

## Welcoming Laura to the UMRDC team!

Since graduating from South Dakota State University with a Bachelor Degree in Human Development and Family Studies, Laura has been working in the non-profit sector and enjoying all of the experiences it has brought her. Prior to being hired as the Loan Officer for the Revolving Loan Fund with the UMRDC in November of 2015, Laura had the opportunity to work both in community action and financial counseling services. Laura was born and



Laura Ostlie

320.289.1981 x 102

raised in the region and feels fortunate to be back near her family farm northeast of Benson with her husband and two children. Laura and her family stay extremely busy working with family and friends through 4-H livestock projects. Laura is thrilled to be working for an agency that is assisting in the implementation and overall vision of regional development right in her backyard! Welcome to the team Laura!

Laura@umvrdc.org

## RLF Welcomes 2 New Board Members

Eddie Masee, Vice President of Farmers & Merchants State Bank of Appleton has joined the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) board as the Swift County At-Large representative. Eddie is active with various Appleton projects including the Martinson Foundation, Junior Achievement, Appleton Golf Club, and Appleton's USDA Revolving Loan Fund. Eddie obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree in finance from Concordia in Moorhead. His hobbies include golfing, baseball and going to the lake. Eddie and his wife Whitney reside in Appleton.

Craig Bakkelund also joined the RLF Advisory Board. Craig is the Executive Vice President of the Granite Falls Bank and will be representing Yellow Medicine County. Prior to working at the Granite Falls Bank where he has been since 2003, Craig spent six years in the Army National Guard and another five years working with Lyon Financial/US Bank.

Craig is very involved in his community where he is active on numerous different boards. Craig attended college in both Willmar and Marshall. He is married and they have two sons.

Are you or someone you may know looking to start or expand a business? Is there a gap in the bank financing for the project? If so, the UMRDC Revolving Loan Fund may be able to fill that financing gap. Eligible start-up and expansion projects include the financing of equipment, real estate, and working capital.

What you need to know about the RLF:

- RLF funds should be used to create or retain jobs in the 5 County region
- Bank financing is required as RLF can only be used to fill that gap
- 10% owner equity is required
- RLF funds cannot be used to finance construction
- All types of business start-ups or expansions are eligible for application with priority given to businesses involved in manufacturing, technology, and/or diversification of the local economy

For more information call Laura Ostlie at 320-289-1981 x 102, email [laura@umvrdc.org](mailto:laura@umvrdc.org) or check out the RLF information at the UMRDC's website.



## RLF Portfolio

\$1,288,767 Lent out    \$100,000 Committed    \$400,144 Available

phone: 320-289-1981 Umrdrdc.org

323 W. Schlieman Ave.  
Appleton, MN 56208

Upper Minnesota Valley  
**REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION**



Helping Communities Prosper

Serving the  
Big Stone, Chippewa,  
Lac qui Parle, Swift  
and Yellow Medicine  
County Region

## Mark Your Calendar!

January 1, 2016  
Office closed - New Year's Day

January 26, 2016  
UMVRDC Board Meeting 6:30pm  
Umrdrdc.org..... Appleton, Mn

February 2-3, 2016  
Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference  
Exploreminnesota.com..... Bemidji, Mn

February 23, 2016  
UMVRDC Board Meeting 6:30pm  
Umrdrdc.org..... Appleton, Mn

March 22, 2016  
UMVRDC Board Meeting 6:30pm  
Umrdrdc.org..... Appleton, Mn



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US POSTAGE  
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APPLETON, MN

# Regional Outlook

Quarterly Newsletter | December 2015 Vol. 34 No. 3  
323 W. Schlieman Ave. Appleton, MN 56208 phone: 320-289-1981 www.umvrdc.org

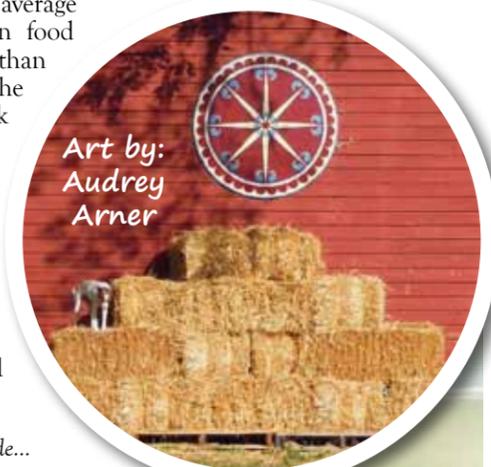
## 2015 Meander Art Crawl SUCCESS!

The 2015 Meander Art Crawl had another outstanding year and the survey results can prove it! The UMRDC tallied the reports from 40 different artists to find that more than \$99,000 of art was purchased over the three day Meander weekend.

**\$99,303**

Total reported art sales during the Meander weekend!

