

## Opportunity for Cities Under 500 (continued from front page)

This one-hour conversation is an informal, no-pressure format that will result in the identification of opportunities for your community. This community conversation could be just with your city council.

The results we will strive for include:

- A list of your community needs and project ideas.
- Prioritization of community needs and project ideas.
- To share some existing opportunities available to all small towns.

We will also provide more information on B3 Benchmarking, public art grants, and website development.

This is a limited opportunity and is currently being offered for communities with populations of less than 500. (Future opportunities may become available for larger communities as well.)

We have extended the deadline by one week for this special opportunity! If you are interested, contact the UMRVDC by Monday, January 9th. Call Jacki Anderson at 320-289-1981 ext. 2 or Kristi Fernholz at 320-289-1981 ext. 6.

### Why Should Your Community Consider Planning?

**Planning allows you to set PRIORITIES and focus on what is important. You need to discover what is IMPORTANT to you and sometimes go through a few tedious tasks in order to get to the exciting end result.**

**Planning starts with a conversation.**

**A community conversation can help you keep the things you value in your small town!**

Mark Your Calendar!

January 9, 2012 Workshop: "Get a FREE Google Website"	St. Cloud, MN	
January 24-25, 2012 Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference	Rochester, MN	
January 24, 2012, 6:30 pm UMVRDC Monthly Meeting www.umvrdc.org	Appleton Civic Center Appleton, MN	
February 28, 2012, 6:30 pm UMVRDC Monthly Meeting www.umvrdc.org	Appleton Civic Center Appleton, MN	
March 27, 2012, 6:30 pm UMVRDC Monthly Meeting www.umvrdc.org	Appleton Civic Center Appleton, MN	

Visit our website for ongoing event information, including links and registration!  
[www.umvrdc.org/category/events/](http://www.umvrdc.org/category/events/)

# Regional Outlook

Quarterly Newsletter | December 2011

Vol. 33 No. 2

323 W. Schlieman Ave. Appleton, MN 56208 phone: 320-289-1981 www.umvrdc.org

## Attention! Cities with populations under 500 in Region 6W!



**We have an opportunity for you!**

**Deadline extended to Monday, January 9th!**

Helping Communities Prosper – that's what we strive for each and every day at the Upper Minnesota Regional Development Commission (UMVRDC). Through our community development survey last spring, we learned that just six of the 24 smallest cities (with populations under 500) have capital improvement plans (CIPs).

A great planning and prioritization tool for all cities, a capital improvement plan is short-term plan (or list) that usually looks

out a couple years at a time identifying potential projects and equipment purchases.

If your community is interested in assistance with starting the conversation about a capital improvement plan or a future projects list, the UMRVDC is offering to come out and facilitate a one hour conversation in your community at no cost!

*(Opportunity for Cities Under 500 continued inside)*

## Seeking Your Input on the Transit Human Services Coordination Plan!

In July 2011, we wrote about the work the UMRVDC is doing with local human services representatives to draft a Transit Human Services Coordination Plan for the region.

The goal of the 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan is to:

- identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes;
- provide strategies for meeting those needs;
- and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation in Big Stone, Swift, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, and Yellow Medicine Counties.



We are still seeking public input on this plan, so visit our website at [www.umvrdc.org](http://www.umvrdc.org) and click the link in the "Take Note" section. **All comments are due by January 13, 2012.**

For more information on this plan, you can contact Dawn Hegland at 320-289-1981 ext. 1 or email [dawn.hegland@umvrdc.org](mailto:dawn.hegland@umvrdc.org), or Lindsey Knutson at 320-289-1981 ext. 7 or [lindsey.knutson@umvrdc.org](mailto:lindsey.knutson@umvrdc.org).



Front: Dawn Hegland, Kristi Fernholz & Jackie Sigdahl.

Back: Barb Jordahl, Jacki Anderson, Lindsey Knutson, Jenifer Fadness & Arlene Tilbury.

