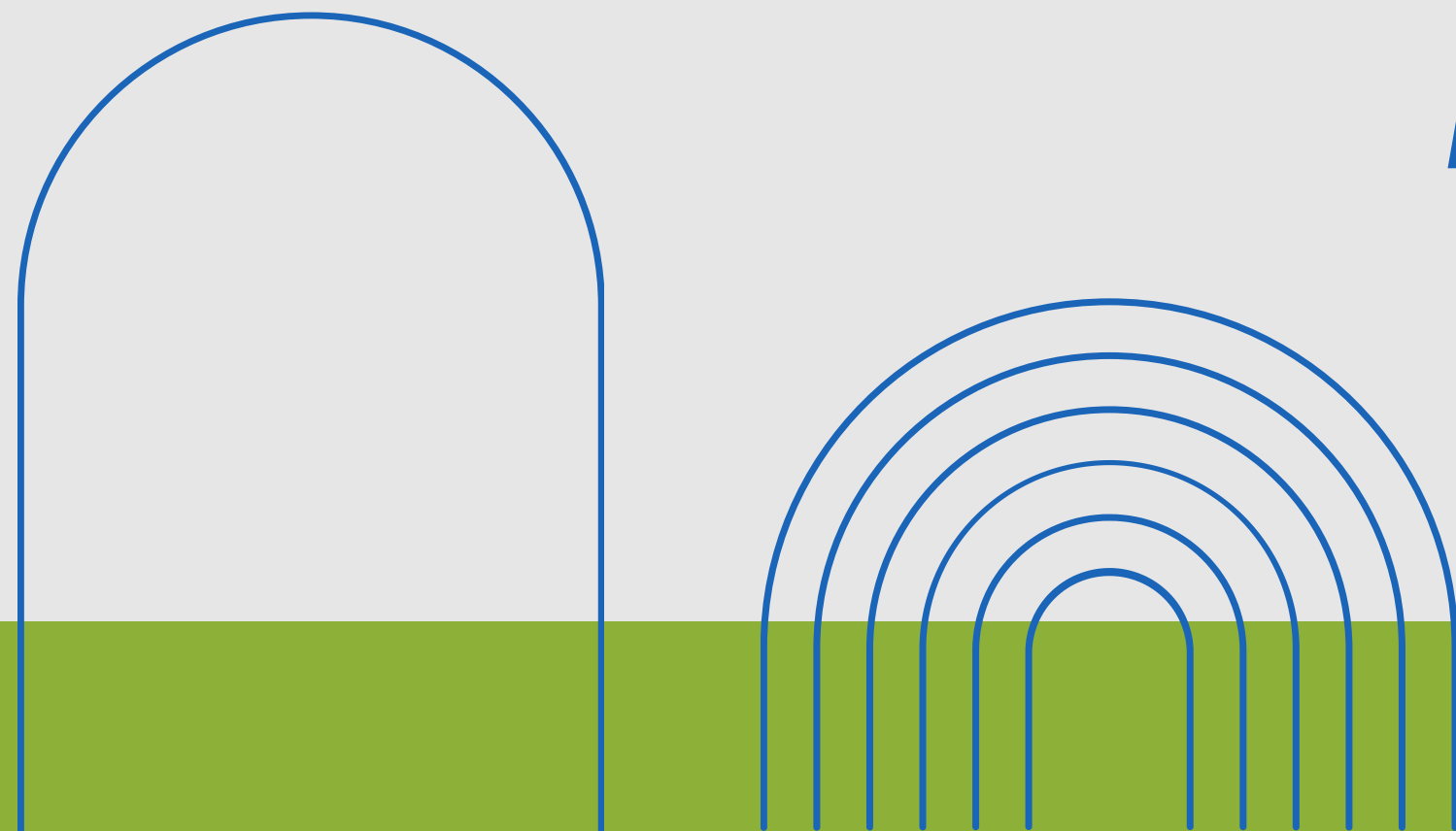


THE FUTURE STATE OF REGION 4

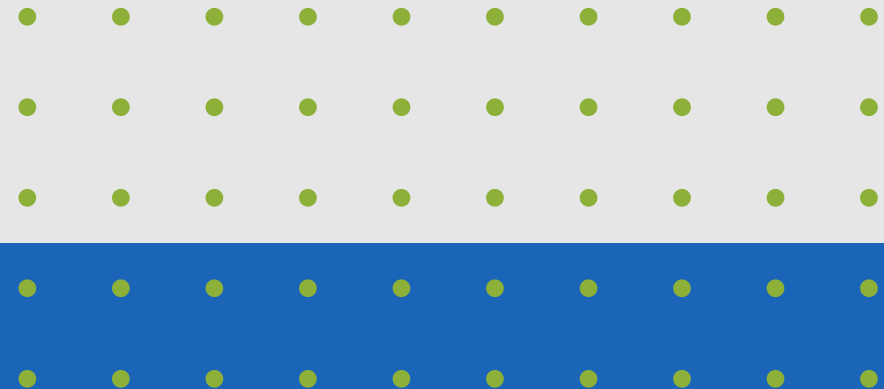
*Dawn Mandt, Executive Director
Red River Regional Council*



WE ARE



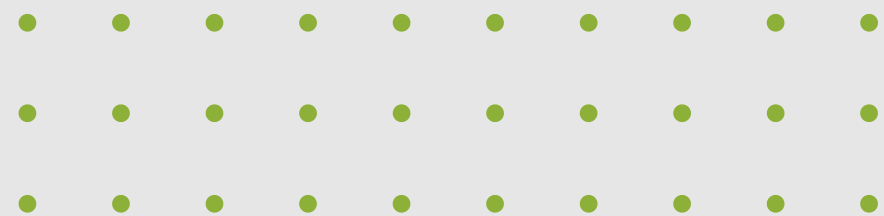
5 Independent Organizations
54 Board Members
6 full time + 2 part time staff



01. OUR VISION

02. OUR PLANS

03. THEMES YOU'LL HEAR TODAY





OUR VISION

We envision a future where communities are strong,
the region is thriving, and everyone can prosper.



HISTORIC ENGAGEMENT

COVID supplemental funds enabled:

- 130 business interviews
- 2,000 public survey responses
- Hundreds of attendees at townhalls and public forums



