August 2023

LCSC Communicator

Regional News, Views, and Information

LAKES COUNTRY Service Cooperative
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Electronic Edition
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STEVENS COUNTY OPENED THE DOORS TO AN INNOVATIVE CHILDCARE ON JULY 24, 2023



A MULTI-GENERATIONAL INVESTMENT INTO STEVENS COUNTY

On July 24, 2023, Stevens County proudly unveiled its new childcare; a much-needed solution for the county. Stakeholders were invited to an open house to commemorate this special milestone. This celebration was years in the planning process, which Stevens County Administrator Rebecca Young and the Board of Commissioners led.

In the aftermath of the Covid pandemic, the importance of affordable and high-quality childcare for the workforce in Stevens County became evident to the Commissioners. They understood the importance of investing for the long term and made a generational investment to enhance the quality of care and capacity.



Rebecca Young
Stevens County Administrator

This was achieved through the help of funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Over $1 million of the $1.9 million available was used to support the project.

Source: Rebecca Young, Stevens County Administrator
Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC's Communications Generalist

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STEVENS COUNTY CHILDCARE





The County experienced a loss of 20 in-home childcare providers between 2014 and 2021, and local studies indicated a shortage of 175-200 childcare slots. This hurts economic development. At the initiative's start, there was only one childcare center with 42 slots and about 14-15 in-home providers. To address the childcare capacity crisis, the Stevens County Commissioners decided to use funds from the American Rescue Plan to build six interconnected units called "pods." The facility was built in the former location of the Morris Elementary School and purchased from Stevens County Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA).

Overall cost investment: $127,000 for the purchase of the land, $18,000 for the cost of facility design, $98,000 for underground site work, $30,000 grant with a $30,000 match for the fence, playset, shed, and landscaping, and $53,000 for curb, gutter, and asphalt.

The City of Morris waived permit costs and Stevens County provided additional in-kind donations of time from the facilities and highways departments.

Currently, no other childcare provider in Minnesota utilizes the unique pod model. This model differs from both home childcare and childcare center models. It involves six family childcare providers who operate their independent businesses. Each mini home has one bedroom, a full kitchen, one bathroom, and a living area. Additionally, there is a washer, dryer, and dishwasher included. Every pod also features a separate fenced-in backyard with an outdoor playset to meet Minnesota requirements.

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Doing childcare in a pod setting and not in your home can have some advantages for providers. By leasing one of the pods, they do not have to use their own home or spend large amounts of money on buying or renovating their current home to fit state childcare requirements. As part of the three-year initial lease agreement, the childcare providers are responsible for subsidized rent, utilities, minor snow removal and mowing, and business liability insurance. Stevens County covers major snow removal and lawn care, major building repairs, and building insurance.
Quality childcare is essential in communities for several reasons. Firstly, it allows working parents to focus on their jobs without worrying about the safety and well-being of their children.

When parents have peace of mind knowing that their kids are in good hands, they can be more productive and engaged in the workplace. Secondly, quality childcare can attract and retain talented employees. Finally, quality childcare can benefit the community by promoting early childhood development and education. Children who receive quality care and education in their early years are more likely to do well in school and become successful adults, which can positively impact the economy and society.
If you are interested in learning more about how Stevens County began planning for this initiative, or you want more information about this county's investment in childcare, contact Stevens' County Administrator, Rebecca Young, at 320.208.6583.

Minnesota Healthcare Consortium

Interested in a Health Insurance Proposal?

LAKES COUNTRY SERVICE COOPERATIVE'S HEALTH INSURANCE OFFERS GREAT PLANS AT EVEN BETTER PRICES.

REACH OUT TO RELLISON@LCSC.ORG OR VISIT MNHC.GOV FOR MORE INFORMATION.

From the

Executive Director

"Learning, Leading, and Innovating to Achieve Vibrant, Inclusive Communities."



Jeremy Kovash
Executive Director

In team sports, the best teams have a strong bench; there are leaders amongst the roster beyond the obvious starters. This phenomenon makes for championship-winning teams year after year. The same is true of our organizations – leadership can be found throughout all levels of staff, and the best teams provide opportunities for growth at any stage. While the term "Professional Development" can sometimes elicit eye rolls or feelings of dread, identifying and training leaders in your organization can save money and help train your leaders for further growth. As we gear up for the onslaught of activities and conferences this fall, LCSC is pleased to offer new opportunities to build your organization's "bench strength."

