



Upper Minnesota Valley  
**REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION**

# 2018 Annual Report



## Helping Communities Prosper





# Message from the ...

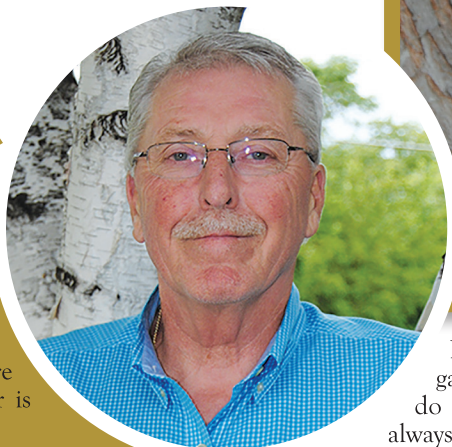
**"It is our purpose to provide excellent service at a reasonable cost and to be your long-term partner for information and assistance"**

**- Dawn Hegland, Executive Director**

## Executive Director



## Board Chair



Greetings to All,

After a long winter and a cold spring where nothing dried out for farming, summer is upon us. Seems like no spring at all!

It seems like I just wrote the chairman report weeks ago and it's already been a year. This year the commission gained new members. The executive director and board of directors reviewed makeup of the board and recruited two new members to fill out four Public Interest positions on the board. The board has representatives from the counties, cities, schools, municipalities, townships and a total of four public interest representatives.

The board is our best source for information and issues affecting the region. They also take on the responsibility to be advocates for the work the UMRDC does. Being chairman with a board like this makes my job a lot easier. Thanks to all board members!

We continue to be blessed with talented and resourceful staff who respond to the ever-changing requests for assistance within the region. Thanks to our staff!

As we look to the upcoming year there are always challenges. Our five-county organization has a very positive and energetic staff. We are always open to questions, suggestions and change. If anyone has a need please contact myself, board member, or staff.

Thanks to all of you for supporting us!

*Gary L. Johnson*

Do you need to clean your closet, basement, or garage? It is often one of the last things on my to do list, but it is always on the list because there is always more to do. Once you set aside time to do it you likely will run across items you have forgotten about that allow you to reminisce. That is what is happening at our office. We are cleaning our filing system. This means sorting and sifting through numerous electronic files going back to the 1990's when we first starting using computers to do more than to create letters, forms, tables, and financial information.

It is exhausting, especially when it reminds me that I am the only person in our office who has been at the RDC since we first started creating those files. It makes me feel old. But it reminds me of some wonderful people, places and projects we have had the pleasure of working on. Projects big and small. Projects that are still in use and benefitting community members years later. Projects, I drive by when traveling throughout the region or that I enjoy the benefits of personally. Most of these projects have no visual way to recognize the RDC's role in the project, but our files tell the story. It is like flipping through an old photo album lost in the deep corner of the basement uncovered after years and opening it and meandering down memory lane.

It also is a reminder that our work is always changing in response to new issues and opportunities the region is faced with. We continue to build on some of the same community development topics we were doing in the 1990s (business lending, transportation, housing and commercial building rehabilitation grants) but we are also always adding new areas of expertise (broadband, arts, park planning). These areas of work all have an electronic file folder chock full of information about the people and communities in our region that undertake the work.

Thank you to all the local governments that choose to work with the UMRDC. There is always a choice. It is our purpose to provide excellent service at a reasonable cost and to be your long-term partner for information and assistance. We also are blessed with an incredibly rich library of electronic records if anyone gets all their closets, basements or garages cleaned out and is in the mood to lend a helping hand, give me a call!

*Dawn E. Hegland*

## UMVRDC Staff



**DAWN HEGLAND**  
Executive Director  
dawn.hegland@umvrdc.org  
320.289.1981 x 101



**JACKIE SIGDAHL**  
Administrative Assistant  
jackie.sigdahl@umvrdc.org  
320.289.1981 x 100



**KIRK BUSTROM**  
Community Development  
Senior Planner  
kirk@umvrdc.org  
320.289.1981 x 111



**LAURA OSTLIE**  
Economic Development  
Specialist  
laura@umvrdc.org  
320.289.1981 x 102



**KRISTI FERNHOLZ**  
Community Development  
Senior Planner  
kristi.fernholz@umvrdc.org  
320.289.1981 x 106



**MATT MOE**  
Financial Officer  
matt@umvrdc.org  
320.289.1981 x 114



**MELISSA STREICH**  
Communications Coordinator  
melissa@umvrdc.org  
320.289.1981 x 105

**Feel free to contact us at anytime via email,  
phone or stop by the office! Stay connected by  
visiting our website for project updates, funding  
opportunities, regional examples and more!**

