

# *REVISED COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2016-2021*



**Home State bank  
Cosmos, MN  
Meeker County**



**First Minnesota Bank  
Stewart, MN  
McLeod County**



**CenBank  
Buffalo Lake, MN  
Renville County**



**Heritage Bank  
Pennock, MN  
Kandiyohi County**

## **U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration Award # 06-83-05908**

### **PREPARED BY:**

**MID-MINNESOTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
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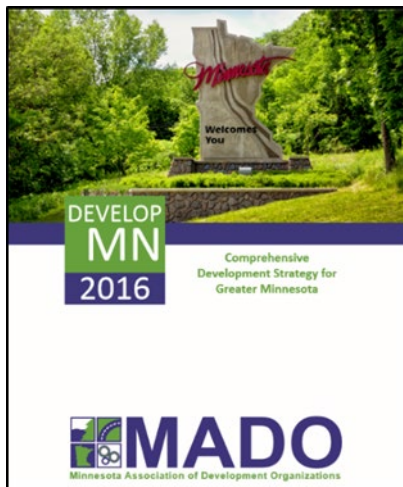
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## OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) has been developed in a partnership between the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission, one of many nationwide Certified Economic Development Districts (EDD's), and the U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration. The CEDS contributes to effective economic development in America's communities as well as the Region. This Region, comprised of the Minnesota Counties of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville has authored a Revised CEDS through a locally-based, regionally-driven economic development planning process. The CEDS provides the capacity-building foundation by which the public sector, working in conjunction with other economic sectors creates the environment for regional economic prosperity.

The CEDS document takes into account and integrates, where appropriate, other planning efforts effecting the region including, but not limited to the *DevelopMN* document that was drafted by the Minnesota Association of Development Organizations (MADO). Minnesota has significant economic opportunities all across the state. Regions throughout Greater Minnesota share many qualities and challenges, but lacked alignment needed to take advantage of shared priorities and maximize the use of resources. The lack of alignment has led to a limited voice in crafting effective development policy based on regional priorities.



*DevelopMN* will help identify needed alignment and document a broadly supported strategy for creating shared prosperity. The beginning of the 21st Century presents a number of challenges and opportunities to rural Minnesota as it charts its economic future. An economy that is now driven by innovation demands that we create an environment that nurtures its talent and workforce, supports entrepreneurship, and creates communities that can support both. In order for rural Minnesota to succeed, there needs to be a strong, collective and credible voice that can create and move forward an economic agenda at the local, regional, state, and federal level. The Regional CEDS will align and integrate with the *DevelopMN* Strategy. The *DevelopMN* document can be found online at <http://www.mnado.org/developmn/>.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission serves the Minnesota Counties of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville (also known as Region 6E). This CEDS is the result of a locally-based, regionally-driven planning process designed to enhance the economic growth of the Region.

The CEDS provides a mechanism for coordinating the efforts of individuals, organizations, local governments, and private industry concerned with economic development. The CEDS is a requirement to apply for assistance under the EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment programs.

Planning for the document began in early 2016 with public input. A draft document was provided to the governing board and a 30-day comment period was provided.

The CEDS document is made readily available to the Economic Development stakeholders in the Region. In creating the CEDS, there is a continuing program of communication and outreach that encourages broad-based public engagement, participation, and partnerships. The general public, government decision makers, and the private sector are able to use this document as a guide to understanding the regional economy and improve it.

The CEDS document:

- Details the people, economy, and sense of place of the Region.
- Describes the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the Region.
- Presents the regions goals.
- Establishes strategies.
- Establishes performance measures.

A Vision Statement was created for the Strategy. This is the Vision Statement:

*“Create a Region with a diverse base of locally successful and globally competitive businesses that contribute to a resilient region and vibrant quality of life and place for all citizens.”*

The key findings from the CEDS process and document construction have been placed in goals and strategies for the four-county Region. The goals and strategies have been divided into the following focus areas:

- HUMAN CAPITAL GOALS
- ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS GOALS
- COMMUNITY RESOURCES GOALS
- FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS GOALS

The following are the SMART goals that were established, under each focus area.

### **HUMAN CAPITAL GOALS**

- 1) Increase labor force participation in the region by 2 percent by 2021.
- 2) Raise worker skill levels, educational attainment to improve productivity, grow the regional economy. Increase the number of individuals with Associates Degrees by 5 percent by 2021.

### **ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS GOAL**

- 3) Improve the region's rank on the Stats America Innovation Index by 2 percent.
- 4) Increase the number of capital investment programs available to small and medium sized enterprises (less than 50 employees) to allow growth and job creation for the majority of the regions businesses.

### **COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

- 5) Increase the number of employment opportunities in the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation and the Leisure and Hospitality Sector by 5 percent by 2021.
- 6) Reduce the number of impaired water bodies listed by MPCA by 3 percent by 2021.

### **FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS**

- 7) Create a minimum of 3 area broadband infrastructure buildouts in the four county region that meet or are above the standards set by the State.
- 8) Invest in a minimum of two new small scale freight infrastructure enhancements that lead to economic improvements to localized areas by 2025. Have investments made in all preliminary planning, and needed environmental studies, to have Highway 23 and Highway 212 quickly ready for construction, when additional funding allows these projects to proceed.
- 9) A minimum for four (10 percent) of the regions municipalities will make a commitment to active living transportation planning and infrastructure by 2021.
- 10) Decrease the number of communities on the Minnesota 2016 Clean Water Project Priority List by 5 percent by 2021.
- 11) Move toward equilibrium in local housing markets, and create a minimum of 150 subsidized rental housing units, and 200 market rate units within the region by 2021.

The goals listed above have been assigned strategies to assist in accomplishing the goals. The strategies are listed in the body of the document.

An evaluation framework has been set up to analyze the outcomes and measure the progress in reaching the goals through the strategies. Evaluation framework includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) Number of jobs created/retained after implementation of the CEDS.
  - a. Total employment in initial year employed 16 and over.

- b. Total employment in subsequent years employed 16 and over.
  - c. Number of jobs created or retained as a result of select state and local investments.
- 2) Number and types of public sector investment undertaken in the Region.
    - a. Federal investment (EDA, USDA, etc.).
    - b. Significant state and local investments.
  - 3) Private sector investment in the Region after implementation of the CEDS.
  - 4) CEDS action plan accomplishments.

Economic resilience and hazard mitigation has been addressed in the plan. Providing goals and strategies. These are the two goals for economic resilience and hazard mitigation:

- 1) Maintain a resilient region and mitigate hazards in the region.
- 2) Increase the Region's ability to withstand an economic downturn.



## SUMMARY BACKGROUND

### Demographic and Socioeconomic Data

#### POPULATION

As can be seen in the following graph Kandiyohi County has the largest population of any County in the Region at 42,542. This is followed by McLeod County at 35,932. This is followed by Meeker and Renville Counties at 23,102 and 14,892 respectively. The total population for the Region is 116,468.

Geography	Population 2000	Population 2015	Numerical Change	2000-2015 Change %
Kandiyohi County	41,203	42,542	+1,339	3.25
McLeod County	34,898	35,932	+1,034	2.96
Meeker County	22,644	23,102	+458	2.00
Renville County	17,154	14,892	-2,262	-13.18

2000 Census; Stats America 2015

#### PER CAPITA INCOME (PCI)

The per capita income of all four counties in the Region is below that of the State of Minnesota as a whole. The County of Kandiyohi is 12.9 percent below the State of Minnesota. McLeod County is 13.6 percent below the State of Minnesota. Meeker and Renville Counties round out the last two counties at 15.5 percent and 10.7 percent below the State of Minnesota, respectively.

Geography	Amount	Percentage below MN PCI
<b>Minnesota</b>	<b>\$31,642</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Kandiyohi County	\$27,550	12.9%
McLeod County	\$27,330	13.6%
Meeker County	\$26,726	15.5%
Renville County	\$28,228	10.7%

US CENSUS/American Fact Finder 2014

## EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The following chart depicts the labor force available in each count along with employment and unemployment statistics. As can be deduced from the table Region 6E has a total labor force of 66,078 persons. Of the total labor force 63,434 are employed while 2,644 are considered unemployed. The unemployment rate for the four-county Region is 4 percent.

Geography County	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
Kandiyohi	23,985	23,177	808	3.4%
McLeod	20,532	19,683	849	4.1%
Meeker	13,265	12,728	537	4.0%
Renville	8,296	7,846	450	5.4%

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development - July 2016

## REGION 6E LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS

The following graph was constructed by a Labor Market Analyst at the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. The graph depicts that though the size of the labor force is not expected to change, the age composition of the workforce will see a significant shift over time, with a steady gain in the number of workers aged 25 to 44 years and big gains in workers aged 65 years-and-over against huge declines in the number of workers aged 45 to 64 years. The Region may lose about 3,100 workers in the 45 to 64 year old age group as the baby boomers generation moves through the population pyramid. Region 6E is expected to see gains in the number of workers aged 16 to 24 years as well, and the 25 to 54 year old age group will still be the largest part of the labor force, accounting for 57.4 percent of the total. This will likely lead to a tight labor market in the future.

AGE	2015 Labor Force Projection	2025 Labor Force Projection	2015 -2025 Numeric Change	2015 -2025 Percentage Change
16 to 19	3,712	3,659	-53	-1.4%
20 to 24	5,930	6,571	+641	+10.8%
25 to 44	24,351	25,322	+971	+4.0%
45 to 54	14,184	12,037	-2,147	-15.1%
55 to 64	12,945	11,992	-953	-7.4%
65 to 74	3,145	4,506	+1,361	+43.3%
75 and over	686	946	+260	+37.9%
Total	64,953	65,033	+80	+0.1%

DEED - Minnesota State Demographic Center; 2009-2013 ACS 5-Year Estimates



## REGION 6E POPULATION PERCENTAGE BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN

The region saw a small gain in the number of white residents and Asian/Pacific Islanders, and much faster increases in every other race group. The number of Black or African American residents quadrupled; people of two or more races jumped almost 75 percent; and American Indian and people of Hispanic or Latino origin both grew about 40 percent from 2000 to 2013.

RACE	PERCENTAGE 2013	CHANGE FROM 2000-2013
Total	100.0%	+1.2%
White	94.9%	0.5%
Black or African American	1.2%	+322.4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	0.4%	+38.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.5%	+7.2%
Some other race	1.8%	-33.1%
Two or More Races	1.2%	+73.9%
Hispanic or Latino	7.2%	+41.8%

U.S. Census Bureau; ACS

## POVERTY

The chart below depicts the poverty rate for all four counties in the Region. Kandiyohi County has the highest poverty rate in the region at 11.5. Renville County has the second highest at 11.3. The two remaining counties of Meeker and McLeod have poverty rates of 10.0 and 7.9 respectively.

Geography	Poverty Rate
Kandiyohi	11.5
McLeod	7.9
Meeker	10.0
Renville	11.3

Stats America; 2014

## AGRICULTURE

A very important industry in Region 6E is agriculture, with 4,484 farms producing more the \$1.7 billion in the market value of products sold in 2012.

Geography	Number of Farms	Market Value of Products Sold
Kandiyohi	1,310	\$495,390,000
McLeod	966	\$234,534,000
Meeker	1,147	\$291,736,000
Renville	1,061	\$710,346,000
Region 6E Total	4,484	\$1,732,006,000

Census of Agriculture; 2012

## STATE OF MINNESOTA SALES TAX REVENUE BY COUNTY (\$)

The Minnesota Legislature enacted the state sales and use tax to broaden the tax base in an effort to create a more stable and predictable tax system that was fair and competitive. Minnesota's general sales and use tax rate is currently 6.875 percent. There are some other sales taxes that go beyond the 6.875 percent at the local level. As one can deduce from the graph that Kandiyohi County has the highest Gross Sales in the region at over \$2.2 billion. This would indicate a strong retail economy as it relates to Willmar being a regional center. Kandiyohi County is followed by McLeod County at almost \$1.5 billion, Meeker at over \$1.3 billion, and Renville at over \$500 million.

Geography	Gross Sales	Taxable Sales	Sales Tax	Use Tax	Total Tax
Kandiyohi	2,257,382,847	545,713,549	38,083,894	2,852,985	40,936,879
McLeod	1,413,377,314	335,756,093	23,437,258	1,752,694	25,189,952
Meeker	1,328,455,642	150,098,812	10,503,676	504,082	11,007,958
Renville	592,372,975	72,672,281	5,106,042	617,681	5,723,723

State of Minnesota Department of Revenue; 2014



## Infrastructure Assets that relate to economic development

In the following graph the total square miles of each county is listed along with the total square miles of the Region. Real property in the Region is an economic development infrastructure asset.