At Lakes Country, we are excited to announce new opportunities for growth. We are offering facilitated seminars by Dave Bartholomay and Practical Leadership training from Lisa Negstad. These trainings will provide you with the chance to expand your professional expertise, network, and develop skills to better serve your organization. Our aim is to share knowledge and expertise amongst regional leaders through these events, which are part of a broader effort led by Mary Phillipe. If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to email her at mphillipe@lcsc.org.



You are cordially invited to a networking luncheon on Friday, August 11, 2023, 11:30 – 1:00 p.m. at Lakes Country Service Cooperative. You will have the opportunity to network and discuss current and relevant topics with fellow City Clerks, Deputy Clerks, City Administrators, and City Managers working in Lakes Country Service Cooperative's nine-county region.

Discussion Topic: Understanding the Impacts of the Adult Use Cannabis Law. Preview the League of Minnesota Cites **Recorded Webinar**, and then join our networking group on August 11, for a group discussion.

Do you have an additional focus item/topic you would like the group to discuss during this session? Let us know what you are interested in discussing, and we will do our best to get your topic on the agenda. Email your topics to communicator@lcsc.org.

REGISTER

ADVANTAGE

A FEATURED CONTRACT THROUGH CPC



Weatherproofing Technologies Inc. (WTI) is the affiliated construction services company of Tremco Roofing and Building Maintenance. Together, this "power couple" provides a robust portfolio of roofing and building maintenance products and services. As a manufacturer of roofing materials since 1928, Tremco Roofing and Building Maintenance offers a breadth and depth of roofing systems for every environment – from built-up, single ply, fluid-applied and metal roofing systems to environmentally conscious vegetated roofing systems and innovative roof restoration technologies. And because WTI offers turnkey maintenance, diagnostics, repair, roof management and general contracting services for the entire building enclosure, they together have the unique ability to provide a total solution to maximize building performance for superior return on investment.

Capabilities also include air barrier audits and indoor air quality assessments. Tremco Roofing and WTI are part of Tremco Construction Products Group, the industry's only provider of comprehensive systems, products, and services for all six sides of the building enclosure.

Tremco/WTI provides high performance products and services designed to meet the needs of your entire portfolio of buildings. Our turnkey approach to problem-solving means cities and counties in Minnesota and South Dakota can turn to Tremco/WTI for world class diagnostics, innovative products for every environment, and essential maintenance and construction services to maximize the performance life of buildings.

All roofing and building envelope solutions can be procured via WTI's full turnkey General Contracting offering or through WTI's new Contractor Network offering which allows CPC members to contract directly with their preferred contractor under WTI's contract.

COOPERATIVE Purchasing CONNECTION

To learn more about procuring Tremco Roofing and High Performance Building Solutions through CPC, please visit purchasingconnection.org



PHELPS MILL

HISTORIC PHELPS MILL RESTORED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO ENJOY

Source/Author: Shannon Terry, Otter Tail County Public Information Officer





It's official, the mill at Phelps Mill Park is open to the public once again. Over 150 people joined in celebrating the re-opening. The mill is a cherished place in Otter Tail County and with the support of dedicated stakeholders, the restored mill will continue to amaze visitors for many years to come.

Set on the mill's loading dock with the sounds of the Otter Tail River in the background, over 150 people celebrated the restoration efforts of the mill. Friends of Phelps Mill welcomed visitors to tour the mill. Otter Tail County thanked those who worked to restore the mill as the Friends of Phelps Mill presented Eagle Construction with a symbolic bag of Maine Rollermills flour in appreciation of their work. Chris Schuelke, Executive Director of the Otter Tail County Historical Society (OTCHS) shared an interesting history of the mill, and County Commissioner Bob Lahman ceremoniously cut the ribbon to mark the event.

"We are grateful to those before us who had the vision for the County to purchase the property for the opportunity to develop this beautiful park," said Commissioner Lahman. "Today, it is a privilege to continue the restoration and growth of the park."

