



2025

STRONGER

TOGETHER

*Taking Our Region
to New Heights*



Duluth
& St. Louis
County **AT THE
CAPITOL**



Advocating for Northeast Minnesota's Legislative Priorities

Thank you for your service!

DULUTH & ST. LOUIS COUNTY REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

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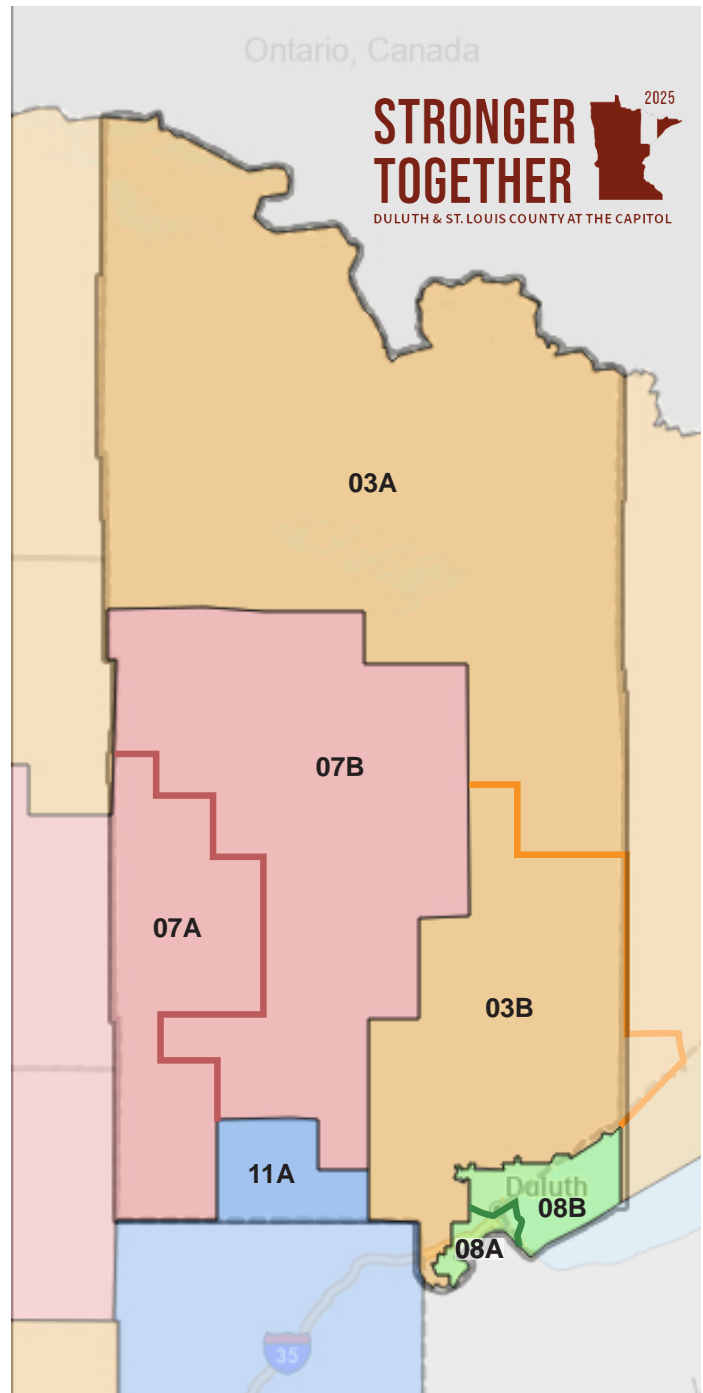
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28th Annual

Duluth & St. Louis County AT THE CAPITOL

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025

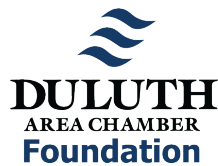
Grand Reception
4:30 - 8:00 p.m.

InterContinental St. Paul Riverfront Hotel
Free to Attend

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025

Legislative Breakfast
9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

InterContinental St. Paul Riverfront Hotel
RSVP Required



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WELCOME AND THANK YOU

FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE 28TH ANNUAL DULUTH & ST. LOUIS COUNTY AT THE CAPITOL DAYS

Together, we are advocating for legislative priorities for Northeastern Minnesota. Together, we have a unified and more effective collective voice. We are **stronger together!**



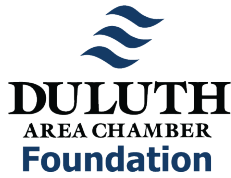
Thank you for being part of our region's collective voice as we advocate for several key legislative priorities that would benefit our local communities and economy. We encourage you to read more about all of these legislative priorities and requests on the following pages, so we can all help support each other and our region's business community.

