipalities
Erich Heppner, Town Boards

Special Interest

Steve Hall, Camp Ripley
VACANT, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
Taran Skwira, Emerging Leaders
Andrea Haverinen, School Board Representative
Dr. Carrie Brimhall, Higher Education
Diane Jacobson, Soil & Water Conservation District
Amy Sjoblad, School Board Representative
VACANT, MN Workforce Development



We are honored to serve the counties of Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena.



Our mission is to enhance the vitality & quality of life for all people in Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena counties by bridging relationships & resources.

Our Staff



Cheryal Lee Hills
Executive Director



Tad Erickson
Sr. Regional Development Planner



Dawn Espe
Equitable Development Specialist



Staci Headley
Sr. Regional Development Planner



Alex Lisson
Finance Director



Angela Anderson
Marketing Director



Matt Kallroos
Regional Development Planner



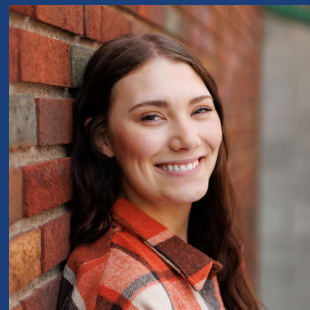
Stephanie Barney
Business Loan Developer



BJ Allen
Deputy Director



Hannah Smith
JEDI Fellow



Savannah Winkler
Regional Development Planner

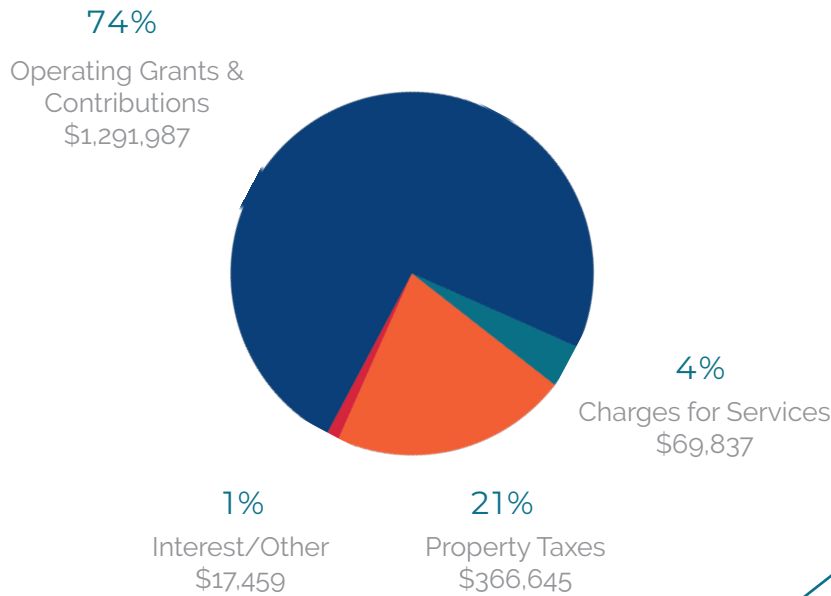


Candice Zimmermann
Regional Development Planner

Financial Highlights

actual revenue by source for FY23

Total Revenue \$1,745,928
 Total Expenditures \$1,703,747
 FY 2023 Net Income \$42,181



