



HELLO

April

April has arrived, bringing with it the sweet scent of spring and the anticipation of longer, sunnier days.

BOARD MEETING

Thursday, April 11, 2024

3:30 p.m. - SRDC Board Room





Southwest Regional Development Commission

Commissioner

Rick Anderson
 Bob Byrnes
 Miron Carney
 Keith Elbers
 Donna Gravley
 Eric Hartman
 Chris Hollingsworth
 Dennis Klingbile
 Paul Langseth
 Richard Peterson
 Bob Van Hee
 Rick VonHoldt
 Dennis Welgraven

Representing

Lyon County
 City of Marshall
 Murray County, Immediate Past Chair
 Rock County, SRDC Secretary
 Cottonwood County
 Region 8 School Boards
 Pipestone County
 Lincoln County
 Nobles County, SRDC Chair
 Jackson County, SRDC Treasurer
 Redwood County
 City of Worthington
 Murray County, SRDC Vice-Chair

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.





SRDC
BOARD MEETING

Thursday, April 11, 2024
3:30 pm

SRDC Board Room
2401 Broadway Ave, Slayton, MN

AGENDA

#	Time		Page
1	3:30	Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance	
2	3:31	Introductions	
4	3:37	Consent Agenda Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February Receipts & Expenditures • Resolution for SRTS Planning Assistance Grant Action Needed: Approval of Consent Agenda Items	5-8 9
5	3:40	Finance Reports — <i>Treasurer Peterson & Finance Director Nelson</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treasurer’s Report, including bank accounts & investments • Administrative February 2024 Action Needed: Approval of Treasurer’s Report Action Needed: Approval of Administrative Report	H-1 10
6	3:45	Project Reviews — <i>Transportation Planner Webb</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracy Ambulance Service Action Needed: Accept Project Review	11
7	3:50	Budget & Personnel Committee Report	
8	3:55	Legislative Report – <i>Chair Miron Carney</i>	
9	4:00	Deep Dive: State Competitiveness Grant – <i>Community Development Director Walker</i>	
10	4:20	Executive Director’s Report — <i>Executive Director Trusty</i>	21
11	4:30	Chairman’s Report — <i>Chairman Langseth</i>	
12	4:40	Unfinished Business	
13	4:45	New Business	
14	4:50	Other Issues	

15	4:55	<p>Annual Meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SRDC's Awards Committee will need to be appointed by the Chairman for Project/Program of the Year <p>Action Needed: Chairman makes Committee Appointments</p>
16	5:05	<p>Announcements</p> <p>SRDC vacancies exist from the following representation: Murray County and Pipestone County Townships along with a Minority Rep.</p> <p>SRDC Full Commission Meeting: Thursday, May 9, 2024 Balaton Community Center</p> <p>The SRDC will be closed Monday, May 27th in observance of Memorial Day</p> <p>SRDC Board Meeting: Thursday, June 13, 2024</p> <p>The SRDC will be closed Wednesday, June 19th in observance of Juneteenth</p> <p>SRDC Annual Meeting: Thursday, July 11 – Windom Community Center</p>
17	5:10	<p>Adjourn</p> <p><i>***Written Planner Reports are located on pages 12 through 21 of the meeting packet. For questions or additional information regarding report information, please contact staff.***</i></p>

OUR VISION

The vision of the Southwest Regional Development Commission is to channel progressive collaboration between cities, counties, and townships so that shared knowledge and resources can be used to help the region prepare for a future where people and businesses thrive.



If we are successful, the region will see:

- A growing workforce & business base
- Population stability
- Better lives for those living in the region
- Solutions to regional challenges



2401 Broadway Ave., Slayton, MN
507-836-8547

Southwest Regional Development Commission
 Check/Voucher Register - Check Register
 From 2/1/2024 Through 2/29/2024

Session ID	Check N...	Document...	Vendor Name	Transaction Description	Check Amount	Effective Date
CD021224	008	2/25/2024		Jan 2024 Wex Admin Fees	22.00	2/25/2024
PRS020824	020824 1	2/5/2024	Nadya N. Bucklin	Employee: BucklinN; Pay Date: 2/8/2024	1,877.66	2/5/2024
PRS020824	020824 10	2/5/2024	Robin R. Weis	Employee: WeisR; Pay Date: 2/8/2024	2,353.63	2/5/2024
PRS020824	020824 2	2/5/2024	Sheila F. Crowley	Employee: CrowleyS; Pay Date: 2/8/2024	1,582.63	2/5/2024
PRS020824	020824 3	2/5/2024	Jodi L. Klein	Employee: KleinJ; Pay Date: 2/8/2024	1,393.35	2/5/2024
PRS020824	020824 4	2/5/2024	Melissa Nelson	Employee: MansonM; Pay Date: 2/8/2024	1,856.99	2/5/2024
PRS020824	020824 5	2/5/2024	Kimberly Murphy	Employee: MurphyK; Pay Date: 2/8/2024	1,600.08	2/5/2024
PRS020824	020824 6	2/5/2024	Kathleen M. Schreiber	Employee: SchreiberK; Pay Date: 2/8/2024	1,704.55	2/5/2024
PRS020824	020824 7	2/5/2024	Jayme I. Trusty	Employee: TrustyJ; Pay Date: 2/8/2024	3,540.91	2/5/2024
PRS020824	020824 8	2/5/2024	Jason L. Walker	Employee: WalkerJ; Pay Date: 2/8/2024	2,470.85	2/5/2024
PRS020824	020824 9	2/5/2024	Christopher S. Webb	Employee: WebbC; Pay Date: 2/8/2024	1,677.69	2/5/2024
APS022224 ...	022224 1	2/22/2024	Keith A. Elbers	Keith Elbers 2/8/24 Meeting	130.40	2/22/2024
APS022224 ...	022224 2	2/22/2024	Paul Langseth	Paul Langseth 2/8/24 Meeting	98.24	2/22/2024
APS022224 ...	022224 3	2/22/2024	Richard Anderson	Richard Anderson 2/8/24 Meeting	80.82	2/22/2024
APS022224 ...	022224 4	2/22/2024	Robert J. Byrnes	Robert Byrnes 2/8/24 Meeting	92.88	2/22/2024
APS022224 ...	022224 5	2/22/2024	Robert H. Van Hee	Bob Van Hee 2/8/24 Meeting	143.80	2/22/2024
PRS022224	22224 1	2/22/2024	Nadya N. Bucklin	Employee: BucklinN; Pay Date: 2/22/2024	1,907.33	2/22/2024
PRS022224	22224 10	2/22/2024	Robin R. Weis	Employee: WeisR; Pay Date: 2/22/2024	2,294.09	2/22/2024
PRS022224	22224 2	2/22/2024	Sheila F. Crowley	Employee: CrowleyS; Pay Date: 2/22/2024	1,584.17	2/22/2024
PRS022224	22224 3	2/22/2024	Jodi L. Klein	Employee: KleinJ; Pay Date: 2/22/2024	1,394.90	2/22/2024
PRS022224	22224 4	2/22/2024	Melissa Nelson	Employee: MansonM; Pay Date: 2/22/2024	1,827.20	2/22/2024
PRS022224	22224 5	2/22/2024	Kimberly Murphy	Employee: MurphyK; Pay Date: 2/22/2024	1,601.63	2/22/2024
PRS022224	22224 6	2/22/2024	Kathleen M. Schreiber	Employee: SchreiberK; Pay Date: 2/22/2024	1,706.09	2/22/2024
PRS022224	22224 7	2/22/2024	Jayme I. Trusty	Employee: TrustyJ; Pay Date: 2/22/2024	3,564.95	2/22/2024
PRS022224	22224 8	2/22/2024	Jason L. Walker	Employee: WalkerJ; Pay Date: 2/22/2024	2,475.45	2/22/2024
PRS022224	22224 9	2/22/2024	Christopher S. Webb	Employee: WebbC; Pay Date: 2/22/2024	1,639.53	2/22/2024
APS020124	60488	2/1/2024	Abila	Abila Multiple Clouds 2/26/24 to 3/25/24	760.53	2/1/2024
APS020124	60489	2/1/2024	ACE of SW MN	1st Qtr 2022 IRS Penalty Refund	27.86	2/1/2024
APS020124	60490	2/1/2024	AFLAC	Aflac 1/25/2024	225.12	2/1/2024
APS020124	60491	2/1/2024	Bluepeak	Bluepeak 1/24/24 to 2/23/24	121.39	2/1/2024
APS020124	60492	2/1/2024	Dust Tex Service Inc.	Dust-Tex Paper Towels	67.34	2/1/2024
APS020124	60493	2/1/2024	Northwest Gas	NW Gas 12/22/23 to 1/18/24	418.50	2/1/2024
APS020124	60494	2/1/2024	One Office Solution	One Office Meter Reading 12/25/23 to 1/20/24	117.71	2/1/2024
APS020124	60495	2/1/2024	The Computer Man, Inc.	In-house tech labor: Upgrade GMS RLSS	125.00	2/1/2024
APS020124	60495	2/1/2024	The Computer Man, Inc.	Update Fed Trust Cert, inst update vCenter server, printers	500.00	2/1/2024
APS020724	60496	2/7/2024	AFLAC	Aflac 2/7/24	225.12	2/7/2024
APS020724	60497	2/7/2024	City of Slayton	City of Slayton 12/31/23 to 1/23/24	46.00	2/7/2024

