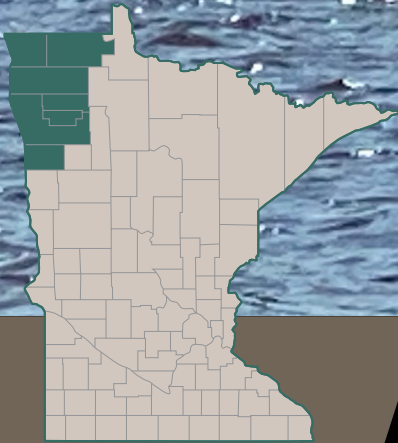




NORTHWEST
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION



Marshall County Park, Florian

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

*Serving the counties of Kittson, Marshall,
Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau.*

www.nwrdc.org

CONTENTS

Introduction

A Message from our Chairperson	1
A Message from our Executive Director	2
Commission Membership	2

Financials & 2022 Budget

Economic Development

On-going Projects Will Have An Impact on Region One

Community Development

Planning, Promotion, Projects, and Partnerships: NWRDC Focuses on Community Development for Public and Private Sectors

Northwest Regional Enterprise Loan Fund

CARES Act Funding Provides Assistance to Businesses

Northwest Regional Economic Resiliency

Regional Resiliency In Response to Global Pandemic

Dancing Sky Area Agency On Aging

Taking Justice on the Road in Northwest Minnesota

Dancing Sky Area Agency On Aging, Cont.....

Senior LinkAge Line®
Medicare Open Enrollment
Pre-Admission Screening
Return to Community
Outreach Events
2021 Aging Grantees

Transportation Planning

Safety and Health: Core to the Bike Project
Grygla to Gully 10-Ton Corridor Expansion

Transportation Planning, Cont.

Train Derailments North of Crookston
Regional Transportation Coordination Council

Emergency Operations Planning

HSEM Region 3 Joint Powers Board

Plans & Publications

NWRDC Team

THE BEAUTY OF REGION ONE



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

Welcome...

One of the mainstays of our work at the Northwest Regional Development Commission is that we remain flexible and responsive to the needs of the region. The staff at the NWRDC pride themselves on these qualities and I think it shows in their ability to decipher the trends, anticipate what is coming next, and be ready to provide good service to our clients and customers.

With the retirements of long-serving staff, one of the biggest topics we've encouraged at the NWRDC is the "succession planning" that has taken place over the past couple years. As our staff undergo retirements and replacements, they have put in place a system of hiring, training, and preparation for new and expanded duties, new program requirements, sudden changes, and adaptive techniques

that allow us to better meet the public's needs. Internal cross-training, as well as personal and professional development training go hand-in-hand with this process and build in a system of resilience so that we don't skip a beat in terms of service.

This process is going on at the commission level as well. We are lucky to have members who take their service seriously and go through some self-examination as to their involvement in commission activities. The NWRDC is a microcosm of the demographic areas we represent so it is important that we give voice to that representation and maintain a culture of acceptance to new immigrants, new thinking, minorities, and people from different walks of life who wish to serve.

It is a pleasure to see the diversity that is attracted to this approach.



GARY KIESOW, COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON

This, too, is something that builds our resilience and capacity to hear and respond to different issues including workforce needs, housing barriers, training, access to capital, childcare, and many other topics of concern to our region. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are subjects of growing importance as the Baby Boomer generation moves into retirement. I think our agency will be at the vanguard of this movement because it is in our region's interest to do so. My expectations are that we must be welcoming and open to new immigrants, new ideas, new cultures...in that way, we can grow and assimilate as our economy changes.

Thank you for your support and we look forward to serving you in the New Year!

Sincerely,
Gary Kiesow



COMMISSION MEMBERS: (FRONT ROW, L TO R) ELVERA CULLEN, KATHY TWITE, WARREN STRANDELL, NORMA CAMPOS, DEBRA WISKOW, GERALD AMIOT. (SECOND ROW, L TO R) LOREN LUSIGNAN, LUCAS SPAETH, RON WEISS, KIMBERLEY JOHNSON, KEVIN REICH, JIM DUCHAMP, DAVID ERICKSON, LOREN YOUNGGREN, DAVID TREUMER.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

It's exciting to announce the end of the year, not because it's over, but because there are so many things just over the horizon that are yet to be tackled!

Fortunately for Region #1 and the NWRDC, there is a great staff in place to address the needs of the region. The year 2021 signals the end of my tenure as Executive Director and I can truthfully say from experience that nothing can get accomplished without a talented and devoted staff all pulling together. I am looking forward to seeing what the future and new leadership brings for my co-workers and Agency! Darla Waldner has been selected to take over the reins upon my departure. She has the experience, leadership qualities and enthusiasm to take the

NWRDC to new heights and new accomplishments. It will be exciting for everyone and I wish her and the agency much good luck.

Over the past 10 years or so, my annual message has usually revolved around the topics of "change" or "resilience." The message remains the same: the one thing we can count on is change, whether we want it or not! In these past several years (and especially 2021), the NWRDC has gone through unprecedented growth in staff and budget capacity, new programs, and with COVID, new ways of bringing services to the public. We adapted to COVID with a different business model, using work at home, reduced travel and no face-to-face public meetings while implementing Zoom meetings and a



CAM FANFULIK, NWRDC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

myriad of other devices designed to protect our clients and ourselves from the Coronavirus. It wasn't perfect, but we still accomplished work program goals and dashboard objectives while providing services in a different way. That is resiliency...the ability to use resources and capacities that allow us to respond to disasters or economic setbacks quickly and competently. I am proud to have worked with dedicated public servants such as those from the NWRDC!

It has been an honor and privilege to have served the Region and the NWRDC. Thank you for the opportunity and your support over the past two decades. Best Wishes in the future!

