



2023

ANNUAL REPORT

GREATER MANKATO GROWTH, Inc.





A MESSAGE FROM JOHN KIND, INTERIM PRESIDENT & CEO

While 2023 can, in some ways, be described as a year of transition, we will also remember it as a catalyst for the bright future that is in store for our region. In this report, we invite you to learn more about the collective work of Greater Mankato Growth, Inc.

Led by Greater Mankato Growth, Inc., the Transforming Tomorrow Together: Greater Mankato 2040—a regional planning and visioning project—explored a shared future for our region. Over a thousand stakeholders worked with us towards shaping the future vision and roadmap for Greater Mankato. We are thankful for everyone who participated in the process, which included a robust survey, as well as many think-tank workshops and roundtables. As we wrap up this annual review of our organization's accomplishments, we are also excited to share the report the Greater Mankato 2040 Summary.

Our foundational programs, Greater Mankato Leadership Institute; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Collaborative; and Young Professionals, continued to support new and seasoned leaders. Greater Mankato Growth served as a voice of the business community, tirelessly advocating for our members and raising the visibility of our regional marketplace among policymakers.

Greater Mankato Growth and our Regional Economic Development Alliance partners renewed the partnership through a six-year joint service agreement, to continue to provide information to businesses interested in the Greater Mankato marketplace.

The most notable accomplishment for Visit Mankato took place in May, when Greater Mankato hosted the Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener for the first time in the event's 75-year history. In 2023, the Mankato Marathon reached an all-time high of 649 runners in the full marathon.

City Center Partnership continues to ensure that our downtown remains the envy of cities who look to us as a model and attempt to capture the magic that is our City Center Mankato and North Mankato.

In 2023, with the launch of GreenSeam Futures and Global Workforce Program, and at signature events, GreenSeam continued to promote the importance of the agriculture industry and our region.

At Greater Mankato Growth, Inc., we are grateful for the support and partnership of our members, stakeholders, volunteers, and our community as they help us carry forward our mission of serving the Greater Mankato regional marketplace. We are excited for the year to come!



Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. exists to support and promote the economic growth and vitality of our members and the regional marketplace. We do this by focusing on business growth and development, talent growth, attraction, and retention, regional livability, and advocacy of the marketplace.

Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. is comprised of four business units: Greater Mankato Growth, the regional chamber of commerce and economic development organization; Visit Mankato, the local destination management organization; City Center Partnership, a downtown development organization; and GreenSeam, which utilizes agriculture to build on the region's extensive agribusiness assets to develop the ag economy.



A Year in Review



NEW INTEGRATED WEBSITE: GREATERMANKATO.COM

In May of 2023, Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. rolled out a new, integrated website designed and built to support members, stakeholders, residents, and visitors of the Greater Mankato region. The website brings together Greater Mankato Growth, Visit Mankato, City Center Partnership, and Regional Economic Development Alliance (REDA), with additional resources for GreenSeam.

TRANSFORMING TOMORROW TOGETHER: GREATER MANKATO 2040

Led by Greater Mankato Growth, Inc., this regional planning and visioning project explores a shared future for the Greater Mankato region. In collaboration with FutureIQ, we worked with over 1,000 stakeholders to shape the future vision and roadmap for Greater Mankato. The process, which included a survey and many think-tank workshops and roundtables, has resulted in many exciting ideas, which are continuously shared with the regional community.

GREATER MANKATO BUSINESS AWARDS & HALL OF FAME

The 36th annual, Business Awards & Hall of Fame was held on November 24, at the Mayo Clinic Health System Event Center.

Lisa Kaye & Brett Prescher of Radio Mankato, our emcees for the night, helped make this year's event successful. The Greater Mankato Business Awards & Hall of Fame is a premier business event where Greater Mankato Growth, Visit Mankato, City Center Partnership, and GreenSeam honor outstanding businesses, professionals, and organizations within our community.

GREATER MANKATO GROWTH AWARDS

HALL OF FAME: Keepers RV Center; Pioneer Bank

BUSINESS LEGACY: Jones Metal, Inc.