Southwest Regional Development Commission
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Session ID	Check N...	Document...	Vendor Name	Transaction Description	Check Amount	Effective Date
AP5020724	60498	2/7/2024	Culligan Water Conditioning	Culligan: Water and cooler rental	47.40	2/7/2024
AP5020724	60499	2/7/2024	Darren Veldhuisen	Darren Veldhuisen snow removal 1-6 through 1-22-24	510.00	2/7/2024
AP5020724	60500	2/7/2024	Grants Management Systems ...	GMS: Monthly license & warranty, service & support	140.00	2/7/2024
AP5020724	60501	2/7/2024	MN Association of County Plan...	MACPZA 2024 Membership Dues	80.00	2/7/2024
AP5020724	60502	2/7/2024	NADO	2024 NADO Registration	1,370.00	2/7/2024
AP5020724	60503	2/7/2024	Quill Corporation	Avery round color coding labels, kleenex	27.70	2/7/2024
AP5020724	60504	2/7/2024	Schaap Sanitation	Schaap 2/1/24 to 2/29/24	93.22	2/7/2024
AP5020724	60505	2/7/2024	Slayton EDA	Lease February 2024	4,848.63	2/7/2024
AP5020724	60506	2/7/2024	SRDC	Explore SW Finance Dec 2023	40.00	2/7/2024
AP5021524	60507	2/15/2024	Allen Jensen	FDC Annual Mtg: Allen Jensen 2/7/24	50.00	2/15/2024
CD021324 B...	60507	2/20/2024		BCBS Mar 2024 - prem reflects new additions for 2024	16,453.55	2/20/2024
AP5021524	60508	2/15/2024	Chandler Co-Op	Chandler Coop Jan 2024	85.65	2/15/2024
AP5021524	60509	2/15/2024	Dave Schreiber	Dave Schreiber: Fill holes and paint in office	210.00	2/15/2024
AP5021524	60510	2/15/2024	Frontier Communications	Frontier 2/4/24 to 3/3/24	858.20	2/15/2024
AP5021524	60511	2/15/2024	Jason Nielsen	Jason Nielsen 1/16/2024 FDC Mtg	50.00	2/15/2024
AP5021524	60512	2/15/2024	Jeremy D. Janssen	FDC Annual Mtg: Jeremy Janssen 2/7/24	50.00	2/15/2024
AP5021524	60513	2/15/2024	John Hay	FDC Annual Meeting: John Hay 2/7/24	50.00	2/15/2024
AP5021524	60514	2/15/2024	Kevin Leopold	FDC Annual Mtg: Kevin Leopold 2/7/24	50.00	2/15/2024
AP5021524	60515	2/15/2024	Nichole Johnson	Nichole Johnson, Ind Contractor Explore SW 1/17 to 1/18/24	150.00	2/15/2024
AP5021524	60516	2/15/2024	Quill Corporation	Quill: Bath tissue	73.79	2/15/2024
AP5021524	60517	2/15/2024	Region Nine Development Co...	MADO conference - SRDC portion	454.02	2/15/2024
AP5021524	60518	2/15/2024	SRDC	Falcon Oct - Dec 2023	1,138.06	2/15/2024
AP5021524	60519	2/15/2024	Steven Bornhoft	FDC Annual Mtg: Steven Bornhoft 2/7/24	50.00	2/15/2024
AP5021524	60520	2/15/2024	Tracy L. Freking	FDC Annual Mtg: Tracy Freking 2/7/24	50.00	2/15/2024
AP5021524	60521	2/15/2024	Verizon Wireless	Verizon 2/2/24 to 3/1/24	41.06	2/15/2024
AP5021524	60522	2/15/2024	XCEL Energy	Xcel 1/6/24 to 2/5/24	53.56	2/15/2024
AP5022824	60523	2/28/2024	Abila	Abila Multiple Clouds 3/26/24 to 4/25/24	760.53	2/28/2024
AP5022824	60524	2/28/2024	Above the Fold	Tracy Headlight Herald 13 month subscription	69.00	2/28/2024
AP5022824	60525	2/28/2024	AFLAC	Aflac 2/20/24	225.12	2/28/2024
AP5022824	60526	2/28/2024	Bluepeak	Bluepeak Internet and Telephone 2/24/24 to 3/23/24	120.69	2/28/2024
AP5022824	60527	2/28/2024	Buffalo Ridge Newspapers, LLC	Tyler Tribute Subscription	55.00	2/28/2024
AP5022824	60528	2/28/2024	Cardmember Services	Cardmember Services 1/17/24 to 2/14/24	2,776.13	2/28/2024