Duluth and St. Louis County at the Capitol Days has grown to become the largest regional advocacy event in the state. The Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce and Duluth Area Chamber Foundation are once again collaborating with the City of Duluth and St. Louis County, along with a record-number of key community stakeholders and sponsors, to bring the voice of Northeastern Minnesota to the Capitol. With a collective message, advocacy efforts generated by this event help secure funding for regional projects, effectively tell the narrative of our region's opportunities and challenges, celebrate our collective successes and progress, and demonstrate how investing in projects in and around Duluth and St. Louis County are investments that pay off for our regional and state economy.

Last year's turnout for this event was the largest turnout so far in the 27-year history of Duluth & St. Louis County at the Capitol Days with well over 500 people participating, and we anticipate 2025 will be even bigger and better yet. Throughout the first day, February 12, key community and business leaders will meet with legislators and legislative staff to lobby for several projects, as well as for policy and tax reform requests and other legislative priorities. That evening, legislators, staff and other key leaders join community members and guests at what is often seen as the main event of the program, the Grand Reception - an informal gathering designed to promote continual dialogue and networking. This is an ideal opportunity for lawmakers and others to learn more about our region's legislative initiatives directly from community leaders and those directly involved with these projects. On the morning of February 13, the formal event concludes with a legislative breakfast where we'll hear directly from city, county, and chamber leaders, along with members of our local state delegation and state leadership. We sincerely appreciate your involvement in this annual event. We all benefit from being united and advocating in one regional voice.

We continue to be **stronger together!**





Clear Answers for Clean Water



GREETINGS FROM THE CITY OF DULUTH

On behalf of the City of Duluth, I want to thank the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce for continuing this tradition of legislative advocacy and ensuring our shared priorities are heard by Legislators and policymakers at the Capitol. Duluth & St. Louis County at the Capitol Days has year after year proven an amazing opportunity for us to gather and focus on the regional issues that matter most.

The City of Duluth's top legislative priorities this year are basic and straight-forward. Repairs to the Aerial Lift Bridge, funding for our region's water system, seawall repairs critical to development of Lot D, establishing a tax credit for converting underutilized commercial space into residential, and protecting local government aid. These regionally significant priorities reflect our focus on core city services.

The City of Duluth is also excited to support and partner on many initiatives led by other organizations. From funding for the air traffic control tower at the Duluth International Airport to supporting the 148th Fighter Wing's request for new hangars, to funding for maintenance and repair at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center, to the proposed Spirit Valley Center, and the proposed downtown Engagement Center - the City of Duluth remains committed to being a strong partner on projects of regional impact and significance.

With divided government the Legislature and Governor have an opportunity to come together and develop a shared agenda to make meaningful impacts in communities across Minnesota. As a Legislator, I was proud of my commitment to do just that and find common ground on these issues. This shared spirit of cooperation will be critical to a successful session, and also a model for our nation.

I look forward to working with the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce, St. Louis County, our legislative delegation, the Governor, partners at State agencies, and organizations from across northeastern Minnesota to improve core city services, improve our housing options, develop our commercial tax base, and grow our population. Our region is stronger because of these partnerships. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Roger J. Reinert
Mayor
City of Duluth



Mayor Roger J. Reinert

GREETINGS FROM ST. LOUIS COUNTY

There's something electric about gathering a few hours from home with hundreds of leaders, friends and colleagues to celebrate and advocate for a region we love.

We come to St. Paul to share our dreams and desires to make our communities strong and to share a snapshot of our vibrant regional partnerships.

To our lawmakers in St. Paul, we appreciate you and the work you are doing to serve all of Minnesota. We welcome the opportunity to tell you more about St. Louis County. While we may represent varying parts of the state, we all get to call this beautiful state home.


To everyone traveling along with us to the Capitol, thank you for the shared enthusiasm.

We know there is work to do. People are struggling and looking to us for leadership and guidance. We must work together, and I am confident we can - to find statewide solutions that address our mental health needs, the housing shortage, and workforce goals - to name just a few of our opportunities to find shared solutions.

What unites us is so much stronger than what drives us apart. We recognize the opportunity to do good - for our residents, our businesses and our environment - by finding common solutions to our most pressing needs while dreaming of a Minnesota that continues to be a leader in the nation.

On behalf of my fellow Commissioners and our 200,000 residents, thank you for joining in celebrating Duluth & St. Louis County at the Capitol Days!

Sincerely,



Annie Harala
Chair
St. Louis County Board



Commissioner Annie Harala

Thank you for your advocacy in support of Northeastern Minnesota!



The future growth and vitality of our region depends on our shared commitment to our legislative priorities. Thank you for your partnership. Together, we make our city and region stronger.

www.duluthmn.gov



Aerial Lift Bridge Capital Improvements

The Aerial Lift Bridge is an iconic symbol of Duluth that not only serves as a tourist destination, but is pivotal to connecting residents to emergency services, education, healthcare, and so much more. The Aerial Lift Bridge also plays a significant role in Minnesota's economy, providing crucial access to ports across the Great Lakes and throughout the world. To ensure safe, efficient operation, the Aerial Lift Bridge requires significant structural repairs to its lift span, sidewalks, and overhead truss across the ship canal.



