



SRDC
SOUTHWEST REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
2401 Broadway Avenue, Suite 1 • Slayton, MN 56172

Newsletter

OCTOBER 2024

www.swrdc.org

2401 Broadway Ave, Slayton, MN
507-836--8547



SRDC Chairman, Paul Langseth is shown with Hills Mayor Keith Elbers and project partners which included Rock County (Sherri Thompson & Kyle Oldre), Sioux Valley Energy (Brandon Lane), New Vision Coop (Brad Berkhof), and not pictured, Alliance Communications.

Hills Daycare

SRDC

'Project of the Year'

The City of Hills was able to convert a tax-forfeited property into a daycare facility that is able to house four separate daycare operations.

This project stands as a testament to effective collaboration between local government, regional commissions (like SRDC) and state agencies dedicated to fostering sustainable growth and resilience in rural communities.

Bus Tour

Prior to the annual meeting of the SRDC, members had the opportunity to tour SRDC projects. Stops included were AmericInn, Windom (RLF loan), Pohlman Pallets, Windom (RLF and PACE loan), Regier Farms solar project, and City of Comfrey lighting project.



SRDC unveils Regional Trail Plan

The Southwest Regional Development Commission (SRDC) recently announced the launch of a comprehensive regional trail plan designed to strengthen support for trails across Southwest Minnesota. This initiative aims to enhance equitable access to recreational funding, boost tourism, attract and retain residents, and foster collaboration among local trail organizations.

The primary objective of the Southwest Regional Trails Plan is to develop a cohesive vision for the region's trail network, elevating awareness of outdoor recreation while building upon the successes of local trail organizations. By creating an integrated trail system, the plan is expected to significantly boost tourism, stimulating growth in local businesses and job opportunities to accommodate visitors.

"This plan represents a significant step forward in connecting our communities and enhancing the quality of life in Southwest Minnesota," said SRDC Community Development Director, Jason Walker. "We are committed to engaging trail users and local partners to promote outdoor recreation and tourism throughout our region."

The planning process prioritized collaboration among various stakeholders, including local trail groups, elected officials, and state and local agencies. This strengthened partnership approach is designed to create a supportive network that fosters trail-user engagement and facilitates local partnerships with communities, businesses, and governments. To read the complete plan see: <https://www.swrdc.org/regional-trails/>



MADO All-Staff Retreat

The dedicated staff of the Southwest Regional Development Commission attended the Minnesota Association of Development Organizations conference! They enjoyed connecting with fellow professionals, sharing insights, and exploring new strategies for regional development.

Luverne Receives \$180,000 for Storm Sewer Improvements

We're excited to announce that the City of Luverne has been awarded \$180,000 in Federal PROTECT funds for vital improvements to their storm sewer system! This funding comes from the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Formula Program, designed to enhance the resilience of our transportation infrastructure against future weather events and natural disasters.

Exciting News for Adrian, Minnesota!

The Southwest Regional Development Commission (SRDC) is happy to have assisted, and is thrilled to announce that the City of Adrian has received a significant boost to its economic infrastructure. The U.S. Department of Commerce awarded them a \$1.6 million grant to enhance electrical infrastructure, paving the way for increased business opportunities and job creation in the region.



This investment will fund the construction of a new electrical substation and essential equipment, ensuring reliable power for local businesses and supporting the creation or retention of over 175 jobs. Leaders from the Biden-Harris Administration, including Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, emphasize the importance of this project for the future economic growth of Adrian.

As Adrian continues to develop its vibrant business community, this funding represents a crucial step toward modernizing its electrical grid. With the support of local funds, this project promises to strengthen the community's resilience and economic prospects for years to come.

Stay tuned for more updates as Adrian embarks on this exciting journey of growth and innovation!

For more information on services provided by the SRDC, visit SRDC's website at www.swrdc.org or contact us directly 507-836-8547.

The SRDC staff was excited once again to participate in the Career Expo. The Southwest Minnesota Career Expo recently wrapped up, and what an incredible event it was! High school sophomores and juniors from the Minnesota West Carl Perkins Consortium gathered to explore a world of career opportunities.



Event Highlights:

Participation: Over 1,000 students attended at Minnesota West – Worthington, while 1,200 students joined us at Southwest Minnesota State – Marshall. Interactive

Exhibits: Attendees explored 80-100 exhibits at each location, featuring industry leaders, educational institutions, and resource agencies eager to share their knowledge and insights.

Career Game Show: The fast-paced 45-minute Career Game Show engaged participants with interactive audience polling, making learning fun and dynamic!

College Tours: Students enjoyed 45-minute tours of local colleges, gaining firsthand experience of campus life. The event was not only for high school students—undecided college majors, Adult Basic Education participants, and job seekers also took advantage of the wealth of information available in the exhibit area.

A huge thank you to our sponsors, including the Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board and the Southwest Initiative Foundation, along with all our partners—Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Southwest Minnesota State University, Southwest Regional Development Commission and many regional businesses and service agencies. Your support made this event possible!