**Follow us on Facebook!**

**www.umvrdc.org** 

**323 W. Schlieman Ave Appleton, MN 56208  
320.289.1981**



## Commission Board Members

### Big Stone County



**Brent Olson**  
County Commissioner



**Harold R. Dimberg**  
Ortonville Township



**Jim Dahlvang**  
County Commissioner



**Jim Schmaedeka**  
Louriston Township



**Debra Lee Fader**  
Montevideo Mayor

### Lac qui Parle County



**Roy Marihart**  
County Commissioner



**Jeff Olson**  
Dawson City Council



**Mark Bourne**  
Hamlin Township



**Gary Hendrickx**  
County Commissioner



**Warren Rau**  
Hegbert Township



**Lucas Olson**  
Benson City Council

### Swift County

### Yellow Medicine County



**Gary L. Johnson**  
County Commissioner



**Gene Bies**  
Canby City Council



**Gene Stengel**  
Granite Falls Township

### Public Interest



**Carrie Bendix**  
SW MN Private  
Industry Council



**Dawn Regnier**  
MN West  
Community &  
Technical College



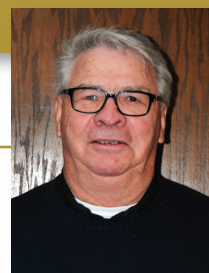
**Winthrow Block**  
Clara City  
Administrator



**Diane Kepner**  
Prairie Five CAC, Inc.  
Board



**Brett Buer**  
Dawson-Boyd School  
Board



**Bill McGeary**  
Benson School  
Board

### School Board



## Financial Report

AMOUNT OF MONEY INVESTED IN OUR REGION AS A  
RESULT OF THE UMVRDC's WORK IN FY18:

# \$29,043,166

Contractual services the  
UMVRDC provided to the  
region **\$624,837**

Funds brought to the  
region as a result of our  
work **\$28,418,329**

### FY18 Ending Account Balances

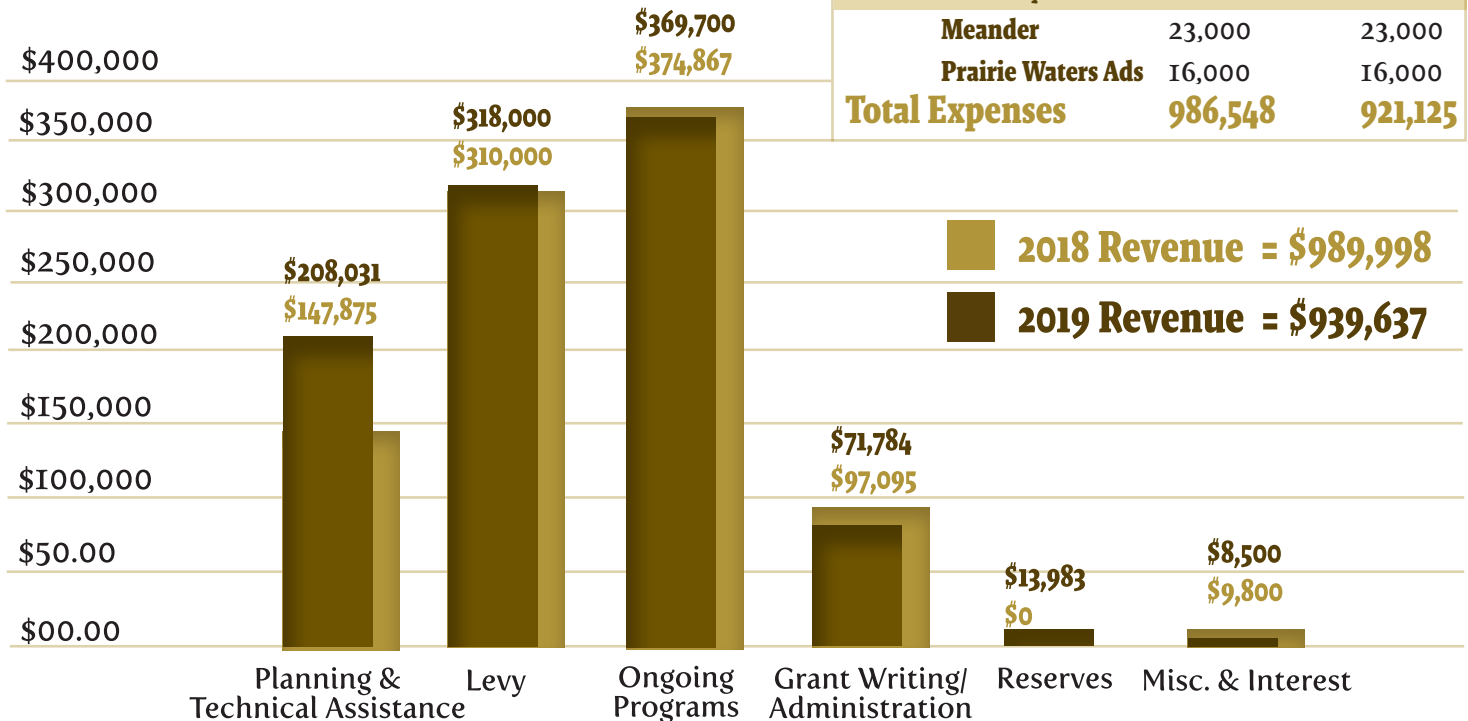
General Checking	\$231,676
Money Market	\$314,081
CD	\$350,674
Scenic Byway	\$7,533
Auto	\$56,010
Equipment	\$31,074
RLF Available for Lending	\$596,481

The most recent audit report is available to  
view at [www.umvrdc.org](http://www.umvrdc.org).

