

Representing Region 8 | Supporting Southwest North Dakota

2024

Annual Report



Roosevelt Custer
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Our Team



Teran Doerr
Executive Director



Debbie Bucholz
Director of Finance



Kate Buer
Executive Coordinator



Jessica Buer
Program Assistant



Shannon Ellig
Regional Program Coordinator



Brooklyn Engelhart
Director of Tourism & Creative

From the **Director**

I'm proud of the collaboration and momentum we built in 2024. One of our biggest goals has been to get to know our communities on a deeper level and this year, we focused on working together, building trust, and showing up across Southwest North Dakota in meaningful ways.

We helped communities prepare for future tourism growth, navigate grant opportunities, and facilitated regional conversations that created stronger partnerships throughout the region. We've spent time on the ground, listened to local leaders, and responded in ways that are practical and needed.

We also worked hard to elevate Southwest North Dakota's voice at the state level, advocating for what matters most to our communities. I'm excited about the year ahead and the continued opportunity to connect, support, and grow alongside the people and places we serve.

I'm grateful for our board, our partners, and every community that continues to reach out and place their trust in us. Collaboration is what makes this work meaningful and it's what makes a bright future possible.

Teran Doerr
Executive Director

From the **Chairman**

Roosevelt Custer Regional Council has continued to experience remarkable growth over the past year. Our commitment to serving and strengthening the region remains steadfast, driven by the dedication and hard work of our team.

A significant milestone in 2024 was the launch of Wide Open Wonder, our regional talent attraction campaign aimed at drawing and retaining workforce in our communities. Additionally, we expanded our technical assistance services to offer broader and more specialized support to local communities, reinforcing our mission to foster sustainable growth and development throughout the region.

We remain focused on implementing our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Region 8, ensuring that our initiatives align with the long-term prosperity of Southwest North Dakota. Strengthening partnerships with state, regional, and local stakeholders continues to be a top priority, as collaboration is key to achieving meaningful and lasting impact.

As we reflect on our accomplishments and set our sights on the future, I am confident that our continued efforts will lead to even greater success in the years ahead. Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to our shared vision for a thriving region.

Josh Buchmann
Chairman

Board of Directors

Josh Buchmann
Chairman
Bowman County

Devan Laufer
Secretary
Hettinger County

Troy Mosbrucker
Vice Chairman
City of Mott

Anthony Larson
Treasurer
Adams County

Steven Klym
Billings County

Rory Farstveit
Golden Valley County

Robert Kleeman
Dunn County

Scott Ouradnik
Slope County

Neal Messer
Stark County

Lyn James
City of Bowman

Greg Nordsven
City of Killdeer

Tom Marman
City of Beach

Dennis Rice
City of Marmarth

Joe Ridl
City of Dickinson

Ryan Jilek
Stark Development Corporation

Dean Baar
Billings and Stark Soil Conservation District

Andrew Sampsel
Dunn County Soil Conservation District

Stuart Nielsen
Slope-Hettinger Soil Conservation District

Our **Mission**

To support Southwest North Dakota through rural innovation, regional collaboration, leadership, tourism, economic and community development.

Our **Vision**

Inspire regional collaboration for a prosperous Southwest North Dakota.

Regional Impact & Representation



INTRODUCING STATE OF REGION 8

Roosevelt Custer hosted the first State of Region 8, bringing together legislators, local leaders, and state officials. The event highlighted the unique needs of rural communities and identified actionable solutions.

A key feature was the presentation of the regional strategic plan, outlining priorities such as workforce shortages, housing, childcare, and aging infrastructure, while also emphasizing opportunities in tourism and energy. Roosevelt Custer highlighted the importance of building rural capacity by equipping local leaders to secure grants, form partnerships, and launch programs.

Afternoon roundtable discussions allowed attendees to engage directly with state officials on property taxes, healthcare, tourism, and more, providing communities with a voice in shaping solutions.

State of Region 8 proved to be a valuable forum for collaboration and will now be held annually, rotating locations across the region to maintain momentum and engagement.

REPRESENTING SOUTHWEST NORTH DAKOTA

Roosevelt Custer is proud to be a connector and advocate for Southwest North Dakota at the local, regional, and state level. We helped facilitate the Southwest Developers group, bringing together local leaders to share updates, align on priorities, and tackle regional challenges. We also represented the region at events like Fusion Conference, ND Association of Counties, and Ports to Plains to showcase our work and build partnerships.

At the state level, we meet weekly with all eight North Dakota Regional Councils to coordinate efforts and strengthen services for rural communities. As an active member of Economic Development Association of North Dakota and ND Association of Regional Councils, we ensure Southwest North Dakota has a voice in shaping economic development policy and programs, elevating our region and creating more opportunities for the communities we serve.



3
vendor booths

5
Southwest Developers meetings

CRAFTING ONE VOICE FOR LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Following the region-wide conversations sparked by State of Region 8, leaders across Southwest North Dakota aligned around a unified set of legislative priorities. These priorities reflect both the immediate challenges and long-term opportunities identified by our region, and serve as a roadmap to guide efforts.