Cam Fanfulik
Executive Director

COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

Kittson County

Kimberley Johnson*	Kennedy	Townships
David Treumer	Hallock	Municipalities
Loren Younggren	Hallock	Counties

Marshall County

Gary Kiesow**	Goodridge	Counties
Loren Lusignan	Grygla	Townships
Lindsay Oslund	Grygla	Municipalities
Gail Yutzenka	Argyle	School Boards

Norman County

Sharon Josephson	Fertile	Townships
Nathan Redland	Halstad	Counties
Crystal Stene	Ada	Municipalities
Lucas Spaeth*	Halstad	School Boards

Pennington County

Elvera Cullen	Thief River Falls	Seniors
Dave Erickson	Thief River Falls	Townships
Judy Jones	Goodridge	Municipalities
Bruce Lawrence*	Thief River Falls	Counties
Dante Steele	Thief River Falls	Minorities

Polk County

Gerald Amiot	Crookston	Labor
Norma Campos	East Grand Forks	Minorities
Gerald Jacobson	Fertile	Seniors
Keith Sistad	Fosston	Townships
Warren Strandell*	East Grand Forks	Counties
Toby Strom	McIntosh	Municipalities
Kathleen Twite	East Grand Forks	Business

Red Lake County

Jim DuChamp	Plummer	Municipalities
John Dudycha	Plummer	Counties
Kevin Reich	Red Lake Falls	Townships
Ronald Weiss*	Red Lake Falls	Watershed District

Roseau County

Daryl Wicklund*	Badger	Counties
Debra Wiskow	Greenbush	Townships

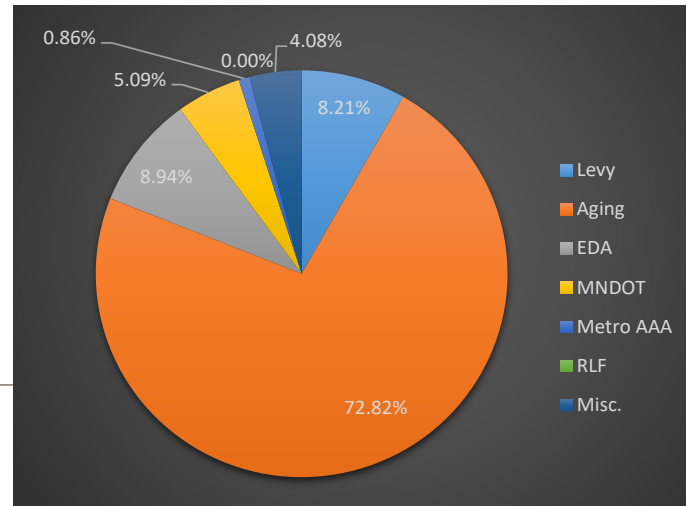
* Board Members

** Chairperson

CALENDAR YEAR 2021 FINANCIALS & 2022 BUDGET

CALENDAR YEAR 2021

Actual 2021 Revenue Sources



REVENUES	CY'2021 BUDGET	CY'2021 ACTUALS	CY'2022 BUDGET
Local Tax Levy	\$ 306,858	\$303,768	\$316,064
MN Board on Aging/Department Health	\$2,703,105	\$2,695,413	\$2,301,449
Economic Development Administration	\$335,916	\$330,727	\$210,907
MN Department of Transportation	\$196,129	\$188,484	\$221,866
NW Minnesota Enterprise Fund	\$0	\$0	\$126,600
Dancing Sky AAA County Match	\$56,992	\$56,992	\$58,702
Metro Area Agency on Aging	\$31,750	\$31,750	\$0
Local Contracts/ Miscellaneous	\$90,386	\$94,183	\$118,909
Regrant Revenue	\$4,716,935	\$4,613,085	\$3,145,895
TOTAL	\$8,438,071	\$8,314,402	\$6,500,392

CY'2020 AUDIT

The CY'2020 Audit was conducted by Brady Martz, Certified Public Accountants and Consultants in Crookston, Minnesota. The auditor's report expresses an unqualified opinion on the General Purpose Financial Statements of the Northwest Regional Development Commission.

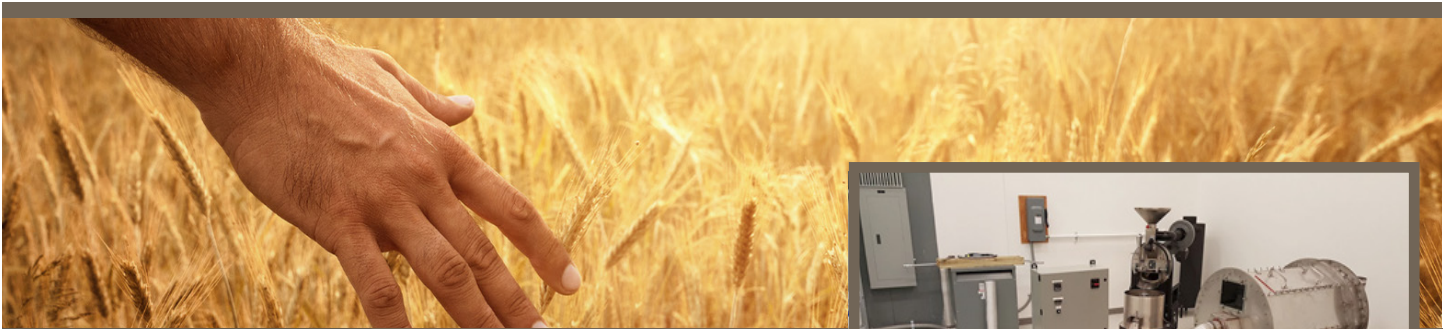
COST ALLOCATION

CY'2021 Actual
Leave Rate:
19.19%

CY'2021 Actual
Fringe Rate:
36.79%

CY'2021 Actual
Indirect Rate:
11.61%

EXPENDITURES	CY'2021 BUDGET	CY'2021 ACTUALS	CY'2022 BUDGET
Salaries and Fringe	\$2,736,888	\$2,724,676	\$2,672,645
Professional Services	\$529,787	\$549,186	\$100,046
Travel	\$53,071	\$44,575	\$236,043
Printing/Postage	\$56,890	\$53,305	\$64,979
Supplies	\$41,881	\$40,589	\$42,990
Rent/Maintenance	\$91,068	\$97,627	\$99,728
Equipment	\$250	\$168	\$867
Other	\$211,301	\$191,191	\$137,895
Grants/Contracts	\$4,716,935	\$4,613,085	\$3,145,895
TOTAL	\$8,438,071	\$8,314,402	\$6,500,392



