Mid-Minnesota Development Commission
333 Sixth Street Southwest, Suite 2
Willmar, MN 56201-5615
Email: mmrdc@mmrdc.org

Please visit us at:
http://www.mmrdc.org

Mid-Minnesota Development Commission

Executive Director............................................. Donn Winckler
Financial Director/Office Manager ..................... Sue Gimse
Economic Development Director.......................... Les Nelson
Community Development Director..................... Matthew Johnson
Admin. Assist./Tech Support Specialist.................. Teresa Westerman

2016 MMDC Staff

Serving the People of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties since 1974.

Annual Report
Calendar Year 2016

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Email: mmrdc@mmrdc.org
Phone: 320-235-8504
Fax: 320-235-4329

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2016 Commission Members

Kandiyohi County Representatives
Cathy Baumgartner .......................................Public Interest
Kevin Crowley **Vice Chair ..................................Municipalities / Public Interest
Rick Fagerlie .................................................City of Willmar
Idalia (Charly) Leuze ......................................Public Interest
Robert Moller, Secretary ..................................Public Interest
Shawn Mueske ..............................................Public Interest
Rellie Nissen ................................................................County
DuWayne Underthun .......................................Townsships

Renville County Representatives
Jeff Benson .....................................................Public Interest
Ronald Degner .................................................Municipalities
Helen Ruebel ....................................................Townsships
James Schafer ..................................................Public Interest
Francis Schweiss .............................................Public Interest
John Stahl, *Chairperson .....................................County

Meeker County Representatives
Dan Barka ..........................................................Townships
Mike Housman, Treasurer ..................................County
Greg Langmo ..................................................Public Interest
Maureen Melgaard-Schneider, *Vice Chair, **Chairperson .................................................................Public Interest

McLeod County Representatives
Robert Anderson ++ ........................................Townships
Bill Arndt ......................................................City of Hutchinson
Bob Becker .....................................................Municipalities
Alan Fredrickson + ............................................Townsships
Sheldon Nies ....................................................County

MMDC Outgoing and Incoming Commission Members
We give our sincere thanks to the following members who have retired from the Commission Board at the end of 2016:
Bill Arndt, City of Hutchinson Representative, 13 years of service on MMDC
Dan Barka, Meeker Co. Township Representative, 3 years of service on MMDC
Ron Degner, Renville County City Representative, 20 years of service on MMDC
Idalia (Charly) Leuze, Minority Representative, 12 years of service on MMDC
Sheldon Nies, McLeod County Commissioner, 21 years of service on MMDC
John Stahl, Renville County Commissioner, 14 years of service on MMDC

MMDC welcomes the following new members beginning in 2017:
Frank Eder, Mayor of City of Watkins
Doug Erickson, Renville County Commissioner
Sue Hilgert, Mayor of City of Olivia
Doug Krueger, McLeod County Commissioner
John Lofdahl, Councillperson for City of Hutchinson

Financials & 2017 Budget

REVENUES
Local Tax Levy $ 306,679 $ 308,239 $ 306,679
Economic Development Admin 52,628 52,628 52,628
MMDC RLF Admin 24,467 25,811 29,682
MNDOT - SRTS 75,000 75,000 75,000
MN DOT - Planning - 75,000 - 25,000
MN Board on Aging - Dementia 6,792 7,161 43,525
Local Contracts / Misc 80,474 53,810 53,694

TOTAL $ 546,040 $ 552,331 $ 581,826

EXPENDITURES
Salaries & Fringe $ 441,261 $ 441,521 $ 456,068
Supplies & Printing 12,281 12,668 16,343
Communications 22,860 23,015 24,834
Services 47,669 47,448 67,239
Capital Outlay - - 1,500
Volunteer Services 541 539 2,480
Travel & Training 10,806 10,740 15,011
Commissioner Travel/Expenses 7,300 8,807 7,775

TOTAL $ 542,718 $ 544,738 $ 591,250

Fiscal Year 2016 Audit.
The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) contracts with Conway, Death and Schmiesing, PLLP, Certified Public Accountants, Willmar, Minnesota to conduct an annual audit. The Fiscal Year 2016 auditors report expresses an unqualified opinion on the General Purpose Financial Statements of the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission.
MMDC Can Provide Survey Research Assistance

The MMDC can provide local units of government and other regional entities assistance with conducting surveys, analyzing results, and producing survey reports. Staff have both the capability to produce scientific surveys utilizing SPSS software, or more general surveys that provide an opportunity for community input, using SurveyMonkey.com.

