



taking THE INITIATIVE

News from Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation

525 Florence Avenue • PO Box 695 • Owatonna, MN 55060-0695
PH 507.455.3215 • FAX 507.455.2098 • smifoundation.org

November 2016

Message from Tim Penny



With what was one of the most vicious, divisive campaigns we've seen in decades, it may be wishful thinking that the intense partisanship and division of the last 18 months will now disappear.

I frequently urge people to think about what the role of government should be. But it is also important that we reflect on the role of other institutions as we move ahead collectively as a country post-election. In a recent

interview, David Brooks observed "I happen to think we are now in a culture that's over-politicized and under-moralized." I think he means that we need to rely on our religious, educational, and philanthropic institutions to combat the political dialogue that makes it seem we have less in common than we do. It is often these non-political, non-government institutions that can help us find common ground.

Last month, SMIF celebrated our 30th anniversary at our Annual Luncheon and Open House. At the luncheon, I announced the Foundation's new brand, emphasizing something that has always been in SMIF's DNA: collaboration. Since 1986, SMIF has actively worked for regional vitality by relying on our region's innate understanding that more can happen together. Neighbors help neighbors, businesses invest in their communities and individuals give back to a place they love through time and money.

Collaboration moves us toward solutions and progress by seeking common ground, leveraging resources and building on assets. That is why I am proud to announce SMIF's new tagline: "Collaborating for Regional Vitality."

Read my full op-ed on our newly-branded website: www.smifoundation.org

MCN Responsive Philanthropy Award: Minnesota Initiative Foundations

The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) presented the Responsive Philanthropy Award to SMIF and the five other Minnesota Initiative Foundations (MIFs) at its annual conference held on October 7, 2016.

"The Minnesota Initiative Foundation model is unique; no other rural economic development foundation model exists that we know of," said SMIF President and CEO Tim Penny. "The McKnight Foundation gave us the flexibility to respond to needs as we saw fit when they established the six MIFs 30 years ago, and we've stayed true to that responsive, collaborative approach."

Criteria for this award include:

- Responsiveness to citizen initiatives;
- Recognition of public policy issues and long-term strategies to fight problems; and
- Commitment of substantial resources to disadvantaged people and Minnesota communities through a process of dialogue and partnership.

The MIFs are six regional foundations working to strengthen Greater Minnesota; they have a deep history in collaboration,

Community Collaboration Grants

At SMIF's 30th Anniversary Annual Luncheon, SMIF President and CEO Tim Penny also announced a special grant round. Typically, SMIF does one "One Big Thing" grant every year, where SMIF awards \$100,000 to a project it feels will have a long-lasting, far-reaching impact in the region.

SMIF decided to take this grant to the next level to celebrate 30 years of collaborating for regional vitality: instead of \$100,000 to one project, SMIF is making \$300,000 available for Community Collaboration Grants to the 26 community foundations under its umbrella and to the 23 Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) coalitions it has helped seed.

"We feel our community foundations and Early Childhood Initiatives have been two of our most successful, collaborative and impactful projects," said Penny when he announced the awards. "The Community Collaboration Grants are a way for them to expand and deepen their work in what are often our smallest communities."

Community foundations and Early Childhood Initiatives can apply for one grant of up to \$10,000. Project proposals must demonstrate collaboration and speak to how the outcomes will contribute to community vitality.

For more information on SMIF's Community Collaboration Grants, contact Alissa Blaha (community foundations) at alissab@smifoundation.org or Teri Steckelberg (ECIs) at teris@smifoundation.org.



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Collaborating for Regional Vitality

beginning with their establishment in 1986 in response to the farming, mining and overall economic crisis at the time. They believe that the best way to do the business of philanthropy is by being approachable, entrepreneurial and nimble, as evidenced by their grant making, business lending, programs, donor services and several statewide initiatives.

To learn more, visit www.greatermnnesota.net.



