



EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

October 27, 2025
100 Park Street South
Mora, MN 55051

Commission Members Present:

Tom Anderson – Isanti Co. Townships
Wallace Bengston – Isanti Co. Public Interest
Dave Dillan – Mille Lacs Co. Municipalities
Alan Duff – Isanti Co. Commissioner
Jack Edmonds – Mille Lacs Co. Public Interest
Robert Hoefert, Mille Lacs Co. Townships
Scott Moe - Northern School Boards
Ben Montzka- Chisago Co. Commissioner
Rick Olseen, Chisago Co. Public Interest
Dave Patenaude -Kanabec Co. Townships
Genny Reynolds – Mille Lacs Co. Commissioner
Peter Ripka – Kanabec Co. Commissioner
Kevin Schieber - City of North Branch
Sara Treiber – Kanabec Co. Public Interest
Dave Waldoch – Chisago Co. Municipalities
Dave Youngquist – Kanabec Co. Municipalities

Commission Members Absent:

Bruce Fitzwater – Chisago Co. Townships
Nate George – Isanti Co. Municipalities
Shelly Johnson – Southern School Boards
Jeannette Kester - Pine Co. Public Interest
JJ Waldhalm - Pine Co. Commissioner
Glen Williamson - Pine Co. Townships

Staff Present:

Bob Voss - Executive Director
Nicole Klosner - Regional Dev. & Grant Specialist
Karen Onan – ECRTCC
Darcy Rylander – Finance Director
Trish Rydlund - Office Manager
Michelle Thomas – Community Development Planner
Jordan Zeller – Economic Development Planner

- A. **WELCOME:** Chairman Montzka called the East Central Regional Development Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- B. **AGENDA APPROVAL:** Bengston moved to approve the agenda. Duff seconded - motion carried.
- C. **MINUTES APPROVAL:** Olseen moved to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2025, meeting, with the correction to note Rick Olseen was present at the meeting. Moe seconded the motion – motion carried
- D. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Executive Director Voss brought before the Commission the following items:
1. **FY 2025 Audit:** Field Work for the FY 2025 agency-wide audit was conducted on October 14th and 15th. CliftonLarsenAllen (our auditing CPA firm) is expected to provide a full report at our December 15th regular Commission meeting.
 2. **Federal Shutdown:** We continue to monitor any impacts that might result from the recent federal shutdown. EDA currently is the only federal agency that the Commission draws funds from directly. It is possible that a prolonged shutdown could delay our next quarterly draw down of \$17,500.
 3. **Commission Vacancies:** The process continues to fill the Pine County Municipalities seat on the Commission. Just one nomination form was received by the October 3rd deadline for Sandstone City Councilmember Julena Rahier. Regretfully, another nominee for Finlayson Councilmember Jeff Flaws arrived late and was not included on the ballot that was mailed out. Ballots are currently out to the cities in Pine County with a November 7th deadline. We have received no further word from the Mille Lacs Band regarding the tribal government vacancy but will continue those efforts as well.
- E. **TREASURERS REPORT:**
1. **August and September 2025 Treasurer's Report:** The August and September 2025 Treasurer's Reports was reviewed. Hoefert moved to approve the Treasurer's Reports, including checks #12221 through #12261 and ACH payments for August and September 2025. Treiber seconded – motion carried. The General Journals for February and March 2025 were also reviewed and approved.

- F. **PERSONNEL & BUDGET (P&B) COMMITTEE REPORT:** The P&B Committee met on September 23rd and also prior to the full ECRDC Board meeting today. Executive Director Voss presented the P&B Committee report.
1. **Executive Director Search:** Ads have been posted on the League of MN Cities and Association of MN Counties websites; Indeed®; and university placement offices such as the UofM Humphrey School and St. Cloud State. Deadline for applications is November 10th.

At this time there are 95 applicants – 13 of which have been selected for further consideration. The P&B will meet again on November 17th at 7:00 p.m.

- G. **TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:** Michelle Thomas reported on the following:
1. **Long Range Transportation Plan Resolution:** The Long-Range Transportation Plans established a vision and corresponding set of transportation goals, objectives, strategies, and actions. The Vision Statement states, the purpose of the Region 7E Long Range Transportation Plan is to provide a unified approach, based upon shared goals, to address the transportation challenges facing the region now and in the future. Through the goals and strategies outlined in this plan, Region 7E's transportation system will become safer, more connected, more accessible, and resilient to natural and economic changes. Waldoch moved to approve the resolution of support for the Region 7E Long Range Transportation Plan. Youngquist seconded – motion carried.
 2. **Historic Bluff Country Scenic Byway (HBCSB) Corridor Management Plan:** Penny Simonsen, Transportation Planner, was asked by MnDOT to assist with conducting an update to the Historic Bluff Country Scenic Byway (HBCSB) Corridor Management Plan. The total for the planning contract is \$125,000 and needs to be completed by June 2026. Motioned by Olseen to enter into said contract with MnDOT. Bengston seconded – motion carried.

- H. **CLIMATE AND ENERGY (C&E):** Nicole Klosner reported on the following:
1. **Technical Assistance:** Staff have been providing technical assistance to City Center Market in Cambridge for an Environment Study Project and their expansion project.
 2. **Energy Audits:** Staff has been reaching out to area energy auditors for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant. Included are Michael's Energy and Lakes and Pines CAC. Energy audits are planned for the following:
 - Pine City Elementary and High Schools
 - Sturgeon Lake City Hall
 - John Wright Building, Sandstone Elementary and High Schools
 - Rush City Aquatic Center
 - Rush City

- I. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE:** Jordan Zeller reported on following items:
1. **Rush City Technical Assistance:** The ECRDC is assisting the City of Rush City with applying to the Federal EDA for infrastructure for a new industrial park. The application has been submitted and is being reviewed by the Federal EDA.
 2. **Mission Creek Township Comprehensive/Zoning Ordinance:** Staff continue to assist Mission Creek Township in Pine County with making updates to the comprehensive land use plan and zoning ordinance.
 3. **City Administrators' Meeting:** The ECRDC City/County Clerks, Administrators & Community/Economic Developers meeting was held on Friday, October 31st. The agenda included a presentation by CoNorth, the MPCA, and update from SBA and MN Dept. of Employment & Economic Development, and the Federal EDA.

- J. **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION COUNCIL (ECRTCC):** Karen Onan reported on the following:
1. **I Like That (ILT) Training** Successfully concluded the Minnesota's RTCC's ILT Academy Training. This nine-week program laid a solid foundation for ongoing development of our Smart Shuttle program.

2. Rural and Tribal Assistance (RTA) Program Application: Submitted a grant application for the RTA Program RTA. This would supply funding for the study for hubs in east central MN, creating continual transportation.

K. **COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**: Michelle Thomas reported on the following items:

1. Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Grant: We received word the 2026 TZD grants have been approved for Kanabec and Mille Lacs Counties. The grants run October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2026.
2. East Central Development Partnership (ECDP): Held the ECDP Annual Meeting on September 16th. Housing affordability, availability, accessibility have emerged as critical issues for our region.

L. **ADJOURNMENT**: Chairman Montzka announced the next meeting will be December 15, 2025, at the ECRDC offices. Olseen moved to adjourn the meeting. Duff seconded- motion carried.

Robert L. Voss, Executive Director



Ben Montzka, Chairman