Annual Report

Calendar Year 2011

Mid-Minnesota Development Commission

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

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MID-MINNESOTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Serving the People of Region Six East

To Those We Serve:

On behalf of the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC), we respectfully submit this 2011 Annual Report. This report highlights key achievements of the Commission and its staff in carrying out the Commission's mission. MMDC is proud of offering another successful year of providing valued services to its citizens and working closely with our partners throughout Region Six-East. The enclosed year-end financial data is for Fiscal Year 20101(July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011).

Within this year's Annual Report, we are highlighting the Commission's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) that is available to new and existing businesses that are creating jobs within Region Six-East. The RLF, which started in 1996 has assisted a number of businesses in each of the four counties, creating numerous, well-paying jobs. The report will give a brief history of the RLF and provide some general information on how the program operates.

In 2011, the Commission assisted local units of government and other clientele with a variety of projects, which are discussed within this report. One of the more significant projects conducted in 2011 was assisting the City of Willmar with the preparation of a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The plan laid out priorities to pedestrian safety improvement needs as well as prioritizing the expansion of the city's bicycle trails and network. Please let us know if your community is interested in preparing a similar plan. School Districts interested in the national Safe Routes to School Program should also contact the Commission for assistance.

The Commission continues to be active in the area of water resource planning, assisting watershed districts and counties with various projects. In 2012, the Commission will be assisting each of the four counties with updating their Water Plans. This is MMDC's third time working on these projects.

Through the years we have provided the citizens of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties with a wide array of technical assistance. Please give us a call if there are projects that you need assistance. We pledge that we will not consider a job complete until the client is satisfied with the end product.

Respectfully yours,

Roney Kutzke

Roney Kutzke
Chairperson

Donn Winckler

Donn Winckler
Executive Director

2011 Commission Members

Kandiyohi County Representatives

DuWayne Underthun ..... Townships
Charles Diederich .....Municipalities
Steve Ahmann ..... City of Willmar
Dennis Peterson, Vice Chairperson ..... County
Idalia (Charly) Leuze.....Public Interest
Shawn Mueske, Treasurer .....Public Interest
Cathy Baumgartner.....Public Interest
Kevin Crowley .....Public Interest

Renville County Representatives

Dave Guggisberg .....Townships
Ronald Degner, Secretary ..... Municipalities
John Stahl..... County
Richard Loftness .....Public Interest
James Schafer.....Public Interest
Francis Schweiss.....Public Interest
Ken Anderson .....Public Interest
Eric Dahlager .....Public Interest

McLeod County Representatives

Alan Fredrickson .....Townships
Charles Warner ..... Municipalities
Bill Arndt.....City of Hutchinson
Sheldon Nies.....County
Vacant ..... Public Interest

Meeker County Representatives

Dale Fenrich.....Townships
John Smith .....Municipalities
Ron Kutzke, Chairperson..... County
Maureen Melgaard-Schneider.....Public Interest
Dee Schutte .....Public Interest

Ken Anderson, who represented the Buffalo Lake-Hector School District, ended his long years of service on the Commission Board. Commissioners and staff thank him for his dedicated service.

At the March 28, 2012 Commission meeting, Executive Director Donn Winckler presented Ken with a plaque honoring his service to the Commission.

Transportation Planning (Continued from page 5)

- The Commission serves as the Minnesota Valley Rail Road Coalition's fiscal agent.
- Staff serves as a member of the Intercity Passenger Rail Transportation Forum. Which was created by MNDOT to provide advice for the statewide rail plan and to recommend and coordinate projects for which MNDOT should seek Federal Railroad Administration funding.
- Staff attended the MNDOT District 8 annual Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) conference that is held in April.

Economic Development

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission's Economic Development Program is designed to assist local units of government and businesses in the Region with activities that create and retain full time higher wage employment opportunities and private investments. The Commission and service area are a Federally Certified Economic Development District and as such is eligible for planning grant funding from the U. S. Department of Commerce's, Economic Development Administration. Further funding of activities and the required matching source is provided by the local tax levy.

A major portion of program staff time is devoted to providing professional technical assistance to businesses, individuals, and governmental units. Requests for assistance include, but are not limited to, business finance analysis, infrastructure improvements, tax increment financing, and grant or loan application authoring.