Southwest Regional Development Commission

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Session ID	Check N...	Document...	Vendor Name	Transaction Description	Check Amount	Effective Date
APS022824	60529	2/28/2024	City of Balaton	Community Center rental for May 9, 2024 Full Commission Mtg	75.00	2/28/2024
APS022824	60530	2/28/2024	DCL Auto Parts, Inc.	CRLF Loan Disbursement: DCL Auto Parts, Inc.	71,500.00	2/28/2024
APS022824	60531	2/28/2024	Fleet Services Division	Monthly Lease Rent 1/1/24 to 1/31/24	540.12	2/28/2024
APS022824	60532	2/28/2024	Marilyn Samuelson	Marilyn Samuelson Janitorial Services Feb 2024	800.00	2/28/2024
APS022824	60533	2/28/2024	Minnesota Trails Magazine	Explore SW: Minnesota Trails Magazine 1/3 pg ad	2,770.20	2/28/2024
APS022824	60534	2/28/2024	Murray County News	Murray Co News/Fulda Free Press subscription	52.00	2/28/2024
APS022824	60535	2/28/2024	NCPEKS Group Life Ins.	NCPEKS 3/1/24 to 3/31/24	48.00	2/28/2024
APS022824	60536	2/28/2024	Pizza Ranch #7801	Dessert and Coffee for Board Mtg 2/8/24	59.82	2/28/2024
APS022824	60537	2/28/2024	Windom Community Center	Windom Comm Center rental for July 2024 Annual Mtg	150.00	2/28/2024
Report Total					150,282.84	

Resolution for SRTS Planning Assistance Grant

WHEREAS, the Southwest Regional Development Commission is the designated regional transportation agency for Southwest Minnesota/Planning Region 8

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School Program assists schools and communities by making it safe for children to walk and bicycle to school; and

WHEREAS, the Minnesota Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School Program solicits application to enable schools and communities to implement Safe Routes to School planning activities; and

WHEREAS, the Southwest Regional Development Commission was awarded planning funds to provide planning assistance to local communities to develop Safe Routes to School plans that increase safety and encourage more children to walk and bicycle to school; and

WHEREAS, no local match funding is required; and

WHEREAS, planning will commence after the contract is finalized through June 30th, 2025.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED;

1. That the Southwest Regional Development Commission authorizes the Executive Director to enter into an agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to complete Safe Routes to School plan.
2. That the Executive Director is authorized to execute such Agreement and any amendments without further approval by the Board of Directors.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution is a true and correct copy of the resolution presented to and adopted by the Southwest Regional Development Commission at a duly authorized meeting thereof held on the 11th day of April, 2024 by the minutes of said meeting.

Paul Langseth, SRDC Chairman

Jayme Trusty, SRDC Executive Director

Date: _____



Southwest Regional Development Commission

Month End February 2024 Fiscal Year 2024

YTD Comparison % of Budget

66.67

	FY24 Budget					Year to Date			Under / Over Budget	% of Overall Budget	Explanation/Comments
	July - September	October - December	January	February	March	January - March	Year to Date	Year to Date			
Revenues											
Taxes	443,445	1,022.58	182,016.78	255,597.66	0.00	255,597.66	438,637.02	4,807.98	98.9%	When current taxes received, payments primarily received in Dec and Jun	
Contract for Services	202,935	26,712.01	43,667.71	11,820.40	18,125.45	29,945.85	100,325.57	102,609.43	49.4%	Based on activity earned to date.	
MnDOT-Regional	75,000	0.00	37,500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	37,500.00	37,500.00	50.0%	Based on Billings Yearly amt is \$75000	
Economic Development Adm	70,000	14,133.26	17,333.29	3,008.05	3,819.05	6,827.10	38,293.65	31,706.35	54.7%	Grant Earned (Federal share)	
EDA Trails Grant	150,000	4,919.28	15,910.15	6,743.19	5,796.24	12,539.43	33,368.86	116,631.14	22.2%	Based on activity earned to date. (Federal share)	
RLF Admin (Covid & Regular)	60,000	16,442.03	16,286.53	4,786.89	5,316.15	10,103.04	42,831.60	17,168.40	71.4%	Based on activity earned to date.	
CERT's Funds	70,910	15,207.73	44,321.50	9,758.12	4,116.45	13,874.57	73,403.80	-2,493.80	103.5%	Based on activity earned to date - main Certs (not subprojects), includes seed grants (additional funds for seed grants, which equals more time)	
PACE loan orig/nt/misc	19,184	78.32	11,662.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	11,740.65	7,443.35	61.2%	Loan int/loan orig fee mostly received in Dec and June (code 4656/4321)	
USDA Food Grant	60,000	15,000.00	15,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	30,000.00	30,000.00	50.0%	Based on Billings (800 hours at \$75/hr for the year)	
Interest & Miscellaneous	6,800	2,254.04	5,070.01	1,881.87	819.46	2,701.33	10,025.38	-3,225.38	147.4%	Bank int/loan orig fee **Bank interest is coming in higher than estimated**	
Total Revenues	1,158,274	95,769.25	388,768.30	293,596.18	37,992.80	331,588.98	816,126.53	342,147.47	70.5%		
Expenditures											
Committee Expenses	30,300	6,691.31	11,788.75	1,581.14	2,172.18	3,753.32	22,233.38	8,066.62	73.4%		
Salaries & Fringe	984,339	166,574.63	263,644.36	81,063.63	75,532.25	156,595.88	586,814.87	397,524.13	59.6%	October includes unemployment paid	
Travel	55,000	12,804.19	14,899.65	2,723.97	2,693.41	5,417.38	33,121.22	21,878.78	60.2%		
Office Space Costs	44,194	2,184.21	2,293.98	958.59	692.44	1,651.03	6,129.22	38,064.78	13.9%		
Postage (on hand, not including Hsg Reimb)	4,863	84.92	1,029.97	9.99	1,009.99	1,019.98	2,134.87	2,728.13	43.9%		
Communications	6,819	1,277.92	1,224.74	401.42	401.42	802.84	3,305.50	3,513.50	48.5%		
Printing/Publication	20,504	5,258.12	5,147.39	3,036.93	3,195.29	6,232.22	16,637.73	3,866.27	81.1%	copier/printer too **this includes advertising/hiring for 4 positions**	
Insurance	5,917	0.00	94.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	94.00	5,823.00	1.6%	Insurance dividend/Building Insurance	
Supplies	17,000	906.35	3,550.78	178.97	693.94	872.91	5,330.04	11,689.96	31.4%		
Program Supply (Trails EDA)	0	0.00	840.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	840.00	-840.00	#DIV/0!	Reimbursed by Trails EDA	
Program Supply (City of Hills)	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	28.96	28.96	28.96	-28.96	#DIV/0!	Reimbursed by Hills Strategic Plan	
Computer	37,750	11,399.45	5,442.92	1,231.41	984.53	2,215.94	19,058.31	18,691.69	50.5%		
Audits	40,000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	40,000.00	0.0%		
Consultant/Contracted Services/Legal	2,750	746.25	1,559.72	227.86	190.00	417.86	2,723.83	26.17	99.0%	**Includes payments to Dianne Crowley for helping + Nichole Johnson-Explore SW** Did not know what to estimate for them	
Dues/Memberships & Other	7,200	1,000.00	3,000.00	14.63	360.68	375.31	4,375.31	2,824.69	60.8%		
Financing Fees & Expenses	5,500	174.87	2,531.17	0.00	55.00	55.00	2,761.04	2,738.96	50.2%		
Equipment/Building Updates	31,207	9,029.36	258.26	0.00	84.00	84.00	9,371.62	21,835.38	30.0%		
PACE loan interest paid	508	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	508.00	0.0%	Paid in December and June **an amt will be in January 2024**	
Debt Service:Prin. & Int.	11,633	0.00	8,080.99	0.00	0.00	0.00	8,080.99	3,552.01	69.5%	Paid in December	
Building Lease Principal Pymt	23,085	5,370.01	5,445.04	1,831.82	1,840.29	3,672.11	14,487.16	8,597.84	62.8%	Our portion of lease pymt	
Total Expenditures	1,328,569	223,501.59	330,831.72	93,260.36	89,934.38	183,194.74	737,528.05	591,040.95	55.5%		
Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	-170,295	-127,732.34	57,936.58	200,335.82	-51,941.58		78,598				

