

# ANOKA COUNTY

# NEWS

Volume 2-2023

## Multiple Metropolitan Areas

## AND RURAL RESOURCES



**ANOKA COUNTY**  
Regional Economic Development

Positioned for Success

- What is economic development - pg. 2
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# ACRED and Economic Development

The word “community” is paramount when talking about Anoka County. When thinking about community, we often piece together the interconnectedness of our lives and talk about where we live, work, recreate, educate, worship, shop and connect with those around us. It was in 2017 when area businesses started asking whether there was a role for economic development to exist beyond the city level, with a broader county-level approach that could support all the Anoka County cities together. A nationally recognized economic development consultant was hired and a study was commissioned to explore this idea. The results were compelling, highlighting that there truly was a role for Anoka County in regional economic development efforts.

Our residents and businesses enjoy a plethora of features and amenities that make Anoka County such a great place to live and operate a business. Expansive parks, unique shops and restaurants, and a talented workforce are only a few reasons why Anoka County has been “home” for so many.

In 2018, the Anoka County Regional Economic Development Partnership (ACRED) was founded, a unique city-led collaboration of all 21 municipalities and industry leaders in Anoka County.

“The establishment of ACRED was the base upon which most of our future economic development endeavors will stand,” said Matt Look, chair, Anoka County Board of Commissioners. “This partnership has paid dividends already and will evolve as the economic development needs of our county change.”

## What is economic development?

According to the U.S. Economic Development Administration, economic development is defined as: “Creating the conditions for economic growth and improved quality of life by expanding the capacity of individuals, businesses, and communities to maximize the use of their talents and skills to support innovation, job creation, and private investment.”

“Because each community is unique, with its own set of economic opportunities and challenges, economic development must likewise remain nimble in its efforts to improve quality of life and help create economic vitality,” said District 3 Anoka County Commissioner Jeff Reinert.

During the creation of the 2017 economic development study, extensive community engagement efforts were exercised to ensure the plan was representative of community needs. That plan created several action steps, all contained within three core areas of focus:

- Site Readiness
- Marketing and Branding
- Alignment and Regionalism

The following pages will offer more information about the pillars of economic development in Anoka County.



June 7 Anoka County Business Summit at Bunker Hills Event Center

# Site Readiness



Since ACRED’s founding in 2018, it has been a central focus of this partnership to keep key development sites at the forefront to best position the region for businesses in the market for new locations. To accomplish this, numerous strategies have been implemented:

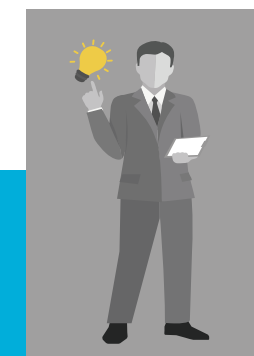
- Subscribing to Minnesota Commercial Association of Real Estate/Realtors (MNCAR), a prominent searchable database in which we submit available properties.
- Hosting real estate events and highlighting opportunities.
- Collaborating with partners, such as MN Tech Corridor, to gain effectiveness across cities.
- Providing pre-development grant programs to businesses so they can accelerate site due-diligence items.
- Networking with real estate and development professionals to share opportunities.

Site readiness is also about preparation.

“The time from when a viable project first gets brought to the attention of economic developers to when the company intends to make a decision just keeps getting shorter and shorter,” said Amanda Taylor, VP of Business Investment at Greater MSP, the 15-county metro region’s economic development organization. “To remain competitive for these types of projects to bring in new investment, cities and counties can ‘work ahead’ on key developable sites before a project is in front of them. Things like having updated environmental studies, soil tests, extending infrastructure or having an efficient city review process are all advantages in gaining the attention of businesses.”

This sentiment is especially applicable for Anoka County. For the more urban communities in the southern part of the county that are fully built out, meaning all vacant land has been developed, ACRED is working in tandem with cities to find available resources, development partners, and address regional concerns to encourage smart redevelopment and revitalization projects. As you continue north, Anoka County’s beautiful natural corridors extend distances between developed areas. Therefore, “site readiness” requires a little different approach in these areas, focused more on infrastructure extensions over larger distances and assisting cities with long-range planning efforts. Site readiness is a key way to ensure that new development projects will serve their communities for the long term.

## BUSINESS RESOURCES



- Help starting a business
- Financing
- Free technical assistance



[anokacountymn.gov/2299/Open-to-Business](http://anokacountymn.gov/2299/Open-to-Business)



# County Marketing and Branding

Prior to 2017, Anoka County's economic development focus was limited in scope and largely relied on each city to generate their own economic development efforts. To represent the entire region as a great place for business and investment, ACRED embraced regional marketing as a key initiative.