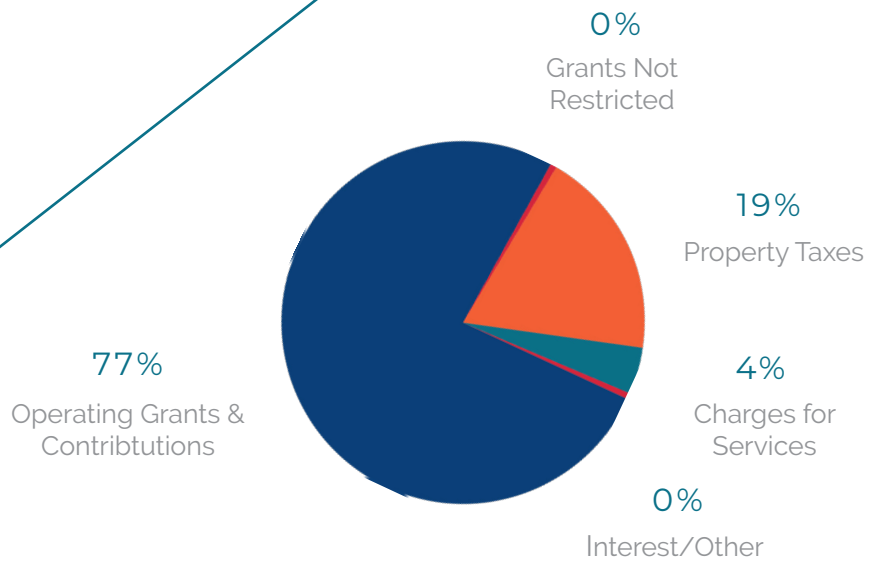
total revenues

Charges for Services: \$69,837
 Grants and Contributions: \$1,291,987
 Property Taxes: \$366,645
 Interest Income: \$17,459
 Total: \$1,745,928

total expenditures

Management and Administration: \$504,310
 Community and Economic Development: \$1,009,120
 Transportation: \$190,317
 Total: \$ 1,703,747

*Audit was in process at time of publication. These are unaudited numbers.



Budgeted Revenue by Source for FY23

Budgeted Expenditures \$1,891,839
 Budgeted FY 2023 Net Income \$10,483

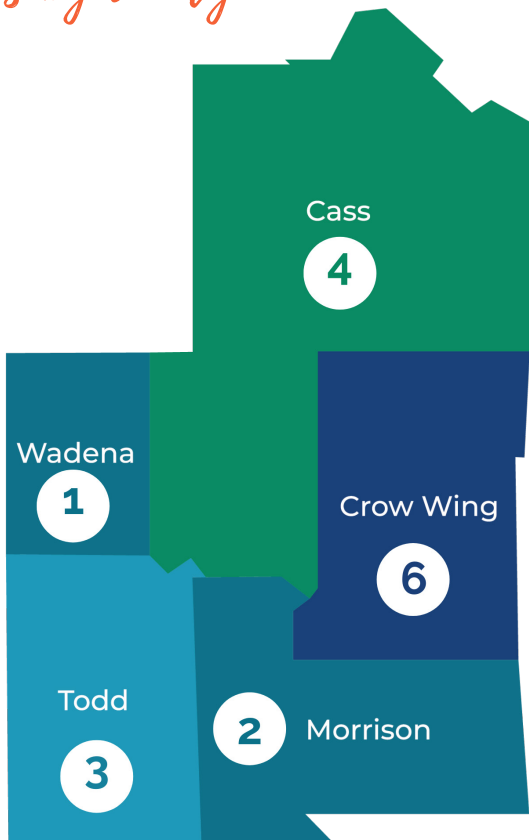
Economic Development

NCEDA Loans

by the numbers

- (1) CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund - **\$80,000**
(Crow Wing)
- (4) Legacy Revolving Loan Fund - **\$505,263**
(Crow Wing, Morrison & Todd)
- (10) Individual Septic Treatment Systems Loans - **\$110,391**
(Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison & Wadena)
- (1) Entrepreneur Lending Program - **\$50,000**
(Todd)

loans by county



regional impact since 1986



\$112.9M+

Melissa Krueger, Owner of Simply Rustic Floral Design in Crosslake, with Harley.



Community Development



Attendees at our **Cultivating Communities | A North Central MN Welcoming Summit**, September 2022

welcoming communities highlights

- [Cultivating Communities Summit](#), **160+ attendees and 25 presenters** with two days of diversity, equity, inclusion, and community focused workshops
- Women in the Round music event featuring 3 local artists
- Izhitigweyaa | A Buckanga Social Club Event - celebrating Indigenous creatives with music, fashion, arts, and poetry, sold out at venue with **65 attendees**
- Relationship Safety Alliance rebranding as a result of Welcoming Communities Advocacy Group Project
- Non-Violent Peaceforce Kickoff with Story Circles, surveys, and one-on-one conversations
- R5DC participation in the [Minnesota Rural-Urban Exchange](#) (RUX) program
- WAVE/Saludos Center (Welcoming Advocates Valuing Everyone) in Long Prairie

Visit www.regionfive.org/welcoming-communities

the sowing room

We developed The Sowing Room website, an online resource to provide equity-driven tools, events, and resources by rural, for rural.
sowingroom.org