## Expenses

Total Expenses	FY19	FY18
Salaries/Fringe	739,945	698,275
Commissioner's Expense	26,500	26,500
Audit	14,000	14,000
Contract for Services	59,393	41,740
Copy Charge/Xerox lease	4,000	4,500
Depreciation	5,200	5,600
Dues	3,000	3,000
Insurance	1,300	1,300
Legal Fees	2,000	2,000
Miscellaneous	1,000	1,000
Office Rent	12,210	12,210
Postage	3,500	3,800
Printing/Advertising	4,500	4,500
RDC Marketing	2,000	2,000
Registration	4,000	3,000
Repairs/Maintenance	1,000	1,500
Scholarship	5,000	
Software	7,000	7,700
Sub./Publications	2,000	2,000
Supplies	4,500	3,500
Telephone/Internet	8,000	8,500
Staff Travel	30,000	25,000
Morale	2,000	2,000
Wellness	2,000	2,000
Web Hosting/Maintenance	3,500	6,500
Pass Thru Activity		
Meander	23,000	23,000
Prairie Waters Ads	16,000	16,000
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>986,548</b>	<b>921,125</b>

## Revenue





# 48 Jobs

Are expected to be created and retained within the region, as a result from the six loans



## Business Lending

### RLF Portfolio 6/30/18

Total Loan Funds	\$1,787,095.40
Loans Current	30
Loans Default/ Deferred	0
Total Receivables	\$1,190,614.79
Total Available for Lending	\$396,480.61

# \$413,720

The amount of RLF funds loaned out this fiscal year

# \$23,511,380

Was leveraged in public and private funding in addition to the RLF funds

A combination of 48 full and part time jobs were created or retained as a result of the six new business loans approved by the UMRDC's Revolving Loan Fund during this last year. In total, the RLF lent \$413,720 to businesses in the five-county region. Loans for the businesses listed below were approved for equipment, fixed assets, and real estate.

**\$34,000 The Dryer Doctors, Montevideo**

*Equipment/Inventory – New Business*

**\$30,000 Lumphy's, Maynard**

*Business Assets/Inventory – Business Retention*

**\$200,000 Western Consolidated Cooperative, Appleton**

*Business Assets – Expansion*

**\$20,000 Jamers 1 Stop, Clinton**

*Equipment/Inventory – Business Retention*

**\$60,000 Clarkfield Enterprises, Clarkfield**

*Equipment – Business Retention*

**\$69,720 Anderson-TeBeest Funeral Home, Granite Falls**

*Business Assets – Business Expansion*

## Transportation Planning

The UMRDC continues to provide local transportation planning assistance to the region through a contract with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). Transportation issues continue to be critical for our region to get to work, school, medical appointments, vacation, and to move products into and outside of the region.

Staff participate in the West Central and Southwest Minnesota Area Transportation Partnerships (ATPs) in MnDOT Districts 4 and 8 respectively. The ATPs review and rank federally funded road, bridge, public transit, and transportation alternative projects. The total federal transportation investment for projects using federal funds in this region for the next four-year time period of 2019 to 2022 is \$61,104,136.

In addition to serving on the two ATPs, other transportation planning work done by staff this year includes:

- Participation in the Southwest Regional Toward Zero Deaths and Southwest Safe Communities Coalition committees, both aimed at reducing fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways
- Working with local communities to develop Transportation Alternatives projects such as trails, scenic turn outs and overlooks, Safe Routes to School (SRTS) projects and other projects that enhance the transportation system for a wider variety of users
- Assisting MnDOT with various statewide planning such as the Bicycle System Plan, the Highway Safety Improvement Plan and the Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan
- Communicating with local communities in Region 6W about state and federal transportation opportunities and programs to help them improve their transportation system



# UMVRDC's Hedgehog Grant



The UMVRDC's mission statement directs us to "Enable the region to thrive by assisting local units of government". We know through a recent survey that local governments have a lot of needs but are having a hard time paying for them. Those needs prompted the creation of the Hedgehog Grant to help subsidize the cost of the UMVRDC's grant writing and planning services. Applications and more program details are available at [www.umvrhc.org](http://www.umvrhc.org).

