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**Contact the SEMLM**  
**brenda@semlm.org**



### *From the Prez – It's time to meet!*

Things are looking up again for meeting in person, and the SEMLM is going to make the most of it on March 29 in Goodview. I'm looking forward to seeing all of you again, and we have lots to do together.

Kasson was fortunate to have a session on regional transit late last year, and it was an eye-opener for our city. More cities need to hear the details on this, and what can be done to have a much better regional transit system for our residents. The planning process is key, and cities can participate. Kasson sees regional transit as a very important thing for our residents, and a great service we need to have available to them. When you find out on the 29<sup>th</sup> how this is moving forward, your city will want to participate, too.

The other hot topic is our SE MN Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) project. Though we don't have a Regional Development Commission, we are fortunate to have regional organizations to help make this happen. SMIF, SEMLM, CEDA, SEMNT, UMN Extension, and others are bringing together a work group and strategic planning team to do the CEDS, which is necessary for access to federal EDA funding for SE MN. Our region has not had access to those funds for many years, and it's time to change that. Our cities need to participate, get our needs and ideas incorporated into the region's strategy, and build on our community strengths for the benefit of our residents all across the region.

A SEMLM event is never all work, it's mostly about fun, even when we are working! City officials and staff have a good time together at our events, and our guests do, too. You can count on learning a lot to take back to your city, and you'll have a great time doing it. We've missed seeing all of you, so be there on the 29<sup>th</sup>!

SEMLM President Dan Egger  
 Kasson City Council

## SEMLM Board

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[councilpersonegger@cityofkasson.com](mailto:councilpersonegger@cityofkasson.com)

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[rylande@hotmail.com](mailto:rylande@hotmail.com)

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[dmatejka@goodviewmn.com](mailto:dmatejka@goodviewmn.com)

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[erickson000@centurytel.net](mailto:erickson000@centurytel.net)

### **Trustee Tony Chladek**

Rushford City Administrator  
[rushford@acegroup.cc](mailto:rushford@acegroup.cc)



## ***Boardroom News***

As an extension of the SEMLM Board discussion on cities' current struggle to retain and recruit fire and ambulance crew numbers, the SEMLM connected with several people from various organizations to get information on approaches being tried in other parts of the state. Of particular note are the contacts made with

**Dean Wrobbel, retired fire chief from St. Cloud, current LMC appointee to the Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education (MBFTE).**

**Anne Finn, LMC IGR staff covering Public Safety and EMS issues.**

The SEMLM is looking at whether to have a session on this topic, relative to both fire and ambulance services, at a membership event in late June, or via online sessions. Watch for more on this topic.

The SEMLM has been approached by one of our counties about whether there could be a SEMLM County Partner membership program, similar to our SEMLM Community Partner program for businesses and nonprofits to support the work of the SEMLM. Board discussion is ongoing at this time, with parameters and other details being considered.

The Board is already clear that this would not dilute city members' representation in the SEMLM. County interaction would be through the city members of the SEMLM when voting is involved for an issue. Only cities would be eligible for voting on SEMLM policy or organizational business.

The Board and Director are outlining possible benefits to be offered as part of any proposed County Partnership Program. County membership in a Partnership Program would generate revenue to support the regional work of the SEMLM on numerous topics and projects benefitting both cities and counties. A County Partnership program would thus help maintain the current low dues structure for cities, which makes it possible for cities of all sizes to participate as SEMLM members. In return, counties would get several different benefits, including some prepaid event registrations as part of their annual program fee. All benefits are under discussion by the Board.

## **Step up to the Board!**

### **Share, learn, have fun.**

Address key topics in our region by finding solutions that really work, and ways to prevent problems for our communities.

Current board openings are for **both elected officials and staff**. Work with bright and highly creative people from all across the region, sharing ideas, and learning much to bring back to your own city.

It's good for you, your city, and the region when you serve on the SEMLM Board.

***You know you're ready for it.***

***Page 14 is ready for you, too.***



# Shaping the future, one project at a time.



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what's next in infrastructure.

---

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# CEDS THIS WAY

What?  
Why?  
How?  
When?

REGISTER online

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/semlm-spring-event-march-29-goodview-elks-lodge-tickets-293373567237>

## What?

The **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)** is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development. A CEDS is the result of a regionally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide the economic prosperity and resiliency of an area or region.

