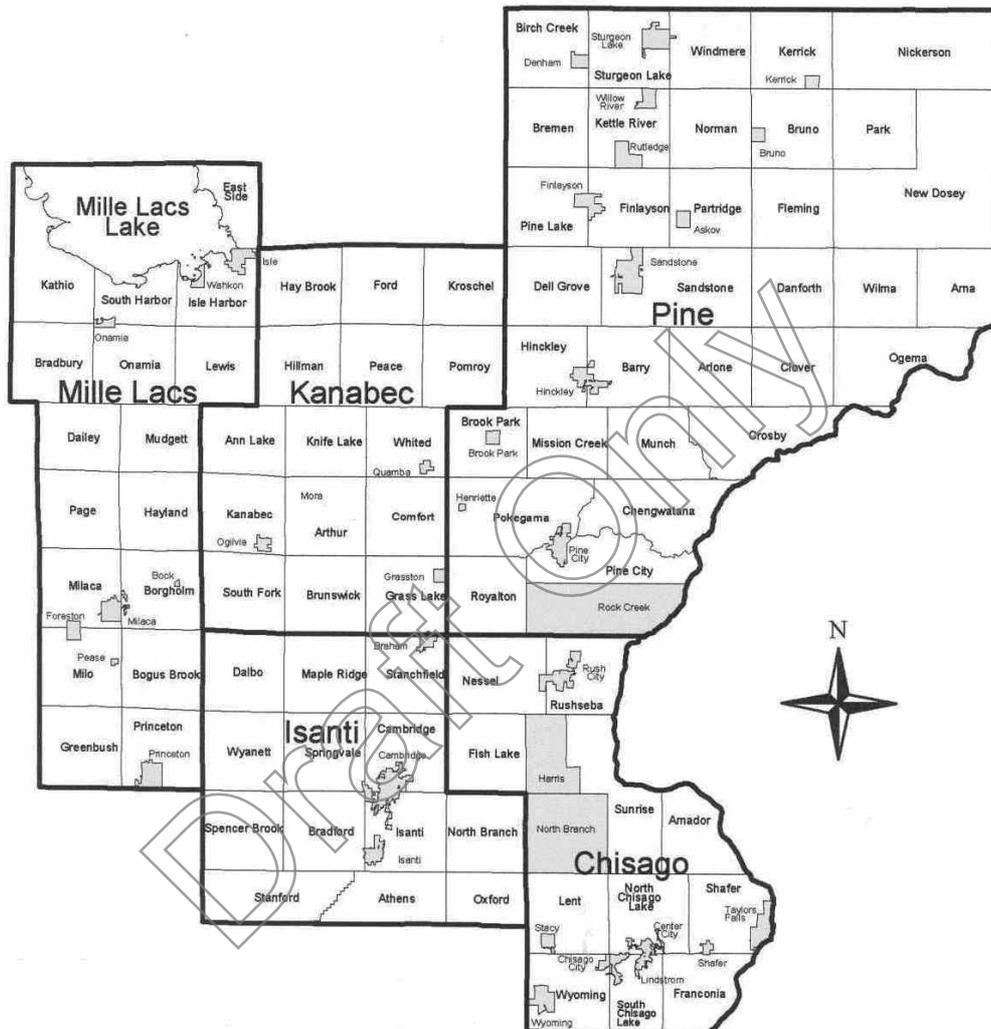


# A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs & Pine Counties in East Central Minnesota.



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b><u>CHAPTER</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
Executive Summary	3
Summary Background Information	4
Demographics and Statistics	6
DevelopMN	10
Topic Areas...	
Human Capital	12
SWOT, Strategic Direction, Action Plan & Evaluation Framework	
Economic Competitiveness	14
SWOT, Strategic Direction, Action Plan & Evaluation Framework	
Community Resources SWOT, Strategic Direction and Action Plan & Evaluation Framework	16
Foundational Assets SWOT, Strategic Direction and Action Plan & Evaluation Framework	17
Directory of Acronyms & Potential Partners	19
 <b><u>APPENDAGES</u></b>	
Appendix A	Documentation of Press Release and Public Comments
Appendix B	Document Dissemination
Appendix C	2016 Regional Demographical / Statistical Profile
Appendix D	<i>DevelopMN</i> , the Greater MN Development Strategy
Appendix E	List of Potential Economic Development Projects from Local Governments
Appendix F	Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee Membership
Appendix G	East Central Regional Development Commission Board Membership
Appendix H	Resolution Approving the CEDS Document

Vision Statement: Make our region's economy stronger, more diversified and sustainable through collaboration and strategic action.

## **Executive Summary**

### **What is a CEDS**

A CEDS - short for a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, is a collaborative regional economic development plan for a specific geographical area - in our case, the MN Economic Development Region 7E / East Central Minnesota - Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Pine Counties.

This CEDS document takes what is often described as a "10,000 foot view" of our five-county region - not only looking at common issues in our region's economy that hold us back from excelling economically, but also comes full circle by analyzing these issues and formulating proposed strategies to mitigate these conditions, working with strategic partners in the public and private sectors.

The CEDS document takes into account and integrates, where appropriate, other planning efforts effecting the region including, but not limited to the *DevelopMN* document that was developed by the Minnesota Association of Development Organizations (MADO). Regions throughout Greater Minnesota share many qualities and challenges, but lacked alignment needed to take advantage of shared priorities and maximize the use of resources.

### **Why is a CEDS Important**

A CEDS is a vital plan for any region. It details current economic conditions, catalogs the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and suggests opportunities to capitalize on the strengths and opportunities and mitigate the region's weaknesses and threats.

A CEDS is also a connection between the region and the US Department of Commerce / Economic Development Administration (EDA). The EDA has been a key partner in improving the economic conditions of East Central Minnesota for over 40 years. Their financial support has aided in creating several industrial parks in many cities in our region, the creation of a virtual reality training center and technology business incubator / accelerator at Pine Technical and Community College in Pine City, assisted in funding the infrastructure for a new 181 acre medical campus in Sandstone, assisted in providing infrastructure to Polaris' R&D facility in Wyoming, and more.

The EDA has also historically assisted in writing down the cost of many technical assistance of programs in our region, including the business planning / financing assistance of the MN Small Business Development Center, educational financial resources summits for businesses and lenders, the operation of a regional small business revolving loan fund, tasked with assisting new, expanding or relocating businesses in our region with gap financing, and so many other programs assisting residents, entrepreneurs and businesses in our region.

All economic development programs of the East Central Regional Development Commission strive to create and retain jobs, grow the local tax base, and create wealth in our five-county region.

## **Background**

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) has been developed by the East Central Regional Development Commission (ECRDC), a local unit of government formed under the State of Minnesota's Regional Development Act of 1969, as amended, serving Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Pine Counties in East Central Minnesota, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Commerce / Economic Development Administration (EDA).

Formed in 1973, the ECRDC has served as this region's EDA Economic Development District, and, as such, has been the author and driving force behind the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) since that time.

## **Planning Process**

As previously mentioned, the East Central Regional Development Commission has been preparing CEDS plans for our region since the 1970s. These documents typically have a five year scope, and annual updates to these plans that bring up to date the status and conditions in our region are prepared every year. As such, economic development planning is a continuous process.

Germaine to this specific planning document, in summer, 2016, a survey was sent to local units of government and public colleges in the region asking them for their thoughts and sentiments on a variety of economic development topics in the region.

Concurrently, the CEDS Strategy Committee, a nine member group composed of representatives of several key fields (see Appendix F of this document for membership and representations) tasked with providing input to this plan based on their professional experience, met regularly to review these surveys, discuss their results, review regional demographics and statistics, analyze our region's attributes, and ultimately oversee the creation of this CEDS planning document.

Upon completion of this CEDS document, it was made available for public review and comment (please see Appendixes A & B of this document for additional details on this). All comments received were carefully considered by the CEDS Strategy Committee and changes to the CEDS document were made per the consensus of this group. The CEDS Strategy Committee then forwarded this document to the East Central Regional Development Commission, the US Department of Commerce / Economic Development Administration designated Economic Development District for our five counties, with a recommendation of approval. After careful consideration, the East Central Regional Development Commission voted to approve and adopt this CEDS document (see appendix H of this document for additional details on adoption of this plan).

## **Synopsis**

Our region, as all regions do, face many hurdles in our quest to prosperity: workforce training and development concerns, business retention and expansion issues, gaps in broadband internet availability, business succession and continuation worries, the availability of quality child care and many more.

But, it isn't all doom and gloom. We have bright people with the skills needed in today's economy. We have access to the resources that can accelerate a bright entrepreneur to success. And our region has strong partners in the public and private sectors that are committed to seeing us all succeed.

In this CEDS we'll explore what makes our region tick, and ways we come up short. We'll conduct a SWOT Analysis that identifies our region's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, then develop some ways to mitigate these situations with measurable benchmarks.

## **Our Region**

Our region, composed of Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Pine Counties is located north of the Twin Cities Metro Area in East Central Minnesota. We have a diverse regional economy from tourism, to high technology, to natural resources, to manufacturing, to medical devices to construction. Our region has several business clusters, with metal manufacturing, and plastic injection molding being the largest. Additional details on this can be found in Appendix C - 2016 Regional Demographical / Statistical Profile.

When looking at our physical environment, we see vast tracts of woods, lakes and farm fields. Historically we've played off these well with a strong tourism economy - especially in the northern part of the region. Our climate of warm summers and cold winters lends itself well to recreation and tourism, as well as agriculture concerns.

In preparing this document, many other regional plans were reviewed for compatibility, including Hazard Mitigation Plans, Comprehensive Plans, and Economic Development Plans. Every effort was made to ensure that this CEDS complements them, and is not in conflict with them.

## **Current Situation**

It's often said that it is hard to know where you're going if you don't know where you're starting from. In this section we take a brief look at our region's current demographics and statistics. This will help provide us a benchmark as to where we currently sit.

In this section, we'll see a brief snapshot of our current economic condition and situation shown through several demographic and statistical tables. Additional in depth review and analysis of our region's statistics can be found in appendage C of this document.

## Demographics & Statistics

**Table 1**

### Population

	2015	2010	2000	% change 2000 - 2015	% change 2010 - 2015
Chisago County	54,332	53,887	41,101	32.19%	0.83%
Isanti County	38,521	37,816	31,287	23.12%	1.86%
Kanabec County	15,908	16,239	14,996	6.08%	-2.04%
Mille Lacs County	25,788	26,097	22,330	15.49%	-1.18%
Pine County	29,107	29,750	26,530	9.71%	-2.16%
Region 7E	163,656	163,789	136,244	20.12%	-0.08%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 1 outlines our region's population in recent years. We saw our population increase sharply in the 2000s, but the "great recession" has taken a toll on our region - contrary to our long term trends, we've seen a small decline in total regional population since 2010. Table 2 details that approximately 61% of our region's residents are in the traditional working age, that is, aged 19-65 years, with the remainder being school aged and senior citizens. While this doesn't encapsulate the workforce, we know that having a thriving workforce is crucial to retaining and recruiting businesses to our region.

**Table 2**

### Population by Age Groups

	Total Population	Under 18	19 – 65	65 +
Chisago County	53,887	13,847	33,793	6,247
Isanti County	37,816	9,805	23,331	4,680
Kanabec County	16,239	3,896	9,684	2,659
Mille Lacs County	26,097	6,615	15,276	4,206
Pine County	29,750	6,599	18,295	4,856
Region 7E	163,789	40,762	100,379	22,648

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Table 3**

### Median Age

	Median Age
Chisago County	39.7 years
Isanti County	37.6 years
Kanabec County	42.1 years
Mille Lacs County	39.4 years
Pine County	41.6 years

Source: United States Census Bureau



*Pine Technical College Incubator*

**Table 4**  
**2015 Unemployment Rates**

2015	US	MN	Region 7E	Chisago	Isanti	Kanabec	Mille Lacs	Pine
January	6.1	4.7	6.9	5.6	5.9	9.8	8.2	8
February	5.8	4.5	6.7	5.3	5.9	9.8	7.9	7.9
March	5.6	4.4	6.7	5.3	5.6	10	8	7.8
April	5.1	3.6	5	4.1	4.1	7.2	5.9	5.8
May	5.3	3.5	4.3	3.8	3.8	5.6	5	4.8
June	5.5	3.8	4.5	4.1	4.1	5.4	5.3	4.9
July	5.6	3.7	4.3	3.9	3.9	5.3	4.9	4.6
August	5.2	3.3	3.9	3.6	3.5	5	4.4	4.1
September	4.9	3.2	3.8	3.4	3.4	4.8	4.2	4
October	4.8	3	3.5	3.1	3.2	4.4	4	3.8
November	4.8	3.1	4	3.4	3.3	5.5	4.9	4.6
December	4.8	3.7	5.5	4.4	4.4	8.1	6.9	6.1

Source: Minnesota Dept. of Employment and Economic Development

Unemployment has always been a concern in our region. Tables 3 & 4 detail not only the seasonality of our region's employment, but also shows that in many locations how we lag the state and national averages.

**Table 5**  
**2005 to 2016 August Unemployment Rate, Not Seasonally Adjusted**

Year-Month	U S	MN	Chisago County	Isanti County	Kanabec County	Mille Lacs County	Pine County
2016-08	5.0	3.8	3.9	4.2	5.2	4.7	4.7
2015-08	5.2	3.3	3.6	3.5	5.0	4.4	4.1
2014-08	6.3	3.7	3.9	4.1	5.3	5.0	4.6
2013-08	7.3	4.6	4.8	5.1	6.2	5.9	5.4
2012-08	8.2	5.5	6.0	6.4	7.3	7.2	6.5
2011-08	9.1	6.2	6.9	7.5	8.1	8.1	7.3
2010-08	9.5	7.1	8.3	8.5	9.3	9.6	8.3
2009-08	9.6	7.7	9.0	8.6	10.8	11.2	9.5
2008-08	6.1	5.4	5.8	5.7	8.2	7.9	7.2
2007-08	4.6	4.3	4.8	4.8	6.4	6.3	5.9
2006-08	4.6	3.5	3.6	3.8	4.9	5.1	4.6
2005-08	4.9	3.4	3.6	3.4	4.7	4.6	4.7

Source: Minnesota Dept. of Employment and Economic Development

**Table 6**  
**Education**

Education Attainment	Chisago	Isanti	Kanabec	Mille Lacs	Pine
Population 18 to 24 years	4,202	2,940	1,137	1,871	2,030
Less than high school graduate	21.1%	14.4%	17.0%	16.8%	14.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	38.2%	42.2%	42.7%	35.6%	40.3%
Some college or associate's degree	36.2%	39.4%	37.7%	38.6%	41.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher	4.6%	4.0%	2.6%	8.9%	3.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

**Table 7**  
**Labor Force**

	Chisago	Isanti	Kanabec	Mille Lacs	Pine	Region 7E
Population 16 years and over	42,215	29,667	12,913	20,094	23,916	128,805
In labor force	29,193	20,976	8,089	12,834	14,149	85,241
Civilian Labor Force	29,169	20,953	8,085	12,831	14,146	85,184
Employed	27,429	19,346	7,174	11,745	12,937	78,631
Unemployed	1,740	1,607	911	1,086	1,209	
Armed Forces	24	23	4	3	3	
Not in labor force	13,022	8,691	4,824	7,260	9,767	

Source: United States Census Bureau



*Mora - Cambridge Industrial Park Showcase*

**Table 8**  
**Employment by Industry**

Industry	Chisago	Isanti	Kanabec	Mille Lacs	Pine
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	27,429	19,346	7,174	11,745	12,937
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	362	293	248	336	502
Construction	2,889	1,892	726	1,004	1,222
Manufacturing	4,314	3,138	990	1,817	1,264
Wholesale trade	800	496	165	233	198
Retail Sales	2,805	2,510	971	1,170	1,511
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1,456	937	315	623	606
Information	242	173	125	112	98
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	1,391	957	323	439	479
Professional, scientific, and management and administrative and waste management services	2,287	1,160	375	684	558
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	6,449	4,693	1,705	3,130	2,511
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	1,678	1,354	638	926	2,255
Other services, except public administration	1,411	984	332	629	593
Public administration	1,345	759	261	642	1,140

Source: United States Census Bureau

We see a large difference in median age of residents in Table 8. Our region has a wide gap of persons living in poverty, from as low as 6% in Chisago County, to as much as 1 in 5 in Mille Lacs County, with incomes, both household and per capita showing swings just as dramatic.

**Table 9**  
**Income**

	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	% Persons in Poverty
Chisago County	70,223	29,293	6.2%
Isanti County	59,588	26,406	7.8%
Kanabec County	46,872	22,705	13.8%
Mille Lacs County	48,763	23,510	12.0%
Pine County	44,680	22,129	17.5%

Source: United States Census Bureau - 2014

## ***DevelopMN***

This CEDS document takes into account and integrates, where appropriate, other planning efforts effecting our region including, but not limited to the *DevelopMN* framework which was created by the Minnesota Association of Development Organizations (MADO).

This *DevelopMN* plan helps identify needed statewide alignment our rural regions and documents a broadly supported strategy for creating shared prosperity. This Regional CEDS will align and integrate with the *DevelopMN* Strategy.

As part of *DevelopMN*, four cornerstones were developed as key components of strong regions and communities. When approached in a coordinated way these cornerstones will assist in creating prosperity in Greater Minnesota through the following focus areas:

- **Human Capital**
- **Economic Competitiveness**
- **Community Resources**
- **Foundational assets**

The SMART Goal Criteria was used in formulating this CEDS. "SMART" is an acronym with each letter providing a process to establish goals. The following is the breakdown of each individual meaning:

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

The goals and strategies of this regional plan are collectively addressed on a **voluntary basis** and are not intended to circumvent, erode or alleviate local control.

For each of these cornerstone topics, we will undertake a SWOT Analysis, which will identify perceived Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, and include it in this CEDS. Please note that a statewide SWOT Analysis - an analysis of attributes common to all rural regions of Minnesota was undertaken as part of the *DevelopMN* planning effort. A copy of the *DevelopMN* plan is attached to the document as Appendage D and includes this statewide SWOT Analysis.