BRIAN FAZIO BUSINESS EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP:

Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota (*Education*) and

Glen A. Taylor Foundation (*Business*)

HAP HALLIGAN LEADERSHIP AWARD: Jamie Jacobs (APX Construction Group)

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR: Dr. Murphy Grotebold
(Calrsol-Tillisch Eye Clinic)

VISIT MANKATO AWARDS

BRING IT HOME: The Landing on Madison (Governor's Fishing Opener)

HOSPITALITY: Mankato Playhouse

CITY CENTER PARTNERSHIP AWARDS

CITYDESIGN AWARD: iSpace Environments Showroom

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING AWARD: Hubbard Park Gardens

GREENSEAM AWARDS

SEAMED IN SUCCESS: Kahler Automation

GROWING IN THE GREENSEAM: The Meatery

2022 VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR

GREATER MANKATO GROWTH

Ceceli Bidelman, Mankato Clinic

Dr. Cuong Huynh, Discover Chiropractic

VISIT MANKATO

Jenna & Justin Rinehart, Nicollet Bike & Ski

CITY CENTER PARTNERSHIP

Eric Lennartson, Widseth

GREENSEAM

Naomi Mortensen, Curious Plot

GREATERMANKATO.COM

NEW
WEBSITE!



WORKED WITH
MORE THAN

1,000

STAKEHOLDERS TO SHAPE
THE FUTURE VISION OF
GREATER MANKATO.

11 FOCUS GROUPS



SOLD OUT!

417 ATTENDEES

12 AWARDS

2 CITYART
AWARDS

395 ANNUAL
MEETING GUESTS
AT MINNESOTA STATE
UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

120 MORE
THAN IN 2022!



Greater Mankato Growth, Inc.

Board of Directors

David Krause, Chair (Pioneer Bank)

David Kim, Vice Chair (Gislason & Hunter LLP)

Charlie Whitaker, Past Chair (Taylor)

Ben Ellingson, Secretary/Treasurer (Eide Bailly LLP)

Samantha Boeck, At-Large (ISG)

James Hebl, MD, At-Large (Mayo Clinic Health System)

Wesley Otto, At-Large (OMG - Otto Media Group, Zanz Mexican Restaurant, Connect Business Magazine)

Jennifer Spaude, At-Large (Consolidated Communications)

JO Guck Bailey (Sign Pro/JGBailey Media & Communications)

Dr. Coung Huynh (Discover Chiropractic)

Jamie Jacobs (APX Construction Group)

Najwa Massad (Massad Group)

Dr. Annette Parker (South Central College)

Paul Peterson (Mankato Area Public Schools)

Christine Powers (Abdo)

Liz Ulman (Dotson Iron Castings)

Ex-Officio:

Susan Arntz (City of Mankato)

Kevin McCann (City of North Mankato)

Dr. Edward Inch (Minnesota State University, Mankato)

Gary Koch, Chair, GreenSeam (Christensen Farms)

Alec Pfeffer, Chair, Visit Mankato (ISG)

Jessica Potter, Chair, City Center Partnership Board (Blue Earth County Historical Society)

Dr. Mark Dehen, Chair, Regional Economic Development Alliance (Nicollet County)

Keri Johnson, Vice Chair, Regional Economic Development Alliance (City of St. Peter)



GROWING BUSINESS WITH AMBASSADORS & CAVALIERS

Another successful year is in the books for Greater Mankato Ambassadors and Cavaliers, the two largest volunteer groups who serve as the greeting arm of our organization. On their mission to promote our community and encourage expansion of established and development of new businesses, the Ambassadors made **82 visits** to celebrate grand openings, major remodels, and other milestones. The Cavaliers visited with **32 new member businesses** to welcome them to our organization. A special thank you goes to **Erin Pietz**, Ambassador Chair, and **Steve Lawrence**, Cavalier Chair, for their leadership over the course of the last year.

MONTHLY NETWORKING AT BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

The Business After Hours series **attendance of 1,500 member business representatives** shows an **increase of 50%** compared to 2022. These monthly events offer opportunities to Greater Mankato Growth members to connect with one another and learn more about the host. ActivePT & Sports, Sky One Eleven, FUN.com, Traverse des Sioux Regional Library System, The Beast, Birkholz & Associates, LLC, Carlson-Tillisch Eye Clinic, Gillette Pepsi-Mankato, Courtyard by Marriott Hotel & Event Center, Eide Bailly, Bethany Lutheran College, and Habitat for Humanity South Central Minnesota/Habitat For Humanity ReStore opened their doors to host the business community last year.

