Minnesota Counties

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2017 SOLUTIONS START HERE VOLUME 61, ISSUE 5

Legislative Platform Development Underway Following AMC Fall Policy Conference

Although summer vacations just ended and the 2018 Legislative Session seems far away, the Association of Minnesota Counties’ (AMC) Policy Committees have begun work on the 2018 AMC Legislative Platform in earnest. We were so pleased that over 200 AMC members attended the fall policy conference at Breezy Point in mid-September, which is the first step in this process. Your next opportunity to influence AMC’s legislative platform is at your fall district meeting. These meetings are open to all AMC members and we encourage everyone to attend.

At the district meetings, AMC members will review a list of potential legislative priority items. This initial list is made up of priority items as identified by each AMC policy committee. Members of each district will then select the five items that they believe are most important to their counties for the coming legislative session. This information from the districts will be forwarded to the AMC board, who will select the final list of priorities for 2018 in December at the AMC Annual Conference in St. Cloud.

Visit www.mncounties.org to learn more and register today!
Leadership Perspectives

I’m continuing to focus my columns on spotlighting some of the leaders in our association. This month’s leadership profile features the three members of the AMC executive committee who currently serve as chairs of AMC’s new Membership Services Committees that were created earlier this year. I asked them to frame their responses while thinking about the following questions:

• What is the role of your committee?
• What has your committee focused on this year?
• What do you personally bring to the table for your committee?
• What do you like about your committee?
• What made you decide to get involved in AMC Leadership?

My sincere thanks to Commissioners Morris, Schulte and Swanson for sharing their insights with us and for their work in getting these important committees off the ground! I believe that the key to success in county government is learning from each other and working together to constantly improve the work we do in our counties and in our association.

Education & Training Committee

By Susan Morris, Isanti County Commissioner
AMC First Vice President

There were cries for help across the state for trainings for county employees, so the new Education and Training Committee answered with relevant, regional trainings that will benefit everyone in your organization. This committee is comprised of commissioners, administrators, department heads and AMC’s Education Director Heather Bandeen.

This is an energetic, visionary group that is passionate about excellence in county government. This is also the committee that plans all AMC conferences. I really appreciate the creative approaches and ideas this group has generated. We all want to govern with the best tools available and with these opportunities, AMC is bringing real value to your organization. Please check out the AMC website to see all classes that are being offered.

Business & Partnership Committee

By Scott Schulte, Anoka County Commissioner
AMC Second Vice President

The Business & Partnership Committee was formed early this year to develop a plan to engage both private sector and quasi-public sector partners and increase the non-dues revenue of the association. My experience as a longtime business owner in my community helps me to understand what our partners may be thinking and what may draw them to our offerings.

Our committee has initiated the revamp of the former AMCAM (Association of Minnesota Counties Associate Membership) program into the new Preferred Business Partners (PBP) program. Its success or failure will become evident by mid-year 2018. Our committee is deeply engaged in the success of this venture, and of AMC as whole. It is clear to me that this group of people enjoy what they do, and have volunteered to be challenged in this realm.

My decision to run for a leadership position within AMC was a bit selfish. It was my goal to become a well-rounded leader and to initiate new relationships to further raise awareness of Minnesota’s counties issues. What better way could there be?

Research Committee

By Jack Swanson, Roseau County Commissioner
AMC Past President

County Commissioners are routinely asked to make informed decisions on a wide range of issues affecting their constituents. Making informed decisions requires information, and elected officials hope that information has been thoroughly researched and presented in a coherent manner. The AMC Research Committee was formed to help counties access data that will guide their decision-making process.

There are obviously numerous issue areas affecting our counties; the first big-picture area being tackled by our fantastic and wonderful Research Analyst, Jill Suurmeyer, is Human Resources; and more specifically in the realm of employee recruitment and retention.

We are a committee made up of commissioners and staff from across the state; our members are from the state’s largest county, and from some of the smallest. I chose to become part of the AMC Leadership Team exactly because of these thoughtful and intelligent local leaders, who are committed to the future of Minnesota, and are willing to donate their time and talents for the benefit of all 87 counties in the AMC family.
Thanks to all of our AMCAM members for their support of Minnesota Counties!

For a complete listing of company information, please visit www.mncounties.org/AMCAM.

PLATINUM
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of MN and Blue Plus
Coast2Coast Rx Card
Ehlers
Eide Bailly LLP
Galldiard Capital Management
MAGIC Fund - PFM Asset Management, LLC
MGIT - Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust
National Joint Powers Alliance
Nationwide Retirement Solutions Inc./NRS PreferredOne
Public Financial Management, Inc. (PFM)
Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, PA.
Revive Government Websites
Thomson Reuters
US Communities

SILVER
BKV Group
Bolton & Menk, Inc.
ISG
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Concrete Paving Association of Minnesota Cooperative Purchasing Connection
David Drown Associates
Disability Specialists
GLT Architects
Hamline University School of Business
INSPIC, INC.
ITC Midwest
Klein McCarthy Architects
Kraus-Anderson Construction Company
Minnesota Counties Computer Cooperative (MnCCC)
Minnesota Healthcare Consortium
MTM/MNET Minnesota Non-Emergency Transportation
National Insurance Services
Novel Energy Solutions
Public Employees Pension Service Association
Purple Wave Auction
RXvision, Inc.
Sand Creek Group, Ltd.
S E H (Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc.)
Stoel Rives LLP

GOLD
Contegrity Group, Inc.