According to surveys returned by Meander visitors and the artists themselves, the average Meander customer also spends \$29 on food and gas and \$11 on shopping other than art in the region. When multiplied by the estimated 2000 Meanderers who took part in the weekend, it is projected that another \$80,000 flowed into the small towns of the 5 County region (Big Stone, Swift, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle and Yellow Medicine) served by the UMRDC. The Meander Art Crawl not only highlights the artist's studios and introduces people to our region, but it is a huge economic boost for small businesses within our region.



Art by:  
Audrey  
Arner

Continued inside...



Art By:  
John George  
Larson

**\$4.95M**



Grant Awarded to Swift County!

DETAILS INSIDE...

## UMVRDC Helps Author a Successful \$4.95 Million Grant!

UMVRDC staff authored a second successful Border to Border grant application to DEED for Federated Telephone. UMVRDC staff continue to hone their grant writing skills and broadband knowledge while quickly becoming the go-to in the region for broadband questions, case study inquiries or help connecting with professionals in the broadband industry.

This year's grant of \$4,950,000 will allow Federated to deploy fiber to the eastern portions of Swift County and a small area in and around the City of Appleton. Last year Federated was awarded \$3.9M to deliver fiber in the northern portion of Big Stone County. These projects will provide connectivity to areas in Big Stone and Swift Counties that were previously identified as unserved by the Minnesota Office of Broadband expanding the region's fiber footprint significantly. High speed fiber broadband will help raise the bar on rural economic development allowing residents and businesses in these areas to compete and prosper in the global economy.

The UMVRDC continues to discuss broadband with a number of communities throughout the region. The City of Madison has recently contracted with the UMVRDC to explore the needs and community interest in high speed broadband options. The outcome of this project will help determine the demand and feasibility of bringing in high speed broadband to Madison. Appleton is also working on a similar project.

For questions about how the UMVRDC can help your community with broadband please contact Jacki Anderson at: [jacki.anderson@umvrdc.org](mailto:jacki.anderson@umvrdc.org) or at 320.289.1981 x 111



### Minnesota Office of Broadband announcement:

The project will deliver high-speed Internet service to 600 households, 425 businesses and 75 community institutions. The project area includes De Graff, Swift Falls and rural parts

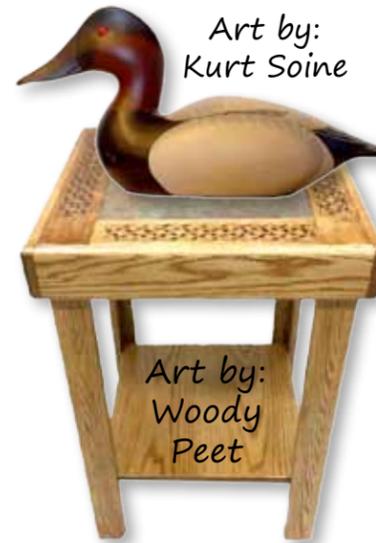
of eastern Swift County. The project touches 13 of the County's 21 townships. Total project costs are \$12.5 million. The remaining \$7.5 million (60 percent local match) will be covered by a loan from Swift County to Federated. The project will help support community and economic development through job creation, business expansion and newly possibly business start-up opportunities. More than 500 jobs are expected to be created over the next few years, related to farming, home-based startups, commercial expansions and more. Nearly half of the County's 800 farms are in the project area.

## Meander Success

Continued from front...

"The Meander seems to have hit its stride now after 12 years. It has become a signature event for the region, featuring our quality of life and raising the profile of our local artists, while generating economic activity in small towns throughout the river valley," said Kristi Fernholz, UMVRDC Senior Planner.

The UMVRDC would like to thank all the sponsors, artists and participants who make the Meander great. The Meander is coordinated by UMVRDC staff. For more information contact Kristi Fernholz, Meander Coordinator, at 320-289-1981 ext. 106 or [kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org](mailto:kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org). You can also visit the Meander website at [Artsmeander.com](http://Artsmeander.com) or find and "like" us on Facebook at [facebook.com/MeanderArtCrawl](https://www.facebook.com/MeanderArtCrawl).



