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To: Board of Commissioners

Re: Northern Lights Contest.

County Board,

The Northern Lights Contest recognizes outstanding work in Minnesota's government, educational and nonprofit communications, and provides valuable feedback for all entries from the communications professionals who judge the contest. The contest is conducted annually by the Minnesota Association of Government Communicators.

Following the implementation of the 2024 Goodhue County Branding project, we submitted the project to Northern Lights Contest. This year, we received the Silver Award for small entities in the Logo, Illustration or Graphic category. The judging scores, criteria, and feedback are attached for reference.

Find your Good here.

Feedback

Logo, Illustration or Graphic

Goodhue County Branding Project

Your overall result

Judging Score Set

Entry score	Category average
85.67 / 100	81.49 / 100

Problem or Opportunity Statement

In 1990, the Goodhue County Board of Commissioners held a logo creation contest. Two designs from County employees were merged into one to form the County seal. Ever since, the seal has been used as a logo on documents. Despite this, dozens of new logo iterations were created and used. In 2023, the County Board recognized a need for unified efforts across departments - starting with the look/feel of Goodhue County.

A Communications Committee was formed, with a representative from every department. During initial meetings we identified the following project objectives:

1. Community Identity: Identify what makes Goodhue County distinct and appealing
2. Consistency: The brand should convey a consistent message and image to audiences within and outside the County
3. Community and Economic Development Promotion: Promote a healthy economy, attract investment and people, retain businesses and creative talent
4. Endorsement: The brand must be authentic, original, and resonate with diverse audiences

Problem or Opportunity Statement

Judging Score Set

Entry score	Category average
4.67 / 5	4.51 / 5

Audience

Over simplified, we wanted to grow our brand with both our external and internal audiences.

For external audiences, we wanted to establish a fresh identity with members of the public, increase our appeal to job seekers, and be viewed as the modern and fast-paced entity that our partner agencies know and appreciate.

For our internal audience, we wanted to create a sense of unity and identity amongst our workforce. Our workforce is spread across several buildings, has more remote workers, and can be withdrawn into our respective departments. Creating a sense of unity within our branding helps unite us all in our daily work so no matter which department you are in, the document templates, signs, and ID materials are all identical.

Audience

Judging Score Set

Entry score	Category average
4.33 / 5	3.8 / 5

Measurable Achievements

During early stages of the project there had been no measurable outcomes identified to measure the project's success. However, we have seen a few signs of both the public and internal staff embracing the new branding.

While in brand development, we saw over 500 public survey respondents while gathering public input on our branding pillars and potential identities. In the survey we used to test our now implemented brand, 63% indicated 'Moderate'-to-'Excellent' for Authenticity, 57% indicated 'Moderate'-to-'Excellent' for Compelling design, and 73% of 20-29 year-olds preferred our now implemented brandg.

Following implementation, we have had numerous comments form our partner agencies indicating their appreciation for the new look and feel as well as an email from a partner agency CEO stating, "*The new branding indicates our County is moving in the right direction.*"

We've also seen internal staff embrace the new branding by quickly trading out old document templates with new branded templates. They've also eagerly requested the new ID badges, lanyards, webcam covers, and pens we've had made for them to wear proudly. Over the past two months we've also seen over 10% of our workforce order from our new branded County apparel store.

Measurable Achievements

Judging Score Set

Entry score	Category average
4.33 / 5	3.96 / 5

Cost and Resources Used

Costs

The initial budget listed was for \$60,000 for the agency contract and rollout.

Trajectory Brands, Inc. was paid \$48,500 for their contract over several months.

The Goodhue County Brand rollout budget was expanded to \$50,000 after the discovery of unused funds which were already budgeted for. Thus, in total, the rollout cost roughly \$36,000 for the purchasing of marketing materials, new vehicle decals, branded ADA signage for all of our buildings, and additional signage in our Boardroom. Over 50% of those funds were spent within the County.

Stakeholders

A large amount of stakeholders interacted with the process. Over 20 staff memembs participated actively in the project. Over 10 partner agencies interacted with the external discovery portion of the project. Over 500 members of the public engaged through survey responses as well.

Work Breakdown

The project is broken out into the branding development and implementation phases. The development phase accounted for roughly 50% of the project and was done by our contracted agency. The other 50% of the project includes our implementation which was done by our internal staff.

Cost and Resources Used

Judging Score Set

Entry score	Category average
5 / 5	4.51 / 5

Project's Effectiveness in Addressing the Problem or Opportunity

Judging Score Set

Entry score	Category average
17.33 / 20	16.53 / 20

Level of Creativity

Judging Score Set

Entry score

15.33 / 20

Category average

15.6 / 20

Technical Skill Level

Judging Score Set

Entry score

17.33 / 20

Category average

16.67 / 20

Overall Impression

Judging Score Set

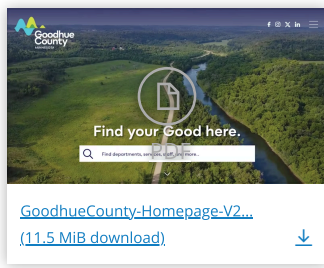
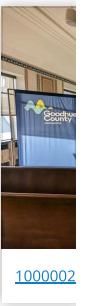
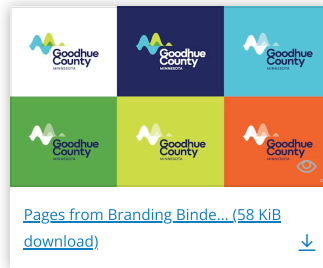
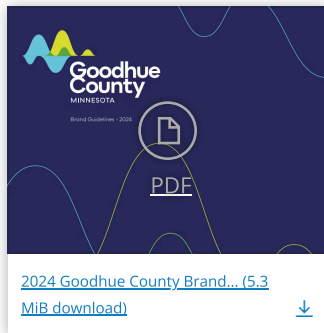
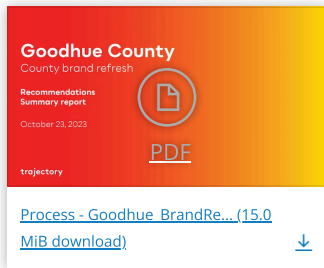
Entry score

17.33 / 20

Category average

15.91 / 20

Attachments



Comments on your entry



What a great rebrand! Love the tagline and the detailed branding guidelines. The entry is well-written and your data is very strong and well-presented. Great job overall. The logo design is unique and modern. If I had to nit-pick the final design is difficult to implement because it is off-centered.

2 months ago



The overall look and colors are clean and appealing. I like the consistency for logos across departments and how the new brand has been incorporated in everything from documents and the website to signage and accessories (pens, lanyards, etc.). Branding campaigns are a huge undertaking, and not everyone is apt to buy-in. The fact that your employees have so quickly embraced the new brand is impressive and should commended!

2 months ago