Gov. Dayton Signs Local Road Wetland Replacement Program Bill

AMC is pleased to announce that we have achieved our first priority item of the legislative session! On March 7, Gov. Mark Dayton signed the Local Road Wetland Replacement Program (LRWRP) Funding and Regulatory Relief Bill (H.F. 434). The language can now be found in Chapter 7 of the 2017 Minnesota Session Laws. The governor held a bill signing ceremony on Friday, March 10, and invited county representatives to attend. Chapter 7 of the Local Road Wetland Replacement Program (LRWRP) Funding and Regulatory Relief Bill contains the following provisions: Effective March 11, 2017, the day after enactment, the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) will provide wetland replacement statewide for eligible county, city, and township road projects under the Local Road Wetland Replacement Program (LRWRP). The four wetland bank service areas that were previously closed or proposed to be closed are now open. Credit trading between wetland bank service areas (BSA) and an exemption equal to the federal exemption goes into effect immediately until wetland bank credits sufficient to replace wetlands for all LRWRP eligible road projects in all BSA’s are established. In addition, $5 million is appropriated to BWSR to acquire wetland bank credits to meet its obligations under the LRWRP. The bill also provides funding for the City of Madelia and Watonwan County after an explosive fire devastated most of its downtown on February 3, 2016. While this is a big accomplishment so early on in the legislative session, it should be noted that our efforts continue. $10 million of bonding authority is required in order for BWSR to fully fund the program for 2018 and beyond. We will continue to push for this to be included in a bonding bill this session.

AMC Announces Launch of New Regional Training Series Starting in May 2017

We are excited to announce that AMC is launching a new series of Regional Trainings! Our goal is to make it easy to attend workshops on the topics that you request most. Beginning in May 2017, we will be traveling to a city near you! (See map at right). Each topic will be offered in each of the seven locations. Look for specific dates, workshop details and registration coming soon! Topics include:

- Get Ready for What’s Next: Succession Planning and Workforce Development in County Government
- Creating Healthy Lines of Communication for Your Team – from County Boards to Front-line Staff
- Leading Continuous Improvement in your County
- Mental Health First Aid & Wellness Strategies to use in your County
- Speaking in Public, Running Meetings, & Convincing Others – Methods that Work!

...and more!

Learn useful material and practice new skills with your colleagues – without traveling far from home.

My columns this year are going to focus on spotlighting some of the leaders in our association, namely members of the Board of Directors. This time around, I asked two of our policy committee chairs – Hennepin County Commissioner Linda Higgins and Pennington County Commissioner Darryl Tveitbakkk to share some of their thoughts on the importance of policy committees and their roles as leaders of these essential groups that are integral to the work of our association.  

I am grateful to Commissioner Higgins and Tveitbakkk for sharing some insights with us. I believe that the key to success in county government is learning from each other and AMC brings us all together in the pursuit of serving our citizens to the very best of our abilities.  

It’s important that you be engaged in the intergovernmental work to ensure we are adequately funded to care for the adults and children who need these important services. See you at the capitol or at one of the next policy committee meetings!  

Now, after 12+ years as a commissioner, I have learned a lot, but there is always more to learn. Some time ago I decided that it is time to take a more active role in leadership, both locally and at AMC. My election as Chair of the General Government Policy Committee has been both rewarding and challenging. The AMC policy committees are where the action starts. Each county has representation on the policy committees. It’s all about networking on issues and bringing those issues forward at the State level and the National level. I want to thank the AMC policy analysts for the work they do to make it all happen.

Serving as a County Commissioner is challenging and rewarding at the same time. I have grown as a leader in county government and at the State level and the National level. I want to thank the AMC policy analysts for the work they do to make it all happen.

Serving as a County Commissioner is challenging and rewarding at the same time. I have grown as a leader in county government, I appreciate the opportunity to serve on the AMC Board of Directors.  

We provide not only the work but a lot of the funding for this work. In 2014, Minnesota counties completed more than 50,000 home visits to more than 7000 children. We provided about 54% – more than $208 million – of the total statewide funding for child welfare services in 2013.

During These Last Weeks of Session, AMC Needs Your Help!

As I write this column, we are in the busiest days of the legislative session. AMC staff are working around the clock to ensure that legislators know counties’ perspectives on the bills that are moving forward. By the mid-point of the session on March 15, more than 4500 bills were introduced in the House and Senate. Our policy analysts have worked with legislators to introduce 20 bills to address AMC’s priority issues – quite possibly an AMC record number of bill introductions! Introducing a bill requires a lot of time and legwork, including finding House and Senate authors who are willing to sponsor and champion the bill, working with legislative staff to draft the bill, walking around the capitol with paper copies of the “bill jackets” and securing authors, working with committee staff to ensure the bill is scheduled for a hearing, and arranging for testimony at the committee hearings. We are hopeful that all the bills that AMC drafted will meet the legislative deadlines in the next few weeks.

We appreciate how many county commissioners and staff have traveled to the Capitol to testify in support of AMC legislative priorities. We know that your advocacy matters, and it’s critical that you contact your legislators about these AMC priority issues as the omnibus bills are developed.
Association of Minnesota Counties
Associate Membership

AMCAM 2017

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.

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Galillard Capital Management
MAGIC Fund - PFM Asset Management, LLC
MCIT - Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust
National Joint Powers Alliance
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Public Financial Management, Inc. (PFM)
Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney, P.A.
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Contegrity Group, Inc.

