

ANNUAL REPORT

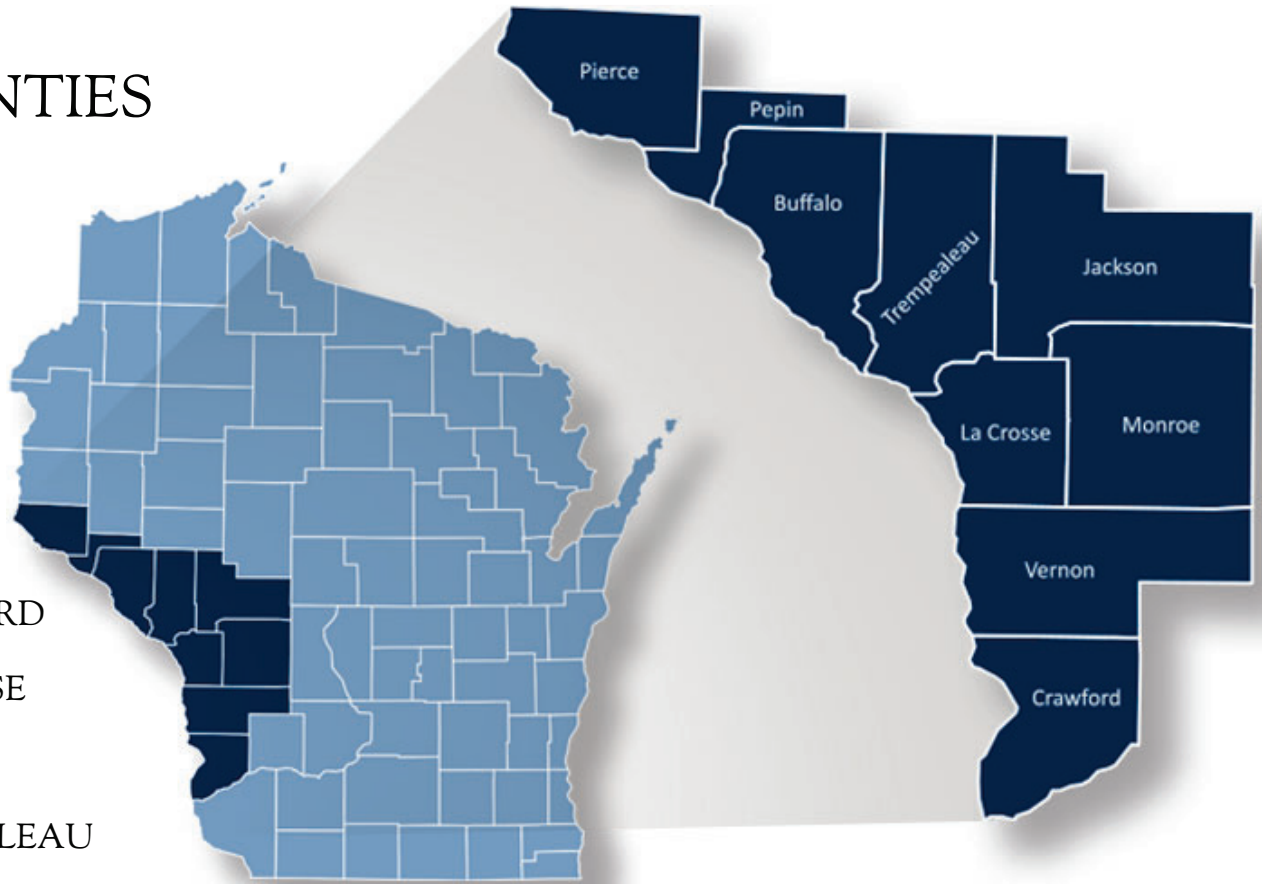
JUNE 1, 2023 - MAY 31, 2024

MISSISSIPPI RIVER REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION



9 COUNTIES

BUFFALO
CRAWFORD
JACKSON
LA CROSSE
MONROE
PEPIN
PIERCE
TREMPEALEAU
VERNON



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



Economic Development Projects

- Vernon County Economic Development Strategy
- Monroe County Economic Development and Tourism Conference
- County Broadband Expansion
- Grain Belt Ports Statistical Area Designation
- Now creating Mississippi Advisory Committee
- Revolving Loan Funds