GEOGRAPHY	SQUARE MILES
Kandiyohi County	862
McLeod County	506
Meeker County	645
Renville County	987
Total for the Region	3,000

As can be deduced from the above graph the region has a total of 3,000 square miles in total.

The map on the following page details infrastructure assets. They are mapped and listed. The Region contains 40 cities. Infrastructure for the Region also includes 3 rails lines and 7 airports. The Region is served by many state highways and two U.S. Highways, 12 and 212. The U.S. Highways are east/west routes.



# REGION 6E MID-MINNESOTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION





KANDIYOHI COUNTY


MEEKER COUNTY

MCLEOD COUNTY

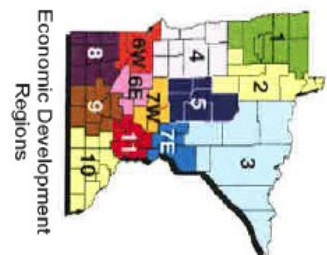
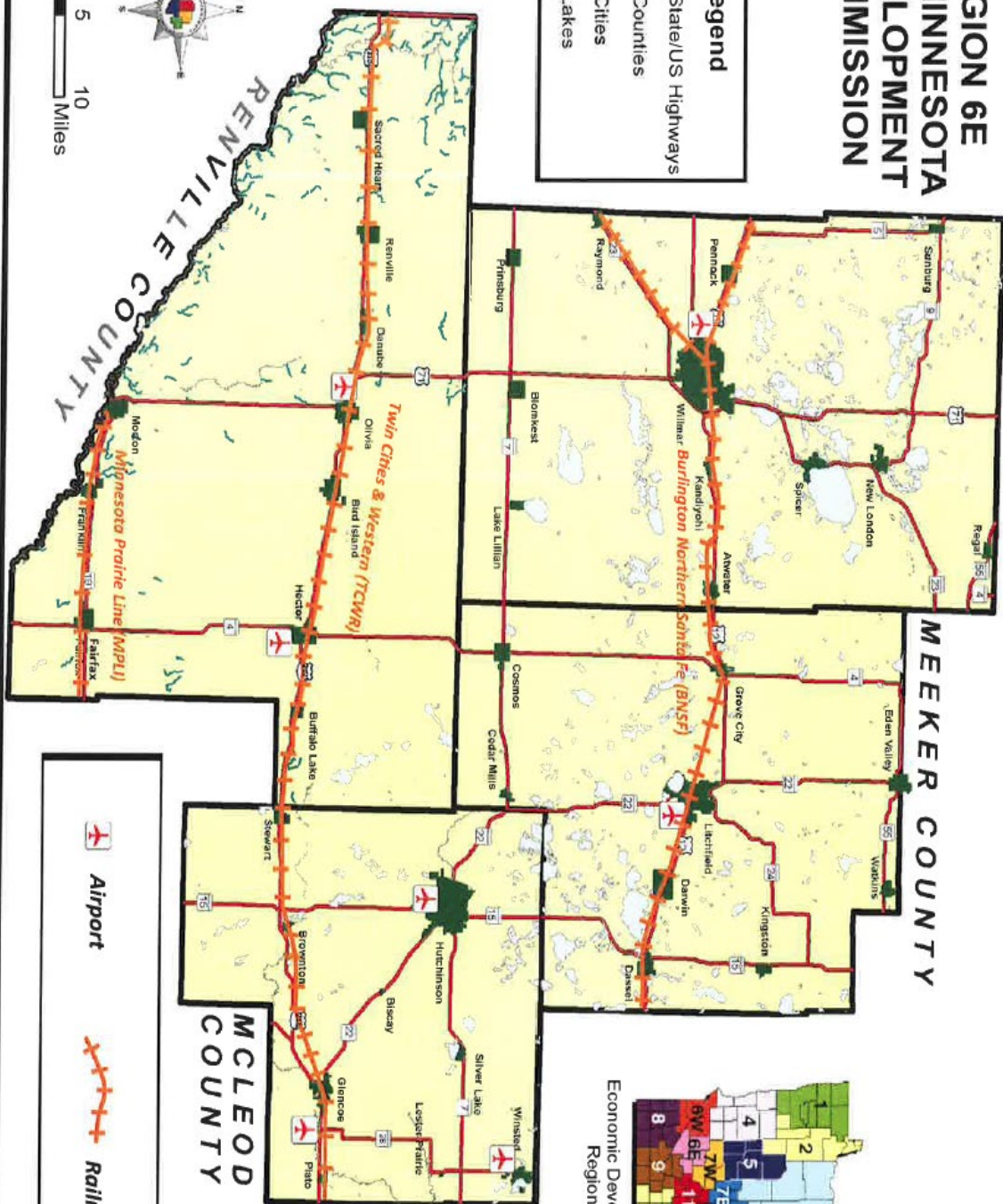
RENVILLE COUNTY

**Legend**

-  State/US Highways
-  Counties
-  Cities
-  Lakes



0 5 10  
Miles



 Airport

 Railroad

## Broadband infrastructure

The term broadband refers to Internet connections that can transfer data and information (like web pages) at high speeds. Broadband service in Minnesota is delivered through the fiber and coaxial networks of cable providers; DSL service over the telephone network; optical fiber to the home or business; mobile and fixed wireless systems; and satellite connections.

It is a state goal that (1) no later than 2022, all Minnesota businesses and homes have access to high-speed broadband and infrastructure that provides minimum download speeds of at least 25 megabits per second and minimum upload speeds of at least three megabits per second; and (2) no later than 2026, all Minnesota businesses and homes have access to at least one provider of broadband with download speeds of at least 100 megabits per second and upload speeds of at least 20 megabits per second.

The Broadband Development Office helps Minnesota residents identify broadband options available to them. The Broadband Development office also maintains county broadband maps identifying underserved and unserved areas of counties.

The maps use the most-recent data available, which is from the October 2014 final submission to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration as part of the U.S. Department of Commerce's State Broadband Initiative. The county broadband maps are attached as Appendix D of this document.

As can be deduced by studying the maps of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties there are large areas of each county that are underserved (the purple color of each map) and underserved (the pink areas of the maps).

Work on increasing broadband speeds is being performed at the Local Government Unit (LGU) level, as well as, partnerships between LGU's. Providers have been approached to assist in fulfilling the need. The State of Minnesota is also providing funding on a competitive grant basis

## Cluster Identification

"The U.S. Cluster Mapping Project is used by governments, economic developers, and businesses to understand and shape the competitive landscape for a wide range of industries. These data are being put in the hands of local officials, who are using the information to make strategic investments, recruit new companies, and lay the groundwork for new industries. Across the country, our cluster mapping tool gives us the ability to reinvent and modernize economic development strategies – all driven by open data."

*U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker*

The U.S. Cluster Mapping Project is a national economic initiative that provides over 50 million open data records on industry clusters and regional business environments in the United States to promote economic growth and national competitiveness. The project is led by Harvard Business School's Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness in partnership with the U.S. Department of Commerce and U.S. Economic Development Administration. The charts (see Appendix E) have been provided on the four local counties.

The Region as a whole, as it's foremost employment cluster, has Local Health Services being at the top. The Regional Cluster Approach should serve as a mechanism for participating health services organizations to work together in partnership to harmonize efforts and use available resources efficiently within the framework of agreed objectives, priorities and strategies, for the benefit of the regional population. This includes avoiding gaps and/or overlap in the regional humanitarian health response and resources both human and financial.

The second leading employment cluster in the region is Real Estate, Construction and Development. This employment cluster is most prevalent in the Counties of Kandiyohi, Meeker, and Renville.

## Relationship of the area's economy to the larger region or state

### COST OF LIVING

According to the Department of Employment and Economic Development's Cost of Living Tool, the basic needs budget for an average Minnesota family (which consists of 2 adults and 1 child, with 1 full-time and 1 part-time worker) was \$50,988 in 2015. The cost of living for a similar family in Region 6E was \$43,728. The highest monthly costs were transportation, food, and housing; but the cost of the Region's housing, child care, and taxes were significantly lower than the state. (see table below). In order to meet the basic cost of living for the region, the workers in the family scenario listed above would need to earn \$14.02 per hour. (The costs in the chart below are monthly).

Geography	Family yearly cost of living	Hourly wage required	Child Care cost	Food cost	Health Care Cost	Housing Cost	Transportation Cost	Other Cost	Taxes Cost
Region 6E	\$43,728	\$14.02	\$234	\$761	\$400	690	\$1,055	\$203	\$301
Minnesota	\$50,988	\$16.34	\$443	\$772	\$405	\$907	\$1,039	\$235	\$448

DEED Cost of Living Tool; 2015

### AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES

Average weekly wages in the Region are consistently lower, in all four counties, than the national and State of Minnesota. The average weekly wage for McLeod County is the highest of all four counties, however, it is \$278.00 below the State of Minnesota. Renville County has the next highest average weekly wages and is \$381.00 below the State. Rounding out the balance of the counties Kandiyohi and Meeker are \$391 and \$425.00 below the State Average Weekly Wage, respectively.

Geography	Industry	Quarter 1 Amount
United States	All	\$1,048.00
Minnesota	All	\$1,078.00
Kandiyohi	All	\$ 687.00
McLeod	All	\$ 800.00
Meeker	All	\$ 653.00
Renville	All	\$ 697.00

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, QCEW, 2015

## Factors that directly affect economic performance in the Region

### OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

In Appendix F of this document is a listing of “Occupations In Demand”, a listing of jobs in the four county Region. As can be seen, the top two occupations listed are Nursing Assistants and Truck Drivers. There are many open positions for these occupations and they are not being filled. This is hampering economic performance of the Region. The Median Wage for Nursing Assistant in the region is \$24,858 while a Truck Drivers’ Median Wage is \$32,227. In the planning area there are projected openings of 870 for Nursing Assistants and 1,710 for Truck Drivers.

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

It has been widely accepted that educational attainment is of key importance at individual’s level for finding better paying jobs and improvement of standard of living. It has also been proven that a strong relationship exists between educational attainment and a Region’s economic performance. Regions with better-educated workers show bigger increases in GDP per capita and real wages. These Regions also compete more successfully in the knowledge economy for high-tech industries and talented workforce.

As can be deduced from the following graph, McLeod and Meeker counties have the highest educational attainment in the High School Diploma or more category. Kandiyohi and McLeod Counties have the highest educational attainment in the Bachelor’s Degree or more category at 21.9 percent and 18.9 percent respectively.

<b>Geography</b>	<b>High school Diploma or more</b>	<b>Bachelor’s Degree or more</b>
Kandiyohi	88.6%	21.9%
McLeod	91.4%	18.9%
Meeker	91.1%	18.0%
Renville	88.9%	15.6%

Stats America - 2014 - age 25+



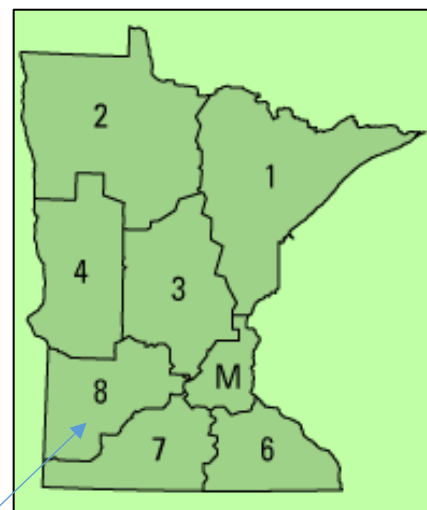
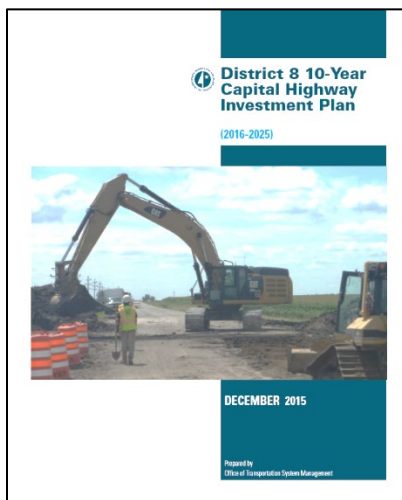
## Integration of other state and regional plans into the document

### MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MNDOT)

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission region is located in the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Region 8, as can be seen in the attached map. MMDC is also part of the Area Transportation Partnership and collaborates with MnDOT in the planning process. In constructing the regional CEDS document the MnDOT Plan was integrated into the CEDS document.