78,598

Southwest Regional Development Commission Project Review

Agenda Item: 6

Meeting Date: April 11, 2024

Project Name: Tracy Ambulance Service, 2024 Ambulance Purchase - USDA Rural Development

Project Description:

The Tracy Ambulance Service is seeking funding for the purchase of a new 2024 Ford 350 Super Duty Ambulance. The non-profit applied to USDA Rural Development for a \$50,000 grant and the remainder of the purchase price (\$308,000) to be financed through USDA RD.

Staff Comments:

- The Tracy Ambulance Service provides service to 9 townships and the City of Tracy.
- If grant money is unavailable, then the entire purchase price of the new vehicle will be financed through USDA RD.
- Staff supports the Tracy Ambulance Service's application for a new 2024 Ambulance.

Project Review Time: 1 hours

Income to the SRDC for this Review: \$0

Reviewer: Chris Webb, Transportation Planner

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

April 2024
CEDS | EDA PLANNING



COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

Our current CEDS can be found at <http://www.swrdc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/CEDS-2022-2027.pdf>. CEDS in MN across the EDA (Economic Development Administration) Economic Development Districts (EDDs) follow the format of the Minnesota Association of Development Organizations (MADO) DevelopMN. The latest DevelopMN can be found at <http://www.mnado.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/DevelopMN-1.pdf>. Every five years, EDA requires an updated CEDS for the region. Our next CEDS is due 12/31/2026.

EDA PLANNING

EDGE: EDA has moved from grantsonline to EDGE for grant management. EDA also recently moved from grant.gov to EDGE for grant submission.

EDA Investment Opportunities: Priorities can be found at <https://eda.gov/about/investment-priorities/>. Priorities include Equity, Recovery and Resilience, Workforce Development, Manufacturing, Technology-Based Economic Development, Environmentally Sustainable Development, and Exports and Foreign Direct Investment. EDA Funding opportunities can be found at Home (eda.gov).

The city of Adrian is in communication with SRDC and EDA about resubmitting their application for an electric substation under the public works NOFO. Max grant award would be 50% versus 80% under the disaster NOFO.

Childcare Technical Assistance: A latest request for proposal for the DEED Childcare Economic Development grant was due 3/12/24. More information can be found at Child Care Economic Development / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (mn.gov). SRDC met with WWG Little Chargers Daycare Center and City of Tyler regarding this opportunity. Tyler submitted an application.

Southwest Minnesota Youth Committee: The Career and Technical Education Committee meets quarterly to support programs and educate students and parents about training opportunities. Its last meeting was on February 1st, and the next meeting is scheduled for May 2nd.

Southwest Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC): The group last met on December 20 and their next meeting date is yet to be determined. SRDC represents economic development on the council. Recently, there was an advocacy effort to pass PCA driver legislation, which has successfully passed. This work has been ongoing for several years and is a great victory for the aging and disabled community.

Friends in the Field: The group last met on January 10 with a focus on shared power. The group next meets on April 10 with a focus on Housing.

Southwest and South-Central Regional Community and Economic Developers Meeting: DEED once again activated this group with Lisa Hughes as the primary contact. The group last met March 21.

Career Expo: 2024 Career Expo is September 24 at SMSU in Marshall and September 25 at MinnesotaWest in Worthington. SRDC participates in the Career Expo by facilitating the "Career is Right."

AURI New Uses Forum: This year the location is Mankato on April 9 with a pre-conference tour in Waseca at AURI's new Bio-industrial Innovation Center on April 8. More information can be found at New Uses Forum 2024: Bioindustrial Innovations and Opportunities - AURI.

RLF Recapitalization: The City of Mountain Lake approached SRDC to recapitalize their RLF using state competitiveness funds to research options within USDA. City staff are currently weighing their options.

Murray/Lyon CEO: SRDC assisted with draft business plans including initial budgets on March 5.

SRDC

Providing Professional Expertise and Leadership to Enhance Regional Opportunities

SRDC works in partnership with local, state and federal agencies to provide planning, guidance, technical assistance and services to the region. We're passionate about partnering with communities, organizations, community groups, regional stakeholders, and local leadership to create vibrant, attractive, and resilient communities, and we do this through providing individualized community and economic development services.

Technical Assistance Services

- ✓ Federal EDA Planning & Grant Packaging
- ✓ Workforce Development Collaboration
- ✓ Grant Research
- ✓ Project Management
- ✓ Community Engagement/Visioning
- ✓ Policy Development & Advocacy
- ✓ Economic Resiliency Planning
- ✓ Strategic Planning
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REVOLVING LOAN FUND (RLF) REPORT

April 2024

COVID-19 RLF | TRADITIONAL RLF | CONTRACTED RLF | PACE

RLF

The committee consists of five members and meets as needed. The committee covers both the COVID-19 RLF and Traditional RLF. The committee last met on March 26. One loan application was considered and approved.

Interest Rates: EDA’s guideline for minimum interest rate is 4% under prime, which equates to 4.5% currently, or 75% of prime, whichever is less. SRDC RLF has been using 75% of the WSJ (Wall Street Journal) Prime Rate for recent loans, which adheres to regulations governing RLF awards.

Application and Checklist: The Application (fillable — same application for both RLF programs) and Requirements Checklist (this is currently being updated to include both SRDC RLF and COVID-19) are online and can be found at <http://www.swrdc.org/economic-development/revolving-loan-funds/>.

