

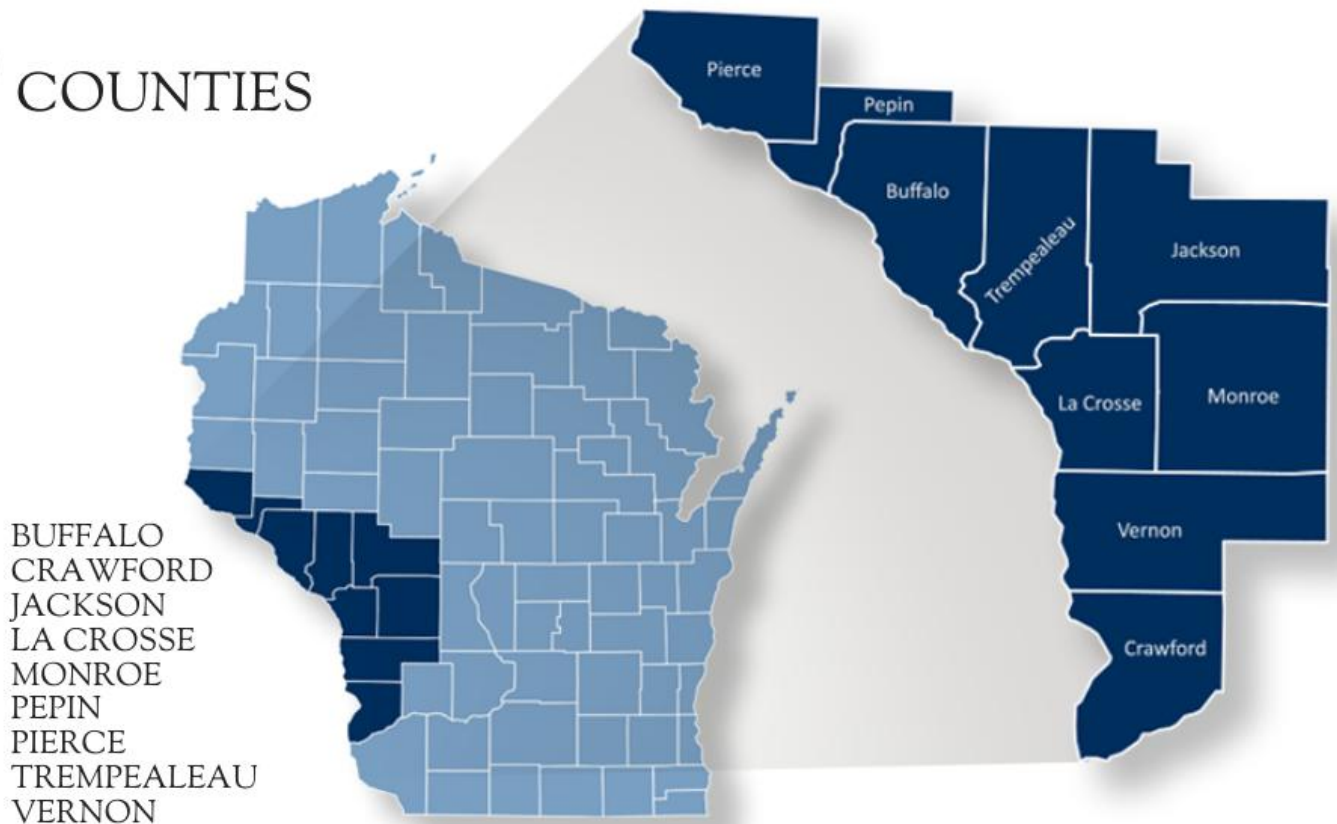
ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 1, 2022 - MAY 31, 2023

MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION



9 COUNTIES



328,538 total population



12,692 total businesses



156,115 total employees

ABOUT US

The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) provides planning and economic development services to improve the nine county region's environment, economy and quality of life.