It is the ATP's responsibility of overseeing the solicitation and creation of the Area Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP). Each of the eight ATPs compose a separate ATIP which, when combined together, create the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

MnDOT created Area Transportation Partnership (ATP) to emphasize greater public involvement in preparation of transportation plans and programs. The Southwest Minnesota ATP is one of eight ATPs in Minnesota (one for each MnDOT District area). Every year, the ATPs develop an Annual Transportation Improvement Program (ATIP). ATIPs cover a minimum four -year period. ATIPs include all projects seeking federal aid highway, state trunk highway, and federal transit sources of funding.

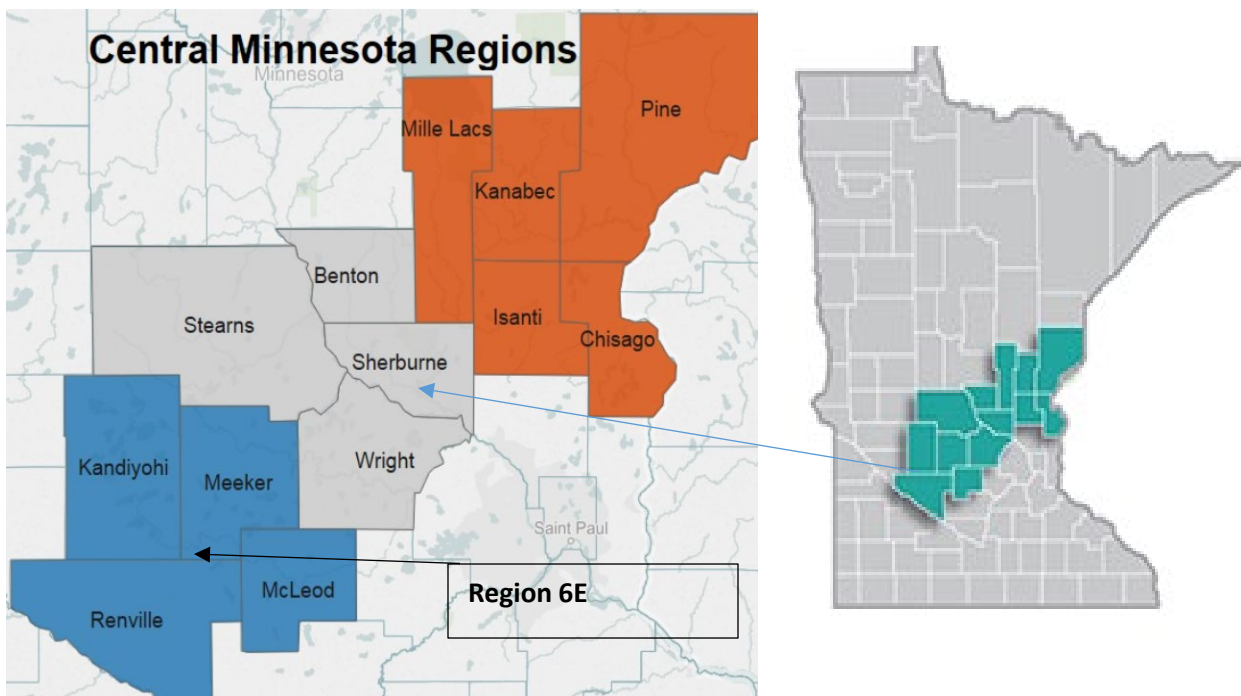
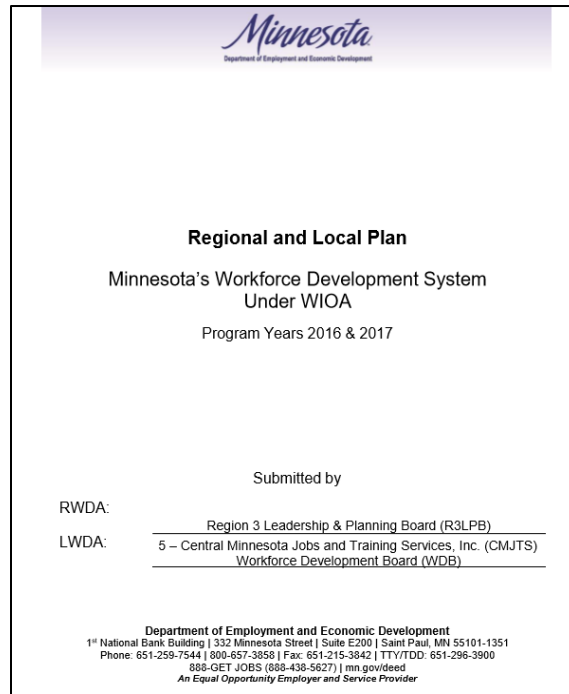


STATE OF MINNESOTA

The Region is part of the larger Region 8 Area Transportation Partnership.

## CENTRAL MINNESOTA JOBS AND TRAINING

In constructing the CEDS document the Regional and Local Plan of Minnesota's Workforce Development Plan was also visited and the Workforce Development Plan was integrated into the CEDS document. THE MMDC Region is a smaller part of the Regional Workforce Development Area (RWDA) 3, a 13-county regional planning area (as depicted in the blue/green area of the map).



## Identification of opportunities for the integration of other local, state, private, and federal funding partners

Local partners for economic opportunity development include, but are not limited to:

- Kandiyohi County/City of Willmar Economic Development Commission
- Meeker Development Corp
- City of Hutchinson Economic Development Authority
- Renville County Economic Development Authority
- Ridgewater College – Hutchinson and Willmar Campuses

Many of these local entities have some type of Revolving Loan Fund Program to utilize for economic development.

Statewide partners include, but are not limited to:

- Small Business Development Centers (SBDC)
- University of Minnesota, Morris - Center for Small Towns
- Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
- Minnesota Public Facilities Authority
- Work Force Investment Boards
- *DEVELOPMN* Project
- Agricultural Utilization Research Institute
- African Development Center

Federal partners include, but are not limited to:

- U.S. Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs-  
Including the Community Facilities Program and Strategic Economic Community Development (SECD) Community Facilities Set Aside Program (6025) Initiative

## HISTORICAL PROJECT SUMMARY

In August of 2009, the City of Hutchinson, Minnesota received a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration (EDA) in the amount of \$950,000.00 with a local contribution from the City of Hutchinson. The investment was used for industrial park infrastructure. In 2012, the City of Willmar, Minnesota applied for a grant for industrial park infrastructure. The application was denied and the city withdrew the application.

## SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) ANALYSIS

A SWOT Analysis was prepared for the rural area of the State of Minnesota through the *DevelopMN* process and document. The *DevelopMN* SWOT analysis was integrated in preparing this Revised Regional CEDS. The entire *DevelopMN* document can be found online at: <http://www.mnado.org/developmn/>. A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool used to ensure that there are clear objectives informed by a comprehensive understanding of an area's capabilities and capacity. This SWOT Analysis identifies the region's competitive advantages – those indigenous assets that make a region special or competitive in the national and global economies. This is juxtaposed against those internal or external factors that can keep an area from realizing its potential. Determining and analyzing what the region already possesses that could be better used to build the capacity for growth, including competitive cultural, economic, technological, intellectual and physical assets is critical to develop the strategic direction and implementation plan to promote regional economic vitality.

The following are definitions of the SWOT Analysis elements:

- **Strengths** – a regions' relative competitive advantages (supply chains, workforce skills, infrastructure, etc.)
- **Weaknesses** – a regions' relative competitive disadvantages (change resistant, risk averse, etc.)
- **Opportunities** - a regions' chances or occasions for regional improvement or progress expansion of industrial park, etc.)
- **Threats** – chances or occasions for negative impacts on the region or regional decline (companies considering moving to other lower-cost states).

To assist in the SWOT Analysis at both the *DevelopMN* level and the regional level, cornerstones were developed as key components of strong regions and communities. When approached in a coordinated way these cornerstones will assist in creating prosperity in Greater Minnesota through the following focus areas:

- **Human Capital**

It is clear that prosperity in the 21st Century will be driven by a combination of Human Capital and Innovation. In a world that is constantly shrinking, people with knowledge and skills are becoming ever more mobile and have multiple choices of where to live, work and play. Growing, retaining, and attracting talent, and then maximizing its potential, are critical for Greater Minnesota.

- **Economic Competitiveness**

Making Greater Minnesota an attractive environment for growth is critical to creating jobs, raising living standards, and financing necessary public services. Economic prosperity requires that communities link all assets of the community to generate new

knowledge, new businesses, and transform existing businesses into thriving 21st Century companies.

- **Community Resources**

Greater Minnesota communities seek to maintain our rural heritage while creating amenities that in return offer sustainable populations and become defining pillars of our culture.

- **Foundational assets**

Greater Minnesota communities require proactive and collaborative approaches/strategies to address infrastructure needs in a cost effective manner. Managing the access to, maintenance, replacement, and growth of these assets is key to preserving and maintaining communities as well as providing for growth opportunities. Foundational Assets include above-ground and below-ground infrastructure including transportation, utilities, and water.

## **SWOT ANALYSIS OVERVIEW AND MAJOR THEMES**

Labor force issues surfaced as a major theme in the SWOT Analysis investigation under the Human Capital Cornerstone Pillar.

Innovation, entrepreneurship, and small business growth issues surfaced as major themes in the SWOT Analysis investigation under the Economic Competitiveness Cornerstone Pillar.

The arts, humanities, culture and tourism, natural resources and water issues surfaced as major themes in the SWOT Analysis under the Community Resources Pillar.

Access to broadband connection, transportation, active transportation, wastewater, and housing issues surfaced as major themes in the SWOT analysis under the Foundational Assets Pillar.

**The complete SWOT Analysis, for the Region, can be found in APPENDIX C on page 39.**

## VISION STATEMENT - STRATEGIC DIRECTION AND ACTION PLAN

A Vision Statement was drafted for the region and the plan. This was done through broad community participation. The following is the Vision Statement:

*“Create a region with a diverse base of locally successful and globally competitive businesses that contribute to a resilient region vibrant quality of life and place for all citizens.”*

The SMART Goal Criteria was used in formulating the vision statement, goals, and objectives in this document. “SMART” is an acronym with each letter providing a process to establish goals. The following is the breakdown of each individual meaning:

- *Specific* – target a specific area for improvement.
- *Measurable* – quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress.
- *Assignable* – specify who will do it.
- *Realistic* – state what results can be realistically achieved.
- *Time-Related* – specify when the results can be achieved.

The goals and strategies of this regional plan are collectively addressed on a **voluntary basis** and are not intended to circumvent, erode, or alleviate local control. Varied monetary support to implement said goals and strategies are sought in partnership with and may include private, public, and non-profit diverse partnerships. This plan and its contents are a vehicle for collaboration.

No specific dollar figure is attached to each individual goal or strategy. The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission prepares their budget annually, and these prioritized items will be factored into the annual budget. The scope of this plan is 5 years. It should be noted that it is anticipated that the greatest costs are anticipated to be tied to staff time. It should be noted that we plan to partner with other like-minded organizations to not only reduce redundancy, but also reduce costs. MMDC also plans to mitigate costs as much as possible, again working with partners, but also exploring opportunities for grants and cost sharing, whenever possible.

# HUMAN CAPITAL CORNERSTONE

## LABOR FORCE

### Call to Action

As the Region's economy recovers to pre-recession levels, it is confronted with the challenge of meeting the hiring needs of employers. Employers are finding it difficult to hire potential employees because the skills potential employees have, are not in line with the employers' needs. Employers are faced, as well, with an aging workforce of older potential employees. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development predicts a tight labor market in the region in the future.

### Context

Labor force participation is the proportion of people either working or seeking work. Students, homemakers, retired individuals, and others not seeking work do not count as participating in the labor force.

The Regions' labor force is 63,434 persons.

### SMART GOAL # 1

Increase labor force participation in the Region by 2 percent by 2021.

### Strategies

- a. Increase labor force participation from diverse populations (Immigrant, Disabled, Mature, Veterans, etc.) and create educational and worker inclusivity within the Region.
- b. Escalate and amplify outreach of educational institutions and programs to diverse populations (ie. Adult Basic Education, Community Education, etc.).
- c. Build a best practices of infrastructure and systems of business/workforce accommodation to and for diverse populations providing for inclusiveness.
- d. Expand services, such as provided by West Central Industries, with campuses in Willmar and Hutchinson, to assist special needs individuals with employment.
- e. Partner with Central Minnesota Jobs and Training to provide workforce development assets.
- f. Increase Day Care Options for working parents.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

### Call to Action

Increased worker skills will be critical to improving productivity and growing the regional economy and competing in the global marketplace.

### Context

The percentage of the region's population that have earned an Associate's Degree varies from high of 13.9 percent in Kandiyohi County to a low of 11.5 percent in Meeker County.

