Case Study: Working with Foundations

Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities (MIRC)
5 Counties
37 Cities
94 Townships
10 School Districts
1 Tribal Community

- 70% of cities have populations under 500
- 67.5% Computer Ownership in the region
- Compared with 74.3% in rural MN statewide
- Broadband adoption rate in the region is 57.6%
- Compared with 64% in rural MN statewide

1of 11 demonstration communities in MN working on:

- **Broadband** – ensuring wired and/or wireless broadband availability
- **Knowledge Workers** – ensuring that workers have the skills necessary for good jobs
- **Digital Inclusion** – ensuring that all have broadband access and necessary skills
- **Innovation** – providing new or more efficient government and business services
- **Marketing/Advocacy** – attracting investment and talent to your community
• Private foundation based in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.
• The state's largest rural-based and rural-focused foundation.
• As of Dec. 31, 2010, the foundation leveraged the proceeds from a trust worth more than $395 million.
• Our mission is to strengthen communities in rural Minnesota by working in three primary areas:
  – Grant making
  – Community leadership development
  – Public policy programs

www.blandinfoundation.org
UMVRDC was an implementation partner.

We had access to different networks.
Linked New Partners
7 Projects • $90,000 Granted • $137,000 Leveraged

Marketing/Advocacy
- Pioneer Public TV
  Regional non-profit
- Echo & Bellingham
  2 small cities

Digital Inclusion
- Lac qui Parle County
  Computer Commuter
  Local non-profit venture

Knowledge Workforce
- Ortonville EDA & School

Innovation
- Dawson Boyd School
- Johnson Memorial Health Facility
- Big Stone County
Pioneer Public TV

Producing video content for broadcast and/or web use describing the challenges facing rural areas in the availability and use of broadband.
Bellingham & Echo City Websites

- **Bellingham**
  - Population: 168
  - 0.4 square miles
  - Median age: 48 years
  - Median household income: $27,083

- **Echo**
  - Population: 278
  - 1.0 square mile
  - Median age: 40 years
  - Median household income: $27,656

19 of 37 cities do not have websites.
Lac qui Parle County Computer Commuter

Increasing Digital Literacy – Traveling 5 days a week to 6 different communities – Twelve local partners making this project happen – Offering 1 on 1 assistance
Goal: For every business in Ortonville to have a web presence!

- Lakewoodupperclub.com
- Economicdevelopmentportal.com
Johnson Memorial Home Health Project

Using broadband-based remote support tools and enhanced family engagement to reduce hospital readmissions and to achieve increased medication adherence for better health outcomes.
Big Stone County GIS Project

- GIS files are now accessible online
- Added a public GIS kiosk at the County building
- Updated computers in the Recorder & Assessor Offices with GIS
- The Recorder, Assessor & Environmental offices are assisting and teaching the public how to use these systems

“It is important to provide access to information they need regardless of our office hours, especially to real estate businesses and banks that could be working on a purchase or sale where time is critical.”

Big Stone County IT Coordinator
Dawson / Boyd Schools Multi-Collaboration Center

A hybrid online classroom

Teacher / Community Training Academy

Student Tech Team

Computer Savvy Specialist

Raising the bar!
Even More Partners!

University of Minnesota Extension

Minnesota Learning Commons
Supporting quality online education and resources

Adult Basic Education

SOUTHWEST MINNESOTA PRIVATE INDUSTRY COUNCIL
Project Impact

Demonstration Project

Extension Classes

Knowledge Worker Courses

Steering Committee Partners
Project Insights

Best Practices
1. Get the right people on board- who is in your network?
2. Be prepared to explain how a new program or opportunity can fit into existing programs
3. Clearly identify expectations from steering committee and project recipients
4. Leverage, Leverage, Leverage!

On-going Challenges
1. Geography- statewide vs regional vs local
2. Defining early what metrics will define success
3. Planning & Knowing the Options
   - Business
   - Government
   - Individuals
   - Non-profits
4. On-going Communication
THANK YOU!

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RDO Project Examples shared at the NADO Conference

• Lake Area Foundation- Russell Springs, KY - Sarah Roberts Hart Fund: [www.runwithallyourhart.com](http://www.runwithallyourhart.com) Also developing women’s groups in 10 counties working to raise funds for issues affecting women
RDO Project Examples shared at the NADO Conference

• Lake Cumberland Area Development District created the Lake Area Foundation: The project is the creation of a community foundation in a foundation desert in South Central Kentucky. www.lakeareafoundednation.org
RDO Project Examples shared at the NADO Conference

• Bland County Medical Clinic: Wytheville, VA- Worked with the Wythe Bland Foundation on the expansion/upgrading equipment in the clinic
  http://www.wbcfoundation.org/
RDO Project Examples shared at the NADO Conference

• Oklahoma Masonic Lodge Foundation/Grand Gateway EDA/Oklahoma Association of Rural Regional Councils: Accept $700,000 a year to meet needs of seniors which are not met with government funding

http://www.grandgateway.org/home