BRONZE
Abdo, Eck & Meyers, LLP
Amramp
Baker Tilly, LLP
CenterPoint Energy
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Concrete Paving Association of Minnesota Cooperative Purchasing Connection
David Drown Associates
Disability Specialists
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INSPIC, INC.
ITC Midwest
Klein McCarthy Architects
Kraus-Anderson Construction Company
Minnesota Counties Computer Cooperative (MnCCC)
Minnesota Healthcare Consortium
MTM/MNET Minnesota Non-Emergency Transportation
National Insurance Services
Novel Energy Solutions
Public Employees Pension Service Association
Purple Wave Auction
RXvision, Inc.
Sand Creek Group, Ltd.
S E H (Short Elliott Hendrickson Inc.)
Stoel Rives LLP

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

October
2 AMC Annual Meeting
4-6 MACA/MCHMRA Fall Conference
MACSSA Fall Conference
5 AMC Executive Committee
12 AMC District 1 (location details on page 9)
13 AMC Board of Directors
MCIT Board of Directors
18-21 NCCAE Annual Meeting
22-25 ICMA Annual Conference
23 AMC District 5 (location details on page 9)
25 AMC District 2 (location details on page 9)
MWCA Committees
26 AMC District 3 (location details on page 9)
MWCA Operations Committee
27 AMC District 4 (location details on page 9)
MACCAC Committees
30 AMC District 9 (location details on page 9)
AMC District 10 (location details on page 9)

November
1 AMC District 1 (location details on page 9)
MACSSA Committees
2 AMC District 8 (location details on page 9)
MACSSA General Meeting
3 AMC District 1 (location details on page 9)
4-8 APHA Annual Conference
8 MACA Executive Committee
9 MCIT Board of Directors
10 VETERANS DAY (Observed) - AMC Office Closed
15 LPHA Executive Committee
LPHA Legislative Committee
23-24 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY - AMC Office Closed
27 AMC Executive Committee
The Federal Perspective
By Dennis McGrann, AMC Federal Liaison
Lockridge Grindal Naunen LLP

CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE
Congress spent the majority of the month of August in recess and both Chambers returned after Labor Day. The President and Congressional Leaders reached an agreement the first week of September to extend government funding and the national debt limit deadline until December 8, 2017 in order to have more time for negotiations. The House of Representatives has shifted its primary focus to releasing a tax reform proposal and passing the annual budget. The House has also passed all 12 appropriations bills for fiscal year 2018 during the second week of September.

The first week of August the Senate remained in session in order to focus on negotiating a version of healthcare legislation that could garner majority support, which were unsuccessful. The effort on healthcare reform has continued as some Senators have put forward their own plans for reform, and the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee have starting holding hearings to develop bipartisan fixes to the American healthcare system. Meanwhile the remainder of the Senate has shifted its focus to working on annual appropriations bills.

UNITED STATES SENATE
Affordable Care Act Repeal: In the last week of July, the Senate rejected several amendments to House-passed bill H.R. 1628, designed to repeal parts of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). After the Senate rejected this series of amendments, efforts to overhaul the ACA have stalled. Since returning after the August recess, some new proposals to repeal the ACA have emerged, including the Graham-Cassidy bill. Essentially, the bill would terminate the ACA’s Medicaid expansions, premium tax credits, cost-sharing reduction payments, small business tax credits, and Basic Health Program as of 2019 and redistribute the money funding those programs to the states. The bill would also impose per capita caps on Medicaid funding, also offering the states the alternative of a broader Medicaid block grant.

Even with the failed amendments and other plans emerging, under the rules of the Senate, the reconciliation option for repealing the ACA in the Senate expires on September 30. This means that if the Senate wants to pass Healthcare legislation with only 51 votes instead of 60 votes, it must do so by September 30. As an alternative to a large, partisan overhaul bill, lawmakers from both parties have started working at the beginning of September in the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) committee on a short-term stabilization measures for health insurance. They are considering a series of proposals intended to fix the ACA designed to solicit bipartisan support.

Appropriations: The Senate Appropriations Committee has approved eight of its twelve annual funding bills, setting up different levels of spending with the House. The full Senate has yet to vote on any of these funding measures. In the Senate, appropriations bills require bipartisan support with 60 votes required to pass. Since returning from the August recess, the Appropriations Committee has already begun work on the remaining four Appropriations Bills.

Children’s Health Insurance Program: Key Senators have reached a deal on a plan to extend funding for the Children’s Health Insurance Program, or CHIP, for five years. Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-UT) announced this deal on September 12, 2017 alongside Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR) while CHIP faces a September 30 deadline for funding reauthorization. The Finance Committee proposal also includes some policy changes such as new protections for low-income kids and elements of state flexibility. The Finance deal also would scale back the Affordable Care Act’s (ACA) 23 percent increase in the federal match rate for the program after 2019. Without congressional action, CHIP would expire and some states would start exhausting CHIP funds by December, with most running out by March 2018, according to the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission. Representative Greg Walden (R-OR), the chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said September 13 that he is waiting to see details of how the Senate Finance Committee will pay for the deal. There’s no text of the proposal yet.