As part of the federal grant agreement, a ***Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)*** is authored by the Commission. This document is drafted each year, after public input, to provide a plan for economic development and prioritize projects in the Region. The plan is then submitted to the Federal Economic Development administration for approval. Staff also prepared the necessary applications and reports for the operation of the Economic Development District. A Comprehensive Economic Development Committee provides input on the CEDS document.

Activities During Fiscal Year

* A peer review was performed on the MMDC, a Certified Economic Development District. The Review was performed by Mr. John O'Leary, the Economic Development Administration Economic Development Representative for the State of Minnesota. In addition to Mr. O'Leary, Greg Wagner of the West Central Initiative Foundation was the peer reviewer. Several members of the MMDC Governing Board were also in attendance. Several topics were discussed including reporting and compliance issues. The review went well and recommendations for future implementation were provided.
* The MMDC, in concert with the Economic Development Administration University Center at the University of Minnesota in Crookston performed a survey. The survey was completed statewide by the regional development commissions. The survey outcomes were to reveal the dynamics of what makes a successful entrepreneur.
* Staff is a member of Kandiyohi County's Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities (MIRC) Committee, and is supporting internet training elsewhere in the Region. A MIRC Forum was held in Duluth. Staff attended this two day event. Education was provided on Broadband and Computer/Technology.
* The Governors Workforce and Jobs Summit was attended by staff. Discussion and education centered around job creation and retention. The manufacturing employment sector was especially emphasized.
* A Manufactures Appreciation Event was held at the MinnWest Campus in Willmar. MMDC staff were in attendance. The event was held in conjunction with the Statewide Manufacturers Appreciation week.
* Regional Development Commission's Economic Development Directors met several times during the year to discuss best practices and new development issues. The meetings were held in Wadena, Thief River Falls, and Bemidji.
* A Supplemental Planning Grant Application was authored by staff. The application was asking for an additional $30,000.00 over a three-year cycle. The grant was approved by the Economic Development Administration.
* Staff served on various committees including Kandiyohi County Business Retention and Expansion and Revolving Loan Fund Committees. Staff also served on the Renville County Revolving Loan Fund Committee.
* Staff is a member of a citizens committee in Kandiyohi County that is encouraging communities in the county to become involved with the state's "Green Steps Cities" Program.

Transportation Planning

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) receives an annual grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation, matched with the local tax levy. The purpose of the grant is to provide transportation planning services within the Region's four counties, primarily for activities involving the State Trunk Highway System 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 are Sheldon Nies and Ron Kutzke. Meeker County's Highway 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 2011-2012 ATP Committee that makes Enhancement Project funding recommendations.

The Commission completed a contract with the City of Willmar for a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that was completed in 2011. The Plan prioritized trail and on-road bicycle route additions, as well as projects aimed at alleviating safety concerns for both pedestrians and bicyclists.

The Commission had a contract with the MNDOT Office of Transit to provide planning assistance on their Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan. Assistance consisted of helping analyze regional ridership and transit service needs, and unmet needs; an assessment of the level and type of service that is required to meet these unmet needs; and a plan to address such needs. The Commission also assisted by conducting public outreach meetings for this Plan.

The Commission received a contract from the MNDOT Office of Transit to conduct a Human Services Transportation Plan. The process was guided by a large committee representing both transportation and human services within the Region. The Plan was approved by the Commission's Board of Directors in December.

The Commission began a new project in 2011, assisting MNDOT with local road verification for the state's base map. Local units of government were contacted to discuss various segments of road that MNDOT had questions about. This assistance will continue in 2012 and beyond.

The Commission has provided assistance to the Highway 15 Coalition. The Coalition was formed, with MMDC assistance, to work towards raising awareness of the access, safety, and capacity challenges facing the Highway 15 Corridor. One of the primary first goals of the Coalition is to conduct a corridor study to identify specific safety and access needs along the corridor. The Commission acts as the Coalition's fiscal agent. MMDC is currently working with the Coalition by working with county and city engineers along the corridor highlight top priority safety projects from those discussed in the recent MNDOT funded corridor study. MMDC staff participated as a member of a technical advisory committee for this study.

Commission staff was also active in the following transportation activities during the 2011 Calendar Year:

* Preparing comprehensive plans that include transportation components and issues.
* Staff attended and made comments to a variety of MNDOT statewide planning initiatives during the course of the year.
* Attending RDC Transportation Planners meetings during the past year. These quarterly meetings allow the planners to share information and coordinate planning efforts.
* Staff serves on a Willmar Downtown Connections Committee that is working on improving transportation connections to the central business district.
* Staff is a member of a Steering Committee for Hutchinson Transportation Plan update that will be completed in 2012.