Transportation Projects

- SMRT Bus
- Human Transit Plans for all Nine Counties
- MRRPC Regional Freight Strategy
- Safe Routes to School Grant – Village of West Salem
- Mississippi River Parkway Commission – Asset Mapping Project mrrpc.com/grr

Community Development Projects

Comprehensive Plans

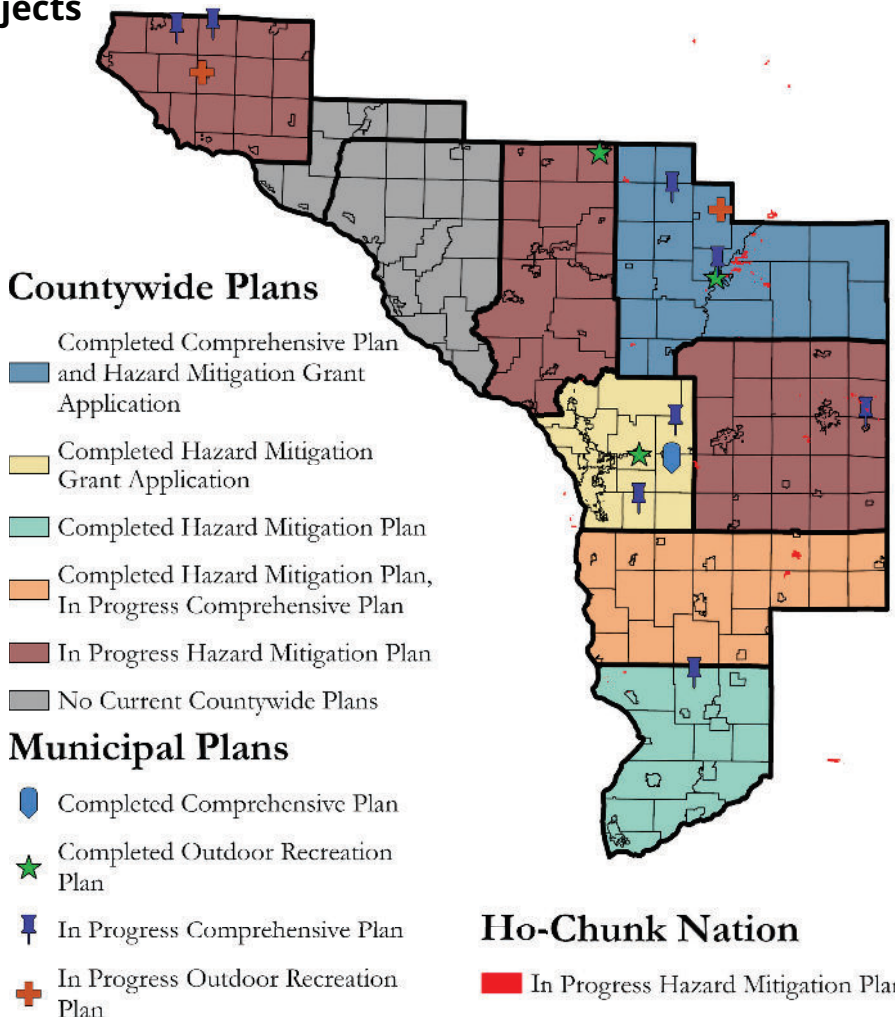
- Town of Bangor
- Jackson County
- Vernon County
- Town of Utica
- City of Black River Falls
- Town of Garden Valley
- Village of Oakdale
- Town of Greenfield
- Town of River Falls
- Town of Martell
- Town of Burns

Outdoor Recreation Plans

- City of Osseo
- Village of West Salem
- City of Black River Falls
- Village of Ellsworth
- Village of Merrilan

Hazard Mitigation Plans

- Vernon County (Completed)
- Crawford County (Completed)
- Trempealeau County
- Monroe County
- Pierce County
- Ho-Chunk Nation



