Association *of* Minnesota Counties



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Reflecting on 2025



What a year it has been! One year ago, I ended my speech as the incoming President of the Association of Minnesota Counties with a challenge to be unified. Going alone would not be an option if counties hoped to be successful. I also reminded those at the Annual Conference that counties are known as the level of government that works together to get things done and 2025 is our year to shine! All I can say is challenge given, challenge accepted.

From the beginning, the 2025 legislative session was one for the record books. New opportunities and challenges happen every year, but no one could have predicted a session like 2025. Not long after the Speaker and tied House of Representatives were finally settled, Governor Walz came out with his proposed budget. Minnesota counties were certainly unified in our opposition to the proposed shifts and cuts from the Governor's budget. We were "fired up" and made it well know that the proposed state shifts and cuts would most certainly mean double digit levy increases even before considering normal operational increases.

County commissioners and county staff were active and engaged at both the Capitol in St. Paul and in their local communities. I often ran into commissioners at the Capitol advocating to stop the shifts to counties. Throughout Minnesota, legislators were invited to our board rooms, letters to the editor popped up in local and statewide newspapers and in the last days of session with only 48 hours' notice, county commissioners from across the state arrived in mass to persuade the Legislature to not make additional shifts. Our unified voice made a difference! A working group was formed to find cost savings and shifts were delayed.

Counties were prominent, present and loud. Legislators and the governor took notice. Counties were successful in 2025 because of our engagement and the amazing work of AMC staff. While our statewide engagement was being noticed, it was somewhat at a cost. Finding that balance between "spice and nice" will be essential in 2026. We cannot lose our energy and unified voice, nor can we lose our county friends at the Legislature.

To conclude, I have great confidence in the future of AMC because of our engaged membership, strong Board of Directors and our hard-working staff under the leadership of our amazing Executive Director Julie Ring! I look forward to Commissioner Larry Lindor leading the association in 2026 as President. His calm demeanor will be an asset in the year ahead. As we have seen in the past, the power of 87 can do great things. Speaking with one voice, counties can have honest, difficult conversations and also be highly effective.

To my fellow board members, staff, the AMC Board of Directors, and to each of you – thank you for your dedication, hard work, unwavering support and your friendship over the past year. Serving as President of the Association of Minnesota Counties has been an absolute honor, and I could not have done it without all of you!

Be well and on to 2026!

Mike Slavik
Dakota County Commissioner
2025 AMC President



Minnesota's 75+ member delegation to the National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference in Philadelphia in July 2025.



AMC's 2025 Executive Committee at the annual conference in December. *From left to right: Past President Neal Gaalswyk (Cass), Second VP Barb Weckman Brekke (Scott), President Mike Slavik (Dakota), First VP Larry Lindor (Pope), and Secretary/Treasurer Steve Schmitt (Meeker).*



AMC's Executive Committee on the steps of the Capitol during County Day at the Capitol in February. *From left to right: Secretary/Treasurer Steve Schmitt (Meeker), Executive Director Julie Ring, First VP Larry Lindor (Pope), President Mike Slavik (Dakota), Second VP Barb Weckman Brekke (Scott), and Past President Neal Gaalswyk (Cass).*



AMC Executive Committee members outside of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., during the NACo Legislative Conference in February.
From left to right: AMC Second VP Barb Weckman Brekke (Scott), President Mike Slavik (Dakota), and First VP Larry Lindor (Pope).



A group of Ukrainian youths (ages 16 – 17) in Minnesota to attend a five-week leadership development program last summer, toured the Capitol and spent the afternoon at AMC headquarters learning about county, city and state government by hearing from and asking questions of elected officials.



AMC President Mike Slavik (Dakota) and 2nd Vice President Barb Weckman Brekke (Scott) were inspired to recreate the scene depicted in a statue of Benjamin Franklin and George Washington outside Philadephia's historic Masoninc Temple during the 2025 National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference in July.

2025 AMC Board of Directors

Officers



PRESIDENT
Mike Slavik (Dakota)



FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
Larry Lindor (Pope)



SECOND VICE PRESIDENT
Barb Weckman Brekke (Scott)



SECRETARY/TREASURER
Steve Schmitt (Meeker)



PAST PRESIDENT
Neal Gaalswyk (Cass)

District Directors



DISTRICT 1
Michael Kearney (Aitkin)



DISTRICT II
Rick Halland (Cass)



DISTRICT III
Joan Lee (Polk)



DISTRICT IV
Bill Stearns (Wadena)



DISTRICT V
Genny Reynolds (Mille Lacs)



DISTRICT VI
DeRon Brehmer (Lac qui Parle)



DISTRICT VII
De Malterer (Waseca)



DISTRICT VIII
Gene Metz (Nobles)



DISTRICT IX
Mitch Lentz (Fillmore)



DISTRICT X
Jeff Reinert (Anoka)



DISTRICT X
John Fahey (Carver)



DISTRICT X
Joe Atkins (Dakota)



DISTRICT X
Heather Edelson (Hennepin)



DISTRICT X
Garrison McMurtrey (Ramsey)



DISTRICT X
Dave Beer (Scott)



DISTRICT X
Karla Bigham (Washington)

National Association of Counties (NACo) Representatives



NACo PAST PRESIDENT
Mary Jo McGuire (Ramsey)



NACo DELEGATE
Tarryl Clark (Stearns)



100% MEMBERSHIP
Tim Sumner (Beltrami)



TOP 12 MEMBERSHIP
Todd Patzer (Lac qui Parle)



WIR REPRESENTATIVE
Rich Sve (Lake)

Member Services Committee Chairs



BUSINESS & PARTNER DEVELOPMENT
Kevin Anderson (Hennepin)



EDUCATION & TRAINING
Linda Flanders (Goodhue)



RESEARCH
Jenny Mongeau (Clay)

Policy Committee Chairs



ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES
Kevin Paap (Blue Earth)



GENERAL GOVERNMENT
Steve Gardner (Kandiyohi)



PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Gary Hendrickx (Swift)



PUBLIC SAFETY
Jared Gapinski (Benton)



TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
Roger Imdieke (Kandiyohi)



The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) is a voluntary, non-partisan, statewide membership organization founded in 1909. All 87 Minnesota counties are members of the association. While county commissioners are our primary audience, all county officials and staff–both elected and appointed–are considered members and serve integral roles in our work.