Anoka County features many tremendous, unique attributes:

"First and foremost is the region's talented labor pool," said District 7 Commissioner Mandy Meisner. "Workforce participation rates and employee productivity exceed both statewide and national averages, demonstrating that businesses can confidently invest in Anoka County and find a robust workforce."

District 6 County Commissioner Julie Jeppson notes the beauty of the county entices people to visit and stay.

"Our county has an expansive park system and natural corridors, and this means residents are always a short distance from high-quality natural areas," she said. "And Anoka County's robust transportation network makes it great for residents, visitors, employees and businesses. Highway 10, Highway 65, I-35, Class 1 railways, and the Anoka County-Blaine Airport drive commerce throughout our region. We're also receiving significant investments into this transportation network through the current projects on Highway 10 and future projects on Highway 65."

To share these unique assets, ACRED hosts economic development events such as the UpRiver Real Estate Event and the Anoka County Business Summit. These targeted industry events provide opportunities for each city to showcase their key development sites and allow area business leaders to connect and network.

ACRED also participates in many other real-estate-focused events throughout the year, such as the MNCAR Expo and Minnesota Real Estate Journal Summits.



## Graco

In early 2023, Anoka County awarded a \$1 million grant to Graco that will go towards a \$42.75 million expansion of its Anoka plant. This will create 55 new permanent jobs with an average salary of \$58,000. Construction is currently underway.



## Naples II

Naples II industrial center is a 195,000-square-foot distribution center located off Naples Street NE in Blaine, adjacent to the Naples I industrial Center. This space for lease is planned to be operational in fall of 2023 and will feature 43 trailer parking spaces and 22 docks. It's zoned heavy industrial, which permits outdoor storage.



## Bunker Lake Business Park

The Bunker Lake Business Park is a \$42 million project which includes three buildings that encompass 405,300 square feet of Class A industrial/warehouse development on 45 acres. Its convenient location off Highway 10 and Armstrong Boulevard allows for quick freeway access, and the three-building warehouse design is flexible to accommodate different types of industrial operations within the area. The first two buildings are complete, with the third estimated to be finished by the end of this year.

## Upcoming Projects

# Alignment and Regionalism

Anoka County certainly focuses on the "community" aspect of economic development, and this emphasis can be expanded with regional approaches occurring in tandem with local leaders. Anoka County and its cities uniquely work together to collaborate, learn best practices, and support the efforts in neighboring cities for regional benefits.

"ACRED not only represents the region and its economic strengths, but it provides a forum for collaboration among economic development professionals in the county," said Matt Brown, Coon Rapids community development director and chairperson of the ACRED Executive Committee. "Our regular 'Partner Meetings' bring in all the cities and additional metro stakeholders to talk about current challenges and opportunities. It's an asset to connect with my peers in nearby cities."

In addition to inviting all 21 cities to the Partner Meetings, there is regular representation from Anoka County Commissioners, Greater MSP, Open To Business, MetroNorth Chamber, Connexus Energy and the State of Minnesota. Each brings a unique perspective and value to the group, creating dynamic conversation and idea sharing.

ACRED's broad regional efforts create opportunities for individual cities to engage with initiatives that help advance local priorities.

"One of the many benefits of ACRED is bringing cities together and sharing costs for impactful marketing events and services that would likely be unaffordable for each city to fund alone," said Sean Sullivan, economic development manager for the City of Ramsey.

Anoka County is composed of 21 unique municipalities, and through the Anoka County Regional Economic Development partnership, all are working together to create a community that draws in commerce, is a vibrant, safe place to live, and supports neighboring communities to enhance the area.



Anoka County has invested in the Minneapolis St. Paul Regional Economic Development Partnership - GREATER MSP. The Partnership is the primary point of contact for businesses looking to locate in the Twin Cities Metro.

To position the Greater MSP region and economy to thrive in the future, the GREATER MSP Partnership is currently focused on many strategic initiatives, each led by a coalition of regional partners working to address specific challenges and deliver measurable results.



# Safe Communities are a Driver for Economic Development

When people are thinking about where to live, shop and participate in recreational opportunities, they want to feel safe doing so. And having a safe community directly relates to economic development, because people invest both socially and economically in areas where they feel comfortable and secure.

In Anoka County, one of the ways in which safety is being enhanced is through technology upgrades at the Emergency Communications Center (ECC), which houses 911 dispatch. The ECC has recently implemented several new technologies which allow improved information sharing between emergency telecommunicators, the public, and first responders. The ECC is also now using an advanced mapping technology that can more accurately pinpoint the location of callers.