(Continued on page 3)

Area Agency on Aging

Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) contracts with Region Nine Development Commission (RNDC) to implement activities approved through a public process administered by the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging® Inc. (MNRAAA). DuWayne Underthun and Maureen Melgaard-Schneider represent MMDC interests on the MNRAAA Board. MMDC provides two staff positions to conduct the aging program activities. The positions are Program Developer and Senior Outreach Specialist.

The mission statement: MNRAAA is the gateway to resources for older adults, caregivers and service providers in the twenty-seven counties of southwest Minnesota.

Did you know?

- ✓ By 2020 — there will be more people over 60 than children in school in Minnesota.
- ✓ By 2030 — 1 in 4 people will be over the age of 65 in Minnesota.
- ✓ The percent of people aged 65 and older in Region 6E is:
  - Kandiyohi County — 21.8%, an increase of 2.8% since 2000 census
  - McLeod County — 22.3%, an increase of 4.7% since 2000 census
  - Meeker County — 20.6%, no change from the 2000 census
  - Renville County — 25.0%, an increase of 0.9% since 2000 census (MN State Demographers Office, 2011)
- ✓ Area Agencies on Aging staff are available to assist local leaders in visioning activities to provide age-friendly communities?

Senior LinkAge Line®: A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors

Since 1997, many older adults in Minnesota have relied on the Senior LinkAge Line®, a statewide service of the Minnesota Board on Aging and Area Agencies on Aging, as their first call for assistance when experiencing questions or issues on a variety of subjects. Most widely known for Medicare expertise and helping older adults age well in the community, the Senior LinkAge Line® is also often used for helping Minnesota seniors and their caregivers to find answers to other questions that may involve state agencies, such as how to handle a driver's license that has been revoked or determining if a professional holds a current license.

Because of the extensive knowledge of the Senior LinkAge Line® specialists, as well as the increasing popularity of the line, when Lt. Governor Yvonne Prettner Solon had a vision for a One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors, it made sense to expand the already in-place Senior LinkAge Line®. The newly expanded Senior LinkAge Line®: A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors can now quickly assist Minnesotans on a variety of subjects that require the expertise of other state agencies. With one call, a specialist can connect the caller to appropriate state agency staff that can directly assist the caller without requiring a second, or even third, call to be made. For example, if a senior has questions regarding their property tax, a Senior LinkAge Line® One Stop Shop specialist can chat with a staff from the Minnesota Department of Revenue to find an answer for the caller. This virtual network is made possible through the use of Revation, a specialized chat and call system. The Senior LinkAge Line®: A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors will continue to expand over the next year with connecting seniors to volunteer and employment opportunities.

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Community Development and Planning

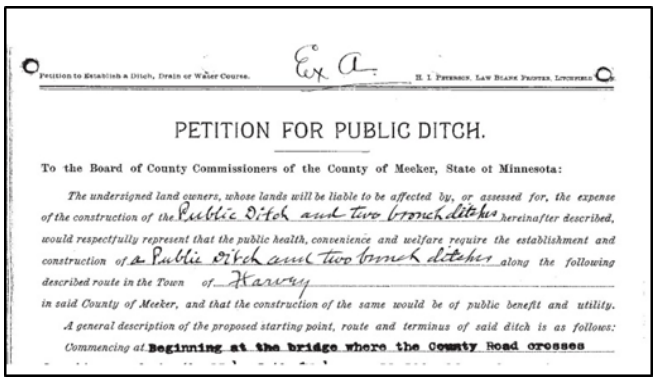
The **Community Development Department** is able to assist with a wide variety of community development planning projects and miscellaneous activities for local units of government. Typically this particular program area is not tied to any State or Federally funded program, but is funded through service charges that are subsidized by the use of the Commission's general fund. Many of the projects are also funded through grants. The Department's technical assistance rate is $75 per hour, however, numerous questions are researched daily for our Region's citizens, elected officials, and units of government without MMDC charging a fee.

