

ANOKA COUNTY

NEWS

Volume 3-2018

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A LOOK AT THE LEVY

Conservative budgeting helps Anoka County weather rising costs

Over the past 8 years, Anoka County's property tax levy has been nearly flat. During that time-frame, the average increase has been only 1.01 percent.

The breakdown looks like this: 2012: -5.22 percent; 2013: -1.2 percent; 2014: .82 percent; 2015: .04 percent; 2016: 2.49 percent; 2017: 2.5 percent; 2018: 3.7 percent.

Being fiscally conservative and finding creative budgeting solutions has allowed the county to keep the property tax impact on residents low during a time when nearby counties and municipalities have endured much higher increases.

During this County Board's tenure, there has been \$43.6 million accumulated in tax savings, a \$126.6 million reduction of general obligation outstanding debt and a \$5.9 million reduction in the debt levy.

When residents read their property tax statements this month, they will notice the proposed county portion of the property tax levy for 2019 stands at 4.94 percent. While this is higher than the Anoka County Board would like to see, it is an amount that is in response to rising health care costs and public safety needs.

The 2019 budget is impacted by a 9.9 percent jump in employee health insurance premiums. The county is required by state law to provide its employees with health insurance.

"We are certainly not unique in facing rising health insurance premiums," said Rhonda Sivarajah, chair, Anoka County Board. "Employers everywhere — public and private — are dealing with these significant increases. It is a cost of doing business and necessary to attract and retain quality workers."

The county is facing increased costs related to housing inmates — it is boarding inmates in other counties' jails due to lack of space at its jail facility. Also on the public safety side, there are overtime costs, and the budget has been increased to ensure the best and brightest are working for the Anoka County Sheriff's Office and the county's 911 Center.

Annually, the county must deal with rising fuel, electric and building maintenance costs. The county does this in the most cost-effective manner possible; department heads routinely go through their budgets to determine ways to streamline them. When budgeting, department heads and County Board members keep in mind that is the county's responsibility to maintain its assets, including roads, parks, libraries, network and security infrastructure, buildings and parking lots.

The County Board will vote to adopt the final levy in December. The levy can be decreased before that time, but it cannot be increased.

To learn more about the county budget and property tax levy, plan to attend the "Truth in Taxation" meeting at 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 6, in Room No. 705 of the Anoka County Government Center, 2100 3rd Ave., Anoka.

2019 budget goals

- Maintain current level of county services
- Address increased public safety needs
- Preserve and improve the assets of Anoka County
- Economic development

How the budget and levy process works

Anoka County provides essential programs and services, such as road maintenance, public safety, veteran services, and more. Every year, counties pass a new budget to cover the cost of these crucial services. Residents are encouraged to participate in the budget process by attending a public meeting in December.

June-August: Anoka County leaders estimate the need - and cost - for programs and services.

August-Sept: County Commissioners use the estimates to create a preliminary budget and set the proposed property tax levy.

November: Anoka County residents receive notice of the property tax changes and are invited to attend a public meeting in December.

December: The Board of Commissioners approves the final budget, levy and capital improvements plan.

Total expenditures \$306M (million)

The 2019 proposed property tax levy is \$136M, an increase of 4.94% over last year.

- Human Services \$92.7M
- Road & Bridge \$43.7M
- Parks & Rec \$8M
- Other Gov't'l Funds* \$14.7M
- Library Fund \$8.5M
- Debt Service \$13.8M
- Infrastructure \$3.2M
- General \$121.4M

*Includes: Job Training Center, Community Development, Medical Examiner, Law Library, Co-op Extension, and Leasehold Properties

The levy increase helps fund:

- Increased costs in Sheriff's public safety budget and 911

Revenue sources

We receive money from many sources. Property taxes fund about 32% of our budget.

- 42.7% Property Tax
- 20% State
- 11% Federal
- 13.3% Charges for Service
- 7% Fiscal Disparities
- 6% County Program Aid

Commissioner Kordiak Calls it a Career

Anoka County Commissioner Jim Kordiak doesn't fish, golf, hunt or take part in many other hobbies people might associate with retirement.

One might ask what Kordiak is going to do with his life after he retires from his District 4 seat on the County Board — a position he's held for the last 32 years. The answer to that is simple: Kordiak is going to continue being involved in civic pursuits, volunteer opportunities and meeting as many people as he possibly can.

Not only is Kordiak stepping away from the board, he's also moving from Anoka County with his wife, Marilyn, in favor of a milder climate in Vero Beach, Florida.

"I will be actively involved in my community once again when I move down there after the end of my term," Kordiak said. "I won't be planting a garden, trust me."

The end of Kordiak's tenure marks the conclusion of one of the more impressive political runs in state history. Kordiak's father, Albert, now 90 years old, also served on the County Board for 32 years, 16 of that as chairman.

"He had a remarkable and excellent career with county government," Kordiak said of his father. He was recognized as a strong figure in county government, back in his day."

"I have just enjoyed every minute of this business."
~ Commissioner Jim Kordiak

Growing up in a household with one of the forefathers of Anoka County government, one might think Kordiak had planned on running for office for years before he took the plunge in 1986, but that wasn't so.

"Most people don't believe this, but I had no vision of running for county commissioner until very shortly before I ran," he said. "Dad and I did not plan this, we did not design this, and I had no broad vision of doing this."