## Why?

The CEDS provides a vehicle for individuals, organizations, local governments, institutes of learning, and private industry to engage in a meaningful conversation and debate about what capacity building efforts would best serve economic development in the region. The CEDS should take into account and, where appropriate, integrate or leverage other regional planning efforts, including the use of other available federal funds, private sector resources, and state support which can advance a region's CEDS goals and objectives.

\* A CEDS is a prerequisite for designation by the federal EDA as an Economic Development District (EDD). Regions must update their CEDS at least every five years **to qualify for federal EDA assistance under its Public Work\$ and Economic Adjus\$ment A\$\$istance program.**

## How?

- *Summary Background:* A summary background of the economic conditions of the region;
- *SWOT Analysis:* An in-depth analysis of regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (commonly known as a "SWOT" analysis);
- *Strategic Direction/Action Plan:* The strategic direction and action plan should build on findings from the SWOT analysis and incorporate/integrate elements from other regional plans (e.g., land use and transportation, workforce development, etc.) where appropriate as determined by the EDD or community/region engaged in development of the CEDS. The action plan should also identify the stakeholder(s) responsible for implementation, timetables, and opportunities for the integrated use of other local, state, and federal funds;
- *Evaluation Framework:* Performance measures used to evaluate the organization's implementation of the CEDS and impact on the regional economy.

In addition to the sections noted above, the CEDS must incorporate the concept of economic resilience (i.e., the ability to avoid, withstand, and recover from economic shifts, natural disasters, the impacts of climate change, etc.).

## When?

It begins **March 29<sup>th</sup> at the SEMLM event** at the Elks Lodge in Goodview. The project must be submitted in 2023. The goal is to be done in late 2022, allowing for early review, and time to make any needed tweaks well before the final due date.



## City Trivia

*Who is this??*

*You're looking at Lonsdale City Administrator, Joel Erickson! Joel has been administrator for Lonsdale since December 2004. Joel recently called the SEMLM for info, and we had a great conversation. Thanks, Joel! We're glad to have you and the City of Lonsdale in the SEMLM.*

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## Fire & Ambulance

Recruiting, Retaining,  
Training, Rewarding

Some of our cities are really struggling with these issues. Cutting back on training to alleviate some of the time burden is seldom an option, though it is good to review the overall training schedules to check for repeats.

If a city cuts training time and the crew misses some key training, the city makes itself and the crew vulnerable to injuries and lawsuits, a bad situation for all.

The SEMLM is working with state experts, people who work in these fields, or handle legislation related to them, to find solutions for our cities on this. We're also looking at the best way to get the information to you, and to have it available on the SEMLM website as a reference.

If possible, this will be one of our June meeting topics. You will be encouraged to bring your fire and ambulance leaders to attend the event to ask questions, give input, and talk with each other city-to-city.

I'm looking at having the June meeting be toward the western side of the eleven-county area. If your city is able to host, please contact me as soon as you can. An early start makes for a terrific meeting. I love working with our host cities!

Thank you!

Brenda

**Got questions about hosting?**

**Call (507) 951-8059**

**or email [brenda@semlm.org](mailto:brenda@semlm.org)**



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## *Sven and Ole take a day off*

Silly on 6

Although they know there are no more fish in the lake, Sven and Ole go ice fishing to enjoy a hot thermos of coffee and a day off from work. After a while, a kid comes to the lake, and cuts a hole in the ice nearby. Sven looks at Ole, and says, "Maybe we should tell him there hasn't been no fish there for a long time?"