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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



VERTICAL MALT, CROOKSTON, MN

PURPOSE:

To maintain and increase the population level and job base in the seven counties of Northwest Minnesota.

SERVICE PRIORITIES:

Business development, labor force development, renewable energy, promotion and planning.

On-going Projects Will Have An Impact on Region One

Region One continues several on-going projects and development of new projects that will have a dramatic impact on the region's economic development.

- Among these are the NWRDC's efforts in writing a successful \$250,000 USDA grant application on behalf of Vertical Malt, Inc.—a custom craft maltster for the brewing and baking industry located in Crookston, MN.
- Grantwriting assistance to Fosston, MN for airport/industrial park expansion and wastewater treatment expansion. Both projects increase capacity for business development, ag processing, residential growth and tourism activities.
- Technical Assistance to City of Warroad regarding Point Marina and Gov't Island development and an ATV/Bike Trail.
- Housing Promotional Efforts.
- Technical Assistance to City of East Grand Forks regarding LaFave Park

Recreation improvements.

- Regional planning assistance towards EV Charging Stations along major tourism corridors.

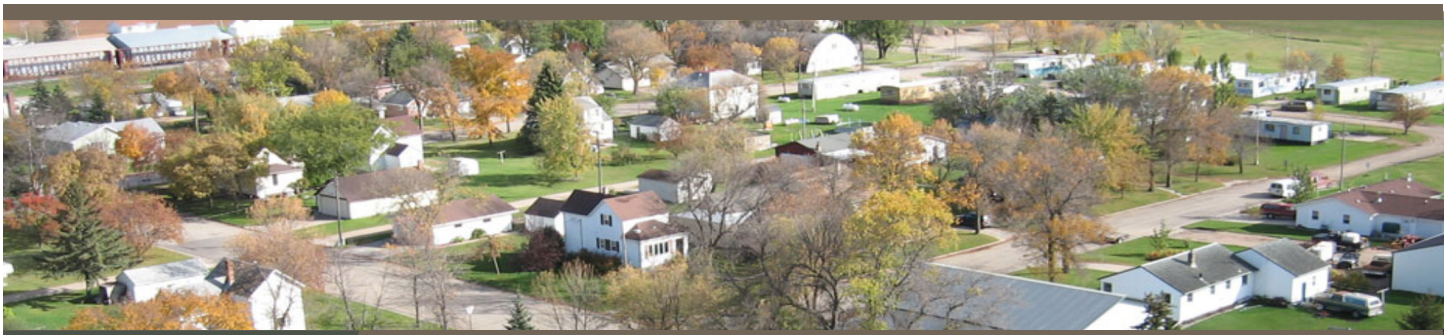


LAFAVE PARK, EAST GRAND FORKS

Numerous projects are also being considered or planned, including airport relocation in Karlstad, Scenic Byways development/improvements, Corridor Enhancement on Red Lake River, Agassiz Environmental Center improvements, Bird Viewing Infra-

structure, Regional Cluster Growth and Main Street Revitalization. These types of amenities are vital to the expansion of business projects because they offer the ancillary services and conveniences that build upon "Quality of Life" and "Quality of Place" considerations for incoming workers and residents. In addition, these forms of economic development provide an overall climate of "business-ready" communities that are attractive to workers, residents and small business.





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HALSTAD, MN

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE:

To assist communities in maintaining the services and infrastructure needed to support a robust economy and an attractive quality of life.

SERVICE PRIORITIES:

Community planning and zoning, tourism and promotions, recreational development and geographic information system (GIS) mapping.

Planning, Promotion, Projects, and Partnerships: NWRDC Focuses on Community Development for Public and Private Sectors

Entering 2021, there was significant hope that the Region would soon be able to avail itself due to COVID vaccine options and begin the laborious process of economic recovery from the shock of mandated business closings, reduced hours and limited commercial flow, fewer customers, closed border crossings, and a myriad of other barriers that came about because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

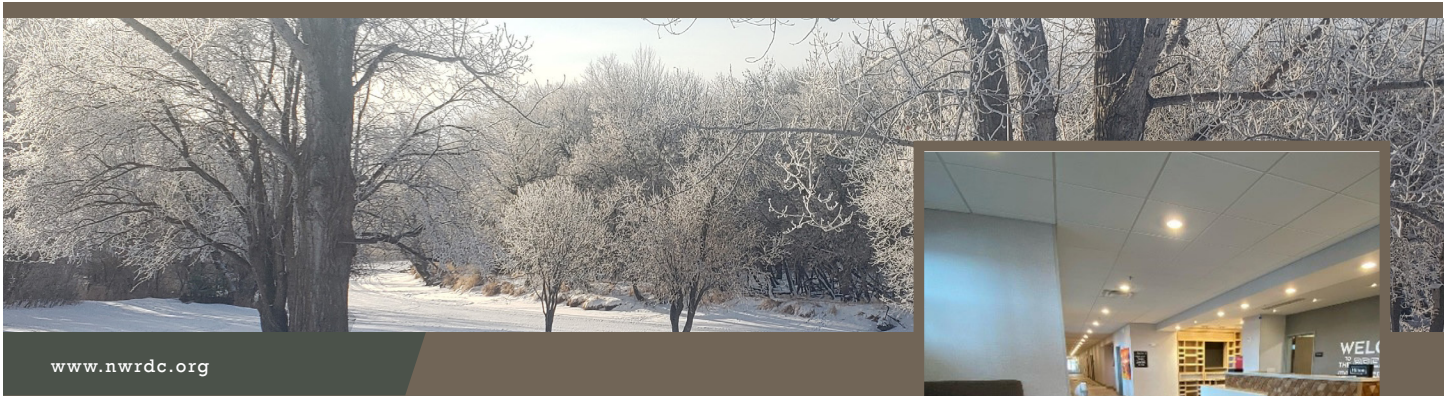
Although the vaccine regimens did come about, there was still a significant amount of the population that did not make use of them. With many different perspectives on the safety and efficacy of the vaccine, the community has had to implement new practices to ensure the health and safety of community members. In order to meet the needs of all, whether it be businesses or consumers, inventive and creative ways were needed to ensure that the community could still thrive amidst the