### SMART GOAL # 2

Raise worker skill levels, educational attainment to improve productivity, grow the regional economy. Increase the number of individuals with Associates Degrees by 5 percent by 2021.

### Strategies

- a. Engage, embrace, and cultivate the availability of Ridgewater College and its Customized Training and Continuing Education Programs as an educational institution and skill building asset to lessen the skills gap between employer needs and employee skill set.
- b. Further augment K-12 local school district student opportunities such as the CEO program and the Tiger Path Program.
- c. Promulgate the 1-2-7 job/educational ratio theory of the 21st Century workforce to maintain a competitive edge in the Region.





# ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS CORNERSTONE

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

### Call to Action

The Region must embrace innovation, calculated risk-taking, and entrepreneurship in order to compete in the global economy.

### Context

The Stats America Innovation Index compares regional performance. It is calculated from four component indexes: human capital, economic dynamics, productivity and employment, and economic well-being.

With 100 percent representing the national average, the Region ranks in the mid 80 percent level.

### SMART GOAL # 3

Improve the Region's rank on the Stats America Innovation Index by 2 percent.

### Strategy

- a. Foster the success of co-working spaces such as the WORK UP co-working space at the MinnWest Technology Campus.
- b. Use the MinnWest Technology Campus as a success story, provide outreach and transferability.
- c. Address the needs of entrepreneurs through the Small Business Development Center at Southwest Minnesota State University and Manufacturing entrepreneurs through Enterprise Minnesota.
- d. Cultivate a successful economic development asset - in the Hutchinson Enterprise Center. Use transferability to create other business Incubators.



## SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH

### Call to Action

Small business, especially those in rural areas, have more limited access to capital than larger business. This includes government economic development programs. In order to prosper, the regions small businesses must have access to more public and private funding.

### Context

Research shows that 80 percent of job growth in a community comes from existing businesses.

### SMART GOAL # 4

Increase the number of capital investment programs available to Small and Medium sized enterprises (less than 50 employees) to allow growth and job creation for the majority of the regions businesses.

### STRATEGIES

- a. Continue to administer the Economic Development Administration Revolving Loan Fund to broaden access to capital – including recapitalization of the fund.
- b. Assist local Economic Development Agencies with marketing and dispersal of Revolving Loan Funds.
- c. Continue and enhance Business Retention and Expansion visitation programs to share possible financial resources for business growth and expansion throughout the Region.
- d. Ensure that the Small Business Development Center at Southwest State University has funding necessary for technical assistance.



# Community Resources Cornerstone

## ARTS, HUMANITIES, CULTURE, AND TOURISM

### Call to Action

The arts, humanities, culture, and tourism are assets to the Region. These assets are needed amenities for maintenance of heritage and boasting of the qualities of the region.

### Context

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development records the number of jobs in the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation Sector. The number of jobs was 376 for 2016 in the Region.

The number of jobs in the Leisure and Hospitality Industry in the region was 3,495.

### SMART GOAL # 5

Increase the number of employment opportunities in the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation and the Leisure and Hospitality Sector by 5 percent by 2021.

### Strategies

- a. Connect artisans and crafts-persons with professional development opportunities.
- b. Seek out Legacy Act Arts and Humanities investments in the Region.
- c. Support the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council with its support of the arts.
- d. Create new attractions, expand museums, magnify theaters, expand the craft wine and beer industries and take advantage of the Regions' bountiful lakes and rivers and parks.

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER QUALITY

### Call to Action

The Region is fortunate to have an abundance of natural resources that are essential to the state's economy. However, there is a strain on these resources. This puts pressure on stakeholders to adapt. The Region must solve multiple threats from groundwater overuse and contamination, invasive species, decline of natural areas, exploitation of natural resources, and a loss of species.

### Context

The highest to lowest uses of groundwater in Minnesota include, public supply, individual household, irrigation, livestock/aquaculture, industrial, mining, thermoelectric.

There are over 200 Impaired Water Bodies as listed by MPCA in the four-county Region.

### SMART GOAL # 6

Reduce the number of Impaired Water Bodies listed by MPCA by 3 percent by 2021.

#### Strategies

- a. Identify and safeguard valuable regional natural resources and outdoor heritage through education, preservation and conservation efforts, incorporate outdoor heritage and preservation strategies that draw connections between historic land uses and natural ecosystems, including agri-tourism, transportation (land, water, air) tourism, and flora/fauna tourism.
- b. Use regional assets like the PrairieWoods Environmental Learning Center to foster knowledge and appreciation of the outdoors and water conservation.
- c. Generate comprehensive plans and other plans that address biodiversity, watersheds, wetlands, critical habitats, grasslands, agriculture, minerals, forest habitat and migration corridors in the planning process.
- d. Develop land-use objectives that balance economic competitiveness/resilience with human well-being and natural amenities preservation.
- e. Identify policies and procedures to understand how invasive species enter ecosystems, and focus efforts on their reduction or elimination.
- f. Partner with Regional Soil and Water Conservation District and Regional Watershed Districts.



## FOUNDATIONAL ASSETS CORNERSTONE

### BROADBAND ACCESS

#### Call to Action

Affordable high-speed internet is necessary to remain competitive in today's economy. Many businesses and residents lack of access to reliable broadband at acceptable speeds and costs.

#### Context

Based on the County Broad Service Inventory maps provided by the Office of Broadband the Region has a large area that is either underserved or unserved.

#### SMART GOAL # 7

Create a minimum of 3 area broadband infrastructure buildouts in the four-county Region that meet or are above the standards set by the State.

#### Strategies

- a. Advocate for broadband funding at both state and federal levels.
- b. Partner with broadband providers to explore ways to assist with fiber infrastructure installation.
- c. Promote the use of broadband to take advantage of economies of scale for providers.

### TRANSPORTATION

#### Call to Action

Economic growth and trade depend on safe and reliable transportation networks. Improvements to the highway and rail system are needed to best meet the needs of the businesses and farmers located within the Region.

#### Context

The Region does not have any Interstate highways. There are some locations with 4-lane highways, but they have gaps that do not allow a complete 4-lane access to the Twin Cities metro area. There is a current lack of transportation funding at both the state and national level that allows for expensive new infrastructure. With the lack of funding, MnDOT's long-range plans show they are in a preservation mode when it comes to road investments. They need to spend most of their funding just to try to keep state roads in an acceptable range of good performance. Small amounts of funds are available for spot improvements for assisting businesses with freight movements. In southern Renville County there is a short line railroad owned by the Minnesota

Valley Regional Rail Authority and operated by the Minnesota Prairie Line Inc. This line, with limited income has had problems making necessary improvements throughout the years.

### **SMART GOAL # 8**

Invest in a minimum of two new small-scale freight infrastructure enhancements that lead to economic improvements to localized areas by 2025. Have investments made in all preliminary planning, and needed environmental studies, to have Highway 23 and Highway 212 quickly ready for construction, when additional funding allows these projects to proceed.

### **Strategies**

- a. Encourage MnDOT, through local highway coalitions to prepare for expansion of Highway 23 and 212 when new funding come forward. Have these projects considered as state priorities for new expansion projects.
- b. Offer assistance to local units of government with their long-range planning to address local industry freight needs.
- c. Encourage state and local units of governments to use all available options that increase transportation funding.
- d. Prioritize transportation projects that connect regional economic hubs within the Region, including Willmar, Hutchinson, Litchfield, and Glencoe.
- e. Help promote, and provide assistance in grant writing to help fund local small-scale freight infrastructure projects.

## **ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION**

### **Call to Action**

Active transportation will not only provide a mechanism for residents to live healthier lives, but will provide better livability/quality of life infrastructure that will be attractive to needed young and skilled workforce.

### **Context**

There are a variety of ways a community can better plan for and implement actions to improve their transportation network to improve the conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. Funding is available for planning through the Safe Routes to School Program and through the State SHIP program for making plans to improve city infrastructure, as well as plan ways to better enforce the safety of bikers and pedestrians as well as encourage, educate the public to participate in such activities. Other tools often used are working toward Bicycle Friendly Community status and writing a “complete street ordinance.” There are some limited grant opportunities for communities to apply for to make improvements to their active living infrastructure.

### **SMART GOAL # 9**

A minimum for four (10 percent) of the regions municipalities will make a commitment to active living transportation planning and infrastructure by 2021.

### Strategies

- a. Encourage cities in the Region to obtain “bicycle friendly community” designation.
- b. Encourage and assist in preparing complete street ordinances.
- c. Assist in preparing a minimum of three active living transportation plans and/or Safe Routes to School plans.
- d. Partner with local government units with trail planning and grant application assistance.

## WATER-WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

### Call to Action

Communities with low populations frequently struggle with the affordability of water and wastewater infrastructure. These cities lack the economies of scale to keep infrastructure construction costs affordable.

### Context

There are 12 projects listed on the Minnesota 2016 Clean Water Project Priority List.

### SMART GOAL # 10

Decrease the number of communities on the Minnesota 2016 Clean Water Project Priority List by 5 percent by 2021.

### Strategies

- a. Ensure communities have effective and up to date Capital Improvement Plans.
- b. Assist communities navigate the funding sources (USDA, Public Facilities Authority, DEED, EDA).

## HOUSING AVAILABILITY

### Call to Action

Housing is a major concern within the region. There is the need for both public and private investment to ensure all households within the region have safe, decent, and affordable housing options. The need for additional workforce and elderly housing is a particularly critical need. There are challenges of tight rental and ownership markets, cost-burdened households, homelessness, and old housing stock in need of rehabilitation.

## Context

In Greater Minnesota, and within the Region, a significant percentage of renters spend more than 30 percent of income on housing. There are communities that new employees have a hard time locating housing in the community where their job is located, forcing them to commute long distances from other communities. For example, Kandiyohi County had a housing study completed in 2015. The study shows the need of 369 to 457 total housing units, of all kinds, by 2020. Some new immigrant households have both low incomes and large household sizes where it is difficult to find units with needed bedrooms at an affordable price. Many housing units were built in the 1940's or earlier and in need of repairs. A number of communities have a serious problem of vacant dilapidated housing units that lower property values of housing units around them. Some other key areas of concern with the supply of housing are:

- Small rural populations have limited markets and apartment complexes are generally only efficiently constructed at 24 or more units.
- Construction costs have increased faster at levels than average wage increases.
- Market valuation gaps between construction cost and market value are common in the Region's smaller communities.
- Market rents in most small rural communities are far lower than those necessary for new construction again creating financing issues for new projects.

## SMART GOAL # 11

Move toward equilibrium in local housing markets, and create a minimum of 150 subsidized rental housing units, and 200 market rate units within the Region by 2021.

## Strategies

- a. Provide more coordinated housing planning and assessments.
- b. Advocate for funding programs for demolition of vacant dilapidated housing units that are too far gone to repair.
- c. Increase the number of units rehabilitated or preserved by using such programs as DEED's Small Cities Development Program.
- d. Encourage the development of transitional and permanent supportive housing.
- e. Collect and share innovative and best management practices around housing policy and financing. Help local communities determine what they can do to help support new housing development.



## EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Performance measures are an important tool that will allow us to measure our progress in implementing the CEDS document and its impact on the regional economy over time. These measures cascade from the strategic direction and action plan. Performance measures are identified to evaluate the progress of activities in achieving the vision, goals, and objectives.

The following measures were developed in conjunction with the CEDS planning process, keeping in mind that the data used must be readily available and replicable over time.

### Measures

1. Number of jobs created/Retained After Implementation of the CEDS
  - a. Total Employment in Initial Year Employed 16 and over
  - b. Total Employment in Subsequent Years Employed 16 and over
  - c. Number of jobs created or retained as a Result of select State and Local Investments.
2. Number and Types of Public Sector Investment Undertaken in the Region.
  - a. Federal Investment (EDA, USDA, Etc.)
  - b. Significant State and Local Investments
3. Private Sector Investment in the Region After Implementation of the CEDS
4. CEDS Action plan accomplishments

### Goal Indicators

1. Human Capital.
  - a. Companies receiving training assistance (Workforce Centers, etc.).
  - b. Ridgewater College – enrollment and Customized Training and Continuing Education assistance opportunities and outcomes.
  - c. Number of Daycare home operators and institutional services.
  - d. Labor Market Analysis from Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.
  - e. Data from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
2. Economic Competitiveness.
  - a. Per capita Incomes of workers and Entrepreneurs in the Region.
  - b. Entrepreneurship opportunities in K-12.
  - c. Stats America Innovation Index.
3. Community Resources.
  - a. Employment in arts industry.
  - b. Employment in the tourism industry.
  - d. Delisting of waters on MPCA Baseline.
4. Foundational Assets.
  - a. Infrastructure (water/wastewater) investments in the Region.

