

Strut Your Stuff Tour

Blandin Broadband Communities

May 2020

Agenda

2 hour meeting

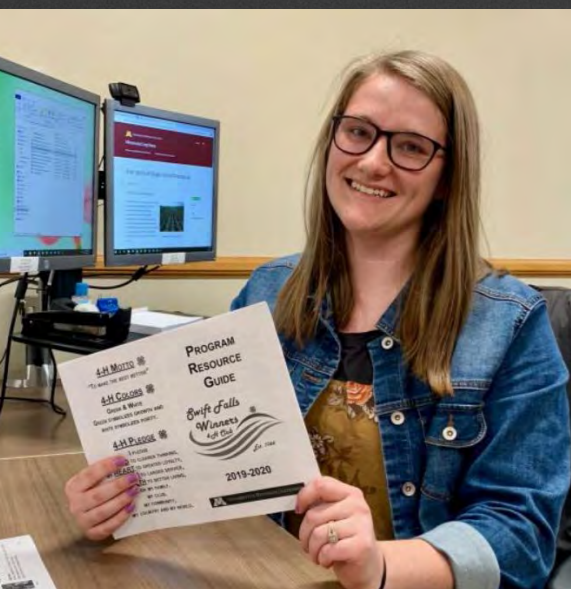
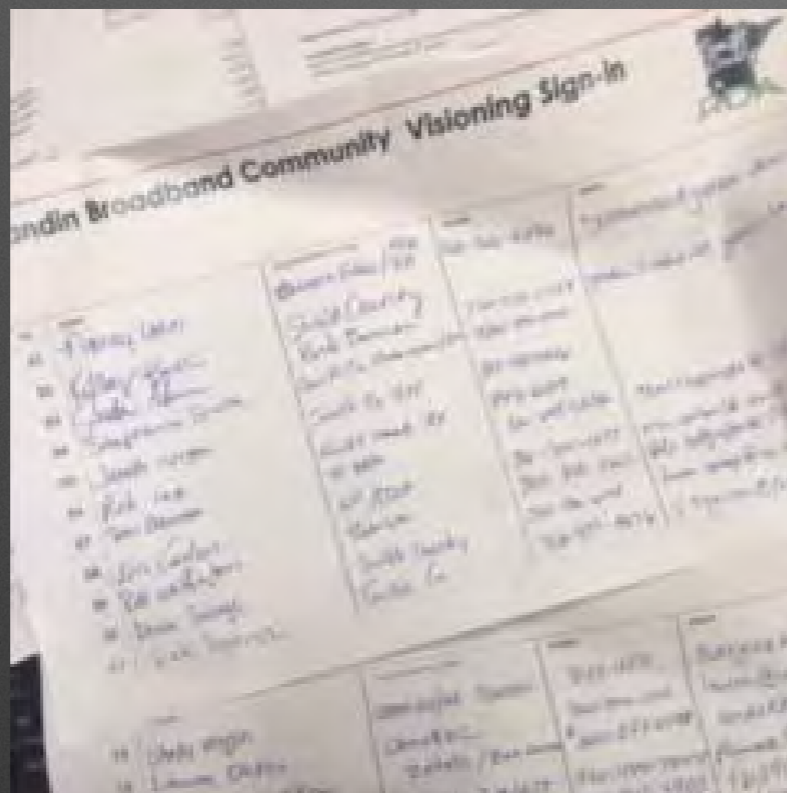
- Networking, informal discussion and virtual refreshments –
What's been your favorite take-out dish during the covid crisis?
- Welcome, introductions and check-in by local hosts/attendees
- Meeting purpose ~ Bernadine
- Community presentation
- Blandin response
- The future
- Adjourn

Community presentation

- Who is involved?
- What activities and projects are being implemented?
 - Applying a Covid-19 lens – how coronavirus did or may have impacted our projects
 - What are your teams' plans or ideas for the future?



Who has been involved? ...the cool kids



Planning Outcomes

community
Telehealth
virtual collaboration
housing
parks
Better
Increase
internet
students
Fiber homes
commuter
kids
Responsibly
Wi-Fi
resources
county
Housing halls
school residents area

learning
broadband
people
Wi-fi
presence
availability

generation
manage free
close gap
Change
Alumni
calendar
position
like
coordinator
preserve
Ability
places

public
Swift
Tech
online
access
retain
rail
help
Attract
County
digital
city
awareness
economic
assets
buses
Reduce
network

newcomer
Attraction
Shared
Community
marketing
natural
w/video
things
Township

Appleton
communities
communicate
businesses

Training

Online Camping Reservations

- Project goals: Develop an online tool to make camping reservations at County camping parks and County Fair Grounds. Options for cities to join.
- Progress to-date: Completed! Yet not fully rolled out/utilized now due to Covid-19.
- Features include Swift County GIS aerial photos, ability to choose by specific site and/or dates
- This was a 2018 visioning project idea that ranked high but struggled to find a champion. Ultimately required formal county leadership. Lesson Learned here.

The screenshot displays the Swift County Minnesota online camping reservation system. The header features the text "SWIFT COUNTY Minnesota" and a "Back To Home Page" link. Below the header, there are navigation tabs for "SITES", "PARK MAP", and "VIDEO". The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains a search form with fields for "Parkcode" and "Citycode", a "SEARCH" button, and a calendar for February. The right column features a "PARK MAP" section with an aerial photo of a park area, overlaid with various site markers (red squares for occupied, blue squares for call us, green squares for available). A "Map Key" legend is visible on the right side of the map, listing "Shelters", "Bathrooms", "Playground", "Trails", and "Campers".

SWIFT COUNTY Minnesota [Back To Home Page](#)

SEARCH

February

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

YOUR RESERVATION

Your reservation is empty. Please select a site or retail item to continue.