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool used to ensure that there are clear objectives informed by a comprehensive understanding of an area's capabilities and capacity. This SWOT Analysis identifies the region's competitive advantages – those indigenous assets the make a region special or competitive in the national and global economies. This is juxtaposed against those internal or external factors that can keep an area from realizing its potential. The following are definitions of the SWOT Analysis elements:

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

Following the SWOT Analysis for each of the Four Pillar topics, we will have a Strategic Direction / Action Plan that outlines ideas and strategies to mitigate the Pillar's Weaknesses and Threats, as well as capitalize on the Strengths and Opportunities.

Please note that these Strategic Direction / Action Plans have been deemed as the best courses of action for this purpose by the CEDS Strategy Committee and the East Central Regional Development Commission at this time. However, times and conditions do change, and opportunities may avail themselves to us tomorrow, that are not available today. Please know that each and every item in the Strategic Direction / Action Plan may not be acted on, as other issues may spring forward. Many local units of government and colleges submitted potential projects for inclusion as action items in this plan (a full list is attached to this CEDS as Appendix E). Please note that while the CEDS Strategy Committee and East Central Regional Development Commission finds these projects valuable to our region and worthy of inclusion in this CEDS, not all will be spelled out in this Strategic Direction / Action Plans as the projects are just too numerous.

Project prioritization is difficult to achieve. The time frame for this Strategic Direction / Action Plan is five years . All projects have strong merit, otherwise they would not be included in this CEDS. Also, many of these projects will be undertaken concurrently, not consecutively. Further, there is overlap on many of the planned elements - and count on synergies between these as we try to avoid the "silo" mentality. Some of these elements will be completed sooner than others.

The CEDS Strategy Committee did prioritize the economic development needs of our community, and came up with the following prioritization: 1) Business Retention & Expansion, 2) Business Recruiting & Prospecting, 3) Broadband / High Speed Internet, Etc., 4) Workforce Development 5) Business Transition / Succession Planning, 6) Daycare, 7 tied) Equity Funding, 7 tied) Rail Industrial Park, 8 tied) Workforce Housing, 8 tied) Small Business Development Center / SCORE - Direct Counseling to Businesses, 9) Business Training Events (Financial Resources, Export, Gov. Contracting, Entrepreneur Fair Etc.) 10) Northern Lights Express (NLX) Station Development, 11) Crowd Funding, and 12) Arts.

Our CEDS Strategy Committee and the East Central Regional Development Commission reserves the right to reprioritize these elements on an as-needed basis as conditions, situations and opportunities warrant and direct staff efforts as such.

No specific dollar figure is attached to each individual element. The East Central Regional Development Commission prepares their budget annually, and these prioritized items will be factored in to the annual budget. The scope of this plan is 5 years. It should be noted that it is anticipated that the greatest costs are anticipated to be tied to staff time. It should be noted that we plan to partner with other likeminded organizations to not only reduce redundancy, but also reduce costs. We also plan to mitigate costs as much as possible, again working with partners, but also exploring opportunities for grants and cost sharing, whenever possible.

Following the Strategic Direction / Action Plan under each of these pillars, we have an Evaluation Framework - a method of evaluating our efforts through the above mentioned Strategic Direction / Action Plan.

### **Human Capital**

Human Capital is the greatest asset our region has. Bright, skilled and agile people with a broad base of backgrounds, experiences and education that make up the core of our region. Without them, we would need no CEDS - as we would have no business economy.

There are two key cornerstones in the Human Capital Pillar: Labor Force and Educational Attainment.



### **Sandstone Medical Campus and 181 acre Business Park**



## Human Capital SWOT Analysis

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b>          Strong Post Secondary Education System          Strategic workforce partnerships like CMJTS          High number of Senior Citizens          Seniors looking for volunteer work          Strong Education / Technical Assistance providers like the MN SBDC, SCORE, etc.          Work ethic of individuals          Strong K-12 Schools,          Entrepreneurial attitude          Non-Profit Foundations, DEED,          Strong background in regional collaboration</p>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b>          Lack of 4-year + university          Rural / Metro Divide          Aging workforce          Brain drain of high school graduates          Lack of technical education in schools          Occupations in demand not being filled          Lack of affordable / workforce housing          A "Brain Drain" of skilled young people</p>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITES</b>          Increased technical education at schools / colleges          Lots of young / school aged people          Great careers outside 4 year degree          Willingness of strategic partners          Spirit of collaboration and cooperation</p>	<p><b>THREATS</b>          Lack of Housing options          Childcare          Funding opportunities          Lack of priority of technical education          Lack of opportunities for "trailing spouse"</p>

## Human Capital Strategic Direction / Action Plan and Evaluation Framework

What	How	Outcomes	Potential Partners
Build childcare capacity within our region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Hold childcare resource event</li> <li>– Promote RLF availability for childcare businesses</li> </ul>	Increase childcare capacity within our region by 5% by 2021	ECRDC RLF, First Children's Finance, Local units of government, State of MN, Childcare Resource and Referral, MLB, Lakes & Pines.
Expand broadband internet penetration within our region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Connect local units of government and interested parties with technical assistance and resource providers.</li> </ul>	Increase 10/2 broadband internet availability by 5% within our region	MN DEED Office of Broadband, Blandin Foundation, EDA Center, Initiative Foundation and others.
Promote workforce development opportunities within our region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Connect business, students and individuals to resources available from our potential partners</li> </ul>	TBD	Central MN Jobs and Training Services, GPS 45/93, EDA Center, MN DEED, MLB and others

## Economic Competitiveness

There are two key cornerstones in the Economic Competitiveness Pillar: Entrepreneurship & Innovation, and Small Business Growth

### Economic Competitiveness SWOT Analysis

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Skilled workforce</li> <li>Location on key transportation routes</li> <li>Diverse base of businesses</li> <li>Many regional clusters including manufacturing, injection molding and others.</li> <li>Proximity to regional population and transportation centers</li> <li>Productive employees and work ethic</li> <li>Manufacturing associations</li> <li>Availability of economic development loan programs</li> <li>Available industrial park land, some shovel ready</li> <li>Beautiful natural setting</li> <li>Strategic partners: DEED, GPS45/93, Initiative Foundation, etc.</li> <li>A diverse regional economy</li> </ul>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shortage of skilled workers</li> <li>Lower wages than nearby areas</li> <li>Lack of workforce housing</li> <li>Lack of Venture Capital</li> <li>Regional Branding</li> <li>Lack of rail access</li> <li>Shortage of business incubator / accelerator space.</li> <li>Higher paying jobs within driving distance</li> <li>Lack of broadband access in many locations</li> <li>Many external trends and forces we have little or no control over</li> </ul>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Centrally located between population centers.</li> <li>Strong workforce training opportunities.</li> <li>Broadband expansion programs from strategic partners</li> <li>Skilled economic developers in region</li> <li>Strong E.D. partners - banks, foundations, non profits</li> <li>Business incubator / accelerator</li> <li>Opportunities to create rail industrial park</li> <li>Creation of equity / venture capital programs</li> <li>Opportunities to grow a sustainable regional economy</li> </ul>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proximity to regional population and transportation centers</li> <li>Turnover of business ownership with retiring baby boomers</li> <li>Higher wages offered in other regions</li> <li>Fuel prices</li> <li>The "Brain Drain" of young people not staying</li> <li>A continued deterioration in technical education opportunities in schools</li> <li>Trends of losing young people after being educated</li> </ul>

## Economic Competitiveness Strategic Direction / Action Plan and Evaluation Framework

What	How	Outcomes	Potential Partners
Grow existing businesses through Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) visits	-With strategic partners, visit businesses in the region to find out challenges and find ways to mitigate them. -BR&E Training for Local Units of government. - Informal business visit training for govt. leadership and staff	Double the number of regional BR&E visits by 2021	Local units of government, GPS 45/93, University of MN Extension, Initiative Foundation, EDA Center, SBDC, SCORE, Chambers and others
Explore & promote resources available to assist businesses	With strategic partners explore business assistance programs and make the known to businesses in our region	Create and make available a regional business resource directory, as well as hold at least two regional business educational events by 2021.	EDA, SCORE, SBDC, SBA, CMJTS, GPS 45/93, Local units of government and many more.
Work keep business located in our region by promoting the idea of business succession planning.	Enlisting partners and service providers to formulate a plan to reach businesses and give them options and ideas to help pass their business on locally.	Hold a keystone event on this topic, and incorporate this topic into BR&E visits by 2021	Anderson Center, SBDC, Initiative Foundation, Local units of government, EDA Center, GPS 45/93 and others
Diversify and strengthen the regional business community	With strategic partners, work to recruit new and expanding businesses to our region	Locate 5 new businesses to the region by 2021	GPS 45/93, SBDC, Local units of government, EDA Center, Initiative Foundation and others
Operate the regional EDA Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)	Market the RLF to businesses, entrepreneurs, lenders, local units of government and others.	Partner in financing 15 businesses to the region by 2021	ECRDC RLF Board, Local units of government, Initiative Foundation, SBDC, SCORE and others
Expand the region's business incubator and accelerator capacity	With strategic partners, promote the concept of business incubators and accelerators as a catalyst for business creation	Create 2 new virtual or physical business incubators or accelerators in the region by 2021	Colleges, GPS 45/93, SBDC, EDC Center, Local units of government, Initiative Foundation and others

## Community Resources

There are five key cornerstones in the Community Resources Pillar: Social Capital, Arts & Culture, Tourism, Natural Resources, and Water Quality

### Community Resources SWOT Analysis

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b>          Good schools and colleges in the region          Strong strategic partners and support of community and economic development          Strong medical facilities          Beautiful natural environment          Strategically located between population centers</p>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b>          Areas of blight and poverty          Lack of broadband internet in certain geographic areas          Lack of community infrastructure and funds to create new / maintain existing.          Willingness to commute          Shortage of child care          Collapse of Walleye fishery on Mille Lacs Lake          Population and development not located equitably across the region.</p>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>          Tourism          Healthy communities          Beautiful natural regional setting          Buildable space          Opportunities to expand broadband access          Committed strategic community and economic development partners          Opportunities for diversification</p>	<p><b>THREATS</b>          Lack of support for school enhancements          Decaying infrastructure          Lack of funding for crucial projects          Lack of support for change          Energy needs in an uncertain future          Natural hazards / weather / natural resource depletion, etc.</p>

### Community Resources Strategic Direction / Action Plan and Evaluation Framework

What	How	Outcomes	Potential Partners
Capitalize on our region's natural setting by promoting the tourism industry	Work with strategic partners to locate and promote assistance programs in this industry	Convene regular regional chamber educational events, increase sales in tourism businesses by 4% by 2021	Chambers, Local units of government, GPS 45/93, MN DEED, Initiative Foundation, MLB and others.
Strengthen our network of partners and promote workforce training	Work with strategic partners to locate and promote assistance programs in this industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hold two keystone events focused on workforce training by 2021.</li> <li>- Scenic Byways</li> </ul>	Pine Technical & Community College, Anoka Ramsey College, CMJTS, Local Units of Government, MLB, Chambers, GPS 45/93 and others.

## Foundational Assets

There are four key cornerstones in the Foundational Assets Pillar: Broadband Access, Active Transportation, Water - Wastewater Infrastructure and Housing Availability.

## Foundational Assets SWOT Analysis

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b>          Strong schools          Pine Technical and Community College          Anoka Ramsey College          Healthcare facilities          Strong, close knit business community          Recreational amenities          Land/open space/agriculture          Shovel ready industrial property          Prominent Mfg sector          Industry cluster/high tech manufacturing/          Transportation infrastructure - roads, air, rail          Natural resources: water, clean air, etc.</p>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b>          Broadband/internet infrastructure          Shortage of housing opportunities for all:          workforce, seniors, families, students          Aging population          Lack of rail served business parks          Commercial Building rehab/ blight          Downtown redevelopment in smaller          communities          Shortage of child care opportunities</p>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>          Local foods expansion          Industry cluster marketing          Broadband expansion assistance programs          Develop public/private partnerships          Shared local resources/intergovernmental          cooperation          Career technical advancement with schools          and colleges          College's customized training for private          sector          Housing Rehabilitation</p>	<p><b>THREATS</b>          Disparity in school funding          Broadband Internet / business model for          rural areas.          Lack of skilled workforce          Lack of child care center opportunities          Diminished grant opportunities from          government and others          State government funding decreased          Lack of housing opportunities for all sectors</p>

*Revolving Loan Fund loan made to Freedom Center in Princeton. Pictured (l-r) Jennifer Russell—ECRDC Economic Development Director, Cheryl Minks –Owner, Robert Voss—ECRDC Executive Director, Cindi Naumann—Owner, Mark Karnowski - Princeton City Administrator, and Ben Montzka—ECRDC Chairman*



## Foundational Assets Strategic Direction / Action Plan and Evaluation Framework

What	How	Outcomes	Potential Partners
Expand broadband internet penetration within our region	Connect local units of government and interested parties with technical assistance and resource providers	Increase 10/2 broadband internet availability by 5% within our region	MN DEED Office of Broadband, Blandin Foundation, Initiative Foundation and others.
Expand housing (workforce, student, family, senior, etc.) opportunities in our region	Connect local units of government and interested parties with technical assistance and resource providers	Bring this topic forward and start conversations by holding two keystone events focused on housing 2021	MN DEED, local units of government, MLB, GPS 45/93, ECHO, CMHP, MN Home Ownership Center and others.
Work to promote and strengthen the region's transit and transportation resources	With strategic partners, work to recruit new and expanding businesses to our region	Hold major Transportation event by 2021	MNDOT, DEED, Local Units of Government, Chambers, MLB, etc.
Strengthen the region's infrastructure (water, sewer, etc.)	Promote grant opportunities from resource providers to build capacity for business growth	Expand the water / sewer capacity at our LUGs by 5% by 2021	EDA, MNDOT, MLB, DEED, USDA Rural Dev and others
Expand gap financing technical assistance and management skills in the region.	With strategic partners, train local RLF operators on RLF operation and management	Ensure that every local unit of government in the region that has a gap financing loan fund is offered training resources.	EDA, DEED, Local Colleges, Local Units of Government, GPS 45/93, Initiative Foundation and others
Be the "Go-To" resource for economic development in our region	Make visits to local units of government and strategic partners, and convene regular meetings of LUGS and Economic Developers and strategic partners	Meet with all local units of government and economic development organizations at minimum annually to communicate economic development opportunities and needs.	EDA, DEED, Pine Technical & Community College, Anoka Ramsey College, Local Units of Government, GPS 45/93, Initiative Foundation and others

## Directory of Acronyms & Potential Partners

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Full Name</b>	<b>More Information</b>
CEDS	Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy	See Executive Summary
ECRDC	East Central Regional Development Commission	<a href="http://www.ecrdc.org">www.ecrdc.org</a>
RLF	ECRDC Revolving Loan Fund	<a href="http://www.ecrdc.org">www.ecrdc.org</a>
	First Children's Finance	<a href="http://www.firstchildrensfinance.org">www.firstchildrensfinance.org</a>
	Local Units of Government	See Map on Cover
	State of MN	<a href="http://www.mn.gov">www.mn.gov</a>
	Childcare Resource and Referral	<a href="http://www.pine.edu">www.pine.edu</a>
MLB	Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe	<a href="http://www.millelacsband.com">www.millelacsband.com</a>
	Pine Technical & Community College	<a href="http://www.pine.edu">www.pine.edu</a>
	Anoka Ramsey College	<a href="http://www.anokaramsey.edu">www.anokaramsey.edu</a>
	Lakes and Pines CAC	<a href="http://www.lakesandpines.org">www.lakesandpines.org</a>
MN DEED	MN Dept. of Employment & Economic Development	<a href="http://www.mn.gov/deed">www.mn.gov/deed</a>
	Blandin Foundation	<a href="http://www.blandinfoundation.org">www.blandinfoundation.org</a>
	EDA Center	<a href="http://www.edacenter.org">www.edacenter.org</a>
	Initiative Foundation	<a href="http://www.ifound.org">www.ifound.org</a>
CMJTS	Central MN Jobs & Training Services	<a href="http://www.cmjts.org">www.cmjts.org</a>
	GPS 45/93	<a href="http://www.gps4593.com">www.gps4593.com</a>
	University of MN Extension	<a href="http://www.extension.umn.edu">www.extension.umn.edu</a>
SBDC	Small Business Development Center	<a href="http://mn.gov/deed/business/help/sbdc/">mn.gov/deed/business/help/sbdc/</a>
SCORE	Service Corps of Retired Executives	<a href="http://www.score.org">www.score.org</a>
	Anderson Center	<a href="http://www.anderson-center.org">www.anderson-center.org</a>
SBA	Small Business Administration	<a href="http://www.sba.gov">www.sba.gov</a>
EDA	US Dept. of Commerce - Economic Development Admin.	<a href="http://www.eda.gov">www.eda.gov</a>
	Chambers of Commerce	Varies by location
	USDA Rural Development	<a href="http://www.rd.usda.gov">www.rd.usda.gov</a>



*CEDS Committee – Pictured l-r  
Loren Davis, Steve Kimmel, John Schlagel, Carla Dunckley, Joe Mulford, Karen  
Amundson & ECRDC Executive Director Robert Voss.*

