

Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC)
Serving Region Six-East

2011 Assessment of Activities

Under Minnesota State Statutes 462.393 (Subd. 2) it states that “In 2001 and every five years thereafter the commission shall review its activities and issue a report assessing its performance in fulfilling the purposes of the Regional Development Act. The report shall address whether the existence of the commission is in the public welfare and interest.”

The five-year assessment needs to be completed in 2011.

MMDC’s Mission Statement:

We will administer state and federal programs, coordinate multi-jurisdictional activities, and provide technical assistance to government, businesses, and local organizations to maintain or enhance the quality of life in the Counties of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville.

**Mid-Minnesota Development Commission’s Departments Key Activities
Performed During Past Five Years:**

During the past five years, the MMDC has operated the following Departments:

- Community Development/Planning
- Economic Development
- Transportation Planning
- Aging Services with the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging[®], Inc.
- Building Inspection Services (Ceased completely in 2011)
- Administration

Highlight of Activities within Each Department over the Past Five Years

The following is a brief listing of some of the key activities undertaken by each of the MMDC’s Departments during the past five years. Many smaller activities are not mentioned.

Community Development and Planning Activities

- Hazardous Mitigation Plans for all four counties
- Comprehensive Local Water Plans for all four counties
- Census Data Center and involved with 2010 “Complete Count”
- Comprehensive Water Plan for the North Fork Crow River Watershed District

- Assistance with forming the Middle Fork – Crow River Watershed District, and preparing their Watershed Management Plan
- Assisting the Buffalo Creek Watershed District with:
 - Rules and Regulations Update
 - GIS mapping and transitioning to Houston Engineering for GIS needs
 - Drainage Records Modernization Project, and successful grant application
 - Drainage Management Plan
 - Wrote a successful BWSR Clean Water Legacy Act grant application for streambank stabilization, etc.
- Some Parcel mapping for Meeker County and assistance with transferring the project to Houston Engineering
- Meeker County Drainage Records Modernization Project
- Meeker County Comprehensive Plan
- Greenleaf State Recreation Area development assistance
- A number of Environmental Assessment Worksheets (EAWs) for both businesses within the Region and for Meeker and Kandiyohi Counties.
- New London Concrete Products Environmental Impact Study (EIS) and also wrote a Conditional Use Permit.
- Reviewed and commented on Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar HRA's Joint Plan
- In process with Penneck, Lake Lillian, and Prinsburg municipal codes
- City of Spicer Comprehensive Land Use Plan
- Assisted City of Willmar with Federal Environmental Review of old airport site to be used as an industrial park
- City of Brownton Comprehensive Plan
- City of Litchfield Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance
- Infrastructure project assistance for the City of Blomkest
- United Way of Kandiyohi County Data Collection and Analysis Committee member for a County Community Assessment of Needs Study
- Over 300 GIS specialty maps for various projects, i.e. wind generation map for Kandiyohi County and an Airport Safety Zone map for the Renville County Airport Ordinance

Economic Development Activities

- MMDC's Revolving Loan Fund made loans to 12 businesses within the Region for a total of \$910,000
- Prepare and annually update the Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

- Keeping current with the necessary reports, etc. with the federal EDA's designation as an Economic Development District
- Assisted the City of Hutchinson's successful EDA Grant for a new industrial park
- Assistance to the Kandiyohi County local Foods System Committee
- Assistance with the Blandin Foundation's Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities (MIRC) grant project
- Staff serving on RLF Committees for Renville County HRA/EDA and for the Kandiyohi County EDC
- Staff served on the Business Retention and Expansion Committee for the Kandiyohi County EDC and as an ex-officio member of their Operations Board
- Business counseling for the Small Business Development Center
- Assisted the U of M Crookston EDA University Center with a statewide broadband internet access study
- Provided assistance with the State's JOBZ Program
- Assisted the Renville County HRA/EDA with setting up their Revolving Loan Fund
- Staff serves on the Kandiyohi County EDC's MIRC Demonstration Community Committee
- Assistance given to the City of Willmar Design Center
- Participation with the 38 county Southern Minnesota Regional Competitiveness Project
- A number of presentations to area business finance seminars
- Partnered with Minnesota DEED regarding an Enterprise Network System Analysis for the Region
- Technical Assistance to Meeker County Development Corporation in connection with liquidation of local estate collateral, on a RLF loan to a new company
- In 2011, assisted U of M, Crookston EDA University Center with interviewing 10 businesses for a statewide study on identifying successful entrepreneurial traits and characteristics