An example of an online survey that was conducted in 2016 for the City of Willmar. Staff assisted the City with a “Projects of Regional Significance Report” that guided discussion of major projects the community may want to pursue over the next two to ten years. Willmar asked MMDC to develop and administer an online survey designed to gauge the public’s interest in a number of potential projects of regional significance. In addition to prioritizing projects, the respondents were also asked if they would support paying for the projects with either local property taxes or implementing a 0.5% local option sales tax. A total of 840 persons participated in the online survey. Filters were used to determine such factors as how Willmar citizens answered the survey compared to non-residents.

The survey results were presented at two City Council listening sessions. The survey results and the comments made at the listening sessions are summarized the “City of Willmar Projects of Regional Significance (PRS) Report.”

To Those We Serve:

On behalf of the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC), we respectfully submit this 2016 Annual Report. We thank you for taking the time to review this report. This report highlights key achievements of the Commission and its staff in carrying out the Commission’s mission during calendar year 2016. The enclosed year-end financial data is for Fiscal Year 2016 (July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016).

One of the primary activities undertaken in 2016, and highlighted in the annual report is the preparation of the “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy” (CEDS) document. The Commission, being a federal EDA Economic Development District is required to prepare a CEDS document every 5 years, with updates in between. MMDC has a CEDS Committee comprised of Commission Board members and our region’s economic development partners who have helped staff prepare this document. The CEDS helps guide our economic development activities and can be found on our website.

The Commission helped prepare several major transportation planning projects in 2016. Staff assisted McLeod County prepare a Trails Plan, and begun assisting Kandiyohi County with a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Safe Routes to School Plans were prepared for BOLD, and Hutchinson School Districts, and for the City of Dassel. Community development activities included city code work and comprehensive planning, among other projects. Further information of these and others is highlighted in this report.

Please take some time to read through the 2016 Annual Report to gain an understanding of the variety of tasks we perform. Further information about the Commission can be found at the MMDC website: www.mmrdc.org. Give us a call if there are projects with which you need assistance. Please also contact us if you would like us to attend one of your meetings to either discuss a particular project need, or simply to provide a general update from the Commission. Through our Board’s leadership, and our talented staff, we will continue to strive to make a strong positive impact on the Region. We pledge that we will not consider a job complete until the client is satisfied with the end product.

Respectfully yours,

Donn Winckler
Executive Director

Maureen Melgaard-Schneider
Chairperson
Economic Development

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission and its area served has been designated a Federally Certified Economic Development District (EDD) by the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA). The EDA and its planning program provides essential investment support to district organizations. The planning assistance provided assists MMDC with short term planning investments. Eligible activities under this program include the development, maintenance, and implementation of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region and related short term planning activities.

Staff assisted in preparing Kandiyohi County’s Blandin Foundation Broadband Feasibility Grant Application. Assistance on this project also included assistance with a draft RFP and vetting RFP applicants. The Blandin Broadband Grant Application was funded in the amount of $25,000 with a higher local match from Kandiyohi County.

Staff participated with the Minnesota Association of Development Organizations to update the DEVELOPMN Plan.

Staff attended meeting of the statewide MADO Economic Development Professionals to discuss pertinent topics related to economic development.

MMDC staff met with USDA Rural Development staff to discuss projects and align services.

Staff attended a meeting of the City of Willmar at two public forums regarding potential projects investment from a local option sales tax.

Staff attended a meeting of the Southwest Minnesota Economic Development Professionals to hear about updates and professional development.

Revolving Loan Fund Program

In 1995, MMDC received a grant from the U. S. Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration to initially create a $1,200,000. Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The grant was partially matched by the Commission, local units of government, and the Southwest Initiative Foundation. Program goals include assisting businesses with gap financing and creating employment opportunities within Region Six-East’s four-county service area. After due diligence, by the loan committee, loans are funded for working capital, real estate purchases, and equipment purchases.

The purpose of the RLF program is to strengthen and diversify the local economy. This is reached by providing a source of low interest financing to businesses, when credit is not otherwise available from other sources, and to ensure the successful completion of a project or activity. Job creation and retention are also a priority of the fund. Since inception the fund has borrowed almost $4,000,000 and leveraged over $27,000,000 in private investment. The loans have created or retained over 800 jobs in the four counties.

Staff attended a training session provided by the Department of Employment and Economic Development regarding the Minnesota Investment Fund.

Staff authored the MMDC EDA “Draft” copy of the planning grant application.

Staff met regularly with representatives for the Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Workforce Center.

Staff attended meetings or provided professional technical assistance to the following entities:

* Kandiyohi County/City of Willmar EDC
* Meeker County EDA
* Renville County EDA
* Hutchinson EDA

FEATURED BUSINESS

Prior to the formation of Superior Transportation Services, Joe Schieffert, one of the owners, was the manager/owner of the Sleepy Eye Bus Service, providing transportation to school district #84 and #2534. Joe and two partners formed Sleepy Eye Bus Service Inc. in 2004. Joe was responsible for the management of employees, bus maintenance, and communication with the school district including school board members, superintendent, parents, teachers, and students. Joe maintained this role until 2012 when Superior Transportation Services was formed by Joe and his wife Ashley.

