

**City Council Meeting Agenda  
City Council Chambers  
August 3, 2015**

1. 5:30 p.m. Call the Meeting to Order at City Hall (Mayor)
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Persons with Unscheduled Business to Come Before the City Council (Mayor)
4. Review the Consent Agenda: (Mayor)
  - a. Minutes: **Action Requested**
    - 7.20.15 City Council Minutes
  - b. Correspondence: **Information Only**
    - League of MN Cities Legislators of Distinction for 2015
    - MRES Dedicated Capacity Agreement Rate Adjustment
    - Minnesota Revenue Sales & Use Tax – Solid Waste Tax Audit
    - Pool Pass Donation Request – Glacial Ridge Auxiliary
  - c. Applications:
5. 5:30 p.m. Public Hearing – Small Cities Grant Review **Action Requested**
6. CGMC Legislative Update, Marty Seifert **Information Only**
7. Consider 2016 Annual Transit Grant Resolution **Action Requested**
8. Charter Communications, Inc. Transfer Memorandum **Action Requested**
9. Public Works Report **Information Only**
10. Kid Day Trailer Request **Action Requested**
11. Adjourn: Mayor

**DRAFT**

**MINUTES - BENSON CITY COUNCIL - REGULAR MEETING  
JULY 20, 2015**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mayor Kittelson. Members present: Paul Kittelson, Mike Fugleberg, Jack Evenson, Sue Fitz & Stephanie Heinzig. Members Absent: None. Also present: City Manager Rob Wolfington, Public Works Director Dan Gens, Police Chief Ian Hodge, Golf Club President Brian Samuelson, Golf Course Groundskeeper Sally Jones, Ron Hanson, Robyn Dehne and Pat Duffy.

The Council recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

It was moved by Fitz, seconded by Evenson and carried unanimously to approve the following minutes:

- July 6, 2015 City Council Minutes
- June 1, 2015 Planning Commission Minutes

Wolfington presented information on the Missouri River Energy Services Municipal Power Leadership Academy, taking place on September 16-17 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He said it is a good orientation.

It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Heinzig and carried unanimously to approve a gambling permit for Northern Lights Trails on November 20, 2015.

Next Ron Hanson and Robyn Dehne approached the Council representing the Benson B.A.C. K. (Benson Area Cares 4 Kids) Pack Program. This program is sponsored by the Benson Ministerium. They are requesting funds to send food home for kids over the weekend that normally wouldn't get fed on the weekends. After discussion, it was moved by Evenson, seconded by Heinzig and carried unanimously to deny the request. The vote was recorded as follows: AYES: Evenson, Heinzig, Kittelson, Fitz NAYS: None. ABSTAIN: Fugleberg.

Hodge approached the Council with the June 2015 Police report.

Pat Duffy had a concern about the traffic on 10<sup>th</sup> St. S. He said there are no stop signs from Pacific Avenue all the way to Oakwood Avenue, and some cars drive by pretty fast. He is concerned about all the kids living along that street and the possibility of someone getting hurt. Wolfington discussed the traffic study the City conducted several years ago that laid out proposed stop signs for the City. After discussion, it was moved by Fitz, seconded by Evenson and carried unanimously to bring the traffic study to the Planning Commission for review at the August 3, 2015 meeting for their recommendation.

Next was a request from Triple Strike for a refund of their liquor license. They were looking to purchase the Benson Bowler, but no deal was reached. After discussion it was moved by Evenson, seconded by Fugleberg and carried unanimously to approve pro-rating the refund for eleven months in the amount of \$962.50.

Wolfington presented a letter from Charter Communications notifying us of a possible pro forma transfer of control if they merge and purchase other cable entities. The service will not change for residents in our area. They are looking for a resolution of approval from the Council. Wolfington said our attorney is drawing up a letter and resolution.

Gens approached the Council with a report from the Minnesota Department of Health, which provided results of lead & copper tap water monitoring for Benson. All the homes sampled had not exceeded the acceptable lead level. Some of the homes have exceeded copper levels. Gens explained with our new facility we are now seeing this because of poly phosphorous in the water, which he believes is causing copper to leach from the pipes in the homes sampled. We have made changes to the chemicals and hope this will come back into compliance.

Next bids were reviewed from July 17 for the Golf Course irrigation project. Samuelson and Jones approached the Council and discussed the bids. After discussion it was moved by Fugleberg, seconded by Evenson and carried unanimously to approve the bid from Midwest Irrigation of Illinois, LLC in the amount of \$224,800.00.

Wolfington presented a letter from Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) discussing the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Drought Adder Program. WAPA is notifying customers that the preliminary review resulted in no estimated changes for 2016.

Next was a memo from Pioneerland Library System requesting an increase in funding. After discussion, it was moved by Fitz, seconded by Heinzig and carried unanimously to approve the requested 3% funding increase to Pioneerland Library System for 2016.

There was a pay request from Kue Contractors for the addition at the street garage. It was moved by Fugleberg, seconded by Evenson and carried unanimously to approve pay request #1 to Kue Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$8,387.00.

The Council reviewed the June Budget Report.

It was moved by Evenson, seconded by Heinzig and carried unanimously to approve the bills and warrants in the amount of \$692,699.85.

It was moved by Fitz, seconded by Fugleberg and carried unanimously to set a public hearing on August 3, 2015 at 5:30 p.m. to review the recent Small Cities Grant program.

Wolfington conducted a conference call with Jackie Anderson from the Upper Minnesota Valley Rural Development Commission (UMVRDC). She discussed with the Council applying for a new round of Small Cities Grants for 2016. There was discussion on how to make our application competitive. She stated the application process takes about a year. After discussion, it was moved by Fitz, seconded by Evenson and carried unanimously to approve a contract with the UMVRDC to proceed with the application process for a new round of Small Cities Grants for 2016.

There being no other business, a motion was made by Fugleberg, seconded by Evenson and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

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Mayor

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City Manager



CONNECTING & INNOVATING  
SINCE 1913

## Memorandum

To: Mayors of Minnesota Cities

From: Gary Carlson, Director, Intergovernmental Relations, League of Minnesota Cities

Date: July 17, 2015

Re: League of Minnesota Cities Legislators of Distinction for 2015

Senator Lyle Koenen, who represents your city at the state legislature, has been selected as a League of Minnesota Cities Legislator of Distinction for 2015. The League's Board of Directors recognized a total of 28 legislators this year, including 17 House members and 11 Senate members, for their actions and leadership on a wide variety of legislative issues of importance to cities across our state. The enclosed letter describes the specific reasons your legislator was chosen for this recognition. A copy of this letter was sent to your legislator several days ago.

Please share this recognition with your city council and the public at your next council meeting. We also encourage you to share this information with your local newspaper. Publicly acknowledging legislators for their support of city-friendly legislation helps to continue strengthening the partnership between state and local government officials in Minnesota.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Heather Corcoran or Laura Ziegler, IGR Liaisons at the League of Minnesota Cities at [liaison@lmc.org](mailto:liaison@lmc.org), (651) 281-1256, (651) 281-1267, or toll-free at 800-925-1122. To read the complete list of all 28 legislators who received this designation, see the *Cities Bulletin* article online at [www.lmc.org/lod](http://www.lmc.org/lod).

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration and your support of the League's Legislators of Distinction recognition program.

Enclosure

July 15, 2015

The Honorable Lyle Koenen  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul MN 55155

Dear Senator Koenen,

On behalf of our 832 member cities, I want to thank you for your efforts this past legislative session and to recognize you as a League of Minnesota Cities Legislator of Distinction for 2015. League staff and member city officials appreciate your accessibility and your consultation with us on legislation affecting cities.

We appreciate your work as the chief author on legislation to extend the sales tax exemption to city and county purchases of road maintenance vehicles and for co-authoring the League bill to simplify the sales tax exemption for local governments for purchases of construction materials.

Furthermore, thank you for your work on legislation creating a workforce housing grant program, one of the League's 2015 legislative priorities.

Our members know that in order to be successful in serving our common constituents, state and city officials must work together as partners to reach solutions that meet the unique needs of rural, suburban, and urban communities all across Minnesota. City leaders also understand that without the support of legislative leaders like you, this state-local partnership would not be possible.

To acknowledge your contributions last session, mayors of each city in your legislative district will receive notification of your recognition. A press release will also be issued to media in your area. City officials and League staff look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.

Sincerely,



Steve Nasby  
Administrator, City of Windom  
President, League of Minnesota Cities

Enclosure



DATE: June 24, 2015

FROM: Cheryl Fox

RE: Dedicated Capacity Agreement Rate Adjustment

Per the Reserved Capacity Agreement (RCA) between your utility and Missouri Basin Municipal Power Agency, d.b.a. Missouri River Energy Services (MRES), the rates paid by MRES are adjusted annually based on the Implicit Price Deflator for Gross Domestic Product. The new DCA capacity rate effective with the June 2015 billing period is \$2.72 per KW (an increase of \$0.04) and is calculated as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Gross Domestic Product for 2014 (108.289)}}{\text{Gross Domestic Product for 2012 (105.166)}} * \$2.64 = \$2.7183972$$

The Energy Adder needs to change by a minimum of one (1) mill, so based on the following calculation, the energy rate effective with the June 2015 billing period will be \$.015 (no change):

$$\frac{\text{GDP for 2014 (108.289)}}{\text{GDP for 2012 (105.166)}} * .015 = \$0.0154454 \text{ rounded to } \$0.015 \text{ per kWh}$$

According to the RCA, these rates will remain in effect until the June 2016 billing period. If you have any questions, please call me at (800) 678-4042.

