

ANOKA COUNTY

NEWS

Volume 1-2021



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Public Health Emergency Preparedness and the COVID-19 Response

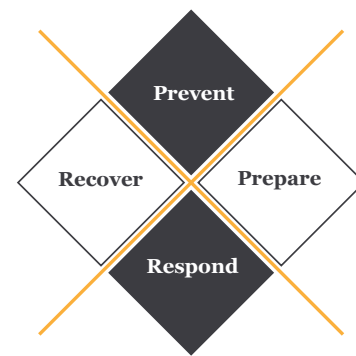
The Anoka County Public Health and Environmental Services department serves as the local authority on public health issues in the community. Public Health and Environmental Services (PHES) protects the health of Anoka County residents through a wide range of services, programs, and community partnerships.

Within PHES, the Disease Prevention and Control / Public Health Emergency Preparedness (DPC/PHEP) unit monitors infectious diseases and supports community partners and Anoka County staff to be prepared for public health emergencies. With guidance from PHES leadership, staff from the DPC/PHEP unit lead Anoka County's COVID-19 response. These experienced professionals ensure partners are supported in community efforts to address COVID-19, and that residents have what they need to stay as safe as possible during this challenging time.

Disease Prevention and Control (DPC) regularly protects community health through surveillance, prevention, and control of communicable (contagious) diseases, and provides immunization services for residents without other access to necessary vaccinations. Regular immunization clinics administered by DPC fulfill a local public health responsibility to ensure basic health services are offered to all community members. In 2019 (the most recent data available), DPC offered 43 immunization clinics in the community and administered 1,230 immunizations. During the Hepatitis A outbreak that occurred in 2019 across the metro region and the state, Anoka County DPC Public Health nurses administered 409 immunizations to protect high-risk individuals against this disease. DPC also regularly investigates many common diseases, such as sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis, and pertussis (whooping cough). In addition to many other services, DPC also helps refugees arriving in Anoka County complete a health exam and screening to aid resettlement and protect the health of the population.

Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) plans for potential threats to public health and coordinates with community partners to respond to such threats. Emergencies may occur at any time, so local public health departments in Minnesota are required to prepare for, and respond to, events such as natural disasters, man-made threats, or new diseases like COVID-19. PHEP serves the community through all stages of the "Emergency Preparedness and Response Cycle" (see right), including preventing and preparing for emergencies, responding to emergencies, and assisting the Anoka County community as it recovers from emergencies.

PHEP coordinates emergency preparedness training and other preparedness activities in partnership with local community partners and state / federal agencies. All PHES staff are required to undergo emergency preparedness training, which may include emergency exercises and drills. Many PHES staff complete advanced training based on their role in (cont.)



The Emergency Preparedness and Response Cycle, with four stages: prevent, prepare, respond, and recover.

Disease Prevention AND CONTROL

- Thoroughly investigates disease outbreaks
- Helps residents control the spread of disease
- Prevents disease through vaccinations and partnerships

emergency preparedness and response. Working closely with Anoka County Emergency Management, local healthcare providers, behavioral health, law enforcement, and other partners, the PHEP team ensures Anoka County is prepared to respond to emergencies that threaten the public's health.

PHEP also coordinates Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers, which comprise medical, public health, and behavioral health professionals who are available to assist in a public health emergency response. In 2019, PHEP had coordinated 160 MRC volunteers.

Public Health assumes a significant role in emergencies that require the distribution of medications or immunizations to the general public, and DPC/PHEP maintain plans for the mass dispensing of medicines to the community, in addition to sharing information and providing resources to help address the emergency. The ability to respond effectively to such emergencies depends on strong coordination and communication with partners and the resiliency of the community.

The success of the Anoka COVID-19 response is made possible by the expertise and diligent efforts of the DPC/PHEP Team. Since Anoka County's first COVID-19 case was identified in March 2020, the DPC/PHEP Team, along with many other PHES and Anoka County staff, have devoted much of their time to addressing the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the activation of the Incident Command System (the standard emergency response framework) and coordination with key partners, the Anoka COVID-19 response continues to successfully serve the community through a variety of initiatives. In the early stages of the response, PHES activated a **Call Center Team** to respond to calls and questions received from the community related to COVID-19. PHES also added information to the county's website, created an online data dashboard, and coordinated with the Anoka County Communications department to ensure Anoka County residents are informed about the situation. In 2020, the Call Center responded to 600 calls.

Emergencies often come with a high amount of stress. Leadership activated a **Disaster Behavioral Health Team** early in the response to provide immediate crisis intervention services for community members experiencing mental health concerns as a result of COVID-19 and related circumstances. Services include offering resources and referrals to partnering agencies. In 2020, the Disaster Behavioral Health Team responded to 33 individuals in need of these services. In addition to supporting individuals in the community, the team works on site at many testing and vaccine clinics to provide support as individuals are tested or vaccinated.

Providing essential services to community members in isolation / quarantine who do not have access to basic needs is an important responsibility of local public health

agencies in Minnesota. The **Essential Services Team** responds to requests made through the Minnesota Department of Health regarding individuals who need to stay home due to a confirmed COVID-19 test or being in close contact with someone who has COVID-19. Members of this team ensure individuals and certain community partners have what they need to safely and successfully navigate their required isolation or quarantine by providing supplies, transportation, or other guidance and resources. In 2020, the Essential Services Team responded to 596 requests from community members needing assistance.

One of the most basic needs is stable housing. The **Facilities Management – Shelter Team** works with community members who do not have a reliable place to stay for their isolation / quarantine. Through local housing partnerships, this team was able to successfully coordinate shelter for 29 individuals in 2020.

