

# ANOKA COUNTY NEWS

Digital Volume 1-2024

## Answering the Call

*Anoka County Celebrates 50 Years of Dispatch Services*



Looking back on 50 years for some is a trip down memory lane, while for others it is a time long before they were born.

The Anoka County Emergency Communications Center (ECC) has staff in both camps, with one thing in common — they are all honored to be celebrating 50 years of service to Anoka County.

More than five decades ago, the Anoka County Sheriff's Office, together with most of the municipalities within Anoka County, had their own radio systems. In January 1974, through a Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) grant, the Anoka County Central Communications System, now Anoka County ECC, was formed. The system serves the whole county, including its 21 cities and townships. This includes 11 law enforcement agencies, 16 fire departments, and 21 public works agencies.

Anoka County was one of the earliest counties in the nation to recognize that coordinating public safety efforts into one centralized service would both improve safety and save money. All incoming and outgoing phone calls and dispatches are recorded and kept on file, so they can be easily accessed, if needed.

"Both current and former employees can be proud of the legacy," said John Tonding, former manager of Anoka County ECC. "I think Anoka County has been a model of efficiency and effectiveness, and I'm certain that will continue." Tonding started with the county in 1978.

Retired since 2011, Tonding said he enjoyed the challenge each day brought to his role during his time working for the county. Regardless of the position he was in, some days — or calls — were more difficult than others.

"I think one of the key skills of a 911 dispatcher is having a short memory," Tonding said. "You must be able to set it aside and move on and that's a challenge. 911 dispatchers don't get closure."

Kari Morrissey, current assistant director of the ECC, echoed Tonding's statement.

"It's not an easy path at times because there's so much to learn and the calls can be tough, but it's so worth the bumps in the road," she said. "I look back at the start of my career to the present, and I couldn't be more grateful for the opportunities that I've had because of Anoka County and the ECC."

Morrissey started in 1992 as a dispatcher. She has also served as communications training officer and supervisor before being promoted to her current position.

"I'm grateful to be a part of our amazing team," she added. "Our ECC is good because of our supervisors and dispatchers who work the floor each and every day. They are the voices of 911."

"I think one of the key skills of a 911 dispatcher is having a short memory. You must be able to set it aside and move on and that's a challenge. 911 dispatchers don't get closure."  
-John Tonding



**Anoka County**  
MINNESOTA

Respectful, Innovative, Fiscally Responsible

Mike Gamache, chair, Anoka County Board of Commissioners, knows how integral ECC employees are for the overall safety of the community.

"Many people overlook how valuable 911 dispatchers are until the day comes when they need them," he said. "Days like those, for many reasons, can be life changing. It is this dedicated team that helps us through in our times of need or crisis. They will always be remembered, maybe not by name, but by how they made sure we were heard when we made the call."

After more than 30 years serving Anoka County, Morrissey finds great pride in watching her staff grow in their roles.

Dispatch Supervisor Heidi Meyer agreed.

"As a supervisor, I'm passionate about mentoring others to reach their full potential," she said. "Fostering a collaborative atmosphere where everyone can thrive is incredibly rewarding for me. It's fulfilling to support our community members in their times of need and ensure that our team is well prepared to make a positive impact on each life we encounter."

### Transforming Technology

Meyer joined the Anoka County ECC in 1988 and works alongside Donelle Lawrence, who has been with the county since 1980 and also serves as dispatch supervisor. Together, and alongside Morrissey, the women have seen a prominent shift in the technology used to aid community members in their times of need.

"We've embraced new systems and tools that have revolutionized how we handle emergencies," Meyer said.

ECC staff usually field more than 400,000 emergency and non-emergency calls a year, with 95 percent of those calls answered in less than 10 seconds. The format for those calls has largely changed, from landline telephones to cell phones, with the option to now text to 911, if needed. The mapping systems have also transformed from Hudson hard copy paper map books to digital pinpoints on a computer monitor.



**Anoka County Emergency Communications serves:**

**21 cities and townships**

**21 public works agencies**

**16 fire departments**

**11 law enforcement agencies**

"When I started, we wrote everything down on cards and used map books to figure out addresses," Lawrence said. "We didn't have 911 to help verify locations."

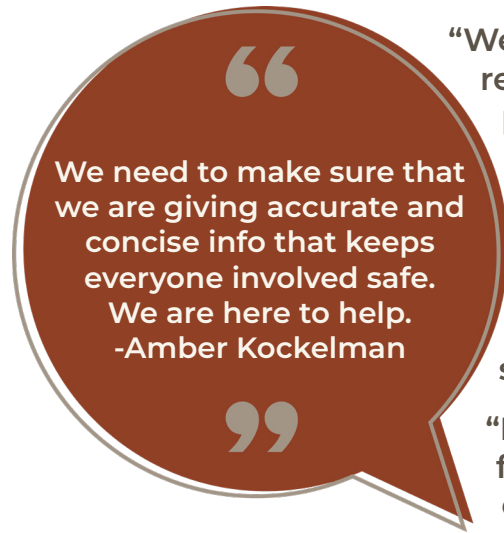
"Throughout the years as technology grew, 911 adapted," Morrissey added. "Today we have two other mapping applications that provide us with additional data tied to a cellular phone. We have an application

that allows us to receive multimedia, livestream, and video. This same application allows us to initiate an outbound text if a caller can't talk to us on the phone."



The application also has language translation that helps staff communicate effectively by text with someone who has a native language other than English.

Regardless of the ever-changing technology, the need for assistance, small or large, is ongoing and Anoka County ECC staff are determined to help.



We need to make sure that we are giving accurate and concise info that keeps everyone involved safe. We are here to help.  
-Amber Kockelman

“We handle high-stress situations while coordinating responses from various emergency services, all while providing crucial support to callers in distress,” Meyer explained. “It requires a unique blend of technical expertise, remaining calm under pressure, and empathy to effectively navigate each situation.”

Amber Kockelman, dispatcher for the county since 2022, wants to remind the public it’s normal for ECC staff to ask a lot of questions.

