

“ Setting a new course for an organization and community during a financial crisis – it can be done.”

## Successful Fundraising in Challenging Times



### Vermillion Area Chamber & Development Company Vermillion, South Dakota

Vermillion is home to the University of South Dakota and has a total population of about 10,000, with about half of that being students. When Steve Howe took the reins at the Vermillion Area Chamber & Development Company in 2008, he sought to set a new course for the organization and the community. He selected the Convergent team to conduct a feasibility study and capital campaign.

The study in 2008 depicted the uncertainty of the \$1.2 million goal as the economy faltered. But this community's leadership courageously decided that it was more than ever the time to pull together, step up, and invest to advance their own economic future. A local newspaper heralded the 2009 campaign on the front page with a headline that said, "Community leaders believe now is the best time not the worst time for Economic Development."

In only six months, we completed the campaign, ending over goal. This was a 92 percent increase in previous funding levels. It sent a strong message statewide that this city's private and public leaders stood ready to address the challenges presented by the economy.

**Goal: \$1,200,000 | Raised: Over \$1,650,000**



“I've worked with key members of Convergent's team, and they've done a terrific job. The amount raised was by far the largest in our history, and we did it right in the midst of the recession. We are happy to recommend Convergent to others contemplating a major program initiative or capital campaign.”

Steve Howe | Former Executive Director  
Vermillion Area Chamber & Development Company