

The Resilient Reader

Resilient Region Stories



Efficiency and Effectiveness

October 2015



Innovative Government Collaboration that Delivers Regional Cost Effective Public Services

WHO: Champions of the Efficiency and Effectiveness theme are:

Andrea Lauer (Mayor), City of Royalton

Don Hickman (Vice President), Initiative Foundation

Melissa Radermacher (Regional Development Planner), Region Five Development Commission

Anna Gruber (City/County Manager), NJPA

Justin Burslie (Planning and Zoning), NJPA

The Efficiencies and Effectiveness Champions offer best practices of where/how governments, non-profits and private sector collaborate in innovative ways to implement regional planning strategies that deliver cost effective regional services. It is clear that the solutions to the region's issues must be innovative, inclusive and not solely reliant on traditional resources.

WHERE/WHAT: The following are examples of efficiency and effectiveness actions that achieve strategies within the Resilient Region plan.

- 1) *Morrison County Tourism agreement.* Morrison County and the cities within Morrison County are working with the Little Falls Convention and Visitors Bureau and Explore MN on a shared tourism plan.

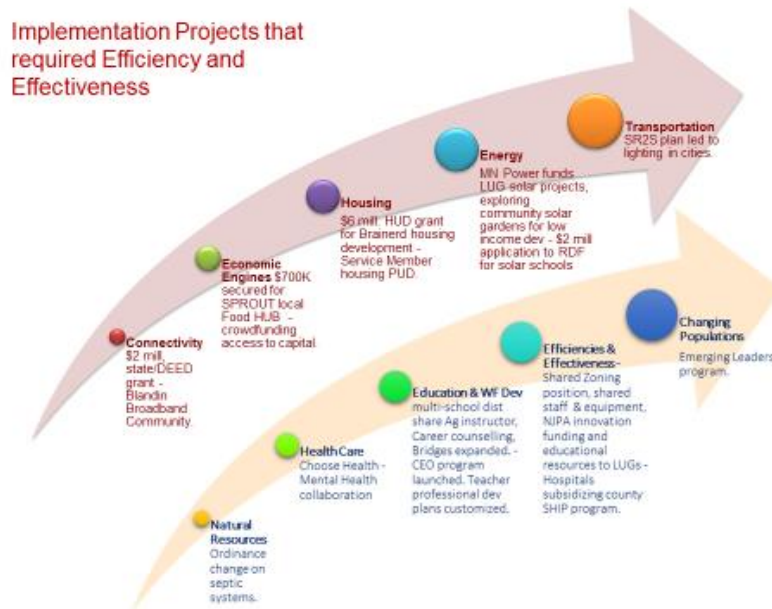


Morrison County Website Banner

- 2) *Contract purchasing solutions.* NJPA offers contract purchasing for thousands of products/services to local units of government and school districts across the nation. A small percentage of the profits from those transactions are dedicated back to the region of where the cooperative initial service territory, which are the five counties of Region Five in Central MN. Contract purchasing is the essence of efficiency in government.
<http://www.njpacoop.org/national-cooperative-contract-solutions/about-us>

- 3) *Multiple cites share a staff for Planning and Zoning.* Several of this region's small cities contract for planning and zoning services, with the NJPA subsidizing the full cost of this shared staff position. <http://www.njpacoop.org/statewide-regional-solutions/cities-and-counties/planning-zoning-communities/>
- 4) *Shared training & contract services for all 5 counties, 65 cities, 155 townships in Region Five.* NJPA offers free municipal professional development for staff in many areas including; Law, Emergency Services, HR. Leadership, technology and more. <http://www.njpacoop.org/statewide-regional-solutions/cities-and-counties/professional-development/>
- 5) *Cities have shared equipment among city fire & police departments.* A requirement for award of the annual NJPA Innovation Funding is regional impact. Police departments SHARE traffic calming signs for areas with high crash rates to improve our Toward-Zero-Death transportation safety goals. See more examples of municipal regional projects; <http://www.njpacoop.org/statewide-regional-solutions/cities-and-counties/innovation-funding>
- 6) *Cities share staff for waste water treatment operators and city clerk/treasure.* This efficiency is funded by the cities through mutual agreements.
- 7) *County Veteran Services offers intake and deliver services to veterans from any of the neighboring counties in Region Five.* This effort is funded by the counties. Similar efforts are underway for regional delivery of community services, such as SNAP/WIC etc.
- 8) *County & Multi-City Housing Redevelopment Authorities.* Two cities and one county have created agreements that allows for one HRA to manage them all.
- 9) *Cass County delivers police services to City of Cass Lake.* Achieved through mutual agreements, likewise with Todd County and the cities of Bertha and Hewitt.
- 10) *RECENT examples of Resilient Region (RR) efficiencies and effectiveness outside of Local Government: (see more on the respective theme reports)*
 - a. *RR Connectivity Theme:* NJPA funding of engineering of broadband projects that lead to grant applications. All theme areas give video testimony for an awarded \$2.0 million grant.
 - b. *RR Economic Engines Theme:* USDA funding of Crowdfunding Business Support Services, Resilient Region/CEDS priority projects from 10 non-profits or municipals a year.
 - c. *RR Economic Engines (in area of local foods) and Housing Themes:* delivery of WealthWorks coordination and evaluation.
 - d. *RR Education & Workforce Development Theme:* Two high schools from different districts share an Ag Instructor, funded by NJPA.
 - e. *RR Housing Theme:* working with all the theme areas on service member housing development project.
 - f. *RR Health Care Theme:* Choose Heath program has multiple theme areas involved, as does the mental health collaboration project.

- g. *RR Energy Theme*: has collaborated with Housing theme to deliver solar thermal systems on low income housing units.



WHY: While the local tax base has changed as a result of lowered property values, the demand for services has increased with the influx of population in some parts of the region. A notable outcome for the Morrison County Tourism Project was quoted by Champion Andrea Lauer as “making local government more efficient allows government to deliver better services”. The same could be said for private sector, non-profits and foundations. Working together to create a Resilient Region is what efficiency is. Andrea also shares analogy of going to Mayo Clinic. “You don’t just see one doctor, you see a room full of doctors”, just like with the Resilient Region Champion meetings, there are all of these areas working together in one room at the same time.

With all groups, trust was formed before moving forward to achieve outcomes.

WHEN/HOW: Efficiency and Effectiveness has influenced all of the other theme areas. It would be impossible to implement the Resilient Region plan without these areas working across silos. This is done by bringing all of the 10 theme area Champions together quarterly since January 2012 to identify needs (brainstorm), troubleshoot bottlenecks and share progress reports.

Projects typically begin with: “Okay, we want to build a new service member housing development, who else cares about this.... and wants to be informed/involved?” OR “We want to apply to the state for a broadband grant to cover an unserved area of our region, is improved broadband access important to your work.....and will you offer testimony for the application?”

For local unit of government, efficiencies and effectiveness coordination: Cities within each of the five counties meet at least a couple times a year with coordination of those meetings by Initiative Foundation, National Joint Powers Alliance (NJPA) and Region Five Development Commission (R5DC), with Morrison County meeting more frequently with Champion Andrea Lauer coordinating the meetings. County Administrators meet quarterly, coordinated by Cheryl Hills at R5DC.