The Facilities Management – Businesses Team provides guidance and infection control information for businesses with a cluster of employees who test positive for COVID-19. Examples include retail, restaurant, manufacturing, or other local businesses. In 2020, this team served 202 businesses with guidance and resources related to COVID-19.

Like the Business Team, the **Facility Management – Congregate Team** provides guidance and infection control information for congregate living settings such as assisted living facilities, group homes, and correctional facilities. Through coordination and communication between various partners, this team addresses COVID-19 concerns as they arise in these settings, which are often vulnerable to rapid spreading of communicable diseases. In 2020, the team provided 118 consultations for congregate living settings.

The **Field Unit Team** conducts some limited COVID-19 testing in special environments and assists with health screenings at testing events and special situations. In 2020, the Field Unit Team performed 190 testing deployments or other actions in support of the COVID-19 response.

Many other teams and professionals support the COVID-19 response, including logistics / supply, planning, finance / procurement, public information officers, a safety officer, a liaison officer, information technology support, and others. PHES staff often fill multiple roles in the response, dedicating a large portion of time to complete their response duties in addition to regular work outside of the COVID-19 Response.

Article continues on page 4.



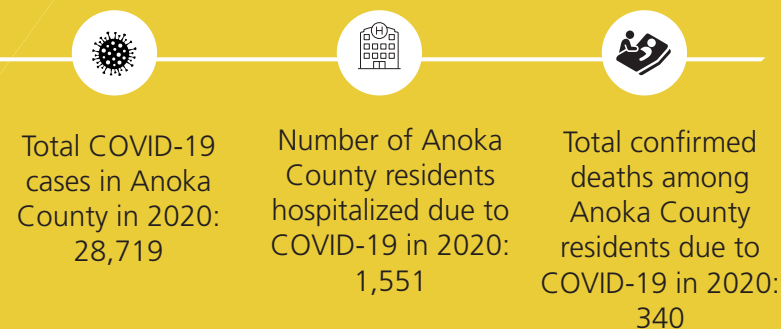
Response leadership recently added a **Vaccination/Distribution Team** to guide community vaccination efforts. As vaccines become available, this team works diligently to ensure that immunizations are given to priority groups. Eventually, all community members will have access to the COVID-19 vaccine, if desired. Because of the high amount of vaccine to distribute, and the limited capacity of response staff, response leadership contracted with Bluestone Physician Services and partnered with Goodrich Pharmacy to help administer vaccines in the community.

“Anoka County’s response to COVID-19 has been comprehensive and has involved multiple county departments and community partners,” said Scott Schulte, chair, Anoka County Board of Commissioners. “This devastating disease has profoundly impacted our community, but we continue to support and enact public health initiatives to mitigate its spread.”

Although the arrival of COVID-19 vaccines represents hope for the future, it is important for all community members to continue following public health guidance to limit the spread of this serious disease. Anoka County PHES urges all community members to maintain social distancing of at least six feet, wash hands regularly, stay home when sick, wear masks when out of the home, and to get tested and stay home if you think you’ve been exposed to someone with COVID-19. Minnesota offers many free testing opportunities for anyone who wants a test, including continuous testing facilities and mailed saliva test kits. (more information can be found on the Minnesota Department of Health – Testing website: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html>). Getting tested helps public health officials know the severity of COVID-19 in a local area, which helps reduce the spread through informed planning.

Below are summary statistics for Anoka County COVID-19 cases in 2020.

Summary of Anoka County COVID-19 Cases in 2020



For more information about COVID-19 statistics, please visit the Anoka County COVID-19 Statistics Dashboard by visiting the Anoka County PHES website (<https://www.anokacounty.us/522/Public-Health-and-Environmental-Services>) and clicking on the “Anoka County COVID-19 Statistics Dashboard” link.

COVID-19 Vaccine Update

About the COVID-19 Vaccines

The first COVID-19 vaccines were authorized by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA), which means the product is safe and very likely to be effective at preventing COVID-19, but hasn’t yet gone through the entire process of FDA licensure, and no other remedy is available. Although the FDA authorized the first vaccines under the special circumstances of an EUA, every vaccine goes through formal clinical trials to ensure their safety and effectiveness. Receiving a vaccine is optional, though all who are eligible to be vaccinated are strongly encouraged to do so. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine will help protect you and your family, co-workers, residents, patients, and the whole community.

Since there are not enough vaccine doses for everyone who may want one at this time, the COVID-19 vaccination process will take a phased approach in getting the vaccines to those who need them. Limited vaccine doses are prioritized for impact, meaning vaccines are currently offered to those at greatest risk for getting COVID-19 and experiencing severe disease and complications if they get COVID-19. Ethics committees thoughtfully considered priority groups for receiving the vaccine and determined that vaccination efforts will start with healthcare providers unable to work remotely and individuals living in long term care facilities. Moving to the next phase will depend on vaccine supply and how many people are getting vaccinated, so the timeline of when vaccines will become widely available is uncertain. Vaccines will be offered at no cost, even if the recipient doesn’t have insurance.

The State of Minnesota has developed a Vaccine Connector tool, which helps Minnesotans find out when, where, and how to get a COVID-19 vaccine. More information on this tool can be found at <https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/connector/>.

If you decide to receive the vaccine, you may require two shots given several weeks apart. You will be informed about the benefits and risks of the COVID-19 vaccine, and you have the right to accept or refuse the vaccine based on the information you receive. Side effects from the vaccine are typical of a normal immune response to any vaccine, including fever, headaches, and muscle aches.

To date, there is not enough vaccine trial information to confirm the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccine in pregnant and breastfeeding women. It is currently recommended that these individuals discuss the risks and benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine with their health care provider prior to receiving it.