(L-R) Diana Anderson (Southwest Initiative Foundation), Wendy Merrick (West Central Initiative), Nancy Vyskocil (Northwest Minnesota Foundation), Tony Sertich (Northland Foundation), Lynn Haglin (Northland Foundation), Nate Dorr (Northwest Minnesota Foundation), Zane Bail (Northland Foundation), Christ Fastner (Initiative Foundation)

Keystone Club (\$25,000-49,999)

*MN Department of Agriculture, Saint Paul
*The McKnight Foundation, Minneapolis
*Mayo Clinic, Rochester

Cornerstone Club (\$10,000-24,999)

*Hormel Foundation, Austin

Champion (\$5,000-9,999)

*Ag Ventures Alliance, Mason City, IA
*Suzanne Blue, Red Wing
*Hormel Foods Corporation, Austin
*Fred W. and Shelly Kraemer, Fairmont
*Mississippi Market Natural Foods Co-op, Saint Paul
City of Northfield
*Profinium Incorporated - Fairmont, Owatonna, Truman, Mankato

Leader (\$1,000-4,999)

aba Water Systems Incorporated, Plainview
*AgStar Financial Services ACA, Mankato
*Child Care Aware, Saint Paul
*CliftonLarsonAllen LLP - Austin, Mankato, New Ulm, Owatonna, Waseca
*Ferndale Market, Cannon Falls
*Home Federal Savings Bank - Albert Lea, Austin, Kasson, La Crescent, Rochester, Spring Valley, Winona
Le Center Economic Development Authority
*Merchants Bank - Caledonia, Cannon Falls, Lanesboro, La Crescent, Red Wing, Rochester, Rushford, Saint Charles, Spring Grove, Winona
*Morgan Stanley, Rochester

*Tim and Sandy Penny, Owatonna
*Red Wing Shoe Company Foundation
*Renewing the Countryside, Minneapolis
*Cynthia and Keith Scheid, Owatonna
*Triumph State Bank, Trimont
*U of M SE Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, Rochester
Waseca County

Partner (\$500-999)

*Allina Health, Owatonna
*Bremer Bank, Owatonna
Buck and Joan Foot, Red Wing
*Learning ZoneXpress, Owatonna
City of Preston
*Roundbank and Roundbank Insurance Agency, Waseca

*Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, Owatonna
*Viracon, Owatonna

Contributor

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*June Reineke, Winona
*Jennifer Sawyer, Northfield
*Nathan Sherwood, Owatonna
*Lynn and Chris Smith, Owatonna

South Central MN SCORE Chapter #710, Owatonna
*Southern Heights Dental Group, Faribault
*Think Mutual Bank, Rochester
Ken and Gloria Trom, Austin
Valley Design Enterprises Incorporated, Fountain

*PROGRAM DONORS

To make a donation, visit www.smifoundation.org.

Recent Activity

Grants

PreK to Grade 3: \$6,350 through 12 mini-grants to school districts

Kiwanis Book Project: 10,000 books for local Kiwanis Chapters to distribute

MN SourceLink: \$40,000 over three years to the Carlson School of Business to develop the platform into an online resource hub for food businesses

Loans

Bella Vita Salon, Faribault | Hair salon

Fairmont Butcher Block, Fairmont | Meat processing and retail shop

For more information about these grants, loans, and equity investments, visit www.smifoundation.org.

Where we'll be (and hope to see you!):

November 8

Collaboration Forum: Ecosystem for Ag Entrepreneurs, Carlson School

November 8

Early Childhood Dental Network, Mankato

November 16

SCORE Meeting, Mankato

November 18

Social Media Breakfast, New Ulm

November 18

Reading Oasis Ribbon Cutting, Albert Lea

November 19

QCCP Training, Mankato

November 30 & December 7

Profit Mastery, Mankato SBDC

December 2-3

Feast! Local Foods Marketplace, Rochester Mayo Civic Center

Visit www.smifoundation.org for full event calendar.



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- Coming together post-election
- Community Collaboration Grants
- SMIF, Minnesota Initiative Foundations win Responsive Philanthropy Award

Read More Inside!