“It’s our job to paint a picture of what is happening for our responding partners, like police, fire, or emergency medical services,” she said. “We are relaying information that you give us to them, and it

helps them to understand the situation they are responding to. We need to make sure that we are giving accurate and concise info that keeps everyone involved safe. We are here to help.”

However, staff remain humble about the role they play in helping others.

“When I entered this career, I did not do it for the recognition,” said Alec Gilbertson, dispatcher and communications training officer. “We are the calm voice in the dark that can assist someone on the worst days of a person’s life. This is a very rewarding job, and I would encourage anyone with grit and a knack for helping others to apply.”

Kari Barrows, dispatcher for the county since last year, agreed it feels good to be able to make a difference in people’s lives.

“I enjoy being able to serve the community that I live in, “ she said. “The Anoka County ECC really makes me feel like I’m part of the family.”

Julie Braastad, District 2 Commissioner for Anoka County and Public Safety Committee Chair for the past 10 years, is thankful for all the 911 dispatchers and ECC staff members who serve the community daily.

“As we recognize the 50th anniversary of our Anoka County ECC, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and honor the contributions, dedication, and commitment of all the dispatchers who have served the residents of our great county,” she said. “I truly believe that being a 911 dispatcher is one of the toughest jobs out there. I am eternally thankful and grateful for the willingness of those who have stepped up to answer the calls from people in the most vulnerable of situations. It takes a very special gift to do this job well, and I could not be more proud of the service our 911 staff have provided each and every day.”



Staff field **400,000+** emergency and non-emergency calls per year, with **95%** answered in less than **10** seconds.



Anoka County Emergency Communications staff include:

48 dispatchers

10 supervisors

5 administrative positions

4 casual dispatchers

3 radio shop technicians

### Cohesive Collaboration

Working together with the county’s radio shop helps the ECC run seamlessly. The radio shop is responsible for ensuring reliable and secure communications to and from Anoka County’s ECC and the public safety departments in the county.

In addition to the critical maintenance and oversight of the dispatch consoles in the center, the radio shop is also

responsible for the maintenance of the Anoka County severe weather siren activation system, audio logging, and the Anoka County Fire Department paging system and pagers.

“We are responsible for RNI (radio networking infrastructure) and microwave systems, which support the operation of all public safety communications equipment utilized by Anoka County dispatch personnel and first responders as well as other federal, state, regional, and local interoperable partners,” Radio Systems Manager Cory DeMuth said.

### Bigger and Better

Anoka County Emergency Communications will move into its new home off Hanson Boulevard in Andover later this year. The brand new 42,000-square-foot building is close to being completed after breaking ground last spring. The facility will combine both 911 emergency telecommunications operations and the county’s radio shop.

More than half of the capital for this nearly \$40 million project came from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. Wold Architects and Engineers, and ICS Consulting have handled the design and construction of the project.

The new facility will address many of the deficiencies of the current location used by the ECC—the basement of the Anoka County Government Center. Employees who work there deal with a cramped workspace, no access to daylight, inconsistent temperatures, low ceilings, and more. The current space was built more than 30 years ago and is only 5,000 square feet. Since its construction, the county has increased in population by more than 200,000 people.

“Over the last five decades, the number of calls being taken by our ECC has continued to increase dramatically, which has made it challenging to run the operations in its current space in the basement of the Government Center,” Commissioner Braastad said. “I’m proud to say that our County Board’s commitment to public safety led us to make the decision to invest in and build a new combined ECC/Radio Shop facility. We are looking forward to the construction being completed, and I know that the new facility will enable us to continue to serve our Anoka County community for many decades to come.”



So much time, thought, and effort has gone into the new building. It will make our jobs so much easier by being in the best environment with the best equipment.  
-Kari Barrows

The new building will have spaces for quiet time, a wellness room, lunchroom, and an outdoor patio area. Telecommunicators and supervisors will also be spaced out more on the dispatch floor, which will offer a quieter, less chaotic workspace.

“Our new facility is going to be amazing,” Barrows said. “So much time, thought, and effort has gone into the new building. It will make our jobs so much easier by being in the best environment with the best equipment.”

Other employees agreed.

“The expansive space is also thrilling as it will accommodate our future growth and enable us to meet the needs for our expanding population more effectively,” Meyer said. “It’s a significant step forward in enhancing our working environment and ensuring our ability to provide top-notch service to the community.”

For many, the simple luxury of being able to see outside will go a long way.

“The new building will be such an upgrade from our current space,” Gilbertson said. “We are beyond excited to have space to host trainings and events, along with the luxury of windows.”

While the move may be overdue, many agree staff are more than well deserving of the new facility.

“I’m proud of the work we did in the current space and the excellence will continue,” Tonding said. “The new building will be terrific for emergency communications. They deserve it.”

Staff will be able to use their current space in the Anoka County Government Center as a back-up location for emergency communications.

For those who have been with the ECC since its near inception, the opportunity to pass the baton to the ECC’s newer staff is exciting.

“I found a career with Anoka County ECC that started over three decades ago,” Morrissey said. “I’ve grown both personally and professionally, and gained a lot of confidence over the course of my career. The bond that’s created when working in public safety is amazing and special. You know that the team always has your back and they pull together when needed.”

Kockelman noted this is an exciting time for ECC employees, past and present.

“With the anniversary, we have had the opportunity to look back at pictures and memorabilia from the past, and it’s amazing to see how far we’ve come,” she said. “With the new building, we get to be a part of the future.”

“The bond that’s created when working in public safety is amazing and special. You know that the team always has your back and they pull together when needed.”  
-Kari Morrissey



### Calling 911

- State the location and type of emergency.
- Stay calm and answer the dispatcher’s questions.
- Know that dispatchers are already sending help while they continue to ask questions.
- Do not hang up until the dispatcher says to do so.
- If the situation changes after you hang up, call back.
- If you accidentally call 911, do not hang up. Stay on the line and explain you misdialed.