One of the new multimedia information sharing technologies used by the ECC is called Prepared Live, which has already worked successfully in several emergency situations. One instance where an ECC telecommunicator used Prepared Live recently was when a kayaker tipped over in the Rum River. He was able to swim to shore but wasn't sure where he was. The emergency telecommunicator sent the caller a video link through Prepared Live, and the caller clicked on the link and started live streaming, which allowed the telecommunicator to assess the terrain. Once it was determined the caller could walk out, a location request was sent through Prepared Live, and the emergency telecommunicator was able to use a mapping technology through RapidSOS to guide the kayaker through the woods to a cul-du-sac where responders were waiting for him.

Another emergency communications technology being used to great effect in Anoka County is RapidDeploy Radius Mapping. In another recent 911 call, a woman speaking Spanish, who was experiencing a domestic violence situation, said she didn't feel safe talking. So,

the emergency telecommunicator sent her texts through RapidDeploy, which were automatically translated to Spanish. The woman's texts were translated into English for the emergency telecommunicator. Officers were able to get the information they needed to respond safely to the call and help the woman.

Anoka County is also using technology called What3Words, which has the entire earth mapped into roughly 10-foot squares. The Anoka County ECC has the What3Words information delivered to them through RapidDeploy Radius and RapidSOS when a 911 call is made. What3Words can be used to find a caller just about anywhere if their cellphone is new enough to support this technology. What3Words is particularly useful for emergency calls that come from rural areas or inside county or city parks, where the nearest streets could be a considerable distance away.



"In a few years, the entire 911 emergency telecommunications system will be overhauled statewide to adopt next-generation technology," said District 4 Anoka County Commissioner Scott Schulte. "Our emergency telecommunicators will have a leg up when that happens, because they're already using the types of technologies now that will be commonplace in the future. Our county is at the cutting edge of emergency communications and response, and this focus is a great asset to our residents and local economy."



Anoka County officials, partner representatives and community members attended a groundbreaking ceremony April 11 for the county's new, 42,000-square-foot Emergency Communications Center off Hanson Boulevard in Andover.

The facility will combine both 911 emergency telecommunications operations and the county's radio shop, which provides and maintains all radio equipment used by law enforcement and emergency telecommunicators in Anoka County.

Most of the capital for this project came from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

The new facility will address many of the deficiencies of the current location used by Emergency Communications in the basement of the Anoka County Government Center. Employees who work there deal with a cramped workspace, no access to daylight, no breakroom or training room, noise issues because of low ceilings, and more.

"In addition to improving working conditions for our current group of emergency telecommunicators, management and radio shop staff, the new, one-story facility will allow for future operational modifications," said District 2 Anoka County Commissioner Julie Braastad, who serves as chair of the county's

Public Safety Committee. "This facility will be a tremendous asset when it comes to shifting our emergency response needs as our county grows and changes."

Commissioner Matt Look, chair, Anoka County Board of Commissioners, lauded everyone involved in making this project a reality and said the county is looking forward to continuing to work with project consultants.

"I want to thank Wold Architects and Engineers and ICS Consulting, who have worked with Anoka County for the planning and design of this facility and will be heavily involved in the construction process," he said. "The renderings they've put together look fantastic, and I'm sure the finished building will be just as good."

District 5 Commissioner Mike Gamache said the mental health supports that will be available at the new ECC/Radio Shop will be a great benefit to employees.

"The improvements, such as a quiet room for staff to step away and collect themselves privately and a wellness/fitness room to help staff relieve stress will be such an asset," Gamache said. "Emergency telecommunications employees deal with many high-stress situations and allowing them opportunities to decompress will help our overall operation."

