RURAL DEMOCRACY PROJECT

The Rural Democracy Project is a grassroots campaign to re-energize civic engagement among rural people, empower new rural leaders, and build political power that serves all people.

How did CURE get here?

CURE is a rural grassroots nonprofit organization that has historically focused on environmental issues important to the people and landscapes within the Minnesota River Basin. While still committed to our long-time mission, CURE has expanded its strategy to better impact badly needed social change and to respond to the larger interests of our grassroots member community. Building on its first twenty-five years, CURE is committed to support its members and lead in this increasingly unpredictable and ever-changing world. Our past success as a deeply rooted rural institution has prepared us to step up to the urgency of now and to meet today's new challenges.

The Rural Democracy Project will:

➔ Plan and execute a grassroots campaign, together with our members, that informs, empowers, and emboldens the people to act on behalf of a people's agenda for Minnesota and America.
➔ Convene the people through house meetings, study circles, rural progressive round tables, and people's assemblies to discuss values, vision, and issues toward a people's agenda.
➔ Contest the power that currently challenges the public welfare and undermines our values, our democracy, and our future.

We're just getting started. All we need to know for now is that our democracy is broken, we need to act in the places where we live and with the people we know to fix it, and there's no time to waste.

"We will make the road by walking." - Antonio Machado

We need to tell our story.

The need for CURE's Rural Democracy Project did not arise because of just one election. We have been moving this direction for decades as rural populations decrease, demographics change and shifting rural economies have led to a dimming of our collective voice. Instead of our voice, other interests have been speaking for us. The story being told most often today paints an incomplete and inaccurate picture.

The Rural Democracy Project is built on neighbor talking to neighbor. We want to see connections instead of divides. We want something bigger. Across rural Minnesota, we are sharing our hopes and concerns. We are telling our own stories, and from these nuanced and personal accounts, we are pulling together the underlying shared values of our communities. These shared values help to tell the

broader stories of our community. Together we are creating a new story that accurately represents the vision we have for our communities and Minnesota.

Our new story is forward-looking. It rejects the current conventional story told about rural communities and people. Our strength comes not just because our story is true, but because it is a future for all Minnesotans–it has the vision that all Minnesotans know they deserve.

We need independent political power.

We are putting ourselves back into the political debate, raising our concerns and values above the loudest voices or the deepest pockets. We do not place our future in the hands of one particular political party. The Rural Democracy Project is focused on advancing a people's agenda. We are growing our own leaders and holding those in elected office accountable. We know that we need governing power to make the change we want in our communities, state, and country.

We need each other.

The Rural Democracy Project and this important work is not just about one organization or one geographic area. We work together with Our Minnesota Future (OMF). OMF is a collective effort and includes many of the strongest people's organizations in Minnesota. The OMF groups are allies who are committed to build governing power. There is power in numbers; allies provide the strength to make the significant change we need for the healthy and prosperity of both the people and the land.