UNITED STATES HOUSE
Budget: The House Budget Committee passed a budget earlier this year, but the measure won’t receive a vote until at least the end of September. It could be well into October before the House and Senate agree on a budget. It may face tough opposition to passage on the floor of the House of Representatives as some members of the Majority have raised concerns. The House budget, which calls for more than $2 trillion in spending cuts, is a necessary precursor to tax reform legislation as it will allow the Senate to pass the tax legislation with only 51 votes bypassing the standard 60 vote requirement.

Tax Reform: Congressional Leadership will release a tax reform framework framework the week of September 25, 2017. Those details will be a crucial negotiating chip as the conference moves to pass a budget resolution for fiscal year 2018 in early October. Since returning this month, the House Ways and Means Committee has faced mounting pressure to release a tax plan, but lawmakers have not commented on the specifics that will be included in the forthcoming document. Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady (R-TX) spoke on September 13 to the conference, to discuss the details of the tax plan. Ways and Means Members are said to be meeting on September 24 and 25 to approve the final details of a tax plan. Once the budget resolution, which will include tax reform instructions, is passed, the committee will introduce the legislation and mark up a bill through regular order before bringing tax reform to a floor vote.

Appropriations: The House passed a $1.2 trillion, 12-bill spending package on September 14, 2017 that reflects Congressional leaders’ plans to finish defense over domestic programs in fiscal year 2018. The omnibus passed on a mostly party-line vote, with Congressional Leaders relying on members of the Majority to support the legislation. But in the Senate, the measure will be vulnerable to a budgetary challenge by Members of the Minority. The big boost for defense greatly exceeds the allowable spending under the Budget Control Act (BCA). The omnibus spending package is likely to remain on hold this fall while appropriators await bipartisan budget talks that will give them better numbers to fund various programs.

FAA Reauthorization: The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved a bill (H.R. 2997), on June 27, 2017, to reauthorize the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). However, the bill has continued to face a series of delays due to a controversial proposal to shift air traffic control (ATC) to a nongovernmental entity, which President Trump has endorsed. The legislation, however, still has not been scheduled for a vote in the House, increasing the likelihood that an extension of the agency’s authority will be needed. The current authorization is the result of a 14-month extension passed last July and is set to expire on September 30. The bill currently under consideration in the Senate (S. 1405), which calls for a four-year authorization of the FAA, does not shift ATC into a nongovernmental entity. In order to pass the Senate, the bill must get at least 60 votes, requiring bipartisan support.

WHITE HOUSE
Infrastructure Approval Process: President Trump reiterated his belief that the federal government should shrink its environmental oversight role and reduce its permitting timeline to two years for infrastructure projects, while signing an executive order Tuesday, August 15, 2017. The President issued a similar order on January 24, 2017, calling for expedited environmental review of priority infrastructure projects. This recently signed executive order sought to promote expediting projects through rescaling a previous rule that required federally funded projects to meet flood risk reduction standards.

The President spoke of additional options to expedite agency review including the creation of a new process whereby major infrastructure projects would only require review under a single Federal Agency that would take the lead on the project. Under this procedure, projects would be given a schedule and missed deadlines would result in the project being elevated to a senior agency review. These announcements followed an infrastructure meeting among administration officials, including Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and her deputy, Jeff Rosen. Neither the President nor the Secretary of Transportation provided an update on the status of Administration’s infrastructure proposal. Director of the National Economic Council Gary Cohn did however recently indicate that he hopes to have an infrastructure bill be brought up in the House this year, following tax reform.

Continuing Resolution: The President signed legislation (H.R. 601) on September 8, 2017 to fund the government, suspend the Federal Debt Limit and provide $15.25 billion for hurricane relief. The President and lawmakers agreed to adding a three-month extension of the U.S. debt limit and government spending to a hurricane-relief bill over the opposition of some lawmakers, who pressed for a longer debt extension. The plan will extend the U.S. debt limit and funds to keep the government running through December 8, 2017. The legislation temporarily suspends the debt limit, allowing Treasury to reset its extraordinary measures that give it some extra time, once it nears the debt limit. The actual amount of time granted by the extraordinary measures will depend on various factors, including Treasury’s borrowing patterns, incoming receipts, but has been estimated under this legislation to run out something in the spring of 2018.

LOCKRIDGE GRINDAL NAUNEN Federal Relations Group will continue to work diligently on behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties and with the Members of the Minnesota Delegation on the aforementioned issues and continuously report back with updates. Please do not hesitate to contact us at (202) 344-8840 if you have any questions or if there are any areas of interest you would like an update on that were not discussed in this article.
First Formal Step To Replacing Aging Election Equipment Now Available

By Steve Simon, Minnesota Secretary of State

I am excited to announce that my office is officially accepting grant applications to assist with the purchase of new voting equipment. This is the first formal step that counties, cities, towns, and school districts, which need assistance, can take to replace aging election equipment.