SILVER
BKV Group
Bolton & Menk, Inc.
ISG
Northland Securities, Inc.
Sicora Consulting - Leadership at the Helm
Springsted Incorporated
Wenk
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Baker Tilly, LLP
CenterPoint Energy
CliftonLarsonAllen LLP
Concrete Paving Association of Minnesota
Cooperative Purchasing Connection
David Drown Associates
Disability Specialists
GLT Architects
Hamline University School of Business
INSPEC, 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
RtVision, Inc.
Sand Creek Group, Ltd.
Stoel Rives LLP

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

April
3
MRC Board of Directors
6 - 7
AMC Leadership Summit - Grand View Lodge, Nisswa
7
MACA Legislative Meetings
13
AMC Executive Committee
14
MCIT Board of Directors
19
LPHA Legislative Committee
LPHA Executive Committee
20 - 21
MCHRMA Spring Conference - St. Cloud
20
LPHA General Meeting
21
AMC Board of Directors
26
MACSSA Committees
MWCA Committees
MACCAC Committees
MACSSA General Membership
MWCA Operations
28
MACA Executive Committee
MACCAD Board of Directors

May
5
MACA Legislative Meetings
8
MRC Board of Directors
12
MCIT Board of Directors
17
LPHA Legislative Committee
LPHA Executive Committee
18 - 19
FUTURES Task Force
22
Constitutional End of Session
24 - 26
NACo WIR Conference - Sunriver, OR
24
MWCA Committees
25
MACCAC Committees
MWCA Operations
26
MACCAC Board of Directors
29
MEMORIAL DAY (AMC Office Closed)
31 - June 2
MACPZA Spring Training & Legislative Update
MACSSA Spring Conference - Ruttger’s Bay Lake Lodge

Successful plans take partnership.

Let’s talk retirement today: Thomas Jones Jr, 612-597-7631
The Federal Perspective
By Dennis McGrann, AMC Federal Liaison
Lockridge Grindal Nauen LLP

Congressional Leadership released its proposed legislation to repeal portions of the Affordable Care Act. This is only the first part of their long-term plan, but will likely be an uphill legislative battle, President Trump has endorsed this plan and has already spent a significant amount of time attempting to bring wary lawmakers on board with the plan. In addition, President Trump held a strategic affairs lunch on infrastructure investments that included business leaders in real estate, management consulting, and private equity. The Senate confirmed Sonia Sotomayor largely by party line votes of 55-43, to lead the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). CMS is a $5 trillion agency that oversees programs for more than 130 million people from the elderly to newborns. As the cabinet nominations begin to wrap up, the next confirmation battle is expected to begin with increased attention on Neil Gorsuch, who was nominated to replace Justice Antonin Scalia on the Supreme Court. Congress decided to put off the deadline for government funding decisions until the end of April, 2017, which is quickly approaching. With Congressional Leadership focusing on Healthcare reform legislation, it is expected that infrastructure investment and tax reform legislation will be the focus for the second half of 2017.

President Trump Issues Executive Order to Revamp WOTUS Rule
President Trump issued an executive order that instructs the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers to begin working on a new rule that narrows the scope of which waters are covered by the Clean Water Act. The President's Executive Order gives his agencies the option of rescinding or revising the previous WOTUS rule. In response to President Donald Trump’s Feb. 28th executive order, without referring the rule (RIN:2040-4F03), which would intend to provide clarity, could take at least a year because it requires the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—to issue a notice of the action and solicit public comment. Additionally, repealing it without a replacement may pass judicial muster as several Supreme Court rulings from the mid-2000s found the agency’s definition of what constitutes a “water” was unacceptably vague. President Trump’s Feb. 28 order instructs the agencies to consider whether they can refashion the WOTUS to make it align more closely with a 2006 opinion from then-Judge Antonin Scalia, which said only streams that flow into navigable waters should be regulated. In revising or revising the rule, the agencies will have to justify why the regulation they plan to issue in place of the 2015 Clean Water Act Rule is better at protecting the nation’s waters. It is likely that any attempts to repeal or revise WOTUS also will be challenged in court by environmental groups that favor a broad interpretation of the Clean Water Act.

Hearing Examines Water Infrastructure’s Role in a 21st Century Economy
The Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment held its first hearing of the 115th Congress in which it examined water infrastructure’s role in the American economy. Following on the broad themes that were present in the full Committee’s kick-off hearing last month, the Subcommittee explored the role of federal agencies in building water infrastructure that is ready for the challenges of the 21st century. The Committee examined how the federal government, in conjunction with its partners in state and local government, can work to reduce inefficiencies and delays in project delivery, include affordability considerations in the rulemaking process, better use data and technology, and maximize benefits from existing resources. Chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Rep. Bill Shuster (R-PA) stated at the initial hearing that ports, waterways, and other water resources infrastructure are the “artery” of a transportation system that allows commerce to thrive and communities to flourish. In 2016, Congress passed the bipartisan Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act. A key component of the WIIN Act was the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2016, which authorized the Army Corps of Engineers to undertake port, waterway, and flood protection improvements across the country. The Committee now is looking towards developing a WRDA bill for 2018, and today’s hearing represents the first step in that process.

Congressional Leadership unveils Healthcare Reform Plan
Republicans unveiled their long-awaited legislation to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, proposing to phase out key parts of the law over several years as they try to bring in both moderates and conservatives in their party to support the bill. It has been named the American Health Care Act; the proposal includes a refundable, age-weighted tax credit for individuals who buy policies through the marketplace. It ends the Affordable Care Act’s requirement to have coverage, and would eventually eliminate many taxes used to fund the 2010 law. Other changes, like a wind-down of federal subsidies, are phased in over a period of years. Specifically, the bill begins with creating an advanceable, refundable tax credit to fund the 2010 law. Other changes, like a wind-down of an expansion of Medicaid, are phased in over a period of years. In addition, the commission would have the authority to issue subpoenas requiring the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of evidence.