To amplify this unified message, we created a booklet outlining our priorities, met one-on-one with regional legislators, and mailed a summary postcard to every legislator in North Dakota. These efforts ensured that the voices of Southwest North Dakota were heard, seen, shared, and taken seriously.

Workforce & Housing

Southwest North Dakota continues to face housing shortages, limited childcare access, and a workforce gap in high-demand sectors like healthcare, manufacturing, and energy. Our legislative agenda advocates for investments in housing incentives, expanded childcare capacity, and workforce development programs tailored to our region.

Infrastructure

Aging infrastructure, including water systems, roads, bridges, and outdated school buildings, is holding back growth in our region. We support expanded funding to update infrastructure and ensure our communities remain viable, connected, and ready for new development.

Regional Capacity

Southwest North Dakota is built on strong communities, but many lack the internal resources to plan for growth or compete for state and federal funding. We are advocating for increased support for regional councils to better support our communities in growth and accessing resources.

Industry & Innovation

From the rise in tourism to opportunities in energy innovation and value-added agriculture, Southwest North Dakota is ripe with potential. We support targeted investment in destination development, automation, emerging technologies, and food system infrastructure to help drive economic growth across our region.

Our legislative priorities reflect the strength, vision, and readiness of Southwest North Dakota. By bringing stakeholders together, clearly defining our needs, and communicating them with unified purpose, Region 8 continues to lead with action and shape a stronger future for our corner of the state.



4
priorities

184
copies distributed

Funding & Financial Support

2024 FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Revenue and Expenditures

	2024	2023
REVENUE		
Admin & Service Revenue	\$116,708	\$54,585
County Contributions	\$82,440	\$76,740
Grant & Program Funding	\$565,502	\$201,386
Interest Income	\$45,447	\$12,113
Total Revenue	\$810,097	\$344,824
EXPENDITURES		
Advertising & Marketing	\$5,011	\$8,213
Contract Services	\$180,408	\$133,304
Professional Development	\$2,689	\$1,000
Projects & Programs	\$238,003	\$72,126
Salary & Benefits	\$124,001	\$67,970
Travel	\$5,276	\$5,258
Other Operating	\$31,376	\$26,648
Total Expenditures	\$586,764	\$314,519
Net Income	\$223,333	\$30,305

Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS

Cash & Cash Equivalents

General Fund	\$254,520	\$77,912
USDA Loan Fund	\$205,301	\$687,353
EDA Loan Fund	\$79,411	\$353,476
Total Current Assets	\$539,232	\$1,113,741

Accounts Receivable

Accounts Receivable	\$15,240	\$13,829
Total Accounts Receivable	\$15,240	\$13,829

Other Assets

Loans Receivable	\$889,637	\$136,644
Total Other Assets	\$889,637	\$136,644

Total Assets	\$1,444,109	\$1,264,214
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LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Liabilities

Current Liabilities	\$570	\$777
Long-Term Liabilities	\$42,754	\$86,570
Total Liabilities	\$43,324	\$87,347

Net Assets

Retained Earnings	\$6,885	\$6,885
Net Assets	\$1,170,567	\$1,139,667
Net Income	\$223,333	\$30,305
Total Net Assets	\$1,400,785	\$1,176,867

Total Liabilities & Equity	\$1,444,109	\$1,264,214
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LOAN PROGRAMS FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

Our loan programs continue to be a crucial resource for entrepreneurs and small businesses across region 8. We are proud to report that in 2024 we provided a significant contribution to the economic vibrancy of our region through the approval and funding of six new loans.

These loans have helped businesses of various sizes and sectors, from startups to established enterprises, fueling their growth and expansion. By providing essential funding, we enable businesses to invest in infrastructure, purchase equipment, hire new employees, and improve overall operations. We look forward to continued success in 2025.

6
new loans in 2024

\$800,911
funded in 2024

Rural Impact Microloan Up to \$50,000

Geared towards establishing, enhancing, and expanding businesses at any stage.

Badlands Fund Up to \$100,000

Resource for BND PACE and Flex PACE Programs.

Roosevelt Fund Up to \$400,000

Utilized to support business, build resilient communities, increase economic diversity, and create and retain jobs.

Economic & Community Development

ESSENTIAL FUNDING THROUGH CDBG

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program supports housing, public facilities, and economic development projects that benefit low-to-moderate income individuals and underserved communities. In 2024, Roosevelt Custer administered seven CDBG projects across five communities. Four of which were ongoing and three were newly awarded. The new awards included \$2.5 million in funding for water and sewer improvements in Mott, Medora, and Regent.

The Mott Rural Housing project, first funded in 2016, was officially closed in 2024 after completing final concrete work to improve accessibility. Another major highlight was the Mott Clinic, which transformed part of a nursing home into a new facility for West River Health Services. The clinic opened in November 2024 and will be fully complete in 2025.