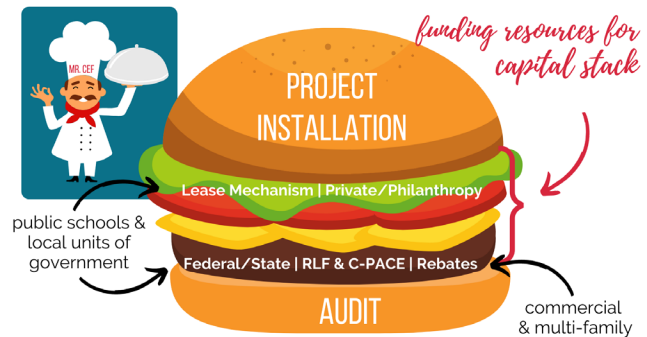
energy & environment

Four more regional cities adopted 5-year Energy & Environment Plans and implemented prioritized projects. In addition to project funding from Sourcewell, this effort leveraged **\$92,148 in additional funding** from 2021-2023. Thirty-four planning team members participated in creating the plans, and **266 community members** responded to a survey. Implemented community-identified projects include energy audits, installing energy efficient street and other lighting, added insulation, community clean-ups, tree plantings, and more. The plans are now successfully leveraging additional resources to support larger community projects identified during the planning process, with **\$9.7 million secured to-date**, and another \$1 million pending. R5DC submitted thirteen **(13) grant proposals** that would enhance the region's resiliency, and **received funding for nine (9)**, with another four (4) proposals pending.

R5DC hosted a conference in April on Energy & Environment work with other Regional Development Organizations in the state. R5DC staff served as member on the Clean Energy Resource Teams Central Region Steering Committee and developed future plans to deliver a Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) lending program to the region.

agricultural mental health

This agreement with the State of Minnesota provides agriculturally competent, no-fee mental health counseling services to Minnesota farmers, farm family members, employees, and related parties through the services of Agricultural Mental Health Providers. This program is supported in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota State Agricultural Centers of Excellence, and Region Five Development Commission. Learn more at regionfive.org/local-foods (our agriculture and local foods page).



Additional R5DC Impacts

- worked with utilities and three regional schools to conduct energy audits on their buildings
- one school is realizing \$14,000 in energy savings annually due to simple measures implemented during the audits
- collaborated with another school on a successful application to cover 85% of the installation of a solar energy system (\$102,000)
- third school received a large energy efficiency award to upgrade equipment, which will result in at least \$75,000 of annual savings on operating costs once implemented
- collaborated to write a grant in support of some regional EV charging stations.

watershed planning

Meeting facilitation, public engagement, and plan development coordinated by R5DC resulted in local, and subsequent state-level approval of multiple watershed plans. These plans will lead to millions of dollars of extraordinary investment in our region over the next 10 years that will:

- protect surface and groundwater
- enhance wetlands
- protect fish and wildlife habitat and recreation
- prioritize buffer zones

Community Development

regional group facilitation

Economic Development Organization Professionals

Economic Development District

North Central Economic Development Association - Full Corporation & Loan Board

Regional Transportation Coordinating Council

Transportation Advisory Council

R5DC regional/statewide board participation

100 Rural Women

Accounting & Financial Women's Alliance

Brainerd Lakes Pride

Brainerd Planning Commission

Central Lakes College Advisory Council

Central MN Partnership

Christian Labor Union Local 8 Board

Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs)

Friends in the Field

Lakes Area Human Resources Association

LEAP, Inc.

MinneAg

MN Association of Development Organizations

MN Military & Veterans Exchange Steering Committee

MN Rural Broadband Coalition

Reimagining Rural Assistance Network (RRAN)

Rivers and Lakes Suicide Prevention Coalition

Rural Urban Exchange

University of MN Regional Sustainable Development Advisory Board

USDA Equity Commission Rural Community Economic Development Subcommittee

Women's Business Alliance Advisory Council

Wondertrek Children's Museum

The R5DC team spent **158 hours** **volunteering** in our communities to causes that are close to our hearts as individuals. Since 2019, we have been meeting as a group to take care of our section of highway near Aldrich, MN.

