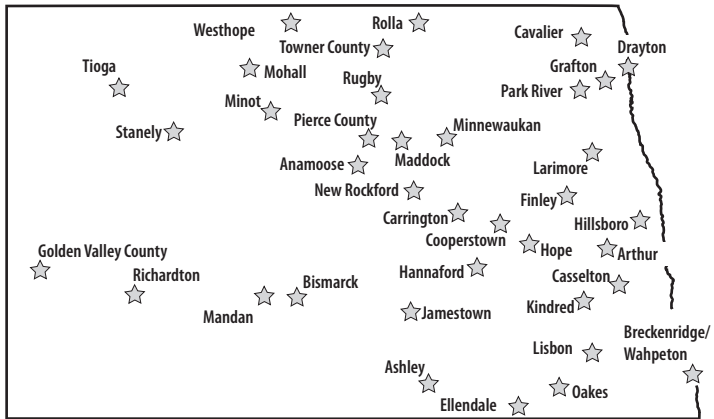


COMMUNITY

The thirty-eight community funds operating in North Dakota



Community Connections Success in Challenging Times

Over the months of 2008, we all read, watched and listened to the reports of our flailing economy. In spite of these dire reports and predictions, the North Dakota Community Foundation and our local partners chose to focus on the positive.

While North Dakota's economy is not completely immune from the national recession, many of our communities have found ways to meet their fundraising goals under these circumstances. Perhaps, that is because of a relatively stable agricultural sector, or because the energy industry has brought jobs and wealth to parts of the state, or perhaps, it is simply that when times are tough and things need to get done, North Dakotans roll up their sleeves and just get it done.

In 2008, we saw that spirit prevail in so many of our

endowed communities. Fourteen communities raised \$10,000 or more, four raised between \$5,000 and \$10,000, with most making their final push at the end of the year. The community of Hope, for example, held a social/dinner in November and raised over \$19,000! This hugely successful event was only possible with hard work and dedication by the local advisory committee members and a commitment from area residents to support their community. Others, like New Rockford, Park River, Rolla, Cooperstown, Finley and Hannaford, to name just a few, also saw successes within their communities despite the economic downturn. Through phon-a-thons, estate planning, events and good old-fashioned face-to-face contact, these communities were able to meet their dollar-for-dollar \$10,000 match. In 2008, seven communities raised \$25,000+



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and were able to capture an additional \$5,000 bonus match.

The bottom line is this; it might have been easier for our local volunteers to throw their hands in the air and surrender to all the negativity. Instead, they dug in and worked hard to successfully build their community funds for the future of their communities. All of our advisory committee members, whether they raised \$10,000 or \$10, made the effort to make their communities better places to live and work.

CONNECTION

While each community endowment fund is unique, most have several basic features in common. For example, each fund is organized on the local level by an Advisory Committee made up of local volunteers who have the responsibility of growing the fund and recommending grant awards each year. Also, many of the Advisory Committees across the state have found success in growing their endowment by using the tried and true method of personal visits to build long-lasting relationships with donors.

For the four new funds in western North Dakota, another common element is the Horizons Program. Horizons, a community leadership program funded by the Northwest Area Foundation and implemented by the North Dakota State University Extension Service, was designed to help reduce poverty in rural communities faced with economic decline. During the 18-month program, participants explored the perceptions and sources of poverty in their communities, with the goal of producing an action plan for improvements and lasting change. Each community that successfully completed the program received a grant from the Northwest Area Foundation to help accomplish their goals. Some of the communities used part of the grant to launch a community endowment fund under the umbrella of the North Dakota Community Foundation. In this way, these communities could continue to actively work to improve the quality of life in their communities by building a permanent source of funds for projects and programs that benefit the entire community. In 2008, four past Horizons participants in western North Dakota established community

endowment funds: Stanley, Beach/Golden Valley County, Harvey, and Anamoose.

Community leaders in Stanley recognized the need to capture some of the local wealth resulting from the recent boom in oil field activity, and investing it for the benefit the entire community today and far into the future. A group of local volunteers, including farmers, social services professionals, small business owners, and financial professionals formed an Advisory Committee and created the Stanley Area Community Foundation, serving Stanley and its surrounding communities. The group decided to partner with the North Dakota Community Foundation in order to meet the charitable giving needs of local residents by providing them with a range of professional gift-giving options. The Advisory Committee is currently visiting one-on-one with residents to educate them about the Foundation and secure lead gifts for the endowment.

A group of concerned citizens in Beach decided to reach out to the entire county with the creation of the Golden Valley County Community Foundation. While initial efforts have focused on Beach and the immediate surrounding communities, the Advisory Committee plans to expand its committee membership, fundraising activities, and grant making to the entire county. Committee members are busy educating residents about the Foundation and meeting with prospective donors to ask for their support. In 2009, Beach will celebrate its 100th birthday with five days of fun activities and an All-School reunion, creating the perfect opportunity for additional exposure and support for the Community Foundation.

Volunteers in Anamoose and



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Harvey established the Anamoose Area Community Foundation and the Harvey Area Community Foundation after successful completion of the Northwest Area Foundation's Horizons Program, a community leadership program for rural communities faced with economic decline. Each used a grant from the program to get their endowment funds started, then approached residents and local businesses for further support. Both Anamoose and Harvey raised over \$35,000 each before the end of 2008, earning \$15,000 in matching gifts from the North Dakota Community Foundation for each community. Both communities look forward to awarding their first grants and expanding activities to include special fundraising events in 2009.

Even though these four communities share a common experience in the Horizons Program, creating an endowment fund is not a requirement of that program, nor is participation in such a program a requisite for establishing an endowment. These four communities, and others like them, view the endowment as an important element in improving their communities and planning for the future. Both Horizons and the North Dakota Community Foundation's Community Endowment Fund Program empower communities to make positive strides toward a better future.