

*City of Madelia, Minnesota*

# MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

2018



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Madelia Economic Development Resiliency Plan was made possible through the dedication of residents, community ambassadors, elected officials, and city staff. A special thank you to the many residents, businesses, organizations, community groups, and other stakeholders who participated in the creation of this plan. Your input, energy, and ideas enriched the planning process and helped set a course for the future of Madelia.

## Madelia City Council

Mike Grote, *Mayor*  
Larry Schickling  
Andy Gappa  
Dave Whitney  
John Nelson

## Madelia City Staff

Jane Piepgras, *City Administrator*  
Christine Fischer, *Assistant City Administrator*  
Samantha Crowley, *Utility Billing Clerk*

## Madelia Community Ambassadors

Karla Angus	Sylvia Kunz
Traci Henry	Tracy McCabe
Brad Krier	Tom Osborne
Joeleen Krier	James Rankin



## Region Nine Development Commission Staff



The Madelia Economic Development Resiliency Plan and Marketing and Communications Strategy was also made possible through the generous support of the U.S. Economic Development Administration, *Federal Award ID Number: ED16CHI3030045* and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, *Grant No: SPAP-16-0021-P-FY17*.

**Adopted September 24, 2018**

The background of the page is a photograph of a tree trunk on the left, showing a metal support structure with bolts. To the right, there is a trellis system for a vineyard with green leaves and yellow markers. The top of the page has an orange header bar.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 Introduction
- 4 State of Communications
- 5 Completed Research
- 7 Community Assets and Target Markets
- 8 Goals and Strategies
- 10 Marketing Campaign and Media Advertisement Costs

# INTRODUCTION

The City of Madelia has undergone a multi-tiered planning process with the goal to diversify and strengthen Madelia's local economy. This process included the development of a comprehensive plan that provided the foundation for economic resiliency. Leveraging the comprehensive plan and the economic resiliency plan will help move the community towards economic prosperity; however, the city recognizes the need for a dedicated branding and marketing effort to successfully attract new residents, businesses, and tourists.

The City of Madelia has an abundance of marketable assets. For example, Madelia is already home to large scale manufacturing, unique-niche small businesses, and is perceived as being a welcoming community. There is also opportunity to further engage the vibrant, ethnic community that is growing within the city.

One of the biggest tasks the City of Madelia will encounter is defining its brand which has been diluted by inconsistency throughout the community and region. To do this effectively, the city will need to designate an individual to implement and manage the strategies within this marketing plan. A dedicated and centralized effort to controlling accuracy, consistency and frequency of Madelia's marketing will be most effective in regaining control of the city's brand.

This marketing strategy is the action plan for carrying out professional, best practice marketing for the City of Madelia. It includes an overview of completed research, identified target industries, goals and strategies that the city can realistically implement within its budget and available resources. This plan focuses on marketing and communications strategies that strengthen citizen engagement and broader recommendations to help the city increase awareness of community assets statewide. If implemented consistently, this will lead to increased economic growth. The marketing strategy aims to answer the following questions:

1. How can the city solicit better citizen engagement to foster support for economic development initiatives?
2. What are the marketable assets of Madelia?
3. How can Madelia increase awareness to those assets to attract site-selecting agencies, tourists, entrepreneurs, prospective new residents, and commerce?

The strategies in this plan lay the foundation for a successful branding and marketing effort that can be expanded and matured over time. By implementing this plan and committing to a consistent and agile marketing and branding effort, the City of Madelia will be well positioned to realize its long-term vision.

When looking at how a community can successfully market itself, you first need to look at how the city is communicating internally to existing residents and businesses. Retaining residents and businesses is important for community vitality. Effective communications strategies can assist in retainment efforts and help to engage these groups. Engaged citizen can help build community pride, stimulate the local economy, and become better stewards of the place they call home.

Shifting the focus to an external audience, city branding plays an important role in economic development marketing. Cities are branded every day by its citizens, visitors, workers, and tourists based on their experiences and interactions with community assets. Having a strong consistent city brand already in place prevents misbranding of the community. In today's world, broad generic claims are not effective for a city brand. Well executed city brands are specific and address the positive assets, resources, destinations, and cultural offerings of the community.

Once a brand is established, target audiences should be identified. Marketing strategies and messaging used to promote the city will differ between each audience segment. Commonly used channels of promotion across all audiences, however, are websites, search engines, and digital platforms. Relationships also play a key role in influencing new residents, businesses, and tourists.

