

Bicycle & Trails Planning (continued from front page)

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) is in the process of conducting a Statewide Bicycle Planning Study. They have held public open houses throughout the state to gather input on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats pertaining to bicycling in Minnesota. The Study will provide detailed policy recommendations, inventory of existing bikeway facilities in the State, including on- and off-road facilities, create a new Statewide Bikeway Map, and establish bicycle-related performance measures for future MnDOT projects. For more information on the Study, visit www.dot.state.mn.us/bike/study.html.

The Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Coalition is working on a study for the parks and trails in greater Minnesota called the \$175 Study. The study's outcomes include establishing protocols to determine

the origin of visitors and project potential use of greater Minnesota's regional parks and trails, collecting an inventory of park and trail facilities in greater Minnesota and developing evaluation protocol and criteria to determine priorities for park and trail acquisition and development. To learn more about the \$175 Study, go to gmrptc.webs.com.



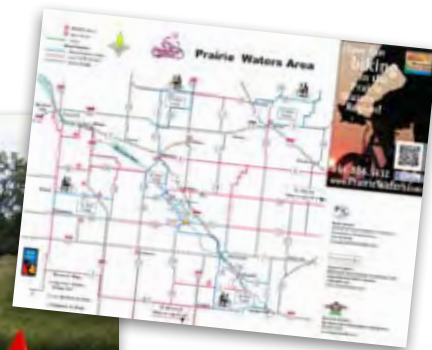
For links to the websites listed in this article, go to our website's home page at umvrdc.org and click on "Bicycle & Trails Planning" in the Take Note box.



Have Fun Biking in Western Minnesota Prairie Waters!

Western Minnesota Prairie Waters has joined up with "Have Fun Biking" to promote biking in the Prairie Waters region. "Have Fun Biking" prints an annual guide with maps showing bike trails, routes for road biking, and low-traffic roads that are suitable for biking. The guides will be available for distribution at the end of May.

Want a copy of the "Have Fun Biking" guide? Visit the Prairie Waters website at www.prairiewaters.com and fill out the request form, or call 1-866-866-5432 and tell us you want to "have fun biking!"



Pictured above is a draft of the Prairie Waters Map for the "Have Fun Biking" Guide.

phone: 320-289-1981 fax: 320-289-1983 www.umvrdc.org

Upper Minnesota Valley
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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Mark Your Calendar!

April 6, 2012
UMVRDC office will be closed for Good Friday.

April 16, 2012, 2:00-6:00 pm
Spring Transportation Forum
www.umvrdc.org

April 19, 2012
2012 SC/SW Toward Zero Deaths Workshop
Holiday Inn
New Ulm, MN

April 24, 2012, 6:30 pm
UMVRDC Monthly Meeting
www.umvrdc.org

May 22, 2012, 6:30 pm
UMVRDC Monthly Meeting
www.umvrdc.org

May 28, 2012
UMVRDC office will be closed for Memorial Day.

June 26, 2012, 6:30 pm
UMVRDC Monthly Meeting
www.umvrdc.org

Visit our website for ongoing event information, including links and registration!
www.umvrdc.org/category/events/

Regional Outlook

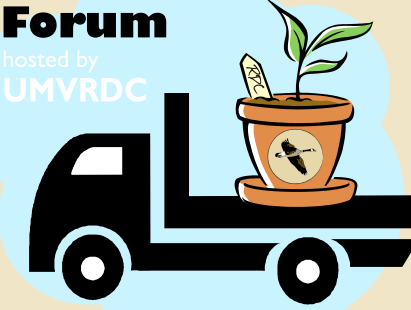
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323 W. Schlieman Ave. Appleton, MN 56208 phone: 320-289-1981 www.umvrdc.org

UMVRDC to Host Spring Transportation Forum

Spring
Transportation Forum
hosted by
UMVRDC



Monday, April 16th

Appleton Civic Center
323 West Schlieman Ave
Appleton, MN
2:00 - 6:00 pm

MnDOT presentations at
2:30 pm & 5:00 pm.

Transportation is a priority issue in Region 6W, so the UMVRDC is planning a Spring Transportation Forum for township, city, and county representatives and other interested parties.

Come and talk with local MnDOT officials from Willmar and Detroit Lakes on a variety of topics. There will be short presentations from MnDOT and LOTS of time for one-on-one questions and answers.

- Provide feedback on MnDOT's new transportation corridor-based process to gather input from cities and counties on their needs and future projects.
- Get information on the use and prioritization process of federal transportation dollars on roads, bridges, rail road crossings, safety improvement, public transit and more!
- Learn how to access funding like:
 - Landscape Partnership:
 - Transportation Enhancements:
 - Safe Routes to School program,
 - Cooperative Agreements

For more information about the Forum, contact Lindsey Knutson, Transportation Planner at the UMVRDC, at 320-289-1981 ext. 7 or lindsey.knutson@umvrdc.org.

