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Annual Report 2022

Counties Are Strongest Together



Simply put, I cannot ever thank you enough for the opportunity to serve in this role as your President for the last year. It has truly been a blur since we gathered together a year ago and I was able to stand before you on my first day in this role, although not until we had all been regaled with the detailed history of the feud over the fish and the bread!

This experience has taken me many places and put me in many rooms I could never have imagined myself being in, with the responsibility to advocate for and represent the great people of Minnesota's 87 counties. I hope I have done so in a manner fitting of the nearly endless respect I have for all of you and the work you do every day.

I can proudly report to you that we have never been stronger, or more respected as an association in our history, and for that I deserve absolutely no credit. Our Executive Director Julie Ring and her amazing team of staff have elevated us and positioned us to be the go-to source on all things county. She and her team are the gold standard for excellence and we are lucky beyond words to have them working every day for us and the people we represent.

As this is an election year, and with that great American tradition so freshly behind us, this conference will be one where we have extra business to handle. We will have something like 80 retiring county commissioners this time around. Some of those retirements planned, some very much not planned, but all having served in their roles with pride and conviction. It is a very bittersweet moment in time for me personally when this every other year tradition rolls around. We say goodbye to those that helped shape us in our own role as commissioners, who taught us how to lead and how to fight for the things we believe in. I want to personally thank all of our retiring friends for their work and friendship and wish them the very best in whatever comes next for them. Most are wired to serve and will find new and fantastic ways to keep helping others and improving the communities they come from!

We also get to say hello to our newly elected county officials. We are glad you are here and glad you stepped up and asked for the opportunity to lead! We welcome you with a firm handshake, a warm smile, and encourage you to engage. I have a favor to ask of all of our returning commissioners attending the annual conference: Please go out of your way to greet every one of the newly elected commissioners that you can. Meet them, engage with them, and learn a bit about their path. We are stronger together and, in fact, we are strongest together. We need them, and their energy for the work ahead and they will lift us to even higher goals and achievements.

Of course the same election that has brought us so much change at the county level has also done the same at the State Legislature. Individually you may be happy about the election results at the state and national levels, or you may not be so happy about it. That aside, we have a job to do, and we will engage in good faith with the state leaders elected by the same folks that elected us. We will meet them, get to know them, and help them understand the critical role counties play in delivering so many of the essential services people depend on. Red or blue will always be a piece of the puzzle, but it will never deter us from our stated AMC mission to unite Minnesota's counties to achieve public service excellence!!

Thank you again for all you have given to me. It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve as your President. As long as I am able I will be an advocate and a champion for AMC and all of its members. ■

Todd Patzer

Lac qui Parle County Commissioner
2022 AMC President



The Minnesota Delegation to the National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference in Colorado in July.



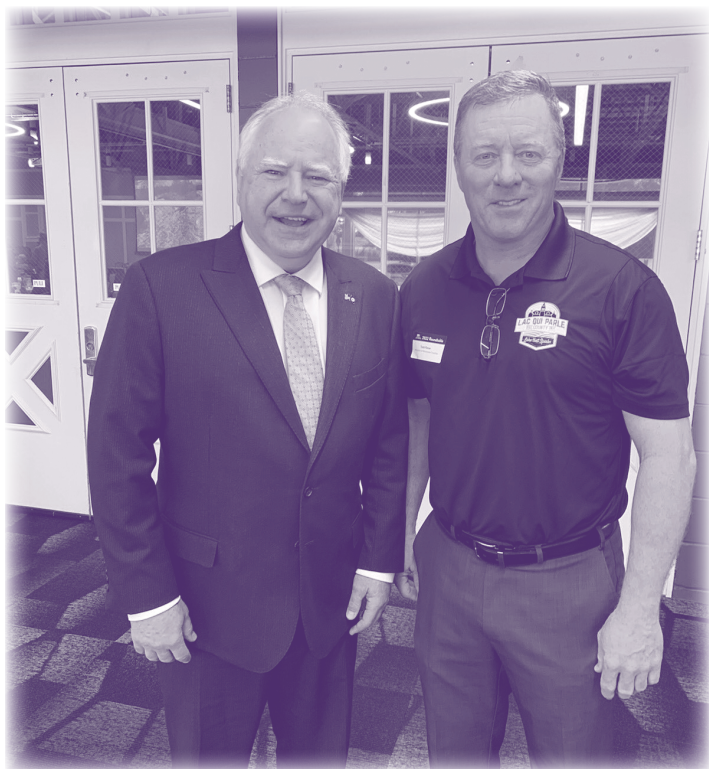
AMC President Todd Patzer at AMC's Legislative Conference in March.



Members of the AMC Executive Committee with Minnesota House Minority Leader Kurt Daudt in March.



AMC leadership and county officials with Minnesota Senate Majority Leader Melisa Franzen in March.



Gov. Tim Walz and AMC President Todd Patzer at a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) roundtable in June.



AMC President Todd Patzer, First Vice President Mary Jo McGuire and Second Vice President Neal Gaalswyk at the Minnesota State Capitol.