Map Key

- Shelters
- Bathrooms
- Playground
- Trails
- Campers

Available Call Us Occupied

PCs for People 2.0

- Project goals: Digital Inclusion & Personal Empowerment focused on providing laptops and internet access to 20 Elderly and/or Disabled clients of the Swift County HRA.
- This project was proposed as part of a home rehab grant targeting elderly and disabled focusing on aging in place and health and safety modifications to homes.
- Originally the hope was to provide instruction on basics like filling out the Census online, access library tools, county services and possibly telehealth services. With Covid-19 this project has the potential to make a greater impact as a necessity rather than a nice to have.
- Progress to-date: Computers have been secured with PCs for People.
- Looking ahead this project will work one-on-one to empower housing rehab grant recipients with basic instruction on how to utilize their laptop, and access low cost internet in their home/community to gain access to services.



Original PCs for People Presented by Jen Frost, Project Lead

Project goals: Address digital equity and equality by placing computers with 50 families in need.

Progress to-date: We struggled to provide computers working with schools but soon hit our stride working with the Swift County HRA and we able to distribute computers to families in need via word of mouth.

It was interesting to hear about the need for computers when schools closed due to Covid-19. Families did seem to have access to a device but in some cases the device wasn't great for doing homework or could not be shared effectively among families with parents working at home and several children.

From the original project: **We are also looking forward to the opportunity to partner with PCs for People to offer a customized empowerment service addressing digital equality/equity as part of a home rehab program grant from FHLB (Financial Security Bank – Kerkhoven)**



Swift County residents invited to apply for free computer from PCs for People
Sunday, June 16, 2019

Blandin Foundation, Swift County Rural Development Authority (RDA) and PCs for People are partnering to distribute computers to families to address digital equity in Swift County. At no cost, recipients will receive a refurbished computer, monitor, keyboard, mouse, and several software applications. This program is funded by a grant from the Blandin Foundation to Swift County RDA and PCs for People (www.pcsforpeople.org). If you are interested in applying to receive a free computer please fill out and sign the application and survey at the link included with this post, or contact the RDA to pick up or be mailed an application. If your...

PCs for People Computer Application

Blandin Foundation, Swift County Rural Development Authority (RDA) and PCs for People are partnering to address digital equity in Swift County. At no cost, recipients will receive a refurbished computer, monitor, keyboard, mouse, and several software applications. This program is funded by a grant from the Blandin Foundation to Swift County RDA and PCs for People (www.pcsforpeople.org). If you are interested in applying to receive a free computer please fill out and sign the application and survey at the link included with this post, or contact the RDA to pick up or be mailed an application. If your safety is enhanced by receiving a free computer from the Swift County RDA please contact your local information on where to pick up the computer. The Swift County RDA supports desktop computers from 11:00 to 12:00 daily.

Eligibility

To receive a computer from PCs for People, a household must be below 200% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines or be currently enrolled in an income-based government assistance program such as:

- *Head Start
- *Medicaid
- *Employment Services
- *Food Support
- *Financial Assistance, such as SA, WFT, etc.
- *Energy Assistance Program
- *Medical or Medical Assistance
- *Free or Reduced Lunch Program
- *Public Housing (PH) or other federal funded rent assistance program
- *Social Security Disability (SSD) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- *Veteran's status

My household meets at least one of the eligibility criteria listed above. *

STEM Camp for Kids – Reboot 2020

- Before Covid-19 hit us KMS Community Ed was looking to expand it's STEM Camp in 2020.
- The plan is still to move forward, although there may be some modifications.
- In year one: 38 kids from the KMS area entering 2nd through 7th grade participated in the National Inventors Hall of Fame program taught by two local teachers.
- Registration filled up in less than a week! For 2020 we are looking to include junior high aged students as well as grow the program so that KMS can become a regional hub as this is typically a national offering hosted in larger cities



2019 STEM Camp for Kids

Presented by Terri Barrett, Project Lead

Project Goals:

- Provide low-cost access to an educational opportunity that will enhance tech skills such as robotics, computer coding and other science technology, engineering and math skills.
- Progress to-date: Camp is underway! From Mr. Saint:
- “We are studying robot coding, farm tech, motors, gears, radio frequency, paleontology, ocean travel using star positioning, and innovation. This is all done with a lot of creative hands-on and team work.”
- Looking Ahead: This camp can be a feeder program for the KMS Robotics program.