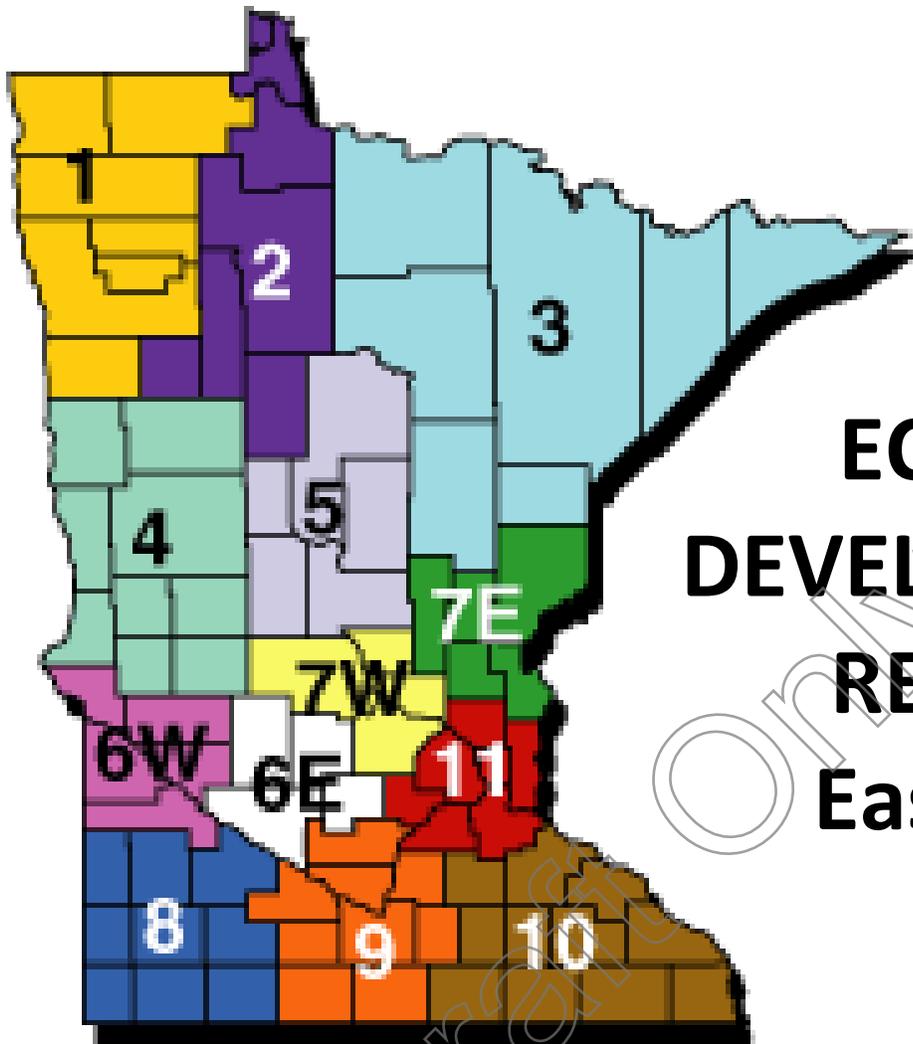
**Appendix A - Documentation of Public Notice & Comments Received**

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# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REGION 7E: East Central

***Covers counties:***

Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec,  
Mille Lacs, and Pine

## 2016 REGIONAL PROFILE

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## DEMOGRAPHICS

### POPULATION CHANGE, 2000-2015

Economic Development Region 7E – East Central includes a total of 5 counties, located in the Central Minnesota planning region. Region 7E was home to 163,416 people in 2015, comprising 3.0 percent of the state’s total population. The region saw a 19.9 percent population increase since 2000, making it the second fastest growing of the 13 economic development regions (EDRs) in the state, and now the seventh largest in total population. In comparison, the state of Minnesota saw an 11.6 percent gain from 2000 to 2015 (see Table 1).

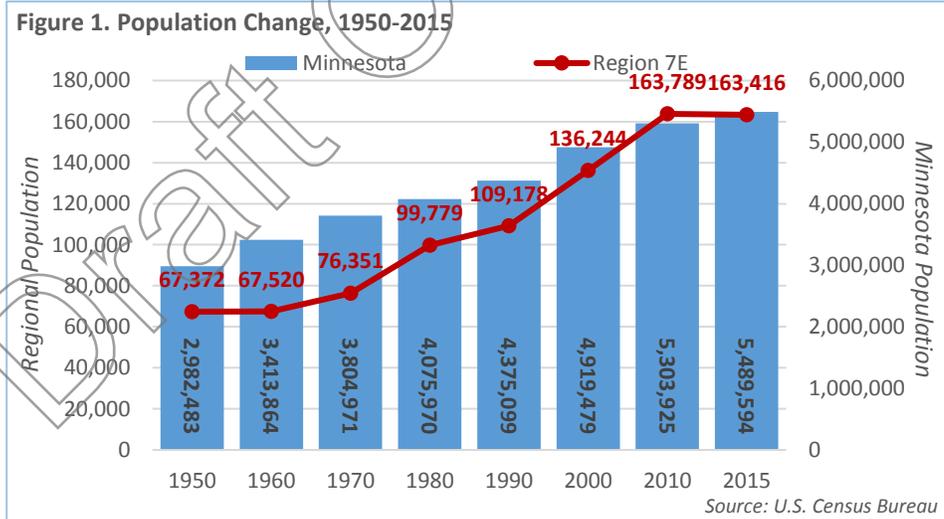
	2000 Population	2015 Estimates	2000-2015 Change	
			Number	Percent
<b>Region 7E</b>	<b>136,244</b>	<b>163,416</b>	<b>+27,172</b>	<b>+19.9%</b>
Chisago Co.	41,101	54,293	+13,192	+32.1%
Isanti Co.	31,287	38,429	+7,142	+22.8%
Kanabec Co.	14,996	15,837	+841	+5.6%
Mille Lacs Co.	22,330	25,788	+3,458	+15.5%
Pine Co.	26,530	29,069	+2,539	+9.6%
<b>Minnesota</b>	<b>4,919,479</b>	<b>5,489,594</b>	<b>+570,115</b>	<b>+11.6%</b>

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates](#)

All five counties in the region saw population gains since 2000, led by Chisago County, which is the largest county in the region and was the fifth fastest growing county in the state after welcoming 13,192 people. Isanti County gained 7,142 residents from 2000 to 2015, making it the seventh fastest growing county, while Mille Lacs grew by 3,458 people, and was the 14<sup>th</sup> fastest growing county. Pine was the 26<sup>th</sup> fastest growing county in the state, while Kanabec was the smallest county in the region and saw the least growth.

### POPULATION CHANGE, 1950-2015

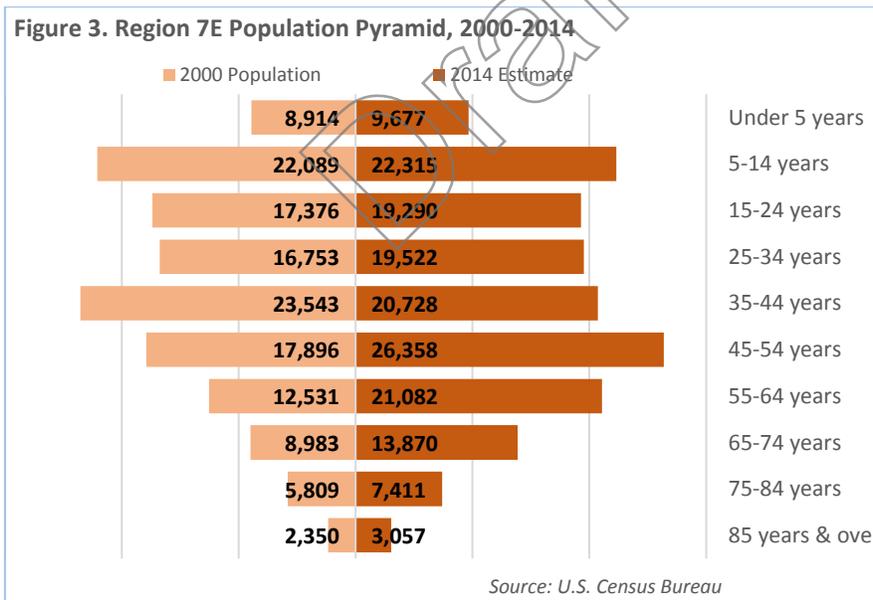
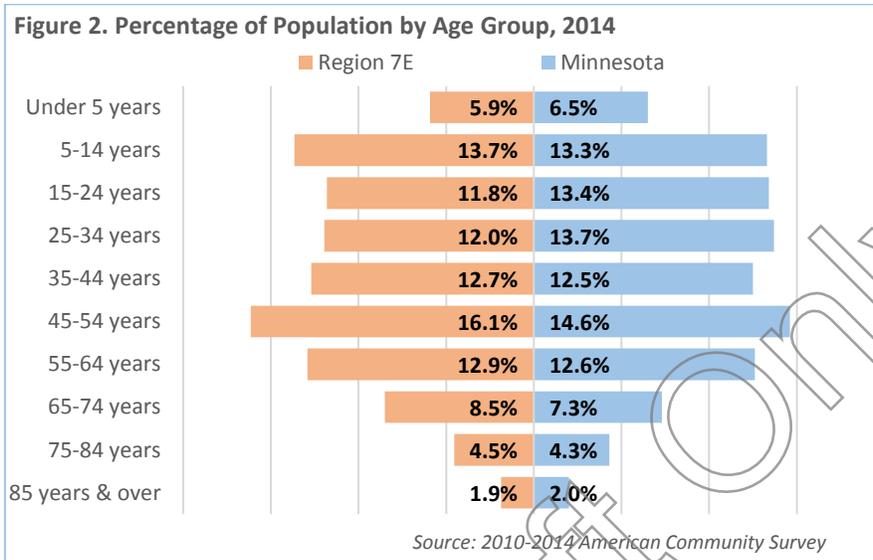
After enjoying rapid growth over the last half century, Region 7E’s population growth has slowed so far this decade. After gaining almost 100,000 new residents from 1950 to 2010, the region lost just over 300 residents from 2010 to 2015. The recent slowdown may have been associated with the recession, which led to a large number of foreclosures from 2008 to 2012, leading to population declines (see Figure 1).



All five counties in Region 7E saw population growth since 1950, led by Chisago and Isanti, which were the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> fastest growing counties in the state, with Chisago jumping nearly 330 percent and Isanti expanding 217 percent. Kanabec County grew 72.3 percent, making it the 22<sup>nd</sup> fastest growing county, followed closely by Mille Lacs in 24<sup>th</sup> and Pine in 27<sup>th</sup> place of the 87 counties in the state. By increasing 143 percent, Region 7E was the third fastest growing region in the state behind just Region 7W and Region 11 – the seven-county Twin Cities metro area.

**POPULATION BY AGE GROUP, 2000-2014**

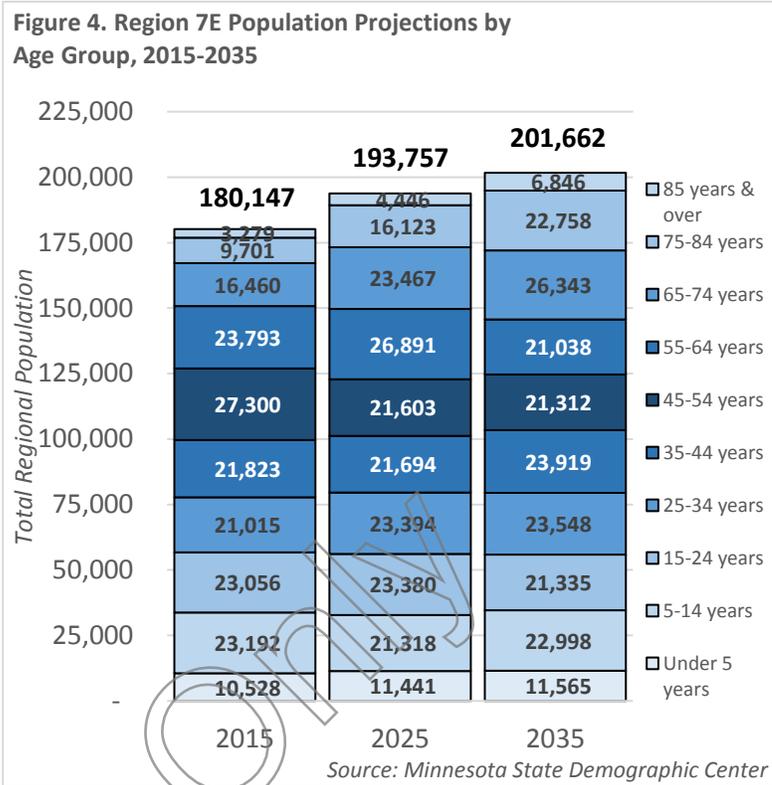
Region 7E’s population is slightly older than the state’s, with 14.9 percent of the population aged 65 years and over in 2014, compared to 13.6 percent statewide. At 29 percent, Region 7E also had a much higher percentage of people in the 45 to 64 year old age group, including the back end of the Baby Boom generation – people born between 1946 and 1964, which is creating a significant shift in the population over time. The largest portion of the population was still 25 to 54 years old, typically considered the “prime working years.” Just 31.4 percent of people in Region 7E were under 25 years of age, compared to 33.2 percent in the state. While the number of younger residents was rising slowly, the number of residents aged 45 years and over was rapidly increasing (see Figure 2 and Figure 3).



**POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY AGE GROUP, 2015-2035**

Region 7E is projected to enjoy continued population growth in the next 20 years as well. Though the 2015 projection is starting higher than 2014 estimates, according to population projections from the [State Demographic Center](#), Region 7E is expected to gain about 21,500 net new residents from 2015 to 2035, an 11.9 percent increase (see Figure 4). The state of Minnesota is projected to grow 10.8 percent.

However, much of this population growth is expected to be in the older age groups. Region 7E is projected to add 26,507 people aged 65 years and over, a 90 percent increase. The region is also expected to gain about 4,600 people in the 25- to 44-year-old age group, as well as a corresponding increase of about 1,000 more school-aged children. In contrast, Region 7E is expected to lose over 1,700 young people from 15 to 24 years, and about 8,750 people from 45 to 64 years of age – as the current Baby Boom generation moves through the population pyramid.



**POPULATION BY RACE, 2014**

Region 7E’s population is less diverse than the state’s, but is becoming more diverse over time. In 2014, 94.4 percent of the region’s residents reported White alone as their race, compared to 85.2 percent of residents statewide. At 1.7 percent, Region 7E had a higher percentage of American Indian or Alaska Natives than the state, but otherwise had much smaller percentages of people of all other race and origin groups (see Table 2).

The region saw a 17.7 percent gain in the number of White residents, then saw much faster increases in every other race group. The number of Black or African American residents and people of Two or More Races more than doubled, while people of Hispanic or Latino origin increased about 96 percent from 2000 to 2014. The number of Asian residents and people of Some Other Race also expanded rapidly in the region over the decade, while American Indians increased 26 percent.

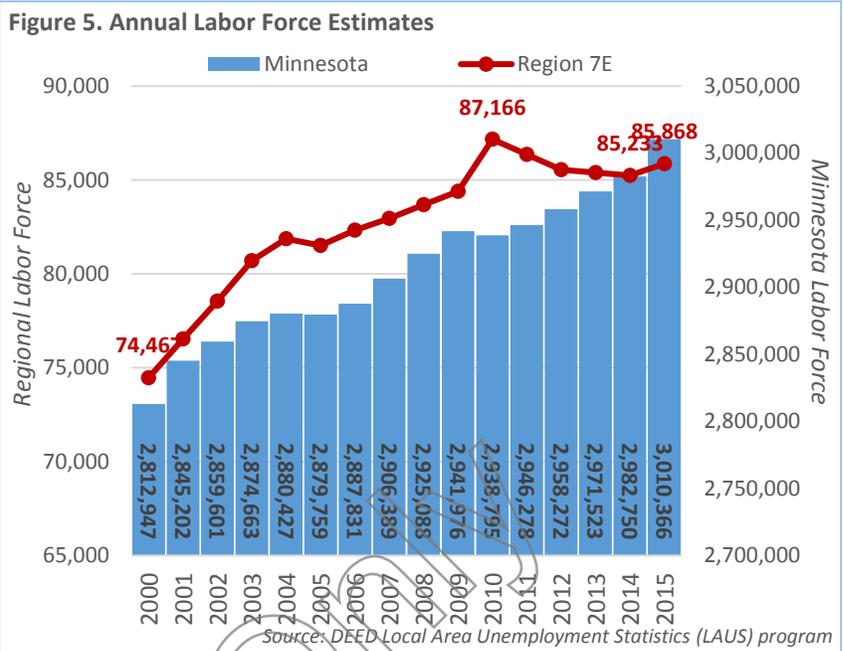
Table 2. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2014	Region 7E			Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	Change from 2000-2014	Percent	Change from 2000-2014
<b>Total</b>	<b>163,310</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>+19.9%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>+9.4%</b>
White	154,192	94.4%	+17.7%	85.2%	+4.2%
Black or African American	1,707	1.0%	+138.1%	5.4%	+69.2%
American Indian & Alaska Native	2,835	1.7%	+26.1%	1.0%	+2.8%
Asian & Other Pac. Islander	1,042	0.6%	+64.4%	4.3%	+61.8%
Some Other Race	597	0.4%	+75.1%	1.5%	+19.8%
Two or More Races	2,937	1.8%	+130.4%	2.6%	+68.0%
Hispanic or Latino	3,043	1.9%	+96.2%	4.9%	+84.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

## LABOR FORCE

### LABOR FORCE CHANGE, 2000-2015

According to data from DEED’s [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#) program, Region 7E has experienced steady growth in the size of the available labor force over the last 15 years in response to changing economic conditions. As the region’s population grew through 2010, so did the labor force. However, the region saw a peak of 87,166 workers in 2010, and since then, Region 7E has lost about 1,300 workers. Despite the recent drop, the region still has over 11,000 more workers than it had in 2000, climbing from 74,467 workers in 2000 to 85,868 workers in 2015. The state was also gaining workers over the past decade and



a half, without the recent drop (see Figure 5). As the economy has recovered, the labor market in the region has been getting tighter, with about 4,250 unemployed workers actively seeking work in 2015.

### LABOR FORCE PROJECTIONS, 2015-2025

Despite the region’s projected population growth, applying current labor force participation rates to future population projections by age group, as shown in Figure 4 above, would lead to much slower growth in workforce numbers in Region 7E over the next decade (see Table 3).