2022 AMC Board of Directors

Officers



PRESIDENT
Todd Patzer (Lac qui Parle)



FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
Mary Jo McGuire (Ramsey)



SECOND VICE PRESIDENT
Neal Gaalswyk (Cass)



SECRETARY/TREASURER
Larry Lindor (Pope)



PAST PRESIDENT
Rich Sve (Lake)

District Directors



DISTRICT 1
Ann Marcotte (Aitkin)



DISTRICT II
Tim Sumner (Beltrami)



DISTRICT III
Darryl Tveitbakk (Pennington)



DISTRICT IV
Bob Kopitzke (Stevens)



DISTRICT V
Felix Schmiesing (Sherburne)



DISTRICT VI
Roger Imdieke (Kandiyohi)



DISTRICT VII
Blair Nelson (Waseca)



DISTRICT VIII
Rick Anderson (Lyon)



DISTRICT IX
Brad Anderson (Goodhue)



DISTRICT X
Jeff Reinert (Anoka)



DISTRICT X
Gayle Degler (Carver)



DISTRICT X
Mike Slavik (Dakota)



DISTRICT X
Marion Greene (Hennepin)



DISTRICT X
Jim McDonough (Ramsey)



DISTRICT X
Barb Weckmann-Brekke (Scott)



DISTRICT X
Stan Karwoski (Washington)

National Association of Counties (NACo) Representatives



NACo FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
Mary Jo McGuire (Ramsey)



NACo DELEGATE
Toni Carter (Ramsey)



100% MEMBERSHIP STATE
Bob Fox (Renville)



TOP 12 MEMBERSHIP STATE
Susan Morris (Isanti)

Member Services Committee Chairs



BUSINESS & PARTNER DEVELOPMENT
Scott Schulte (Anoka)



EDUCATION & TRAINING
Gary Hendrickx (Swift)



RESEARCH
Mike Slavik (Dakota)

Policy Committee Chairs



ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES
Luke Johnson (Pipestone)



GENERAL GOVERNMENT
Gene Metz (Nobles)



HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Tarryl Clark (Stearns)



PUBLIC SAFETY
Jack Swanson (Roseau)



TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
Gordy Wagner (Pope)

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) is a voluntary, non-partisan statewide member organization that began in 1909. All 87 Minnesota counties are members of the association. While county commissioners are our primary audience, all county officials and staff are also members of the association.

AMC works closely with the legislative and administrative branches of government to assure that legislation and policies favorable to counties are enacted. AMC also provides educational programs, training, research and communications for county officials.

AMC is governed by a Board of Directors composed of five officers, one representative from each of nine AMC districts, seven representatives from the metropolitan district, National Association of Counties (NACo) board of directors members, policy committee chairs; member services committee chairs and ex-officio representatives from organizations affiliated with AMC (please see list at right).

Partnering with county organizations encourages maximum cooperation between the association and the various county functions, between administrative departments and agencies and between counties throughout the state.

In 2022, AMC employed 22 staff members to conduct the work of the association which is divided into three broad functional service areas: Administrative Services, Government Relations, and Member Services. ■

Notable Board Accomplishments in 2022

Board Developed New AMC Strategic Plan

AMC MISSION: To unite Minnesota counties to achieve public service excellence.

AMC VISION: Minnesota counties are trusted partners in strengthening communities.

AMC VALUES:



Leading the Way. AMC and our members identify and address issues proactively. We initiate action, foster partnerships, and prepare members to be strong advocates for the needs of their county.



Meeting Member Needs. AMC adapts to meet member and staff needs and is a reliable source of information for our members and partners.



Stronger Together. AMC acts as a statewide voice for all Minnesota's 87 counties. We value collaboration to get strong results and demonstrate respect for all perspectives.

AMC GOALS:

AMC intends to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Strengthen member engagement & increase board leadership.
2. Grow policy leadership & strengthen AMC's role as the voice of Minnesota counties.
3. Develop programs (training and research) that anticipate and meet member needs.
4. Attract, develop, and retain a high-performing AMC workforce.
5. Clarify the business structure and processes of the affiliate team.
6. Strengthen affiliate member engagement and increase connections to the broader Association of Minnesota Counties.

The board has all powers necessary to carry out effectively the governance, business and affairs of the association, which includes developing a strategic plan to set the association's overall goals and a plan to achieve them. ■

Affiliate Ex-Officio AMC Board Members

AMEM - Association of Minnesota Emergency Managers
 LPHA - Local Public Health Association of Minnesota
 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 Finance 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
 MCAA - Minnesota County Attorneys' Association
 MCEA - Minnesota County Engineers Association
 MCHRNA - Minnesota Counties Human Resource Management Association
 MCIT - Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust
 MCCC - Minnesota Counties Computer Cooperative
 MNCITLA - Minnesota County Information Technology Leadership Association
 MRC - Minnesota Rural Counties
 MSA - Minnesota Sheriffs Association
 MAWB - Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards
 SWAA - Minnesota Solid Waste Administrators Association

AMC Joined WIR

AMC joined the National Association of Counties' Western Interstate Region (WIR) as an associate member. WIR brings together county officials from to focus on pressing issues, such as public land issues (use and conservation), community stability and economic development, and the promotion of the traditional Western way of life.

