



2024

# ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared by Amber Patten and Celia Simpson



# 2024 Year in Review

**1.3%**

**Increase**

Total Jobs,  
2022-2023

**\$60k+**

Grant funds secured  
for County or local  
municipalities

**11**

New Homes  
Constructed with Tax  
Abatement

**57+**

Businesses Supported  
through Advising &  
Workshops

**\$8M+**

Secured in State  
Funding for  
Broadband through  
Federated REA

**5**

Events held or  
supported by the  
Martin County EDA

# Martin County Statistics

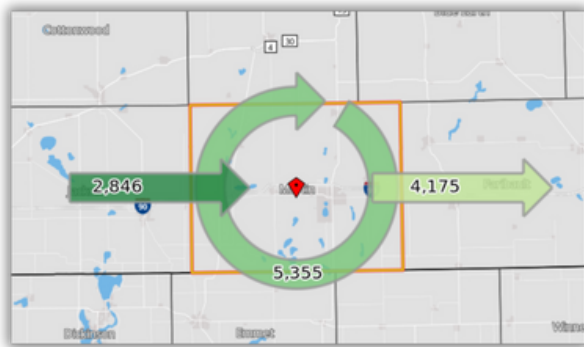
## Top Industries by Total Jobs

1. Health Care & Social Assistance
2. Retail Trade
3. Manufacturing
4. Accommodation & Food Services
5. Wholesale Trade

## Top 5 Industries by Job Vacancies

1. Health Care & Social Assistance
2. Retail Trade
3. Manufacturing
4. Accommodation & Food Services
5. Construction

## Workforce Inflow/Outflow



Source: ACS, 2022 5-Year Profile

## Top Business Concerns

1. Increasing Costs
2. Workforce Shortages
3. Tight Economy

*These concerns were identified through business survey responses and business conversations.*

# 19,657

Population

# 9,785

Workers

# 2.8%

Unemployment Rate

# \$62,969

Area Median Income

Source: DEED County Profile

# Martin County EDA (MCEDA)

**Mission:** *The mission of the Martin County Economic Development Authority is to inspire Growth and Nurture Innovative Talent through Empowerment.*

**Vision:** *The Martin County Economic Development Authority strives to facilitate, support, and encourage entrepreneurs, start-ups, and existing business owners with their ideas working from the bottom-up to grow and sustain our vibrant community for the future.*

**Goals:** *Our fundamental goals are to start, grow, and strengthen businesses, maintain and create jobs, increase tax revenue, and create a welcoming environment for innovation and economic development.*

## 2025 Martin County EDA Board

**Wes Anderson - Chairman**

**Tim Terfehr - Vice Chairman**

**Elizabeth Miller - Secretary/Treasurer**

**Billeye Rabbe - Commissioner**

**Richard Koons - Commissioner**

**Tom Lytle - Member**

**James Kloeckner - Member**



*We want to thank Steve Fosness, Brent Schultze, and Jaime Bleess, whose terms ended in December 2024, for their time on the Martin County EDA board. Through their service, they helped drive economic growth and opportunity in Martin County.*

# Introducing Our Team

Amber Patten and Celia Simpson are Community and Business Development Specialists from *Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA)* based out of Chatfield, MN. Simpson took over for Joshua Schuetz at the beginning of 2025.



