

# Swift County RDA

Providing opportunities for economic and community development in Swift County

Volume 14, Issue 3

Autumn 2005

## Important Events:

- RDA Board meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7 a.m.
- GROW Board meets quarterly following the RDA Board meeting.
- The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) of St. Cloud State University is in Swift County the first and third Tuesday of each month. Call the Swift County RDA office for an appointment.
- Office hours 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. and other times by appointment.

## Inside this issue:

Answers to Quiz	2
CERTs Tour stops at Swift County locations	2
Blandin selects Benson as CALP pilot community	2
FibroMinn under construction	3
Information and Training Opportunities	4

## Manufacturers Week Celebrated

The week of October 24, 2005 was Manufacturers week in Minnesota. In Minnesota, manufacturing is a very big deal, as it is in Swift County!

Many people are not fully aware of the great economic impact the manufacturing has on our local and state economy. Test your knowledge by taking the quiz below about Swift County manufacturers. The answers are listed on page 2. Good Luck!

**Question #1:** *What is the largest business sector in Swift County in 2005?*

**Question #2:** *How many manufacturers are there in Swift County?*

**Question #3:** *How many jobs does the manufacturing sector provide in Swift County?*

**Question #4:** *How does manufacturing's weekly wage compare to other sectors in Swift County?*

**Question #5:** *How has manufacturing employment increased since 1980 in Swift County (answer is a percent)?*

Check out the answers on page two. You will be surprised! Then take the opportunity to thank a manufacturer you know and some of the people who work in manufacturing plants in Swift County! They are all valuable to us!



## Manufacturers of Swift County

Appleton Press	Glacial Plains Cooperative - Murdock & Benson
Benson Bakery	Klassen Repair & Welding - DeGraff
Benson Tackle	Lorenz Manufacturing - Torning Twp
Carlson Manufacturing - Pillsbury Twp	Mike's Welding and Fab. - Pillsbury Twp
Case New Holland - Torning Twp	Monitor Printing Company - Benson
Chamberlain Oil - Clontarf	NEM Woods - West Bank Twp
CVEC - Clontarf Twp	Pioneer Fabricating - Clontarf Twp
Country Pet Foods - DeGraff	RedBall - Torning Twp & Benson
Custom Roto-Mold - Benson	Reid's Welding & Custom Fab. - Benson
Del Dee Foods - Appleton	Ron Carlson Machine - Benson
ECONAR - Appleton	Staton Welding - Clontarf
FibroMinn - Benson	Stony Ridge Foods - Benson
Future Products - Benson	Yuletide Expressions - Benson
Glacial Grain Spirits - Clontarf Twp	WestCon - Holloway & Appleton

# CERTs Tour features Swift County stops

On September 13, 2005 more than fifty people from throughout the area participated in a tour of various businesses and sites featuring renewable energy. The tour was arranged by the West Central Clean Energy Resource Team and the West Central Regional Sustainable Partnership. It is an annual event meant to showcase renewable energy projects in the area.

The tour started in Kandiyohi County and proceeded to rural Kerkhoven where participants visited the Grant Krieger farm. The Krieger's have installed an eighty foot tall wind turbine that powers most of their farm needs. Not only do they live on this farm, they also raise hogs, cattle, chickens and laying hens, and a plentitude of garden vegetables.

The next stop for the tour was in Appleton at ECONAR Energy Systems. The participants toured the plant where GeoSource Heat Pumps are made. The company makes cold climate ground source heat pumps that efficiently heat,

cool and dehumidify, both residential and commercial buildings. About twenty-five people are employed at the Appleton manufacturing plant.

The next stop was between Benson and Clontarf at the hybrid poplar stand on Highway 9. Dean Schmidt of the WesMN RC&D explained the uses and benefits of the species as an energy source, as well as being good for the environment in numerous other ways.

As the Rustad (from Kerkhoven) bus rolled through the county, various speakers discussed the technologies of the places the groups visited as well as those businesses the tour viewed from the road, such as CVEC (ethanol, organic industrial alcohol, and Shakers Vodka), Future Products (where shirts are made from corn), and FibroMinn (biomass electric generator under construction).

It is very apparent that Swift County has a lot to be proud of as a center for renewable businesses. We are indeed becoming more of a renewable community every day!