Superior Transportation Services Inc. was formed in 2012 for the purpose of providing school bus services to a head start program called Tri-Valley Opportunity Council (TVOC). This program is funded through the USDA and provides curriculum based day care for children of migrant workers in MN. As with most programs like this and school districts that operate their own buses, it is difficult to find and keep good drivers. It is also tough to keep equipment up to DOT standards. TVOC asked Superior Transportation Services to take over transportation services at one of their centers in Elysian MN. The business has also provided similar services to centers in Danube, MN and Monticello, MN on more of an as needed basis. In February of 2014 Superior Transportation Services Inc. expanded by purchasing a bus company in Springfield, MN. Superior Transportation was also awarded the contract for the BOLD Public School District in May 2016. We currently provide the transportation for school district #85 and #2534.
Mid-Minnesota Development Commission

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Toward Zero Deaths

Minnesota’s Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Program is a partnership between the Minnesota Departments of Public Safety, Transportation, and Health, the University of Minnesota, and others. Each MnDOT District has a TZD Coalition, and MMDC staff is a member of the District 8 Coalition (Southwest Minnesota TZD). The TZD program “is the state’s cornerstone traffic safety program that employs an interdisciplinary approach to reducing traffic crashes, injuries, and deaths on Minnesota Roads.” The vision of the program is to reduce fatalities and serious injuries to zero. Through efforts in what is known as the “4 Es”, Education, Engineering, Enforcement, and Emergency Medical and Trauma Services, there has been strong progress made in reducing fatalities and serious injuries in the state. While this is good news, much more work is needed in such areas as improved seat belt use, speeding, drunk driving, distracted driving, and road safety improvements.

While Kandiyohi County has been operating their Safe Community Coalition, since 2006, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties have in the past couple of years began TZD/Safe Road Coalitions. Each have various activities they are working on to lower crashes in their counties. Contact the coalition in your county to see how you can be of assistance. You may contact the Southwest Minnesota Regional TZD Coordinator, Annette Larson, at annette.l.larson@state.mn.us, or (507) 304-6110, to learn more. Please also consider attending a District’s TZD workshop which are held in the spring.

Southwest TZD includes the counties of Big Stone, Chippewa, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Meeker, Murray, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Swift, and Yellow Medicine.

For additional information, visit the state’s TZD website: www.MinnesotaTZD.org.

LUCA (Continued from page 11)

Bureau offers in-person training using LUCA materials. Self-training aids and webinars are available online at the LUCA web site.”

When a complete review is not possible, focus your review on these areas:

- Group quarters – College dorms, nursing homes, correctional facilities, etc.
- Areas of new construction.
- E-911 conversion areas.
- Single/multifamily home conversions.
- New mobile homes.
- Annexed land.
- Areas along governmental boundaries.
- Blocks with the greatest count differences between the Census Bureau’s address block count and your address block count.
- County reviewers should also focus on the ungeocoded list.

For more information about LUCA, call 1-844-544-0169, e-mail the Census Bureau at: GEO.2020.LUCA@census.gov, or visit their Website at www.census.gov/geo/partnerships/luca.html.

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The CEDS, a locally-owned strategic planning document, is critical to facilitating regional economic development efforts. Effective planning creates a roadmap, which practitioners and policy makers use to identify and take actionable steps necessary to realize their desired economic vision. This is central to the bottom-up strategy of working with local communities to help them meet goals and achieve success with the support of MMDC and EDA.

A new Revised Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was authored by staff, and formalized in late 2016. This was performed with public comment from several CEDS Committee meeting along with a 30-day public comment period. Federal Economic Development Administration guidelines and regulations were followed along with the DEVELOPMN format. Information from the DEVELOPMN Greater Minnesota Plan were also included in the plan. Information on the DEVELOPMN plan can be found at www.mnado.org/developmn/. A SWOT Analysis was also included in the CEDS, along with background information on the Region. The CEDS document can be found on the Commission’s website at http://mmrdc.org/ceds.html.

In 2016, the MMDC played a role in a number of grants awarded in our four-county region, worth over $6.7 million. MMDC assistance was with helping prepare the grants, and/or assistance in preparing the plans necessary for the grant application to proceed.

Grants included a Blandin Foundation Feasibility Study Grant that documented the need for the Kandiyohi County Broadband Project Grant; Legacy Grants for Willmar’s Robbins Island Regional Park, and the McLeod County Dakota Trail; Transportation Alternative Program Grants to Willmar and Olivia for trails for FY 2020 construction; and a Local Road Improvement Program Grant to Dover Township.
Community Development and Planning

The Community Development Department assists with a wide variety of consulting and planning projects for local units of government, including cities, counties, townships, watershed districts, and school districts. This particular program area is not tied to any State or Federally funded program, however, many projects are funded through competitive grants. MMDC also charges a technical assistance rate, which is currently set at $75 per hour. In addition, numerous questions are researched on a regular basis for our Region’s citizens, elected officials, businesses and other stakeholders, without MMDC charging a fee.