Though the total labor force numbers are artificially high due to the population projections, the data show that the age composition of the workforce will see a significant shift over time, with a steady gain in the number of workers aged 20 to 44 years and big gains in workers aged 55 years and over, against a huge decline in the number of workers aged 45 to 54 years - the region may lose about 4,900 workers in the 45 to 54 year old age group. The region is expected to gain almost 4,000 workers aged 55 years and over. The 25 to 54 year old age group will still be the largest part of the labor force, accounting for 59.4 percent of the total (see Table 3). This will likely lead to a tight labor market in the future, with employers needing to respond to the changing labor force availability.

	2015 Labor Force Projection	2025 Labor Force Projection	2015-2025 Change	
			Numeric	Percent
16 to 19 years	5,601	5,121	-480	-8.6%
20 to 24 years	7,830	9,046	+1,216	+15.5%
25 to 44 years	35,959	37,848	+1,889	+5.3%
45 to 54 years	23,305	18,442	-4,863	-20.9%
55 to 64 years	15,636	17,672	+2,036	+13.0%
65 to 74 years	3,897	5,556	+1,659	+42.6%
75 years & over	686	1,087	+401	+58.5%
<b>Total Labor Force</b>	<b>92,915</b>	<b>94,772</b>	<b>+1,857</b>	<b>+2.0%</b>

Source: calculated from [Minnesota State Demographic Center population projections](#) and [2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates](#).

**EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS, 2014**

With 66.2 percent of people aged 16 years and over in the labor force, Region 7E had lower labor force participation rates than the state’s 70.1 percent. The region had lower labor force participation rates than the state in all but the youngest age groups, and the overall rate was even lower because a higher percentage of Region 7E’s labor force was in older age groups (see Table 4).

Likewise, the region had lower participation rates than the state in all but one race group; and also had big unemployment rate disparities for all but one minority group – the exception being Asian workers. Region 7E had about 5,700 veterans and 4,975 workers with disabilities in the labor force, though they also had higher unemployment rates. In sum, unemployment rates in the region were highest for young people, minorities, workers with disabilities, and people with lower educational attainment.

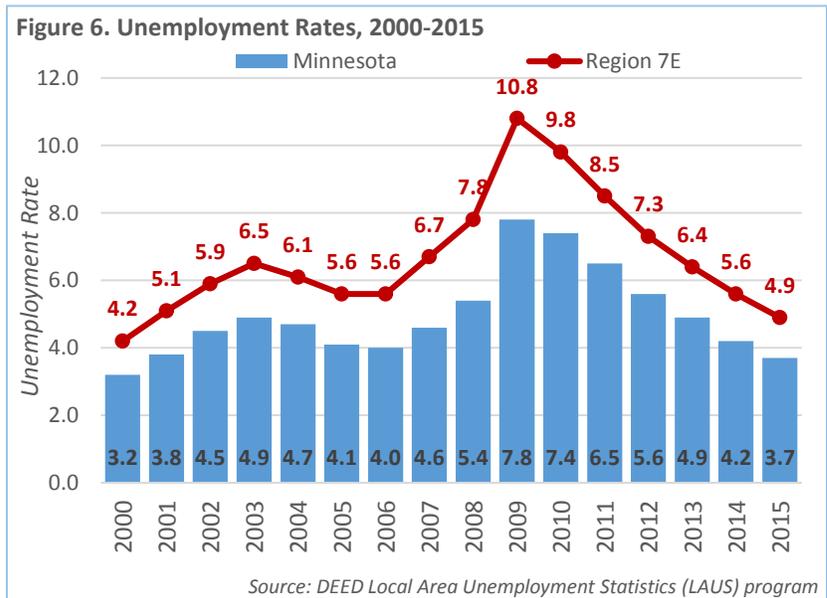
**Table 4. Employment Characteristics, 2014**

	Region 7E			Minnesota	
	In Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate
<b>Total Labor Force</b>	<b>85,269</b>	<b>66.2%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>70.1%</b>	<b>6.5%</b>
16 to 19 years	4,301	51.8%	15.6%	51.1%	18.7%
20 to 24 years	6,954	82.0%	13.4%	81.8%	10.2%
25 to 44 years	33,786	83.9%	7.4%	88.1%	5.8%
45 to 54 years	22,501	85.4%	6.9%	87.3%	5.0%
55 to 64 years	13,855	65.7%	5.9%	71.8%	4.9%
65 to 74 years	3,284	23.7%	4.6%	26.6%	4.1%
75 years & over	553	5.3%	1.2%	5.9%	3.5%
<b>Employment Characteristics by Race &amp; Hispanic Origin</b>					
White alone	82,017	66.9%	7.5%	70.2%	5.6%
Black or African American	336	23.5%	24.7%	68.0%	16.4%
American Indian & Alaska Native	1,063	51.6%	15.8%	59.4%	17.4%
Asian or Other Pac. Islanders	593	72.6%	6.0%	70.6%	7.2%
Some Other Race	255	62.4%	7.5%	76.2%	11.0%
Two or More Races	966	66.0%	11.3%	69.5%	13.2%
Hispanic or Latino	1,189	59.3%	13.4%	75.0%	10.1%
<b>Employment Characteristics by Veteran Status</b>					
Veterans, 18 to 64 years	5,711	79.2%	12.0%	82.9%	6.9%
<b>Employment Characteristics by Disability</b>					
With Any Disability	4,975	47.7%	12.6%	51.0%	14.0%
<b>Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment</b>					
Population, 25 to 64 years	70,146	80.0%	6.9%	84.0%	5.4%
Less than H.S. Diploma	3,861	67.3%	11.9%	65.8%	13.1%
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent	23,368	75.4%	8.9%	79.1%	7.3%
Some College or Assoc. Degree	28,722	82.5%	6.7%	85.3%	5.6%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	14,200	88.1%	2.8%	89.2%	3.1%

*Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates*

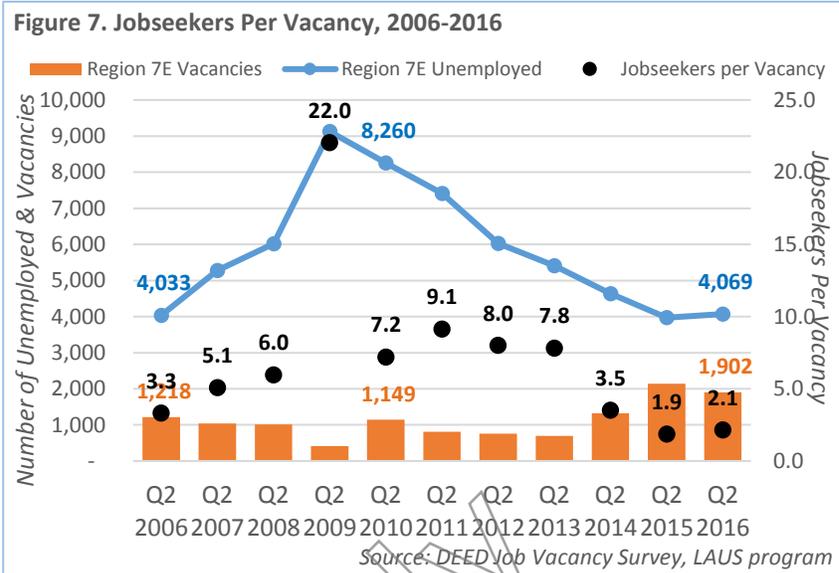
**UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, 2000-2015**

Region 7E has consistently had among the highest unemployment rates in the state, typically hovering at least 1.5 percent above the state rate. According to DEED’s [Local Area Unemployment Statistics](#), Region 7E’s unemployment rate rose as high as 10.8 percent in 2009, which was the highest of the 13 EDRs, and 3 percent above the state rate. Since then, the state and region’s economies have recovered and unemployment rates have dropped, with Region 7E reporting 4.9 percent in 2015, which was 1.2 percent above the state rate (see Figure 6).



**JOBSEEKERS PER VACANCY, 2016**

As the number of available workers has declined, the region’s labor market has tightened. One clear demonstration of this is the ratio of unemployed jobseekers per vacancy, which dipped to 2.1-to-1 in the second quarter of 2016. According to recent job vacancy survey results, there were 1,902 openings reported by employers compared to 4,069 unemployed jobseekers in the region. The region’s ratio is also affected by the large outflow of workers to other regions for work. The ratio climbed as high as 22-to-1 during the recession (see Figure 7).



**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT BY AGE GROUP, 2014**

With just 26 percent of adults aged 18 years and over having a college degree, Region 7E has lower educational attainment than the state, where 40.5 percent of adults have an associate, bachelor’s, or advanced degree. However, 26 percent of residents have some college experience, but no degree, compared to 24.8 percent statewide. Overall, Region 7E has lower educational attainment across all age groups, though younger people are taking advantage of new opportunities.

That is leading to changing educational attainment overall – 32.8 percent of people aged 18 to 24 years have attended some college, but hadn’t earned a degree yet, and 10.2 percent already had a college degree. Region 7E had a much higher percentage of people in the 25 to 44 year old age group who had earned associate degrees, but much lower percentages of people with bachelor’s degrees or higher. Region 7E has a higher percentage of the population in the oldest age groups, and those residents have much lower educational attainment than the rest of the state, and those in younger age groups. Nearly two-thirds of the region’s oldest residents stopped with a high school diploma or less (see Table 5).

	Region 7E		Minnesota
	Number	Percent	Percent
<b>18 to 24 years</b>	<b>12,180</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>12.3%</b>
Less than high school	2,116	17.4%	12.8%
High school grad. (incl. equiv.)	4,816	39.5%	26.0%
Some college, no degree	3,997	32.8%	43.4%
Associate's degree	671	5.5%	6.1%
Bachelor's degree	562	4.6%	11.3%
Advanced degree	18	0.1%	0.5%
<b>25 to 44 years</b>	<b>40,250</b>	<b>32.4%</b>	<b>34.3%</b>
Less than high school	2,571	6.4%	6.7%
High school grad. (incl. equiv.)	12,704	31.6%	19.5%
Some college, no degree	11,275	28.0%	22.0%
Associate's degree	5,927	14.7%	12.9%
Bachelor's degree	5,801	14.4%	27.5%
Advanced degree	1,972	4.9%	11.4%
<b>45 to 64 years</b>	<b>47,440</b>	<b>38.2%</b>	<b>35.6%</b>
Less than high school	3,168	6.7%	5.6%
High school grad. (incl. equiv.)	18,300	38.6%	27.3%
Some college, no degree	12,524	26.4%	23.7%
Associate's degree	5,109	10.8%	11.1%
Bachelor's degree	5,581	11.8%	21.1%
Advanced degree	2,758	5.8%	11.2%
<b>65 years &amp; over</b>	<b>24,338</b>	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>17.8%</b>
Less than high school	4,609	18.9%	13.8%
High school grad. (incl. equiv.)	11,431	47.0%	38.1%
Some college, no degree	4,483	18.4%	19.5%
Associate's degree	836	3.4%	4.7%
Bachelor's degree	1,971	8.1%	14.6%
Advanced degree	1,008	4.1%	9.3%

Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

**COMMUTE SHED AND LABOR SHED, 2014**

According to commuting data from the [Census Bureau](#), Region 7E is a net labor exporter, having more workers than available jobs. In fact, more residents commute out of the region than stay in the region for work. In sum, 32,468 workers both lived and worked in Region 7E in 2014, while 13,903 workers drove into the region from surrounding counties for work, compared to 46,463 workers who lived in the region but drove to surrounding counties for work (see Table 6 and Map 1).

Chisago County is the largest county and the largest employment center in the region and was the biggest draw for workers, followed by Isanti County, Pine County, Mille Lacs County, and Kanabec County is the smallest. Most workers in the region commute to the Twin Cities metro area and Hennepin County, as well as to the northern and eastern counties like Ramsey, Anoka, and Washington County (see Table 7 and Map 1).

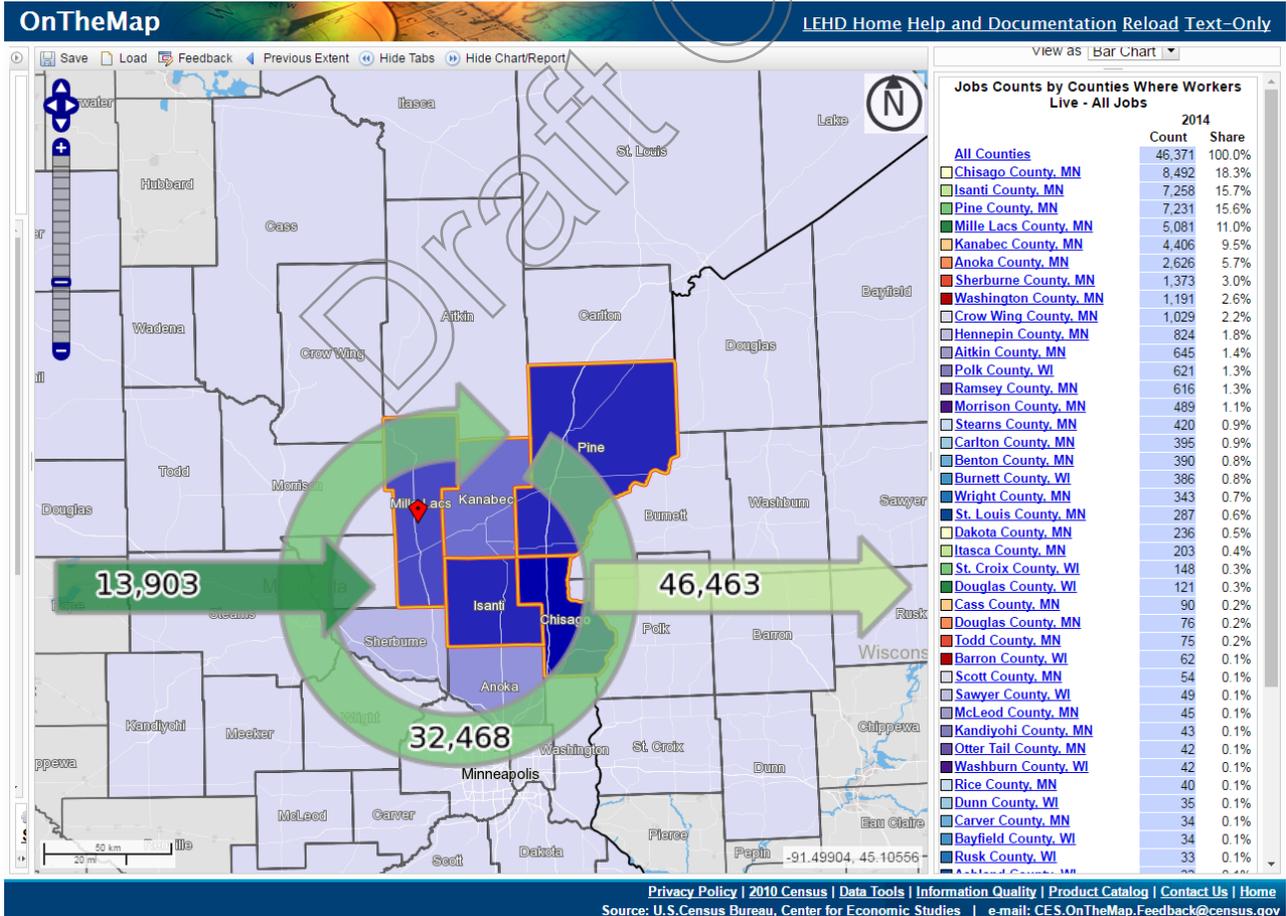
Table 6. Region 7E Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (All Jobs), 2014	2014	
	Count	Share
Employed in the Selection Area	46,371	100.0%
Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside	13,903	30.0%
Employed and Living in the Selection Area	32,468	70.0%
<hr/>		
Living in the Selection Area	78,931	100.0%
Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside	46,463	58.9%
Living and Employed in the Selection Area	32,468	41.1%

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap](#)

Table 7. Region 7E Commuting Patterns	
Counties outside the region that send the most workers into the region	Counties outside the region that the most workers from inside the region travel to
Anoka Co. MN	Hennepin Co. MN
Sherburne Co. MN	Ramsey Co. MN
Washington Co. MN	Anoka Co. MN
Crow Wing Co. MN	Washington Co. MN
Hennepin Co. MN	Sherburne Co. MN

Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap](#)

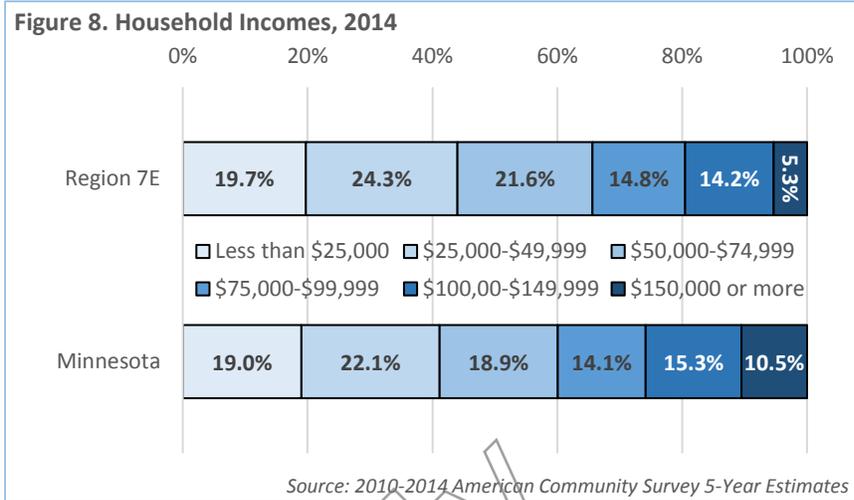
**Map 1. Region 7E Labor and Commute Shed, 2014**



## INCOMES, WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

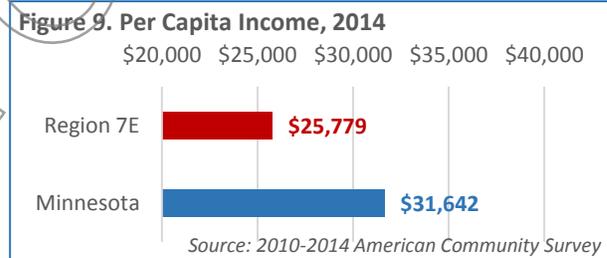
### HOUSEHOLD INCOMES

Household incomes were slightly lower in Region 7E than the state, where the median household income in 2014 was \$60,828. In the region, median household incomes ranged from \$44,680 in Pine County, which was the 6<sup>th</sup> lowest in the state, to \$70,223 in Chisago County, which was the 8<sup>th</sup> highest in the state. Incomes were relatively high in Chisago and Isanti County, and relatively low in Kanabec, Mille Lacs, and Pine County. Forty-four percent of the households in the region had incomes below \$50,000 in 2014, compared to 41.1 percent statewide. Another 36.4 percent of households earned between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in the region. In contrast, only 19.5 percent of households in Region 7E earned over \$100,000 per year, compared to 25.8 percent of households statewide (see Figure 8).