Each year, MMDC staff offers assistance to local units of government on a wide range of services, including comprehensive land use plans, environmental reviews, zoning and subdivision ordinances, ordinance codification, grant and loan writing, community surveys, public facilities planning, housing studies, mapping services, and many other technical services. As one of Minnesota's State Data Centers, the MMDC regularly provides data to businesses, non-profit agencies, private citizens, and units of government from the Census and other informational sources free of charge.

Activities During Fiscal Year

* Staff worked on a grant received from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources to assist Meeker County with modernizing their drainage records. These records dated all the way back to the 1880s when public drainage was first established in Meeker County. Each drainage system has numerous files associated with them, ranging from the original petition to establish the system, to maps and plans showing how the drainage system was engineered and constructed. Meeker County staff was responsible for scanning the documents, while MMDC staff was responsible for converting the scanned documents into electronic files with standardized names to help identify what type of document it contains. For example, a map showing how a drainage system was constructed in 1920 might be modernized by being scanned and named "MC_CD7_Plans_10051920". This refers to Meeker County (MC), County Ditch 7 (CD7), set of construction plans (Plans), dated October 5, 1920 (10051920). All of the County's 5,000 drainage files can then be sorted by ditch system, types of files, and date.

Meeker County Drainage Record


Petition to Establish a Ditch, Drain or Water Course. Ex A. H. I. Peterson, Law Blank Printer, Litchfield

PETITION FOR PUBLIC DITCH.

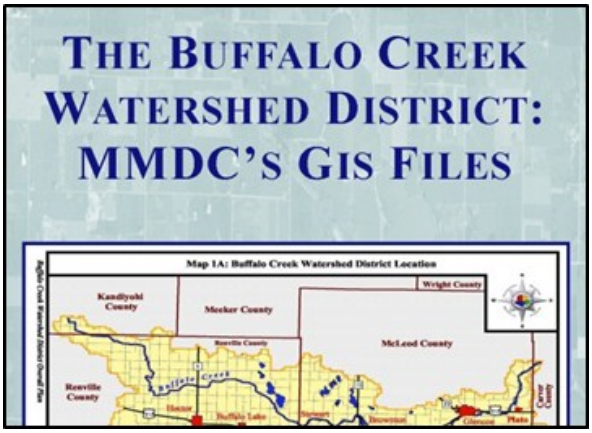
To the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Meeker, State of Minnesota:

The undersigned land owners, whose lands will be liable to be affected by, or assessed for, the expense of the construction of the Public Ditch and two branch ditches hereinafter described, would respectfully represent that the public health, convenience and welfare require the establishment and construction of a Public Ditch and two branch ditches along the following described route in the Town of Harvey in said County of Meeker, and that the construction of the same would be of public benefit and utility.

A general description of the proposed starting point, route and terminus of said ditch is as follows:

Commencing at Beginning at the bridge where the County Road crosses

Buffalo Creek Watershed District GIS Files Index



* Staff worked with the Buffalo Creek Watershed District (BCWD) on a Drainage Records Modernization grant received from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. This project was similar to Meeker County's drainage project, with the exception that the main focus was on creating an interactive mapping website for the District. Drainage files were still converted into a standardized naming system, which identifies the drainage system, file type (i.e., petition, order, plans, etc.), and date. Unlike

Community Development and Planning (Continued from page 7)

Meeker County, however, all of MMDC's Geographic Information System (GIS) files were indexed to assist with the District's new interactive mapping website. The new website can be accessed off the District's website at www.bcwatershed.org

* Staff continued to work with the Cities of Prinsburg, Pennock, and Lake Lillian on identifying changes to their respective City Codes. MMDC Staff has worked throughout the years on maintaining a Model City Codes book that can be customized to fit each community's needs. The three communities are currently working with on identifying a number of issues that MMDC will need to research and create language to incorporate into their existing codes.

Comprehensive Planning

MMDC staff is fully prepared to work with communities on developing Comprehensive Land Use Plans. These plans establish the foundation for all zoning issues, and identify future land use Goals, Objectives, and Policies. Please contact MMDC Staff for more information.

Area Agency on Aging (Continued from page 6)

To seek assistance with any area concerning Minnesota seniors and their caregivers, call the Senior LinkAge Line®: A One Stop Shop for Minnesota Seniors at 1-800-333-2433. Specialists are also available through online chat at www.MinnesotaHelp.info®. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Voicemail is available after hours.