The Community Development Department specializes in the following types of projects:

- **Official Plans**, including comprehensive plans, water plans, hazard mitigation plans, and other types of community development documents.
- **Official Controls**, including zoning and subdivision ordinances, ordinance codification, rules and regulations, and other types of regulatory documents.
- **Environmental Reviews**, including environmental impact statements and environmental assessment worksheets.
- **Special Projects**, including grant writing, community surveys, public facilities planning, housing studies, mapping services, and many other technical services.

As one of Minnesota’s State Data Centers, MMDC also regularly provides Census and demographic data free of charge to businesses, non-profit agencies, citizens and other interested organizations.

Main Projects during the Calendar Year

**McLeod County Trails Pan**

MMDC finished the McLeod County Trails Plan, which was adopted by the County Board on May 3, 2016. The plan identifies a number of trail projects that will be a priority to implement over the next 20 years. The priority projects will be dependent upon local stakeholders securing funding and developing maintenance plans. Many of the trail segments identified would use paved shoulders along existing County Roads.

**Willmar Projects of Regional Significance**

MMDC was contracted by the City of Willmar to facilitate the decision on which local projects are needed in the community. Refer to page 14 of this Annual Report for more information.

The 2020 Census Local Update of Census Addresses Operation (LUCA)

LUCA is the United State Census Bureau’s voluntary program to give an opportunity to State, county and local governments to review and comment on the residential address list for their jurisdiction prior to the 2020 Census. The Census Bureau relies on a complete and accurate address list to reach every living quarters and associated population for inclusion in the census.

In July, 2017 all eligible governmental units will be sent an invitation letter and registration forms. We encourage that all of our local units of government participate in this process to help make sure that all your citizens are counted in the 2020 Census. Reasons why it is important to participate in LUCA are:

- To help ensure an accurate decennial census count in your community.
- To help the federal government distribute more than $400 billion in funds annually for infrastructure, programs, and services.
- To help your community plan for future needs.

“Under the voluntary LUCA Program, participating governments may review the Census Bureau’s confidential list of individual living quarters addresses and provide to the Census Bureau address additions, corrections, deletions, and/or the identification of corrected address counts for census blocks; street and street attribute updates; and legal boundary updates. Governments electing to participate in the LUCA program also provide program contact information, certification of their agreement to maintain the confidentiality of the Census Bureau address information, responses regarding their physical and information technology security capabilities, program option and product media preference information, shipment inventory information, and certification of their return/destruction of materials containing confidential data.”

The Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) Program was developed by the U.S. Census Bureau to meet the requirements of the Census Address List Improvement Act of 1994, Public Law 103-430.

“The Geographic Update Partnership Software (GUPS) is new for LUCA. The GUPS is a self-contained Geographic Information System (GIS) update and processing package. In addition to the software, you will receive the Census Bureau’s address list, address count list by census block, and Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (TIGER) partnership shape-files. The Census Bureau offers its address list in digital or paper formats. The digital format requires the use of spreadsheet or database software. The paper format is available only to governments with 6,000 or fewer addresses.”

“Maps are offered in digital (TIGER partnership shapefiles that require GIS software) or paper (large format maps are 42 X 36 inches and include a DVD of small format [8.5 X 14 inches] block maps in Adobe PDF) formats. The Census
Transportation Planning

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) receives an annual grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), matched with the local tax levy, to provide transportation planning services within the Region’s four counties principally for activities involving surface transportation and to participate in the Southwest Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (ATP) process. The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) makes recommendations to the Commission on these transportation activities.

The Commission annually participates in the Area Transportation Partnership’s decision-making process of which projects receive Federal funding through the State’s Transportation Improvement Program. MMDC’s voting members on the ATP in 2016 were Sheldon Nies and John Stahl. Meeker County Engineer, Ronald Mortensen, was the Commission’s County Engineer representative. The Commission holds an annual public informational meeting on the proposed Area Transportation Improvement Program. Staff provides assistance for this activity as well as serving on the ATP Committee that makes Transportation Alternatives Program (TA) funding recommendations. This program combined several federal programs together under the new federal Transportation Act, including the Enhancement Program, Safe Routes to School infrastructure funding, and Scenic Byway funding. Staff continues to be involved with developing application materials for this grant program. Staff has also been part of a statewide MnDOT Local Technical Team that has made recommendations on the ATP process including the TA application process.