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The Otter Tail County Board of Commissioners extended its appreciation to all who committed their time and efforts to the restoration project. To pour the footings in the basement of the mill the Eagle Construction crew had to perform a bucket brigade and haul the cement bucket by bucket. Dave Boen, Phelps Mill Park Caretaker, was given a round of applause for his extensive work cleaning the mill in preparation for the open house and for maintaining the park in pristine condition throughout the year. Partnerships with those invested in the preservation of the mill were key to the success of the project. "There were a lot of very hard-working people and groups that came together to make this restoration project end up being a great success and to protect the historic mill structure for generations to come," Kevin Fellbaum, Director of Parks and Trails expressed to the audience. "Eagle Construction's attention to detail on their work was second to none, they did such a beautiful job on restoring the mill to a condition that matches its original historic nature."

The Friends of Phelps Mill, a volunteer group, has been working to preserve the history and culture of the mill since 1993. The group provides tours and holds fundraising events to raise money for the restoration of the equipment and interruptive signage inside the mill. Contact Chris Schuelke at the OTCHS if you are interested in becoming a Friend of Phelps Mill. The repair work stabilized the structure while retaining the building's historically significant character. Grants from the Minnesota Historical Society and a State Capital grant funded much of the restoration. The mill and park are open to the public and visitors are encouraged to take the self-guided tour of the restored mill. The Phelps Mill Festival was held July 8-9, 2023.

YOU CAN VISIT THE WEBSITE OTTERTAILCOUNTY.GOV/PHELPS-MILL/ FOR MORE INFORMATION.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

LEADERSHIP





United Way of Otter Tail & Wadena Counties'

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT



Fergus Falls
Community Investment Panel
February 2020



Executive Director
Summer Hammond

Source: Summer Hammond, United Way of Otter Tail & Wadena Counties Executive Director
Author: Mary Phillipe, LCSC Communications Generalist

ADAPTING TO MEET TODAY'S NONPROFIT NEEDS

United Way of Otter Tail & Wadena Counties (UWOTW) has been investing in local communities for almost 80 years by supporting programs that improve education, health, and financial stability for local families and individuals. Every two years, volunteers review funding applications and attend presentations from over 40 nonprofit programs seeking support. This process allows nonprofits to share inspiring stories of how they improve lives in the area.

United Way

United Way of Otter Tail & Wadena Counties

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Summer Hammond, Executive Director of United Way, shared that the UWOTW Board is evaluating its traditional community investment process and funding priorities. With new board members come fresh perspectives on old processes, and they are assessing the effectiveness of specific community investment procedures. Hammond aims to streamline and improve the process for local nonprofits, regardless of size. Hammond shared, “The current grant application is too time-consuming for the funds received, and this has resulted in several programs choosing not to apply. Our mission does not align with this approach, so we will release an updated application version on January 1, 2024.”

Hammond is now gearing up for the 2023 Annual United Way fundraising campaign with a goal of $360,000. They have already received $23,000 in contributions, which is a good start and puts them on track to reach their target. However, with only two full-time employees covering two counties, it can be challenging to connect with donors and communicate United Way's impact on improving lives in local communities. To address this, Hammond plans to hire an additional staff member to focus on community impact in the Fergus Falls office in 2024. This will help sustain outreach efforts in the Fergus Falls area while enabling Hammond to expand her efforts further east in Otter Tail County and Wadena County.

Volunteers are crucial to achieving objectives, and Hammond understands the heavy lift of the two-county campaign. In the wake of the pandemic, people have grown more protective of their time, making it difficult to find and motivate volunteers for charity fundraisers. To provide an easier way to find out about United Way volunteer opportunities and how to engage, UWOTW has collaborated with Elevate Volunteer Hub.

> **After the pandemic, people have become more protective of their time. As a result, we are currently working on finding ways to reengage volunteers.**
>
> *-Summer Hammond*

This initiative facilitates seamless connectivity between non-profit organizations and individuals, providing a platform to serve the community.

The United Way is committed to improving the lives of people and has adapted and grown to meet the changing needs of the communities it serves. In just one year as Executive Director, Hammond has made significant strides in advancing the organization. These improvements are empowering volunteers, donors, and stakeholders to participate in and support United Way's work, ultimately benefiting the lives of everyone in the communities they serve.