Recently, public health officials have discovered new variants of the coronavirus, which are slight mutations of the original coronavirus discovered in late 2019. The new variants appear to spread more quickly than the original virus. However, there is currently no evidence to suggest that the new variants cause more severe illness or increased risk of death. Researchers believe that the currently available COVID-19 vaccines will protect recipients from new variants of the coronavirus. Although large scale vaccine distribution is on the horizon, it is still very important to continue following public health recommendations such as physical distancing, using face masks, practicing good hand hygiene, and isolating when sick or exposed to limit the spread of the virus and protect public health.

“As the vaccine rollout continues to progress, Anoka County is working to ensure those who are eligible for the vaccines can get them when supplies are in place,” said District 5 Anoka County Commissioner Mike Gamache. “These vaccines, along with adhering to public health guidance, will go a long way in helping us overcome COVID-19.”



The information provided here is up to date as of the writing of this Newsletter, though information changes quickly. The Anoka County website (<https://www.anokacounty.us/>) will have updated information about COVID-19 vaccine as it becomes available. More information about COVID-19 vaccine can be found at mn.gov/vaccine or by calling 612-426-7230 (or toll free, 1-833-431-2053).

Highway 10

LARGE-SCALE PROJECTS

to Address Congestion, Safety

Travelers on U.S. Highways 10 and 169 face significant traffic backups and safety-related issues through the cities of Anoka and Ramsey. As a result, several agencies, including Anoka County, came together and will be initiating three of the largest construction projects for the region in recent memory.

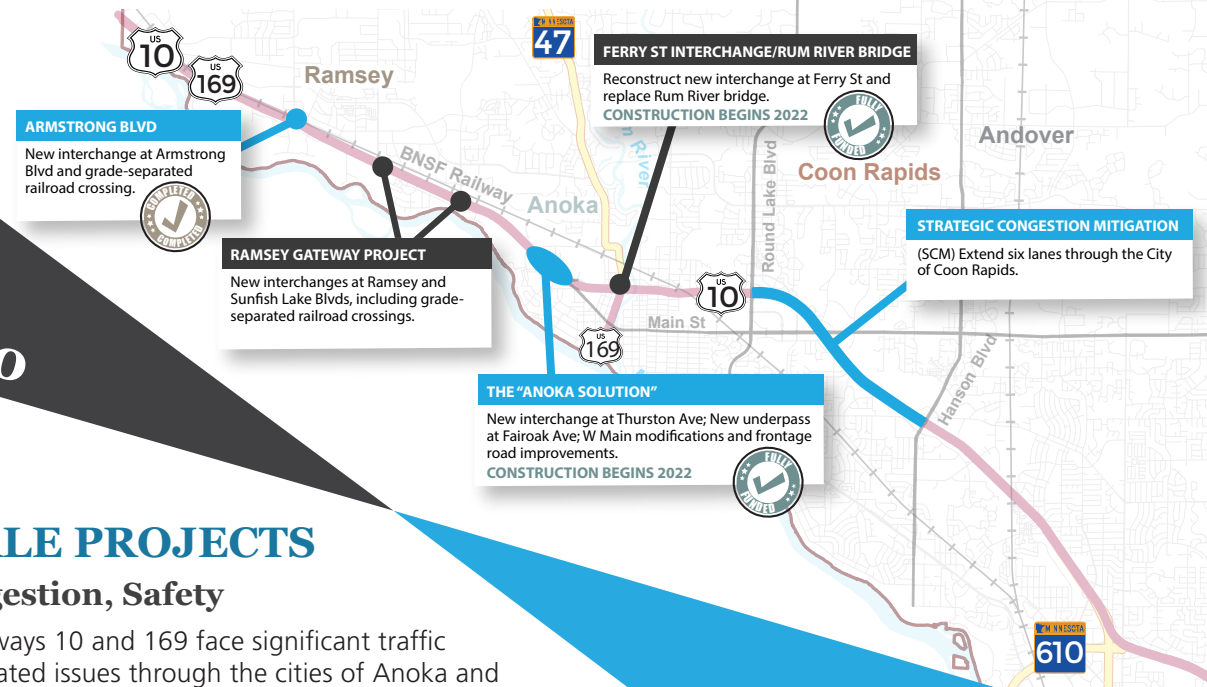
These projects are geared towards solving the frustrating (and dangerous) issues commuters deal with daily through this corridor. The first project, slated to begin in 2022, is a \$64 million project that will upgrade the aging U.S. Highway 10 bridge over the Rum River and reconstruct the Ferry Street interchange to improve traffic flow and reduce congestion. The second project, known as the "Anoka Solution," will also break ground in 2022. This is an \$85 million undertaking that will include eliminating the at-grade signals in favor of overpasses at Thurston and Fair Oak Avenues. These improvements will significantly reduce the delays in the area. Once these two projects are completed, the congestion that was experienced at the Fair Oak and Thurston Avenues signalized intersections will shift to the last two at-grade intersections on U.S. Highways 10/169 in Anoka County, located at Sunfish Lake and Ramsey Boulevards.

Over the past 10 to 15 years, several studies were conducted along this corridor to improve safety, mobility and reliability for all modes of travel. Most recently, in 2019, the City of Ramsey, in coordination with Anoka County, MnDOT, and the Metropolitan Council, further evaluated the findings from the 2014 U.S. Highway 10 corridor study to develop an updated vision for Ramsey and Sunfish Lake Boulevards. This vision has become known as the "Ramsey Gateway." The result of this study was a recommendation to replace the at-grade signalized intersections with grade-separated interchanges, construction of new frontage roads to provide safer access to local businesses, and bridges over the parallel BNSF railroad. These improvements, coupled with the fact that Armstrong Boulevard is already a grade-separated interchange, improve traffic safety, mobility and congestion.