Staff completed assistance in the preparation of a Safe Routes to School Plan (SRTS). Staff finalized SRTS plans for BOLD School District (Cities of Olivia and Bird Island), the Hutchinson School District, and for the elementary school in Dassel. The SRTS program is an opportunity to make walking and bicycling to school safer for children and to increase the number of children who choose to walk and bicycle. SRTS is a nationwide program. MMDC is paid by MnDOT to provide technical assistance to school districts and cities that have successfully applied to the state to move forward in creating plans.

Staff was funded by Kandiyohi-Renville SHIP to work with the communities of Olivia and Bird Island to prepare Healthy Living Transportation Plans (refer to page 9 of this Annual Report). Much of Olivia’s plan was completed in 2016, while Bird Island’s plan was in its beginning stages.

Staff was close to the completion of assisting Kandiyohi County prepare a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. A committee provided guidance to determine needed infrastructure to accommodate a network of trails and wider shoulder bicycle routes throughout the county.

Kandiyohi County Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan

Kandiyohi County began a 12-month planning process to identify needed bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the unincorporated areas. Many of the identified bicycle routes would be created using paved shoulders along county roads.

MMDC developed and administered an on-line survey through SurveyMonkey.com. The survey had 393 respondents, with mostly positive support for improving access to bicycle and pedestrian trails (69% support). The survey also revealed a number of suggestions for new trails located throughout the county. Many of the comments suggested creating loops off existing trails.

Lester Prairie Comprehensive Plan

MMDC began work on updating the City of Lester Prairie’s Comprehensive Plan. The new plan will have a revised urban growth area map and seven new goal areas. The goals range from economic development to promoting Lester Prairie as a family and kid-friendly community.

City Codes

MMDC completed updating ordinances for the cities of Franklin and Pennock. After investing numerous hours in adding new language and reformatting the documents, MMDC is well situated to assist other communities with updating their city codes.
WCDAN Assistance

On behalf of the West Central Dementia Awareness Network (WCDAN), the MMDC received a grant from the Minnesota Board on Aging in 2015. The grant allows WCDAN to expand its ongoing activities of providing community awareness, education and support related to dementia and Alzheimer’s disease in the Kandiyohi County area. The MMDC is the fiscal host for the 18-month long grant.

WCDAN provides assistance in a number of ways. The organization provides awareness education to care professionals, local businesses, faith organizations, caregivers, and community members. They also provide resources to people living with memory loss and their caregivers. A volunteer community education team is utilized for these efforts. In addition, WCDAN has begun the Forget-Me-Knot Memory Café. The Memory Café provides a safe, supportive environment for people with memory loss and their caregivers.

The grant helped WCDAN host two major events in 2016. In October, WCDAN co-sponsored the Teepa Snow Conference at the Willmar Assembly of God Church. Teepa Snow is a world renowned speaker and one of the nation’s leading educators on dementia. The event was attended by approximately 600 individuals. In April, they hosted a Spring Education Event featuring Lori La Bey. She is the founder of Alzheimer’s Speaks, a Minnesota-based advocacy company that provides education and support for those dealing with Alzheimer’s disease and their caregivers.

To learn more about WCDAN and the services they offer, please visit their website at: www.wcdan.com.

Active Living Transportation Plans

This past year, the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) has taken on assisting communities with creating documents called Active Living Transportation Plans. Through the funding assistance from Kandiyohi and Renville SHIP (Statewide Health Improvement Program) a Plan has been prepared for the City of Olivia, which was completed in early 2017. We are currently assisting the City of Bird Island.

The Active Living Coalition defines Active Living as “incorporating physical activity into your daily life”. It is a way to incorporate increased physical activity in our normal daily routines. Most communities are designed primarily for transportation by automobiles that restrict other safe and viable opportunities to get around. Active living transportation plans look to improve a community’s built environment to promote walking and bicycling in the community.

There are a number of benefits to encouraging active living. The foremost benefit and reason to undertake an active living transportation plan is to have a positive impact on the health of the residents. Physical activity has been shown widely as one of the most important things you can do for your health. Making it more natural for persons to walk and bike is an effective way to increase resident’s physical activity levels. By providing a network of trails, sidewalks, bicycle road sharing routes, and other bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, will improve the livability of the community. A pedestrian and bicycle friendly community is a livability measure that helps attract and retain residents and the needed workforce for the community’s businesses. Better accommodating walking and bicycling in a community also benefits the large portion of the population that do not have motor vehicle licenses, or the ability to drive.

In preparing the plan, MMDC staff reviews a city’s current planning documents and ordinances to find implications for active living in the community. MMDC works with an active living committee to inventory current assets and existing conditions. Strategies are written to improve the walking and bicycling alternatives, and implementation steps are devised to implement these strategies.