SONGS ON THE LAWN: 20th ANNIVERSARY

The **20th annual** summer concert series brought **over 2,000 visitors** to Civic Center Plaza to listen to live music and enjoy local food. Over the course of the four Thursdays in June, the event featured City Mouse, The Bad Companions, NUNNABOVE, and The DW3.



GREATER MANKATO ON THE GREEN

The annual golf tournament, held in July at the Mankato Golf Club, attracted **144 golfers** who enjoyed 18 holes of golf. The golfers, along with **over 100 guests** from member businesses enjoyed networking, food, and beverages throughout the day. This sold-out tournament featured many new games, enhanced networking opportunities, and a variety of new ways to showcase the **30 sponsors** who supported the event.

THE FIRST MEMBER SHOWCASE ONLINE AUCTION: SUCCESS!

Previously part of the annual golf tournament, the auction was expanded to include more members and a large audience of bidders. The first Member Showcase Online Auction was held in August on an online platform and **nearly 100 members businesses** donated items or services.

6th **LARGEST CHAMBER**
of commerce in
the Twin Cities Metro area
by Minneapolis/St. Paul
Business Journal.

T H E L I S T

910

**GREATER MANKATO GROWTH
MEMBERS**

56 NEW MEMBERS

2 NEW INVESTORS

50

**GREATER MANKATO
AMBASSADORS**

82 AMBASSADOR VISITS

34

**GREATER MANKATO
CAVALIERS**

32 CAVALIER VISITS



7.350 M

BUSINESS DIRECTORY
IMPRESSIONS

8,166

AVERAGE IMPRESSIONS
PER MEMBER

FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS

UP **220%**

720 NEW FOLLOWERS

465,546

FACEBOOK REACH
UP **289%** FROM 2022.

33,800

INSTAGRAM REACH
UP **254%** FROM 2022.
VISITS UP **145%**

106,587

LINKEDIN REACH

2,600

E-NEWS SUBSCRIBERS

40% open rate
(higher than industry standards)

220,105 emails sent
90 campaigns

REDA PARTNERSHIP RENEWED: 6-YEAR JOINT SERVICES AGREEMENT

Greater Mankato Growth and our partners in the Regional Economic Development Alliance renewed the partnership through a **new, six-year joint services agreement**. Each of the communities and counties in Greater Mankato has its own unique strengths, which together create a robust portfolio of regional assets. These communities and counties joined together with Greater Mankato Growth in 2009 to efficiently provide both regional and individual city and county information to businesses interested in the Greater Mankato marketplace.

With the support of the public partners and investor members, Greater Mankato Growth has expanded our economic development team to two full-time staff positions to continue to support business requests and economic growth in the community.

FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE FUND

Greater Mankato Growth **secured \$40,000** in funding to support work-based learning initiatives for our local high school students. We have **awarded \$20,000** to Mankato Area Public Schools to support their internal efforts. We have already seen growth of new potential partnerships in the transportation sector.

MAIN STREET ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

The Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. Foundation has **awarded \$1,913,462** through the Main Street Economic Revitalization Program, which is **expected to leverage over \$50 million** in additional, private construction investment in the community. Over \$800,000 has already been distributed to businesses in the region. The goal of this program is to create jobs and increase the tax base through commercial development and/or redevelopment.

REDA FOCUS: RESIDENT RECRUITMENT

In 2023, resident recruitment became a focus of the Regional Economic Development Alliance. In addition to enhancing the new resident experience on the GMG website, which included a new job board, REDA ran successful marketing campaigns in the Twin Cities, St. Cloud, and Chicago, with **over 10 million cumulative impressions**.

MINNESOTA YOUNG AMERICAN LEADERS PROGRAM

A cohort of eight outstanding individuals from the Greater Mankato area participated in the 2023 Minnesota Young American Leaders Program (MYALP). Inspired by Harvard Business School's Young American Leaders program and hosted by the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, the program brings together rising leaders from diverse sectors and equips them with knowledge, networks, and inspiration.

SOUTH CENTRAL TOUR OF MANUFACTURING

The 2023 South Central Tour of Manufacturing took place on Thursday, October 5, featuring **15 area organizations** and hosting **443 Mankato area students from 19 schools**, who explored careers in manufacturing. The Tour of Manufacturing is an annual showcase of facilities, products, machines, and the variety of opportunities in the high-paying, in-demand manufacturing sector. Students, job-seekers, and the general public can join the tours, learn about how products are made, and how to start a career in manufacturing.



