



THE REGION NINE REPORT

Welcome!

Welcome from the new Chair of the Region Nine Development Commission!

I hope you will enjoy this first newsletter. There will be an annual report coming out to you in February and additional newsletters quarterly.

I have been the Mayor of St. Peter for the past two years, so I am relatively new to the Region Nine Development Commission and I am still learning things.

One of my main goals for Region 9 is to increase the visibility and presence for Region Nine. We can do this by increasing our efforts to communicate our accomplishments to the public.

I would welcome any ideas or suggestions from any Commissioner.

Please join me in promoting our Region!

I thank you.

Tim Strand

Transportation – An overview of the past 90 days.

Brent O'Neil - Transportation Planner

The Functional Classification Refinement Process (Road function classification) went through a final review by Region Nine this summer. The process has taken over a year and involved evaluating the entire network of roads in the region, to ensure they were properly classified. The classifications (i.e. local road, principal arterial road, etc.) help define the function of particular roadway segments, and can be used by planners and decision-makers in assessing plans and projects. The refinements are expected to be approved by the State Functional Classification Oversight Committee and adopted by Mn/DOT this fall.

Region Nine assisted VINE Faith-in-Action, a non-profit organization from Mankato, apply for federal funding to implement transit coordination initiatives. The application included funding of a full-time mobility manager, reimbursement funding for volunteer drivers, and marketing assistance. The application targeted "passenger mobility" in Blue Earth and Nicollet counties, and will also focus on cross-county-line transportation among Blue Earth, Faribault, Le Sueur, Nicollet and Waseca counties. VINE was notified in September that their application had been approved and funds will be disbursed in calendar year 2008. Congratulations and Best Wishes to VINE as they implement this new initiative.

The City of Gaylord requested assistance in completing a downtown



parking survey/inventory. The city wanted to determine parking patterns and parking use in their core downtown area. The city completed nearly 50 observational surveys at various times of day, and days of the week. Region Nine compiled and analyzed that information into a report for the city to use. The report also included an overlay map which provided a visual interpretation of parking in downtown.

The Mankato Area Transportation and Planning Study, which was updated in 2002 and 2003, are being considered for an update. Some of the stakeholders in the first MATAPS met

this summer to examine next steps in update and/or rewriting the plan. It is likely the plan will be rewritten and incorporate new items such as the Mankato area's potential designation as a metropolitan planning area. Brent O'Neil Transportation Coordinator of Region Nine and Mn/DOT's Lisa Bigham will be serving as project managers of this project.



New Faces at Region Nine

A warm welcome to:



John Considine Jr.
Regional Development Planner
507-389-8871 • john@rndc.org



Sarah Reichwald Beiswanger
Resource Development Coordinator
507-389-8880 • sarah@rndc.org

Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

By: Robert Klanderud - Regional Director & Troy Bonkowske - Director

The SBDC has assisted 230 clients, year to date, and held 22 seminars with 340 attendees. There also has been \$5,562,865 in capital invested in the Region Nine area. We are continuing work on our strategic plan with the principal board members, which include Minnesota State University, Mankato, South Central College, Greater Mankato Economic Development Corp., Southern

Minnesota Initiative Foundation and Region Nine Development Commission. It is expected this strategic plan will be completed by the end of the year.

Distinguished Service Award - Linda Giersdorf

By: Rhonda Hiller Fjeldberg - Grant/Contract Manager of MNRAAA

Linda has lived in Mankato for 25 years and has worked for Region Nine Development Commission since 1983. She was the director of the Region Nine Area Agency on Aging from 1993-2004 and the director of the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging since 2005. Linda is passionate about addressing the needs of the elderly and their caregivers in rural Minnesota. She stated, "I continue to be amazed by the contributions our

elderly have made to society and also by their humbleness."

Linda also has been a Region 9 MSSA member for 15 plus years and is the Region Nine MSSA board treasurer. She has also served as the secretary, conference chair and the chair for the Region Nine Board. Linda has been active on the state level. She serviced as MSSA state treasurer and conference co-chair.

Linda has shown her dedication to the Social Service field and to Region Nine with her commitment to both the Area Agency on Aging and MSSA.



On 9.28.07, Linda Giersdorf received a Distinguished Service Award from the Region Nine MSSA (MN Social Service Association).

The Changing Workforce

By: Reggie Edwards

One of the more significant issues facing our region, is that of a rapidly changing workforce. Recently, I visited with Hal Freshley, of the Minnesota Board on Aging and Tom Gillespie, the Minnesota State Demographer on this matter. Below are startling bits of information.

