



Le Sueur County, MN

Tuesday, August 28, 2018

Board Meeting

Item 5

10:30 a.m. Dan Larson, MRC Executive Director (15 min)

Staff Contact:



August 28, 2018

Le Sueur County Board Members:

I'm writing to thank you for allowing MN Rural Counties to visit with the board today about the benefits of adding your county's considerable talents and energies to our membership group. I regret I am not able to be there in person due to my own county board commitments, but I hope you will give every consideration to joining MRC, and help us build new strength in Greater Minnesota.

In this time when any given issue is as likely to split along rural / metro lines as it is along party lines, MRC is an established and well-regarded organization with coordinated leadership and communications capabilities that advocates specifically for rural county concerns.

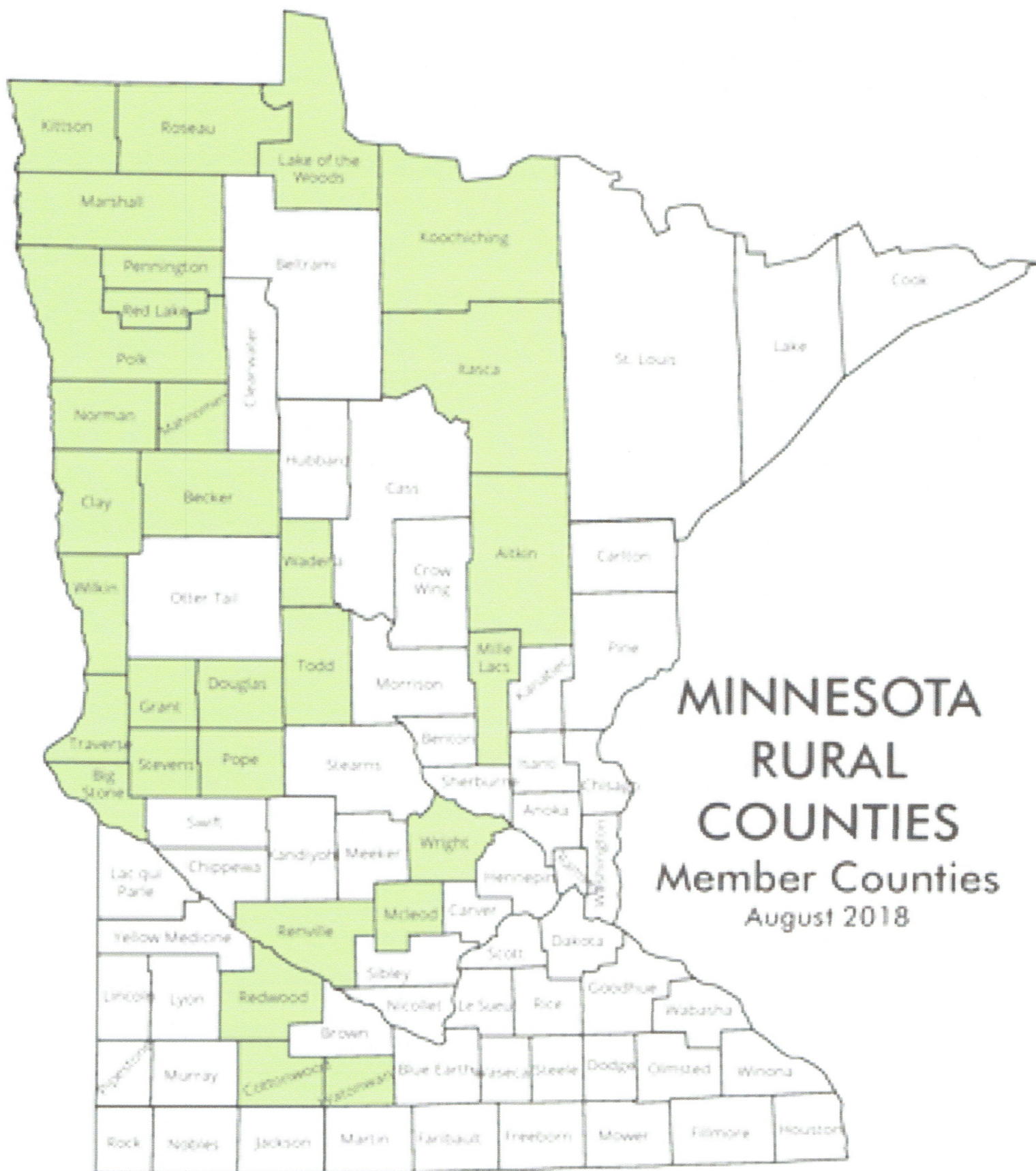
With our newest members being Cottonwood, Redwood, Renville and Watonwan counties, we are actively working to build membership in your region. You can be sure MRC will provide a welcoming platform for Le Sueur County concerns.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. I would be happy to talk to you at any time about MRC!