## CURRENT STATE OF COMMUNICATIONS

### Communication Vehicles

The City of Madelia uses the following channels to communicate to its audience.

**Social Media:** The City of Madelia uses one social media platform, Facebook. News, videos, pictures and features are published on this page weekly. Various city departments also have their own Facebook accounts. Below is a list of the all city owned Facebook pages and their followers:

City of Madelia	392
Madelia Police Department	1,331
Madelia Fire Department	548
Madelia Community Ambulance Service	189
Madelia Swimming Pool	703
Madelia Golf Club	312

**E-mail:** The city also utilizes MailChimp to communicate to subscribers via e-mail. These e-mails are sent monthly.

**Website:** The city recently updated to a new responsive website. The website gives citizens a convenient way to find information about city services, codes, and announcements.

**Printed Materials:** The city distributes printed materials to communicate information and programs to the public. These include newspaper announcements, utility bill inserts, brochures, and flyers.

**Cable Channel:** The cable channel, MCTV, is broadcast on Comcast Cable, channel 14. It provides announcements for community and business events. The city council meetings are broadcast live twice a month.

**CodeRED:** The city utilizes the CodeRED public alert and warning system. Messages can be sent from the system via text, call, or email.

Equally important are the City of Madelia’s channels that allow the city to actively listen to and engage with its residents, businesses, and partners. Here are the primary means by which audiences can communicate with the City of Madelia:

**City Council Meetings:** The City of Madelia provides opportunities for public comment during the regularly scheduled city council meetings. The meeting notices and dates are readily available, and the meeting venue is accessible.

**City Hall:** The Madelia City Hall is in the heart of Madelia. The office is open Monday thru Thursday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Three full-time staff are available to assist the public via phone, e-mail, or in-person.

**Special Events:** Throughout the year the City of Madelia finds opportunities to engage with the public by

holding special events such as resource fairs or open houses. This provides a unique way for the citizens to learn about the opportunities the city has to offer outside of regular business hours.

**Social Media Channels:** The city administered social media channels allowing for public comments and direct messages. They are monitored regularly for questions and comments that relate to city services. A great degree of engagement and customer service can happen in these online spaces.

## COMPLETED RESEARCH

To fully understand the existing conditions, a brand and marketing audit was performed along with a situational analysis in which internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats were closely examined. Interviews with residents, business owners, and tourists were also conducted to gain further insights.

A brand and marketing audit takes a thorough evaluation of the city's marketing environment, objectives, strategies, and activities with a view to determine opportunities and problem areas. This type of audit also helps to determine the strength of the city's brand as well as any weaknesses or inconsistencies. This audit informed the goals and strategies of this plan. The following is a summary of the audit findings.

### Logo/Colors

The City of Madelia's logo was last updated ten years ago during a re-branding effort completed by the city. The logo incorporates a sunrise over a prairie with a pheasant in the forefront in black and orange shades. During the audit, inconsistencies on branded materials were found with the logo hues and design. This can cause confusion to the audience when trying to identify the City of Madelia.

### Tagline

Taglines are a powerful way to communicate the city's brand message. Consistent use of the tagline can be a key factor in a brand strategy success. Overtime, the City of Madelia has inherited three prominent taglines that, through the audit process, were found on various marketing materials, both print and online. Those three include: *Experience the Four Seasons in Madelia*, *Pheasant Capital of Minnesota*, and *Pride of the Prairie*. Each tagline has its own embedded message and meaning:

*Experience the Four Seasons* boasts a robust year-round experience where each season is defined by their own activities. This would include diversified recreational activities complimenting each of the seasons such as golfing in the spring, swimming in the summer, hunting in the fall, and snowmobiling in the winter.

*Pheasant Capital of Minnesota* implies a rich pheasant environment with public access land that could attract hunters and wildlife enthusiasts. This also would hold an expectation for the community to have amenities to support those enthusiasts.

*Pride of the Prairie* paints an image of a vibrant community nestled in the heart of the prairie land. It gives the perception that those who live within the community are proud of, and take pride in, their city.

### Website

A website is a key component to a city's brand and communication strategies. Residents and business owners

in a community can use a website to access information easily. This can reduce the amount of city staff time answering questions in person or over the phone. Site selectors, tourists, and potential residents can also use a city's website to aide in their decision-making process. A well-designed website can create a memorable experience for the user and help a city to stand out against competition.

