



Upper Minnesota Valley  
**REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
Helping Communities Prosper

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## Case Study: Montevideo Mansion of Mysteries Playground



### The People Involved

**Project Champions:** Montevideo volunteers

**City Manager:** Steve Jones

**Companies:** Leathers and Associates

### Initial Goals:

The motivation for the project came from the community which desired a new playground. City council approved the playground contingent on the city's ability to raise sufficient funds for the project. This meant that the initial goals were: (1) secure funding (2) decide what kind of playground could be built.

### Timeline:

The parks board noticed a community desire for a new playground, and brought the idea to the Montevideo City

Council in 2006. City Council agreed to approve a new park as soon as there were enough funds to complete it. Once the funding goal was reached, the city council official approved the playground and construction began. A group of volunteers completed construction, and Leathers and Associates was hired to assist in designing the plans that those volunteers used. With 750 volunteers, the playground was completed in approximately five days.

### Funding:

The total cost of the Mansion of Mysteries Playground was approximately \$100,000, and this was funded primarily through donations, though some funding did come from the city. There was a single \$10,000 donation, a handful of donations ranging between \$500 and \$1,000. The most common donations were between \$10 and \$100, however. The estimated value of the completed playground was \$500,000.

### Results:

The city of Montevideo now has a playground structure for both children and adults. City manager, Steve Jones, believes the playground is even more successful than originally planned due to the quality of the playground and the overwhelming community support for the project. Community support for the playground also acted as a springboard for other improvements around Smith Park. Remaining funds were allocated to future park repairs.



**Opposition:** There was no opposition to the playground.

### **Financial Sustainability:**

The majority of the covered by donations and volunteer work. The cost to the city was only a small up-front cost. There were funds left over that the city designated for the upkeep of the playground structure. However, there are two recurring costs: 1) staining the play structure so that it remains sounds for the years to come and 2) replacing the mulch that covers the ground around the playground. The cost of the staining is fairly minimal as volunteers complete most of the work. The main cost for the playground is replacing the engineered wood mulch that covers the ground. This must be replaced every few years and ranges in cost from \$1,000- \$2,000. The city currently has a plan to allocate funds to purchase more durable, longer lasting rubber mulch. This will have a higher up front cost, but will have a short payback.