**Amber Patten**



**Celia Simpson**

# City Support and Partnerships

## Sherburn

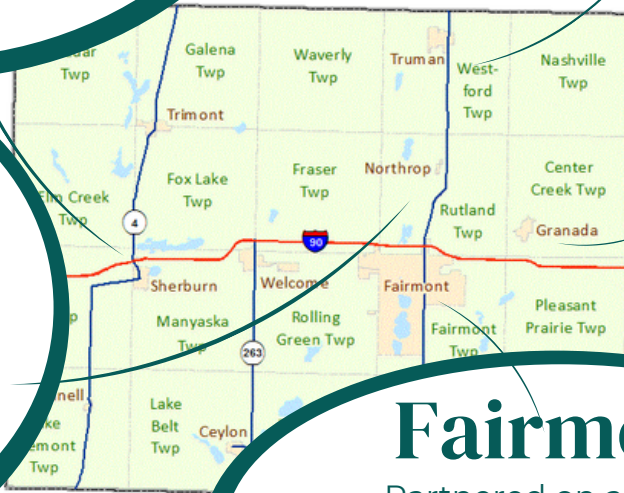
- Assisted the Sherburn EDA with a Strategic Economic Development Plan
- Helped Sherburn secure \$25k in playground funding through the Taylor Rural Improvements Grant Program
- Connected Sherburn with resources for a hotel feasibility study

## Truman

- Facilitated a Housing Study through CEDA for Truman
- Assisted the City through a DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant to support their campground and add pickleball courts. The grant was not awarded.
- Helped Truman secure grant funding to add pickleball courts

## Northrop

- Supported the City in its efforts to identify funding to purchase a backup generator



## Granada

- Facilitated a Housing Study through CEDA for Granada
- Assisted the City with a Fire Truck Restoration Fundraiser

## Fairmont

- Partnered on a Retail Coach Initiative to identify and recruit businesses to the area

## Advancing Regional Economic Development

In 2024, the *Martin County EDA* and *Faribault County EDA* led the **I-90 Network** with a focus on housing, holding bi-monthly meetings to discuss development challenges and explore solutions.

In 2025, the network will shift to regional marketing, promoting the I-90 corridor for business growth and workforce attraction. Meetings will move to a quarterly schedule, allowing for deeper strategic planning. Through this collaboration, we continue to strengthen economic opportunities for the region.



**I-90 NETWORK**

# Business Retention and Expansion

In 2024, we remained committed to strengthening local businesses through hands-on support and strategic initiatives.

**Workshops That Matter** – We hosted two key workshops: an Earned Sick and Safe Time Presentation and a Business Succession Planning Workshop, helping over 25 businesses navigate legislative changes and future planning.

**Faribault and Martin Counties Tour of Manufacturing** – We co-hosted this event, connecting more than 130 students and attendees to 10 local manufacturers, fostering relationships and raising awareness of career opportunities in the manufacturing sector.

**One-on-One Business Advising** – We provided direct support to 32 clients, offering guidance on start-ups, financial planning, business expansion, and succession strategies.

**Martin County Accessible Entrepreneurship Program** – Launched in 2024, this initiative funds on-demand translation and interpretative services, ensuring non-English-speaking entrepreneurs have access to critical business resources.

Through these efforts, we continue to foster a strong, resilient business community in Martin County.

## Retail Recruitment

The *Martin County EDA*, in partnership with the *Fairmont EDA*, has engaged **The RetailCoach** to attract larger retailers to the region. This initiative focuses on identifying market gaps, analyzing consumer data, and actively recruiting businesses that align with local demand. By leveraging expert insights and targeted outreach, we aim to strengthen the retail sector and expand shopping options for residents.



9

**Market Data & Reports**

7

**Retail Engagements**

4

**Site Visits & Follow Ups**



# FARIBAULT AND MARTIN COUNTIES TOUR OF MANUFACTURING

In collaboration with the Faribault County Economic Development Authority (EDA), the Martin County EDA successfully launched the Tour of Manufacturing on October 16th. The tour featured 10 manufacturers across both counties, who opened their doors to host groups of local students and community members for 20-30 minute tours.

This unique opportunity allowed participants to gain an inside look into the diverse industries driving the local economy. Manufacturing is a cornerstone of economic vitality in our region, supporting over 15% of jobs in Faribault and Martin Counties. This industry not only provides stable employment opportunities but also plays a critical role in fostering innovation and growth across the local business landscape. By connecting the public with manufacturers, the tour highlighted the vital contributions of these businesses to the community and the economy.

To show appreciation for their participation, each manufacturer received 30 minutes of free drone footage showcasing their facility. This footage not only highlighted the manufacturers' operations but also served as a valuable promotional tool to elevate their visibility in the community and beyond.