If you would like to learn more about United Way's mission to improve lives locally or how to volunteer, visit their website at **www.uwotw.org.**

CAPLP
Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership

& NORTH COUNTRY FOOD BANK

PROVIDES FOOD FOR NEARLY 500 PEOPLE

Source/Author: Amanda Even, CCAP Communications Coordinator

Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership (CAPLP) joined forces with North Country Food Bank to organize food drops in the Breckenridge, Rothsay, and Campbell communities. The food drops were open to people needing food for their family. Many individuals even picked up food for their neighbors, friends, or family who could not attend the event.

The Rothsay food drop was hosted at the Rothsay Event Center, where volunteers from Rothsay Public Schools helped distribute and load food into cars for families. A total of 47 people received food at the Rothsay site, which included various items such as meat, butter, cereal, beans, condiments, and even pies.

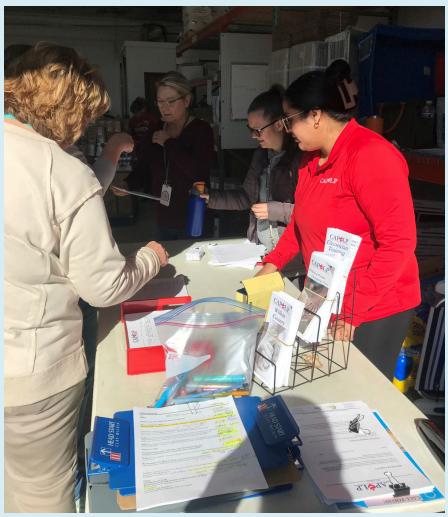


The Campbell Community Center and Campbell Lions organized a food drop, with help from volunteers at Campbell-Tintah School, serving 100 people with necessary food for their families.

RDO Equipment in Breckenridge provided space for the food drop in their community. The RDO staff were so helpful and welcoming. They even had a vendor who misunderstood, thinking they were hosting a food drive and donating food for the event! St. Mary's School provided student volunteers to help the 331 food recipients. A mixture of high school and junior high students were excused from class to help distribute food alongside school staff, administration, CAPLP staff, and adult volunteers. The students walked with families while they picked out the food, filled their carts, and loaded their vehicles. Each family chose the items their family could use, and the student volunteers did all the heavy lifting.



Community partners were given leftover food to distribute, including the Richland Wilkin Emergency Food Pantry, Park Manor Breckenridge Housing & Redevelopment Authority, Richland/Wilkin Humane Society, and Dakota Vet. The food drop provided food, dog food, or cleaning supplies, with 478 people receiving food across all three sites.



A statement from a partner regarding the received food: "Food was distributed to all that were here, and everything went. Tenants very much appreciated the donations from the CAPLP food drop. Thank you for your dedication and hard work! I wish you could've seen the faces of some of the ones we delivered to. Heartwarming and heartfelt thanks. Thank you also for thinking of us; it helped so many."

READY RIDE & THE HOME CARE REPAIR PROGRAM

Source/Author: Heather Molesworth, CCAP
Director of Family and Community Services and Operations

West Central Minnesota Communities Action partners with Minnesota Live Well at Home and PrimeWest, enabling us to offer our Ready Ride Volunteer Driver Program and Home Care and Repair Programs. Ready Ride is available to residents and adults 65 and over in Douglas, Grant, Pope, Stevens, and Traverse counties. Ready Ride PrimeWest MA is open to residents and adults 18 – 64 in Douglas, Grant, Pope, Stevens, and Traverse counties for medical rides for approved and active PrimeWest MA Insurance.

Below are a few key points about the program.

- Rides can range from short trips to longer trips for various medical appointments, to pick up medications, or grocery shopping
- Riders must reside in our five-county service area
- Rides may go outside of the five-county service area for appointments
- Volunteer Drivers use their vehicles to provide the rides
- Scheduling rides should be requested a week in advance, which allows time to find a Volunteer Driver
- Guidelines, in response to COVID-19 are in place for both volunteer drivers and riders

There is an application process for the Ready Ride Program, so please contact us, and we will mail or email the application to you. Each rider pays an annual cost-sharing fee and a per-mile charge for the ride. A person's net income within five different Tiers determines the cost per mile.

If you have any questions or wish to know more about the Ready Ride program, call John at 218-685-7433.