Regional and Statewide Bicycle & Trails Planning

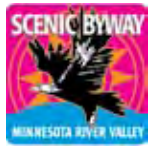
There are several regional and statewide bicycle planning efforts taking place now through the end of the summer. They are happening at a great time since bicycling is a topic that is gaining momentum in Minnesota right now. They are also great examples of intergovernmental coordination as the inventory portions of each of these plans is a coordinated effort between all agencies.

The UMVRDC is working on an update to its regional Trail Planning Guide, from 2002, that will update the inventory of trails throughout the region, develop priorities and goals for trail planning in the region that are consistent with statewide goals for parks and trails, and identify future trail projects in the region.

(Bicycle & Trails Planning continued inside)

Inside

- Explore the Byway
- New Prairie Waters Antiques Guides Available!
- ATIP Update
- UMVRDC Writes New MIRC Grant
- CEDS 2012



Explore the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway!

This summer will mark 150 years since the U.S.—Dakota War of 1862. As you travel the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway, there are a number of ways you can learn more about this important story.

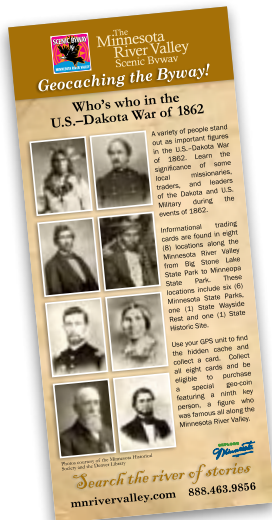
Geocaching:

Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunt that uses the internet and a handheld GPS (global positioning system) to get coordinates. Once you have the coordinates and clues, you search for your hidden treasures or caches. For more information on geocaching, go to: geocaching.com.

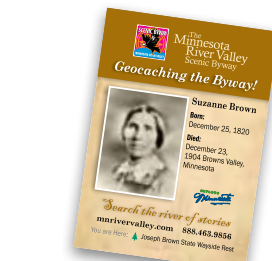
Starting in June of 2012, the byway will have cards placed in each of the caches in six state parks plus one wayside rest and a state historic site along the byway. After you retrieve all eight cards, you will be eligible to purchase a collectable coin. We will have more information on our website: mnrivervalley.com.

Interpretation:

Ten new interpretive panels will be installed this spring at various locations along the byway. These panels specifically talk about the U.S.—Dakota War of 1862 in areas that previously did not have interpretation. Locations of the panels, as well as images of each panel, can be located on our website: mnrivervalley.com.

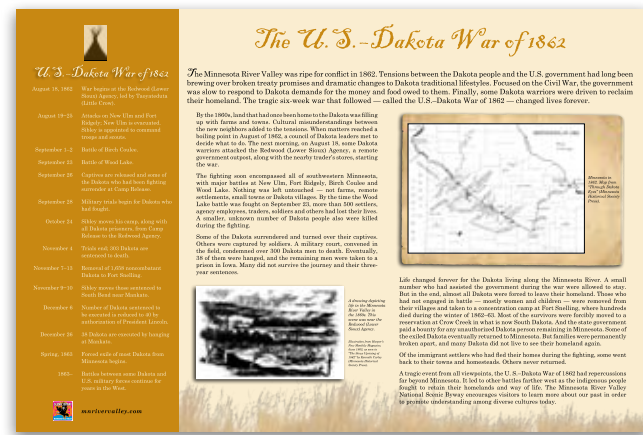


Pictured above is the brochure with information for "Geocaching the Byway."



Suzanne Brown is one of the important figures featured on the Geocaching trading cards, shown above.

This is one of ten new interpretive panels that will be placed along the byway this Spring.

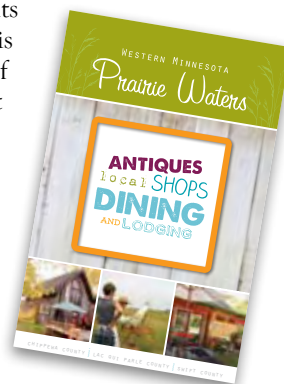


New Western Minnesota Prairie Waters Antiques, Local Shops, Dining and Lodging Guide

The latest edition of the Western Minnesota Prairie Waters Antiques, Local Shops, Dining & Lodging Guide is now available, and we'd love to send you a copy!

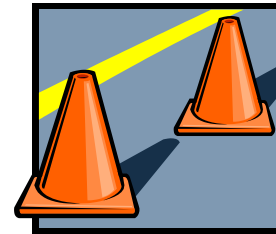
This four-color guide is a comprehensive listing of shops, restaurants and accommodations available in the Prairie Waters region. It is a collaborative effort between Prairie Waters and Chambers of Commerce from many of the region's member cities. It was last printed in 2008.