SERVICES



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Comprehensive Planning
Hazard Mitigation Planning
Land Use Planning
Outdoor Recreation Planning
Farmland Preservation Planning
Zoning Assistance
Housing Studies/Reports



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
Revolving Loan Funds
Disaster Recovery Microloans
Grant Writing and Administration
Special Reports
Economic Development Plans
Technical Assistance



TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

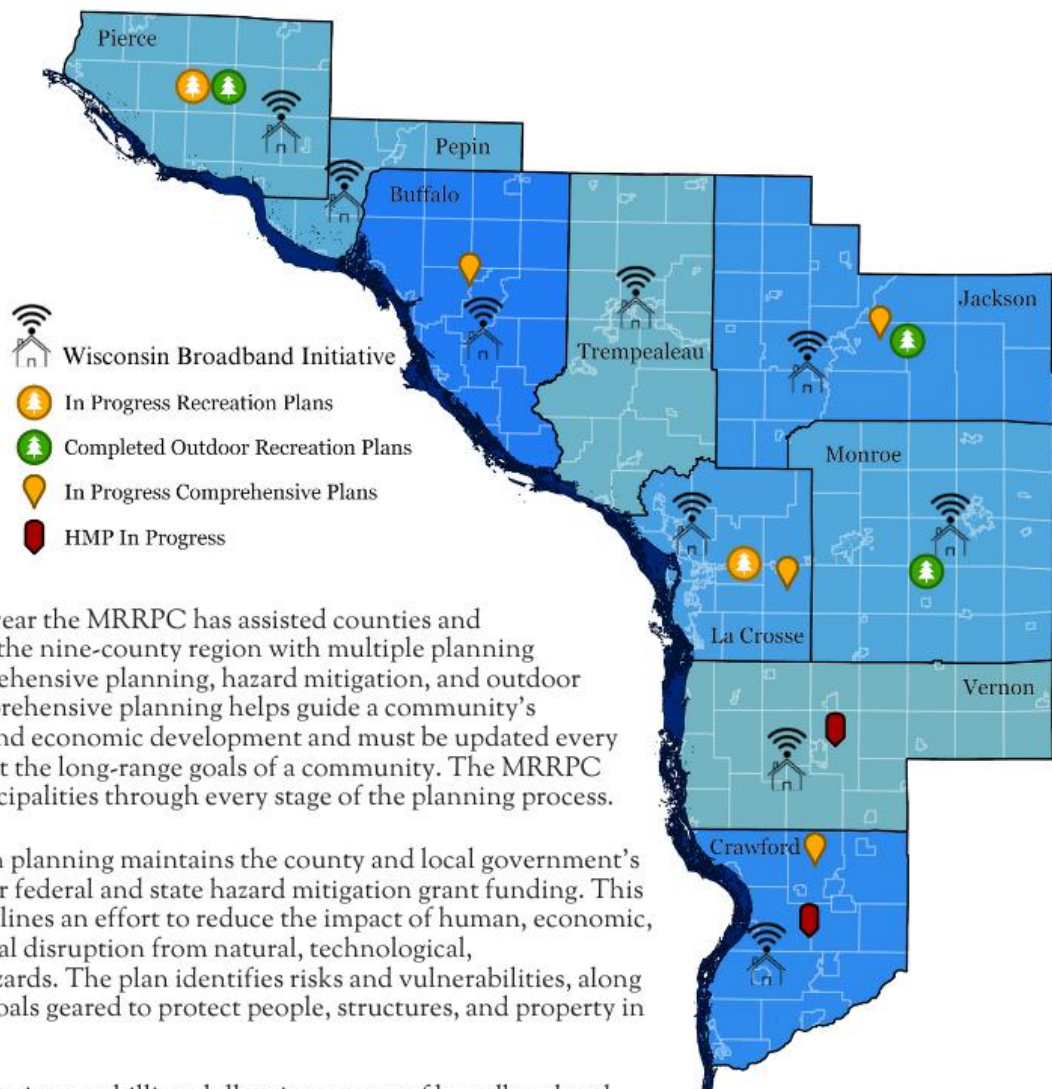
Regional Transportation Planning
Safe Routes to School Planning
Corridor Planning
Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Planning
Freight Planning
Transportation & Economic Development



MAPPING AND DATA SERVICES

Custom Map Design
Interactive Maps and Applications
Lightcast Data Assistance
Location Based Data Services
Land Use Data

HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS



During this past year the MRRPC has assisted counties and municipalities in the nine-county region with multiple planning updates in comprehensive planning, hazard mitigation, and outdoor recreation. Comprehensive planning helps guide a community's physical, social, and economic development and must be updated every ten years to reflect the long-range goals of a community. The MRRPC assists local municipalities through every stage of the planning process.