Sincerely,

Paul Gerde
MRC Chairman and Pope County Commissioner
Cell: 320-815-9821
E-mail: paul.gerde@co.pope.mn.us

*Aitkin / Becker / Big Stone / Clay / Cottonwood / Douglas / Grant / Itasca / Kittson / Koochiching
Lake of the Woods / Mahnommen / Marshall / McLeod / Mille Lacs / Norman / Polk / Pennington
Pope / Red Lake / Renville / Roseau / Stevens / Todd / Traverse / Wadena / Wilkin / Watonwan / Wright*



Here's what your colleagues are saying about MRC:

"Recreation is a key part of the economy in our area. Before MRC went to work on it, metro and DNR interests were taking 86% of Legacy Parks and Trails funding, while the remaining 80 non-metro counties were forced to compete with metro counties for what remained. MRC changed all that and we are now building a first-class regional parks and trails system in Greater MN."

Jim Stratton – Douglas County Commissioner

"Metro area legislators and lobbyists participate in every meeting affecting rural areas at the legislature. Greater MN needs a group like MRC that watches our interests and fights for its priorities."

Bob Kopitzke - Stevens County Commissioner

"As a charter MRC member, our county was there from the beginning when we formed to push-back on a state-sponsored one-size-fits-all wetland plan. It had support from outdoor, environmental, and metro advocates, but would have been terrible for many rural regions of the state. The MRC stopped the plan and helped create the three-tiered system that has worked as a model ever since."

Don Jensen – Pennington County Commissioner

"Greater Minnesota is building a brand-new, world-class regional parks and trails system because MRC stepped up and fought for the funding. Groups like this deserve support."

Dave Kircher - Todd County Commissioner

"Our county joined the MRC last year on a one-year trial basis. I was asked to participate in a land use work group that is addressing important concerns for rural counties, and I told my board recently that MRC is doing a good job representing rural concerns. I will be recommending continuing our membership in the MRC and encourage other counties to consider joining."

Randy Kramer - Renville County Commissioner

"As the lead staff person for a rural county, my greatest challenge is keeping up with developments on critical issues at the legislature. This is especially true late in the session when final decisions are being made. MRC sends updates as they occur – often multiple times per day when things are happening quickly – along with suggested messages and contacts. MRC's communication is invaluable and outstanding."

Rebecca Young – Stevens County Coordinator

"The MRCC is making a difference for us – but it needs to grow. It doesn't cost much to join in either time or effort, and the returns have been significant."

Kevin Stevens – Cottonwood County Commissioner

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MRC Legislative Priorities 2018

MRC Priority Issues:

- Bring adequate reliable broadband access to all corners of the state.
- Increase the percentage of the total monthly Mortgage Registry and Deed Tax collections retained by counties.
- Support County Relief if Utilities Prevail in Challenging Dept. of Revenue Valuations.
- Support county notification of grant applications for the acquisition of private lands with public funds within the county.
- Establish a funding mechanism to pay landowners for buffer acquisition.

MRC Issues of Importance:

- Support bonding for local mental health facilities.
- Support bonding for local road and bridge funds.
- Support beaver control cost-share.

Aitkin / Becker / Big Stone / Clay / Cottonwood / Douglas / Grant / Itasca / Kittson
Koochiching / Lake of the Woods / Mahnommen / Marshall / McLeod / Mille Lacs / Norman / Pennington Polk / Pope
Red Lake / Redwood / Renville / Roseau / Stevens / Todd / Traverse / Wadena
Watsonwan / Wilkin

Jerry and Steph Paumen

Plato, MN

Business: Young farm family who own and operate a retail seed business in addition to farming.

Internet Service: Switched from too-slow DSL offered by the local telephone company to costly patchwork of wireless accounts.

