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# Mid-Minnesota Development Commission Fiscal Year 2001

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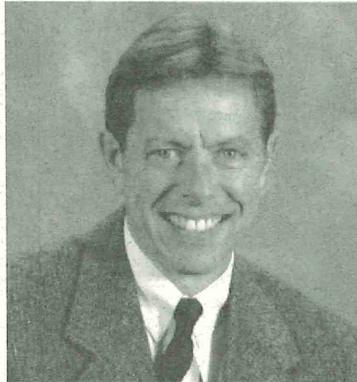
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# ANNUAL REPORT

## Greetings from the Chair!

The past year has been a busy and exciting one for the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC). From economic development to transportation planning, community development to grant administration, building inspections to the area agency on aging, we have experienced one of the busiest years ever in MMDC history.



**Bruce Shuck, Chairman**

The Commission provides economic development technical assistance and operates a \$1.4 million Revolving Loan Fund program to assist businesses in the Region's four counties. The Loan Fund provides loans from \$5,000 to a maximum of \$100,000. In the past year, the Fund has assisted many businesses in creating additional jobs and tax base development.

The Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Advisory Council, chaired by Richard Brooks, had an active year. Over and above the grant and contract activities and the important advocacy roles of the AAA, they also brought on board a new Director and began a State recognized collaboration effort between Region 6E and 6W AAAs within the Information and Assistance Program.

The state certified building inspectors on our staff have experienced one of the busiest years yet in building inspections. Our building officials receive training that provides service with lead-based paint inspections. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations require these inspections in housing projects they participate in.

This past fiscal year, the MMDC has been involved in grant administration services in eight small city development projects that were all in different stages of completion. These projects are in various cities in the four county area. Funding for the program comes from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. This grants administration helped my local city of Sunburg retain sewer funds for their newly installed sewer system.

The community development and planning technical assistance department has also been very busy at MMDC this year. The comprehensive plan in Meeker County and writing the comprehensive plan for Kandiyohi County have proven to be huge projects and have been very beneficial to the community development staff. Our community development planners have also been involved in a number of city comprehensive plans and other numerous community development contracted projects throughout the course of the past fiscal year.

Our transportation planning department has also been very active. We annually receive a grant from MnDOT to provide transportation planning services in the four county area. Sheldon Nies and myself are members of the Area Transportation Partnership and play a role in deciding where our funds will be spent in our area from year to year.

In closing, I would like to thank the Commission for the opportunity to serve as chair for the past year. It has been a great experience for me as well as a learning experience. I would also like to thank the Commissioners for the time and effort that they have put into the various committees and the commitment and dedication that they have displayed over the past year for me as chair and the organization as a whole. A thank you also to the employees of MMDC for their dedication and hard work that they have displayed over the past year. Once again, thanks and it has been a great pleasure to be the chair of Region 6E.

## Executive Director's Letter



Fiscal Year 2001 has been a very active year for the Commission in terms of both providing much needed professional services



**Donn Winckler**  
Executive Director

within the Region's four counties and making internal improvements to the organization. The accomplishments of Fiscal Year 2001 would not have been possible without the hard work of the staff and the engaged, strong leadership of the Board of Commissioners. As Executive Director, I am very fortunate to have both.

The Community Development Department has had an exceptional year of providing the Region's local units of government with a wide variety of assistance. Staff has had a record year in generating contractual work in providing these services. The Community Development and Planning Technical Assistance Section of this report gives a good summary of the highlights of the past year. The Department also has been able to create GIS base maps for

all 40 cities located within the Region through funding from a Minnesota Planning Grant. This will allow MMDC to provide fast and affordable mapping assistance throughout the Region.

The Building Inspection/Housing Grant Administration Department of the MMDC has added a major service during this past year. MMDC's two fully certified building officials have been trained as lead-based paint inspectors. New U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations now require that this type of testing be done in housing units that they provide financial assistance to. Since being trained in this activity, the two inspectors have kept busy assisting HRAs and other organizations with these activities.