Joining WIR allows Minnesota to participate actively in the association, benefiting from its work and informing its policy platform. ■



AMC President Todd Patzer addressed the WIR Board of Directors in May.

Executive Director's Report

"Good Conflict" Can Lead to Good Progress

It has been another year of steady progress at the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), with a new strategic plan, new staff, new programs, and new initiatives, all of which you can read about throughout this annual report.

During the past year, our staff traveled to every corner of the state to meet with county officials and learn about your priorities. We visited the Jolly Green Giant, Paul and Babe, the World's Oldest Rock, the World's Largest Twine Ball, and ate the World's Best Donuts. We spent time in new county government centers, historic courthouses, and many, many local breweries. We had the honor of visiting the Little Cedar Spirit Tree with an Ojibwe tribal elder along with commissioners from AMC District 1, and the adventure of traveling by boat and float plane to a Lake of the Woods board meeting in the Northwest Angle. Our future plans reflect what we learned along the way, and we are inspired to keep moving your association forward!

As the year comes to a close on the heels of another election, I find myself reflecting on our ongoing Bridging Divides strategic initiative. This work started in 2019, before the divisions caused by the Covid 19 pandemic, before concerns about elections, and before hot button issues started showing up routinely in county board rooms. Bridging Divides feels more important than ever as we move forward into 2023.

When we started this strategic initiative, our goal was to bridge policy divides within our membership – specifically regarding gas tax and transportation funding – hence the clever use of the word "bridge." As time went on, the work grew to include bridging divides across rural-urban-suburban members and between members of different partisan perspectives.

During the past three years, we focused on building the negotiation and conflict resolution skills of county officials. We emphasized civility and productive public discourse. We developed tools to assist counties with effective public meetings. We structured our association business to view issues from multiple points of view. Through it all, a fundamental principle of our work has been to reduce conflict by building relationships, with the idea that the more you know someone and know their story, the more likely you are to listen and try to understand their point of view.

As we head into the new year, I am starting to think about cultivating "good conflict" as a priority of our Bridging Divides work. After all, our goal is not the elimination of all disagreement. We need to consider differing points of view if we are going to move forward and make progress on the issues facing counties. In fact, when the fear of conflict keeps us from saying what we think, or talking to people that have different perspectives, we end up isolated with our same old ideas. At AMC, we embrace local government control because we know that solutions often look different in different parts of the state. Good conflict means understanding why solutions might be different in different counties, and that requires candid discussions of differences without judgement so that we can build better solutions for all Minnesotans.

The Association of Minnesota Counties exists to unite Minnesota counties in public service excellence. Our ability to unite may feel more challenging than ever, but I am optimistic – because of our members! You continue to show up and engage in policy committee discussions. You sit together, talk, and build relationships at our events. You seek out new information through our research projects and training sessions. As we welcome new commissioners to the association this year, I look forward to the new perspectives and priorities they will bring, knowing they will continue these traditions that allow us to bridge divides. ■



Julie Ring
AMC Executive Director



Minnesota's Delegation to the NACo Annual Conference in Colorado last July included (from left to right): Commissioner Tarryl Clark (Stearns), Commissioner and AMC President Todd Patzer, Jen O'Rourke (Ramsey), Julie Ring (AMC), Ryan O'Connor (Ramsey), Judd Freed (Ramsey), Commissioner Trista MatasCastillo (Ramsey), and Commissioner and AMC/NACo First Vice President (Ramsey).



Financial Overview

AMC's 2021 revenue totaled \$2,832,500 and expenditures totaled \$2,619,700 resulting in net revenue over expenditures of \$212,800.

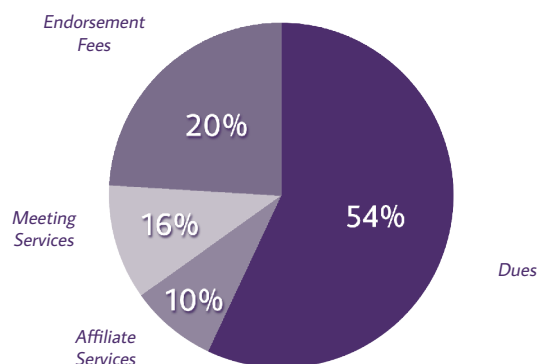
The primary source of revenue continues to be member dues, and the largest expenditure is staff salary and benefit costs. Non-dues revenue (which includes meeting registration fees, affiliate management services, endorsement fees, and the AMC Preferred Business Partners program) accounts for 46% of all revenue. 2021 meeting revenue improved but is still lower than pre-pandemic revenue. Increasing non-dues revenue continues to be a goal of the organization.