As you know, this has been a major priority of mine since taking office and I have discussed this issue with many of you in great detail. For those who may not be familiar, earlier this year the legislature authorized $7 million in grant funding to assist with the purchase of new voting equipment. It provides up to a 50 percent match for mandatory equipment, such as optical scan precinct counters, optical scan central counters, or assisted voting devices; and up to a 75 percent match for electronic rosters.

The deadline for jurisdictions to submit an application for grant funds is Dec. 15, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. Applications are available at http://bit.ly/mn-electiongrant, as well as additional information and Q&A on the grant application process.

It is critical that we ensure voting equipment is up to the standards Minnesotans expect and I encourage all counties, cities, towns and school districts to consider this available resource.

Legislature Approves $7 Million For Election Technology

By Deborah Erickson, Crow Wing County Administrative Services Director, Chair - MACO Elections Committee

We’ve heard a lot about election security recently and the safety of our election equipment and election processes is a responsibility that MACO members take extremely seriously and go to great efforts to protect. As we moved into the 2017 legislative session, MACO’s top priority in the elections realm was to establish a dedicated funding source to continue election technology upgrades in the counties.

The Secretary of State’s office had identified the state-wide spend to replace existing precinct equipment to be approximately $28 million, assuming a one-for-one replacement of equipment. Federal law requires that every precinct must have an assistive voting technology device to allow all voters to mark their ballots privately and independently; and additionally a tabulating device is used in most precincts to allow voters the ability to ensure their ballot has been marked correctly and that their vote has been counted. Minnesota law requires the security of a paper ballot system to ensure that we have a verifiable back-up of votes cast.

Many counties were finding the use of electronic rosters in the polling places to be very beneficial to voters and election judges as a way of managing high voter turnout and ensuring voter privacy and accuracy in checking voters in. Along with these polling place advantages, electronic rosters greatly improved the speed, accuracy and efficiencies in posting voter history and processing voter registrations after election day, which resulted in cost savings at the county levels.

In the first presidential election since absentee voting in Minnesota was expanded to not require a reason, almost 23 percent of Minnesota voters cast ballots prior to election day. The greatest spike in this time was during the seven days leading up to election day when county and city election offices were bombarded with in-person voters. Additional equipment was needed to accommodate these voters and many counties could benefit from enhanced central count voting equipment to effectively manage the volume of absentee and mail ballots.

With the support of AMC, funding for election technology was passed by the legislature this year. A one-time $7 million appropriation was allocated for the creation of a grant program to assist in the purchase of election technology. Counties can apply for 50 percent matching funds to purchase precinct based or central count equipment, and up to 75 percent of the cost of electronic rosters. While the total statewide need for election technology was estimated to be approximately $28 million, the Legislature was clear that this appropriation was a one-time deal and that counties and local governments need to be better prepared to deal with the cost of technology needs in the future.

Several counties have already purchased some level of equipment or electronic rosters. The grant funds cannot be used to reimburse for previous purchases. In order to allow all counties to take advantage of some level of funding, base grant amounts were determined by allocating the $7 million across all the precincts in Minnesota, resulting in a base amount of $5,000 per precinct. Grant funds will be prorated based on the number of applications received and the amounts requested. It is anticipated that all $7 million will be appropriated during the first round of grant funding.

In an effort to get best pricing for all election technology, the Secretary of State’s office has worked to secure state contract pricing for all election related technology and equipment. Once the contract is in place, the grant process will be open through December 1 with grants anticipated to be awarded by December 31.

MACO wants to thank AMC for its support in securing funding for election technology advances. As we move forward into the next election cycle, we are well poised to continue the great tradition of Minnesota electoral engagement and excellence.

Important Dates for the Grant Application

- Dec. 15, 2017: Applications must be received by the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State by 4 p.m.
- Jan. 31, 2018: Grants will be awarded with across the board reductions if requests exceed the funds available
- Feb. – March 2018: Grant contracts signed and returned, funds provided to jurisdictions
- Aug. 31, 2019: Unused funds must be returned to Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State
- Sept. – Dec. 2019: Possible second round of grants from unused/returned funds
- June 30, 2020: Unused second round funds must be returned to Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State

As I said, my office expects local jurisdictions to request more than the $7 million in grant funding available, which is why I will continue to work with the legislature to address this pressing need and ensure voting equipment works properly and consistently in precincts all around the state.

Thank you again for all the work that you do.
The Buffer Law: New, But Not So Different

Minnesota Buffer Law compliance requirements take effect in November. As counties, watershed districts and soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) have considered their role in complying with the law, questions have arisen regarding how it may affect their organizations, specifically, how MCIT coverage may or may not respond.

Provisions of the Law

For counties and watershed districts, the risk greatly depends on whether they have accepted enforcement responsibility or whether the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) handles enforcement. For SWCDs, it depends on the role and scope of assistance it provides landowners and any other responsibilities it accepts related to the Buffer Law.

