



MAXIMIZE NWMO

Dream big and grow together.

REGIONAL STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

UPDATED JANUARY 2023

Executive Summary

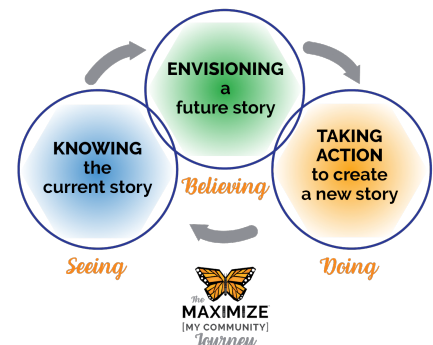
The Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri's regional vitality initiative, Maximize NWMO, has updated its regional comprehensive strategic action plan to capture the evolution of its navigational statements and what is forecasted as the focus for the 2023 through 2025. It also captures a record of progress made on inputs and outputs as well as short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes since 2019. While the quick wins along the journey are primarily process results, the gathering of baseline data, collection of input from many voices across multiple sectors and jurisdictions, engagement of leaders across the 18-county primarily rural region, and other work activity serves as leading indicators to multi-decade economic vitality transformation.

It is worth mentioning that 2020-2021's global COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted regional and local community collaboration efforts. Some things moved along faster than anticipated while others lagged. Overall, the recognition of Maximize NWMO's value significantly increased thanks to the agility and ability to connect people to each other and critical information.

Most visible is the updated branding, launch and growth of online platforms supporting communication needs, and the engagement of over 2,500 voices participating in the Alumni & Resident Survey in 2020, and inclusion of hundreds of people over the last two years who are now committed to projects and various parts of the process of The Maximize [My Community] Journey Framework™ from being advocates and ambassadors to serving as partners and CollaborACTION Team members. The Journey Framework is an adaptation and expansion of the Baldrige-based Communities of Excellence Framework and several other proven collaborative leadership, innovation, and problem-solving approaches. In addition, a group of approximately 30 leaders representing nine communities participated in the first Regional Learning Collaborative in 2021 over 15 sessions as a community collaboration leadership development opportunity. That unique curriculum is being split into two levels of learning along with tools and resources for community coaching and practical application in 2022 and 2023 through Phase 4. Additional resources are also being explored as Phase 5 of the plan for 2024-2025.

Maximize NWMO serves the region in a neutral community development and collaboration support role providing communications, data access, technical assistance and training, as well as coaching support on systems-thinking and community prosperity-building for leaders throughout Northwest Missouri. The initiative's Guiding Coalition including partners from many sectors supports a growing action network of leaders and communities who want to *dream big, decide wisely, and maximize the region's potential by growing together.*

This initiative is made possible through partnerships with Communities of Excellence 2026, the United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA-RD), University of Missouri Extension, Missouri Department of Economic Development, Northwest Missouri State University, JUPER Communications, Rachel Kagay Coaching and Consulting, and Everygy, along with the time, expertise, and the dedication and support of many volunteers, businesses, and organizations.



NAVIGATIONAL STATEMENTS

Vision

Be a model sustainable support system for regional community collaboration.

Mission

Bring Northwest Missouri communities together to dream big, grow leaders, and collaborate across health care, economics, education, and quality of life enabling positive transformation and vitality.

Purpose

Overcome the consequences of long-term economic decline, population loss, and the resulting threats to all sectors by promoting and supporting a spirit of systematic and inclusive action.

Through these efforts, we exist to assist the region, building leadership capability and capacity to sustain successful existing and new community development efforts. Leaders and residents throughout the region are empowered to identify and prioritize challenges, strengths, and opportunities most important to them by following a proven framework that serves to sustain and transform this place where people love to live, learn, work, and play.

Key Values



Resident, Visitor, Stakeholder, and Partner Engagement^{*1}



Integrity, Honesty, and Transparency^{*2}



Open Communication^{*2}



Focus on the Future^{*3}



Building and Sharing Knowledge^{*3}



Community Systems Perspective^{*3}



Encouraging Innovation^{*4}

^{*} Voted on in 2020 by Regional Learning Collaborative and Communications CollaborACTION Team participants, including the Navigation Team Members of Maximize NWMO.