Water Treatment Plant Capital Improvements

Located on the north shore of Lake Superior, the City of Duluth Water Treatment Plant is a regionally significant asset that treats and delivers safe drinking water to the Cities of Duluth, Proctor, Hermantown, and Rice Lake. The structure and roof of the plant require significant repairs. The pump house is over 100 years old, and the plant equipment is original to the main plant building, which was placed in service in 1977.



Lot D Development Funds

Funding to cover costs to rehabilitate Lot D in Duluth's bayfront area to enable new economic development opportunities on the site. Costs will include seawall repairs, demolition of existing infrastructure, utilities, and other related site preparation.



Establish Tax Credit for Conversion of Underutilized and Vacant Buildings

Like many other cities, Duluth has seen an increase in the number of vacant or underutilized buildings throughout the city's core. Establishing a robust tax credit for the conversion of underutilized and vacant buildings to residential buildings will help facilitate the restoration of Duluth's commercial district to a vibrant residential and mixed-used hub.

Protect Local Government Aid

A key component of Duluth's budget, local government aid supports critical city functions, from police and fire to roads and sewers. Protecting LGA is imperative to delivering core city services.

More at duluthmn.gov



With divided government the Legislature and Governor have an opportunity to come together and develop a shared agenda to make meaningful impacts in communities across Minnesota.”

Roger J. Reinert, Mayor, City of Duluth





WHEN WE SEEK LEGISLATIVE HELP, IT'S FOR A BIG REASON

Just how big is St. Louis County?



200,000 RESIDENTS

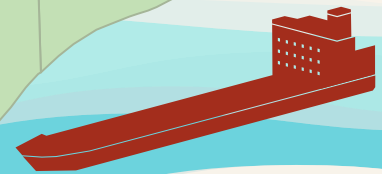
THE GATEWAY TO LAKE SUPERIOR, VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK AND THE BOUNDARY WATERS, PLUS 700 OTHER LAKES IN BETWEEN



HOME TO THE MAJORITY OF MINNESOTA'S MINES, WHICH PRODUCE MORE THAN 75% OF AMERICA'S IRON



3
1
2



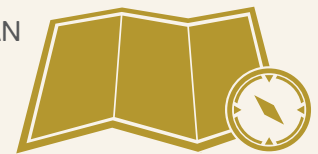
HOME TO THE PORT OF DULUTH-SUPERIOR, THE #1 TONNAGE PORT ON THE GREAT LAKES



- 27 CITIES
- 72 TOWNSHIPS
- 76 UNORGANIZED TOWNSHIPS
- 2 TRIBAL NATIONS

7,000 SQ MILES

MORE LAND THAN 16 METRO COUNTIES COMBINED



LARGER THAN THREE US STATES

WE MANAGE 900,000 ACRES OF TAX FORFEITED LAND FOR THE STATE, SUPPORTING THE TIMBER INDUSTRY AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

2025 BONDING PRIORITIES

- 1 CANYON - INTEGRATED SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT CAMPUS
- 2 DULUTH - ST. LOUIS COUNTY HERITAGE & ARTS CENTER (THE DEPOT)
- 3 EVELETH - PROGRESS PARKWAY CONSTRUCTION

ST. LOUIS COUNTY PLAYS A UNIQUE ROLE IN MINNESOTA. THANK YOU TO OUR STATE PARTNERS FOR YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT.

Big projects. Big regional benefits.

When we request bonding support, it’s for projects that serve a wide region while fulfilling our mission to promote health and safety, ensure sound infrastructure, embrace our natural resources, and support an environment where communities prosper. St. Louis County spans 7,000 square miles. (If superimposed over the Twin Cities metro area, we’re larger than the combined land areas of 16 counties!)

Integrated Solid Waste Management Campus - Canyon:

St. Louis County is seeking \$6 million for the next phase of development of a regional repository for leachate generated by landfills and dumps. This facility would provide a PFAS solution for all of northeastern MN.



St. Louis County Heritage & Arts Center (The Depot) - Duluth:

This 130+ year old building is a regional hub for arts, history, culture and agriculture, while hosting numerous free community events. It will also be a destination point for Northern Lights Express (NLX). However, \$8 million is needed for improvements to replace failing heating, ventilation, air conditioning (HVAC) and mechanical, electrical, plumbing systems.



Progress Parkway - Eveleth:

\$8 million is needed to complete this project, which will provide safe, multimodal access to the new Rock Ridge School while opening new areas for economic development and recreational trail connections.



