BENTON
Economic Partnership, Inc.

Annual Meeting

January 23, 2025

BENTON
Economic Partnership, Inc.

BEP Annual Membership Meeting

Meeting Agenda

January 23, 2025

7:30 – 7:45	Breakfast & Networking
7:45-7:55	Introductions
7:55-8:05	Breakfast Sponsor Recognition: Bay West
8:05-8:15	Benton Economic Partnership 2024 Recap-Amanda Othoudt
8:15-8:20	BEP President Sandy Saldana Presentation of Service Award
8:20-8:50	Guest Speakers: Benton County Board Chair and City Mayors
8:50 – 9:00	Questions and Adjourn

*BEP Board Meeting to Follow

INTRODUCTIONS

Bay West

Michael Graber

Tony Meyer

Benton Economic Partnership Annual Breakfast Sponsor

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2024 RECAP

Recognizing the 2024 BEP Board of Directors

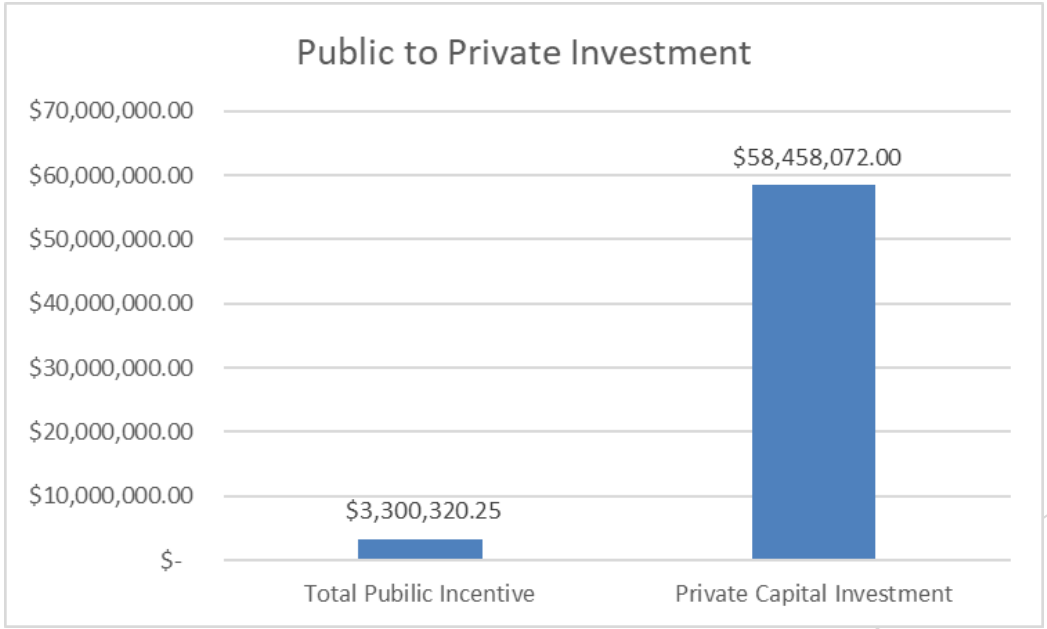
- Sandra Saldana, President
- Kevin Johnson, Vice President
- John Herges, Past President
- Pat Welty, Treasurer
- Jake Bauerly, Founding Member
- Ed Popp, County Representative
- Jesse Arndt, Township Representative
- Laura Kangas, Local Business Representative
- Dr. Trish Perry, Local School Representative
- Sarah Brunn, City Representative
- Brandon Voit, Chamber Representative

Increase Awareness of BEP, Retain and Grow BEP Membership

- Continue developing relationships with existing members
  - 124 Members and Growing
- Quarterly Membership Meetings – 2024 Recap
  - January – Nextera Sponsored and Bill Towle + Airport Presentation
  - April – Bradbury Stamm Sponsor and Presentation by SCTCC President Lori Kloos
  - July – Two Rivers Sponsor and MN Housing Presentation (MCPP)
  - October - Terra Construction Sponsor + Student Workforce Pannel
- BRE Visits
  - 24 Visits Completed across all sectors in all communities
- Articles in the Sauk Rapids Herald

Expand or build businesses in Benton County.

- New and Expanding Projects in the County
- Since 2020, BEP leveraged over $3.3M in public (state and local) incentives, which resulted in over $58.5M in private capital investment.



Expand or build businesses in Benton County.