In early 2020, Anoka County began to implement the recommendations from the 2019 study by once again commissioning a consultant to create a plan that includes the grade separations. As the design commenced, Anoka County scoured the various governmental agencies seeking sources to fully fund the estimated \$138 million project. The county received a significant boost in funds in June of 2020 with the award of \$40 million through the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) program. This money, coupled with various other grants, bonds, and funding programs, has created a bank of nearly \$84 million on hand for construction. Anoka County is confident additional sources will be found in the next few years to fully fund the project before 2024.

As Anoka County revisits the recommendations from the 2019 corridor study, engineers are finding innovative and exciting ways to refine the original concept. These design variations are resulting in efficiencies and cost savings that are going to be huge benefits to roadway users in the future. The following articles will discuss the improvements to the corridor and how they will affect users daily.

"These projects will be a massive undertaking, but Anoka County is well prepared to complete them due to forward-thinking construction plans and our county's ability to secure grant funding to cover large portions of the project costs," said District 6 Anoka County Commissioner Jeff Reinert.



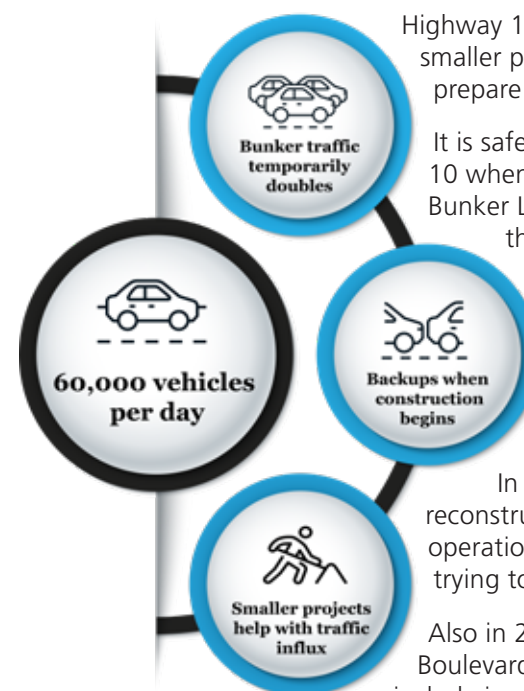
Anoka County

U.S. Highway 10 Traffic to Shift to Other Roads During Construction

Anoka County is preparing for a significant shift of traffic during the upcoming U.S. Highway 10 improvement projects.

Currently, the four-lane expressway carries over 60,000 vehicles per day through the area, which experiences significant delays and backups. The two multi-year projects scheduled to begin during the 2022 construction season are expected to provide a significant reduction to these delays as well as reduce the number of crashes. It is anticipated that many of the current 60,000 vehicles will seek alternate routes around the U.S. Highway 10 projects during construction.

Temporarily Moving Traffic



It has been estimated that the peak hour traffic volumes on Bunker Lake Boulevard will temporarily double during the U.S.

Highway 10 construction. Because of this, there are a host of smaller projects in the region that will be completed in 2021 to prepare for the influx of additional traffic beginning in 2022.

It is safe to assume there will be daily backups on U.S. Highway 10 when construction begins and that traffic will migrate north to Bunker Lake Boulevard, which parallels U.S. Highway 10. There are three pavement preservation projects that connect these two thoroughfares that will be completed by the end of the 2021 construction season. These projects are intended to extend the life of the pavement and minimize maintenance operations during the U.S. Highway 10 work. Segments of road that will have been reconditioned include Highway 47, 7th Avenue and Round Lake Boulevard.

In 2021, the intersection of Bunker Lake Boulevard and Highway 47 will be reconstructed as well. This \$3.8 million improvement project will drastically improve operations and not only address current issues but help to minimize delays for traffic trying to bypass the U.S. Highway 10 work.

Also in 2021, Anoka County is leading a spot-improvements project for Bunker Lake Boulevard, between Sunfish Lake Boulevard and Ramsey Boulevard. This project will include improvements such as dedicated left turn lanes, median channelization, and a traffic signal at Bunker Lake Boulevard's intersection with Sunwood Drive. These changes will help mitigate the anticipated traffic influx associated with the U.S. Highway 10 work. An online open house for this project will occur in the spring of 2021. As always, check the Anoka County Highway Department's website, anokacounty.us/307/Highway-Department, for more detailed project information and updates.

"In the short term, there will certainly be delays on Highway 10 and some surrounding thoroughfares, but the safety enhancements and congestion mitigation that will result because of these projects will help alleviate issues on these roadways long into the future," said District 1 Anoka County Commissioner Matt Look.

These construction projects should reduce the headache for the daily commuter over the next few years while the Anoka Solution and the Ramsey Gateway projects are underway. In the final article of this series, we will take a more detailed look at what will be built as a result of these two projects, and how the final configuration will affect the corridor.

GRADE SEPARATION, ACCESS MANAGEMENT to resolve congestion

The U.S. Highway 10 corridor in the cities of Anoka and Ramsey will be receiving approximately \$223 million to fund two projects that will incorporate several significant improvements to the area over the next five years.

The improvements are intended to reduce congestion and crashes in the area by increasing the capacity and reducing the number of conflict points along U.S. Highways 10/169. The design uses two primary concepts to achieve this goal: grade separation and access management.