Story Behind the Brand

In early 2020, a team of approximately two dozen representatives – some familiar, and some new to the table – from across the region chose the monarch butterfly to represent this work that started in 2012.



Like the monarchs, our population is challenged.

In the case of the monarch, a concerted effort of many people learning about ways to help, slightly changing some of the habits they didn't realize were causing a problem, and the resiliency of monarch butterflies themselves, we are slowly seeing their population stabilize to rise.

We live in a beautiful region in the heart, soul and crossroads of the country. **There is hope.**

The same can happen for us in northwest Missouri.

By **dreaming big and growing together**, our region's population and prosperity can rise again.



Additional Values

- Visionary Community Leadership
- Valuing Diversity and Inclusiveness
- Agility
- Measuring Performance
- Mutual Societal Responsibility
- Focus on Excellence
- Delivering Value and Results

Maximize NWMO Regional Vitality Initiative

OVERALL GOALS | 2020-2070+

SHORT-TERM (1-10 years)

Make community development resources for systems leadership capacity- and capability-building available to all 18 counties of Northwest Missouri by 2025 with at least 360 people engaged in programs by 2030.

Specifically, expand the impact and sustainability of Maximize NWMO™ over generations in Northwest Missouri through the promotion and facilitation of its Maximize [My Community] Journey Framework™ as a service to, and support for, leaders of cross-sector local community development, cross-jurisdictional regional community development, and collaborACTION initiatives in communities, counties, the region, and beyond by 2030.

Expanded use of The Maximize [My Community] Journey Framework™ and approaches to community development and innovative leadership learning resources created by and adapted for Maximize NWMO in other surrounding areas will serve to financially support in part ongoing efforts throughout Northwest Missouri.

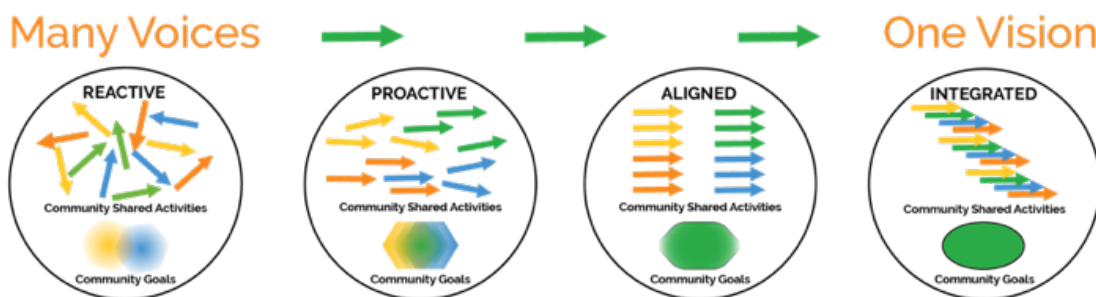
MID-TERM (1-3 decades)

Inspire our region to keep and bring innovative talent and intelligent risk-takers to the primarily rural region of Northwest Missouri who contribute to the economic vitality, health and safety, educational attainment, and quality of life of the region's residents to maintain 2020 population numbers over the next several decades.

LONG-TERM (1-5+ decades)

Enjoy a thriving region, vibrant communities, and prosperous people who are focused on collaborACTING across all sectors and counties to maximize the collective potential of Northwest Missouri as evidenced by multi-sectoral and multi-jurisdictional data improving each decade chosen by a regional Guiding Coalition of partners.

Ultimately, move the region from being reactive to proactive, aligned, and integrated where it makes sense by building on each other's combined strengths and assets to attain common goals that cannot as effectively or efficiently be attained alone.



Local and regional communities respecting individual interests while working together on shared needs.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES | 2023-2025

All of the Strategic Action Plan's priorities (strategic objectives), strategies, and tactics align with the three 2020-2070 overall goals. While Maximize NWMO, through its former name of the Regional Vitality Committee of The Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri participating in Communities of Excellence 2026, has been in place since 2012, the phases on the following pages only outline the work that has progressed since 2019 as funding was received and activities implemented. The first three phases are included as summaries for reference of progress. Phase 4 outlines the work planned for the next three years from 2023-2025. The intentions of this plan and the actual timeframes will be implemented at the speed that adequate resources of time, talent, and treasure—*paid and volunteer*—are secured.