pandemic. Even at the end of 2021, the area of northwest Minnesota is undergoing another surge of COVID exposure and treatment due to the Omicron variant, therefore, continued work is needed in this area.

With that said, the NWRDC continues to be in contact with communities regarding various projects that will have both public and private benefit.

- Continued comprehensive planning for Halstad including a marketing plan for the school building and capital improvements scheduling for building improvements, sewage and water aging infrastructure replacement, and equipment replacement.
- Comprehensive planning for Norman County, including review of zoning requirements.
- Community and regional improvements to tourism promotion and regional marketing.

- Defining cluster development of business sectors for project prioritization purposes, including drone (UAV) development, ag (food) processing, manufacturing, agriculture, health care (including childcare, eldercare, and mental health components).
- Developing connections with regional partners to strengthen bonds and foster partnerships that promote the area assets.
- Working with the U of M Design Center on a pilot project in Warren, Hallock and Crookston using community regeneration, a community driven approach that keeps the principles and practices of participatory development. Active participation and empowerment (and the prevention of disempowerment) are the basis of practice.



NORTHWEST REGIONAL ENTERPRISE LOAN FUND

PURPOSE:

To strengthen and diversify the economy by providing a source of low interest financing to businesses when credit is not otherwise available from other sources and to ensure the successful completion of activities to be financed.

SERVICE PRIORITIES:

Financing for-profit businesses which create or retain jobs, especially for the long-term underemployed or unemployed.



HAMPTON INN, WARROAD
OPENED SPRING OF 2021.

CARES Act Funding Provides Assistance to Businesses

The Northwest Regional Enterprise Loan Fund activities transitioned from primarily technical assistance to making loans to new and existing businesses.

In July of 2020, the Northwest Regional Enterprise Loan Fund was awarded \$3.1 million in CARES Act funding through the Federal Economic Development Administration. These funds provided more flexible terms for potential borrowers, including 0% interest rates. In 2021, the new fund closed 11 loans for a total of \$1,527,000 and committed an additional loan of \$90,000 to be closed in 2022.

In April, the Economic Development Administration released their federal interest in the pre-COVID RLF funds. These funds will continue to be used to operate the revolving loan fund program going forward.

Three loans totaling \$245,000 were made in 2021 under this legacy program. Loan recipients for 2021 included retail, value-added agriculture, food and beverage, manufacturing, and hospitality industries.

In addition to opening new loans, other loan fund activities included loan restructuring, interest rate adjustments, payoffs, loan assistance to community economic development agencies (EDAs), and technical assistance.

We continue to provide technical assistance in the form of information and referral to other organizations and agencies, including, but not limited to, Small Business Development Center, EDA University Center, Agricultural Utilization Research Institute, Department of Employment and Economic Development, Headwaters Regional Development Commission, NW Minnesota Multi-County HRA, Northwest

Minnesota Foundation, and the IDEA Competition.

Historical Loan Activity (period ending 12/31/2021):

Total Loans	234
Active Loans	61
Total Loan Amount	\$17,882,229
Other Financing Leveraged	\$92,056,141
Jobs Created/Retained	2,436,315
Total Project Costs	\$125,495,033

Historical Loan Activity by County (period ending 12/31/2021):

County	# of Loans	Amount
Kittson	24	\$1,349,120
Marshall	43	\$2,972,045
Norman	20	\$1,189,248
Pennington	25	\$2,261,850
Polk	74	\$6,013,478
Red Lake	16	\$1,190,615
Roseau	32	\$2,905,875



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NORTHWEST REGIONAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

VISION OF THE ADVANCE RESOURCE CENTER
DOWNTOWN WARROAD

PURPOSE:

To prevent, prepare for, and respond to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic or respond to economic injury as a result of Coronavirus

SERVICE PRIORITIES:

Short-term and long-term economic development planning and coordination to develop or update a disaster recovery and resiliency economic development plan; Serve as a liaison in identifying potential resiliency, mitigation, and economic recovery projects in disaster-impacted areas; Build organizational capacity in support of Coronavirus response.

Regional Resiliency In Response to Global Pandemic

In January 2021, the NWRDC assumed an additional role for regional resiliency in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic. With funding from the Federal CARES Act, the Commission began developing strategies to mitigate the impacts of the global pandemic and its effects on communities, employers, higher education, childcare, workforce, and housing. With government-mandated shutdown's, a transition to distance learning, remote working models, and much of our economy in a "hunker-down" posture, new issues became evident.

NWRDC staff worked with local governments to distribute CARES Act funding to assist hard-hit sectors of the economy through a series of grant rounds. Communities across the region were contacted to understand new challenges they were facing and worked to develop solutions for a rebounding economy. In March, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was passed by Congress which made available \$3 billion through the U.S. Economic Development Administration to assist communities in repairing economies severely impacted by COVID-19. In NW Minnesota, the

Commission has been assisting communities to secure ARPA funding for travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation projects, workforce training initiatives, broadband, childcare resources, emergency management, and assistance to small businesses.