AMC ended 2021 with net assets of \$3,669,760. ■

2021	
Total Current Assets	\$4,074,708
Net Fixed Assets	\$719,174
Total Assets	\$4,793,882
Total Current Liabilities	\$2,045,930
Fund Balances	
Unrestricted	\$2,747,952
Board-Designated Capital Improvements	
Total Fund Balances	\$2,747,952
Total Liabilities & Fund Balance	\$4,793,882

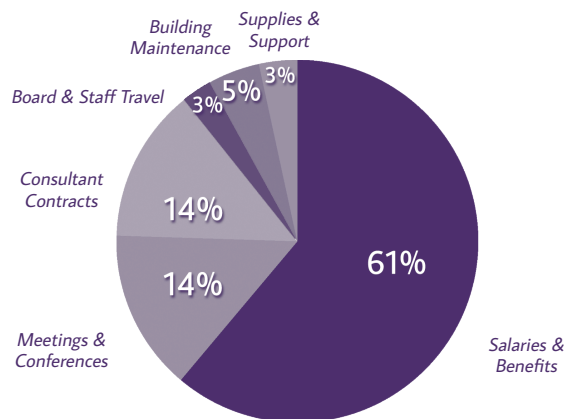
Revenue Summary

Total Revenue: \$ 2,832,470
December 31, 2021



Expense Summary

Total Expenses: \$ 2,619,651
December 31, 2021



Research Programs

The Research Committee, chaired by Mike Slavik, Dakota County Commissioner, was instrumental in AMC launching the Leadership in Local Government summer research internship program this year. The program successfully hosted three graduate student interns from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs and Minnesota State University, Mankato.

The interns met with county leaders from across the state and toured facilities in Aitkin, Blue Earth, Washington, and Ramsey Counties. Each student completed a research project on an issue important to counties and created toolkits now available on the AMC website in the County Library and Information Center (CLIC). Research projects focused on cybersecurity, joint powers agreements, and roadside ditch mowing. The interns also assisted with research on elections, broadband, and redistricting. AMC looks forward to hosting a new cohort of graduate students in 2023.



AMC is also hosting a Public Health Project Coordinator through the AmeriCorps Public Health Corps, in order to help meet emerging public health needs and grow the public health workforce. The goal of this program is to increase the capacity of public health departments across Minnesota and build a long-term public health career pipeline. AMC's Public Health Project Coordinator is leading on projects related to the opioid settlements, understanding the impacts of THC and cannabis, and public health workforce needs. ■

Government Relations

By Matt Hilgart, AMC Government Relations Manager



2022 was a year of tremendous change. In this sea of uncertainty and rapid change, the work of your Government Relations team remains critical as counties look to familiarize a new Legislature with county priorities with an eye toward the state setting a new two-year budget with substantial financial resources available.

An Unfortunate Session Standstill Hampers Counties' Chances at Success

The continuation of the pandemic, split-party control, and hybrid legislative logistics combined with a historic budget surplus, legislative redistricting, and election year politics made for quite the year at the Capitol. Early on, leaders recognized these difficulties and committed themselves to focusing on only the most pressing issues while trying to meet in the middle on budget and policy discussions. As the state's budget surplus continued to grow mid-session (to over \$9 billion!), calls became louder for significant tax relief and additional spending on an array of education, transportation, and health/human services-related fields. While leaders were successful in passing bills related to workers compensation presumptions, frontline worker pay, unemployment insurance, and a few fortunate others, an ultimate agreement on a comprehensive supplemental budget deal proved elusive towards the end of session barring last minute "escape pods" that included an omnibus veterans, agricultural, and broadband package along with a "mini omnibus" mental health bill. This outcome was particularly frustrating in lieu of the significant progress AMC staff made on CPA/property tax relief mechanisms, community supervision funding, solid waste/SCORE resources, alongside a variety of AMC-supported policy measures that were all stymied by inaction.

One of the most significant elements of the session was the outcome of a once-in-a-decade redistricting process that resulted in numerous incumbents being either "redistricted out" or combined with other legislators creating what some have labeled a Minnesota political "Game of Thrones." All told, the Legislature will be losing 47 legislators to retirement representing close to 600 years of cumulative legislative experience.

With one week left to go in regular session, legislative leaders announced the outline of a major budget framework, setting aside \$4 billion for a tax relief plan along with another \$4 billion for various spending proposals. In the last week, conference committees met to negotiate within their targets and attempt to forge compromise—some committees finding more success than others. By session's close, Sunday evening, leadership

negotiations over remaining packages—particularly the education, public safety, and health and human services bills—had come to a standstill. While a few "escape pod" bills were able to pass last minute (including AMC-supported broadband and mental health provisions), most of the omnibus bills fell as the House refused to move forward the coveted tax omnibus without action on a broader deal. Leadership on both sides expressed disappointment and frustration with some calling out a broken process while others lamented a lack of leadership. That said, efforts to renew negotiations quickly subsided as parties' focus on the midterm elections grew wider meaning that for the first time in several years, there were no special sessions.

