



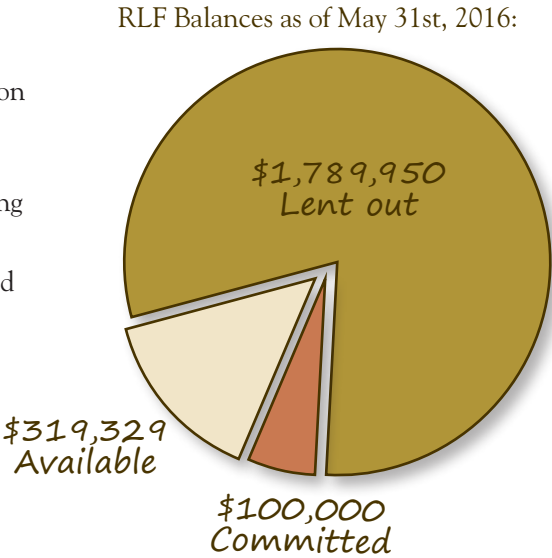
Is there an entrepreneur in your community looking to start a business or expand their business? The Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) works to help businesses by creating a financial package to fund those projects. The UMRDC RLF was able to partner with financial institutions and other gap lenders to grow and retain the work force in our region with the addition of two new business loans. Clara City Foods, Inc. and Picht's Auto Body and Glass will create or retain 27 jobs throughout our region utilizing RLF dollars.

RLF Portfolio

Things to know about the RLF:

- A primary focus is job creation and retention
- Funds are available for fixed assets, real estate, and working capital
- Bank participation is required

For more information call Laura Ostlie at 320-289-1981 x 102, email laura@umvrdc.org or check out the RLF information at the UMRDC's website.



HOUSING SURVEYS

The cities of Clarkfield and Granite Falls have partnered with Yellow Medicine County to complete a community housing assessment with the help of the UMRDC. Housing was identified as a critical issue and these cities wanted an updated assessment of their housing stock. The UMRDC will be mapping the housing assessments completed by community volunteers with summary results provided in late June. The City of Appleton has completed their community housing assessment and used it to build a successful Small Cities Development Program application for housing rehabilitation. The assessments will also be used to inform future decisions about community housing goals and investments. If your community is interested in a housing assessment, please contact Jacki Anderson at 320-289-1981 x 111 or jacki.anderson@umvrdc.org.



Broadband

The UMRDC provided technical assistance to the cities of Appleton and Madison after they determined that they wanted to establish committees to assess the demand for better broadband within their communities. The committees first studied broadband options, speeds, possible construction time lines, and costs. After determining that fiber broadband would be the best solution based on several factors the committees went to work. They deployed public education, outreach, and city-wide surveys to assess the needs in each community. The committees are currently working to develop a work plan following the results of the survey.

Mark Your Calendar!

July 4, 2016	Office closed - Independence Day	
July 26, 2016	UMVRDC Annual Bus Tour 1:00pm	Region-wide
July 26, 2016	UMVRDC Annual Board Meeting 6:30pm	Milan, MN
August 10, 2016	Prairie Waters Annual Gathering	Swift Falls, MN
August 23, 2016	UMVRDC Board Meeting 6:30pm	Appleton, MN
September 27, 2016	UMVRDC Board Meeting 6:30pm	Appleton, MN



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Upper Minnesota Valley
**REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION**



Helping Communities Prosper

Serving the
Big Stone, Chippewa,
Lac qui Parle, Swift
and Yellow Medicine
County Region

Regional Outlook

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

Get Rural!

Quietly Beautiful. Wildly Connected.

Over the past few months the UMRDC has been convening meetings with local chambers and economic development professionals to develop an online regional message to help brand the region and put us on the map!

Throughout the course of the meetings attendees were asked to write down all the unique assets that they believe best describes our region. Christie Dick, Freelance Management Consultant, examined the long list of assets and created multiple different taglines based off of the results, she then narrowed it down to a few different options. Those present then voted on which tagline they felt best describes and truly represents the region, and since this is a regional effort, UMRDC staff met with those communities that were not present to get their approval. All communities with a population of over 1000 in the UMRDC 6W Region have agreed to brand the region with the message "Get Rural. Quietly Beautiful, Wildly Connected."

Within the last few months UMRDC staff have created a regional logo to visually showcase the new message. UMRDC staff have also been collecting video footage of the region and have created a regional promotional video. On June 23rd the regional logo and video were revealed. All cities and counties will have access to the video through One Drive, an online file sharer, where they will be emailed a link for easy access. We encourage every community and county to utilize the new message and regional promotional video on their websites and social media platforms. The regional message is designed to complement each individual communities' identity, that showcases the lifestyle of living in a rural community.

CONTINUED INSIDE.



Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission

IT PROFESSIONALS COORDINATION



Several years ago during a regional meeting, County Information Technology (IT) staff identified a need to collaborate and have discussion on IT topics and issues. Funding from the Blandin Foundation allowed the UMRDC to help coordinate meetings to bring the IT group together to have discussion on issues they identify. The group kicked off their first meeting in February and have met every month since then.