The first concept of grade separation is a simple notion that has an obvious advantage to the flow of traffic along U.S. Highway 10. Creating the ability for cross traffic to pass over the highway simply means commuters driving through the corridor will not have to stop at traffic signals. This provides the ability for U.S. Highway 10 traffic to flow more freely without delay. Not only is there a capacity advantage but the grade separation eliminates the potential for crashes by removing the existing conflict points on the highway system. Additionally, the local traffic that uses Ramsey and Sunfish Lake Boulevards will enjoy a grade separation over the railroad tracks. Obviously, this means the local traffic will no longer have to wait for the seemingly endless line of rail traffic and instead can simply pass over it. There is a similar safety benefit from separating road traffic from rail traffic as well.

The second concept of access management relates to

the numerous businesses in this area of the county. Currently, most businesses have direct access to U.S. Highway 10, which leads to lots of vehicles entering and exiting randomly through the corridor. These vehicles tend to decelerate and accelerate in the through lanes, which leads to congestion and significant safety concerns.

An analogy to describe the situation compares the corridor to a garden hose, and the traffic to the water flowing through the hose. If your goal is to get as much water through the hose as possible, you would not want the hose to be full of holes. Reducing the access to U.S. Highway 10 can be equated to plugging the holes in a garden hose to maximize the flow.

Of course, businesses still need to be provided access, and this is achieved with the creation of what are called frontage roads. These frontage roads provide the ability for vehicles to access all the local businesses while not affecting the traffic flow within the U.S. Highway 10 corridor. Thinking back to the garden hose analogy, it would be the equivalent of adding a second hose to carry water alongside the main hose, which is more efficient than trying to water everything with one big hose full of holes.

Together, the two concepts of grade separation and access management work to resolve the congestion and crash issues that we experience today throughout the corridor.

Two Anoka County Departments win AMC Awards

Anoka County received two Association of Minnesota Counties Awards during AMC's annual conference Dec. 7, 2020, which was held virtually due to COVID-19.

The County Achievement Award was presented to Anoka County for its "Absentee Ballot: Behind the Scenes" video. This video, made available on the county website before the primary election, gave an in-depth look at the absentee ballot process. The AMC-County Conservation Award was presented to Anoka County for the Rum River Restoration Initiative. This project, which utilized various state and local grant dollars, focused on riverbank stabilization, water quality enhancements and fish and wildlife habitat improvements along 26 miles of the Rum River in Anoka County.

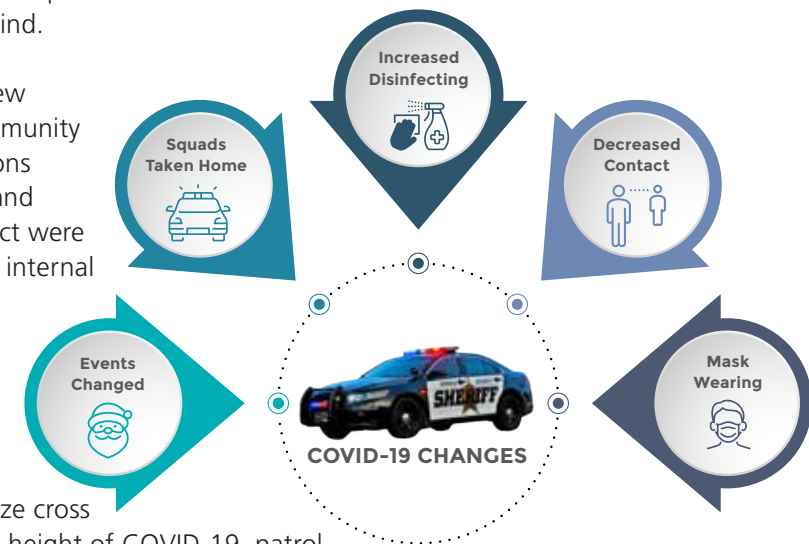
"We're proud to be recognized by AMC for both of these initiatives," said District 2 Anoka County Commissioner Julie Braastad. "Informing voters about the absentee ballot process, especially during this past election cycle when absentee ballots were issued and accepted at record levels, was immensely important. Our county's dedication to preserving and enhancing the Rum River is steadfast, and we're honored to be acknowledged for our work on this front, as well."

Sheriff's Office Embraces Flexibility to Stay Safe Amid COVID-19

As the Anoka County Sheriff's Office reflects on all the impacts the COVID-19 pandemic, planning and creative solutions come to mind.

COVID-19 required everyone in the office to create new operational plans to keep staff, inmates, and the community safe while continuing to meet service standards. Actions such as wearing masks, increasing sanitizing efforts, and adjusting office practices to minimize in-person contact were quickly implemented with great success in preventing internal outbreaks of the virus.

Previously, public safety usually required face-to-face contact. However, throughout the past year staff had to figure out the appropriate balance in operations to continue keeping the community safe, without inadvertently spreading COVID-19. To minimize cross contamination due to sharing workspaces, during the height of COVID-19, patrol deputies were allowed to take home squad cars during their rotations on duty. Some proactive enforcement was limited to decrease non-essential contact with the public, and when possible, calls for service were handled via telephone.



Detectives, victims, witnesses, and suspects were always wearing masks when conducting interviews on scene or in the office. When detectives were called to a death where COVID-19 may have been a factor, greater discretion was used in determining the level of response, while still ensuring a thorough investigation was completed. Evidence intake procedures were altered by asking all agencies to schedule appointments to drop off evidence to aid in social distancing. Evidence receipts were emailed to reduce the contact between customers and staff, and the intake counters were always disinfected between uses.

The jail purchased a UVC Disinfection System that can inactivate viruses, bacteria, and fungi in a room, allowing for faster and more effective cleaning of cells and communal spaces in the jail. In addition, the Anoka County Jail and Courthouse staff worked to upgrade systems that would allow for video court appearances between the two buildings. With evictions being drastically slowed and transports of inmates between facilities reduced, civil and transport deputies have been assisting in other parts of the office that have needed assistance during the pandemic.