For non-emergencies or for those dialing outside of Anoka County, call 763-427-1212.

### When to Use Text-to-911

- 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 peer pressure is strong.
- If the reporting party is deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing, or has a speech impairment.

If you can safely call 911, do not text. Texting isn’t as efficient in an emergency. It is a crime to text 911 with a false report. If you accidentally send a text to 911, send another text or place a call to let the dispatcher know there is no emergency.





Back Row: Jared Belter, Jamie Kidder, Daniel Nolan, Kevin McNallan, Kari Morrissey, Amanda Palmateer, Kelli Rogers; Front Row: Tanner Ess, Esther Hauss, Donelle Lawrence, Kelly Sandmann, Heidi Meyer



Back Row: Kevin McNallan, Alec Gilbertson, Sam Forton, McKenna Evans, Mike Knoll, Bonnie Blakeman, Kelsey Lessar, Ryan Koppendraye, Jenna Pulvermacher, Matt Johnson; Third Row: Kari Barrows, Leah Ronnebaum, Blake Reed, Kaitlynn Morin, Becky Ristow, Annemarie Avery, Kisha Richardson, Erin Jacobsen, Kelli Rogers; Second Row: Kari Morrissey, Samantha Gust, Korrie Zupon, Jamie Teetzel, Cassi Pipenhagen, Melanie Lloyd, Deanne Williams, Sherry Stevens; Front Row: Amber Kockelman, Kayla Lauzon, Kaylee Palmer, Maddie Bayne, Sam Mitchem.

Dispatcher Photo Edit: In the front row, Person on the far left and person on the far right are no longer employed by Anoka County.



**P**roject partners and officials from several Anoka County departments celebrated the groundbreaking of a new maintenance shop April 18 that will meet the growing needs of the Anoka County Highway Department, Parks Department, and Sheriff's Office by providing much-needed maintenance and storage space.

The project, anticipated to be complete in fall of this year, will replace the current nearly 60-year-old building that is nearing the end of its useful life. The new facility will be large enough to support up to six plow trucks and adequately house staff from both the Parks Department and Sheriff's Office, including all equipment needed to support them.

"It's obvious our Anoka County department needs are growing, and our physical operation must change to meet those needs," said District 6 Commissioner Julie Jeppson, chair of the county's Transportation Committee. "Thankfully, we are now beginning that important transition."



The addition of the new facility will also help to alleviate storage issues at the Bunker Lake facility. The building will be occupied year-round, providing much-needed, full-time support to the northeast portion of Anoka County.

"This facility will be a vast improvement that will strengthen and support services for the regional parks, trails, and facilities in the northeast quadrant of Anoka County," said District 3 Commissioner Jeff Reinert, chair of the county's Parks Committee. "The new building will also add critically needed storage for our departments."



# Property Tax Assistance for Seniors and People with Disabilities

[Click HERE](#) FOR MORE INFO!

Trained volunteers are available to help senior citizens and people with disabilities apply for their homeowners/renters Minnesota property tax refund (M1PR) form. This program is offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Any changes to this schedule will be announced on the property tax line, 763-324-1480.

June 11: 9 a.m. to noon	Mary Ann Young Center	9150 Central Ave. NE, Blaine
June 12: 8 a.m. to noon	Coon Rapids Senior Center	11155 Robinson Dr., Coon Rapids
June 20: 2 to 4 p.m.	Murzyn Hall Columbia Heights Senior Center	530 Mill St., Columbia Heights
June 27: 10 a.m. to noon	Ham Lake Senior Center	15544 Central Ave. NE, Ham Lake
July 8: 8 a.m. to noon	Coon Rapids Senior Center	11155 Robinson Dr., Coon Rapids
July 16: 9 a.m. to noon	Fridley Community Center	6085 7th St. NE, Fridley
July 17: 9 a.m. to noon	Mary Ann Young Center	9150 Central Ave. NE, Blaine



Have you ever wanted to become an election judge or know someone who might? The time is now! With the State Primary Election Aug. 13 and the State General Election Nov. 5, the need is great. If you are interested, please reach out to your city or town clerk today.

**What is an Election Judge?**  
Election judges are temporary, paid

employees of local election officials trained to handle all aspects of voting at the polling place. Serving as an election judge is a chance to learn about elections and is a great service to the community.

**Who Can Apply?**  
You must be eligible to vote in Minnesota and able to read, write and speak English. Students 16 and 17 years old can be election judge trainees. Relatives cannot serve together in the same precinct at the same time. Candidates cannot serve in a precinct where they are on the ballot.

**How to Apply**  
You can go to your municipality's website for more information on their hiring process or contact your city clerk.

*Continues on next page ...*

**Pay**  
You can choose to volunteer or be paid. Wages vary by municipality.

**Training**  
You must take the required online training that will be roughly two hours in length. Head judges and assistant head judges are required to take an extra one hour of in-person training as well.

**Workday schedule**  
A typical schedule on Election Day is from 6 a.m. to around 9 p.m. In some cases, you can ask to work a half-day.

**Right to time off from work to serve**  
Your employer is required to give you time off from work to be an election

judge without a reduction in pay. To qualify, you must:

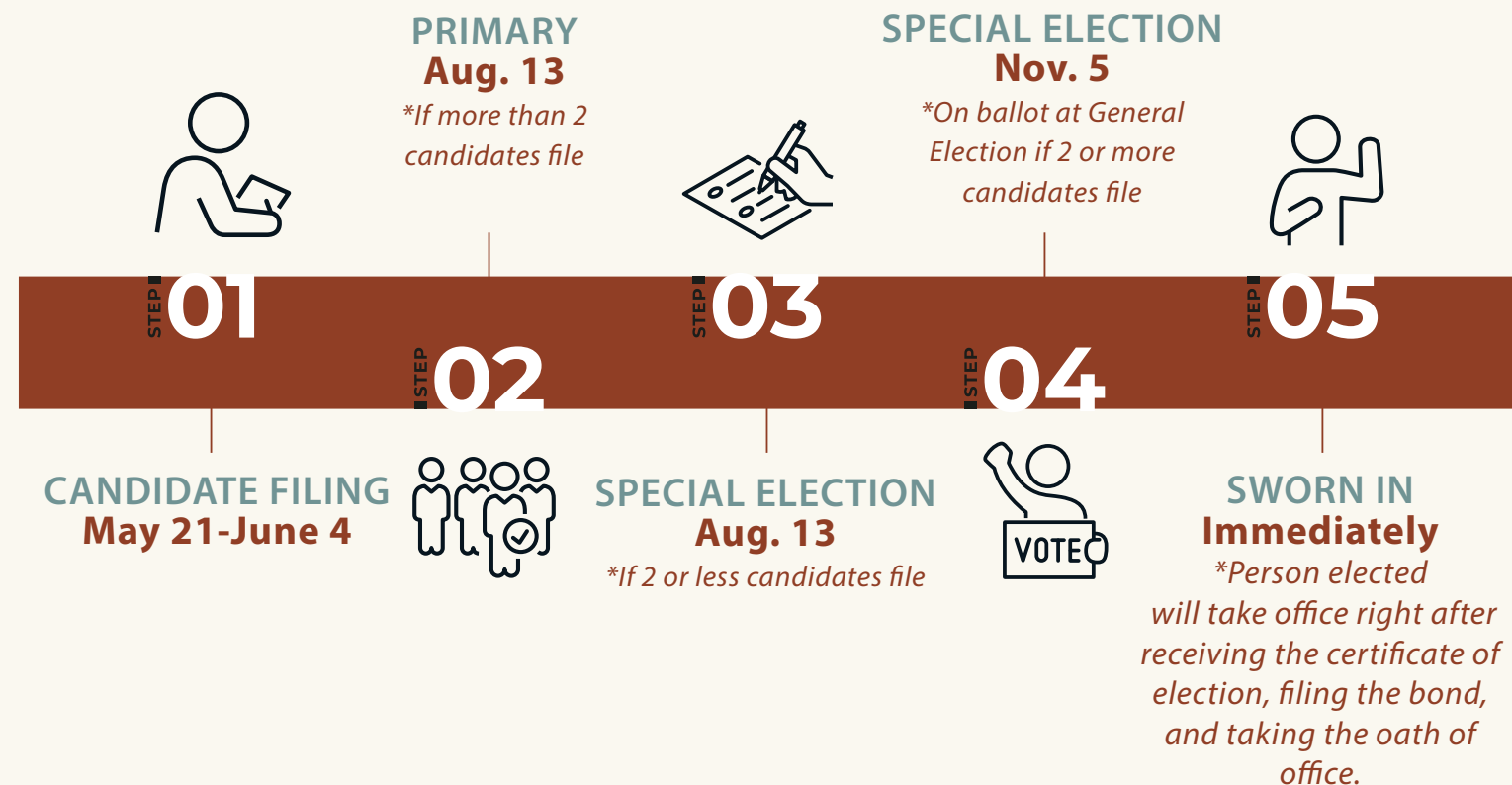
1. Notify your employer in writing at least 20 days in advance of Election Day.
2. Attach a copy of your schedule and pay rate form to your written notice. The schedule and pay rate will be provided by the jurisdiction that hires you as an election judge.

**High school student trainees**  
16 and 17-year-old students can work as election judge trainees, receive training, and be paid for their work. It's a great way to learn about elections and voting, and earn cash at the same time!

Click [HERE](#) for more info.

## Commissioner District 1 Special Election

# TIMELINE



*Anoka County Celebrates*

## Child Care

# Providers

### National Child Care Provider Appreciation Day

Anoka County recognized area child care providers on National Provider Appreciation Day, also known as National Child Care Provider Day, May 10. This special day commends child care providers, teachers, and other educators of young children everywhere. For more information on what you can do to recognize child care providers, click [HERE](#).

For many families, finding child care is a daunting task — there are provider shortages across the nation, and many daycare centers are also facing staff shortages and long waitlists for families, leading some parents to ask themselves if licensed, in-home family child care could be the solution to their problem.

Licensed family child care often provides a more intimate setting to meet children's needs, siblings can be together, and it's often more convenient and more affordable. Chandra Snyder, a licensed family child care provider in Anoka County, knows the benefits of owning her own daycare.

"There are so many aspects of my days that I look forward to," she said. "I look forward to the children arriving and being excited about

*Continues on next page ...*

our day and that they're happy to see their friends. I love our circle time and teaching them new things related to our theme of the week. I look forward to seeing the pride and joy on their faces when they have worked hard on a new challenge and succeed. I enjoy watching them while they are playing freely with their friends and using their imaginations. I absolutely love our time outdoors, exploring and running around. I love our field trips to local libraries, parks, and museums, and watching them engage and learn new things out in the world."

Snyder has learned throughout her more than a decade as a licensed child care provider what she can do to ensure success for both her business and the families she works with.

"Make sure you are becoming a child care provider for the right reasons," she said. "Not only do we care for children and teach them, but we also maintain relationships with their families, continue trainings and education, maintain records, and more. Our job is extremely rewarding but it can also be a tough and challenging job, and if your heart isn't truly in the profession, you are likely to flounder."

"It is imperative that there are available child care options for families in Anoka County," said District 7 Anoka County Commissioner Mandy Meisner. "People like Chandra Snyder are making a huge difference with their commitment to caring for the children in our county."

— *District 7 Anoka County Commissioner Mandy Meisner*

### Snyder's List for Success

- Find a balance between your child care program and your personal life to avoid burnout.
- Have a policy in place for your program that works best for you, so expectations are clear for families.
- Plan, prepare, and be organized.
- Take time for yourself and do things you enjoy.

### Steps for Becoming a Provider

The Anoka County Family Child Care Licensing Unit is responsible for licensing and monitoring family child care homes within the county. For more information, click [HERE](#).