- b. Broadband investments in the Region.
  - e. Transportation (road, rail, air, etc.) investments in the Region.
5. Resilient Regions.
- a. Hazard mitigation plans.



## ECONOMIC RESILIENCY AND HAZARD MITIGATION ANALYSIS

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA), commonly known as the 2000 Stafford Act amendments, was approved by Congress on October 10, 2000. On October 30, 2000, the President signed the bill into law, creating Public Law 106-390. The purposes of the DMA are to amend the Stafford Act, establish a national program for pre-disaster mitigation planning, and streamline administration of disaster relief.

Section 322 of the act specifically addresses state and local mitigation planning. It establishes pre-disaster hazard mitigation funding and new requirements for the national post disaster Hazard Mitigation Program Grant (HMPG). It identifies new requirements that allow HMPG funds to be used for planning activities, and increases the amount of HMPG funds available to states that have developed a comprehensive, enhanced mitigation plan prior to a disaster. States and communities must have an approved mitigation plan in place prior to receiving HMPG funds. Local mitigation plans must demonstrate that their proposed mitigation measures are based on a sound planning process that accounts for the risk to, and the capabilities of, the individual communities.

The act encourages cooperation between state and local authorities, prompting them to work together. It rewards local and state pre-disaster planning and promotes disaster resistance as a key component of sustainable development. The intended result is better articulation of local and state government mitigation needs, resulting in faster allocation of funding, and more effective risk reduction projects.

### All Hazard Mitigation Plan Content

The plan is divided into the following Chapters:

- Chapter One: County Profile – This Chapter contains information on the County’s history, demographics, physical features, infrastructure, and emergency response.
- Chapter Two: Hazards Profile – This Chapter identifies and profiles the various hazards addressed in the plan.
- Chapter Three: Risk Assessment – This Chapter provides a community profile and risk assessment for each local government unit covered in the plan, including all cities and townships.
- Chapter Four: Goals, Objectives, and Mitigation Strategies – This Chapter identifies the specific mitigation steps the County has committed to achieve the goals of the plan.
- Chapter Five: Plan Administration – This Chapter outlines how the plan will be administered, including implementation tables for Chapter Four.

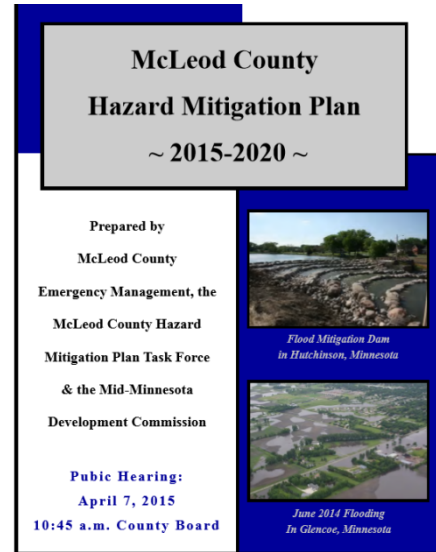
## Hazard Mitigation Planning Process

The Process included:

- Public input
- Assembling task force committee
- Holding public meetings
- Obtaining resolutions for all local government units
- Establishing goals, objectives and policies

The plan was coordinated with other existing County and Regional Plans including:

- A County's Emergency Operations Plan
- Comprehensive Land Use Plan
- Comprehensive Water Plan
- County Health Plan
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)



## Hazard Mitigation Plan Duration

The Hazard Mitigation Plans for all four counties will be formally reviewed and updated once every five years.

## ACTION PLAN - GOALS

### SMART GOAL

Maintain a resilient region and mitigate hazards in the region.

### Strategies

- a. Update the Hazard Mitigation Plans every five years.
- b. Maintain eligibility for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.
- c. Join or maintain membership in CodeRED notification system.
- d. Utilize the [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) web site and tools to build resiliency.

### SMART GOAL

Increase the regions ability to withstand an economic downturn.

### Strategies

- a. Maintain and amplify a diversified economy and a well-educated skilled workforce.
- b. Increase exports from regional companies.
- c. Decrease income gaps of citizens in the Region.
- d. Be proactive, not reactive with policies and procedures
- e. Develop succession planning strategies to assist businesses in need.

## APPENDICES TO FOLLOW

## Appendix A Documentation of Public Comment/30 day Public Review

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOVEMBER 1, 2016

The Revised Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Region 6E (Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties) has been authored (in draft form) and is in a 30-day comment period. The document was drafted by the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission with financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration. The thirty-day comment period will end November 30, 2016

A CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. A CEDS is the result of a regionally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region.

The “draft” copy is in text form only. After the Comment Period and comments are analyzed the document will be formalized, formatted and edited.

The draft CEDS can be viewed at the following locations:

Mid-Minnesota Development Commission office  
333 West Sixth Street  
Willmar, MN 56201

Or the Commission’s Website [www.mmrdc.org](http://www.mmrdc.org)

Willmar Public Library  
410 5<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Willmar, MN 56201

Olivia Public Library  
405 South Tenth Street  
Olivia, MN 56277

Litchfield Public Library  
216 Marshall Avenue North  
Litchfield, MN 55355

Hutchinson Public Library  
50 Hassan Street SE  
Hutchinson, MN 55350

Comments on the Strategy can be made to Les Nelson, Economic Development Director at the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission by U.S. Mail, by phone at (320) 235 – 8504 x 241, by fax (320) 235-4329 or by e-mail at [les\\_nelson@mmrdc.org](mailto:les_nelson@mmrdc.org).

## Appendix B Document Dissemination

The Commission will provide a link on its website [www.mmrdc.org](http://www.mmrdc.org) for the 30 day comment both the “draft” CEDS and after the 30 day comment period the approved CEDS documents.

A paper copy of the “draft” CEDS document will be provided to the libraries in the four county seat cities of Willmar, Hutchinson, Olivia, and Litchfield. Once the CEDS is approved the CEDS document will be provided to the above same libraries. The paper copies will be available for patrons to view.

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission maintains a Facebook Page. The Commission will make a post when the 30-day comment period will start and will make a link to the “draft” document on the Commissions Website. The Commission will also make a post once the CEDS document has been approved and will post a link to the approved document on the Commissions website. This will provide the stakeholders on Facebook to interface and the opportunity for engaged ongoing communications.

A Press Release will also be provided to regional newspapers stating that the 30-day comment period has started on the “draft” document and when the CEDS has been approved another Press Release will be performed stating the CEDS document has been approved and a website address will be provided to the approved document.

Paper copies and electronic copies will also be available at the Commission office and by mail from the commission, when requested.

## Appendix C Complete SWOT Analysis

### Human Capital SWOT Analysis

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work ethic of individuals</li> <li>Ethnic Diversity</li> <li>Life Expectancy</li> <li>K-12 Schools, Investment Capital</li> <li>Ridgewater College</li> <li>Leadership Perspectives</li> <li>Tiger Path – CEO Programs</li> <li>Entrepreneurial attitude</li> <li>Non-Profit Foundations</li> <li>MinnWest Campus</li> <li>Incubator Culture</li> <li>Collaboration, Trust, Spirit</li> <li>Social Media Use</li> <li>Continuity, Transitioning</li> <li>Opportunity</li> <li>Wellness Programs</li> <li>Drop-out Rate Decreasing</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bias, Prejudice, Cultural Friction</li> <li>Rural-vs-Metro</li> <li>Older aging workforce</li> <li>Occupations in Demand not being filled</li> <li>Basic Education for “new Minnesotans</li> <li>Broadband Infrastructure and Usage</li> <li>Attitudes of employees</li> <li>Investment in employees by employers</li> <li>Recruitment of 40-50 year old persons</li> <li>Drug Rehabilitation of workers</li> <li>Four year college or University</li> <li>Education of Diverse Populations</li> <li>Increase needed in “Regional Recruitment” of individuals, workers and entrepreneurs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Innovative Business Base</li> <li>Social Media Perception</li> <li>Niche Business Development/i.e. daycare</li> <li>Location/Farm- Lakes Transition</li> <li>Bring them back home campaign</li> <li>Spousal Employment</li> <li>Great careers outside 4 year degree</li> <li>Amount of \$ available for workforce education</li> <li>Partnership Development</li> <li>Workforce Synergies</li> <li>Mentoring – Time management</li> <li>Bio-Vaccines Development</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of Spousal Employment</li> <li>Variety of Housing options</li> <li>Childcare</li> <li>Local, state and federal political scene</li> <li>Lack of ability to work together/competition</li> <li>Disconnect K-12 and private Sector</li> <li>Curriculum changes – Too Lengthy</li> <li>Out-sourcing of jobs</li> <li>Imported goods</li> </ul>



## Economic Competitiveness SWOT Analysis

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <p>Co-Worker space (i.e. Work-up)          Natural Resources – Solar array          Lessened cyclical Mfg sector          K-12 Private Sector Partnerships i.e. Tiger path, CEO Program          Productive employees          Manufacturing Associations i.e. Made in McLeod          Regional Retail Infrastructure          Strong Agricultural Base          Close to Minneapolis/St. Paul Int’l Airport</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <p>Entrepreneurial Educational Organizations need to align technical Assistance.          Cost of Living as a comparison to Cost of Living          Venture Capital          Regional Branding          Transit availability          Multi-faceted housing options</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <p>City of Hutchinson Business Incubator          Grow business by growing talent          Synergy of Manufacturing          Provide broadband/internet everywhere creating a vibrant economy          Lower cost of living/competitive advantage          Local Foods/change zoning rules          Encourage venture capital          Financing of business expansions/start-ups          Succession planning – lessening jobs – find new local owners          Equity and Capital Injection/participation</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THREATS</b></p> <p>Natural Disasters          Natural hazards – i.e. invasive species          Change in consumerism – non GMO food products          Change in consumerism – Online purchasing versus bricks and mortar          Proximity to twin cities metro area          Long-term employment and labor force trends (skills, aging, etc.)</p>

## Community Resources SWOT Analysis

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revolving Loan Fund</li> <li>Minnesota River Valley</li> <li>Rural Charms – close to metro</li> <li>Strong community partnerships</li> <li>Growing diverse populations and cultures</li> <li>Cultural Festivals (art)</li> <li>Involvement – Volunteerism</li> <li>Welcoming Culture</li> <li>Smaller schools – students can participate in extracurricular activities easier</li> <li>Community leadership opportunities</li> <li>Public Safety</li> <li>Educational investment</li> <li>Soils and water</li> <li>Healthcare campuses</li> <li>MinnWest Campus</li> <li>Southwest Initiative Foundation</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Region not branded for tourism</li> <li>Aging Population</li> <li>Commercial investment in downtowns</li> <li>Geographically challenged</li> <li>Little training for leadership positions</li> <li>Connectivity between people and between towns</li> <li>Greater Minnesota gets less funding \$ Due to funding formulas</li> <li>Community Brain Drain – same people same committees</li> <li>Inclusiveness in government/traditional leadership</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educational opportunities for inclusive - leadership of diverse populations</li> <li>Need for “livable communities” – amenities available in town <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attraction of metro workforce – ex. Commute times</li> </ul> </li> <li>Use technology to the maximum ex. Saving travel time for meetings</li> <li>Expand all tourism opportunities</li> <li>Expand the arts and humanities</li> <li>Locally grown food</li> <li>Public/private collaboration</li> <li>Incubator Mentality</li> <li>Small business education – innovation - entrepreneurship</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not addressing mental health issues</li> <li>Privacy issues in small towns</li> <li>Lack of funding from non-profits, State and -Federal Governments</li> <li>Bio-Hazards regarding agriculture</li> <li>Protecting both surface and groundwater</li> <li>Spread of invasive Species</li> <li>Environmental Concerns</li> <li>Changing weather patterns</li> <li>Fear to racially diversify – Domestic Terrorism</li> <li>Domestic Terror – accepting in a way of life</li> </ul>