Unfortunately, a drastic decrease in community engagement events occurred due to safety precautions. However, the Anoka County Sheriff's Office was still able to spread some holiday cheer by hosting a Drive Thru Santa Express event that allowed children to safely engage with Santa, Mrs. Claus, and the Grinch! This event also collected over 4,000 pounds of food for a local food shelf and a trailer full of toys for Toys for Joy.

Anoka County Offering Health-Focused Grant Opportunities

Anoka County Public Health is offering an opportunity for neighborhoods and community organizations to submit project proposals for Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) funding.

The funding, which will be awarded in the form of "mini grants" of up to \$3,000 per project proposal, is to increase sustainable opportunities for social connectedness through healthy eating, physical activity, mental well-being and reducing commercial tobacco use in communities. Examples of the types of projects this funding could be used for include starting a community garden, organizing a bike share program, or offering tobacco-free/vaping-free resources and support.

Entities applying for these grants do not need to be registered organizations, but they should be consistent, sustainable groups within a neighborhood or community.

Applications, which will be accepted until March 31, and more information on the grants, can be found at [Anokacounty.us/mini-grant](https://anokacounty.us/mini-grant). Those who receive the funding will be notified April 14; the project funding period is May 1 to Oct. 31. Further questions about the grants can be directed to SHIP@co.anoka.mn.us or 763-324-4344.



SUMMER DAY CAMPS 2021

**IN-PERSON AND
VIRTUAL DAY
CAMPS AVAILABLE**
Registration Opens March 15

Camp topics for ages preschool through grade 8 include: Survival Adventures, Insect Investigations, Wilderness Living Skills, and more!

REGISTER EARLY AND SAVE

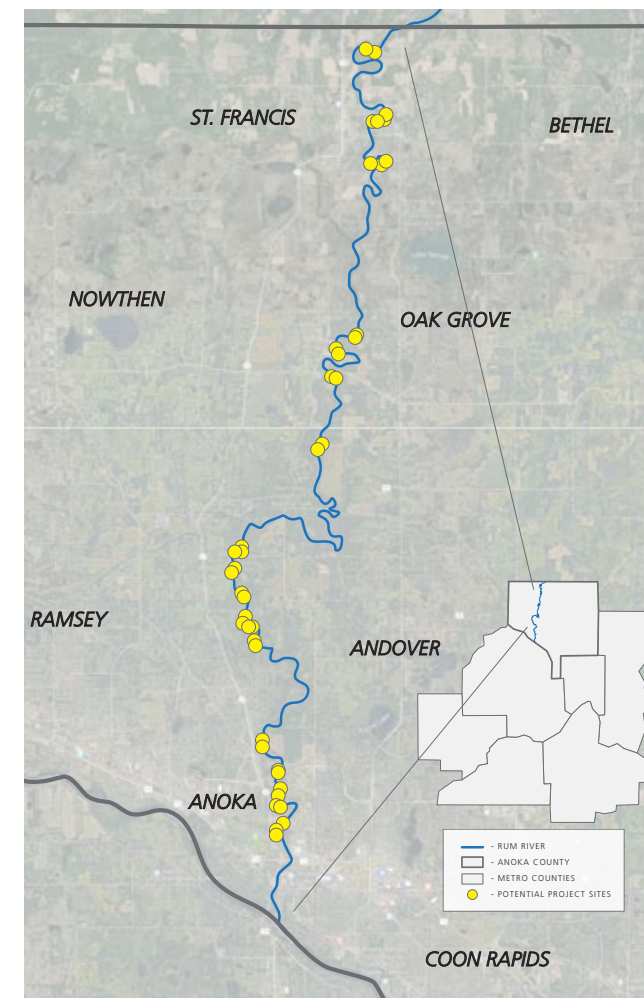
Register by May 7, 2021 and save \$5 per participant on preschool and grandparent camps and \$10 on school-aged camps.

Register online at anokacountyparks.com or call 763-324-3350

RUM RIVER CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

The Rum River is a highly recognized fishing and recreational river that feeds into the Mississippi River with currently 7,800 tons of sediment loading annually. The loading occurs from 80 identified sites (shown on the map), involving 133 public and private property owners that span more than seven miles. To start to address restoration, Anoka County partnered with the Anoka Conservation District and developed an approach to bank restoration, which includes three types of restoration solutions; depending on the severity of erosion they are: 1. Cedar tree revetments; 2. Bioengineering; 3. Armoring.

Once the solutions were determined, Anoka County put together an aggressive 5-year funding program to address as many sites as possible within that timeframe. Funding is being sought from a variety of sources at the state, county and local levels. The county will be providing matching grants to the private landowners to help defray restoration costs. After the 5-year period, the project will be assessed to ensure the project is meeting the outcomes expected and if successful, it is anticipated to continue for another five years, provided funding is available.



[ANOKACOUNTYPARKS.COM](https://anokacountyparks.com)

FAMILY EARTH WEEK CELEBRATION

**FREE
EVENT**

APRIL 19-24
VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON
AT WARGO NATURE CENTER

Join Wargo Nature Center in celebrating the Earth all week long! Earth activities are happening all week and pre-registration may be required. Call 763-324-3350 for more information.

KIDS FISHING CLINIC

MAY 1
COON RAPIDS DAM
REGIONAL PARK,
9 AM - 12 PM

Bring the family and learn how to fish, be safe near the water, cast, and identify fish. All equipment is provided. Pre-registration required.

