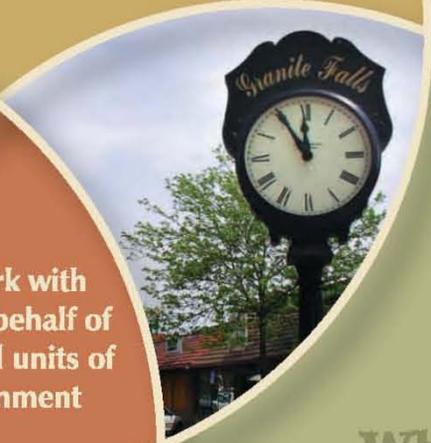


What can  
we be best at?



To work with  
and on behalf of  
our local units of  
government



What are we  
deeply  
passionate  
about?



What  
drives our  
economic  
engine?

# 2008 Annual Report



Upper Minnesota Valley  
**REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION**

Helping Communities Prosper

# Mission

Enable the region to thrive through assisting local governments



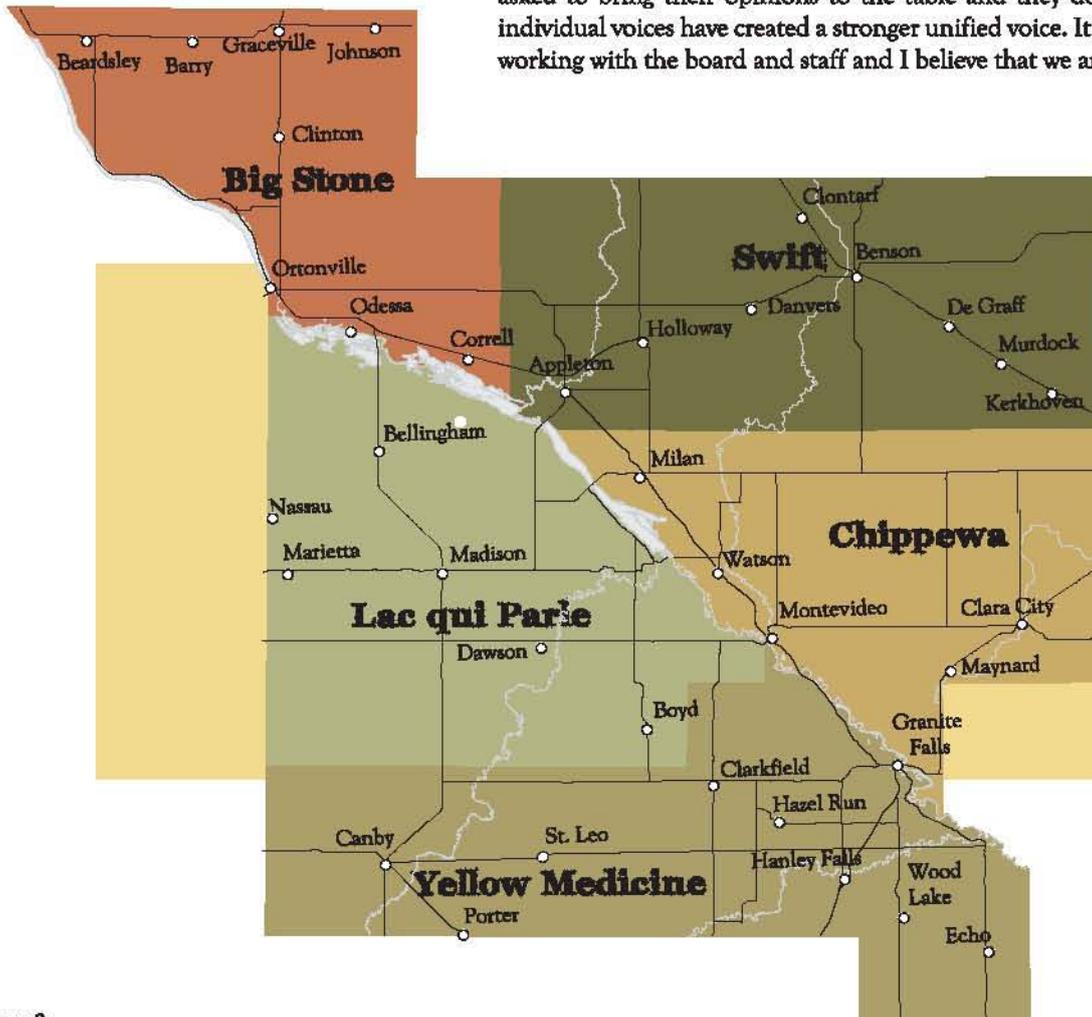
# Message from the Chair

As chairman of the Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission (UMVRDC), I thank all of our staff and board members as well as our partners for their quest to improve the quality of life for our region. This past year the organization weathered some issues that will affect us today as well as years to come. I believe that through the process of solving these issues we have become a stronger and more defined organization. The UMVRDC board and staff have made a clear choice in how we are going to approach our future.

One priority is to focus our expertise towards the betterment of our communities. The board and staff have come to the conclusion that our passion centers on our communities. We feel we have the staff, the board members, as well as our connections to our communities to become the economic and community development "Go To" agency. Throughout this past year we have been in constant dialogue with many of our partners. They bring many ideas as well as solutions to the table. Our partners have become crucial in fulfilling our mission.

With all the planning discussions that the board has had this past year, I have found out how important the commission members are. The commission members are asked to bring their opinions to the table and they do. I believe that our strong individual voices have created a stronger unified voice. It has been a great experience working with the board and staff and I believe that we are only going to get better.