Midterm Election Surprise Ushers in New, DFL-controlled Legislature

The November midterm election results stunned all and rebuked polling and pundit expectations of a nation and statewide "red wave." The Democratic Farmer and Labor party (DFL) retained control over the executive branch (Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, and State Auditor), held onto control of the House chamber, and flipped control of the GOP-controlled Senate—creating a new 34-33, 1 seat DFL majority in the Senate. Single party control will return to Minnesota for the first time since 2012 paving way for the governor and Legislature to have their best chance at implementing longstanding DFL policy proposals surrounding education, paid family medical leave, and much more. That said, a razor thin margin in the Senate—incumbent on a few seats that won by hundreds (or less) of votes will still come into play.

As a nonpartisan organization, AMC will continue to work with both sides of the aisle to push forward priorities that improve services to our residents, created better outcomes for our clients, and provide relief for our tax payers. AMC priorities surrounding mental health, housing, community supervision, broadband, County Program Aid, will remain important and hopeful pos.



AMC staff snapped this photo of the tax committee working late into the final hours of the 2022 legislative session.



AMC Policy Analysts brief Legislative Conference attendees before “County Day at the Capitol” meetings with legislators.

Government Relations Strategic Planning

As AMC continues to enact its new strategic plan, the AMC Government Relations team has outlined several areas of focus for the next few years:

- Engaging membership directly with legislators on AMC priorities.
- Assessing AMC’s policy process to identify opportunities for greater membership engagement.
- Identifying creative and meaningful ways to educate the Legislature about counties.
- Building partnerships with the Big Four to elevate local government shared priorities.

Government Relations staff have started implementing many components/measures of the plan meaning membership has already seen—or will be seeing soon!—some of these efforts play out. Highlights include a new membership strengths assessment, revised “Counties Working for Minnesotans” educational handouts, a first-ever New Legislators Reception, along with a partnership with the Big Four to introduce new legislators to local government priorities and operations. The team will continue to build on these successes by focusing in on longer-term projects surrounding policy development processes and creative/innovative ways to leverage membership and legislator relationship development outside of session. If you are interested in learning more or have thoughts that could help shape our work, please reach out to our team!

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS TEAM GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Be the voice for all 87 Minnesota counties.
- To be seen and respected as the go-to, objective, honest source of information and analysis for all AMC issue areas.
- To build strong, bipartisan relationships in both chambers as well as state departments and the Governor’s office.
- To be engaged and in-tune with membership by routine communication, outreach opportunities, and county visits.

New Team Members!

Our Government Relations Team was fortunate to add to new members to our team in 2022. Matt Cook joined the team as our new “Government Relations Coordinator” where he will assist policy analysts Emily Murray and Carli Stark in their management of affiliate duties as well as provide general support, data analysis, and research for the broader Government Relations Team.

Nathan Zacharias joined AMC fresh from his work leading the Minnesota Broadband Coalition where he advocated for one of AMC’s top priorities: broadband funding and expansion. Nathan serves as the Executive Director of the Minnesota Counties Information Technology Leadership Association (MNCITLA) as well as AMC’s Technology and Broadband Policy Analyst, responsible for a wide policy portfolio that includes issues surrounding technology, cybersecurity, IT-systems support across county programs, broadband, emergency communications, data practices and open meeting law.

Looking Toward 2023

An inordinate amount of legislative turnover thanks to a once-in-a-decade redistricting effort as well as a midterm election that created a new party control structure will necessitate the Government Relations team in establishing new relationships and educating members about county issues and priorities. Government Relations staff will enter session (starting January 3, 2023) prioritizing relationship building—this emphasized by our first-ever “New Legislators Reception” in January to showcase AMC, members, and county issues. In addition to legislative work, the team will continue pushing forward elements of the AMC strategic plan with a particular emphasis on reevaluating AMC’s policy platform development process and utilizing membership in legislative relationship building outside of session and during summer interim. Between now and then, please don’t hesitate to reach out to our team at any time for policy insight/research, legislative analysis, or general assistance. As always, we thank you for your active involvement in our work; our membership engagement remains our strongest asset in finding success at the Capitol! ■

Member Services

By Laurie Klupacs, AMC Deputy Director

AMC offers a variety of member events, meetings and conferences designed to help county commissioners and staff keep up-to-speed on issues, enhance their leadership skills, learn, network, and share best practices to help improve residents' lives and the efficiency of county government. 2022 was a successful year for AMC with member participation and active engagement.

For many counties, balancing and managing relations with intergovernmental partners includes not only state and city governments, but tribal governments as well. Regardless of level, all governments work to serve the public benefit. The **AMC TRIBAL RELATIONS FORUM**, chaired by Beltrami County Commissioner Tim Sumner and our partners from the Tribal Nations of Minnesota hosted a Building Effective County-Tribal Relations conference in February. Over 100 Tribal and county leaders gathered for this two-day conference to develop a shared vision for County-Tribal Partnerships as well as to build relationships, trust, and mutual respect.