**FREE
EVENT**

WORK IN THE PARKS

NOW HIRING

PARK MAINTENANCE
NATURAL RESOURCES
PARK SERVICES
CHOMONIX GOLF COURSE
BUNKER BEACH WATER PARK
WARGO NATURE CENTER

APPLY ONLINE AT
[ANOKACOUNTYPARKS.
COM/PARKJOBS](https://anokacountyparks.com/parkjobs)

Anoka County News

COMING IN 2021 BUNKER BEACH WATER PARK

A **RENOVATED AND HEATED WAVE POOL**
FEATURING A **3,000 SQ. FT. LAGOON**
FAMILY RESTROOM BUILDING



MORE DETAILS [BUNKERBEACH.COM](https://bunkerbeach.com)

Anoka County LIBRARY

JOB SEEKER RESOURCES

Available in English and Spanish



Career Advice and Resources

Find your desired career field.

Live One-On-One Coaches

Resume, cover letters, interviews.



English Language Learning Test Prep

High School Equivalency, U.S. Citizenship, ASVAB, TABE, HESI, and more.

Microsoft Office Help

Word, Powerpoint, Outlook, Excel.

College Readiness

Match majors and careers to skills and interests.

AP, SAT, ACT, CLEP, & TOEFL exam prep.

Application and FAFSA help.



Learning in the palm of your hand

3-5 minute lessons via app or web browser or call/text 818-423-5533 (no internet required).

English, reading, math, job skills.

Anoka County Library users enter PIN Code 5749 to register.



Business, Tech, Creative Design Courses

Expert-led online tutorials

Learn in-demand skills to achieve personal and professional goals.



VISIT ANOKACOUNTYLIBRARY.ORG

for more information on upcoming events and programs

PROGRAMS

Setting Up a Small Business Site or Blog (Online)

6 p.m. Wednesday, March 31.

Club Book: Therese Anne Fowler (Online)

7 p.m. Thursday, April 1.

Frank Sentwali: Enterbrainment Live! (Online)

1 p.m. Sunday, April 4.

Get Started on Your Writing Project (Online)

6 p.m. Tuesday, April 6.

Book Look Book Club for grades 3-6

2 p.m. Thursday, April 15.

Copywriting Tips and Tricks

6 p.m. Monday, April 26.



SUMMER ADVENTURES

Begins June 1, 2021

Complete challenges and track your reading online: anokacounty.beanstack.org.

The eLibrary is Moving

Audiobooks, ebooks and magazines are moving from RBDigital and cloudLibrary to the Libby app by OverDrive. Download the Libby app to get started using the new platform. The move will be in phases and completed by summer 2021.



Benefits of Libby

- One Tap App: All materials available in one spot.
- Offline Access: Download items for offline reading or stream them to save space.
- Read Across Devices: all checkouts, bookmarks, and reading progress sync across your devices.
- Listen in Your Car: Play audiobooks with Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, or a Bluetooth connection.
- All metro area libraries will now use the same app for eBooks.



Good news for Kindle users!

Download Libby's companion app, Overdrive, for access to the eLibrary on your Kindle.



Apps are available for download.



EASY VIRTUAL FAIR

An Online Job Search Resource

One of the many difficulties of COVID-19 is that the pandemic has affected the job search process and placed a pause on in-person hiring events.

These gatherings of employers and jobseekers oftentimes lead to connections that fulfill the needs of both these groups — employers are able to bring in new employees to their companies who can perform the required job duties and provide needed creativity and insight, and jobseekers can land employment at well-respected companies that offer competitive pay, benefits and advancement opportunities.

Recognizing the need to keep job fairs going during the pandemic, CareerForce in Blaine has incorporated Anoka County Easy Virtual Fairs, which allow jobseekers to connect with employers in various fields, such as healthcare, construction, manufacturing and more.

A Robust Hiring Experience

The Easy Virtual Fair experience mirrors in-person job fairs in many ways: There are a variety of employers present, with several openings at their companies. Company representatives can reach out to jobseekers through an instant messaging feature before jobseekers even check out a company's page. Each company featured in the job fair has easily accessible contact information, and jobseekers can read job descriptions, express their interest and chat with company representatives in real time.

The Easy Virtual Fair even allows jobseekers to create a profile with an optional photo, attach a resume, and include an email and phone number at which they can be contacted. The site also has links to CareerForce resources, such as resume writing online workshops and a video that provides tips about online interviewing. To create your career profile and join an event, visit <https://anokacounty.easyvirtualfair.com>. The metro region also holds interactive career fairs; for more information on these opportunities, visit <https://metroregioninteractive.easyvirtualfair.com>.

"The Easy Virtual Fair is yet another resource for career-seekers," said District 3 Commissioner Robyn West. "This new, interactive tool allows employers and prospective employees to make connections in a safe virtual environment."

Careerforce is Minnesota's workforce system—made up of State of Minnesota workforce development staff, business leaders, nonprofit organizations and local government partners throughout the state. CareerForce is dedicated to helping Minnesotans prepare for and find fulfilling work and helping Minnesota employers find the employees they need to succeed.

Grants Available for Housing Assistance

In December of last year, the UCare Foundation approached Anoka County with a grant opportunity that focuses on health equity by providing housing assistance to certain individuals impacted by COVID-19.

Anoka County now has up to \$100,000 from UCare to allocate to county residents, primarily those who are at risk of becoming homeless. This funding is available until November 2021 or until funding is expended.

The services available through this grant include:

- Housing related expenses such as rental and mortgage assistance and past due utilities related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Flexible funds to remove barriers that prevent people from renting, such as past due utility bills and past rent (in collections).
- Damage deposit assistance.

Those applying for this funding must be impacted by COVID-19 and their income should fall within 200 to 400 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The Anoka County Community Action Program and the Salvation Army will determine applicant eligibility. For more information on income eligibility and how to apply, visit anokacounty.us/2689/Basic-Needs.



