FULL COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, November 18, 2021
3:30 p.m.

Board Members Eric Hartman and Rick Anderson discuss priorities with Development Planner Rosemary Bruce-White at the October Board Retreat
Photo Credit: Paul Langseth

Murray County 4-H Building
3048 Broadway Ave, Slayton, MN
Southwest Regional Development Commission—Full Commission

*Board of Directors

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<th>Commissioner</th>
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<td>Rick Anderson</td>
<td>Lyon County Commissioners*</td>
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<td>JoEllen Benson</td>
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<td>Bob Byrnes</td>
<td>City of Marshall &amp; RLF Committee Chair*</td>
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<td>Miron Carney</td>
<td>Murray County Municipalities &amp; Legislative Committee Chair*</td>
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<td>Pam Cooreman</td>
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<td>Bill Crowley</td>
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<td>Keith Elbers</td>
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<td>Eriann Faris</td>
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<td>Eric Hartman</td>
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<td>Myron Koets</td>
<td>Pipestone County Municipalities, SRDC Vice Chair*</td>
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<td>Mike Kuhle</td>
<td>City of Worthington, SRDC Chairman*</td>
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<td>Nora Murphy</td>
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<td>Kevin O’Keefe</td>
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<td>Bob Paplow</td>
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<td>Richard Peterson</td>
<td>Jackson County Townships, SRDC Secretary*</td>
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<td>Mic VanDeVere</td>
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<td>Bob Van Hee</td>
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<td>Carol Wagner</td>
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<td>Shanda Walker</td>
<td>Southwest Center for Independent Living</td>
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<td>Dennis Welgraven</td>
<td>Murray County Commissioners, SRDC Treasurer*</td>
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<td>Beth Wilms</td>
<td>Health and Human Services</td>
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SRDC Full Commission Membership

One (1) County member from each of the nine counties.
One (1) Township member from each of the nine counties.
One (1) Mayor/Council member from each municipality over 10,000 in population.
One (1) Mayor/council member for each of the nine counties representing cities under 10,000.
Two (2) School Board members.
One (1) Lower Sioux Indian Community member.
Five (5) Public Interest Groups

SRDC Board of Director Membership

SRDC Chairman & a regional commissioner from each county elected by the regional commissioners from each county and:
One (1) Elected commissioner from each city over 10,000 in population.
One (1) Elected commissioner from any county with a population of more than 20,000 but without a city over 10,000 in population nominated by the regional commissioners of that county.
One (1) School board member selected by the Commission as a whole
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<th>#</th>
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<th>Agenda Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3:30pm</td>
<td><strong>Call to Order &amp; Pledge of Allegiance</strong></td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3:32pm</td>
<td><strong>Introductions</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3:34pm</td>
<td><strong>Additions to and Approval of Agenda</strong>&lt;br&gt;Action Needed: Approve Agenda**</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3:35pm</td>
<td><strong>Consent Agenda Items</strong>&lt;br&gt;• September 9 Full Commission Minutes&lt;br&gt;• October 14 Board of Directors Minutes&lt;br&gt;• September Receipts &amp; Expenditures Report&lt;br&gt;• Casey Jones Contract Amendment&lt;br&gt;• A.C.E. of SW Minnesota&lt;br&gt;Action Needed: Approve of Consent Agenda Items</td>
<td>5-11</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3:36pm</td>
<td><strong>Finance Reports</strong>—Treasurer Welgraven &amp; Finance Director Swart&lt;br&gt;• Treasurer’s Report, including bank accounts &amp; investments&lt;br&gt;<strong>Action Needed: Approval of Treasurer’s Report</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Administrative Report through September 2021&lt;br&gt;<strong>Action Needed: Approval of Administrative Report</strong></td>
<td>Handout</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3:40pm</td>
<td><strong>Project Reviews</strong>—Development Planner Bruce-White&lt;br&gt;• Northern Con-Agg, LLP&lt;br&gt;• MnDOT Airport Zoning Standards&lt;br&gt;<strong>Action Needed: Accept Project Review</strong></td>
<td>24-26</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3:45pm</td>
<td><strong>Committee &amp; Staff Reports</strong></td>
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<td>7a</td>
<td>3:45pm</td>
<td><strong>Budget &amp; Personnel Committee Report</strong>—Committee Chair Welgraven&lt;br&gt;• Review topics discussed by Committee&lt;br&gt;<strong>Action Needed: Approve Committee Recommendations</strong></td>
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<td>7b</td>
<td>3:55pm</td>
<td><strong>Economic Development Report</strong>—Deputy Director Weis &amp; Development Planner Bruce-White&lt;br&gt;(30 min)&lt;br&gt;• Guest Speaker: Tom Hoff, SWWC Service Cooperative, Katie Baustian, SW MN CEO-presentation, and Austin Brooks, Midland Institute regarding Midland CEO model</td>
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<td>7c</td>
<td>4:35pm</td>
<td><strong>Revolving Loan Funds Report</strong>—Committee Chair Byrnes &amp; Deputy Director Weis</td>
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<td>7d</td>
<td>4:45pm</td>
<td><strong>Physical Development Report</strong>—Development Planners Bruce-White &amp; Walker</td>
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7e 4:50pm **Community Development Report**—*Communications Specialist Welu* 36-37

7f 4:55pm **Transportation Report**—*Committee Chair VanDeVere & Development Planners Bruce-White & Walker* 38-40

7g 5:00pm **Executive Director’s Report**—*Executive Director Trusty*
- NADO Annual Training Conference 41-44
- SRDC 2021 Self Assessment *(complete & turn in if not done already)*

Handout in mailing

7h 5:15pm **Chairman’s Report**—*Chairman Koets*

8 5:25pm **Unfinished Business**

9 **New Business**

10 **Other Issues**

11 **Announcements**
SRDC Commissioner vacancies exist from the following representation: Nobles County Municipalities, Pipestone County Townships, Redwood County Municipalities, and Region 8 Cultural Diversity.

- SRDC Office closed November 25th & 26th in observance of Thanksgiving
- SRDC Board of Directors Meeting: Thursday, December 9 at 3:30pm at the SRDC office
- SRDC Office closed December 24th in observance of Christmas
- SRDC Office closed December 31st in observance of New Year’s Day
- SRDC Full Commission Meeting: Thursday, January 13 at 3:30pm at Murray Co 4-H Building
- 2022 Meeting Schedule is included in your packet 45

12 5:30pm **Adjourn**
MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Myron Koets, Commissioners Rick Anderson, Bob Byrnes, Miron Carney, Bill Crowley, Keith Elbers, Lori Grant, Donna Gravley, Tiffany Knott, Paul Langseth, Jeff Moen, Bob Paplow, Richard Peterson, Terry Quiring, Stephen Schnieder, Sherri Thompson, Mic VanDeVere, Bob Van Hee, Carol Wagner, Dennis Welgraven, and Beth Wilms

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioners JoEllen Benson, Pam Cooreman, Eriann Faris, Eric Hartman, Tom Hoff, Chris Hollingsworth, Dennis Klingbile, Mike Kuhle, Kevin O’Keefe/Nora Murphy, Jenny Quade, Don Wachal, and Shanda Walker

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jay Trusty, Rosemary Bruce-White, Elling Mann, Brooke Swart, Robin Weis, and Jessica Welu

CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Myron Koets called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/APPROVAL

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Welgraven and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the agenda with the addition of two contracts under Contracts. Upon vote taken: Ayes-22, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Langseth and seconded by Commissioner Crowley to approve the following consent agenda items: July 8, 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes, and the June & July Receipts & Expenditures Reports. Upon vote taken: Ayes-22, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

CONTRACTS
Finance Director Swart and Executive Director Jay Trusty provided information on four contracts up for Commission approval.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Carney and seconded by Commissioner Langseth to approve the Ray Pipeline & Land Services Tenant Lease contract. Upon vote taken: Ayes-22, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Van Hee and seconded by Commissioner Welgraven to approve the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership contract. Upon vote taken: Ayes-22, Nays-0. Motion Carried.
M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Gravley and seconded by Commissioner Langseth to approve the EV Charging Ahead contract with Great Plains Institute. Upon vote taken: Ayes-22, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Paplow and seconded by Commissioner Crowley to approve the BERCEE Outreach contract with Great Plains Institute. Upon vote taken: Ayes-22, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

FINANCE REPORT
SRDC Treasurer Dennis Welgraven referred Commissioners to the Treasurer’s Report, showing bank accounts and fund designations. There were no questions.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner VanDeVere and seconded by Commissioner Anderson to approve the Treasurer’s Report as provided. Upon vote taken: Ayes-22, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

Finance Director Brooke Swart reported on the Administrative Report through the end of June 2021. Swart noted that the report showed preliminary numbers from fiscal year 2021 and that audited numbers will be upcoming. Swart highlighted several line items. There were no questions.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Peterson and seconded by Commissioner Langseth to approve the Administrative Report as provided. Upon vote taken: Ayes-22, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