Highlights of the conference include learning about the history of federal policy and law related to Tribal Nations, why treaties matter, and how to effectively collaborate on issues of common interest such as the delivery of human services, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), public safety and land use.



Beltrami County Commissioner and AMC Tribal Relations Forum Chair Tim Sumner welcomes attendees to the forum.

AMC members actively participate in the National Association of Counties (NACo) by serving on the NACo Board of Directors and legislative steering committees, and by attending conferences. AMC members were in Washington, D.C., in February for the **NACo LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE**, where they had the opportunity to discuss federal priorities with members of Congress.

Save These Dates in 2023!

COUNTY GOVERNMENT 101 –
NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS CONFERENCE
January 25-27, 2023

AMC LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE
February 22 - 23, 2023 | InterContinental Hotel, St. Paul

NACo LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE
February 11 – 14, 2023 | Washington D.C.

AMC LEADERSHIP SUMMIT
March 29 – 31, 2023 | Grand View Lodge, Nisswa

NACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE
July 20 - 24, 2023 | Travis County, Texas

AMC FALL POLICY CONFERENCE
September 13 - 15, 2020 | Arrowwood, Alexandria

AMC ANNUAL CONFERENCE
December 4 - 6, 2023 | Hyatt Regency, Minneapolis

Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan opened **AMC's LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE** with her thoughts on a variety of county issues including the state-local government funding partnership, property tax relief, and broadband funding. Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) Commissioner Jim Showalter noted that the Budget and Economic Forecast showed that Minnesota's economy is doing well and included a General Fund surplus of \$9.25 billion for the current biennium which enabled the state's frontline worker payments.

Attendees then headed to AMC's third annual "County Day at the Capitol" for meetings with legislators to discuss a wide variety of issues including the State-Local Funding Partnership, Property Tax Relief, County Program Aid, Indian Child Welfare Act, the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, housing, childcare and broadband funding. The large, united county presence at the Capitol garnered the attention of legislators, staff, and decision-makers. This type of member engagement is invaluable, particularly in the early critical days of the legislative session. The conference included policy issue breakout sessions and a legislative reception that was attended by many members of both the House and Senate. This conference also included policy committee meetings, the "State of the Counties" address from AMC President Todd Patzer (Lac qui Parle County Commissioner), presentation of the 4H Community Youth Leadership Awards in partnership with University of Minnesota Extension, and the annual student scholarship presented by AMC Past President Commissioner Rich Sve (Lake County).

AMC's long-time, valued partner, the University of Minnesota Extension worked with statewide county commissioners to recognize this year's recipients of the **4H COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARDS**. There were three outstanding projects from Douglas, Rice and Swift Counties that received 2022 4-H Community Leadership Awards, recognizing their outstanding contributions and services to their local communities, volunteering and creating strong youth leaders across the state.

The AMC Leadership Summit is a great tool to improve yourself and to interact with other county leaders throughout the state.

Rod Peterson, Dodge County Commissioner

AMC's **LEADERSHIP SUMMIT** was attended by county officials and key staff interested in taking their leadership skills to the next level. The leadership examples set by county officials and staff is critical to creating a culture that attracts, retains, and motivates a workforce that can meet today's needs. The two-day Summit presenter was Bruce Christopher, a psychologist and humorist, who discussed how attitude creates success, the factors that lead to success, and how to apply strategies for increasing communication effectiveness and success. The Summit is smaller and more intimate in nature than other AMC conferences, and attendees enjoy the networking, relationship building and interactive nature of the Leadership Summit.

The AMC Leadership Summit dives deep into practical training on topics that county government professionals are involved in everyday. I thoroughly enjoyed it and learned a lot.

CJ Holl, Mahnomon County Administrator

In addition to developing a policy platform to guide the work of AMC's government relations team during the legislative session at **AMC's FALL POLICY CONFERENCE**, attendees learned about tax assessment and how the trend of rising home values ties to property taxes and governance from a panel of county officials and Department of Revenue Assistant Commissioner Jon Klockziem, as well as an overview of election related processes and the county role in elections. The conference concluded with an enjoyable networking event at our annual bean bag tournament and wine pull, which raised more than \$7,200 from our generous members and premier partners for the Minnesota Counties Foundation.



Fall Policy Conference Bean Bag Tournament.

Minnesota counties were also well represented at this year's **NACo ANNUAL CONFERENCE** in Adams County, Colorado, where NACo President Denise Winfrey of Illinois appointed eight AMC members to national leadership positions. Minnesota is a 100% NACo membership state, which gives Minnesota an additional seat on the NACo Board of Directors.

NACo'S HIGH PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY has been making existing leaders better and emerging leaders ready across Minnesota counties.

The challenges faced in county government today are more complex than ever and we all face the perpetual need to do more with less. This challenge has been particularly acute in recent years. From our largest county to our smallest, we did exceptionally well on many fronts of this challenge, and yet we have room for improvement in some areas, too. Minnesota counties have been using the NACo High Performance Leadership Academy (www.naco.org/skills) to make existing leaders better and to prepare the next generation of leaders to be ready. In fact, Hennepin County has enrolled more leaders in this program than any other county in the country!



