

# County Perspectives

*The newsletter of economic development in Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties*

## Brandon is named the 2009 Community of the Year

**G**overnor Mike Rounds has selected Brandon as the Community of the Year for 2009. The award was conferred by the Governor during the annual Economic Development Conference in Pierre.

“Brandon’s rapid growth and aggressive business recruitment fall in line with the goals of the 2010 Initiative,” Rounds said. “This past year, several quality companies have made Brandon their home, and several others have expanded existing operations.”

The governor cited Tower Tech, a wind-tower manufacturer, and Wausau Supply Company as two companies growing in Brandon.

“Tower Tech recently made a \$21 million investment in Brandon and will create up to 150 jobs,” the governor said. “Wausau doubled the size of its Brandon facility. That’s particularly noteworthy in today’s economy.”

Brandon’s success is attributed, in part, to its role in the Corson Development Association, a collaborative partnership created by the Minnehaha County Economic Development Association, Sioux Falls Development Foundation, Brandon Development Foundation, Alliance Communications, Sioux Valley Energy, Home Federal Bank, First National Bank in Sioux Falls (Brandon branch) and Security Bank, now Great Western. For more than ten years, this group has worked together to promote growth that has a positive impact on the region.

“Brandon’s city leaders and development foundation have always understood the value of partnership, patience and



*The Brandon delegation and Mayor Larry Beesley receive their award from Governor Rounds.*

*“Brandon’s rapid growth and aggressive business recruitment fall in line with the goals of the 2010 Initiative. This past year, several quality companies have made Brandon their home, and several others have expanded existing operations.”*

*— Governor Mike Rounds*

perseverance in successful economic development,” said Jeff Eckhoff, MCEDA executive director. “As a result, they have been able to offer new and expanding companies the land and cooperative support they need to grow their businesses in Brandon.”

The Excellence in Economic Development Award was established in 1993 to honor the dedication and commitment of eight South Dakotans who lost their lives when returning home from an economic development trip. Businesses and individuals across the state helped finance this award established in honor of those who died: Governor George S. Mickelson, state business leaders Roland Dolly, Ron Reed, Angus Anson, David Birkeland, Roger Hainje, and pilots Dave Hanson and Ron Becker.

The Governor presented the 2009 Excellence in Economic Development award to Jerry Prostrullo of Madison. Both Prostrullo and the Community of Brandon received \$2,000 checks to be used for community economic development projects.





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## TCF moves main office to Sioux Falls

**T**CF Financial, once known as Twin Cities Federal and the second largest bank in Minnesota with \$16 billion in assets, has relocated its headquarters office to Sioux Falls, SD. The move will create 15 to 20 new jobs in Sioux Falls and let the financial corporation take advantage of South Dakota's more advantageous banking rules.



TCF Financial opened its first South Dakota branch in March at 2508 South Louise Avenue, in Sioux Falls' Meadows on the River retail area. By establishing its main office in Sioux Falls, the bank can take advantage of South Dakota's less complicated banking rules and export those rules in doing business in an eight-state network.

Both Citibank (South Dakota) NA and Wells Fargo Bank NA relocated their charters to South Dakota to take advantage of the state's banking laws, Citibank in 1981 and Wells Fargo in 2004.

"Our partners at the Sioux Falls Development Foundation have directed an aggressive marketing campaign at Twin Cities businesses for several years," said Jeff Eckhoff, MCEDA and LCEDA executive director. "When a financial institution of this size gets the message and relocates its main office to our area, it validates our efforts and benefits all our communities."



## Rural development groups hold annual meeting

**T**he Minnehaha and Lincoln County Economic Development Associations held their combined 2008 annual meeting in the Starlite Room of the Holiday Inn City Centre in downtown Sioux Falls on November 6. The annual meeting focused on the development achievements of the past year in both counties and a combined annual report was distributed at the meeting.

Slater Barr, president of the Sioux Falls Development Foundation, was the keynote speaker at the event. Barr focused his remarks on the importance of setting goals and achieving the dreams for our communities which drive our involvement in economic development. The Sioux Falls Development Foundation is an active partner in regional economic growth with LCEDA and MCEDA.

Incoming Minnehaha County Economic Development Association president Jim Clark and Lincoln County Economic Development Association president Todd Nelson each provided a report from their counties and Jeff Eckhoff, executive director of both groups, addressed the solid growth recorded in rural development during 2008.



*Jeff Eckhoff addresses the combined annual meeting crowd.*

"The combined economies of our two-county area exceeded the growth of most areas of our nation last year," Eckhoff said.

"Although 2008 was not the third consecutive record-setting year for economic benchmarks, it was one of the best years of the past decade and evidence that sustained growth continues to fuel Minnehaha and Lincoln counties."