As soon as Kordiak took his seat on the County Board, he knew it was the right fit. He said he's never felt like serving the citizens of Anoka County has been a "job."

"I have just enjoyed every minute of this business," Kordiak said. "It's diverse, and it's been different every day, which has been fun. It's never the same place."

Kordiak said he's also thoroughly enjoyed serving with 18 other county commissioners during his tenure.

"Every single board I've worked with has worked hard to look out for the greater needs of Anoka County," he said. "It's kind of remarkable. They're all different boards.

They're all different people. But at the end of the day, the vote is commonly 7-0, because we see the need, we see the benefit, and we take care of business."

Commissioner Rhonda Sivarajah, chair, Anoka County Board, said she's seen Kordiak's passion for people while working side by side with him for more than a decade.

"The skill and genuine interest Commissioner Kordiak has exhibited while interacting with the citizens of Anoka County for decades has been a pleasure to witness," Sivarajah said. "He truly cares about helping people."

County Administrator Jerry Soma, who at 52 years of service to the county, is one of the few people who can best Kordiak's 46 years, said he has known Kordiak since his first day on the job in Corrections. Kordiak served as an Anoka County probation officer for 14 years before being elected to the County Board.

"He has always had a positive attitude; he's always been a 'glass is half full' kind of person," Soma said. "Whatever task he takes on becomes his highest priority. He sets goals and is persistent until he achieves them. During his time as commissioner, he has become knowledgeable in many areas, with our parks and recycling being some of the areas in which he's become the most well informed."

Kordiak admits it's going to be difficult to leave Anoka County, but he's looking forward to his new life in Florida, and he said he doesn't think it's going to be tough to attract visitors to his new home, including his three daughters — Jeanette, Lisa, and Laura — and their families. Kordiak isn't completely leaving Minnesota behind, though. He has a cabin in the Nisswa area, and he plans to be back in the state for about three months out of each year.

Kordiak said he'll miss the people he's built relationships with in Anoka County, and it's going to be strange stepping away from the real estate and tax income business that he's run with his father in Columbia Heights. That business has doubled as the District 4 Anoka County Board office since 1954. But, he noted with a laugh as he pulled up a photo on his phone of a path he had to shovel through the snow to his office in mid-April of this year, he's not going to miss Minnesota winters.



REAL ID applications now being accepted

As of Oct. 1, Minnesotans were able to start applying for REAL ID-compliant driver's licenses and ID cards. Anoka County License Bureau officials say not to rush get the licenses or cards, as residents have until Oct. 1, 2020 to complete the process.

The REAL ID act was passed by Congress in 2005; it establishes minimum security standards for state-issued driver's licenses and ID cards. The Act refers to federal anti-terrorism laws and regulations that control access to federally regulated commercial aircraft and federal facilities that require identification to enter, such as military bases or nuclear power facilities.

What makes obtaining a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or ID card different than procuring a regular driver's

license or ID card is the amount of documentation needed at the time of the application. Documents that prove identity, date of birth and legal presence in the United States are required. Also needed is a document proving the applicant's Social Security number and two documents proving current residency in Minnesota. The full list of documents that work for a Real ID application can be found on the Minnesota Department of Public Safety website: dps.mn.gov — search "Real ID" and then click on the "Required Documents" link on the left of the screen.

The DPS site also has comprehensive information on all the other aspects of REAL ID compliance, standard driver's licenses, IDs, and enhanced driver's licenses.

When REAL ID is not needed

People who already have a passport book or a passport card can still use those forms of identification to fly domestically, and they can be used to enter federal facilities that require identification. The passport book can also be used to fly internationally.

Obtaining your license, ID card

Those who wish to obtain a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or identification card can do so at any of Anoka County's license centers in Blaine, Columbia Heights, Coon Rapids, Ham Lake or Ramsey. Residents applying for REAL ID-compliant licenses or identification cards are advised to come at non-peak times to avoid long waits. Peak times include the beginning and end of months, Mondays and Fridays.

Veterans who are seeking to secure military benefits for themselves or their dependents and would like help with the process need to look no further than the Anoka County Veteran Services Office.

The office employs five veteran service officers who are highly trained in navigating the Veterans Affairs Health System (VA), and they can also direct area veterans to local resources that don't fall under the VA umbrella. Currently, there are 21,911 veterans living in Anoka County. The county's Veteran Services Office fields about 400 meetings a month to help members of this population. Meetings are on a walk-in basis only, and wait times are usually about five minutes, unless a veteran wants to see a specific service officer. The office keeps a database of every meeting, so each veteran service officer can access the necessary information to promptly help clients upon return visits.

The veteran service officers don't work for the VA; they are Anoka County employees who are available to help veterans cut through the red tape at the VA and secure the benefits they're eligible for. These officers stay up to date on the ever-changing benefits system. They attend the annual National Association of County Veterans Service Officers Conference, during which they learn directly from VA officials and benefits experts.

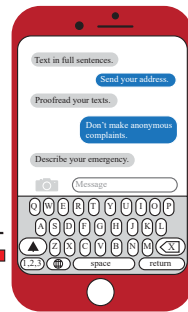
In addition to helping veterans and their dependents secure military benefits, the Anoka County Veteran Services Office also participates in a Veterans Court program, in conjunction with the Anoka County Attorney's Office. Veterans Court seeks to help area veterans who've had run-ins with the law in a long-lasting way through a rehabilitation process that includes chemical dependency counseling, physical and/or mental health care and therapy, peer mentorship, employment services, disability claim assistance, housing assistance and financial counseling. For veterans the court deems eligible, this has been a life-altering and in some cases a life-saving program.

