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New DevelopMN plan provides a strategy for statewide economic development

STAPLES, MINN — After two years of collaboration and research, 10 Greater Minnesota Regional Development Organizations (RDOs) have released DevelopMN, a comprehensive statewide framework for regional economic development. Working together as the Minnesota Association of Development Organizations (MADO), the RDOs identified strategies to address the special challenges and opportunities of Greater Minnesota.

“The beginning of the 21st century presents a number of challenges and opportunities to rural Minnesota as it charts its economic future. An economy that is now driven by innovation demands that we create an environment that nurtures its talent and workforce, supports entrepreneurship and creates communities that can support both,” said Cheryal Lee Hills, Executive Director, Region Five Development Commission “In order for rural Minnesota to succeed, there needs to be a strong, collective and credible voice that can create and move forward an economic agenda at the local, state and federal level.”

The DevelopMN plan identifies four cornerstones for strong regions and communities:

- **Human Capital:** Developing, retaining and attracting talent are critical for Greater Minnesota in order to sustain and grow rural businesses and communities.
- **Economic Competitiveness:** Making Greater Minnesota an attractive environment for growth is critical to creating jobs, improving living standards and financing necessary public services.
- **Community Resources:** Greater Minnesota communities seek to maintain rural values, their heritage and the assets that support them.
- **Foundational Assets:** Greater Minnesota communities require proactive and collaborative approaches/strategies to address infrastructure needs in a cost-effective manner.

MADO will use DevelopMN to:

- Create a common framework for regional economic plans, including a template for data collection, assessment, strategies and measures of success
- Develop regional strategies that address the special challenges and opportunities of each part of the state
- Create a framework for state action that will enhance and support economic development efforts at the local and regional level
- Develop and implement an approach that effectively engages state partners
- Raise the bar on what constitutes effective rural economic development in Minnesota

DevelopMN was funded through support from the Minnesota Dept. of Employment and Economic Development, the Blandin Foundation and the Bush Foundation.

View the DevelopMN plan at <http://www.mnado.org/developmn/>.

MADO is an association of 10 Minnesota regional development organizations, whose purpose is to promote and create economic prosperity in Greater Minnesota. This is accomplished through alignment of a strong network of RDOs, the communities they serve, and the federal and state agencies that share their commitment. Region Five Development Commission is central Minnesota's regional development organization. For more information about DevelopMN, contact Cheryal Hills or Dawn Espe at 218-894-3233.

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