In late 2018, NMF launched the Communities Thrive program as a result of a recent organizational strategic planning process. The Communities Thrive program builds on the strength and diversity of our region. This grant and loan program is focused on community building, place making, and showcasing a variety of amenities that make Northwest Minnesota a great place to live, work, and play.

Rural Minnesota is enjoying a relatively new phenomenon, the “Brain Gain,” a trend of population increase in residents aged 30–49. This trend, highlighted in the 2012 report by Benjamin Winchester, Continuing the Trend: The Brain Gain of the Newcomers “A Generational Analysis of Rural Minnesota Migration” 1990-2010, is bringing a resurgence to rural Minnesota as many of these newcomers are highly educated and have families, which is a boom to the community. The report states, “The leaders found that the top reasons cited for migration to rural Minnesota include: 1) a desire for

a simpler life, 2) safety and security, 3) affordable housing, 4) outdoor recreation, and 5) for those with children, locating a quality school. Surprisingly, jobs were not found in the top 10 reasons. In short, the decision to move was based on concerns about quality of life.” This report lends credibility to the position taken by NMF in 2003—that talent has become the main driver of regional economic development and that quality of place is the essential ingredient in attracting and retaining a talented workforce. This “brain gain” provides Northwest Minnesota with an opportunity to boost a trend already moving in a positive direction.

Warroad and Halstad were selected through an intensive application and site visit process. These communities will be eligible to receive grant funding up to $100,000 over two years. Low-interest loans are also available to support projects that enhance the community’s quality of life or create opportunities for local entrepreneurs.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The times they are a-changing...

I sit at my desk on this sunny first day of spring and I can see the first signs that spring may truly be trying to join us! After the winter we have had, I am very excited and ready for this change.

Another exciting yet bittersweet change is that I will be retiring this summer after eleven years with the Foundation.

When I announced my retirement to the Board and staff in November, I shared that this decision has been one of the hardest I have ever had to make. I love this job, this region, and the wonderful and talented people that I work with every day. They are the best of the best! But I am also blessed to have so much more in my life, and I look forward to having more time to spend with family and friends.

In the months since November, a search committee comprised of NMF Board of Directors has been working to hire a new president. They hope to introduce this person to the region very soon.

As for me, I hope to see you all before my tenure as president closes; but if not, I hope our paths will cross in the future. I will continue on as the number one cheerleader for NMF and this great region.

Nancy has always been a cheerleader for Northwest Minnesota.

NEW! CHILD CARE GRANT PROGRAM

On March 11, 2019 NMF launched a new Child Care Grant Program. Our goal is to develop a child care workforce who not only meets the needs of working parents and communities, but also the needs of developing children. We are supporting a workforce of educated child care providers who understand child development, curriculum and assessment, so children are ready to learn, which will create a smoother transition from child care to Kindergarten. NMF has developed three potential funding areas that applicants can use to determine if they are eligible for funding: Child Care Availability & Quality, Early Childhood Education, and Workforce-High School Child Care Careers.

Additional information can be found online by visiting www.nwmf.org/programs. Deadline to apply for funding is May 3, 2019.
As the IDEA competition moves into its final round of judging, five unique businesses are moving forward for a chance to win up to $15,000 to get their idea off the ground.

The 2019 Finalists are:

- **Bullseye Variable Diameter Discharge, Gary Ward of Twin Valley** - The Bullseye Variable Diameter Discharge is an elegant solution to centering grain in a storage bin. This product helps maximize storage capacity, reduces or eliminates shoveling, and is the first step in good storage management practices. All they have to do is “hit the Bullseye” and they win!

- **Dean 3Digital, Dr. Todd and Melinda Sandwick, Bryce Oakes of Bemidji** - Dean 3DIGITAL has developed a new dental appliance that is being made and distributed in a way that has never been done in the dental industry. The TMB Flipper will revolutionize the way "flippers" (partial removable dentures) are manufactured and sold.

