

"To develop and promote resources for Economic Growth in our community."



March 2024



Community Calendar

Add an event to the community calendar

Economic Development Priorities to Invoke Change



## Priorities to Invoke Change

Promote Recreation  
and Tourism

Improve  
Broadband

Support  
Childcare

Support Career  
Development

Business Retention,  
Expansion and  
Attraction

Support Housing  
Initiatives

## County Economic Development What you need to know:

### Governor Walz Urges Small Businesses Impacted by Lack of Snow to Apply for Business Assistance

**m** EMPLOYMENT AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**PRESS RELEASE**

[ST. PAUL, MN] – As Minnesota continues to face record-high winter temperatures, Governor Tim Walz today announced that Minnesota has unlocked federal funding for small businesses impacted by this winter’s historic drought conditions. Amid the warmest winter on record, federal Economic Injury Disaster Loans are available because of ongoing federal drought declarations affecting 81 Minnesota counties. Governor Walz urges small business owners to apply for assistance as soon as possible.

“From skiing and snowshoeing to winter festivals, snowy winters are part of our way of life in

Minnesota. The low precipitation we've experienced this winter has had a real economic impact on small businesses that rely on snow and winter tourism to grow and survive," said Governor Walz. "I encourage all impacted business owners to apply for assistance as soon as possible." From December to February, Minnesota experienced the **warmest meteorological winter** on record. Through February 29th, there has only been 14.3" of snow in the Twin Cities, the **second-lowest season total** on record. In Duluth, only 15.7" snow has fallen, with an average snow depth of 1.8" – both among the **five lowest measures** on record. This lack of precipitation has exacerbated an ongoing drought. Eighty one counties in Minnesota are currently covered by U.S. Department of Agriculture disaster declarations for drought.

Impacted businesses in counties with a drought declaration can apply for the Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) through the Small Business Administration (SBA).

The loans are designed to help businesses get through emergency situations that have impacted their economic well-being. Under the EIDL program, businesses can borrow up to \$2 million to cover their actual losses. Businesses pay no interest on the loan for the first year and a maximum rate of four percent for the rest of the loan period. In order to take advantage of the program, businesses must apply by the application deadline for their county, listed below.

There are 81 counties in Minnesota covered by 13 disaster declarations. Business owners can learn more about eligibility, find an application, and learn more about application deadlines for their county at the [SBA's disaster assistance page](#).

Businesses impacted by a lack of precipitation will enter their county's name and see a list of all open disasters for their county. They should pick one where the incident includes "drought." Submit applications and find additional disaster assistance information at <https://lending.sba.gov>.

Applicants may also contact Minnesota's **Small Business Development Centers** and SBA's Customer Service Center at [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov). You can also call 800-659-2955 from 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. CT Monday through Friday. If you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

DEED is the state's principal economic development agency, promoting business recruitment, expansion and retention, workforce development, international trade and community development.

Find out how DEED delivers for Minnesota by visiting the **DEED website**, [JoinUsMn.com](http://JoinUsMn.com), [CareerForceMN.com](http://CareerForceMN.com) or **follow us on X**.

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## Aitkin County Workforce Summit



Thank you to all who attended this event in Aitkin County, made possible by Aitkin and McGregor Chamber of Commerce, Growth Innovations and Aitkin County Economic Development.

The participants heard from a large variety of Aitkin County businesses concerning best practices and guidance on employee attraction, hiring, onboarding and retention.

Thank you to our sponsors. We hope to see you all again in 2025.



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## Aitkin County Business Development & Recreation Grant is now open

The purpose of this grant fund is to leverage county funds, private funds and volunteer efforts to increase small business development activities in Aitkin County, with an emphasis on increasing sustained tourism and recreation activities.

Several organizations may submit a single application or organizations may apply individually. Organizations need only to commit one hundred dollars (\$100) in good faith to ensure commitment to the grant request.

The Aitkin County Board of Commissioners, have approved funding to be used to directly impact the Community of Aitkin County by executing the Aitkin County Business Development & Recreation Grant.

Funding Limits: Minimum of \$100 and a maximum of \$2,000 per grant application.

Eligible Project Examples:

- Sustainable marketing and advertising materials including but not limited to permanent signage materials, etc.
- Menu signs (interior)
- Technology or training programs
- Any other activities to develop your business

Eligible Event Examples:

- Annual events promoting tourism & recreation
- Events must provide incremental tourism growth

Grant Funds shall be used to market business development activities that create sustainable tourism or recreation growth or activities/businesses that will enhance the Aitkin County economy.

[Guidelines and Application](#)

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**Minnesota Housing Finance Agency offers  
homeowner opportunities**





## Downpayment and Closing Cost Loans

Don't let a downpayment prevent you from buying a home. Minnesota Housing loans go up to \$18,000 to help make homeownership work for your budget.

Need help with your downpayment? Concerned about paying for closing costs? We can help! Minnesota Housing downpayment and closing cost loan programs provide up to **\$18,000** to help you bridge the gap and become a homeowner. Depending on your need and eligibility, choose from the Monthly Payment Loan with the same affordable interest rate as your first mortgage or a Deferred Payment Loan with no interest.

Additional eligibility requirements, including income limits, minimum credit score, and home cost limits apply. Loans must be fully repaid.

### Monthly Payment Loan

- Loans up to \$18,000
- Available with Start Up and Step Up loan programs

### Deferred Payment Loan

- Loans up to \$16,500 (up to \$18,000 for borrowers who meet criteria for Deferred Payment Loan Plus)
- Available with the Start Up loan program

**Contact a participating Minnesota Housing lender to start your path to homeownership.**



651.296.8215  
[www.mnhousing.gov](http://www.mnhousing.gov)

In connection with Single Family Division loan programs, Minnesota Housing does not make or arrange loans. It is neither an originator nor creditor and is not affiliated with any Lender. The terms of any mortgage finance transactions conducted in connection with these programs, including important information such as loan fees, the annual percentage rate (APR), repayment conditions, disclosures, and any other materials which are required to be provided to the consumer are the responsibility of the Lender.