158
Volunteer Hours





Bags with Badges tournament Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023, at the Northern Pacific Center. Tim Speier / Brainerd Dispatch

justice system consortium

The goal of the Justice System Consortium (JSC) is to build upon our regional assets, make appropriate investments, celebrate efforts that maintain the most effective and trusting police community relations possible. The Brainerd Police Department's Bags with Badges tournament was funded by Sourcewell, Region Five Development Commission and the Initiative Foundation through a collaborative partnership with regional law enforcement agencies as part of this initiative. The Northern Pacific Center donated the use of their facilities for the tournament.

military connections

R5DC currently supports our active duty military personnel, veterans and their families through the AgVet Program. The AgVet program is a product of collaboration, with input from over 40 regional growers, ranchers, Veterans, and various federal, state, and veteran-serving agencies. Sprout, in partnership with R5DC, offers Veterans in the region opportunities to explore agricultural careers with hands-on learning opportunities through apprenticeships, fellowships, and cohort peer-to-peer learning. Together, we're building bridges to serve the workforce needs of our Veterans. Visit regionfive.org/military-connections to learn more.



AgVet Workshop held at Island Lake Farm
May 2023

Transportation Planning

regional transportation coordination council

R5DC continues to serve as the coordinator of the five-county Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC) for the counties of Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena. The goal of this council is to fill transportation gaps, streamline access to transportation and provide individuals with more options of where and when to travel. This improves mobility for the “transportation disadvantaged”— older adults, individuals with disabilities, individuals with low income and/or military veterans.

In partnership with regional stakeholders, we created the Region 5 Regional Transportation Coordinating Council website, where you can find the transportation providers in our five-county region, including a full directory and helpful resources. Visit r5rtcc.org to learn more.



transportation advisory council

Continuing its more than 40-year relationship, assisting the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), the Region Five Transportation Advisory Council (TAC) is charged with addressing issues of local and regional significance; reviewing and guiding the development of various transportation plans and studies effecting the region; providing input to the Minnesota Department of Transportation in planning, policy, and project development; and recommending a prioritized lists of transportation projects seeking federal aid through the Central Minnesota Area Transportation.

safe routes to school

R5DC worked alongside the Pequot Lakes School District, to craft a Safe Routes to School Plan that seeks to increase safety, health and well-being of students by improving walking and biking opportunities and by addressing any potential risks, issues and barriers that may exist.

After assessing issues and barriers, the planning team, guided by R5DC, developed several goals and recommendations to be considered by the school board. Each goal will be based on the 6 “E” framework, which include Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Equity, and Evaluation.

43+

Years of Partnership
with MNDot

1,771
Students Impacted



planning assistance with statewide priorities

R5DC Staff regularly participates in a variety of MnDOT's statewide workgroups such as:

- Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan
- Mn State Highway Investment Plan (MnSHIP)
- State Rail Plan
- Greater MN Transit Investment Plan
- Greater MN Transit Plan
- Assisted with US Bicycle Route Designation Program Update Workgroup (PUW)
- Minnesota State Freight Plan
- Statewide Freight Investment Committee

regional priorities

In addition to statewide priorities, R5DC Staff also advances a variety of regional transportation priorities.

- Truck Highway 210 Corridor Study participation
- Continued involvement with Scenic Byways
 - » Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway
 - » Great River Road Scenic Byway
 - » Mille Lacs Lake Scenic Byway

mado

Staff meets quarterly with Minnesota Association of Development Organizations (MADO) Transportation planners from across the state in order to share information, engage in industry leading education, coordinate, information share, and to hear from MnDOT on a wide variety of topics and administrative update.



Transportation Planning

transportation coordination

R5DC assists MNDOT and the region through the facilitation of multi-jurisdictional transportation discussions – no other topic in transportation is as important as Safety. While each community, and each jurisdiction has its own unique challenges, and opportunities, they all strive to provide safe transportation. Therefore, staff has been engaged in local efforts to coordinate locally to find innovative solutions to safety concerns on a regional basis.

local human services transit coordination plan

The purpose of the Local Coordination Plan (LCP) is to evaluate existing transportation providers, identify the unmet needs and services, and establish transportation related goals for Region Five. This documentation fulfills planning requirements for the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) signed into law December 4, 2015.

The local human service transportation coordination planning process encourages participation from all local stakeholders and the public in the region, especially within target populations. The purpose of this process is to improve human service and public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with low incomes through coordinated transportation.