## Answers to Quiz on page 1

*Question #1: Manufacturing, with more than 21% (statewide it is 15.6% and nationally it is 13.6%)*

*Question #2: 28 (count them on page 1)*

*Question #3: 749 jobs in Swift County*

*Question #4: 27.7% higher than all industries*

*Question #5: The number of firms is the same but jobs have seen a nearly 60% growth*

I bet you'll be able to stump your friends and families with this information. Give it a try!

This information was provided by the MN DEED Regional Analyst, Cameron Macht.



**Purpose: To engage and enable the community to grow and prosper**

## Benson chosen as Blandin pilot for CALP

In July a group of Benson people were invited to an informational meeting to learn about a pilot program offered by the Blandin Foundation known as the Community Advantage Leadership Program (CALP). In conjunction with the Southwest MN Foundation, presentations were made to introduce CALP and to encourage a community application to participate.

In August a team of fourteen people from the Benson area were informed that their application had been approved and training of the group would begin in October with a two and one half day session in Fergus Falls.

CALP is an asset based approach to advancing



the local economy. Team members are trained over a six month period to engage the community in determining what are the local assets and then strategizing about what can be done to maximize them in the future.

The Benson team has developed a purpose statement that will direct them as they work in the community and continue their training in CALP. It is: "To engage and enable the community to grow and prosper." To that end, the CALP Team will be holding several local community meetings, and visiting with community and business leaders in the near future. With the information and insights gathered, the Benson CALP Team will chart a course for progress.

Watch for more information in the local media.

# FibroMinn construction proceeding at full speed

Construction at the FibroMinn site is well underway and becoming more visible each day. Over the summer, most of the work was being done below ground level with pile driving and concrete work taking place. Now we can see steel frame being erected to house the first area of the plant.

As we speak, many truck loads of steel and various parts are being shipped to the Benson site. Construction of the 55 megawatt biomass power plant is expected to last into 2007.

Several hundred construction trades people of all types will be on the site during that time to build the 140 foot tall building and 350 foot tall stack. With the delightful fall weather this year the construction

season has been extended. Cold weather will not stop construction, as many things can be done throughout the winter.

Numerous businesses in the area are feeling the positive effects of having a lot of new people in the area because of FibroMinn. We hope you and your business are prospering as well.

One thing we can all do to make the most of this opportunity is to welcome the new faces we see in the area. Those who aren't from here may spend a good deal of time with us over the next year or more. Help them feel at home and to find what they need right here in Swift County. If you don't know the answer to their questions contact the RDA for help.



FibroMinn project under construction October 2005



*Photos provided by the Swift County Monitor News*

## Swift County RDA

Swift County Courthouse  
301 14th Street North  
Post Office Box 288  
Benson, MN 56215

Phone: 320-842-GROW  
Toll Free: 888-843-GROW  
Fax: 320-843-4850  
Email: [grow@co.swift.mn.us](mailto:grow@co.swift.mn.us)

Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Permit #10  
Benson MN  
56215

**We're on the web!**  
**[www.swiftcounty.com](http://www.swiftcounty.com)**

*Swift County - A great place  
to live, work and do business.*

## Information and Training Opportunities

**Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Swift County:** Mark Stiegel, CPA, from the SBDC in St. Cloud is available by appointment the first and third Tuesday of each month. He can meet with you at your business or at the Courthouse. Contact the Swift County RDA office for an appointment at 320-842-4769 or 888-843-4769 (toll free) or e-mail at [grow@co.swift.mn.us](mailto:grow@co.swift.mn.us).

**BizPathways.org:** This is a web site with oodles of information for entrepreneurs at every stage of business. For an annual fee of \$52.00 you can access help in developing a business plan, a marketing plan, meet other entrepreneurs on-line, find out about events of interest to you and your business, and much more. Check out the website or contact MN Rural Partners at 651-645-9403 or e-mail them at [info@minnesotaruralpartners.org](mailto:info@minnesotaruralpartners.org).

**Customized Training for Business Employees:** The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System is committed to supporting economic growth throughout the state. The system's state universities and community and technical colleges provide career preparation and continuing career education for more Minnesotans than any other organization in the state. By providing customized training, the system helps employers stay competitive and workers advance their skills and manage career changes. For more information about customized training opportunities contact Wendy Meyer, the Southwest Region Coordinator, at 507-372-3493 or 800-657-3966 (toll free), or by e-mail at [Wendy.Meyer@mnwest.edu](mailto:Wendy.Meyer@mnwest.edu).