\$106,509
in completed projects

\$6,083,206
in active projects

SUPPORTING ARTS AND CULTURE

Roosevelt Custer supported the Arts Across the Prairie initiative in Region 8 by participating in artist interviews, site visits, and stakeholder meetings. Artists Ryah and Sun were selected to create Rugged and Unforgettable, an abstract sculpture symbolizing the region's resilience. The piece will be installed along Old Highway 10, about 10 miles west of Medora.



PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

JDA Services Administration

In 2024, Roosevelt Custer continued its partnership with the Hettinger County Job Development Authority (JDA) to support local businesses and ensure financial planning. Highlights included awarding a Store Front grant, offering an Interest Buy Down program, and approving a loan for a local entrepreneur. Roosevelt Custer also assisted with the JDA's annual audit and 2025 budget development. Looking ahead, we will begin business visits across the county to better understand local needs and identify growth opportunities.



Grant Writing for Partners

Roosevelt Custer assisted the Amidon Fire District in securing federal funding through the Inflation Reduction Act. After preparing and submitting a full application, the district was awarded \$710,242 in summer 2024. This was one of only two North Dakota projects selected by the U.S. Department of Energy. Funds will support a fire department building expansion to better serve the region.

\$710,242
obtained for partners

Feasibility Study Coordination

Hettinger County took a bold step toward tourism development with a \$120,000 grant secured by Roosevelt Custer to fund a feasibility study for a theme park in Regent, ND. Conducted by Aerlig Associates, the study will analyze market demand, finances, and site viability. This initiative has the potential to create lasting economic impact for Regent, Hettinger County, and surrounding areas.



\$120,000
feasibility study



Strategic Planning Support

To launch a new Development Fund, Roosevelt Custer was contracted by Dunn County JDA to design fully implementable programs promoting growth and sustainability. Through visioning sessions and strategic planning, eight programs were developed, exceeding the initial five requested. The finalized Development Fund Vision Plan includes clear guidelines, application processes, and evaluation criteria, creating a strong framework for long-term economic and community success in Dunn County.



213,501
individuals served

18
counties served

LOCAL FOODS

Roosevelt Custer was awarded funding through the North Central Regional Food Business Center to strengthen access to local foods in Regions 7 and 8. In 2024, we finalized the Regional Food Action Plan to guide growth, technical assistance, and capacity building for farmers, ranchers, and food-based businesses.

Three businesses were assisted through the Business Builder Awards program, with one receiving a competitive grant, one of just five awarded statewide. The funded project, Hazelton Food Co-op, will purchase a delivery truck and hire staff to support a rural grocery delivery network.

EXPANDING RURAL SERVICES

In the spring of 2024, Roosevelt Custer applied to the Otto Bremer Trust Community Responsive Fund to strengthen our efforts in serving rural communities across the region. We were awarded \$40,000 to expand and enhance our rural support efforts, aimed at addressing critical gaps identified throughout Southwest North Dakota.

The funding helps us provide initial guidance, respond to emerging needs, and support communities as they navigate development challenges. It also enhances our ability to engage with Job Development Authorities (JDAs), particularly in areas facing staffing shortages or limited resources.

This grant aligns closely with Roosevelt Custer's ongoing strategic plan. By building local capacity and responding to real-time needs, we're helping ensure communities across the region are positioned for long-term success.

\$40,000
received





**Discover why so many
are coming home to stay.**



WIDE OPEN WONDER CONTINUES TO REACH THOUSANDS

Launched in 2023, the Wide Open Wonder campaign was created to raise awareness and attract talent to fill in-demand jobs across Southwest North Dakota. As the region continues to grow, the campaign highlights the area's unique lifestyle, strong economy, and opportunities across key industries.

In 2024, efforts expanded with a strategic launch of digital ads and a new regional website, wideopenwondernd.com. The next phase focuses on developing a comprehensive relocation guide that showcases housing, education, recreation, and community life to prospective residents. A broader media campaign will also roll out to promote the region beyond North Dakota's borders.

Businesses are encouraged to participate by sharing job openings and events through the campaign website.

\$252,927
spent in 2024

264
cumulative job listings



LIVESTOCK PLANNING ACROSS SOUTHWEST NORTH DAKOTA

In 2024, Roosevelt Custer was awarded a \$196,500 Livestock Planning Grant from the ND Department of Agriculture to support a comprehensive study focused on strengthening and expanding livestock production in the region. We've contracted with First District Association of Local Governments to lead this effort, which includes site analysis, strategic planning, and identifying opportunities for future investment. The study is expected to be completed by summer 2025 and will help lay the foundation for long-term growth in the local livestock industry.



\$196,500
received

8
counties served



Explore Careers &

**DISCOVER
YOUR NEXT
OPPORTUNITY**

WIDE OPEN
WONDER
— SOUTHWEST NORTH DAKOTA —