

Communities eye design

By **MONICA LUNDQUIST**
Cass County Correspondent

WALKER - Volunteer architects, landscape architects, urban designers, planners, economic developers, historic preservationists and natural resource specialists have helped Minnesota communities develop visions to improve their physical and environmental designs since 1983.

The volunteers range from students to actively engaged professionals to retirees.

First known as the Governors Design Team, the name shifted to Minnesota Design Team in 1992, said Rita Trapp, Hoisington Koepler Group Inc. of Minneapolis, who responds to e-mails via the Minnesota Design Team Web site at www.minnesotadesignteam.org.

Communities seeking help from the design team to plan for their futures can contact the design team via the Web site or by calling Trapp at (612) 252-7135. A workbook will be sent to community representatives to complete a description of the city or area as it exists today and identify concerns. The design team will review that information and screen the application before a community can be selected for a design team visit to the city in spring or fall.

Application deadlines are Jan. 15 and Aug. 15 each year.

On a design team visit, representatives draw more information from community residents about what they see as unfulfilled needs for that city or area. They recommend ways to plan to fulfill the local community's goals and suggest options that can work over time. Usually, there is a second follow-up visit later to assess the community's progress and offer further suggestions.

Work to implement the community's future plans depends totally on the work residents do to bring their hopes into reality.



Walker Area Partners is working to assure the survival of downtown Walker, as well as the rest of the community, by working with the Minnesota Design Team. Monica Lundquist