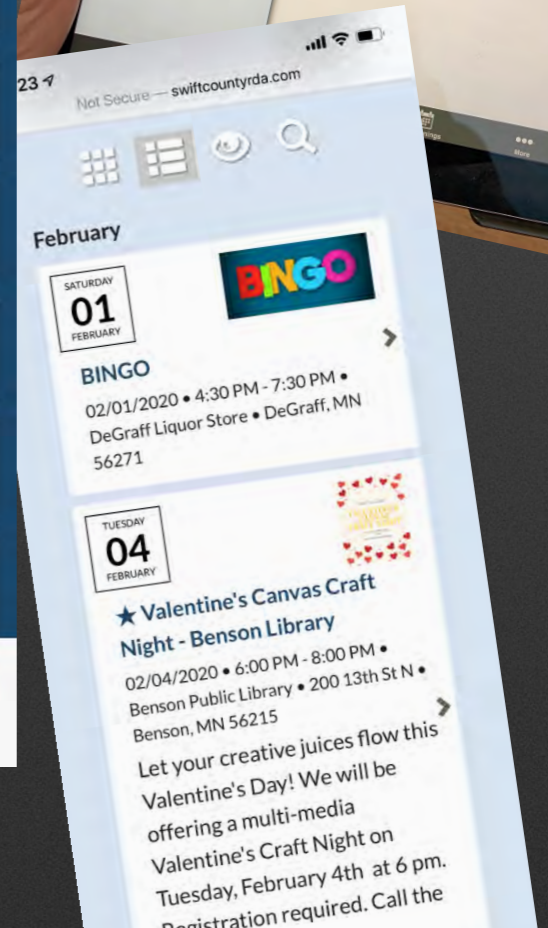
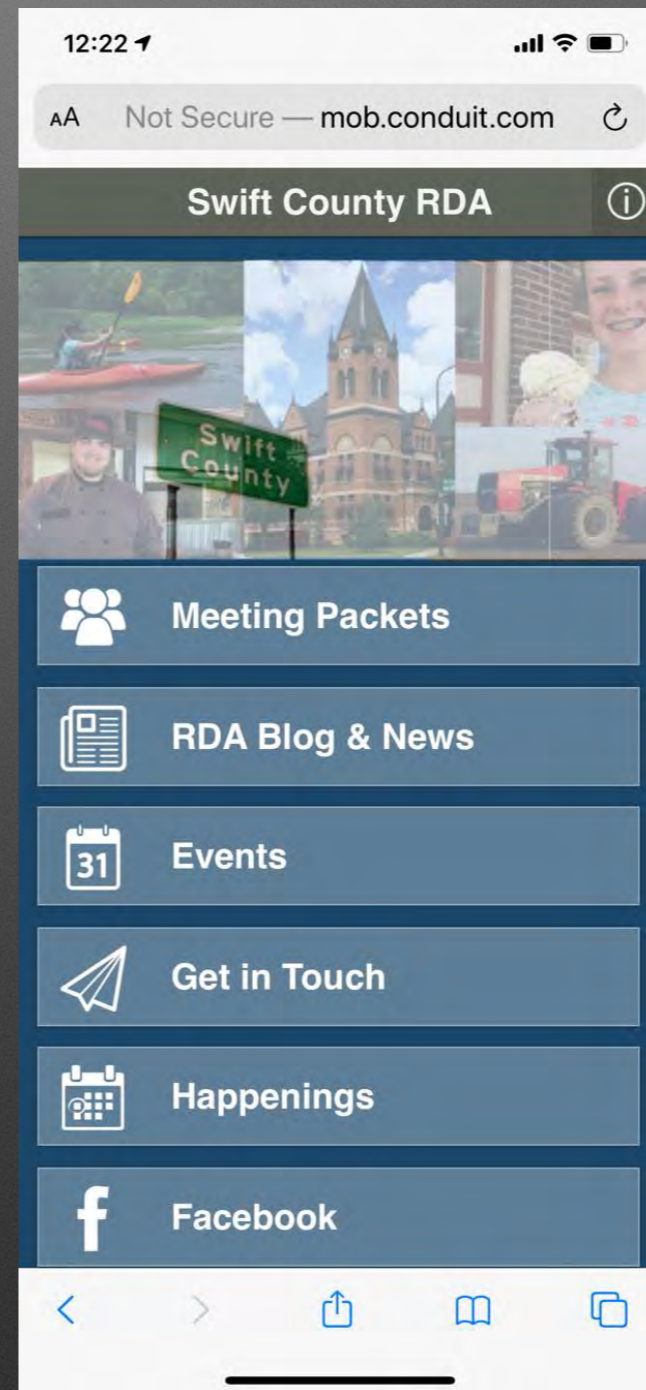


Swift County RDA App

Presented by Jenn Frost, RDA Staff

Project goals:

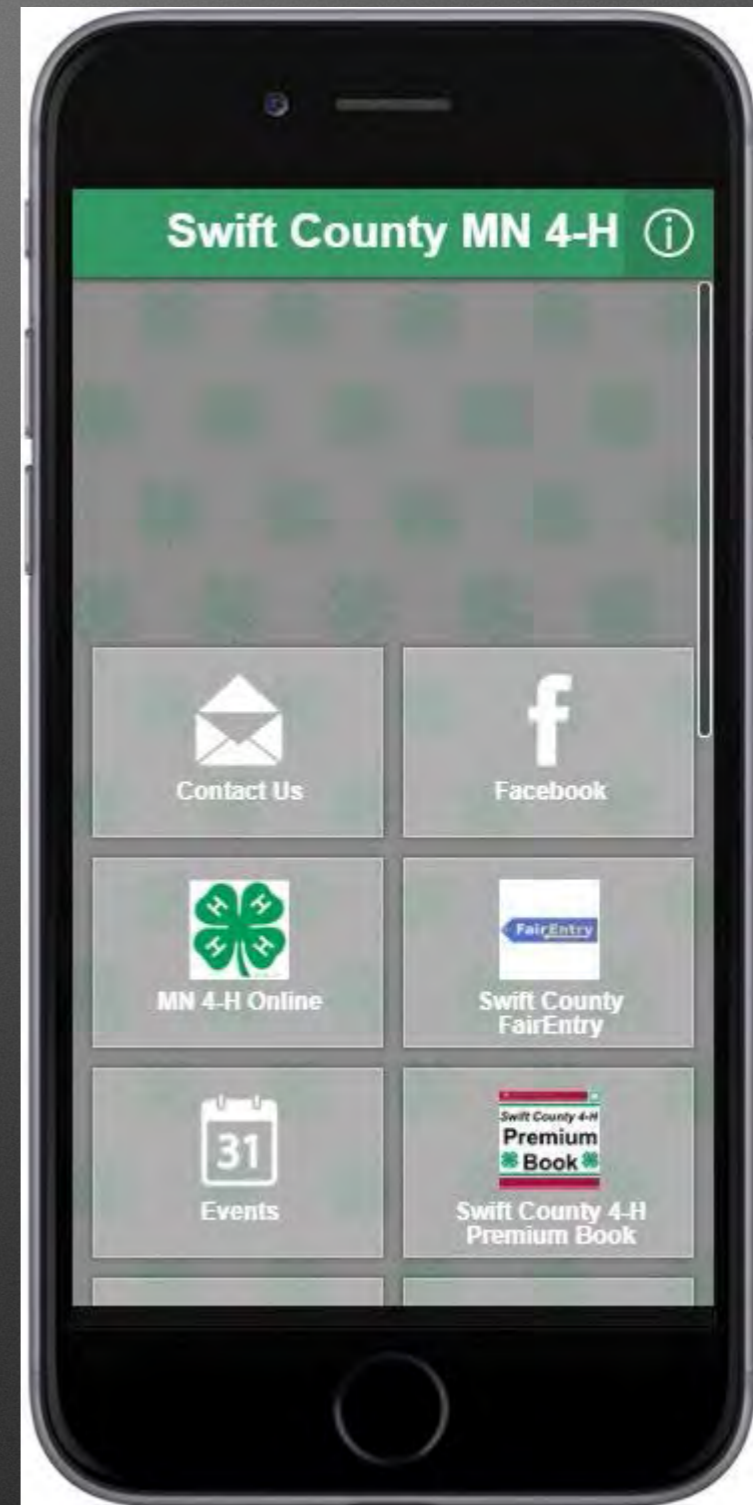
- Enhance use of digital devices in Board Meetings
- Reminders of Board Meetings
- Easy access to Board Packets
- Incorporate Community Calendar via RDA Webpage – Two for one
- Share RDA News
- Progress to-date: App is developed and primary caters to board members/those we have a relationship with.
- Looking forward: Calendar possibilities/group marketing #SavorSwift
- There is also a Covid Resource page now.