COVID-19 RLF (C-RLF)

Funds Available: Funds on hand are in the approximate amount of \$170,606.19 (as of 3/6/2024). This amount does not account for our latest loan approval on March 26 with a Pipestone County business of \$50,000. These funds will remain federalized until seven years have passed. Reporting is required twice per year.

Traditional RLF

Funds Available: Funds on hand are in the approximate amount of \$289,209.93 (as of 3/6/2024). These funds are defederalized.

Site Visits

Staff are scheduling site visits. Site visits are required every three years; however, they are done more often as the need arises. Site visits will be combined with communication audits and interviews for storytelling. Success stories can now be found at <http://www.swrdc.org/economic-development/revolving-loan-funds/rlf-business-spotlights/>.

MINNESOTA BUSINESS FINANCE CORPORATION SPRING FORUM

SRDC will be attending to learn more about SBA 504.

CDFA ADVANCED RLF COURSE

SRDC will be presenting on a panel during the Portfolio Management session on May 16.

Contracted RLFs

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

Jackson County RLF: There are six active loans. Approximately \$125,000 is available for lending.

Heron Lake RLF: 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. There are funds available for businesses in their service area that have gap financing needs.

Falcon Development Corporation (FDC): Information on FDC can be found online at <https://www.swrdc.org/revolving-loan-funds/>. FDC focuses on economic development improvements within a 30-mile radius of Heron Lake. These funds are de-federalized; therefore, Davis Bacon does not apply to construction projects. Interest rates can now be as low as 75% of prime. The FDC Board now has 7 members, which is the maximum. The FDC committee will next meet on May 1 at 9 a.m. at the Heron Lake City Hall. Approximately \$25,000 is available for lending.

If you have questions about the business lending via SRDC RLF or its contracted RLFs, please contact Robin Weis, Deputy Director, at 507-836-1638 or via email at robin@swrdc.org.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

Funding Opportunities for Businesses and Entrepreneurs

SRDC administers several funding opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs in Southwest Minnesota. Financing from the SRDC makes projects possible when gap financing or up-front funds are not available. Two primary funding opportunities include the SRDC Revolving Loan (RLF) and Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)

SRDC
SOUTHWEST REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

2401 Broadway Ave
Slayton, MN
507-836-8547

For more information check out the website at www.swrdc.org



PROPERTY ASSESSED CLEAN ENERGY (PACE) REPORT

April 2024



PACE is available to small businesses, agri-businesses, and some non-profits based on usage. Spread the word about PACE to property owners looking to reduce their energy usage.

Funds Available: Funds are currently available in the approximate amount of PACE ARRA \$145,280.30 (as of 2-29-24) and PACE SEP \$137,607.02 (as of 2-29-24). These amounts do not account for the three applications that were considered and approved on 3/20/24, nor the one application that was considered and approved on 3/25/24, collectively totaling \$122,600. One PACE loan closing is scheduled for 4/2/24 in Redwood Falls for \$17,000 of heating and insulation improvements.

PACE Committee: The committee meets as needed, often in conjunction with RMEB (Rural Minnesota Energy Board) meeting dates. Committee members are Metz, Wildermuth, Wachal, VanDeVere, and Paap. Interest rates for new projects are set at 3% under Prime, with a floor of 3%.

C-PACE Statewide Discussions: The MN Department of Commerce is working to expand commercial PACE programs in MN. The DOC included within their application non-competitive funds of \$300,000 to expand the financing capacity of the RMEB PACE program. DOC has recently indicated a delay.

Energy Audits: Energy assessments/audits are informational to property owners and may be the start to cost-saving energy improvements. MN DOC is working on increasing access to energy auditors. Contractor estimates and the energy assessment/audit are the two first steps to PACE financing. There has been an increase in the number of recent referrals made to RETAP, MN-TAP, CEE, EnergySmart, USDA REAP, and MDA Good Food Access Program.

Upcoming Presentation: SRDC was available in St. James for their EDA lunch and Learn on March 21. Contact staff if you have other groups in the region that would be appropriate.

Ways to Make Cents: SRDC provided information to a CERTs SEED Grant project on PACE projects and advocates as they prepare an upcoming series that hopes to inspire people to become local clean energy champions.

Are you looking to cut your energy bill?

PACE Loans are a new way to finance energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades to buildings of commercial property owners, industrial and agri-business.



Energy saving measures are repaid on property tax assessment which eliminates burden of upfront costs providing low-cost, long-term financing



- Heating/Cooling
- Lighting
- Refrigeration
- Insulation • Air Sealing



- Solar Energy Systems
- Wind Turbines
- Geothermal



This Program is administered by the SRDC on behalf of the Rural Minnesota Energy Board.

COUNTIES SERVED

- Blue Earth •Brown •Cottonwood •Faribault •Freeborn •Jackson •Lincoln •Lyon •Martin •Mower •Murray •Nicollet •Nobles •Pipestone •Redwood •Renville •Rock •Watonwan

PACE Success Stories

A few recent success stories can be found at <https://www.swrdc.org/broadway-beauty-salon/> and <https://www.swrdc.org/tally-ho-koffee/>.

The PACE application that includes a checklist can be found at <http://rmeb.org/pace.htm>.

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



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

April 2024

ENERGY | LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING | SOLID WASTE & NATURAL RESOURCES
USDA REGIONAL FOOD BUSINESS CENTER

ENERGY

Rural Minnesota Energy Board (RMEB): The RMEB met on March 25, 2024, at 1 PM. Topics covered included possible changes to the PACE program, grant opportunities, potential site permitting reform, approval of the Lake Wilson solar project, and a growing opposition group called Tactical Civics that has been organizing in Rock County. The next meeting will be the tour of the West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris, MN on June 3rd.

Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs):

Seed Grants: The projects funded include: three lighting upgrade projects – two in Slayton (at the library/senior center and in the 4-H building) and one in the Comfrey municipal building, a manufactured home building basics training project by Slipstream, an air-source heat pump feasibility assessments project by SWMHP, a home education and energy saving program by UCAP, and an energy efficiency video storytelling project by Erika Gilsdorf.

Seed grants are for projects that:

- Help people learn about clean energy and get energized.
- Build community by engaging a variety of partners.
- Remove barriers, making clean energy more accessible for everyone.
- Are highly visible in the community and can be an example for other communities.

World Mart – Work on completing the battery and modular solar panel installations is still under way. The plan is to install the battery system by the end of March. In order to give plenty of time to monitor and assess how the battery system is functioning, the mounting of the solar panels will not happen before the original project deadline in June. The team will need time to monitor the system and do adequate research on appropriate panels before a decision can be made on the type of solar panels that need to be installed. This will also give the engineering students involved in the project an opportunity for educational research and will give the team valuable information to share with other food truck vendors.