*Ron's HVAC, Plumbing, and Electric introduced their work to students from United South Central (USC).*

**10**  
**manufacturers**  
**130**  
**attendees**

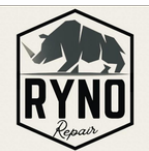
## Event Sponsors



*Huisman Family Foundation*



**FASTENAL**



**NASINEC**  
Funeral Home & Crematory  
**Five Lakes Centre Mall**



*Nathan Kilwine of Kevco Oil Pans and Components in Fairmont stands before a group during the Tour of Manufacturing.*



# Quality of Life



## *Supporting Growth Through Housing Investment*

In 2024, the Martin County EDA took a major step toward addressing local housing challenges by establishing a **Local Housing Trust Fund (LHTF)**. Using our allocation of Statewide Affordable Housing Aid, we created this dedicated resource to incentivize new housing construction, rehabilitation, and demolition projects.

With **63%** of Martin County homes built before 1970 and rising affordability challenges, the LHTF will help leverage public and private investment, support workforce housing, and strengthen our communities. By prioritizing investments in housing, we are laying the foundation for sustained economic growth and a better quality of life for Martin County residents.

## *Expanding Broadband Access in Martin County*

In 2024, we continued advocating for broadband expansion through the **Martin County Broadband Advisory Committee**, bringing together internet providers, county officials, and stakeholders to identify unserved areas and pursue solutions. As part of this effort, we provided **Federated REA** with a letter of support for their Round 10 Low Density Broadband Grant and contributed **\$780,000** in matching funds through our **Martin County Broadband Partnership Program** to help expand high-speed internet access.

# Community Partnerships

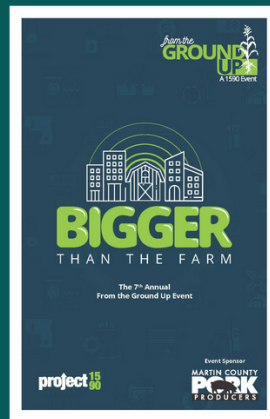
## Helping Students Discover Careers Close to Home



MCEDA contributed **\$2,000** to support the *Area Career Exploration Program*, which connects students with local employers and career opportunities. This investment helps encourage young talent to stay in Martin County and build their future here.

## From Farm to Economy: The Bigger Picture

We proudly contributed **\$1,000** to support the **From the Ground Up: Bigger than the Farm** event, which showcased the significant economic ripple effect of agriculture in Martin County. This year's theme emphasized how farming extends beyond the fields—**fueling local industries, creating jobs, and driving economic growth**. Through engaging discussions, networking, and education, the event connected community leaders, businesses, and residents to the broader impact of agriculture on our local and regional economy.



Martin County Agriculture has an economic impact that's

**BIGGER THAN THE FARM**

There are over **225** agricultural businesses in Martin County.

Agriculture Sector ranks the **third highest** for average wages per worker in the county - \$104,839.

Martin County has a **6.5 times higher** agriculture employment rate compared to the nation average.

Market value of products sold in 2022 was **\$943,050,000**

51% of sales are from livestock and 49% of sales are from crops.

# Looking Ahead to 2025

## ***Business Retention & Expansion***

In 2025, the Martin County EDA will focus on enhancing business retention and expansion efforts. Our work will continue with **recruitment** to bring larger retailers to the area through the RetailCoach, as well as expanded **outreach and marketing** of our services to local businesses. We will also host key **workshops on succession planning, Google Verified listings, and Minnesota Paid Leave**, providing businesses with critical tools to grow, adapt, and thrive.

## ***Community Development***

In parallel, we are committed to driving community development across Martin County. We will embark on **community visits** to connect with residents, raise awareness of our services, and gather input on their needs. We also plan to continue providing **grant navigation and writing support** for communities to access funding. By strengthening our communities, we can position Martin County as an attractive destination for new businesses and investment.