Hazard mitigation planning maintains the county and local government's ability to apply for federal and state hazard mitigation grant funding. This five-year plan outlines an effort to reduce the impact of human, economic, and environmental disruption from natural, technological, and manmade hazards. The plan identifies risks and vulnerabilities, along with mitigation goals geared to protect people, structures, and property in the region.

Wisconsin will receive one billion dollars in support of broadband and increased access to internet especially in rural areas. MRRPC continues to support efforts to improve high speed internet service across the region.

Outdoor recreation planning is an activity the MRRPC assists counties and communities with to be eligible to apply for grants. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is a main source of funding for outdoor recreation facilities. The Stewardship Program, administered by the DNR, is a fund designed to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, protect land sensitive to environmental degradation, conserve and restore wildlife habitat, and protect water quality. As a prerequisite to WIDNR funding programs, applicants must first submit an outdoor recreation plan that has been approved by a local governing unit, or a plan of a higher unit of government.

PLANS and GRANTS

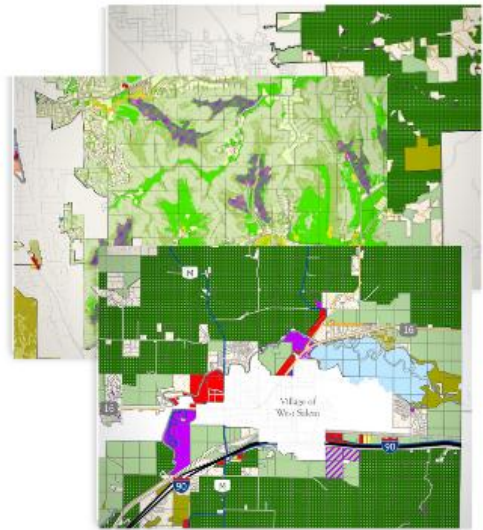
COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

Comprehensive Plans are created and updated to provide overall strategies to guide a community's physical, social, and economic development. The MRRPC is assisting Jackson County with an update to their Comprehensive Plan including updating statistical data, creating new maps, conducting new community surveys, and hosting open houses.

The MRRPC is also working closely with other municipalities across the Region to update their Comprehensive Plans. The staff is building on previous efforts and is focused on turning complex data into useful information. It is our goal to create engaging plans that capture the character of communities that can be used to guide future development and community success.



Contact: Jamie Schoen - Planner
jamie@mrrpc.com - (608) 785 - 9396



MULTI-HAZARDS MITIGATION PLANS



Contact: Aurora Bergeron - Planner
aurora@mrrpc.com - (608) 785 - 9396

Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan updates began in the Fall of 2022 for Vernon and Crawford Counties. These plans are in the final stages of revisions and will soon be adopted by their county boards. This hazard mitigation planning reduces the risk to people and property and reduces the cost of recovering from a disaster. A hazard mitigation plan can help communities become more sustainable and disaster-resilient by focusing efforts on the hazards, disaster-prone areas and identifying appropriate mitigation actions. Effective mitigation planning and efforts can break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction and repeated damage.

The MRRPC has submitted grant applications to update multi-hazard mitigation plans for Pierce, Monroe, and Trempealeau Counties and the Ho Chunk Nation. The plan updates are anticipated to begin in late 2023.