GREATER MANKATO LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

The Greater Mankato Leadership Institute has been the premier comprehensive leadership training program with a community focus for over 40 years. The program runs from September to May and includes a full-day session each month, as well as a two-day overnight trip to the State Capitol in Saint Paul. Each year, the curriculum is updated to ensure graduates are prepared to serve as leaders in their workplace and our community. The 2022 - 2023 class celebrated graduation on May 10 at the Mankato Golf Club. The current cohort consists of 40 participants from Greater Mankato Growth member businesses.

DEVELOPMENT AND NETWORKING WITH YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

The Greater Mankato Young Professionals program provides opportunities to make new connections and familiarize its members with the amenities and resources available in Greater Mankato. In 2023, this vibrant group had **192 members**, 82 of which joined for the first time. The Young Professionals held **32 events**, which included six professional speakers, one panel, one volunteer opportunity open house, one new member social, nine other socials, two mentor lunch programs, a holiday party, annual meeting, and five leadership book club meetings (new this year!). Thank you to the 2023 YP officers: **Nate Olsen** (Bremer Bank), **Claire Goettl** (Taylor), **Collin Bennett** (Knutson Construction), **Amanda Ohme** (North Risk Partners - Kato Insurance), **Lauren Atchley** (Abdo), **Jamie Reutzel** (U.S. Bank), **Macy Anderson** (Blethen Berens), and **Cody Booker** (Maschka, Riedy, Ries & Frentz Law Firm).



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COLLABORATIVE

The first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Collaborative graduated 29 participants from area businesses and organizations of all sizes. In its second year, the DEI Collaborative continued to support area leaders in developing the skills, mindsets, and networks needed to drive inclusive change for greater equity within their organizations. In its second year, the cohort welcomed 21 participants, ensuring collaborative networking as they work towards creating a more inclusive workplace. Facilitators are providing local and statewide resources and support as participants dive deeper to understand how they show up as leaders and drive DEI in their organizations.

TWO EXECUTIVE SOUNDING BOARD COHORTS

Greater Mankato Growth continued our commitment to providing leadership programming for all career levels by hosting two Executive Sounding Board cohorts. Seventeen business and nonprofit leaders met for two hours each month, giving them an opportunity to discuss their successes and challenges, as well as timely leadership topics. Each meeting was professionally facilitated by Scott Morrell with Rebar Leadership.



41th ANNIVERSARY



192 MEMBERS

82 NEW MEMBERS

1,300+ EVENT REGISTRATIONS

32 EVENTS



21 PARTICIPANTS IN THE SECOND COHORT



17 PARTICIPANTS

12 SESSIONS

SENT A COHORT OF

8 EMERGING LEADERS

TO THE MINNESOTA YOUNG AMERICAN LEADERS PROGRAM

Greater Mankato Growth Investors 2023



MAYO CLINIC
HEALTH SYSTEM



TAYLOR™





GREATER MANKATO GROWTH ADVOCACY

Greater Mankato Growth serves as the voice of the business community, working tirelessly to advocate for our members and raise the visibility of our regional marketplace among policymakers. When residents, businesses, key institutions, and governments collaborate, our community thrives. Each of our members plays an important role in growing our local economy and improving the Greater Mankato marketplace. Last year, Greater Mankato Growth identified and focused on the following policy priorities: **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, TAX COMPETITIVENESS, HEALTHCARE, CHILDCARE, REGULATIONS, AND STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS.**

GREATER MANKATO AT THE CAPITOL

In April, **more than 30 business and community leaders** met with Governor Walz, six legislators, and two commissioners during the annual Greater Mankato at the Capitol and had an opportunity to advocate for their industry and our marketplace. Our elected officials have the power to make decisions about critical issues impacting the vitality of our regional marketplace and strong participation from the community is always critical to the success of events like this one.

FINISH LINE: HIGHWAY 14 PROJECT

After years of advocating, Greater Mankato Growth and other stakeholders saw the finish line of the Highway 14 Project, valued at **\$83 million**. The project has improved safety and serves as a catalyst for economic growth along the corridor. On November 21, stakeholders celebrated this significant accomplishment with a ribbon cutting.

LUNCH & LEARN: THE STATE OF BIPARTISANSHIP

Greater Mankato Growth partnered with Shannon Watson of Majority in the Middle for a discussion of bipartisanship in Minnesota. As political polarization has increasingly become a factor in our communities, schools, civic organizations, and businesses, this lunch and learn helped the attendees learn origins of division, as well as some steps they can take to bring down the temperature.

