

Executive Director Participates in ACE

Region Nine Executive Director Nicole Griensewic recently took part in the Americas Competitiveness Exchange (ACE) Louisiana. A few of the objectives of ACE are to support economic recovery, boost job creation, and nurture business development throughout the Americas.

The week-long event brought together governmental, business, and educational leaders from around the globe. The participants had the opportunity to share ideas and promote their respective regions while developing relationships and strategic partnerships. Some of the areas of focus were workforce development, Latin American and Hispanic business ownership, and biotech/health tech innovation startups.



In this photo: Region Nine Executive Director Nicole Griensewic and U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Alejandra Y. Castillo

ACE was created in 2014 by the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of State and the Organization of American States (OAS) to showcase successful examples of entrepreneurship, innovation, strategic investments and public-private partnerships from a specific region/country that contribute to economic development at the local, regional, and national levels. ACE activities are selected to further advance commerce, trade and investment between participating economies, accelerate business opportunities, and promote collaboration among stakeholders.

NUBRIC Launching in May, Names Paul Wessel New Director



New Ulm Business Resource and Innovation Center (NUBRIC) is launching in May. NUBRIC, formerly known as the New Ulm Economic Development Corporation, works to promote economic growth in New Ulm by attracting new businesses to the area and providing resources to existing businesses.

In April, NUBRIC named Paul Wessel as the new director. Wessel has spent the last 31 years involved in industrial and healthcare automation. During this time, he has been issued six United States patents with five more patents pending, and has been given multiple awards throughout his career. Wessel was recently interviewed by Region Nine.

What drew you to the automation field?

I started my career in a metal fabrication shop who built electrical control panels for machine tools. This was about the time the CNC controls were being introduced into the marketplace and I was drawn to the possibilities that computer controlled machinery could contribute to manufacturing so I learned as much as I could about them. I then began assembling the electrical control panels that housed the programmable logic controllers for the automated machinery. Eventually, I learned how to program in ladder logic and then onto working with robotics in a manufacturing environment.

What brought you to New Ulm?

I've always kept an eye on what was going on in New Ulm as I still have family and friends here. I was so fortunate to have had friendships and acquaintances that had a profound impact on the manufacturing industry in New Ulm. I thought now might be the time to draw from the lessons I learned throughout my global career in automation and robotics; as well as an inventor and entrepreneur in the medical device field, to see how we might be able to jumpstart some initiatives in New Ulm.

When will NUBRIC be launching?

NUBRIC unofficially launched the first of the year, but its operational structure and mission has been around since 1954 when New Ulm Industries was founded, a private economic development corporation to attract new manufacturing businesses to New Ulm. Our official launch will be in mid-May. At that time, you'll hear about different initiatives we've identified are pursuing.

How do you think your previous experiences will benefit NUBRIC?

I've been blessed to have held executive roles in fortune 100 companies as well as starting several medical companies from scratch. I believe that I can equally relate and understand the corporate mindset as well as offer guidance and assistance to startup business. I'm thankful to have been involved in global business acquisitions, private label agreements, and working with automation original equipment manufacturers and manufacturing partners all over the world.

What opportunities for economic and community development do you see for the New Ulm area?

For the past three months, it's been pretty much an informational deep dive to assess where our businesses are. Currently, like most other businesses, worker and day care shortages are having a profound impact on our companies. While we are working collaboratively with industry, NPO, and our city government to help solve these issues, I also want to look deeper to see how we can assist to position our corporately owned companies to be favorably considered for expansion, how we can connect our mid-sized manufacturers with new customers or discuss new ways of adding value to the products currently being produced.

I also think is naive to think that New Ulm can stand alone in rural economic development so I'll be looking regionally to see we might collaborate with neighboring cities to provide something unique and compelling for our industry.

What goals do you have for NUBRIC?

It was really helpful reviewing the history of this organization, which was really formed out of necessity. You see, the largest employer (over 400) up until 1950 was Eagle Roller Mill - the second largest wheat mill in Minnesota. However, when row crops were introduced to our area, corn and soybeans crops became more popular and profitable for the farmers in this area to plant, the smaller grain crops were relocated for being planted in other plain states; negatively impacting the employment of Eagle Roller Mill in New Ulm. So, a group of 39 New Ulm businessmen got together, formed a corporation called New Ulm Industries, and raised \$100,000 in cash and stock - which today is the equivalent of nearly \$1,000,000. These funds were used to build a large manufacturing building intended to attract a manufacturing company to town. I truly admire these men and women who demonstrated a deep love of community and literally, put their money where their heart was.

Our first goal is to reignite that spirit and love of community and do those things necessary that companies will want to locate here. New Ulm has a very unique and valuable history within the manufacturing industry.