PROJECT REVIEWS
Development Planner Rosemary Bruce-White reported on two USDA project reviews for the City of Lakefield on an infrastructure improvement project and for the City of Edgerton on the purchase of a new pumper truck. There were no questions.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Langseth and seconded by Commissioner Van Hee to approve the City of Lakefield project review as presented. Upon vote taken: Ayes-22, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Welgraven and seconded by Commissioner Gravley to approve the City of Edgerton project review as presented. Upon vote taken: Ayes-22, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS
A. Budget & Personnel Committee Report
Committee Chair Dennis Welgraven reported that the Budget & Personnel Committee had met prior to today’s meeting. Welgraven turned the discussion over to Executive Director Jay Trusty for a report of the Committee’s meeting.
Trusty reported that the Committee discussed COVID-19 policies for the accumulation of vacation and comp time. The Committee had initially thought this temporary policy would be able to be removed by October 2021, but given the Delta variant, the Committee felt it was best to keep this temporary policy in place. The Committee next discussed letters received from Minnesota Department of Commerce and MnDOT on State Policy #1446 requiring contractors to have a protocol in place for proof of vaccination records or weekly testing for all staff who work under contract and work indoors with regular in-person contact with State agency employees or members of the public; and outdoors with substantial and/or regular in-person, non-socially distanced contact with State agency employees or members of the public. This policy will affect all SRDC planning staff and went into effect on September 8th. Trusty will be working on a protocol and policy for SRDC. Trusty noted that he asked other MADO Executive Directors about the policy, and they were unaware that the policy existed. Development Planners Rosemary Bruce-White and Jason Walker received these letters via email last week and Trusty received these letters this week. The Committee then reviewed the draft hybrid work policy with the intent to continue to allow staff who want to work from home to do so. Equipment purchases made by SRDC would belong to the RDC, and staff would need to be in the office one day a week. Commissioner questions and discussion followed. The SRDC Commission would still meet in person. It has been arranged to have winter Full Commission meetings at the Murray County 4-H building to allow for social distancing, which the SRDC Board Room cannot. The Committee also reviewed the Development/Transportation Planner and Development/Energy Planner job descriptions and will be taking these to the October Board of Directors meeting for approval. A motion is needed to approve the hybrid work plan. The Commission asked that the hybrid work plan and State Policy #1446 information be emailed to Commissioners for review.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Langseth and seconded by Commissioner Gravley to approve the hybrid work plan and a plan for State Policy #1446 with later review by the Commission. Upon vote taken: Ayes-22, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

B. Economic Development Report

Deputy Director Robin Weis provided an update on the CEDS. Individual CEDS meetings are still ongoing and the CEDS draft has been started. Weis put out a request for anyone interested in being on the CEDS Committee and reviewed the committee’s responsibilities. Weis will be sending out a committee meeting request soon. The CEDS comment period is planned for November 1-30, and an updated draft presented at the December Board of Directors meeting. Weis then provided an update on the 2021 Career Expo being planned for September 28th at Minnesota West in Worthington and September 29th at SMSU in Marshall.

Executive Director Trusty reported on the Blandin Broadband Conference which is scheduled to be a statewide three-morning event October 12-14th. Regional gatherings are being scheduled across the state prior to the conference. The Southwest Minnesota gathering is scheduled for September 16th from 1p-2:30pm and is being hosted by SRDC, MMDC, UMVRDC, SWIF, and the Blandin Foundation.
Deputy Director Weis then provided an update on the Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC) and the Minnesota Marketing Partnership before turning the discussion to Development Intern Elling Mann for an update on the EDA Funding Opportunities through the American Rescue Plan. Mann provided a summary of the seven funding opportunities and noted that staff is available to brainstorm projects, review applications, and provide technical assistance. Staff have met to discuss potential project ideas that are currently being explored. Weis noted that five of the EDA funding programs are new initiatives through the EDA, including Coal Communities Commitment; Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation; Good Jobs Challenge; Indigenous Communities; and the Build Back Better Regional Challenge. These funding opportunities are competitive on a national level. Questions and discussion of these funding opportunities followed.

Development Planner Rosemary Bruce-White provided an update on the Regional Economic Resiliency Plan. In phase 1, staff conducted research and identified three main issues impacting the region’s economic resiliency: 1. the deficit between employment projects and regional population growth, 2. the mismatch of desired skills and the skills of the available workforce, and 3. the balance between land stewardship and agricultural productivity. The next step was to conduct regional workshops. From these workshops, four themes for the foundation of economic resilience emerged: 1. community resilience/social capital, 2. diversity of the business community, 3. access to an adequate and diverse workforce, and 4. the importance of an inviting community for young professionals to live. Currently, staff is soliciting feedback on strategies to support each of goals and outcomes found in the meeting packet. Bruce-White encouraged Commissioners to complete the survey through the link provided to tell staff how they see SRDC fostering economic resilience in the future. These strategies will be taken to the Board Retreat for further development. Bruce-White noted that while the CEDS sets up development strategies for the region; the Resiliency Plan sets SRDC’s actions within it.

C. Revolving Loan Fund Report

Committee Chair Bob Byrnes reported the RLF Committee meets via Zoom. The Committee has not met in the last month as the COVID-19 RLF is 100% loaned out and the Traditional RLF is mostly loaned out. There is around $58,000 available in uncommitted funds at this time and around $30,000 are received monthly in repayment.

Development Intern Elling Mann reported on site visits conducted over the summer. Ten site visits have been completed thus far. The most common issues among local businesses are product shortages, employee retention, and a lack of qualified applicants. Mann highlighted two RLF businesses who have seen success during the pandemic.

Deputy Director Weis reported on contracted RLFs. An application in the amount of $100,000 has approved by the Jackson County RLF and will close early 2022.
PACE
Funds are currently available in the approximate amount of $51,000 (PACE ARRA funds) and $265,000 (PACE SEP funds). Weis talked Commissioners through the PACE application process. The process begins with an energy assessment. Once the assessment is completed, the applicant gets contractor estimates. After this point, an application is straight forward. PACE is currently at 4% interest rates and the loan is paid back on property taxes.

D. Physical Development Report
Development Planner Rosemary Bruce-White noted that Seed Grant solicitation for CERTs is in full swing and there is an extra $10,000 available this year for projects. Bruce-White then provided an update on the City of Pipestone and City of Tracy Comprehensive Plan Updates. The City of Pipestone launched its community survey on August 7th on the Chamber’s Facebook page. The survey has 87 responses so far. The City of Tracy conducted its community survey July 2-August 13th. The survey received 331 responses. Bruce-White presented on survey results to the planning commission and will present to the steering committee soon to discuss next steps and set up focus group activities. The Solid Waste Commission had a hybrid meeting July 26th, and the Solid Waste Administrators and State agency staff held a retreat at the SRDC office on September 2nd.

E. Community Development Report
Communications Specialist Jessica Welu provided an update on Friends of the Casey Jones State Trail. Their next meeting will be held on September 13th in Walnut Grove and will focus on mapping and trail development with DNR. Recent SRDC assistance has included the development of a handout for landowners, an updated membership form, and research, design, and ordering of swag items. Welu and Development Planner Bruce-White are part of the MADO DEI workgroup which formed in June. The group’s first project is a MADO-wide webinar on Native American and LUG Relations being held September 15th as part of Welcoming Week. SRDC had a booth at the Healthy Living Expo in Marshall on August 21st. The focus of the booth was on our active living and clean energy work. SRDC had 176 people stop by the booth. The Annual Report has been published and mailed and the next edition of the SRDC newsletter is scheduled to be published mid-September. Welu also reported that the Communications Plan was approved and Welu has received certification through the Certified Public Communicator Program at Texas Christian University. Welu is now one of only five Certified Public Communicators in the state of Minnesota.

F. Transportation Report
Development Planner Bruce-White reported on the Annual Transportation Committee meeting held on July 21st.

Transportation Committee Chair Mic VanDeVere noted that the next ATP 8 meeting will be held October 15th. All MnDOT meetings have been virtual and will continue this way for some time. VanDeVere provided an update on the Hwy 59 project which has been changed due to MnDOT finding unanticipated work on the section that has been started. MnDOT will need to find additional funds to complete the entire segment as initially planned. Discussion followed.
Development Planner Bruce-White provided an update on recent workgroup activities. Members of the joint SMTP-MnSHIP Equity Workgroup coauthored the equity review which will be used to evaluate strategies in the SMTP. The workgroup is expected to continue meeting for another six months. The SMTP Economy and Employment Workgroup concluded their work on August 19th. This workgroup advised MnDOT on how the transportation system as a whole can further economic and employment development. The District 7 Freight Plan Advisory Committee is currently identifying needs and issues and reviewing projects to identify gaps. Public input is being sought through an online survey and online open house. Bruce-White then provided an update on the Local Human Services Transit Coordination Plan. Staff has reached out to the RTCC to ask members if they would volunteer to be part of the steering committee. Staff is also seeking volunteers from interested stakeholders to be part of the steering committee. The MADO Transportation Planners met August 17-18th in Bemidji. The portable counter borrowing program has had a successful year of counter use. There has been some discussion about bringing more counters to the area. Staff facilitated the SRTS kickoff meeting in Adrian on August 19th. Staff will be working on SRTS planning in Adrian throughout the school year.

G. Executive Director’s Report
Executive Director Jay Trusty reported on the MADO Executive Directors meeting held in August in Hinckley and the staff retreat held in August in Windom. The Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition speed test is finished, and data is currently being broken down. Redwood County is listed as county #87/87 for broadband speed. Jason Brisson is leaving the City of Worthington for a job with the City of Minneapolis. Brisson reached out to SRDC regarding a possible grant writing contract. Trusty will present at the Minnesota Entrepreneurs Summit which will be held October 7th at SMSU. SRDC and Murray County are planning to present at the AMC Conference in December on the Murray County Solar Siting Project. MADO also typically has a booth at the conference.