- These projects results in the retention of 547 jobs, and the creation of 104 new FT jobs for the county.
- Average Hourly Wage of Retained Workers: $25.79/hour
- Average Hourly Wage of New Workers: $27.04/hour
- Manage the County's Revolving Loan Fund Program
  - 4 Loans Out
  - 1 Loans Pending Closing
  - Cash Balance: $930,987.67

Facilitate Development in East St. Cloud

- City of St. Cloud, GSDC and BEP partnered together to apply for another round of Main Street Economic Revitalization Grant Program in 2024 – Results will come out in early 2025
- East St. Cloud Action Committee
  - Work alongside St. Cloud Planning Commission on their Comprehensive Plan Update
- Tour with DEED Commissioner Varilek

Identify and align business workforce needs with K-12 and Higher Ed educational offering

- Workforce Committee Established in 2022
- Participated in the EPIC Event in 2024
- Established a partnership with Central MN Re-Entry Program (CMNRP)
- Facilitated a local Manufacturing Tour with Foley High School – Students + Teachers
- Facilitated a Student – Workforce Panel in October 2024

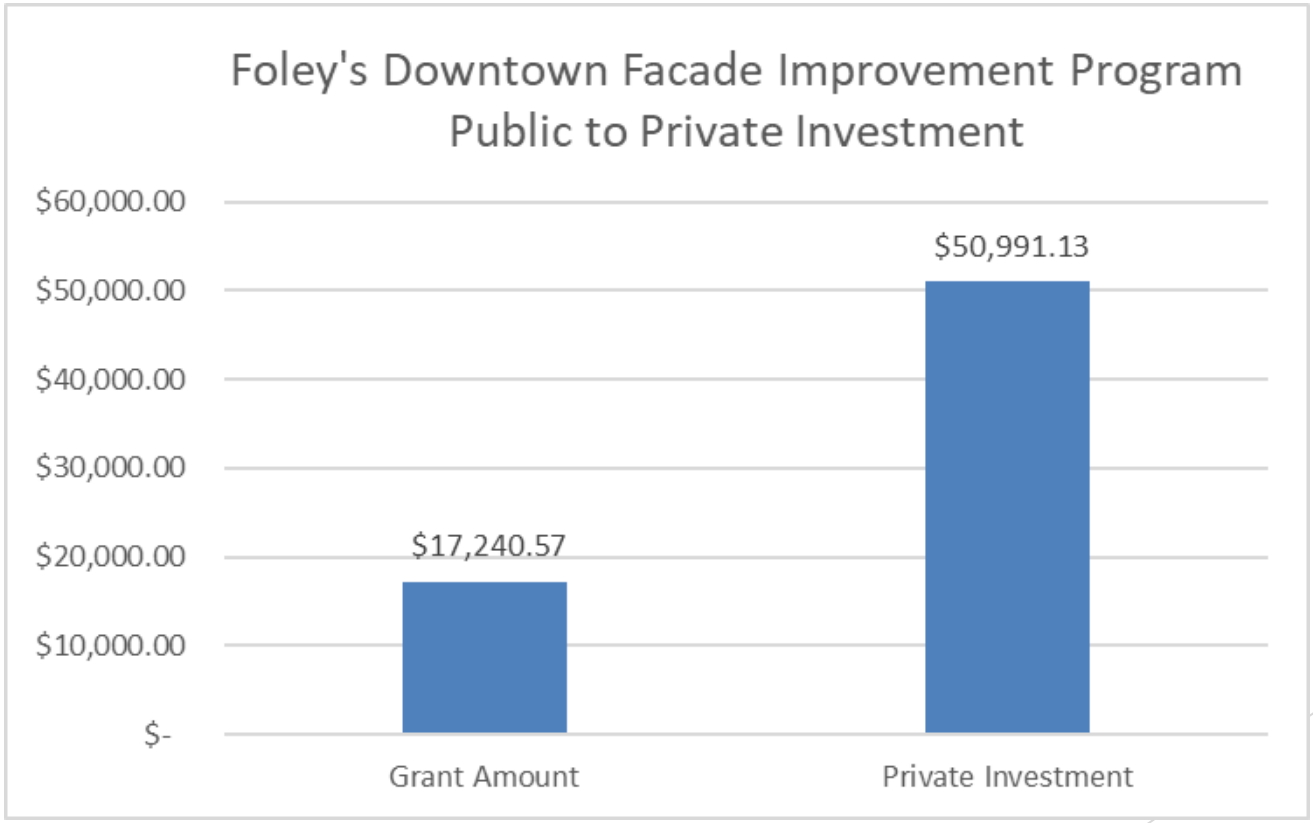
Identify community development opportunities to lead in Benton County.

- County Housing Study
  - Completed in 2023
  - Housing Demand in Benton County: 3,800+ units
  - Full Housing Study available on our website www.bentonpartnership.org
- BEP to manage Benton County's Local Housing Aid
  - Working to establish a County-Wide Housing Trust Fund
  - BEP to establish a county-wide rehab loan program with funds
    - Preserve Existing Homes
    - Income Based
    - More details to come!