"Our Veteran Services Office is among the best in the state," said Anoka County District 1 Commissioner Matt Look. "It's truly a one-stop shop for veteran benefits."

The Anoka County Veteran Services Office is open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Thursday each week and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fridays. The office is in Ste. No. 216 of the Anoka County Government Center, 2100 3rd Ave., Anoka. For more information on the Anoka County Veteran Services Office, email veterans@co.anoka.mn.us or call 763-324-4500.



9-1-1 CALL IF YOU CAN TEXT IF YOU CAN'T



- The reporting party cannot speak while a crime is in progress.
- The reporting party must remain quiet to stay safe.
- If speaking may cause harm, such as in a home invasion, domestic violence, or human trafficking situation.
- If the reporting party encounters a suicidal or agitated person.
- If the reporting party is deaf, hard of hearing, or has a speech impairment.

Text-to-911 is an evolving technology with improvements to be made as it becomes more heavily utilized. Location services are not always accurate, so users should text their full address in an emergency. Currently, emergency services dispatchers in Anoka County receive about 25 to 30 texts per month. That's a small amount compared to the 20,000 to 30,000 calls per month dispatchers field, but as residents become more aware of texting capability, the amount of texts to 911 could increase.

"This is an important technology our emergency services providers are now offering," said Anoka County District 2 Commissioner Julie Braastad. "Texting 911 is another tool that can be used in emergency situations, but it should be viewed as just that: an additional tool. The best way to get help is still to call 911, if you can."

The Text-to-911 system became operational in Minnesota Dec. 5, 2017. It's serving as a way for the hearing and voice impaired to contact emergency services, and it's also an option for people who find themselves in dangerous situations during which a voice call to 911 is not a possibility.

Text-to-911 is useful in certain circumstances, but emergency services dispatchers in Anoka County and the rest of the state want the public to know the preferred method of communication with 911 is still to call. Information received over a call is understood and processed more quickly by dispatchers than a message received via text.

When to use Text-to-911

According to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Text-to-911 is appropriate to use in the following circumstances:



Anoka County Employees Give Back

Anoka County employees are a powerful force for doing good in the community.

For many years, the county has organized its annual "Charitable Campaign," which allows its employees to donate to

charities while having a little fun in the process. Past events have included pizza and ice cream socials, and there's even been a "Pie a Commissioner" event where employees get to toss cream pies into the faces of willing Anoka County Board members.

For employees who don't have a taste for pizza, ice cream or pie throwing, there's also been the option simply to give an amount of their choosing to charity.

This year, that amount totaled more than \$60,000. The top charities Anoka County employees chose to give to were Alexandra House, which provides domestic and sexual violence services to women, men, youth and young

families; the Animal Humane Society, which annually cares for more than 23,000 animals in need and helps thousands more through programs for people and pets; Hope 4 Youth, which seeks to meet the needs of young people experiencing homelessness in Anoka County; and Can Do Canines, which enhances the quality of life for people with disabilities by creating mutually beneficial partnerships with specially trained dogs.

Anoka County employees have also volunteered at Feed My Starving Children events. At those outings, employees have worked together to hand-pack and box nutritional meals that are then shipped to children in need around the world.

"We're proud to say that many Anoka County employees dedicate their time and money to helping people in need," said Anoka County District 5 County Commissioner Mike Gamache.

Anoka County is always looking for ways to get its employees engaged in charitable causes, and the county actively seeks out charitable organizations in the area that could use volunteer help.

LIBRARY

Anoka County

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

FEATURED EVENTS



Antique Appraisal

1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 1
Rum River Library
Register and bring your antique or collectible to be examined by antique expert Mark Moran. Moran has bought and sold antiques for over 30 years, specializing in vintage folk art, Americana, and fine art. Observers are encouraged to attend even if you are not registered as a participant. Call Rum River Library to register: 763-324-8625.

"Noon" Year's Eve Party

11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 29
Rum River Library
2 to 3 p.m. Monday, Dec. 31
Northtown Library
Ring in the New Year early with stories, songs, dancing, and crafts at this family-friendly event.

James Bond Throughout History

5 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 24
Northtown Library
Celebrate the adventures of the world's most famous spy in this class from North Metro TV's Eric Houston. Using rarely seen film clips, photographs, and more, Houston will take you through the entire

history of James Bond, from his literary origins to the most recent films. You'll learn where the name James Bond came from, which Hollywood actor was originally cast to play Bond, and even hear the surprising words to the famous James Bond theme song!

Jim Henson & the Muppets

5 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 21
Northtown Library
It's time to grab a seat for this terrific 1-hour look at the life and career of one of the most talented and creative men ever born: Jim Henson. North Metro TV Studio Manager Eric Houston will use rare photographs and clips to take you on a tour of Henson's work, including the birth of the Muppets. You'll see rare Muppet commercials, clips from Henson's most famous and most obscure movies and TV shows, and even get a look at Sam and Friends, the very first Muppet show!

