



SCALE

Scott County Association
for Leadership & Efficiency

GOVERNMENT WITHOUT BORDERS

Working. Smarter. Together.



2021

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

A Brief History

The Scott County Association for Leadership and Efficiency (SCALE) was formed in the spring of 2003 to encourage greater efficiencies and leadership in public service through enhanced communication, collaboration of services, and sharing of resources. Members include elected and appointed officials from the cities, schools, and townships within Scott County, the Shakopee Mdwakanton Sioux Community, and Scott County. (See membership list on back page.)

SCALE members meet monthly to discuss ways in which local governments can continue to maximize the value of taxpayers' money through cooperating in mutual service areas, such as public safety, parks and recreation, transportation, community development, and general government.

The mission of SCALE is to explore new and innovative ways in which government entities can collaborate to provide superior services while making the most of limited resources. Core values include relationships, innovation, influence, partnerships, education, and leadership.



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2021 SCALE Legislative Priorities

The Scott County Association for Leadership and Efficiency (SCALE) wants all of its residents to be stable, educated, connected, and contributing to our communities. Through this, SCALE proposes the following Legislative Priorities for 2021. We believe that these changes will help us work smarter together to promote safe, healthy, and livable communities for our residents in efficient and effective ways, providing funding from the appropriate levels of government while new development pays for itself.

SCALE members developed these priorities in each of five areas: Transportation; education; empowering local governments; housing; and capital investments. These priorities support SCALE's Live. Learn. Earn. initiative. The following includes our vision for our community, some challenges currently being faced, and why we need legislative changes.

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IMPROVING TRANSPORTATION

Pay for safe roads

SCALE is seeking legislation that will give cities and townships statutory authority to assess street infrastructure fees to help pay for safety and capacity improvements needed as a result of new development. What does this mean?

- Development pays for itself. Costs of new development are not borne by existing taxpayers
- Development is planned and connected
- Development is safe, and has adequate capacity

Construction that would be subject to the fee is based on project growth plans overlaid by transportation needs. The improvements may be beyond the development perimeters but adjacent and impacted by the development.

- Right turn lanes, left turn lanes, bypass lanes
- Signalization/roundabout construction at identified key intersections
- Capacity improvements as growth demands

Bills to provide this authority were introduced last session in the House (Tabke, Albright) and the Senate (Pratt, Hoffman). A hearing was held in the House, but no other action occurred during the COVID-interrupted session. Resolutions supporting this initiative were passed by all Scott County cities, four townships, and the County Board.



Maintain Scott County's Portion of the Motor Vehicle Lease Sales Tax

The Motor Vehicle Lease Sales Tax (MVLST) is distributed based on a formula that supports Greater MN transit (38%); County State Aid for five metro counties, including Scott, Carver, Anoka, Washington, and Dakota (38%); and the MN Transportation Fund (local bridges) (13%).

This funding has been the fastest growing portion of Scott County's State Aid Distribution over the last several years. In 2019, it was \$4.277 million, and it is estimated at \$4.3 million for this year. The MVLST is 40% of Scott County's annual State Aid construction allocation. Loss or significant reduction of this funding would have a large impact on Scott County's annual transportation program, creating challenges in our pavements, safety, and expansion levels. This funding for roads and bridges in the five metro suburban counties was included in the transportation package approved by the Legislature in 2008 as part of a "deal" to provide equity in the allocation for the road and bridge needs of the growing suburban counties. We ask that the agreement continue to be honored.

Gas tax increase of seven cents, implemented over several years

The demand for highway funding far outstrips the amount of money available. The gas tax is constitutionally dedicated 100 percent for roads. The U.S. average rate for gasoline motor fuel tax as of July 1, 2020 was 54.78 cents. Minnesota's rate is currently 47 cents (28.5 cents MN tax, 18.5 cents federal), nearly eight cents below the average. It is estimated that for each cent of gas tax, \$31 million is raised. The MN gas tax has not been increased since 2009. A seven cent a gallon gas tax increase would generate over \$200 million a year in needed revenue. This could be implemented over several years, such as three cents, two cents, two cents over three years to reduce the impact on motorists. Without additional funding, more of the burden of major projects -- especially state highway projects that intersect with local roads -- will continue to fall on local governments. This could result in higher local taxes or the continued delay of projects. Delayed projects cost the public more due to inflation and create continued safety and efficiency problems that affect the driving public.