Our Story: Farming and running a small business are hard enough, but the internet access we depend on is a nightmare. We had something that the local telco called “high-speed broadband,” but it was too slow to deliver even basic email and file transfer. We’ve looked into fixed wireless but have line-of-sight issues. My parents live nearby and have satellite, but service depends on fair weather and it’s costly. We’re stuck with cell phones and cellular hot spots. We run the farm and business off of four dedicated accounts, have a fifth for our teenage son, and add a sixth during fieldwork in the spring and fall. These are top of the line plans and we pay about \$350 a month for basic communications only. Our data lasts about three weeks - we pay extra after that. We’re doing everything we can to build success for our family and community, but in this day and age, you cannot compete if you don’t have access to reliable, affordable high-speed broadband.

Our Message:

MRC and MAT are participating members of the Rural Broadband Coalition and support the coalition message for 2018:
“Fund the Border-to-Border Broadband program. No new policy this year.”

Goal: The Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition and its supporters request the 2018 Legislature to fund the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Grant program with \$51.48 million in 2018 to achieve the state’s 2026 broadband speed goal of 100 megabits per second (Mbps) download and 20 Mbps upload. Consistent and stable funding of the grant program is important to allow economic development agencies, local governments and others to be creative and collaborative in their approach to providing broadband services to these areas.

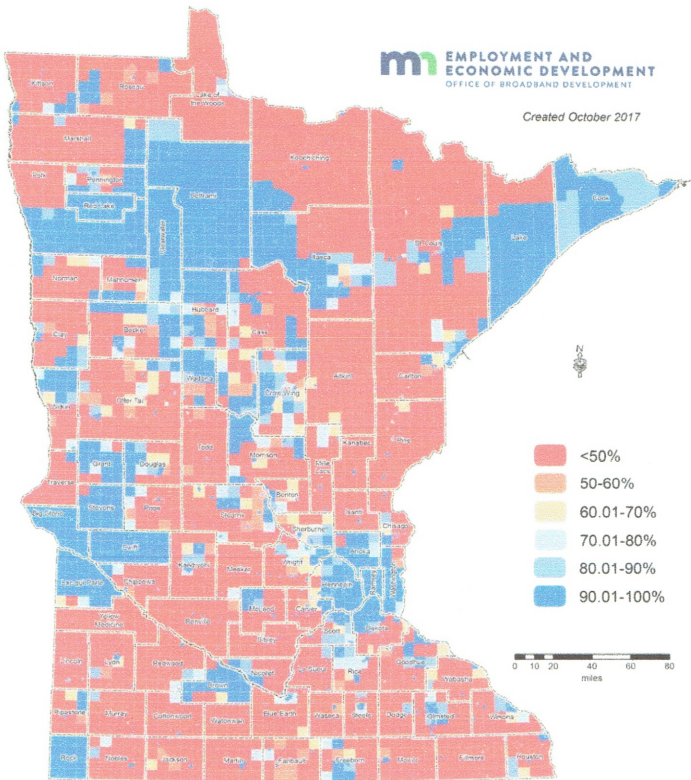
Background: The Legislature has traditionally provided funding for the Border-to-Border Broadband Grant Program on an annual basis, rather than over the biennium. Last session, the Legislature included \$20 million for the program. The Office of Broadband Development received 70 applications in the 2017 grant cycle totaling over \$50 million in requests for broadband infrastructure projects throughout the state.

The Governor’s Task Force on Broadband Report recommends \$71.48 million per biennium in on-going funding over the next four years. This will provide broadband internet speeds of 25 Mbps/3 Mbps to the 252,000 households that currently lack such service—and will help Minnesota achieve its statutory broadband speed goal of connecting all Minnesotans with broadband internet speeds of 100 Mbps/20 Mbps by 2026.

For more information, please contact:
Dan Larson, MN Rural Counties
612-210-2493 or dan27@frontiernet.net
Steve Fenske, MN Assn. of Townships
763-497-2330 or sfenske@mntownships.org

2017 Broadband Availability
in the State of Minnesota

Percentage of Households served by broadband
service of at least 25Mbps/3Mbps
Statewide: 88.11%, Rural: 73.45%



Statewide Distribution: June 24, 2018
Contact: Dan Larson
612-210-2493
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Line 3 Pipeline Tax Revenues Critical to Greater MN Counties

When the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission announces its long-awaited decision on the Enbridge Line 3 replacement, it should approve both the certification of need, and the route permit - based on the Enbridge preferred route. Additionally, we believe Governor Dayton should direct the MN Dept. of Commerce to rescind its opposition to the Line 3 replacement project - because pipelines are critical to Greater MN counties.

