



SOUTHERN MINNESOTA  
INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

Collaborating for Regional Vitality

# Blue Earth 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 Blue Earth County

\$1

=

\$15

is invested back into  
Blue Earth County  
communities.\*

\*Includes grants, loans & programming

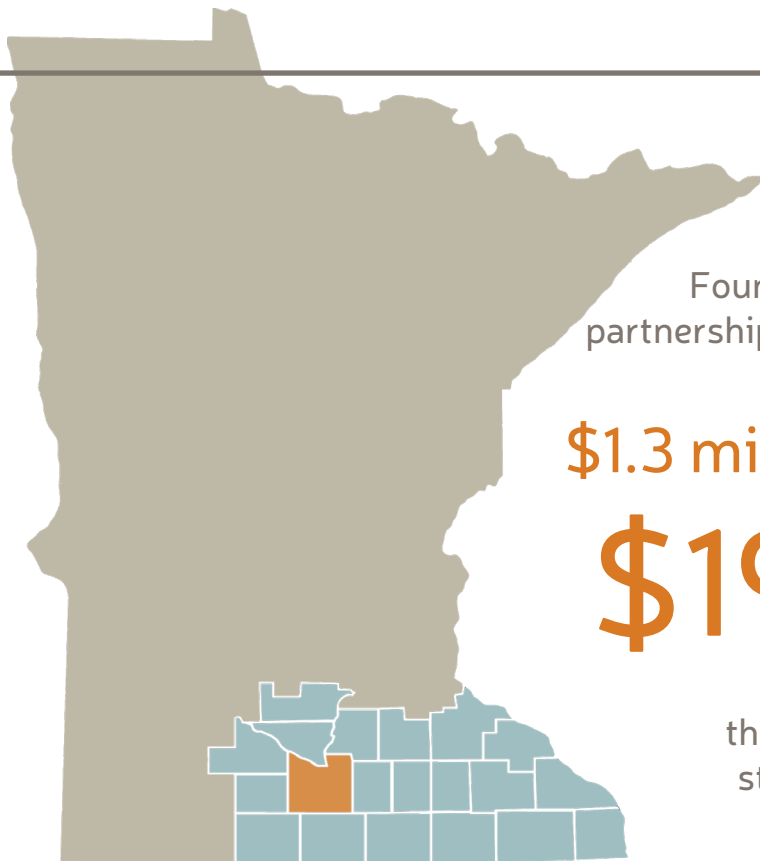
45 LOANS

\$2.5 million to Blue Earth County entrepreneurs

393 GRANTS

\$8.5 million 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 **Blue Earth County**:

**\$1.3 million** in local donations to SMIF

**\$19.7 million**

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

## Loans & Equity Investments\* Supporting local entrepreneurs & creating jobs

Maggie J's LLC, Mapleton	Restaurant & bar, American food
Blue Star Power Systems Inc, Lake Crystal	Renewable energy/power generation equipment supplier
Aleamar Cheese Company LLC, Mankato	Small-batch, artisan cheese company
New Identity Barbershop LLC, Mankato	Barbershop
Perfection Packaging Incorporated, Mankato	Packaging company
Dakota Mart, Good Thunder	Gas station & convenience store
Monique Hair Company LLC, Mankato	Women's hair extensions
Shawarmania LLC, Mankato	Mediterranean grill

\*SCORE Chapter

## Grants Investments in economic development, early childhood and community vitality

AmeriCorps LEAP Initiative, MVAC Head Start, Mankato	Members helping with social emotional skill development
A Chance to Grow, Lake Crystal	Continued S.M.A.R.T. training to prepare children for kindergarten
MN Valley Action Council	Implementing home based curriculum with families in need
Follow Me Preschool, St. Clair	275 books for Family Fun Nights through BookStart grant
MN Valley Action Council, Mankato	Seeded a food hub, linking small-scale farmers to buyers
Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial Community Education	Develop comprehensive 3-5 year PreK-Grade 3 plan
Region Nine Development Commission	FEAST! Smart Start grant to expand local foods coaching program
Quality Child Care Program, Mankato	Increasing quality child care through provider training
MN State University Mankato	Expand workshop to Mankato to grow a culture of entrepreneurship

## Affiliate Funds Increasing rural philanthropy

Donald Manthei Veterans Memorial Park Fund	Maple River AAA Foundation (school foundation)
Eagle Lake Community Development Foundation	Mapleton Area Foundation
FitzSimmons Scholarship Fund	Swanson Scholarship Fund
Investing in Maple River (school improvement fund)	Sugar Plum Fund (student assistance fund)
Madison Lake Area Community Foundation	

## Community Collaborations Bringing communities together for change

Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial Early Childhood Initiative (started in 2010)
Greater Mankato Area Early Childhood Initiative (started in 2006)
Community Growth Initiative: Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship at MSU-Mankato (started in 2017)
City of Eagle Lake, Communities Addressing the Child Care Shortage

### Making a Difference Preparing children for academic success



Young children's brains are typically not prepared to learn once they enter school. S.M.A.R.T. (Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training) is a series of movements that focus on the stimulation of the brain stem to prepare their brains and bodies for academic success. The Lake Crystal Wellcome Memorial Elementary School received a grant to provide discounted rates for teachers to attend S.M.A.R.T. workshops. So far 22 teachers have been trained, which will help sustain the program at the school in the future. The grant will also allow them to bring S.M.A.R.T. to home providers in the community.