Thank you!

# MINNESOTA • REVENUE

July 16, 2015

MN ID: 9698847

Letter ID: L0398565248

BENSON CITY OF  
WATER DEPT  
1410 KANSAS AVE  
BENSON MN 56215-1718

CP

W  
7/23/15

## Re: Sales & Use Tax - Solid Waste Tax Audit

Dear: WATER DEPT

Thank you for providing the information that was requested about your Sales & Use Tax - Solid Waste tax returns for the periods 12/31/2011 through 05/31/2015. We have reviewed the information and find no changes to your tax liability at this time.

Our audit finding is based on the laws in effect during the review period and is not a comprehensive list of potential tax issues. Law changes and court decisions could affect how similar transactions are taxed in the future.

In this audit, we focused on identifying major Sales & Use Tax - Solid Waste tax issues. It's possible your business records have other tax issues that weren't addressed in this audit.

If you have questions about Sales & Use Tax - Solid Waste tax or this audit, please contact me at (651) 556-4737 or [tom.king@state.mn.us](mailto:tom.king@state.mn.us).

Sincerely,



Tom King  
Revenue Tax Specialist  
Special Taxes Division



10 Fourth Avenue SE  
Glenwood, Minnesota 56334  
866.667.4747

GLACIALRIDGE.ORG

July 15, 2015

Dear Friends:

The Auxiliary of Glacial Ridge Hospital will host the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Harvest Ball on Friday, September 25, 2015 at Lakeside Ballroom in Glenwood. We will also celebrate our organization's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday with special memorabilia and mention of important people and events from our Auxiliary's past.

Our fundraising goal is \$17,000 to pay off our \$50,000 commitment to Glacial Ridge Health System for their most recent building project, specifically the equipment needed in the new Physical Therapy Department. We are very proud of our facility and what we have to offer to the Glenwood and surrounding communities.

Your support is needed to help us reach our goal. We are looking for donations for our silent and live auctions, or a monetary donation to help offset expenses. Your contributions will receive public acknowledgement along with our sincere thank you. I will be happy to arrange a pick-up time for your donation.

Tickets for the event are available for \$50 each. We will reserve tables for parties of 10 upon request. Doors open at 5:00 pm with dinner served at 7:00 pm. Please join us and have fun bidding on the silent and live auction items, wall of wine and 50/50 raffles. Dance and be entertained by the Blues Brothers Review from 9-11 p.m.

Your support and contributions are deeply appreciated, as is your commitment to the community. If you have any questions, please call me.

Working together,

### Harvest Ball Committee

Kathy Claussen, Auxiliary President

Vonnie Anderson, Treasurer

Doris Weispfennig, Secretary

Gaylyn Bisel, Committee Co-Chair

Margaret Claesson, Committee Co-Chair

Barb Flolo, Committee Co-Chair

Joanna Curry, GRHS Auxiliary Liaison



*The Auxiliary of*  
**GLACIAL RIDGE**  
HOSPITAL heartfelt care

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING ENTERING INTO AN AGREEMENT  
WITH THE STATE OF MINNESOTA TO PROVIDE  
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICE IN THE CITY OF BENSON  
(RESOLUTION NO. 2015- )**

2016 City of Benson Heartland Express

Resolved that the City of Benson, MN to enter into an Agreement with the State of Minnesota to provide public transportation service in the City of Benson.

Further resolved that the City of Benson agrees to provide a local share of 15% percent of the total operating cost and 20% of the total capital costs.

Further resolved that the City of Benson agrees to provide 100% of the local share necessary for expenses that exceed funds available from the State.

Further resolved that the City of Benson authorizes the City Manager and the Finance director to execute the aforementioned Agreement and any amendments thereto.

## MEMORANDUM

To: Moss & Barnett's Clients and Interested Parties

From: Brian T. Grogan

Date: July 23, 2015

Re: Charter Communications, Inc. - FCC Form 394

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On or about July 1, 2015 your City received a letter from Charter Communications, Inc. ("Charter") seeking approval of Charter's proposed merger with Time Warner Cable (TWC) and acquisition of Bright House Networks (BHN) ("Merger"). The Merger will result in the creation of **New Charter** to complete the transaction. According to published reports, including a recent article by Forbes, the debt burden of New Charter could reach "worrisome proportions."

*The Time Warner Cable-Charter deal puts Time Warner Cable's enterprise value at \$78.7 billion. Charter plans to borrow between \$25 Billion to \$29.3 billion, depending upon the stock-cash composition of the deal, in order to fund the purchase. Time Warner Cable already carries debt worth \$23.3 billion on its balance sheets while Charter's pre-existing debt obligations amount to \$13.9 billion. The companies estimate that New Charter's total debt could cross \$65 billion once the transaction is completed. The combined 2014 revenue for the merging companies sums up to \$35.7 billion while combined adjusted EBITDA amounts to \$12.9 billion. This results in a potential Debt-to-EBITDA ratio of 5.09 for New Charter. By comparison, the 2014 Trefis adjusted Debt-to-EBITDA ratios for pay-TV rivals Comcast, Direct TV and DISH Network were 2.00, 2.58 and 4.97 respectively. Pre-merger Time Warner Cable has a Debt-to-EBITDA ratio of 2.82.*

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2015/06/26/watch-out-for-twc-charter-combos-post-deal-debt-levels/>

The July 1, letter from Charter also included a document titled FCC Form 394 – Application for Franchise Authority Consent to Assignment or Transfer of Control of Cable Television Franchise. Under both your existing franchise with Charter and Minnesota Statutes Chapter 238.083, any sale, assignment or transfer of control of a franchise requires your City's written consent. The FCC developed Form 394 to provide cable operators with a uniform document to submit to franchising authorities, such as your City, to describe the proposed transaction and present an outline of the legal, technical and financial qualifications of the proposed transferee.

### ***Timing***

While each local franchise may have unique timing requirements, generally under federal law your City must take action on this proposed transfer of control within 120 days of your date of receipt of Form 394. That means that the deadline for action by your City is on or about October 29, 2014. If your City fails to take action within that 120-day time period, your City's silence serves as an implicit approval of the proposed transfer of control.

In addition, federal law provides a 30-day time period from July 1, 2015 within which your City can ask additional questions about the proposed transfer of control. The purpose of this initial 30-day period is for the City to determine whether the Form 394 application is complete and accurate, and if not, to raise questions so that the operator can either supplement the information or explain why the information may not be required. The cable operator in this case, Charter, has 10 days following receipt of such an initial 30 day letter from the City within which to respond.

### ***Charter's Proposed Resolution***

One of the documents that Charter submitted along with its Form 394 was its "proposed resolution" regarding the transaction. Please be advised that your City should carefully consider Charter's proposed resolution before taking any action. Adoption of Charter's proposed resolution would serve as an immediate approval of the proposed transaction. Most importantly, the resolution contains language which, if adopted as currently drafted, would serve as a waiver of the City's right to enforce any existing violations of the franchise. This is an important issue for the City to consider before taking action on this proposed resolution.

If there are pending disputes between the City and Charter, those issues should be addressed before any resolution is adopted which would waive the City's right of enforcement. By way of example, if in 2016 the City were to conduct an audit of franchise fee payments that Charter is required to remit to the City under its franchise, and the City were to discover underpayments dating back to 2012, executing the proposed resolution submitted by Charter may well waive the City's future enforcement rights for such alleged noncompliance. It is important that the City maintain the legal right to pursue collection of underpayments and all other rights under the franchise.

### ***Next Steps***

Moss & Barnett represents cities across the State of Minnesota served by Charter. Many of these cities have received nearly identical Form 394s from Charter seeking written approval of the proposed transaction. Moss & Barnett will be attempting to work jointly with our clients to conduct an efficient review of Charter's Form 394 and provide recommendations for each City's consideration and action. In this way, the goal will be to provide information to all of the cities so that city councils may make an informed decision about this proposed transaction and determine any potential adverse impact on consumers and constituents within your community. Particular emphasis will be placed on a review of the financial qualifications of New Charter as a result of the debt required to complete the proposed Merger.

If your community is interested in participating in this joint review of Charter's FCC Form 394 please let us know and we will add your City to the list of cities we are serving. Please contact my paralegal, Terri Hammer, at [Terri.Hammer@lawmoss.com](mailto:Terri.Hammer@lawmoss.com) to be added to the list. We will prepare a written report and recommendation about the proposed transfer as well as a draft resolution for your Council's consideration and action. Unique issues related to franchise renewal, or other compliance matters will be addressed individually with each City. The costs associated with this review will be shared among the participating communities and we will present a cost estimate once we determine the cities interested.

# Public Works Report August 3, 2015

## **Electric:**

- The storm a couple weeks ago brought some excitement. Thanks to special effort by Randy Peterson, Gary Searcy, Russell Olson, Mike Hoffman, John Goulet and Dave (Super Dave) Johnson all areas of the City were covered and things went well into Kids Day.
- The underground by the Civic Center is complete and the poles have been removed. It looks nice cleaned up. The guys still have to install a few lights off the building but should have that done soon.
- Boring is done and the wires have been pulled on the underground project from 19<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> Street. The guys will work on terminating and then the wires and poles will come down.
- The Senior Center is receiving a new heating/cooling system and some modifications to the existing due to some complications of the old system.