RSDP Idea Briefs

RSDP has had meetings in their four focus areas, to discuss the submitted idea briefs. Most of the idea briefs submitted this year have been from the West Central region. The projects that are being voted on to submit full proposals are: Morris model – Battery storage research, MMDC – Energy Resource Guides, MnTAP – Energy Efficiency and Waste Reduction for Grocers, Rauenhurst Farm Agrivoltaics.

Idea brief proposals are for projects that can improve sus-

tainability in communities, by addressing a community-identified need or opportunity related to one or more of RSDP's focus areas: sustainable agriculture and food systems, clean energy, natural resources, and resilient communities. It should expand community collaborations and support environmental, social, and economic sustainability for public purpose or benefit. Priority is for projects that are from, led by, or that include meaningful participation of historically underrepresented communities. Ideas can be submitted directly on the RSDP website.

RSDP Empowering Small MN Communities (ESMC)

The ESMC program had several applications from Southwest MN communities. Comfrey, Edgerton, Tyler, Lamberton, Currie, and Lynd were among them. More to come on the actual projects in future updates.

The Empowering Small Minnesota Communities (ESMC) program is a community-centered collaboration with the University of Minnesota to support small communities in becoming well-positioned to benefit from federal, state, and local investments. Several University of Minnesota partners will work directly with participating communities to creatively leverage community assets and ideas and strengthen projects and plans for resilient physical, social, and economic infrastructure. This partnership will lay the groundwork for competitive proposals that could be eligible for a variety of funding opportunities. Communities with a population of under 15000 are eligible, with prioritized communities of 5000 or under.

CERT Steering Committee Updates

The first steering committee meeting of 2024 took place on February 15. The committee discussed updates and various outreach opportunities, as well as the structure of future meetings. The next meeting is May 9, at 10:30am. The committee will also be looking to add to its membership this year, and over the next few years will replace many of the current members who have been on for many years, to give others an opportunity to be a part of the committee.

Southwest CERT Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Ambassador Networking Event

The SW region is planning an IRA ambassador networking event, which will take place on April 30th, from 2-4:30pm, in the Farmer's Room at the Government Center building in Worthington. The event will bring together our steering committee, some current and former Seed grant awardees, and some community-based organizations and nonprofits who are doing work in the renewable energy and energy efficiency realm. It will consist of a short presentation, a workshop and small group discussion, and a networking hour, to get people acquainted with the IRA and current updates and get them thinking about how they can serve their communities with this knowledge.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

April 2024

ENERGY | LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING | SOLID WASTE & NATURAL RESOURCES

USDA REGIONAL FOOD BUSINESS CENTER



LAND USE, PLANNING & ZONING

City of Hills, Strategic Plan: Planners Webb and Murphy are working on the Hills Strategic Plan and have received over 120 responses from the Community Survey. Additionally, a Community Engagement Meeting took place on Tuesday, February 20th at the Legion Hall in Hills. The planners provided an update on the plan's progress during the Hills City Council Meeting on Tuesday, March 12. The final Strategic Plan is expected to be developed in March/April and presented to the Hills City Council in May. Once completed, Planner Webb will shift his focus towards working with the city council to update the city's land use and zoning ordinances.

Murray County, 5-Year Comprehensive Plan Update: Planners Webb and Murphy have initiated the process of updating the Murray County Comp Plan for the next 5 years. They have already interacted with the county staff and scheduled the first two meetings. The first meeting was conducted on March 25 and primarily dealt with Chapter 8 which involves the goals and objectives that need to be achieved. The second meeting, scheduled for April 22, will majorly focus on the data sources, trends, and changes that have occurred since the plan was last written in 2016.

Lyon County, Comprehensive Plan: The Lyon County Comprehensive Plan is due for an update, and Planner Webb has already met with the county staff to start the preparations. Planner Murphy and Communications Specialist Crowley will be joining the effort as well. The kick-off meeting for this project is scheduled for Tuesday, June 11.

SWHHS Strategic Plan: On March 18th, a kickoff strategic planning session was held with 22 participants, including staff, supervisors, and board members. During the meeting, the attendees reviewed previous work done and conducted a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) analysis. The next meeting is scheduled for April 22nd, during which the participants will prioritize their goals and develop an action plan.

Cottonwood-Middle Minnesota One Watershed, One Plan: Planner Webb is representing the SRDC on the Advisory Committee for the Cottonwood-Middle MN One Watershed Plan. The next advisory committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 17 in Springfield.

SOLID WASTE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Solid Waste Commission:

The regular meeting of the Southwest Solid Waste Commission, which was scheduled for March 25, 2024, had to be postponed due to inclement weather. The meeting was rescheduled to April 1, 2024.

During the meeting on January 22, 2024, the Commission voted in favor of submitting a written request to extend the existing Solid Waste Plan by two years until the MPCA defines and implements the new rules. The request was sent to the MPCA on February 2, 2024, and on March 12, 2024, we received a written notification that the request had been denied.

The MPCA has agreed to be flexible regarding the plan due date, provided progress toward completion is made.

Solid Waste Regional Plan:

To receive SCORE funds and apply for additional grants from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), all counties in Minnesota are required to submit a solid waste plan. A cost-effective way for the 12 counties is to submit the plan as a Joint Powers Agreement. This helps to reduce individual county costs, and also provides an opportunity to pool resources and arrange materials exchange for the counties in the Southwest Minnesota Solid Waste Commission..

The upcoming plan will address several issues and topics, such as the need for 100% SCORE funding to counties for Solid Waste and Recycling activities, staff constraints faced by individual counties, Construction and Demolitions landfill capacity, and the requirement of financial support from the state. In addition, the plan aims to educate the public and policymakers on the significance of sanitation services as a foundation for public health.

On March 22, 2024, the Solid Waste Administrators had a meeting, and they continue to work on drafting the new 10-year Solid Waste Regional Plan. The draft plan is due to the MPCA by June 1, 2024, and the final Solid Waste Regional plan is due on December 4, 2024



USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) Regional Food Business Center



The USDA Regional Food Business Centers aim to enhance economic opportunities throughout their respective regions and establish a more resilient and diverse food system. The North Central Food Business Center (NCFBC) was created to serve Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota, with a grant of \$15 million for a period of five years. The Southwest Regional Development Commission (SRDC) has been assigned to provide technical assistance in our area, with an annual compensation of \$60K.

North Central Regional Food Business Center:

The SRDC (Southwest Development Commission) is committed to seeking ideas and suggestions from various groups and individuals. To enable growth and improvement over the next five years, the North Central RFBC (Regional Food Business Centers) Action Plan was developed and written.

The first round of Business Builder Sub-Award grants was scheduled to open in March 2024, with grant awards announced in April 2024. However, we received notification on March 5, 2024, that the process has been delayed. The USDA needs to prepare a full communications package before the launch of this process.

Recently, SRDC worked with three business owners in our region to apply for the MN Dept of Agriculture's Good Food Access Program Equipment and Physical Equipment Grant.

Other opportunities have gained momentum. We are in the beginning stages of working with the following.