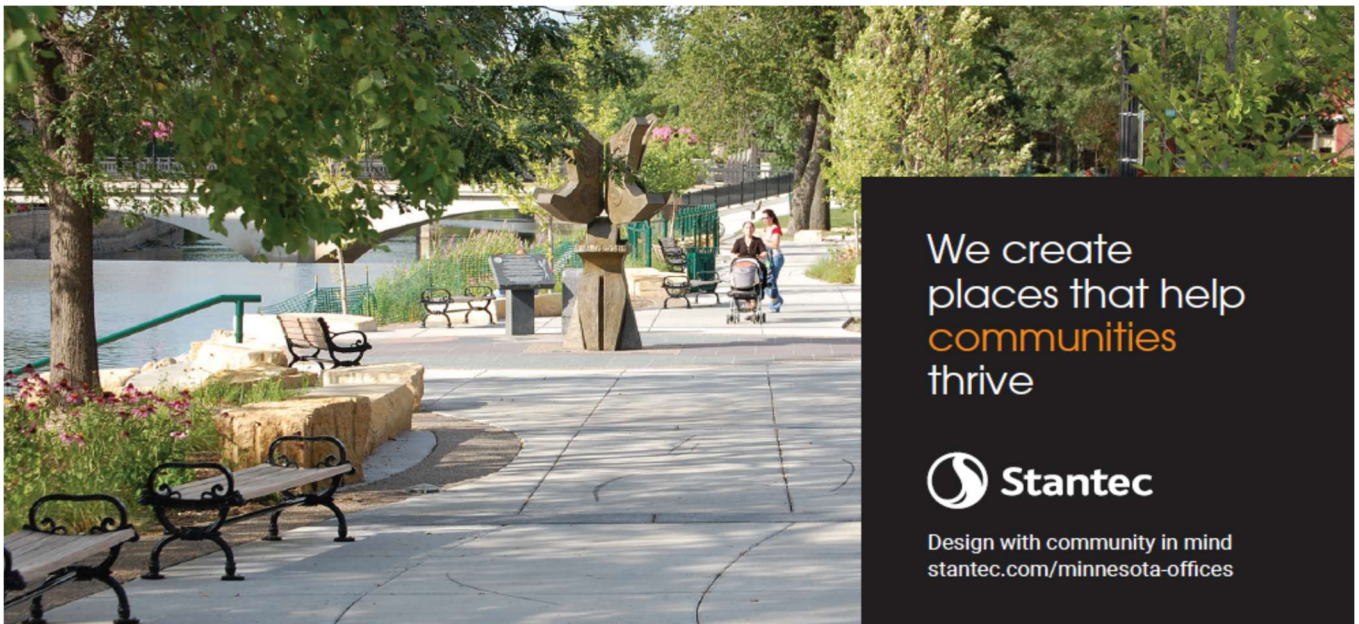
Before long, the kid pulls out a fish, ... then another, ... and yet another.

Sven says to Ole, "What's going on? There's no fish there!" Ole says, "I don't know! Why don't you go over there and ask him?" Sven says, "That's just what I'm gonna do!"

So Sven goes to the kid and says, "Me and Ole have fished here for years, and not caught nuttin'. What's going on?"

The kid says, "Kmmm mmm mmm mmm. Sven replies, "I can't understand what you said."

The kid repeats, "Kmmm ymm wmm wmm." Sven says, "I don't wanna be rude, but I can't understand what you said!" The kid pulls out yet another fish, puts his hand to his mouth, spits out the contents, and says, "Keep your worms warm!"



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## Let's get a head start on 2022!

The SEMLM is giving our cities an early start on sharing their input for

- Meeting topics
- Policy topics
- Hosting a SEMLM event in 2022 or 2023
- Ideas and Questions

Hearing from our cities is so important for the good of our organization. Share all those good ideas you've got using page 13 of this newsletter. We need them!

*Yes, we know you have good ideas, and we also know where you keep them.*



## What's HOT in Goodview???

With warmer weather coming, Goodview has outdoor fun for people of all ages.

\* Every Thursday 3-6pm is the Farmers Market at the Elks Lodge parking lot with locally grown produce and meats, baked goods, artisan products, fresh eggs, and local honey.

\* Outdoor Movie Nights are on Fridays at Memorial Park. Food trucks, hot dogs, and snacks are available at 6pm. The movie starts at dusk - approximately 7:30 p.m. Bring your chairs, blankets and appetite.

\* Goodview has two wonderful pavilions available to rent. These are near the lake and offer swimming, beach, fishing pier, boat launch, playground equipment, soccer fields, a paved walking/bike path (2.04 miles), and restrooms.

\* Goodview even has pickleball courts! If you haven't heard of pickleball, talk to SEMLM Board member, and Goodview City Administrator, Dan Matejka!



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## \$\$\$\$\$\$ NEW Update from Treasury Department \$\$\$\$\$\$

### Regarding uses for COVID related funds (ARP, CARES Act)

<https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Final-Rule-Overview.pdf>

The Treasury Department updated their FAQ page **again** for COVID funds in **January 2022**, and it's available here: <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRPFAQ.pdf>

This covers both the ARP and CARES Act programs. Changes since the last overview are noted in the documents.

The Interim Final Rule is in effect until April 1, 2022. Sometime after that, the final Final Rule (that's no typo) will have a new set of FAQs made available for local government users.