Launch into Great Reads this summer!



**June 1 - August 17**

- Track your reading
- Complete activities
- Share book reviews
- Enter prize drawings



Use the Beanstack Tracker mobile app or register online [anokacounty.beanstack.org](http://anokacounty.beanstack.org)

All ages can register for the summer reading challenge. Complete fun activities and earn digital badges to enter prize drawings.



**Read Down Fines - For Kids & Teens**  
June 1 - August 17 remove \$1 of fines or fees for every 15 minutes of reading logged. Contact a librarian by **August 19** to have a youth account adjusted.

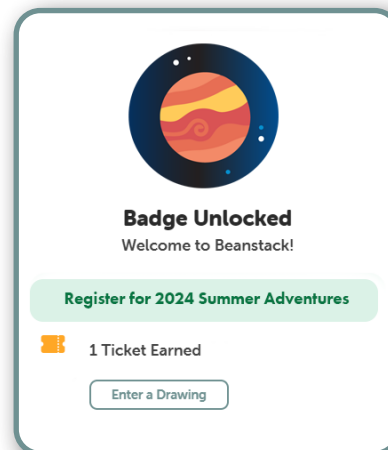


**Beanstack Book Bonus - Stellar Readers Prize**

Log 5 hours of reading in Beanstack  
**Youth** - earn a book prize  
**Adults** - earn a coupon for the Book Cart or Friends of the Library Book Sale

**Summer Prize Drawings - New Process**

Earn virtual tickets in Beanstack to enter prize drawings. **Earn 1 ticket** for each activity, logging, and book review badge. Enter one or multiple drawings.



**Youth Prize Options:**

Family 4 pack of Bunker Beach Water Park, Twins, State Fair, or Sealife passes

**Adult Prize Options:**

Anoka County Parks Annual pass

## Summer Programs



Visit the online event calendar for out-of-this world arts & STEM classes, concerts, magic shows, book clubs, storywalks, and more [tinyurl.com/ACLeventcalendar](https://tinyurl.com/ACLeventcalendar)

- ✦ **Greek Music of the Spheres**  
6/3 Northtown 6 p.m. and 8/5 Crooked Lake 5:30 p.m. (adult)
- ✦ **STEM Interstellar Water Quest**  
6/5 St. Francis 11 a.m. (school age)
- ✦ **UFO Minnesota - Watch the Sky Author Chad Lewis** 6/8 Northtown 2 p.m. (adult)
- ✦ **Solar Viewing with Minnesota Astronomical Society** 6/15 Rum River 2 p.m. and 6/17 Mississippi 2pm (all ages)
- ✦ **Orbit the Earth with Orby** 6/26 Fridley Community Center (family)
- ✦ **ExploraDome - Traveling Planetarium** 6/27 Centennial (all ages)
- ✦ **Blast Off! Rocket Building** 7/16 Crooked Lake 2 p.m. (school age)
- ✦ **Gardeners in Space** 7/19 Mississippi 2 p.m. (school age)
- ✦ **What's Up in the Sky with Minnesota Astronomical Society** 7/22 Johnsville 5 p.m. and 8/5 Rum River 5 p.m. (all ages)



**libby** Great for summer road trips and time at the cabin!

This summer travel light with **audiobooks, eBooks, and eMagazines for all ages**. Items from the eLibrary automatically return on the due date, so you never have to worry about making it back to town to avoid overdue fines (plus the eLibrary goes with you on your mobile device - no travel bag required).

**Did you know you can use the Beanstack Tracker app all year long?** We add extra activities and have prize drawings during our seasonal challenges, but you can track your reads, share reviews, and compete with friends and family all year long.

**Become a Reading Bridge mentor this summer**



Volunteers pair up with 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> graders to improve their reading skills. Mentors meet with their student once a week at the library. For more information on how to apply online visit

[tinyurl.com/ACLreadingmentor](https://tinyurl.com/ACLreadingmentor).



## LEARN AND EXPLORE

### FOREST BATHING

Ages 12+ • \$25-35/person +tax  
Wargo Nature Center

June 4; 6 - 8 p.m.  
June 11; 6 - 7 p.m.  
July 26; 9 - 10 p.m.  
August 2; 9 - 11 a.m.

Awaken your senses and connect deeply to nature around and within you. Experience an immersive, meditative session of the Japanese practice of shinrin-yoku, or “forest bathing,” with certified ANFT guide Kirsten Welge.

### WALK WITH A NATURALIST

All Ages • FREE  
Select Saturdays • 9 - 10:30 am

June 8 Lake George Regional Park - Pavilion 5 Parking Lot

June 22 Martin-Island-Linwood Lakes Regional Park - Island Lake Beach

July 20 Bunker Hills Regional Park - Activities Center

August 3 Coon Lake Regional Park - Veterans Memorial

August 17 Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park - Visitor Center

### MEET WARGO'S ANIMALS

All Ages • \$5/person +tax  
Saturdays • Wargo Nature Center

June 15; 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.\*  
June 15; 3:30 - 4:30 p.m.  
August 24; 1:30 - 2:30 pm\*  
August 24; 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Learn more about the reptile and amphibian animal ambassadors that live at Wargo Nature Center. Check out the animals up close while learning more about their unique characteristics, diets, behaviors, habitats and how we properly care for them.

**\*ADAPTIVE & INCLUSIVE**  
Special sessions designed to meet the needs of children with cognitive and/or physical disabilities along with an accompanying adult.



## GRAB A PADDLE



### LEARN TO STAND UP PADDLE BOARD

Ages 15+ • \$25/person +tax

June 11; 6 - 7:30 p.m.  
June 23; 3 - 4:30 p.m.  
July 20; 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
August 27; 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park

June 29; 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
August 22; 1 - 2:30 p.m.  
Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve

### INTRODUCTION TO KAYAKING

Ages 15+ • \$25/person +tax

June 25; 4 - 6 p.m.  
August 25; 1 - 3 p.m.

Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park

August 29; 6 - 8 p.m.  
Rum River South County Park

### FREE PADDLE BOARD & KAYAK SESSION

Ages 12+ • Saturdays; 1 - 3 pm

Try a paddle board or kayak for free and get your paddle questions answered!

June 29  
Rice Creek Chain of Lakes Park Reserve

July 20  
Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park

EXPLORE THE PARKS  
[ANOKACOUNTYPARKS.COM](http://ANOKACOUNTYPARKS.COM)

REGISTER ONLINE  
OR CALL 763-324-3350



## SUMMER SOLSTICE CELEBRATION

Thursday, June 20; 4:30 - 10 p.m.  
Wargo Nature Center

All Ages Celebrate the longest day of the year with an evening at Wargo Nature Center. We'll be open late to enjoy the long day and late sunset. Come explore on your own, try a self-guided activity or join a naturalist for a relaxed walk to see what is happening around Wargo in the summer. **FREE!**



## WARGO NATURE CENTER

Interactive Displays • Animal Ambassadors  
Nature Play Area • Walking Trails  
Story Walk • NEW Tracks Trail

MONDAY - FRIDAY: 8 am - 4:30 pm  
SATURDAY: 9 am - 5 pm  
SUNDAY: 12 - 5 pm

7701 Main Street, Lino Lakes, MN 55038

**BUNKER BEACH WATER PARK**

OPEN DAILY  
11 AM - 7 PM  
JUNE 8 - AUG. 25

[CLICK HERE](#)

[BUNKERBEACH.COM](http://BUNKERBEACH.COM)

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Bunker Beach

**CHOMONIX GOLF COURSE**

18 HOLE, PAR 72 COURSE  
TOURNAMENTS // SMALL GROUP RATES  
PLAYERS CLUB // MEMBERSHIPS  
BLUE HERON ROOM  
DRIVING RANGE

LEARN MORE AT [CHOMONIX.COM](http://CHOMONIX.COM)  
700 AQUA LANE, LINO LAKES // 763-324-3434



# Coon Rapids Dam Trail RECONSTRUCTION

Due to heavy rain events in 2023, erosion was accelerated at the Mississippi River and Coon Creek streambank, causing the Mississippi River Regional Trail (MRT) pedestrian bridge in Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park to close.

The Anoka County Parks Department is now working with TKDA and the Coon Creek Watershed District on the first phase of the Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park Bridge and Trail Project. The entire project includes removal and replacement of the failed pedestrian bridge over Coon Creek, removal of a culvert system upstream on Coon Creek, and reconstructing and realigning the trails connecting the two structures.

The project sequencing will begin with creekbank stabilization, bridge removal and replacement, culvert replacements, and trail reconstruction. The project is anticipated to be substantially complete by December 2024, with final restoration work completed in the spring of 2025.

“Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park and the Mississippi River Trail serve more than 1 million visitors each year, so

these improvements will have great value and outdoor recreation benefit to the public,” said Jeff Perry, Parks Department director. “Managing and restoring Anoka County’s lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands is key towards accomplishing our mission to positively impact the quality of life in Anoka County — this encompasses the protection of the natural environment, improving the health of citizens, and supporting a strong local economy.”

District 4 Anoka County Commissioner Scott Schulte noted residents and visitors to the area are eager to have the trail reopened in this area.

“This is such a beautiful route, and when the weather is nice there is a steady stream of people cycling, walking, and taking part in other forms of recreation along this part of the Mississippi River Regional Trail,” he said. “The trail has been closed for a while now, so it’ll be exciting when it reopens. Anoka County isn’t bearing the full brunt of the cost for this project, either — in 2023 we received a \$1 million Metropolitan Council grant, which helps greatly with the reconstruction.”

**Click [HERE](#) for more project details**

## Seeking Positive Change AT LEGISLATIVE LEVEL

When people talk about what Anoka County does for them, they might mention road maintenance, public safety, libraries, and any other of the many services available through various county departments. Advocating for positive changes at the state and federal level doesn’t often come to mind.

But that’s an integral service Anoka County provides for its residents, visitors to the area, and those who pass through the county on its roadways. Each year, Anoka County staff and commissioners identify several priorities that can only be accomplished with state and federal help, and this becomes the county’s legislative platform. These ideas on streamlining services, saving money, creating pilot programs, or aiming to fix legislation that isn’t working are presented at an annual meeting where all Anoka County Commissioners are present.

“Commissioners later come to consensus on which ideas have the most merit and likelihood of passing in the State Legislature or at the federal level to provide the greatest benefit to the county,” said Karen Skepper, department director of Community and Governmental Relations. “The recommendations from this meeting go to the full County Board at a meeting in November or December for approval as the official legislative platform.”

Two contract lobbyists work for Anoka County monitoring state issues, and the county employs one federal lobbyist. Before the legislative session starts, Anoka County hosts a meeting for



legislators so discussion can be had regarding county priorities. Staff and commissioners may be called upon to testify before a committee, and the contract lobbyists keep in constant contact with legislators.

“If we need to provide information or react to a suggestion, we can quickly have staff or a commissioner reach out to resolve it,” District 3 Anoka County Commissioner Jeff Reinert said. “Priorities are typically bonding for roads, parks, or other projects that impact residents. We may also be supporting funding for programs that are accessed by persons in the county.”

**Legislative Platform**

Depending on the year and need for changes, the number of items on the legislative platform can fluctuate from a handful to double digits. For the full list of Anoka County’s 2024 Legislative Platform items, click [HERE](#).

# JOB SEEKER Open house

12:30-3:30 p.m.  
**Wednesday  
June 12**




## Learn About PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Career Training Breakout  
Sessions

1:1 Walk-in Job Search  
Assistance

Job Search in the Career  
Lab

Location: CareerForce Blaine  
1201 89th Ave. NE, Ste. 2300  
Blaine, MN 55434

-  Video Interview Guides!  
(While Supplies Last)
-  Door Prize Drawings!
-  Free Refreshments!