The Commission has undertaken a number of administrative tasks during this past fiscal year. The Personnel Committee has met numerous times on both an Employee Compensation Study and with updating the Commission's Personnel Policies. The Bylaw Committee has completed an update of the Commission's Bylaws. The Commission's newly formed Marketing Committee, made up of staff and Commissioners, has begun to meet with the goal of establishing better marketing and communication efforts for the Commission. The Commission will be continuing to make needed internal improvements in the upcoming fiscal year as well.

## State Certified Building Inspection Services

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) has two fully certified state building officials on its staff who provide inspection and plan review services for communities that have adopted the State Building Code. The State Building Code sets construction standards to assure the health, safety, comfort and security of building occupants. In Fiscal Year 2001, the MMDC had ongoing contracts with the following communities in providing this service: Atwater, Blomkest, Fairfax, Grove City, Brownton, Kandiyohi, Pennock, Stewart, Paynesville, Cosmos, New London, Spicer and Dovre Township. The Commission also provides services to the City of Litchfield for commercial buildings and plan review. For several months, the Commission also assisted the City of Hutchinson with building code assistance while they went through the process of hiring a new building official. Additional inspections are being made in the communities of Buffalo Lake, Sacred Heart, Hector and Lake Lillian under the State Hazardous Building Act. Staff also provides accessibility inspections on occasion for Renville and Meeker Counties.

During the fiscal year, both building officials received training and provided service with lead-based paint inspections and risk assessments. New U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations require these inspections in housing projects that they participate in. Staff have kept very busy providing this service throughout southwest Minnesota and it should continue to be a major activity in the upcoming fiscal year.

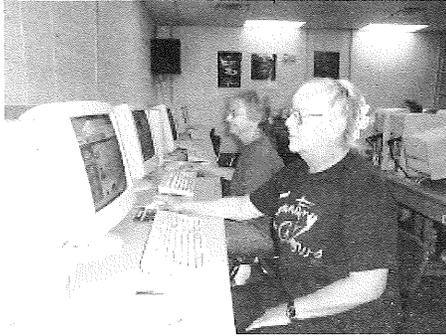


**XRF Lead Testing Machine**

# Area Agency on Aging



The Mid-Minnesota Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is dedicated to helping older people in Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker and Renville Counties lead comfortable, independent lives. The goals of the AAA are to enhance service offerings and ensure that the needs



Senior Surf Day Attendees

of the senior population are met. Each year, the AAA is accountable for a budget of approximately \$1,213,822, which provides for program development, senior information and assistance through the Senior LinkAge Line® and health insurance counseling, as well as financial assistance to service providers and senior centers. Staff also provides a wide variety of technical assistance to various aging organizations and causes. Some of the activities of the past fiscal year include:

- ✓ Conducted a number of Senior Surf Day presentations.
- ✓ Made numerous presentations about AAA services including presentations on health insurance counseling topics such as Medicare and the Prescription Drug Program.
- ✓ Participated in the Life Connections Expo.
- ✓ Co-sponsored an aging workforce conference.
- ✓ Hosted a volunteer recognition and appreciation event.
- ✓ Provided testimony to the State Legislature for the Minnesota Board on Aging.
- ✓ Member of a Cultural Diversity Committee and co-sponsored a Regional Cultural Diversity Conference.
- ✓ Participated in the Medicare FYI Empowerment and Collaboration Initiative (MECI) program.
- ✓ Participated on the Leadership Committee of the Willmar Community Capacity Collaborative.
- ✓ During 2002, staff will serve on the Aging Funding Board of the Southwest Minnesota Foundation.

The AAA has an advisory council composed of 13 members chaired by Richard Brooks of rural Darwin. The advisory council meets once a month and has a primary responsibility of establishing

priorities and reviewing and recommending projects for funding. Although priorities and projects change, the following list of priority areas and projects funded during Fiscal Year 2001 is representative of a typical year:

*Transportation:* Meeker County, Spicer, Atwater, Kandiyohi County and Renville County

*Legal Services/Education:* Western Minnesota Legal Services  
*Congregate Dining and Home Delivered Meals:* Augustana Homes (28 dining sites and 27 home delivered communities).