Additional bonding priorities:

We support the requests of numerous community partners – Union Gospel Mission – Mission Heights permanent supportive housing, Ash River Wastewater Treatment and Collection System, Scandia Cemetery, University of MN Medical School, Duluth Airport Authority, NLX, and more.

Find all at stlouiscountymn.gov



As an arm of the state, St. Louis County takes seriously our role of fulfilling state-mandated services for our 200,000 citizens. At the same time, our staff is doing innovative work – finding new ways to be more efficient and effective, while modeling processes that other counties can follow. We are partners and we look forward to working with you all to create legislation that serves our county and our state.”

Kevin Z. Gray, St. Louis County Administrator



MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE: ADVOCATING FOR CRITICAL INVESTMENTS AT THE 148TH

The Duluth Area Chamber’s Military Affairs Committee (MAC) was formed in 2003 as a community-led effort to help promote and support the vast economic impacts of local military branches. The MAC’s primary goal is to support local military units through legislative advocacy, as well as building community support through education, fundraising and advocacy efforts.

The MAC works with all military branches and especially with local U.S. Coast Guard units and the MN Air National Guard’s 148th Fighter Wing. The 148th is an integral part of the state and nation’s military network with numerous national performance awards that speak to their exemplary service. The 148th also serves as one of the largest employers in the region and provides an estimated annual economic impact of over \$112M. Shortly after the MAC’s formation, the 148th was selected for closure through the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. The MAC unified voices and actively began lobbying for the 148th, engaging business leaders and elected officials at every level. Thanks to the strong community support, the base remained opened and has only grown since. The MAC was also instrumental in successfully advocating for the 148th to receive Block 50 F-16s as well as active association status. For over twenty years the MAC has consistently been effective in advocating on behalf of the 148th, who cannot lobby for themselves due to federal restrictions.

Now, the Duluth Area Chamber and Duluth Chamber Foundation’s Military Affairs Committee, led by MAC Chair Jennifer Cady and Chamber Foundation Executive Director Daniel Fanning, is advocating for state funding for much needed hangar upgrades on the base. State funding would help leverage additional federal funding and would not only enhance safety for members of the 148th but would also help prepare the base for updated aircraft and future missions, further securing the long-term mission and success of the 148th for decades to come.



Jennifer Cady



Daniel Fanning

COMPLEX PROJECTS SOLVED

Duluth Airport Air Traffic Control Tower

H+U CONSTRUCTION

hu-construction.com

148th FIGHTER WING

148FW

MN AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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148TH FIGHTER WING

Supporting the 148th by Funding Necessary Hangar Upgrades

The Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce, Duluth Chamber Foundation, and our Military Affairs Committee (MAC) are advocating for \$25M in state funding for much-needed hangar upgrades at the Minnesota Air National Guard – 148th Fighter Wing in Duluth.

When approved, the funding will go towards demolition of the current, outdated hangars and the construction of new and safer hangars, which will also be able to house updated aircraft - such as F-35s. This proposal has received strong, bipartisan support at the legislature the past couple of years but has yet to receive funding. There is a sense of urgency to get this funding approved in 2025 to ensure the 148th has what they need to succeed, as well as potentially leverage millions more in federal dollars and ensure the 148th is ready and able to adapt to future missions and the possibility of updated aircraft in the near future - helping secure their long term future in our area for decades to come.



Never before has more been asked of the 148th, from the state and federal government, which has included state missions for pandemic response and additional security missions in recent years, as well as combat deployments. The 148th made national headlines in 2023 for successfully shooting down an unidentified object over Lake Huron, further demonstrating their incredible relevance to national security, as well as their vast contributions to our community

and state. The 148th has an annual economic impact of over \$112M in our region and serves as one of area's largest employers. For these reasons and more, this proposal has broad community support, including a unanimous resolution by the Duluth City Council. We are grateful for their service and vast contributions, and now it's our time to help support them!



The men and women of the 148th are second to none and deserve the best, and safest, equipment and hangars. They currently operate out of old, outdated and even potentially unsafe hangars. These hangars are over seventy years old and have several concerning safety issues including leaks, pooling water and electrical issues. This funding would allow the 148th to replace the outdated hangars with state-of-the-art hangars to enhance safety and support the Bulldogs' current and future missions.

Please support the 148th Fighter Wing by supporting this urgent \$25M request for much needed new hangars on the air base. For more information, please visit duluthchamber.com/148fw or contact Daniel Fanning, Vice President of the Duluth Area Chamber, at dfanning@duluthchamber.com.

duluthchamber.com/148fw

DULUTH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER REPLACEMENT

Replacing the deteriorating tower will support the growing demand for aircraft operations and strengthen the airport's role as a key economic driver for Minnesota's Arrowhead Region.