## Foundational Assets SWOT Analysis

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ridgewater college campuses             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hutchinson/Willmar</li> </ul> </li> <li>Healthcare facilities</li> <li>Recreational amenities</li> <li>Land/open space/agriculture</li> <li>Two ‘shovel ready’ industrial parks</li> <li>Two larger rural regional centers</li> <li>Three large airports/ smaller ones</li> <li>Water/surface and groundwater</li> <li>Prominent Mfg sector – electronics/agriculture/metal fabrication</li> <li>Industry cluster/high tech manufacturing/ educational opportunities</li> <li>MinnWest ‘high-tech’ campus</li> <li>US and State highway connectivity</li> <li>Seed genetics</li> <li>Transit systems</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broadband/internet infrastructure</li> <li>Dated wastewater treatment facilities</li> <li>Workforce housing</li> <li>Housing needing rehab or demo</li> <li>Lack of 4 lane hwy - gaps to fill - Hwy 23</li> <li>Upgrade of hwy 212 and 22 – Glencoe to Hutchinson</li> <li>Growing aging population</li> <li>Freight railway south part of region</li> <li>Active/available industrial park land in smaller communities</li> <li>Commercial Building rehab/ blight</li> <li>Downtown redevelopment in smaller communities</li> <li>Water/wastewater assessment performed</li> <li>American with disabilities compliance</li> <li>Lack of new one level housing for seniors</li> <li>Child care institutions of all types</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local foods expansion</li> <li>Industry cluster marketing</li> <li>Expand Broadband footprint/Fiber to the premise</li> <li>Develop public/private partnerships</li> <li>Shared local resources/intergovernmental cooperation</li> <li>Career/entrepreneurship education opportunities such as Tiger Path and the CEO program</li> <li>Ridgewater College Customized Training Program for private sector</li> <li>Housing Rehabilitation</li> <li>Hutchinson Enterprise system</li> <li>Brain Gain Center</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little return on investment for providers for installation of broadband -infrastructure/impact on local economy/cannot compete in the global marketplace</li> <li>Less grant dollars available from foundations/government</li> <li>State funds pushed down to local government units</li> <li>Cost of housing construction higher than final appraisal amount</li> <li>Lack of child care center/homecare centers</li> <li>Child care expenses exceed income for workers</li> </ul>

**Appendix D Broadband County Maps**

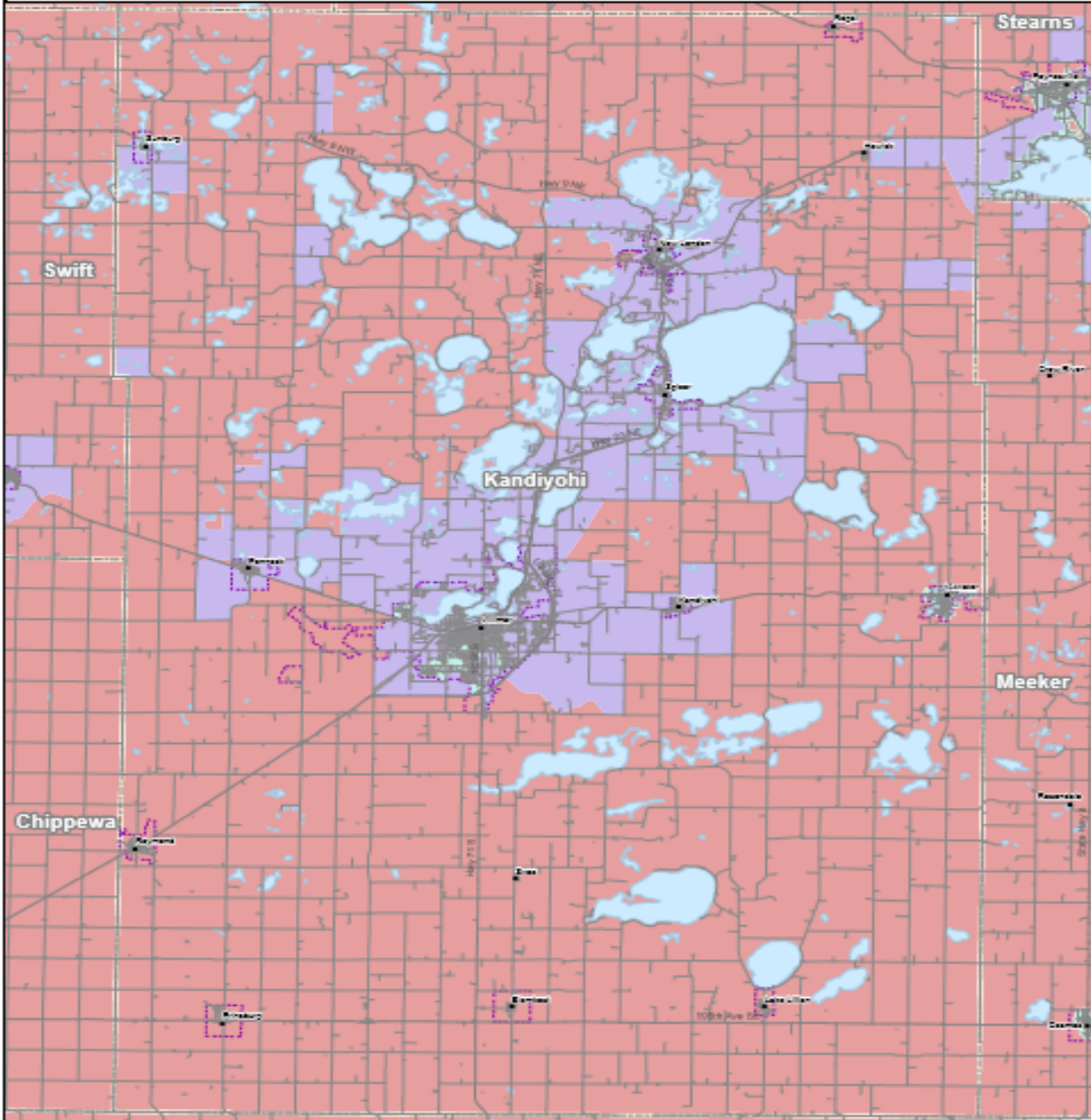
# 2016 Broadband Service Inventory

Kandiyohi County  
Minnesota



Border-to-Border  
Broadband  
Development  
Grant Program

Uncovered, Underserved  
and Served Wireline  
Broadband Areas



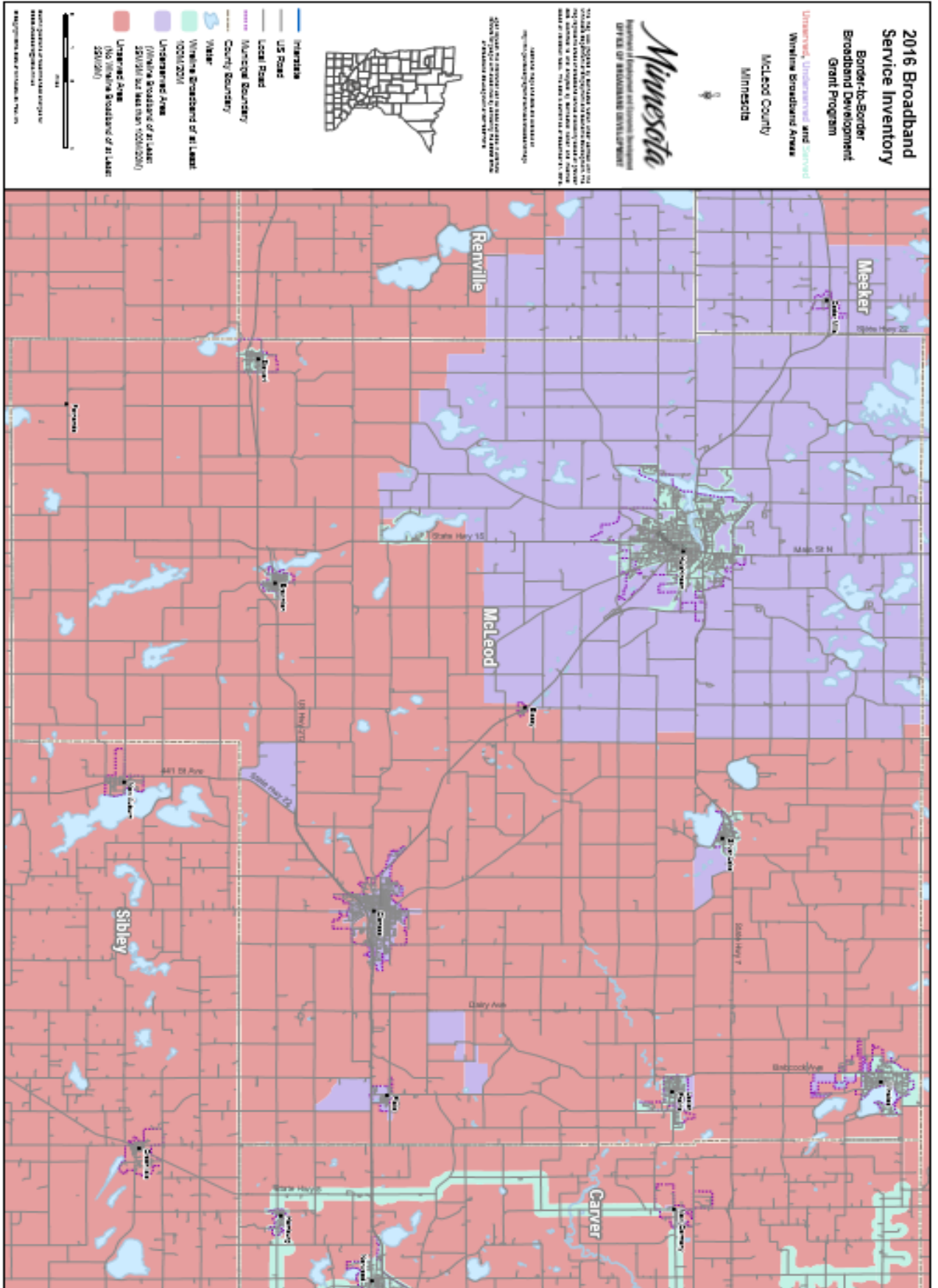
- Interstate
- US Road
- Local Road
- Municipal Boundary
- County Boundary
- Water
- Wireline Broadband of at Least 100Mbps
- Underserved Area (Wireline Broadband of at Least 25Mbps but less than 100Mbps)
- Uncovered Area (No Wireline Broadband of at Least 25Mbps)



This map was prepared by Minnesota State Land Resources for the limited purpose of providing information regarding broadband service areas. The map is not intended to be used for any other purpose and is not intended to be used for any other purpose.

Minnesota Department of Environment and Economic Development  
2016 Broadband Service Inventory

www.doe.state.mn.us  
www.broadbandgrantprogram.com



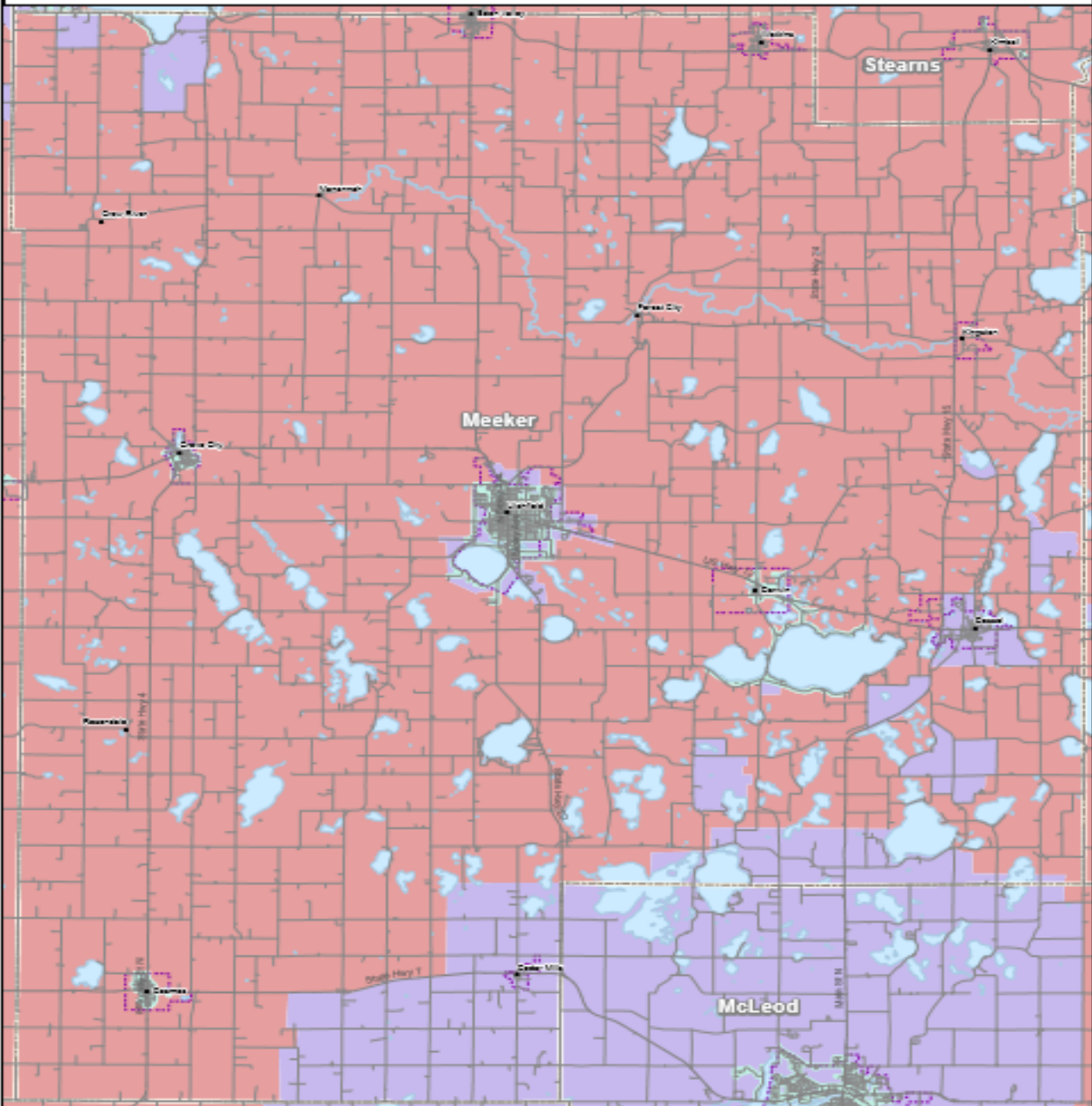
# 2016 Broadband Service Inventory

Unserved, Underserved  
and Served Wireline  
Broadband Areas

Meeker County  
Minnesota



Border-to-Border  
Broadband  
Development  
Grant Program



Interstate	Wireline Broadband of at Least 100M/20M
US Road	Underserved Area (Wireline Broadband of at Least 25M/20M but less than 100M/20M)
Local Road	Unserved Area (No Wireline Broadband of at Least 25M/20M)
Municipal Boundary	
County Boundary	
Water	