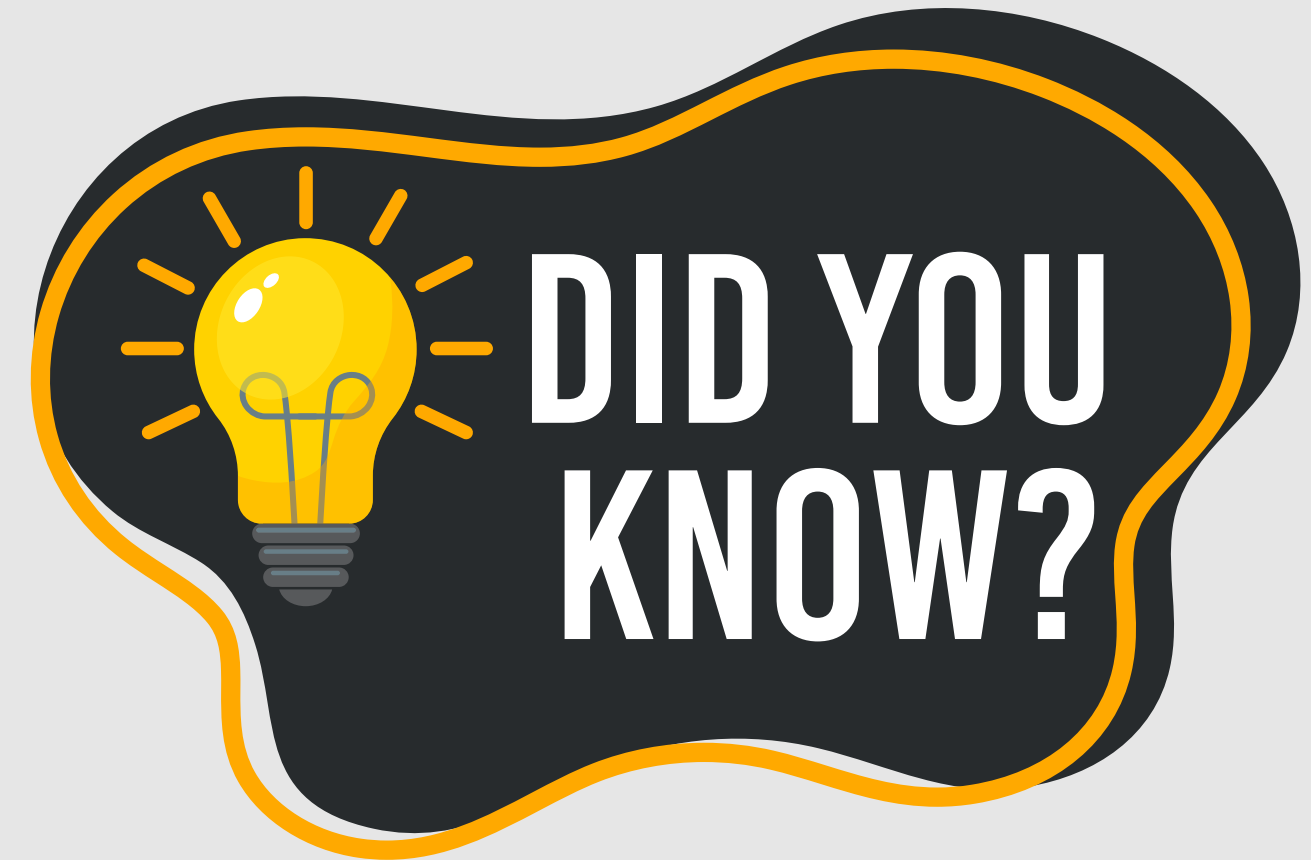
WE LEARNED

- 90% of people want growth and vibrancy
- 90% of all businesses have growth plans
- People live and work in an hour radius
- Substantial investments have been made in healthcare, infrastructure, flood protection, and school systems
- 18 of our 42 towns grew
- 37 of our towns are under 1,000 people
- People are moving to small towns
- Nearly 1,000 H2A farm workers
- The region is interdependent
- We see extraordinary opportunities in northeast ND



WE ALSO LEARNED

- The chasm between large and small towns in ND is significant and growing
- Rural places have childcare and food deserts while large towns are thriving with innovation, R&D, space, national defense
- Cost of construction is more in rural places and fewer builders
- Small town leaders are exhausted from being in survival mode
- Place-based, gender, and ethnic wage disparities are strong
- Aggregate state data doesn't tell the whole story
- Issues are complex and require collaboration and investment



