



Association of Minnesota Counties

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 2017

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
Becky Pizinger, Communications Coordinator
E-mail: pizinger@mncounties.org

ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA COUNTIES ANNOUNCES 2017 OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARDS FOR INDIVIDUALS FROM ANOKA AND GOODHUE COUNTIES

(St. Paul, MN)— **Nina Arneson, Goodhue County Director of Health and Human Services**, and **Jerry Soma, Anoka County Administrator**, were recognized with Association of Minnesota Counties' (AMC) 2017 'Outstanding Service Awards' for exhibiting excellence, innovation and dedication to their work in county government. 2017 AMC President Gary Hendrickx, a Swift County commissioner, presented the awards at the association's annual conference December 4 in St. Cloud. The recipients were nominated by their counties and selected by a committee of county officials.

About the Award Winners:

Nina Arneson, Goodhue County Director of Health and Human Services

Goodhue County Health and Human Service's Director, Nina Arneson, has been involved in public service for 20 years, and working for Goodhue County for the past seven years. Nina was hired under the joint leadership of the former Human Service's Director, Greg Schoener, and former Public Health Director, Karen Main, with the goal to be to integrate two county service systems into one, more efficient way to deliver county services known as Health and Human Services. This transition was in no way an easy task and included moving staff from a deteriorating building to a newly renovated central location to maximize effectiveness and efficiency. This transformation was years in the making and under Nina's leadership has been a success in Goodhue County. In addition to Nina's strong leadership role in Goodhue County, she also plays a critical role in her involvement with South Country Health Alliance. In 2015, when the Department of Health announced they planned to discontinue contracting with South Country Health Alliance, Nina was the driving force behind a committee who met with DHS officials and representatives from Governor Dayton's Office and as a result, DHS reversed their decision and spared some of Goodhue County's most vulnerable citizens.

-MORE-

Jerry Soma, Anoka County Administrator

With a remarkable 51-year tenure, Anoka County Administrator Jerry Soma's legacy of leadership, integrity, and service to county government is unparalleled. His entire professional career has been dedicated to public service and the citizens of Anoka County have benefited immeasurably by his passion, extraordinary vision, and unwavering commitment to making county government better. In his role as county administrator, Jerry has introduced numerous innovations and service delivery enhancements. He has promoted a work culture that encourages creativity, nurtures professional development, and inspires excellence. Jerry is a gifted communicator, whether working with staff, county commissioners, legislators, community leaders, or members of the public. He listens thoughtfully, has a strong sense of fairness, and possesses extraordinary vision. He is a positive leader who sees the possibilities in every challenge facing county government. His unfailing optimism and can-do attitude fosters a spirit of collaboration and motivates others to find workable solutions to complex issues, even among groups with widely divergent viewpoints. Jerry has dedicated his life to public service. His long tenure working in county government has been far more than a career; it's been his life's calling.

###

Editors: Photo available upon request.

Photo Caption: 2017 AMC President Gary Hendrickx, a Swift County commissioner, presented the Outstanding Service awards at the association's annual conference December 4 in St. Cloud. The recipients were nominated by their counties and selected by a committee of county officials.