AMC collaborates closely with the legislative and executive branches of government to advance policies and legislation that benefit Minnesota counties. In addition, AMC provides comprehensive educational programs, training opportunities, research, and communication services to support county officials in their roles.

The association is governed by a Board of Directors composed of five officers; one representative from each of the nine AMC districts; seven representatives from the metropolitan district; Minnesota representatives serving on the National Association of Counties (NACo) Board of Directors; policy committee chairs; member services committee chairs; and ex-officio representatives from affiliated county organizations.

Through strong partnerships with county associations and affiliated organizations, AMC promotes collaboration across county functions, administrative departments, agencies, and counties statewide.

AMC currently employs 28 staff members who carry out the work of the association across three primary service areas: Government Relations, Internal Operations & Communications, and Learning & Member Programs.

Affiliate Ex-Officio AMC Board Members

AMEM - Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers

LPHA - Local Public Health Association

MACA - Minnesota Association of County Administrators

MACAI - Minnesota Association of County Ag Inspectors

MACCAC - Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Act Counties

MACFO - Minnesota Association of County Feedlot Officers

MACHP - Minnesota Association of County Health Plans

MACLC - Minnesota Association of County Land Commissioners

MACO - Minnesota Association of County Officers

MACPZA - Minnesota Association of County Planning & Zoning Administrators

MACS - Minnesota Association of County Surveyors

MACSSA - Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators

MACVSO - Minnesota Association of County Veterans Service Officers

MAPCED - Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers

MAWB - Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards

MCAA - Minnesota County Attorneys Association

MCEA - Minnesota County Engineers Association

MCHRMA - Minnesota Counties Human Resource Management Association

MCIT - Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust

MnCCC - Minnesota Counties Computer Cooperative

MNCITLA - Minnesota County Information Technology Leadership Association

MRC - Minnesota Rural Counties

MSA - Minnesota Sheriffs Association

SWAA - Minnesota Solid Waste Administrators Association

Our Mission

AMC unites Minnesota's counties to achieve public service excellence.

Our Vision

Minnesota counties are trusted partners in strengthening communities.

Our Values

Leading the Way

We notice issues proactively and work to solve them before they have wider impact.

We take first steps on big issues and organize the work of many members and partners.

We prepare individual members to be a strong voice and advocate for the needs of their county.

Meeting Member Needs

We adapt to meet member and staff needs as they arise.

We are a reliable source of information for our members and other partners.

Stronger Together

We are a statewide voice for all of Minnesota's counties.

We are stronger together than we are alone as individual counties.

We value collaboration among counties, affiliates, outside groups, state agencies, and other partners to get strong results and outcomes.

We demonstrate respect for all perspectives.

Our Goals

To promote, advance and represent the interests of Minnesota counties in obtaining appropriate policy responses from federal and state legislative and executive branches.

To foster and encourage innovative and responsive county service delivery, policy decisions and public resource utilization.

To assure public understanding and support for the choices and decisions made by counties to provide quality programs and services.

To develop resources to insure the vitality of the Association of Minnesota Counties programs to county government.

Executive Director's Report



2025 brought no shortage of challenges for Minnesota counties–chief among them, significant proposals from both state and federal leaders to shift substantial human services costs onto local governments. Cost shifts aren't new, but the scale and speed of this year's proposals created real concern for county leaders across the state.

AMC members and staff moved quickly. We gathered data, analyzed the potential impact on property taxes, and highlighted how little control counties have over programs created and governed by state and federal rules. Thanks to this collective work, we had real impact, delaying the biggest state cost shifts. Unfortunately, substantial federal costs and administrative responsibilities have been shifted to the state and counties.

These developments feel less like isolated decisions and more like a realignment of government roles. Leaders from both political parties–and from both the federal and state levels–have turned to shifting responsibilities to counties as a strategy to balance their own budgets. Instead of reducing programs or increasing revenue, they are redefining the roles of government. That has prompted counties to ask for a bigger conversation about how human services are delivered in Minnesota – if there will be changes, let's think bigger than just shifting costs and work to counties.

In the year ahead, we will need to lead these conversations with state and federal partners. The challenges are bigger than ever, and the solutions will need to be more creative. Business as usual has already changed–and we must continue to lead, not just react.

That's why AMC's work matters more than ever. We bring counties together to share ideas, learn from one another, and build practical solutions. We convene county, state, and federal partners to look beyond budget cycles and think about what Minnesotans truly need. And more than ever, AMC is focused on telling the county story–through television, radio, print, and online media–while helping local officials communicate their own stories at home.

With this backdrop, the AMC Board of Directors began crafting a new three-year strategic roadmap this summer. The board will continue refining it this fall, with plans for adoption in January 2026. This roadmap will help us stay focused, coordinated, and purposeful as the landscape continues to shift. (See shaded center box for more!)

As the year comes to a close and I wrap up my 30th year (!!!) in public service, I feel gratitude–for the dedicated county public servants I have the privilege to work alongside, and for the remarkable AMC staff whose daily commitment helps counties thrive. Rather than looking back with nostalgia, I am energized for the work ahead.

Please continue sharing your local stories, bringing bold ideas to the table, and leaning into the creativity and problem-solving that define Minnesota counties. The work ahead is significant, but so is our ability to shape solutions that truly serve Minnesotans. As always, we are stronger together!



Julie Ring
AMC Executive Director

Draft AMC Stra 2026

Strategic Outcomes:
What we hope to achieve

- **AMC is recognized as the trusted, unifying voice for all 87 counties** at the Legislature, with partners, and with the public.
- **Expand member engagement and leadership capacity,** ensuring every county has access to high quality education, training, and opportunities for connection.
- **Develop the next generation of county leaders** by equipping commissioners and staff with tools, training, and networks to serve effectively.
- **AMC maintains its role as a stabilizing force in government,** fostering connection and collegiality between members and partners.
- **Strengthen AMC's organizational excellence,** ensuring financial sustainability, staff retention, and innovative use of technology.
- **Advance research, knowledge creation, and innovation,** positioning AMC not just as a messenger but as a source of insight, foresight, and solutions.
- **Strengthening AMC's Board of Directors** as a hub of leadership and identity for the association.