The Buffer Law generally:

- Requires landowners to establish and maintain buffers (of perennial vegetation) adjacent to public waters and public drainage ditches.
- Allows landowners to meet the requirements through other conservation practices that protect water quality.
- Requires SWCDs to assist landowners in complying with the riparian protection requirements.
- Authorizes counties and watershed districts to elect to enforce the buffer requirements via ordinance, rule or other official control and administrative penalty order.
- Provides for enforcement by BWSR when not elected by a county or watershed district.
- Provides for an appeal of an administrative penalty order to BWSR.

When a county or watershed district chooses to enforce the law, BWSR staff will review the organization’s rules, ordinances and other official controls to ensure that they:

- Meet the state mandated requirements of Minnesota Statutes, Section 103F.48—Riparian Protection and Water Quality Practices (a.k.a. Buffer Law); and
- Have adequate procedures for administrative penalty orders, enforcement activities and appeals.

If a local shore land ordinance is the mechanism for implementation of the law, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources may simultaneously need to review the ordinance.

After November 2017, a county or watershed district can choose to discontinue enforcing the law (which then becomes the obligation of BWSR) or conversely can choose to assume enforcement responsibilities. Either change requires that BWSR be notified in writing within 60 days of the effective date of the change.

SWCDs have a variety of recommended state and federal resources that can be used to assist landowners with strategies to comply with the Buffer Law.

Application of MCIT Coverage

As counties, watershed districts and SWCDs consider how best to address the law, questions have been raised regarding MCIT coverage should a claim be made against members relative to their roles in complying with the Buffer Law. Although MCIT cannot make a coverage determination until a claim has been made, issues to keep in mind include the following.

Generally, claims against a member seeking nonmonetary relief are not covered. However, MCIT’s land use defense endorsement can provide coverage for claims seeking nonmonetary relief when a member’s land use decision and/or action to invalidate ordinances (e.g., do not enact the ordinance, reverse decision and issue the permit, etc.) is challenged.

The endorsement is provided to all members and when applicable, it will pay for the first $125,000 of attorney defense fees and costs. The endorsement only applies to claims where no other exclusion applies and generally does not apply to administrative appeals.

If the claim alleges that the enforcement of the Buffer Law results in a “ takings” of land or property, coverage is clearly excluded as provided in the MCIT Coverage Document: “Claims or ‘Suits’ based upon, caused by or arising out of the operation of the principles of eminent domain, including condemnation proceedings or inverse condemnation by whatever name called, whether such liability accrues directly against the ‘Covered Party’ or by virtue of any agreement entered into by or on behalf of the ‘Covered Party.’”

However, if the takings claim is made along with a covered claim, such as trespass (e.g., an allegation that an employee of a covered party—county, SWDC, watershed district—entered a landowner’s property without permission), MCIT would generally provide a defense for the entire case under a reservation of rights.

In other words, MCIT would pay for the cost of the defense of the entire lawsuit until only the non-covered claims remain, at which time defense of the claim would become the responsibility of the member. Damages for non-covered portions of the claim are always the responsibility of the member.

Although the Buffer Law may be new and has its own nuances, it is not unlike other ordinances, rules and regulations that members routinely adopt. Likewise, MCIT coverage will apply in a fashion similar to previous claims.

MCIT recommends consulting with legal counsel as organizations undertake their roles in the implementation of the Buffer Law. If a claim is made against a member, it should immediately submit the claim to MCIT via the forms available online at MCIT.org/reporting-mcit/property-liability-claims.
Second quarter MPCA SSTS enforcement cases totalled $15,535

During the period of April - June, 2017, the MPCA completed 48 enforcement cases. Of those, seven (15%) were SSTS related. They were located in Hastings ($7,075), Rush City ($3,960), Minnesota Lake ($1,350), Cologne ($1,100), New London ($1,000), Manhattan Beach ($550), and Taopi ($500). The Quarterly Enforcement Report can be found on the MPCA website. Google “MPCA enforcement summary.”

Counties, other LGUs urged to check license status of SSTS installers

Just a reminder to county SSTS program staff and other LGUs, go to the MPCA online search tool to check the license status of your local SSTS installers. Installers who have not submitted their 2016 tank fee form or have not paid their tank fee invoice have had their licenses revoked. The search tool is located on the MPCA website.

Winter is coming, shield your (drain) field

SepticSmart week was Sept. 18-22. The EPA provides a wealth of information counties, cities and other local septic programs can use to promote awareness of septic system issues and steps residents can take to protect their investment and the environment.

This includes suggested social media posts, press releases and supporting graphic images. For example, with colder temperatures ahead, it’s important for homeowners, especially those with new septic systems, to protect their systems from any type of traffic, including foot traffic, to prevent compaction and freezing. New systems that don’t establish a good cover of grass before freezing temperatures should be covered with leaves or other insulating material to prevent problems this winter.

U of M looking to partner with counties, other local orgs to host homeowner classes

The University of Minnesota Onsite Sewage Treatment Program received a grant from the Minnesota Department of Health to offer a total of eight educational homeowner classes in 2018 and 2019 across Minnesota. These classes will cover how SSTS function and maintenance issues, and provide SSTS owners information on chemicals of emerging concern (CEC), including pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCP) and the potential impact on groundwater. The known Public Water Suppliers within the area will also be invited to attend. Customized fact sheets will be provided.