In FY18, the UMVRDC used a portion of the local tax levy to subsidize the following work:

## **\$4,000 City of Clarkfield**

*MN DEED grant writing to rehabilitate homes and businesses and improve community infrastructure.*

## **\$2,000 City of Dawson**

*Historical Society grant writing for their library building.*

## **\$3,300 Upper Sioux Community**

*Federal Emergency Management Agency grant writing for a storm shelter.*

## **\$5,000 City of Milan**

*Strategic planning and grant writing assistance.*

## **\$2,000 City of Madison**

*Grant writing for a public art project.*



## Yellow Medicine County Tackles Abandoned School Property

After several years of being vacant and exposure to the natural elements, the structure of the old Clarkfield School was dilapidated and tax forfeited from the prior private owner who had used it for a business office. The county and City of Clarkfield reviewed the condition and estimated that it would cost two to three times as much to clean and rehabilitate the structure as it would to demolish it.

The gym and three classrooms are salvageable and the city wanted to renovate these spaces to create a community center. The classrooms would be used as areas to display past Clarkfield School items, as a gathering place, and a location for reunions.

Yellow Medicine County asked the UMVRDC to prepare and submit a capital bonding request to the State of Minnesota for \$675,175 to partially demolish and rehabilitate the tax forfeited former school building. The bonding request was not included in the final Governor's bonding bill.

## Updating Firefighter's Equipment

The UMVRDC has been coordinating with fire services throughout the region to put together an application for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The program helps fire departments across the country fund the replacement of critical fire equipment – such as turnout gear, air packs, and rescue kits.

Each application to the grant program is eligible for up to \$1 million in requested funds with a 5% match requirement. Currently, there are 12 fire departments in the UMVRDC's five-county region interested in participating in the applications.





# Dawson Armory & Public Library Historic Preservation



The Dawson Armory and Community Building houses the Dawson Public Library and Heritage Court Apartments which has experienced water infiltration through the roofing system and foundation. The City of Dawson requested assistance from the UMRDC with a Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) Historical and Cultural Grant. A grant was written in the summer of 2017 for the construction documents to repair the roof and interior damage.

The project overview was to complete architectural drawings, construction documents, specifications, and a scope of work and cost estimates for the Dawson Armory and Community Building. The 1923 historic former Armory required architectural & engineering drawings to address infrastructure and interior issues in order to preserve the building.

The long-term goal of the project was to repair the roof, stop the water infiltration, and restore the interior in order to preserve this historic structure. The MNHS grant submission requested grant funds to hire an architect experienced in historic buildings, preservation standards, materials and historic construction techniques for specific drawing and prioritization of projects.

The grant was not funded, and it was recommended that the city instead do a Conditions Assessment. In the spring of 2018, staff assisted with procurement of a contractor to do a Conditions Assessment, and is in the process of writing a second grant to MNHS to fund the Conditions Assessment.

## Local Loan Funds Established

The UMRDC assisted the Lac qui Parle County Economic Development Authority (EDA) in writing a United States Department of Agriculture Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) to establish a business loan fund. The EDA was notified during the summer of 2017 that they were awarded the grant to establish a county-wide revolving loan fund to support development or expansion of small, emerging businesses. The EDA leveraged \$25,000 of their own dollars in addition to the \$99,999 in grant funds. The UMRDC continues to provide technical assistance to the EDA by coordinating the loan process with local businesses.

The UMRDC assisted the City of Appleton by writing a grant to establish their business local fund a few years ago. They received \$90,000 in USDA funds and added \$50,000 in local funds to create a \$140,000 loan fund. During the spring of 2018, the UMRDC was asked to assist the city with coordinating their loan processes.

## Clarkfield Childcare Grant Application



While discussing solutions to the child care shortage in Yellow Medicine County, the City of Clarkfield chose to develop a new child care center. Through a collaboration between the city and the Clarkfield Charter School, a non-profit was organized. This group sought local donations, donated labor, county funding, and other grants, including a collaborative Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development grant application through the Southwest Initiative Foundation. The UMRDC staff assisted the city with grant writing and brainstorming funding and other resources. All resources were necessary to get the newly constructed center up and running in May of 2018.

## Childcare Case Studies

The UMRDC has documented case studies to provide examples of regional child care facilities. Child care is considered an economic driver in rural communities and these studies can provide guidance as to how individuals, communities, employers have rolled up their sleeves to meet the needs of the local families. To view the UMRDC's current case studies, visit [www.umvrdc.org](http://www.umvrdc.org).



## Lac qui Parle County Park Master Plan

The Lac qui Parle County Park has been designated as a regional park designation through the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC). Achieving regional designation makes the park eligible for Regional Parks and Trails Legacy funding where an estimated \$8 million will be available annually.

The Lac qui Parle County Park needed to complete this master plan before it can be formally designated and eligible for funding. The UMRDC and the landscape architect firm, Damon Farber, worked with the Lac qui Parle County Park Board to create the master plan that was adopted in the spring of 2018.

The plan's first phase of projects includes the west entrance road, a bridge, and the park loop trail on the west side of the park. Phase two includes the trailhead on the west side of the park, with a bathroom/shower building, parking, and lighting. Phase three includes more trail system improvements and additions.