The FAQs are often the best and most useful tools for figuring out what uses are allowable. It gets into more detail on permissible uses for the funds, and addresses other questions raised by city and county officials. If you still cannot find info that addresses your needs, send a more specific note about your question(s) to [brenda@semlm.org](mailto:brenda@semlm.org).



# SE MN Regional Transit Planning Progress

**SE Minnesota Transit Management** planning continues moving forward with municipalities and counties who have supported this planning effort. In addition, private enterprise has also stepped up to offer planning expertise and financial resources to take the next steps in creating a **Transit Management Organization (TMO)** for the region.

On March 29<sup>th</sup> in Goodview, the TMO will be a featured topic:

- **Who has contributed, and how much?**
- **Is a staff person hired for the TMO?**
- **What are the roles for cities and for counties?**
- **What current resources are available to help cities and counties be part of the solution?**
- **Who can cities and counties contact to get more information brought to their elected officials for action?**
- **What might the new transit system look like? How will that get determined?**
- **What other funding sources are being sought? Federal? State? Other?**

## News from the City of Mosquito Heights

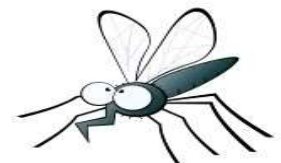
Mayor Buzz wants to lighten the mood before the council takes on the next agenda item, one that will be rather contentious, likely to create a long and heated discussion. As he starts his story, City Administrator Damsselfly groans, having heard this one before from Mayor Buzz.

"There once was a village whose mayors were all named Benny, and they all had magnificent beards. Legend held that if a mayor shaved his beard off, an ancient curse would transform him into a piece of pottery.

Centuries passed, and every Benny was a fair and wise mayor, and none of them ever shaved their beard. But one summer, their land was struck by a terrible heatwave. All the men of the village shaved their beards, but Benny could not.

After days and days of sweltering temperatures, Benny could no longer stand it. He summoned the village barber and had his beard shaved right down to the skin. The people of the village barely had time to gaze upon their newly-shorn mayor's face before he disappeared in a puff of smoke, transformed into a vase.

And so it was on that day, the villagers knew the curse was true:  
a Benny shaved is a Benny urned."



**CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_**  
**RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF Southeast Minnesota Regional Transportation Planning for the creation of the Transportation Management Organization for Southeast Minnesota.**

**WHEREAS**, the 2018 Southeast Minnesota Economic Impact Forecasting Study identified Regional Transit as a significant issue for communities to encourage workforce participation.

**WHEREAS**, the southeast Minnesota region's communities need transportation for Health and Human Services clients, employees in our regional businesses, employees and students in our regional education system, and employees and customers in our regional hospitality and tourism industry.

**WHEREAS**, the 2020 – 2021 Pandemic has brought changes in working from home and commuter patterns, and a discontinued regional commuter bus service.

**WHEREAS**, the economic outlook for southeast Minnesota forecasts a rebounding economy, an increased need for employees, and an increased need for regional transportation to address a much broader range of users, such as business employees and customers, students and faculty, medical workers, health and human services customers, hospitality and tourism staff.

**WHEREAS**, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's current Inflow/Outflow data shows that communities in all eleven counties of southeast Minnesota have significant movement of people both in and out of their areas every business day.

**WHEREAS**, the 2021 Federal Stimulus Program allots federal funds to cities and counties to address the changing economic needs of their communities, including transit, and funds can be transferred between jurisdictions or to nonprofit partners as outlined in the sections below of

H.R.1319 – The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 as it was passed on 03/11/2021 and became Public Law No: 117-2.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_, MINNESOTA, AS FOLLOWS:**

The \_\_\_\_\_ City Council supports participating as a contributor to the Transportation Management Organization for Southeast Minnesota with a contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ of the city's allotted 2021 Federal Stimulus funding.

Adopted by the \_\_\_\_\_ City Council on \_\_\_\_\_.

Approved:

(Signature area)



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## How the SEMLM works

1.

Member cities have at least one person representing their city attend quarterly meetings to share issues their community faces. This person can be an elected or appointed official, or a staff person.

2.

Cities can send a different person each time, the same person, or more than one person. Each city has one vote for any official action, no matter how many representatives it sends.

3.

Shared issues can become regional legislative policy positions to promote with area lawmakers, the governor, and state commissioners.

4.

Executive Board members maintain contact with legislators on regional priorities. Background information on policy positions can be provided in the form of "Talking Points" to assist lawmakers in promoting our members' positions.