A NEW TOWER WILL PROVIDE

- 2x more space and adequate working conditions for air traffic controllers
- Adherence with ADA compliance standards
- Improved energy efficiency and LEED certification
- Enhanced safety and efficient air travel

With one year remaining to access \$45M in federal funding, state support of this project is essential.



#FLYDLH
DuluthAirport.com

The Duluth Airport Authority (DAA) is actively advancing its vision for the future as detailed in the master capital plan for the Duluth International Airport. Over the past 13 years, the DAA has successfully completed more than \$157 million in infrastructure investments. Looking ahead, we remain committed to enhancing air commerce by completing an additional \$190 million in infrastructure improvements over the next decade. However, to achieve these goals, the DAA needs state support.

The DAA is requesting \$14 million from the state legislature for a new Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) to help leverage a significant federal investment. This funding allows us a better opportunity to secure an additional \$45 million from the FAA's Airport Terminal Program (ATP), established through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Without state support, this federal funding will not come to Minnesota. The ATP Grant program provides a 5-year window to secure funding that will pay for 95% of eligible costs to construct the new \$70 million ATCT at DLH.

With only one year left to access this federal funding, the urgency to act is clear. The \$14 million in state funding offers a unique opportunity to secure substantial federal support, modernize our infrastructure, and strengthen DLH as a key economic asset for the region. This allocation is more than just a financial investment. It is a critical step toward securing our region's economic future and ensuring safe and efficient air travel. DLH contributes approximately \$760.6 million annually to the local economy, supporting jobs and businesses that drive growth. Now is the time to invest in our airport's future, ensuring DLH continues to be a driving force in our regional economy for years to come.

More at duluthairport.com



State support for the new Air Traffic Control Tower at Duluth International Airport is not just an investment in infrastructure – It is an investment in the future of our region. With \$760 million in annual economic impact, DLH plays a vital role in driving growth and creating jobs. The \$14 million in state funding will help us secure crucial federal dollars, ensuring that we can meet the growing demand of aircraft operations, enhance safety, and maintain our position as a key economic engine for the Arrowhead Region of Minnesota.”

Tom Werner, Executive Director, Duluth Airport Authority



Our energy vision is your carbon-free future.

Minnesota Power's Jean Duluth Solar.



Minnesota Power is a clean-energy leader, delivering safe and reliable energy while helping our customers achieve their sustainability goals. As the region's trusted energy provider and the first utility in Minnesota to deliver more than 50% renewable energy, we're building a 100% carbon-free energy future.



EnergyForward



mnpower.com/EnergyForward

Connect with us    

Minnesota Power is moving *EnergyForward*

Minnesota Power is a clean-energy leader under our *EnergyForward* strategy and was the first electric utility in Minnesota to deliver more than 50% renewable energy to customers. We will continue to execute *EnergyForward* with a vision to deliver 100% carbon-free energy while maintaining reliability and keeping bills as low as possible. While we invest in renewable energy and a more resilient and modern energy grid, we also will continue to deliver energy-efficiency programs to help customers reduce energy use and their bills.

Our renewable energy plans include construction of two large solar projects in northern Minnesota. The 119.5-megawatt Regal Solar project, near Royalton, and the 85-megawatt Boswell Solar project, in Cohasset, are expected to be online in mid-2027. We are also evaluating how we will add up to 400 megawatts of additional wind energy to our system and expect to announce our wind energy plan soon. The solar and wind additions are part of our *EnergyForward* strategy and will enable us to reach more than 70% renewable energy by 2030.

As we add more renewable energy to our system, we're also investing in two major transmission projects over the coming years to deliver that energy to customers. One project will modernize the converter stations at each end of our existing high-voltage, direct current (HVDC) transmission line from North Dakota to Duluth. The second project is a new 180-mile transmission line from central Minnesota to northern Minnesota, the Northland Reliability Project, to be built in partnership with Great River Energy.

We also exceeded the state of Minnesota's energy savings goal for the 14th consecutive year in 2023. Our Conservation Improvement Program helped customers save 2.8% of gross annual retail energy sales in 2023, well above the state goal of 1.75%. We are the only Minnesota utility to have exceeded the state goal each year since 2010.

Find all at mnpower.com/EnergyForward



We're working hard to execute our sustainability-in-action strategy, planning and designing renewable energy and transmission projects, and seeking government funding opportunities wherever possible to lower costs for our customers. We're also doing all we can to include opportunities for everyone to thrive in the clean-energy future."