PLANS and GRANTS

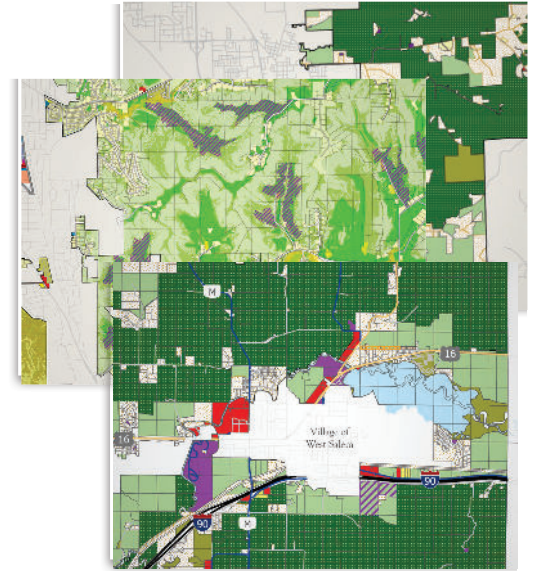
COMPREHENSIVE PLANS



Contact: Jon Bingol - Executive Director
Jon@mrrpc.com - (608) 785 - 9396

Comprehensive Plans are created and updated to provide overall strategies to guide a community's physical, social, and economic development. The Comprehensive Planning process for each municipality includes updating statistical data, creating new maps, conducting new community surveys, and hosting open houses to gain public input. The goal of the MRRPC is to create engaging plans which capture the character of the community, turn data into useful information, and can be used to guide future development and community success. These comprehensive plans are due for updates every ten years. Communities with updated plans may be eligible for state and federal grants.

During the past year the MRRPC has assisted communities and completed comprehensive plans for Jackson County and the Town of Bangor. Currently the MRRPC is assisting the following communities: City of Black River Falls, Town of Utica, Vernon County, Town of Greenfield, Town of River Falls, Village of Oakdale, Town of Garden Valley, Town of Burns, and the Town of Martell in completing their plans.



MULTI-HAZARDS MITIGATION PLANS (HMP)



Contact: Jack Zabrowski - Senior Planner
Jack@mrrpc.com - (608) 785 - 9396

Hazard mitigation planning reduces loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters. The process begins with state, tribal and local governments identifying natural disaster risks and vulnerabilities that are common in their area. After identifying these risks, they develop long-term strategies for protecting people and property from similar events. Mitigation plans are key to breaking the cycle of disaster damage and reconstruction. 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 reduce the cost of disaster damage, speed reconstruction and potentially avoid repeated damage.

The MRRPC has assisted Vernon and Crawford Counties in completing their hazard mitigation plans. Currently the MRRPC is assisting Monroe, Pierce, and Trempealeau Counties, as well as the Ho Chunk Nation in updating their plans. HMPs are sponsored by FEMA and coordinated through WEM and need to be updated every 5 years.



OUTDOOR PLANNING

OUTDOOR RECREATION PLANS

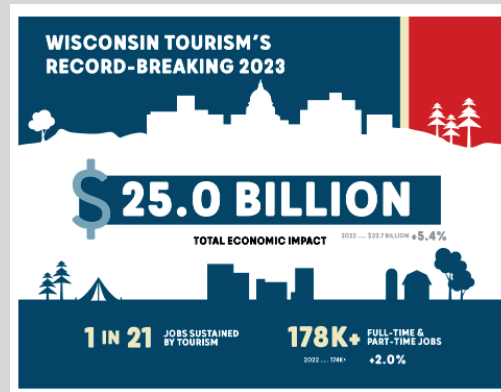
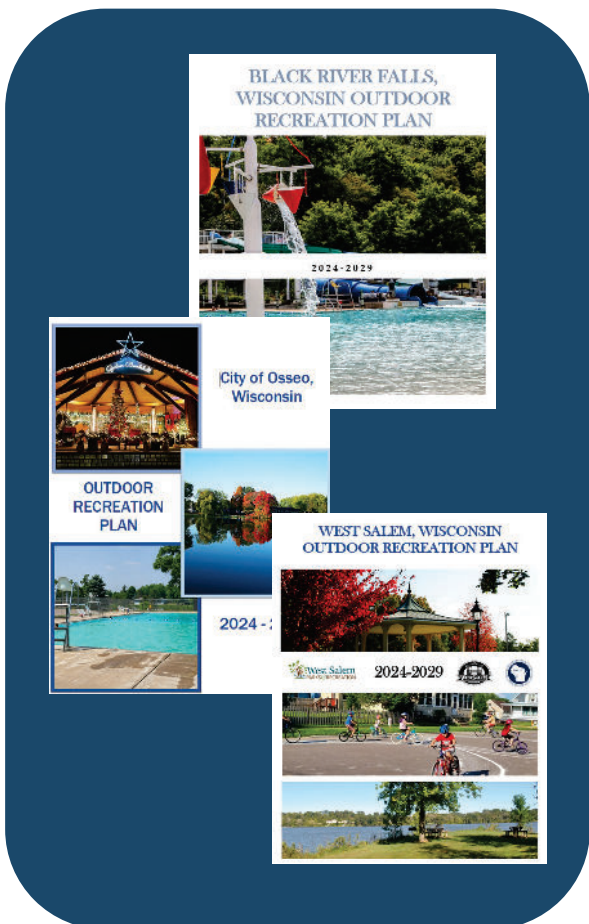
Outdoor Recreation Plans are an expression of the community’s goals and objectives for current and future needs for their recreational facilities. Recreation planning is intended as a way to plan for the maintenance and improvement of recreational and open space resources by outlining a strategy to manage existing resources and to develop new resources to meet future needs and demands. The plans need to be updated every five years.