This program is an excellent investment in time and money.



This program has helped with employee retention.



This program has equipped my team to better lead in times of change.

The results from investing in leadership development have been immediate and incredibly successful. The content (from assessments, videos, case studies, and especially engaging with other county leaders) provides tools that can be applied immediately. Importantly, supervising managers of those enrolled in the program have also seen better outcomes as a result of investing in the development of our leaders. To date, Minnesota counties have received \$999,999 in scholarships, enrolling 1,000 leaders. Let's keep going. Learn more and enroll your counties leaders at www.naco.org/skills.

Member participation is what makes an association like ours strong, and we'd like to extend our sincere thanks to all of you for making 2022 a successful year! ■



AMC's PREFERRED BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (PBP) was successfully launched in 2018 has been chaired AMC Past President and Anoka County Commissioner Scott Schulte since its inception in 2018. His service as Chair, his leadership and work in securing new business partners has been invaluable to the success to this program, as are the members of the Business and Partner Development Committee. AMC Premier Business Partners has grown from nine in 2021 to sixteen in 2022. It is an honor to have such close working relationships with these outstanding partners that work tirelessly to bring their products, services, and commitment to helping our members better serve their employees and constituents!

The AMC PBP Program was designed to give companies the greatest exposure to county officials and employees for their investment. The AMC Board of Directors approved the PBP to help accomplish an entity's goal of creating and strengthening awareness and visibility of their service. AMC PBP's are uniquely positioned to build and deepen relationships with county officials in all 87 Minnesota counties. There is no other program in the state that focuses on nurturing the critical and growing relationship between county government and business.

We're always looking to bring new partners into the program to offer the very best products and services to our member counties. Benefits for Premier member including inclusion in the annual Minnesota County Service Directory, substantial discounts on exhibit space at the Annual Conference and advertising in our publications, in addition to unparalleled access to our Board of Directors, members and county decision-makers.

If your county does business with a company that you think would be a good fit for the program, please have them contact Laurie Klupacs, AMC Deputy Director, at 651-789-4329, or visit www.mncounties.org/pbp to learn more about the benefits of partnering with AMC through this program. ■

Associate Partners 2022



Premier Partners 2022

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DDA Human Resources, Inc. (DDA HR) www.ddahumanresources.com was incorporated in 2017 and has been providing human resource consulting services throughout Minnesota since 2013. DDA Human Resources, Inc. is proud to partner with AMC on the Human Resource Technical Assistance Program which delivers exclusive human resource assistance to every County HR department in Minnesota.

DDA HR's services include executive searches, classification/compensation studies, organizational studies, and more. Since 2013, we have completed over 70 executive searches, over 35 classification/compensation studies, and several organizational studies. Clients range from cities with four employees to the largest county in Minnesota.

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OurTech Co-op is a Minnesota-based, membership-supported technology services cooperative that is looking to bring broadband Internet services and best-value technology solutions to under-served communities in Minnesota. By pursuing a cooperative ownership model and targeting connection deserts throughout the state, OurTech's approach has built-in antitrust protections that work to uplift and empower these communities. Additionally, Our Tech has built up a diverse vendor base that can provide goods, services, and training throughout the state.

It is estimated that 42 million Americans live in areas that do not have access to broadband Internet. In a world that has grown more and more connected, there are entire communities being left behind. OurTech believes that our model can help close these gaps in the state of Minnesota while also empowering users to demand quality service from technology providers.

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PRIMEWEST HEALTH
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PrimeWest Health is a joint powers organization of 24 rural Minnesota counties. Governed by two county commissioners from each owner county, PrimeWest Health was established to enable participating counties to conduct Minnesota Health Care Programs managed care through County-Based Purchasing (CBP). Through PrimeWest Health, participating counties manage and pay for the health care, wellness, and human services of over 50,000 members. Our mission is helping these members achieve healthier, fuller lives by improving their health care experience and population health and advancing health equity through our unique county-based ability to coordinate the delivery of cost-effective health care, human services, and community resources. Because we are county owned and governed, we are not just a health plan—we are part of the community, assisting and serving our neighbors, families, and friends who participate in Medical Assistance (Medicaid), MinnesotaCare, and Medicare through PrimeWest Health.

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Looking Forward to 2023...



"Where there is no vision, the people perish..." King Solomon, circa 1000 BCE.

Greetings Fellow AMC Members:

The vision of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) is that we are stronger together as we lead and serve the people of this state at the local level. This was my theme last year while I was encouraging you to put your trust and confidence in me as your 2nd Vice-president. Since then, discussions and interactions with my fellow commissioners and other county leaders at AMC events have motivated and encouraged me to be a better leader. My hope is that some of you can say the same about your interactions with me! As I reflect back my first year of service on the Executive Committee of the association and as I look to the future, I can tell you that I am more convinced than ever that we really are stronger together. As an example, Cass County is participating and spearheading a housing initiative in Cass Lake that had its genesis in an idea I heard at one of our District meetings. I know that others of you have taken good ideas home and put them to work in your county. We are stronger, and more effective, together.