Swift County 4-H Extension App is still going strong.


Project goals:

- Connect 4-H members and families across Swift County
- Provide quick and easy access for program updates & events
- Provide youth an opportunity to showcase talents by helping to teach or present on creating the app
- Community connectedness
- Progress to-date: App is developed!
- Looking forward: (Presentation)




Digital Marketing for Business 2.0

- Project goals: This project was also rebooted to provide a total of 10 Swift County business owners with professional digital marketing consulting to implement affordable strategies to strengthen their brand awareness and increase the likelihood of business success



Economic Gardening
ending your ability to grow



Swift County Small Business Opportunities

Swift County was named a Blandin Broadband Community in June 2018 and has embarked on a two-year process to advance local broadband initiatives. For more information, visit <http://www.swiftcountyrda.com/blandin-broadband-grant>

Want to WIN \$1,500 of Digital Marketing Consulting for your Business?



- Progress to-date: All 10 consultations are complete
- Looking ahead we have discussed engaging Molly to do some webinars to assist with ecommerce/digital marketing during covid-19

Digital Marketing for Business AND Community



Swift County RDA
Published by Jennifer Frost [?] · June 12 at 1:08 PM · 🌐

It was nearly klub all-around for a tasty #SavorSwift Wednesday at Sherrie's Cafe in the City of Kerkhoven!



SAVOR SWIFT
#SavorSwift

Digital Marketing for Communities & EDOs

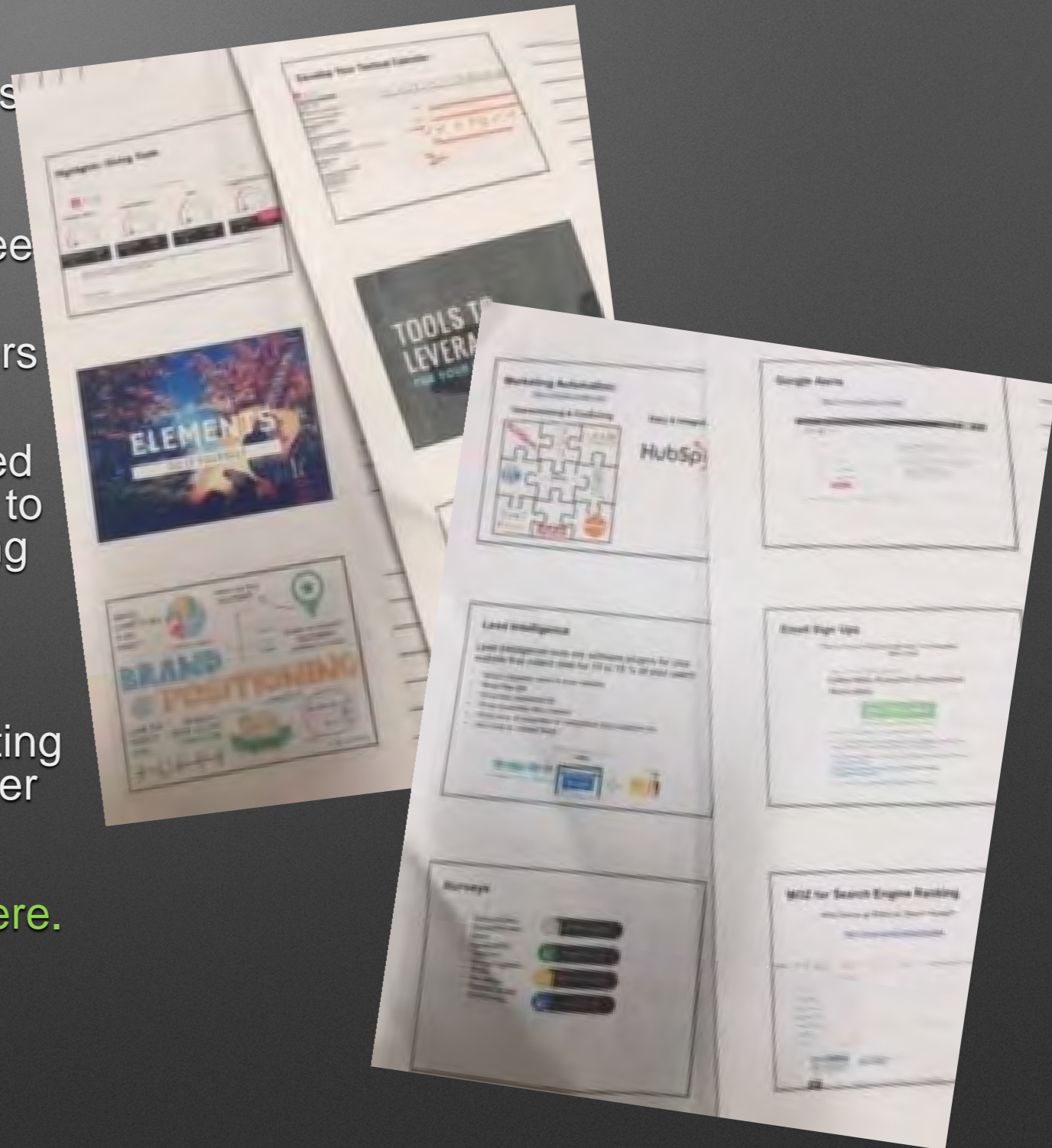
Project Goals:

1. Learn and Share digital marketing strategies and tools Best practices for utilizing tools
2. Build a sustainable network of marketing peers
3. Strategically align marketing goals with peers

Progress to-date: Completed and held six shared webinars from using Virtual Reality – 360 video to market to using data to tell your story to creating compelling websites.

Looking forward: The group was smaller than I hoped (two people who worked solely in marketing were on maternity leave) so the networking never really took place. In the end, the handful of participants would rather review materials or webinars on their own time. **No covid impact here.**

Looking forward I would focus on businesses in communities rather than community people to network on marketing initiatives. Chamber/CVB style



CNH Weld Training

Presented by Kimberly Collins, CNHi - Benson

- Project goals: Develop individuals with skills necessary to fill Weld positions in the area
- Progress to-date: Course completed

Build Your Future with Welding Skills

Start a New Career in Just 4 Weekends for FREE!

DATES
April 12 - May 13
Orientation:
Fri., April 12, 5:00-10:00 p.m.
Hands-on:
Saturdays, 8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
Sundays, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

NO FEE
Equipment and materials provided by CNH Industrial. Participants must provide own steel-toed shoes.

LOCATION/FORMAT
Blended: Online plus hands-on welding at CNH Industrial, Benson, MN

FOR MORE INFO
www.swiftcountyrda.com/weld

Act Today! Limited seats!

Learn welding and fabrication skills to join metals on everything from snowmobiles to bridges. Join the expanding manufacturing industry.



Demand is VERY HIGH so jobs are waiting for you!
• Projected growth for welders in central MN: 17% for 2016-2026
Source: careerwise.minnstate.edu

Just 3 Steps to a Rewarding Welding Career

1. Learn concepts online at home and then practice skills in industry
2. Earn a certificate for CNH Welding Basics
3. Be next in line for potential jobs with CNH Industrial

TRAINING PARTNERS

CNH INDUSTRIAL   **Blandin Foundation**
STRENGTHENING LOCAL INDUSTRIES

 **RIDGEWATER COLLEGE** **CUSTOMIZED TRAINING & CONTINUING EDUCATION**
320-222-6067
www.ridgewater.edu/customized

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CNH Weld Training

Presented by Kimberly Collins, CNHi - Benson

- Progress to-date (cont): Tooling U with Ridgewater
- What are you most looking forward to?

CNH, Ridgewater partner to train welders to meet area job demand

Submitted by admin on Wed, 05/15/2019 - 13:20



By Reed Anfinson
Publisher
Swift County Monitor-News

Just over a month ago a group of people looking to learn a new skill and improve their chances to earn a good income began taking welding classes at CNH in Benson. Sunday they graduated after having their skills and knowledge tested.

The welding course was sponsored by CNH and Ridgewater College in Willmar. It was free to people from 18 years old and up. It was training that could lead some of the participants to a starting pay of \$21.62 an hour along with full benefits.

It was also sponsored through the Swift County Rural Development Authority with a grant from the Blandin Foundation. Basically, the only thing students had to provide was steel-toed boots.

