

Small Places. Big Possibilities. 40 years of helping communities dream, grow and thrive!

For four decades, the heart of rural Minnesota hasn't just been in its rolling farmland, it has been in the people who believe small towns deserve big futures and the businesses that fill their Main Street's. This year, CEDA marks the major milestone of 40 years of helping small communities do BIG things. We recently held a celebratory event in South Central Minnesota, showcasing how we have helped the communities in the area to dream, grow and thrive.

The event, held on Thursday, July 23, 2026 at The Steeple Event Center in New Richland, MN brought together CEDA staff members, community and business leaders, government officials and regional stakeholders coming together to celebrate the past 40 years, yet also to look ahead to the future of the issues rural America and South Central Minnesota will continue to face in the years ahead such as housing availability, workforce development, energy transitions, and small business succession. To all that attended, a huge thank you in helping us continue with our mission of helping small communities do BIG things.

CEDA team members work directly with city officials, economic development authorities (EDA's) and regional organizations to help turn ambitious ideas into reality. From helping to secure grant funding, fueling Main Street businesses to open their doors, expand their operations and navigate economic shifts, address housing shortages in rural communities, address aging infrastructure and create vibrant community spaces. "Rural communities don't lack ambition; they lack capacity. CEDA's job for 40 years has been to bridge the gap, giving small towns the exact same professional tools and grant strategies that major metropolitan areas enjoy", CEDA South Central Minnesota Regional Manager Dave Schmidt.

CEDA doesn't just drop off a report and leave, CEDA integrates directly into the fabric of the towns it serves. Staff attend local city council meetings, sit down with business owners, walk project sites with engineers and build long-term relationships with residents and city leadership. By getting engrained into the inner workings of the community, CEDA staff is able to ensure that when opportunities arise the community is aware and knowledgeable to go after and often achieve that goal.