OUTDOOR PLANNING

OUTDOOR RECREATION PLANS

The MRRPC collaborated with Jackson, Monroe, Pierce, and Trempealeau Counties and the Town of Holland to complete an update to their Outdoor Recreation Plan. All plans were successful in identifying and establishing strategies to continue the maintenance and safety of all public and private outdoor recreation facilities. The completion of these plans followed by the community's adoption, makes the projects listed eligible for various state and federal funding through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Updates to the Village of Ellsworth and the Village of West Salem Outdoor Recreation plans are in progress. The Village of West Salem has a high priority to provide ADA access to playgrounds and surrounding facilities, repave bike trails, and restore bike racks and picnic tables in their parks and campgrounds.



Contact: Aurora Bergeron-Planner
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TOURISM MEANS BUSINESS

In 2022, the tourism industry in the nine county MRRPC region generated a record-breaking 989 Million dollars in total economic impact with 627 million in direct spending by visitors. All 9 counties saw year-over-year growth in total economic impact. This data was reported by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism in May of 2023.

This data shows that the Mississippi River and Driftless Area continues to be both a regional and national attraction for tourism dollars and investment. The area saw record setting overnight lodging, camping, event attendance, dining and recreational spending.

MRRPC continues to partner with the State and our communities to promote this growth and encourage investment in this important sector. Tourism continues to be an economic development engine in the region.

This success also speaks to the collective efforts of our tourism partners from all corners of the region, all of which help position Western Wisconsin as a premier travel destination.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MRRPC's role in economic development is to assist our counties, local units of government, and regional, county, and local Economic Development Organizations. We help craft, promote, and implement economic development plans, and activities in the Region that support our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

In addition, MRRPC is working with the Coulee Region Business Center, the Workforce Development Board, The Upper Mississippi River Manufacturing Alliance (TUMMA), the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at UW - La Crosse, the Northern Grain Belt Ports, and many other businesses and organizations to promote job growth and development in the region.

MRRPC continued to partner with the State, Communities, and Federal Government in the distribution and administration of both Revolving Loan Funds, and various grants.

We manage four Revolving Loan Funds with over two million dollars in assets and a current available cash balance of over \$800,000 dollars and more than 20 outstanding business loans.

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Main Street Bounce Back Program, which ended on December 31, 2022, brought \$5,600,000 into our region over 18 months. The program successfully assisted 560 businesses to move into vacant commercial space, expand operations, buy equipment and hire additional employees. We appreciated the opportunity to work with WEDC on this exciting project and look forward to seeing these businesses continue to grow well into the future.

All nine counties in our region have applied for Public Service Commission (PSC) Broadband Expansion Grants. They are also collecting data on internet speeds, service costs, and availability of high-speed internet. Additional money has been allocated to the state through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation (BIL). This will ensure the deployment of advanced telecommunications capability in the region.

The counties must now demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in their unserved and underserved areas. The pandemic taught us the necessity of high-speed internet connectivity for education, commerce, and economic / community development. We have identified broadband expansion as a primary goal in our CEDS.

MRRPC is assisting the region in these important efforts.



"These new investments will help bolster our ongoing work and give local communities the support needed to build critical broadband infrastructure and ensure high-speed internet access for all."

Governor Tony Evers



TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

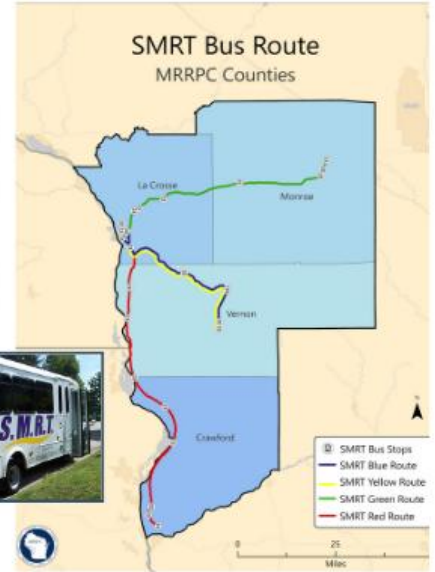
Second Train!



The Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago (TCMC) Intercity Passenger Rail Project adds a second daily round-trip passenger train on the 411-mile corridor between Chicago, Illinois and Twin Cities (St. Paul and Minneapolis) in Minnesota. The TCMC Service will follow Amtrak's existing long-distance Empire Builder route. The new service will complement the existing Empire Builder schedule, providing travel flexibility with both a morning and mid-day departure from Chicago and St. Paul.

SMRT BUS

The SMRT Bus system is a dynamic, integrated, and coordinated fixed route bus system that provides access to jobs, recreation, shopping, and other opportunities for residents within the region. In 2022 there were 18,500 riders which is approaching pre-pandemic levels. To access the SMRT Bus schedule and other information go to RideSmrt.com.



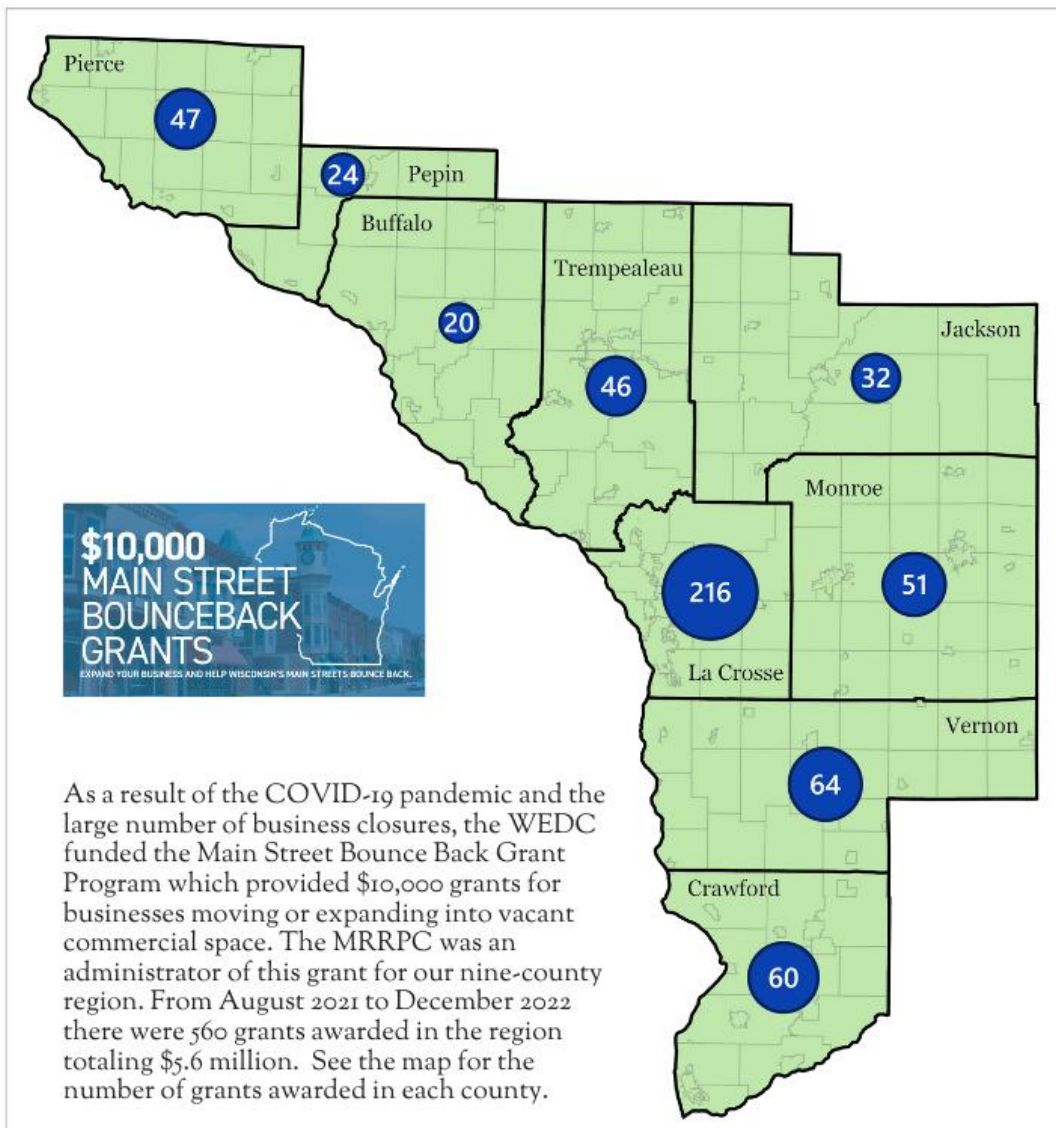
The historic inland port cities of La Crosse and Prairie du Chien and the Upper Mississippi River were recognized in late 2022 as a part of The Northern Grain Belt Ports, a Federal Port Statistical Area. This designation will raise the area's profile and attract federal, state, non-profit, and business organization investment in our MRRPC ports and waterway. This national recognition will also help advance agriculture and industry in the region.