*Gary Hedrick*

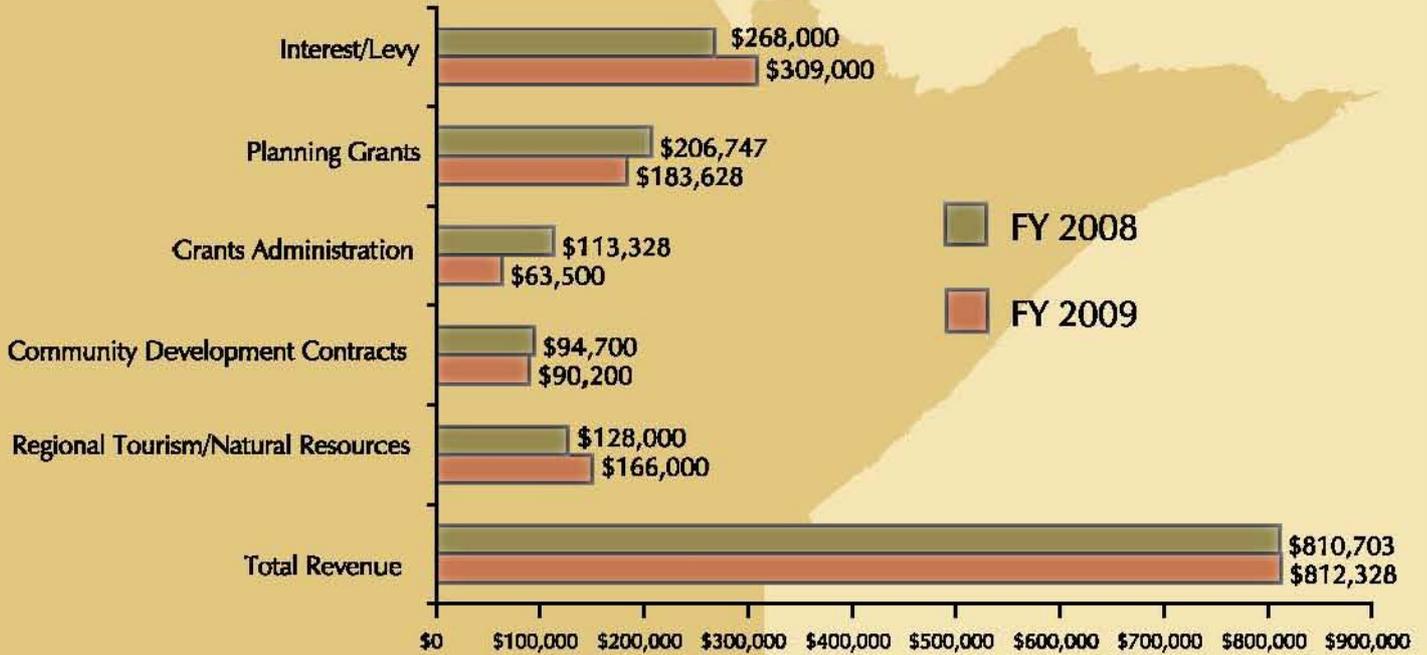


Serving our five counties and 37 communities

# Financial Report

Revenue and Expenditure Comparison  
Current FY 2008 and Proposed FY 2009

## Revenue



## Expenditures



**2008**  
 Total Revenue - \$810,703  
 Total Expenditures - \$810,000  
 Excess Revenue - \$703

**2009 Proposed Budget**  
 Total Revenue - \$812,328  
 Total Expenditures - \$811,952  
 Excess Revenue - \$376

# Board of Directors

## **BIG STONE COUNTY**

Brent Olson, *County Board*  
Shirley Finberg, *Municipalities*  
Harold R. Dimberg, *Townships*



## **CHIPPEWA COUNTY**

Ron Anderson, *Municipalities*  
Jim Dahlvang, *County Board*



## **LAC QUI PARLE COUNTY**

Greg Thole, *Municipalities*  
Harold Solem, *County Board*  
Tim Patzer (not pictured), *Townships*



## **SWIFT COUNTY**

Gary Hendrickx, *County Board*  
Warren Rau, *Townships*



## **YELLOW MEDICINE COUNTY**

Erling Albin, *Townships*  
Dan Jahn, *Municipalities*  
Gary L. Johnson, *County Board*



## **PUBLIC INTEREST GROUP & TRIBAL COUNCIL**

Bruce Swigerd, *Prairie Five CAC, Inc.*  
Juanita Lauritsen, *Work Force Council*  
Travis Leenerts (not pictured)  
*Tribal Council, Upper Sioux Community*



# Staff



*(left to right, front)*  
Barb Jordahl  
*Financial Planner*

Kay Koosman  
*Office Manager*

Connie Stotesbery  
*Secretary*

Michelle Bouta  
*Division Director Aging*

*(left to right, back)*  
Karin Tank  
*Community Development Senior Planner*

Arlene Tilbury  
*Division Director Financial*

Paul Michaelson  
*Executive Director*

Dawn Hegland  
*Planning Director*

Connie Nygard  
*Co-coordinator of Prairie Waters Tourism*

Jacki Anderson  
*Community Development Planner*

Kristi Fernholz  
*Co-coordinator of Prairie Waters Tourism*