### PER CAPITA INCOMES

Per capita incomes were also lower in Region 7E than the state, ranging from \$22,129 in Pine County and \$22,705 in Kanabec County to \$29,293 in Chisago County, compared to \$31,642 in Minnesota. At \$25,779, Region 7E had the third lowest per capita income of the 13 EDRs in the state (see Figure 9).



### COST OF LIVING

According to DEED’s [Cost of Living tool](#), the basic needs budget for an average Minnesota family (which consists of 2 adults and 1 child, with 1 full-time and 1 part-time worker) was \$54,804 in 2016. The cost of living for a similar family in Region 7E was \$57,588 – which was the second highest of the 13 EDRs in the state, behind only the Twin Cities metro area. The highest monthly costs were for transportation, food, and housing; and the cost of the region’s housing, transportation, and taxes were significantly higher than the state (see Table 8).

In order to meet the basic cost of living for the region, the workers in the family scenario listed above would need to earn \$18.46 per hour. For a single person living alone and working full-time, the estimated yearly cost in Region 7E would be \$32,856, the highest cost in the state, which would require an hourly wage of \$15.80 to meet the basic needs standard of living.

**Table 8. Family Yearly Cost, Worker Hourly Wage, and Family Monthly Costs, 2016**

Region	Family Yearly Cost of Living	Hourly Wage Required	Monthly Costs						
			Child Care	Food	Health Care	Housing	Transportation	Other	Taxes
Region 7E	\$57,588	\$18.46	\$394	\$749	\$408	\$921	\$1,058	\$523	\$746
Minnesota	\$54,804	\$17.57	\$462	\$771	\$408	\$916	\$805	\$528	\$677

Source: [DEED Cost of Living tool](#)

## WAGES AND OCCUPATIONS

According to DEED's [Occupational Employment Statistics](#) program, the median hourly wage for all occupations in Region 7E was \$17.00 in the first quarter of 2016, which was the third highest wage level of the 13 EDRs in the state. Region 7E's median wage was \$1.88 below the state's median hourly wage, equaling 90 percent of the statewide wage rate, and \$3.79 below the median hourly wage in the 7-County Twin Cities metro area, which would amount to nearly \$8,000 per year for a full-time worker. Region 7E had higher wages than surrounding regions like Region 3 at \$16.61, Region 7W at \$16.92, and Region 5 at \$15.07, but lower wages than the Twin Cities at \$20.49 (see Table 9).

Over 12 percent of the jobs in Region 7E were education, training and library occupations, which was twice as concentrated as in the state as a whole. Region 7E also had a higher share of workers in healthcare support; community and social services; farming, fishing and forestry; installation, maintenance, and repair; production; and healthcare practitioners and technical occupations (see Table 10).

	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment
EDR 1 - Northwest	\$16.48	38,910
EDR 2 - Headwaters	\$16.19	31,570
EDR 3 - Arrowhead	\$16.61	142,870
EDR 4 - West Central	\$16.03	82,910
EDR 5 - North Central	\$15.07	60,260
EDR 6E - Southwest Central	\$16.78	48,890
EDR 6W - Upper MN Valley	\$15.52	16,200
<b>EDR 7E - East Central</b>	<b>\$17.00</b>	<b>54,650</b>
EDR 7W - Central	\$16.92	182,330
EDR 8 - Southwest	\$15.48	52,940
EDR 9 - South Central	\$16.39	107,390
EDR 10 - Southeast	\$17.77	228,960
EDR 11 - 7-County Twin Cities	\$20.79	1,719,000
<b>State of Minnesota</b>	<b>\$18.88</b>	<b>2,772,240</b>

Source: [DEED Occupational Employment Statistics](#).

	Region 7E				State of Minnesota		
	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment	Share of Total Employment	Location Quotient	Median Hourly Wage	Estimated Regional Employment	Share of Total Employment
<b>Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>\$17.00</b>	<b>54,650</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>\$18.88</b>	<b>2,772,240</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Office & Administrative Support	\$16.77	7,360	13.5%	1.3	\$17.65	403,870	14.6%
Education, Training, & Library	\$22.92	6,660	12.2%	2.9	\$22.59	162,330	5.9%
Sales & Related	\$11.07	5,540	10.1%	1.4	\$13.03	274,960	9.9%
Production	\$17.10	4,940	9.0%	1.6	\$16.80	219,390	7.9%
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	\$31.14	3,600	6.6%	1.5	\$31.65	167,800	6.1%
Transportation & Material Moving	\$16.35	3,430	6.3%	1.4	\$16.35	174,150	6.3%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	\$9.39	3,430	6.3%	1.1	\$9.39	232,550	8.4%
Healthcare Support	\$13.06	2,790	5.1%	2.3	\$13.96	87,470	3.2%
Management	\$36.43	2,460	4.5%	1.0	\$48.47	167,820	6.1%
Personal Care & Service	\$11.15	2,310	4.2%	1.3	\$11.29	125,520	4.5%
Installation, Maintenance, & Repair	\$20.96	2,280	4.2%	1.7	\$21.96	94,280	3.4%
Construction & Extraction	\$24.58	1,750	3.2%	1.3	\$25.36	95,560	3.4%
Business & Financial Operations	\$25.41	1,660	3.0%	0.7	\$31.06	162,610	5.9%
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	\$12.55	1,460	2.7%	1.3	\$12.25	82,220	3.0%
Community & Social Service	\$20.69	1,460	2.7%	2.1	\$20.99	50,160	1.8%
Protective Service	\$19.85	840	1.5%	1.4	\$19.85	42,440	1.5%
Architecture & Engineering	\$29.27	700	1.3%	0.9	\$35.14	52,680	1.9%
Computer & Mathematical	\$29.57	520	1.0%	0.4	\$38.93	94,470	3.4%
Life, Physical, & Social Science	\$25.86	460	0.8%	1.3	\$29.94	24,380	0.9%
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	\$11.51	440	0.8%	0.9	\$22.49	35,510	1.3%
Legal	\$22.78	220	0.4%	0.8	\$38.40	18,450	0.7%
Farming, Fishing, & Forestry	\$15.91	90	0.2%	1.8	\$14.86	3,610	0.1%

Source: [DEED Occupational Employment Statistics, Qtr. 1 2016](#)

Not surprisingly, the lowest-paying jobs are in food preparation and serving, personal care and service, arts, design, and entertainment, and sales and related jobs, which tend to have lower educational and training requirements. For the most part, the gap in pay between Region 7E and the state is also lower in these jobs.

In contrast, the highest paying jobs are found in management, healthcare practitioners, computer, architecture and engineering, life, physical, and social science, construction, and business and financial operations, which tend to need higher levels of education and experience. The pay gaps between the region and state are much bigger in these occupations.

### JOB VACANCY SURVEY

Employers in Region 7E reported 1,902 job vacancies in the second quarter of 2016, the second highest number ever recorded. Job vacancies in the region peaked at 2,138 the previous year, but are still over 400 percent higher than the recession low point in 2009. Overall, almost 60 percent of the openings were part-time, 27 percent required postsecondary education, and 38 percent needed 1 or more years of experience. The median hourly wage offer for all occupations was \$11.79, ranging from under \$10.00 for personal care and service, sales and related, and food prep jobs to \$30.00 for management jobs (see Table 11).

**Table 11. Region 7E Job Vacancy Survey Results, 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr. 2016**

	Number of Total Vacancies	Percent Part-time	Percent Temporary or Seasonal	Requiring Post-Secondary Education	Requiring 1 or More Years of Experience	Requiring Certificate or License	Median Hourly Wage Offer
<b>Total, All Occupations</b>	<b>1,902</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>\$11.79</b>
Personal Care & Service	354	88%	62%	2%	5%	2%	\$9.88
Food Preparation & Serving Related	301	75%	28%	0%	30%	23%	\$9.96
Education, Training & Library	207	50%	9%	81%	72%	77%	\$16.87
Sales & Related	188	94%	30%	6%	6%	0%	\$9.92
Construction & Extraction	164	1%	83%	1%	83%	2%	\$17.92
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	162	49%	6%	91%	59%	97%	\$24.50
Production	149	1%	0%	32%	39%	1%	\$12.68
Office & Administrative Support	102	67%	11%	7%	56%	3%	\$10.44
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	48	70%	55%	24%	29%	14%	\$9.71
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	45	90%	33%	9%	53%	30%	\$12.33
Healthcare Support	45	69%	1%	61%	14%	75%	\$12.10
Transportation & Material Moving	44	86%	25%	2%	7%	73%	\$11.38
Business & Financial Operations	17	0%	0%	43%	99%	6%	\$12.72
Community & Social Service	17	7%	0%	87%	73%	63%	\$15.70
Internships	17	18%	68%	100%	1%	13%	\$13.15
Management	14	9%	0%	99%	100%	60%	\$29.42
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	14	8%	1%	46%	52%	20%	\$11.55
Protective Service	7	57%	15%	52%	33%	71%	\$16.09

Source: [DEED Job Vacancy Survey, Qtr. 2 2015](#)

### OCCUPATIONS IN DEMAND

According to DEED's [Occupations in Demand](#) tool, there are hundreds of occupations showing relatively high demand in the region, with training and education requirements ranging from short-term on-the-job training to postsecondary education to advanced degrees. Many of the occupations in demand in the region require a high school diploma or less. These occupations are spread across different sectors but are also concentrated in the region's major industries. For example, personal care aides and home health aides, janitors and cleaners, retail sales workers, truck drivers, teachers, nurses, and healthcare practitioners are all occupations in demand based on the consistent need for these workers (see Table 12).

**Table 12. Region 7E Occupations in Demand by Education Level, 2016**

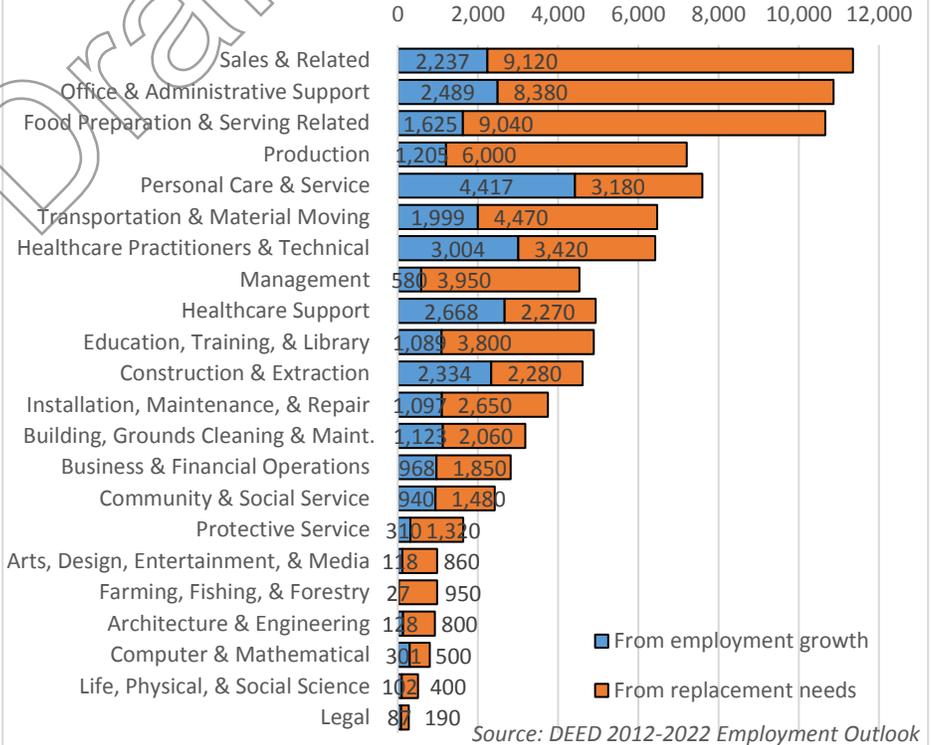
Less than High School	High School or Equivalent	Some College or Assoc. Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Cashiers (\$18,947)	Cabinetmakers & Bench Carpenters (\$39,466)	Nursing Assistants (\$29,620)	Elementary & Secondary School Teachers (\$62,228)
Food Prep & Serving Workers (\$18,656)	Maintenance & Repair Workers, General (\$39,297)	Registered Nurses (\$74,024)	Accountants & Auditors (\$49,652)
Personal Care Aides (\$23,672)	Secretaries & Admin. Assistants (\$36,362)	Licensed Practical & Voc. Nurses (\$43,533)	Medical & Health Services Managers (\$91,972)
Retail Salespersons (\$23,298)	Bus Drivers, School or Special Client (\$34,183)	Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers (\$45,023)	Education Administrators, Elem. & Secondary (\$96,032)
Stock Clerks & Order Fillers (\$24,946)	Office Clerks, General (\$31,196)	Hairdressers, Hairstylists, & Cosmetologists (\$23,853)	Child, Family, & School Social Workers (\$53,872)
Janitors & Cleaners (\$27,899)	Social & Human Service Assistants (\$29,236)	Emergency Medical Techs. & Paramedics (\$37,793)	Nurse Practitioners (\$95,829)
Home Health Aides (\$24,216)	Driver/Sales Workers (\$24,245)	Medical Assistants (\$35,705)	Physical Therapists (\$76,982)
Landscaping & Grounds-keeping Workers (\$25,859)	Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Mfg. (\$66,055)	Teacher Assistants (\$31,672)	Financial Managers (\$80,072)
Cooks, Restaurant (\$26,090)	Police & Sheriff's Patrol Officers (\$49,691)	Industrial Engineering Technicians (\$50,967)	Human Resources Specialists (\$48,967)
Laborers & Freight, Stock & Mat'l. Movers (\$28,679)	Postal Service Mail Carriers (\$49,170)	Radiologic Technologists (\$58,199)	Civil Engineers (\$75,528)

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

**EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS**

Region 7E is a part of the larger 13-county Central Minnesota Planning area, along with Region 6E and Region 7W. Central Minnesota is projected to remain the fastest growing part of the state, expanding 9.8 percent from 2012 to 2022, a gain of 28,848 new jobs. In addition, the region is also expected to need 68,960 replacement openings to fill jobs left vacant by retirements and other career changers. In fact, the number of replacement openings is expected to dwarf the number of new jobs in every group except for personal care and service occupations, construction and extraction workers; and healthcare support and practitioner jobs (see Figure 10).

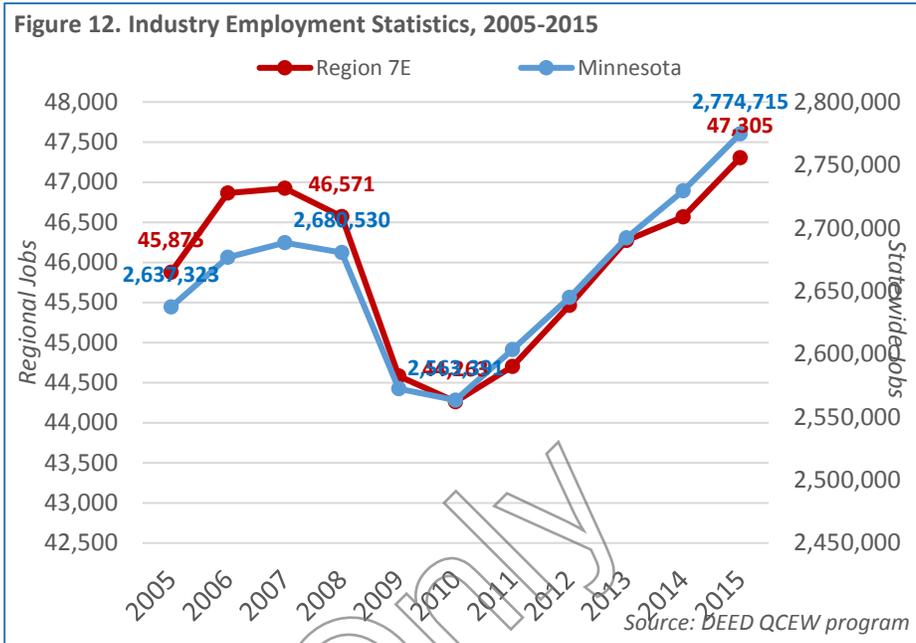
**Figure 10. Central Minnesota Employment Projections, 2012-2022**



## ECONOMY

### INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

Region 7E has seen employment ups and downs over the past decade, but ended 2015 with 1,430 more jobs than it had in 2005. The region was hit harder in the recession than the state, experiencing severe job declines from 2007 to 2010. Since then, Region 7E has seen a steady but slightly slower recovery than the rest of the state, which gained jobs at an 8.2 percent clip from 2010 to 2015, compared to a 6.9 percent increase in the region. Region 7E finally regained all of the jobs lost during the recession in the past year, while the state reached breakeven in 2013 (see Figure 11).



According to DEED’s [Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages \(QCEW\) program](#), Region 7E was home to 3,366 business establishments providing 47,305 covered jobs through 2015, with a total payroll of just over \$1.7 billion. That was about 1.7 percent of total employment in the state of Minnesota, making it the fourth smallest of the 13 EDRs in the state. Average annual wages were \$36,244 in the region, which was about \$17,000 lower than the state’s average annual wage, and the third lowest of the 13 EDRs.

