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Green legacy

By Troy Krause, Editor

After the voters of Minnesota passed the Constitutional amendment adding three-eighths of one percent to the sales tax collected for the next 25 years, the wheels were set in motion determining how best to spend those dollars. With an estimated \$270 million set aside annually to fund projects in four major categories – the outdoors, clean water, arts and humanities and parks and trails – there is certainly money to be had for those willing to make the effort to develop proposals.

One group from the local area that has been putting together a proposal for some of the 33 percent of the funds for the outdoors is known as the Green Corridor Legacy. The premise behind this group is to address a future need of the area – the economy – by enhancing tourism opportunities along the Minnesota River. The idea is to use funding allocated to it to purchase easements on land along the river. Those easements would then create more access on publicly owned land to the beautiful area we know as the Minnesota River Valley. The Green Corridor Legacy has received funds in the past from the LCCMR, and could do a lot of good for the tourism industry by creating access for hunters and anglers in areas where fish and wildlife could be found in abundance.

We think this is the kind of project that makes a lot of sense when it comes to utilizing those dollars from the amendment.

It is our hope the council established to allocate these funds seriously considers the Green Corridor Legacy for long-term funding. As project coordinator Brad Cobb said during a recent meeting, one can only imagine the kind of impact 25 years of funding could have on the river valley. This is a vision that goes well beyond our generation by creating something for our children and grandchildren.

It is also our hope when the council does make its recommendations, which ought to demonstrate balance statewide (including southern Minnesota), like the LCCMR council, the legislature abides by those suggestions.

It is also our hope other similar councils are created to be allocated funding for the other three allocation categories.

Perhaps in the not so distant future, state historical societies could receive funding from the arts portion to help better tell the story of the state's history.

We encourage those of you with ideas for this funding take time to get involved with the process. Even if your idea gets rejected the first time, there are still chances for the next two and a half decades to make a difference.

Posted with permission from Pat Schmidt, Publisher, Redwood Gazette