Please contact the MMDC if you have interest in having your community prepare an Active Living Transportation Plan.
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MMDC completed updating ordinances for the cities of Franklin and Pennock. After investing numerous hours in adding new language and reformatting the documents, MMDC is well situated to assist other communities with updating their city codes.
Community Development and Planning

The Community Development Department assists with a wide variety of consulting and planning projects for local units of government, including cities, counties, townships, watershed districts and school districts. This particular program area is not tied to any State or Federally funded program, however, many projects are funded through competitive grants. MMDC also charges a technical assistance rate, which is currently set at $75 per hour. In addition, numerous questions are researched on a regular basis for our Region’s citizens, elected officials, businesses and other stakeholders, without MMDC charging a fee.

The Community Development Department specializes in the following types of projects:

- **Official Plans**, including comprehensive plans, water plans, hazard mitigation plans, and other types of community development documents.
- **Official Controls**, including zoning and subdivision ordinances, ordinance codification, rules and regulations, and other types of regulatory documents.
- **Environmental Reviews**, including environmental impact statements and environmental assessment work sheets.
- **Special Projects**, including grant writing, community surveys, public facilities planning, housing studies, mapping services, and many other technical services.

As one of Minnesota’s State Data Centers, MMDC also regularly provides Census and demographic data free of charge to businesses, non-profit agencies, citizens and other interested organizations.

Main Projects during the Calendar Year

McLeod County Trails Pan

MMDC finished the McLeod County Trails Plan, which was adopted by the County Board on May 3, 2016. The plan identifies a number of trail projects that will be a priority to implement over the next 20 years. The priority projects will be dependent upon local stakeholders securing funding and developing maintenance plans. Many of the trail segments identified would use paved shoulders along existing County Roads.

Willmar Projects of Regional Significance

MMDC was contracted by the City of Willmar to facilitate the decision on which local projects are needed in the community. Refer to page 14 of this Annual Report for more information.

The 2020 Census Local Update of Census Addresses Operation (LUCA)

LUCA is the United State Census Bureau’s voluntary program to give an opportunity to State, county and local governments to review and comment on the residential address list for their jurisdiction prior to the 2020 Census. The Census Bureau relies on a complete and accurate address list to reach every living quarters and associated population for inclusion in the census.

In July, 2017 all eligible governmental units will be sent an invitation letter and registration forms. We encourage that all of our local units of government participate in this process to help make sure that all your citizens are counted in the 2020 Census. Reasons why it is important to participate in LUCA are:

- To help ensure an accurate decennial census count in your community.
- To help the federal government distribute more than $400 billion in funds annually for infrastructure, programs, and services.
- To help your community plan for future needs.

“Under the voluntary LUCA Program, participating governments may review the Census Bureau’s confidential list of individual living quarters addresses and provide to the Census Bureau address additions, corrections, deletions, and/or the identification of corrected address counts for census blocks; street and street attribute updates; and legal boundary updates. Governments electing to participate in the LUCA program also provide program contact information, certification of their agreement to maintain the confidentiality of the Census Bureau address information, responses regarding their physical and information technology security capabilities, program option and product media preference information, shipment inventory information, and certification of their return/ destruction of materials containing confidential data.”

The Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) Program was developed by the U.S. Census Bureau to meet the requirements of the Census Address List Improvement Act of 1994, Public Law 103-430.

“The Geographic Update Partnership Software (GUPS) is new for LUCA. The GUPS is a self-contained Geographic Information System (GIS) update and processing package. In addition to the software, you will receive the Census Bureau’s address list, address count list by census block, and Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (TIGER) partnership shape-files. The Census Bureau offers its address list in digital or paper formats. The digital format requires the use of spreadsheet or database software. The paper format is available only to governments with 6,000 or fewer addresses.”

“Maps are offered in digital (TIGER partnership shapefiles that require GIS software) or paper (large format maps are 42 X 36 inches and include a DVD of small format [8.5 X 14 inches] block maps in Adobe PDF) formats. The Census Bureau relies on a complete and accurate address list to reach every living quarters and associated population for inclusion in the census.”

LUCA (Continued on page 12)
Mid-Minnesota Development Commission

Annual Report 12

Toward Zero Deaths

Minnesota’s Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Program is a partnership between the Minnesota Departments of Public Safety, Transportation, and Health, the University of Minnesota, and others. Each MnDOT District has a TZD Coalition, and MMDC staff is a member of the District 8 Coalition (Southwest Minnesota TZD). The TZD program “is the state’s cornerstone traffic safety program that employs an interdisciplinary approach to reducing traffic crashes, injuries, and deaths on Minnesota Roads.” The vision of the program is to reduce fatalities and serious injuries to zero. Through efforts in what is known as the “4 Es”, Education, Engineering, Enforcement, and Emergency Medical and Trauma Services, there has been strong progress made in reducing fatalities and serious injuries in the state. While this is good news, much more work is needed in such areas as improved seat belt use, speeding, drunk driving, distracted driving, and road safety improvements.