The House recently passed a bill (H.R. 998), by a 240-185 vote, to establish a regulatory review commission to identify regulations for repeal, with the goal of reducing their economic costs of Federal regulations by 15 percent. The bill’s author, Senator Jeff Sessions, has expressed his support for the resolution. The resolution will eliminate a Bureau of Land Management, Interior Department headquarters and diminish the influence of state and local governments. The resolution was expected to sign the resolution. Senators emphasized energy and rural lawmakers whose diverse interests were served in the legislation. Ranking Member of the Committee Rep. Collin Peterson (D-MN) restated his opposition to the proposal and two from each party in Congress expressed their opposition over the next several months. In addition, the commission would have the authority to issue subpoenas requiring the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of evidence.

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Senate Votes to Nullify Federal Land Planning Rule
The Senate voted March 7 on a resolution under the authority of the Congressional Review Act nullifying an Obama Administration revamp of federal land planning on millions of acres. The 51-48 vote followed party lines. President Donald Trump is expected to sign the resolution. Senators emphasized energy and mining and ranching as important functions for federal lands that could be undercut by changes that, according to the critics, would tend to centralize decision-making in Interior Department headquarters and diminish the influence of state and local experts and interests. The House already approved the resolution. The White House has expressed its support for the resolution. The resolution will eliminate a Bureau of Land Management rule, issued in December 2016, calling the Planning 2.0 Rule (RIN:1004-AE39). It would revise resource management plans governing more than 245 million acres and 700 million acres of subsurface federal property, and non-federal estate such as tribal lands, mostly in the Western U.S. The rollback resolution was supported by the National Association of Counties, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and association of state departments of agriculture, American Farm Bureau Federation, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, oil and gas associations, and other groups. ■

LOCKRIDGE GRINDAL NAUEN 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) 544-9840 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.
‘Minnesota Business Snapshot’ Will Better Serve Minnesotans

By Steve Simon, Minnesota Secretary of State

When most Minnesotans think of the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, they often think of our work around elections. However, our office also spends a great deal of time streamlining business services so Minnesotans can spend more time running their businesses and less time shuffling paperwork. I also personally meet with and get feedback from local chambers, small business owners, entrepreneurs, and economic development authorities every year as I travel throughout the state.

That is why I am excited to use this issue’s column to spotlight the Minnesota Business Snapshot, a new initiative designed to better serve Minnesotans and advance economic development by providing the public with critical data and information on the economic and demographic make-up of Minnesota's businesses.

For those not yet familiar, the Minnesota Business Snapshot (MBS) is a voluntary, five-question survey being offered to nearly 550,000 new and existing businesses in Minnesota as they file their annual renewal each calendar year with our office. To date, over 100,000 businesses have participated since it first became available in September 2016—a 47 percent response rate.

The survey asks business owners a variety of questions, including how many full-time employees they have; whether they self-identify as a member of specific communities, including veterans, women, or communities of color; the industry or field in which the business operates, such as mining, construction, retail, etc.; whether it’s a full-time or part-time endeavor; and gross revenues for the past year.

The reason I am highlighting this today is because the information collected from the Minnesota Business Snapshot is now available to state, county, and municipal governments at no cost! For order information and instructions, please contact our Business Information Lines at (651) 296-2803 or (877) 551-6767.

The ability for state, county, and municipal governments to request customized orders is expected to be available by summer. Customized orders will allow you to select a range of criteria for the search, such as industry, location, and other factors.

The Minnesota Business Snapshot will make it easier and more convenient for small business owners to identify potential partners, for consumers to target their spending, and for local governments and educational institutions to better understand the economic and demographic makeup of our state's business community.

The survey was put together with the input of individual business owners, business organizations, non-profits, and researchers from across the state. For the complete list of survey questions and answer options, visit http://bit.ly/mnmbs. If you have any comments, questions, or suggestions, please don’t hesitate to contact my office.

Thank you again for all the work that you do.

Funding for Election Technology and Equipment is a Top Priority

By Deborah Erickson, Crow Wing County Administrative Services Director

With the 2016 election season behind us, county election administrators are looking to the future and already planning for the next elections. Much of that focus is centered on the need for a partnership with the state to purchase new and replacement election technology. MACO’s top legislative priority for 2017 in the elections arena is the creation of a dedicated funding source to continue election technology upgrades at the county level.

Most the precinct tabulating and assistive voting technology equipment in place in precincts today was initially purchased using federal Help America Vote Act (HAVA) funds beginning in 2002. HAVA laws require every polling place to have an assistive voting technology device.

The cost of equipment technology funding is a steep one with the statewide cost to replace existing equipment estimated to be approximately $28 million. To outfit one polling place with new tabulating and assistive technology equipment can be as high as $10,000. Counties estimate that equipment purchase needs range anywhere from $50,000 - $1.3 million, and 74 percent of counties have no county funding established other than levy dollars in the year of purchase.

Without a matching funding partnership from the state, only 32 percent of Minnesota counties will be able to purchase election technology in the next four years, which could lead to wide disparity in voter experience across the state.

There is legislation in the current session aimed at addressing this issue. HF 1697 establishes a voting equipment matching grant program and appropriates $14 million to assist counties in purchasing or leasing tabulating, assistive voting technology, electronic rosters, or other certified election equipment or technology. Additionally, SF 838 also establishes a voting equipment grant and appropriates $15 million; however current language of the bill would earmark $13 million for electronic roster purchases and only $2 million for other equipment.

MACO supports HF 1697 which will provide the necessary flexibility for each county to address the needs in their county. We encourage county commissioners to consider supporting the bill as well and to contact your legislators to let them know of your support.

Approximately 20 Minnesota counties have purchased election technology in the past four years with the majority of the purchases centered in the metro areas. Several of these 20 counties have purchased systems to assist with the increase in mail-in and absentee voting including central count systems for mail processing, or updated precinct tabulators to meet the requirements for accepting in-person absentee ballots with the newly implemented direct balloting process.