- **ELITE Additive, Mike Block of Bemidji** - ELITE Additive is your #1 source for professional automation technologies and Additive Manufacturing Services. We help companies adopt and integrate the necessary equipment to help them go mainstream production. We also consult on the process from start to finish while integrating and support on areas, such as part design, part printing.

- **Lake of the Woods Brewing Company, Taras and Audry Manzie, Eric and Lindsay Nerland of Warroad** - Lake of the Woods Brewing Company will create captivating commercials to increase brand awareness and bring in more business to our neck of the woods. This can help our bottom line sales goals, whether it is bringing people into The Lake of the Woods Brewing Company taproom, or in bars across the State/Region. By creating enthusiastic commercials we open the door to co-marketing relationships that not only get people excited about our product, but also spotlights the businesses carrying our products.

- **Silver Wings Coffee Company, Hokuf Family of Bemidji** - Silver Wings Coffee Company will sell coffee online to honor the people that served in WWII and the history from that era. They will do this by educating the public with stories and events from the past. They will also donate to and promote WWII museums.

The winner of the 11th Annual IDEA Competition will be announced at the annual IDEA Awards Banquet on April 23, 2019 at Bemidji State University’s Beaux Arts Ballroom. IDEA will also be presenting Michelle Landsverk of Landsverk & Associates (Fosston) with the Regional Impact Award, and this year’s banquet will feature an Entrepreneur Panel as a part of the program.

This event is open to the public and costs $20 to attend.

For more information and to purchase a ticket online, visit [www.ideacompetition.org](http://www.ideacompetition.org).
A charitable bequest is an easy way for you to help us in our work. Here are some of the benefits of bequest giving:

- It costs you nothing today to make a bequest
- A bequest is free of federal estate tax
- Your bequest can be changed down the road
- You can still benefit your heirs with specific gifts
- A bequest may produce estate tax savings
- You can leave a legacy through a bequest

To learn more about bequest giving please contact us. Ask for your FREE Wills Kit!

218-759-2057
On March 14, 2018, Lois Ludwig passed away at age 98. She was never married and had no children of her own, but she kept a number of dear friends close throughout her life. She spent the majority of her professional career as a fourth-grade teacher at Red Lake Falls school. Several former students reflected on their memories of Miss Ludwig.

“She was a tough teacher, but always honest and fair. And she gave credit for good work.”

Lois even supported her students outside of the classroom, attending sporting events and other extracurricular activities. One former student, Lana Violette, wrote about Miss Ludwig in a letter to the editor of Red Lake Falls Gazette, “She [Lois] was the most inspirational and motivational teacher of my academic career.”

During 34 years of teaching, Lois saw many students come through her classroom doors. Most of these students probably didn’t realize they were leaving just as much of an impact on Miss Ludwig’s life as she was on theirs. Upon Lois’ passing, the Red Lake Falls school learned that she left them $360,000 to set up a scholarship fund.

“We are honored and excited about the opportunity this gift provides for our students in years to come,” said Red Lake Falls Principal, Brad Kennett. “After researching Ms. Ludwig, we have come to know that she was a very effective teacher that had a big impact on many students’ lives during her time in our school district.”

Lois’ story shows us all that we may never know the lasting affect we have on other people’s lives. Lois’ students gave her a sense of purpose and belonging in Red Lake Falls. She taught her students the value of working hard and caring for others. Many current and future Red Lake Falls students will not have met Lois, but because of her compassion, they will have the opportunity to advance their education with a scholarship in her memory.

“Miss Ludwig was very intelligent and very dedicated to teaching. She put in many long hours.”

The Lois Ludwig Memorial Scholarship Fund has been set up at the Northwest Minnesota Foundation. The first scholarship(s) from her fund will be made available to the graduating class of 2019.

If you have questions about how you may leave a lasting legacy, contact the Northwest Minnesota Foundation to speak to one of our development officers.
Northwest Minnesota is home to a number of major manufacturing companies: Polaris, Marvin Windows and Doors, AirCorps Aviation, and many more. One young entrepreneur with years of industry experience has decided to join the ranks and bring his new manufacturing company to the region—Mike Block, principal and founder of Elite Additive.