The City of Madelia's website was updated within the past two years. The current site provides city updates and news, resource materials for city code and ordinances, a city calendar, and information on city services. The site is mobile friendly and has some accessibility features. After a thorough analysis some areas for improvements were identified which include:

- Updating the menu system to be a simpler format
- Completing content throughout the site, for example the economic development page
- Highlighting the city assets to attract tourism and businesses looking to relocate
- Addressing frequently asked questions the city receives via phone calls on the website
- Adding city meeting agendas and minutes in a searchable form
- Ensuring the website is up-to-date with ADA compliance standards
- Implementing an easy to use translation system on the site for Spanish

Updating the site to address these issues and enhance the overall user experience is suggested.

## **Social Media**

Facebook is the only form of social media that the City of Madelia utilizes. The City of Madelia's Facebook page had 393 fans as of January 2018. In comparison, cities similar to Madelia in the Midwest average 800 fans. From June to December of 2017, the City of Madelia had 57 posts on its page. Shared content from city partners made up 49 percent of the posts. Of the total posts, 89 percent had low interaction levels from the community, between zero and 14 likes or shares. Low interaction can be a result of the lack of original content, type of content, and number of established fans.

Various city departments also have their own Facebook accounts. As of January 2018, the combined Facebook presence for the City of Madelia was more than 3,400 followers. To maximize on this following, the city may want to combine some of the accounts, such as the public safety departments. Also, using unified branding would help to clearly identify these accounts as part of the city.

## **Community Input**

To gather information on the current communications environment in Madelia, community members, business owners, and other local stakeholders were surveyed at community events and during one-on-one interviews. The responses brought to light barriers the city faces with communication. Most commonly mentioned was the difficulty to communicate to the diverse resident audience. The city's diverse age, 30 percent being 55+ and 36 percent being under 24, poses a challenge in the unique way both age groups listen. The city will need to utilize different strategies to target these audiences. Another challenge related to the diverse community is the language barrier for the growing Hispanic and Latino population which makes up 25 percent of the city. Translation services should play a key role in the city's communication to address this barrier.

Aside from these barriers, those surveyed had many positive things to say about the community. These four themes emerged from the responses:

1. Madelia is a welcoming, safe, and family-friendly community.
2. Madelia is a small town that carries a wealth of opportunity.
3. Madelia has a vibrant, ethic community.
4. Madelia is a very independent community and there is great pride in this.

## COMMUNITY ASSETS

To begin to market the City of Madelia effectively to new residents and expanding and relocating businesses, the promotable assets of the community must be identified. The top marketable assets that have been identified for the purpose of this plan are:

- Low property taxes
- Shorter travel time to work for those living in Madelia
- Low crime rates
- Established manufacturing base and workforce
- Stable economic base with low unemployment
- Affordable housing
- Access to community facilities, including a community hospital
- Recreational facilities including a pool, trails, and park
- Close proximity to major highways and rail access
- Local entertainment such as golfing, movie theater, and sporting events

These assets should be prominently displayed in marketing materials especially online. The website will play a vital role in highlighting these attributes.

## TARGET MARKETS

There are many diverse “customers” for the City of Madelia and each require their own set of communications approaches. These customers range from residents to the city council, community leaders, tourists, local businesses, and potential businesses. The goals in this marketing strategy have been designed to establish a base line for addressing the needs of all of these diverse customers. Future marketing strategies should begin to focus on each of the marketing segments listed below:

**Existing Customers:** This includes the current residents, businesses, and community leaders within the City of Madelia. Community engagement from reach of these groups is key to the overall success of the community. Ensuring specific communications strategies are targeted directly to this market segment can help in the continuation of increased community engagement and support. It is important to also remember the diversity that exists inside this market segment including, but not limited to, age, ethnicity, and income.

**Potential Long-Term Customers:** New residents and businesses in a community can provide new life and economic diversity that will help the city prosper. Marketing to this group should focus on highlighting the assets and incentives Madelia can offer. It will be important to know which type of resident and businesses that will be most appropriate to target. For example, are the available properties well suited for call centers or manufacturing companies?

**Tourists:** Ongoing advertising plans and campaigns should be established to reach tourists. With the many local events and amenities, plus proximity to major highways, Madelia has a lot to offer tourists. Partnering with neighboring communities can also be a benefit to draw people from further away to visit the *region* for day trips or longer stays.

## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The goals and strategies in this plan will create a baseline for the City of Madelia to enhance its communications efforts. Focusing on internal communication throughout the city is just as important as its external communication to future residents, business, and tourists. When good communication is established internally, the current citizens, businesses, and local leaders will become advocates for the community to their friends and family outside of Madelia.

**Goal: Create a unified brand for the City of Madelia that is relevant, relatable, and recognizable to build awareness of the city locally, regionally, and nationally.**

Strategy: Ensure consistent use of the city's logo and brand organization-wide and by city partner organizations.

- Develop a style guide, set standards for the writing and design of documents, for the City of Madelia and disburse internally and to all partners
- Adopt one official logo and slogan for the city that accurately portrays the community
- Update city welcome signs to reflect the new style guide and community branding
- Utilize the city brand for all city owned municipalities (e.g. golf course and liquor store)

Strategy: Instill one voice for the City of Madelia and encourage community partners (e.g. chamber and newspaper) to use similar branding that pairs well with the city's.

Strategy: Create branded documents to highlight the assets and opportunities of the community to draw in new residents and businesses, e.g. flyers, commercials, radio ads, billboards, etc.

Strategy: Develop and implement a marketing campaign to highlight the City of Madelia and draw in new residents and businesses.

**Goal: Communicate city news and information in a timely, transparent, and accurate manner so that residents, businesses, visitors, and city employees are knowledgeable about what is happening in Madelia.**

Strategy: Broaden the reach and impact of the city's storytelling.

- Provide meaningful, diverse and conversational content for the website, newspaper and social media to showcase the good things happening around Madelia and in city government
- Create a marketing calendar to better coordinate coverage of City of Madelia events, projects, and information.
- Create an inclusive environment by translating city news into Spanish
- Utilize the community ambassadors to promote city events and initiatives

Strategy: Use established channels to demonstrate Madelia city government's effectiveness.

- Provide context in all content about city strategies and long-term projects

- Enhance the city’s social media presence by posting on the city’s social media channels at least three times per week
- Send out a monthly city newsletter highlighting city council priorities, project updates, community events, employee spotlights, etc

Strategy: Maintain open and transparent communication for all city customers.

- Conduct communications on multiple platforms to reach and engage the widest audience
- Ensure residents can easily find ways to contact city employees, access meetings, and find documents
- Hold a city open house twice a year to inform residents of services and important resources

**Goal: Explore and utilize multiple technologies to enhance the delivery of the City of Madelia’s communication.**

Strategy: Continue the development and enhancement of the city’s website to boost its use and engagement.

- Update the website to create a more user-friendly experience and add additional features to attract residents to use the website as a resource
- Become more inclusive by ensuring the website is American with Disabilities Act compliant and utilize built-in multilingual translation tools
- Strategically place information that may be important to site selectors throughout the website
- Create real estate listings for office and industrial properties, even for unimproved commercial or industrial land
- Annually conduct user experience audits of the website to assist in periodic updates
- Ensure all pages within the website have relevant, fresh content that are utilizing search engine optimization strategies to increase the visibility of the web page in web search engines

Strategy: Create greater transparency and increase resident engagement by promoting city council meetings through online channels.

- Provide city council agendas and meeting minutes on the city website
- Use Facebook live, public access, or other services, to live stream city council meetings

Strategy: Provide increased coordination between the City of Madelia social media accounts and the social media accounts of the city’s departments and partner organizations to provide greater awareness of city information.

**Goal: Be a welcoming and inclusive community that responds quickly, effectively, and efficiently to resident’s needs.**

Strategy: Develop and promote methods for the City of Madelia to listen to resident’s needs.

- Implement a satisfaction survey and distribute on an annual basis
- Encourage engagement on social media platforms to provide feedback to the city

Strategy: Embrace and promote the minority cultures in the community.

- Contract with a translator and outreach specialist to encourage engagement from local minority populations
- Create partnerships between the city and minority organizations to hold awareness building events