Only four counties have purchased assistive voting technology devices to replace the aging AutoMARKs in every precinct. With the vast majority of Minnesota’s polling places still using the original AutoMARKs there are strong concerns among election administrators that service and replacement parts for this equipment will become very difficult to get in the next few years. As the vendors move on to their next generation of equipment, counties will be challenged to keep this required equipment operational without replacement assistance.

A few counties deployed electronic rosters in their counties in 2016 with great success. The electronic rosters allow for expediency and efficiency in the polling place by serving all voters at each terminal rather than having separate lines for alphabetical names, or separate stations for new registrations. The electronic rosters allow election judges to better serve the voters in the polls, and provide a reduced number of opportunities for manual errors in completing new registration forms or signing voters in as well as maintaining a higher level of voter privacy by not having other voter information apparent when someone is signing the roster.

From an administrative standpoint, the increased efficiency in posting voter history and processing new registrations is a time and cost savings for counties resulting in less manual hours needed for data entry and less opportunity for error.

Approximately 65 percent of Minnesota counties have plans to purchase election technology in the next two years, with about 80 percent of these counties looking to replace assistive and tabulating equipment and 42 percent looking to purchase electronic rosters. Additionally, 30 percent of these counties are looking to purchase central count equipment for processing of mail and absentee ballots.

The reason I am highlighting this today is because the information collected from the Minnesota Business Snapshot is now available to state, county, and municipal governments at no cost! For order information and instructions, please contact our Business Information Lines at (651) 296-2803 or (877) 551-6767.

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Thank you again for all the work that you do.
MINNESOTA COUNTIES INTERGOVERNMENTAL TRUST

2017 Report to Counties
Highlights MCIT’s Sustainability

MCIT representatives continue the annual tradition of meeting with each county board in the next few months. The meetings provide an opportunity for valuable discussion between the Trust and members.

This year’s presentation focuses on the benefits of membership, recent claim trends, how claims affect rates and reinsurance costs, dividend experience and information regarding MCIT’s risk management and loss control efforts. Each presentation is county specific and discusses the county’s role in the success of the MCIT program.

MCIT staff members look forward to these meetings. Commissioners and county staff are encouraged to engage MCIT during these sessions. It is an opportunity for members to ask questions about the program, as well as for MCIT to learn more about particular issues affecting each county member.

Invite Citizens to See “Brilliant Ideas at Work” During National County Government Month

By David Minke, Pine County Administrator
MACA Secretary

April is county government month and the theme for 2017 is “Brilliant Ideas at Work.” The National Association of Counties (NACo) has a web page full of information and ideas on ways to highlight your county. Often county government is referred to as the “invisible” layer of government. As nice as it may be to fly under the radar at times, we all know that counties provide many valuable services that make life changing, and in some cases lifesaving impact. These promotional efforts also help convey the value to residents of what they are getting for the taxes they pay.

Last April, Pine County hosted its first “County Government Day.” The day was focused on 9th graders and coincided with their study of government in school. We began the day in the county board room with a welcome by a county commissioner. The commissioner described what he did, talked about running for office, and shared insight into governing. We followed that with presentations from the highway department and health and human services departments.

We scheduled the day to fall on a county board meeting day, which gave the students an opportunity to attend part of the county board meeting. As is typical for a board meeting, there were a wide range of topics from the Medical Examiner’s annual report to an overview of the 2016 highway projects. The Medical Examiner report included 17 deaths by accident and five suicides—a sobering presentation for our high school guests.

After the board meeting, the group headed to court where they were greeted by a district court judge and county attorney to learn the ins and outs of the criminal justice system. Once finished with the legal work, students met the county auditor-treasurer and land services director.

After lunch, the students were on the move between the sheriff’s office, jail, and probation.

Prior to sponsoring county government day, we had to consider the value as it took significant staff time to plan, prepare and lead the day-long events. As county leaders, we are regularly faced with placing more demands on our staff than they can manage and working to set priorities in a never ending flow of service demands.

After seeing the impact of the event, it is clear to me that there was a significant return on investment. County staff from many different departments, offices, and agencies came together to focus on a single event. I also saw staff excel as they showcased their areas and skills. Not only are staff technically competent, but they are creative, energetic, and passionate about what they do—who knew surveying could be so interesting.

After the event, the students wrote thank you notes. Many of the notes highlighted specific events during the day and generally demonstrated that students learned something and thought the day was time well spent. I’ll quote from two letters that are representative of the comments. “I thought it was going to be boring but I am glad I went because it was actually pretty fun and it was a great learning experience” and another concluded with, “Stay awesome my friends!” It was also exciting to hear the kids express interest in county jobs, and for them to see that the county can be a good career choice.

If your county has sponsored a similar event, you have likely seen similar benefits. If you have not, consider an event to reach out to youth in the future.

Learn more about planning an event in your county by visiting www.naco.org!

Yellow Medicine County Commissioner Joins MCIT Board

With the departure of Lac qui Parle County Commissioner Graylen Carlson from the MCIT Board of Directors at the end of 2016, the search for his replacement began in January.

The call for candidates was sent to all county commissioners, auditors and auditor-treasurers with a deadline for interested parties to submit their résumés to MCIT by Jan. 25. During its February meeting, the MCIT Board interviewed several individuals for the seat.

With a unanimous vote, Yellow Medicine County Commissioner Ron Antony was appointed to the MCIT Board of Directors. He will serve until the next annual meeting, at which time the seat will be filled by election. The unexpired term for this board seat coincides with the 2017 MCIT Annual Meeting.

Antony was elected to the Yellow Medicine County Board of Commissioners in 2002 and is currently serving as vice-chair. He also serves as chair on three joint powers boards and is chair of the Minnesota Workforce Council Association. Antony finds time to serve his community as the fire chief of the St. Leo Fire Department and the local EMS system as a first responder.

Antony worked for Schott Corporation and Hirel Systems as a manufacturing engineer before pursuing a career in insurance. He currently owns and operates his own insurance agency in Canby, Minn., and has experience with property, casualty, life, health and crop coverage.