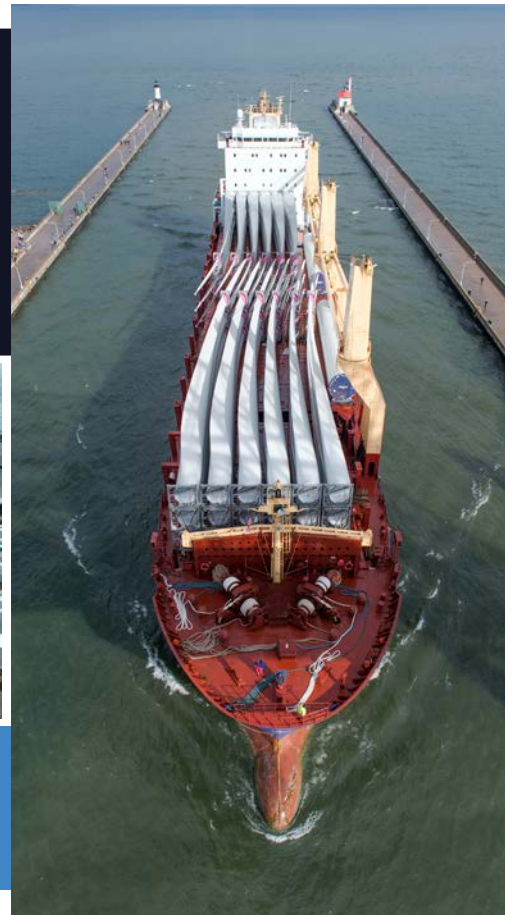
Bethany Owen, Chair, President and CEO, ALLETE



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Duluth: Minnesota's world port

Ships in the Port of Duluth-Superior move the raw materials of your everyday life, carrying key cargoes like iron ore and grain that put the automobile in your garage and the pasta on your plate.

Limestone, salt, cement and coal also move through the port, supporting Minnesota's agriculture, mining and manufacturing sectors, in addition to the infrastructure on which Minnesotans rely daily.

Duluth also handles breakbulk, project and containerized cargoes, with the Clure Public Marine Terminal serving as the region's multimodal logistics hub. Cargoes sail worldwide to and from the Clure Terminal, benefiting from Duluth's award-winning docks, roads and rails to make their connections.

Maritime cargo activity in Duluth supports more than 7,000 jobs and generates \$1.6 billion in economic activity, plus nearly a quarter of a billion dollars in state and federal tax revenue. It also creates a greener supply chain. Goods transported by ship reduce CO2 emissions by 17% compared to trains and 78% compared to trucks. Ships sailing the Great Lakes transport the equivalent of 11 million truckloads per year, which decreases roadway deterioration and congestion.

To put it succinctly, state investments in port infrastructure benefit all Minnesotans, regardless of where they live.

Within our harbor, we are seeking support to rehabilitate and rebuild a strategic but dilapidated dock on Rice's Point. A planned federal grant application could leverage this request and provide further investment. The result will mean creation of a modern dock and expansion of Clure Terminal services, strengthening the regional supply chain and positioning our port for the needs of the future.

Projects like this are why the Minnesota Department of Transportation's **Port Development Assistance Program** is essential. It supplies grant funding for infrastructure projects that keep cargo moving, supporting our state's agricultural and industrial base while providing a cascade of benefits throughout Minnesota. PDAP funds are critical to ensuring our port infrastructure is safe, reliable and efficient. PDAP funds also help leverage large federal grants in Duluth, as well as port cities on the Mississippi River. As a public port authority, we are grateful for this vital support.



While our port has a storied past, which we enjoy celebrating, we're truly driven by the mission of creating a bright future: a healthy regional economy supported by a vibrant port. We want to capture all the opportunity and potential that exists for our port and our region. Our collective legislative priorities exemplify that drive for progress in northeastern Minnesota. We urge legislative cooperation, action and results in 2025 to support that regional vision."

Deb DeLuca, Executive Director, Duluth Seaway Port Authority



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Northland Constructors is proud to be a sponsor of the
Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce

**Thank You for Supporting
Legacy Funding to History**

These projects were financed in part with funds provided by the State of Minnesota from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society.

WATER LAND & LEGACY MEMBERSHIP
Cultural Landscape Report, 2016

STAINED GLASS WINDOW CONSERVATION
2018 & 2020

GLENSHEEN
Carriage House Exterior Preservation, 2020 & 2023

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TRUTH

— OR —

DARE



Stop Summer Steaming

The DECC is connected to the Duluth Energy Systems, also known as the Steam Plant. Unfortunately, due to faulty pipe fittings, we are forced to run 190-degree water through the pipes 24/7 – or thousands of joints throughout the facility will leak.

This current system continuously heats our spaces, even in the summer. The need for additional air conditioning then compounds this inefficiency. The DECC stands to recoup over 40% of its heating and cooling costs by replacing faulty joints with welded pipes.