Chisago County is the largest employment center in the region, with 14,855 jobs at 1,060 firms; accounting for 30 percent of the region’s jobs. Isanti County was the next largest, with 10,986 jobs at 743 firms, followed by Mille Lacs County with 679 firms and 9,555 jobs and Pine County with 8,169 jobs at 593 firms. Kanabec County was the smallest economy in the region, with 292 firms and 3,739 jobs. As shown above, the region recovered more slowly than the state over the past five years; with Chisago, Isanti and Mille Lacs County seeing the biggest rise in jobs. In contrast, Pine County employers cut jobs over the past five years, though it gained over 100 jobs in the past year. Chisago County grew more than 4 percent from 2014 to 2015, which was much faster than the rest of the state (see Table 13).

Geography	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll	Average Annual Wage	2010-2015		2014-2015	
					Change in Jobs	Percent Change	Change in Jobs	Percent Change
<b>Region 7E</b>	<b>3,366</b>	<b>47,305</b>	<b>\$1,715,992,115</b>	<b>\$36,244</b>	<b>+3,042</b>	<b>+6.9%</b>	<b>+739</b>	<b>+1.6%</b>
Chisago Co.	1,060	14,855	\$608,065,200	\$40,872	+1,477	+11.0%	+604	+4.2%
Isanti Co.	743	10,986	\$417,778,179	\$38,012	+838	+8.3%	+84	+0.8%
Kanabec Co.	292	3,739	\$133,538,849	\$35,672	+149	+4.2%	-26	-0.7%
Mille Lacs Co.	679	9,555	\$313,410,894	\$32,760	+640	+7.2%	-26	-0.3%
Pine Co.	593	8,169	\$243,198,993	\$29,744	-63	-0.8%	+104	+1.3%
<b>State of Minnesota</b>	<b>160,678</b>	<b>2,774,765</b>	<b>\$148,563,385,038</b>	<b>\$53,560</b>	<b>+211,374</b>	<b>+8.2%</b>	<b>+45,152</b>	<b>+1.7%</b>

Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW)

With 9,629 jobs at 294 firms, health care and social assistance is the largest employing industry in Region 7E, accounting for 20.4 percent of total jobs in the region. Due to the region's older population, the largest sector was nursing and residential care facilities, which had 4,040 jobs, despite losing 360 jobs since 2010. In contrast, the region had a rising number of jobs in ambulatory health care services and social assistance, which both gained jobs since 2010.

Accommodation and food services is the next largest industry in Region 7E, with 6,623 jobs at 268 firms, accounting for 14 percent of total jobs in the region. The related arts, entertainment, and recreation industry (which includes casinos) also provides 754 jobs at 78 locations, after seeing a shift of jobs due to a classification change. Retail Trade is the third largest industry with 5,980 jobs at 453 stores. These three industries provide almost 28 percent of the region's jobs, but have relatively low wages.

After adding 1,829 net new jobs, manufacturing is now the fourth largest industry in Region 7E, with 5,858 jobs at 240 firms. Wages in manufacturing were nearly \$15,000 higher than in the total of all industries. Region 7E also has a high concentration of jobs in educational services, with 4,773 jobs at 70 institutions – primarily at elementary and secondary schools, but also at junior colleges – and in public administration.

Other important industries in Region 7E include construction, other services, transportation and warehousing, administrative support and waste management services, and finance and insurance. Twelve of the 20 main industries in the region added jobs since 2010, with the huge gains in manufacturing accounting for over 60 percent of the growth; along with smaller gains in retail trade, construction, educational services, transportation and warehousing, and public administration. In contrast, the region saw job losses in arts, entertainment and recreation (due to the classification switch), finance and insurance, information, and wholesale trade, and health care and social assistance (see Table 14).

NAICS Industry Title	2015 Annual Data				Avg. Annual Wage	2010-2015		2014-2015	
	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Percent of Jobs	Total Payroll (\$1000s)		Change in Jobs	Percent Change	Change in Jobs	Percent Change
<b>Total, All Industries</b>	<b>3,366</b>	<b>47,305</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$1,715,992</b>	<b>\$36,244</b>	<b>+3,042</b>	<b>+6.9%</b>	<b>+739</b>	<b>+1.6%</b>
Health Care & Social Assistance	294	9,629	20.4%	\$385,054	\$39,936	-104	-1.1%	-109	-1.1%
Accommodation & Food Services	268	6,623	14.0%	\$127,793	\$19,292	+2,961	+80.9%	+1,568	+31.0%
Retail Trade	453	5,980	12.6%	\$139,822	\$23,348	+545	+10.0%	+162	+2.8%
Manufacturing	240	5,858	12.4%	\$299,364	\$51,116	+1,829	+45.4%	+400	+7.3%
Educational Services	70	4,773	10.1%	\$185,821	\$39,000	+128	+2.8%	-4	-0.1%
Public Administration	145	3,935	8.3%	\$168,417	\$42,744	+170	+4.5%	+66	+1.7%
Construction	545	2,329	4.9%	\$121,229	\$51,064	+444	+23.6%	+185	+8.6%
Other Services	336	1,438	3.0%	\$30,869	\$21,424	+132	+10.1%	+82	+6.0%
Transportation & Warehousing	149	1,062	2.2%	\$39,189	\$36,920	+124	+13.2%	+18	+1.7%
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	139	1,013	2.1%	\$39,080	\$38,532	-76	-7.0%	-3	-0.3%
Finance & Insurance	122	952	2.0%	\$43,398	\$45,604	-155	-14.0%	-16	-1.7%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	78	754	1.6%	\$10,264	\$13,520	-2,793	-78.7%	-1,650	-68.6%
Professional & Technical Services	182	715	1.5%	\$32,016	\$44,720	-4	-0.6%	+10	+1.4%
Wholesale Trade	107	663	1.4%	\$26,282	\$39,624	-130	-16.4%	-21	-3.1%
Information	46	461	1.0%	\$16,455	\$35,672	-129	-21.9%	+5	+1.1%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	54	416	0.9%	\$12,259	\$29,484	-5	-1.2%	+10	+2.5%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	104	281	0.6%	\$7,709	\$27,300	+36	+14.7%	+13	+4.9%
Utilities	22	252	0.5%	\$20,504	\$81,380	+19	+8.2%	+2	+0.8%
Management of Companies	9	124	0.3%	\$8,473	\$68,120	+40	+47.6%	+15	+13.8%
Mining	6	41	0.1%	\$1,997	\$46,904	+8	+24.2%	+5	+13.9%

Source: [DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages \(QCEW\)](#)

## DISTINGUISHING INDUSTRIES

Region 7E stands out in the state for its higher share of employment in amusement, gambling, and recreation and accommodation, but also has strengths in unexpected areas like transportation equipment, plastics and rubber product, and furniture and related product manufacturing; and justice, public order and safety activities. As noted above, the region has a higher concentration of jobs in nursing and residential care facilities, elementary and secondary schools, and executive, legislative, and other general government support (see Table 15).

NAICS Industry Title	NAICS Code	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll	Avg. Annual Wages	Location Quotient
<b>Total, All Industries</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,366</b>	<b>47,305</b>	<b>\$1,715,992,115</b>	<b>\$36,244</b>	<b>1.0</b>
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	336	11	1,270	\$89,324,777	\$70,252	6.3
Accommodation	721	41	2,982	\$81,634,737	\$27,352	5.2
Plastics & Rubber Products Manufacturing	326	13	936	\$39,223,220	\$41,860	3.6
Justice, Public Order, & Safety Activities	922	20	893	\$50,114,729	\$56,056	2.3
Executive, Legislative & General Government	921	79	2,672	\$102,285,161	\$38,220	2.3
Gasoline Stations	447	86	941	\$16,460,339	\$17,472	2.2
Nursing & Residential Care Facilities	623	70	4,040	\$130,693,231	\$32,344	2.2
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	332	75	1,316	\$64,151,659	\$48,672	1.8
Elementary & Secondary Schools	6111	55	4,463	\$171,894,825	\$38,636	1.8
Furniture & Related Product Manufacturing	337	23	283	\$13,535,837	\$47,736	1.7

Source: [DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages \(QCEW\)](#)

## INDUSTRY PROJECTIONS

As noted above, Region 7E is part of the 13-county Central Minnesota Planning Region, which is projected to lead the state with 9.8 percent job growth from 2012 to 2022, a gain of 28,848 new jobs.

The largest and fastest growing industry is expected to be health care and social assistance, which may account for over 40 percent of total projected growth in the region from 2012 to 2022. The region is also expected to see significant employment growth in construction, professional and technical services, administrative support and waste management services – which includes temporary staffing agencies, retail trade, wholesale trade, and accommodation and food services. In contrast, the region is expected to see declines only in information (see Table 16).

Industry	Estimated Employment 2012	Projected Employment 2022	Percent Change 2012-2022	Numeric Change 2012-2022
<b>Total, All Industries</b>	<b>294,407</b>	<b>323,255</b>	<b>+9.8%</b>	<b>+28,848</b>
Health Care & Social Assistance	41,963	53,847	+28.3%	+11,884
Manufacturing	38,994	40,126	+2.9%	+1,132
Retail Trade	34,167	37,510	+9.8%	+3,343
Accommodation & Food Services	20,475	21,678	+5.9%	+1,203
Construction	13,987	16,879	+20.7%	+2,892
Other Services	12,001	12,809	+6.7%	+808
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt.	10,500	12,219	+16.4%	+1,719
Wholesale Trade	10,123	10,801	+6.7%	+678
Transportation & Warehousing	7,851	8,710	+10.9%	+859
Finance & Insurance	7,036	7,731	+9.9%	+695
Professional & Technical Services	5,957	6,905	+15.9%	+948
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	5,861	6,394	+9.1%	+533
Ag., Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	4,921	5,113	+3.9%	+192
Information	3,160	3,012	-4.7%	-148
Educational Services	2,629	2,865	+9.0%	+236
Utilities	2,446	2,455	+0.4%	+9
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	2,028	2,247	+10.8%	+219
Management of Companies	1,387	1,458	+5.1%	+71
Mining	268	269	+0.4%	+1

Source: [DEED 2012-2022 Employment Outlook](#)

### EMPLOYERS BY SIZE CLASS

The vast majority of businesses in Region 7E are small businesses, with 58.5 percent of businesses reporting 1 to 4 employees in 2014, according to County Business Patterns from the U.S. Census Bureau. Another 31 percent had between 5 and 19 employees; and 9 percent had between 20 and 99 employees. Only 1.3 percent had 100 to 499 employees, compared to 2.4 percent of businesses in the state. Just 5 businesses in the region had more than 500 employees, which is the Small Business Administration's official cut off for a "small business". Obviously then, small businesses are vital to the region's economy (see Table 17).

Number of Employees	Region 7E		Minnesota
	Number of Firms	Percent of Firms	Percent of Firms
1-4	2,108	58.5%	53.9%
5-9	665	18.5%	17.7%
10-19	452	12.5%	13.4%
20-49	263	7.3%	9.1%
50-99	61	1.7%	3.2%
100-249	40	1.1%	1.9%
250-499	8	0.2%	0.5%
500 or more	5	0.1%	0.3%
<b>Total Firms</b>	<b>3,602</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: *U.S. Census, County Business Patterns*

### NONEMPLOYER ESTABLISHMENTS

Before growing, the basic building block of most small businesses is a self-employed business. Region 7E was home to 11,026 self-employed businesses or "nonemployers" in 2014, which are defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as "businesses without paid employees that are subject to federal income tax, originating from tax return information of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS)." Unlike covered employment, Region 7E has suffered a significant decline in the number of nonemployers over the past decade, responding to economic changes. In sum, the region lost 1,073 nonemployers from 2004 to 2014, a staggering -8.9 percent decrease. The largest amount of nonemployers is in Chisago County, while Isanti has the second most and saw the smallest decline in self-employment in the region. Together, these nonemployers generated sales receipts of \$465 million in 2014 (see Table 18).

	2014		2004-2014	
	Number of Firms	Receipts (\$1,000s)	Change in Firms	Percent Change
<b>Region 7E</b>	<b>11,026</b>	<b>\$465,101</b>	<b>-1,073</b>	<b>-8.9%</b>
Chisago Co.	3,782	\$157,684	-322	-7.8%
Isanti Co.	2,635	\$112,764	-55	-2.0%
Kanabec Co.	1,041	\$49,156	-233	-18.3%
Mille Lacs Co.	1,829	\$72,621	-387	-17.5%
Pine Co.	1,739	\$72,876	-76	-4.2%
<b>State of Minnesota</b>	<b>394,690</b>	<b>\$17,982,080</b>	<b>33,610</b>	<b>9.3%</b>

Source: *U.S. Census, Nonemployer Statistics program*

### CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

Unlike other parts of Greater Minnesota, agriculture is not a key industry in Region 7E, but there are 3,925 farms producing just under \$268 million in the market value of products sold in 2012 according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. All of the counties in the planning region rank near the bottom in Minnesota in regards to the market value of products sold, with all five counties ranked between 66<sup>th</sup> and 76<sup>th</sup> of the 87 counties in the state. However, the region experienced a 70.5 percent increase in the market value of products sold since 2007 (see Table 19).

	Number of Farms	Market Value of Products Sold	State Rank	Change in Market Value, 2007-2012
<b>Region 7E</b>	<b>3,925</b>	<b>\$267,943,000</b>		<b>+70.5%</b>
Chisago Co.	832	\$56,530,000	70	+69.2%
Isanti Co.	844	\$61,026,000	68	+125.1%
Kanabec Co.	648	\$31,963,000	76	+62.3%
Mille Lacs Co.	731	\$52,980,000	71	+94.2%
Pine Co.	870	\$65,444,000	66	+31.7%
<b>State of Minnesota</b>	<b>74,542</b>	<b>\$21,280,184,000</b>		<b>+61.5%</b>

Source: *2012 Census of Agriculture*

*Upon request, this information can be made available in alternate formats for people with disabilities by contacting Luke Greiner at 320-308-5378 or at [luke.greiner@state.mn.us](mailto:luke.greiner@state.mn.us).*



DEVELOP  
MN  
2016

Comprehensive  
Development Strategy for  
Greater Minnesota



**MADO**

Minnesota Association of Development Organizations

# Overview

## The DevelopMN Plan

This plan is the result of a collaborative effort of the members that make up the Minnesota Association of Development Organizations (MADO). It was developed in order to align strategic economic development efforts throughout Greater Minnesota, and leverage resources at all levels for a greater overall development impact.

The beginning of the 21st century presents a number of challenges and opportunities to communities in rural Minnesota as they chart their economic future. Minnesotans live in an economy that is now driven by innovation demands, necessitating an environment that nurtures its talent and workforce, supports entrepreneurship and creates communities that can support both. In order for rural Minnesota to succeed, there is need for a strong, collective and credible voice that can create and move forward an economic agenda at the local, state and federal levels. MADO members are committed to providing that collective leadership for rural Minnesota.

DevelopMN creates a common framework for regional economic development, and identifies strategies to address the special challenges and opportunities of Greater Minnesota. This initiative will enhance and support economic development efforts on all levels and engages local, regional, state and federal partners. Collectively, MADO and partners will raise the bar on what constitutes effective rural economic development in Minnesota.

## DevelopMN as Statewide Community Development

The primary goal of this development strategy for Greater Minnesota is strengthening communities. By expanding the diversity of job opportunities, providing access to safe and affordable housing, and developing employment training that meets the needs of businesses, DevelopMN builds on regional strengths and fosters vibrant, healthy communities. Stronger communities include more stable social infrastructure that supports the full range of opportunities for healthy families including education and the arts. Preserved and protected natural resources also help strengthen communities.

To accomplish all of this, there needs to be opportunities for businesses and individuals to create, develop and expand. These range from providing educational opportunities for employees to become skilled workers that meet the emerging needs of businesses, to offering financing options that support sustainability, diversity and expansion. And finally, strong businesses need a well-developed and maintained infrastructure, including water, sewer, communications and transportation systems.

## A Rural Economic Development Collaborative

While DevelopMN was created through a collaborative effort of the 10 Minnesota Regional Development Organizations (RDO), the RDOs will partner with a host of local, regional, state and federal partners for the plan's implementation. In fact, many of the initiatives listed here are already priorities for some of these partners, and it is through these collaborations that meaningful economic change will continue throughout rural Minnesota. The non-RDO areas of the St. Cloud Quad Counties and the 11 counties of Southeastern Minnesota were able to participate in this process to ensure their areas had representation and a voice in this project.

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2016

## Acknowledgments

MADO would like to thank all of the individuals and organizations who have given their time to share their vision for Greater Minnesota. It was a unique regional collaboration that brought together many team members to make this document possible. MADO would also like to specifically thank the following organizations for their significant financial contributions to the plan development:

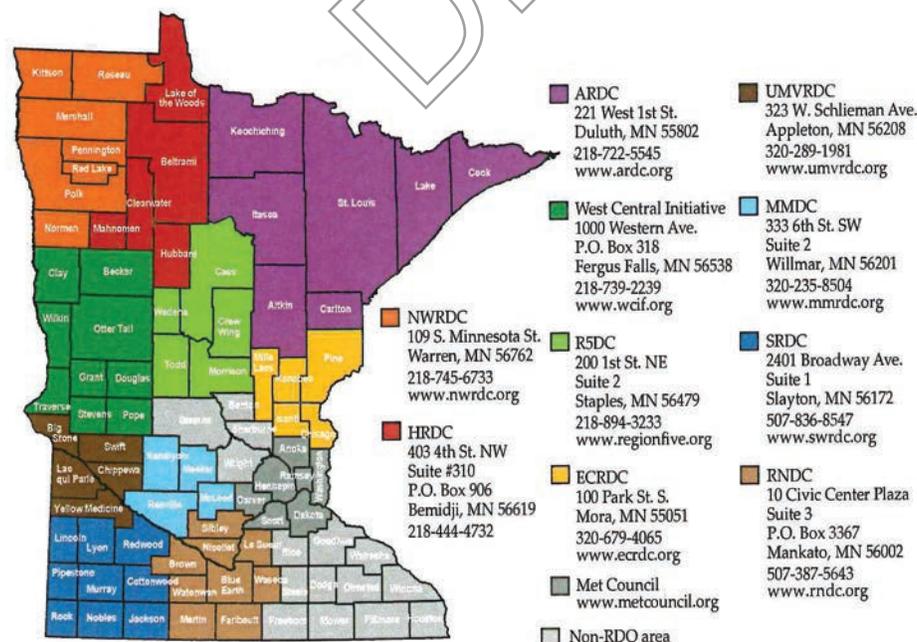
- Bush Foundation
- Blandin Foundation
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

## A Vision for Greater Minnesota

Greater Minnesota will have attractive communities with outstanding place-based amenities and will encourage innovation, attract and retain a talented workforce, and provide economic opportunity for all.