HOSPITALITY LEGISLATIVE PANEL

In October, in partnership with Hospitality Minnesota, Greater Mankato Growth hosted a roundtable with Mankato legislator, focused on recent legislative changes, and challenges facing the hospitality industry. The event presented a valuable opportunity to gain insights, engage in meaningful dialogue, and understand what the future has in store for this industry. The featured panelists were Senator Rich Draheim (District 20), Representative Luke Frederick (District 18B), and Representative Bjorn Olson (District 22A).

SUPPORTED MANKATO AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOND REFERENDUM

The Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. Board of Directors unanimously supported the Mankato Area Public Schools bond referendum, which took place--and passed--in November. The economic growth and vitality of our members and the regional marketplace relies on strong public schools. This referendum will provide necessary resources for our District's students to have safe, secure, and quality education facilities.



\$100M

secured in tax relief.

More than **30**

business and community
leaders met with Governor

Walz, **6** legislators, and **2**
commissioners during the
**GREATER MANKATO AT
THE CAPITOL** visit.

Hosted **THREE**
LEGISLATIVE FORUMS:
pre and post-session, and
Rural Forum in December.

GMG, Inc. Board of Directors
unanimously supported
Mankato Area Public Schools
bond referendum, which
passed in November.

\$200,000

secured for **GreenSeam**
from the
Minnesota Department
of Agriculture.

Visit Mankato Board of Governors

Alec Pfeffer, Chair (ISG)

Matt Atwood, Vice Chair (Atwood Companies)

Trisha Duncan, Past Chair (Xcel Energy)

Roxy Traxler, Secretary/Treasurer (South Central College)

David Anderson, At-Large (Courtyard by Marriott Hotel & Event Center)

Gerry Burke, At-Large (Holiday Inn Express & Suites)

Jason Ceminsky (PRO TRAIN Aviation)

Kaaren Grabianowski (Minnesota River Builders Association)

Daniel Lee (Scheels)

Jennifer Moore (Minnesota State University, Mankato)

Nate Newhouse (Pioneer Bank)

Beth Rohrich (Quality 1 Hr Foto/SPX Sports)

Susan Arntz, Ex-Officio (City of Mankato)

JO Guck Bailey, Ex-Officio (Sign Pro/JGBailey Media & Communications)

Eric Jones, Ex-Officio (Mayo Clinic Health System Event Center)





75TH GOVERNOR'S FISHING OPENER HOSTED IN GREATER MANKATO

Over the course of this two-day event which took place in May, Visit Mankato showcased the impressive fishing and recreational amenities our region has to offer. Spring Lake Park, Red Jacket Park, Madison Lake, Minneopa State Park, and many local businesses were featured, providing a taste of what makes our region a unique part of the state. This was **the first time Greater Mankato hosted the event in its 75-year history** and the fifth time it was held in southern Minnesota. Attendees included Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan, DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen, Lauren Bennett McGinty, Executive Director of Explore Minnesota, local legislators, and media from across the Midwest.

Media coverage resulted in **over 1,000 printed, electronic, and broadcast media stories** delivered to an estimated **audience of over 500 million**. In addition, Visit Mankato hosted three content creators over the weekend, who participated in a variety of tourism-related activities and shared their experience across many social media channels and blogs.

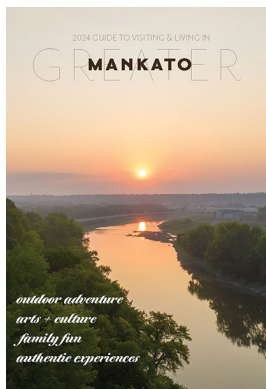


VISIT MANKATO PROVIDED \$27,785 IN EVENT GRANTS & SUPPORT

In 2023, Visit Mankato provided a full menu of support for events, including **\$27,785 in event grants**, equipment, consultation, visitor information, and more. The list includes **13 leisure events**, **30 conferences**, and **48 sporting events**. This support leveraged **\$12 million** in economic impact.

MANKATO MARATHON

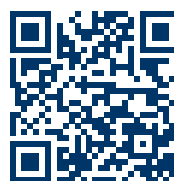
On October 20 and 21, the Mankato Marathon hosted **3,398 runners from 36 states**, bringing in an **estimated impact of \$2 million**. Following the cancelation of the Twin Cities Marathon, our team added an additional 300 spots in the full marathon, reaching an **all-time high of 649 runners**. The 2023 event focused on experiences, with the introduction of the 5K Corporate Team Challenge, as well as Spirit Awards for cheer, water stop, and relay teams.