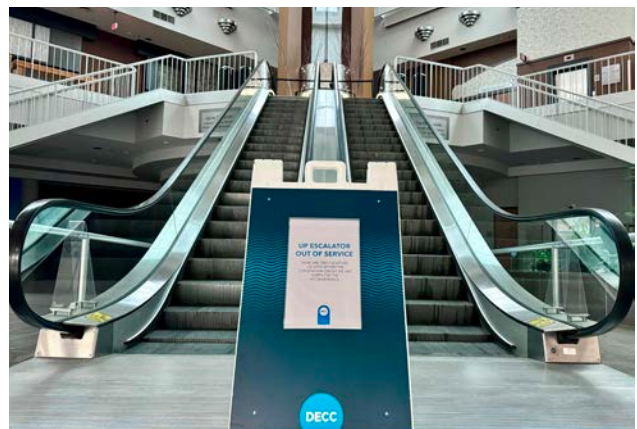


Welcoming to All

To further support accessibility, upgrades are needed and long overdue for many of our elevators and escalators throughout the facility.

A core value at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC) is Hospitality. However, many guests have felt less than welcome for years in our 2,300-seat Symphony Hall – the largest in the region.

That’s because the auditorium was built in 1966 when people were smaller and required less legroom for a comfortable evening at the theater. Also, additional accessible seating is required as our population ages. Our goal is to replace our current seating with larger, generously spaced chairs while creating additional accessible seating closer to the action on stage.



[More at decc.org/truth](https://decc.org/truth)



Our bonding projects are focused on increasing accessibility and energy conservation. Once completed, it will greatly add to the long-term sustainability of the facility.”

Dan Hartman, Executive Director, Duluth Entertainment Convention Center



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College of St. Scholastica New Student Center



St. Louis County Public Works Countywide Improvements Projects

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McGough is proud to have partnered on the recently completed College of St. Scholastica New Student Center and St. Louis County Public Works Countywide Improvements Projects.



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Effluent Filtration Improvement Project

Western Lake Superior Sanitary District is seeking \$20 million in state bonding funds to support the improvement of final effluent filtration systems at the regional wastewater treatment plant.

Current Filtration System:

WLSSD uses mixed media filters as a polishing step of wastewater treatment to remove solids from the water. This filter system improves effluent quality by removing Total Suspended Solids (TSS), heavy metals, and some nutrients.

The filters were last replaced in 2008 and the whole system has reached its end-of-life. Additionally, because mixed media filters require intense maintenance, replacement with a new technology is preferable.

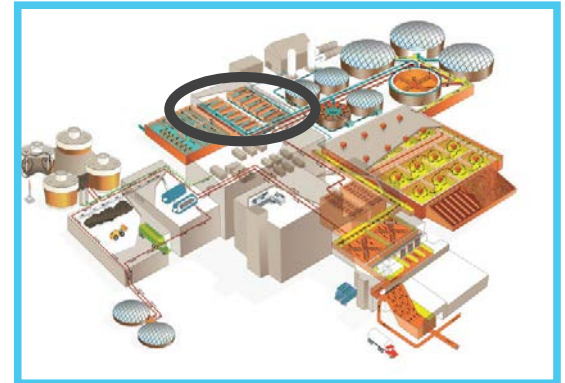
New Filtration System Needs

One of the main contaminants targeted by the mixed media filters is mercury. Mercury tends to stick to other small particles, so the more solids the wastewater treatment plant can filter, the greater the reduction of mercury in the cleaned water.

WLSSD has stricter mercury discharge limits than most other wastewater treatment plants because our cleaned water discharges into a tributary of Lake Superior. WLSSD is unable to consistently meet this monthly average limit of 1.8 nanograms per liter of mercury and currently receives a variance to discharge 5.2 nanograms per liter.

As a part of this variance agreement, WLSSD is required to test new technologies to increase mercury reduction towards the goal of mercury limit compliance and has implemented several pilot studies.

It is clear that new filtration technologies will make WLSSD's mercury reduction goals attainable.



Project area within the treatment plant.



One of several filtration pilot projects.

Project Budget

Total Budget	\$40 million
Bonding Request	\$20 million

District Contacts

Carrie Clement • Assistant Director
carrie.clement@wlssd.com

Marianne Bohren • Executive Director
marianne.bohren@wlssd.com

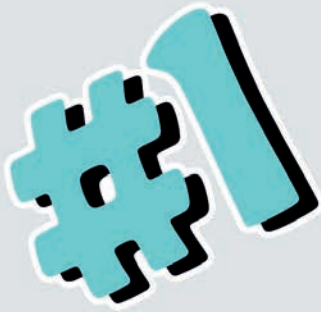
AJ Axtell • Director of Community Relations
aj.axtell@wlssd.com