Meeting topics range from software demonstrations to data security threats and prevention. The purpose of gathering IT professionals is to develop an on-going technology network for the region that will identify shared opportunities and jointly pursue professional development in areas of the technology adoption and integration.

APPLETON ZONING

The City of Appleton is wrapping up a major zoning update. A local task force was developed to review the current zoning ordinance and update it to reflect existing use of land and opportunities for future growth and development. The project is complete and the council adopted the new zoning ordinance at their June meeting. The project took nearly a year to complete with a dedicated task force that reviewed the existing ordinance, identified best practices for future land use and ultimately recommended an updated ordinance that supports a sustainable and thriving community.



Visit www.appletonmn.com for updates

BROADBAND FEASIBILITY STUDY

As a region we are exploring the feasibility and opportunities for a public sector fiber network that would allow for shared knowledge, create an efficient system that will benefit the public by saving public funds, contribute to professional retention, and increase capacity. If deployed, a shared public network could serve as a backbone for future business and residential broadband expansion throughout the region.

Goals for a regional network include:

- Identify how equipment and staff could be shared through a network;
- Identify current connections, limitations, barriers, costs, and funding sources for existing connections;
- Identify possible collaborative services such as data backup, reporting, and redundancy.

Elert and Associates was selected as the engineering firm to complete the study. Their team will meet with a task force several times between now and the end of September to update us on the project. The final report will be available late fall.

This project has been funded by the Blandin Foundation and Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift and Yellow Medicine counties.

WELCOMING MATT TO THE UMRDC TEAM!



The UMRDC would like to introduce Matt Moe who joined us in June 2016 as the Finance Officer. Matt has a Bachelor of Science degree in both Accounting and Business Administration from Southwest Minnesota State University. Prior to being hired as the Finance Officer, Matt worked in the nonprofit sector for Pioneer Public Television for 10 years and has experience with individual and corporate taxes. His wife and their three children reside in Benson. As a family they enjoy everything about the outdoors, archery, camping, gardening and spending time at the lake. We're very excited to add Matt and his finance experience to the team – Welcome Matt!

Matt Moe

Matt@umvrdc.org

320.289.1981 x 114

PRAIRIE THUNDER OFF-ROAD RALLY



The UMRDC helped coordinate the first annual Prairie Thunder Off-Road Rally on June 17th – 19th at the Appleton Area OHV Park.

The event packed weekend included something fun for the entire family. The mud pit made a great new addition to the park, and participants were thrilled to get muddy on a warm day. Those brave enough participated in a blindfolded barrel race, where the driver was blindfolded and a partner gave directions throughout a timed course.

Over 10 kids received their ATV Safety Training by taking an ATV youth training course. Kids also had the opportunity to attend the outdoor field day which was held at the Appleton Sportsman's Club. Swift County Pheasants Forever hosted trap shooting and archery shooting for both kids and adults, and one lucky kid won a youth bow! Other events included a timed obstacle course and a scavenger hunt throughout the park. There were motorsport vendors from Marshall, Ortonville, Redwood Falls and Willmar promoting their latest and greatest side-by-side models and ATV's.

The Appleton Area OHV Park is a unique asset that our region has to offer. The park attracts hundreds of people each year from all over the state and even out of state active riders. Each week we receive numerous calls from those interested in the park and other attractions in the area through the Prairie Waters Regional Tourism toll free number. Promoting the park through Prairie Waters has been a huge success and the UMRDC will continue to help advertise the park to bring visitors to our region! Visit www.prairieoffroaders.org for more information on the park or event details.



CONTINUED FROM FRONT...

We've been working on bringing the message to life through the "Visitor for a Day Campaign" where we've been capturing photos, videos, blogs and interviews of the region. All cities and counties will have the opportunity to access all of the new content and materials through the online file sharing, One Drive.

As a 2017 NEW Prairie Waters membership benefit, cities and counties will receive a "Lifestyle & Tourism Snapshot" of their community (new photos and blogs captured through the Visitor for a Day Campaign). The interactive online snapshot can be embedded onto websites and easily shared on any social media platform. This is a huge new benefit that we can offer to the cities and counties that continue to support the regional tourism program.

Let's all work together on putting our region on the map and promoting the rural lifestyle through sharing the new logo, video, and hashtags! After all, living in Western Minnesota is quietly beautiful and wildly connected!



Local Chambers & EDAs watching the reveal of the NEW regional promotional video!

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!



The UMRDC would like to introduce Marcy Prince from the University of Minnesota Extension, Center for Small Towns who will be helping the UMRDC with a variety of projects throughout the Summer. Marcy has been helping the UMRDC expand its' photo and video inventory of the region, which all cities and counties will have access to. With an outsider's point of view, Marcy will be visiting each community and blogging about her experience in that community, along with attending community events. Collecting these new photos, videos, and content will give cities and counties an opportunity to update their websites and online social media presence. We are looking forward to working with Marcy throughout the Summer to capture the beautiful unique assets within our region and to be able to share that with others.

WWW.APPLETONMN.COM

Get ready for a new fresh look of the Appleton Website! The UMRDC has been working with the City of Appleton on updating and refreshing their website. New features include a new template which will allow for more customization, scrolling photos on the home page, new photos, videos, and content (Captured through the Visitor for a Day Campaign!)