Building a legacy — your legacy.

Learn more about planning an event in your county by visiting www.naco.org!
Member Services Update  
By Laurie Klupacs, Deputy Director  

NACo Legislative Conference Review  
Nearly 50 AMC members and staff attended the National Association of Counties (NACo) Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. in late February. This meeting brings over 2,000 elected and appointed county officials from across the country to focus on legislative issues facing county government. Attendees hear from key Administration officials and members of Congress and are offered a myriad of additional educational opportunities addressing current and hot topic issues.

Conference general session speakers Sens. Mark Warner (D-Va.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) and Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah) brought conference attendees up to speed on the views from Capitol Hill. The opening session keynote speaker Jim VandeHei, co-founder of Axios, media entrepreneur and expert on American politics spoke to NACo members about political changes brought by President Donald Trump and advised local governments what to expect from the White House over the next four years.

The final general session of the conference featured addresses from Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), and Rep. Rob Bishop (R-Utah), as well as a Capitol Hill briefing on Medicaid and the Role of Counties in Local Health Systems. Presidential historian and author Michael Beschloss spoke about the lessons he’s learned writing presidential histories. He noted that historically lawmakers were much more likely to make friendships across the political parties than they are today.

We’d like to thank AMC’s contracted federal lobbyists from Lockridge Grindal Nauen for doing an outstanding job of coordinating the schedules of Minnesota’s Congressional Delegation so that they could attend the AMC Congressional Breakfast on the final day of the conference to discuss their top priorities as well as answer questions.

Interested in Getting Involved with NACo?  
Minnesota members are encouraged to get involved with NACo by being a member of one of eight policy steering committees. These committees annually review and make recommendations on federal policy issues and legislation. They start the policy development process leading to the development of the NACo Legislative Platform, which guides the county government message presented to the Administration, Congress, U.S. Courts and the American public.

Please contact me (lklupacs@mncounties.org) if you are interested in being appointed to one of the following NACo committees: Agriculture & Rural Affairs, Community, Economic & Workforce Development, Justice & Public Safety, Environment, Energy & Land Use, Finance & Intergovernmental Affairs, Health, Human Services & Education, Public Lands, Telecommunications & Technology or Transportation. AMC is allowed eight individuals (including up to two from any one county) to serve on each committee.

The next opportunity to participate in NACo is at their Annual Conference on July 21-24 in Franklin County, Ohio. Registration is now open at www.naco.org.

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 cost 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.

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

Congressman Tim Walz with AMC President and Swift County Commissioner Gary Hendrickx during the Minnesota Congressional Delegation Breakfast.

Dakota County Commissioner Joe Atkins, Congressman Tom Emmer, AMC Secretary/Treasurer and Ramsey County Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire, and Washington County Commissioner Karla Bigham at the Minnesota Congressional Delegation Breakfast. The group served in the Minnesota Legislature together before moving to their current positions.
4-H Clubs From Big Stone, Dakota, and Pope Counties Receive 2017 Community Youth Leadership Awards

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) honored three Minnesota 4-H projects for their contributions and service to communities at the AMC Legislative Conference in St. Paul on February 16. These projects, driven by youth across Minnesota, truly make a big difference and respond to real community needs in the state.

The Big Stone County 4-H AIS Team's project "Aquatic Robotics/Aquatic Invasive Species Education" is led by ten youth and three volunteers. They wanted to help others to learn more about the county's local lakes and how to prevent aquatic invasive species. In 2016, they presented to approximately 527 youth and 65 adults across the county and distributed informational packets to over 100 fishermen. Then, they built an underwater robot with motors and a camera to help detect any changes in the lake's ecosystem. Members of the club are shown here with AMC President Gary Hendrickx, Swift County Commissioner.

The Pope County Lakeview 4-H Club's "Welcome to the Community Baskets" is a project that started to welcome new families with children to the community. Their goal is to help children to feel excited to join a new school and make new friends. This nine-member club shopped for the gift baskets, put everything together, and hosted Open House events at the elementary and high schools. It was a fun way to encourage new friends while also providing leadership in the community. Members of the club are shown here with AMC President Gary Hendrickx, Swift County Commissioner.

The Dakota County Youth Teaching Youth Teachers and Peers for Peers Group wanted to make a difference through mentoring so they created the "Youth Teaching Youth Mentorship Program." In this program, youth shaped the direction of activities, communicated with school staff to better understand their mentees, and provided support to mentees beyond program meetings. This year, they found that these efforts impacted entire classrooms as more students developed positive relationships – making a difference by helping others to stay engaged in school and also graduate. Members of the club are shown here with AMC President Gary Hendrickx, Swift County Commissioner, and several Dakota County Commissioners and staff.

Meet CLIC

The County Library & Information Center (CLIC) is AMC's online resource for counties that contains fact sheets, reports, videos and other materials on policy issues important to counties.

Some of current CLIC topics:
- Transportation Funding
- Aquatic Invasive Species
- Solar Energy
- Temporary Family Health Care Dwellings
- County Officers
- County Program Aid
- Property Taxes
- Probation Services
- Broadband
- County Sign Ordinances

Each CLIC topic includes an AMC overview describing why the issue is important to counties and additional in-depth publications by policy experts from around the state. Like all libraries, CLIC will be routinely updated, with new topics and materials added regularly.

Who can use CLIC?

CLIC is a public website that anyone can use. New county officials will find the AMC overviews helpful for learning the basics of complicated county issues. Experienced county officials can use CLIC to stay informed of new policy issues as they emerge in Minnesota's political landscape.

Next time you have a question about counties, visit CLIC to find a quick overview or in-depth report. If CLIC does not have the answer to your question, contact AMC’s research analyst Jill Sunnemeyer (jsunnemeyer@mncounties.org). She will be happy to help you find an answer!

