

ADVANTAGE . . . EVERYONE !!!

The phrase “*Uniting our Region for a Vibrant Future*” is much more than just a tagline for the **Advantage Alexandria** initiative that is presently underway. It is a focused and timely outcome that a group of citizens representing Douglas County communities is pursuing. It is the lifeline for a vibrant west central Minnesota and a vision for economic vitality – throughout all of our communities, small and large - that will rival any in the northern tier states.

By working together, connecting our small and large communities, and identifying what their special niche might be in the next 10 – 25 years, we will be well positioned for the challenges of the 21st century. Our small town education systems – in Brandon, Evansville, and Parkers Prairie must stay strong and play a critical role in those and all of our communities. The health care systems and services in Osakis, Glenwood, and Starbuck will continue to enhance the lives of those needing services in and around those communities. And the manufacturing companies, banks, and restaurants in Villard, Miltona, Carlos, Millerville, Forada, Kensington, and the rest of our small, regional communities will continue to provide important employment and social opportunities.

The “spoke and wheel” analogy is very appropriate for this initiative. While the hub of much of the economic vitality of this region is Alexandria, without spokes, the wheel does not function. Our small, regional communities make up the spokes of a well-honed wheel that will continue to turn faster, more efficiently, and drive an economy that is healthier than any other region in rural Minnesota.

We’ve been blessed with many wonderful things in west central Minnesota . . . transportation corridors, lakes and other natural resources and telecommunication networks to name just a few. But most important are the people who live and work here – those who have invested in the businesses and industries that drive our quality of life . . . in our small *and* large communities. By working together as we look to align the building blocks of the future for west central Minnesota, everyone will win!

Dr. Kevin Kopischke, President
Alexandria Technical College