Individuals from Anoka, Mahnomen, Ramsey, Rock and Waseca Counties Receive ‘Outstanding Service’ Awards from Association of Minnesota Counties

(St. Paul, MN)—Individuals from Anoka, Mahnomen, Ramsey, Rock and Waseca Counties received Association of Minnesota Counties’ (AMC) 2023 ‘Outstanding Service Awards’ for exhibiting excellence, innovation and dedication to their work in county government. 2023 AMC President and Ramsey County Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire presented the County Achievement awards at the association’s annual conference December 5 in Minneapolis. The recipients were nominated by their counties and selected by a committee of county officials.

Julie Hanson, Mahnomen County Social Services Director
Julie is known as a caring, compassionate leader who prioritizes those who need help in Mahnomen County. Julie has served Mahnomen County for 22 years and is currently the county’s Social Services Director. She is also a two-term mayor of the City of Mahnomen and is recognized across the county for her leadership. A former MACSSA Executive Committee member, Julie was recognized in March 2023 by the Northwest Service Cooperative in their “One Person Can Make a Difference” program.

Alex Kotze, Ramsey County, Chief Financial Officer
As the Chief Financial Officer in Ramsey County, Alex Kotze leads the Finance Department whose functions include biannual performance-based budgeting; accounting and financial management; managing investments and debt financing; procuring goods and services; payroll; risk management; enterprise resource management; and audit coordination. Alex is not only as a financial steward of the county’s resources – she is also a transformational leader who models Ramsey County’s core values of People, Integrity, Community, Leadership and Equity within the organization. One of Alex's most notable accomplishments is the modernization of Ramsey County's contracting and purchasing systems. In partnership with community members, she created a new system that will build intergenerational wealth and prosperity for racial and economic inclusion in the community.

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Pam LeBlanc, Anoka County Chief Officer, Property Records and Taxation

Pam has worked for the Anoka County for 42 years and has risen through the ranks to the top position of Chief Officer, Property Records and Taxation. She works collaboratively with other departments, community partners, counties, and professional organizations. She is a past president of the Minnesota Association of County Officers and active member of the legislative committee, currently serving on the AMC Tax Forfeiture work group. Throughout her tenure, Pam has fostered a cohesive team atmosphere in her department and finds ways to develop leaders in her division. She is a shining example of a public servant who has devoted her career to county government.

Blair Nelson, Former Waseca County Commissioner

Blair Nelson served as a Waseca County Commissioner for more than 13 years until his passing in May, 2023. Blair found his true calling when elected commissioner in 2010. One of his proudest achievements was initiating the purchase of a weed harvester to bring Clear Lake back to its beauty and recreational use for the local community. Blair was also very proud to be part of the Waseca County Veterans Memorial project. Blair enjoyed networking with local, state, and national leadership, and was active in AMC and NACo. At the time of his death, Blair was serving as District 7 Director and a member of the AMC Board of Directors. He had previously served as the General Government Policy Committee Chair. He will be remembered by all who knew him for his selflessness and willingness to always help someone in need. Blair is dearly missed by his colleagues and friends in county government. Commissioner Nelson’s family attended the ceremony to accept this award (see photo).

Kyle Oldre, Rock County Administrator and Emergency Management Director

Born and raised in Rock County, he entered county service following his time in the military and college. Kyle served as Rock County's very first county administrator, a position he has held for the last three decades. Kyle is known for his calm demeanor, dedication to his staff, and is well respected in his field. Amongst his colleagues, he is the person to contact when there is a “disaster,” and they know he will take care of it. Kyle has shared his knowledge of county budgeting with new commissioners and is a trusted resource for AMC staff.

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AMC is a voluntary statewide organization that assists the state’s 87 counties in providing effective county governance to the people of Minnesota. It is the mission of the Association to assist in the provision of effective county governance for the people of Minnesota. The association works closely with the legislative and administrative branches of government in seeing that legislation and policies favorable to counties are enacted. In addition, the Association provides educational programs, training, research and communications for county officials.