Find the CLIC at www.mncounties.org under 'Information and Jobs'.

Roseau High School Senior Receives AMC Student Scholarship Past President Jack Swanson

Roseau County Commissioner Jack Swanson, Immediate Past President of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), selected Ivy Braaten, a senior at Roseau High School, to receive a $3000 AMC Student Scholarship during AMC's Legislative Conference in St. Paul on February 16.

Candidates for the scholarship must demonstrate excellence in the classroom, actively participate in intra- and/or extra-curricular activities and serve as a role model for his or her peers. The scholarship recipient must also share the AMC vision of a future that contains active civic participation, community pride and a sense of community responsibility. The scholarship is made possible through donations made during a silent auction at the association's annual conference each December.

"As the immediate past president of AMC one of the great things that I get to do is select an outstanding high school student from Roseau County to receive the AMC Student Scholarship Award," Swanson said.

Braaten is currently president of the RHS National Honor Society, vice-president of her senior class, secretary of her 4-H Club, a student representative on a local public health coalition, a Target Team member, a three-sport athlete, and carries a 3.92 grade point average. She plans to attend the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

Swanson asked the scholarship candidates to write a brief essay on how they will make a positive impact in the world during their lifetime and Ivy's essay reflected on her life growing up on a farm, which she says, "instilled values of optimism, perseverance and involvement."

“She also explained that her upbringing cultivated a passion for hard work and that she will strive to offer service to those in need,” Swanson continued. “Those are powerful words from a high school senior who will make a positive difference.”

Ivy Braaten, a Roseau High School senior, and Roseau County Commissioner Jack Swanson, who selected Braaten for the 2017 AMC Student Scholarship.
Serving Our County Proudly!

By Laura Elvebak, Steele County Administrator

A community member recently questioned whether Steele County employees were upset or ashamed by the wages and benefits we receive. While I can’t speak for all Steele County employees, I think I can speak on behalf of most of them when I say – No, we are not! We are proud and dedicated and we work hard every day to provide quality services to not just taxpayers, but to all who live, work and play within Steele County.

We are those who give up time on holidays and weekends with family so that you may safely travel to be with yours. We process the paperwork so you may refinance your home (or get the passport to go on that once in a lifetime vacation!). We assist the entrepreneur who is looking to start a small business on a recently purchased piece of property. We are driving the Zamboni to smooth the ice at the hockey tournament and then working overnight in preparation of the vendor show the next day. We maintain the buildings those before us paid for so that we may be proud of our history. We provide support to our Veterans and their families. We protect the groundwater and the land so we can share with those after us.

We are planning for a disaster, we are with when and after one strikes - to keep you safe, assist and guide you to a warm meal, to a warm bed and financial assistance. We maintain the integrity of our elections so that every voice may be heard. We advocate for you with our legislators against state cost shifts which result in unfunded mandates and additional “red tape”. We prosecute those who commit crimes and provide you with due process.

We educate the new mother so that her child may thrive. We hire top talent and support our employees so they may be their best!

We are yelled at, we are sworn at, our character and professionalism are publicly questioned, we are called incompetent, we are said to be lazy and yet we come to work the next day determined to make a positive difference in our County! We are awake when you sleep, we work seven days a week, 24 hours a day protecting your neighborhood, holding those who commit crimes accountable, and helping those who went down the wrong path to a path of individual success. We are with you and your loved ones at your most vulnerable times.

There are those who question our decision or are malicious or seek to undermine our integrity. We are your Steele County employees!

Laura Elvebak is the Steele County Administrator, a position she has held for two years. Elvebak has a bachelor’s degree in Political Science, completed coursework in a Master’s of Public Administration, and 17 years of local government experience.
Lack of State Investment Threatens Public Health, Burdens Local Tax Levies

By Renee Fraundienst, Stearns County Public Health Division Director and LPHA Legislative Co-Chair and Allie Friedrichs, Meeker-McLeod-Sibley Community Health Services Administrator and LPHA Legislative Co-Chair

Local public health departments are on the front lines every day to protect and promote the health and safety of their communities. To do so successfully requires adequate, stable and flexible funding; but past funding cuts and shifting priorities at both state and federal levels have put our local public health system – and the health of our communities – at risk.

Talk to a public health director today, and you’ll hear that mental health is consistently one of the most important health issues identified by Minnesota’s community health boards, but local public health departments have too little capacity to effectively address it. Tuberculosis outbreaks are more common, but agencies are forced to hold referrals from too little staffing. Rates of sexually transmitted infections have increased, but there are too few resources for education and intervention. Schools are looking to public health as a partner to prevent youth alcohol, drug and opioid use; but there are not enough staff to do the work.

Stories like these can be found all over Minnesota. Local public health is our first line of defense at the core of our communities’ health, but it is struggling and needs help.

To the credit of local government, counties and cities have made important investments in public health to try to fill the gap, but they can no longer continue to pour local resources into maintaining the system. Local tax levies are the single largest funding source of local public health, accounting for 32% (more than $107 million) of all expenses in 2015. In total, nearly half (47%) of Minnesota’s local public health expenses are locally generated. By contrast, 16% comes from the state; and of that, just 6% allows local officials flexibility and control to direct dollars where they are needed most.

This legislative session, the Local Public Health Association (LPHA) is calling on state lawmakers to support adequate, stable and flexible funding for Minnesota’s community health boards to restore capacity for core, state-mandated services and address local public health priorities. We have three asks:

Increase funding to the Local Public Health Grant (HF614 / SF1144)

LPHA supports HF614/SF1144, which would increase funding to the Local Public Health Grant by $37 million per year. The Local Public Health Grant is the state’s main investment in local public health’s state-mandated services and provides local governments local control to direct dollars to their public health priorities.