Want a copy? Visit the Prairie Waters website homepage and click on the Antiques Guide icon to fill out the request form, or call 1-866-866-5432. Prairie Waters also stocks brochures and guides on various cities, events, and activities in the region, so let them assist you in finding a great place to eat, a fun festival to experience, or a family-friendly activity!



Area Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP) Update

The draft 2013-2016 Area Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP) plans were recently reviewed in Area Transportation Partnership (ATP) 4, ATP 8, and at the UMRVDC meeting March 26. The ATIP lays out the four year plan for federally funded transportation improvements. This plan is then sent to the State of Minnesota to be included within the State Transportation Improvement Program. This year the principal



decision will be made on 2016 submitted projects. Eligible projects include roads and bridges, safety, transit capital, railroad safety and enhancements for projects submitted by Mn/DOT, counties and cities.

For more information on transportation, call Lindsey Knutson, Transportation Planner, at 320-289-1981 ext. 7 or email lindsey.knutson@umvrdc.org.

UMVRDC Writes Grant to Assist School Families With Refurbished Computers

UMVRDC staff will work with five local school districts and the nonprofit PCs for People to provide at least 50 computers to families in the region who currently do not have access to a home computer. There was at least one school in each of our five counties that responded with interest in participating in the program, including: MACCRAY, Benson, Lac qui Parle Valley, Ortonville & Yellow Medicine East.

The goals of this program are:

- to provide income eligible families with a home computer;
- encourage internet subscriptions to better connect parents with their child's education; and
- to create an opportunity for school staff to share with parent's information they can find on their school's website.

As a result we hope this project will lessen the technological gap between students who have home access to a computer and those who do not, share the benefits of having an internet connection and strengthen parent's interaction with their student's school activities through interaction on the school's website.

The UMRVDC will work with the local school districts to set up the program this spring. The program will be implemented over the summer months so that the 50 families receiving computers will be better connected and ready to start the new school year this fall.

This grant was made possible through the Blandin Foundation's Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities (MIRC) initiative.



For more information on UMRVDC's work on the MIRC Initiative, contact Dawn Hegland at 320-289-1981 ext. 1 or Jacki Anderson at 320-289-1981 ext. 2.

Mission

Enable the region to thrive through assisting local governments

Contact us:

Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission
323 W. Schlieman Ave. Appleton, MN 56208
320.289.1981 (phone)
800.752.1983 (toll free)
320.289.1983 (fax)
www.umvrdc.org

Meet Our Board Members

We would like to introduce you to Mark Bourne, the Lac qui Parle County Township representative on the UMRVDC Board.



Mark Bourne
Lac qui Parle
County Townships

Mark has been very involved in his community: he has been a small business owner; worked in conservation; was clerk of Hamlin Township; served on the school board for six years; and was on the lobby committee for Minnesota Rural Education for nine years. Mark lives with his family in Dawson.

We appreciate Mark's experience, and thank him for his commitment to helping the region!

CEDS 2012 is Coming!

What is CEDS?

CEDS stands for comprehensive economic development strategy. It is designed to:

- Bring together the public and private sectors;
- Create an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies;
- Analyze the regional economy;
- Serve as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives;
- Develop a regional plan for implementation and action; and
- Identify investment priorities and funding sources.

A CEDS document is required by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) in order to maintain Economic Development District (EDD) status which the UMRVDC holds for the five counties in Region 6W. This EDD status allows the UMRVDC to work with local units of government to apply for funding through EDA for public works and planning projects.

UMRVDC staff will lead the new CEDS process beginning in May 2012 with a new CEDS required to be submitted to EDA in June 2013. There will be a "CEDS Corner" on the UMRVDC website for all the latest updates on CEDS and to find out when the CEDS Team will be in your area.

We look forward to hearing the ideas that will take our region into the future!

For questions about the CEDS, please contact Jacki Anderson at jacki.anderson@umvrdc.org or 320-289-1981 ext. 2.

Keep an eye out for the following opportunities to provide community input and ensure your community's projects are on EDA's project list! If community projects are not included in the CEDS plan, they will not be funded through EDA.

- **Spring 2012 Survey:** This is very important feedback; please make this a priority to complete and return.
- **County Meetings:** Encourage local residents, business and community leaders to get involved and attend one of these sessions to help format the new vision for the CEDS update.
- **Economic Development Professionals (EDPROs) Meetings:** These are offered several times a year, with agendas that focus on timely topics for city staff, county staff and economic development professionals throughout the region. The CEDS Update will be a natural fit on the agenda and will look for critical feedback from attending professionals.
- **Website Updates:** For all the latest demographic analysis and any CEDS-related issues, stay tuned to the UMRVDC website at www.umvrdc.org.