*Respite Care:* Counties of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker and Renville

*Senior LinkAge Line®:* Mid-Minnesota AAA direct service and Upper Minnesota Valley AAA

*Health Insurance Counseling:* Mid-Minnesota AAA direct service

*Reaching Out to Support Elders (ROSE) Program:* Mid-Minnesota AAA direct service

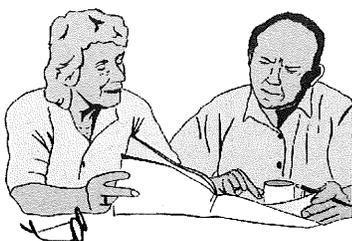
## Collaboration Between Mid-Minnesota and Upper Minnesota Valley AAAs

Early in the fiscal year, a new collaboration began between the Mid-Minnesota AAA and the Upper Minnesota Valley AAA.



With the goal of offering better services through specialization, Mid-Minnesota AAA is now providing Health Insurance Counseling services to Region

Six East's four counties and Region Six West's five counties. The Upper Minnesota Valley AAA has taken the role of providing the Senior LinkAge Line® services within both Regions. An 800 number is used for Senior LinkAge® calls, thus there is no advantage for these calls being taken at the Mid-Minnesota AAA office. The arrangement has allowed staff to focus in one area of expertise, with the end result of higher quality service in both program areas. The new collaboration has proven itself to be very beneficial to both agencies thus far, and the Minnesota Board on Aging has been very supportive of the effort.



# Commission Members



## *Kandiyohi County Representatives*

DuWayne Underthun	Townships
Bruce Shuck	County
Les Heitke	City of Willmar
Gene Anderson (Jan.-Present)	Municipalities

## *McLeod County Representatives*

Roger Schmidt	Townships
Kevin Klucas (Jul.-Dec.)	Municipalities
Sheldon Nies	County
John Mlinar	City of Hutchinson
Kay Husfeldt	Public Interest
Chester Hoernemann	School Districts

## *Meeker County Representatives*

Archie Peters	Townships
Ava Flachmeyer (Jul.-Dec.)	Municipalities
Vernon Madson (Feb.-Present)	Municipalities
George Rice (Jul.-Dec.)	County
Ron Kutzke (Jan.-Present)	County
Sherron Reilly	School Board
Richard Brooks	Public Interest
Dorothy Lindstrom	Public Interest

## *Renville County Representatives*

Delbert Wetzel	Townships
Ronald Degner	Municipalities
Bob Mehlhouse	County
Richard Loftness	Public Interest
James Schafer	Public Interest

## *Officers*

Chairperson	Bruce Shuck
Vice-Chairperson	DuWayne Underthun
Secretary	John Mlinar
Treasurer	Dorothy Lindstrom

## *Staff*

Executive Director	Donn Winckler	Economic Development Director	Les Nelson
Office Manager	Kristen Rosenboom	Community Development Director	Matthew E. Johnson
Building Department Secretary	Tiffanie Krieger	Public Facilities Planner	Robert F. Williamson
Financial Director	Sue Gimse	Community Development Planner	Ryan Krosch (Jul-June)
Aging Program Director	Robert Otto (Jul.-Nov.)	Community Development Planner	Tyrone Hippe
Aging Program Director	Michael Pattee (Nov.-Present)	Transportation Planner	Steven Robertson
Aging Program Specialist	Jennifer Jeffords (Jul.-Jun.)	SCDP Grants Administrator	Bernard F. "Butch" Schulte
Aging Program Specialist	Carin Erickson (May-Present)	Building Inspector	Kevin Piepenburg

## REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE SUMMARY FISCAL YEAR 2001

### REVENUES

FEDERAL		\$ 1,525,013
Economic Development Administration	\$ 51,187	
HHS - Area Agency on Aging	546,859	
Housing Preservation Grant	33,515	
Department of Trade & Economic Development	<u>893,452</u>	
STATE		\$ 227,931
Homestead Taxes/Credits	\$ 51,530	
PERA Aid	2,101	
Department of Transportation	50,000	
State Nutrition	96,550	
State Health Insurance Counseling	<u>27,750</u>	
LOCAL		\$ 484,665
Property Taxes	\$ 153,471	
Interest Earnings	24,720	
Inkind	1,264	
Elderly Workforce - Bremer Foundation	6,832	
Building Inspections	83,323	
Revolving Loan Fund - Repayments	20,677	
Small Cities Repayment Monies	47,289	
Technical Assistance Contracts/Miscellaneous	124,306	
Medicare FYI	4,334	
Grove City, SCDP Admin.	6,001	
Stewart, SCDP Rehab.	4,128	
Sacred Heart, SCDP Admin.	1,620	
ROSE - Caregivers Grant	<u>6,700</u>	
TOTAL REVENUES		<u>\$ 2,237,609</u>

### EXPENDITURES

PERSONAL SERVICES		\$ 598,040
SUPPLIES & PRINTING	20,697	
OTHER SERVICES: Communication, Postage, Conference, Subscriptions	45,100	
OTHER CHARGES: Rent, Insurance, Professional Services	62,938	
CAPITAL OUTLAY	2,222	
TRAVEL: Staff and Advisory Committees	28,152	
COMMISSION: Travel and Per Diem	16,246	
DIRECT CONTRACTS	1,423,786	
OTHER USES	13,560	
IN-KIND SERVICES	<u>1,264</u>	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		<u>\$ 2,212,005</u>



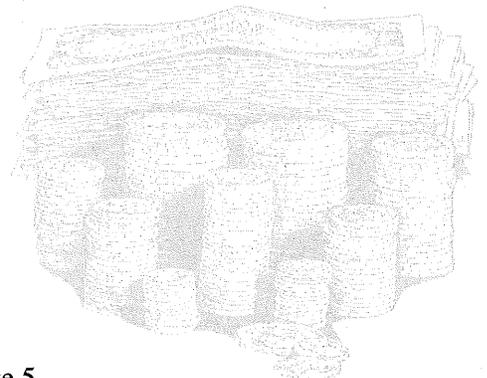
## PROPOSED BUDGET SUMMARY FISCAL YEAR 2002

### REVENUES

FEDERAL		\$3,015,164
Economic Development Administration	\$ 53,000	
HHS - Area Agency on Aging	590,035	
Department of Trade & Economic Development	2,363,118	
Housing Preservation Grant	<u>9,011</u>	
STATE		\$ 231,302
Homestead Taxes/Credits	\$ 50,624	
PERA Aid	2,101	
Department of Transportation	50,000	
State Nutrition	104,527	
State Health Insurance Counseling	<u>24,050</u>	
LOCAL		\$ 474,980
Property Taxes	\$ 154,376	
Interest Earnings	15,000	
Inkind	2,862	
Building Inspections	84,718	
Revolving Loan Fund - Repayments	30,000	
Technical Assistance Contracts/Miscellaneous	172,424	
ROSE - Caregivers Grant	13,400	
Medicare Empowerment	<u>2,200</u>	
TOTAL REVENUES		<u>\$3,721,446</u>

### EXPENDITURES

PERSONAL SERVICES		\$ 661,981
SUPPLIES & PRINTING	16,995	
OTHER SERVICES: Communication, Postage, Conference, Subscriptions	45,839	
OTHER CHARGES: Rent, Insurance, Professional Services	58,320	
CAPITAL OUTLAY	8,000	
TRAVEL: Staff and Advisory Committees	39,722	
COMMISSION: Travel and Per Diem	18,795	
DIRECT CONTRACTS	2,916,141	
OTHER USES	6,241	
IN-KIND SERVICES	<u>2,862</u>	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		<u>\$3,774,896</u>