The U of M is hoping to partner with local programs including counties, wastewater management districts, homeowner associations, or other similar organization who would be interested in hosting and marketing the homeowner classes. Please contact Sara Heger or 612-625-7243 if you are interested.

What could a 14% savings on your employee health insurance mean for your county?

Self-funded health insurance can mean significant savings for a county. But many often overlook a self-funded option because they:

- Are not clear about the risks involved
- Feel their county is not big enough
- Think switching plans is difficult

At PreferredOne we’ve helped many Minnesota Public entities save up to 14% on health insurance costs through self insurance. In fact, more counties are taking advantage of self insurance with flexible benefits, lower costs, and fewer taxes.

Contact your broker or PreferredOne at 763.847.4007.

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952.942.3550 • 800.552.3550
AMC 4-H Community Leadership Award

Application deadline: Monday, January 22, 2018

Do you know youth with a special community project in your local 4-H club or in a smaller project group in your county? If YES... please consider encouraging them to apply for this award!

The Extension Committee of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) will select two projects that will each receive $500.

Every year, the Extension Committee of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) selects two 4-H club projects, in recognition for their contributions and service to their communities. These projects must have responded to real community needs, have had a great impact, and been driven by youth. The awards will be presented at the annual AMC Legislative Conference on March 1, 2018.

Purpose
To recognize 4-H clubs and other organized 4-H youth development programs for outstanding contributions and service to their local communities.

Criteria
• The service or leadership project must be organized by a recognized 4-H club or other recognized 4-H youth development program.
• Project must engage multiple members of the 4-H club or group and not just a few individuals or families.
• Project must have responded to real community need(s).
• Project must have been active and had impact during the 2017 calendar year.
• Youth must be involved in significant leadership roles in the project, including in the selection of the project.
• Project must demonstrate impact.

Application Materials Required
Simply download the application form at:
www.mncounties.org/partners/u_of_m_extension/index.php

• AMC 4-H Community Leadership Award Application Cover Page form
• Summary of your project
• Letter of support from a county commissioner or other community leader verifying he completion and effectiveness of the project
• (Optional) Copies of any additional support materials such as a more detailed description of the project, photographs, newspaper clippings, etc. Be selective.
• Completed application packet

Application Deadline: Monday, January 22, 2018
Submit by email attachment, postal service or fax to:
AMC – Heather Bandeen
125 Charles Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55103-2108
Phone: 651-789-4341 FAX: 1-651-224-6540
hbandeen@mncounties.org

Awards Event
The awards will be presented during the AMC Legislative Conference on March 1, 2018. Four members of each winning project will be invited to the event to receive the award. One youth is typically asked to make a few brief comments when accepting the award. The AMC Award is a great opportunity for counties and regions to recognize its 4-H members.

Questions? Contact Heather Bandeen at hbandeen@mncounties.org or 651-789-4341.
The Association of Minnesota Counties was recognized for our work to increase the number of counties and county employees participating in the NACo Deferred Compensation Program, which is administered by Nationwide Retirement Services. AMC was presented with a new touring bike by NACo’s Financial Services Corporation.

(From left to right): Nationwide’s East Regional Vice President Jeff Francis, AMC Executive Director Julie Ring, NACo Senior Program Director Carlos Greene, and Nationwide’s Upper Midwest Program Director Levi Lathen.

**Follow-up Seminar for New County Commissioners and Administrators**

In early September, new county commissioners and administrators gathered for a follow-up seminar to January’s new commissioners conference. Co-sponsored by the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) and the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT), the day included three topics:

- An in-depth exploration of the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, highlighting areas of frequent concern and ways to navigate them.
- Strategies to guide public meetings when people disagree.
- Administrator and Coordinator models in Minnesota county government.

The seminar used scenarios and work groups, giving participants the opportunity to practice applying techniques to the real world of county government.

**Make Plans to Attend Your AMC Fall District Meeting!**

All meetings are from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

- **District 1**
  - Thursday, October 12, 2017
  - Hosted by: St. Louis County
  - Mineland Reclamation Building - Minnesota Discovery Center
  - 1005 Discovery Drive, Chisholm

- **District 2**
  - Wednesday, October 25, 2017
  - Hosted by: Beltrami County
  - Northern Township Hall (3 mi north of Bemidji)
  - 445 Town Hall Road NW, Bemidji

- **District 3**
  - Thursday, October 26, 2017
  - Hosted by: Mahnomen County
  - Shooting Star Casino
  - Rice Lake Roy Lake Rm - 777 SE Casino Rd, Mahnomen

- **District 4**
  - Friday, October 27, 2017
  - Hosted by: Otter Tail County
  - Otter Tail County Government Center – Jury Room
  - 500 Fir Avenue West, Fergus Falls

- **District 5**
  - Monday, October 30, 2017
  - Hosted by: Rice County
  - The Inn at Shattuck St. Mary’s
  - 1000 Shumway Avenue, Faribault

- **District 6**
  - Friday, November 3, 2017
  - Hosted by: Yellow Medicine County
  - American Legion
  - 60 6th Avenue, Granite Falls