Contact: Ken Harwood-Planner
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The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission (MRRPC) provides planning and economic development services to improve the environment, economy, and quality of life for our nine-county region. The region has a wide range of prominent job sectors, dominated by manufacturing, agriculture, health care and retail trade. There is an array of freight infrastructure to move the region's products including Interstates and highways, railroads, waterways, pipelines, and airports. This multimodal network is essential to the efficient movement of goods and commodities of all modes within and through the region.

The MRRPC Regional Freight Strategy integrates multimodal systems including major highways, the Mississippi River, air freight and railroad corridors into one plan. We will combine community input, regional plans and various freight studies into a cohesive and consistent strategy. The project team is working with WisDOT, area businesses, transit companies, regional planners and community experts to combine MRRPC's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy goals, Regional Transportation Planning goals, Connect 2050 WisDOT Vision, and National multimodal and highway freight program goals into recommendations for both best use of and continued improvement and investment in the entire Transit System for the region.

BOUNCEBACK GRANTS



Contact: Jon Bingol - Executive Director
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THE MRRPC STAFF

WELCOME JON BINGOL

Jon Bingol, Executive Director, Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission has been in the La Crosse area since 2012 and has worked locally for Gundersen Health System, Forward Path Logistics and now, the MRRPC. He earned his bachelor's degree in Business Administration from UW-Eau Claire and his MBA from Viterbo University. He serves on several boards including: Coulee Region Business Center, Gundersen Credit Union, Seven Rivers Hospice Home Inc. and the Western Wisconsin Workforce Development Board. Having led organizations from various industries, he understands both private and public business. His background in economic development and community development will support the MRRPC Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies. He also has extensive experience in Continuous Improvement and enjoys helping organizations and communities grow and prosper.

*JON BINGOL
Executive Director*

*SARAH OFTE
Administrative Assistant*

*AURORA BERGERON
Planner*

*JAMIE SCHOEN
Planner*



*KEN HARWOOD
Planner*

*ABBEY NICEWANDER
Senior Planner*

*COLE REMACK
GIS Intern*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR RETIRES



Dave Bonifas, who has been the Executive Director of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission for the past 3 years retired December 31, 2022. Over his 32 years of working for the MRRPC,

Dave served in various positions beginning as an intern while in college and after his graduation from UW- La Crosse was hired as a Community Development Planner and GIS Specialist and Senior Planner before becoming the Executive Director in January 2020. Thank you for 32 years of service to the Mississippi River Region and we wish you the best in your retirement.