## What is MADO?

Minnesota Association of Development Organizations (MADO) is comprised of 10 Minnesota Regional Development Organizations (RDOs) whose purpose is to promote and create economic prosperity in Greater Minnesota. This is accomplished through alignment of a strong network of RDOs, the communities they serve, and the federal and state agencies that share their commitment.



**DevelopMN:**  
Intro ..... 4

**Cornerstones:**  
Intro ..... 5

**Cornerstones: Goals & Strategies..... 6-11**

**Foundational Assets..... 12-14**

**Conclusion..... 15**

**MADO Member Organizations ..... 15**



## *The beginning of the 21st century presents a number of challenges and opportunities to rural Minnesota as it charts its economic future.*

An economy driven by innovation demands an environment that nurtures its talent and workforce, supports entrepreneurship and creates communities that can support both. In order for rural Minnesota to succeed, there needs to be a strong, collective and credible voice that can create and move forward an economic agenda at local, state and federal levels. MADO members are committed to working on key issues in rural Minnesota as identified in this document.

Greater Minnesota has significant economic opportunities across the state. Regions throughout Greater Minnesota share many assets and challenges, but lack the intentional alignment needed to take advantage of shared priorities and maximize the use of resources. This lack of alignment has led to a limited voice in creating effective development policy based on regional priorities.

In 2012, MADO began working on a Greater Minnesota development strategy, which was named “DevelopMN.” DevelopMN establishes the strategic framework for coordinated action by MADO, the communities they serve and the federal and state agencies that share their commitment. In this spirit, MADO strives to promote and create economic prosperity in Greater Minnesota through alignment of a strong network of Regional Development Organizations.

## PROCESS

MADO met regularly over a two-year period to create DevelopMN, and collected, reviewed and analyzed information from a variety of sources.

- The Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and the University of Minnesota Extension provided data on current economic conditions, housing, population and social conditions in Greater Minnesota.
- MADO met with state and local economic development organizations, philanthropic foundations, local governments, state and local elected officials, the business community, educational institutions and members of the public to review and discuss issues and opportunities.
- MADO synthesized the 10 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies that were developed by each of the Economic Development Districts.
- MADO reviewed best practices for economic development from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) and examples of statewide comprehensive plans compiled in other states.
- Economic resiliency—defined as an area’s ability to prevent, withstand and quickly recover from major disruptions (i.e., ‘shocks’) to its economic base—is a key element to ensuring and preserving regional economic prosperity. While it is an important enough element to be identified as its own cornerstone, the approach recommended is that economic resiliency strategies be a consideration for carrying out the work identified in all four cornerstones. While not called out further in the document, it is implied that economic resiliency is a component of all activities associated with economic development in Greater Minnesota.

# Cornerstones



## *Creating economic prosperity is a multifaceted process.*

In Greater Minnesota, economic advantages historically included agriculture, natural resource extraction and low costs (inexpensive labor, low taxes, available land, etc.) Today, in a global economy, Greater Minnesota needs to place emphasis on preserving traditional industries, improving the quality of inputs and facilitating innovation as the driver of long-term competitiveness, growth and employment.

DevelopMN identified the following cornerstones as key components of strong regions and communities. When approached in a coordinated way, these cornerstones will help create prosperity in Greater Minnesota through these four focus areas:

- Human Capital
- Economic Competitiveness
- Community Resources
- Foundational Assets

### Human Capital

Developing, retaining and attracting talent are critical for Greater Minnesota in order to sustain and grow rural businesses and communities. Tracking the characteristics of the labor force and the needs of employers, and creating strategies for alignment between the two, are the foundation for this cornerstone.

### Economic Competitiveness

Making Greater Minnesota an attractive environment for growth is critical to creating jobs, improving living standards and financing necessary public services. Economic Competitiveness requires communities to develop and link all available assets to support innovation and encourage business growth.

### Community Resources

Greater Minnesota communities seek to maintain rural values, their heritage and the assets that support them. Community Resources includes topics that balance the preservation and improvement of local social, cultural and natural assets that are critical for the future.

### Foundational Assets

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

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**DevelopMN's plan is based on SMART goals. SMART stands for:**

**S**pecific: target a specific area for improvement.

**M**easurable: quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress.

**A**ttainable: assure that an end can be achieved.

**R**ealistic: state what results can realistically be achieved, given available resources.

**T**ime-related: specify when the result(s) can be achieved.

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# Human Capital Cornerstone

## LABOR FORCE

### Call to Action

As Greater Minnesota's economy recovers to pre-recession levels, it is confronted with the challenge of meeting the hiring and skills needs of employers. The labor force for Greater Minnesota's businesses has declined four years in a row (2011-2014). Demographics suggest labor force availability will be a more serious concern in the future.

### Context

Labor force participation is the proportion of people ages 16 and older who are either working or seeking work. Students, homemakers, retired individuals and others not looking for work do not count as participating in the labor force.

Greater Minnesota's labor force peaked at 1,345,402 workers in 2010. While the prime labor force aged 25-54 is projected to decline by 1.4% statewide through 2025, Greater Minnesota's prime labor force aged 25-54 is projected to decline by 5.2% during the same period.

### SMART Goal

Increase labor force participation by 2% by 2021.

### Strategies

1. Align education and workforce development to meet current and future skill needs of employers.
2. Expand the participation of mature workers to make up for the shortage of new workforce entrants.
3. Increase childcare options to assist parents in joining the workforce.
4. Advance credit-based apprentices, internships, and on the job training as a workforce development solution.

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

### Call to Action

As the size of Greater Minnesota's workforce is projected to decline, increased worker skills will be critical to improving productivity and growing the economy.

### Context

The percentage of Greater Minnesota's population aged 25 and over that have earned a bachelor's degree or higher is 28%, compared to 39% statewide.

### SMART Goals

1. Increase the number of residents (ages 18-64) who have completed post-secondary education or training with a particular focus on certificates, technical degrees and apprenticeships relevant to employment in middle-skill, living wage occupations.
2. Increase the percentage of residents aged 25-44 with a bachelor's degree or higher to 39% by 2025.

### Strategies

1. Build and improve career technical education opportunities for high school students interested in careers as skilled tradespeople.
2. Create local talent retention and attraction programs.
3. Embrace emerging populations through targeted educational programs.
4. Create and sustain vibrant and healthy communities that attract and retain residents.

# Economic Competitiveness Cornerstone



## ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

### Call to Action

Greater Minnesota must embrace innovation, calculated risk-taking and entrepreneurship in order to compete effectively in the global economy.

### Context

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

With 100.0% representing the national average, Greater Minnesota ranks 91.8% on the Stats America Innovation Index and the State of Minnesota ranks 105.8%.

### SMART Goal

Improve Greater Minnesota's rank on the Stats America Innovation Index from 91.8% (Greater MN) to the National Average 100% by 2021.

### Strategies

1. Broaden access to capital to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship.
2. Create networks of incubator, co-working, proof of concept and maker spaces.
3. Establish and expand entrepreneurship education programs in K-12 schools.
4. Maintain and expand renewable energy production incentives.
5. Invest in value-added opportunities from agricultural and forest products.

## SMALL BUSINESSES GROWTH

### Call to Action

Small businesses, especially those in rural area, have more limited access to capital than larger businesses. This includes government economic development programs. In order to prosper, Greater Minnesota's small businesses must have access to more public and private funding.

### Context

74% of businesses in Greater Minnesota have less than 10 employees and 96% have fewer than 50 employees. Research shows that as much as 80 percent of job growth in a community comes from existing businesses.

### SMART Goal

Increase the number of capital investments programs available to Small and Medium Enterprises (SME, small is considered 20 or fewer employees, medium is considered 21-50 employees) to allow growth and job creation for the majority of Greater Minnesota businesses.

### Strategies

1. Build a statewide resource of capital programs by eligibility and stage.
2. Utilize public-private partnerships to facilitate increased SME business lending.
3. Establish new business programs to fill gaps in the capital market.
4. Fully fund regional Small Business Development Centers at the state level.
5. Expand and improve technical assistance for growers and producers.



# Community Resources Cornerstone

## SOCIAL CAPITAL

### Call to Action

Residents must act together to meet challenges, improve their communities and transform their communities for the better. This can happen if residents believe that their civic participation, as an individual or as part of a larger group, can have an impact.

### Context

MN Compass asked people throughout the state to rate the following statement: “When there is a problem in your community, people get together and work on it.” In Greater Minnesota, respondents answered:

- 52.5%: “That is a lot like my community,”
- 35%: “That is a little like my community,”
- 12.4% “That is not like my community.”

### SMART Goal

Based on MN Compass data, reduce the percentage of respondents who feel that people working together on community problems “is not like my community” by 5% by 2025.

### Strategies

1. Actively recruit and nurture emerging community leaders.
2. Formalize community leadership networking groups.
3. Enhance the knowledge and capacity of community leaders and educators through development opportunities.
4. Establish succession-planning programs in private, public and nonprofit organizations.

## ARTS AND CULTURE

### Call to Action

Arts, culture and placemaking contribute to the vibrancy of Minnesota’s economy and quality of life.

### Context

According to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), arts industry jobs in Minnesota increased 5.7% from 2004-2014. Greater Minnesota has a slightly smaller concentration of employment in arts, entertainment and recreation than the Twin Cities; though in both cases, it is less than 2% of total jobs. Greater Minnesota has 18,907 arts-related jobs, comprising 1.7% of total employment; compared to 30,601 jobs in the Twin Cities, which is 1.9% of total jobs. Greater Minnesota also saw job declines, while the Twin Cities saw gains in this sector.

### SMART Goal

Increase employment in the arts industry in Greater Minnesota by 5% by 2021.

### Strategies:

1. Utilize arts-based placemaking to improve downtowns and public spaces.
2. Connect artists with resources they need to make a living and life in Greater Minnesota.
3. Expand existing and create new artist-in-residence programs.
4. Support and enhance arts and culture efforts through an increase of Legacy Act investments in Greater Minnesota.

# Community Resources Cornerstone



## TOURISM

### Call to Action

The leisure and hospitality industry is a leading producer of jobs in Greater Minnesota. Communities across the state consider tourism to be an essential industry for economic development, and actively promote the state's attractions and assets.

### Context

Travel and tourism make up a large portion of the leisure and hospitality industry. They create jobs and generate sales in every county of Greater Minnesota. Tourism jobs represent all levels of employment, from important entry-level service jobs to high-paying executive positions. Traveler spending indirectly supports jobs in many other industries, as well, from financial services to printing.

Travel and tourism in Minnesota generate \$13 billion in gross sales in 2013 and 250,000 full- and part-time jobs.

### SMART Goal

Increase visitor spending in Greater Minnesota by 5% by 2021.

### Strategies

1. Keep Minnesota travel experiences fresh and current by creating new outdoor recreation, arts and cultural heritage experiences and amenities.
2. Develop career paths in the tourism industry to attract and keep younger employees while staying competitive in pay and benefits to attract and retain employees.

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**The leisure and hospitality industry is a leading producer of jobs in Greater Minnesota. Communities across the state consider tourism to be an essential industry for economic development, and actively promote the state's attractions and assets.**

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# Community Resources Cornerstone

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### Call to Action

Greater Minnesota is fortunate to have an abundance of natural resources that are essential to the state's economy. As Minnesota continues to grow, strain on natural resources is on the rise, putting pressure on stakeholders to adapt. Minnesota must solve multiple threats from groundwater overuse and contamination, invasive species, decline of natural areas, exploitation of natural resources and a loss of species.

### Context

In 2011, hunters, anglers and wildlife watchers contributed \$3.8 billion to Minnesota's \$12.5 billion tourism economy, and accounted for one-fifth of the state's tourism jobs.

Minnesota's natural resources provide 342,000 agricultural, 62,400 forest products, 11,000 mining and 47,900 fishing/hunting related jobs. More than 200,000 jobs are attributable to the tourism industry.

As climate change and global interaction have become more prevalent, Minnesota has seen the rise of several non-native species, including zebra mussels, spiny water flea, Eurasian Milfoil, West Nile Virus, and Emerald Ash Borer. These invasive species (and others) have a direct effect on water quality, fishing, forest production and human health.

### SMART Goal

Protect and preserve natural resources for continued responsible use. Achieve no net loss of wetlands/prairie lands, and add programs and policies that reduce the carbon footprint through renewable energy or energy efficiency initiatives.

### Strategies

1. Identify and safeguard valuable natural resources and outdoor heritage through education, preservation and conservation efforts. Incorporate outdoor heritage and preservation strategies that draw connections between historic land uses and natural ecosystems, including agri-tourism, mining/timber tourism, transportation (land, water, air) tourism, and flora/fauna tourism.
2. Generate comprehensive plans that address biodiversity, watersheds, wetlands, critical habitats, grasslands, agriculture, minerals, forest habitat and migration corridors in the planning process.
3. Develop land-use objectives that balance economic competitiveness/resilience with human well-being and natural amenities preservation.
4. Identify policies and procedures to understand how invasive species enter ecosystems, and focus efforts on their reduction or elimination.
5. Support and enhance stronger conservation efforts across all natural resources through an increase of Legacy Act investment in Greater Minnesota.

# Community Resources Cornerstone



## WATER QUALITY

### Call to Action

Minnesota's water resources are world-renowned and a leading indicator of the state's overall economic health. Demand for water resources is increasing due to a growing population, agricultural and manufacturing utilization, increased urbanization and recreational activities.

### Context

Minnesota's water resource is becoming more important as the state grows. Ground water use was 300 billion gallons in 2012 and is increasing by an average of 3 billion gallons per year across the state. During 2012, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency had 512 additions to their impaired waters list of about 3,645 listings, while only delisting thirteen.

### SMART Goal

Improve water quality by ensuring Greater Minnesota's groundwater and surface water supplies are protected from depletion and degradation by reducing the number of impaired waters and endangered ecosystems in the state.

### Strategies

1. Promote adherence to federal Clean Water Act standards that presume a water body should sustain healthy aquatic life, recreation and additional uses, such as drinking water (domestic consumption), industry, agriculture, navigation and aesthetic enjoyment.
2. Achieve delisting of impaired waters on Minnesota MPCA baseline inventory through identification of critical ecosystems and promotion of conservation best practices.
3. Identify policies and procedures to understand how invasive species enter water-based ecosystems and focus efforts on their reduction or elimination.

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**Minnesota's water resources are world-renowned and a leading indicator of the state's overall economic health.**

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# Foundational Assets

## BROADBAND ACCESS

### Call to Action

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

### Context

Based on broadband maps provided by the Minnesota Office of Broadband, 88.29% of the state is underserved with wireline broadband at speeds of 25 Mbps download and 6 Mbps upload.

### SMART Goal

100% of businesses and households in Minnesota will have access to federal broadband goals currently set at 25MB/sec down and 6MB/sec up by 2025.

### Strategies

1. Advocate for broadband funding at both state and federal levels.
2. Advocate for a symmetrical standard.
3. Create and leverage public and private partnerships to fund improved broadband access.
4. Develop an inventory for best management practices (BMP) to improve policies and procedures for broadband and deployment of broadband service in rural, sparsely populated and high-cost regions.
5. Ensure the collection of accurate data around served and underserved regions.
6. Promote an understanding of the importance of broadband to a community's infrastructure.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Call to Action

Economic growth and trade depend on safe and reliable transportation networks. Virtually no production can take place unless raw materials, manufactured products, labor and fuel can be moved to and from different locations.

### Context

In Greater Minnesota, county and state highways are a primary means for moving freight. Planning experts working on the Minnesota State Highway Investment Plan (MN SHIP) have determined that, during the 20-year period of 2018 to 2037, Minnesota will see a shortfall of \$16.3 billion of funding necessary to provide a transportation system that addresses congestion and meets the needs of Minnesota businesses.

### SMART Goal

Increase the percentage of Greater Minnesota's fair quality-rated roadways in the next 20 years. This includes arterials and collectors under both state and local jurisdictions.

### Strategies

1. Define a significant and coherent priority network of roads, ranking the most critical connections to maintain over the next 20 years.
2. Offer assistance to local units of government with their long-range planning to address transportation sustainability and resiliency.
3. Encourage state and local units of governments to use all available options that increase transportation funding.
4. Standardize baseline ranking and project prioritization throughout the state.
5. Prioritize transportation projects that connect regional economic hubs.

# Foundational Assets



## ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

### Call to Action

Active-living planning and implementation will help improve community health, livability and social capital.

### Context

The Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) program provides a roadmap to improve conditions for bicycling and guidance to create and implement a plan for better, bikeable communities. Currently 13 communities in Greater Minnesota have this designation: Bemidji, Crosby, Duluth, Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area, Fergus Falls, Frazee, Grand Marais, Grand Rapids, East Grand Forks, Greater Mankato, Hutchinson, Rochester and Winona.