Repeal the 2002 law that prohibits the study of the Dan Patch Line

Scott County is one of Minnesota's fastest growing counties with half of its workers driving across the Minnesota River into Hennepin County for employment. The County is served by only two river crossings designed for cars into Hennepin County, and both are projected to be over capacity by the year 2040. The Dan Patch Line is an existing river crossing currently used for freight. It cannot be studied for passenger rail by the State, Metropolitan Council, or Regional Rail Authorities due to a 2002 law that prohibits the study of the Dan Patch Line. Without an additional river crossing, Scott County's economic potential will be limited. SCALE supports removing the legislative prohibition to study the viability of the Dan Patch Line for alternative modes of transportation.

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ENHANCE EDUCATION

Help school districts through the pandemic

SCALE recommends using the greater of the enrollment number from Oct. 1, 2019 or Oct. 1, 2020 to determine state aid and other portions of school revenue for the 2020-21 school year.

Scott County school districts, as well as those around the state, experienced an unexpected loss of student enrollment in the fall of 2020 due to the pandemic. Some parents chose to delay the start of kindergarten for their five-year-olds, some chose to homeschool, some enrolled in private schools that were offering in-person education, and some high school students chose post-secondary online education.

Districts in Scott County reported the enrollment losses (from FY21 budget projections) below:

Schools	Total enrollment decline from FY 21 budget projections	Kindergarten enrollment decline from projections
Burnsville-Eagan-Savage	-150 (-1.9%)	-38 (-5.8%)
Prior Lake/Savage	-235 (-2.6%)	-41 (6.8%)
Shakopee	-93 (-1.13%)	-72 (-12%)
Jordan	-49 (-2.6%)	-23 (-17.3%)
Belle Plaine	-39 (25%)	0
New Prague	-189 (-4.4%)	-89 (-28%)

The loss of enrollment not only affects General Education Aid at an average of \$6,567 per student, it also affects other state and levy aid, such as long-term facilities maintenance (LTFM) revenue and other restricted revenue sources.

Because of the loss of enrollment among districts, which will result in lower free and reduced lunch percentages, districts' Compensatory Revenue and Title I money will also be affected.



Provide an adequate and flexible increase in the General Education Aid (per pupil funding) formula

The basic per pupil formula, currently at \$6,567 per student, generally provides school districts flexibility in meeting their individual needs. A funding increase that meets or exceeds inflation is needed to help districts meet the needs of students.

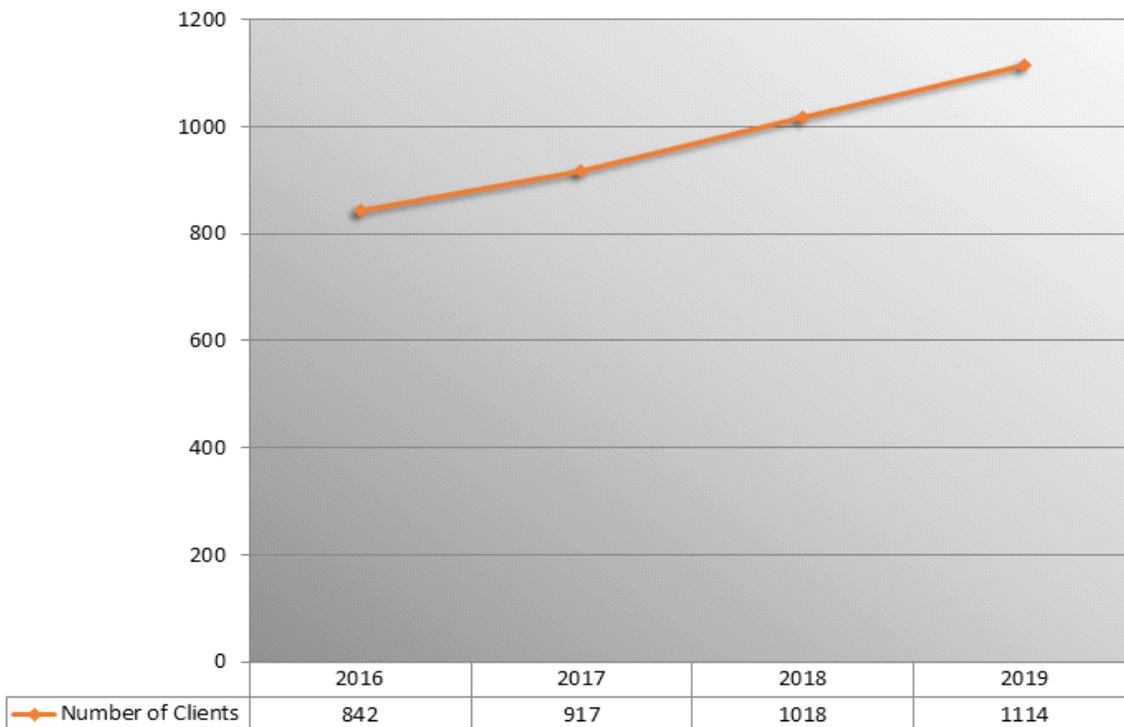
Provide additional funds for mental health/behavioral support for students