Increase Medical Assistance (MA) reimbursements for family home visits (HF1385 / SF1143)

LPHA supports HF1385/SF1143, which would increase the minimum MA reimbursement rate for all public health nurse family home visits to $140 per unit, providing needed resources to maintain and strengthen programs throughout the state. Family home visiting is known to improve birth outcomes, prevent child maltreatment, promote healthy childhood development and foster self-sufficiency among our most at-risk families.

Maintain Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) funding

LPHA supports maintaining SHIP funding at $35 million per biennium. SHIP supports local communities working together to prevent the leading causes of death and disease in Minnesota and reduce health care costs. Funding goes to local community partners in all 87 counties and 10 tribal nations, with nearly 2,300 partner sites engaged.

The collective impact of these funding priorities would bring more capacity and more local control to local public health agencies throughout Minnesota for the benefit of our public’s health. We look forward to working with our partners through the Association of Minnesota Counties to advance this agenda.
Association of Minnesota Counties

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES
January 20, 2017

CALL TO ORDER
President Gary Hendrickx called the AMC Board of Directors’ meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, January 20, 2017 in the Board Room at the Association of Minnesota Counties located in St. Paul.

INTRODUCTIONS
A special welcome to the new Board members:
- Rhonda Sivarajah, (Anoka)
- Jeff Johnson, (Hennepin)
- Mike Beard, (Scott)
- Dan Stenseng, (Clearwater)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA
MOTION by Karla Bigham; seconded by Larry Lindor to approve the January 20, 2017, AMC Board of Directors’ agenda as presented. The motion carried.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT – PRESIDENT GARY HENDRICKX
Goals for 2017
Last week Executive Director Julie Ring and President Hendrickx attended the NACo Executive Directors and Presidents Meeting in Washington, D.C. They met with their counterparts from across the country, heard updates from NACOs and attended briefings on the impact of the Supreme Court on county government. One session of particular interest focused on how different associations conduct training for commissioners, particularly new commissioners. This prompted President Hendrickx to include a strategic discussion about AMC’s education program that will be presented by Heather Baudenb, AMC Education Director during today’s meeting. President Hendrickx noted that one of his goals for the year is to reflect back on AMC’s strategic planning and governance work and to ensure the board is using their time most effectively. His plan is to include fiduciary, strategic and generative items on each board agenda.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT
The committee met prior to prepare for today’s meeting.
- The committee recommends board approval on a proposal from Lockridge Grindal and Naunen for communication support during the upcoming session. A copy of the proposal was included in the board packet.
- MOTION by Michael Potter; seconded by Karla Bigham to approve the proposal from Lockridge Grindal and Naunen as presented. The motion carried.
- Appointed individuals to AMC Committees. A handout listing committees and appointees was available at the meeting.
- Appointed Washington County Commissioner Karla Bigham and Blue Earth County Commissioner Vance Stuhlenberg to fill open seats on the MAGIC Fund Board of Trustees. Stearns County Commissioner DeWayne Mareck was re-appointed.
- Crow Wing County Commissioner Paul Theide is an AMC appointee on this board.
- A letter of recommendation was sent to the governor supporting the appointment of Lake County Commissioner Rich Swe and Faribault County Commissioner Tom Lovall to the BWIR board.

The minutes from the January Executive Committee meeting were included in the board packet.

SECRETARY/TREASURER REPORT – COMMISSIONER MARY JO McGUIRE
- Approval of the Minutes
- MOTION by Mary Jo McGuire; seconded by Larry Lindor to approve the December 4, 2016 AMC Board of Directors’ meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried.
- Approval of November 2016 Financials
- MOTION by Mary Jo McGuire; seconded by Joe Bouvette to accept the November 2016 Financial Statements as presented pending the AMC 2016 annual audit.
- The motion carried.
- Approval of the AMC Annual Business Minutes
- MOTION by Mary Jo McGuire; seconded by Susan Morris to approve the December 6, 2016 AMC Annual Business meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried.

MINNESOTA RURAL COUNTIES (MRC) LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES
Douglas County Commissioner and MRC Chair Jim Stratton and MRC executive director Dan Larson gave an overview on the MRC committee and they presented their legislative priorities for 2017. A handout listing MRC’s 2017 legislative priorities and leadership (officers, delegates and alternates to the MRC Board of Directors) was provided.

These discussions on MRC’s policy positions and how they relate to or may conflict with AMC’s positions. AMC’s policy is that an affiliate cannot take a legislative position that is in conflict with AMC’s policy position. Key discussion points are outlined below.

If AMC chooses not to take a position that doesn’t necessarily mean AMC is neutral on the issue. There was debate about whether MRC can take legislative positions on items that are not included in the AMC platform. After discussion, the Board recommended that the AMC Board and the MRC Board should communicate throughout their policy development processes to ensure that MRC does not inadvertently take a position in conflict with AMC. The Board recommended that AMC Executive Director facilitate this information exchange.

There was concern that introduction of a transportation bill without a transit component would be in opposition to AMC’s position that supports a comprehensive transportation bill. AMC and MRC should be on the same page regarding transportation. Dan Larson said that he would talk to MRC members about whether to draft a bill and how to include transit.

STRATEGIC DISCUSSION: GOALS OF AMC’S EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM – COMMISSIONER GARY HENDRICKX AND AMC EDUCATION DIRECTOR HEATHER BAUDENB
Education Director, Heather Baudenb, facilitated a discussion regarding education and training priorities for 2017. Several options were highlighted, including college and university partnerships, mentorship for new administrators and coordinators, expanded county-based and regional trainings; opportunities to share best practices; and, additional workshops at AMC conferences.