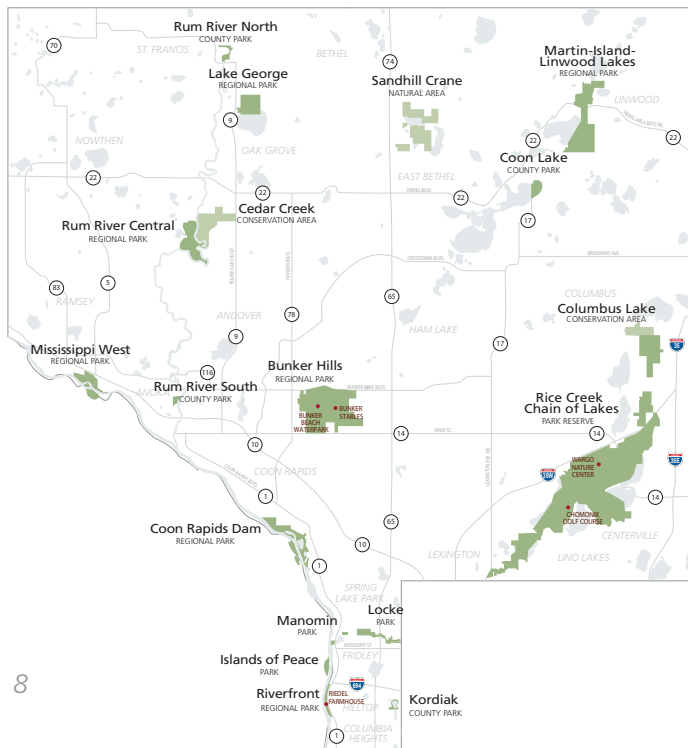
# IMPACT OF PARKS

ANOKA COUNTY PARKS: TRAILS, OPEN SPACES AND ECONOMY

The mission of the Anoka County Parks Department is to positively impact the quality of life in Anoka County by providing parks, outdoor recreation and leisure services for the public. Our mission encompasses protection of the natural environment, improving the health of citizens and supporting a strong local economy.

In pursuit of the above mission, Anoka County recognizes that its citizens are passionate about outdoor recreation. More than six million people visit Anoka County Parks every year, playing a vital role in contributing towards a strong local economy. Parks and trails are instrumental in Anoka County's economic output: they increase retail sales, support jobs, attract new residents and businesses and boost property values. A recent University of Minnesota study revealed every dollar invested in conserving natural lands nets a return of \$1.70 to \$4.40.

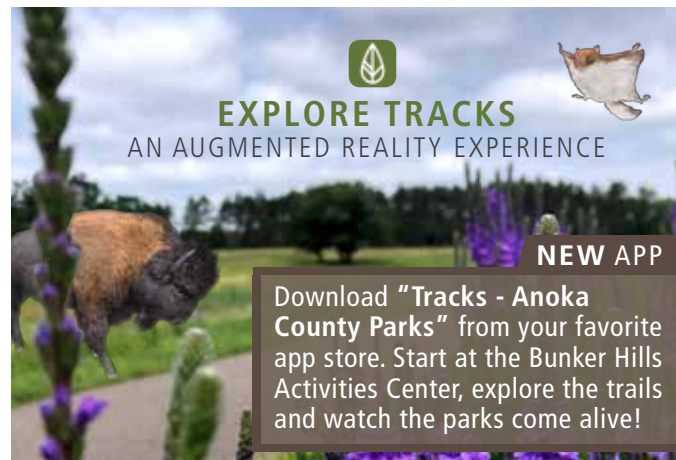
Anoka County Parks, trails and open spaces are important factors that influence people's decisions on where to live, work and play. Established in 1963, the Anoka County Parks System has evolved into a premiere 11,000-acre system that is geographically located on scenic lakes, rivers, streams, forests and oak savannas – arguably some of the highest quality natural habitat in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.



According to the Parks and Trail Council of Minnesota, the Twin Cities parks and trails are commonly cited as the area's most attractive feature, and 85 percent of residents say expanding and maintaining these features are critically important for enhancing quality of life.

National real-estate associations confirm the importance of parks and trails. According to the National Association of Home Builders' most recent data, walking trails and park areas strongly influence the purchasing decision of most home buyers. As a general guideline, researchers have discovered nearby parkland increases home values 5 to 15 percent, depending upon proximity and quality of the park. Trails have a similar effect: researchers estimate homeowners are willing to pay an additional \$4,000 to \$9,000 to be located within one thousand feet of a trail.

In conclusion, the Anoka County Parks System respectfully plays a vital role in contributing towards building and maintaining a strong local economy by enhancing property values, decreasing medical costs through improved health and wellness, increasing tourism revenue, creating jobs and ultimately strengthening the appeal of Anoka County to attract new residents and businesses in the future.



# SUMMER PROGRAMS

REGISTER AT ANOKACOUNTYPARKS.COM OR CALL 763-324-3350

## Forest Bathing

Aug. 4, 6-8 p.m.  
Wargo Nature Center

Aug. 26, 9-11 a.m.  
Wargo Nature Center

## FREE Wargo Nature Center Restoration Project Days

Aug. 5, 10 a.m. to noon  
Wargo Nature Center

## FREE Campfire Talks

Aug. 5, 7-8 p.m.  
(Native American Games)  
Rice Creek Chain of Lakes  
Campground

Aug. 19, 7-8 p.m.