# Transportation Planning and Assistance



The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) receives an annual grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation, matched with the local tax levy, to provide transportation planning services within the Region's four counties 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 activities of deciding which projects receive Federal funding through the State's Transportation Improvement Program. MMDC's voting member, Sheldon Nies, was the ATP Chairperson during the fiscal year. The TAC scores projects to their "regional significance" as part of the ATP's project ranking process. The Commission also holds an annual public informational meeting on the proposed Area Transportation Improvement Program. Staff provides assistance for these activities as well as serving on an ATP Committee that makes Enhancement Project funding recommendations. During this past fiscal year, staff have actively been working with MnDOT and the TACs from Regions 6W and 8. This activity will be continued into the current fiscal year.

During the past fiscal year, the Commission was also active in the following transportation activities:

- √ Represented the Commission on the Technical Advisory Committee of the Glencoe Area Transportation Study. The study is being jointly funded by the City, McLeod County and MnDOT.
- √ Served as an ex-officio member of a couple of transit operations committees.
- √ Staff continues to be a member of the Welfare-to-Work Transportation Subcommittee. The Committee recommends and oversees transportation projects that aid in helping people on welfare find and keep employment opportunities. The Heartland Community Action Agency is the project administrator for the transportation programs and has done an outstanding job in delivering assistance to the welfare-to-work clientele.
- √ The Commission continues to work with MnDOT to process functional classification changes on a case-by-case basis.
- √ The Department has assisted the MMDC's Community Development Department with researching and preparing sections of several city comprehensive plans and the Kandiyohi County comprehensive plan that have dealt with transportation issues.
- √ Staff co-chaired the RDC Transportation Planners meetings during the past year. These quarterly meetings allow the planners to share information and coordinate planning efforts.
- √ There has been expanded transportation information placed on the MMDC web page.
- √ Staff was the lead planner in this past year's ATP Enhancement Committee project review process. The lead planner is responsible for organizing and distributing materials regarding the meeting of the committee.
- √ Staff currently serves on the TH 212 Corridor Management Team and both the East and West Transportation Advisory Committees for the MnDOT Corridor Study which is taking place.
- √ Participated as a member of a panel that reviewed applications for a Statewide inter-city bus grant program.
- √ Organized a meeting between four transit providers in the region to discuss possible coordination/cooperation efforts.
- √ Staff is currently serving on an ATP subcommittee given the responsibility of updating the scoring system the ATP currently uses to place project candidates in a priority order.

# Community Development and Planning Technical Assistance



The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) is able to provide a wide array of community development/planning projects and activities for local units of government. Typically this particular program area is not tied to any State or Federally funded program, but funded through service charges that are subsidized by the use of the Commission's authority to raise a limited amount of taxes. Consequently, the Commission is free to set its own priorities and objectives in providing technical services where they are most needed to local units of government.

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

In Fiscal Year 2000, the Commission received a Minnesota Planning Grant of \$50,000 that was implemented in the past two fiscal years. The grant was principally used for creating GIS data base maps of all 40 municipalities within the Region. This project allowed MMDC to produce mapping projects for cities in a short amount of time, thus keeping prices very affordable. Some of the principal accomplishments and activities that have been undertaken by the Community Development/Planning Department over the course of the past

fiscal year are highlighted below.

- √ The City of Dassel and Meeker County Comprehensive Plans were completed.
- √ Other cities and counties that the MMDC has contracts for comprehensive plans at various stages of completion include: Kandiyohi County and the Cities of New London, Spicer, Renville, Bird Island and Stewart.
- √ Housing studies were conducted for the Cities of Lester Prairie and Dassel.
- √ SCDP applications for written for Bird Island, Cedar Mills and Prinsburg.
- √ Zoning ordinance assistance was given to the City of Olivia.
- √ A new ordinance code book was prepared for the City of Lake Lillian.
- √ Ordinance codification has been completed for the City of Renville.
- √ Technical assistance has been given to the Cities of Plato, Prinsburg, Cedar Mills, Franklin and Dassel on public facilities projects.
- √ County water plan updates have been started for all four of the Region's counties.
- √ Assisted Renville County with some mapping needs for their comprehensive plan. There have been a number of other GIS mapping projects throughout the course of the year.
- √ Organized and held a Conservation Subdivision Conference in Willmar.
- √ Assisted Meeker County with the preparation of new zoning, subdivision and gravel mining ordinances.

