

Association of
Minnesota Counties

DISTRICT 7

Blue Earth Brown Fairbault Le Sueur Martin McLeod Nicollet Sibley Waseca Watonwan



Friday, November 2, 2018
8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Farmamerica – Waseca County
7367 360th Ave., Waseca ([Directions](#))

Meeting Fee: \$35

Agenda

8:00 A.M. Registration – Coffee, Juice, Rolls

8:15 A.M. Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance / Introductions

District Director: Jack Kolars, Nicollet County

Terms: 06/15-07/17; 07/17-07-19

Alternate Director: Vance Stuehrenberg, Blue Earth County

Announced Candidates for AMC Office

AMC Secretary/Treasurer:

Mary Jo McGuire, Ramsey County Commissioner

Terms: 2016, 17, 18

AMC 2nd Vice President: Todd Patzer, Lac qui Parle County Commissioner

Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships (RSDP) @ UM Extension

Okey Ukaga, Executive Director, Southeast RSDP

County Reports: Concerns, Priorities and Accomplishments

Each county should come prepared to share items of interest and issues of concern.

AMC Executive Committee Report

AMC President, Susan Morris, Isanti County Commissioner

AMC Management Report – Julie Ring, Executive Director

Government Relations Report

- 2019 Legislative Preview
- 2019 AMC Legislative Priorities Discussion & Vote

AMC Member Services Report

Upcoming AMC Meetings & Events

- **AMC Annual Conference:** December 3-4, 2018 – DoubleTree by Hilton, Bloomington
- **Newly Elected Officials Conference** – January 23-25, 2019 – Embassy Suites, St. Paul
- **AMC Legislative Conference** – February 13-14, 2019
- **AMC Leadership Summit** – April 3-5, 2019 – Grand View Lodge

Hot Topic Discussion

Working Lunch

1:00 P.M. Adjourn

Spring District 7 Meeting – Wednesday, June 5, 2019 – Watonwan County



Association of Minnesota Counties Ballot Background

Environment & Natural Resources

- 1. AMC supports state assumption, in collaboration with local government, of the federal section 404 permit program to increase efficiencies associated with local infrastructure projects.**

In 2015 AMC supported, and the Legislature passed, a provision to study the feasibility of the state taking on implementation of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Section 404 waters and wetlands dredge/fill regulatory program (aka 404 “assumption”). The results of the study were not favorable to assumption due to limitations on the scope of a state-assumed program, however, a recent change of interpretation by the Corps has now made assumption of the 404 program a meaningful and worthwhile option in Minnesota. Counties believe the time is now to proactively advocate for and pursue state assumption of this program that would provide a more efficient and timely permitting process for local infrastructure projects and individual landowners.

- 2. AMC supports funding to counties to reimburse costs associated with the cleanup of blighted, tax-forfeited properties.**

When taxes go unpaid on a property in Minnesota, the land is turned over to the state and counties become responsible for administering a tax-forfeited land program to make the land productive again. In recent years, counties are seeing costs to cleanup these tax-forfeited parcels that are higher than revenues the land sales generate. AMC supports assistance from the state to help pay for the cleanup of these tax-forfeited properties.

- 3. AMC supports coordinated statewide market development for materials recoverable from waste, including efforts to create commodity markets for material otherwise found in waste. AMC supports state economic development funding to support businesses that use recovered materials.**

Domestic and international markets for recycled materials have been volatile and challenging, making it difficult for counties to find places to send recyclable materials they collect as a service to their residents and to support state recycling goals. AMC supports enhancing recyclable materials markets by investing in local businesses in Minnesota that use recovered materials.

General Government

- 4. AMC supports promoting legislation that preserves tax base in response to increased property tax appeals, utility tax refunds, and potential “dark store” assessing practices.**

A recent Minnesota Tax Court decision (*Enbridge v. Minnesota*) found that the Department of Revenue over assessed Enbridge Utility Company over \$2 billion from tax years 2013-2015. If the Minnesota Supreme Court upholds the Tax Court decision, counties and local governments would be on the hook for hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions, in tax refunds—forcing counties to spend reserves or levy residents for a DOR-issued assessment. In addition, counties are witnessing a surge of contested property tax appeals by big box retailers using questionable comparables and assessment theories. Both developments threaten county budgets and erode tax bases, causing potential shifts to small businesses and residents.

5. AMC supports data practices legislation that maintains current transparency and public access to data while balancing government cost and efficiency.

Last session the legislature proposed several bills aiming to limit a county's ability to set their own retention schedule and/or create a uniform email retention policy that would force counties to keep large amounts of email for three years. AMC supports government transparency and access while also pressing the legislature to recognize the costs of storage and retention and update the data practices act to reflect appropriate levy reimbursement for any new mandates.