Food News

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Regional Food Business Center (RFBC)

In May 2023, the USDA Regional Food Business Center (RFBC) was established nationwide to promote economic opportunities and build a more diverse and resilient food system. As part of the RFBC initiative, the North Central Food Business Center (NCFBC) was formed to serve Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota, receiving a grant of \$15 million over five years. The Southwest Regional Development Commission (SRDC) offers technical support across our nine-county region. Over the past year, the SRDC connected numerous grocery stores and/or meat processing facilities to grant opportunities including the RFBC Business Builder Subaward Grant. As a direct result of our efforts, one grocery store was able to enhance their heating and cooling system, and install night shades over their open refrigeration units and one meat locker was able to make roof insulation improvements to meet minimum licensing standards as a result of PACE loans. The SRDC is dedicated to nurturing relationships and fostering food systems growth and development in Southwest Minnesota.

Strengthening the Food System in SW Minnesota

The Southwest Regional Development Commission, in collaboration with Regions 6W and 6E, was recently awarded the Minnesota Department of Ag (MDA) Meat Processing Train and Retain Grant for \$250,000. The SW MN Meat Processor Workforce Development Initiative kicked off in July and aims to assist small to medium-sized meat and poultry processors by providing training, supportive services, and tailored career navigation. The initiative will invest in 30 individuals, addressing training gaps and offering retention strategies to support careers in the meat or poultry industry.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Southwest Minnesota Meat Processor Workforce Development Initiative

The Southwest Regional Development Commission aims to use grant funds to train small to medium-size meat and poultry processors, addressing employment barriers to retain workers and investing in 30 individuals within their service area.

Are you considering a career in meat cutting or aspiring to become a butcher?

Funding from this program can be used for expenses such as:

- Tuition Reimbursement
- Relocation Assistance
- Transition Services
- On-the-Job Training & Supplies
- Career Navigation

Excellent Opportunity

- Online Coursework: flexible
- No relocation required
- Retention Incentives
- Weekly On-the-Job NEAR YOU
- Fall & Spring Semester Starts

For more information contact:
 Sophia Berg
 Phone: 320-222-8276
 Email: Sophia.Thommes@ridgewater.edu

Tim Jones
 Southwest MN Private Industry Council
 Phone: 507-828-1382
 tjones@swmpic.org

Logos for SRDC, MDC, CMJTS, and RIDGEWATER are also present.

News Brief

Strategic Planning

SRDC Staff has been busy over the last few months helping to craft strategic plans for the City of Hills, Lyon and Murray County along with Southwest Health and Human Services. The SRDC helps develop individual approaches for a variety of entities. We partner with local leaders, regional stakeholders, and community members to craft tailored strategies to address specific goals.

RLF Site Visits

Staff scheduled several site visits. These visits are required every three years; however, they are done more often as the need arises. Site visits were combined with communication audits and interviews for storytelling. Success stories can now be found at <https://www.swrdc.org/regional-spotlight/>.

EECBG Grants

The SRDC is working to help cities and counties under 15,000 population with Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) projects. Maximum grant for eligible communities is \$20,000.

Solid Waste Regional Plan

All counties in Minnesota must submit a solid waste plan to receive SCORE funds and apply for additional grants from the MPCA. Doing this as a 12-county Joint Powers Agreement decreases individual county costs, helps pull together resources, and arrange materials exchange for counties in the Southwest Minnesota Solid Waste Commission



SRDC Commissioners

Cottonwood County

Jenny Quade, Municipalities
Ronald Kottke, Townships
Donna Gravley, Commissioners

Jackson County

Mark Haberman, Municipalities
Craig Rubis, Townships
Scott McClure, Commissioners

Lincoln County

Dennis Klingbile, Municipalities
Jeff Moen, Townships
Mic VanDeVere, Commissioners

Lyon County

Pam Cooreman, Municipalities
Lori Grant, Townships
Rick Anderson, Commissioners

Murray County

Miron Carney, Municipalities
Vacant, Townships
Dennis Welgraven, Commissioners

Nobles County

Steve Kellen, Municipalities
Paul Langseth, Townships
Bob Paplow, Commissioners

Pipestone County

Dan Delaney, Municipalities
Vacant, Townships
Chris Hollingsworth, Commissioners

Redwood County

Leah Bittner, Municipalities
Tiffany Knott, Townships

Bob Van Hee, Commissioners

Rock County

Keith Elbers, Municipalities
JoEllen Benson, Townships
Sherri Thompson, Commissioners

Cities over 10,000

Rick VonHoldt, City of Worthington
Bob Byrnes, City of Marshall Officers
Paul Langseth, Chair
Dennis Welgraven, Vice Chair
Lori Grant, Treasurer
Keith Elbers, Secretary

Southwest MN School Boards

Eric Hartman
Stephen Schnieder

Lower Sioux Community

Vacant
Alternate: Tabia Goodthunder

Public Interest Groups

Justine Wettschreck, Economic Development
Carrie Bendix, SW MN Private Industry Council
David Sturrock, SW MN Higher Education
Beth Wilms, Health & Human Services
Kristie Blankenship, SW MN Housing Partnership

SRDC Mission Statement:

Promoting
Growth & Opportunities
for Southwest MN

We work to connect units of
government, businesses, and
communities with the
resources, planning, and
services needed
to promote growth.

Together we can further
opportunities in
Southwest Minnesota
by promoting a growing workforce
and business base
and ensuring population stability

SRDC Staff

Jay Trusty

Executive Director

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Deputy Director

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Jason Walker

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