The plan includes two strategic objectives and eight strategies that align with key qualitative and quantitative data gathered over the past several years as well as the need for a neutral, non-partisan, and non-political group to fill gaps and uplift existing regional community, economic, and leadership development efforts.

A. Virtual Community Development Leadership Center and Knowledge Support

(Aligned with GOAL 1)

1. **Expand access to next-level leadership programs and technical assistance through a Maximize NWMO Regional Learning Collaborative with at least three participants involved from each county within the primarily rural 18-county region by 2025.**
2. **Create a community and economic development data resource ready for use by active communities 2024 that is a user-friendly access hub to relevant information for decision-making in communities, counties, and the region that aligns with The Maximize [My Community] Journey Framework and the Communities of Excellence 2026 results criteria.**
3. **Establish a community development resource library online, mentorship group, and coaching network that is trained to guide communities of all sizes, prioritizing rural and Northwest Missouri, through The Maximize [My Community] Journey Framework™, by 2025.**

B. Regional Shared Priorities and Innovation Growth through Communications and Action Network Support

(Aligned with GOALS 2 and 3)

1. **Form and support a Guiding Coalition Partner Council in 2023 with participants from multiple sectors and counties while also maintaining a capable and engaged Navigation Team.**
2. **Organize and facilitate regional multi-sector and multi-jurisdictional decision-making and coordinate shared vision projects, events, and continuous growth with greater alignment and integration of regionwide strategic priorities/objectives and collaborative actions across the core areas of health, education, economy, and quality of life towards overall regional vitality.**
3. **As an initial regionwide strategic priority/objective, expand the entrepreneurial ecosystem and pipeline through population retention and growth.**
4. **Launch an annual celebration by Fall 2023 to uplift and sustain the gathering of regional community development strategic priorities, recognize efforts towards progress, and give leaders who are participating in the Regional Learning Collaborative's programs an opportunity to connect in person.**
5. **Implement a strategic integrated communications action plan updated annually to support all Guiding Coalition (Partner Council, Navigation Team, and Network Coordination and Support Team) and Action Network activity with the assistance of contract and volunteer resources through the Communications CollaborACTION Team, a part of Maximize NWMO's Action Network.**

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS BY PHASES | 2023-2025

PHASE 4: ENGAGING PARTNERS AND CULTIVATING COMMUNITY LEADERS FOR COLLABORATION THAT FOSTERS A STRONGER SENSE OF BELONGING AND INNOVATION

The focus of Fiscal Years 2022-2023, 2023-2024, and 2024-2025 will build on the success of Phases 1-3:

Advance the practical application of The Maximize [My Community] Journey Framework™ through partner engagement and expansion of Maximize NWMO's Virtual Center of Community Development and Innovative Leadership Learning

A. Virtual Community Development Leadership Center and Knowledge Support

(Maximize NWMO OFFERINGS - Aligned with GOAL 1)

This strategic objective aligns with Maximize NWMO's first overall goal with the many strategic activities and tactical details that must be accomplished before further work towards other regional comprehensive goals can be attained.

1. **Expand access to next-level leadership programs and technical assistance through a Maximize NWMO Regional Learning Collaborative with at least three participants, who are rural entrepreneurs, manager, and/or informal or formal community leaders, involved from each county within the primarily rural 18-county region by 2025.**
 - a. Develop a short (30-45 minutes) overview online program – The Top 5 Impacts of Community Success – as a free offering online and in-person at least 4 times each year to promote the Regional Learning Collaborative's programs.
 - b. Hold the first-level program – Introduction to Community Excellence: Reaching Common Goals Faster – online in six sessions per offering twice a year and create a self-paced webinar version of the first-level program to be ready to offer by early-2024. *These are social enterprise offerings for fee of Maximize NWMO.*
 - c. Develop and facilitate a second-level program – Building Strong Teams for Community Excellence – interactive online in 12 sessions offered over 12 months as a new annual offering for community / county groups of leaders desiring deeper learning and personalized guidance through The Maximize [My Community] Journey™. *This will be a social enterprise offering for fee of Maximize NWMO.*
 - d. Maintain and promote access to the national community performance excellence network and recognition pathway through Communities of Excellence 2026 and the Baldrige Enterprise through participation in the alumni program, annual conferences