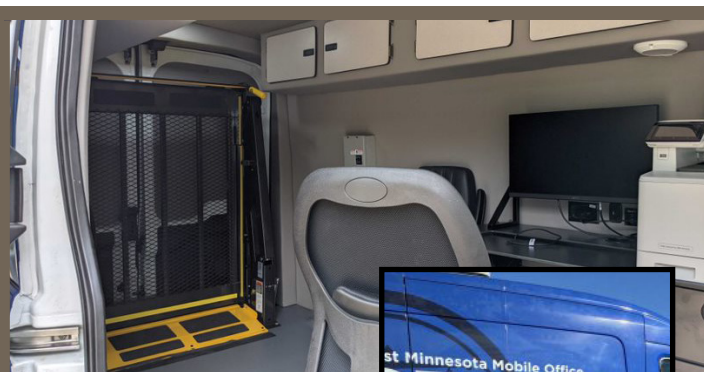
- NWRDC is working with the newly formed Warroad Community Development Corp. on several projects identified through a community visioning process in Warroad with collaboration from greater Roseau County
- Two new childcare task groups have been formed to develop solutions to shortages which are impacting workforce availability in several communities in NW Minnesota.
- Expansion of the Industrial Park in Fosston and a new hangar at the municipal airport will be submitted to EDA in early 2022.
- The Red Lake River Corridor and the City of East Grand Forks were awarded a grant from the Greater MN Parks and Trails Commission for improvements to LaFave Park. The city is also seeking funding to complete the park's Master Plan as part of the Greater

Grand Forks Greenway Plan and the Red River Recreation Area.

- Warroad, with the Blandin Foundation is developing a plan with Blandin Broadband Communities Grants to study and plan for implementation of an accessible and affordable fiber network within the Warroad School District. This project is a partnership with Lead for America/America Connection Corp and Land O' Lakes.
- NWRDC Staff have been collaborating with the EDA University Center at U of M Crookston with the Rural Sustainable Development Partnerships and a local foods network.
- The City of Thief River Falls is seeking funding from EDA for the improvements at the Huck Olson Memorial Civic Center.
- NWRDC supported Northland Community & Technical College, Marvin Co's, and the Marvin Family Foundation with the launch of the Advanced Resource Center (ARC) in downtown Warroad. This collaborative aims to create local higher education opportunities through competency-based education.



www.dancingskyaaa.org



DANCING SKY AREA AGENCY ON AGING



PURPOSE:

The Dancing Sky is 1 of 7 Minnesota Area Agencies on Aging. Our goal for the people of Minnesota is simple, to work with rural communities to help older adults stay in control of their choices. We envision vibrant communities invested in their elders as well as older adults and caregivers planning for the future. Together, older adults and communities thrive.

SERVICE PRIORITIES:

Nutrition - congregate and home delivered meals, legal services, homemaker and chore services, home modification, assisted transportation services, health promotion and prevention programs, medication management, dementia friendly and age friendly communities.

Taking Justice on the Road in Northwest Minnesota

In July 2021, Legal Services of NW Minnesota (LSNM) literally put wheels on justice with the purchase of their new Justice Bus mobile legal aid office. Now that the bus is on the road, LSNM is looking to make a big impact on communities in its 22-county service area in northwest Minnesota.

Rural Minnesotans face many obstacles to legal help, and the COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated the problem. The Justice Bus is part of a series of initiatives aiming to bridge both the digital and physical divide to accessing civil legal help. Its intent is to help mitigate the social and economic impact of the pandemic – especially the disproportionate numbers of people of color, people with disabilities, and seniors who have felt the effects of the pandemic more significantly.

The Justice Bus is a large, retrofitted van with a wheelchair lift intended to serve as a mobile legal aid office that travels to rural areas, bringing with it the ability to obtain legal information or meet with an attorney in person so clients can stay close to home. “We are delivering on the concept of intentional proximity, or the idea that we should be where we know people who need these civil legal services are. We need to go to the need,” said LSNM’s Executive Director, Anne Hoefgen.

As the Justice Bus establishes regular outreach and rotations, the hope is that community relationships and trust can be built as LSNM’s physical presence in communities increases. Libraries, community centers, food banks, and health fairs are just some examples of places and events where the Justice Bus has made an appearance.

Although the Justice Bus doesn’t solve all the problems rural communities face in accessing civil legal help, its presence is one less barrier standing in the way, bringing justice directly to where it’s needed most.

If you’re an organization that’s interested in partnering with LSNM to host a Justice Bus event OR if you’d like to see where the Justice Bus will be next, visit: www.lsnmlaw.org/justice-bus to submit a request or see the calendar of events!

The Justice Bus is just one of a series of initiatives of Reach Justice Minnesota and was funded through a combination of grants including funding through the federal CARES Act. Reach Justice Minnesota is a series of initiatives that leverage technology and emergency staffing to help protect Minnesotans’ basic civil and human rights in the face of an unprecedented emergency and disaster. To learn more about Reach Justice Minnesota, please visit www.reachjustice.org.

Senior LinkAge Line®

During 2021, we received 10,230 calls from older adults and caregivers providing information and resources on Medicare, housing, transportation, financial services, and other community supports. The Senior LinkAge Line can help simplify the complex issues and decisions you face every day as a senior, Baby Boomer, Medicare beneficiary, caregiver or someone trying to reduce prescription drug costs. We can help resolve billing errors, compare health or drug plans, and fight fraud and abuse.