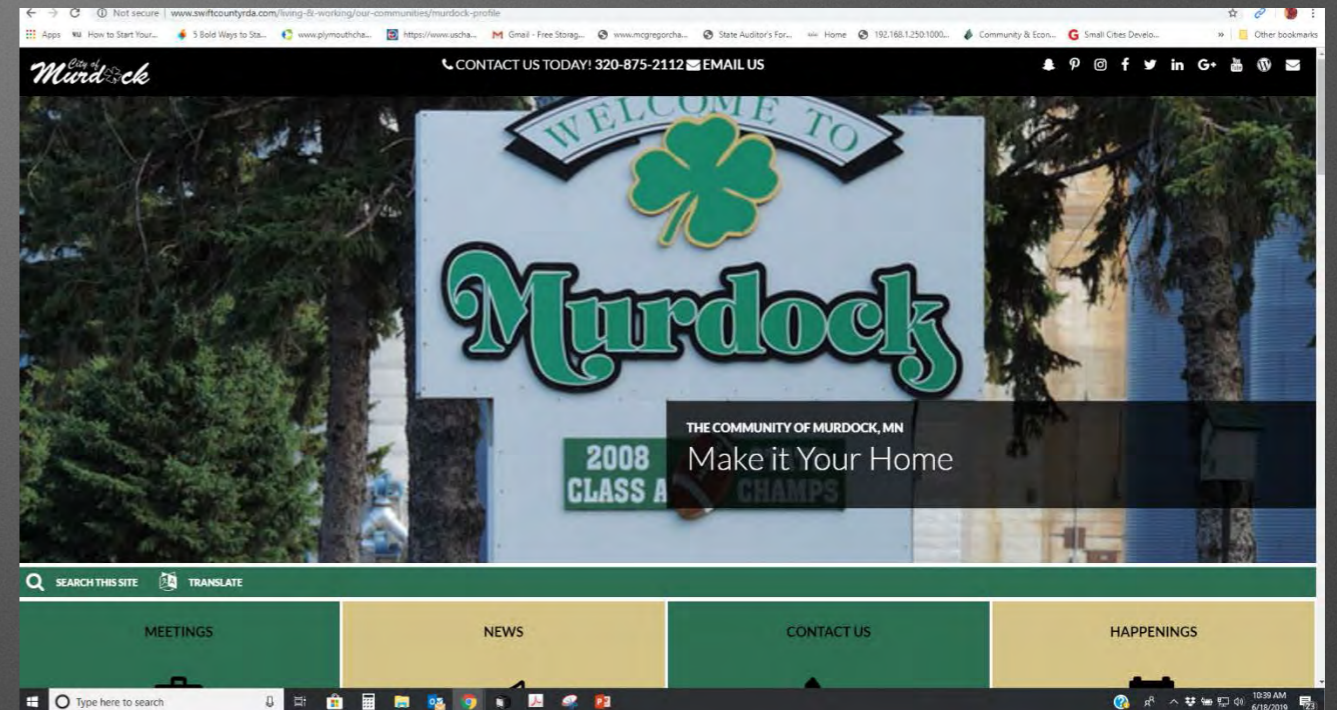
To make it possible for those already working another job, the hands-on training course was offered over four consecutive weekends at the CNH Industrial facility on east U.S. Highway 12 just east of the City of Benson. The "book learning" portion of the course was offered online.

Upon successful completion of the program, students received a certificate stating they have completed the CNH Welding Basics program...

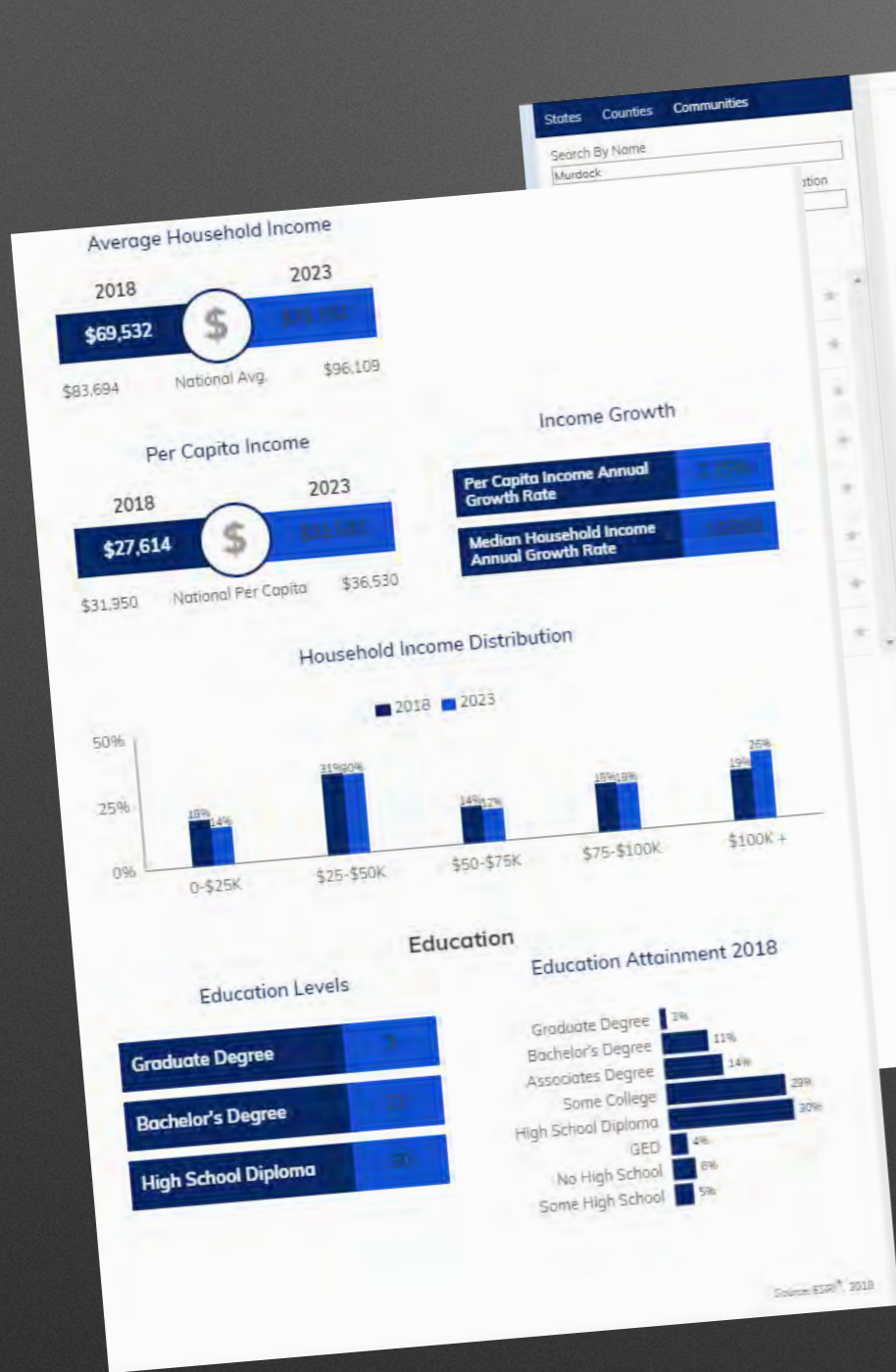
Community Websites

Presented by Jennifer Frost, Project Co-Lead

- Two Project goals:
 1. Provide a local community website customized for cities without websites, and
 2. Provide a comprehensive profile page on the County's economic development website
- Progress to-date: We came up with a main page design that could be customized for each community to include: a scrolling announcement, banner photos, contact info, news feed, social media feed, business directory, bill pay, etc.



