



# Association of Minnesota Counties

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## ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA COUNTIES ANNOUNCES 2018 OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARDS

**Commissioner DeWayne Mareck - Stearns County**  
**Julie Kleinschmidt - Ramsey County**  
**Jim Standish - Grant County**  
**Tamra Laska - Crow Wing County**

(St. Paul, MN)— **Four individuals from Crow Wing, Grant, Stearns and Ramsey Counties** were recognized with Association of Minnesota Counties' (AMC) 2018 'Outstanding Service Awards' for exhibiting excellence, innovation and dedication to their work in county government. 2018 AMC President Susan Morris, an Isanti County commissioner, presented the Outstanding Service awards at the association's annual conference December 3 in Bloomington. The recipients were nominated by their counties and selected by a committee of county officials.

### ***About the Award Winners:***

#### **DeWayne F. Mareck - Stearns County Commissioner**

*Years of Service: 12*

Nominated by the Stearns County Board of Commissioners for his 12+ years of outstanding leadership, dedication and service to Stearns County, DeWayne F. Mareck is no stranger to government. He began as an employee for Stearns County in 1963 and now has 38 years in elected office—on the St. Cloud Township Board, the St. Cloud City Council and lastly, the Stearns County Board. As a commissioner, DeWayne has consistently promoted a philosophy of innovation and has fostered numerous efficiencies and streamlined services. DeWayne has strongly promoted intergovernmental cooperation and communication, demonstrating the ability to align, engage and focus multiple parties on shared goals. DeWayne is well known for his ability to collaborate and work behind the scenes. He understands the role of government and his role as a member of the governing body; he always searches for the greater good within the existing rules and laws. DeWayne's underlying philosophy to always be respectful of others and "remember everyone has a story" is the hallmark of his service. Respect, in the context of appreciating and valuing someone deeply because of their abilities, qualities and achievements, embodies what makes Commissioner Mareck truly worthy of this award.

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**Julie Kleinschmidt - Ramsey County Manager**

*Years of Service: 18 with Ramsey County; 30+ in total*

Former Ramsey County Manager Julie Kleinschmidt transformed Ramsey County into a county of excellence that provides a model to other local governments around the state and country. In partnership with the Board of Commissioners, she led the county through the Great Recession and ensuing recovery, guided the organization to a AAA bond rating, oversaw the realignment of Ramsey County's operating departments into a collaborative Service Team structure, rewrote the county's vision, mission and goals, and established a public commitment to racial equity and community engagement that will far outlive her tenure as County Manager. Ms. Kleinschmidt participated in regional, state and national organizations that advanced the work of counties. She sought to ensure that the state's second most populous county was a strong and supportive voice for counties of all sizes, recognizing that one of us is never as strong as all of us. Kleinschmidt served as County Manager from December 2008 - July 2018. Before her appointment, Kleinschmidt served as Ramsey County finance director for eight years. She had more than 30 years of experience in government management and finance prior to her retirement in 2018. Kleinschmidt, a CPA, was the first woman to serve as County Manager.

**Jim Standish - Grant County Coordinator**

*Years of Service: 47*

Jim Standish is being recognized for his lifelong leadership, loyalty and dedication in public service to Grant County and its citizens over the past 47 years. Jim remains as the one and only Grant County Coordinator and HRA Executive Director to this day. He was tasked with the development, including educational outreach and enforcement of the County Shoreland Zoning Program, Countywide Solid Waste Collection Program, Countywide Recycling Program and the Grant County Housing and Redevelopment Authority. Jim has overseen major housing construction projects, a major courthouse rehabilitation project and written numerous grants for a variety of projects. He is a Vietnam Veteran and served as a member on numerous community organizations. Jim is a true friend to those that know him, a mentor those he works with and an avid golfer.

**Tamra Laska - Crow Wing County Human Resources Director**

*Years of Service: 13*

Tamra Laska has been a leader in HR strategy for both Crow Wing County as well as among practice leaders in HR strategy around the state. In Crow Wing County, she initiated an outcomes-based, results-driven performance review process which provided a solid foundation for the introduction and institutionalization of a pay-for-performance compensation system. She brings stability and fairness to our labor relations practice with 11 bargaining units and she has made Crow Wing County's recruitment and exit management processes more contemporary and more effective. She has introduced a leadership development training program for our high-potential talent to better position them to take on leadership roles within the organization given the high exit rate of Baby Boomers from leadership positions, something that was particularly strategic and valuable during our current tight labor market. She initiated an annual employee engagement survey program to measure the return on investment from the county's human capital spend. She also restructured retiree benefit plans and enrollments requirements to reduce Crow Wing County's long-term OPEB liability by over \$10 million.

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AMC is a voluntary statewide organization that assists the state's 87 counties in providing effective county governance to the people of Minnesota. It is the mission of the Association to assist in the provision of effective county governance for the people of Minnesota. The association works closely with the legislative and administrative branches of government in seeing that legislation and policies favorable to counties are enacted. In addition, the Association provides educational programs, training, research and communications for county officials.

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**Editors: Photos attached.**

*Photo Caption: 2018 AMC President Susan Morris, an Isanti County commissioner, presented the Outstanding Service awards at the association's annual conference December 3 in Bloomington. The recipients were nominated by their counties and selected by a committee of county officials.*