WE ASKED OURSELVES

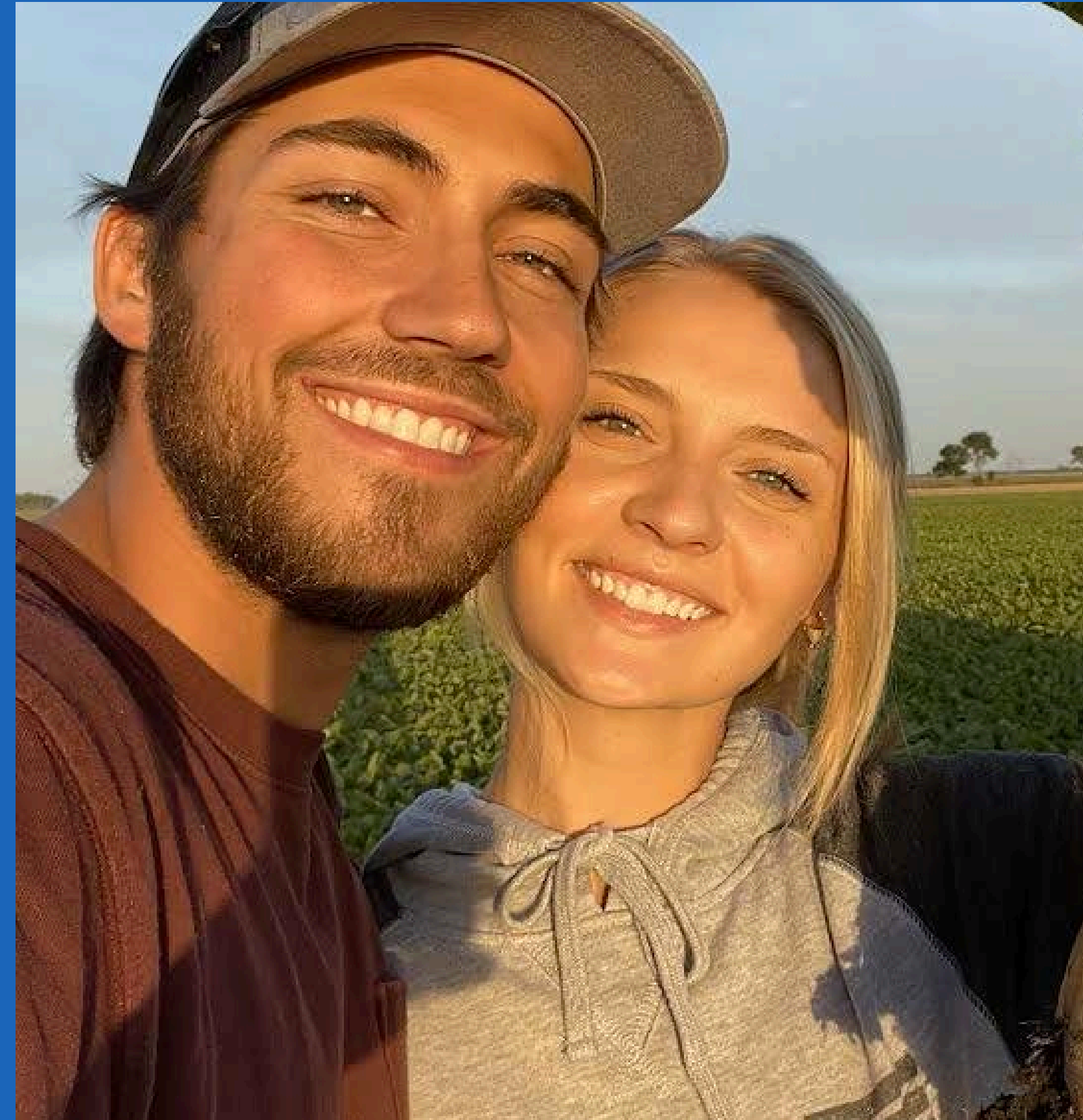
Have we built communities where Jenny would like to live?

Young, educated professional woman.

Brought to town by Beat Farmin' Mitch.

Will she thrive here – personally and professionally?

Will she want to raise her children here?



WE PLANNED

- Destination Red River Plan
- Workforce Attraction Plan
- Economic Resiliency Plan
- Entrepreneurship Plan
- Housing Plan

AND ...

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
2024 - 2028





ECONOMY

Foster a resilient, generative, and equitable regional economy so that businesses, communities, and people can prosper.

HOUSING

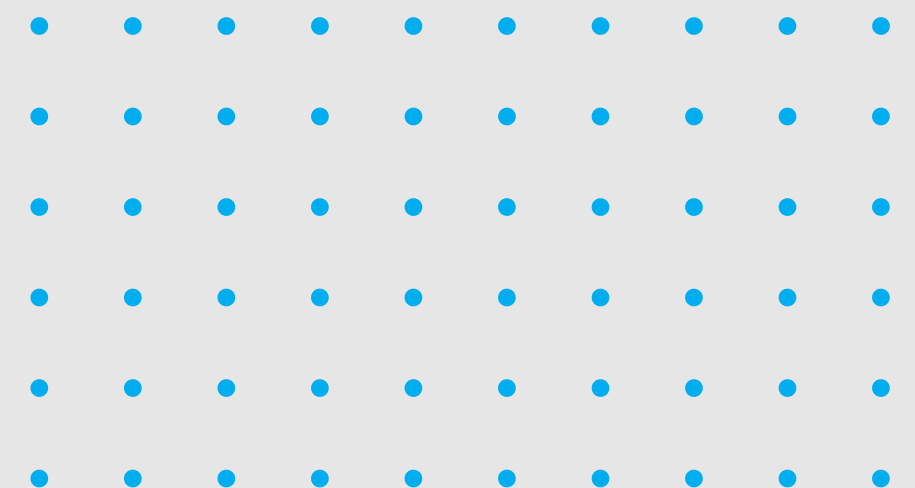
Increase all housing options so everyone has a place to call home.

