

UMVRDC's Revolving Loan Fund

The UMVRDC administers a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to assist existing businesses as well as new entrepreneurs in securing financing. The primary goal of the RLF program is to create and retain jobs in the region. The UMVRDC welcomes partnering with other lenders to assist local area businesses to succeed and thrive.

The UMVRDC was a partner with other financial institutions, gap lenders, and a USDA guaranty, in the construction/expansion of Do-Mat's Family Foods in Benson. Through this project 36 existing jobs will be retained and two new jobs will be created.

For more information contact Laura Ostlie at 320-289-1981 x 102, or email at laura@umvrhc.org. Visit www.umvrhc.org website for more details.



NEW RLF Board Member

The UMVRDC's Loan Advisory Board for the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) welcomes new board member Carie Driessen, who will be representing Lac qui Parle County. Carie is the Assistant Vice President/Business Banker with United Prairie Bank in Madison where she has worked since 2014.

Carie lives on a farm outside Canby with her husband and three young children. She and her husband raise and sell registered Angus bulls and heifers. Welcome Carie!



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The UMVRDC's updated Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) has been out for public review since October 21st, 2016. In that time, staff have been reaching out to both community and economic development staff and private sector representatives for feedback. Take a look at the strategies for our region!

The CEDS Document can be viewed at www.umvrhc.org.org/CEDScorner.



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

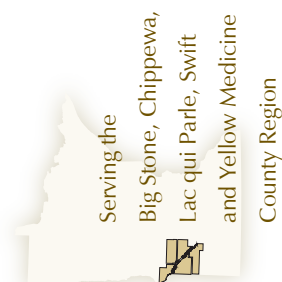
phone: 320-289-1981 umvrhc.org

323 W. Schlieman Ave.
Appleton, MN 56208

Upper Minnesota Valley
**REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION**



Helping Communities Prosper



PRST STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT 63
APPLETON, MN

Mark Your Calendar!

January 24, 2017
UMVRDC Board Meeting 6:30pm
umvrhc.org..... Appleton, MN

January 31 - February 1, 2017
Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference
www.exploreminnesota.com..... St. Paul, MN

February 20th, 2017
President's Day - Office Closed

February 28th, 2017
UMVRDC Board Meeting 6:30pm
umvrhc.org..... Appleton, MN

March 28th, 2017
UMVRDC Board Meeting 6:30pm
umvrhc.org..... Appleton, MN

See you next year!

January 2nd, 2017
New Years Day Observed - Office Closed



Regional Outlook

Quarterly Newsletter | December 2016

Vol 34 No. 3

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

2016 Meander was another SUCCESS!

The Meander is held on the first weekend of October with 45 artists from Granite Falls to Ortonville, and from Danvers to Dawson. Their juried works are displayed at either home studios or at host sites such as the Red Barn north of Ortonville or the Milan Arts School.

Hundreds of comments highlighted visiting and meeting the artists on the tour. Kristi Fernholz, Meander Coordinator, stated "The attendees enjoyment goes far beyond the art. The welcoming nature of the artists in their studios was noted once again throughout the surveys this year. People love meeting with the artists, who they found very open and friendly. This is good for the region overall and has an impact that lasts long past the Meander itself."

Continued inside...

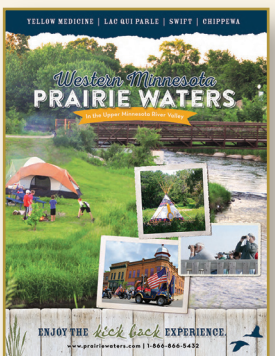


Western Minnesota PRAIRIE WATERS

Prairie Waters staff is busy working on updating the NEW 2017-2018 visitor's guide. We are excited to announce that we will be adding Big Stone County to the new guide making it a five-county visitor's guide! The guides will be completed by April 1st, 2017.

The guides will be displayed at all of the large travel information centers across the state, Mall of America's Visitors Bureau, local chambers, displayed on the Prairie Waters website and on the Explore Minnesota Tourism Website. The guides are used in waiting rooms in clinics, student orientation packets at MN West Technical Colleges, mailed out by requests, and large regional events.

If you would like to advertise in the guide, or know of anyone that would be interested contact Melissa for rates at 866.866.5432 or at melissa@umvrhc.org.