## **Parks:**

- Working with John Deere to see if there is a way to govern mowing speed without losing cutting power on our mowers. If not a speed control we may be able to install an indicator light. Mowers do not have a speedometer and sometimes mowers may be going a little too fast.
- The summer crew only has about a week left and most will be gone. Stan hasn't come back yet, so parks may be a little short handed going into the last part of the season.

## **Water:**

- The pool has stayed busy and presented a few challenges but all seems to be going well.
- Gary and I have been working at solving water plant issues. We just ran jar tests, reviewed parts of the system, contacted the engineer on several things and will be pushing forward in rapid fashion to get some things resolved.

## **Wastewater:**

- Routine stuff.

## **Streets:**

- Wood Ave. has been dug out and replaced and is opened up again. Will asphalt in the fall. Next is Elizabeth, part of Oregon, the alley off 19<sup>th</sup> and Kansas Ave.

All departments are working hard doing way more than what's on this list. These are just highlights.

# HAH BOB WORKS/ROBSON Dahlberg Sales, Inc.

Stock, Horse, Cargo, Dump, and Flatbed Trailers -- Boots and Western Wear  
 Box 203, East Highway 12 at Stockyards, Willmar, Minnesota 56201 · Phone (320) 235-4180

Date: 7/22/15 Phone: 805 043 FAX 842-7151

Sold To: City of Benson

Address: 1410 Highway Ave Benson MN 56215

Ser. No: 1VK500F20C1075810 Color: CHRY/BLK

Description: Used 12 Intensity  
Shredder Road 14X7 enclosed  
7' wide body damaged axis

74K # B23602937

Plate # 3560 CRT

Trade In: \_\_\_\_\_

Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Ser. No: \_\_\_\_\_

**SELLER'S DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY**  
 Any Warranties on the products sold hereby are those of the manufacturer. As between this retail seller and buyer the product is to be sold "AS IS" and the entire risk as to the quality and performance of the product is with the buyer. The seller expressly disclaims all warranties, either express or implied, including any implied warranty of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose, and the seller neither assumes nor authorizes any other person to assume for it any liability in connection with the sale of said products. This disclaimer by this seller in no way affects the terms of the manufacturer's warranty. The buyer acknowledges being so informed prior to the sale.  
 Customer Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Tax: 197.94  
 Title & Doc. Fees: 58.50  
 Lic: —  
 Lic. Fees: —

Total: 3252 44  
 Due 3,057.50

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Purchaser

Signed [Signature] Seller

No Warranty expressed or implied.

Remarks:



Val, 7/27/15  
Please Sean &  
include in cc  
PAX Aug 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Thanks Rob

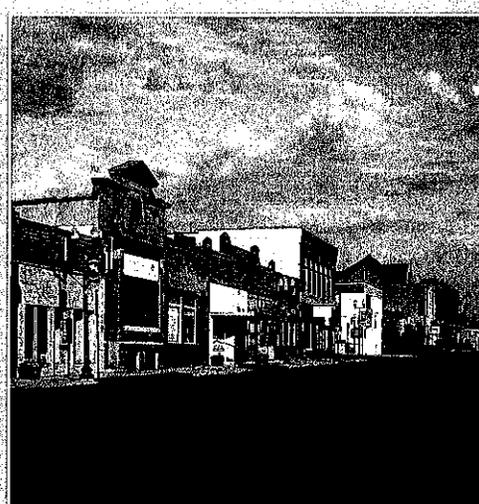
# 2015 Annual Report



Helping



Communities



Prosper

# Message from the Executive Director

## Location Matters...

Realtors often say "Location, location, location!" when trying to evaluate places. In rural Minnesota, we frequently compare what our communities have to what other places in Minnesota have, and what we don't have. Communities throughout Minnesota have remarkable similarities (population profiles, number and type of businesses, cultural values, recreational facilities, good roads, good schools, and friendly people) as well as drastic differences (diversity, unemployment, crime, economic growth, number and variety of business and industry, amount of green space and community resources). As our communities compete for new businesses, new investment, new employees, new residents, new housing, our communities need to be able to share these similarities and differences to prospective businesses and residents.

Often, in the work that the UMRDC completes in the region, we help local community members map their local assets and try to tactfully challenge them to find the truly unique items that make their locale stand apart from others near and far. During the conversations we have with our communities, UMRDC employees train their ears to listen and identify the assets and the needs of the region. We know that resources to address these needs are not always available and the UMRDC plays a key role in connecting our regions needs to what resources are available. And if the resources to address our region's needs are not available, we advocate to state and federal agencies regarding the needs and resources.

Throughout this report you will find examples of projects the UMRDC worked on this year that helped the region with some of the things on their local "to-do" list. Big Stone County received significant investment to create better broadband services in the county. Ortonville, Canby, and Appleton are all updating their local ordinances and or zoning to address changing needs in their towns.

Numerous schools and community leaders worked together to identify and promote safe and active ways to get to school. Montevideo implemented a new mural to beautify their downtown. The RLF assisted new and expanding businesses. New marketing materials for both the byway and the region were developed and promoted to show off locally unique assets and to attract visitors.

None of these projects would be initiated or completed if it were not for the many hours of service and dedication by our local leaders and community volunteers. Every single community has opportunities that could use more financial, physical, and philosophical help from members of the community.



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“ Be local, give local, help local, promote local. Be proud of your location, with all its similarities and differences. I know the UMRDC is proud to work on sustaining and improving the region, and we look forward to working on new projects and with new community leaders in the years to come.”

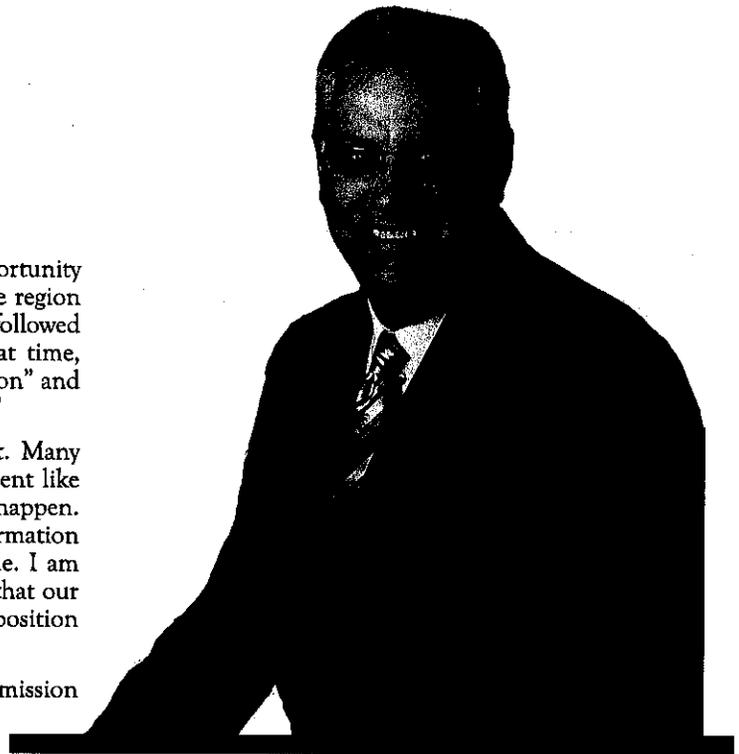
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# Message from the Board Chair

Twenty years ago, our family moved to Appleton. I saw a lot of opportunity to raise a family in an area that I hoped was reinvigorating itself. The region went through a significant decline in the 1980's with low ag prices followed by businesses closing, and schools consolidating. I believe since that time, people philosophically have changed their attitudes from "Life will go on" and "whatever happens, happens" to "We must step up to new challenges."

Appleton built a prison, a very novel idea to bring in employment. Many towns turned towards manufacturing or towards economic development like never before. Communities have learned that they can make things happen. Opportunity doesn't just show up on your doorstep. This transformation has taken place and it must continue for the region to be sustainable. I am proud to say that I am from the Upper Minnesota Valley region and that our communities have rediscovered themselves and they are determined to position themselves toward the future.

The Upper Minnesota River Valley Regional Development Commission has been a part of the community's transformation. Today the agency is in a great position with hard working dedicated staff to work with all communities enhancing their future.



*Gary Hedrick*

“ Let's work together for a more vibrant tomorrow ”



# COMMISSION BOARD MEMBERS

## Big Stone County

## Chippewa County



**Brent Olson**  
County Board

**Scott Rixe**  
Municipalities  
Graceville City Council

**Harold R. Dimberg**  
Townships  
Ortonville Township

**Jim Dahlvang**  
County Board

**Jim Schmaedeka**  
Townships  
Louriston Township

**Debra Lee Fader**  
Municipalities  
Montevideo Mayor

## Lac qui Parle County

## Swift County



**Graylen Carlson**  
County Board

**Jeff Olson**  
Municipalities  
Dawson City Council

**Mark Bourne**  
Townships  
Hamlin Townships

**Gary Hendrickx**  
County Board

**Mike Fugleberg**  
Municipalities  
Benson City Council

**Warren Rau**  
Townships  
Hegbert Township

# UMVRDC STAFF

**DAWN  
HEGLAND**  
Executive Director

**ARLENE  
TILBURY**  
Financial Director

**RANDY  
LARSON JR.**  
Loan Officer

**KRISTI  
FERNHOLZ**  
Community Development  
Senior Planner

**JACKI  
ANDERSON**  
Community Development  
Senior Planner



## Public Interest

## School Board



Juanita Lauristen  
Work Force Council  
Private Industry Council



Vicki Oakes  
Ortonville EDA



Bruce Swigerd  
Prairie Five CAC, Inc.