Block was born and raised in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. He attended Bemidji State University (BSU) and graduated in 2006 with a degree in Design Technology with an emphasis in model design. “I always had an interest in designing new or improving current products and how we bring those to market, and the Design Technology program was the first in the nation to have a program that exposed me to 3D printing for the first time,” said Block. The program, which is now called TAD (Technology, Art, and Design), brings together disciplines such as engineering, product development, graphic design, studio arts, and technology.

After graduating from BSU, Block worked at Stratasys, a world leading 3D printer manufacturing company based in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. During his time there, he had an opportunity to learn more about the industry’s technologies and game-changing applications. He worked on the development of materials and software that is used in many industries today. After nearly ten years working for Stratasys, Block and his family moved back to Grand Rapids temporarily. He was able to continue working remotely for the company until he was ready to get his new venture up and running. From his new home in Bemidji, Block began working on 3D printing and product development in his garage. His new business, Elite Additive, officially began on November 6th, 2017.

Elite Additive offers a full range of comprehensive solutions for all industries (e.g., medical, aerospace, consumer, energy, and automotive) and every phase of the production cycle. Their niche is providing tailored production automation technologies to help companies increase utilization and quality with additive manufacturing (3D printing). One of their many specialties includes fused deposition modeling (FDM) a “hot glue gun” process that extrudes layer upon layer of material to build 3D parts. A part is printed and generated by a computer-aided design (CAD) file, resulting in extremely durable and accurate parts. Their core focus the integration of production automation equipment, which can improve a company’s internal process when using additive manufacturing for low to high volume runs. Currently, Block and his colleague of fifteen years, John Oney, work out of a space they lease from LaValley Industries in Bemidji. Jason LaValley and Jorge Prinze of LaValley Industries suggested that Block get in touch with Northwest Minnesota Foundation’s lending team for additional business financing. Block worked with Diane Morey and Sean Moran from NMF’s lending department to secure a small-business loan in the summer of 2018. Elite Additive is projected to pay back that loan in full and will be operating fully in the black within the next few months. Block plans to keep Elite Additive headquarters in Bemidji, and is planning to add more sales staff to the team in the near future.

To learn more about Elite Additive, visit www.eliteadditive.com and check out their Facebook page.
Warroad has a number of recreational opportunities because of their location on popular Lake of the Woods, and the community is surrounded by thousands of acres of state parks and forests. Area businesses work together to provide quality in both products and services. Warroad’s school district offers vast scholarship options and provides an array of educational opportunities through school programs and community education classes. The community hosts annual cultural and community events to provide fun and entertainment for all ages. Home to Marvin Windows and Doors and numerous other small businesses thriving under the leadership of local entrepreneurs, Warroad’s economy is uniquely suited to take on a concerted effort to build on its existing assets.

Halstad is a 125-year-old community that is home to about 570 residents. Innovative founders worked together to grow the community from its roots. By tilling land, starting businesses to serve the citizens, and working together to form cooperatives that have stood the test of time, Halstad has been a strong pillar of Norman County for generations. That hard-working spirit continues today as a group of leaders has come together to build the small-but-mighty community’s future. Situated along US 75 and MN Hwy 200, Halstad offers its residents key amenities such as Sanford Clinic, senior living communities, a bright and welcoming recreation center, a nine-hole disc golf course, and a number of city parks and outdoor recreation opportunities.

These communities will evaluate their current community assets, such as recreation, leisure, retail, services, housing, public arts, restaurants, coffee shops, and community identity and connectedness. Once they identify current strengths and areas for improvement, they may use a combination of grants and loans to achieve their goals.

“We are excited to work with these communities and make a greater impact for their residents,” said Nate Dorr, NMF senior program officer. “After two years of dedicated focus for these cities, we plan on opening the program up again and replicating these efforts for more communities.”

NMF still offers a number of resources for communities and organizations to support projects and initiatives that make the region a better place. For more information, visit www.nwmf.org/programs.
WELCOME NEW NMF BOARD MEMBERS

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Mayor, City of Gary

Dennis Bona
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President, Northland Community & Technical College

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