Transportation Planning

- Participation with the Southwest Minnesota Transportation Area Partnership (ATP) which decides how federal dollars are spent in MnDOT District 8
- Staff is annually on the ATP's Enhancement Program Committee and takes the Committee Chair every 3 years
- Assistance to a number of Enhancement Program applicants
- Preparing the City of Willmar's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan
- Preparing Meeker County's Trail plan
- Assistance with the Greater Minnesota transit Investment Plan within the region

- Assistance to the Highway 15 Coalition and acting as their fiscal agent
- Being the fiscal agent for the Minnesota Valley Rail Road Coalition
- Member of the Highway 15 Technical Committee for the MnDOT funded Highway 15 Corridor Study
- Regional Functional Classification Update and assistance to counties and cities with changes to their functional classification systems
- Assistance given to Renville County trail planning efforts
- Assistance with a Bike Rack Needs Study within the City of Willmar
- Assistance with the MnDOT Western Minnesota Freight Plan, including interviewing businesses in the region for the project
- Staff is a member of the Minnesota Intercity Passenger Rail Transportation Forum
- Staff served on the Passenger Rail Committee for MnDOT's Freight and Passenger Rail Plan
- Prepared a Roadway Jurisdictional Study for Kandiyohi County
- Provided a means of citizen input on various transportation projects
- Provided assistance to consultants that worked on the City of Litchfield Transportation Study
- Staff assisted with 5310 application reviews in 2007
- Prepared the Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan in 2006/2007 and the new Plan being prepared in 2011
- In 2006, staff served on KAT's operation Board

Aging Program Activities

- Participate through staffing and board members to the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging[®], Inc. (MnRAAA)
- Long-term care gaps & regional analysis activities
- Transform 2010 Project
- Health Insurance Counseling services including Medicare Part D Plan comparisons for numerous persons
- Other Senior Outreach Specialist one-on-one assistance
- Provides phone assistance by answering the Senior LinkAge Line[®]
- Participated in Life Connections Expos and Senior Health Fairs
- Provided CSSD grant writing assistance for numerous organizations
- Facilitated Eldercare Development Partnership Long Term Care Coordinating Council
- Prepared grant and operate program with partners for the Bone Builders Exercise Program funded through Prime West Health Services Community Reinvestment Grant
- Assistance given to Somali Elders in Willmar

- Assistance to the Alzheimer's Association for development of West Central Dementia Awareness Network
- Numerous presentations made about MnRAAA and the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) services and other elderly programs
- Coordinated Chronic Disease Self-Management Classes through McLeod County Public Health
- Support given for state and community planning to address the long-term care needs of the baby boom generation
- Served on the planning committee for the McLeod County Senior Expo
- Facilitated Eldercare Development Partnership (EDP) Long-Term Care Coordinating Council for 16 counties
- Received grant dollars to implement the "Carfit" Program in Willmar
- Worked with the Minnesota Arts Council to host "The Creativity of Aging" Program
- Assisted Buffalo Lake Care Center to receive funding for 5 assisted living units added to their existing building
- Secured an Alzheimer's Demonstration Grant for project sites at Grove City CARE and the Atwater Living at Home Block Nurse Program
- Facilitated medication management sessions with the help of area pharmacists
- Conducted a telehealth survey of home care agencies and held a Telehealth Forum in 2007

Building Inspections Department Activities

During a portion of the past five years, the MMDC provided State building Code Inspection services and conducted other building inspection services. State Building Code Services was closed out completely in 2009, and other specialty inspections will cease in 2011.

- Provided State Building Code Inspection services for as high as 16 different communities
- Assistance was given to both the Willmar and Hutchinson HRAs for inspections for rehabilitation projects and also lead-based paint inspections
- Provided assistance with home inspections for the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
- Provided asbestos inspections for some businesses within the Region
- Provided lead-based paint inspections and risk assessments
- Provided a few communities with inspections under the State Hazardous Buildings Act
- Provided Renville County with accessibility inspections on a couple occasions
- Provided Douglas County HRA with some inspection assistance

- Provided Renville County HRA assistance with Section 8 audit inspections

Administration Activities

MMDC provided itself with normal agency administrative functions to conduct the Commission's operations. In addition, some key activities included:

- Updating the Personnel Policies Manual and creating an Employee Handbook
- Developing an MMDC Operations Manual and Processing Procedures Manual
- Updating the Commission's Bylaws
- Made improvements to the Commission's web site

Minnesota's Regional Development Act

MN Statutes 462.383 Purpose: Government Cooperation and Coordination

Subdivision 1. **Legislative findings.** The legislature finds that problems of growth and development in urban and rural regions of the state transcend the boundary lines of local government units that no single unit can plan for their solution without affecting other units in the region; that coordination of multijurisdictional activities is essential to the development and implementation of effective policies and programs; that intergovernmental cooperation is an effective means of pooling the resources of local government to approach common problems; and that the assistance of the state is needed to make the most effective use of local, state, federal, and private programs in serving the citizens of such urban and rural regions.

