



SOUTHERN MINNESOTA
INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

Collaborating for Regional Vitality

Watonwan County Investments

We envision southern Minnesota as a prosperous and growing region with vibrant communities, innovative and successful economies, and engaged and valued citizens. To achieve this vision, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, a regional development and philanthropic organization, fosters economic and community vitality in 20 counties of southern Minnesota through a culture of collaboration and partnership.

For every donation of
from Watonwan County

\$1

=

\$13

is invested back into
Watonwan County
communities.*

*Includes grants, loans & programming

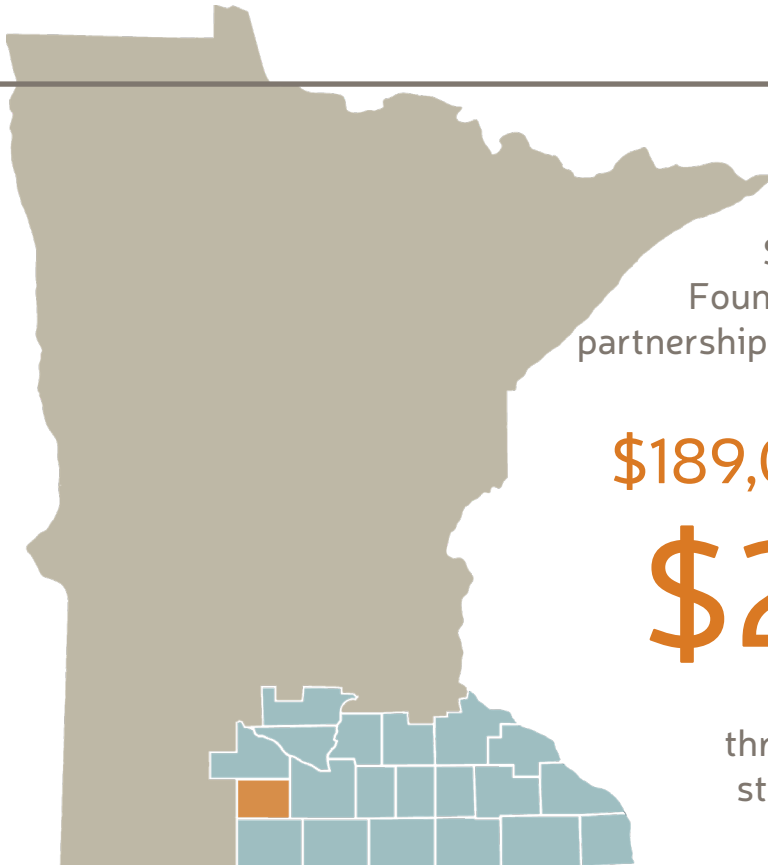
12 LOANS

\$300,000 to Watonwan County entrepreneurs

104 GRANTS

\$774,000 to support community initiatives

***\$5 million invested annually to the 20 counties of
south central and southeastern Minnesota***



Since 1986, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation has leveraged local investments & partnerships to create a stronger **Watonwan County**:

\$189,000 in local donations to SMIF

\$2.4 million

invested by SMIF in Watonwan County through grants, loans, and programming for stronger kids, businesses and communities

Loans & Equity Investments Supporting local entrepreneurs & creating jobs

Maria's Western Wear, Madelia	Clothing store
Wild Blue Skies Wind LLC, Butterfield	Wind farm
La Rosita, Madelia	Hispanic grocery/convenience store
El Sarape, Saint James	Latino grocery store
Collage Saint James	Retail store

Grants Investments in economic development, early childhood and community vitality

AmeriCorps LEAP Initiative, St. James	Members helping with social emotional skill development
Quality Child Care Program	Increasing quality child care through provider training
Odin Community Club Incorporated	Remodeling of kitchen area
City of St. James/St. James Area Foundation	Marketing and rebranding St. James
Watonwan County Human Services, St. James	Reach out program
Butterfield Odin Public School	Hundreds of books awarded through multiple literacy grants
Distaster Recovery Grants: Madelia Fire	13 businesses received grants to assist with fire clean-up
Watonwan Co. Early Childhood Initiative	Collaborative investment project in quality child care
St. James Public Schools	Strategic planning support for Uniting Cultures/Uninendo Culturas
Watonwan County Human Services/Public Health, St. James	Awarded 475 books for Book Buddies program

Affiliate Funds Increasing rural philanthropy

St. James Area Foundation	Watonwan County Weekend Backpack Program
Healthy Families Healthy Futures	

Community Collaborations Bringing communities together for change

St. James Community Growth Initiative
St. James "Entrepreneur & Experiential Learners Community Growth Initiative"
Watonwan County Early Childhood Initiative (started in 2004)
Watonwan County (Watonwan County Early Childhood Initiative), Communities Addressing the Child Care Shortage

Making a Difference Supporting community needs



A group of concerned teachers and community members from Butterfield, Madelia and St. James formed a group to start a Watonwan County Weekend Backpack program in 2016. In order to facilitate the receipt of donations they approached the St. James Area Foundation and SMIF to act as a fiscal host. In their first year they were able to raise \$20,000 to start the program and they continue to receive donations.

The program serves about 7,500 meals for students during the school year. In 2019 they added to the program to provide other essential items like clothing to students. What started as a program that served kindergarteners is now serving all grade levels in all schools in Watonwan County.