VISITOR GUIDE REDESIGN

Through an in-house effort, the Guide to Visiting and Living in Greater Mankato was redesigned to feature a new size, look, and feel. Visit Mankato was also awarded a lottery spot to display the new guides at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, which is available to a very limited number of destinations. Our visitor guides are also available at kiosks in Greater Mankato, visitor centers around the state, and the Mall of America.

CHECK OUT THE
GUIDE HERE:



\$27,785

GRANT DOLLARS
AWARDED

MORE THAN

\$12 M

IN EVENT SUPPORT
ECONOMIC IMPACT

MORE THAN

1,000

MEDIA STORIES ABOUT
MINNESOTA GOVERNOR'S
FISHING OPENER

3,398

RUNNERS IN THE
MANKATO MARATHON

\$2 M

ESTIMATED
ECONOMIC IMPACT

VISIT MANKATO
SUPPORTED:

48 SPORTING EVENTS

30 CONFERENCES

13 LEISURE EVENTS

City Center Partnership Board of Governors

Jessica Potter, Chair (Blue Earth County Historical Society)

Max DeMars, Vice Chair (DeMars Construction)

Dan White, Chair, Aesthetics & Vitality (iSpace Environments)

JO Guck Bailey, CityArt Representative (SignPro/JGBailey Media & Communications)

Scott Danger (Abdo)

Jared Koch (Blethen Berens)

Kent Stanley (Minnesota State University, Mankato)

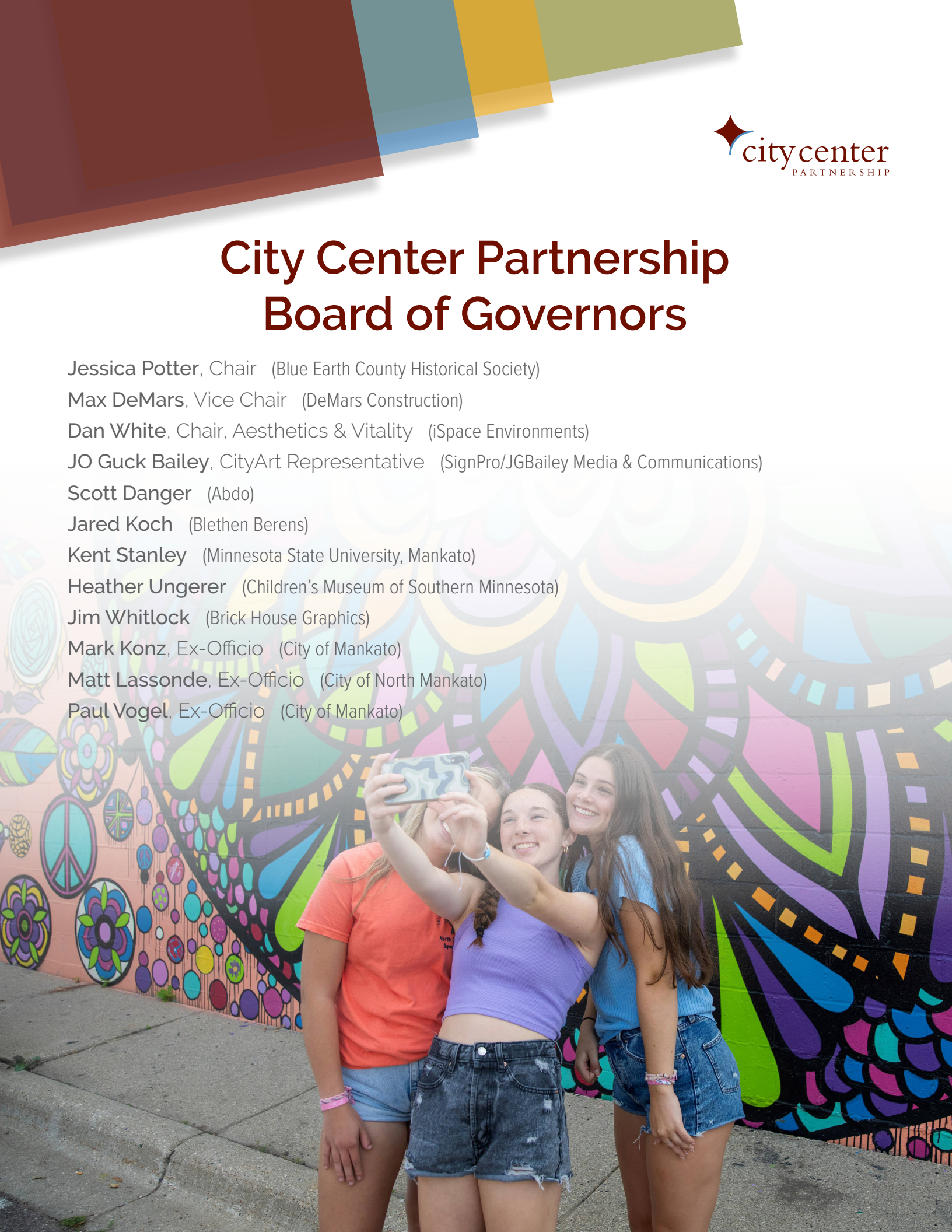
Heather Ungerer (Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota)