Brett Buer  
Dawson-Boyd School



Kathi Thymian  
Ortonville School

## Yellow Medicine County



Gary L. Johnson  
County Board



Scott Peterson  
Municipalities  
Granite Falls City Council

(Photo not available)

Gene Stengel  
Townships  
Yellow Medicine

EMILY  
ZANDT

Community Development  
Planner

ERIN  
SMITH

Community Development  
Planner

BARRETT  
VOIGT

Community Development  
Planner

MELISSA  
CARRUTH

Communications  
Coordinator

JACKIE  
SIGDAHL

Administrative Assistant



# \$5,059,234

RLF Loans (\$400,000) Grands awarded (\$4,476,685)  
 Meander art sold (\$108,207) Prairie Waters marketing (\$74,342)

## Financial Report

## Expenses FY15 FY16

### Revenue and Expenditure Comparison Current FY15 and Proposed FY16

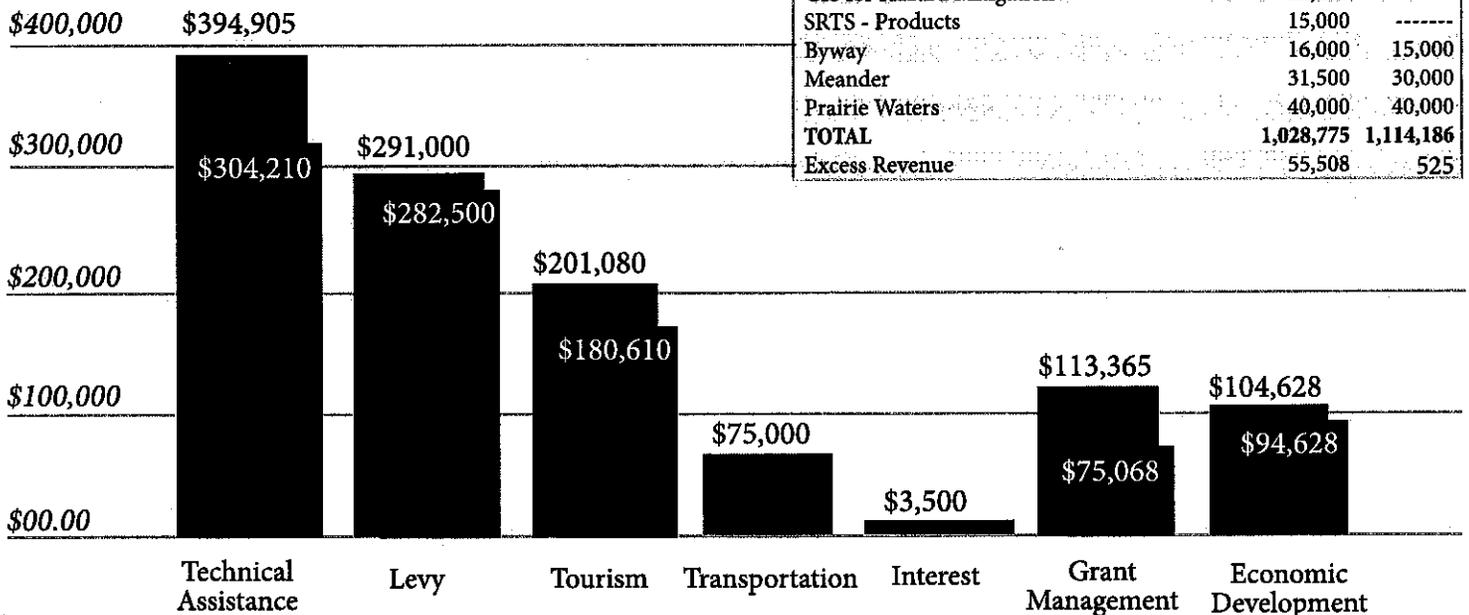
#### FY15 Ending Account Balances

General Checking	\$268,285
Money Market	\$310,309
CD	\$250,000
Scenic Byway	\$6,903
Auto	\$27,441
Equipment	\$25,184
RLF Available for Lending	\$400,581

Salaries/Fringe	713,465	829,956
Commissioner's Expense	28,000	30,000
Audit	13,000	13,500
Contract for Services	10,000	-----
Intern	-----	2,000
Strategic Planning	-----	10,000
Computer Support	12,000	10,000
Email	-----	1,560
Virtual Server	-----	2,760
Copy Charge/xerox lease	8,500	5,000
Depreciation	11,000	10,000
Dues	5,000	5,000
Insurance	1,200	1,200
Legal Fees	2,000	2,000
Miscellaneous	3,000	1,000
Office Rent	12,210	12,210
Postage	7,000	7,000
Printing/Advertising	8,000	8,000
RDC Marketing Item	2,000	2,000
Registration/Program Specific	4,000	4,000
Repairs/Maintenance	2,000	2,000
Software GMS/GIS/General	6,000	6,000
Publications	2,000	2,000
Supplies	6,000	6,000
Telephone/Internet	4,000	6,500
Travel	34,000	30,000
Training	6,000	12,000
Morale	-----	2,000
Wellness	-----	2,000
Web Hosting/Maintenance	3,500	3,500
GIS for Hazard Mitigation	22,400	-----
SRTS - Products	15,000	-----
Byway	16,000	15,000
Meander	31,500	30,000
Prairie Waters	40,000	40,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,028,775</b>	<b>1,114,186</b>
Excess Revenue	55,508	525

## Revenue

- 2016 Revenue = \$1,114,711
- 2015 Revenue = \$1,084,283



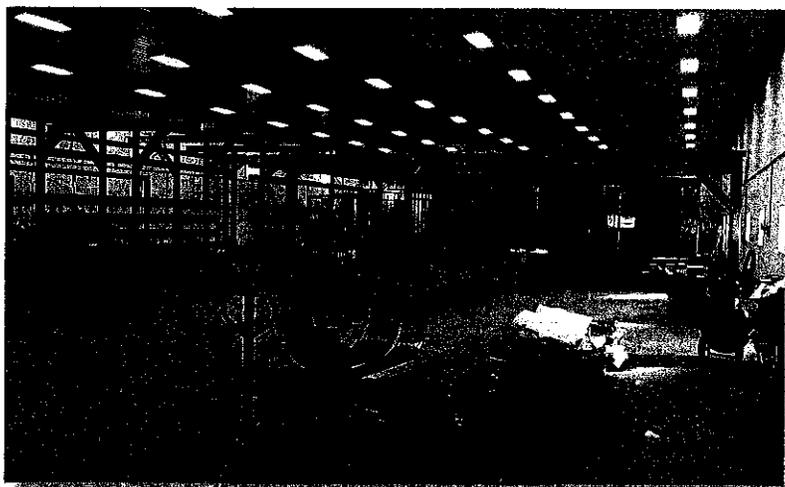
# Revolving Loan Fund

Since 1998, the UMRDC's RLF has partnered with financial institutions and other gap lenders to grow and retain the work force in our five county region. When a financial institution is unable to finance the entire project, businesses and entrepreneurs have the ability to gain access to funds that are necessary to see their project come to fruition. The UMRDC's RLF is designed to aid in the creation and retention of jobs in the region. This past fiscal year, revolving loan fund financed \$400,000 in loans for the businesses listed below for equipment, fixed assets, inventory, working capital, and real estate.

- Bluegrass Proteins, Inc., Dawson - **\$200,000**  
Fixed Assets - New Business
- West Central Powder Coating, Inc., Benson - **\$100,00**  
Real Estate - New Business (Photo below)
- Kay's Processing LLC/Kay's Naturals, Clara City - **\$100,000**  
Working Capital - Existing Business/Expansion

A combination of 91 jobs were created or retained as a result of these business start-up and retention projects. A total of \$19,347,000 was leveraged in public and private funds. Financial partners involved with these projects included local banks/financial institutions, Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF), Lac qui Parle EDA (MIF), Benson Industrial Development Corporation (BIDC), and the Clara City EDA.

For more information contact Randy Larson at 320.289.1981 x 102  
Randy.Larson@umvrdc.org.



Inside of West Central Powder Coating, Inc., located in Benson



"We have made **\$5.95 million** in business loans since the loan fund started in 1990."

"We've leveraged almost **\$146.2 million** in other funding for beginning and expanding local businesses in the region!"

## FY15 Revolving Loan Fund

Total Funds	\$1,779,345
Loans Current	31
Loans Delinquent	0
Loans Deferred	1
Loans Default	2
Total Receivables	\$1,378,764
Funds Committed	\$0
Total Available for Lending	\$400,581

## Hedgehog Grant



The UMRDC mission statement directs us to "enable the region to thrive by assisting units of government". We know through our recent survey that local governments have a lot of needs but are having a hard time paying for them. Those needs prompted the creation of the Hedgehog Grant to help subsidize the cost of our grant writing and planning services.

In FY15, the UMRDC has subsidized the following work:

- \$4,358** for the Dawson Sidewalk Plan
- \$5,000** for the Upper Sioux Community
- \$5,000** for the Granite Falls Memorial
- \$5,000** for an Appleton Technical Assistance Contract

This year we used \$19,358 to leverage an additional \$125,915 in new revenue. Applications and more program details are available on our website.