Staff Experience: *Staff helped a man who was new to Medicare apply for Low Income Subsidy/Extra Help. He was on both insulin and expensive life prolonging heart medications, some of which do not have lower cost generic equivalents. Thankfully, he qualified. If not, his medications would have cost more than twice the amount of his mortgage, more than \$1400.00 a month.*

Medicare Open Enrollment

Senior LinkAge Line staff, Senior Coordinators, temporary staff, and volunteers know it's important to review your Medicare plan each year because things change. We provide free, unbiased, comprehensive help so you can select the best options for you. During our 2021 Medicare Open Enrollment, we served people over the phone. Senior LinkAge Line answered 2,679 calls October through December.

Staff Experience: *Our new temporary staff for Medicare Open Enrollment created a medicare.gov account for herself so she could complete her own Part D comparison. She previously had used an agent but plugged in all her drugs and did a comparison. By switching plans, she found she will save herself \$1500/year. She was giddy and has said numerous times, that while she was interested in this position to help others, she was also glad to be able to help herself. Clearly, she's proven she can do both.*

Pre-Admission Screening

Preadmission screening (PAS) is an assessment individuals go through to ensure it is appropriate for them to be placed into a skilled nursing facility. It is required to measure a person's need for nursing home level of care and to connect them with supportive services. Our team completed 4,630 screens. Care transitions or "checking in on you following your short stay" is a call our team will also provide. Staff completed 478 care transition calls for older adults returning home after a short nursing home stay.

Staff Experience: *Staff followed up with a man who had a heart bypass. When she called him, he stated he never went to the nursing home. He and his wife were at a hotel in Fargo because he didn't want to be very far from his doctors. They had decided they were going to rent an apartment in the Fargo/Moorhead area through the winter; he was going to be starting cardiac rehab. At the time of the call, they hadn't found an apartment yet. They were looking for something that wasn't too expensive, but he wanted it to be in a "decent" neighborhood. Staff told him about Return to Community and he was more than happy to have a referral made on his behalf.*

Return to Community

Return to Community staff connect to the growing aging network: providers of community-based services, housing options, assistance programs, healthy aging workshops, caregiving support and more. Staff are available to connect you to the possibilities for aging well, planning well, and living well. Community Living Specialist (CLS) assists 259 older adults to remain at home. Staff provided follow-up in person and over the phone assistance on 2,428 calls/meetings.

Staff Experience: *Staff had the privilege to have a Zoom meeting with "Joan", a 93-year-old woman looking for support to remain at home. Her pastor helped set up the Zoom where they did a Return to Community intake. Joan is fiercely independent and wanted to stay home. Joan had a list of questions she wanted answered.*

Staff helped set up support services including home delivered meals, personal emergency response system and a tele-health visit with her primary doctor. At a time where in-person visits were limited, Zoom allowed everyone to see each other and have a better look at the whole picture. Joan has continued follow-up phone calls to offer check in and support.

Outreach Events

SLL successfully presented virtual Medicare 101 classes serving 96 people this year in partnership with Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging. Attendees are people starting Medicare, agency providers or county social workers.

2021 AGING GRANTEES

Tri-County Community Corrections Chore Program [\$13,489]
Northwest Sentence to Service Chore Program [\$13,157]
Clearwaters Life Center Assisted Transportation & Homemaker [\$17,635]
Park Rapids Living at Home Caregiver, Respite & Homemaker [\$53,081]
Productive Alternatives Assisted Transportation [\$25,500]
Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota Legal Assistance [\$72,000]
West Central Community Action Home Modification [\$25,670]
Lutheran Social Services Caregiver & Respite [\$166,799]
Northwoods Caregivers Caregiver & Respite [\$40,880]
Central MN Elder Network Caregiver & Respite [\$36,816]
Pope County Caregiver & Respite [\$26,300]
Nutrition Services Inc. Congregate/Home-delivered Meals [\$1,184,650]
Lutheran Social Services Congregate/Home-delivered Meals [\$946,420]

Title III-D Grants

Warren Serving Our Seniors [\$4,800]	Perham Area Community Center [\$1,200]
Tri Community Living at Home [\$4,800]	West Central MN Communities Action [\$2,400]
First Lutheran of Detroit Lakes [\$4,800]	Barnesville Helpers [\$2,400]
East Grand Forks Senior Center [\$4,800]	PARTNERS of Rothsay [\$4,800]
Wilkin County Public Health [\$1,200]	REACH of Hawley [\$4,800]
	Northwoods Caregivers [\$4,800]
	OAKS of Pelican Rapids [\$2,400]
	Lake Region Healthcare [\$14,500]



www.nwrdc.org



TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

PURPOSE:

To ensure safe and efficient movement of people and commodities and provide an on-going forum for important transportation issues in the region. To assist MnDOT and provide input with planning and programs.

SERVICE PRIORITIES:

Direction setting, comprehensive regional planning, legislative advocacy and MnDOT project coordination.

Safety and Health: Core to the Bike Project

The NWRDC completed the 5-year contract with MnDOT for the purchase and use of bikes for schools to make use of to educate kids on bike safety and introduce them to healthy and safe ways to bike to school. The students are taught the rules of the road and general maintenance to keep the bikes in good working condition. Several schools in the region have utilized the bikes and the NWRDC will continue to furnish the bikes as long as they are in working condition and schools still want to utilize the bike fleet. Any youth group is welcome to use the 25 bikes. Go to www.nwrdc.org to sign them out.

Grygla to Gully 10-Ton Corridor Expansion

The engineers from Polk, Pennington, Marshall, Roseau, and Beltrami Counties have met with the NWRDC and MnDOT to discuss the expansion of the North-South truck shipping corridor north from Grygla through

Beltrami and Roseau Counties to connect with MNTH 11 east of Roseau. The existing route traversing north of Grygla runs on MNTH 89 which is unsafe for heavy commercial vehicles if they have any maintenance issues that forces them to stop along the highway. There is minimal or no shoulder along most of the highway making for hazardous conditions especially during the winter months. The subcommittee of TAC members has produced a document that will be discussed with our state and federal representatives. The TAC is hopeful to get some funding that could be coming to the state from the President's new infrastructure bill. The map below illustrates the route of choice. Roseau County has already upgraded 7.5 miles of County State Aid Highway #9 to 10-ton status. That project was completed in 2020.