Often, when I return home from an AMC event, my wife will ask me to reflect on my experience and to share some of what I learned with her. While the specifics of the answer will vary depending on the nature of the event, all the answers have a common theme—the people of this state are well served by their local leaders. Each of you brings a unique perspective to every issue. Every one of you is dedicated to serving the people of your county and community. Together, all of us are looking for ways to lead those who have put their trust in us toward a better, more inclusive and prosperous future.

I encourage all of you to become fully engaged in what AMC has to offer to you individually and to your county generally. The prosperity of a community depends on the character of the decision making of its leadership. The educational and leadership development opportunities offered by AMC help us become better, more inclusive, and effective local leaders.

While it may be hard for all of us to agree on everything, it is easy for us to agree on this one thing: We are stronger together, and that is a good thing for the people we serve. ■

*Neal Gaalswyk, Cass County Commissioner
AMC Second Vice President*



County Friends and Colleagues,

The AMC Annual Conference is upon us once again and so is a time to reflect on the year as well as the work and accomplishments of our association.

We ended 2021 and began 2022 with completing our work on the Opioid Settlement. A heavy lift, yet a big win for counties, and those who will benefit from the settlement funds. Also, the Board of Directors completed their Strategic Planning efforts, which will provide guidance for our association for years to come.

A lot was accomplished in 2022 due to the relentless work of our AMC staff. We had successes at the Capitol with many of our platform items finding their way into bills. Unfortunately, that is where many still languish waiting to be picked up in the 2023 Session. In 2022, AMC staff increased in size and saw some reorganization. These additions and changes are critical if we are to meet the growing needs of our association. Other growth we experienced was with our affiliates and our business partners, important relationships and resources that contribute greatly to AMC.

Perhaps what stood out above all was the increased interest and involvement of our members. Many of you have served, inquired, applied, or volunteered for the many boards, committees, and leadership roles through AMC. These endeavors will continue to keep AMC at the forefront of nonpartisan county government, speaking with and for you on the important issues that you, and those you represent, face.

My time on the AMC Executive Committee has come to an end, and I would be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to thank you all once again for your efforts, your support, your involvement, and what you continue to provide this association. ■

*Riich Sve, Lake County Commissioner
AMC Past President*



Hello Minnesota County Colleagues!

Every year, counties experience new challenges and old familiar ones and each time counties step up and get the job done. Counties continue to improve the lives of our citizens through the services we provide. This is not always easier with budget constraints and inflationary happenings, but it gets done. We also worked through this election cycle with professionalism and integrity, again showing counties can be counted on. Congratulations to all of you for a job well done and the best to you in the coming year. ■

*Larry Lindor, Pope County Commissioner
AMC Secretary/Treasurer*

Dear Colleagues,



As I write this column, county election officials across Minnesota are taking a collective deep breath after another safe, secure, and busy election season. I'm reminded of just how central their work is to the business, peace, and stability of our country. This isn't to say the election season has been easy. I know many of you have been responding to election challenges and decreased trust in our legitimate government operations. I'm grateful for what county election officials have done and I'm proud, just as I am sure you are, of their dedication and hard work. They truly show that counties run elections that we can trust and be proud of.

Congratulations to those of you who won your races and a special welcome to those you who are new to county government. Sending best wishes to those of you who will be starting new journeys outside of elected office — we will miss you!

After divisive elections, it is helpful to remember the importance of coming back together. Finding common ground for the good of all of us is more relevant than ever. There are some who say that we're so different that we cannot work together — I just don't see it. I come to AMC meetings and I see colleagues working together to find practical solutions. I hear discussions about issues that we are all dealing with and care about. I see relationships being built that bring out creative, innovative, and important ideas that make a difference in our counties. County officials and staff are a special group and good role models for working together. I'm grateful to be a part of this with all of you.

Counties' success in working together comes from our willingness to listen to each other's experiences and expertise. It reminds me of my family's tradition of the McGuire family timer. Every night at dinner, my mom would bring out a timer and each of us would get 3 minutes to talk about our day. It taught us that everyone has a voice, every voice matters, and the importance of listening. At AMC, I see this happening in committees, trainings, and conversations over meals. When we hear from many voices, we get more done and our results are better.

I am proud of the work that AMC is doing in bringing policy issues forward at the state and federal level to get work done for our residents. I see the amazing ways you are all contributing to this association on top of your home county responsibilities, and I am thankful for it. We still do the timer at family events because it keeps us connected while we share stories and learn from each other. I know that our work at AMC holds us together and moves us forward as well.

It has been an honor to be AMC First Vice President and I look forward to leading together in the coming year as President. I wish you all the best this holiday season! ■

*Mary Jo McGuire, Ramsey County Commissioner
AMC First Vice President*

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