The process includes surveying the community about facility use and creating an inventory of all recreational facilities in the area. During this past year Outdoor Recreation Plans were completed for the Village of West Salem, and the Cities of Osseo and Black River Falls. Currently the MRRPC is working on Outdoor Recreation Plans for the Villages of Ellsworth and Merrilan.

With the completion of these plans followed by the community’s adoption, this makes the projects listed eligible for various state and federal funding opportunities through the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.



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MRRPC Counties	Total Economic Impact		
	Millions		%
County	2022	2023	Change
Wisconsin	\$23,731	\$25,003	5.4%
Buffalo County	\$28	\$29	0.9%
Crawford County	\$71	\$73	2.0%
Jackson County	\$63	\$66	5.5%
La Crosse County	\$491	\$502	2.3%
Monroe County	\$148	\$165	11.2%
Pepin County	\$14	\$15	5.1%
Pierce County	\$59	\$63	7.8%
Trempealeau County	\$68	\$70	4.1%
Vernon County	\$73	\$73	0.9%

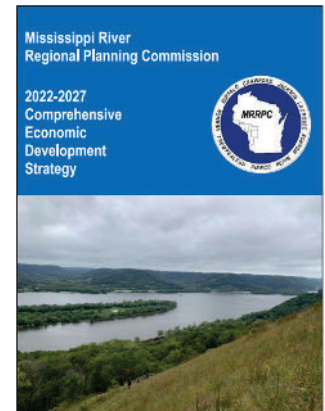
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The MRRPC region is an Economic Development District (EDD) designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration (EDA). As an EDD, the MRRPC takes an active role in economic development to assist our counties, local units of government, and regional, county, and local Economic Development Organizations.



As an EDD, the MRRPC created a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) to promote, and implement economic development plans, and activities in the Region. This strategy is updated every five years with input from our economic development partners and member counties.



The MRRPC continues to partner with the Coulee Region Business Center (CRBC), the Western WI 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, WWBIC, WEDC, 7 Rivers Alliance, Prosperity Southwest, Momentum West, UW-Extension, WHEDA and many other businesses and organizations to promote job growth and development in the region.

In the region the necessity for access to high-speed internet connectivity for education, commerce, and economic/community development has been identified as a primary goal. Last year all nine counties in our region applied for Public Service Commission (PSC) Broadband Expansion Grants. The speed testing phase of the grant has been completed and projects in each county in our region are underway. The PSC and UW-Extension have held several educational events to help counties advance their Broadband efforts.



The MRRPC is active on several county economic development committees. The MRRPC assisted Monroe County with planning and hosting their first regional Economic Development and Tourism Conference since 2018. This event was supported by UW-Madison EDA University Center who supplied key speakers and funding assistance.



In Vernon County, the MRRPC helped create an updated Economic Development Strategy for the county. This updated economic development strategy allows the county to build on successes and make intentional decisions to grow the county's economy in the future.



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TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