Jim Whitlock (Brick House Graphics)

Mark Konz, Ex-Officio (City of Mankato)

Matt Lassonde, Ex-Officio (City of North Mankato)

Paul Vogel, Ex-Officio (City of Mankato)





MAIN STREET AMERICA ACCREDITED COMMUNITY

Main Street America has been helping revitalize older and historic commercial districts for more than 40 years. Today, it is a network of more than 1,200 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share both a commitment to place, and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development.

City Center Mankato/North Mankato has been an **accredited Main Street America community since 2017**. This is a special mark of distinction that only the most qualified organizations and communities receive. Accredited communities must show a proven track record celebrating community character, preserving local history, generating economic returns, and building collaborative partnerships and resources, all of which supports City Center Partnership's vision of a vibrant City Center that anchors and exemplifies the creativity, diversity, and vitality of the region. Our community should be proud of this designation!

BONUS GIFT CARD PROGRAM SUCCESS

During the 2023 holiday season, the Bonus Gift Card Program saw **\$26,428** in receipts turned in for bonus gift cards, equating to **\$4.1 in additional spending for every \$1** City Center Partnership invested in this initiative. This program provides an incentive to support City Center Mankato/North Mankato businesses which make our community special. Supporting local businesses is equivalent to supporting friends, neighbors, and loved ones.

ALIVE AFTER 5 ATTRACTS 1,400 TO CITY CENTER MANKATO

The 2023 Alive After 5 series of free summer concerts took place on Thursday evenings in August and September. This free summer concert series attracted over 1,400 people who enjoyed live music, artisan market, and local food and beverages. International Reggae All Stars, Holy Rocka Rollaz, Stacy K, and Drew Peterson Band provided entertainment at the concerts.

CITYART WALKING SCULPTURE TOUR

The 13th annual CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour featured **32 new sculptures in 2023**. This exciting exhibit of outdoor sculptures is displayed year-round in City Center Mankato and North Mankato.

2023 PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD WINNER



Viktor by Jefferson Davis
\$1,000 prize for the artist

2023 JUROR'S PURCHASE AWARD WINNER



Lupine by Tim Adams
purchased and added to the public arts collection

\$26,428

in receipts turned in for bonus gift cards, equating to \$3.5 in additional spending per every \$1 invested.

16

City Center businesses participated in the third annual Let it Glow, Kato!

13th

annual CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour

32

new sculptures installed

58%

CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour survey respondents traveled more than **75** miles.

20

states represented in the survey

3

voters from outside of the United States

57%

community response

GreenSeam Board of Governors

Gary Koch, Chair (Christensen Farms)
Wesley Beck, Vice Chair (Beck Farms)
David Krause, Past Chair (Pioneer Bank)
Ryan Erickson, Secretary/Treasurer (AGCO Corporation)
JO Guck Bailey, At-Large (SignPro/JGBailey Media & Communications)
Chris Fitzloff, At-Large (Compeer Financial)
Matthew Berger (Gislason & Hunter LLP)
Brian Buhr (University of Minnesota, CFANS)
Ben Buie (Crystal Valley Cooperative)
Laura Drager (ISG)
Ryan Dutton (SDN Communications)
Jim Heilman (CLA)
Terri Jensen (National Land Realty)
Wayne Kahler (Kahler Automation)
Jerad Michels (Eide Bailly)
Kelcey Woods-Nord (South Central College)
Patrice Bailey, Ex-Officio (Minnesota Department of Agriculture)
Tim Penny, Ex-Officio (Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation)