Benchmarks for Success:
How we will assess it

- AMC is consistently cited in media and by policymakers as the trusted voice of counties.
- Increased commissioner participation in advocacy, with measurable engagement in policy development, hearings, and testimony.
- All 87 counties participate in at least one AMC training or educational program annually.

tegic Roadmap: – 2028

Strategic Priorities:
How we will achieve it

ADVOCATE
Advocacy & Policy Leadership
Protect and advance county interests at state, federal, and agency levels by continuing to build strong legislative influence.

COMMUNICATE
Communications & Visibility
Raise the profile of AMC and counties, becoming the most reliable source of information for and about Minnesota counties.

EDUCATE
Research & Education
Equip commissioners and staff with knowledge, training, and opportunities to connect across regions and roles.

ENGAGE
Member Engagement & Leadership Development
Identify, support, and elevate county leaders to strengthen governance capacity statewide.

ELEVATE
Organizational Excellence
Ensure AMC remains sustainable, high-performing, and innovative by investing in strong staff, diversifying revenue, leveraging technology, and building strategic partnerships.

- Launch of successful Commissioner Technical Days program.
- Staff retention remains above 90% with expanded staff/contract capacity.
- AMC continues growth in non-dues revenue ensuring sustainable operations.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data tools are fully integrated into member services, supporting counties 24/7/365.

Financial Overview

In 2024, AMC generated total revenue of $3,637,073 with expenditures totaling $3,351,974, resulting in a net operating surplus of $285,099.

Member dues remain the organization's primary revenue source, while staff salaries and benefits continue to represent AMC's largest expenditure category. To strengthen long-term financial stability and support sustainable growth, AMC is actively expanding and diversifying its revenue base. Non-dues revenue (including meeting registration fees, affiliate management services, endorsement fees, and the AMC Preferred Business Partner program) accounts for approximately 52% of AMC's total revenue.

As of year-end 2024, AMC's net assets totaled $3,938,298, reflecting the organization's strong financial position and commitment to responsible stewardship of member resources.

2024 Operations

Current Assets	$3,479,849
Other Assets	$956,780
Net Fixed Assets	$490,721
Total Assets	$4,927,350
Total Current Liabilities	$989,052
Total Fund Balances	$3,938,298
Total Liabilities & Fund Balance	$4,927,350
Net Assets	$3,938,298

Revenue Summary
December 31, 2024

Dues: $1,740,770

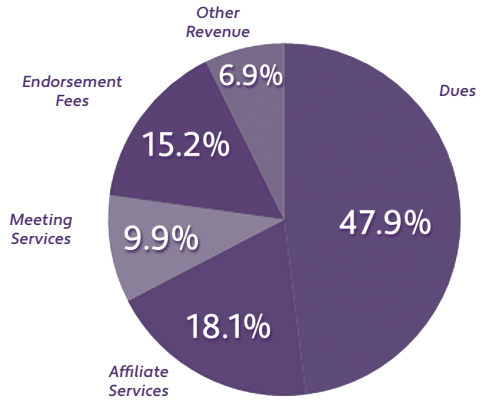
Affiliate Services: $360,764

Meeting Services: $656,519

Endorsement Fees: $553,596

Other Revenue: $325,424

TOTAL REVENUE: $2,980,554



Expense Summary
December 31, 2024

Salaries & Benefits: $2,075,943

Meetings & Conferences: $581,312

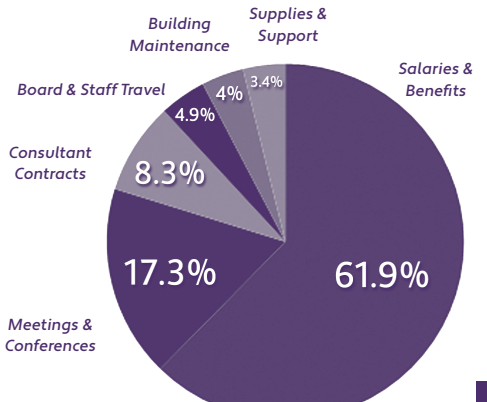
Consultant Contracts: $279,571

Board & Staff Travel: $165,461

Building Maintenance: $134,303

Supplies & Support: $115,384

TOTAL EXPENSES: $3,351,974



Government Relations

By Matt Hilgart,
AMC Deputy Director of Government Relations



With a Relentless Series of Twists and Turns, It's Hard to Believe 2025 is Just One Year

The 2025 legislative session was extraordinary in every sense of the word. It brought historic moments–including unprecedented Supreme Court rulings on residency and quorum requirements–and a Legislature that, at one point, was literally tied in both chambers (67–67 in the House and 33–33 in the Senate), a first in Minnesota history! Despite early-session uncertainty and delay, counties effectively elevated our priorities in a politically divided environment, achieving success in preserving recent gains in County Program Aid and even securing vital resourcing for updates to the SSIS system that is the infrastructure for the state's child protection system.



AMC Executive Committe and staff met with Gov, Tim Walz in early February to discuss the impact of his proposed budget on counties. *From left to right: Matt Hilgart (AMC), AMC Second VP Barb Weckman Brekke (Scott), AMC First VP Larry Lindor (Pope), Gov. Tim Walz, AMC President Mike Slavik (Dakota), AMC Past President Neal Gaalswyk (Cass), and AMC Secretary/ Treasurer Steve Schmitt (Meeker).*

In February, Gov. Tim Walz released a budget proposal shaped by worsening fiscal projections and a multi-billion-dollar out-year deficit. That proposal included significant cost shifts to counties, totaling hundreds of millions of dollars in future obligations. These proposals galvanized county officials statewide, prompting commissioners to organize an ad-hoc, late-session Day at the Capitol in May.