Southwest TZD includes the counties of Big Stone, Chippewa, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Meeker, Murray, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Swift, and Yellow Medicine.

For additional information, visit the state’s TZD website: www.MinnesotaTZD.org.

LUCA (Continued from page 11)

Bureau offers in-person training using LUCA materials. Self-training aids and webinars are available online at the LUCA web site.”

When a complete review is not possible, focus your review on these areas:

- Group quarters – College dorms, nursing homes, correctional facilities, etc.
- Areas of new construction.
- E-911 conversion areas.
- Single/multifamily home conversions.
- New mobile homes.
- Annexed land.
- Areas along governmental boundaries.
- Blocks with the greatest count differences between the Census Bureau’s address block count and your address block count.
- County reviewers should also focus on the ungeocoded list.

For more information about LUCA, call 1-844-344-0169, e-mail the Census Bureau at GEO.2020.LUCA@census.gov, or visit their Website at www.census.gov/geo/partnerships/luca.html.

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The CEDS, a locally-owned strategic planning document, is critical to facilitating regional economic development efforts. Effective planning creates a roadmap, which practitioners and policy makers use to identify and take actionable steps necessary to realize their desired economic vision. This is central to the bottom-up strategy of working with local communities to help them meet goals and achieve success with the support of MMDC and EDA.

A new Revised Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was authored by staff, and formalized in late 2016. This was performed with public comment from several CEDS Committee meeting along with a 30-day public comment period. Federal Economic Development Administration guidelines and regulations were followed along with the DEVELOPMN format. Information from the DEVELOPMN Greater Minnesota Plan were also included in the plan. Information on the DEVELOPMN plan can be found at www.mnado.org/developmn/. A SWOT Analysis was also included in the CEDS, along with background information on the Region. The CEDS document can be found on the Commission’s website at http://mmrdc.org/ceds.html.

In 2016, The MMDC played a role in a number of grants awarded in our four-county region, worth over $6.7 million. MMDC assistance was with helping prepare the grants, and/or assistance in preparing the plans necessary for the grant application to proceed.

Grants included a Blandin Foundation Feasibility Study Grant that documented the need for the Kandiyohi County Broadband Project Grant; Legacy Grants for Willmar’s Robbins Island Regional Park, and the McLeod County Dakota Trail; Transportation Alternative Program Grants to Willmar and Olivia for trails for FY 2020 construction; and a Local Road Improvement Program Grant to Dove Township.
Economic Development

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission and its area served has been designated a Federally Certified Economic Development District (EDD) by the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA). The EDA and its planning program provides essential investment support to district organizations. The planning assistance provided assists MMDC with short term planning investments. Eligible activities under this program include the development, maintenance, and implementation of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region and related short term planning activities.

Staff assisted in preparing Kandiyohi County’s Blandin Foundation Broadband Feasibility Grant Application. Assistance on this project also included assistance with a draft RFP and vetting RFP applicants. The Blandin Broadband Grant Application was funded in the amount of $25,000 with a higher local match from Kandiyohi County.

Staff participated with the Minnesota Association of Development Organizations to update the DEVELOPMN Plan.

Staff attended meeting of the statewide MADO Economic Development Professionals to discuss pertinent topics related to economic development.

MMDC staff met with USDA Rural Development staff to discuss projects and align services.

Staff attended a meeting of the City of Willmar at two public forums regarding potential projects investment from a local option sales tax.

Staff attended a meeting of the Southwest Minnesota Economic Development Professionals to hear about updates and professional development.

In 1995, MMDC received a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration to initially create a $1,200,000. Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The grant was partially matched by the Commission, local units of government, and the Southwest Initiative Foundation. Program goals include assisting businesses with gap financing and creating employment opportunities within Region Six-East’s four-county service area. After due diligence, by the loan committee, loans are funded for working capital, real estate purchases, and equipment purchases.

The purpose of the RLF program is to strengthen and diversify the local economy. This is reached by providing a source of low interest financing to businesses, when credit is not otherwise available from other sources, and to ensure the successful completion of a project or activity. Job creation and retention are also a priority of the fund. Since inception the fund has borrowed almost $4,000,000 and leveraged over $27,000,000 in private investment. The loans have created or retained over 800 jobs in the four counties.

**FEATURED BUSINESS**

Prior to the formation of Superior Transportation Services, Joe Schieffert, one of the owners, was the manager/owner of the Sleepy Eye Bus Service, providing transportation to school districts #84 and #2534. Joe and two partners formed Sleepy Eye Bus Service Inc. in 2004. Joe was responsible for the management of employees, bus maintenance, and communication with the school district including school board members, superintendent, parents, teachers, and students. Joe maintained this role until 2012 when Superior Transportation Services was formed by Joe and his wife Ashley.