# MARKETING CAMPAIGN

CAMPAIGN TYPE	PROJECT GOALS	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
<b>Local Marketing</b>				
Newspaper	Create a unified brand for the City of Madelia that is relevant, relatable, and recognizable to build awareness of the city locally, regionally, and nationally.	Establish in-kind partnerships to increase exposure and recognition.	Promote local events, community activities, etc.	Create targeted campaigns for community activities and local events.
Flyers	Create a unified brand for the City of Madelia that is relevant, relatable, and recognizable to build awareness of the city locally, regionally, and nationally.	Promote local events, council priorities, project updates, etc. and place in prominent areas in the community.	Continue to promote events, council priorities, project updates, etc. and place in prominent areas as well as digitally on website, email, etc.	Continue to promote events, council priorities, project updates, etc. and place in prominent areas as well as digitally on website, email, etc.
<b>Public Relations</b>				
Public Events	Be a welcoming and inclusive community that responds quickly, effectively and efficiently to resident's needs.	Encourage engagement on social media platforms to provide feedback to the city.	Contract with a translator and outreach specialist to encourage engagement from local minority populations.	Create partnerships between the city and minority organizations to hold awareness building events.
Press Releases	Create greater transparency and increase resident engagement.	Create branded documents to highlight the assets and opportunities of the community to draw in new residents and businesses.	Provide context in all content about city strategies and long-term projects.	Create an inclusive environment by translating city news into Spanish.
<b>Content Marketing</b>				
Sponsored Content	Broaden the reach and impact of the city's storytelling.	Ensure residents can easily find ways to contact city employees, access meetings and find documents.	Hold a city open house twice a year to inform residents of services and important resources.	Utilize the community ambassadors to promote city events and initiatives.
<b>Social Media</b>				
Facebook	Enhance the city's social media presence by posting on the city's social media channels.	Post meaningful content 3 times per week. Experiment with photo and video content.	Post meaningful content at least 3 times per week. Interact with other pages at least 2 times per week. (commenting or sharing posts)	Build a social media calendar of important events, holidays, etc. that will help dictate content posted. Continue posting and interacting at least 3 times per week.
<b>Online</b>				
Website	Continue the development and enhancement of the city's website to boost its use and engagement.	Update the website to create a more user-friendly experience and add additional features to attract residents to use the website as a resource.	Become more inclusive by ensuring the website is American with Disabilities Act compliant and utilize built-in multilingual translation tools.	Annually conduct user experience audits of the website to assist in periodic updates.
Email Newsletter	Send out a city newsletter highlighting city council priorities, project updates, community events, employee spotlights, etc.	Send out a quarterly newsletter highlighting city council priorities, project updates, and other relevant information.	Send out monthly newsletter highlights city council priorities, project updates, employee spotlights, and other relevant information.	Continue sending out monthly newsletter and build a community calendar highlighting community events and upcoming projects.
<b>Advertising</b>				
Outdoor	Ensure consistent use of the city's logo and brand organization-wide and by city partner organizations.	Develop a style guide, set standards for the writing and design of documents, for the City of Madelia and disburse internally and to all partners.	Update city welcome signs to reflect the new style guide and community branding.	Utilize the city brand for all city owned municipalities (e.g. golf course and liquor store).
Radio	Create a unified brand for the City of Madelia that is relevant, relatable, and recognizable to build awareness of the city locally, regionally, and nationally.	Establish in-kind partnerships to increase exposure for city events, etc.	Promote local events, community activities, etc.	Create targeted campaigns for community activities and local events.

# MEDIA ADVERTISEMENT COSTS

Madelia Advertisement Costs			
	<b>Dioramas</b>		
<b>MSP Airport</b>	\$4,400		
<b>Mall of America</b>	\$750-\$2500		
	<b>Bulletins (Large Billboards)</b>	<b>Posters (Medium Billboards)</b>	<b>Junior Posters (Small Billboards)</b>
<b>Billboard - Hwy 169</b>	\$1,500 - \$5,000 Average per Ad/Month	\$700 - \$3,000 Average per Ad/Month	\$300 - \$800 Average per Ad/Month
	<b>94.5 KS95</b>	<b>102.9 BUZN</b>	
<b>Twin Cities Radio</b>	\$173 for 30 second Ad-contacted	\$173 for 30 second Ad - contacted	
<b>Mankato Movie Theaters</b>	\$450-\$1500		
	<b>4 sheet (60"w x 40"h)</b>	<b>8 sheet (60"w x 80"h)</b>	<b>32 sheet (160"w x 120"h)</b>
<b>Digital Billboards in Mankato - 1 Month</b>	\$187.40 - \$609.06	\$281.11 - \$702.77	\$702.77 - \$1,874.04
	<b>Visitor Guides</b>		
<b>Visit Mankato</b>	Free		



**City of Madelia**  
116 West Main, Madelia, MN 56062  
**(507) 642-3245 | [madeliamn.org](http://madeliamn.org)**