## The UMVRDC's Good to Great Process

During this past year, the UMVRDC began a strategic planning process that was intended to set the future course for the UMVRDC.

The UMVRDC used the models and ideas in this book to guide them through their strategic planning process.

The goal of this process was to position the UMVRDC to best meet the needs of the local units of government (LUGs) it was created to serve.

"Plan for the quarter century, not the quarter" is one of the quotes from Jim Collins' book *Good to Great*.

### What Can We Be Best At?

1. Knowing/understanding communities
2. Providing hands-on assistance
3. Convening & facilitating of community leaders (e.g., CCS)
4. Project implementation (state & federal regs, etc.)
5. Getting training as needed to address identified needs
6. Regional program implementation (e.g., Tourism, GIS)
7. Identify potential needs, problems, opportunities in region & work with leaders to address them
8. Regional approaches in planning for collective impact opportunities
9. Identifying needs related to aging population of region & developing solutions through program development & individual assistance to seniors
10. A regional catalyst for building successful communities (e.g., Renewable Energy promotion, JOBZ)
11. Being an information/resource center
12. Being able to identify resources

### Best At

1. Community development
2. Regional program implementation
3. Regional catalyst

### Passionate About

1. Supporting LUGs/Communities
2. Regionalism

### What Are We Deeply Passionate About?

1. Planning
2. The Region
3. Partnership/collaboration
4. Being proactive
5. Serving needs of LUGs
6. Producing QUALITY products
7. Supporting grass root efforts
8. Being a vital organization to Region
9. Improving quality of life in Region

## UMVRDC Hedgehog

To work with and on behalf of our local units of government.