GreenSeam Futures Board of Directors

Aaron Budge (Minnesota State University, Mankato)
TJ Brown (South Central College)
Matt Downs (Carlson-Tillisch Eye Clinic, Downs Family Farms)
Andrew Herr (GAT Farms)
Gary Koch (Christensen Farms)



FUTURESOLVERS CULTIVATION CHALLENGE

In November, GreenSeam Futures partnered with Minnesota State University, Mankato's Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship to engage entrepreneurially-minded students with real world opportunities for innovation in our industry. The FutureSolvers Cultivation Pitch Challenge invited undergraduate students in southern Minnesota and northern Iowa to compete in teams to develop innovative and entrepreneurial solutions to a common challenge in the food and ag economy. Six finalists delivered their pitches to judges at a live event on the final day of the Global Entrepreneurship Week. Over **\$14,500 was awarded** to the winning teams.

GLOBAL WORKFORCE PROGRAM

The Global Workforce program provides technical assistance to food and agriculture businesses seeking to hire non-U.S. citizens to meet their talent needs. It launched in June and served half a dozen regional food and ag businesses with human resource and legal guidance for hiring and retaining international employees. The program was a capstone to a series of global workforce opportunities events hosted by GreenSeam over the last two years, with the goal of educating the business community on the potential of international hiring to address regional workforce challenges. This work was made possible by the Small Business Administration's Community Navigators program and GreenSeam's grant partners in Mainstreet Businesses Focused on Food and Agriculture.

2023 STATE OF AG REPORT

The fourth annual State of Ag Report was published on National Ag Day, March 21, revealing the perceptions and opinions on the economy and other major issues impacting businesses in the agriculture industry, while placing an emphasis on education, talent attraction, and retention. The majority of respondents identified labor and retention as their main concerns. The State of Ag Survey in 2023 included **302 respondents**.

CELEBRATION OF AG

The event was held on July 19 at ISG Field in Mankato and marked the fourth year of networking and celebrating the success of the GreenSeam region and our investors. Over 250 attendees came to hear from Kevin Born (CEO/President at Environmental Tillage Systems, Inc.), John Schwartz (CEO/President, Schwartz Farms, Inc.), Collete Drager & Molly Byron (Founders at The Meatery), and Gary Koch (VP & General Counsel at Christensen Farms and GreenSeam Board Chair). As a result of 300 ag-related questions asked at the event, Christensen Farms donated **300 pounds of pork** to South Central MN Food Recovery.

40th ANNUAL RURAL FORUM: FUTURE FORWARD

The Rural Forum, took place at the Mayo Clinic Health System Event Center on November 30 and connected **294 attendees** to business leaders and other professionals from the ag sector. This year's program, Future Forward: Empowering Rural America Through Innovation, featured Bob Reiter, Ph.D., Head of Research & Development for Bayer's Crop Service Division. Brian Werner, Executive Director of MN Bio-Fuels and Pam Gorman, General Manager of Nuclear Fleet Operations at Xcel Energy participated in a panel on energy. A legislative panel at the event included Senator Bill Weber, Representative Samantha Vang, and Representative Bjorn Olson.

GREENSEAM'S NEW 5-year STRATEGIC PLAN PILLARS:

- » **CONVENE AND BUILD THE REGIONAL ECOSYSTEM**
 - Build collaboration as the food and ag ecosystem conductor
- » **ENHANCE STRATEGIC LEVERAGE AND INFLUENCE**
 - Position GreenSeam as the go-to voice for bio, food, ag innovation, investment, and policy.
- » **DRIVE WORKFORCE ATTENTION AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT**
 - Build the talent pipeline and attract global skills.
- » **AMPLIFY THE GREENSEAM BRAND**
 - Expand and amplify the GreenSeam brand and profile it as a purpose-based consortium.

PAST 5-YEAR IMPACTS:

- » Tracked \$850 million in new economic investments for businesses and organizations across the region.
- » Helped initiate ten new ag-related programs in K-12 schools and colleges within the region.
- » Assisted in the creation of new ag-focused programs, which resulted in the enrollment of more than 3,000 students.



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