Thanks to this engagement, final Special Session agreements removed the most immediate and concerning cost shifts facing counties. The end of session was overshadowed by the tragic murders of House DFL Speaker Emerita Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, as well as the attempted murders of Sen. John Hoffman and his wife, Yvette.

These abhorrent acts struck deeply within our membership–many of whom had personal relationships with these leaders–and reminded us that political violence, long absent in Minnesota, threatens our shared democratic fabric.

As we honor their memories and legacies, we also recognize the profound sacrifices made by all who choose public service. To the commissioners who give their time, energy, and personal resilience to serve their communities–and to the public servants who work every day under extraordinary pressure–thank you!

Reaffirming Government RelationsTeam Direction Through the Strategic Plan

During the AMC Board of Directors' summer retreat, members reviewed progress toward our strategic plan objectives related to government relations. Board members applauded the government relations team's expanded education efforts and the strategic use of media and public engagement during the debate over historic cost-shift proposals.

Board members also emphasized the importance of increasing member engagement throughout the legislative session and interim–particularly as counties navigate ongoing, transformational policy changes at both the state and federal levels. This feedback will help shape the next phase of AMC's strategic vision and has resulted in the team further emphasizing utilizing the legislative interim as a way to educate on a variety of issues including a number of informtation technology (IT) modernization demonstration events!



Dozens of commissioners traveled to St. Paul during the final weeks of session to advocate directly with legislative leaders, underscoring county leaders' ability to capitalize on the unified strength of 87 unique communities and ensuring that legislators heard a clear, consistent message.



AMC's Board of Directors at their annual Strategic Planning Retreat in August.

The board also took time to reaffirm the government relations team's commitment to offering clear, timely education for members, including ongoing support for:

- Weekly legislative updates and Zoom briefings
- Annual commissioner testimony events
- Legislative-process and AMC platform "lunch and learn" webinars

As always, if you have ideas for how we can better communicate or support your work, please reach out to any member of the team.

"Leading in Tough Spaces" – Looking Ahead to 2026

As we look toward 2026, counties face a set of challenges that are unprecedented in both scale and complexity. The federal government's passage of HR 1 will significantly affect county work related to SNAP and Medicaid eligibility. Counties will be required to take on substantial new administrative responsibilities (many of them mandated) while receiving reduced federal reimbursement.

Welcoming a New Team Member



We were excited to welcome **Paul Verrette** to the Government Relations team in 2025! Paul now serves as AMC's **Human Services Policy Analyst** and **Director of the Minnesota Association of County Social Service Administrators (MACSSA).** Paul joins AMC after working as the public policy director at Agate Housing and Services, bringing strong experience in non-profit human services work. He is already diving into counties' complex human services portfolio and supporting members on a wide variety of emerging issues, many of which will be top 2026 priority actions items!

At the same time, the state continues to grapple with escalating costs in areas such as disability waiver services and other human-services-related programs. Some proposals under consideration would shift additional costs to counties for programs in which counties have little or no role in benefit determination. These pressures place historic strain on county budgets and directly contribute to property tax increases already visible in this fall's preliminary levy cycle.



Ramsey, Hennepin, and AMC collaborated to host several legislators and members from Department of Human Services, Department of Children, Youth, and Families, and MN.IT in late October to provide a demonstration of the antiquated technology and software systems counties use to administer state and federal benefits/programs.

County Commissioners Mai Chong Xiong (Ramsey) and Irene Fernando (Hennepin) laid out the limitations of current state-run programs and the negative effects on clients, staff, and property tax burden. Commissioners hammered home the urgency of achieving both immediate fixes next session that will help address longstanding program failures and opportunities for ready-to-go, creative solutions to help with efficiencies while also underscoring the need for the Legislature and state to start the process of a longer term system revamp.

Internal Operations & Communications

By Laurie Klupacs,
AMC Deputy Director of Operations



Transforming Member Management with Engagifii

AMC's legacy iMIS database had become increasingly difficult to manage, posing challenges with usability, data accuracy, and integration with AMC's accounting system. Maintaining separate platforms for events, communications, and websites added inefficiencies and extra costs.

Following a comprehensive review, AMC selected Engagifii, a robust Association Management Solution designed specifically for membership organizations. Already in use by several other state associations of counties, Engagifii provides an all-in-one platform to streamline AMC's operations and enhance member engagement.

> "This investment modernizes our data systems and strengthens how we serve our members."
>
> – Steve Schmitt, AMC Secretary/Treasurer, Meeker County Commissioner

Key Features and Benefits:

- Centralized member and contact management
- Integrated legislative tracking and advocacy tools
- Streamlined event registration and mobile conference apps
- Website integration and online engagement tools
- Training, accreditation, and communication modules
- Inclusive pricing model with no per-user fees

By consolidating these tools into one unified system, AMC will save time, reduce costs, and deliver stronger, more efficient service to members across all departments.

Modernizing Accounting & Financial Systems

In January, AMC modernized its financial operations by transitioning from Microsoft Great Plains to Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central, Microsoft's fully cloud-based financial management solution.

This upgrade was driven by Microsoft's phase-out of Great Plains and the system's limited integration capabilities. Business Central provides advanced automation, cloud accessibility, and secure integration with Microsoft 365 tools–ensuring AMC's financial operations remain efficient, transparent, and future-ready.

Key Benefits:

- Cloud-Based Platform – Eliminates on-premises servers and manual updates, improving system security and resilience.
- Affiliate Financial Transparency – Each of AMC's 17 affiliates now operates in its own financial dimension, providing real-time visibility and accurate reporting.
- Automation & Integration – Connects seamlessly with Microsoft 365 tools for advanced reporting and real-time insights.
- Enhanced Security & Compliance – Ensures ongoing protection and automatic compliance updates.

This transition ensures a modern, secure, and transparent financial system that supports AMC and its affiliates with accuracy, accountability, and efficiency.

Strengthening Operations & Staffing

AMC's long-time accountant retired in 2024 after more than two decades of dedicated service. Her successor trained alongside her prior to retirement, thus ensuring a smooth transition.