H. Chairman’s Report
Chairman Myron Koets noted that when we begin looking regionally, it is interesting how much of the interests and concerns are shared across jurisdictions. In Worthington, employees are working with JBS and may potentially see a $4-6 increase in pay. Koets noted that in Pipestone salary starts at $17 per hour. This is pulling employees there way, which has both positive and negative effects. The RDC has an opportunity to help with strategies that impact workforce issues in the region. Koets also reported that the Human Rights Commission in Pipestone will be holding several town forums.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS
No discussion.

NEW BUSINESS
Executive Director Trusty reported that the Board Retreat is being planned for October 28-29th in Okoboji. The agenda for the retreat will be on the Communications Plan, Regional Resiliency Plan, and
Strategic Plan. Trusty noted that there are still strategies listed in the Strategic Plan that we’ve already accomplished and it is time to revisit these strategies.

OTHER ISSUES
No discussion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Chairman Myron Koets referred Commissioners to the announcements included on the agenda.

SRDC Commissioner vacancies exist from the following representation: Nobles County Municipalities, Pipestone County Townships, Redwood County Municipalities, and Region 8 Cultural Diversity.

ADJOURNMENT
Chairman Koets adjourned the meeting at 4:53 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES
Meeting Minutes prepared by Jessica Welu, SRDC Communications Specialist.

Reviewed by: Richard Peterson
Approved by: Myron Koets
SRDC Secretary SRDC Chairman
MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Myron Koets, Commissioners Rick Anderson, Miron Carney, Keith Elbers, Mike Kuhle, Paul Langseth, Richard Peterson, Bob Van Hee, and Dennis Welgraven

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioners Bob Byrnes, Donna Gravley, Eric Hartman, and Dennis Klingbile

STAFF PRESENT: Elling Mann, Kathy Schreiber, Brooke Swart, Jay Trusty, Jason Walker, Robin Weis and Jessica Welu

CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Myron Koets called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m., followed by introductions and the pledge of allegiance.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/APPROVAL
There was one addition to the agenda. Discussion and approval of CERTs Seed Grants were added to the Physical Development report.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Carney and seconded by Commissioner Langseth to approve the agenda with the addition. Upon vote taken: Ayes-9, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Elbers to approve the following consent agenda items: August Receipts and Expenditures Report. Upon vote taken: Ayes-9, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

FINANCE REPORT
SRDC Treasurer Dennis Welgraven referred Commissioners to the Treasurer’s Report, showing bank accounts and fund designations. There were no questions.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Peterson and seconded by Commissioner Langseth to approve the Treasurer’s Report as provided. Upon vote taken: Ayes-9, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

Finance Director Brooke Swart reported on the Administrative Report through the end of August 2021. Swart highlighted several line items. There were no questions.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Langseth and seconded by Commissioner Welgraven to approve the Administrative Report as provided. Upon vote taken: Ayes-9, Nays-0. Motion Carried.
PROJECT REVIEWS
There were no Project Reviews.

COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

A. Development Report

Deputy Director Robin Weis provided an update on the CEDS. Individual CEDS meetings are still ongoing and the CEDS draft has been started. The CEDS Committee has meet twice so far. The CEDS comment period is planned for November 1-30, and the updated CEDS plan will be presented at the December Board of Directors meeting for approval of the resolution to submit the plan.

The SRDC had their EDA Peer Review. This is done prior to having to submit the next 3-year grant application. The SRDC’s grant application will be due in early 2022.

Weis then provided an update on the 2021 Career Expos that were held September 28th at Minnesota West in Worthington and September 29th at SMSU in Marshall. Attendance was approximately 2400 students between the two days. Booths were very interactive this year.

As a result of one of the CEDS individual meeting Weis has accepted an invitation to be a member on the SW MN Youth Committee. This committee will work in partnership to ensure youth have access to the services they need to become self-sufficient and successful. They meet four times per year.

Deputy Director Weis, reminder board members that SRDC Intern, Elling Mann is available to help them with any technical assistance they need. Mann informed the board of the 7 categories for funding from EDA with CARES Act money. Weis stated that the SRDC is working on two grant applications to be submitted to EDA under the CARES Act funding. One under the Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation category and one under the Good Jobs Challenge category.

Deputy Director Weis, in the absence of Development Planner Rosemary Bruce-White, asked commissioners to review the list of examples of things that the SRDC could be working on to foster economic resilience in the future. Weis asked commissioners to take the survey if they haven’t already done so.

Finance Director Brook Swart informed the board that she had sent out an email to the township clerks in the region reminding them to apply for the CARES Act money before the deadline and offered her help with applying for the money. Twelve to fifteen townships reached out to Swart for help or more information. Any money not applied for will need to be returned to the State. There was much discussion about the CARES Act money that counties, cities and townships have received and how it can be spent.

B. Revolving Loan Fund

Deputy Director Weis referred Commissioners to their meeting packet which summarized recent RLF activities. Traditional RLF funds are currently available in the approximate amount of $81,000. The committee will meet next week to look over 3 loan application and look at
prioritizing funds as we do not have enough funds to cover the total amount requested. COVID-19 RLF program funds started at $1.48 million. Currently no funds are available to loan out after a loan closed on October 12.

Development Intern Mann has completed 14 site visits.

Deputy Director Weis reported on contracted RLFs. An application in the amount of $100,000 was approved by the Jackson County RLF and will close early 2022. Weis has received inquiries under both Jackson County and Heron Lake RLF programs.

**PACE**
Deputy Director Weis referred Commissioners to their meeting packet for an update on the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program. Funds are currently available in the approximate amount of $86,000 (PACE ARRA Funds) and $266,000 (PACE SEP Funds). Weis continues to have businesses complete energy audits and she is working on 3 possible loans.

**C. Physical Development Report**

Development Planner Jason Walker reported the Rural Minnesota Energy Board met in person on September 27th with the option to join via zoom. There was much discussion about the Summit Carbon Solutions company that is visiting county boards to get support for constructing an underground pipeline through parts of southwest Minnesota on its way to North Dakota. Board members discussed this too.

CERTs Steering committee met on October 14th to review CERTs seed grant applications. They reviewed 8 application and is recommending to the Board to approve 6 of them. The total amount of Seed Grants approved is $30,000.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Kuhle and seconded by Commissioner VanHee to approve the 6 recommended Seed Grants for funding as provided. Upon vote taken: Ayes-9, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

**D. Community Development Report**

Communications Specialist Jessica Welu provided an update on the Friends of the Casey Jones State Trail Association. They held their September meeting in Walnut Grove with 10 new people attending. Friends of Casey Jones State Trail received word that the Minnesota House Capital Investment Committee Tour will stop at the trailhead in Pipestone on October 20th. There will be a presentation and brief tour of the Pipestone segment. Welu along with Walker will be at the October 22nd Friends of the Casey Jones State Trail meeting to work on strategic planning. A contract extension with the SRDC will also be discussed. Welu is still working with a couple of RLF clients on marketing assistance and communications audit.

Welu and Development Planner Bruce-White are part of the MADO DEI workgroup and hosted the October 6th meeting with the topic being “Representation, the Data We Use, and How We Use It”.

The September issue of the SRDC Newsletter was sent out.
E. Transportation Report
Development Planner Jason Walker highlighted SHIP and Active Living work. Tracy Active Living has been discussing possible projects. They are looking at putting a 9-hole disc golf course at Swift Lake Park and building a pedestrian/bike connection between the museum and downtown. The walk audit and hazard observations have been completed in Adrian. Walker noted that there is a lot of grant money available for SRTS Planning Grants, SRTS Non-infrastructure Boost Grants and SRTS Infrastructure Grants so anyone looking to do a SRTS plan or anyone that already has a SRTS or Activ Living plan and wants to do some more work with their current plan should contact him soon to get their application done and submitted.

Communications Specialist Welu discussed the Regional Trails Planning effort that staff have been working on. They held 2 meetings with stakeholders on September 21st and 23rd. Thirty-one people attended between the 2 meetings. A draft proposal for the EDA Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Grant Program was discussed. The proposal was submitted to Chicago EDA and a meeting held on September 30 with EDA. Discussion was held on whether each county would be willing to match $3,000 over 2 years if the grant is approved by EDA. The grant was submitted for $209,000, there is a 20% match required. Match amount would be $41,800 with $3,000 coming from each county and the SRDC would match the remaining $14,800. Board members requested staff visit each county board and present that request in-person. Visits will be conducted in November. A resolution for the Southwest Regional Trails Plan and EDA Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Program Grant Application was provided for approval.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Langseth to approve the resolution of the Southwest Regional Trails Plan and EDA Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Program Grant Application as provided. Upon vote taken: Ayes-9, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

F. Executive Director’s Report
Executive Director Jay Trusty talked about the Blandin Broadband Conference. Townships need to be involved with bringing broadband to rural areas. The BERCEE committee has been working on outreach and what they need to ask the legislature for. Trusty and Deputy Director Weis will be attending the NADO conference on October 16-19 in Portland, OR. Trusty has been working on revising the Transit portion of the CEDS and reworking the smart goals. The SRDC Board retreat will be held October 28 and 29 in Okoboji, IA. MADO executive director-Cam Fanfulik, Northwest RDC will be retiring. Headwaters RDC new director is no longer there so their retired director is now the Interim Director. Trusty will be presenting at the Minnesota Entrepreneurs Summit which will be held October 27th on-line and sponsored by SMSU. Trusty informed the board that long time board members Werner Fischer and Eloise Hauschild have recently passed away. Trusty was asked to sit on the Governor’s Clean Fuel Standards (CFS) Committee. This committee is being headed by the assistant commissioners of Commerce and Ag and Trusty has accepted the invitation.