To talk about potential projects that might be eligible for the Hedgehog Grant, please contact Dawn Hegland, Executive Director at 320-289-1981 ext 101.

# Grant Writing & Management

## Rehab of Historical Pedestrian Bridge

Work is under way to rehabilitate a pedestrian bridge that has been an historical part of the City of Granite Falls since 1888. The rehabilitation will include cleaning and painting of the bridge, replacement of the concrete bridge decking, repair of structural deficiencies, replacement and upgrading of metal railings, lighting, and repairs and restoration of the bridge vault. UMRDC staff assisted the city in securing funds from the Minnesota Historical Society for \$512,000 and an additional \$512,000 from state bonding dollars through the DNR to partially cover the cost of the project. Staff is also assisting the city by handling grants administration duties.

## Volstead Museum

The City of Granite Falls received a \$153,990 grant from the Minnesota Historical Society to rehab the Andrew John Volstead House Museum. In 1976 the Volstead House was designated as a National Historic Landmark. The work to be accomplished includes stabilization and restoration of the foundation. The city has contracted with the UMRDC to monitor prevailing wage requirements.

## Broadband Development

The UMRDC authored a successful application to the new state Border to Border grant program. It awarded Federated Telephone Cooperative \$3.9 million to deploy fiber to the premise in the northern half of Big Stone County where a majority of the area is unserved or significantly underserved. The two year project will deploy fiber to over 1,000 structures. The grant is part of an \$8M investment by Federated that includes a partnership with Big Stone County who is providing a \$4M loan to Federated to enable the project to move forward.

It's exciting when we see the region becoming a leader in broadband availability. Fiber creates new opportunity to market to new businesses and residents - it assures them that they can live and do business in our region while enjoying natural amenities that they can't find in an urban setting. There is a lot more work to do to make the entire region a leader in broadband but there is no doubt that our communities and elected leaders understand the importance of broadband. We will continue to work with local and regional partners to ensure future broadband availability.

**\$3.9m**  
Grant  
Awarded!



For more information contact Jacki Anderson at 320.289.1981 x 111 [jacki.anderson@umvrdc.org](mailto:jacki.anderson@umvrdc.org).

## Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) - Grant Writing

The City of Appleton received a grant for residential and commercial rehabilitation from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Small Cities Development Program. The grant award is just under \$600,000 and will assist at least 20 homes and 5 businesses with needed repairs that address safety, energy efficiency and façade improvements. The total investment into the community as a result of this grant is anticipated to be nearly a \$1,000,000 when including the owner investments. Improvements are targeted towards Appleton's oldest neighborhoods that border the downtown, school and areas near the hospital. This grant application was made more competitive by housing assessments completed by community volunteers and mapped by UMRDC. The UMRDC has been able to accomplish all of this work through an on-going technical assistance contract with the city.

## Small Cities Development Program - Grant Management

The UMRDC is currently assisting with grants management for two Small Cities Development Program grants that must be complete by December 31 2015. In 2013 UMRDC successfully secured funding for the Cities of Benson and Ortonville for the following activities:

*Benson* - \$597,940 to rehabilitate 24 owner-occupied homes and 5 rental units

*Ortonville* - \$552,000 to rehabilitate 20 owner-occupied homes and 5 commercial properties

UMVRDC staff authored a successful SCDP application that was awarded in July of 2014 to Clara City in the amount of \$613,295. UMRDC staff is managing the fiscal administration and technical reporting obligations of the grant. Clara City received this funding for the rehabilitation of the following: Nine Owner-Occupied Homes, one 14 unit rental, five single family units, four commercial properties

# Technical Assistance

Our technical assistance helps cities, counties and schools solve local and regional issues, including addressing the fundamental building blocks needed to sustain resilient and competitive communities and economies. Technical assistance focuses on real issues and specific opportunities, not general topics. Our technical assistance is customized to meet the needs and priorities of the community. The following represent a small sample of technical assistance projects that we have completed in the last year.



## Milan Housing

The City of Milan has been working with the UMRDC to coordinate efforts to help the Micronesian population learn how to buy and own a home. UMRDC staff brought together the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership, city officials and 35 Micronesian community members in January where they talked about the type of house they would like to buy and what challenges they need to overcome in order to purchase a home. Many expressed interest in participating in programs that would help. The first program is a home stretch course that will be offered in Milan.

For more information contact Kristi Fernholz at 320.289.1981 x 106  
Kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org.



## Hazard Mitigation

After a full year of hazard mitigation planning in Big Stone, Chippewa, and Yellow Medicine Counties, the 2015 plan updates are in review by Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) and FEMA. Upon final approval, UMRDC staff and county emergency managers will take the plans to each county and city for adoption.

The 2015 plan updates focused on safety during violent storms, added erosion and climate change as additional hazards, and put particular emphasis on preparation and training for hazardous material spills. The planning process for each of these counties has brought to light a number of strong implementation projects to pursue in the region.

For more information contact Emily Zandt at Emily.zandt@umvrdc.org  
320.289.1981 x104



## Canby Zoning

UMVRDC staff is working with the City of Canby to update their zoning ordinances. After reviewing their Comprehensive Plan, Canby found their zoning ordinances were not consistent with the needs and vision identified in their planning process. To ensure better consistency for future planning and land use, Canby decided to work with the UMRDC to update their zoning ordinances to better reflect the vision of the community and staff.

## Ortonville Zoning

The City of Ortonville has contracted with the UMRDC to update their zoning ordinances. This process will include an organizational update of the plan with a focus on clarifying the permitting and enforcement processes. The work plan also includes an opportunity for public education on zoning and public input on the ordinance updates. We look forward to working with the city and its residents on this project.

For more information on Zoning contact Erin Smith at Erin.smith@umvrdc.org  
320.289.1981 x 110

*The UMRDC has been selected as the "Community and Economic Development Partner Region" by the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development. The goal of this partnership is to increase awareness of resources available to further economic development within the Upper Minnesota Valley Region, ensuring the sustainability of its communities well into the future. In coordination with USDA staff, UMRDC is working to identify opportunities in support of local and regional projects.*



— Colleen Landkamer | State Director  
Rural Development



## Public Art Project

There is a new mural behind the Jose Artigas Statue in the heart of main street Montevideo. The community formed the Montevideo Arts Project (MAP) in 2014 and their first project has come to life in time for the community's Fiesta Days Celebration in June 2015.

MAP is a volunteer driven group of local citizens, business owners, city staff, elected officials, and chamber of commerce staff. The group has a goal of creating one public art piece per year. The UMRDC has a contract to help with the coordination, grant writing and facilitation of this project that started in June 2014.

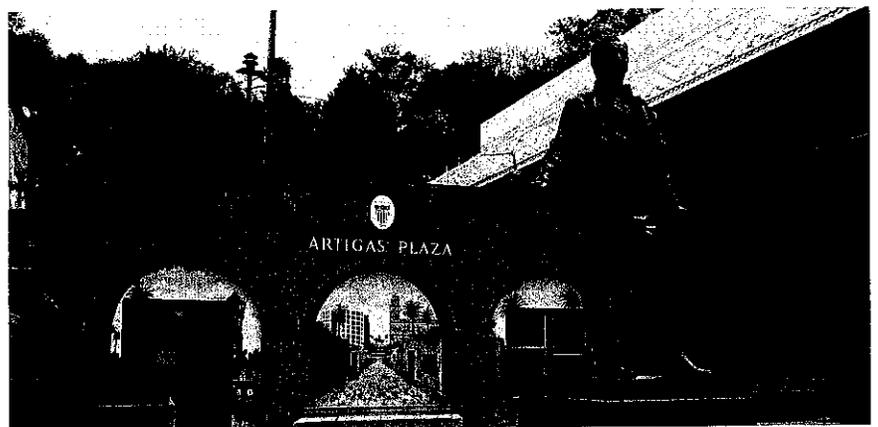
The mural was painted by Shawn McCann, an accomplished mural artist from Crystal, MN, and celebrates the relationship between the City of Montevideo and Montevideo, Uruguay. McCann and his design was selected from 10 different artists by the citizen members of MAP, and funding for the mural was provided by the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council, the City of Montevideo, Montevideo Chamber, the Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and community donations.

## Region 6W Public Art Planning:

The UMRDC received a small planning grant from the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council in 2014 which was completed this past year. The grant was to explore a regional public art project. Two surveys were sent out: one to gather top city/county needs, and one to gather project ideas. The most universal project identified was the beautification of the downtown and trails.

The UMRDC solicited and received ideas from 10 different artists, and received many ideas to consider. Three artists were chosen to create a design and to further develop their idea: sculpture based on local objects, parklets for vacant spaces, and a series of sculptures along trails based on book pages. The UMRDC intends to work in the next two years to complete one of these projects.

For more information on Public Art Planning contact Kristi Fernholz [kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org](mailto:kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org) 320.289.1981 x 106



## Develop MN

In order for Greater Minnesota to succeed and prosper there must be a strong, collective and credible voice that can create and advance a common agenda. Toward this end, the Minnesota Association of Development Organizations is in the process of creating a greater Minnesota development strategy called Develop MN. The document will highlight common development opportunities and identify strategies that will accelerate business growth and job creation in rural Minnesota including all counties outside of the seven county metro areas.

The group has built consensus around four areas; and has been collecting and reviewing statewide data regarding the changes in these areas.

