



**Celebrating 40 years of helping small communities do BIG things!**

*The Latest with CEDA  
May 2026 Edition*

## **CEDA Announces the Promotion of Hillary Tweed**

Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) announces the promotion of Hillary Tweed to Executive Vice-President.

CEDA CEO/President Ron Zeigler states "we are excited to announce the promotion of Hillary Tweed to Executive Vice-President. Hillary's experience and insight is a valuable asset in assisting CEDA and the Region with thinking outside the box to bring forth opportunities to help shape rural America. Hillary's five-years with CEDA and interim involvement in all aspects of the operation has led her to be the person to lead our Community Support Programs as well as being in a position for interim continuation/succession planning should the need arise. Congratulations to Hillary!"



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# Celebrating 40 Years of Helping Small Communities Do BIG Things

*Join us at our Regional events and 2026 Annual Meeting to showcase the communities we serve, the impact of rural America and the incredible partners that make our work possible.*

**CEDA**  
Community and Economic Development Associates

Please join us as CEDA celebrates  
**FORTY YEARS OF HELPING SMALL COMMUNITIES DO BIG THINGS**  
Regional events are being held to showcase the work accomplished across each CEDA region.  
All events are free of cost to attend.  
For additional information please visit [www.cedusa.com](http://www.cedusa.com)

**Northern Minnesota**  
Wednesday, June 17, 2026  
3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
No RSVP needed  
The Event Center  
201 W 7<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Floodwood, MN  
appetizers and cash bar available

**South Central Minnesota**  
Thursday, July 23, 2026  
11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
No RSVP needed  
The Steeple Event Center  
110 Ash Ave N  
New Richland, MN  
networking & lunch provided

**Central Minnesota**  
Wednesday, July 29, 2026  
12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
No RSVP needed  
The Benson Community Center  
203 14<sup>th</sup> St S  
Benson, MN  
networking & lunch provided

**Southeast Minnesota 1**  
Wednesday, August 19, 2026  
4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
No RSVP needed  
Riverside Park Pavilion  
320 N Main St  
Mantorville, MN  
meal & beverages provided  
music & art display to enjoy in the park

**Southeast Minnesota 2**  
Wednesday, September 23, 2026  
5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
No RSVP needed  
Bluff Brothers Brewing  
817 N Broadway Ave  
Spring Valley, MN  
appetizers and cash bar available

**CEDA ANNUAL MEETING OCT. 2, 2026 - SUGAR LAKE LODGE - COHASSET, MN**  
PLEASE VISIT [WWW.CEDUSA.COM](http://WWW.CEDUSA.COM) FOR INFORMATION TO REGISTER FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING  
WE LOOK FORWARD TO CELEBRATING WITH YOU!

This year, Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) is celebrating a major milestone: 40 years of living, working and growing alongside rural communities.

When we first opened our doors back in 1986 as the Southeastern Minnesota Development Corporation, we had a simple, clear mission. Forty years later, our mission hasn't changed: helping small communities do BIG things. Over the last four decades, CEDA has evolved from a regional initiative into a trusted partner across the region. We've rolled up our sleeves alongside local leaders, business owners, and residents to help small communities thrive. Whether it's securing vital grant funding, building out housing initiatives, guiding community planning, or supporting local businesses, our goal has always been to provide the extra hands and expertise that rural communities need to turn big ideas into reality

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## Rural Capacity Program Opens with Eight More Slots

CEDA is encouraging Minnesota's smallest cities, those with a population of 3,000 or less, to take advantage of a unique opportunity designed to help rural cities build local capacity, support economic growth, and invest in economic development tools.

Through the Rural Capacity Program (RCP), cities with populations of 3,000 or fewer can receive:

- Up to 135 hours of technical assistance from Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA), as well as;
- Up to \$13,500 in grant funding to help implement locally driven economic development initiatives.

The program is supported through a special appropriation from the State of Minnesota and was created specifically to assist rural communities that may have limited staff capacity, smaller budgets, or little formal economic development infrastructure, but still have strong ideas and goals for their future.

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## CEDA Leads Community Engagement Efforts in Cannon Falls

This spring, the City of Cannon Falls launched an update to its Comprehensive Plan, marking the first major revision since 2003. The city partnered with CEDA to lead a community driven planning process that will help guide future investments, development, and priorities over the next 20 years.

## HCBT Holds Their Annual Banquet Celebrating Rural

## Economic Development in Howard County

For the last 30 years, Howard County Business and Tourism has partnered with the Times Plain Dealer newspaper to present several awards to outstanding individuals from Howard County, IA. In addition to these special recognitions, the annual banquet hosts at least two speakers, one of which is an elected official from the state of Iowa, and the other a well-know individual(s) and leader in Howard County. Both of these awardees hold accolades in their respective fields of expertise and experience, and are selected for their dedication to community, small business, and rural development and sustainability.

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After forming a steering committee and launching a community survey that has already received more than 400 responses, CEDA's Planning Department organized an interactive open house for residents to learn about the Comprehensive Planning process and provide feedback on key topics. CEDA Planning staff Annie Nichols, Cameron Payne, and Sarah Schrauth organized the event with support from CEDA Vice President Hillary Tweed, Regional Manager and Cannon Falls CSP Representative Laura Qualey, and CEDA team member Meyer Beckner.

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## County Launches Comprehensive Trail Study to Measure Use and Economic Impact

Itasca County and its partners are moving forward with a comprehensive trail study designed to better understand how local trails are used and the economic impact they bring to communities across the county. The study is being financed through a collaborative effort among multiple partners and is focused on gathering accurate data that will help guide future trail planning, maintenance, and investment decisions.

As part of the study, 10 trail counters have been strategically placed throughout the county on a variety of trail systems. These counters collect trail usage data and will be relocated every three to four weeks to capture activity across different locations and trail types throughout the season.

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## Rushmore Breaks Ground on Childcare Duplex

The City of Rushmore recently celebrated the groundbreaking of a new prefab duplex on First Street that will soon provide the space for two separate childcare providers, helping address the growing childcare need in Nobles County.

Construction is expected to be completed by June 30, 2026 with efforts already underway to recruit providers for the new spaces. An open house held May 19 brought together City staff and the Nobles County Childcare Licensor to discuss the opportunity, family childcare licensing process and available grant funding.



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## Allamakee County Economic Development Tour

Chris Hardie, 7 Rivers Alliance CEO and CEDA staff member, was part of a group that toured various economic development projects in Allamakee County, Iowa on April 29. Allamakee County is part of the 7 Rivers Alliance service area.



Participants stopped at various economic development projects, including the city of Waukon's state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant and the city's newest housing development

**The Second Phase of the UW-La Crosse Prairie Springs Science Center broke ground**

**Envision Plainview SPARK Session introduces Business Toolkit and new eNavigator**



The Ceremonial groundbreaking marked the unofficial start of the \$194 million project, which will replace Cowley Hall with 30 state-of-the-art labs, classrooms and specialized learning spaces, with completion expected in late 2028.

Together, the two phases will form a comprehensive hub supporting education, research and innovation across a variety of STEM fields.

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By: [Lindsay Hammer Bartley](#)

On May 18th, the Envision Plainview team hosted a SPARK session at the Plainview Public Library to launch their collaboration with Kindling (Shantelle Speedling) in the Entrepreneur Navigator role (E-Navigator), and to reveal a Business Toolkit. Allison Whalen, Community and Business Development Specialist supporting the Envision Plainview group, demonstrated the web-based toolkit which can be accessed from the City's website under the EDA page:

[Plainview EDA - Business Toolkit](#)



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## Community and Economic Development Associates

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