6. AMC supports promoting a sustainable approach to Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) funding that includes proposals to address instability in PILT payments for acquired acres lands.

PILT is a vital resource for counties with large amounts of state/federally-owned land. While a certain subset of PILT payments have received increases in funding, two important PILT categories (DNR-administered and county-administered) have remained stagnant, not keeping up with inflation or properly reimbursing local governments for lost tax base. In addition, a recently mandated re-assessment of acquired acres land values has caused dramatic swings in PILT appropriations. Counties are asking for both increased and consistent funding.

Health & Human Services

7. AMC supports maintaining the state's health care provider tax.

Minnesota's gross revenue tax on health care goods and services is the primary revenue source for the state's Health Care Access Fund and is scheduled to sunset at the end of 2019. The tax was passed in 1992 to help pay for MinnesotaCare and the state currently relies on the fund to support the Medical Assistance program, physician training, and the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership. The state is expected to take in more than \$690 million dollars in FY 2019. Counties ask for the continued revenue dedicated to health care.

8. AMC supports the state's responsibility to fund mental health services, including the state operated services, and eliminating cost shifts to counties for hospitalization and children's residential treatment services.

Counties will pay 100% of the cost of care starting in early 2019 for children's residential treatment facilities, due to a change in federal reimbursement. Counties remain on the hook for 100% of costs for adult services once individuals at state operated facilities no longer require high level of care. However, there remains a lack of adequate community services. Counties ask for additional state support and fewer barriers to transition to community services, including the ability to appeal care costs, giving advance notice for discharge, and decreasing cost shares.

9. AMC supports investing in strategies that strengthen support services and early intervention activities to promote child well-being.

Child protection dollars in counties are directed toward investigating child maltreatment, managing child placement and adoption, and providing support services to families. Strengthening the wellbeing of Minnesota children means also focusing on keeping children safe by preventing maltreatment and strengthening families. However, funding levels are disparate across the state and counties are challenged to adequately budget for all child protection needs often putting prevention and early intervention services at risk. Counties ask for additional state investment in child wellbeing.

Public Safety

10. AMC supports creating a stable source of revenue to replace declining fine revenue for Regional EMS Boards.

Regional EMS boards play a key role in training and preparing EMS services throughout Minnesota. The primary funding source for this function is seat belt fines. Due to increased seat belt use, that revenue source is shrinking and as a result funding has been cut in half over the last several years. A new stable source of funding is needed.

11. AMC supports increased support for the core function of emergency management through a stable, ongoing state appropriation and renewal of the expired rail safety fee.

Minnesota's emergency preparedness system has been funded primarily by inconsistent federal sources. An ongoing stream of state funds to fund the critical functions of this process is needed. In addition, the rail safety fee has expired, eliminating funds for much needed training, equipment, and education related to rail incident preparedness.

12. AMC supports increasing funds for community supervision, including core county probation functions as well as the community supports, like mental health and CD treatment resources, that are needed to help justice involved individuals succeed.

Minnesota's county-based probation systems have been underfunded for nearly two decades. Increased funds are needed to support the basic functions of this system. In addition, policy changes related to pre-trial assessment and supervised released supervision are likely to increase caseload pressure for local agencies as well as demanding additional community supports for justice involved individuals. The supports, like CD treatment and appropriate mental health care, are in short supply all over the state and non-existent in some places. These are critical services for meeting the needs of our criminal justice system.

Transportation & Infrastructure

13. AMC supports a comprehensive and sustainable transportation funding package that includes new revenue for roads, bridges, and transit.

AMC supports a statewide, integrated, multi-modal transportation system that keeps Minnesota competitive in a global marketplace with long-term, sustainable funding to ensure safe systems that efficiently move people and goods. With over 90% of Minnesota's road mileage under the local jurisdiction and about 80% of bridges on the local system, the gap between projected funding and the amount needed to adequately maintain and improve local roads and bridges is significant. A sustainable investment option from the Legislature would help counties plan for future projects and address the growing need at the local level.

14. AMC supports the build-out of broadband infrastructure in Minnesota, including legislation that would provide adequate and continuous funding for the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant Program.

Last year, the legislature included \$15 million in funding for the broadband grant program in its Omnibus Supplemental Finance Bill that was ultimately vetoed by the governor. It was the first time since the grant program has been in place that it did not receive any funding. Many counties have been recipients of this funding in the past and there are others that would likely benefit from future grant cycles. AMC supports adequate and continuous funding for the grant program in order to continue the build-out of broadband infrastructure in Minnesota and meet the state's broadband speed goals by 2026.