G. Chairman’s Report
Chairman Myron Koets reported that Pipestone is looking at how to retain workforce and how to be competitive as a study shows people are willing to drive within a 45 mile radius of their home to work, so that puts those in Pipestone in the range of Sioux Falls, SD and Marshall, MN. Sioux Falls is growing fast and with all the new industry coming they will be looking for about 2,400
more employees. Housing and amenities were mentioned as a big concern or hurdle when trying to entice people to come live and work in your community. Pipestone is working on an app for self-guided tours of the city.

OLD BUSINESS
Executive Director Trusty reported that the Board Retreat will be October 28-29th in Okoboji. The agenda for the retreat will be on the Communications Plan, Regional Resiliency Plan, and Strategic Plan. Trusty noted that there are still strategies listed in the Strategic Plan that we’ve already accomplished and it is time to revisit these strategies. There will be no formal facilitator, staff will be facilitating the retreat.

NEW BUSINESS
No discussion.

OTHER ISSUES
No discussion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Chairman Koets referred Commissioners to the announcements included on the agenda.

SRDC Commissioner vacancies exist from the following representation: Nobles County Municipalities, Pipestone County Townships, Redwood County Municipalities, and Region 8 Cultural Diversity.

ADJOURNMENT
Chairman Koets adjourned the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Peterson to adjourn the meeting. Upon vote taken: Ayes-9, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES
Meeting Minutes prepared by Kathy Schreiber, SRDC Administrative Assistant II.

Reviewed by:                        Approved by:

Richard Peterson                  Myron Koets
SRDC Secretary                    SRDC Chairman
### Southwest Regional Development Commission

Unposted General Ledger Transactions - Board Receipts Report - By Month

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**Report Total**

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Page: 3
SOUTHWEST REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
CONTRACT WITH  
FRIENDS OF THE CASEY JONES TRAIL ASSOCIATION  
FOR  
TECHNICAL SERVICES

The following is a contract amendment to the contract with Friends of the Casey Jones Trail Association for technical services which will require a budget extension beyond the original contract term per request from Friends of the Casey Jones Trail Association for the continued implementation of social media, marketing, and outreach strategies.

WHEREAS the Contract Agreement under this Agreement reads:

The total contract cost for the project attributed to CLIENT will not exceed $3,500 including expenses.

Professional services will be provided by SRDC at $60 an hour.

The contract agreement is amended to read:

The total contract cost for the project attributed to CLIENT will not exceed $5,000.00 including expenses.

Professional services will be provided by SRDC at $60 an hour for Communications Specialist services and $100 an hour for Planner services.

All other areas of the contract will remain the same.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, The SRDC has caused this contract amendment to be duly executed in its behalf and the other Friends of the Casey Jones Trail Association has caused the same to be duly executed on its behalf.

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  

Chairperson  
Executive Director  

Date ________________

FRIENDS OF THE CASEY JONES TRAIL ASSOCIATION

Chairperson  
Board Member  

Date 10-21-21
SOUTHWEST REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
CONTRACT WITH
A.C.E. OF SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA
FOR
TECHNICAL SERVICES

THIS CONTRACT for technical services is entered into this 1ST day of January, 2022, by and between the Southwest Regional Development Commission (SRDC), and A.C.E. of Southwest Minnesota (A.C.E.).

WITNESSED; In consideration of the mutual promises and covenants herein contained, the SRDC and A.C.E. agree to the following terms and conditions:

The Term of this agreement commences January 1, 2022 and shall continue through December 31, 2022. The following work activities will be provided:

I. Financial Services will be provided to A.C.E. as per the attached work activity list including A.C.E. responsibilities. Reports will be provided showing the hours worked by individual staff members included in the monthly report billed. Financial Services include staff member's salaries, leave and fringe and administrative support for use of supplies, computer and other items necessary to work completion. A budget of $13,500 is included here for financial services. (Exhibit A)

II. Support Services will be provided to A.C.E. as per the attached work activity list. Reports will be provided showing the hours worked by individual staff members included in the monthly report billed. Support Services include staff member's salaries, leave and fringe and administrative support for use of supplies, computer and other items necessary to work completion. A budget of $20,500 is included here for support services. (Exhibit B)

III. Payment for Services

A. A.C.E. will make payment to the SRDC. Statements will be billed monthly.

B. A.C.E. will be billed for costs incurred by the SRDC to perform services listed on the attached exhibits.

IV. Hold Harmless

A.C.E. agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the SRDC against any legal actions brought by any personal entity whatsoever arising out of or claimed to be arising out of the performance of either party under this agreement for services.

A.C.E. agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the SRDC against any action legal and/or administrative for any A.C.E./RSVP performance prior to December 31, 2006.
V. Cancellation

This agreement may be cancelled by A.C.E. or SRDC at any time, with cause, upon ninety (90) days written notice to the other party. In the event of such a cancellation, SRDC shall be entitled to payment, determined on a pro-rata basis, for work or services satisfactorily performed.

VI. Assignment

SRDC shall neither assign nor transfer any rights or obligations under this agreement without prior written consent of A.C.E.

VII. Staffing

The SRDC reserves the right to utilize the most appropriate personnel and/or time availability of staff members to perform the stated activities.

VIII. Amendments

Any amendments to this agreement shall be in writing, and shall be executed by the same parties who executed the original agreement or their successors in office.

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Chairperson

Executive Director

Date

A.C.E. OF SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA

Chairperson

Board Member

Date 11-4-21
## Environmental Assessment Review

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## Minnesota Department of Transportation

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Southwest Regional Development Commission Project Review

Agenda Item: 6  Meeting Date: November 18, 2021

Project Name: Northern Con-Agg: Boen Site

Project Description:

Northern Con-Agg, LLP proposes the mining of gravel present on the Boen Pit Property in Luverne Township (near the Rock County Transfer Station). The mine is to be approximately 92 acres and is to be operated for 15-20 years. There is a site adjacent to the proposed mine location that has operated as a wash plant for over 25 years.

Mining activity is set to take place in three separate stages. First, the excess overlying soil and rocks (overburden) will be removed from the gravel. The overburden will be used to build berms that will provide sound and visual screening from the mining site. They will also act as a safety barrier around the site and will prevent potential pollutants from entering nearby water bodies.

Then, gravel will be extracted using hydraulic dredging equipment to 30-35 feet below the ground surface. All material dredged will then be pumped into a dewatering wheel where gravel and water are separated.

In the final phase, gravel is brought to the adjacent wash plant to the north while water and silt are returned to the dredge pond.

Staff Comments:

All excess soils and rocks extracted from previous stages are reclaimed as the next phase begins.

As each phase ends, four inches of topsoil will be spread on the disturbed areas, and vegetation will be planted in accordance to MN DNR’s “Handbook for Reclaiming Sand and Gravel Pits in Minnesota.” These treated areas will be suitable for recreational and wildlife habitats. This includes areas of upland, wetlands, and deep open waters.

Historic: After a review conducted by MN SHPO, there were no sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Throughout the process, no contaminants are introduced to the mined materials, and there will be no water discharge from the site. The project requires zero municipal water supplies.

There will be negligible impacts on transportation infrastructure near the site. All truck traffic picking up products will utilize the existing routes that are used by the Northern Con-Agg plant site.

Considering the mitigation strategies noted to minimize environmental impacts, there are no noted concerns.

Project Review Time: 1 hour

Income to the SRDC as a result of this Review: $0

Reviewer: Rosemary Bruce-White, Development/Transportation Planner
Project Name: MnDOT Office of Aeronautics; Possible Amendments to Rules Governing Airport Zoning Standards, Part 8800.2400 and 8800.2500. Revisor’s ID R-04655

Part 8800.2400-Airport Zoning Changes:

The Office of Aeronautics of the Department of Transportation is requesting comments on possible amendments to rules governing public airport zoning standards. The amendments will bring the current zoning standards up to date with recent statutory changes and provide greater flexibility to local units of government.

Those who work with airport zoning will be able to write standards and ordinances that better reflect their needs and uses. This will deviate from the usual Zone A, B, and C set for the current Airport Zoning Rules.

Part 8800.2500-Funding Standards:

The Office of Aeronautics of the Department of Transportation is requesting comments on the possible addition of rules that incorporate exiting standards for funding airport clear zone acquisition that ensures adjacent compatible land uses. By adopting these standards into official rule, the standards will be more accessible and transparent.

Staff Comments:

Proposed changes are in accordance with the latest State Aviation System Plan.

At this time, staff is unaware of any issues or controversies pertaining to either of the proposed changes.

For additional questions or concerns, contact Rylan Juran at Rylan.Juran@state.mn.us.

Project Review Time: 1 hour

Income to the SRDC as a Result of this Review: $0

Reviewer: Rosemary Bruce-White, Development/Transportation Planner
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

The region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is in the final stages of completion. We are in the process of accepting public comments through the mandatory EDA 30-day public comment period. The CEDS committee will meet in early December to review public comments received and will be looking forward to receiving a recommendation for approval from the SRDC Board of Directors on December 9.