This discussion provides direction for the new Education & Training Committee, chaired by Susan Morris, that will begin meeting at the February Legislative Conference.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT – JULIE RING
Board meeting evaluations – Board members were asked to fill out an evaluation for today’s meeting.
- 2017 AMC Board of Directors’ handbook – The AMC Board is the Board of Directors for our nonprofit 501c4 organization. The Board provides leadership and governance for the organization and board members are a voice of the membership. The board handbook includes a collection of policies that guide board work, and other information that members may find useful, including a copy of the updated AMC bylaws, and the new reimbursement policy, which the Board updated in December. Some of the documents are still in the process of being updated.
- Conflict of Interest Policy – Julie Ring referred to the Board of Directors’ Conflict of Interest Policy, which was distributed prior to the meeting. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions about the policy. All board members were asked to sign a document certifying they reviewed the policy.
- Board contact form – All board members were asked to complete the annual contact form noting their preferences for urgent communication.
- Board bios/photos – All board member bios and photos will be included on the AMC website. Julie Ring asked new members to please provide their information to Donna Haupert in the next week. Individual members spoke on the importance of renewing AMC’s membership.
- State Fair booth update – In the interest of time this item will be discussed at a future meeting. Julie briefly informed the board about her conversation with Dean Beverly Durgan from MN Extension about exploring the possibility of partnering with them to plan a county government day in the Extension building.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR’S REPORT – LAURIE KLUPLAC
- 2016 AMC Annual Conference overview – The final registration count for the 2016 annual conference was 552. 112 attendees answered the post conference survey and responses seem to be very positive. A copy of the conference program results were shared with the board. AMC Membership Services was able to deeply cut expenses at the Hyatt by purchasing screens and AV equipment which was set up by AMC staff.
- 2017 AMCAM report – AMC has received 39 AMCAM applications to date, bringing in $36,000. This is expected to grow to the 2016 level or higher (60 applications/$49,300).
- 2017 AMC Newly Elected Officials Conference – The newly elected officials conference is January 25-26, 2017, and will be held at the MCIT building in St. Paul. There are a total of 77 newly elected county commissioners, and attendance is currently at 70. This includes a few county administrators/ coordinators.
- 2017 Legislative Conference update – 95 individuals are currently registered. The conference will be held at the InterContinental Hotel in St. Paul on February 6-7. AMC’s room block is completely full with multiple registrations from a few counties, some counties have not yet registered. AMC is working on increasing the room block.
- 2017 NACo Legislative Conference update – The conference will be held on February 24 – March 1, 2017 in Washington DC. 39 representatives from MN are currently registered.
- Leadership Summit – The Leadership Summit is planned for April 6 & 7, 2017. The conference will be held at Grand View Lodge in Nisswa MN. Staff expects great attendance and a “Save the Date” notification will be sent to all members next week.

NACO/DISTRICT DIRECTORS/AFFILIATE MEMBERS REPORT
NACO representatives, District Directors, Policy Committee Chairs and Affiliate Representatives were given the opportunity to report on key issues affecting their districts/communities/associations.
- Commissioner Shoff provided a written report from the NACo Board of Directors meetings held on December 8-10 in Tallahassee, FL.
- Julie Ring reported NACo Executive Director Matt Chase will speak at the AMC Legislative conference.

ADJOURN

MARCH - APRIL 2017

Minnesota COUNTIES
Taking a Systemic Approach

As part of our ongoing strategic planning work, MACSSA has finalized a framework to guide the Association’s work over the coming years. The framework is a blueprint for the Association as we navigate an environment of constant and large-scale change in the human services system as well as the rapidly changing makeup of our membership. This blueprint will focus the Association’s resources on addressing the bigger picture forces that are impacting our membership.

The framework consists of a set of values and systemic priorities that were designated based on those values. These values and priorities will form the foundation of how MACSSA approaches its work, whether that be externally (e.g. legislative and policy work) or internally with our membership.

The following values were developed at a retreat of the MACSSA Executive Committee last November and finalized by the MACSSA membership last December.

MACSSA endorses the following values:

**Equity**
- Promoting the respectful, fair, and inclusive treatment of all with the recognition that racial, economic, and gender differences can create unique and unequal experiences and backgrounds.

**Fiscal Responsibility**
- Advocating for the ethical, honest, and conscientious stewardship of public funding through transparency and public awareness.
- Positive sustainable outcomes for the people we serve.
- Creating stable, sustainable, and equitable results for our communities.

**Collective Responsibility**
- Creating a collaborative environment of accountability through shared ownership of outcomes.

**Continuous Learning/Improvement**
- Creating a culture that supports change and innovation through personal growth and professional development.

**Empowered Workforce**
- Promoting the resources, support, and training for human services staff to provide consistency and build capacity across the state.
- To transform these values into action, the membership agreed to a set of systemic priorities. These priorities are intended to encompass initiatives that apply broadly across the health and human services system as opposed to individual silos within the system (e.g. economic assistance programs).

MACSSA’s systemic priorities:

**Equity**
- MACSSA is committing over the coming years to promoting equity and supporting counties to take a leadership role in addressing disparities, disproportionality, and access issues. Additionally, MACSSA is committing to ensuring that the Association is an inclusive organization and one that is actively seeking and engaging diverse viewpoints.

**Human Services Fiscal Framework**
- MACSSA believes that a strategic framework for human services financing is critically needed. MACSSA will be promoting the development of a financing framework that is sustainable, transparent, equitable, and supports positive outcomes.

**Integrated Service Delivery**
- MACSSA will be working with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and other stakeholders to develop and promote an integrated health and human services business model. Integrated services are critical to providing cost-effective positive outcomes for Minnesota residents. An integrated system will break down silos between programs and allow for a truly person-centered approach to meeting the needs of residents.
- In order to make progress on these systemic issues, it will be critical for MACSSA to engage with a broad and diverse group of government and non-governmental partners. MACSSA looks forward to working with county commissioners, our partner organizations at the Association of Minnesota Counties, DHS and others as we move these priorities forward.

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