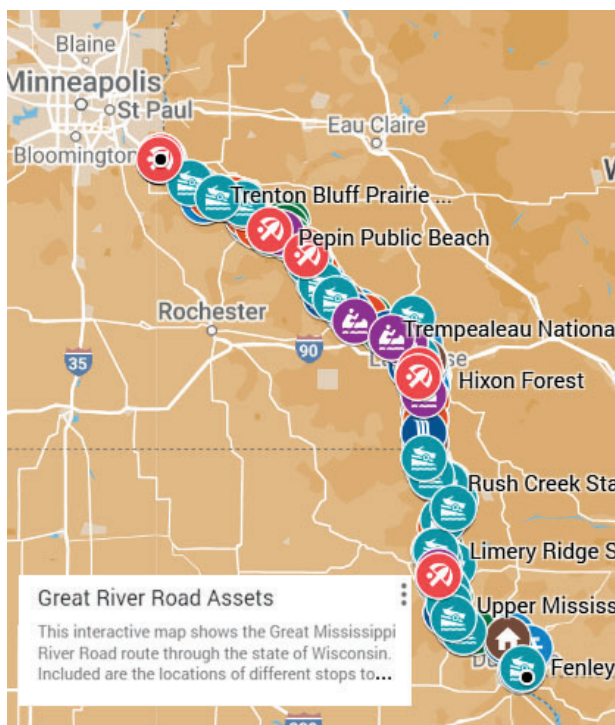
COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT-HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLANS

The 2023 coordinated public transit-human services transportation planning process was conducted regionally for the nine counties in the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission area. These plans identified the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provides strategies for meeting those local needs, and prioritizes transportation services for funding and implementation. We met with ADRC's and other Transit Service Providers to develop goals, identify existing providers, and create action plans for each individual county.



These plans are used to secure funding for the organizations in each county. The goals developed for the region are also used to guide our planning processes in all of our other projects. The individual counties have also identified some regional opportunities that MRRPC continues to work on.

GREAT RIVER ROAD



Working with the Mississippi River Parkway Commission, MRRPC conducted an asset inventory of things to do and see along the Great River Road. This data was also used to develop an interactive map for public use.

The interactive map is found at www.MRRPC.com/GRR and will enhance the user experience as visitors travel through our region.

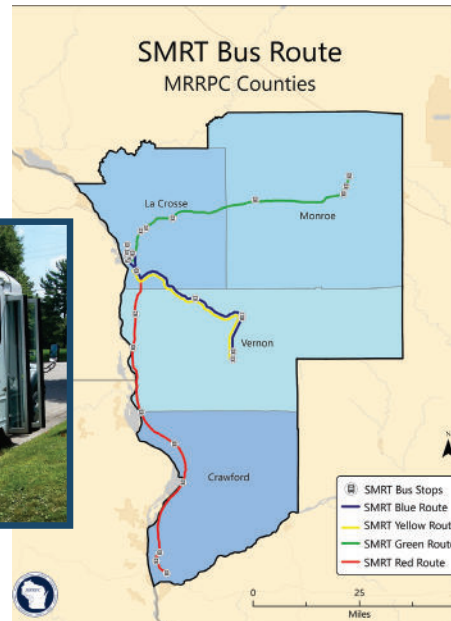


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TRANSPORTATION UPDATES

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 2023 there were 19,764 riders an increase of 1,264 from the 2022 ridership of 18,500. To access the SMRT Bus schedule and other information go to RideSmrt.com.



REGIONAL FREIGHT STUDY



We continue to use the Regional Freight Study that was completed and approved under a federal BUILD grant. This study has allowed us to advocate for additional truck parking, route improvements, inclusion of concepts in our community plans, and we are in the early stages of working with La Crosse County on a study on the need for an intermodal facility in the area.

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NORTHERN CORN BELT PORTS



We continue to work with a group of key stakeholders, elected officials, and other interested parties to chart a course for the future of the use of the river, needed improvements, maintenance and other harbor and river related projects moving forward. This group now meets on a regular basis to discuss the transportation and freight aspects of the river and long range planning.

THE MRRPC STAFF

WELCOME JACK ZABROWSKI AND SIMON FICHTER



Jack Zabrowski is our new Senior Planner. He is driven by a commitment to enhance the quality of life and foster sustainable development within the region. His expertise in land use, economic development, and community engagement, allows Jack to navigate the intricate balance between local identity and regional cohesion.

Jack and his family have lived in La Crosse for many years and enjoy the good schools, connected community, and outdoor recreation opportunities the area affords. His hobbies and interests include skiing, hiking, bicycling, fishing, and camping with his family. He looks forward to collaborating with communities to enhance and grow the Mississippi River Region.

JACK ZABROWSKI
Senior Planner

Simon Fichter joined the commission in May 2024 after graduating from UW La Crosse with a degree in Geography. Specializing in GIS, research, and analysis, Simon works on all plans requiring GIS research, primarily focusing on comprehensive and hazard mitigation plans. Outside of work, he enjoys hiking and exploring the region.