During this first year, AMC's new accountant has successfully guided the association through the transition to Business Central and continues to oversee financial operations for AMC, the Minnesota Counties Foundation (MCF), and several affiliated organizations. The department also manages four active grants:

- LPHA–MDH Emergency Preparedness Grant
- MCF Sauer Grant
- Mental Health Initiative Grant
- McKnight Grant

As accounting operations expanded with new software, increased reporting requirements, and multiple entities under AMC's management, the need for additional support became clear. The Executive Committee approved the creation of an Associate Accountant position to expand departmental capacity. This new position now manages accounts receivable, accounts payable, and other transactional processes. This added support has:

- Strengthened departmental efficiency
- Improved internal workflows
- Allowed greater focus on strategic financial management and oversight

2025 was a tranformative year for AMC's internal operations with modernizing both our member management and financial systems, enhancing data integration and transparency, and strengthening staffing capacity to better serve Minnesota's counties for years to come.

Association *of* Minnesota Counties

Preferred Business Partners

Helping Minnesota's Counties Do Business Better.

Since its launch in 2018, AMC's Preferred Business Partnership (PBP) Program has continued to grow and evolve, fostering meaningful and productive relationships with nearly 50 business members. AMC is proud to collaborate with these partners who bring innovative products, professional expertise, and steadfast support–helping Minnesota's counties better serve their employees and residents.

The PBP Program was created to provide companies with maximum exposure to county officials and employees in exchange for their investment. Approved by the AMC Board of Directors, the program enhances awareness and visibility for participating companies, positioning them to build and strengthen connections with county leaders across all 87 Minnesota counties.

No other program in Minnesota creates such a focused and effective link between county government and the business community.

Partner benefits include:

- Recognition in the Minnesota County Service Directory
- Significant discounts on exhibit space at AMC's Annual Conference
- Advertising opportunities in AMC publications and digital platforms
- Unmatched access to AMC's Board of Directors, members, and county decision-makers

AMC continues to expand the program to ensure our member counties have access to the highest-quality products, services, and expertise available.

If your county works with a company that would be an excellent fit for this program, please contact Laurie Klupacs, AMC Deputy Director of Operations, at 651-789-4329 or **visit www.mncounties.org/pbp** for more information on partnership opportunities.

2025 PREFERRED BUSINESS PARTNERS

Foundational Partners

AMC's Foundational Partners provide essential, long-term support that strengthens county government across Minnesota. These trusted organizations collaborate with AMC on education, research, and risk management initiatives that directly benefit member counties.

MCIT

University of Minnesota Extension

NACo Solutions

Through NACo Solutions (NACo Edge), AMC members gain access to a suite of cost-saving programs and innovative services designed specifically for counties. These national partnerships deliver value-added, cost-cutting solutions by harnessing the collective purchasing power of member counties nationwide.

cashvest by thread ClearGov

Nationwide On Your Side

savi

Elite Partners

Elite Partners receive the highest level of visibility and engagement with AMC members, including premium recognition, exclusive event opportunities, and strategic collaboration with AMC leadership.

BlueCross BlueShield Minnesota

DDA Human Resources, Inc. a David Drown Associates Company

Sourcewell

Twin City Underwriters, Inc. Helping Fill Insurance Needs Since 1968

Premier Partners

Premier Partners enjoy strong brand exposure and direct access to county officials through AMC conferences, publications, and member communications.

binti

Bolton & Menk Real People. Real Solutions.

Ehlers Public Finance Advisors

H2Over Viewers

HMA Health Management Associates

Homestyle Direct Your Health. Your Meals. Your Choice.

ISG Architecture Engineering Environmental Planning ISGInc.com

MAGIC Fund

Minnesota Association of County Health Plans

PrimeWest Health

Xcel Energy

Associate Partners

Associate Partners receive foundational benefits that promote their services and connect them with county leaders across Minnesota through AMC's key communication channels.

Abdo
CenterPoint Energy
CliftonLarsonAllen
Comcast
Contegrity Group
Counties Providing Technology (CPT)
Galliard Capital Management
Goff Public
HHAeXchange
Hiller Commercial Floors
Houston Engineering
ICS Consulting
Klein McCarthy Architects
Knutson Construction
Kraus-Anderson
McKinstry
MnCCC - Minnesota Counties Computer Cooperative
National Insurance Services
PFM Financial Advisors LLC
Ratwik, Roszak & Maloney
REPAY
Revize
Rinke Noonan
Wold Architects and Engineers
WSB

Learning & Member Programs



By Jessica Seibert, Manager

Recognizing the strong connection between conference planning, education, and research, AMC restructured in 2025, creating Learning & Member Programs. The team supports the mission of AMC by equipping members and affiliates with research, education, and resources to achieve public service excellence.

Association Conferences

AMC offers a robust calendar of member events, meetings, and conferences designed to keep county commissioners and staff informed, connected, and equipped to lead. These gatherings help strengthen leadership skills, foster collaboration, and encourage the sharing of best practices; all in support of improving residents' lives and enhancing the effectiveness of county government. In 2025, AMC continued to experience strong member participation and engagement across its statewide events.

With 2024 marking the end of an election year, AMC launched the new term by hosting the **County Government 101 Conference** in January. This essential orientation equips newly elected commissioners with the tools and knowledge needed to serve effectively with in-depth sessions on the Open Meeting Law, County Communication Tools, Budgeting, and many other important topics. The conference also provided valuable time for commissioners to get to know one another, visit AMC's offices, and meet the AMC staff and Board of Directors. These informal connections help foster a strong sense of community and collaboration among Minnesota's county leaders from the very start of their terms.



Welcome Class of 2025! AMC hosted 63/67 newly elected Minnesota county commissioners at our headquarters in St. Paul as part of County Government 101 in January.

AMC also launched a new training series for county board chairs, vice chairs, and administrators/coordinators called **Leadership Essentials**. This program combined virtual workshops with in-person learning during the County Government 101 Conference. The sessions focused on building strong working relationships between board leadership and county staff, with virtual topics covering effective meeting management, collaboration between administrators and board chairs, and strategies for reframing conflict to promote understanding and teamwork. Participants also took part in a panel discussion with experienced county board chairs and administrators who shared practical insights from navigating complex challenges together.