### Best At

1. Community development
2. Regional program implementation
3. Regional catalyst

### Economic Engine

1. LUG needs (e.g., contacts per customer)
2. Administration of regional programs
3. Federal & state grant programs
4. Levy - (catalyst vs driver)

### What Drives Our Economic Engine?

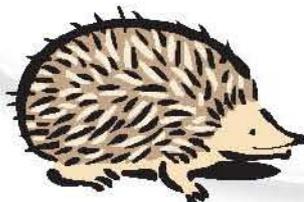
1. Community needs
2. Regional needs
3. Per great staff person
4. The desire of LUG to prosper
5. Community resources
6. Good support & relationship with LUG
7. Technology & innovation
8. Professional development
9. Responsive service in areas of expertise that makes an impact in community
10. Ability to respond
11. Contracts per customer (e.g., LUG) maximized by positioning to meet needs of LUG
12. Administration/implementation of regional programs (Tourism, GIS, renewable energy)
13. Grant programs through state & federal agencies
14. Levy

### Passionate About

1. Supporting LUG/communities
2. Regionalism

### Economic Engine

1. LUG needs (e.g., contracts per customer)
2. Administration of regional programs
3. Federal & state grants
4. Levy - (catalyst vs driver)



# nity Development

The "Hedgehog" metaphor was created by Isaiah Berlin and is based on the difference between a hedgehog and a fox. The fox is incredibly smart, always looking for a way to attack a hedgehog. The hedgehog, on the other hand, is a simple creature and has one simple defense against the fox of rolling into a ball with spikes in all directions. And the hedgehog always wins.

"Foxes pursue many ends at the same time and see the world in all its complexity....Hedgehogs, on the other hand, simplify a complex world into a single organizing idea, a basic principle...it doesn't matter how complex the world, a hedgehog reduces all challenge and dilemmas to simple...hedgehog ideas. For a hedgehog, anything that does not somehow relate to the hedgehog idea holds no relevance." (*Good to Great, Collins, 2001*)

Jim Collins' Good to Great process is based on research that shows that building a great organization proceeds in four basic stages: 1) disciplined people, 2) disciplined thought, 3) disciplined action and 4) building greatness to last. This process is intended to move an organization from good to great and to create a deep understanding of what an organization CAN be best at.

## The Hedgehog Concept

(Simplicity within three circles)

The Hedgehog Concept is an operating model that reflects a deep understanding of three intersecting circles: 1) what you can be the best in the world at, 2) what you are deeply passionate about, and 3) what best drives your economic or resource engine.

The UMRDC analyzed the agency by asking these questions. Topics that overlapped into the center circle became a simple clear concept, called the Hedgehog.

Through this process, the UMRDC went on to identify:

**Core Values** (what the UMRDC is passionate about and would never give up)

**Core Purpose** (what the UMRDC is about)

**BHAGs** (Big Huge Audacious Goals)

"Definition of BHAGs: action-oriented; clear (who, what, where, by when); compelling and gripping - people "get it" right away; bold; bordering on hubris and the unattainable. It is a 10 to 30-year objective—like a big mountain to climb—that serves as a unifying focal point of effort, galvanizing people and creating team spirit. It is crisp, compelling and easy to understand." (*Good to Great, Collins, 2001*)

"Bad BHAGs are set with bravado; good BHAGs are set with understanding. Indeed, when you combine quiet understanding of the three circles with the audacity of a BHAG, you get a powerful, almost magical mix." (*Good to Great, Collins, 2001*)