SIMON FICHTER
Planner

JON BINGOL
Executive Director

Jon joined the commission in November 2022. In addition to his management duties as the Executive Director, Jon is involved with supporting the region as an Economic Development District, Revolving Loan Fund Manager, and promoting Economic Development in the region.

KEN HARWOOD
Planner

Ken joined the commission in February of 2023 as a Transportation Planner. His primary duties involve assisting with regional transportation programs, developing planning documents, and providing transportation support within the region.

SARAH OFTE
Senior Office Manager

Sarah joined the commission in May of 2016. Her duties involve office management, revolving loan fund and financial management and assisting in the day-to-day management of the Commission. She also provides project support as needed.

REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS



MRRPC ACTIVE LOANS 2023-2024

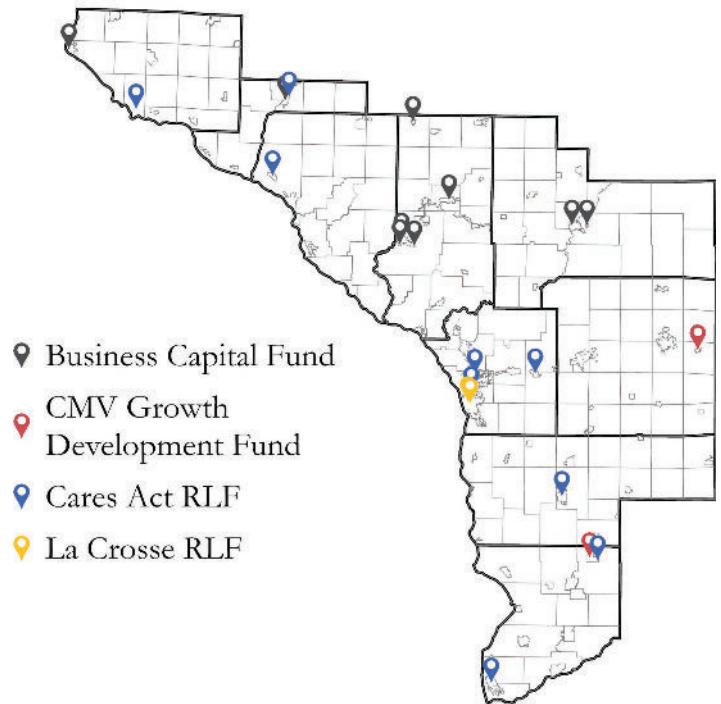
REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS	FUND BALANCE AS OF May 31, 2024 <i>(Total Cash and Receivables, and Other Assets)</i>	AVAILABLE CASH BALANCE AS OF May 31, 2024 <i>(Net of Closed Loans not yet Funded and Committed Loans)</i>
Business Capital Fund	\$817,624.99	\$443,437.66
CMV Growth Development Fund	\$247,725.19	\$115,823.50
La Crosse County Business Fund	\$170,312.73	\$112,735.67
CARES Act RLF	\$1,072,888.84	\$280,601.71
TOTALS	\$2,308,551.75	\$952,598.54

The MRRPC administers four revolving loan fund programs to assist businesses in the region.

- The Business Capital Fund RLF serves Buffalo, Jackson, Trempealeau, Pepin and Pierce Counties.
- The CMV Growth Development Fund serves Crawford, Monroe and Vernon Counties.
- The La Crosse Economic Development Fund serves La Crosse County.
- The Cares Act Recovery Assistance Fund serves all nine of the MRRPC Region’s nine counties.

During the past year the Business Capital Fund made a \$25,000 loan to a restaurant in Eleva, a \$38,000 loan to a convenience store in Black River Falls, and a \$20,000 loan to a restaurant in Arcadia. For more information about the MRRPC Revolving Loan funds go to our website mrrpc.com.

The MRRPC also assists Vernon County with the administration of their Revolving Loan Fund Program to assist businesses located in Vernon County.



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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
Bruce Strnad

Jackson County

Ron Carney
Brad Chown
Tom Cooper

La Crosse County

Vicki Burke
Sharon Hampson
Vacant

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

John Pedretti
Jo Ann Nickelatti
Nancy Jaeckel

STAFF

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SARAH OFTE
Senior Office Manager
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JACK ZABROWSKI
Senior Planner
jack@mrrpc.com

KEN HARWOOD
Planner
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SIMON FICHTER
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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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.