THE HOME CARE & REPAIR PROGRAM

The Home Care and Repair Program offers homemaking, chore, and maintenance services provided by volunteers and a full-time lead maintenance provider. This service is offered to help adults 65 and older maintain their independence at home. Basic cleaning, grocery shopping, yard work (mowing, raking, snow blowing), and light maintenance are just some of the services offered. The program is available to residents of Douglas, Grant, Pope, Stevens, and Traverse counties.

There is an application process for the Home Care and Repair Program so please contact us and we will mail or email the application to you. There is an annual cost-sharing fee that each client pays along with a per hour charge for tasks. The cost per hour is determined by a person's net income within five different Tiers. If you have any questions or wish to know more about the Home Care and Repair Program, call John at 218-685-7008.

The Home Care and Repair Program recently received a letter from one of our clients, Carol Swanson. The following is an excerpt from Carol's letter.

"Dear Home Care and Repair, This letter is to share how pleased I am to have your services…

continued on next page...

The Lead Maintenance Provider, Jeremy, is such a blessing! He has become like a friend to me, always ready to help and sometimes will call to see if I need anything. Last week after I had a fall and couldn't get out of the house for days to get my mail, Jeremy made sure to come by and retrieve it for me. This program is like family! I have family in the area, but they have their own families and busy lives. Please continue the wonderful work you provide for us Seniors. I can truly say that you make life worth living."

Carol's letter exemplifies what the Home Care and Repair Program is about, assisting older adults in our communities with services that enable them to stay in their homes safely.



Home Care and Repair Program Lead maintenance provider Jeremy and program recipient, Carol Swanson

$112,000

in Grants from Endowment Funds Awarded to Organizations Serving the Fergus Falls, Perham, and Dent Communities

Source/Author: Greta Hentges, WCI Summer Communications Intern

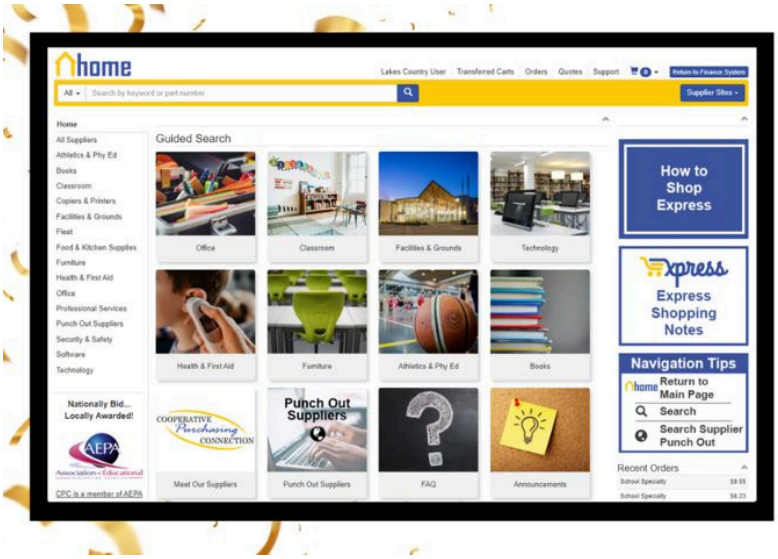
West Central Initiative awarded grants totaling more than $112,000 from three of its Endowment Funds to organizations serving the Fergus Falls, Perham, and Dent communities.

"Deloris Barnack Kenner, Floyd and Harriet Miller, and Inga M. Johnson established Endowment Funds with West Central Initiative to create lasting impacts by supporting their favorite causes and organizations in our region," said Rebecca Lynn Petersen, Director of Development. "They determined how West Central Initiative would direct their Endowment Funds by identifying giving criteria. We then seek and grant to causes that fit those criteria. The Endowment Fund program is a charitable giving vehicle for organizations, families, or individuals."

West Central Initiative awards grants from Endowment Funds in two ways. West Central Initiative can use the identified giving criteria to distribute the funds, or an individual can directly choose which causes to fund—both ways of giving have tax benefits and leave lasting impacts in our region.

"I remind people all the time that anyone can be a philanthropist," said Petersen. "A philanthropist donates their time or resources to a charitable cause. It's all about generosity—and giving in a way that is right for you."

CLICK HERE FOR A LISTING OF FUNDED PROGRAMS



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