FOR ADULTS & TEENS



Monthly - See online:

Book Clubs - *Crooked Lake Library*

Dementia Dialogue - *Rum River Library*

NEW Coffee and Crafts - *Mississippi Library*

Monday, Nov. 26, Saturday Dec. 8, and continuing into 2019.

Socialize with other crafters while you get your craft on.

ONGOING CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

Winter Story Time - All locations
Monday, Jan. 7, to Saturday, Feb. 23

Baby Story Time: 0-24 months
(Register online)

Toddler Story Time: Ages 2-3

Family Story Time: Ages 2-5

Books, songs, and rhymes build early literacy. We will sing, talk, read, and play together.

Minecraft - *Rum River Library*

Lego Challenge - multiple locations

Read to a Dog (or a Rabbit) - multiple locations

BUSINESS CLASSES AND DIGITAL LITERACY

Smartphone Basics & Security

2 to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 12
Rum River Library

Identity Theft

2 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9
Rum River Library
6 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 19
Northtown Library

Google Tools

5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 25
Northtown Library

Creating a Marketing Plan for Your Business

6 to 7:30 p.m. Monday, April 22
Rum River Library

Book A Tech Tutor

Weekly, Northtown Library

One-on-one help with technology questions. Topics updated regularly: digital photos, email, Google Calendar, Google Drive, Excel, Word, online safety, social media. Register by phone, 763-234-1510, or reserve a time online.

FEATURED DATABASES AND ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Winter is the perfect time of year to research a new project, learn a new language, begin a marketing plan, or dive into your family history. Take advantage of these free online resources and more that are available only through the library. Access to most databases is available 24/7. A valid Anoka County Library card and PIN are required. Apps available for Android and iOS for some databases.

BUSINESS



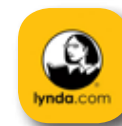
Reference USA

Business directory. Over 14 million U.S. business, non-profits, government agencies.



Demographics Now

U.S. demographic data. Gain consumer and market insights.



Lynda.com

Tutorials for business, technical, and creative skills.

HOMEWORK HELP



HelpNow

One-to-one tutoring, practice tests, flashcards, live tutoring, and more. Available in Spanish.

GENEALOGY



My Heritage

Access to a wide range of historical documents, photos, records, indexes, databases, and more.

BOOKS & READING



Cloud Library

eBooks and eAudiobooks.



RBDigital

eAudiobooks and eMagazines.



MN Writes, MN Reads

Local authors create and share ebooks with local readers.

REPAIR



ALLDATA

Automotive maintenance with step-by-step repair procedures. Accessible only in the library buildings.

LANGUAGE



Transparent Language Online

Learn more than 80 languages. Also includes ESL for Spanish, Arabic, and other languages.

Internet access, Wi-Fi, and use of Microsoft Office applications are always free at your library.

Printing and copying stations are available at all locations, 10 cents per page for black and white copies, 50 cents per page for color copies.

Document scanning is offered as a free service.

DID YOU KNOW... ALSO AVAILABLE AT YOUR LIBRARY

Light Therapy Lamps for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

All Anoka County Library locations provide a light therapy lamp for use in the library to aid in the prevention of Seasonal Affective Disorder.

Meeting Room/Conference Rooms

Available at five locations for groups and other nonprofit organizations (some restrictions apply). Reserve a space online. Smaller conference rooms are available at Northtown and Rum River locations.

AVAILABLE FOR CHECKOUT:

Outdoor Exploration Backpack Kits -

Kits include binoculars, parking pass to Anoka County Parks, magnifying glass/compass, Minnesota field guides, and more.

Board Games - A collection of trending table-top games geared for teens and adults.

Memory Maker Kits - For the use of caregivers and family who are caring for persons experiencing memory loss.

Book Club in A Bag Kit - Everything you need to start a book club, kits include 8 copies of the featured title and related discussion questions.

Visit anokacountylibrary.org for more information on upcoming events and programs.

LIBRARIES

An integral aspect to the community

Automated Materials Handling Saves Time, Money



Patrons who look into the back room of the Northtown Library in Blaine will find a materials sorting system that can cause a person's eyes to dart from one area to the other as books and other library resources zip through it.

This system, called Automated Materials Handling (AMH), is a conveyor belt of sorts, but it's more than simply a set of rollers. When patrons return library resources to the branch, those books, DVDs and other items head down the rollers and then their radio-frequency identification tags are scanned. After the scanning, the items are then placed in the appropriate

bins by the system, either for re-shelving at the Northtown Library or for transport to other Anoka County libraries.

The AMH system has been operational for about two years, and it's saving time, money and physical wear and tear on materials and staff. The sheer volume that comes into the library is impressive: The Northtown AMH sorts an average of 12,800 items per week, checking in items from Northtown readers, and routing materials to other libraries. With the machine doing much of the sorting work, materials are touched less, prolonging their life. With the AMH, fewer staff are needed to handle materials, and the staff who used to work primarily only on organizing materials have now been freed up to spend more time working directly with library patrons.

"The AMH system has been a great addition to the Northtown Library; it's really a benefit to our patrons and staff," said Anoka County District 2 Commissioner Julie Braastad.

Library System Highly Utilized by Patrons

With all the entertainment options available nowadays — streaming video, video games, social media browsing — one might think libraries don't see much use anymore.

That's not the case, especially in Anoka County. In 2017 alone, patrons checked out about 2.5 million items from Anoka County's libraries. Program attendance posted some impressive numbers as well. When children, young adult, and adult program attendance was tallied for last year, that total came to 54,261.