The plan contains demographic conditions, inventory of existing transportation providers, gaps in service, and unmet needs throughout the region that have been identified through analysis, committee input, and stakeholder outreach. It included a 30 day public review as well as a technical review by MNDOT and was approved in June 2022.

toward zero deaths

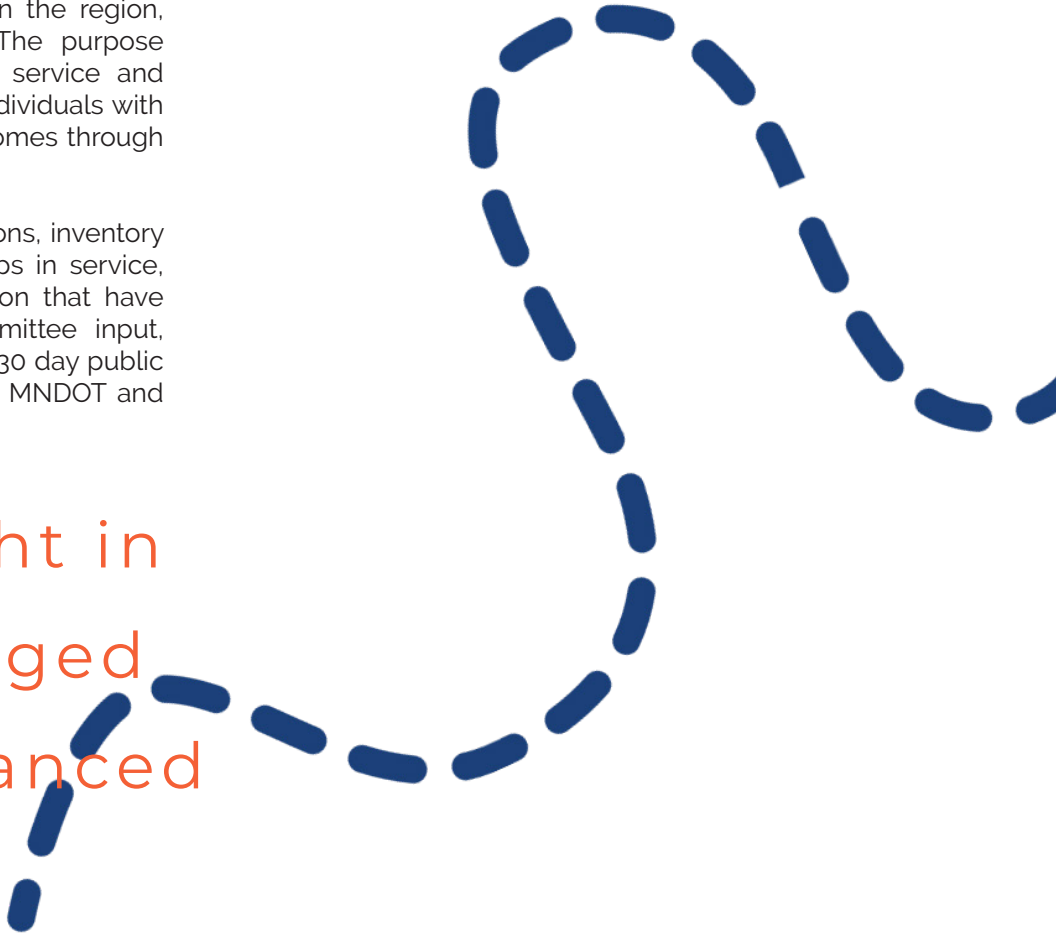
This year, R5DC staff emphasized involvement with the Brainerd Lakes Area Towards Zero Deaths coalition which is a part of the larger State (MNDOT) program known as Towards Zero Deaths (TZD). to create a culture for which traffic fatalities and serious injuries are no longer acceptable through the integrated application of education, engineering, enforcement, and emergency medical and trauma services.

In addition, staff is working with MnDOT, local law enforcement, emergency services such as fire and EMS as well as local elected leaders to develop coalitions in the other counties of the region currently not served.