**Wishing you a happy & healthy 2012!**



from the  
**UMVRDC Staff**

phone: 320-289-1981 fax: 320-289-1983 [www.umvrdc.org](http://www.umvrdc.org)

Upper Minnesota Valley  
**REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

323 W. Schlieman Ave.  
Appleton, MN 56208

Helping Communities Prosper

PRST STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT 63  
APPLETON, MN

Serving  
Big Stone, Chippewa,  
Lac qui Parle, Swift  
and Yellow Medicine Counties

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## 2011 Meander Art Crawl: Economic Impact



The numbers are in for the 2011 Meander Art Crawl, and with forty of the forty-five artists reporting, there is big news to report. The total art sales reported so far is \$85,357, an increase of 23% from 2010!

Each year during the Meander Art Crawl, artists and customers are asked to fill out surveys. The reason we do this is to gather information about who is visiting our area during the Meander weekend, what they are spending their money on, the quality of their experience, and how the Meander benefits the artists involved. These surveys are a valuable tool for planning. The results shown below are tabulated from the 2011 artist and customer surveys that have been turned in.

**\$85,357** Total reported Meander art sales to customers during the Meander weekend. An increase of 23% from 2010! (40/45 surveys reported)

**\$2,134** Average reported art sales per artist (Increase of 23% from 2010)

**83%** 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

**80 to 1700** Reported total number of customers at individual studios for the entire weekend

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

**2 people** per travel party (on average)

**78%** of customers said the quality of the art was excellent

**78%** of customers said their overall experience was excellent

**53%** did NOT attend last year

**85%** plan to attend again next year  
**15%** maybe plan to attend next year

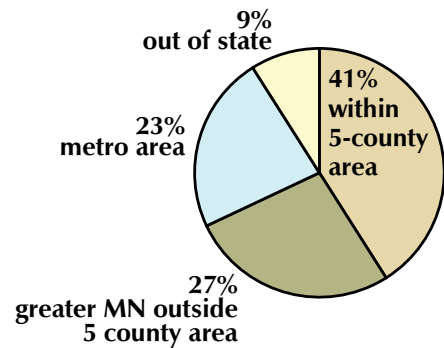
For more information on the Meander Art Crawl, contact Kristi Fernholz, Meander Coordinator, at 320-289-1981 ext. 6 or kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org. You can also visit the Meander website at [www.artsmeander.com](http://www.artsmeander.com) or find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/MeanderArtCrawl](http://facebook.com/MeanderArtCrawl).

**Mark your calendar now! Meander 2012 is set for October 5, 6 and 7.**

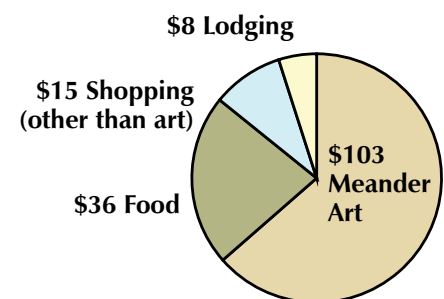


Meander artist Darold Bailey of Odessa discusses his process for working on a sculpture.

### Customers came from



### Average Expenditures per Customer



## UMVRDC Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) is Here to Help Small Businesses

Are you, or someone you know, considering opening a small business or expanding an existing business? The UMVRDC's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) can help with startup funding.

The UMVRDC has helped over 100 small businesses throughout the five-county area with start-up and expansion funding. In collaboration with a bank, we can help a new or expanding business with funding for inventory, equipment, real estate and working capital expenses.

Things you should know about the revolving loan fund:

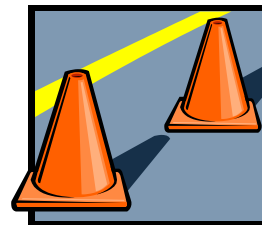
- A primary focus is job creation and retention.
- Funds are available for fixed assets, real estate and working capital.
- Bank participation is needed; the RLF will not replace bank financing.

For more information about the RLF, go to our website at [www.umvrdc.org](http://www.umvrdc.org) and click on the RLF link in the "Take Note" box, or contact Jacki Anderson at [jacki.anderson@umvrdc.org](mailto:jacki.anderson@umvrdc.org) or call 320-289-1981 ext. 2.

## Toward Zero Deaths

UMVRDC staff Lindsey Knutson recently attended the statewide Toward Zero Deaths Conference on November 16 & 17 in Duluth. Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) is a Minnesota partnership led by the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Health, in cooperation with the Minnesota State Patrol, the Federal Highway Administration, Minnesota county engineers, and the Center for Transportation Studies at the University of Minnesota.