A CEDS brings together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies and to create an environment for economic resiliency and prosperity. The CEDS analyzes the regional economy and serves as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, developing, and implementing a regional plan of action, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources.

You can expect the following in the coming months regarding the CEDS:

- **November 1-30**: Public Comment Period
- **Early December**: CEDS Committee: Reviewing public comments received and considering a recommendation for approval to the SRDC Board of Directors
- **December 9**: SRDC Board of Directors: Consider resolution regarding CEDS submission
- **January 31, 2022**: Due date to submit CEDS document


EDA PLANNING


**Friends in the Field**: Quarterly, economic and community development professionals in Minnesota get together to learn and collaborate. The October 13 learning collaborative focused on post-pandemic workforce recovery. Objectives achieved included: current workforce ecosystem promising practices, better understanding of what we can do as community developers to support regional and statewide work, and building stronger collaborations and equitable systems in the future.

**Career Expo**: The 2021 Southwest Minnesota CareerForce Expo was held on September 28 and 29 at the college campuses of Southwest Minnesota State University and Minnesota West—Worthington. The event provided valuable career and education information to high school students, plus highlighted regional businesses, and the types of jobs they provide in our communities. During the two expo events, over 2,400
students from 29 schools attended, which involved teamwork from over 250 volunteers. SRDC was listed as an event sponsor. Almost 100 exhibitors from a large variety of career fields were available to show students what Southwest Minnesota has to offer.

**Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC):** The coordinating council met on October 26 to hear about the council’s role in the next Local Human Services Public Transit Plan.

**Southwest Minnesota Youth Committee:** It is the vision of the Youth Committee to work in partnership to ensure youth have access to the services they need to become self-sufficient and successful. It is the mission of the Youth Committee to guide the coordination of services that fully develop the employment potential of youth in Southwest Minnesota. The committee meets in February, May, August, and November. Weis is a new member of this committee. The November 4 meeting focused on the CEDS Labor Force cornerstone as well as staff and member updates.

**MN Marketing Partnership:** The partnership last met on August 16. DEED recently shared the launch of the new marketing platform designed to promote Minnesota as a world-class destination to build a business and expand careers. Governor Walz announced this new platform for why businesses and people should consider Minnesota as the place to grow. It is complete with a new website at [https://joinusmn.com/](https://joinusmn.com/), and new messaging that has been developed to serve as a partner resource for companies, ecosystem leaders, and other marketers of Minnesota. They have asked for the following assistance to get the word out:

- Amplify their message on social media. Their twitter handle is @joinusmn. Please feel free to retweet, follow, or mention the effort. If you’d like, you can tag @joinusmn and share your “Why Minnesota?” story – why did you start, grow or locate your business here?
- Consider creating links from your websites or efforts to their new URL at joinusmn.com.
- Share any success stories you see of great things happening in Minnesota's economy. They've created a form to submit your stories in the coming days and weeks, which they can feature on the site.

**NADO Training Conference:** The training conference was October 16-19. It included numerous learning labs, mobile workshops, plenary sessions, conversation cafes, concurrent sessions, and many opportunities for networking. Weis is grateful for the opportunity to attend and was able to participate in a mobile workshop on Portland’s Brownfields, plenary session on Communication and Messaging, concurrent sessions on Embracing Change and Strengthening Communities in Rural America, Grant Audit Readiness in a Pandemic Environment, Workforce Development, and two sessions on CEDS, as well as the impact awards reception and President’s Award Dinner. There were several opportunities to network with peers.

**Major Madness:** SRDC was a conference sponsor of this event. The conference was a joint effort with SMSU and MinnesotaWest which incorporated speakers who were BIPOC to tell their story as a motivation for BIPOC students to dream. This event provided encouragement to achieve college education whether that be 2- or 4-year degrees, etc. The agenda included career planning, as well as a professional panel and student panel.

**CARES ACT EDA (C-EDA)**

SRDC staff are available to provide support and technical assistance to businesses and local units of government. Staff just completed requests for data and resources in Redwood and Nobles Counties and are finishing up on another request from the City of Windom. Staff was asked to participate in conversations with Murray County about use of ARPA dollars.

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic created a number of new challenges for businesses, workers, and government. For a list of state and federal programs (SBA, Unemployment and DEED) for businesses, visit [https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/press-releases/?id=425890](https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/press-releases/?id=425890). Several e-mails and calls have been received for technical assistance.
EDA Funding Opportunities: There are several grant opportunities now available through the federal EDA. With $3 billion of American Rescue Plan funding to the EDA recently announced, staff is working hard to make sure our region is aware of these opportunities. More information can be found at https://eda.gov/arpa/. Contact staff with project ideas. Staff can assist with application review, project partner facilitation, regional and local data, etc.

Programs within EDA’s Investing in America’s Communities includes:

1. **Coal Communities Commitment:** $300 million. Will ensure support for coal communities as they recover from the pandemic and create new jobs and opportunities.

2. **Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation:** $750 million. Accelerate communities impacted by COVID-related travel and tourism decline through state grants ($510 million) and competitive grants ($240 million).
   - Staff have completed and submitted an application for the development of a regional trails plan.

3. **Good Jobs Challenge:** $500 million. Establish or strengthen regional systems to train workers with in-demand skills through employer-driven training, supporting participants with wrap-around services and employer commitments to hire.
   - The project narrative for the Good Jobs Challenge – Food Processing has been completed. At this point, we are waiting to hear back from the Windom EDA for further details. Organizations within the sectoral partnership will be contacted to begin gathering feedback and establish plans once we get more information. JBS and HyLife Foods Windom are the major employers in this project. MinnesotaWest Community and Technical College will be the source for education and training. SRDC is looking into collaborating with United Community Action Partnership on a community transit program for new employees at JBS and HyLife Foods Windom. We plan to include childcare options for new employees through Kids-R-It Inc., Hi-Ho Nursery School and We Care Day Care in Worthington. SRDC will continue to facilitate collaboration and set goals for each sectoral partner. While writing the project narrative, SRDC has been able to identify the following steps that are required within the project, including:
     - Employer leadership and commitments
     - Other stakeholders and partnerships
     - Impacts of a regional workforce training system
     - Program design and implementation

4. **Economic Adjustment Assistance:** $500 million. Invest in infrastructure, technical assistance, planning, and revolving loan programs through competitive grants available to every community.

5. **Indigenous Communities:** $100 million. Additional Economic Adjustment Assistance funds to specifically support Indigenous communities.
   - A broadband application is being pursued at Lower Sioux Indian Community.

6. **Build Back Better Regional Challenge:** Submission for phase 1 applications has already come and gone with phase 2 applications due March 15, 2022. A list of projects selected for phase 1 has been announced. Transform 20-30 economically distressed regions through substantial investment through groups of 3-8 projects, totaling ~$25-75 million per region: open to proposals up to $100 million.

7. **Statewide Planning, Research & Networks:** $90 million. Invest in economic plans, research to assess the effectiveness of EDA’s programs, and support for stakeholder communities around key EDA initiatives.

Regional Economic Resiliency Plan: Over the last year, staff have been working on the region’s first Economic Resiliency Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This effort began with a comprehensive review of available planning documents and available data packages, including local and county Comprehensive Plans, One Watershed One Plan Water Management Plans, Census Bureau Data, USDA Census of Agriculture Data, and much more. This review assisted staff in identifying three overall priority issues impacting economic...
resiliency. Those issues are: the deficit between employment projects and regional population growth; the mismatch of desired skills and the skills of the available workforce; and the delicate balance between land stewardship and agricultural productivity.

After the initial analysis, staff hosted regional workshops using priority issues as guides for each discussion. Workshop participants included family farming operations, business owners, local government officials, first responders, and economic development professionals. During these workshops, participants talked about the successes and resiliency in their communities. During these efforts, four themes rose as foundations of economic resilience. These themes include the importance of community resilience/social capital, business community diversity, access to adequate and diverse workforce, and the importance of having an inviting community for young professionals to live.

During 2021, resiliency planning shifted from technical analysis of available resources to establishing SRDC’s role in fostering economic resilience for the region. This effort started in the business community with a COVID-19 Business Response survey. SRDC heard from 56 businesses around the region on the resources they were aware of, technical assistance needed, and how the pandemic has impacted their businesses.

The information and input collected in the first phase of the planning process has been used to establish draft goals and objectives to support economic resilience in Southwest Minnesota. The three goals aim to address the three priority issues, and the objectives are intended to support the foundations noted by workshop participants and survey respondents. Each set of objectives includes opportunities to build upon SRDC’s capacity to support each overall goal.

During the Board Retreat, the SRDC Board of Directors assisted staff with the prioritization and assessment of draft strategies. Staff will be presenting a final list of strategies and action items at the December Board meeting.
RLF COMMITTEE

The committee consists of five members and meets as needed. The committee covers both the COVID-19 RLF and Traditional RLF.

RLF PLANS AND FLEXIBILITIES

EDA provided flexibilities to recipients of EDA-funded Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) awards in light of the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses, the increasing demand for RLF loans, and the need for RLFs to provide credit quickly and efficiently to their communities. These flexibilities, discussed further below, continue to be available under our Traditional RLF through June 30, 2022:

- Establish a minimum interest rate for RLF loans (13 CFR 307.15(b)(1))
- Require RLF loans to leverage additional capital (13 CFR 307.15(c))
- Require evidence demonstrating credit is not otherwise available (13 CFR 307.11(a)(1)(ii)(H))

Application and Checklists: The Application (fillable — same application for both RLF programs) and Requirements Checklist for both SRDC RLF and COVID-19 RLF are online and can be found at http://www.swrdc.org/economic-development/revolving-loan-funds/.