## UMVRDC Core Values

- Commission Leadership (Full board)  
*Staff is accountable to and driven by the members of the Commission*
- Leadership/Assistance  
*Agency's role is to assist, guide, facilitate*
- Integrity  
*Respectful, open & transparent*
- Progressive Thought & Action  
*Moving forward, proactive and innovative*
- Leaving no Community Behind  
*Value all of our communities*
- Quality Service  
*Striving for excellence in work and/or products*
- Collaboration/Cooperation  
*To work together as a team toward a common cause*
- Our Region  
*Value the region's lifestyle and all it has to offer*
- Stewardship  
*Pride in the agency's abilities and capabilities*

"Core values and core purposes are essential for enduring greatness...build them into your organization & preserve over time" (*Good to Great, Collins, 2001*)

## UMVRDC Core Purposes

- Building successful communities
- Improving the quality of life for the citizens of Region 6W
- Be a vehicle that allows for regional approaches to address community needs

## UMVRDC's 20 year BHAGs

- Be the premier agency for community development in Region 6W
- Be the model of excellence for implementing regional approaches to addressing needs in Region 6W
- The UMRDC name will be as recognizable as the "golden arches" in Region 6W
- The UMRDC will be viewed as "the" model for board leadership and involvement within Region 6W



## Community Development Programs

### Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) Applications

An application for Odessa's public facility project was submitted to the SCDP. They will be utilizing Rural Development funds as opposed to SCDP.

A successful joint application for Maynard and Clara City includes owner-occupied, rental and commercial rehabilitation in both communities and a community center for Maynard. Grant funds for this application were awarded to the communities by the Department of Employment and Economic Development in April 2008.



*Downtown Maynard*

### Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

A 5-year CEDS update was completed as part of the UMRVDC's U.S. Dept. of Commerce Economic Development Administration Planning Grant. The plan identifies the region's current economic condition and provides goals and an action plan for the region's economic development activities. Five county meetings were held to gather input into the economic condition and opportunities for the region.

### Upper Sioux Community Transit Plan

UMVRDC staff are completing a Tribal Transit Study to address current and future transit needs of each segment of the Upper Sioux Community. The timeline for completing the study is the end of July.

### Area Transportation Partnerships (ATP)

Participated in ATP 4 and 8 meetings to review and rank applications for 2012 federal funds for roads, bridges, trails and railroad crossings.

### MnDOT Transportation Contract

Renewed the annual contract for transportation planning on behalf of MnDOT.

### Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

Convened the TAC to review and seek public input on the 2009-2012 Area Transportation Improvement Program.

### Western Minnesota Revolving Loan Fund

The Loan Board approved seven new loans over the last year to assist new and expanding businesses throughout the region. These loans totaled over \$700,000 for the uses of working capital and fixed assets. Businesses receiving loans from the WesMN RLF include:

- Riverdale Environmental Services, Granite Falls
- Hantho Farms, Appleton
- ECONAR, Appleton
- Noah's Ark, Dawson
- Hardware Hank, Clarkfield
- Hardware Hank, Ortonville
- East Dublin Dairy, Kerkhoven



### Ortonville 2008 Comprehensive Plan Update

Guided the city through a planning process to update their 2002 Comprehensive Plan.

### Nassau Fire Hall

Developed a Minnesota Bonding application for the city of Nassau for a new fire hall.

### Hazard Mitigation

Completed applications to update the hazard mitigation plans for all five counties.

### Browns Valley Hazard Mitigation

Completed a Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan for the city of Browns Valley to assist the city with recovery efforts from floods experienced in March 2007. Staff continue to participate on a mitigation task force focused on long-term recovery efforts and implementing mitigation strategies for future flood prevention.

### Granite Falls Hazard Mitigation

Staff continue to assist the city with flood recovery and mitigation efforts. The primary focus this past year has been acquisition, relocation and protection of the downtown business district. Funds were secured to enable the city to move into the next phase which will include building a new city hall, remove remaining buildings in the floodplain, completion of the flood retaining walls and certification of the existing levy.

# Community Development

## Renewable Energy

Collaborated with other regional organizations to host two wind information meetings.



George Crocker, North American Water Office, at the Benson Wind Information Meeting

## Economic Development Administration (EDA)

Completed the annual EDA Planning Grant application to remain a designated Economic Development District in Minnesota. Staff attended required national EDA meetings throughout the year and completed mandatory RLF training in Cleveland, OH May 12-14th.