### Mini Workshops & ASSISTANCE

- 12:30 – 12:50: “Navigating MinnesotaWorks.net”
- 1:00 – 1:45: “Understanding AI Applicant Selection”
- 1:45 – 2:15: “Anoka County Programs & Services Overview”
- 2:15 – 3:30: “Meet and Greet with Career Staff and Partners”
- Sign-up for Online Workshops & Classes at [CareerForceMN.com](https://www.careerforce.com)
- Discover Community Ed and Online Computer Skills Training Options



# Job Seeker SERVICES



### TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Apply Today!

We're here to serve young adults, dislocated workers and those transitioning to a new career. Eligible applicants may receive training assistance.

Reach out today!

Click [HERE](#).

### WORKSHOPS

Sharpen Your Skills!

CareerForce now has in-person workshops on job searching, resume writing and interview skills along with links to several online resources.

Click [HERE](#).

### CAREER SERVICES

Get ready! Get set! Get hired!

Click [HERE](#).

Log in for the latest in career tips, area employer connections, resume tricks and interview preparation.

Also, check out Minnesota's largest listing of available job openings across the state

[HERE](#).

### RESUME REVIEW

Get resume tips from our expert team!

CareerForce professionals will review your resume or cover letter and provide feedback. Email your resume to:

[careerforce.blaine@state.mn.us](mailto:careerforce.blaine@state.mn.us)

### JOB SEARCH ASSISTANCE

One-on-one job search assistance!

Schedule a job search appointment to meet in person, over the phone or online to get help with your job search and learn about other available resources.

Call us at 763-324-2300 or email:

[careerforce.blaine@state.mn.us](mailto:careerforce.blaine@state.mn.us)

## BOARD WELCOMES '4-H Green Superheroes of Science'



From left: Commissioner Julie Braastad; Donel Kadindula; Anna Gilbertson, Anoka County 4-H Educator; Peter Archambault; Commissioner Jeff Reinert; Samantha Hamm; Jenovic Kadindula; Aasiya Bashir; Commissioner Julie Jeppson; Saara Bashir; Commissioner Mike Gamache; Extension Educator/Professor Anne Stevenson; Commissioner Mandy Meisner; Commissioner Scott Schulte. All youth are members of the Loganberries 4-H Club in Anoka County.

the beginning of COVID as a way to bring much-needed, interactive programming experiences to youth that they could do at home," said Anne Stevenson, University of Minnesota Extension Educator and Professor with 4-H. "Since that time, the program has expanded, with more in-person offerings, and our teen leaders have taught many children in Anoka County and Hennepin County schools."

Stevenson said the lessons taught by the teens delve into topics such as bioplastics, environmental issues of plastics, and ways to keep our lands and waters clean for fish, animals, and humans. She noted the program received an Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) 4-H Community Leadership Award in February.

One of the teen leaders, Samantha Hamm, of Blaine, said the program has been an eye-opening experience for her.

"When I began with GSOS 4 years ago, I knew some plastics are bad and hurt the environment," she said. "What I didn't know was that there are a lot of ways people are trying to make plastics with bioproducts. I've been really excited to teach kids and get them to ask, 'what can I do to help out my environment?'"

At the May 14 Anoka County Board of Commissioners meeting, Stevenson and several 4-H GSOS program participants presented to the board about the impact of the program.

"The board congratulates all our 4-H members on their well-deserved AMC award," said Mike Gamache, chair, Anoka County Board of Commissioners. "The GSOS program is building young leaders who impact our community in positive, far-reaching ways."

A group of 4-H teen leaders, seven of which are from Anoka County, are making an impact in local communities by taking part in the Green Superheroes of Science (GSOS) program, which engages teen leaders to teach elementary-aged children science concepts that inspire and engage them as change makers to help solve the urgent environmental issue of plastic pollution in our environment.

GSOS was formed in 2020, and since then the participants have helped hundreds of students learn about plastic pollution through STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) projects. For example, in 2023, GSOS teen leaders:

- Reached 93 Fridley school district youth with 4 weeks of in-person summer school programming.
- Led a hands-on science workshop for Anoka County 4-H Project Workshop Day.
- Were selected to present a workshop on GSOS in Washington D.C. They were again selected in March 2024.

"The GSOS program was formed during

## FOOD SCRAPS DROP-OFF



Food waste can be up to 30 percent of what we throw away. Keep your food waste out of the landfill so it can be made into valuable compost when you participate in the FREE organics recycling program.

### ACCEPTABLE ITEMS

- All food scraps
  - Leftovers
  - Peelings
  - Spoiled food
- Soiled, uncoated, non-recyclable papers
  - Paper towels
  - Napkins
  - Coffee grounds/filters
  - Take-out delivery pizza boxes
  - Paper egg cartons
- BPI-certified compostable products
  - Food ware
  - Silverware
  - Bags