Centennial Library Construction Update

The Centennial Library is undergoing a renovation project that began Aug. 25. It is expected to be finished in the summer of 2019. This project aims to greatly expand the size of the library and add exciting new spaces for creativity and collaboration. Centennial Library will continue offering programs at other community locations. Information about the project can be found on the Anoka County Libraries website:

anokacountylibrary.org — there visitors can track the progress of the project with updates and time-lapse photos.

New information will be continually added throughout the duration of the project.



Career Connections: Job Training Offered to Eligible Applicants

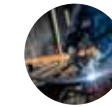
Deciding on and training for a career can be a daunting road, but for those who turn to the Anoka County Job Training Center in Blaine, that path can be clearly defined.

The Job Training Center recently secured a 2-year Pathways to Prosperity grant from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development that allows the center to continue offering three Career Pathways trainings that have been in existence since 2013 — Office and Administration, Precision Sheet Metal and Health Care Pathways — and expand the program to include more courses: 911 Telecommunications Training, Call Center Agent Training, Warehouse Associate Training, and Basic Life Support and First Aid Certification.

These no-cost trainings are available to eligible applicants. For more information on the trainings, all of which will be starting this winter, visit <https://www.anokacounty.us/1064/Job-Training-Center> and click on the "Career Pathway Training" tab on the left of the screen, or visit the Blaine Human Service Center: 1201 89th Ave. NE, Ste. No. 235. Individuals who self-report a disability may access testing accommodations, assistive technology and other resources to participate.



Office and Administration: Learn computer skills and become certified in Microsoft Office products.



Precision Sheet Metal: Get hands-on training in the sheet metal industry, including blueprint reading and quality control.



Health Care Pathways: Earn your certified nursing assistant/home health aide certification.



911 Telecommunications Training: Learn to operate specialized electronic systems and equipment to become a 911 telecommunications professional. Earn up to \$19.25 per hour.



Call Center Agent Training: Learn in-depth customer service, communication, sales and listening skills, and conflict management strategies. Average starting wages are \$16 an hour.



Warehouse Associate: Become a certified fork-lift driver in a manufacturing setting, learning OSHA 10 and other warehouse skills. Average starting wages are \$14 to \$21 an hour.

Applications Being Accepted for Senior Employment Program

Anoka County is now accepting applications for the Senior Community Service Employment Program. The program assists unemployed, low-income Anoka County residents, at least 55 years old, with paid placement in part-time employment. This is a great opportunity for qualified participants to obtain work experience and training, while earning wages.

Services Available

- Vocational assessment.
- Career counseling.
- Worksite placement.
- Job search assistance.
- Resume writing.
- Interview skills.
- Case management.

Visit the Job Training Center site and click on the senior employment tab on the left for more information.



WAITLIST NOW OPEN!

INTERESTED APPLICANTS CAN CALL 763-324-2284



FAT TIRE BIKING

N E W P R O G R A M

This spring, the Anoka County Parks Department received a \$25,000 grant from the State Health Improvement Program (S.H.I.P) to develop and implement a fat tire biking program. Those funds were used to purchase fat tire bikes, helmets, tools, storage racks, and a trailer to transport equipment.

Fat tire biking has become very popular for several reasons. With fat tire bikes, you can bike places you have never biked before. The fatter tires provide

improved grip and traction, and the lower tire pressure provides extra surface contact. This allows biking year-round, even in snow. As the contact area is larger, the bikes provide better balance to the rider, letting even the most inexperienced rider get the hang of it quickly, and due to the heavier weight, riding a fat tire bike provides a great workout.

Monthly programs are offered throughout the year in addition to small private, group reservations.

- December 19:** 4 - 6 PM, Rice Creek Chain Of Lakes Park Reserve
- January 26:** 1 - 4 PM, Wargo Nature Center (Free; part of Snow Day)
- February 23:** 1 - 3 PM, Bunker Hills Regional Park
- March 23:** 1 - 3 PM, East Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park
- April 21:** 1 - 3 PM, Rice Creek Chain Of Lakes Park Reserve

SIGN UP FOR A CLASS OR GROUP RESERVATION
ANOKACOUNTYPARKS.COM • 763-324-3350



GIVE THE GIFT OF ADVENTURE

Gift cards can be used throughout the Anoka County Park System including Chomonix Golf Course, Bunker Beach Water Park, and Wargo Nature Center. Gift cards can be purchased in any amount over \$10 and can have value added as needed. Call the parks office at 763-324-3300 to order today.