AMC members continue to play an active role in the National Association of Counties (NACo), serving on the Board of Directors, contributing to legislative steering committees, and attending national conferences. In March, members from across Minnesota attended the **NACo Legislative Conference** in Washington, D.C., where they engaged in policy discussions, helped shape national priorities, and met with Minnesota's Congressional delegation to advocate for county interests. In July, more than 75 Minnesota delegates attended the **NACo Annual Conference** in Philadephia.



Some of the more than 250 county officials and staff who participated in the 2025 County Day at the Capitol in February.

Hundreds of county officials gathered in St. Paul for **AMC's Legislative Conference and County Day at the Capitol** in February, with the latter expertly facilitated by Rosedahl Public Affairs. Attendees participated in policy committee meetings and met with their legislators to discuss issues affecting counties statewide. Highlights included AMC 2025 President Mike Slavik's (Dakota) State of the Counties address, the 4-H Community Youth Leadership Awards, presented in partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension, and the annual student scholarship presented by AMC Past President Neal Gaalswyk (Cass).

AMC's Leadership Summit in March convened county officials and staff for targeted professional development focused on strengthening leadership and navigating complex challenges. The 2025 Summit featured motivational speaker Scott Welle and his program *Outperform the Norm*, which inspired participants to elevate their leadership practices and performance. The Summit also provided valuable networking opportunities and fostered meaningful peer connections that enhance leadership capacity across Minnesota counties.

AMC's Fall Policy Conference in September opened with an AMC Board meeting and featured several of AMC's Premier Business Partners, who engaged with members throughout the event. Their active participation during sessions and social events underscored the importance of strong public–private partnerships. In addition to developing AMC's policy platform to guide the government relations team during the legislative session, general sessions addressed key issues facing counties, including strengthening partnerships with state legislators, solid waste management, and modernization of human services systems.

The conference concluded with a successful networking and fundraising event featuring the annual bean bag tournament, wine pull, and live auction, all supported by generous donations from members and partners. Proceeds benefitted the Minnesota Counties Foundation (MCF), which advances county policy and practice through research, scholarships, and special initiatives. MCF supports AMC's research efforts, provides scholarships for Minnesota students, and funds the Pathways Programs that assist newly appointed county administrators and human resources professionals.

Each year, AMC conducts **District Meetings** for all ten districts each spring and fall, providing a regional platform for collaboration, information sharing, and problem-solving. The spring meetings focus on reviewing legislative outcomes, while the fall sessions emphasize developing AMC's legislative priorities for the year ahead. These gatherings are essential touchpoints for AMC to stay connected to members in their local communities and to support regional collaboration.

The calendar year always ends on a high note with **AMC's Annual Conference** bringing together hundreds of county commissioners, staff, and partners to learn from each other and build connections. Timely workshops, engaging keynote speakers, and time with colleagues inspire attendees to start the new year with a fresh perspective.



2024 AMC President Neal Gaalswyk (Cass) welcomed Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz to address nearly 600 attendees during the annual conference's opening session.

Professional Development & Educational Programs

In 2025, AMC delivered a broad range of leadership, communication, and technical training opportunities that reflected the diverse and evolving needs of county leaders. In response to member feedback, AMC offered many training programs and workshops in a virtual format this year to make them more accessible statewide.

Foundational leadership development remained a central focus. In the spring, the popular **Practical Leadership 1.0** workshop was introduced in a multi-day, virtual format and quickly filled to capacity, resulting in a second session being offered in July. In partnership with the Professional Development Academy, AMC also offered the **Leading on Purpose** program, enrolling nearly 50 county leaders in a Minnesota-only cohort to build long-term leadership capacity across the state.

AMC also invested in strengthening workplace communication and constituent engagement skills. A new two-part virtual series, **Managing Effective Communication**, led by organizational trainer Becky Schueller, helped supervisors and frontline staff improve coaching, communication, and team performance. AMC continued to respond to growing member interest in civil discourse and conflict resolution through virtual sessions of **Managing Difficult Conversations with Constituents**, offered in collaboration with the "Big 4" (AMC, League of Minnesota Cities, Minnesota Association of Townships, Minnesota School Boards Association) and Braver Angels. The successful **Mastering Collaborative Decisions** training with Dr. Dave Webb was also piloted virtually, equipping county teams with strategies to facilitate more effective and inclusive decision-making.

Programs addressing emerging and technical topics complemented the leadership curriculum. AMC partnered with Mitchell Hamline School of Law to revive **Negotiation for County Leaders** and offered **cybersecurity training** through a collaboration with the League of Minnesota Cities and the Norwich University Applied Research Institute. With counties across the state facing evolving workforce needs, AMC also introduced training on **succession and transition planning**, which attracted strong participation throughout the summer.

2025 also saw the launch of the **Virtual Lunch & Learn** series. Designed to deliver timely, impactful learning in a concise virtual format, the series drew nearly 280 participants in its first three sessions and remained a consistent source of engagement throughout the year. Topics included public health strategies such as NARCAN deployment, artificial intelligence in county operations, child welfare equity, veteran homelessness, renewable energy planning, and economic development best practices, and more. The growth of this series underscores the strong demand for accessible, relevant professional development among AMC members.

Planning is underway for 2026 programming, with continued emphasis on leadership growth, collaborative governance, and practical skills development. We're looking forward to seeing you in 2026!

Research & Grant Coordination

Mandated/Non-Mandated Activities Guide

AMC developed a standardized template for counties to categorize their activities as mandated, non-mandated, or core functions. The template enables counties to document each activity's purpose, associated costs, funding sources, and projected future expenses. In 2025, the project focused primarily on public health and human services, given the heightened need to clearly identify mandated functions in these areas. Looking ahead to 2026, AMC plans to expand the guide's application to additional areas of county operations.

SNAP and Medicaid Research

AMC produced several fact sheets detailing recent federal changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid, outlining the potential impacts on counties. To further support county understanding and engagement, AMC hosted a series of informational webinars and leveraged this research to emphasize the need for human services modernization during the Fall Policy Conference.