\$6.5M Brought in

\$2.6M Leveraged

31 Miles Enhanced



Plans & Publications

plans and reports

- Region 5 Local Human Services Transit Coordination [Plan](#)
- EDA Planning Grant - Progress Reports (March & October)
- [Energy and Environment Plans](#) for Bertha, Menahga, Motley, and Sebeka
- [City of Sebeka](#) Comprehensive Plan
- [Pequot Lakes](#) Safe Routes to School Plan
- Agricultural Mental Health Annual [Report](#)

To view our plans and publications, visit www.regionfive.org/resources

outreach and publications

- Take 5 with Region 5: R5DC's quarterly newsletter provides updates on our work in the region
- Deep Dive Podcast: We share program details with partners, funders, program participants, team members and our R5DC Commissioners as guests
- NCEDA: Monthly newsletter shares economic news, grants, resources and webinars
- Sowing Room: Communicates opportunities to read, watch, and learn to enhance welcoming communities in the region

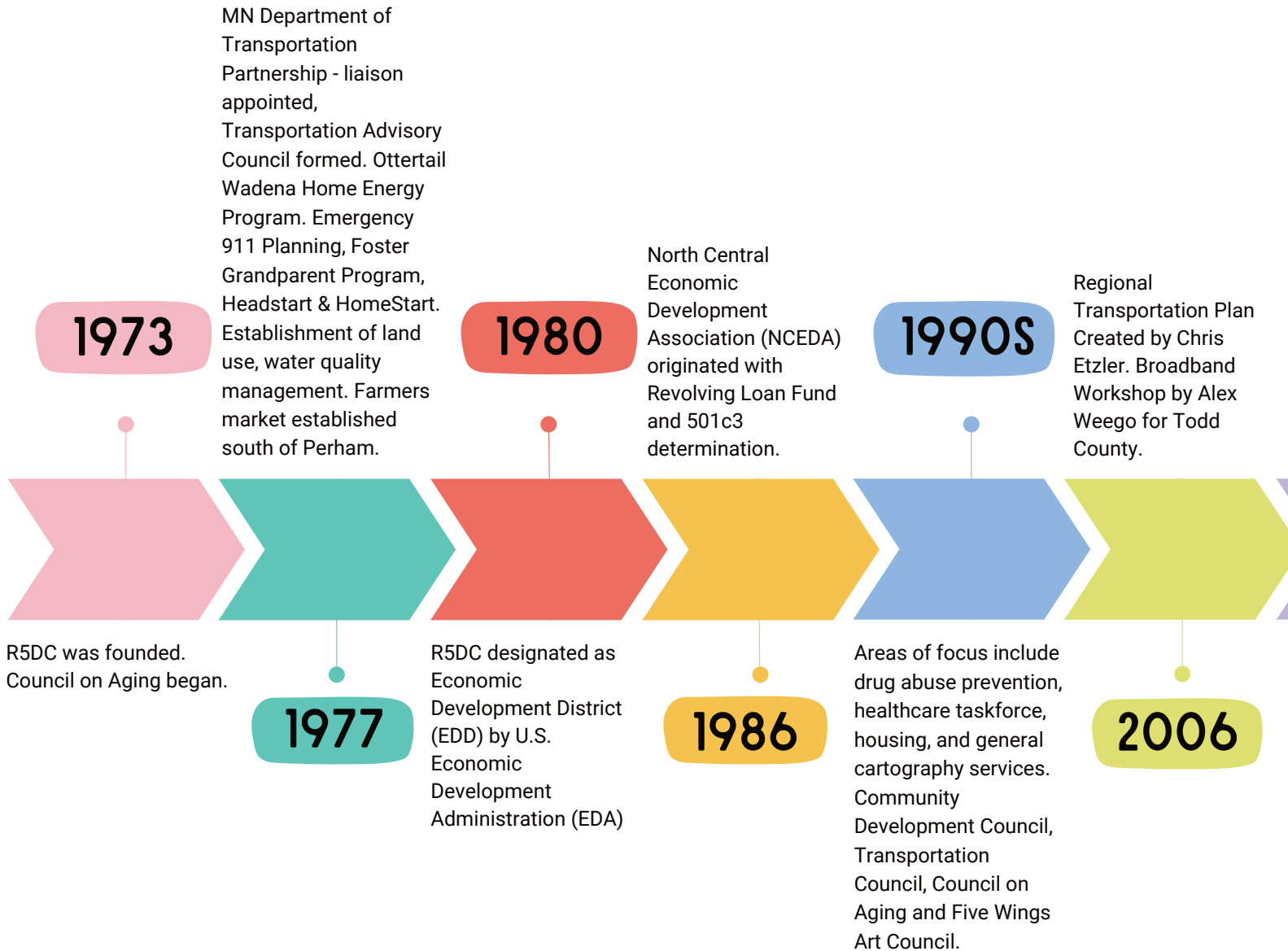
proudly celebrating 50 years of service!