(Wild Cats)  
Rice Creek Chain of Lakes  
Campground

## FREE Introduction to Fly Fishing

Aug. 10, 6-8 p.m.  
Coon Rapids Dam Regional  
Park

## Stand Up Paddle Boarding

Aug. 22, 1-2:30 p.m.  
Coon Rapids Dam Regional  
Park

## Rice Creek Paddling Adventure

Aug. 24, 12-4 p.m.  
Rice Creek Chain of Lakes  
Park Reserve, water levels  
will determine the location

## Birding by Boat

Aug. 29, 9 a.m.-noon  
Wargo Nature Center

## Fat Tire Biking

Aug. 30, 4-6 p.m.  
Rice Creek Chain of Lakes  
Park Reserve

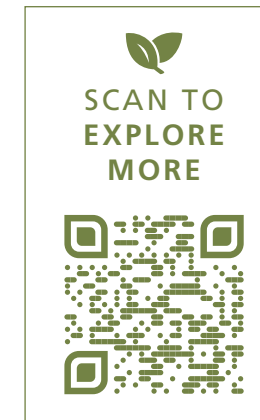
## Introduction to Kayaking

Aug. 31, 6-8 p.m.  
Rum River South County  
Park

## Forest Kids Club

Wednesdays, 9:30-11:30  
a.m.  
Wargo Nature Center  
Ages 4-5

Go adventuring out on Wargo's wooded peninsula, exploring different nature topics and seasonal changes. Each week will include guided learning activities and free-explore time where participants will be encouraged to follow their senses and create their own adventure with new friends! Fall, winter and spring sessions are available.



Volume 2-2023 **PLAY TODAY!**  
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BUNKERBEACH.COM | f i

## From ABCs to SATs to CEOs



The library supports economic development with education initiatives, starting with the youngest members of our community and continuing through post-graduation professional development, so residents are successful in their academic and career pursuits.

- **Free public computers and internet access** available at all library locations for job seekers
- **One-on-one assistance from librarians** with computer navigation and digital skills
- **Free WiFi in parking lots 24/7**
- **Hotspots available for check out**
- **HelpNow and JobNow powered by Brainfuse**  
Live online tutors and career coaches to help with homework, college applications, resumes, and job interviews



- **Book Club Kits, eBooks, & Audiobooks for Professional Development**  
visit [tinyurl.com/ACLProfessionalBookclub](https://tinyurl.com/ACLProfessionalBookclub)



## LinkedIn Learning

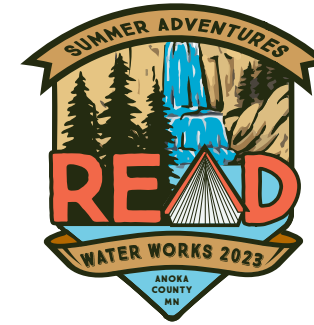
- **LinkedIn Learning**  
20,000+ online courses from industry experts in management, tech, design, data, and more to meet your personal and professional goals

## Transparent Language Online

- **Transparent Language**  
Online tools and resources that learners need to survive and thrive in a new language environment, including English as a Second Language

## data axle

- **Data Axle Reference Solutions**  
Grow your business with the Directory of U.S. Businesses and Consumer Lifestyle Database. Tools to identify sales leads, locate suppliers, analyze competitors, conduct market research, or target new customers



## Summer Adventures - Water Works

Runs through Aug. 13

REGISTER ONLINE [anokacounty.beanstack.org](http://anokacounty.beanstack.org)

Summer reading for all ages, including adults! Earn digital badges for completing activities, tracking your reading, and sharing book reviews. Register online, download the Beanstack Tracker app, or ask a librarian for a paper tracker. Youth 17 and under can read down fines. For every 15 minutes of reading logged, \$1 of fines can be removed. Contact the library by Aug. 14 for more info.

## WEEKLY PRIZE DRAWINGS

The more you log in Beanstack, the more likely you are to win

- Kids can win tickets to SeaLife at MOA, Minnesota Twins, Minnesota State Fair, and Bunker Beach Water Park.
- Adults can win an annual pass to Anoka County Parks.

## FREE EVENTS July - Aug. 2023

### Jolly Pops Concert

Wednesday, July 19, Centennial Library, 1 p.m.

### Adaptive Teen Cooking Classes: Curiosity Kitchen

Wednesday, July 19, Centennial Library, 4:30 p.m.

Monday, Aug. 7, Crooked Lake Library, 5 p.m.

Thursday, Aug. 24, Mississippi Library, 2 p.m.

### Adaptive Program: Artist Trading Cards

Saturday, July 29, Northtown Library, 2 p.m.