THIS MAP WAS PREPARED BY THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS PART OF THE BORDER-TO-BORDER BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM. THE MAP PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW OF BROADBAND SERVICE IN MEERER COUNTY, MINNESOTA. THE DATA IS BASED ON THE 2016 BROADBAND SERVICE INVENTORY. THE DATA IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AND SHOULD BE USED AS A GENERAL GUIDE. THE DATA IS NOT A GUARANTEE OF SERVICE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. WEBSITE: [www.dede.state.mn.us](http://www.dede.state.mn.us)


DATE: 10/2016

## 2016 Broadband Service Inventory

Border-to-Border  
Broadband Development  
Grant Program

**Unserved, Underserved and Served  
Wireline Broadband Areas**

Renville County  
Minnesota



**Minnesota**  
Department of Economic and Economic Development  
OFFICE OF BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT

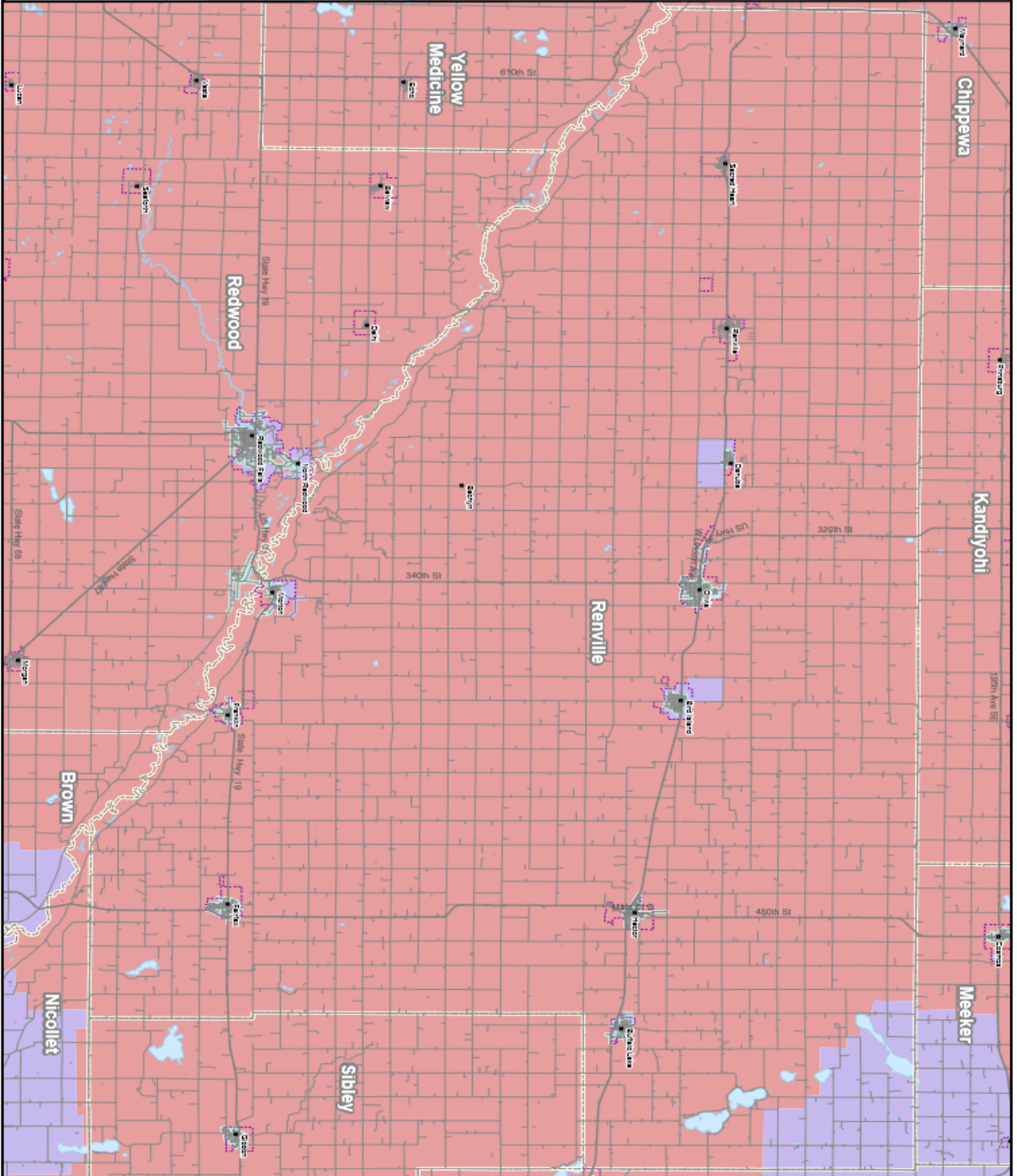
Legend: Broadband Service Inventory

(Data source: the information on the map is derived from the Minnesota Statewide Broadband Inventory (MSBI) as of January 1, 2016. The MSBI is a project of the Minnesota Statewide Broadband Inventory (MSBI) as of January 1, 2016. The MSBI is a project of the Minnesota Statewide Broadband Inventory (MSBI) as of January 1, 2016.)

- Interstate
- US Road
- Local Road
- Municipal Boundary
- County Boundary
- Water
- Wireline Broadband of at least 100M/20M
- Underserved Area (Wireline Broadband of at least 25M/5M but less than 100M/20M)
- Unserved Area (No Wireline Broadband of at least 25M/5M)

Scale: 0 1.5 3 6 Miles

Data provided by Minnesota Statewide Broadband Inventory (MSBI) as of January 1, 2016. The MSBI is a project of the Minnesota Statewide Broadband Inventory (MSBI) as of January 1, 2016. The MSBI is a project of the Minnesota Statewide Broadband Inventory (MSBI) as of January 1, 2016.