Community Websites cont.



Housing Overview

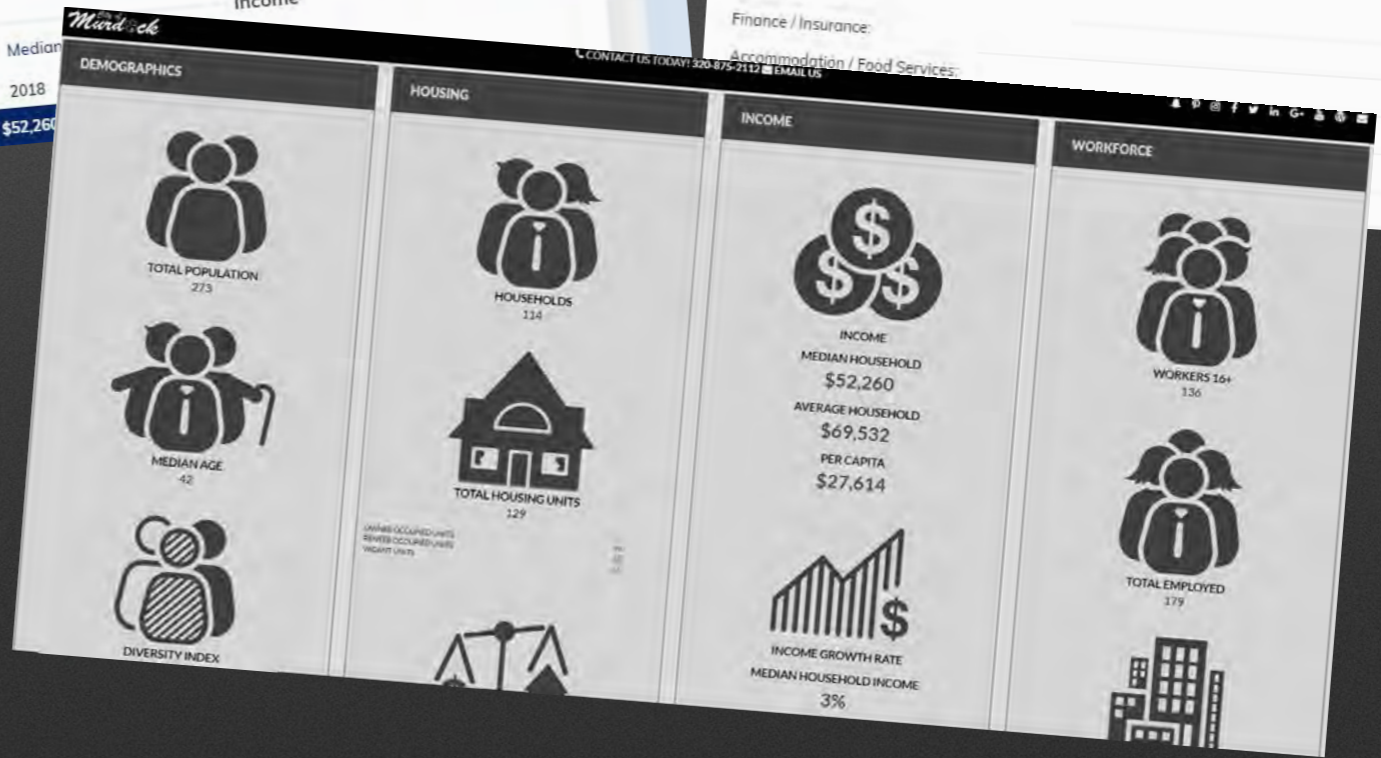
2018 Median Home Value:	
2023 Median Home Value:	\$117,708
2018 Total Housing Units:	\$121,739
2018 Owner Occupied Units:	129
2018 Renter Occupied Units:	96
2018 Vacant Units:	18
2023 Total Housing Units:	15
2023 Owner Occupied Units:	129
2023 Renter Occupied Units:	96
2023 Vacant Units:	18