Opioid Settlement Support and Research

AMC continues to provide support to counties in managing opioid settlement funds. In spring 2025, AMC helped achieve 100% county reporting to the Department of Human Services (DHS) and submitted a memo to key legislative leaders highlighting how counties are allocating funds, emphasizing the importance of strategic planning, and noting limitations in the current DHS reporting tool. This fall, AMC also helped ensure that 100% of counties signed two new opioid settlements. AMC continues to provide updated information to county leaders on new opioid settlements related to the sign on process, reporting, and the timeline of payments.

AMC is also one of ten state associations participating in the NACo Opioid Solutions Network Cohort, collaborating nationally to share best practices, successes, and challenges in local opioid response. AMC delivered two presentations showcasing AMC's leadership in securing 75% of opioid settlement funds for local governments and ensuring full reporting compliance to promote transparency and accountability.

Cannabis Research

AMC continues to support counties with cannabis legalization through legislative efforts from AMC's Government Relations Team and support from AMC's Learning and Member Programs Team. AMC has continued to assist with answering questions related to cannabis legalization when we are able to and connecting members with the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) when questions are outside of our authority to answer.

Grant Coordinators

In 2024 AMC was awarded a McKnight Foundation Midwest Climate and Energy grant to build capacity to assist Minnesota counties in successfully applying for state and federal funding. Two Grant Coordinators met with counties from across the state in an effort to better understand the needs of counties and the barriers they face in applying for grants.

Staff created resources to assist counites including a Capital Improvement Guide, Grant Resources Hub, Grant Writers Database, and a template Request For Proposal for grant writers. Staff continues to collaborate with stakeholders to bring information, resources, and technical assistance to counties.

Save These Dates in 2026!

Nuts, Bolts & Boardrooms
January 21 - 23, 2026
InterContinental Hotel,
St. Paul Riverfront

AMC Drainage Conference
January 27 - 29, 2026
Arrowwood, Alexandria

NACo Legislative Conference
February 21 - 24, 2026
Washington, D.C.

AMC Legislative Conference & County Day at the Capitol
March 4 - 5, 2026
InterContinental Hotel,
St. Paul Riverfront

AMC Leadership Summit
March 25 - 27, 2026
Grand View Lodge, Nisswa

NACo Annual Conference
July 17 - 20, 2026
New Orleans, LA

AMC Fall Policy Conference
September 15 - 18, 2026
Sanford Center, Bemidji

AMC Annual Conference
December 7 - 9, 2026
DoubleTree Hotel, Bloomington

www.mncounties.org

AMC Executive Committee Reflections



Someone recently asked me what commissioners normally do. I explained that our main responsibilities include voting at meetings on bills, permits, levies, road projects, employee benefits, and personnel issues. But for quite some time now, nothing about being a commissioner has felt "normal." We've dealt with unallotments, COVID, ARP and CARES funding, cannabis legalization, ESST, paid family leave, the Act, state funding shifts, and even federal government shutdowns.

As county commissioners, we're responsible for implementing the programs that the state and federal governments enact–often with limited funding. Yet, we get it done for our citizens as best we can. That's no small accomplishment. We should all be proud of the work we do and the dedication we bring to serving our communities. Thank you for your service and commitment.

Larry Lindor
Pope County Commissioner
2025 AMC First Vice President



What a year 2025 has been! I'm grateful to serve on the AMC Executive Committee and represent all of you. Just when it seemed the year couldn't get more interesting, new challenges emerged – but AMC's strong leadership and staff always guided us through, and I was glad to jump in wherever needed.

The AMC Finance Committee had a full year as well, investing in new software to improve efficiency and finalizing a dues formula that better reflects our current practices and strengthens AMC's future. We also welcomed Donna Klingenberg to support Janine Cross in managing our finances. My sincere thanks to the committee for their hard work and support.

Executive Director Ring kept us in "all hands on deck" mode as state and federal issues developed quickly, bringing us frequently to St. Paul and Washington, D.C., to advocate for our counties.

As I reflect on 2025 and look ahead to 2026, I'm proud and grateful for all 87 counties and for the dedication you show to your communities. We are our hometowns, and your voice matters. Let's continue supporting one another in our mission to serve.

May God bless you all this holiday season!

Steve Schmitt
Meeker County Commissioner
2025 AMC Secretary/Treasurer



"But you must remain clear-minded in every way, stand strong in hard times, and do the work of a good storyteller."

-The Apostle Paul, to his protégé, Timothy

In my time on the AMC Executive Committee, and in particular during my time as your president, I tried to let those words be my guide. My encouragement to each of you is that you do the same, as you lead and serve the people in your county. We are faced with a torrent of information, a deluge of claims and counter-claims, and a plethora of conflicting opinions on a daily basis. It is hard to remain clear-minded. Hard times test us in ways that days of ease never touch. Leaning into the wind is hard, walking uphill takes effort, and choosing the right path in the face of difficulty takes courage.

This farm boy convinced many of you to vote for me as 2nd VP by telling a compelling story of the triumphs and tragedies of my childhood and of the hard times and successes of my early career. The story I told was designed to connect, to inform, to engage, and ultimately, to persuade. This is the goal of every good story and, at least in that case, it worked!

AMC has a good story to tell as well. We have an amazing staff who live, create, and proclaim the story of Minnesota's 87 counties everyday. Thanks to your vote of confidence in me, I had the privilege of being part of their story. Matt Hilgart, through his thought provoking questions and amazing grasp of detail, challenged me to be more than I would have been on my own. Angie Thies encouraged me to remain in difficult conversations during a time when I was discouraged and was tempted to pull back and seek an easier path. Julie Ring helped me find my voice when I took the story of AMC's work and the need for a significant dues increase on the road to our District Meetings. The rest of the staff stood in the gap and provided support whenever needed. I don't believe I ever heard the word "No" from any one of them.

Traveling to District Meetings opened my eyes to the diverse needs, opportunities and success stories that are created at the county level each day across Minnesota. You have all heard me say, "I really like county people!" I enjoyed your stories and am grateful that you appeared to like mine.