Human Capital

Economic Competitiveness

Community Resources

Foundational Assets

## Blandin

The UMRDC was named one of 13 alumni Blandin Broadband Communities to continue to work on broadband issues in the region. A stakeholder meeting was held in October 2014 where several projects were identified.

The UMRDC is working with the Blandin Foundation on three projects: a feasibility study for a regional fiber ring to all public sector buildings within the five county region; a regional online branding campaign; and convening IT professionals throughout the region for resource sharing and increased collaboration. A grant was submitted to the Blandin Foundation for the feasibility study and \$25,000 was awarded, and matched by \$25,000 from the five counties, and two of the grants requests are currently awaiting a decision by the Foundation.

## Bellingham's Website

The City of Bellingham contracted with the UMRDC to update their website. The project included a new layout, updated information and new photographs highlighting the city's assets. The City of Bellingham now offers an events calendar, links to local utilities, and ordinance information for its current and future residents. The importance of a strong online presence is continuing to increase. Easy access to important information is not only helpful for current residents but it is particularly beneficial to cities looking to recruit new residents and businesses. Check it out!

[Bellinghammn.com](http://Bellinghammn.com)

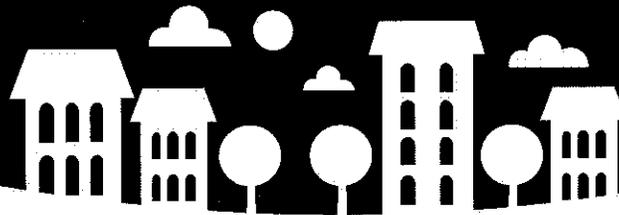
# Appleton Technical Assistance

The City of Appleton has retained the UMRDC to assist with community and economic development efforts. To fund the technical assistance, Appleton matches planning funds from Swift County and a Hedgehog Grant from the UMRDC.

A few accomplishments from the first technical assistance contract include:

1. Completed a project prioritization process with council.
2. Completed a community-wide housing survey/analysis and mapped the results.
3. Coordinated, authored and submitted a successful SCDP application for \$591,250 in state funds for the rehabilitation of 20 homes and five businesses.
4. Submitted a successful Countryside Public Health SHIP grant for \$3,500 to look at city sidewalk priority routes and financing (work will be completed summer 2015).
5. Submitted USDA RLF application to establish a city economic development revolving loan fund.
6. Initial research and issues identification for the zoning ordinance update.

A new contract in the coming year will work on a zoning ordinance update and will include new work sessions with the council to develop project priorities for this next year.



## Aquatic Invasive Species

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are threatening Minnesota waters. These nonnative species harm fish populations, water quality, and water recreation. Our five counties have been charged to create a plan to prevent the spread of AIS. The UMRDC coordinated with our five counties to explore common issues and strategies to work together to contain AIS in our region and implement their County Program Aid Grants for AIS prevention.

For more information contact Kristi Fernholz at 320.289.1981 x 106 [Kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org](mailto:Kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org).

## Memorial Park Master Plan

The UMRDC has been working with Granite Falls on developing a Master Plan for Memorial Park. A task force along has been working with the UMRDC to develop project ideas and strategies to make improvements to the park infrastructure and programming. The Master Plan includes a vision for the park as well as goals to make the park a destination for visitors and residents of Granite Falls. Memorial Park was named a Regional Park by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission and work will continue to secure grant funding for projects.

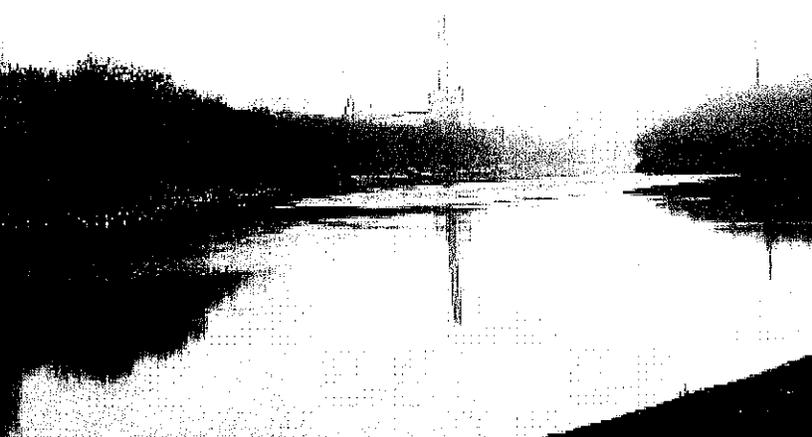
For more information contact Kristi Fernholz at 320.289.1981 x 106 [Kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org](mailto:Kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org).

## Dawson Sidewalk Plan

Creating a walkable community is a top goal in many of our cities in the Upper Minnesota Valley. The City of Dawson partnered with Countryside Public Health to contract with the UMRDC to create a sidewalk plan for the Dawson community. The goal of the sidewalk plan is to identify primary destinations and priority pedestrian routes in the city in order to strategically plan for future sidewalk investments.

The planning process took into consideration the Stevens Elementary Safe Routes to School Plan as well as future infrastructure projects planned by the City of Dawson, Lac qui Parle County, and MnDOT (Minnesota Department of Transportation). The document offers a work plan that identifies possible funding opportunities as well as sidewalk policy considerations for creating an ordinance that supports the plan. The Dawson Sidewalk Plan is a great example of aligning multiple plans in order to approach future projects as efficiently as possible.

For more information on sidewalk planning contact Emily Zandt at 320.289.1981 x104 [Emily.zandt@umvrdc.org](mailto:Emily.zandt@umvrdc.org)



## Safe Routes to School

With help from the UMRVDC, both Montevideo Public Schools and Clarkfield Area Charter School completed a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan. The SRTS model takes a comprehensive approach to addressing safety issues that prevent children from walking and biking to school by looking at the barriers through the 5 E's of bicycle and pedestrian planning: Evaluation, Education, Encouragement, Engineering, and Enforcement.

The UMRVDC has also been providing technical assistance to schools in the region through a grant from MnDOT for Safe Routes to School Implementation. Through this work, walk/bike to school day events, bike rodeo, and other education and encouragement events and activities were held. Walk audits were also completed at KMS Elementary School in Murdock and at the Ortonville Public School.

Four schools (Clarkfield Area Charter School, Ortonville Elementary, KMS Elementary in Murdock, Stevens Elementary in Dawson) applied for and received MnDOT's Mini Grants for additional SRTS implementation funds. These funds were used for bike rodeo giveaways, additional incentive prizes, safety patrol equipment, as well as to pay for 15 students from our region to attend Legionville School Safety Patrol Camp over the summer.

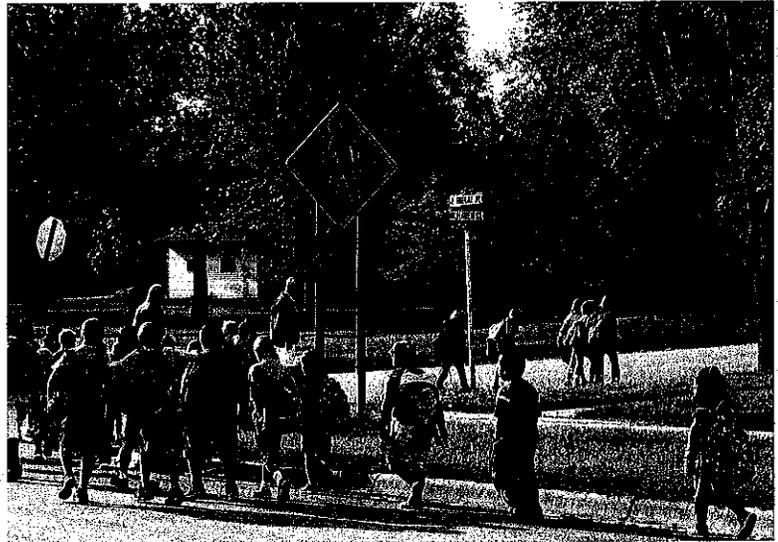
For more information contact Emily Zandt at [emily.zandt@umvrhc.org](mailto:emily.zandt@umvrhc.org) 320.289.1981 x104



.....  
**1,430 students**

Impacted by Safe Routes to School Implementation Funding

# Transportation



## Transportation Planning

The UMRVDC continues to provide local transportation planning assistance to the region through a contract with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). Transportation issues continue to be critical for our region to get to work, school, appointments, vacation, and to move commodities into and outside of the region.

Staff participated in the West Central and Southwest Minnesota Area Transportation Partnerships (ATPs) in MnDOT Districts 4 and 8 respectively. The ATP review and rank federal fund applications for transportation projects that include roads, bridges, trails, public transit, and transportation alternative projects. The total federal transportation investment for projects using federal funds in Region 6W for the 2016 to 2019 is \$53,523,790.

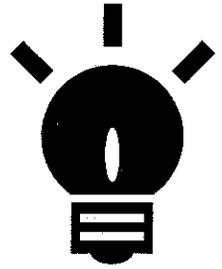
In addition to serving on the two ATPs, other transportation planning work done by staff this year includes:

- Participation in the Southwest Regional Toward Zero Deaths and Southwest Safe Communities Coalition committees, both aimed at reducing fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways.
- Working with local communities to develop Transportation Alternatives projects such as trails, scenic turn outs and overlooks, Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects and other projects that enhance the transportation system for a wider variety of users.
- Representing the RDCs throughout Greater Minnesota on the statewide Safe Routes to School Steering Committee to direct policy, programming and planning efforts for the SRTS program in Minnesota.
- Assisting MnDOT with various statewide planning such as the Bicycle System Plan, the Highway Safety Improvement Plan and the Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan.
- Communicating with local communities in Region 6W about state and federal transportation opportunities and programs to help them improve their transportation system.
- Initiating a regional trails interest group for sharing information and resources on trail planning and development.