Workforce

Total Workforce:	172
Employed:	172
Unemployed:	3%

Employment by Industry

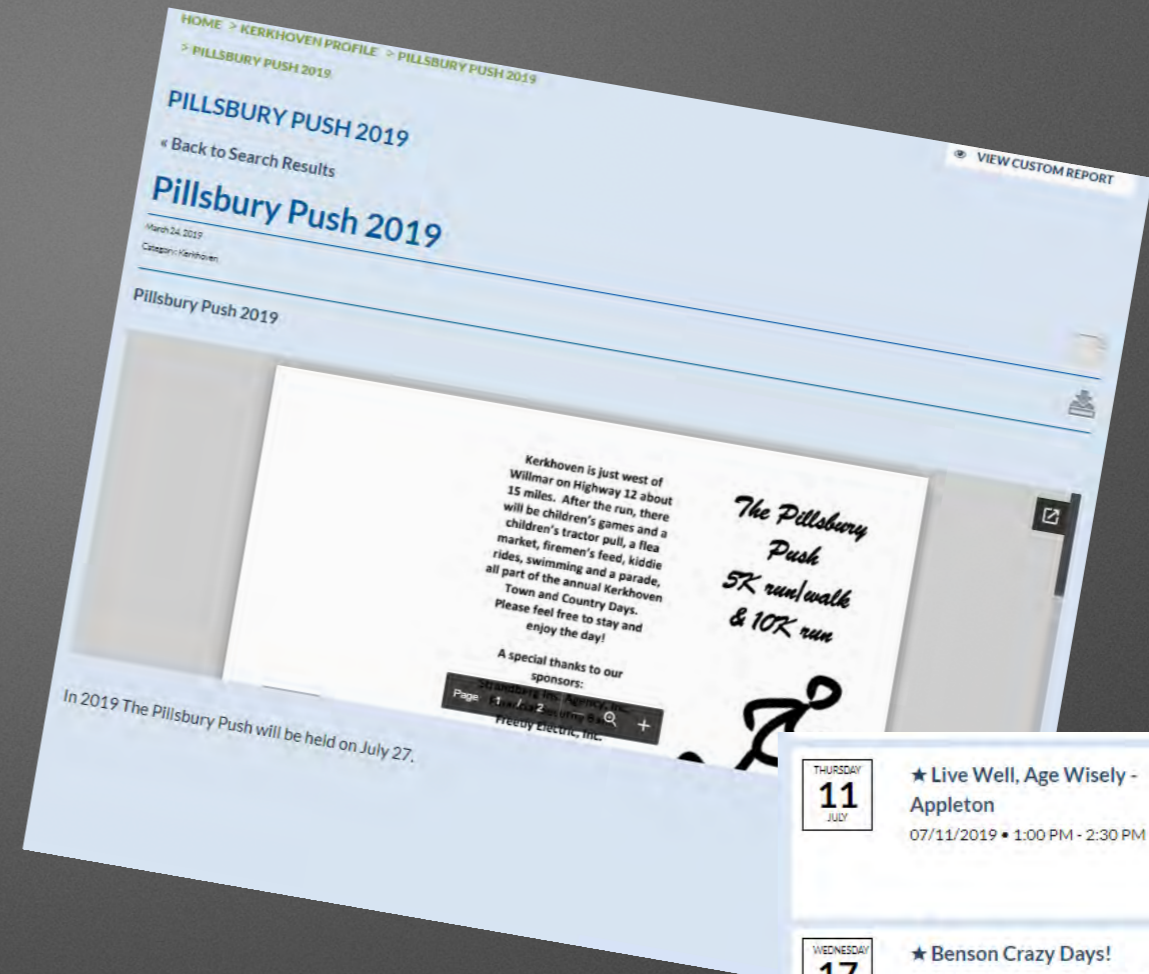
Agriculture / Forestry / Fishing / Hunting:	42
Manufacturing:	21
Health Care / Social Assistance:	21
Construction:	19
Retail Trade:	19
Other Services:	8
Public Administration:	7
Educational Services:	6
Wholesale Trade:	5
Finance / Insurance:	5
Accommodation / Food Services:	5



Community Websites cont.

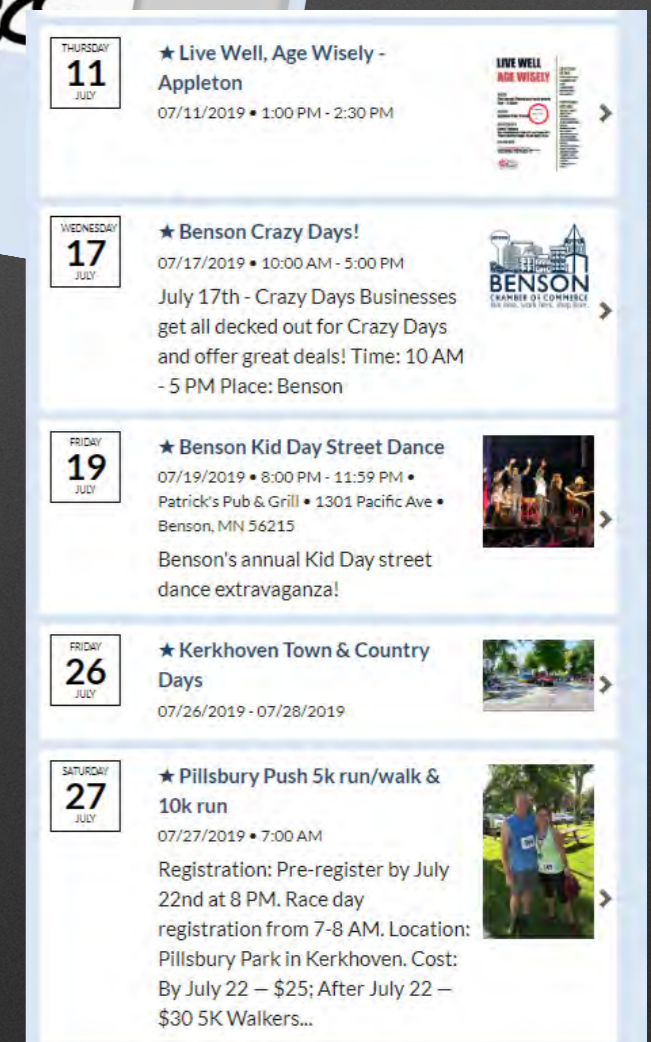
Progress to date cont. – **Challenges:**

- **Implementing websites “live” at the City level**
 - Larger role for the RDA than anticipated
 - “A website is not in my job description” – City Clerk



What are you **most looking forward to?**

- Having more time to roll out each site with each community.
- Finding out if Covid-19 has changed some minds and made a city website a necessity.
- **App-based Community Calendar/Newcomer Group possibilities (RDA app – calendar feature for businesses – group marketing)**



Going forward

- What challenges are you facing?
- How can the Blandin team be more helpful?
- Are you observing any community-wide impacts yet?
- Other feedback?