COVID-19 RLF (C-RLF)

Funds Available: Funds are currently available in the approximate amount of $10,000 (amount does not include November payments). A loan recently closed with a Murray County business in the amount of $93,190.20.

Original funds available to SRDC were $1.48 million. We’ve now closed on 100% of our original funds. We’ve closed on 25 C-RLF loans thus far. SRDC no longer needs to submit requests to EDA for funds to close approved COVID-19 RLF loans.

Traditional RLF

Funds Available: Funds on hand, uncommitted, are in the amount of $39,000 (amount does not include November payments), which includes an early loan pay-off from a Redwood County business in the approximate amount of $30,000. The committee has approved, but has not yet closed on, one loan in Jackson County totaling $75,000, which will close in early 2022. A loan recently closed with a Nobles County business in the amount of $60,000. Conversations are occurring with multiple potential loan clients.

Site Visits: Since June 1, fourteen site visits have been conducted and eight stories have been drafted to showcase successful businesses who have utilized the RLF loan. The most common issues among local businesses continue to be supply chain issues, product shortages, employee retention, and a lack of qualified applicants. SRDC’s role of providing the loan, technical assistance in the application process, and education on other governmental loan opportunities has proved fruitful for local businesses.
**Contracted RLFs**

Staff continues to assist inquiries made regarding business start-ups, retentions, and expansions and financing. Staff assists with three additional revolving loan fund programs within the region.

1. **Jackson County RLF:** JCRLF has three active loans. An application in the amount of $100,000 was approved by the committee and county commissioners and will close early 2022. Another application was recently approved in the amount of $75,000 and will close by November month end. There are still available funds for businesses in Jackson County with gap financing needs.

2. **Heron Lake RLF:** HLRLF has two active loans. HLRLF focuses on economic development within a 20-mile radius of Heron Lake. These are Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. SRDC continues to assist them with GMS entry and amortization schedules as requested. An application was recently approved by the committee and city council for an aerial spraying business in the amount of $87,500.

3. **Falcon Development Corporation (FDC):** Information on FDC can be found online at [http://www.swrdc.org/economic-development/falcon-development-corporation/](http://www.swrdc.org/economic-development/falcon-development-corporation/). FDC focuses on economic development improvements in the Heron Lake area. These funds are de-federalized; therefore, Davis Bacon does not apply to construction projects. The committee last met on November 9.

**PROPERTY ASSESSED CLEAN ENERGY (PACE)**

**Funds Available:** Funds are currently available in the approximate amount of $86,000 (PACE ARRA Funds), which includes an early payoff from a Redwood County business, and $266,000 (PACE SEP Funds). Thirty-one loans have closed thus far.

**PACE Committee:** The committee meets as needed or in conjunction with the RMEB. Committee members are Metz, Wildermuth, Wachal, VanDeVerre and Paap.

**General Information:** PACE is available to property owners of small businesses, including agri-businesses and some non-profits based on usage.

**Upcoming Outreach:** Staff is putting together a list of local grocers to conduct outreach to. Once complete, other sectors will be targeted.

Energy assessments/audits are informational to property owners and may be the start to cost saving energy improvements. Contractor estimates and the energy assessment/audit are the two first steps to PACE financing. The PACE application and brochure can be found at [http://rmeb.org/pace.htm](http://rmeb.org/pace.htm).

If you have groups in your area that would benefit from hearing about PACE, please contact Robin.

*If you have questions about the RLF, PACE, or about energy audits, please contact Robin Weis, Deputy Director, at 507-836-1638 or via email at robin@swrdc.org.*
ENERGY

Rural Minnesota Energy Board (RMEB): The next meeting will be November 22 at 1pm. At the November meeting, Fryberger will provide a legislative update, and the board will discuss the issue of counties not receiving any additional revenue for solar projects that are under 1 megawatt.

Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs): Approved Seed Grant projects include:

- Electric Co-ops EV event: $5000
- Bike Local, Shop Local: Developing a Bicycle Incentive Program: $5000
- Clean Energy Educational Programs: $5000
- Solar Thermal Training & Installation: $5000
- MN Solar Collective: $0
- Improving Efficiency in Mobile Homes: $5000
- Energy Justice Pueblitos: $5000
- Bridging the gap-Mobile Grocery Store and Deli: $0

Total $30,000

Electric Co-ops EV Event: Electric Cooperatives in Southwest Minnesota will be hosting an electric vehicle education event. The event will include presentations and/or panel informing attendees about electric vehicles and EV charging. There will be as many different EV models as we can get for participants to see and possibly test drive. The objective is to educate southwest Minnesota residents on electric vehicles and charging options. The Electric cooperatives are South Central Electric, Nobles Electric, Federated, Brown County and Redwood Electric. Together these cooperatives cover almost the entire Southwest CERTS area.

Bike Local, Shop Local: Developing a Bicycle Incentive Program: The focus of our grant will be to adopt a “Bicycling Business Incentive Program” where businesses in downtown Jackson give those who bicycle to work or their business an incentive. The incentive program would be tailored after “Bicycle Benefits” in which participating businesses offer a discount (i.e. 10% of coffee purchase at Starbucks, 25% off a purchase at ACE Hardware) This program would also allow employers to provide employees incentives (i.e. Bicycle Commuter Reimbursement, bicycle shop discounts, etc.). The primary objective is to encourage residents and employees to utilize Jackson’s bicycle infrastructure while also reducing vehicle miles traveled to reduce energy consumption.

Clean Energy Educational Programs: Shetek Lutheran Ministries will develop and provide clean energy educational courses available to participants K-12 and adults, utilizing LED lighting as an example to both course participants and other camp guests. This will create opportunities for connection and engagement and help to advance awareness of regional clean energy initiatives. In addition, by posting accurate information regarding energy and cost savings pertaining to Shetek Lutheran Ministries’ LED lighting, it is hoped that other groups and organizations would be inspired, and investigate clean energy opportunities.

Solar Thermal Training & Installation: Akiing 8th Fire (White Earth) will be creating a partnership with Lower Sioux Indian Community to install Solar Air Furnaces to assist in becoming more energy efficient. This partnership will be between two Tribal Communities who will work together to teach our families how we can address energy independence.
MN Solar Collective: Minnesota Solar Collective intends to allow solar array owners throughout Minnesota to access the Solar Renewable Energy Credits generated by their systems in a tokenized format that enables exchange on an open market. The project design is unique in that it activates stranded decarbonization assets that are otherwise unused by solar array owners outside of utility incentive contracts, like Solar*Rewards with Xcel. Utilizing data from the production meter (and inverter) the system creates a verified resource in a token format that array owners can manage at their own discretion in emerging digital markets. As part of the work owners can subscribe to a managed service as well.

Improving Efficiency in Mobile Homes: North County Cooperatives will assess the energy efficiency of manufactured homes in NCF client cooperatives in partnership with Slipstream; use the assessment data to develop a program concept for a scalable energy efficiency rehab loan and grant program for manufactured/mobile homeowners.

Energy Justice Pueblitos: Unidos MN will conduct a series of train the trainer educational workshops on energy efficiency and electric bill explainers with support from CUB. Our hopes are to establish a cohort of community experts who will then go out in the community in a series of lit drops and doorknocks to engage with the community on energy efficiency resources and tools as well as provide bill consultation to community members.

Bridging the gap-Mobile Grocery Store and Deli: World Mart serves all three census tracts in Worthington MN-1054, 1055 and 1056. It’s a food desert tract. The population, which does not have access locally to cultural appropriate foods-grains (teff), lentils, vegetables, spices, etc. except for our business supplying those needs. The solar system will help store vegetable after collecting them from farmers and it will help keep food safe; the fridge can keep running without pollution of the Atmosphere and we will educate people on clean energy. We could also serve as role model for other food truck to reduce pollution.

Contingency Plan: Should any organization fail to complete projects or spend its allocation in the timeline that CERTS has outlined, that money would then be reallocated, with project approval, to North County Cooperatives and the Lower Sioux projects evenly depending on which project or projects is missing its targets and who could most effectively use the funds in a timely manner.

EV Outreach: For the next 18 months, staff will work with the Great Plains Institute to do events and outreach regarding electric vehicles in Greater Minnesota with a focus on the 12-county SW CERTs region. SRDC signed a contract for $11,000 to do this work. On November 1 staff conducted intercept surveys in Windom, Worthington, Pipestone and Marshall. The next steps are staff training, then working with utilities to then coordinate a peer-to-peer event with dealerships in the region. One of the seed grants is to do an EV event in Windom next August.

Land Use, Planning & Zoning

City of Pipestone Comprehensive Plan Update: The City of Pipestone received a total of 136 responses on their community survey. Staff is currently working with the community on their results and assessing how they line up with the draft goals of their Comprehensive plan.