For more information on Transportation contact Barrett Voigt at [Barrett.voigt@umvrhc.org](mailto:Barrett.voigt@umvrhc.org) 320.289.1981 x 107

# Programs

## Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs)



CERTs is a statewide partnership with a shared mission to connect individuals and their communities to the resources they need to identify and implement community-based clean energy projects



For more information on CERTS contact Erin Smith at erin.smith@umvrdc.org 320.289.1981 x 110

Erin Smith is a UMRDC staff that also serves as the West Central area CERTs coordinator. CERTs works to empower communities and their members to adopt energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy technologies and practices for their homes, and local institutions.

### What does CERTs do?

- Works to advance projects identified as priorities by our regional teams;
- Offers tools for energy efficiency implementation through outreach campaigns;
- Helps people learn about and implement solar, wind, and biomass projects;
- Shares successes and lessons learned on our MN Energy Stories Blog;
- Connects individuals and organizations to clean energy financing tools; and
- Provides limited financial assistance to projects through Seed Grants.

### Projects from the West Central Region upcoming this year:

- Worked with electric cooperatives to increase program outreach to cooperative members and to create more consistency across the region for opportunities.
- Provided information about community solar projects throughout the region.
- Promoted LED Street lighting upgrades
- Completed GreenStep City outreach and assistance for cities

## Meander Art Crawl

The 11th Annual Meander held in October 2014 was another success! The UMRDC coordinates the Meander Art Crawl through planning, financial management, grant writing, marketing, distribution and communication of the event. Funding for the advertising and organization of the event comes from a grant from the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council, artist fees and the many wonderful sponsors and supporters of the Meander. The event has an economic impact on our region, which is shown below.

**\$108,200**

Art sales were brought in from the Meander



### Average Expenditures per Customer

\$12 Shopping other than art

\$121

\$11 Lodging

\$40

**97-1400** Reported total number of customers at individual studios for the entire weekend.

**81%** plan to attend again next year

**\$2,576** Average reported art sales per artist. (12% increase from 2013!)

**76%** Money raised to organize the Meander through sponsors and artists was spent on products or services (printing, paper, advertising, graphic design, staffing) Meander spent over \$10,000 on advertising in 2014.

### Where customers came from

**25%** Outside 5-County Area

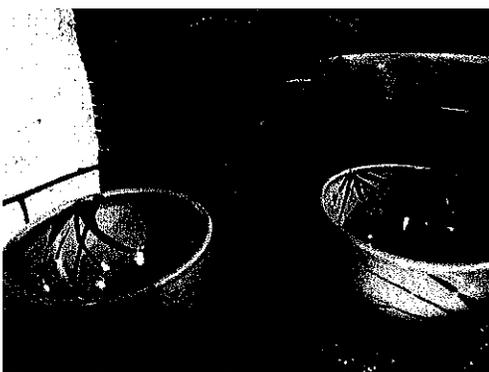
**36%** Within 5-County Area

**20%** Metro area

**19%** Out of State

Join us for the 2015  
Meander October 2-4!

Artsmeander.com



# Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway



"The purpose of the Alliance is to encourage economic development through the promotion, preservation and protection of the intrinsic qualities of the Minnesota River Valley."

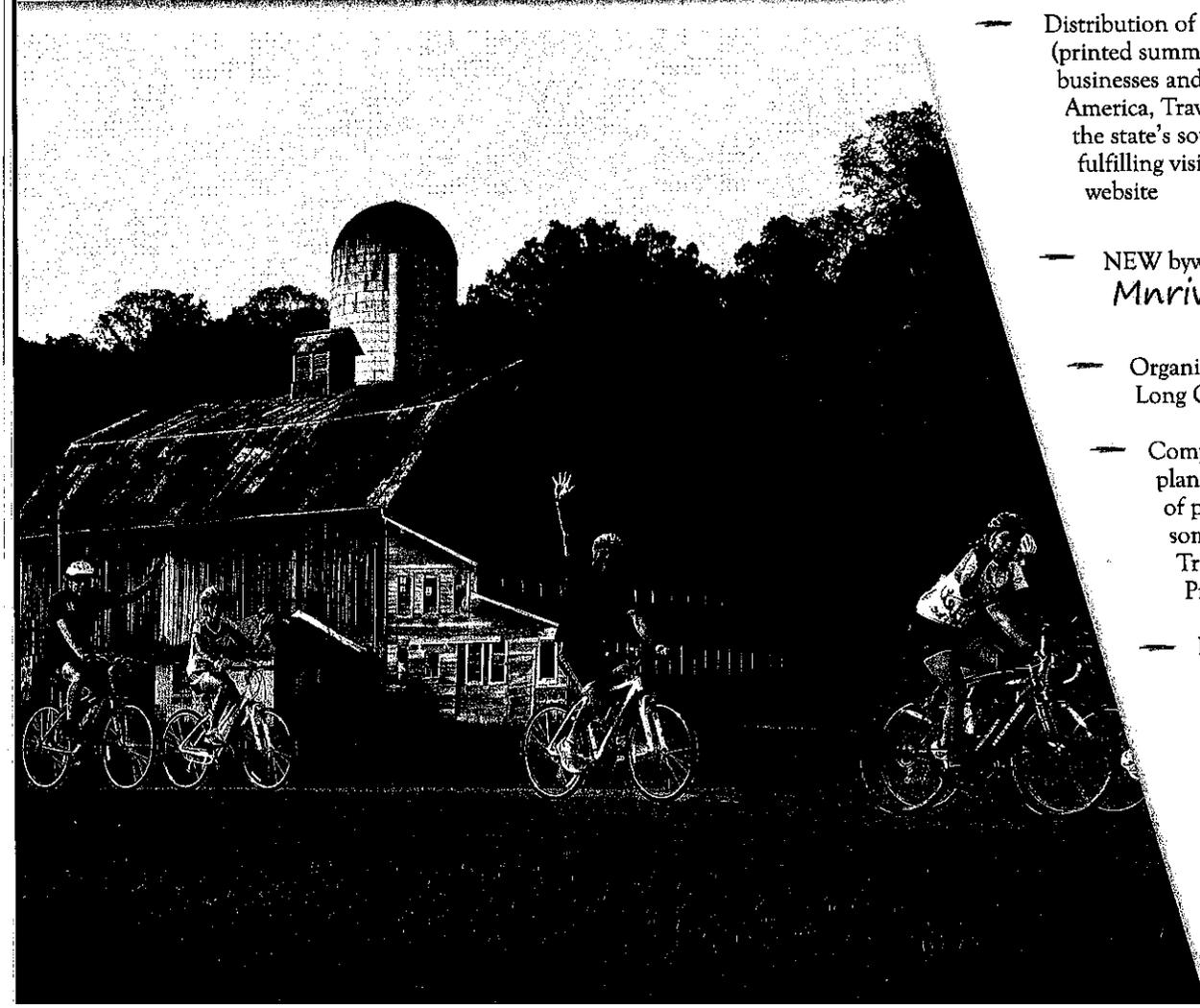
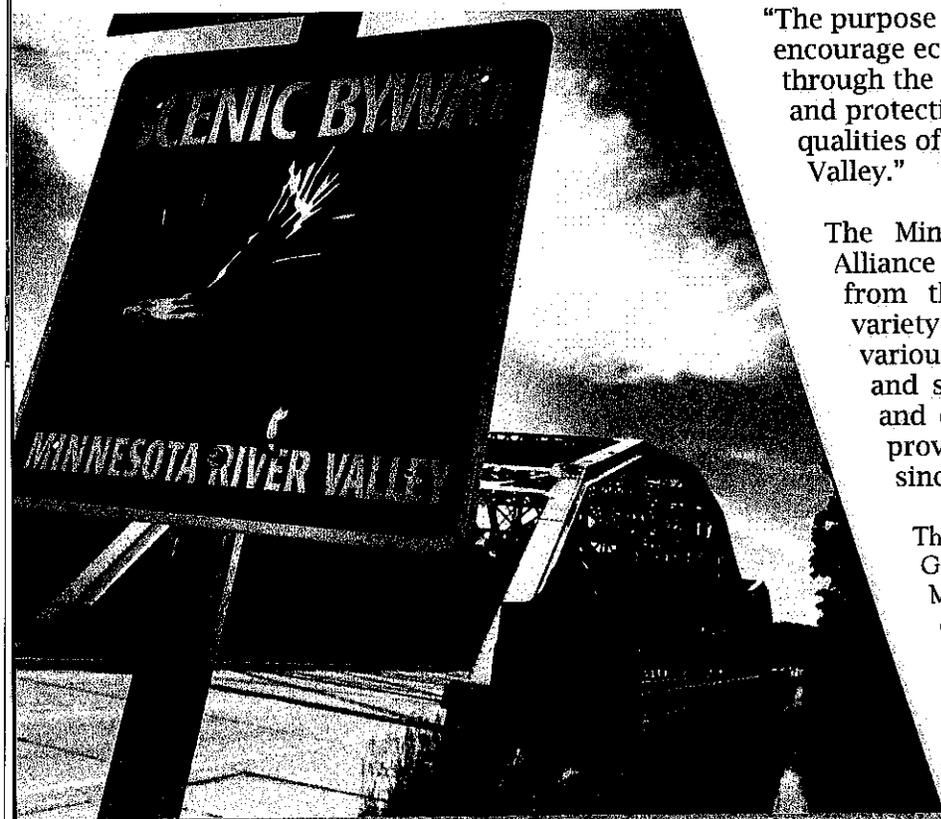
The Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway Alliance (MRVSBA) is a group of committed individuals from the 287-mile Byway Corridor representing a variety of interests including Chamber of Commerce, various attractions and historic sites, State Parks, local and state governmental bodies, private businesses, and concerned individuals. The UMVRDC has been providing staffing and fiscal services to the Byway since 1996.

