

## Overview of Belle Plaine

The City of Belle Plaine is located in Scott County and is approximately forty miles from the Twin Cities (Figure 1). US Highway 169 is the major highway that connects the City to the metro area. The City's location is significant because it is on the urban / rural edge of development and land use, which suggests that Belle Plaine is the southwest gateway into the seven-county metro area.

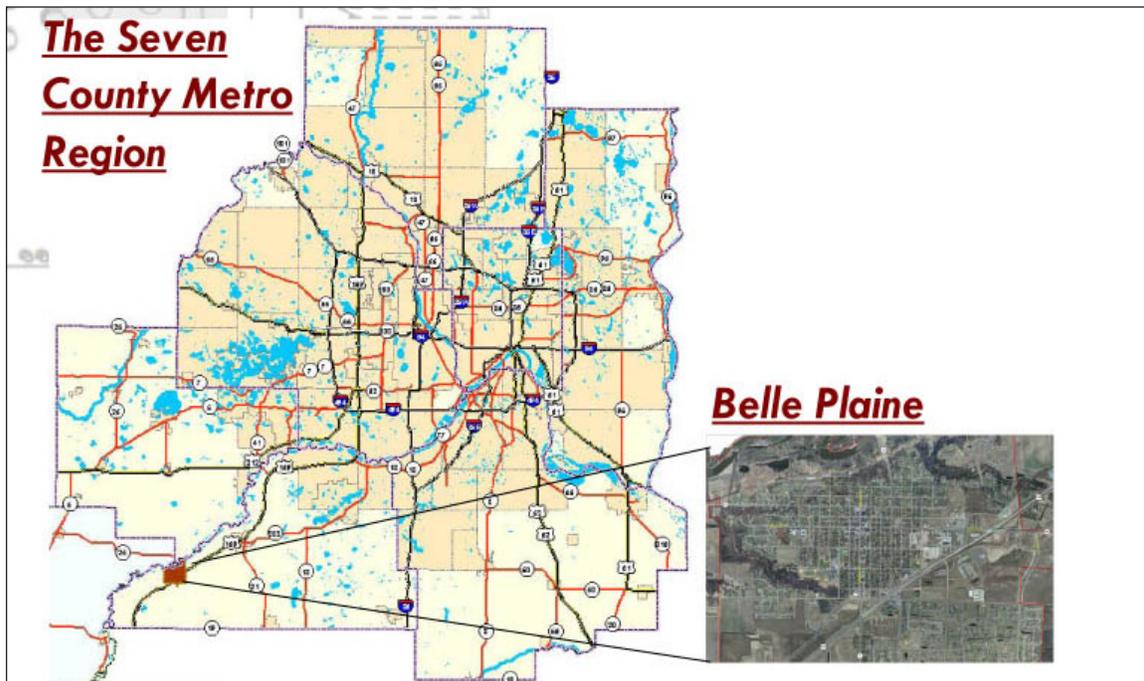


Figure 1. Belle Plaine Region, CRD, February, 2008.

Belle Plaine, as shown in Figure 2 (located at the end of the section), is home to more than 6,744 people (Metropolitan Council, 2007) and a hub for manufacturing, education and agriculture. The City resides within the glacial floodplain of the Minnesota River and the surrounding landscape is characterized by rolling prairie and bluff lands. The City is serviced by State Highway 25 and US Highway 169. State Highway 25 majestically crosses the Minnesota River and provides access to the City of Green Isle. US Highway 169 connects Belle Plaine to the Twin Cities to the north and Mankato to the south and serves the northern and southern portions of the City. Recently, the Minnesota Department of Transportation modified the access of US Highway 169 to the local roads of the City resulting in one interchange finished in 2007 located in the northeast and one proposed interchange in the southwest of the City. As a result, two areas of commercial and industrial development were defined: the area of development around the US Highway 169 Corridor and the historic downtown district.