03.01.2023

[Contact a Lender](#)



Dream it. Do it.  
We'll help you  
afford it.

Hassle-free home  
improvement loans up to  
**\$75,000** from the  
Minnesota Housing  
Fix Up Loan Program.

LEARN MORE

In connection with Single Family Division loan programs, Minnesota Housing is neither an originator of loans nor a creditor and is not affiliated with any Lender. To find out if you are eligible, or to apply for a loan, please contact a participating Lender.



Home sweet  
renovated  
home.

Hire it out or DIY with flexible  
home improvement loans from  
the Minnesota Housing  
Fix Up Loan Program.

LEARN MORE

In connection with Single Family Division loan programs, Minnesota Housing is neither an originator of loans nor a creditor and is not affiliated with any Lender. To find out if you are eligible, or to apply for a loan, please contact a participating Lender.

learn more

## Attention Businesses! DEED office of Small Business Development offers Small Business Calls



### Small Business Call

Join the conversation every month  
on the 2nd Tuesday at 2pm.

Scan to join video call →



MN Office of Small Business Development

## Workforce Training Available for Minnesota Employers

### Need Help Training or Retraining Your Workforce? We Can Help!

The state of Minnesota Job Skills Partnership (MJSP) program offers grants to help train or retrain your workforce. We've helped train thousands of workers in the state.

### MJSP works with a broad range of businesses, educational institutions and nonprofit organizations to:

- train or retrain workers
- expand work opportunities
- keep high-quality jobs in the state
- 

Your business may qualify for one of our training grant programs that help offset training-related expenses.

**Find out more at [mn.gov/deed/mjsp](https://mn.gov/deed/mjsp)**

Or contact the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Office: [deed.mjsp@state.mn.us](mailto:deed.mjsp@state.mn.us)

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If you need **help paying for training**  
& have been on unemployment  
anytime in the past year  
please contact us to  
see if you qualify  
for our services.

**JET**



**218-421-6070**

**[www.nemojt.org](http://www.nemojt.org)**

**[holly.miller@nemojt.org](mailto:holly.miller@nemojt.org)**

JET is an equal opportunity employer & service provider. Proud partner  
in the American Job Center Network & Careerforce. This material can be  
made available in an alternate format by contacting 218-623-5978.



**JET**

**Aitkin County offers unique recycling opportunity**

# recyclops

*Recycling could never be easier!*



Curbside recycling pickup is now available in Aitkin County! Availability starting in the following townships;

- Aitkin (Township Only)
- Farm Island
- Fleming
- Glen
- Hazelton
- Kimberly
- Lakeside
- Malmo
- Morrison
- Nordland
- Spencer
- Unorganized 48-27
- Wealthwood

The first 625 customers pay \$10/month for the first 10 months

Sign up today at [recyclops.com/aitkin](https://recyclops.com/aitkin)

Coming March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024

**m1** MINNESOTA POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY



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**NATURE ROCKS IS BACK!**



# THE KENTUCKY HEADHUNTERS

WITH PERT NEAR SANDSTONE + WHISKEY RIVER

**JUNE 21** 4:30 - 10 P.M.  
AITKIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

**NATUREROCKSCONCERT.COM**

PROCEEDS BENEFIT LONG LAKE CONSERVATION CENTER

Properties Available in the Aitkin Area

Tour the Properties





Contact me directly for any details and additional opportunities: [mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us](mailto:mark.jeffers@co.aitkin.mn.us).

26838 U.S. 169 Aitkin, MN 56431 USA

Are you ready to move you, your family and/or your business to an amazing area? We welcome you to visit anytime. Tour any of our available properties, enjoy our recreational assets, amazing dining and our unique entertainment offerings. We think you will agree, it is Naturally Better here. Aitkin County is a community with momentum. We are confident once you visit, you will live here!

[naturallybetterhere.com](http://naturallybetterhere.com)

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## County Business Spotlight





# Big Sandy Lodge and Resort

## McGregor, MN

20534 487th Street  
218.426.5040

Big Sandy Lodge & Resort is not your average Up North vacation experience. Located just 2 hours north of the Twin Cities, 1 hour west of the Twin Ports and 45 minutes south of Grand Rapids, it's a premier Minnesota resort community located in the heart of northern Minnesota's vacationland on Big Sandy Lake. You will find more than you've ever dreamed!

Big Sandy Lodge is a perfect combination of lakeside retreat, comfortable accommodations and big fun.

Book your stay for a special night, romantic getaway, stay-cation or a special event. While here you'll enjoy great lakeside dining at the Bear's Den Bar, Pines Dining Room and popular deck. Our expansive 3-tiered deck provides just the right atmosphere for a delicious dinner outside or a quiet escape with a favorite book and cup of coffee.

In addition great dining, you'll love the indoor pool, jacuzzi and sauna as a great way to unwind after a refreshing day in Minnesota's North Country.

We also offer a fitness room and a media center. Bring your own games or check out our bean bags and play down by the lake.



Big Sandy Lodge

## What makes Aitkin County Naturally Better



## Community

*Aitkin*

 **McGregor**



**PROUD  
PARTNER**



*Palisade Events Committee*

## Cities



## Contact Us



### AITKIN COUNTY

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Economic Development Coordinator  
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218-513-6188

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Aitkin County Government | 307 2nd St NW, Aitkin, MN 56431

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