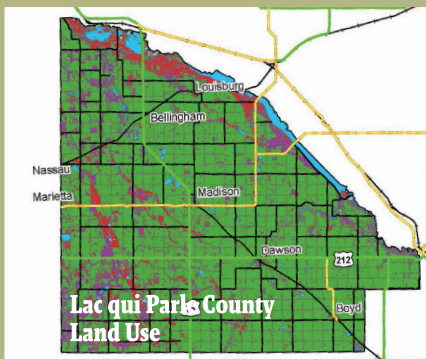
Lac qui Parle County Park



Consultants and Memorial Park committee members



Memorial Park Shelter



Lac qui Parle County Land Use

## Granite Falls Memorial Park Improvements

The UMRDC continues to assist the City of Granite Falls with improvements to Memorial Park, which was designated a regional park in 2016 by the Greater MN Regional Parks and Trails Commission. The city is currently working on the construction of phase one, which includes building a new shower house, improvements on the main park shelter, and making safety improvements to the park entrance. The request of \$595,613 was funded in the spring of 2017 and this project was implemented in the fall of 2017.

Phase two focuses improvements on the south side of the park. It will develop the RV campground closer to the new shower house, and turn the existing campground into a nature-based playground area. It will restore the ecological landscape on the south side of the park, improve the overlook trail and add signage throughout the entire park. The city received \$732,261 to complete this phase, and is now working through the paperwork and environmental review.

Funding for both of these phases came from the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC). The UMRDC helped with the funding requests, environmental review and master planning process. The UMRDC will be assisting with the next phase funding request due July 2018.

## Lac qui Parle & Swift County Hazard Mitigation

Hazard Mitigation Planning aims to break the cycle of disaster-repair-disaster and can help a community prepare for a more sustainable future.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requires local units of government to have a multi-hazard mitigation plan in place in order to be eligible for funding that can proactively address disaster related issues identified in the plans. In order to continue to be eligible for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds, counties must update the plan every five years. Projects identified in the plans might include things like improved community sirens, storm shelters, improved disaster response processes and equipment, water diversion projects, and more.

Starting in July 2017, the UMRDC began updating the Lac qui Parle and Swift County All-Hazard Mitigation Plans to meet the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. Plan updates are scheduled for completion and approval by the counties and FEMA in 2018.

# Housing and Commercial Property Rehabilitation

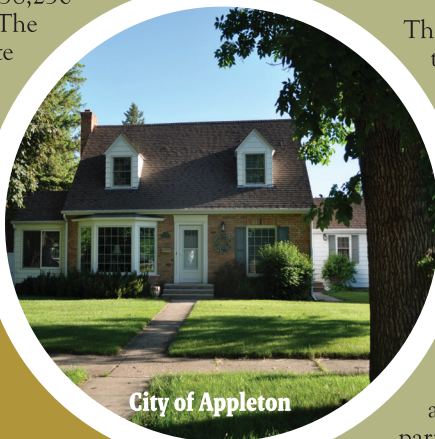
The UMRDC staff continues to author grant applications and provide the general administration of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) which helps cities and communities with funding for housing, public infrastructure, and commercial rehabilitation projects.



City of Benson

## Benson

The City of Benson was awarded \$638,250 in SCDP grant funds in June 2017. The UMRDC authored grant will rehabilitate 20 owner-occupied homes and six commercial properties by September 2020. The UMRDC staff will continue to work with the City of Benson and Swift County HRA to administer the program.



City of Appleton

## Appleton

The Swift County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Prairie Five Community Action, and the UMRDC wrapped up administration of the City of Appleton's SCDP grant in December 2017. Over \$766,000 was invested into the rehabilitation of 20 owner occupied homes and six commercial buildings.

## Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley

The communities of Clinton, Graceville, and Beardsley are continuing to use their joint SCDP grant authored by the UMRDC. The communities have until September 2019 to use the \$637,500 in SCDP grant funds and aim to rehab 26 owner-occupied homes and six commercial businesses. Prairie Five Community Action and UMRDC staff are providing the communities with the field and general administration of this project.

## Granite Falls

The City of Granite Falls was awarded a SCDP grant that will be available through September 2021. The UMRDC authored the \$625,888 grant from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) that will be utilized to rehabilitate 11 owner-occupied homes, seven rental single-family homes and six commercial business. These 24 improvement projects, totaling \$891,501 will create work for contractors and result in safety, efficiency, and aesthetic improvements.

While providing the overall grant administration, the UMRDC will be partnering with the City of Granite Falls and Prairie Five Community Action to complete the project.

## Clarkfield

The City of Clarkfield was awarded a SCDP grant that will be available through September 2021. The UMRDC authored the \$1,107,403 grant from DEED that will be utilized to rehabilitate 20 owner-occupied homes and five commercial business, along with a new water tower as part of a large project that will address their ongoing infrastructure needs. These projects total over \$24 million and will also address drinking water system, sanitary sewer and storm water system.

While providing the overall grant administration, the UMRDC will be partnering with the City of Clarkfield and Prairie Five Community Action to complete the project.