## Grant Administration Services

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission has successfully administered a number of Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) grants through the years. In Fiscal Year 2001, there were eight SCDP projects that were in all different stages of completion. These projects were for the Cities of Grove City, Cosmos, Sacred Heart, Sunburg, New London, Stewart, Renville and Buffalo Lake. Funding for the program comes from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is administered at the State level by the Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development.

The Cities of Grove City, Cosmos, Sacred Heart and Renville all have received SCDP funds for providing housing rehabilitation to low and moderate income households. The Cities of Stewart and Buffalo Lake have received SCDP funds for both housing rehabilitation and public facilities improvements. The Cities of Sunburg and New London received SCDP funds for public facilities projects.

The MMDC provides this SCDP grant administration service to provide funded communities with experienced grant administrators and rehabilitation specialists. The contracted assistance relieves the local units of government of the staggering amount of required paperwork. The MMDC has two persons who are state certified building inspectors and are trained in the necessary rehabilitation standards that are used for the program. Other MMDC personnel are involved in the financial and project administration of the program.

The MMDC is also administering a Housing Preservation Grant funded through USDA Rural Development. These grant funds are used as matching funds for projects where the Commission administers the SCDP Housing Rehabilitation Program. These funds are used on housing rehabilitation projects that are owned by very low income persons.

# *Economic Development Assistance and Revolving Loan Fund*

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission's economic development program is designed to assist local units of government and business in the Region with activities that create or support the creation of jobs and investment. Program activities are funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration and the local tax levy. The Commission operates a \$1.4 million Revolving Loan Fund program within the Region's four counties. Two separate advisory committees assist the Commission with the economic development activities. The first committee provides recommendations to the Commission on the priorities and goals of economic development in the Region. The second advisory committee provides review and recommendations on the Commission's Revolving Loan Fund program.

A major portion of the staff time in economic development is devoted to technical assistance and administering the Revolving Loan Fund. Businesses, individuals and governmental units can request and receive economic development technical assistance. Requests range from business assistance information to business finance analysis, infrastructure improvements, tax increment financing and grant and loan writing.

The Revolving Loan Fund was established to assist businesses within the Region with gap financing. Businesses must be deemed viable and involve job creation or retention. Loans are made for working capital, land, buildings and equipment. The amounts given out as loans range from \$5,000 to a maximum of \$100,000. The Revolving Loan Fund was originally capitalized primarily through Economic Development Administration funds, but also from funds from the four counties, the State of Minnesota, the Southwest

Minnesota Foundation and from the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission.

Economic development activities during the past fiscal year include:

- √ Prepared Economic Development Administration planning grant application.
- √ EDA Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy update.
- √ Business Retention and Expansion Partner - City of Winsted.
- √ Updated Financial Assistance Directory of assistance sources for small businesses.
- √ Sponsored "Southwest Minnesota Labor Force Assessment project".
- √ Partner of the "West Central Growth Alliance".
- √ Assisted with a job fair for displaced AGCO employees.
- √ Facilitated public meeting with David Fisher, Minnesota Department of Administration, on the topic of telecommunications.
- √ Provided technical assistance to "Regional Marketing Assistance Project".
- √ Technical assistance and planning partnership with the following entities: Kandiyohi County Economic Development Partnership, Meeker County Development Corporation, Renville County Economic Development Commission, Ridgewater College Small Business Management Advisory Committee, Southwest Minnesota Technology and Telecommunications Project, Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development.

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