Property Assessment and Taxation Reminders

First Half Real Estate Property Taxes Due May 15



Property owners are reminded that the first half of the 2021 real estate property tax is due May 15, 2021 (which falls on a Saturday, allowing for timely payments to be made until May 17). The second half is due Oct. 15. If your property is classified as agricultural, the second half is not due until Nov. 15. These dates do not apply to those who have their taxes rolled into their mortgage payments.

Property tax statements will be mailed to all property owners by March 31. You can make your property tax payments by mail, online, at drop box locations or at Anoka County Property Records and Taxation: 2100 3rd Ave., Anoka, Mn 55303. For additional information, visit anokacounty.us, email RS-PropTax@co.anoka.mn.us or call 763-323-5400.

Assessing Staff to View Properties in Quintile Area

The assessor values all property in the county for property taxation purposes. State law requires the assessor to physically inspect all properties every five years. To accomplish this, the assessor's office views approximately one-fifth of the existing parcels each year. These reviews will help determine the Jan. 2, 2022 estimated/ taxable market values for property taxes payable in 2023.

When appraisers visit the property, they verify the accuracy of information used to determine market values for properties. This includes a home's size, age, style, condition, amenities, etc. By inspecting both the interior and exterior of a home, appraisers can do their best job of making a thorough and equitable appraisal of each property. Appraisers carry picture identification badges, drive identified vehicles and practice the proper COVID-19 safety guidelines.

Your valuation and classification notice, which includes the estimated market value, is mailed annually with your property tax statement. If you have any questions regarding the quintile review or your valuation and classification notice, call 763-323-5400.

"Assessing staff have important roles when it comes to determining market values of properties, and although their jobs will be a little different this year, due to COVID-19, they will still be doing their inspections," said District 4 Anoka County Commissioner Mandy Meisner. "Our county staff will adhere to all of the necessary precautions while ensuring this important, state-mandated, task is completed."



Batteries



Cellphones, laptops, car keys, e-cigarettes and many other items are powered by batteries. If punctured or damaged they can cause explosions and fires.

Never place batteries in the trash or recycling bin.



Find disposal locations:
AnokaCounty.us/RecyclingDirectory



Rechargeable

- Lithium ion (Li-ion)
- Nickel cadmium (NI-Cd)
- Nickel metal hydride (NI-MH)
- Lead acid (Pb)



Single Use

- Alkaline (A,AA,C,D)
- Button
- Lithium



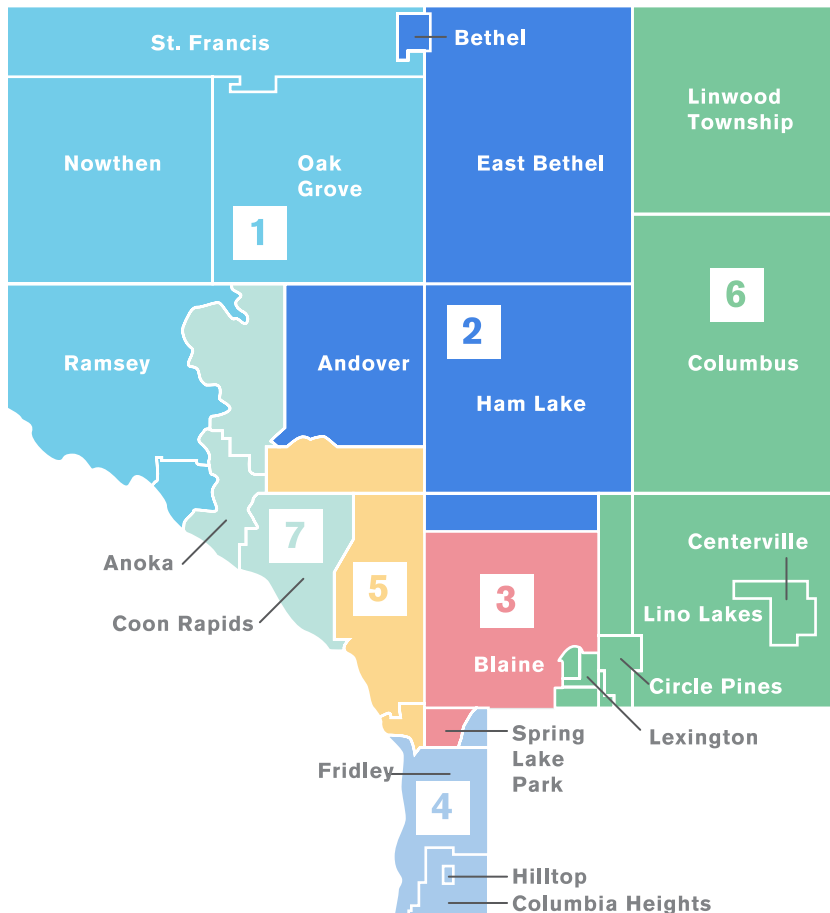
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Visit our website!

ANOKA COUNTY LEADERSHIP

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DISTRICT 3
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COMMISSIONER



Mike Gamache
DISTRICT 5
COMMISSIONER



Jeff Reinert
DISTRICT 6
COMMISSIONER



Scott Schulte
DISTRICT 7
COMMISSIONER



James Stuart
COUNTY
SHERIFF



Tony Palumbo
COUNTY
ATTORNEY

County board meetings are generally held the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 9:30 a.m. in Room 705 of the Anoka County Government Center in Anoka. Watch board meetings live at anokacounty.us. "Anoka County News" is produced by Anoka County Communications, Erik Thorson, Director, 763-324-4612 publicinfo@co.anoka.mn.us • anokacounty.us/newsletter
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