## Madison EDA Strategic Planning and Business Interviews

Guided the Madison EDA through a planning process that began with UMRDC staff completing business interviews and resulted in a strategic plan that included specific work goals for the EDA.

## 6W Community & Economic Development Professionals Meeting

Coordinated quarterly meetings for community and economic development professionals.

## Regional Development Commission Planners Meetings

Attended statewide meetings of the RDC transportation planners and economic development planners to coordinate projects, share experiences, and participate in professional development.

## Participated as committee members for several larger Minnesota initiatives including:

- Entrepreneurship Academy
- Youth Entrepreneurship
- Regional Capacity Building
- Renewable Works
- Workforce Innovation in Regional Development (WIRED)
- Framework for Integrated Regional Strategies (FIRST)
- University of Minnesota Tourism Center Advisory Committee
- West Central Minnesota Clean Energy Resource Team
- Center for Small Towns - University of Minnesota, Morris

## Aging

### Program Development and Coordination

- Technical assistance provided to entities looking at developing adult foster facilities, and adult day services, including regulations, rules, and financing.
- Technical assistance to existing service providers and counties regarding programming issues, marketing, sustainability, grant seeking, policies and procedures.
- Community Service/Service Development Grants (CS/SD). Six grants submitted for Region 6W, with two selected for funding and two pending, negotiations go through July 2008. Selected for funding are Prairie Rose Senior Services, Kerkhoven and Graceville Area Health Services-Home Health Telehealth. With the funding for Graceville, ALL the home health agencies in Region 6W will now offer Telehealth services, not yet accomplished anywhere else in the state.

### Information and Referral

- 500+ client contacts made the past year for information and assistance. Many repeat callers, more complicated, time consuming assistance required. Many clients who do not qualify for county assistance programs, near poverty level. Work closely with county staff and health plans, Social Security and Medicare. Addressed donut hole issues. Majority of referrals have come from outreach locally and word of mouth.
- Core Body of Knowledge training held for Health Insurance Volunteers, three new volunteers added, now have a total of 13.
- Seventeen presentations held during Medicare Part D open enrollment, educating, taking referrals.

### Comments from clients

*Very professional but also showed understanding and compassion. Very, very helpful and informative!*

*Staff seems very knowledgeable.*

*Very nice and very helpful.*

*Did a great job. I had more than one visit...was always patient and understanding. It is a very good program to help seniors who don't understand all the ins and outs. Thanks again.*

*A personality plus made you feel important, very pleasant.*



## UMVRDC Marketing

Remember the UMVRDC logo? The goose remains significant to our region and to our mission. The goose symbolizes a great quest, setting a high goal, finding the right way to navigate it, sharing a common direction and sense of community, and being mutually supportive in attaining of the goal.



*The UMVRDC Logo of the past*

The goose has been updated will help us work towards our name becoming recognizable to people we serve in Region 6W.



Helping Communities Prosper

*New look*

*Check us out!*  
[www.umvrdc.org](http://www.umvrdc.org)



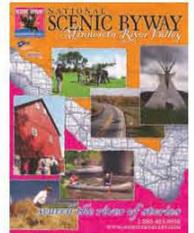
## Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway

*"The purpose of the Alliance is to encourage economic development through the promotion, preservation and protection of the intrinsic qualities of the Minnesota River Valley."*

The 287-mile tourism destination is a group of committed individuals representing a variety of interests including Chambers of Commerce, various attractions and historic sites, State Parks, local and state governmental bodies, private businesses, and concerned individuals. UMVRDC staff continued to provide staff and fiscal services to the Byway.

