

## **Location**

Adrian, Minnesota

## **Funding**

\$900,000 USDA Community Facilities Loan *for City Hall*

\$99,000 Rural Business Enterprise Grant from the Recovery Act *for Revolving Loan Fund*

\$50,000 Blandin Foundation Light Speed Grant *for Telepharmacy*

## **Partners**

City of Adrian

Blandin Foundation

Sterling Drug

Asturp Drug

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development

## **Abstract**

In reaction to vital businesses closing in their small town, Adrian, Minnesota created a revolving loan fund with USDA support. The loans provide assistance to new and experienced businesses downtown and throughout their community. The fund is allowing Adrian to maintain access to important services in town, support downtown development, and enhance the community's economy.

## **Project Description**

The City of Adrian is a small community in the far southwestern corner of Minnesota. The City was established in 1876 after the St. Paul and Dakota Railroad Company laid track in the area. Early founders drew eastern Catholic settlers to the area with the promise of farmland. The community's population grew quickly around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and then leveled out after Adrian lost the Nobles County Seat to nearby Worthington, MN.

During Adrian's early growth, a general store, hotel, state bank and church opened in the center of this rural community. In 1967, a new highway was built on the outskirts of town. The highway replaced Adrian's downtown railroad track as the town's main line of transportation. Unfortunately, it also discouraged travelers from stopping in downtown and, overtime, Adrian's downtown economy and buildings slowly deteriorated.

In the 1980s, the City decided to redevelop Maine Avenue, the primary street in downtown Adrian. In 1983, the City received support from the Department of Housing and Urban Development in the form of a \$600,000 Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development "Small Cities" grant. The community used the funds to refinish a few storefronts and to demolish five old buildings on Maine Avenue.

In 2007, the City decided to build a new government center in Adrian's historic downtown to expand upon the progress made in the 1980s. The City received \$900,000 in USDA Community Facilities assistance toward the development of the building. The building would operate as a community center and also serve as Adrian's City Hall. The building also included a post office and space for commercial development.

About the time the new civic building was completed, the local Adrian pharmacy contacted the City to inform them that the pharmacy would soon be going out of business. For 113 years, a hometown pharmacy had operated in Adrian. It was especially important considering that 35-40% of residents are senior citizens who are unable to drive long distances to visit other pharmacies. Additionally, clinics and nursing homes rely on the convenience of a pharmacy in the area. Unfortunately, the Adrian pharmacy explained that a community of 1,200 people could not financially support its own pharmacist any longer. With their residents and businesses in mind, the City of Adrian needed to find a way to provide pharmaceutical services to their residents.

After speaking with public and private partners, the City decided to create a “telepharmacy”. A telepharmacy uses satellite technology to connect a pharmacist to pharmacies in remote locations. Using video, audio and data technology, a pharmacist in a central location can oversee the daily operations of several small telepharmacies at once. The central pharmacist can fill prescriptions, consult with patients, and review documents – all through the use of video and broadband technology.

The City partnered with Sterling Drug and Asturp Drug to set up the telepharmacy. The partnership identified equipment needs for the telepharmacy and sought funding sources. The City received a \$99,999 Rural Business Enterprise Grant for a city revolving loan fund. The first loan the City issued was to the telepharmacy. Additionally, a local philanthropic agency, Blandin Foundation, contributed a \$50,000 grant for the broadband equipment in the telepharmacy.

Adrian’s telepharmacy opened in 2009 and provides services to the residents and health-related organizations in Adrian. City Administrator, Bruce Heitkamp, stated, “Our little town of Adrian just can’t afford a full-time pharmacist. The telepharmacy option ensures that rural areas of Minnesota can still have a hometown pharmacy. It also allows the pharmacy to serve more areas with less people at a reduced cost.”

The economic impacts of the City’s USDA-funded revolving loan extend beyond the telepharmacy. As the telepharmacy began to pay off their loan to the City, the City lent that money to other small businesses. Adrian presently has five acting loans outstanding: the telepharmacy, a fitness center, two restaurants, and an auto repair shop. Adrian plans to continue their support of growth in downtown businesses and organizations to create the best quality of life possible for Adrian residents.

### **Livability Principles Addressed**

Increase economic competitiveness.  
Support existing communities.  
Value communities and neighborhoods.

### **Lessons Learned**

Collaborate with REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONS and local philanthropic FOUNDATIONS if possible. Their technical assistance and funding contributed to the success of the telepharmacy project.

### **Pictures and Maps**



Description: Context Map.

Source: Esri Basemaps, ArcGIS online database (all layer packages by Esri)



Description: DowntownMap – Adrian, MN

Sources: GoogleMaps, Esri Basemap



Description: Exterior of Adrian's new civic building  
Source: Bruce Heitkamp, Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer, City of Adrian, MN



Description: Sterling Drug Video Receiver  
Source: Bruce Heitkamp, Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer, City of Adrian, MN



Description: Sterling Drug Video Receiver  
Source: Bruce Heitkamp, Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer, City of Adrian, MN



Description: Sterling Drug Front Counter  
Source: Bruce Heitkamp, Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer, City of Adrian, MN



Description: Sterling Pharmacy Production Area

Source: Bruce Heitkamp, Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer, City of Adrian, MN

### **Sources for Textual Information**

*Adrian Local History*. (n.d.). Retrieved September 10, 2012, from City of Adrian, MN:

<http://www.adrian.govoffice2.com/index.asp?Type=DYNAFORM&SEC={E440EED7-0593-443E-A72F-FC5142E0B20B}>

Heitkamp, B. (2012, July 31). Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer of City of Adrian, MN. (A. Murnan, Interviewer)