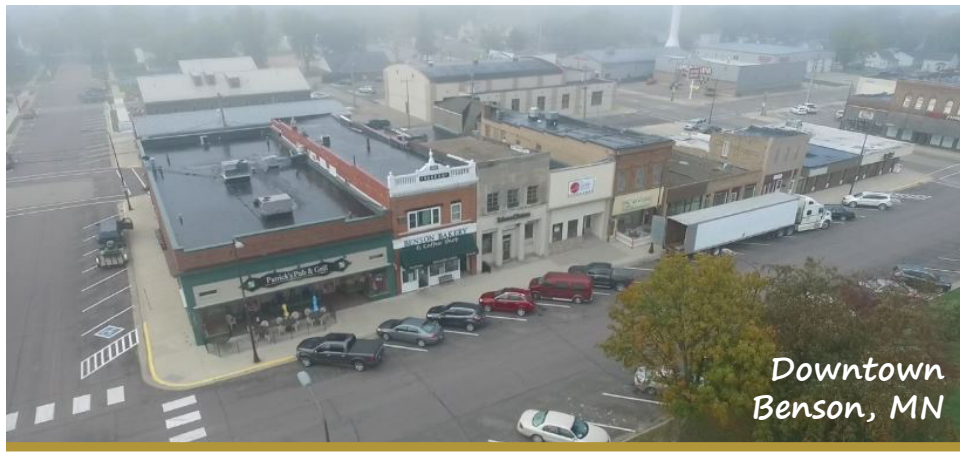
Danvers Seeks Firefighters Equipment



The City of Danvers utilized UMRDC staff to author a Federal Emergency Management Agency, Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) application. The primary goal of AFG is to meet the fire fighting and emergency response needs of fire departments. The City of Danvers is in need of updated protective gear and equipment for their firefighters in order to best equip their personal. Like many of the regional communities, the City of Danvers' volunteer fire department is made up of community leaders that are active in providing fire safety awareness and mutual aid to the rural area that surround the city. Grant award recipients will be notified mid-2017.

For information on the Assistance to Firefighters Grant application process, contact Laura Ostlie at 320-289-1981, ext 102 or laura@umvrdc.org.

Benson Plans for Home & Business Rehabilitation Funding



Downtown Benson, MN

A Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) grant application was submitted for the City of Benson for a total of 26 commercial and residential rehabilitation projects. A community survey resulted in substantial interest from the community and business owners. The target area focuses on the central corridors of the community and was determined based on survey responses. Pre-applications were due November 10th, and Benson hopes to be invited to submit a full application that is due at the end of February.

The UMRDC continues to work to bring rehabilitation funding to the region. SCDP, a federally-funded initiative, provides funding for projects that eliminate slum and blight conditions, benefit people of low and moderate incomes, and eliminate urgent threats to public health and safety. These grants funds are available to cities and townships with populations under 50,000 and counties under 200,000.

Currently Appleton, Clara City, and Clinton/Graceville/Beardsley are working on SCDP grants authored by the UMRDC. These funds leverage other local and project participant funds, allowing for the communities to rehabilitate owner occupied housing, rental housing, and commercial properties.

For more information on the UMRDC's SCDP services, contact Laura Ostlie at 320-289-1981, ext 102 or laura@umvrdc.org.

Meander Economic Impact

Continued from front cover...

80%

Plan to attend again next year

50%

Did not attend last year

38%

Came from within 5-county area

15%

Came from out of state

Between 130 and 1,500 art enthusiasts were reported to have visited each of the sites, with an average in the 500 range. Fernholz noted, "The quality of the art is a big draw, the art is what brings the visitors into the region." In all, 71 percent of the customers surveyed said the art was excellent. The overall average for art sales per artist was \$2,668, up slightly over the \$2,564 per artist in 2015. Money raised to organize the Meander through sponsors and artists was spent on products or services (printing, paper, advertising, graphic design, staffing). The Meander spent over \$9,500 on advertising in 2016. This was 26 percent of the total budget.



83% of customers said their overall experience was excellent

\$115,000

Total art sales during the Meander



An average per visitor:
\$36 on food/gas
\$17 on lodging

For more Meander economic impact results visit www.umvrdc.org/meanderartcrawl



A to Z Letterpress Printing Montevideo, MN

Get Rural Meeting Recap

The regional recruitment efforts continue as Phase II of the Get Rural project kicked off with a meeting on December 6th, 2016. Present, were economic development and chamber professionals that represented all corners of the region. The meeting showcased the NEW regional promotional videos that were shot this summer/fall. A discussion followed on how the communities have been utilizing the new message/logo on their websites, email signatures, and social media platforms. UMRDC staff explained how to access the online imagery library through Dropbox.



Guest speaker John Schultz, Explore Minnesota Tourism Marketing Strategy Manager, presented on the legality of taking, sharing, and promoting photos and video. John hit on the following topics: capturing photos at private vs. public spaces, third party usage, consent forms, and copyright usage.

Phase II of the Get Rural project is a year long effort that will focus on sharing new imagery and exploring a lifestyle portal for the region. As part of this phase, economic development and chamber staff will gain access to the inventory of new imagery giving them a new tool in their toolbox to promote the region. Together, the group will explore different types of portals and develop a concept for a regional platform that links to regional resources and showcases lifestyles, opportunities and specific areas of interest such as entertainment, schools and housing information.

The next meeting will focus on the strategy and development of a potential online portal where all of the Get Rural work would be housed. Follow the Get Rural work on Facebook @GetRuralMN or visit www.umvrdc.org/regionalrecruitment for more information or contact Melissa at melissa@umvrdc.org, 320.289.1981 x 105.



Happy Holidays! From the UMRDC

