



Blandin Foundation™
STRENGTHENING RURAL MINNESOTA

Region Nine Development Commission -- Mankato

\$200,000 project support for housing, community and economic development and clean energy projects in rural Minnesota

Contact

Jessica Beyer - Deputy Director

jessica@rndc.org

507.646.9631

<https://www.rndc.org/>

Comfrey proves the possibilities in small city climate resilience

The City of Comfrey (pop. 396) has been a leader in rural sustainability thanks to the capacity building support of Region Nine (RNDC). Beginning in 2023, Comfrey and RNDC partnered to develop a Climate Resilience Plan for the community to help this small town of 396 residents prepare for and address extreme weather threats, rising energy costs for residents, and operating costs for city utilities. With that plan in hand, the community has been able to advance multiple projects thanks to free grant writing support from RNDC. This has included a full LED retrofit of the municipal building, installing an air source heat pump in the firehall for efficient heating and cooling, and getting a solar system at their wastewater treatment plant that is projected to save the city \$220,000 in electricity costs over the system's lifespan. By the end of summer 2026, RNDC will help Comfrey complete a full LED lighting conversion at the public library, further reducing energy costs and improving efficiency for the community.

As Region Nine moves forward with the Blandin Foundation's funding, they will support small rural communities with big goals on housing, economic development, and sustainability projects leading to additional progress and lasting impacts.

Photos and captions available on the following pages



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Solar system at Comfrey Wastewater Treatment Plant (Photo by Comfrey Mayor, Gary Richter)



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