This is the fourth year of the Federal Highway Administration Grant the byway received to update the Byway's Corridor Management Plan (CMP), create an interpretive plan, and develop new interpretive panels. Of these activities, the interpretive plan is complete and the CMP is in final draft form. We will be finishing designed new interpretive panels in late summer 2015.

Other projects from this past year include:

- Distribution of the new Byway Guides (printed summer 2013) to Byway businesses and attractions, the Mall of America, Travel Information Centers on the state's southern borders, as well as fulfilling visitor requests by phone and website
- NEW byway website:  
[Mnrivervalley.com](http://Mnrivervalley.com)
- Organized the third annual Byway Long Garage Sale.
- Completion of a MnDOT planning grant to create a list of project along the byway, some that may utilize MnDOT Transportation Alternatives Program funding.
- Maintenance of the Byway Facebook page - this is a dynamic resource for the happenings along the Byway!

For more information contact Kristi Fernholz at [kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org](mailto:kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org)  
320.289.1981 x 106



# Western Minnesota Prairie Waters Regional Tourism

The purpose of Western Minnesota Prairie Waters is to promote our area as a great place to visit, live and work by highlighting and showcasing our natural, cultural, scenic and historical assets. Prairie Waters serves as a tourism destination marketing organizations for the four county area of Lac qui Parle, Swift, Yellow Medicine, and Chippewa.



*NEW Logo!*

The following are some of the highlights from the past year:

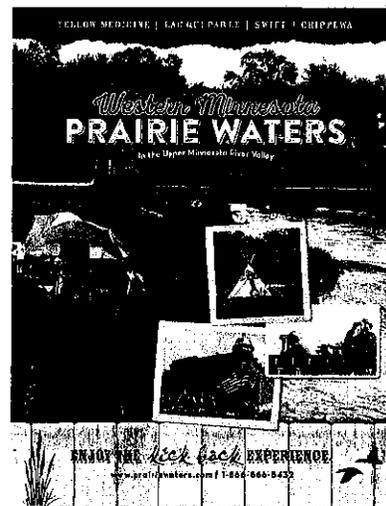
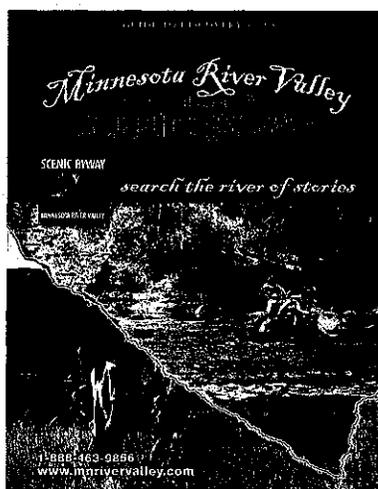
- Hosted the Annual Gathering in Granite Falls, alongside the Minnesota River. Over 50 people attended the event and participated in minnow racing and casting contests, listened to a presentation from the DNR on fishing, received door prizes, and learned about the efforts and importance of the Prairie Waters program.
- Printed the NEW 2015-2016 Regional Visitor's Guide. These guides are distributed to chambers, cities and businesses throughout the region; Travel Information Centers across the state and at the Mall of America; and are sent out upon requests through the toll free number or website. The guide is also used as a regional tool for attracting new comers to our area. In 2015 Prairie Waters responded to over 8,000 information requests.
- Wrote a successful grant to Explore Minnesota Tourism procuring \$8,000 for advertising our region.
- Launched a NEW website and logo: *Prairiewaters.com*
- Promoted the area and highlighted events on the Facebook fan page. There currently are over 4,230 followers that Prairie Waters markets to with weekly updates, photos, and links to stories about the region.
- Collaborated with Have Fun Biking Guide to promote biking in the Prairie Waters region. The guide contains maps showing bike trails, routes for road biking, and low-traffic roads that are suitable for biking.
- Created and placed numerous ads in our region's newspapers, statewide, and in out-of-state publications such as Midwest Living, AAA Home & Away, Explore Southern Minnesota and Outdoor News.
- Continue to distribute Antiques, Local Shops, Dining and Lodging Guide. This full-color guide is a comprehensive listing of shops, restaurants and accommodations available in the Prairie Waters region. It is a collaborative effort between Prairie Waters and participating Chambers of Commerce.



*Local Shops  
Guide*

For more information contact Melissa Carruth at [melissa.carruth@umvrdc.org](mailto:melissa.carruth@umvrdc.org) 320.289.1981 x 105

*Request a FREE Guide!*



**Mnrivervalley.com || Prairiewaters.com**



**866.866.5432**





Upper Minnesota Valley  
**REGIONAL  
 DEVELOPMENT  
 COMMISSION**

Helping Communities Prosper

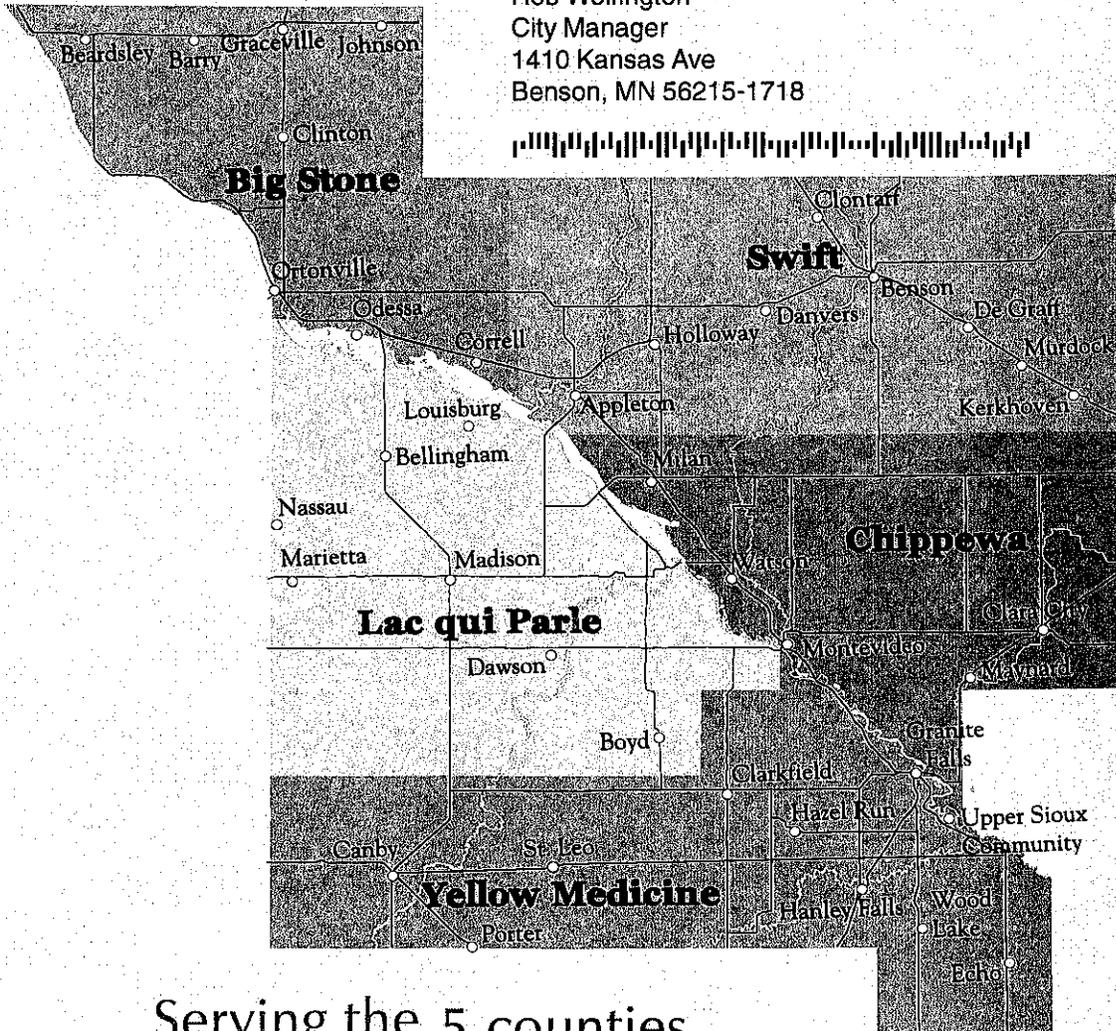
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Rob Wolfington  
 City Manager  
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Serving the 5 counties  
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 1 tribal nation  
 94 townships  
 10 school districts  
 in the Upper Minnesota River Valley