City of Graceville



The Upper Sioux Community requested assistance to write and submit a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Project grant application. This grant would pay for the design and construction of a storm safe shelter for the community's wacipi grounds. The UMRDC helped the community develop an application and worked with the community in developing the project.

The Upper Sioux Community is an area vulnerable to tornadoes and high wind events. The Upper Sioux Community wacipi, falls within the March-to-November tornado "season". Fortunately, the area has not been hit by a tornado during the wacipi, but nearby Granite Falls was hit by record tornado events in July of 2000 and September of 2005.

Total estimated project cost was budgeted at \$627,505. The federal share was budgeted as \$564,754 with the remainder borne by the Upper Sioux Community as local match.

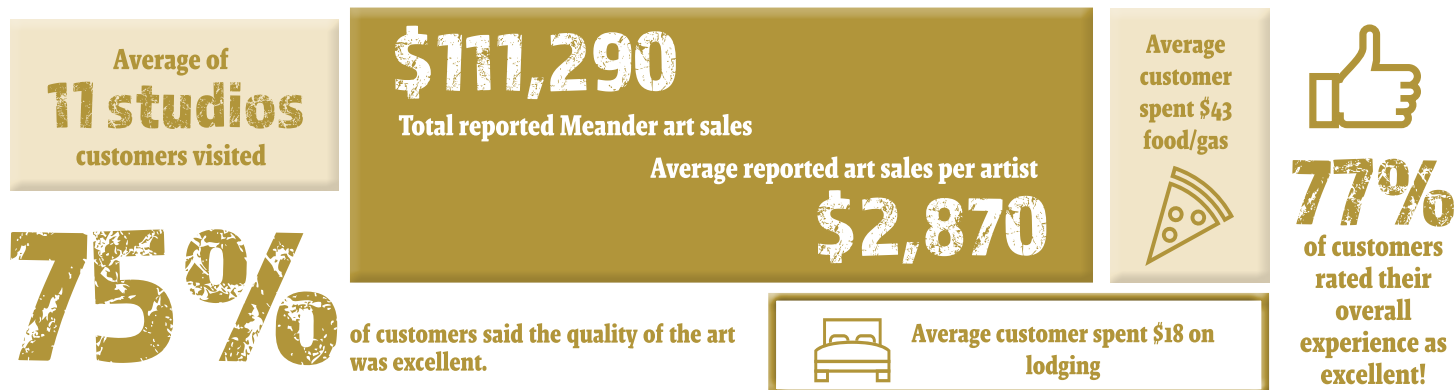
Construction of a storm safe shelter on the Upper Sioux Community wacipi grounds in accordance with FEMA guidelines will provide near absolute protection from storm events. Construction of a storm safe shelter is the only viable mitigation activity that meets the Upper Sioux Community's stated objective in its 2015 All-Hazard Mitigation Plan.



## 14th Annual Meander Art Crawl Success

The UMRDC continues to provide technical and financial management for the Meander. The 14th annual Meander in October 2017 proved to be another success! After tallying reports from Meander artists, the UMRDC found that Meander attendees purchased more than \$111,920 of art over the course of the three days of the art crawl.

Meander attendees did not just buy art, they also spent \$43 on food and gas, \$18 on lodging, and \$11 on shopping (other than art) per person. If we estimate that at least 1,500 people meandered, this amounts to another \$108,000 dollars entering the small towns across the five-county region of Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift and Yellow Medicine counties. The Meander Art Crawl highlights the region's artists and their studios while also introducing people to the region and giving a huge economic boost to the small businesses too.



The UMRDC has been a founding organizer of the Meander since it started in 2004 and each year is responsible for organizing the planning, artists selection, fundraising, marketing and financial management of the event.

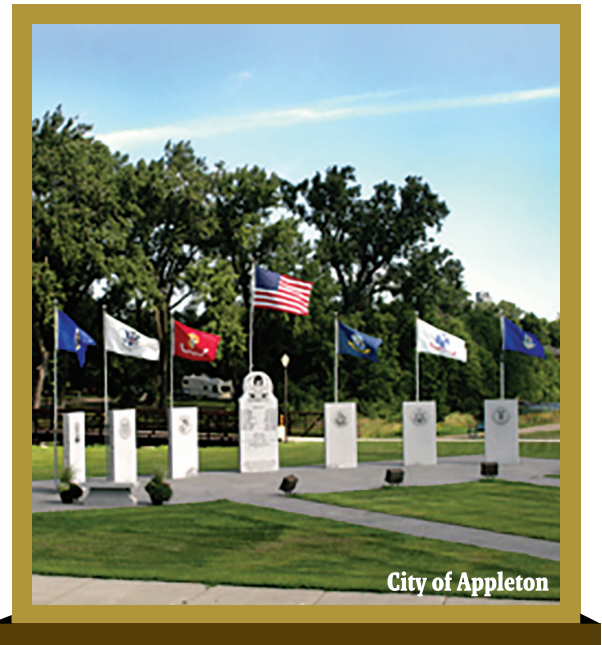


# Appleton Comprehensive Plan

The UMVRDC completed a comprehensive plan for the City of Appleton, which was adopted in the spring of 2018. A task force helped in developing the plan, which is meant to guide the city for the next 10 years (2018-2028). A plan serves as a legal basis for land use regulations and it provides guidelines for the city council and decision makers on how best to use city resources. It also gives an opportunity for residents to voice their shared vision for the community.