I am reminded of the words of American author Harvey Pekar (he wrote comic books, mostly) who asked: "What kind of a day was it? It was a day like all others, that alter and illuminate our times. And you, my friend, were there."

Thank you for letting me be there. Our story is still unfolding, and it needs to be heard. Stay focused, find your voice, and tell your story.

Neal Gaalswyk
Cass County Commissioner
2025 AMC Past President



2025 brought its share of challenges, but our county members and AMC staff once again responded with determination, collaboration, and deep commitment to their communities. Serving as AMC's Second Vice President has been an honor and a reminder of the strength and resilience of county leaders across Minnesota.

Counties navigated uncertainty around the state budget, impacts from the federal shutdown, and ongoing issues with disability waivers – all of which underscored the essential role counties play in supporting Minnesotans. In every case, county leaders met these challenges with creativity, advocacy, and a focus on doing what's right for their residents.

Through AMC, members shared ideas, learned from one another, and worked together on solutions that strengthen our communities. This collaboration continues to make AMC a trusted and unified voice for counties statewide. I'm grateful for the engagement and leadership shown throughout the year. Despite the obstacles, we made progress because of your participation and commitment.

Looking to 2026, we have important work ahead: modernizing human services technology, addressing the disability waiver fiscal crisis, and improving how we manage and fund solid waste and recycling. These challenges are significant, but I'm confident our members are ready to meet them.

I encourage all members to stay active – attend meetings, participate in policy discussions, and connect through AMC programs. Together, we can ensure strong counties, strong communities, and a strong AMC. Thank you for your dedication to Minnesota.

Barb Weckman Brekke
Scott County Commissioner
2025 AMC Second Vice President

Staff Contacts

Administration

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Julie Ring
651-789-4330
ring@mncounties.org

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR
Ryan Erdmann
651-789-4345
erdmann@mncounties.org

Internal Operations & Communications

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF INTERNAL OPERATIONS
Laurie Klupacs
651-789-4329
lklupacs@mncounties.org

ACCOUNTANT
Janine Cross
651-789-4338
jcross@mncounties.org

ACCOUNTING ASSOCIATE
Donna Klingenberg
651-789-4344
dklingenberg@mncounties.org

COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR
Becky Pizinger
651-789-4332
pizinger@mncounties.org

MEMBER SERVICES ASSOCIATE
Suzanne LaPalm
651-789-4333
lapalm@mncounties.org

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSOCIATE
Donna Haupert
651-789-4356
haupert@mncounties.org

Learning & Member Programs

MANAGER
Jessica Seibert
651-789-4361
jseibert@mncounties.org

CONFERENCE & AFFILIATE COORDINATOR
Bob Libal
651-789-4336
blibal@mncounties.org

EDUCATION & TRAINING SPECIALIST
Matt Cassady
651-789-4341
mcassady@mncounties.org

PUBLIC HEALTH, RESEARCH & ADMINISTRATION PROJECT COORDINATOR
Mary Lyon
651-789-4326
mlyon@mncounties.org

GRANT COORDINATORS
Marnie Sciamanda
651-789-4324
msciamanda@mncounties.org

Noah Knapp
605-380-3848
nknapp@mncounties.org

Government Relations

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS/ GENERAL GOVERNMENT
Matt Hilgart
651-789-4343
mhilgart@mncounties.org

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES
Brian Martinson
651-789-4322
bmartinson@mncounties.org

PUBLIC HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Public Health: Kari Oldfield-Tabbert
651-789-4354
koldfield@mncounties.org
Human Services: Paul Verrette
651-789-4340
pverrette@mncounties.org
Child Wellbeing: Angie Thies
651-789-4321
athies@mncounties.org

PUBLIC SAFETY & CORRECTIONS
Emilio Lamba
651-789-4335
elamba@mncounties.org

TECHNOLOGY
Nathan Zacharias
651-789-4342
zacharias@mncounties.org

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
Emily Murray
651-789-4339
emurray@mncounties.org

WORKFORCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING
Cate Duin
651-789-4323
cduin@mncounties.org

FEDERAL RELATIONS COORDINATOR
Kari Oldfield-Tabbert
651-789-4354
koldfield@mncounties.org

POLICY COORDINATOR
Matt Cook
651-789-4346
mcook@mncounties.org

Association *of* Minnesota Counties

125 Charles Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55103-2108
Office: 651-224-3344
www.mncounties.org

Affiliates & Partners

LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA (LPHA)
Kari Oldfield, Executive Director
651-789-4354
koldfield@mncounties.org

Alicia Rodriguez, Member Engagement Coordinator
651-789-4325
arodriguez@mncounties.org

Mary Lyon, Public Health, Research & Administration Project Coordinator
651-789-4326
mlyon@mncounties.org

Joy Gerdes, Project Coordinator
651-789-4337
jgerdes@mncounties.org

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS ACT COUNTIES (MACCAC)
Emilio Lamba, Director
651-789-4335
elamba@mncounties.org
Matt Cook, Program Manager
651-789-4346
mcook@mncounties.org

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICE ADMINISTRATORS (MACSSA)
Paul Verette, Executive Director
651-789-4340
pverette@mncounties.org

Fiona Carson, Program Manager
651-789-4359
fcarson@mncounties.org

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF WORKFORCE BOARDS (MAWB)
Cate Duin, Executive Director
651-789-4323
cduin@mncounties.org

MINNESOTA COUNTIES IT LEADERSHIP ASSOCIATION (MNCITLA)
Nathan Zacharias, Executive Director
651- 789-4342
nzacharias@mncounties.org

MINNESOTA CITY/COUNTY FACILITY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (MCCFMA)

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF WORKFORCE BOARDS (MAWB)

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY PROFESSIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS (MAPCED)

MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF PLANNING & ZONING ADMINISTRATORS (MACPZA)

MINNESOTA SOLID WASTE ADMINISTRATORS ASSOCIATION (SWAA)
Bob Libal
651-789-4336
blibal@mncounties.org