EXPLORE WINTER AT WARGO

anokacountyparks.com • 763-324-3350



WINTER RECREATION SAMPLER

DECEMBER 22: 1 – 3 PM
 WARGO NATURE CENTER

Get a taste of some of the many things to do outside in Minnesota during our colder months! You will sample a variety of recreational activities, including kick-sledding, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. This event is open to families and individuals of all ages. Pre-registration is required. **\$7/adult, \$5/child +tax**



SNOW DAY - 19TH ANNUAL

JANUARY 26: 1 – 4 PM
 WARGO NATURE CENTER

Play in the snow! The Anoka County Parks Department, in collaboration with the Cities of Lino Lakes and Blaine Parks & Recreation Departments, will be offering the 19th annual Snow Day event. Participants of all ages will have a chance to partake in a variety of activities including: snowshoeing, winter crafts, ice fishing, kicksledding, cross-country skiing, fat tire biking, live animals, and more. This is a free event, open to the public. **FREE**



MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL

MARCH 17: 2 – 4 PM
 WARGO NATURE CENTER

Come and celebrate spring! Learn about the tradition of gathering maple sap and cooking it down to make maple syrup and sugar. We'll go through the syrup process, do some maple crafts, participate in a spring scavenger hunt and taste some maple-y treats. Fun for the whole family! Pre-registration is required. **\$5/person +tax**



CHOMONIX SEASON PASSES

- 7 DAYS A WEEK PASS
- MONDAY - FRIDAY PASS
- COLLEGE PASS
- JUNIOR PUNCH CARD
- PATRON CARD

Available to purchase at www.chomonix.com or call 763-324-3434

WORKFORCE CENTER SOON TO BE *CareerForce*

The Minnesota WorkForce Center system has been working on a rebranding process over the past four years, and one of the results of that initiative has been a name change to CareerForce.

The rebranding process will start in late November. Centers across the state will be implementing the new name and taking time to showcase what they have to offer to residents. Once the rebranding is finished, there will also be an online platform people can visit; it will provide customer-centric content that inspires thriving career solutions. This dynamic platform is designed to help people view resources, services, programs and opportunities on any device, including their mobile phones, with a “no-wrong door” approach so users will be able to easily navigate their way to success.

In Anoka County, there are a large variety of career services available both online and at the Blaine Human Services Center: 1201 89th Ave. NE, Ste. 235, Blaine.

Anoka County has the most comprehensive CareerForce Center in the state, offering more than 20 services at the Blaine location. It’s truly a one-stop shop.

Some of those services include:

- A resource center that assists people with returning to

work as soon as possible.

- A host of workshops that include advanced interviewing, resume creation, and getting started with LinkedIn.
- Basic adult education opportunities for people to acquire and improve their literacy and math skills, obtain GEDs/ Adult Diplomas and take English as a Second Language classes.
- The Educational Opportunity Center: onsite assistance with school and financial aid information.
- Veterans services.
- Multiple public aid programs that include cash, medical, supplemental nutrition, child care assistance and more.

The CareerForce Center also seeks to connect employers with jobseekers. Businesses that partner with CareerForce Anoka County can receive help in such areas as employee recruitment, hiring incentives and tax credits, MinnesotaWorks.net (a free online job bank for finding employees), identifying resources and experts to provide business solutions, and labor market information.

For more information about CareerForce Anoka County, visit www.anokacounty.us.jtc or call 763-324-2300.

Economic Development Website to Launch Soon



ANOKA COUNTY Regional Economic Development

Positioned for Success

To provide a county-wide Economic Development website and resource for businesses and investors, Anoka County will have a separate Economic Development website to launch the end of this year. The Anoka County Regional Economic Development Initiative has established a logo that represents the diverse makeup of communities in the county. The brand identity is “Positioned for Success.” The website will feature available sites and building information, demographic data, community contacts, business resources, quality of life information, and a regional profile. This regional tool is a resource for businesses and investors looking to build in Anoka County, and it can be used to connect our existing businesses, cities, and community partners with the right resources that align with their economic goals.

Vehicles kept in Anoka County are NOT subject to wheelage tax.

NOTE: If your vehicle renewal notice reflects a \$10 wheelage tax and your vehicle is kept in Anoka County, let your service representative know.

Willfully providing false information for wheelage tax is a misdemeanor. (Minnesota Statutes, section 163.051 subd.7)

Gerald Maeckelbergh Retires from CHAC



Anoka County Public Health & Environmental Services is deeply appreciative of Gerald Maeckelbergh’s 20 years of service as a member of the Community Health Advisory Committee (CHAC).

At the Sept. 5 CHAC meeting, District 5 Commissioner Mike Gamache (right) presented Maeckelbergh with a plaque recognizing his commitment and contributions to the health and safety of the citizens of Anoka County.

Anoka County News

Anoka County Honors Volunteer Drivers



A total of 53 volunteer drivers for Anoka County’s MedLink Transportation Program were honored during an Oct. 9 luncheon at the TPC Twin Cities in Blaine. Volunteer drivers provide transportation for more than 3,400 passengers, most of

whom are seniors and veterans.

Volunteer drivers logged a total of 143,136 miles this year on 6,943 trips, most of which were to veterans’ medical facilities in Minneapolis, St. Cloud, Ramsey, and Maplewood, as well as other clinics and medical facilities.

“Oftentimes, when people speak of the quality of life in a community, they are really speaking about people like the

volunteer drivers who willingly give of themselves to make their community a better place,” said Scott Schulte, vice chair, Anoka County Board.

Several drivers were specially honored for their long years of volunteer service with the MedLink Transportation Program: Roland Zacharias, Fridley, (25 years); Lucy Schalwig, Andover, (20 years); Dean Wagner, Andover, (15 years); Gerald Wegscheid, Columbia Heights, (15 years); James Hinrich, Fridley, (10 years); Paul Nelson, Dayton, (10 years). In addition, several volunteers were recognized for driving the most miles in the last year: David Adrian, Coon Rapids, (13,688 miles); Paul Nelson (8,326 miles); and David Westphall, Coon Rapids, (7,554 miles).