Complete Streets is an approach to road planning and design that considers and balances the needs of all transportation users. It is about the basics: improving the transportation system's safety and functionality for all users. Its main premise is nothing more than for people to get around safely and efficiently from point A to point B, using whatever mode of travel they choose. Greater Minnesota communities that have adopted a Complete Streets policy include: Rochester, Albert Lea, Duluth, Byron, Stewartville, Big Lake, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments, Red Wing, Pipestone, Breckenridge, St. Cloud Area Planning Organization, Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments, Battle Lake, Dilworth, Wilkin County, St. Cloud, Clay County, Otter Tail County, Northfield, Austin, Fergus Falls and Frazee.

### SMART Goals

1. Increase the number of communities that have achieved BFC-designated status by League of American Bicyclists.
2. Increase the number of communities that have adopted Complete Streets policies.

### Strategies

1. Work with state and local partners to coordinate efforts to develop and enhance regional bicycle and pedestrian systems.
2. Explore long-term funding mechanisms for the maintenance and improvement of bike and pedestrian infrastructure.
3. Work with state and local partners to support the expansion and maintenance of regional trail systems.

## TRANSIT

### Call to Action

Transit in rural and small urban areas will be increasingly important for access to services. Greater Minnesota must decide what needs their rural transit systems must meet to address this increasing mobility gap.

### Context

In 1990, 40 of Greater Minnesota's 80 counties had some form of public transportation system. By 2009, 76 counties had transit systems logging 11.1 million passenger trips, 1.03 million service hours and traveling 14.9 million miles to serve passenger needs. Local, state and federal sources combined to fund transit programs at a level of \$55.3 million.

### Smart Goal

Increase the level of service of Greater Minnesota's transit system by 2021.

### Strategies

1. Work to ensure that long-range public transit policy decisions in Greater Minnesota address future demographic shifts and needs.
2. Work with state and local partners to evaluate funding and service options to meet mobility and access needs of individuals.



# Foundational Assets

## WATER-WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

### Call to Action

Communities with low populations frequently struggle with the affordability of water infrastructure – they lack the economies of scale that help keep costs down in more populous cities.

### Context

Over 80% of the cities on the MPCA 2016 Clean Water Priority list (PPL) are in rural Minnesota. There are 297 cities listed statewide with total estimated project costs of \$1,347,854,296. Of the total estimated project costs, over \$800 million are rural projects.

### SMART Goal

Decrease the number of communities out of MPCA compliance by 2025.

### Strategies

1. Focus municipal infrastructure investments to support business development and affordable housing.
2. Facilitate dialog around right-sized wastewater infrastructure projects.
3. Encourage cities to develop capital improvement plans that are aligned with comprehensive plans and zoning/land use ordinances.
4. Collect and share best practices that demonstrate funding scenarios and solutions to update outdated and undersized systems.

## HOUSING AVAILABILITY

### Call to Action

Housing issues in Greater Minnesota vary from community to community. Challenges that need to be addressed include: tight rental and ownership markets, cost-burdened households, workforce and elderly housing shortages, homelessness, and low-quality and aging housing stock.

### Context

- In Greater Minnesota, nearly half of all renters spend more than 30% of income on housing, while 30% of homeowners with a mortgage spend at least 30 cents of every dollar they earn on housing.
- Since 1991, homelessness in Greater Minnesota has increased. Between 2009 and 2012, the homeless rate increased from 13 to 14.1 per 10,000 residents, and the number of homeless adults ages 55 and older nearly doubled.
- A 5% vacancy rate is generally considered a sign of a healthy rental housing market. A 2014 Minnesota Housing Partnership report showed 78% of 24 communities studied had a market-rate rental vacancy rate of 5% or less, and 91% had subsidized rental vacancy rates of 5% or less.

### SMART Goal

Move toward equilibrium in local housing markets.

### Strategies

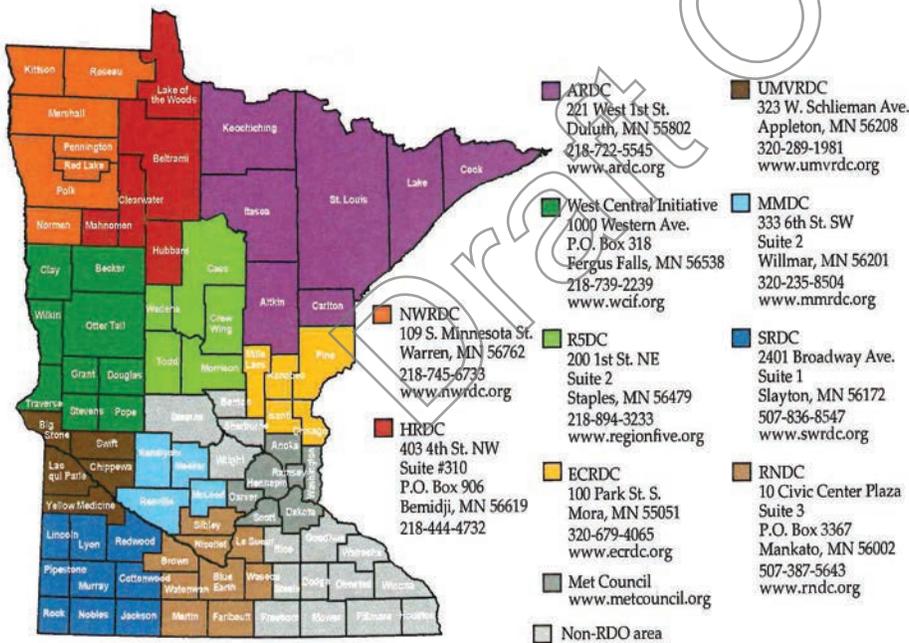
1. Provide more coordinated housing planning.
2. Advocate for funding programs for demolition of vacant, unsafe and dilapidated housing units.
3. Increase the number of units rehabilitated or preserved.
4. Encourage development of transitional and permanent supportive housing.
5. Collect and share best management practices around housing policy and financing.

# Conclusion

# MADO Members

## IMPLEMENTATION

The primary purpose of this plan is to align public and private entities around a common vision for Greater Minnesota. DevelopMN is a strategic document that will become that foundation. MADO's hope is that through this process partners can align work plans across state and local governments, organizations, educational institutions and businesses. As DevelopMN rolls out, MADO will look to a number of state, local and federal partners to implement initiatives and projects that will help accomplish the goals outlined here. MADO will review DevelopMN annually. Each year, MADO will assess progress, identify gaps and modify plans as needed. Lastly, MADO welcomes your participation and involvement. Greater Minnesota is most successful when all are involved. If you have ideas, or comments, please contact your local regional development organization listed on this page, or visit [mnado.org](http://mnado.org) for more information.



**NWRDC**  
109 S. Minnesota St.  
Warren, MN 56762  
218-745-6733  
[www.nwrdc.org](http://www.nwrdc.org)

**HRDC**  
403 4th St NW  
P.O. Box 906  
Bemidji, MN 56619  
218-444-4732  
[www.hrdc.org](http://www.hrdc.org)

**ARDC**  
221 West 1st St  
Duluth, MN 55802  
218-722-5545  
[www.ardc.org](http://www.ardc.org)

**R5DC**  
200 1st Street NE, Suite 2  
Staples, MN 56479  
218-894-3233  
[www.regionfive.org](http://www.regionfive.org)

**ECRDC**  
100 S Park St  
Mora, MN 55051  
320-679-4065  
[www.region7erdc.org](http://www.region7erdc.org)

**UMVRDC**  
323 W Schlieman Ave  
Appleton, MN 56208  
320-289-1981  
[www.umvrdc.org](http://www.umvrdc.org)

**MMDC**  
333 SW 6th St  
Suite 2  
Willmar, MN 56201  
320-235-8504  
[www.mmrdc.org](http://www.mmrdc.org)

**SRDC**  
2401 Broadway Ave  
Suite 1  
Slayton, MN 56172  
507-836-8547  
[www.swrdc.org](http://www.swrdc.org)

**Region 9**  
10 Civic Ctr Plaza, 3rd Floor  
P.O. Box 3367  
Mankato, MN 56002  
507-387-5643

**West Central Initiative**  
1000 Western Ave  
PO Box 318  
Fergus Falls, MN 56538  
218-739-2239  
[regionfour.wcif.org](http://regionfour.wcif.org)

Support for



comes from



The following projects were submitted by the local units of government of the region through our annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) Survey for inclusion in our regional CEDs. Not all projects are a match with EDA's funding priorities at this time, but do have an economic development focus, and were deemed important by their community. The CEDs Strategy Committee and East Central Regional Development Commission concur with the local units of government on their importance, and have included them as an appendage to the CEDs.

## **Chisago County**

### **Harris**

Refurbish water tower for commercial and residential needs.

### **North Branch**

- 1) Develop water infrastructure along Flink Avenue to provide adequate pressure to Interstate Business Park.
- 2) Construction of water infrastructure to Interstate Business Park to allow for pressure for fire suppression to allow for expansion and development of Interstate Business Park.
- 3) Develop affordable workforce housing.
- 4) Construct rail spur in Interstate Business Park.
- 5) Training for today's and future workforces.
- 6) Construction of an overpass or interchange at 400th and I35.

### **Taylor's Falls**

- 1) Explore marketing opportunities to promote the municipally owned industrial park.
- 2) Explore marketing opportunities to promote available commercial properties.
- 3) Work to expand recreational trail infrastructure.
- 4) Implement the City's transportation alternative program.
- 5) Explore Safe Routes to School program opportunities.

### **Wyoming**

- 1) Upgrade / expansion at Polaris facility
- 2) Upgrade / expansion at Rosenbauer - General Safety

### **Chisago County EDA / HRA**

- 1) Develop infrastructure for Chisago County Business Parks.
- 2) Prepare a county rail plan focused on rail focused industrial property.

## **Isanti County**

### **Braham**

- 1) Street Improvements
- 2) Development of phase 2 lots in industrial park.

### **Cambridge**

- 1) Acquisition of 72 additional acres to expand the Cambridge Opportunity Industrial Park.
- 2) Acquisition of additional land for industrial park served by rail.
- 3) Construction of a 47,040 square foot spec building at Cambridge Opportunity Industrial Park.
- 4) Infrastructure development for Southeast Industrial Park
- 5) Development of a portion of the airport to accommodate airport related industrial companies.
- 6) Acquisition of additional adjacent land for industrial park for the purpose of a 250,000 square foot data center.
- 7) Creation of transit oriented development at City Center Mall for Northern Lights Express passenger rail.

### **Isanti**

- 1) Development of a rail served industrial park.
- 2) Implement a downtown redevelopment plan.
- 3) Upgrade the mechanized sewer plant for business and residential needs.
- 4) Attract and develop a hotel to serve the community's business and personal needs.

### **Isanti County**

- 1) Alleviate Trunk Highway 65 Congestion
- 2) Increase Broadband Internet Availability
- 5) Develop a Rail Served Industrial Park

## **Kanabec County**

### **Mora**

- 1) Development and implementation of commercial and residential revitalization plans.
- 2) Purchase and installation of electric car charging stations.
- 3) Purchase of permanent site for the Mora Area Farmers Market.
- 4) Construction of a business incubator / spec building in the Mora Industrial Park.
- 5) Development of recreational attraction opportunities for the community and region, including the installation of a pedestrian tunnel under TH 65.
- 6) Planning and construction of community facilities.
- 7) Trunk highway transportation enhancements.

### **Ogilvie**

- 1) Redevelopment of the old school site to allow for industrial and commercial development.

### **Kanabec County EDA**

- 1) Work to expand broadband internet availability in county for business, education and personal uses.
- 2) Explore opportunities to expand workforce housing options.

- 3) Explore opportunities and programs to mitigate unemployment rates that are amongst the highest in the state.

## **Mille Lacs County**

### **Bock**

- 1) Construction of a new City Hall
- 2) Upgrading sanitary sewer infrastructure

### **Foreston**

No Projects Submitted

### **Milaca**

- 1) Continued development of the Highway 169 Industrial Park for further industrial and manufacturing capacity.
- 2) Construction of a spec building in the industrial park with room for three tenants.
- 3) Development of retail land at the junction of Highways 169 & 23.
- 4) Expansion of city utilities to serve areas outside city limits including the cities of Foreston and Pease.

### **Mille Lacs County**

- 1) Undertake a program to assist businesses in the Mille Lacs Lake feeling the effects of a collapse of the walleye population.
- 2) Work to expand broadband internet availability in county for business, education and personal uses.
- 3) Expand off highway vehicle trails for residents and tourists.
- 4) Work to expand the county's trails as part of the trail plan

### **Princeton**

- 1) Purchase of additional acreage and provision of infrastructure, including sewer, water, sidewalks and streets, to accommodate growing and new business
- 2) Conduct a marketing analysis and implement a marketing promotion of the Aero Business Park lots.
- 3) In conjunction with strategic partners, create an inter-connected regional trail and open spaces system.
- 4) With the assistance of strategic partners, work to recruit education providers that offer post-secondary education opportunities locally.
- 5) Support the creation of additional housing of all types.

## **Pine County**

### **Askov**

- 1) Upgrade roads and infrastructure to accommodate further development.

### **Henriette**

- 1) Road improvement projects.
- 2) New fencing at cemetery.

### **Hinckley**

- 1) Develop a mixed-use business/industry incubator with both office and light industrial space for new and start-up businesses
- 2) Development of a 34-acre regional park.
- 3) Infrastructure for the development of a retirement housing complex.
- 4) Acquire land to facilitate a train depot and related parking for a proposed passenger rail line between the Twin Cities and Duluth.
- 5) Redevelopment in several parts of the City to mitigate properties and accommodate future commercial and light industrial growth.
- 6) Develop an office space business incubator.
- 7) Develop a program to redevelop blighted properties.

### **Pine City**

- 1) Capitalize on City's location on lakes and rivers by developing water front areas.
- 2) Extend municipal water/sewer infrastructure to areas in the city not served by these utilities.
- 3) Acquire and develop additional property for the expansion of Pine City Technology Park
- 4) Develop an office space business incubator to grow new and start-up office-based businesses, with a focus on information technology
- 5) Provide remedial cleanup to Brownfield sites within the city.
- 6) Upgrade and develop the city's housing stock.
- 7) Build out portion of Twin Cities – to – Twin Ports Trail.
- 8) Improve and upgrade signage to advertise business development infrastructure.
- 9) Connectivity to the planned Northern Lights Express passenger rail line.
- 10) Planning for a creation of regional sports complex.
- 11) Create program to redevelop blighted properties.

### **Pine Technical College – Pine City**

- 1) Construct Advanced Technology Center to assist with training workers in the region.
- 2) Create student housing facility (affordable) near campus.

### **Sandstone**

- 1) Develop a mixed-use business and industry incubator with both office and light industrial space to grow new and start-up businesses
- 2) Acquire and rehabilitate land to construct a regional passenger rail station as well as overnight maintenance and cleaning facility for these passenger trains. Upgrade and expand community's water, wastewater and storm water facilities to allow for further development.
- 3) Expand infrastructure from the medical campus to a 184-acre city owned business park with freeway frontage.
- 4) Upgrade the City's drinking water system.

### **Pine County**

- 1) Build in collaboration with Pine County, Pine City Schools, East Central Schools, Hinckley-Finlayson Schools and others and Pine Technical and Community College for an Advanced Technology Education Center to train students in high demand occupations for jobs with new and existing companies and organizations in the region.

### **Regional**

**GPS 45/93** (regional public/private nonprofit partnership focused on community and economic development)

- 1) Workforce initiatives including training, development, retraining & educating on workforce opportunities within the region and working with the k-12 school system.
- 2) Work with post-secondary schools, community education and others to address issues where portions of the workforce may need to upgrade skills.
- 3) Work with post-secondary schools, community education and others to address issues which employers need to provide more skill development for their current workforce.
- 4) Work to expand broadband internet availability in our region.
- 5) Explore opportunities to recruit new businesses to our region as a catalyst for job creation.

## Appendix F

### CEEDS Strategy Committee Members

Name	Representing	Also Representing	Serving
Steve Kimmel	Private Industry		Chisago County
John Schlagel	Private Industry		Isanti County
Loren Davis	Private Industry	Private Individual	Isanti County
Karen Amundson	Chamber of Commerce	Community Leader	Kanabec County
Rebecca Perrotti	Workforce Development		Kanabec County
Thom Walker	Private Industry	Elected Official	Mille Lacs County
Joe Mulford	Post Secondary Education		Pine County
Frank Christopherson	Private Industry	Economic Development	Pine County
Carla Dunkley	Tribal / Minority		Mille Lacs County

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## Appendix G

### East Central Regional Development Commission Members

First Name	Last Name	Represents	Also Represents
Karen	Amundson	Kanabec County Public Interest	Chamber of Commerce
Greg	Anderson	Isanti County Commissioner	Elected Official
Loren	Davis	Isanti County Public Interest	Private Industry
Carla	Dunkley	Native American Tribal Representative	
Kathi	Ellis	Kanabec County Commissioner	Elected Official
Linda	Evans	Mille Lacs County Public Interest	
Tim	Franklin	Pine County Municipalities	Private Industry
Gordon	Gullixson	Kanabec County Municipalities	Elected Official
Steve	Hallan	Pine County Commissioner	Workforce Development
Richard	Hansen	Isanti County Townships	Elected Official
Kirsten	Kennedy	City of North Branch (10,000+ population)	Elected Official
Jeannette	Kester	Pine County Public Interest	
Steven	Kimmel	Chisago County Public Interest	Private Industry
Diane	Larkin	Chisago County Townships	Elected Official
Tom	Lawlor	Southern School Board Rep.	Elected Official
Ben	Montzka	Chisago County Commissioner	Private Industry
Steve	Odegard	Northern School Boards	Elected Official
Marlys	Palmer	Isanti County Municipalities	Private Industry
Dave	Patenaude	Kanabec County Townships	Elected Official
Genny	Reynolds	Mille Lacs County Commissioner	Private Industry
Bill	Schlumbohm, Sr.	Chisago County Municipalities	Elected Official
Thom	Walker	Mille Lacs County Municipalities	Private Industry
Barbara	Welty	Mille Lacs County Townships	Elected Official
Glen	Williamson	Pine County Townships	Elected Official & Private Industry

## Appendix H

### Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Resolution

**Placeholder**

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