Across all of K-12, administrators are seeing increased challenges and concerns related to anxiety and depression in students, and at younger ages. Through a collaboration with the Scott County Mental Health Center, therapists are currently available in all County schools. Called the Connect Program, it is funded through insurance, a state grant received by Scott County, and district contracts. Additional state funds are sought to maintain this successful partnership as student needs increase.

Some of the primary benefits to the Connect Program in the schools are:

- Early identification and intervention, resulting in better outcomes
- Training of staff in early identification and referral
- As economic struggles increase in community, school-based therapy becomes more crucial; students who are uninsured or underinsured receive services
- Students who struggle academically and/or parents who struggle economically do not have to miss a ½ day of work and school to attend therapy
- Team approach to assessment and intervention school/therapist is much more effective
- Access -- Data show most students in school-based programs are experiencing first contact with mental health services even though they have significant symptoms indicating that they would not likely get services without the program

**Scott County Mental Health Center
Connect Program: Clients Served in the Schools**



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EMPOWERING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Allow limited but critical data sharing

SCALE supports enabling legislation that allows agencies to share certain pieces of information with other agencies to support better coordination of services and responses for our vulnerable populations. A system that will allow access to certain data for specific purposes only could allow sharing between medical, mental health, public safety, education, and child protection to provide the right information to the right agency at the right time. Reducing these isolated silos can improve outcomes for our residents.

Law enforcement examples:

- A police officer approaching a home situation could potentially be advised if a resident is suffering from mental health issues and also make appropriate connections to the mental health crisis team. This provides opportunities to de-escalate situations
- Police officers must wait for in-custody hospital patients as information, such as anticipated release, cannot currently be shared. This results in police officers waiting at the hospital until release – wasting valuable time towards public service

Schools, public health, child protection and mental health examples:

- Counties have data that identify at-risk youth prior to their engagement with school districts, and sharing those data would help connect those families with existing programs and resources so children are kindergarten-ready
- Data sharing across state departments – Sharing data between the Department of Education and the Department of Human Services is critical for longitudinal program evaluation
- If agencies can share actionable data, they can coordinate services and leverage existing programs to improve student outcomes

Reform the Metropolitan Council governance structure

Currently, members of the Metropolitan Council are non-elected officials appointed by the Governor to four-year terms that are coterminous with his term. SCALE supports the selection of local officials to four-year terms on the Council, with half of the members selected every two years to provide greater accountability, continuity, and institutional stability.

SCALE supports changes to legislation which follow the below principles for Metropolitan Council Reform:

- A majority of Metropolitan Council members shall be elected officials
- Metropolitan cities shall appoint their own representatives
- Metropolitan counties shall appoint their own representatives
- Terms will be staggered
- The Metropolitan Council shall represent the entire region, therefore voting shall be based on population and incorporate a system of checks and balances

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IMPROVING HOUSING OPTIONS

SCALE requests increased, sustainable, and adequate state funding for new and existing programs that support lifecycle, workforce, and affordable housing; address homeownership disparities; address foreclosure mitigation; address housing for families with children and support senior, transitional, and emergency housing for Scott County and the metro region.