- **District 7**
  - Wednesday, November 1, 2017
  - Hosted by: Nicollet County
  - Nicollet Conservation Club
  - 46045 471st Lane, Nicollet

- **District 8**
  - Thursday, November 2, 2017
  - Hosted by: Rock County
  - Grand Prairie Event Center
  - 105 South Estey Street, Luverne

- **District 9**
  - Monday, October 30, 2017
  - Hosted by: Rice County
  - The Inn at Shattuck St. Mary’s
  - 1000 Shumway Avenue, Faribault

- **District 10**
  - Monday, October 30, 2017
  - 2:00 – 5:00 p.m.
  - AMC Board Room
  - 125 Charles Avenue, St. Paul
Millions in Prevention Funding at Risk as Part of Federal Health Care Reform

By Lorna Schmidt, Executive Director, Local Public Health Association of Minnesota

As debates about repealing or replacing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) continue, much of the conversation is focused on how many individuals may lose health care coverage and the impacts of block granting Medicaid. There is no doubt these are serious issues that demand our attention, but there is another important piece of health care reform with the potential to affect millions that has been largely overlooked: the Prevention and Public Health Fund.

The Prevention Fund, which is currently rolled into the ACA, is a critical component of our nation’s efforts to curb rising health care costs. It’s an investment dedicated to preventing disease, rather than just treating it after the fact. Therefore, it is deeply concerning that each of the health care reform proposals brought forward by the U.S. House and Senate have threatened to fully eliminate the Prevention Fund.

The Prevention Fund was originally intended to boost public health activities, but the reality of federal budget pressures meant dollars instead went to backfill spending cuts. Today most of the services funded by the Prevention Fund are core public health functions which actually pre-date the ACA. In Minnesota, $18.6 million in annual Prevention Fund dollars support immunizations, childhood lead poisoning prevention, heart disease and stroke prevention, foodborne illness prevention, epidemiology and laboratory capacity, tobacco use prevention and more. Many of these dollars contribute to efforts like those involved in investigating and responding to the recent measles outbreak—and to preventing future outbreaks from occurring.

Without a mechanism to sustain or replace the Prevention Fund, Minnesota stands to lose more than $80 million for these core public health services over five years.

A funding cut of this size would significantly compromise public health’s capacity and put at risk the health and safety of Minnesotans throughout the state. The current public health challenges facing our communities—from infectious disease outbreaks to concerns over drinking water safety, opioid abuse and more—have great implications for our economy, our workforce and our health. We should be looking for ways to invest more, not less, in public health and prevention.

Federal public health funding and the Prevention Fund are a critical piece of our nation’s and Minnesota’s health care system. As Congress continues moves forward with efforts to repeal or replace the ACA, protecting the Prevention Fund must not be overlooked.
CALL TO ORDER
President Gary Hendrickx called the AMC Board of Directors’ meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, June 23, 2017 in the Board Room at the Association of Minnesota Counties located in St. Paul. Introductions were made.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
MOTION by Linda Higgins; seconded Karla Bigham to approve the June 23, 2017 AMC Board of Directors’ agenda as presented. The motion carried.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT – COMMISSIONER GARY HENDRICKX
• Welcome New District Directors - Rich Sve (Lake) District 1; Tim Sunner (Beltrami) District 2; Felix Schmiesing (Sherburne) District 5; and Rick Anderson (Lyon) District 8.
• Executive Committee Update - Meeting minutes from the April Executive Committee meeting were included in the board packet. The AMC executive committee, in its role as the Minnesota Counties Research Foundation (MCRF) board of directors, heard from staff about a possible partnership to provide resources and support services to the Human Resources staff in counties.

SECRETARY/TREASURER REPORT – COMMISSIONER MARY JO MCGUIRE
• Approval of the Minutes
MOTION by Mary Jo McGuire; seconded by Bob Fox to approve the June 23, 2017 AMC Board of Directors’ meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried.
• Approval of the March and April Financial Reports
MOTION by Mary Jo McGuire; seconded by Joe Bouvette to accept the March and April 2017 audited financial statements pending the AMC 2017 annual audit. The motion carried.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT – COMMISSIONER MARY JO MCGUIRE
The Finance Committee recommends a 3.6% dues increase which equates to $47,000 for 2018. A handout was included in the packet. This increase will be used primarily for staff salary adjustments and to manage the anticipated increased cost for employee health insurance. The board discussed the dues formula and the funds currently in reserves. A full budget will be presented to the board, for approval, in October. The Finance Committee members are: AMC Past President, Commissioner Jack Swanson (Roseau); AMC Secretary/Treasurer, Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire (Ramsey); Commissioner Todd Patzer (Lac qui Parle); Commissioner Rick Anderson (Lyon); AMC Secretary/Treasurer, Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire (Ramsey); Commissioner Todd Patzer (Lac qui Parle); Commissioner Rick Anderson (Lyon); and MACA representatives Sharon Hanson (Pipestone) and Bob Meyer (Blue Earth).