### Martina the Cockroach and Perez the Mouse Puppet Show

Thursday, Aug. 3, Northtown Library, 4 p.m.

### Our Leaders Are Readers Storytime

Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.

Fridley Civic Campus, 7071 University Ave. NE, Fridley

Fire Department - Aug. 3

Mayor - Aug. 17

Police Department - Aug. 31



Image credit: Unsplash/ David Todd Mccarty

## Summer is the Season for Family Reunions

Discover, share and preserve your family history with free online access to genealogy resources with My Heritage Library Edition.

## MyHeritage LIBRARY EDITION

MyHeritage Library Edition is one of the largest, most internationally diverse genealogy databases of its kind in the world including billions of historical documents from over 48 countries as well as millions of historical photos, public records, indexes and additional resources. Available in 42 languages, this family history research database includes:

- Census records
- More than 5 billion exclusive family tree profiles from MyHeritage and Geni
- 100 million gravestone photos
- 500 million historical photographs
- Military records, immigration records
- Citizenship and naturalization records
- Government, land and court records
- Wills and probate records
- Additional content under license including Tributes obituaries, WikiTree, BillionGraves, Canadian Headstones and many others

## FREE REMOTE ACCESS WITH YOUR LIBRARY CARD

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

Contact the library for more information.

## Minnesotans May be Eligible for a Property Tax Refund

Minnesota residents may be eligible for both regular and special property tax refunds, depending on several qualifications.

A recent law change provides a one-time increase to the 2022 Homestead Credit Refund (for homeowners) and Renter's Property Tax Refund. This increase applies to 2023 refunds only, based on rent paid in 2022 and property taxes payable in 2023.

Claim your refund by filing form M1PR. Find additional information, forms, and instructions online at [revenue.state.mn.us/property-tax-refund](https://revenue.state.mn.us/property-tax-refund). Or call the Minnesota Department of Revenue 24-hour automated help line at 651-296-3781 or 800-652-9094 to have a form sent to you. Teletypewriter users can call 771 for Minnesota Relay.

The filing deadline is Aug. 15.



## Program May Allow Seniors to Defer Property Taxes

The State of Minnesota administers the Senior Citizens Property Tax Deferral program. This program may allow you to defer a portion of your property taxes. This is not a tax forgiveness program; however, this program:

- Limits the maximum amount of property tax paid to 3 percent of total household income.
- Ensures the amount of tax paid remains the same as long as you participate in this program.

For more information, including qualifications, and how to apply, visit [revenue.state.mn.us/property-tax-deferral-senior-citizens](https://revenue.state.mn.us/property-tax-deferral-senior-citizens).

Recent law changes modifying program qualifications include increasing the household income limit from \$60,000 to \$96,000 and reducing the number of years a homeowner must own and occupy their property, from 15 years to 5 years. Changes will be effective for taxes payable in 2024 and thereafter.



## We want to hear FROM YOU

Anoka County wants your feedback on the new 2024 Solid Waste Management Plan. This plan will guide how the county works in partnership with your community and waste haulers to manage waste for the next six years and to achieve the state-mandated goal of a 75 percent recycling rate by 2030. This plan will lay out how the county will manage recycling, food scraps or organics, solid waste, and more for our residents and businesses. Please take our short survey to let us know your thoughts on many different possible strategies that may be included in the new plan. Your input is valuable and greatly appreciated. Your feedback will be used to form the strategies selected for the next plan.



Use your smartphone to access the online survey by scanning the QR code to the left, or by heading to our website:

[AnokaCountyMN.gov/recycle](https://AnokaCountyMN.gov/recycle)

## Legislative Update

The 2023 Minnesota Legislative Session concluded May 22, and some of the decisions made during the assembly of lawmakers will have significant impacts on transportation and housing in Anoka County.

### Greenhouse Gas and VMT Reduction Requirements

A new item included in the transportation omnibus bill requires the completion of a greenhouse gas (GHG) and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction analysis for all state trunk highway capacity and interchange improvement projects. If a proposed project does not meet the state's GHG and VMT reduction targets, mitigation measures must be implemented and/or the project must be redesigned/rescoped to meet the targets or the project will not move forward. MnDOT is currently working on developing GHG and VMT reduction targets, which are due by February 2025.

### .75 Percent Sales Tax Increase for Transportation

As part of the omnibus bill, the Legislature approved a .75 percent sales tax that will raise \$440 million per year for public transit spending, which is approximately equivalent to the Metropolitan Council's annual transportation budget. About 17 percent of that tax revenue — nearly \$90 million annually — will be allocated to the seven-county metro area to fund road maintenance and bicycle and pedestrian trail improvements. The amount of money to be distributed to Anoka County from this new revenue source is still being determined.