Anyone who needs driving services or who would like to join the corps of volunteer drivers can call 763-324-3255.

Have a plan for *winter* weather

Winter weather can be unpredictable, and the best way to prepare for winter weather is to have a plan. Losing power, heat, mobile or land-line phone service during an extreme winter weather event is a possibility and could create a life-threatening situation. According to the National Weather Service, warnings are issued when the threat to life and property is imminent or has already begun from severe winter weather.

- A **winter storm watch** is issued when heavy snow, damaging ice accumulations, or blizzard conditions are possible. Winter storm watches are typically issued 36 to 72 hours before a winter storm starts.
- A **wind chill watch** is issued when dangerously cold wind chills are possible in the next 36 to 72 hours.

KEEP AN EMERGENCY KIT

Whether you are at home, on the road or at work, you should always have an emergency kit. If you must drive, slow down and allow extra time to reach your destination.

If your car gets stuck in a storm, stay in your vehicle. Make sure you clear snow away from the exhaust pipe to avoid carbon monoxide gas poisoning. Signal for help using your hazard lights, by attaching a bright cloth to your car door, or raise the hood of your car. Go to dps.mn.gov and search “winter driving” for information on winter driving safety.

“Being prepared and understanding the risks of winter can help keep you and your family safe while you enjoy the winter experience Minnesota has to offer,” said Anoka County District 3 Commissioner Robyn West.

Visit weather.gov or ready.gov for more information.



RECYCLE



FACILITY WINTER HOURS ARE UPON US

Anoka County Household Hazardous Waste Facility

3230 101st Avenue NE, Blaine.

Winter hours of operation, November to March: 2 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays.

For materials accepted free of charge at the Anoka County Household Hazardous Waste Facility, go to: AnokaCounty.us/hhw

Anoka County Compost Sites

Bunker Hills compost site: 13285 Hanson Blvd. NW, Coon Rapids. November: 10 a.m. to sunset Monday to Friday.

Rice Creek compost site: 7701 Main Street, Lino Lakes. November: 10 a.m. to sunset Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Saturday hours at both sites are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday hours are noon to 5 p.m.

Compost Site Winter Hours of Operation for Both Sites

December to March, weather permitting: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays.

For materials accepted at the Anoka County compost sites and any applicable fees go to: AnokaCounty.us/yardwaste

REDUCE, REUSE AND COMPOST DURING THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season is upon us, and that means holiday entertaining and parties with family and friends. It's also a great time to reduce the food waste created at all these events. Did you know food waste in Anoka County accounts for about a quarter of all the trash generated? That's a lot of time, energy, water and fuel going to waste.

Reduce Food Waste



A little planning ahead will go a long way to green up your holiday season; there are some great tools available from SaveTheFood.com to reduce food waste before it's created. It can be difficult to plan and feed larger groups of people. This food prep calculator takes the guesswork out of meal planning: SaveTheFood.com/guestimator/guests — It's surprisingly spot-on!



Reuse – Save leftovers for future meals or send food home with guests. If you don't have enough reusable dishes, think about borrowing some from a friend.



Recycle – When hosting a party, provide recycling containers for bottles and cans. Recycling & Resource Solutions has a container loan program; go to AnokaCounty.us/recycle and select "recycling at events."



Compost Excess Food Waste, Paper Napkins and Compostable Serving Ware

If you are having a large event, use compostable plates, cups and cutlery instead of disposable, and if you have leftovers that cannot be eaten, Anoka County has many options available for residents to drop off organics throughout the county. Columbia Heights and Fridley residents have organics collection curbside, and drop-offs for organics are available in Columbus, Coon Rapids, Ham Lake, Lino Lakes, Linwood Township, Ramsey, and Spring Lake Park. For information on how to get started with an organics program go to: AnokaCounty.us/organics

For more information on recycling in Anoka County, visit AnokaCounty.us/recycle or download the Recycling & Disposal app: "Anoka County Recycles."

(Available on iTunes and Google Play).



Attorney's Office Utilizes Grants to Enhance Services

The Anoka County Attorney's Office focuses on providing core legal services to the county and its citizens. Ninety percent of its budget goes toward staffing costs to provide those services. As the office looks for additional ways to provide services, it applies for grants from other agencies to create new programs, or to supplement existing ones.

This office currently receives funding from four grants.

Crime victim services: The Victim/Witness Services unit uses grant funds from Minnesota's Office of Justice Programs to bolster efforts to reach under-served victim populations — namely: elderly and non-English-speaking victims. The funds are used to employ a victim/witness specialist who works directly with the target groups, and to support training and public education efforts.

Veterans Court: In 2016, the County Attorney's Office received a \$300,000 federal grant to enhance the county's existing Veterans Treatment Court over three years. Though the County Attorney's Office received the grant, it did so on behalf of the program's many partners, including the courts, corrections, defense attorneys, city prosecutors,

Veteran Services, and a peer mentor coordinator. The grant funds are used to grow the program, train the specialty court team members, and to hire a court program coordinator, who oversees both the Veterans Court and the county's Drug Treatment Court.

Lethality Assessment Program: The County Attorney's Office, in partnership with local law enforcement agencies and Alexandra House, has used federal grant funds to create a program designed to identify high-risk domestic abuse cases and to offer supportive services to reduce the likelihood of death. The program, now in its ninth year, has been highly successful in reducing domestic homicides. Partner agencies continue to explore innovative efforts to grow the program and expand services.