Local AAA Activities

- Provided a wide variety of technical assistance to organizations and individuals throughout 2011. Participated in the Life Connections Expo, MN State Fair, and other area Senior Health Fairs.
- Coordinated Eldercare Development Partnership (EDP) grant activities for MNRAAA including quarterly reports and grant activities. Goals focused on supporting implementation of programs that support elders to address chronic health conditions and falls prevention.
- Continued partnership with Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) to implement Bone Builders Exercise program with physical therapist assessment component. Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties.
- Continued work with Somali Elders grant to provide counseling services for elders. Worked with Willmar Area Multi-Culture Market/West Central Integration Collaborative to assume grant administration for the service.
- Met with Alzheimer's Association Director to evaluate outreach into the West Central area. Identified common points to distribute information in the upcoming year. The West Central Dementia Network is developing a strong partnership and presence in our region.
- Coordinated Chronic Disease Self-Management Classes through McLeod County Public Health; and worked with Atwater Living at Home Block Nurse Program to establish classes in Kandiyohi County.

Pam White, Meeker County Social Services recognition for service on NE Advisory Council on Aging. Chairperson Maureen Melgaard-Schneider presents certificate.

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Revolving Loan Fund Program

In 1995, a grant was received, in the amount of $950,000 from the Federal Economic Development Administration to initially capitalize a Revolving Loan Fund Program. The award 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, loans are funded for working capital, real estate purchases, and equipment purchases. The Revolving Loan Fund Committee provides lending expertise and makes recommendations of loan funding to the governing board.

The purpose of the RLF program is to strengthen and diversify the 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 is a priority of the fund, as well.

The RLF program was funded in 1996 from a variety of sources.
These sources include:

Federal Economic Development Administration
State of Minnesota
Southwest Initiative Foundation
Counties of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville
Mid-Minnesota Development Commission

Over the past 16 years the fund has provided $3,725,990 in total loans to businesses in the four county service area. The RLF has leveraged private financing in the amount of $19,114,189. The RLF has created or retained 532 jobs. Over the history of the RLF, 52 loans have been funded to businesses in the four county service area.

The following is a breakdown of the number of businesses financed by county and total amount provided:

County	Number of Businesses	Amount
Kandiyohi	18	$1,226,000
McLeod	15	$918,000
Meeker	7	$817,000
Renville	12	$764,990

The Revolving Loan Fund is accepting applications as funds become available from the repayment of existing loans. For more information, please contact Les Nelson, Economic Development Director, at (320) 235-8504 ext. 241.

Area Agency on Aging
(Continued from page 8)

- Partnered with Lutheran Social Services and Compassionate Care to provide Powerful Tools for Caregivers classes throughout Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties.
- Conducted numerous Medicare Part D Plan Comparisons throughout the region for consumers during the annual open enrollment period that began October 15 and ended December 7.
- Answered Senior Linkage Line calls through voice over internet protocol (VOIP)

Advisory Council on Aging (ACA) 2011

The ACA meets up to seven times per year and provides the link between MNRAAA, older adults, and their respective communities. Susan Meyer is the liaison member between the ACA and the MNRAAA Board. Maureen Melgaard-Schneider is the Chairperson for the ACA. Representatives are as follows:

Agency serving older adults	—	open
Diversity	—	Batula Osman
Kandiyohi County 60+	—	open
Long Term Care	—	Susan Meyer
McLeod County 60+/MMDC	—	Charles Warner
Meeker County 60+	—	Amy Wilde
MNRAAA/MMDC	—	Maureen Melgaard-Schneider
Public Health/Human Services 60+	—	Pam White