# Misconceptions about stimulus money raise unrealistic expectations

**W**hile federal stimulus package money is flowing to each state, residents of local counties and cities have several misconceptions about the amount of money available and how it is being divided and used, according to Lynne Keller Forbes, executive director of the South Eastern Council of Governments.

"The numbers being thrown around are enormous," Forbes said, "but in the final analysis, the actual dollar amount available to our area does not match the expectations that came with the initial package. And basically, we are still using the existing programs with the same rules and the same need for preparation and planning."

Forbes said that organizations like hers were requested to compile a list of existing projects from communities and counties that might be eligible for the infrastructure portion of the stimulus package, about \$150 billion for new infrastructure for the entire nation. In the SECOG service area alone, a list of projects totaling \$1 billion was assembled.

"You can easily see how thin that \$150 billion is being stretched if we were able to come up with \$1 billion in projects just in our corner of South Dakota," Forbes said. "There is not enough infrastructure improvement money in the stimulus package to cover the nation's wish list."

Even qualifying for some of the federal funding is still problematic.

"The federal staff is in transition in Washington,"

Forbes said, "so we are waiting to see how the coordination of the funding is managed, since several government departments are involved. And we have to wait for the federal agencies to interpret some of the language from the bill. This delay is frustrating for many communities that were looking for an immediate impact."

Some things are certain, Forbes said. Only public infrastructure projects are eligible, no private sector projects will be considered and some level of matching funds will be required. But most of all, she said, it is clear that a much smaller number of projects, especially in our area, will receive funding through the stimulus package.

"Communities in the state of South Dakota will not receive as much money as people hoped for," Forbes said. "Infrastructure projects that do receive this new federal money will have a positive impact on the region. Unfortunately, it will not have the enormous impact the general public was expecting, and it will certainly not be sufficient to accommodate everyone's wish lists."



Lynne Keller Forbes



## PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

### Ashley Mayland, President, Harrisburg Economic Development Corporation

*Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of regular spotlights on local development partners.*

**B**etween 2000 and today, the community of Harrisburg has increased its population from 1,000 to 4,300. Along the way, the commercial and industrial base of the community has changed significantly, necessitating a local economic development organization to work with city government to help plan the future in this rapidly growing Lincoln County town.

According to Ashley Mayland, Harrisburg chiropractor and president of the Harrisburg Economic Development Corporation (HEDC), Mayor Reed Ramstad and local business leaders requested a group to help the community compete with other fast-growing area towns.

"The organization is representative of the businesses here in Harrisburg, as well as having a board member who represents local residents," Mayland said. "The city's full time job is keeping up with infrastructure development and improvement. We have the job of marketing and attracting new business to Harrisburg."

HEDC was organized in 2006 and holds monthly meetings. The group has already created a new welcome sign for Harrisburg, published a community



Ashley Mayland

guide and has met with business prospects. Last year, the group hosted a community-wide business mixer to acquaint local business leaders with their colleagues. This year, HEDC plans to facilitate a local business needs assessment to help chart future growth.

"Another building boom could follow the completion of the new high school this summer," Mayland said. "From what I've seen, a population of 5,000 is the magic number for retail interest. The new school may drive

another population increase, which could fuel additional construction, rather than the drop-off other communities are expecting this year."

Another project of the Harrisburg group has been the promotion of Harrisburg Days, a community-wide celebration slated for this summer, featuring entertainment by popular area musicians Kory and the Fireflies.

"It's a major step for a community to have its own development group," said Jeff Eckhoff, LCEDA executive director. "The Harrisburg organization is very active and very dedicated to their community. They understand the value of listening to the business community and to local residents."

## *Keep your eye on the ball—not on the leader board*

**E**conomic development is really a bit like a golf tournament. You have to keep your eye on the ball and play your own game, but you also have to be aware of what the other players are doing. In economic development, we each focus on our own hometown, but we don't work in a vacuum. When other communities try a new idea, build a spec building or get a new company, we're aware of that action and it can have an impact on the way we play our game.

But in the final analysis, no matter what the others are doing, success depends on our own actions and our own focus, not on what's happening down the road in another town. Any community—no matter how large or how successful—can point to someone else who is “doing better” in some economic segment or aspect of community growth. But as soon as we start to focus on that other place—where people, finances and conditions are doubtlessly different—we lose sight of our own situation, our own goals and our own future.

Rather than ask the question “Why aren't we like them?” we should ask ourselves “How did they achieve

their success?” If the other town has a new idea or an economic program that could be transplanted to your community, it is worth studying. If a new company in another town has supply needs that your own community could fill, that's an opportunity to consider. Learning from others is a positive step. Copying others usually doesn't work—in a golf tournament or in economic development.

Setting goals, accepting new ideas, planning for the future, involving local residents, keeping your options open—all these things work together to make community development successful. Once we recognize the uniqueness of each community, we're able to each “play our own game” and achieve the success we deserve—no matter where we live.



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