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\$1.1M IN GRANTS AWARDED TO NORTHWEST MINNESOTA BUSINESSES TO SUPPORT REVITALIZATION

September 22, 2023 (Bemidji, MN) – Twenty-one businesses in Mahanomen, Waubun, Richwood, East Grand Forks, and Bemidji have received a combined \$1.1 million in funding to support economic revitalization in their communities.

Funds were approved by the Northwest Minnesota Foundation through the Minnesota Main Street Economic Revitalization Program to help fund projects such as property improvements and building renovations. Eligible projects in this region had to be located along the Highway 59 corridor and in specific boundaries of East Grand Forks and Bemidji.

The Northwest Minnesota Foundation (NMF) was awarded more than \$2.1 million by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development to support revitalization projects in the three corridors for the repair or renovation of property, building construction, landscaping, streetscaping, demolition and site preparation, and related site improvements.

In determining the awards, NMF staff worked with committees comprised of economic development professionals and community members from each of the three corridors.

“The dedication to community that was demonstrated by each of the volunteer committee members was impressive,” said Nate Haskell, Senior Program Officer in Community Revitalization at Northwest Minnesota Foundation. “These individuals were all committed to supporting projects that will create real and lasting change in these communities.”

Due to the approval process required by both NMF and DEED, not all projects are being awarded at the same time; others may follow. This first dispersal of \$1,109,283 represents 53 percent of the total funds allocated to NMF. Should projects that have received preliminary support but not final approval fail to proceed, those dollars will be made available to other eligible projects in those corridors. All funds must be committed and approved by DEED by early January.

The following projects have submitted the necessary documentation to receive funding.

\$325,237 in funding has been dispersed for the Highway 59 corridor.

Awarded projects include:

- In Our Prime LLC: \$159,000 for an expansion to provide additional retail spaces for entrepreneurs in Waubun.
- Greenlaw Realty: \$99,750 to convert a vacant building (the American Legion building) in downtown Mahanomen into three retail spaces with high-efficiency and environmentally conscious utilities, including solar energy.
- Richwood Store LLC: \$33,871 for upgrading the store in Richwood to facilitate ADA accessibility and other improvements.
- Benson + Turner Foods Inc: \$32,616 for the construction of a meat processing plant in Waubun.

\$405,655 in funding has been dispersed for the East Grand Forks corridor.

Awarded projects include:

- Sweet Clover Bldg, LLC: \$120,000 to renovate the historic Hamm Brewing Company Beer Depot building to house eight to 10 more office suites for business use.
- East Rovers Edge Corporation: \$90,267 to replace the HVAC system and install a new roof and air-conditioning condenser at the Blue Moose.
- Pierce Investment, LLC: \$71,541 for an addition to increase production at Hawkes Manufacturing.
- GFKRENTAL LLC: \$36,750 to repair and renovate a historic downtown building that houses a restaurant and four upper-level units with residential tenants.
- Opticare-Forks Vision Clinic: \$28,050 for interior renovation.
- GFKRENTAL LLC: \$27,750 to renovate a currently vacant space into an ADA-compliant, 75-slot child care facility, operating as Gold's Childcare Center.
- JH Properties: \$15,000 to construct a storage garage to allow for one or two additional tenants.
- Five B's: \$11,047 to replace exterior siding and painting at the Local Ace Hardware store.
- Northland Custom Woodworking: \$3,000 to replace the front entrance door and install new steel siding.
- DeMers Dental, P.A.: \$2,250 to overhaul the reception area.

\$378,391 in funding has been dispersed for the Bemidji corridor.

Awarded projects include:

- 4th Street Lodge: \$130,091 for exterior repairs and a full interior remodel of the building formerly occupied by the Elk's Lodge.
- St. Phillips: \$120,000 to help fund renovations for a new child care center with 30 child care slots located in the old public library/REMAX building.
- Opportunities In Science: \$45,300 to fund improvements for the Headwaters Science Center building. The improvements include the build-out of exhibit space and remodeling of its bathrooms to become ADA-compliant.



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- Dream Blue LLC: \$30,000 to fund interior improvements to a building that houses a restaurant and office space; a new sprinkler system is needed to complete the improvements.
- Northwest Indian Community Development Center: \$30,000 to fund exterior improvements, including landscaping, updating the parking lot, refreshing the exterior, and adding signage to be more visible to the community.
- SCIMED Properties: \$18,000 for an exterior facelift, new windows, and repairs to roofing to a downtown Bemidji building currently occupied by the Lash Call with six rental units above.
- Bemidji Brewing: \$5,000 for external paint and timber treatments, and internal upgrades for customer experience and safety