While the provision of housing is predominantly a private sector, market-driven activity, all levels of government – federal, state, regional, and local – have a role to play in facilitating the production and preservation of affordable housing in Minnesota.

In Scott County, the following outlines some our challenges now and for the future:

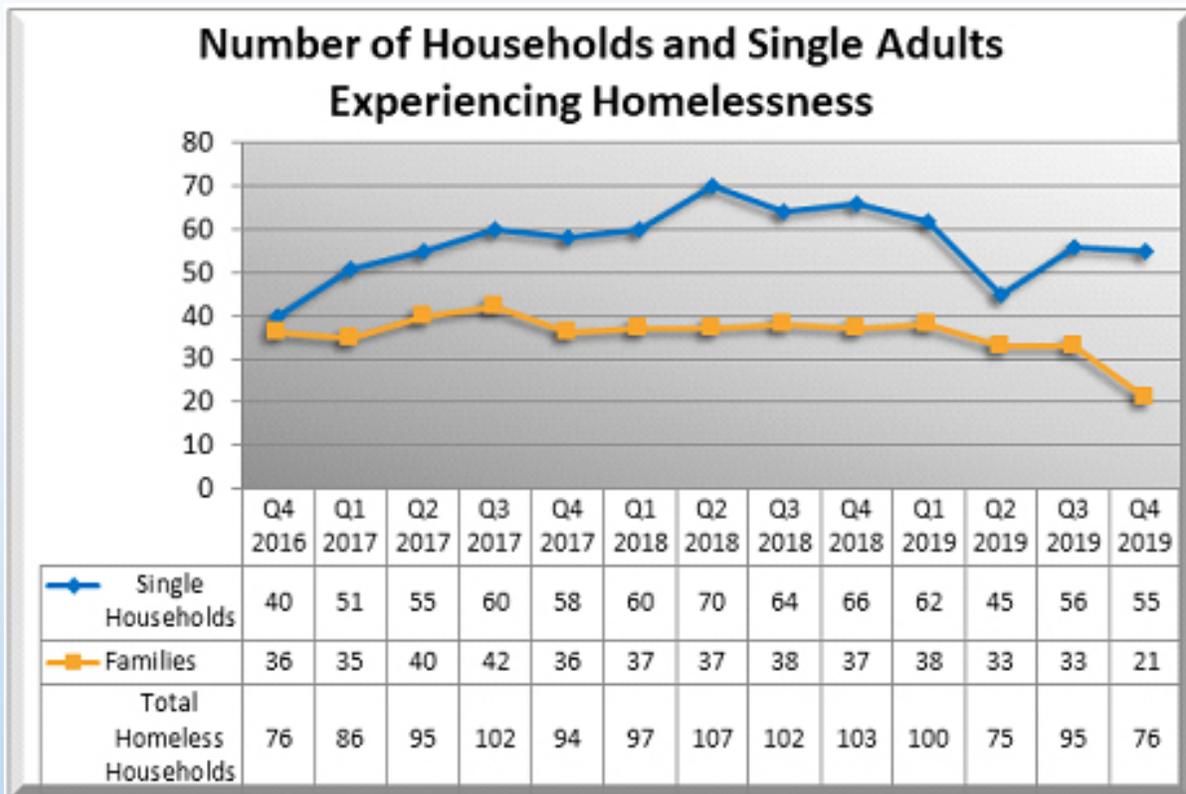
- Sixty one percent of senior renters and 26% of senior homeowners pay more than 30% of their income on housing
- Since 2000, rental rates have risen 21% while renter incomes have risen by 4%
- In the second quarter of 2019, Scott County had 78 homeless households (45 singles and 33 families), down from 62 singles and 38 families in the first quarter due to affordable units being added
- Aging apartment complexes for seniors or workforce housing will age out of the affordability rate, creating a greater gap in affordable rental units
- Over 40% of Scott County jobs pay less than \$43,000 a year, while according to a MN Housing 2018 profile, 50% of all renters in the County make less than this amount
- Twenty seven percent of all homeowners in Scott County pay more than 30% of their income towards housing



Housing support could be accomplished through multiple strategies, including:

- A state match for local and regional housing trust fund investments
- Consideration of the use of state bond proceeds and other appropriations for land banking, land trusts, and rehabilitation and construction of affordable housing
- Programs that help avoid foreclosures, improve homeownership rates, and provide education about the rights, options, and costs associated with owning a home
- Tax incentives to keep rental units affordable to low-wage families by using targeted support from local and state governments
- Due to the low vacancy rate in the County, it is important to keep existing affordable units affordable. If this is not addressed, we will need to develop many additional units to achieve our workforce housing target of 1,385 homes, according to the Maxfield study on housing
- Tax credits to incentivize the construction of affordable homes in Minnesota communities, including the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for residential developments that encourage workforce housing
- The decade of 2010-2020 forecasted the need of 520 workforce units. We have completed 353 units to this point, but that still leaves a gap of 167 units in the community
- This is an area that the market is struggling to construct. To meet the projected need, it is critical we find creative ways to increase housing options in this segment of our inventory
- Expand the Housing Support Demonstration Project to allow for metro-wide access to the Housing Support Demonstration units and increase the total capacity to serve additional people experiencing homelessness in the region

The data contained within this chart are reflective of the Suburban Metro Area Continuum of Care (SMAC) Coordinated Entry Priority List for the corresponding dates.



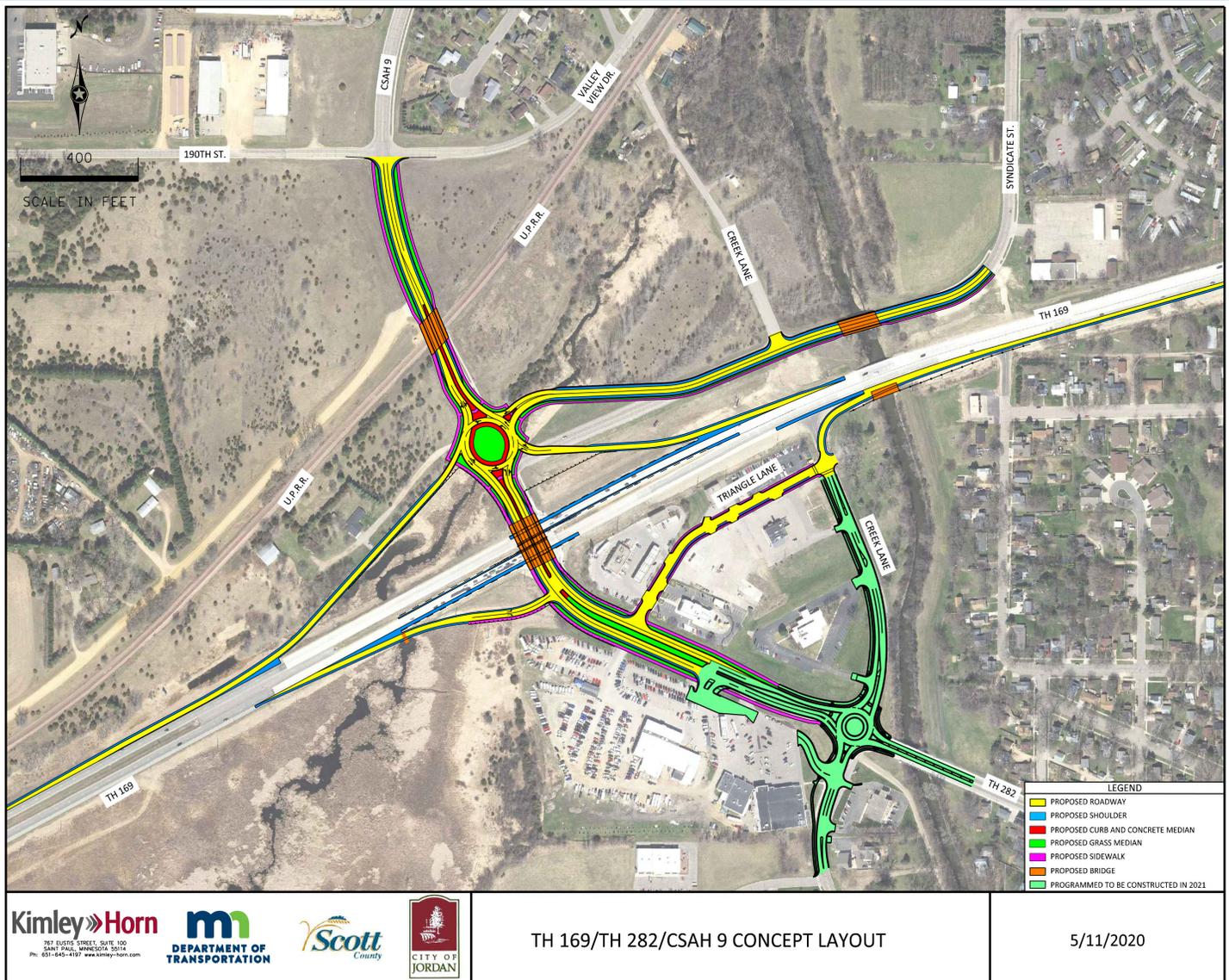
This chart shows the number of families and single adults that do not have a home to live in. A few are living on the street, but the majority are couch hopping or staying somewhere other than a home of their own.