MOTION by Mary Jo McGuire; seconded by Will Purvis to approve the Finance committee’s recommendation for a 3.6% dues increase for 2018. The motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT – JULIE RING
• NACO Delegates Election – Commissioner Jim McDonough (Ramsey) submitted a letter of intent for re-appointment as AMC’s Regular Delegate on the NACO Board of Directors. A copy of his letter was included in the board packet. No other letters were received. Commissioner McDonough’s name was placed for nomination by Secretary/Treasurer Mary Jo McGuire. There were no other nominations. The open NACO position was announced via email in April 2017. There was a recommendation to announce all open positions at Spring District meetings as well.
MOTION by Jack Swanson; seconded by Joe Bouvette to re-appoint Jim McDonough as AMC’s representative on the NACO Board of Directors. The motion carried.

In other NACO news, Central Region Director Cindy Bobbitt from Oklahoma plans to start highlighting one central region state at each of the monthly conference calls and Minnesota was asked to provide a report on July 6.

NACO Executive Director Matt Chase asked AMC to weigh in on the Senate draft health care reform bill. The bill significantly alters the federal-state-local partnership for Medicaid and would shift significant costs to counties. The board asked staff to draft a letter outlining the impacts of the proposed Senate bill on Minnesota counties and send it to MN Senators. A copy of the draft letter will be sent to board members for feedback and the AMC Executive Committee will finalize the letter and send it by early next week.

• New staff – Betsy Hammer was hired for the new Association Management Specialist position at AMC. She will serve as the Executive Director for the Minnesota Resource Recovery Association (MRRA) and the staff liaison from the Solid Waste Administrators Association. Betsy is relocating from California and has a targeted start date of July 17.
• Spring District Meetings – Staff just completed the spring district meetings yesterday, great attendance statewide. At least one legislator joined every district meeting, two counties did not attend district meetings.
• Amicus Update – A written update on the active cases in which AMC has submitted amicus briefs was included in the packet. Contact Julie Ring with any questions.

• Federal Policy Development – AMC is launching a new process for federal policy development this summer. Staff plans to engage several commissioners, particularly those that are active in NACo Steering Committees.
• August Board Retreat - Laurie Klupacs reported the August 17-18 AMC Board of Directors’ retreat will be held at Chase on the Lake in Walker, MN. A summary of the retreat and a link for members to make their lodging reservations will be sent.

GENERATIVE DISCUSSION: THE AMC BUILDING – There was preliminary discussion on how to ensure the AMC building meets the association’s needs for the next decade. Office space and parking are some of the current challenges. The board agreed that the Executive Committee should serve as the Building Committee. The Building Committee will explore solutions to handle these challenges and the Executive Committee was given authorization to enter into a purchase agreement with adjacent properties near the building, if needed.

MOTION by Jack Swanson; seconded by Barry Nelson to create a Building Committee and to authorize the Executive Committee to enter into a purchase agreement with the adjacent properties near the building, if needed. The motion was adopted.

STRATEGIC DISCUSSION:
SUMMER PROJECTS/WORK GROUPS
AMC staff led small groups discussions to gather board feedback on potential policy work groups. Topics are: data practices, courthouse costs, no net gain of public land, predictable funding for SWCDs, day training and habilitation, METS funding, and transportation funding.

BUSINESS AND PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT
Chair Scott Schulte provided the report. The Business and Partnership Committee will begin their work with revamping AMC’s AMCAM program. The Associate Membership program has been in existence for many years. The committee discussed rebuilding and/or rebranding AMCAM; the possibility of changing the four-level system (Platinum, Gold, Silver, Bronze) and potentially adding an exclusive Diamond level. Generating non-dues revenue as a priority was also discussed.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMITTEE REPORT
Chair Susan Morris provided the report. The Governance Committee established a workplan that can be adapted to keep track of the committee’s tasks each year and develop a list of accomplishments as a record of their work. The first priority is to develop an affiliate policy, which does not currently exist. The committee will review the first draft of that policy next week. They also reviewed the current policy for amicus briefs and provided feedback to staff for updates to that policy.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE REPORT
Chair Susan Morris provided the report. The Governance Committee established a workplan that can be adapted to keep track of the committee’s tasks each year and develop a list of accomplishments as a record of their work. The first priority is to develop an affiliate policy, which does not currently exist. The committee will review the first draft of that policy next week. They also reviewed the current policy for amicus briefs and provided feedback to staff for updates to that policy.

RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT
Chair Jack Swanson provided the report. The committee will focus its forthcoming research project on county employment challenges with recruitment and retaining employees. For the remainder of 2017, the committee and AMC’s Research Analyst will work on establishing the groundwork for an in-depth analysis of this issue. The committee identified survey and focus group questions for AMC’s Research Analyst to explore further this summer and fall while working with MACA and MCHRMA. Later this year, the Research Committee will identify the workforce challenges to serve as focus points for 2018 for its publications and workshops at AMC events.

NACO REPRESENTATIVES/DISTRICT DIRECTORS/POLICY COMMITTEE CHAIRS/AFFILIATE MEMBERS REPORT
NACO Representatives/Policy Committee Chairs and Affiliate Representatives were given the opportunity to report on key issues affecting their districts/commissions/associations.
Now Accepting Nominations for AMC’s Annual Awards

Outstanding Service County Achievement County Conservation

Nomination deadline: October 27, 2017

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