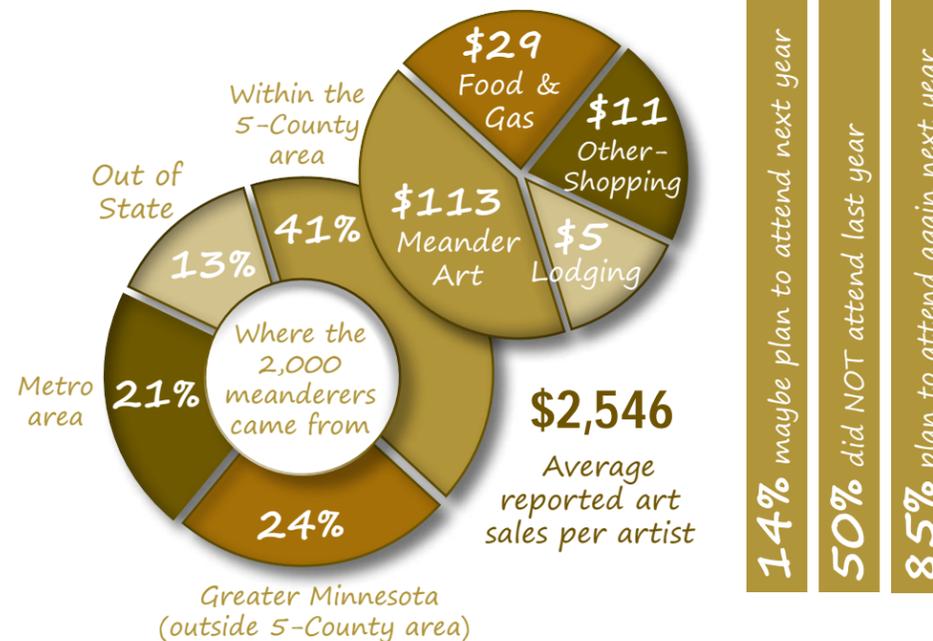
### Meander's Economic Impact

**71%** Money raised to organize the Meander through sponsors and artists was spent on products or services (printing, paper, advertising, graphic design, staffing) in the five County area. Meander spent over \$10,000 on advertising in 2015; 27% of the total budget.

**11 studios** Average number of studios customers visited.

**81%** of customers said the quality of the art was excellent.

**83%** of customers said their overall experience was excellent.



## Prairie Waters Receives Advertising Grant

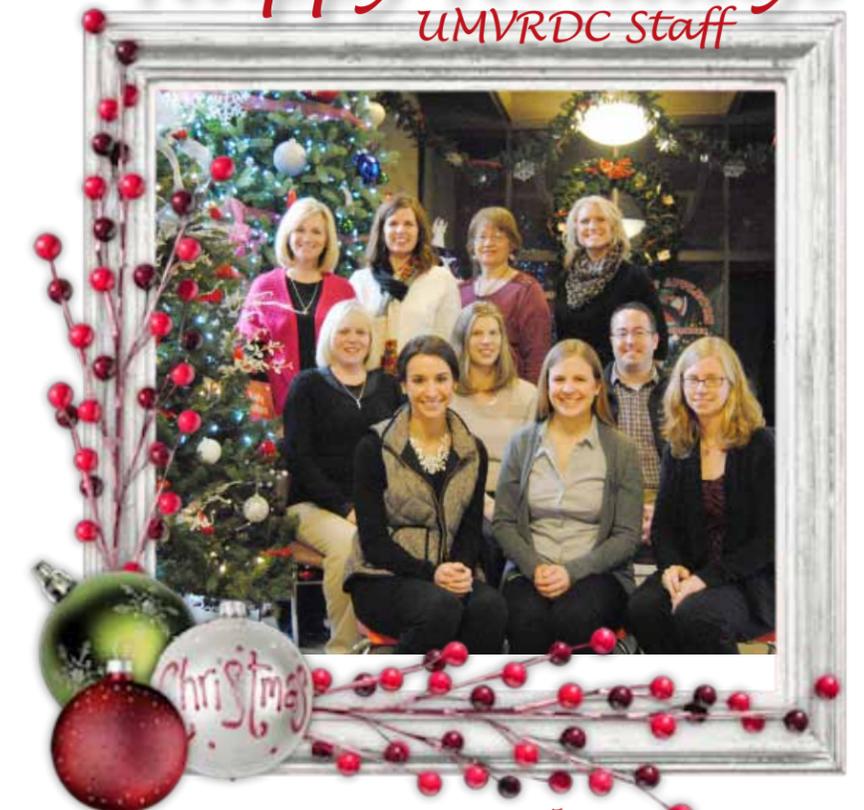
Western Minnesota Prairie Waters has once again received a grant from Explore Minnesota Tourism for nearly \$8,000 that will go towards advertising and promoting our region as a great place to visit, work, and to live! We will advertise in a wide variety of both online and print publications which have distributions throughout Minnesota and beyond its borders. See a publication you'd like to advertise an event in? Call us today and ask about our cooperative advertising for up to 60% off the regular advertising rates. The following is a list of the advertising for 2016:

- Outdoor News
- Midwest Living
- AAA Living
- Western Peach
- Sponsored Facebook ads
- SD Magazine
- Pioneer Public TV
- Bird Watchers Digest
- Valley Shopper



[Prairiewaters.com](http://Prairiewaters.com) || 866.866.5432

## Happy Holidays UMVRDC Staff



### Giving Back...

The UMVRDC is pleased to announce that our year-long "Jeans Friday" donation is being divided and given to the Food Shelf in both Lac qui Parle & Swift County. This is the fifth year our office has participated in raising money to help support local organizations in our region.