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INVESTING IN CAPITAL PROJECTS

Although not a traditional bonding year, these remain unfulfilled capital investment requests. State bonding is requested in the areas of:

- Highway 169/282/9 interchange in Jordan
- Minnesota River Cultural Corridor and Riverbank Stabilization – Shakopee
- Merriam Junction Trail and MN River Crossing – Louisville Township/City of Carver
- DNR flood mitigation funds for the Jordan Flood Protection Project (Jordan is expected to receive less than \$1 million from the recently passed bonding bill to begin the \$4 million first phase of the project, but ongoing appropriations will be needed)



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SOME OF SCALE'S MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

A safer and more efficient transportation system, including a Unified Transit Plan

Improved public safety by providing training for first responders through our SCALE Regional Public Safety Training Facility, joint prosecution services, emergency response unit (SWAT), coordinated crime analyst/analysis, and public safety radio, mobile data computers, and communication

Fiber Optic connectivity

Significant economic growth and development with the assistance of our First Stop Shop and the Unified Economic Development, Land Use, and Transportation Plan

Shared employee training programs and classes

Improved services, reduced costs, and enhanced quality of life for our residents and businesses



For more information about SCALE, visit
www.scaleinfo.org

CITIES

Belle Plaine	(952) 873-5553
Elko New Market	(952) 461-2777
Jordan	(952) 492-2535
New Prague	(952) 758-4401
Prior Lake	(952) 447-9800
Savage	(952) 882-2660
Shakopee	(952) 233-9300

TOWNSHIPS

Belle Plaine	(651) 307-0101
Blakeley	(612) 860-0836
Cedar Lake	(612) 308-0871
Credit River	(952) 440-5515
Helena	(952) 758-4505
Jackson	(952) 445-6495
Louisville	(952) 445-8715
New Market	(952) 461-1920
St. Lawrence	(952) 492-3284
Sand Creek	(952) 423-8177
Spring Lake	(952) 492-7030

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Belle Plaine Public ISD #716	(952) 873-2400
Burnsville-Eagan-Savage Public ISD #191	(952) 707-2000
Jordan Public School District #717	(952) 492-6200
New Prague Area ISD #721	(952) 758-1700
Prior Lake-Savage ISD #719	(952) 226-0000
Shakopee Public ISD #720	(952) 496-5000
Shakopee Area Catholic Schools	(952) 445-3387
SouthWest Metro Intermediate District	(952) 567-8104

COUNTY ENTITIES

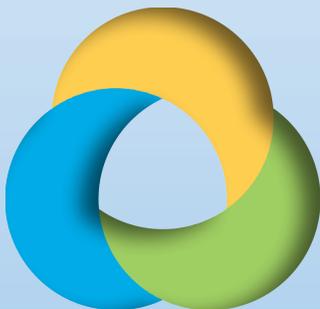
Scott County	(952) 496-8100
Scott County Community Development Agency	(952) 402-9022
Scott County Township Association	(612) 490-6363

TRIBAL COMMUNITY

Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community	(952) 445-8900
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REGIONAL ENTITIES

Metro Cities (AMM)	(651) 215-4000
Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA)	(952) 882-7500
Prior Lake - Spring Watershed District	(952) 440-0067
Scott Soil and Water Conservation District	(952) 492-5425
Three Rivers Park District	(763) 559-9000



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