The Appleton Comprehensive Plan includes information on the past, present, and what it hopes for the future. The community profile includes demographics, a brief history of the community, and a snapshot of where Appleton is today. The community vision outlines where the community hopes to be in 10-20 years.

There are seven planning topics in the plan and each section includes an overview of each topic, as well as goals and strategies that should be worked on. The implementation chapter gives an outline on how to use the plan and gives an action plan with guidelines on how to prioritize the strategies.



## Opportunity Zones Established

Opportunity Zones are a new community development program established by Congress in the Tax Cut and Jobs Act of 2017 to encourage long-term investments in low-income and urban communities nationwide. The Governor was able to designate 25% of eligible census tracts as Opportunity Zones in the state.

The UMVRDC staff worked with city/county representatives, and the Southwest Initiative Foundation, to review local applications to the Governor to designate Opportunity Zones within the region. Four zones within the following counties were identified: Big Stone, Chippewa, Swift and Yellow Medicine.

Once approved by the U.S. Department of Treasury, projects in Opportunity Zones will be eligible for funding through Opportunity Funds. Opportunity Funds are an investment vehicle that is set up as either a partnership or corporation for investing in eligible property that is in an Opportunity Zone and that utilizes the investor's gains from a prior investment for funding the Opportunity Fund. Guidance for opportunity funds are being developed by the Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service and should be available later this year.

## Milan Listening House



The City of Milan participated in the Partnership Arts Program through the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership and ArtPlace. The intent of this program is to infuse arts into community development projects to solve problems.

UMVRDC staff teamed up with three other artists: Lucy Tokheim (designer), Lauren Carlson (poet), and Brendan Stermer (new media) to work with Milan community members to use art to explore the many meanings of home. The team rented a house that needed rehabilitation and developed the "Milan Listening House" to serve as a gathering space, work space, and gallery space. Through the conversations and coordination, this project worked to identify shared values and priorities of what changes would help Milan address housing issues. The community-generated art installation centered around the question, "What does home mean to you?"

After months of listening sessions and public exhibit hours, the artists presented a guiding document of concrete suggestions for housing and community planning to the City of Milan. The top three priorities are:

- Visual revitalization of public spaces
- Better relationships between community members
- Develop leaders





Public Art - Montevideo, MN

## Montevideo Arts Project

The UMVRDC has been providing grant writing and project implementation services to the Montevideo Arts Project (MAP) for several public art projects. MAP's 2017 project was "Rustician", an antique tractor turned sculpture by Chatfield, MN artist, Karl Unnasch. The tractor was donated from the Minnesota Valley Antique Farm Power & Machinery Association. Unnasch, who visited Montevideo to collect stories from residents and history books, incorporated these stories into the stained glass, which is back lit by LED lights and embedded into the tractor. The UMVRDC wrote and managed the successful grant to the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council for \$20,000.

For 2018, MAP has started working on a public art project centered around staircases in the downtown area. They are working to hire an artist with a planning grant received from the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council to develop the project further.

### EDA Planning Grant



The UMVRDC was invited to re-apply to the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development planning grant program. The grant provides \$70,000 each year to the UMVRDC to provide economic development activities and services throughout the region. The UMVRDC received \$210,000 in EDA funds for a 3-year grant to continue a comprehensive economic development planning program. Notice of Investment Award was received from Congressman Collin Peterson's office March 26th, 2018.

### Browns Valley Flood Recovery



The UMVRDC has a contract to provide the City of Browns Valley fiscal agent and technical assistance for their DNR Flood Damage Reduction Grant.

Browns Valley Diversion project will reduce future flooding in Browns Valley. The project includes completion of a levee, culverts, ditch restoration and excavation. The project is state funded. We are assisting the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District and the City of Browns Valley.

### Maynard Museum



The UMVRDC has been assisting the City of Maynard with their Historic Maynard State Bank Building. Staff wrote and implemented a grant for the building to be placed on the National Register, which was completed in the spring of 2018. Registering the building on the National Register will enable the Maynard History Museum to take advantage of other grants and resources from the Minnesota Historical Society.

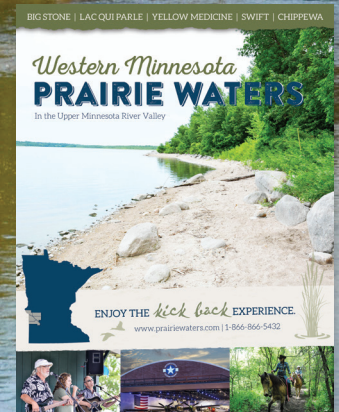


# Prairie Waters Regional Marketing

NEW Guides  
Spring of 2019!