Subdivision 2. **By creating regional commission.** It is the purpose of sections 462.381 to 462.398 to authorize the establishment of regional development commissions to work with and on behalf of local units of government to develop plans or implement programs to address economic, social, physical, and governmental concerns of each region of the state. The commissions may assist with, develop, or implement plans or programs for individual local units of government.

Commission Review:

On September 28, 2011, at the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission meeting, Commissioners performed an assessment of the Commission's performance in fulfilling the purposes of the Regional Development Act. Below are the findings of the Commission in conducting this assessment. The Commissioners found that the MMDC serves a number of important roles within the four-county region that no other body does provide, or can provide in as efficient and cost effective manner. The Commissioners greatly value the technical

assistance MMDC provides local units of government, who do not have the capacity to provide these services for themselves. A resolution from the MMDC Board was passed at their September 28, 2011 meeting stating that the Commissioners have come to the conclusion that MMDC's existence continues to be in the public welfare and interest.

Assessment on *MMDC's* performance in fulfilling the purposes of the Regional Development Act:

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission has served the citizens of Region Six-East for 37 years. As assessments completed in 2001 and 2006 have demonstrated the Commission has fulfilled the purposes of the Regional Development Act during the first 32 years, this report will focus on the past five years. As demonstrated by the list of activities shown above, the organization has continued to meet the fulfillment of the purposes of the Regional Development Act during the past five-year timeframe. Thus, it is not the intent to relist all activities of the past five years below, but to demonstrate through selective examples that "the existence of the commission is in the public welfare and interest."

One of the key purposes of the Regional Development Act is for RDCs to **provide coordination of multijurisdictional activities, and on behalf of local units of government to develop plans or implement programs to address economic, social, physical, and governmental concerns of each region of the state.** The following are some examples of how the MMDC has fulfilled this purpose.

MMDC's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document is required by the federal EDA as part of being designated an Economic Development District. Every five years a new CEDS must be prepared with annual updates made. The CEDS document was re-written in 2011. The CEDS involves the input from a committee made up of economic development professionals, businesspersons, elected officials, higher education representatives, and work force representatives from throughout the region. One of the key responsibilities of the CEDS is to bring forward a list of economic development priorities for the region. The Commission has also been involved with the 38-county Southern Minnesota Regional Competitiveness Project that is looking to advance various key industry segments within the region.

The MMDC has assisted the four county Mid-Minnesota Joint Powers Board with preparing Hazardous Mitigation Plans for each of the four counties. The Commission has also assisted updating each of the county's Comprehensive Water Plans in a coordinated manner. Much assistance has also been given to several area Watershed Districts that have multi-county territories in which they serve.

The MMDC has assisted MnDOT's Office of Transit convene regional transit providers and other key stakeholders to prepare the Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan in both 2007 and in 2011. These plans have looked for ways that transit providers may better coordinate and cooperate with each other. The MMDC has representatives on the Southwest Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership, which guides how federal transportation dollars are spent in the twelve counties of MnDOT's District 8. The Commission has helped form and participates in the multi-county Highway 15 Coalition. MMDC serves as the Coalition's fiscal agent as well as acts as the fiscal agent for the Minnesota Valley Rail Road Coalition. MMDC also gave assistance to the MnDOT Western Minnesota Freight Plan.

Much of the activities of MMDC's Aging Program staff are multijurisdictional in scope. The MMDC has membership on the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging[®], Inc. (MNRAAA). The Commission provides staff for nine of the counties within MNRAAA's 27-county region.

Another of the key purposes of the Regional Development Act is for RDCs to assist **with, develop, or implement plans or programs for individual local units of government**. The following are some examples of how the MMDC has fulfilled this purpose.

The MMDC has always placed a strong emphasis in providing local units of government, businesses, and organizations with needed technical assistance. A large share of the key activities of the past five years, as is highlighted above, are a variety of technical assistance activities to local units of government or to local businesses and organizations. Each MMDC Department spends much of its time and resources on providing these technical assistance activities. Examples of such activities includes the preparation of comprehensive plans, grant writing, GIS mapping, providing assistance to elderly care organizations, assistance to businesses, and providing loans to businesses that create jobs. The MMDC provides this assistance in an efficient and cost effective manner. An indication of how well the Commission does in providing technical assistance is the degree to which the same local units of government and organizations have conducted repeat business with the Commission throughout the years.