City of Tracy Comprehensive Plan Update: The City of Tracy launched a community survey that was active from July 2 to August 13. The survey received 331 total responses. SRDC is working with the city to organize focus groups to discuss issues surrounding economic/population growth, Hwy 14 and downtown Tracy corridor, community facilities and amenities, and open spaces/parks. So far, SRDC worked with the City to organize and conduct a focus group with the Parks Committee to speak about open spaces and local connections.
**Solid Waste & Natural Resources**

**Solid Waste Commission:** SRDC arranged for a retreat between Solid Waste Administrators and State agency staff as a kick-off effort for the regional Solid Waste Management Plan. This retreat took place in the SRDC board room with online attendance available. The next Solid Waste Commission meeting is scheduled for November 22.
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT
November 2021
LOCAL ASSISTANCE | COMMUNITY PLANNING | COMMUNICATIONS

LOCAL ASSISTANCE

Friends of the Casey Jones State Trail: The House Capital Investment Committee Tour stopped in Pipestone to talk about the Casey Jones State Trail on October 20. The meeting was moved to the Performing Arts Center due to rain. Representative Schomacker attended and spoke. SRDC Commissioners who attended included Myron Koets, Miron Carney, and Chis Hollingsworth. An article appeared in the Pipestone Star on October 28 regarding the House Capital Investment Committee Tour.

Senator Weber asked that time be given for the Friends to speak to the Senate Capital Investment Committee Tour in Worthington on October 27. Welu was asked to speak on behalf of the Friends and was joined by Friends President Mick Meyers. Senator Dahms was in attendance.

Staff developed a media kit to provide to both Committee Tour groups. On November 4, Welu and Mick Meyers were interviewed by the Tracy Herald in regards to the vision of the Casey Jones State Trail and its impact on economic development in the region. The article will appear in the upcoming issue of the SW Sailor, which goes out region-wide. Staff is also working with the Friends on the development of a monthly column in local newspapers—the Pipestone Star and Tracy Herald have been contacted and are on board thus far. The Friends’ next meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 19 at 11:30am at the Slayton Pizza Ranch and will be the second strategic planning session. Walker and Welu are helping to facilitate the strategic planning.

Communications Assistance: Staff completed a Communications Audit for a current RLF Client in Wabasso. Staff met with the business on November 1 to discuss the audit results and their communication needs. The business has asked about a contract to assist them with updating and restructuring their website and storytelling/content editing. Further discussion on assistance is upcoming.

Staff has submitted a draft contract to the City of Pipestone for Social Media Training for the City’s Human Rights Commission.

The contracted time for SpringBrooke ended October 31. Staff has reached out to the business owners to see if they would like an extension. The general manager that staff was working with is no longer there.

COMMUNITY PLANNING & ACTIVITIES

MADO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Group: The group met on November 3 with Bruce-White and Cheryal Hills (executive Director from Region 5) as meeting hosts. The meeting topic was “Constructive Conflict: Preparing for and making the best use of Conflict”. The next meeting is scheduled for January 5 and members are encouraged to attend the Rural Minnesota Equity Summit being held virtually on November 30 and December 1 from 7:30am-1pm both days. The Rural Minnesota Equity Summit is open to the public and tickets are $60 for both days. Learn more and register for the Summit: https://stpeter.epaytrak.com/2021-Rural-MN-Equity-Summit-P1072.aspx.

SWRSDP Resilient Communities Workgroup: Staff will be attending the Southwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership’s Annual Gathering on November 18 from 9:30-3pm in Granite Falls.
SRDC COMMUNICATIONS

**Newsletter:** The next issue is planned for mid-December. If there is information that you would like shared in the SRDC newsletter, please reach out to staff. An archive of SRDC newsletters can be found at: [http://www.swrdc.org/category/newsletter-archive/](http://www.swrdc.org/category/newsletter-archive/).

**Communications Plan/Certified Public Communicator Training:** During the Board Retreat, the SRDC Board of Directors assisted staff with the prioritization of communication strategies over the next year. Staff will be presenting a final list of priorities and action items at the December Board meeting. This list will then be presented at the January Full Commission meeting.

*If you have questions about the Communications Report, please contact Jessica Welu, Communications Specialist, at 507-836-1644 or via email at jessicaw@swrdc.org.*
AREAS TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIPS (ATP)

ATP 7: MnDOT D7 ATP is scheduled to meet November 12 at 10am via Microsoft Teams.

ATP 8: MnDOT D8 ATP met October met October 15 and is scheduled to meet again December 3.

ATPs have officially kicked off their CHIP cycle and MnDOT districts are working on programming (scheduling and acquiring funds for) the next five years of projects. Local opportunities such as the TAP, Local HSIP, MnDOT HSIP and some local rail safety projects are part of the CHIP cycle and are used to select projects for the next programable year (2026).

Stay updated on MnDOT road projects, construction progress, and detours at [http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadwork/](http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadwork/). The South-Central District (District 7) includes Cottonwood, Jackson, Nobles, and Rock Counties. The Southwest District (District 8) includes Pipestone, Murray, Lincoln, Lyon, and Redwood Counties.

Currently, MnDOT is not holding in-person meetings, and public-outreach is being conducted online through virtual open houses and project websites. SRDC is available to assist in navigating and disseminating information as needed.

Joint SMTP-MnSHIP Equity Work Group

Staff accepted an invitation to serve on the Joint Statewide Multi-Model Transportation Plan (SMTP)-Statewide Highway Improve Plan (SHIP) Equity Work Group. The work group will advise MnDOT on how to use its plans and investments to advance equity throughout Minnesota. SRDC staff, along with other volunteers, co-authored the equity review that will be used for all strategies in the SMTP.

District 7 Freight Plan

Staff accepted an invitation to serve on the MnDOT District 7 Freight Plan Advisory Committee. This committee is an opportunity to provide regional input, perspective, and expertise that will be crucial in shaping the strategies and goals of the freight plan. The committee met October 26 to discuss the consultant’s findings from the latest round of interviews conducted with Trunk Highway stakeholders.

Currently, consultants are identifying needs and issues, reviewing programed projects, and identifying “gaps” between the freight system needs and programmed projects.

Consultants are also currently seeking public input through the following opportunities:

- Open House website: [https://district7freightplan.com/](https://district7freightplan.com/)
- Online Survey: [https://live.metroquestsurvey.com/?u=xo6d6j#!/?p=web&pm=dynamic&s=1&pop-up=WTD](https://live.metroquestsurvey.com/?u=xo6d6j#!/?p=web&pm=dynamic&s=1&pop-up=WTD)

Local Human Services Transit Coordination Plan

Staff presented LHSPTCP at the October RTCC meeting. Staff presented on the timeline, steering committee events and duties, and planning timeline. Staff will follow up with an evaluation of previous efforts in December. Survey and outreach materials will be available in Spanish, Karen, Hmong, and Somali. Public engagement efforts will begin once staff has received the materials submitted to the Office of Transit for translation.
Transportation Planning

Transportation Alternatives Program: Three total Letters of Intent (LOIs) were received from the SRDC Region. Staff immediately reached out to each potential applicant with preliminary notes. So far, one applicant completed an LOI review, and has been recommended to fill out a full TA application.

Portable Counter Borrowing Program: MnDOT has portable counters that are freely available to partner agencies such as cities, counties, MPOs, RDCs, and active transportation advocacy groups. These counters help collect important pedestrian traffic data that can be used to plan projects, apply for funding, and much more. Counters are available through each MnDOT District Office and can be reserved online. More information can be found at https://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike-ped-counting/borrow.html.

Quarterly Transportation Planners Meeting: Transportation Planners from across MADO (and MnDOT districts not represented by an RDO) met November 16-17. The meeting was offered both in person and virtually and covered topics including Active living, MnSHIP, TZD, and more. The next quarterly meeting will line up with the Minnesota Transportation Planners Conference in March 2022.

ACTIVE LIVING & SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS)

Active Living: Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) Community Leadership Teams (CLT)

Active Transportation Program: The Minnesota legislature established an Active Transportation program in 2018 and funded it with $5 million in 2021. The plans are to allocate $3.5 million to infrastructure and the remaining $1.5 million will go toward planning and non-infrastructure projects.

Planning Assistance (Early 2022): This solicitation will offer funding to communities seeking consultant support to complete an active transportation plan. One consultant proposal will be selected to serve all awarded grantees. Consultant proposals are encouraged to sub-contract with Regional Development Organizations if possible.

Non-Infrastructure (Fall 2022): This solicitation will offer funding for engagement, encouragement, demonstration projects, and education to support active transportation in communities around Minnesota.

Infrastructure (Fall 2022): This solicitation will offer funding to construct active transportation improvements in communities.

Engineering Studies (potential future solicitation): As warranted by demand, an engineering studies solicitation may be scheduled to assist communities with engineering work to be better prepare for future infrastructure solicitations.

Safe Routes to School (SRTS): Staff conducted hazard observations and a walk audit for Adrian on October 12. Staff did community engagement activities during parent/teacher conferences on November 9 and 11. Caregiver survey results and student tallies are completed and ready for analysis.

The following grant solicitations are open this fall:

- SRTS Planning Grants
- SRTS Non-infrastructure Boost Grants
- SRTS Infrastructure Grants—Letters of Intent were due October 29
  - Staff are aware of at least three LOIs in our region for Tyler, Jackson, and Adrian. Additionally, Lakefield plans to apply but they did not submit an LOI
Regional Trails Planning

Staff held two kickoff meetings on September 21 and 23 with regional stakeholders to discuss reinvigorating trail planning efforts in the region through a regional trails plan. We had 31 attendees between the two meetings, and several interested stakeholders who were unable to attend but are interested in future participation. During the meetings, we reviewed a draft proposal for the EDA Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation Grant Program and discussed local needs and priorities.