Our second goal is to continually remind our city that from a business perspective, there have been many sons and daughters raised in New Ulm who have gone on to have spectacular careers in technology, medical devices, broadband communications, internet security, printing, and the like. All of these people have a deep appreciation for the community in which they were raised; where work ethic was respected and taught, where precision and quality control were paramount to producing a good product. Some of these individuals have agreed to sit on NUBRIC's advisory board to help guide our direction and decision making.

Our third goal will be to assist with organically growing new business in New Ulm. New Ulm is a great community in which to live which leads into the SPARK Initiative.

Tell us about the SPARK Initiative?

The SPARK Initiative is an effort to assemble companies that offer support services that are essential to a new business. Currently we have legal firms, printing companies, and digital marketing firms that have committed to become part of the SPARK Alliance. NUBRIC can also assist with determining the correct corporate structure to operate, recruitment of board members, and assist with intellectual property protection.

Any last thoughts?

NUBRIC and the City of New Ulm continues to benefit from the efforts of those men and women who, nearly 70 years ago, had a vision for New Ulm. I believe that is an admirable goal to pursue. Someone once said, "always leave a place better than it was when you came" - that's what drives us.

Take the City of Eagle Lake Survey

The City of Eagle Lake has partnered with Region Nine to create a strategic plan and we need to hear from you! If you are a resident of Eagle Lake, please take a few minutes to share your opinion by clicking the button below.



[Take the Survey](#)

The CARES Act

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act

CARES Act Loans Available - 0% Interest for the First Two Years

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (2020) provides direct economic assistance for workers, families, small businesses, and industries. CARES Act Loans offer 0% interest rates for two years and 2% interest for the remainder of the loan. These loans can be used for real estate, machinery, inventory, working capital, building improvements, and operating expenses.

This is a limited opportunity as funds remain available. See the website for more information and how to apply.

Learn More



Region Nine is Hiring!

Region Nine currently has employment opportunities for a Lending Specialist and an Associate Planner. Click the button below to find out more and how to apply.

Apply Now



Register for "No Mow May"

For the month of May, Mankato is running the "No Mow May" program to promote early season pollinators by allowing grass to grow. The City of Mankato will temporarily suspend its ordinance requiring homeowners to keep their grass under 12 inches.

To participate in this pilot program, click the button below.

Register Here

Farmfest Accepting Woman of the Year Nominations

Minnesota Farmfest is accepting applications for the 2022 Woman Farmer of the Year. The award recognizes the efforts of female farmers whose work not only impacts the income, yield, diversification of their farm, but is also has a positive impact on their community.

Nominations will be accepted until May 20. A committee will choose five finalists to be named on June 3 and the winner will be announced August 4 during Farmfest. The winner will receive a \$1,000 cash prize.

To find out more and to make a nomination, click the button below. Minnesota Farmfest runs from August 2-4 in Redwood County, MN.

Learn More

CERTS Given 2022 Environmental Initiative Award

Minnesota's Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTS) was presented with a 2022 Environmental Initiative Award for their work with manufactured home parks. The Environmental Initiative Awards recognize programs that focus on a healthy environment, a prosperous economy, and an equitable society.



[Learn more about CERTs work with manufactured homes.](#)

In the Media



MNSU Strategic Partnership Center Awarded Launch MN Grant [-Read More](#)

Leading Sibley Together Is Now Taking Applications For The 2022-2023 Program [-Read More](#)

Watonwan Cty. volunteers recognized during volunteer appreciation [-Read More](#)

\$\$ Grant Opportunities \$\$

EDA Build to Scale Program

The U.S. Economic Development Administration Build to Scale Program is making \$45 million in federal funds available to build regional economies through scalable startups. The program is focused on technology based economic initiatives that work to create high-skill, high-wage jobs, and building the industries of the future.

Deadline: June 13

[Learn More](#)

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development - Launch Minnesota Grant

Launch Minnesota Innovation Grants, target innovative and scalable businesses in Minnesota. Grants are available in the following categories:

- Innovation Grants
- SBIR/STTR Matching Grants

Deadline: On Going

[Learn More](#)

Calendar of Events

May 11: [RNDC Board of Directors Meeting](#)

June 1: [RNDC Board of Directors Meeting](#)

June 15: [RNDC Full Commission Meeting](#)



About Region Nine

Region Nine Development Commission takes great pride in working with and on behalf of counties, cities, townships, and schools throughout South Central Minnesota. Since 1972, being a partner for progress has led to the development of programs and identification of solutions in the areas of economic development, business development, healthy communities, transportation, community development, and leveraging regional

resources. To learn more about our work and mission, visit www.rndc.org.

Follow Region Nine on social media to stay up-to-date on events, news, and more!