2. **Create a community and economic development data resource ready for use by active communities 2024 that is a user-friendly access hub to relevant information for decision-making in communities, counties, and the region that aligns with The Maximize [My Community] Journey Framework and the Communities of Excellence 2026 results criteria.**
 - a. Establish a team for technical assistance, research, and data analysis support for asset-mapping and strategic action planning on specific multi-sector and/or multi-community/county economic development opportunities raised in discussions with participating communities (i.e. housing, early childhood learning/quality child care, retirement-focused ventures, entrepreneurship launch and innovation centers, tourism, etc.)
 - b. Development of a Customized Search Tool of a comprehensive database containing data from multiple public and private resources aligning with The Maximize [My Community] Journey Framework through a partnership with MU CARES.
 - c. Conduct another round of the Alumni & Resident Survey for a multi-year comparison through a partnership with Maximize NWMO's Communications CollaborACTION Team, MU Exceed, and MU CAFNR for implementation and analysis.
3. **Establish a community development resource library online, mentorship group, and coaching network that is trained to guide communities of all sizes, prioritizing rural and Northwest Missouri, through The Maximize [My Community] Journey Framework™, by 2025.**
 - a. Implement a Community Development Coaching training, playbook and investment to coach at least four community/county groups as they participate in the second-level course and beyond as well as asset-mapping and strategic action planning and implementation of collaborative cross-sector and multi-jurisdictional projects and sustainable processes for ongoing improvement and community development initiatives. *This will be a social enterprise offering for fee of Maximize NWMO.*

B. Regional Shared Priorities and Innovation Growth through Communications and Action Network Support

(MAXIMIZE NWMO ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE - Aligned with GOALS 2 and 3)

This strategic objective is the critical practical application of The Maximize [My Community] Journey Framework™ within Northwest Missouri's communities, counties, and region. The activities included are an essential supportive element for developing leaders, building trust, and expanding engagement. The activities (outputs) in this second section demonstrate how Maximize NWMO is modeling the way for others to follow and/or replicate for success. They also cover administrative, financial management, communications and other operational functions.

- 1. Form and support a Guiding Coalition Partner Council in 2023 with participants from multiple sectors and counties to expand stakeholder participation and sustained engagement while also maintaining a capable and engaged Navigation Team.**
 - a. Build relationships and establish partnerships with key leaders and organizations throughout the region to serve as the advisory governance leg to the three-part Guiding Coalition of Maximize NWMO's distributed leadership model as well as provide resources and the empowerment of time, talent, and/or treasure through their organizations to support the regional vitality initiative. Prospects include:
 - Key and anchor institutions representing healthcare, business, education, and quality of life services
 - Private Foundations and Charitable Trusts
 - Communities and Counties
 - USDA-Rural Development and other Federal agencies
 - Missouri Department of Economic Development (and Division of Tourism) and/or other Missouri governmental departments invested in community development (i.e. Department of Agriculture, Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Health and Senior Services, etc.)
 - Community development organizations within Missouri, the Midwest, and across the United States such as MU Extension, Network Kansas and the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, the Federal Reserve, Kansas State University, the Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance [Great Plains IDEA] including KSU, NDSU, SDSU, and U of Nebraska, and others.
 - b. Ensure the Navigation Team, the oversight and decision-making core team of the three-part Guiding Coalition of Maximize NWMO's distributed leadership model, is resourced through the work of the Resource Development CollaborACTION Team to maintain a stable and sustainable group of talent with established leadership processes and work systems by 2024.