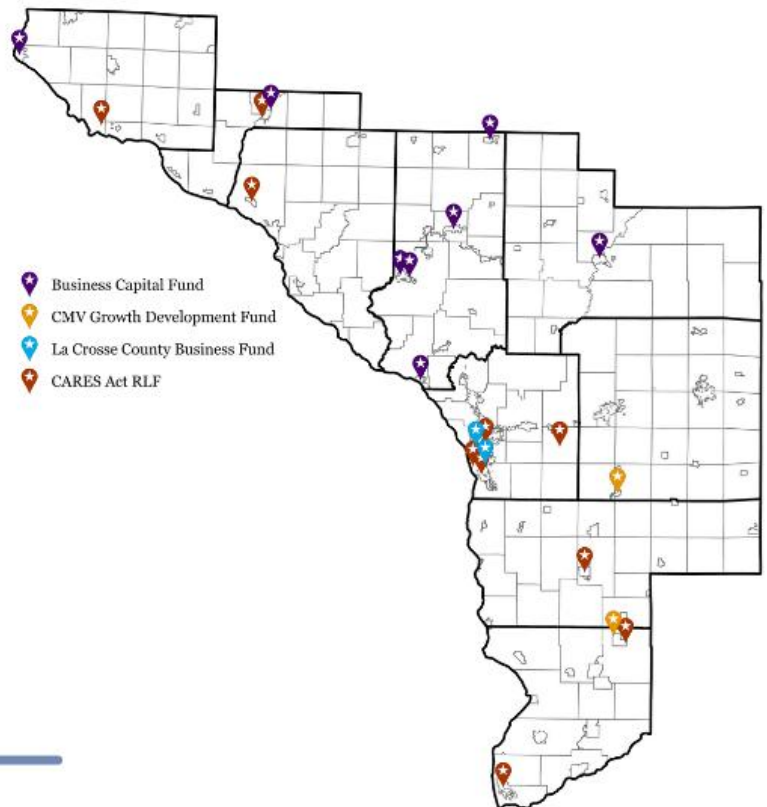
REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS



MRRPC ACTIVE LOANS 2022-2023

REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS	FUND BALANCE AS OF May 31, 2023 <i>(Total Cash and Receivables, and Other Assets)</i>	AVAILABLE CASH BALANCE AS OF May 31, 2023 <i>(Net of Closed Loans not yet Funded and Committed Loans)</i>
Business Capital Fund	\$820,780.07	\$424,693.53
CMV Growth Development Fund	\$244,023.02	\$151,021.02
La Crosse County Business Fund	\$170,095.34	\$105,518.28
CARES Act RLF	\$1,064,131.99	\$155,323.79
TOTALS	\$2,299,030.42	\$836,556.62

The MRRPC administers four federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) Revolving Loan Funds (RLFs) that provide gap financing to businesses. These are: the Business Capital Fund RLF serving Buffalo, Jackson, Trempealeau, Pepin and Pierce counties, the CMV Growth Development Fund serving Crawford, Monroe and Vernon Counties; the La Crosse Economic Development Fund serving La Crosse County and the Cares Act Recovery Assistance Fund serving all nine of our counties. The Business Capital Fund made a \$21,000 loan to a business in Osseo retaining 3 jobs and leveraging \$92,000 of private financing. For more information about the MRRPC Revolving Loan funds go to our website mrrpc.com.



Contact: Jon Bingol - Executive Director
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COMMISSIONERS *and* STAFF

COMMISSIONERS

The Commission is made up of three commissioners from each member county that are appointed by the county board, or appointed by the Governor.

Buffalo County
Mary Anne McMillan Urell
Del Twidt
John Schlesselman

Crawford County
Craig Anderson
Gerald Krachey
Vacant

Jackson County
Ron Carney
Brad Chown
Tom Cooper

La Crosse County
Vicki Burke
Sharon Hampson
Robin Schmidt

Monroe County
Toni Wissestad
James Kuhn
Cedric Schnitzler

Pepin County
John Andrews
Chris Kees Winkler
Kim Seipel

Pierce County
Richard Purdy
William Schroeder
Neil Gulbranson

Trempealeau County
Patrick Sorge
George Brandt
Phillip Borreson

Vernon County
Herb Cornell
Jo Ann Nickelatti
Nancy Jaeckel

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JAMIE SCHOEN
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ABBAY NICEWANDER
Senior Planner
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Providing planning and economic development services to improve the region's environment, economy and quality of life.

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Website

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The Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission would like to thank the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Wisconsin Department of Administration, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, The Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration, Wisconsin Emergency Management, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and most of all the County Boards of Supervisors of Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Pepin, Pierce, Trempealeau and Vernon for their cooperation and involvement. The combined resources of these local, state, and federal government partners provide the funding that makes the activities of the MRRPC possible.