REGION FIVE
Development Commission

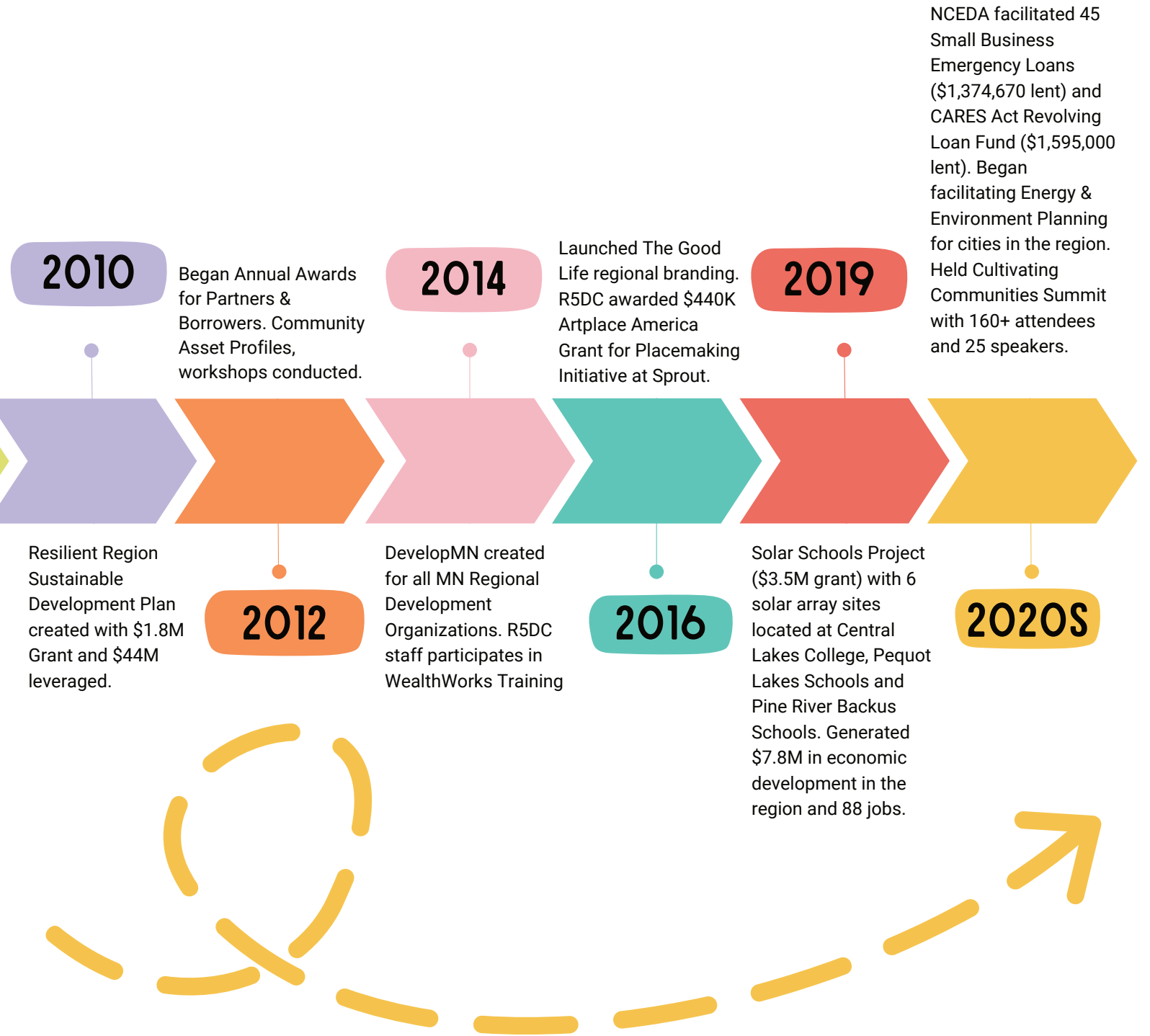


highlights from the last 50 years



check out our podcast
regionfive.org/podcast





Congratulations
to our 2023 Award Winners:

True North Strategy
Exceptional Service Provider

Rural Climate Partnership
Exceptional Regional Partner

CC Cares Co
Outstanding Business Partner

Sprout MN
Outstanding Business Partner

Thank you to all of our amazing partners!
We look forward to another year of serving all people
in the communities of our region.

R5DC & NCEDA

regionfive.org