Here's the cost breakdown for each county. An overlay will be done on the existing truck route.

Pennington County:

- CSAH 27 – mill and overlay (\$1.33 million)
- CSAH 28 – mill and overlay (\$0.35

million)

If curves are placed add (\$0.41 million)

Roseau County

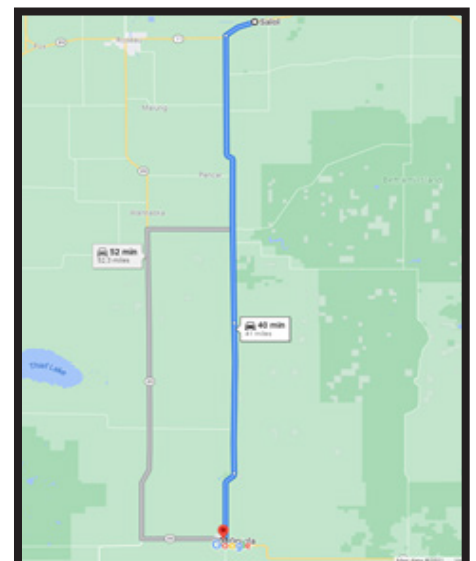
- CSAH 9 – overlay and shoulder widening (\$8.5 million)
- Realignment curves (\$0.40 million)

Marshall & Beltrami Counties

- CSAH 54/CSAH 1. 16.8 miles \$4.2 million.

Polk County:

- CSAH 2 overlay cost is \$1.25 million



Train Derailments North of Crookston

The Region had two train derailments north of Crookston on the BNSF rail line in 2021. The rail had recently been replaced and speeds upgraded. The railroad had a failure in the same location and has since repaired the tracks and railgrade. Several cars were leaking non-hazardous material that did not present any public safety concerns. There were no injuries.



Northwest RTCC: Understanding Barriers And Providing Opportunities

Phase 4 of the Northwest Regional Transportation Coordination Council (NWRTPCC) has been a busy one. Our new website, www.nwrtcc.org was launched and offers an online searchable transportation provider directory. Individuals can search for their county to find the transportation providers available in their area. This resource includes the hours of operations, costs, and any requirements for travel. Also available is a printable PDF file with all transportation providers listed in alphabetical order. This is a valuable resource for county social services, care coordinators and Senior LinkAge Line staff.

The NWRTPCC meets six times per year. During the “off” months, work teams meet to do the heavy lifting. This year in addition to the executive work team and the volunteer driver work team, we have formed work teams in both Polk County and Roseau County to establish partnerships to share accessible vehicles. The goal is to meet nonemergency medical transportation needs. Medical and behavioral health providers are partnering with agencies who have vehicles that sit idle during peak appointment times to create more efficient and enjoyable transpor-

tation experiences for local residents.

Building Relationships

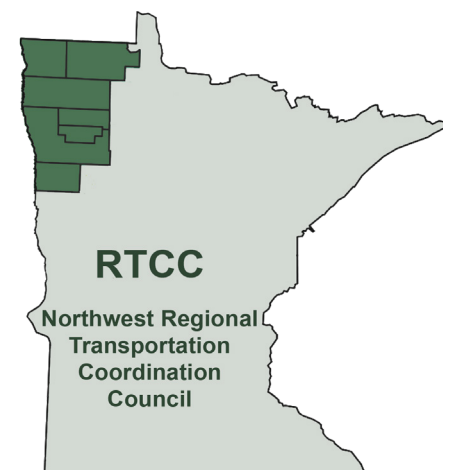
As we continues to build relationships, an example of how we assess needs and develop services is our work with the Adult Mental Health Initiative and Tri-Valley Transportation. The Adult Mental Health Initiative (AMHI), planned an event, “E-Race the Stigma” that involved a 5K walk/run and speakers for September Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month. The event ended at 9 PM, but buses quit running at 8:30 PM.

We brought the need to Tri-Valley Transportation Program and they offered to keep the buses running an extra hour to be sure people could get home from the event. Tri-Valley then offered to provide the rides to and from the event, for free. This benefit was advertised throughout the area. When it appeared no one took advantage of the offer, it prompted an important discussion about the barriers to using public transit by those who have the most need.

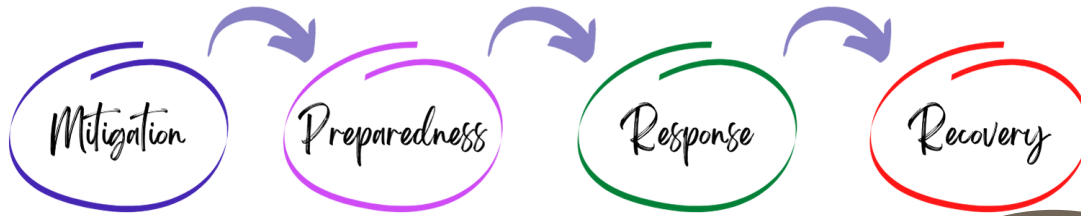
We talked about the need for travel training and the options currently available through Tri-Valley Transit. We found that even though this might look like a less-than-successful effort, we used it as a learning opportunity.

The AMHI was pleased that we could dig deeper into the real needs of their clients and provide resources they did not know were available. We will be arranging travel training opportunities in each county this year and tracking any new transit riders by providing them with a special bus pass.