Superior Transportation Services Inc. was formed in 2012 for the purpose of providing school bus services to a head start program called Tri-Valley Opportunity Council (TVOC). This program is funded through the USDA and provides curriculum based day care for children of migrant workers in MN. As with most programs like this and school districts that operate their own buses, it is difficult to find and keep good drivers. It is also tough to keep equipment up to DOT standards. TVOC asked Superior Transportation Services to take over transportation services at one of their centers in Elsberry MN. The business has also provided similar services to centers in Danube, MN and Monticello, MN on more of an as needed basis. In February of 2014 Superior Transportation Services Inc. expanded by purchasing a bus company in Springfield, MN. Superior Transportation was also awarded the contract for the BOLD Public School District in May 2016. We currently provide the transportation for school district #85 and #2534.
The MMDC can provide local units of government and other regional entities assistance with conducting surveys, analyzing results, and producing survey reports. Staff have both the capability to produce scientific surveys utilizing SPSS software, or more general surveys that provide an opportunity for community input, using SurveyMonkey.com.

An example of an online survey that was conducted in 2016 for the City of Willmar. Staff assisted the City with a “Projects of Regional Significance Report” that guided discussion of major projects the community may want to pursue over the next two to ten years. Willmar asked MMDC to develop and administer an online survey designed to gauge the public’s interest in a number of potential projects of regional significance. In addition to prioritizing projects, the respondents were also asked if they would support paying for the projects with either local property taxes or implementing a 0.5% local option sales tax. A total of 840 persons participated in the online survey. Filters were used to determine such factors as how Willmar citizens answered the survey compared to non-residents.

The survey results were presented at two City Council listening sessions. The survey results and the comments made at the listening sessions are summarized the “City of Willmar Projects of Regional Significance (PRS) Report.”
2016 Commission Members

Kandiyohi County Representatives
Cathy Baumgartner.............................Public Interest
Kevin Crowley **Vice Chair .......................Municipalities / Public Interest
Rick Fagerlie ..................................City of Willmar
Idalia (Charly) Leuze..............................Public Interest
Robert Moller, Secretary .......................Public Interest
Shawn Mueske................................Public Interest
Rellie Nissen ....................................County
DuWayne Underthun .........................Townsships

Renville County Representatives
Jeff Benson .....................................Public Interest
Ronald Degner ................................Municipalities
Helen Ruebel ..................................Townsships
James Schafer ................................Public Interest
Francis Schweiss ..............................Public Interest
John Stahl, *Chairperson ....................County

Meeker County Representatives
Dan Barka ....................................Townsships
Mike Housman, Treasurer ...................County
Greg Langmo ..................................Public Interest
Maureen Melgaard-Schneider, *Vice Chair, **Chairperson
Bob Becker ....................................Municipalities
Maureen Melgaard .......................Townsships
Mike Hans, Mayor .........................Townsships

McLeod County Representatives
Robert Anderson + .............................Townsships
Bill Arndt ........................................City of Hutchinson
Brian Lofthus ..................................City of Willmar
Helen Ruebel ..................................Townsships
Sheldon Nies ..................................County

MMDC Outgoing and Incoming Commission Members
We give our sincere thanks to the following members who have retired from the Commission Board at the end of 2016:
Bill Arndt, City of Hutchinson Representative, 13 years of service on MMDC
Dan Barka, Meeker Co. Township Representative, 3 years of service on MMDC
Ron Degner, Renville County City Representative, 20 years of service on MMDC
Idalia (Charly) Leuze, Minority Representative, 12 years of service on MMDC
Sheldon Nies, McLeod County Commissioner, 21 years of service on MMDC
John Stahl, Renville County Commissioner, 14 years of service on MMDC

MMDC welcomes the following new members beginning in 2017:
Frank Eder, Mayor of City of Watkins
Doug Erickson, Renville County Commissioner
Sue Hilgert, Mayor of City of Olivia
Doug Krueger, McLeod County Commissioner
John Lofthus, Councilperson for City of Hutchinson

Financials & 2017 Budget

REVENUES

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<th>FY 2016 Budget</th>
<th>FY 2016 Actuals</th>
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EXPENDITURES

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<td>Salaries &amp; Fringe</td>
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The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) contracts with Conway, Death and Schmiesing, PLLP, Certified Public Accountants, Willmar, Minnesota to conduct an annual audit. The Fiscal Year 2016 auditors report expresses an unqualified opinion on the General Purpose Financial Statements of the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission.
Executive Director: Donn Winckler
Financial Director/Office Manager: Sue Gimse
Economic Development Director: Les Nelson
Community Development Director: Matthew Johnson
Admin. Assist./Tech Support Specialist: Teresa Westerman

Serving the People of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties since 1974.