### .25 Percent Sales Tax Increase for Housing

The legislature also approved a .25 percent sales tax increase for the metro region, which includes Anoka County. It is estimated that this increase will generate nearly \$200 million a year by 2027. Most of that funding will go toward providing aid to local governments to assist with housing development. Twenty-five percent of revenues from the tax will be for a rent voucher program for low-income Minnesotans in the metro.



## Funding Allocated for Highways and

\$102.75 million was secured via state bonding funds and cash during the session for a series of planned improvements along Highway 65, and \$30 million of combined funds to add a lane between Hanson and Round Lake boulevards.

The sections of Highway 65 slated for enhancements are in the areas of 99th Avenue, 105th Avenue, 109th Avenue and 117th Avenue in Blaine. Projects in this area will include adding frontage roads and overpasses, changing access, and improving facilities for people walking and bicycling. A total of four traffic lights along the thoroughfare will be removed, which will address congestion issues.

The funds obtained for the add-a-lane project are going to be used to extend the existing 6-lane section of U.S. Highway 10 between Hanson and Round Lake boulevards in the City of Coon Rapids. The project will add an additional travel lane in each direction. The project development team is currently working on preparing the construction plans and completing the environmental documentation/evaluation necessary to construct the improvements. The team is working closely with MnDOT to develop a construction schedule and timeline.

# Anoka County Celebrates Longtime Foster and Adoptive Parents



Anoka County residents who would like to learn more about becoming foster care providers can visit [anokacountymn.gov/619/Services-for-Children-Families](http://anokacountymn.gov/619/Services-for-Children-Families) or call 763-324-1230.

Children in foster care receive health care coverage through the Medical Assistance program. Providers receive a modest monthly reimbursement to assist in providing care.



For more than 20 years, foster and adoptive parents Kathy and Pat Borowick, of Anoka County, have been a steadfast source of nurturing, love and guidance for hundreds of children who have passed through their home.

They have cared for all ages, including teens and sibling groups. The Borowicks have worked as part of the Child Welfare Team, where they've built strong relationships with case workers, birth family members and therapists. They are also regular attendees at the foster care connections groups and because of their extensive experience, the Borowicks are often sought out as mentors for newly licensed providers.

The reason why they've been fostering for so long is straightforward: to positively impact the lives of youth so they can hopefully grow into well-adjusted adults who contribute to their communities. Sometimes, a foster child might only be with the Borowicks for a few days before they're reunited with parents or placed somewhere else. In other instances, some foster children have been with them for months or even years before permanent placements happen. All these children have left indelible impressions on the Borowicks, and they agree that one of the greatest rewards of fostering is when they learn of the successes of their former foster children.

"I received an email on Mother's Day from a former foster child that read, 'Not a day goes by that I don't think about you,'" Kathy said. "She was placed with us a long time ago, and I keep up on her life on Facebook. She even asked us to go to her high school graduation about five years ago. It's great to know that she still remembers us." Pat said he's had similar, out-of-the-blue interactions with former foster children.

"I was in a parking lot outside of a McDonalds in Andover, and a young man came up to my car, knocked on my window, and said, 'Hey, Pat, do you remember me?'" Pat said. "I replied, 'Of course I do!' He told me about how well his life was going and about his kids. Those are the blessings when they recognize you — you know that you made a difference."

Kathy and Pat both noted caring for foster children isn't always easy, and there are children who they don't hear from after they've left their home, but they know that they've provided these youths with a safe place to live while situations stabilize with their parents or until they're placed in homes that are better for them in the long term. They also note that flexibility is key, both in providers' personal and professional lives. Pat has worked as a realtor for more than 20 years, which has helped when it comes to providing care for foster children. Kathy has worked in county adult protection investigation for many years, and those positions have worked well with fostering.

Kathy said she and Pat "have no regrets" about fostering for so many years, and they encourage people who are interested in fostering to become involved, since the county is always looking for more foster care providers.

"Fostering, in many ways, is just like parenting your own children," Pat said. "You get to learn their individual characteristics, you provide love and guidance, and the children eventually leave your care and go out on their own. Over the years, we've impacted the lives of many children, and they've also changed us, for the better. It's amazing, as a foster parent, to think that you provided children care when it was so desperately needed, and maybe you made a difference that set their lives on the right path."

**Keep your health insurance**

If you have Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare, your health insurance needs to be renewed annually. Be prepared for your renewal.