Our advocacy work on behalf of volunteer drivers in Minnesota was successful. With the new state legislation, the definition of a volunteer driver has been codified and volunteer drivers cannot be considered commercial or independent contractors. Our sights are now set on advocating for federal legislation to increase the reimbursement rate for volunteer drivers from \$.19/mile to the current business reimbursement rate, somewhere around \$.55/mile.



Emergency Management



www.nwrdc.org

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANNING

PURPOSE: To aid Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HSEM) Region Three in the preparation, planning and implementation of activities related to regional preparedness, response and recovery.

SERVICE PRIORITIES: Utilize a specifically geared, annually evolving work program to support existing emergency management capabilities throughout Northwest Minnesota, as approved by the Emergency Management Joint Powers Board and HSEM staff.



HSEM Region 3 Joint Powers Board

The Northwest Regional Development Commission continued its planning partnership with the HSEM Region 3 Joint Powers Board by providing planning services for the fourteen counties (includes 2 tribal nations) located in North-western Minnesota. This year's focus was on homeland security and terrorism.

With an ever-evolving work program combined with an active array of hazards present in Minnesota; it takes many individuals active in emergency preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery in order save lives, reduce property damage and decrease/eliminate future effects. Government, local agencies, volunteers, businesses and emergency response personnel all work together and lend efforts/resources to keep our communities safe. The following points highlight a

few of the successes that the Northwest Emergency Manager's Joint Powers Board's regional planning program has accomplished in 2021, thanks to a grant funding opportunity through Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM):

- Mass Fatality Planning
- Partner Information Coordination Planning
- Virus/Bioterrorism Planning
- Recovery Planning Related to Hostile Action Scenarios
- Regional Emergency Operations Center Planning
- Terrorism-Based Regional Exercise
- Regional Badging & Credentialling
- Mass Gathering Plan
- Quarterly and Joint Powers Board Meeting Attendance

- Involvement with the Upper Red River Valley COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster), Regional Radio Board/Radio Advisory Committee and the Northwest Health Services Coalition.
- Local and Regional Exercise Involvement

Additional projects (not part of the above-mentioned grant) were also undertaken, including:

- Resiliency Planning with Jim Retka
- Assistance to the NW Regional Transportation Coordination Council
- Participation in the Rainy River International Full-Scale Exercise
- Northwest Minnesota Tourism Directory
- IT Support
- Assistance to Blandin – Building On Broadband Annual Conference Speaker

PLANS & PUBLICATIONS

PREPARED BY THE NWRDC

PLANS:

2021 Aging Area Plan – Includes senior and provider input as well as demographic data to establish priorities for the use of Title-III Older Americans Act funds. Includes information on the unique characteristics of our region, demographics, accomplishments, program outcomes and budget information.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) –

The 2017–2021 CEDS has taken a little different shape to more closely resemble that of each of the other Economic Development Regions of Greater Minnesota. The Economic Development Regions have agreed upon four key cornerstones to economic development: Human Capital, Economic Competitiveness, Community Resources and Foundational Assets. Each region has based their CEDS on these cornerstones and developed their own unique goals and strategies. The 2017-2021 CEDS does maintain previous priorities of Planning, Promotion, Business Development, Labor Force Development and Renewable Energies with added emphasis on workforce related issues such as housing, childcare, training and business succession planning.

Revolving Loan Fund Plan – Consists of program elements and guidelines.

PUBLICATIONS:

SeniorNews – A newsletter for senior citizens and service providers of Northwest Minnesota.

Government Units of Service Directory – A listing of service agencies and government offices from the township and legislative levels.

2021 Annual Report – A report sent to local officials and legislators on funding and work activities of the NWRDC.

NW MN Visitor & Recreation Guide – A guide of attractions highlighting services and recreational opportunities in Northwest Minnesota communities.

WEBSITES:

www.nwrdc.org
www.dancingskyaaa.org
www.visitnwminnesota.com
www.nwrtcc.org



NWRDC TEAM



Cameron Fanfulik
Executive Director



Carol Kilen
Financial Assistant



Kalen Wiseth
Financial Director



Judy Flaten
Administrative Support



Amanda Russell
Office Manager



Sean Ranum
Loan Fund Manager/
Economic Development



Troy Schroeder
Transportation
Planning Director



Jennifer Olson
Emergency Operations
Planning Director



**Lynnell Simonson
Popowski**
Regional Transportation
Coordinator



James Retka
Economic Resiliency
Specialist



Darla Waldner
Dancing Sky AAA
Director



Beth Budziszewski
Senior LinkAge Line®
Supervisor



Danica Robson
Development Supervisor



Judi Weiss
Grant & Contract
Manager/Program
Developer



Connie Troska
Program Developer/
Marketing Manager



Carol Bye
Healthy Aging
Coordinator



Stephanie Aassness
Program Developer



Amy Dallmann
Program Developer



Nancy Finstrom
Community Living
Specialist



Heather Pender
Community Living
Specialist Lead



Deb Rapp
Community Living
Specialist



Sabrina Anderson
Community Living
Specialist



Mary Krueger
Community Living
Specialist



Jane Stumbo
Community Living
Specialist



Dana Kloepfner
Pre-Admission
Screening Specialist



Melissa Hoeft
Pre-Admission
Screening Specialist



Valerie Mattison
Pre-Admission
Screening Specialist



Kaela Wiskow
Pre-Admission
Screening/Case Aide
Specialist



Kim Anderson
Volunteer Coordinator/
Senior LinkAge Line®
Phone Specialist



Helen Phalen
Senior LinkAge Line®
Phone Specialist Lead



Marlene Dahlquist
Senior LinkAge Line®
Triage Coordinator



Jennifer Hedrick
Senior LinkAge Line®
Phone Specialist



Lyn Pankratz
Senior LinkAge Line®
Phone Specialist



Kathy Dahl
Senior LinkAge Line®
Phone Specialist



Paul Baymiller
Senior LinkAge Line®
Phone Specialist