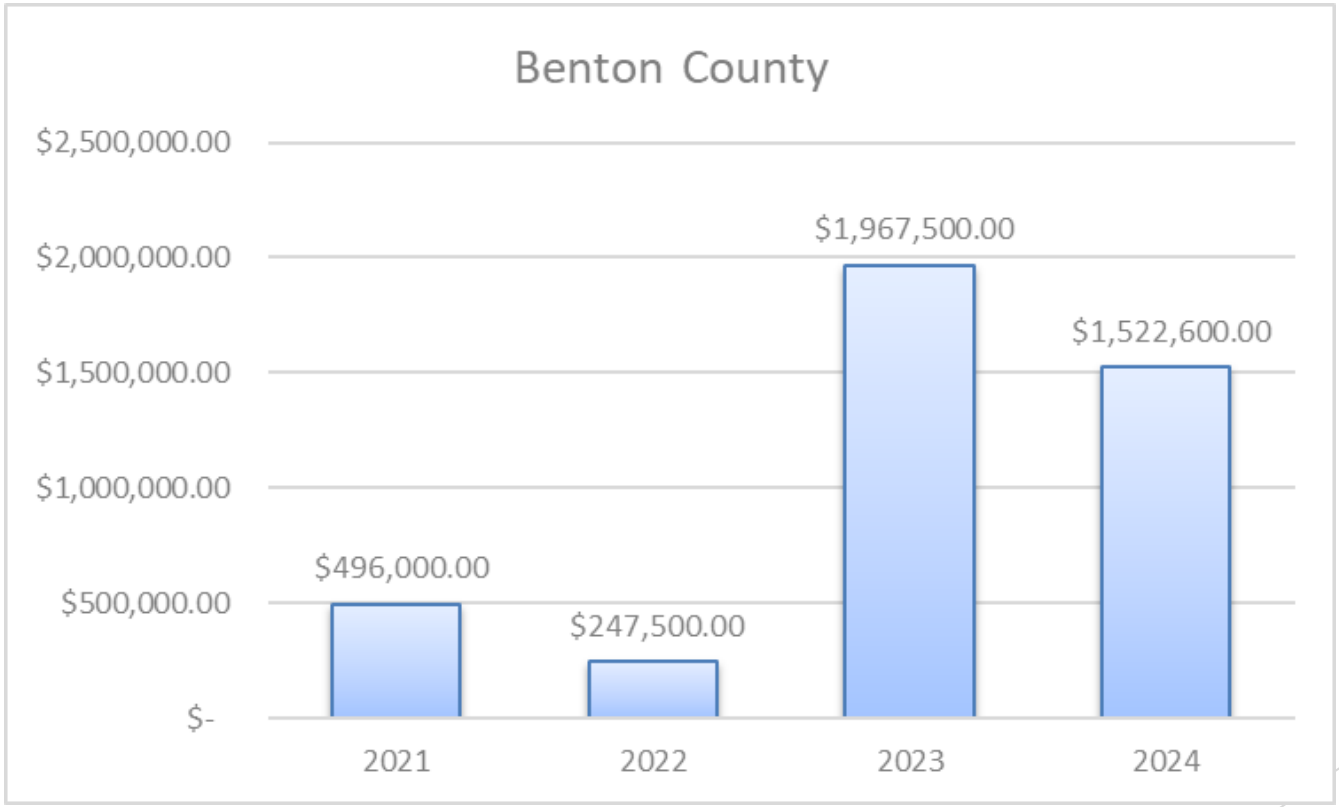
Identify community development opportunities to lead in Benton County.

- County Broadband Initiative
  - Build out county with fiber to home and business
  - Benton Communications
  - $13M+ Investment – To be completed in 2024
- Designating Region 7W as a Federal Economic District
  - Four county region – Benton, Stearns, Sherburne, Wright
  - Allows Benton County to be eligible for funding from Federal EDA.
- ARPA Funds – Allocation to Infrastructure Projects across all cities in Benton County

Identify community development opportunities to lead in Benton County.



New Money Brought into the County 2020-2024



* Energy Transition Grant of $1,000,000 for CSAH 20 & CSAH 1 Roundabout Project – Relocating Xcel Energy Poles in 2024

** Main Street Grant $1,500,000 in 2023 for Benton/Stearns

BEP Annual Meeting
Keynote Speaker
County Board Chair and City Mayors

CITY OF Sauk Rapids MINNESOTA

CITY OF GILMAN

Foley

CITY OF SARTELL MINNESOTA

CITY OF ST.CLOUD MINNESOTA

RICE, MINN 1858-1958

BENTON COUNTY MINNESOTA

Questions?

Contact Information:
Amanda Othoudt, EDFP
Executive Director
Office: 320.968.6197