Staff submitted the revised regional trails plan application on October 22 and the EDA scoring committee was scheduled to meet on November 4.
Executive Director’s Report
November 18, 2021

**Sunday, October 17th Highlights**

**Concurrent Learning Lab: Branding and Public Relations for RDOs**

Erica Allison from Formation PR + Branding gave a class on how best to convey the value of the organization to the region through branding and PR. Some of the things discussed during the session:

⇒ Why do I care what the public thinks? Is the general public really one of our audiences? The SRDC has multiple audiences. Priority should be given to those who have the most impact on the success of the organization, elected officials and local government staff.
⇒ What makes a brand successful? Telling the brand’s story; what are we best known for? Probably economic development/loan packaging.
⇒ What do we do really well, but may not be as known for? What do you want to make sure people know you do?
⇒ Measuring ROI, what would not have happened as a result of our facilitation, input, actions?

Ms. Allison then discussed getting ahead of negative stories, holding statements, telling the press that we are aware of an issue but have no comment at this time, buys time to formulate an organized response through our normal media channels.

**Concurrent Learning Lab: A Creative and Arts-Based Approach to Equitable Recovery**

I was originally signed up for the Strategic Planning Learning Lab, but the instructor fell ill and was unable to attend the conference, so I sat in on the first hour or so of this class. The session was about how Arts and Culture can contribute to the recovery and/or to community resiliency. The presenters were Michael Rohd, an artist from the Center for
Performance and Civic Practice in Phoenix, and Jun-Li Wang who attended remotely from Springboard for the Arts in St. Paul. To be honest, most of what they were talking about was aimed at larger agencies with big staffs in areas with large populations and came across as an advertisement for Art-Train, a virtual technical assistance program for municipal agencies, community non-profits, and arts councils.

Midwest Regional Caucus Meeting

The Midwest Caucus met on Sunday afternoon at 3:45. NADO First Vice-President Misty Crosby from Ohio would have typically chaired the meeting, but was called back to Ohio following the death of her father. In her absence, Sheldon Johnson from Spooner, Wisconsin chaired the meeting. In attendance were representatives from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. After being the lone member from Wisconsin, Sheldon let the group know that the RDO in Lacrosse has joined. The RDOs in Wisconsin are trying to get clarification on their tax status with the State, as there are two conflicting definitions in State Statute.

Michigan is also having this issue, as the RDOs in Michigan were formed under one of three different statutes, all of which have separate rules. The representative from Michigan at the caucus said that they were getting good applicants after they increased their pay to be comparable with their private sector counterparts. They also indicated that Michigan’s non-profit sector, which generally ignores the RDOs are suddenly interested now that EDA has all this funding.

In Indiana they are looking at an industrial cluster to help with recovery from the shutdown of coal fired power plants in the rural areas. This is also an issue in southern Illinois as the region struggles to move past its dependence on the coal industry. Also in Indiana, the local units are looking at pooling ARPA resources on a regional basis and hiring a full-time “ARPA Coordinator” to assist communities with ways to utilize the funds.

Monday, October 18th Highlights

Opening Plenary – Regional Economies in a Pandemic World

NADO President Kevin Byrd (Executive Director of the New River Valley Regional Commission in Radford, Virginia), welcomed everyone to the conference. While a smaller conference than usual there were still 300 in attendance, although a vaccine/test requirement and Oregon’s indoor mask mandate likely reduced the numbers, especially for the southerners who don’t think Covid is real.

The Opening Plenary Session was hastily restructured as the opening speaker was scheduled to be the same Strategic Planning guy from Sunday’s Learning Lab. Instead, a panel made up of NADO’s President, NADO’s Executive Director Joe McKinney, Erica, the instructor from the PR/Branding session, and our own Nicole from Region 9, discussed how to manage communications. Kevin said that they put together what he
called Board “cheat sheets” for individual projects. Joe said that agencies need to be relevant to their regions and communications efforts should take into consideration the way that the region wants to be communicated with and that your message is communicated to those who define your relevance. Joe also mentioned that they learned a valuable lesson during NADO’s Livable Communities Project, never lead with something that isn’t. Basically, lead with something positive, not with something you are trying to prevent. Kevin talked about having three salient points going in to an interview, and that if the interviewer asked a question you didn’t want to answer, bring the conversation back to one of your three points.

**Concurrent Session: The American Rescue Plan Act: What are the RDO roles?**

The presenter was Bob Lloyd from Greenville, SC, a policy consultant who has worked with NADO and NADO members for many years on federal legislation. Bob walked us through the ARPA language and recommended we download the Interim Final Guidance from Treasury as well as the SLFRF Compliance and Reporting Guidance. He made it clear that regardless of what the states might think, they cannot add additional requirements to the federal requirements for the ARPA dollars. In the Treasury Department Q and A section, it is stated that “units may pool their funds to work on regional things that meet the purposes of the Act.”

**Plenary Luncheon**

NADO Executive Director Joe McKinney introduced The Honorable Alejandra Castillo, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, the newly appointed head of the EDA. As befits the first Covid conference, Secretary Castillo was unable to attend in person, but instead of a pre-recorded message attended the conference via Zoom and was able to interact with Joe and to take questions from the audience. Secretary Castillo is a relatively new appointment but has a background in economic development and so was a little more up to speed on who and what NADO is and represents.

**Conversation Café: Executive Director Roundtable Discussion about the Post-Pandemic Workplace**

This Roundtable was led by Dave Doran, Executive Director of the Southeast Idaho Council of Governments in Pocatello. We went around the room and talked about the adjustments agencies had made in dealing with the pandemic, especially workforce issues. Many of the Directors in attendance were stressed about how they were going to find workers in the future when their Boards were not allowing staff to work from home and yet new staff, especially younger staff, have the expectation of being able to do work remotely. The market for talent is highly competitive right now and working from home is just one of the flexibilities that can be offered by agencies that can’t compete with the private sector on wages and benefits. Some of the other Directors described how they re-arranged how work gets done and talked about the benefits of being able to recruit talent that they wouldn’t normally be able to attract because of flexibilities in work locations.
Conversation Café: Affordable and Workforce Housing

This Roundtable was led by Tom Bliss, Executive Director of the Southeast Nebraska Development District in Lincoln. The discussion centered on ways that rural communities are trying to increase the availability of housing, especially workforce housing in areas where it is increasingly difficult to cash-flow multi-family units, there is not enough available housing stock, and developers and contractors to actually do the work are in short supply. This seems to be a tremendous issue in the Midwest and across the Great Plains especially. Many RDOs are starting to work in this arena by necessity and there is a lack of experienced staff and knowledge as this has not traditionally been an area of work for most RDOs.

Tuesday, October 19th Highlights

Listening Session: Tackling Your Unique Regional Challenges

NADO Executive Director Joe McKinney and Director of Government Relations Mirielle Burgoyne led a discussion on what NADO can advocate for at the national level that would be the most beneficial to the NADO membership. There was much discussion on the re-authorization of EDA, which hasn’t happened in almost twenty years as well as discussion about increasing the amount of the partnership planning dollars which are allocated to the Economic Development Districts each year. NADO’s goal is to increase the planning grants from the current $70,000 per year to $100,000 per year. The EDDs are uniquely situated in the federal system to disseminate funding on behalf of EDA and will be looked to for assistance assuming the mega infrastructure bill finds its way through Congress. There was much discussion of what this might mean to the EDDS.

Concurrent Session: Expanding Broadband

This session was a little bit of a disappointment, as most of the presenters talked about projects they did pre-Covid and the pandemic has changed the development of Broadband projects and the funding landscape in fundamental ways. The key take away from this session that I think is still valid, is that you have to have good data to refute the claims of the incumbent providers that an area is “served” by their existing services.

Closing Plenary Session: Advocacy during Unprecedented Times

NADO Government Relations Director Mirielle Burgoyne led a panel of NADO lobbyists on how Covid has changed the political advocacy landscape, with most federal offices still being closed to visitors and the inability to meet in person with congressional staff. As with a lot of our work in these times, advocacy has also relied heavily on Zoom and other sharing/meeting technologies. The panel also discussed what the influx of additional federal resources might mean for the work that RDOs do throughout rural America and how we might best position NADO and its members to take advantage of these new resources.
*Meeting locations are tentative. Confirmed meeting locations will be announced prior to all Board of Directors and Full Commission Meetings. Location details will be updated via meeting notices and on the SRDC website (www.swrdc.org).

**FULL COMMISSION**

Thursday, January 13, 2022  
3:30 p.m.  
Murray County 4-H Building, Slayton

Thursday, March 10, 2022  
3:30 p.m.  
Murray County 4-H Building, Slayton

Thursday, May 12, 2022  
3:30 p.m.  
Nobles County (Location TBD)

**SRDC Annual Meeting**

Thursday, July 14, 2022  
4:00 p.m.  
(Location TBD)

Thursday, September 8, 2022  
3:30 p.m.  
Cottonwood County (Location TBD)

Thursday, November 10, 2022  
3:30 p.m.  
SRDC Offices, Slayton

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Thursday, February 10, 2022  
3:30 p.m.  
SRDC Offices, Slayton

Thursday, April 14, 2022  
3:30 p.m.  
SRDC Offices, Slayton

Thursday, June 9, 2022  
3:30 p.m.  
SRDC Offices, Slayton

No August Meeting

Thursday, October 13, 2022  
3:30 p.m.  
SRDC Offices, Slayton

Thursday, December 8, 2022  
3:30 p.m.  
SRDC Offices, Slayton