COMMUNITY VITALITY

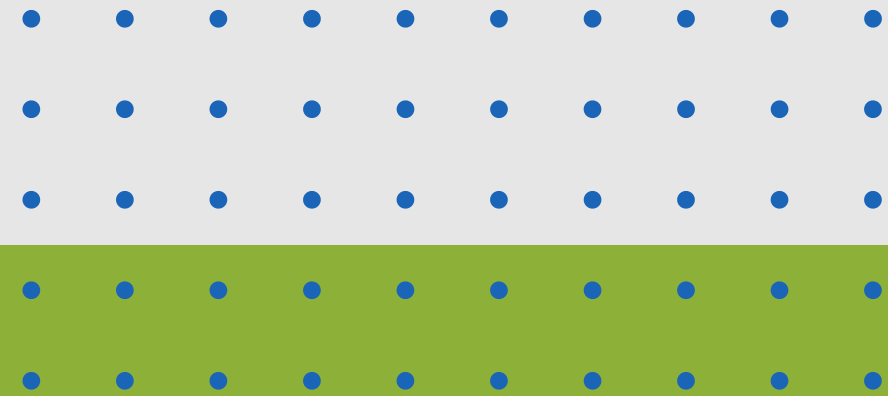
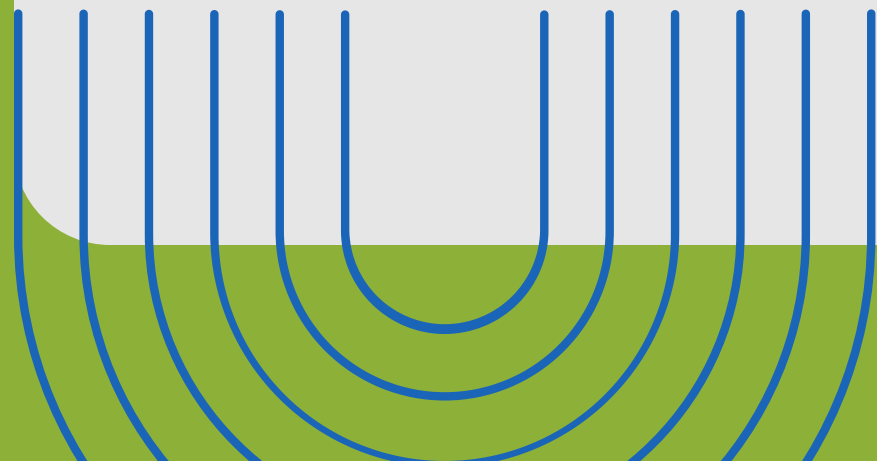
Foster vibrant, revitalized, inclusive communities through destination development, placemaking and leadership growth.

WORKFORCE

Grow, attract, and retain people and entrepreneurs to fuel a prosperous and resilient economy.



THEMES YOU'LL HEAR TODAY





NEED RURAL INVESTMENT

- Areas of the state that have received substantial investment have prospered
- Our largest towns rely on our small towns to be healthy and vibrant and support their economy
- Rural = dispersed population – but not small (think West Fargo + 40% of state)
- Small town investment looks different than large towns
 - Housing, childcare, recreation, amenities
 - ROI is different
- One size does not fit all with funding – small towns need different rules and set asides





NEED INVESTMENT IN REGIONAL CAPACITY

- Urban and rural capacity are radically different
- People, expertise, networks, resources, collaboration, and initiatives
- Regional development has piecemeal short-term grants – requires baseline funding
- Our plans lack funding to implement
- Funding mechanisms support large towns, not regions
- Our towns, large and small, are interdependent – we need a unified, economically healthy state





NEED TO BUILD REGIONAL PROSPERITY

- Rural wages lag – people leave (up 23% since 2019)
- Creates difficulty for new housing development
- Construction costs more in small towns, hard to find builders
- Technology has enabled a new development opportunity
- Need stronger entrepreneurship ecosystem to revitalize main streets