Auto Theft: The Anoka and Washington County Attorneys' Offices have partnered on a grant-funded program dedicated to reducing auto thefts through education and tougher prosecution since 2004. Funding comes from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.



There is a phenomenon within the criminal justice arena called "The CSI Effect." It is an often-false expectation of criminal justice system capabilities based on television shows or movies. Unfortunately, Hollywood has created a society that is influenced by this effect, and this has even affected juries in criminal proceedings.

We are in a culture that expects our protectors to respond to the scene, gather the evidence, and use high-tech gadgetry to identify and arrest the suspect rapidly. Despite "The CSI Effect," the Anoka County Sheriff's Office has a great track record of investigating crimes and bringing criminals to justice in a timely manner to safeguard citizens. While not always worthy of CSI TV timelines, the Sheriff's Office does proudly provide a wide range of technological investigative services to the citizens of Anoka County. The services include a state-of-the-art crime scene unit for processing crime scenes and gathering evidence; and computer, cellular and digital

technology forensics, including the state's first mobile digital forensics lab. The Sheriff's Office has embraced technology in numerous other ways to improve service delivery and enhance efficiencies across its six divisions.

The Sheriff's Office also provides premier forensic laboratory services to all of Anoka, Sherburne, and Wright counties. Those services include DNA, latent fingerprint, and drug chemistry processes through the Sheriff Office's internationally accredited laboratory.

"While we remain highly responsible with our budgets, and benefit from numerous grant opportunities, we also strive to provide the best possible services to our citizens," said Anoka County Sheriff James Stuart. "This is at the core of our purpose in order to keep our citizenry safe and apprehend the criminals who would otherwise continue victimizing our neighborhoods."

ANOKA COUNTY Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)

The Anoka County Highway Department is seeking comments on their SWPPP. The SWPPP is a document required by the State and Federal Governments that outlines how the county will work towards reducing pollution in storm water runoff.

JOIN US FOR AN OPEN HOUSE

4:30 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 4.
Anoka County Highway Department, 1440 Bunker Lake Blvd. NW, Andover

Questions? Call Jack Forslund, Anoka County Transportation Planner, at 763-324-3179 or email jack.forslund@co.anoka.mn.us

Anoka County
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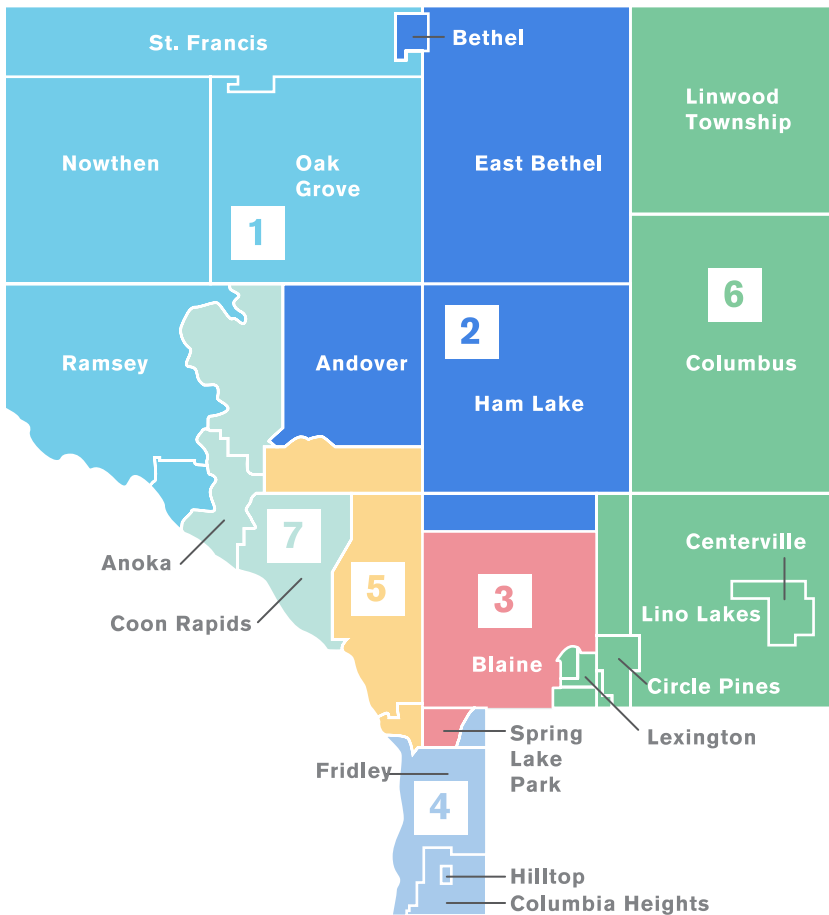
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DISTRICT 6
COMMISSIONER



Scott Schulte
DISTRICT 7
COMMISSIONER



James Stuart
COUNTY
SHERIFF



Tony Palumbo
COUNTY
ATTORNEY

County board meetings are generally held the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 9:30 a.m. in Room 705 of the Anoka County Government Center in Anoka. Watch board meetings live at anokacounty.us. "Anoka County News" is produced by Anoka County Communications, Erik Thorson, Director, 763-324-4612 publicinfo@co.anoka.mn.us • anokacounty.us/newsletter
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