The Otto Bremer Foundation (OBF) passed a notable milestone in 2014—the charitable trust turned 70. In 1944 Otto Bremer created OBF to perpetuate his life’s work of growing his investments in community banks, which over time evolved into OBF’s 92 percent ownership of Bremer Bank and a portfolio of other investments. Bremer’s assumption was that with good management these investments would be available to support his expressed philanthropic interests. (See our website, ottobremer.org, for more information about our history.) Bremer created OBF and appointed three trustees to ensure that his vision would be maintained in perpetuity. As we look forward to many more years of continued growth, we take this time to reflect on OBF’s history over seven decades of activity.

OBF is committed to the communities and adjacent regions that are homes to Bremer banks. OBF seeks to serve as a resource to local and regional organizations that helps to move these communities forward. 

**Bremer Regions**

OBF’s place-based funding strategy comes from Otto Bremer’s personal interest in supporting organizations and programs that allow people to fully engage in their communities, coupled with his investment in specific community banks, now Bremer Bank. The world has changed dramatically over the decades, and there has been great growth in the number and sophistication of services offered by nonprofit organizations. With the growth of the general population, identified community needs and funds available to OBF to fulfill Bremer’s philanthropic interests, we understand the importance of being well informed about the geographic areas in which we fund. In 2014 we divided the three states of Minnesota, North Dakota and western Wisconsin into seven regions. Each region has a dedicated program staff member to serve as its point person. This will facilitate accumulating knowledge of region-specific needs and resources.

**March Millions Challenge**

OBF is aware that a strong partnership with the organizations and individuals who serve and live in more than 95 Bremer communities is a key component to accomplishing our mission. We have recently been involved in a vivid illustration of the power of individuals stepping up to support their neighbors through gifts to local organizations. With OBF’s expansion into nine communities in southeastern Minnesota, we selected 102 organizations to participate in a $1 million challenge over the month of March 2015. While the challenge had been structured to run throughout the month with daily incentives, the community response was immediate and powerful: $1 million was raised by more than 2,000 individuals in the first four days.

### 2014 Grants Overview

The concept of community lies at the core of OBF’s work. We are interested in supporting a community’s efforts to move toward its vision when those efforts are consistent with OBF’s mission to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate in and for the benefit of the larger community. The following overview identifies 2014 grants by region to better illustrate the areas where grants were awarded.

#### 2014 Grant Distribution

680 grants and program-related investments (PRIs) were awarded totaling $42,296,824

### 2014 Assets (dollars in millions)

For 70 years OBF’s main asset has been a majority investment in Bremer Financial Corporation. From modest origins, our long-term investment in financial services has resulted in a portfolio of assets today approaching $1 billion.

*Estimates

### 2014 Grants/PRIs (dollars in thousands)

The annual return on our bank and other investments has allowed for an extraordinary increase in our philanthropic output. Since inception, OBF has made over a half billion dollars in grants and PRIs to nonprofit organizations in our region.

#### Western North Dakota

43 grants, totaling $3,058,971

- Bismarck, Carrington, Devils Lake, Minot, McIntosh, Richland, Rugby

#### Red River Valley

54 grants, totaling $4,175,995

- MN: Moorhead, Warren; ND: Casselton, Fargo, Fordville, Gilby, Grafton, Grand Forks, Larimore, Lisbon, Wahpeton

#### Central and Northern Minnesota

76 grants, totaling $3,977,592

- Atkinson, Baxter, Brainerd, International Falls, Princeton, Rice, Sauk Rapids, St. Cloud

#### Western and South Central Minnesota

81 grants, totaling $4,672,768

- Alexandria, Brandon, Fergus Falls, Mankato, Marshall, Morris, Owatonna, Perham, Redwood Falls, Starbuck, Watertown, Willmar

(continued on next page)
Twin Cities Metropolitan Area
250 grants and PRIs totaling $16,734,103

Western Wisconsin
101 grants, totaling $4,597,473
Amery, Bayfield, Colfax, Danbury, Eau Claire, Elk Mound, Frederic, La Crosse, La Pointe, Menomonie, New Richmond, Siren, Washburn

Southeastern Minnesota
No grants (we started making grants in this region in 2015)
Austin, Eyota, Houston, Kasson, Rochester, Rollingstone, St. Charles, Stewartville, Winona

Minnesota Statewide
66 grants, totaling $4,242,462, made to organizations with statewide programs.

North Dakota Statewide
9 grants, totaling $837,460, made to organizations with statewide programs.

END OF YEAR MARKET VALUE OF ASSETS
Cash $ 290,787
Investments
Fixed income 42,636,251
Corporate stock 888,632,444
Other 12,913,831
Other Assets
Fixed assets 196,890
Accrued receivables 586,840
Total Assets $ 945,257,043

REVENUE AND EXPENSES
Revenue
Interest from investments 435,995
Dividends from investments 43,912,201
Net gain on sale of investments 7,069,418
Other income 1,457,143
Total Revenue $ 52,874,757
Expenses and Disbursements
Operations and administration 5,040,779
Taxes 514,000
Grants and program-related investments 42,296,824
Total Expenses and Disbursements $ 47,851,603
Excess Revenue over Expenses $ 5,023,154

GUIDE TO GRANTMAKING
The Otto Bremer Foundation website, ottobremer.org, has detailed information on the grantmaking process, including answers to frequently asked questions. Topics of general interest include:
• Funding focus
• Eligibility
• Application and review process
• Criteria considerations
• Reporting
If you have any questions, please call the Foundation office at 651-227-8036, or toll free at 888-291-1123.

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THE OTTO BREMER FOUNDATION ASSISTS PEOPLE IN ACHIEVING FULL ECONOMIC, CIVIC AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION IN AND FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THEIR COMMUNITIES.

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