Some accomplishments from the past year include:

- Continued work on 15 Interpretive Panels to be installed along the Byway. They will be 2' x 4' colorful signs and will be weather and vandalism resistant.
- Distributed over 15,000 of our Byway Guides including distribution at the Mall of America, at Travel Information Centers on the state's southern borders, fulfilling visitor requests and to Byway businesses and attractions.
- The website ([www.mnrivervalley.com](http://www.mnrivervalley.com)) has had a major overhaul and is continuing to be a great source for Byway travelers.
- We are pursuing community kiosks installed in five pilot cities along the Byway. These will be used for both Byway and civic announcements and will elevate Byway awareness. We have been working with the MnDOT Environmental Services landscape architects on the cabin-like design. We plan to work with Prairie Correctional Facility in Appleton to build them.
- Operated another successful familiarization trip for 35 people from Granite Falls and southward on September 21, 2007. It serves to give a first-hand experience on what the Byway offers.
- Exposure in various media including AAA Magazine, Explore Southern Minnesota, Minnesota Golfer, the Office of Tourism's Explorer newspaper, and many local newspapers.
- Completed two applications for federal Byway funding. The applications were ranked high by the state committee and will provide funds for staff coordination and a significant marketing campaign for the Byway. Funding should be announced in fall 2008.



# Community Development

## Meander

The UMVRDC and Prairie Waters helped coordinate planning, developed and implemented marketing and managed finances for the 4th annual Meander in October 2007. Forty-five local artists participated.

*Meander 2008 is October 3, 4, & 5!*



## 2007 Meander Economic Impacts

- Total reported Meander art sales to customers during the Meander weekend was \$39,480.
- Of the money raised to organize the Meander through sponsors and artists, 93 percent was spent on products or services (printing, paper, advertising, graphic design, staffing) in the five county area.
- Average number of studios customers visited was eight.
- 81 percent of customers said the quality of the art was excellent.
- 81 percent of customers said their overall experience was excellent.
- Average expenditures per customer:
  - \$57.43 Meander Art
  - \$11.87 Food
  - \$ 6.76 Shopping (other than art)
  - \$ 5.53 Lodging

### Comments from Customers

*My favorite thing was meeting the artists and seeing their studios.*

*Everything excellent. Finding so many wonderful talents in our area.*

### Comments from Artists

*All my customers remarked that the quality of art is outstanding.*

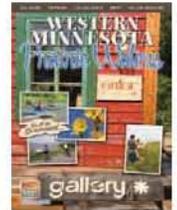
*I thought it was excellent! I had many people from a distance that heard about it and enjoyed attending.*

## Western Minnesota Prairie Waters Regional Tourism



Working to promote our area as a great place to visit and live, Prairie Waters accomplished much the past year. A few include:

- **New Visitors Guide!** This full color, glossy publication of Prairie Waters is the premier visitors guide for our Region with 25,000 copies printed and over 83 advertisers.
- **Bicycling Around Minnesota (BAM).** Coming to our region in August 2008, Prairie Waters has assisted in coordinating this event.
- **The Upper MN Valley Celebrates the Sesquicentennial Visual Arts Display.** This incredible visual arts display honors our state's 150th birthday by showcasing the artists and history of our region.
- **Cuisine of the Prairie Event.** Planned by Prairie Waters, the Montevideo Chamber of Commerce and multiple area businesses sponsoring the event, this was an event focused on highlighting our local foods in our region. Cuisine of the Prairie hosted 250 people to an evening of wine tasting, a gourmet meal prepared by Chef Jenny Breen from the MN Arboretum and speaker Rebecca Kolls for a fun filled evening.



*"Uncommon Threads" by Deb Connolly*



- **New Prairie Waters Website.** Coming in the summer of 2008, this website is one of the few places to gather critical and interesting information about our Region online.
- Numerous ads in our regional papers, statewide and out of state publications.
- Toll-free phone line 866-866-5432.
- Received 2,830 lead requests in 2007 and 1,750 in the first half of 2008.

[www.prairiewaters.com](http://www.prairiewaters.com)  
866.866.5432

Ad for Prairie Waters and our Scenic Byway for the MN Moments Magazine July/August 2008.



Upper Minnesota Valley  
**REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION**

Helping Communities Prosper

323 W. Schlieman Ave. Appleton, MN 56208  
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## Fact

As each goose flaps its wings, it creates an "uplift" for the bird following. By flying in a "V" formation, the whole flock adds more flying range than if each bird flew alone.

## Lesson

People who share a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.