2. **Organize and facilitate regional multi-sector and multi-jurisdictional decision-making and coordinate shared vision projects, events, and continuous growth with greater alignment and integration of regionwide strategic priorities/objectives and collaborative actions across the core areas of health, education, economy, and quality of life towards overall regional vitality.**
 - a. Host Discovery Group gatherings online and in-person as appropriate (2-4 per year) with panels of experts to learn more about what is already being done to address regionwide strategic priorities and what can be done to fill existing gaps. Topics include high-speed broadband, entrepreneurship and small business topics, regional media, regional tourism, community project funding, etc.
 - b. Host or support Dream Big Community Listening Projects (surveys and town hall-style forums) in communities across the region to engage and inform residents and other customers about desires, needs, and opportunities for improvements. Prioritize those communities/counties participating in Regional Learning Collaborative programs.
3. **As an initial regionwide strategic priority/objective, expand the entrepreneurial ecosystem and pipeline through population retention and growth on a pace that achieves the 10% overall increase by 2050.**
 - a. Uplift entrepreneurship support and business enterprise facilitation groups, events, and efforts throughout the region.
 - b. Expand the Communications CollaborACTION Team to achieve broader and deeper awareness of the region's assets/strengths by restructuring and reenergizing the team with 2-3 ambassadors serving as members of the team from each of the 18 counties within the northwest Missouri region to implement the team's strategic action plan.
4. **Launch an annual celebration by Fall 2023 to uplift and sustain the gathering of regional community development strategic priorities, recognize efforts towards progress, and give leaders who are participating in the Regional Learning Collaborative's programs an opportunity to connect in person.**
 - a. Create and test a sustainable event coordination process for holding an annual regional community forum and celebration event that meaningfully gathers many voices, recognizes contributions of time, talent, and treasure, and shares qualitative and quantitative data of progress that is useful to all voices gathered.
5. **Implement a strategic integrated communications action plan updated annually to support all Guiding Coalition (Partner Council, Navigation Team, and Network Coordination and Support Team) and Action Network activity with the assistance of contract and volunteer resources through the Communications CollaborACTION Team, a part of Maximize NWMO's Action Network.**
 - a. Interactive Public Participation Online Hub: Website – Bang the Table Engagement HQ Subscription renewal for the addition of new pages, interactive features, and content as strategic priorities of the region progress and the number of resource partners and formally engaged active communities/counties grows.
 - b. Content development, creative direction, and management of all online platforms, and virtual, and in-person meetings including strategy, writing, and coordination of all plan element creation and implementation; management of any communications-related potential interns, volunteers, and freelancers; and, writing, scheduling, posting, and reporting.

- c. Graphic Design, Audio/Video, and Photo Production – Spotlight stories, event and program flyers, webpage headers, project tiles, infographics, and other graphic elements for website and social media, animation, presentations, curriculum, on-camera interviews, and video production.
- d. Advertising and Awareness Items – Digital and traditional tools including cause-marketing related items for promotion and fostering a sense of belonging for Northwest Missourians including branded clothing, signage, and other merchandise.
- e. Online eCommerce Website or Webpages on Existing Site(s) – Page(s) for Program fee payment and registration; area featuring resources related to The Maximize [My Community] Journey Framework and leadership development curriculum (free and paid downloads) such as the Monarch Town CollaborACTION Story; and, area featuring branded clothing, signage and other merchandise (i.e. T-shirts, polo shirts, stickers, window decals, pins).
- f. Backbone Support through The Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri – Coordination of Maximize NWMO’s Guiding Coalition_ (Three interconnected groups): Navigation Team (*executive and strategy*), Advisory Partner Council (*priority setting and resource development*), and Network Coordination and Support Team (*day-to-day operations*). This includes administrative functions such as scheduling, logistics, emails, activity and results tracking, project coordination, reporting, etc.
 - Communities of Excellence Framework Community Profile and Application for Assessment and Recognition updated and submitted for feedback at least every two years (2023, 2025).
 - Complete a tool for assessing progress (i.e. Communities of Excellence 2026 assessment and a traditional SWOT—strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats—or JUPER Communications’ TOTAL Picture—team, opportunities, threats, assets and strengths, and leadership culture for the organization, operations, and offerings.)
 - Establish a leadership structure with roles and responsibilities that is updated each year to reflect growth and human resource (paid and volunteer) transitions and additions.
 - Develop a Balanced Scorecard for tracking and communicating progress on this strategic action plan (direct impact) as well as the overall vitality of the region (indirect impact).
 - Office and Meeting Space and Fund Management – The Community Foundation of NWMO service as the fiduciary backbone of Maximize NWMO. The Foundation represents the entire region, is not political and makes it a point to be focused on the process not the decisions themselves. Experience in other communities on complex projects make it clear that the initiative can only survive over time if an organization is in the background nurturing and supporting the communities, counties, and sub-region trade clusters, coordinating support resources, developing networks, building partnerships, tracking results and documenting processes of the initiative and arising take action projects so it can be replicated in other rural communities and trade regions.