Visit [mn.gov/dhs](http://mn.gov/dhs)

## Midwest Medical Examiner's Office Director Receives Health Care Hero Award

Shane Sheets, director of the Midwest Medical Examiner's Office (MMEO) in Ramsey, received a Health Care Hero award from the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal in June for his leadership at the office.



The Journal noted that in the past several years the MMEO has seen a "marked increase in the number of overdoses, accidents, homicides, and suicide cases." During this time, Sheets has been able to keep his office from developing a backlog by adding more forensic pathologists, death investigators and other staff.



Even with the increased workload, those served by the MMEO have not had to wait an unreasonable amount of time for reliable data or answers about suspicious or unexplained deaths.

Sheets has a strong track record of supporting his staff and peers in this high-pressure environment, and he's proud his office has a balanced budget and is accredited by the National Association of Medical Examiners.

### Increase in 911 POCKET DIALS

There has been a massive increase in the number of accidental 911 calls received by the Anoka County Emergency Communications Center. Android OS (Samsung) phones received an update that automatically turns on a setting where if you hold down the side button on the phone for more than 5 seconds it dials 911. Please check your phone to disengage this feature. Go under Settings, scroll to Emergency SOS and turn off this feature. Eliminating open 911 lines will free up the 911 telecommunicators, as well as police and fire responders, and allow them to respond to real emergencies.

### Driver's Licenses for All

According to the Minnesota Secretary of State, to vote in elections residents must be U.S. citizens and at least 18 years old on Election Day. As of Oct. 1, all Minnesota residents, regardless of citizenship status, will be eligible to obtain driver's licenses. For residents, licenses can be used as proof of residence to register on Election Day, if they have not previously registered at their Minnesota address. Non-citizens cannot use their driver's licenses as proof of residence to vote. Non-citizens who vote will face a fine, jail time, or both. Any non-citizen caught voting may also face deportation.

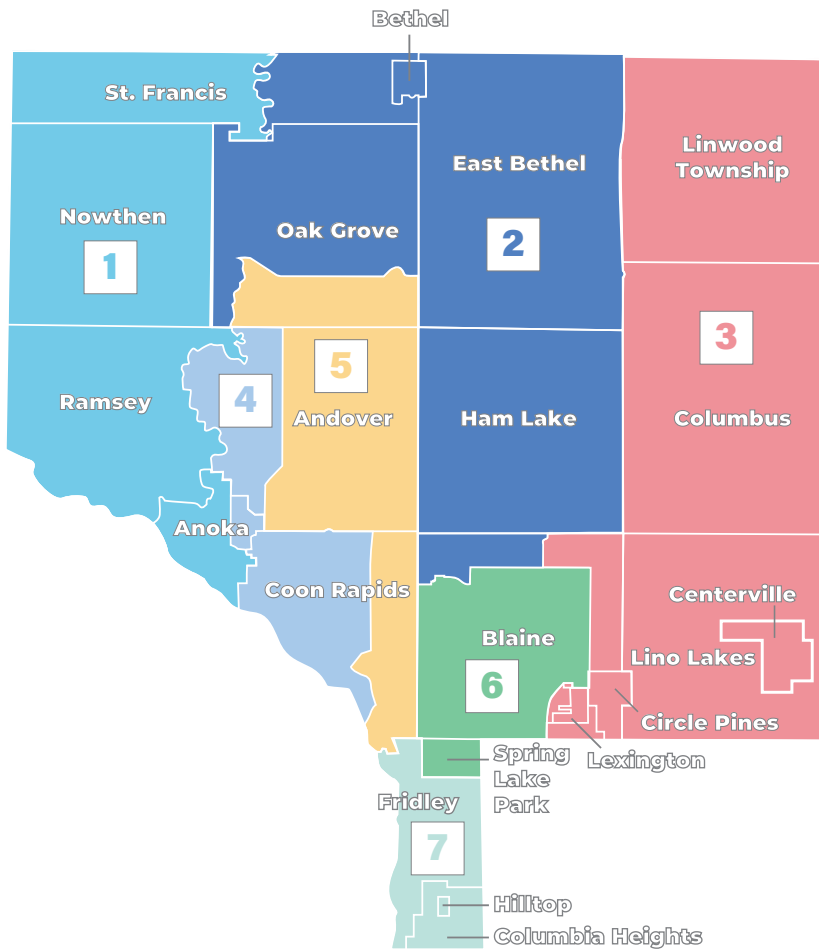
Anoka County  
 2100 3rd Ave.  
 Anoka MN 55303-5024



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## ANOKA COUNTY LEADERSHIP

763-324-4700



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)  
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