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**See page 14.**



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## Ahhhhh ... the good old days!

Remember when we used to be able to plan meeting dates a year or more in advance?

When we could reserve the venues and caterers, and arrange for speakers to be available? Then came



# COVID.

I'm hopeful again.

It's time to select SEMLM event dates for 2022, and ... dare I say ... even 2023.

Select your date:

June 29 or 30, 2022

September 29, 2022

January 30 or 31, 2023

March 29 or 30, 2023

June 29, 2023 (Wabasha!)

October 30, 2023

**Note to self:**  
Tell Brenda our date and location for our city to host.  
Email her at [brenda@semlm.org](mailto:brenda@semlm.org)

Tell me when your city would like to host, and what venue. I will do the rest. You get the glory, and we all get a great event!





# SEMLM

*Southeastern Minnesota League of Municipalities*

[www.semlm.org](http://www.semlm.org)

## Legislative Policy Topics

## Meeting Topics

## Other Ideas to Share

Please fill out and send to [brenda@semlm.org](mailto:brenda@semlm.org) or SEMLM, P.O. Box 413, Chatfield, MN 55923. Use additional pages if needed. Send any additional topics or documentation as well.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts. We look forward to hearing from you and your city.

Name and Position:

City:

Email:

Phone number:

Topic Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of issue: \_\_\_\_\_



## SEMLM Board Application

(Attach additional sheets as needed.)

Please send your completed application  
by mail or email to:

Brenda Johnson, SEMLM Exec. Dir.

P.O. Box 413

Chatfield, MN 55923

[brenda@semlm.org](mailto:brenda@semlm.org)

Name

Email

Phone

Address

Relevant Experience or Employment (attach a resume if relevant):

Why are you interested in serving on the SEMLM Board?

Area(s) of expertise and contributions you feel you can make:

Other volunteer commitments:



This research is **STILL** going on right now. 😊

Please share this with your local businesses for them and their employees to participate. UMN appreciates your help. Results will be shared with our region.

<https://www.cts.umn.edu/research/project/telecommuting-during-covid-19-how-does-it-shape-the-future-workplace-and-workforce>



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## CENTER FOR TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

### Telecommuting during COVID-19: How does it shape the future workplace and workforce?

The University of MN needs your help with a [research project](#) funded by the MN Department of Transportation. Focused on telecommuting before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic, the project includes a [worker survey](#) and an [employer survey](#). The **worker survey** asks about individual employees' experience with telecommuting during and before the pandemic, their employers' plan for telecommuting (or not) in the future, their demographic characteristics, and a few questions about the employer. The **employer survey** mirrors the worker survey as much as possible, but from an employer's perspective.

**If you are able to help distribute the employer survey to business owners and other types of employers, and the worker survey to working-age adult MN residents -- that would be much appreciated by the University Transportation study group!**

Project summary: During COVID-19, many employers asked their employees to telecommute, in order to comply with stay-at-home orders. In fact, a number of businesses, both in the U.S. and other parts of the world, have decided to allow employees to telecommute permanently (if employees choose to do so). This is the first time in history that we are witnessing a temporary shift of a large portion of the workforce to telecommuting. We argue this unprecedented time provides a unique opportunity to assess the impact of telecommuting. Telecommuting relates directly to transportation demand and pattern, congestion mitigation, population migration, as well as the sustainability, livability, and prosperity of communities. Therefore, many government agencies, including those of transportation, have inherent and long-term interests in understanding the impact of shifting the workforce to telecommuting. The objective of this research is to assess the impact of temporarily shifting the workforce to telecommuting on: (1) workplace policy changes and support related to telecommuting, (2) population migration as individual employees react to the temporarily shift to telecommuting and subsequent workplace policy change, and (3) differences among geographic areas, employer sizes, and industry types. The project will employ a mixed-method approach, by using both focus groups and surveys. The researchers will conduct focus groups with employers and human resource professionals, to generate in-depth data related to telecommuting. Focus group outcomes, insights from past literature, and suggestions from MnDOT and the TAP will inform the development of the employer and worker surveys. The two surveys will generate data on the impact of telecommuting on productivity as well as future workplaces and the workforce, from the perspectives of both employers and workers. This research will immediately benefit transportation agencies in Minnesota, by providing data-driven, evidence-based insights for both short- and longer-term transportation planning and congestion mitigation on both state and local levels.

Sponsor: [Minnesota Department of Transportation](#)