- 2024 Minnesota Department of Agriculture Meat Processing Train and Re-train Grant (Due April 25, 2024). This grant provides funding for partner organizations to assist small to medium-sized meat and poultry processors with hiring and training new employees.
- 2024 USDA Local Food Promotion Program (Due May 14, 2024). This grant supports the development, coordination, and expansion of local and regional food business enterprises.



TRANSPORTATION REPORT

April 2024

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE | ATPs | TRANSPORTATION PLANNING | ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & SRTS



Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC): The TAC met on Thursday, March 14 at 2:00 pm. MnDOT planners from District 7 & District 8 were in attendance to go over the ATIP (Road/Bridge Projects in 2025-2028). Commissioner Mic VanDeVere was re-elected as TAC Chair.

Area Transportation Partnerships (ATP): On Friday, March 29, the ATP-8 CRP & PROTECT Scoring Subcommittee convened virtually. During the meeting, two projects were scored, and the subcommittee will present their funding recommendations to the full ATP-8 in April. The next ATP-8 meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 5 in Willmar, while the next ATP-7 meeting is set to take place on Friday, June 14 in Mankato.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Carbon Reduction Program (CRP): ATP-8 has been allocated \$1.49 million for fiscal year 2025-2026 through the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP). Out of this amount, \$740,000 is available for FY 2025, and \$750,000 for 2026, with a 20% minimum match. This grant is intended to fund projects that reduce emissions from on-road sources, and any road jurisdiction is eligible to apply. Examples of eligible projects include public transit, vehicle electrification, TA-eligible projects, energy-efficient lighting conversion, and reducing construction-related freight impacts. You can find more information in the attached CRP handout.

ATP-7 is now accepting applications for two funding programs, which are as follows:

1. PROTECT: This program is designed to finance projects that enhance the weather resilience of transportation networks. The program will be available for the Fiscal Year 2026. It can cover up to 80% of the eligible project costs, with \$500,000 available for FY 2026 projects.

2. Carbon Reduction Program (CRP): This program is intended to finance projects aimed at reducing carbon emissions from transportation sources. It will be available for the Fiscal Years 2025 and 2026. The program can cover up to 80% of the eligible project costs, with \$920,000 allocated for the South-Central Minnesota ATP for FY 2025 and \$940,000 for FY 2026. Projects must be outside the Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization (MAPO) urbanized boundary, which has separate funding for this program.

A Letter of Intent (LOI) is not required for either program. Eligible local partners may submit their applications to angela.piltaver@state.mn.us at MnDOT District 7 by April 26. For CRP, applicants will need to coordinate with District 7 staff to verify eligibility and cost-effectiveness score. Applications and project criteria links can be found under "Solicitations" at the ATP website: <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/area-transportation-partnerships/south-central.html>.

To learn more about PROTECT, please visit <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/protect/index.html>, and for more information about the Carbon Reduction Program, visit <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/carbon-reduction-program/>. All applications must be submitted by April 26, 2024.

Portable Counter Borrowing Program: MnDOT provides portable counters to partner agencies like cities, counties, MPOs, RDCs, and active transportation advocacy groups. These counters help to collect essential data on pedestrian traffic that can be used for various purposes such as planning projects, applying for funding, and more. The counters are available through each MnDOT District Office and can be reserved online. For more information, please visit <https://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike-ped-counting/borrow.html>.

Quarterly Transportation Planners Meeting: Planner Webb and Community Development Director Walker virtually attended the quarterly meeting for Transportation Planners on February 29. Future meetings are scheduled for May in St. Cloud, August in Bemidji, and November in St. Cloud.

A graphic for 'Safe Routes to School' featuring a photo of two children walking to school. The text describes SRDC's role in working with communities and government to develop active living and trails plans. It also lists the organization's address and phone number.

Beyond our Safe Routes to School efforts, SRDC works with communities, organizations, and local units of government to develop active living and trails plans. We also assist in connecting communities with the resources needed to reach their active living goals through grant research and writing, technical assistance, and meeting facilitation. We work closely with the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) and other regional and statewide partners to support community-driven solutions to expand opportunities for active living.

SRDC
2401 Broadway - Slayton, MN
507-836-8547



TRANSPORTATION REPORT

April 2024

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE | ATPs | TRANSPORTATION PLANNING | ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & SRTS

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS)

SRTS Design Assistance Grant: The City of Tracy has been granted the MnDOT SRTS Design Assistance Grant. This grant will provide design assistance to help improve walking and biking routes to and from schools, bridging the gap between safe routes to school plan strategies and their implementation. The design assistance reports will verify existing methods and identify new engineering strategies to enhance the safety of these routes. The resulting document will include project summary sheets with concept-level drawings and a prioritized list of potential infrastructure projects based on their effectiveness in addressing safety risks, possible usage, and cost. More details about this program are available in the solicitation guide.

So, how does this program work? Selected applicants will receive consultant services to develop a design report that identifies up to four community locations where students walk or bike to school. The consultants will work with the recipients in the spring/summer and fall to identify areas that require improvement, and determine potential solutions for each site.

Active Transportation Safety Education

- Required training for all schools within the first 3 weeks
- K-3 Pedestrian safety education
- 4-8 Bicycle and Pedestrian safety education
- \$500,000 each year for education

If funds are left over after meeting the needs of 5–14-year-

olds, additional funding may support 15–17-year-olds and adult education, and adults learn to ride.

Transportation Alternative Infrastructure Grant (Federal)

This grant is 80% funded and covers the costs of constructing infrastructure improvements to make walking, biking, and rolling safer and better in your community.

Rock County has been awarded \$573,902 in TAP Federal Grant Funds to complete the rehabilitation of the Blue Mounds County Trail, which connects the City of Luverne’s Trail Loop to Blue Mounds State Park. The rehabilitation project also includes 3.2 miles of trail inside Blue Mounds State Park. The county will coordinate with the DNR to complete this project in 2025.

The City of Marshall has been awarded \$325,680 in TAP Federal Grant Funds to complete the rehabilitation of three city blocks of trail that run adjacent to County Club Drive. The project will also improve drainage in the area. This project is scheduled for completion in 2028.

The City of Marshall has also been awarded \$361,039 in TAP Federal Grant Funds to complete a bridge replacement and rehabilitation of four city blocks of trail that run in Justice Park. This project will replace the oldest pedestrian bridge in town and improve ADA accessibility for all city trail users traversing over the Redwood River to enter Justice Park and the Camden Regional Trail that runs next to the park. This project is scheduled for completion in 2028.

REGIONAL TRAILS PLANNING

The most recent quarterly stakeholder meeting was held on Wednesday, March 20 at 1 pm at the SRDC Office, as well as virtually. During the meeting, the group discussed the next steps to take in distributing the Tourism Survey and finalized the list of focus groups to wrap up by the end of April.

The funding partners for this project include the Cities of Wabasso, Lambertson, Walnut Grove, and Revere, as well as Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, and Rock Counties.