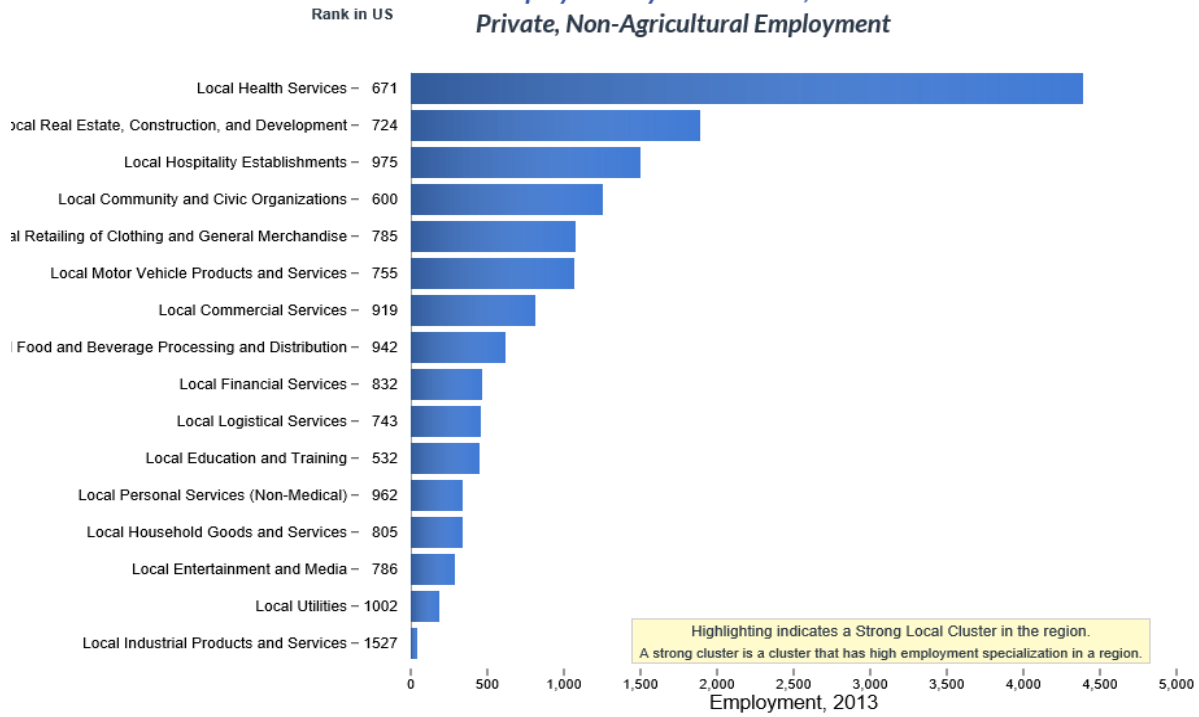


**Appendix E Cluster Identification Graphs**

## Kandiyohi County

### Employment by Local Cluster, 2013

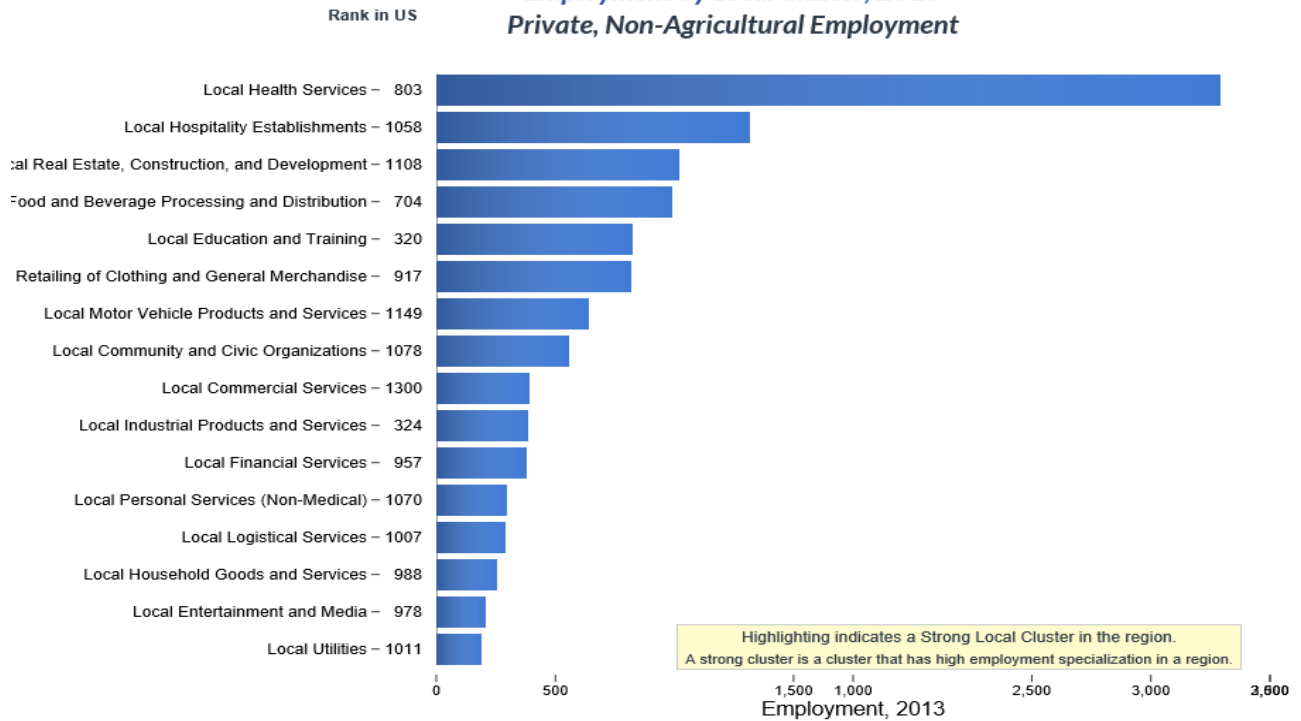
Private, Non-Agricultural Employment



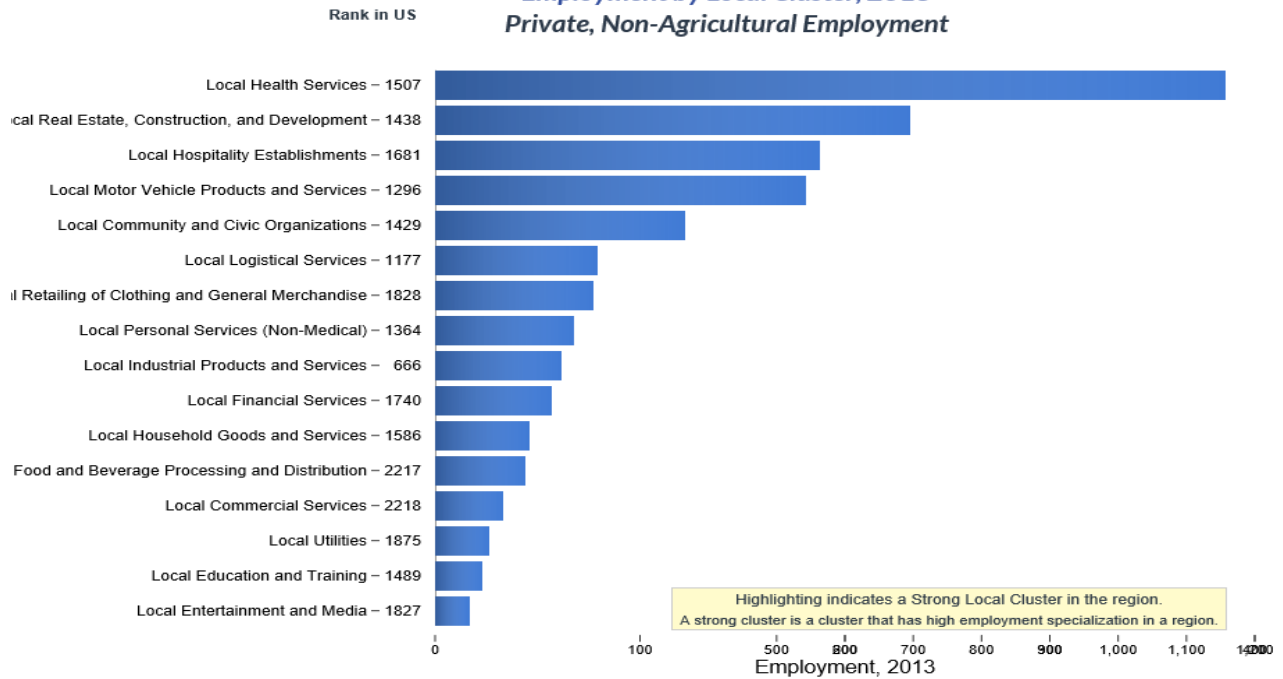
## McLeod County

### Employment by Local Cluster, 2013

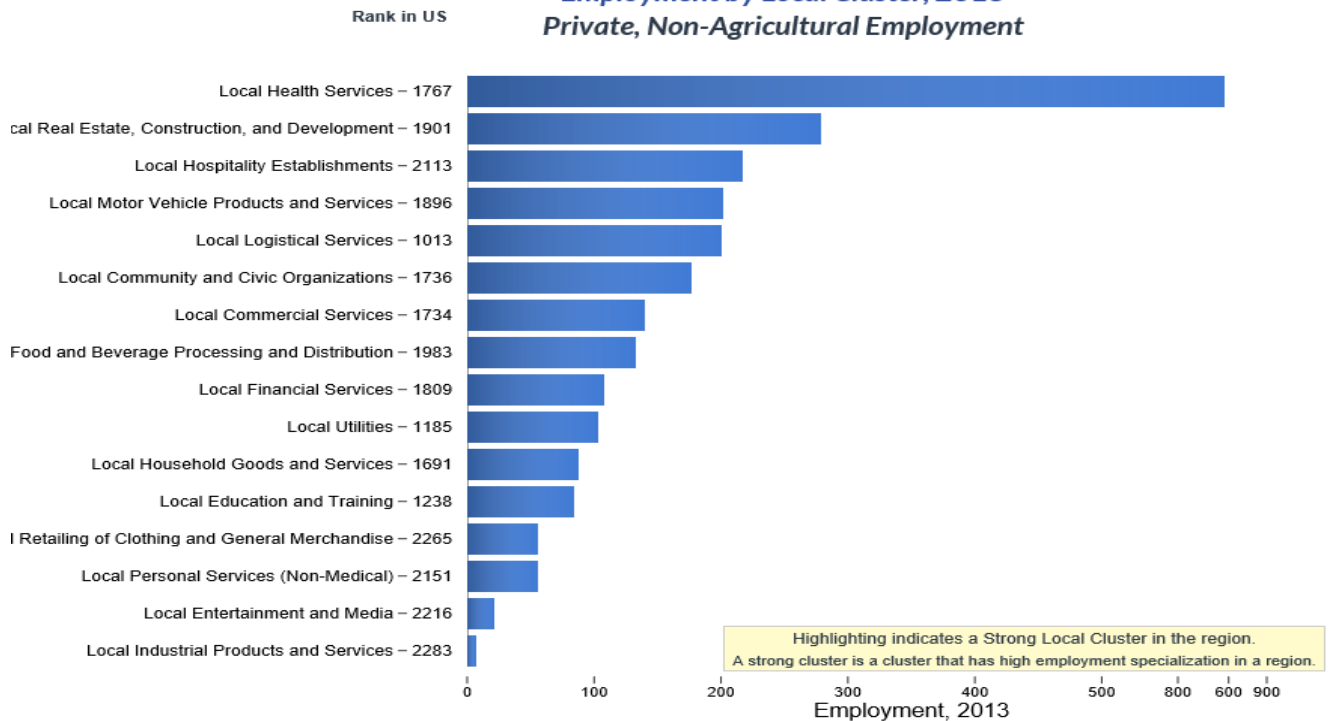
Private, Non-Agricultural Employment



### Meeker County Employment by Local Cluster, 2013 Private, Non-Agricultural Employment



### Renville County Employment by Local Cluster, 2013 Private, Non-Agricultural Employment



## APPENDIX F Occupations In Demand

SOC Code	Job Title	Current Demand Rank	Current Demand Indicator	25th Percentile Wage	Median Wage	Planning Area Projected Growth Rate	Planning Area Projected Openings	Education Requirements	On-the-job Training Requirements
311014	Nursing Assistants	1	*****	\$22,228/yr	\$24,858/yr	8.6%	870	Postsecondary non-degree award	None
533032	Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	2	*****	\$32,227/yr	\$37,385/yr	12.2%	1,710	Postsecondary non-degree award	Short term on the job training
434051	Customer Service Representatives	3	*****	\$23,988/yr	\$32,962/yr	12.6%	1,470	High school diploma or equivalent	Short term on the job training
514121	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	4	*****	\$34,389/yr	\$39,840/yr	13.3%	560	High school diploma or equivalent	Moderate term on the job training
513023	Slaughterers and Meat Packers	5	*****	\$23,914/yr (MN)	\$28,389/yr (MN)		NA	Less than high school	Short term on the job training
399021	Personal Care Aides	6	*****	\$21,318/yr	\$22,995/yr	59.1%	3,670	Less than high school	Short term on the job training
353021	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Inc	7	*****	\$18,152/yr	\$19,415/yr	10.6%	4,360	Less than high school	Short term on the job training
472031	Carpenters	8	*****	\$34,297/yr	\$40,452/yr	22.6%	960	High school diploma or equivalent	Apprenticeship
435081	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	9	*****	\$19,185/yr	\$22,758/yr	1.4%	1,090	Less than high school	Short term on the job training
493031	Bus and Truck Mechanics and Diesel Engine Speciali	10	*****	\$32,482/yr	\$39,101/yr	8.8%	240	High school diploma or equivalent	Long term on the job training

Occupations In Demand; Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

## Appendix G CEDS Public Meeting Attendee List

Several meetings of the CEDS Committee, which are all open to the public, were held throughout the Region to gain public input. Meetings were held in the cities of Willmar, Hutchinson, and Olivia.

Attendees at the meetings included:

<b><u>NAME</u></b>	<b><u>AFILIATION</u></b>
Gary Foster	Ridgewater College
David Krueger	Meeker County EDA
Miles Seppelt	City of Hutchinson
Suzie Lang	Renville County EDA
Adam Birkholz	City of Lester Prarie
Maureen Melgaard-Schneider	MMDC Board Chair
Luke Greiner	DEED
Donn Winckler	MMDC Executive Director
Jodi Grams	CMJTS
Sue Hilgert	Mayor, City of Olivia
Kari Gislason	City of Renville
Cathy Baumgartner	CMJTS
Tyler Gehrking	Willmar School District
Jill Bengston	Kandiyohi County HRA
Aaron Backman	Kandiyohi County/City of Willmar EDA
Francis Schweiss	Private Sector MMDC Board Member
Sam Bowen	Ridgewater College

## Appendix H CEDS Committee membership

### COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

<u>NAME</u>	<u>GEOGRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION</u>
Jeff Benson	Olivia – Renville County
Maureen Melgaard-Schneider	Atwater – Kandiyohi County
Miles Seppelt	Hutchinson – McLeod County
Shawn Mueske	Willmar – Kandiyohi County
David Krueger	Litchfield – Meeker County
Susie Lang	Olivia – Renville County
Connie Schmoll	Willmar – Kandiyohi County
James Shafer	Buffalo Lake – Renville County
Cathy Baumgartner	Olivia – Renville County
Jill Bengston	Willmar – Kandiyohi County
Adam Birkholz	Lester Prairie – McLeod County
Cameron Macht	Raymond – Kandiyohi County
Francis Schweiss	Fairfax – Renville County
Kevin Crowley	Pennock – Kandiyohi County
Dan Ehrke	Glencoe – McLeod County
Donn Winckler (Ex-officio)	Willmar – Kandiyohi County
Idalia Leuze	Willmar – Kandiyohi County

## Appendix I Governing Board Membership

### Mid-Minnesota Development Commission Membership

<u>NAME</u>	<u>AFFILIATION</u>
Robert Anderson	Townships
Bill Arndt	Municipalities
Cathy Baumgartner	Public Interest
Dan Barka	Municipalities
Bob Becker	Municipalities
Jeff Benson	School Board
Kevin Crowley	Public Interest
Ron Degner	Municipalities
Rick Fagerlie	Municipalities
Mike Houseman	County Board
Greg Langmo	Public Interest
Idalia Leuze	Private Sector
Maureen Melgaard-Schneider	Public Interest
Robert Moller	School District
Shawn Mueske	Public Interest
Sheldon Nies	County Board
Rollie Nissan	County Board
Helen Ruebel	Townships
Jim Shafer	Public Interest
Francis Schweiss	Public Interest
John Stahl	County Board
DuWayne Underthun	Townships

## Appendix J Resolution approving the CEDS Document

### Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Resolution

**WHEREAS**, The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission has a strong commitment to promoting the economic development of the Region, and

**WHEREAS**, The Commission decided to prepare and submit to the Economic Development Administration a District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, and

**WHEREAS**, The Revised Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has been successfully executed with input from the public, and

**WHEREAS**, The Commission appointed a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee composed of representatives of various economic sectors of the Region, and

**WHEREAS**, This committee has developed a Revised Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Region which includes goals and objectives and a strategy for the economic development of the Region, and

**WHEREAS**, the original Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has been revised as part of a continuous planning process in accordance with the guidelines of the Economic Development Administration, and

**WHEREAS**, The Commission approves of this Revised Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, That the Commission adopt the Revised Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and submit it to the U.S. Economic Development Administration for approval and to request formal designation as an Economic Development District.

Dated:

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Maureen Melgaard-Schneider, Chairperson