1. Retiree/new workers – By the year 2020 the number of retirees will be almost double that of new employees in the labor force and by 2030 retirees will have tripled the number of new workers.

2. Labor force net growth – In the year 2010, Minnesota will have less than half the labor force growth than what occurred in the years 1970-1980. By the year 2020, it will shrink to less than a third of the growth in 1970-1980.

3. Entry workforce levels – In the years 2000-2005 Minnesota increased

the number of entry level workforce by 13%, which outpaced the nation at 6.2%. By the year 2010, Minnesota's growth will have dropped to 0.7% and be outpaced by the nation at 4.43%. By the years 2015-2020, the Minnesota's entry level workforce will be in the negative <-3%>.

Such challenges will create a shift in how services are provided at the local level and the type of services that will be available.

This is not a government issue, but a public issue. It will require the public to have an answer.

As resources shrink there will be a greater need at the federal level and private sector to divest itself of the large unsustainable costs (i.e. social security, Medicare/aid, pensions,



etc.). Problems that the federal and state governments are unable to answer will be passed down to local communities.

The question is what local communities will do given the challenge of

shrinking resources. This is not a government issue, but a public issue. It will require the public to have an answer.

PALs – Sustaining Independent Lives

By: Gail Gilman Waldner

PALS - A health and fitness program designed to help older adults have fun, be more active and become more empowered to sustain independent lives.

The Partners in Active Living for Seniors program, is designed to help older adults have fun while improving their physical fitness. It offers a safe and enjoyable experience for people of all fitness levels, including those who may walk with the assistance of a cane or walker.



Area Recreation Center. Funding is provided by the MN Department of Human Services. According to Loren Colman, Assistant Commissioner of Continued Care at the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the funding "is intended to help aging



Minnesotans live independently in their homes and to increase the capacity of family, friends and neighbors and communities to provide support to older individuals."

The PALS program is jointly sponsored by VINE Faith in Action, the MN River Area Agency on Aging, MAGEC South, Minnesota State University, Mankato, Blue Earth Community Health, the City of Mankato and the Lake Crystal

Economic Development

By: Troy Bonkowske

Revolving Loan Funds-

The Loan Review Committee approved four loans over the past two months, in the cities of Wells, St. Peter, Minnesota Lake and Gaylord. One of these requests involved the meat packing plant in Wells, where they are optimistic that 130 new jobs will be created in the near future. There is also an application on the table for consideration in the city of New Prague.

City of Truman Revitalization Plan-

They have held two public hearings, with an average of 40 residents and business owners in attendance, to discuss their Comprehensive Plan. Transportation Coordinator Brent O'Neil and newly-hired Regional Development Planner John Considine Jr. have really done a great job with this project.

Establishment of Regional Downtown Coordinator & Main Street program -

Staff have been working hard in

Gaylord, where they are assisting with projects and establishing the Main Street program there.

EDA Workshop-

Downtown Coordinator and Economic Development Director, Troy Bonkowske attended a regional EDA workshop on entrepreneurship in Kansas City on September 26. This workshop, hosted by the Chicago

100 + New Jobs in Wells

Regional EDA Office, was informative about new programs started by both the public and private sector to encourage entrepreneurs in their region.

One good example was from Kansas State University, where they have interns working with entrepreneurs on the feasibility of their products and ideas for business. They do charge a nominal fee for the service. This idea could possibly be utilized with the SBDC and it's partnerships.

EDA Infrastructure Grant Opportunities-

Region Nine Staff is in the process of contacting communities interested in pursuing grant applications with the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA). These EDA grants are used for possible funding for infrastructure improvements, in industrial parks and business expansion projects. We have also been in contact with a large employer that is interested in a building for a renewable energy plant using "green" materials, outside of producing ethanol.

Helping older Adults Become Empowered to Sustain Independent Lives

Community Development:

City of Pemberton Community Center- Staff is currently reviewing other grants and loans that could be used for this project, in addition to a low-interest loan with Benco (electric utility co-op). It appears likely the City will receive a zero-interest loan over ten years from USDA. This loan application will need to be approved by another electrical cooperative before it is submitted to the USDA. It appears unlikely the City would be eligible for Minnesota's Small Cities grant program.

Miscellaneous:

Hazard Mitigation Plans-

Two county plans have been approved by FEMA, the state and the six remaining plans have recently been submitted to them. Brown County and Waseca County will need to approve these Plans for final acceptance.