The mission of TZD is: To create a culture for which traffic fatalities and serious injuries are no longer acceptable through the integrated application of education, engineering, enforcement, and emergency medical and trauma services. These efforts will be driven by data, best practices, and research.



### Did you know?

- There are almost 21.5 million (90%) small businesses in the United States;
- Small businesses are responsible for 39 percent of gross national product (GNP);
- Small businesses are responsible for 52 percent of all the U.S. sales and contribute about 21 percent of all manufactured U.S. exports;
- Small businesses contribute 44 percent of all sales in the country;
- Small businesses employ 54.4 million people, about 57.3 percent of the private workforce;
- 600,000-800,000 new small businesses are launched each year by entrepreneurs!

Statistics are from National Telecommunications and Information Administration ([www.ntia.doc.gov](http://www.ntia.doc.gov)) and International Economic Development Council ([www.iedconline.org](http://www.iedconline.org)).



The conference provides a forum for sharing information on best practices in engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency medical/health services and for identifying new approaches to reducing the number of traffic fatalities and life-changing injuries on Minnesota roads.

TZD Conference materials, including presentations, for the 2011 and previous conferences, can be found on our website at [www.umvrdc.org](http://www.umvrdc.org). Click the link in the "Take Note" box on our homepage.

For more information on TZD or other transportation issues, contact UMVRDC's Transportation Planner Lindsey Knutson at 320-289-1981 ext. 7 or email [lindsey.knutson@umvrdc.org](mailto:lindsey.knutson@umvrdc.org).

## Welcoming A New Commission Member

One of our goals at the UMVRDC is to have everyone in our region know who we are and what we do. That includes knowing our board members. Because our board is constantly changing and growing, we will continue highlighting board members in our newsletter, *Regional Outlook*, so that you will know who is representing your community and the region.

One of our new members in 2011 is Kathi Thymian. She is a representative of the Ortonville School Board.



Kathi Thymian  
Ortonville School Board

She is also a member of the Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative, and is a past member and president of the Ortonville Civic and Commerce (C&C) Board. She has lived in Ortonville her whole life except for her time spent at St. Cloud State. She and her husband Russ have two sons: Jesse and wife Wendy, and Adam and wife Erin. Kathi works at Barr Electric as a bookkeeper.

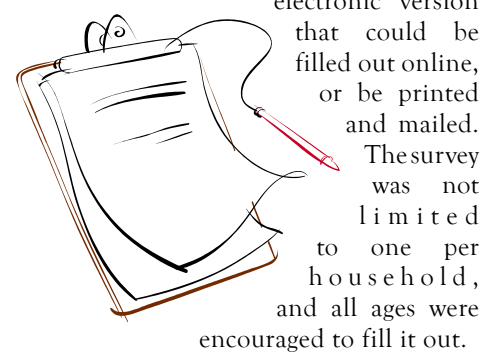
We would like to welcome Kathi to the UMVRDC, and thank her for her work on behalf of the Ortonville School Board and Region 6W!



## Clara City Survey Success

The UMVRDC is working on a comprehensive plan for the City of Clara City. As part of that comprehensive plan, the UMVRDC conducted a survey of residents in Clara City and within two miles of the city limits.

The survey was sent out in August of 2011. One survey was sent to each household and was also available to pick up at city hall or the city library. There was also an



electronic version that could be filled out online, or be printed and mailed. The survey was not limited to one household, and all ages were encouraged to fill it out.

A total of 800 surveys were sent out. Of those names, 111 lived within two miles of Clara City, 45 were distributed to the apartments in town and the rest were sent to addresses in Clara City. The 2010 census reports that there are 591 households in Clara City.

There were 288 surveys returned to the city, which is a 35% return rate. The City of Clara City was very pleased with the response rate, and will use the survey results to guide the comprehensive plan.

If your city is interested in doing a survey or working on a comprehensive plan, the UMVRDC can help! Contact Jacki Anderson at 320-289-1981 ext. 2 or [jacki.anderson@umvrdc.org](mailto:jacki.anderson@umvrdc.org), or Kristi Fernholz at 320-289-1981 ext. 6 or [kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org](mailto:kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org).

### Mission

Enable the region to thrive through assisting local governments

### Contact us:

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