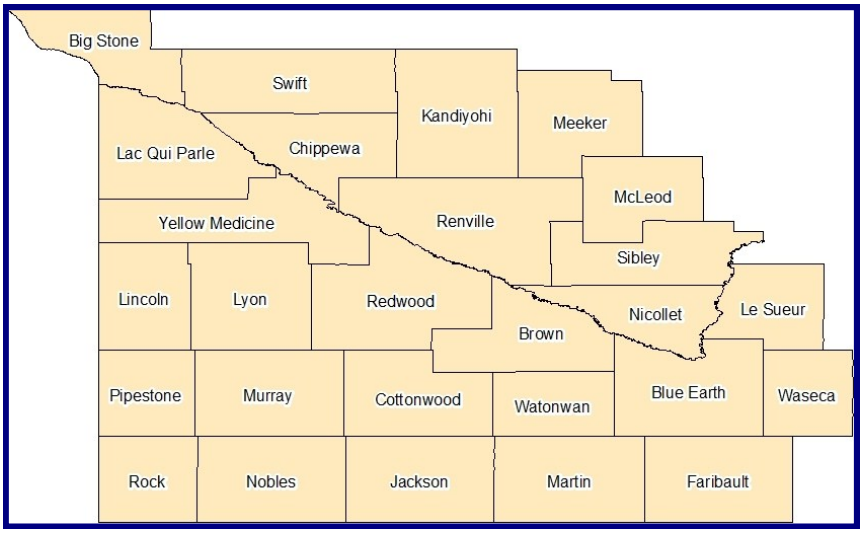
In 2011, MNRAAA established a Funding Task Force comprised of Advisory Council members representative of the four ACAs. This committee reviewed applications, conducted interviews, and made final project awards to the MNRAAA Board of Directors. The following list of priority areas and projects approved during 2011 for calendar year 2012 are as follows:

***Transportation*:** Kandiyohi, Meeker, and Renville Counties

***Legal Services/Education*:** Western Minnesota Legal Services

***Congregate Dining and Home Delivered Meals*:** Lutheran Social Services is contracted through December, 2012. East African Elders enjoy socializing and eating at Bihi's Restaurant once weekly through a grant provided by Title III nutrition funds.

Coalition of East African Community Services: Received a grant to provide counseling services to East African elders. The purpose is to address acculturation and trauma needs to facilitate greater immersion into the local population (Kandiyohi County). Note: this agency closed business operations and opted to find a new sponsor for the grant. ***Willmar Area Multi Culture Market*** applied and received approval to administer and implement this grant.



MNRAAA 27-County Service area

Financial Report

Actual Figures Fiscal Year 2011

Revenues		
Economic Development Admin	$ 63,606	
Revolving Loan Fund Admin	35,250	
HHS - MnRAAA	152,066	
Department of Transit	15,059	
Total Federal Sources		$265,981
Agricultural Credit	$ 19,911	
Department of Transportation	50,000	
HHS - MnRAAA	19,315	
HHS - EDP/Sail	59,510	
Total State Sources		$148,736
Property Taxes	$259,464	
Interest and Dividends	5,079	
Inspection Services	2,792	
Technical Assistance	33,072	
GIS Mapping	-	
Other	6,696	
In-kind	40,902	
Total Local Sources		$348,005
Total Revenues		**$762,722**
Expenditures		
Personnel	$398,515	
Supplies & Printing	7,315	
Communications	7,260	
Capital Outlay	3,039	
Services	4,141	
Volunteer Services & Other Uses	560	
Travel & Training	19,457	
Commission	12,277	
In-kind	40,902	
Indirect	222,908	
Total Expenditures		**$716,374**

Original Budget Fiscal Year 2012

Revenues		
Economic Development Admin	$ 52,628	
Revolving Loan Fund Admin	37,099	
HHS - MnRAAA	144,712	
Department of Transit	10,000	
Total Federal Sources		$244,439
Agricultural Credit	$ 19,466	
Department of Transportation	50,000	
HHS - MnRAAA	23,950	
HHS - EDP/Sail	63,482	
Total State Sources		$156,898
Property Taxes	$270,095	
Interest and Dividends	5,325	
Inspection Services	300	
Technical Assistance	50,067	
GIS Mapping	-	
Other	22,152	
In-kind	41,586	
Total Local Sources		$389,525
Total Revenues		**$790,862**
Expenditures		
Personnel	$401,727	
Supplies & Printing	9,941	
Communications	12,066	
Capital Outlay	2,000	
Services	34,503	
Volunteer Services & Other Uses	3,800	
Travel & Training	34,745	
Commission	13,550	
In-kind	41,586	
Indirect	235,794	
Total Expenditures		**$789,712**

Mid-Minnesota Development Commission

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

2011 MMDC Staff

Executive Director.....Donn Winckler

Financial Director/Office Manager ..... Sue Gimse

Aging Program Director.....Kate Selseth

Senior Outreach Specialist ..... Jeanette Jochum

Senior Outreach Specialist .....Ashley Ellingson

Economic Development Director.....Les Nelson

Community Development Director..... Matthew Johnson

Admin.Assist./Technology Support Specialist .....Terresa Westerman