The UMRDC continues to manage a regional marketing program started in the 1980's under the brand Western Minnesota Prairie Waters. This program is supported through joint funding from counties, cities, chamber, and economic development organizations in the region. Prairie Waters promotes the region as a great place to visit, live, and work by highlighting and showcasing the region's natural, cultural, scenic, and historical assets.

Each year Prairie Waters develops print and electronic marketing campaigns; develops and distributes visitors guides; manages and updates [www.prairiewaters.com](http://www.prairiewaters.com) and the social media outlets and much more. Visit [www.prairiewaters.com](http://www.prairiewaters.com) for projects, members, regional information and more about the program!



## Get Rural MN

Attracting and retaining residents is a key component for the sustainability of the region and has been voiced as an issue from several local units of government within the region.

Based on the "Brain Gain" research and efforts with local stakeholders, the UMRDC took a huge leap in January 2018 by launching a new website that includes information to make it easier for a potential new comer to move to the region. The UMRDC expanded the Prairie Waters website including information on employment opportunities, housing, healthcare, education, childcare, stories, and things to do. Creating a one-stop-shop has been a huge goal for several years throughout the recruitment process.

Over the next year, UMRDC staff will continue to incorporate new content and develop relationships with local entities to feed into the new web pages. The UMRDC staff will be convening and working with local employers, schools, healthcare facilities, realtors and local newspapers on how they can work together to better market themselves.

Follow the project on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest by searching Get Rural MN, or visit the UMRDC website.





Granite Falls, MN

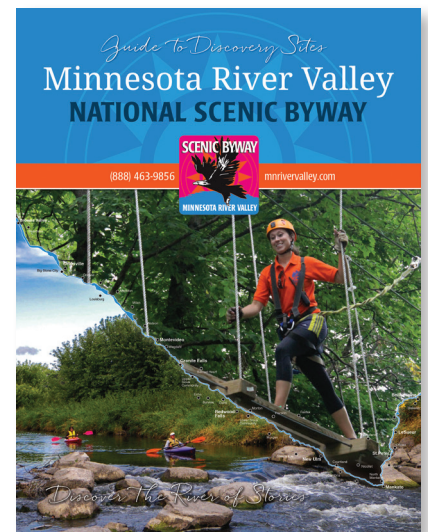
## Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway

The UMVRDC has been providing staffing and fiscal services to the byway since 1996.

The MRVSBA is a partnership of committed individuals from the 287-mile byway corridor, representing a variety of interests including chamber of commerces, various attractions and historic sites, state parks, local and state governmental bodies, private businesses, and concerned individuals.

The byway plays an important role in linking and promoting historical sites and stories to better tell the history of the Minnesota River Valley through a variety of efforts, including its programs, website, roadside signs, brochures, and other marketing materials.

In the past year, the MRVSB has completed their corridor management plan, marketing plan, major website updates, and a new visitors guide. The byway has also been active with the Minnesota Byway Statewide Strategic Planning process.



## Border to Border Broadband

The UMVRDC contracted with Farmers Mutual Telephone Company (FMTC) to author Border-to-Border Broadband applications through the MN Office of Broadband Development. The grants would provide funding to establish high speed broadband service from FMTC for NE Yellow Medicine County, the City of Watson and selected addresses within SW Lac qui Parle County.

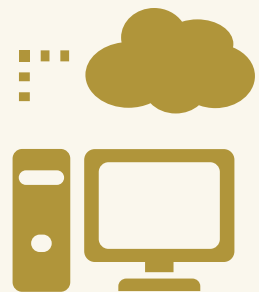
Project partners FMTC, the City of Watson and Yellow Medicine County proposed to build out fiber infrastructure to the aforementioned areas, creating ubiquitous broadband that meets and exceeds state and federal standards. Broadband infrastructure has been identified as a high priority for the region in the UMVRDC's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. This infrastructure priority is supported with financial commitments, public-private partnerships and need expressed by residents, businesses and organizations in letters of support found in this project proposal.

# \$760.5k

### Border to Border Grant

The City of Watson and SW Lac qui Parle County broadband infrastructure project will cost \$1.55 million to construct. \$760.5K will come from a Minnesota Border to Border Grant. The remaining \$791.5K project cost will be borne as local match. The grant was awarded in late 2017.

The NE Yellow Medicine County broadband infrastructure project grant was authored in 2017, but ineligible for submittal due to late provider challenge notifications via FMTC.







Upper Minnesota Valley  
**REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION**

Helping Communities Prosper

323 W. Schlieman Ave. Appleton, MN 56208

320-289-1981

[www.umvrdc.org](http://www.umvrdc.org)

PRST STD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT 63  
APPLETON, MN



Serving the...  
5 counties  
37 cities  
1 tribal nation  
94 townships  
10 school districts  
in the Upper Minnesota River Valley