TIMELINE:

- JAN.-FEB. - Complete Trail Scoring
- JAN., FEB., MAR. - Focus Groups & Interviews
- APR.-MAY - Intercepts & Economic Surveys
- MAY-JUNE - Trail Counters
- JULY-AUG. - Economic Analysis
- SEPT. - Final Report Due



COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

April 2024

FRIENDS OF THE CASEY JONES TRAIL

Trail Downgrade Challenges & Advocacy:

A meeting was held on March 14 in which discussion took place regarding the downgrade of their trail designation from primary to secondary, which was discovered three years ago. They talked about the challenges this downgrade posed, such as being the last to receive funding and the difficulties in maintaining and expanding their trail network. Deb and Colleen also highlighted the importance of winter planning, the need to convince legislators of the trail's importance, and the success they had in getting a bonding bill passed. They concluded by discussing the potential impacts of geographic inequity on funding for trails and the importance of advocating for more trail development. A plan was set for an April meeting to further discuss these issues, with a focus on pressing legislators for funding if necessary.

Veterans Fundraiser and Trail Construction:

Colleen and Deb explored the idea of hosting a 24-hour walk/run fundraiser for veterans on the Casey Jones trail. They considered partnering with the American Legion or Stacy's in Woodstock, but noted the need for a special use permit from the State. Bruce suggested obtaining liability insurance coverage through the Minnesota Parks and Trails Council. The team left the decision on whether to proceed with the event and its partnership pending. They also discussed a potential collaboration with a person connected to the Veterans Crisis Line and agreed to invite this individual to present at their April 11th meeting.

Myron also brought forward a letter received from the Internal Revenue Service due to possible non-compliance issues stating no tax information had been filed for a few years.

Bill Progress and Legislator Influence Debate

Deb and Colleen discussed the progress of two bills, house file 3477 and senate file 3386. They also touched upon a request from Representative Joe Schomacher to be heard in one of the committees. The status of letters sent to local representatives was also discussed, with Deb confirming that she would follow up. They debated the importance of securing a hearing for the bills and the potential impact of their classification on their chances of being included in bonding requests. Colleen emphasized the role of legislators in pushing for certain legislation.

Regional Trail Application Process Update

Myron shared an update on the regional trail application process, which he realized was a two-step process involving a designation and a master plan. He proposed a new trail from Luverne to the county line and Jasper and discussed a potential partnership with the city of Pipestone and the National Monument to make Hiawatha a regional park. Deb mentioned plans to apply for a grant to create a master plan for the Hiawatha Pageant Park, with the aim of expanding the park and connecting trails.

Upcoming Events:

In March, I was responsible for planning upcoming events and I am pleased to report that I have made significant progress in this regard. For the July annual meeting, I have secured the Windom Community Center as the venue and have also finalized arrangements with a caterer. At present, the schedule for the bus tour is being worked on and I will provide further updates as soon as it is ready.

In addition, I have also reserved a meeting space along with rooms for the MADDO All-Staff retreat. This retreat is scheduled to take place on October 2nd, 3rd, and 4th, 2024. The MADDO executive directors have collaborated to provide opportunities for staff to grow, learn, and interact with one another during this event, which is held every other year.

I also coordinated meeting times with legislative figures for staff and board members both in Washington, DC as well as the MN State Capitol.

RLF Site Visits:

As Robin mentioned earlier site visits with RLF clients are done every three years and reports are gathered. I am assisting with this process and recently stopped at the Falls Cafe in Redwood Falls. During my conversation with Julie Buffie, owner, we discussed how she got started in the business along with her recent remodeling and new menu development. You can read her spotlight story at www.swrdc.org/spotlight/the-falls-cafe-offering-diverse-menu-options/



STATISTICS

Facebook:

- 1,837 post reach
- 691 post engagement
- 8 new followers

SRDC Website

- 872 sessions
- 1,336 page views
- 95% new 5% returning



EXECUTIVE REPORT

April 2024

We received an official response to the letter sent by the Solid Waste Commission to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), requesting an extension of the current plan. As expected, the request was denied. After speaking with Dustin, the SWA Chair from Lincoln County, we sent out the first data request to the Solid Waste Administrators (SWAs) for the plan. On March 22nd, Kim and I met with the SWAs, and we received the information from everyone except for Cottonwood and Murray Counties. During the meeting, the SWA from Cottonwood County had a few questions, which we were able to address, and Kim then sent out the second data request.

I attended the State of the City Address in Marshall upon the invitation of Mayor Byrnes and City Administrator Hanson. The event was quite interesting as I got to witness the ongoing development in Marshall. Additionally, I received an update on the Solugen project which we had previously reviewed. Representatives from the company explained why they had chosen to set up the project in Marshall. According to them, the project will bring 42 well-paying jobs and will utilize the existing by-product stream from the ADM plant.

I also wrote a number of letters of support for projects throughout the region that are requesting Congressionally Directed Spending. These are infrastructure projects in Revere, Holland, Okabena, Russell, Lamberton, and Ruthton.



Recently at the Minnesota State Capitol, the legislative group had the opportunity to meet with Representative Marj Fogelman(21B) during the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities legislative day. The delegation included members from the Southwest Regional Development Commission, City of Jackson, City of Worthington, City of Windom, City of Slayton, City of Lakefield, and Operation Prairie Venture.

On March 20th, I attended the legislative day organized by the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities/Greater Minnesota Partnership. As a part of this event, SRDC Legislative Chair Carney arranged meetings with our local legislators along with other municipal leaders. To cover all the meetings, we divided ourselves into two groups. Carney and Slayton City Administrator Malchow met with Representative Swedzinski while Mayor Byrnes and I met with Senator Dahms. Later, a large group of us jointly met with Senator Weber, Representative Schomacker, and Representative Fogelman. Senators Dahms and Weber also joined the southwest contingent for dinner at Mancini's. Overall, both Miron and I felt that it was a very productive day.

We are currently collaborating with Regions 9, 6E, 6W, and 4 to apply for a regional grant that would allow us to act as an intermediary lender for federal dollars to install solar panels on public buildings. The Region Nine Development Commission is leading a coalition with four other regional development organizations to apply for the EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program (CPRG), which offers \$4.3 billion to promote the transition to a decarbonized economy and showcase replicable methods for reducing emissions. Our proposal aims to achieve the goals of this program by installing solar panels on public facilities of varying sizes. We submitted our letter of intent to R9 at the end of March.



In March, both federal and state legislative bodies were in session, and a lot of time was spent on legislative efforts. I, along with Chair Langseth, attended the NADO Policy Conference where we met with Representative Finstad and the staff from Senator Smith and Senator Klobuchar's offices. During our visit to Washington DC, the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee passed a bill that will reauthorize the federal Economic Development Administration for the first time since 2004. Currently, there is no companion legislation in the House. However, a member of the NADO Midwest caucus is hoping to get authorship by meeting with her House member.



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