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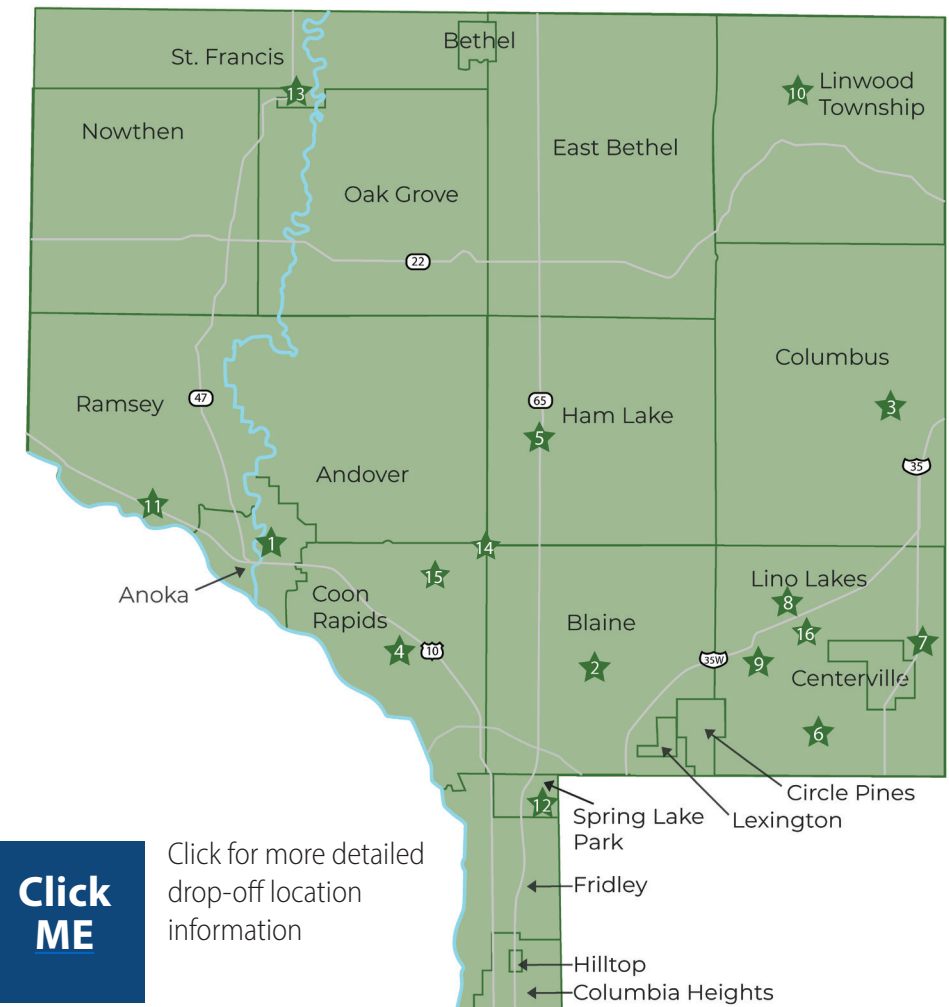


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3. Collect food scraps in provided pail and bags.
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6. Collect more compostable bags at drop-off site.

### ANOKA COUNTY ORGANICS DROP-OFF LOCATIONS



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Click for more detailed drop-off location information



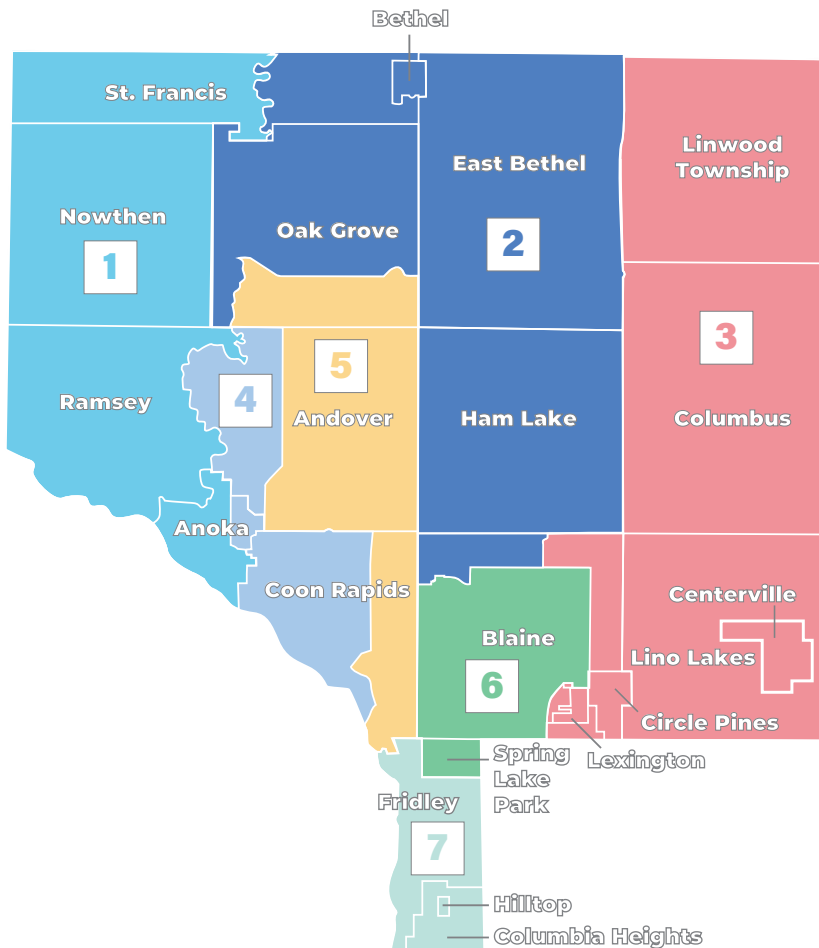
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*Visit our website!*

## ANOKA COUNTY LEADERSHIP

763-324-4700



Vacant <small>DISTRICT 1 COMMISSIONER</small>	 <b>Julie Braastad</b> <small>DISTRICT 2 COMMISSIONER</small>	 <b>Jeff Reinert</b> <small>DISTRICT 3 COMMISSIONER</small>
 <b>Scott Schulte</b> <small>DISTRICT 4 COMMISSIONER</small>	 <b>Mike Gamache</b> <small>DISTRICT 5 COMMISSIONER</small>	 <b>Julie Jeppson</b> <small>DISTRICT 6 COMMISSIONER</small>
 <b>Mandy Meisner</b> <small>DISTRICT 7 COMMISSIONER</small>	 <b>Brad Wise</b> <small>COUNTY SHERIFF</small>	 <b>Brad Johnson</b> <small>COUNTY ATTORNEY</small>

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 [anokacountymn.gov](http://anokacountymn.gov). "Anoka County News" is produced by Anoka County Communications, Erik Thorson, Chief Officer, 763-324-4612 [publicinfo@anokacountymn.gov](mailto:publicinfo@anokacountymn.gov) • [anokacountymn.gov/newsletter](http://anokacountymn.gov/newsletter)

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