Pipelines have become controversial in recent years, but largely lost in all the back and forth between individuals and groups that support or oppose this project and others like it, is that pipeline property tax revenues are the foundation for many rural county budgets, and they ease the burden on individual home owners and small business owners who pay the freight for county services.

At a time when the limited resources of counties across Greater Minnesota are being stretched thin from growing concerns related to opioid and eldercare abuse, an aging and increasingly isolated population, and endless unfunded mandates, pipeline revenues have supported law enforcement, human service and transportation infrastructure programs that have improved and saved lives.

It is not an overstatement to say, pipeline revenue is lifeline revenue to many counties of the state.

Commissioners from six such counties in northern Minnesota met with Governor Dayton's staff last month to ask that he work with them to get the MN Department of Commerce to rescind its opposition to the Line 3 project. We support their request and hope the Governor is listening.

As a deep-rural county that is among the oldest and poorest in the state, Aitkin is one county that would benefit greatly from the Line 3 replacement. "Approval of the preferred route for Line 3 means an additional million dollars annually to our \$12 million budget," said Aitkin County Commissioner Don Niemi, "and there would be another million annually for the townships and school districts." He said those funds would provide significant relief to the schools, local governments, elderly homeowners on fixed income, and the small businesses that local residents and summer tourists depend on.

To counties in Greater Minnesota and the people who live there, pipelines and the property tax revenue they generate annually are critical and even life saving components to budgets that are stretched thin by endless existing and developing needs.

We hope the PUC and Governor Dayton act favorably and soon on Line 3.

Paul Gerde, Chairman
MN Rural Counties
Pope Co. Commissioner
27774 Lake Linka Lane
Glenwood, MN 56334
320-815-9821.

*Minnesota Rural Counties is a 29-member advocacy organization working on behalf of Greater Minnesota counties.



Minnesota Rural Counties Leadership List 2018

MRC Officers 2018

Chairman
Vice-Chair
Secretary/Treasurer

Paul Gerde
Russell Walker
Sharon Bring

Delegates / Alternates to MRC Board of Directors

	Delegate	Alternate(s)
Aitkin	Don Niemi	Bill Pratt
Becker	Barry Nelson	Jack Okeson
Big Stone	Wade Athey	All Other Members
Clay	Grant Weyland	Frank Gross
Cottonwood	Kevin Stevens	Jim Schmidt
Douglas	Jim Stratton	Any of the Other Members
Grant	Troy Johnson	Doyle Sperr
Itasca	Terry Snyder	Davin Tinquist
Kittson	Leon Olson	All Other Members
Koochiching	Wayne Skoe	Brian McBride
LOW	Cody Hasbargen	All Other Members
Mahnomen	David Geray	Brad Athmann
Marshall	Sharon Bring	Gary Kiesow
McLeod	Doug Krueger	Ron Shimanski
Mille Lacs	Roger Tellinghuisen	Dave Oslin
Norman	Steve Jacobson	Nathan Redland
Pennington	Don Jensen	Neil Peterson
Polk	Jerry Jacobson	All Other Members
Pope	Paul Gerde	Larry Lindor
Red Lake	Dave Sorenson	Chuck Simpson
Redwood	Jim Salfer	All Other Members
Renville	Randy Kramer	All Other Members
Roseau	Russ Walker	Glenda Phillipe
Stevens	Bob Kopitski	Phil Gausman
Todd	Dave Kircher	Gary Kneisl
Traverse	Dave Salberg	Todd Johnson
Wadena	Bill Stearns	All Other Members
Watsonwan	Jim Branstad	Ray Gustafson
Wilkin	Dennis Larson	Lyle Hovland
Wright	Charlie Borrell	Mike Potter

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Event Calendar 2018

Date:	Start Time	Event	Location
Jan. 8	10 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Board Meeting	Douglas Co
Feb. 5	10 a.m. - Noon	Board Meeting	ITV
Feb. 27	7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.	Board Meeting *AMC Legislative Conference	St. Paul
April 9	11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Board Meeting	ITV
May 7	10 a.m. - Noon	Board Meeting	ITV
May 21	Legislative Session Concludes		
May 24	10 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Board Meeting	TBD
Sept. 12	7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.	Board Meeting	Alexandria
Oct. 15	9 a.m. - 1 p.m.	Annual Business Mtg.	TBD
Dec. 2	5 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.	Board Meeting *AMC Annual Mtg.	Bloomington

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