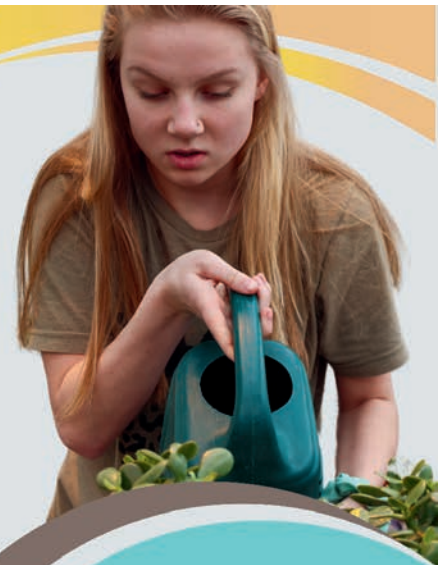
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DULUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Duluth Public Schools (DPS) appreciates the Legislature’s support for public education. However, as federal pandemic funding ends and enrollment fluctuates, supplemental investments are critical to address ongoing shortfalls and ensure continued academic, social, and emotional progress for all students.

We Are Asking For:

An additional increase in the basic general education formula for the 2025-2026 school year to keep up with inflation, the rising costs of serving our students, and to address funding shortages that are leaving districts across the state to cut millions of dollars from their budgets.

The creation of a permanent state funding stream for unemployment insurance for non-licensed school district employees and requests that the Legislature fully fund the cost of unemployment insurance for non-licensed employees.

The state to fully fund special education by providing funding to close the special education cross-subsidy. While we appreciate the state providing 60% of the special education cross-subsidy, we have more and more students with increasing needs that must be addressed.

Other Priorities Include:

The Legislature to eliminate the cap on Long Term Facilities Maintenance Revenue, allowing districts like Duluth to address critical facility needs.

A continued investment in Career and Technical Education, allowing funds to be used for equipment, supplies, and technology to support the CTE mission. CTE is a critical education tool helping to get students into the workforce.



While we’re grateful for the state’s support, we must address the funding gaps impacting our students. We need further investments in general education, special education, and career and technical education to ensure a bright future for every child in Minnesota.”

John Magas, Superintendent, Duluth Public Schools





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Key Results Areas

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- Economic Vitality
- Community Growth & Public Safety
- Communication & City Image
- Community Pride & Philanthropy

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Founded in 1893, Hibbing is at the heart of Minnesota’s Iron Range. The City of Hibbing is the largest city in the state by area (186 square miles) and the largest city by population (16,077) in the Taconite Tax Relief Area (TTRA).

Known for being a tight-knit community, Hibbing is intimately intertwined with the mining industry that fueled its growth and two taconite production plants continue to operate within city limits. It has undergone numerous transformations to become the thriving city it is today. Additionally, the city is home to a vibrant manufacturing sector, a spirited political landscape, a historic downtown, and the breathtaking Hull Rust Mine View.



Legislative Priority 2025: Carey Lake Recreation Area

The Site:

Carey Lake Recreation Area is in the top five of most visited sites in Hibbing, according to the 2018 City of Hibbing Comprehensive Plan. The 1,100-acre park is located a little over four miles east of Hibbing’s downtown and provides public access to natural open spaces of mostly pristine and undeveloped wetland and forested areas. Carey Lake, covering approximately 139 acres in the park, is the largest body of water within the city limits of Hibbing. Further, the park contains 13 miles of trails for hiking and cross-country skiing, providing year-round recreation opportunities for Iron Range residents. For many years, the City of Hibbing has maintained a basic bathhouse, pavilion, and utility garage within the park area to provide basic recreation services to park visitors.

The Project:

As part of the community engagement during our most recent comprehensive planning, Hibbing residents reported that they would like to see additional development at Carey Lake Park to make it a destination recreation area. Our residents suggested adding a campground, additional trails, and enhancing the beach and public facilities. Further, this recreation-based development would preserve the 1,100-acres and keep it accessible to residents and visitors, alike. Finally, community residents suggested that the city explore the alignment of the trails in the Carey Lake Recreation Area with all-terrain-vehicle trails, Redhead Mountain Bike Park, and the Mesabi Trail.

The Investment:

- Will improve the well-being of Hibbing residents
- Create a destination recreation area for residents and visitors
- Connect people with the outdoors
- Enhance recreational opportunities for generations to come

Estimated cost: \$10.5 million

We are seeking \$5.2 million for design, construction, furnishing and equipping improvements and amenities to enhance recreational opportunities in the Carey Lake Recreation Area. Enhancements would include shoreline improvements, adding an RV campground, north park road upgrade and the creation of new ski, bike and multipurpose trails.



Our top priority for this session is the Carey Lake Recreation Area. This 1,100-acre park is a gem within the City of Hibbing, St. Louis County, and, frankly, the State of Minnesota. Enhancing recreational opportunities here will transform Carey Lake into a popular recreational hotspot and destination by offering unique features, exceptional experiences, convenient accessibility and thoughtful amenities that will appeal to diverse visitors. It will become more than just a place to stay — it will be a reason people want to travel.”

Pete Hyduke, Mayor, City of Hibbing



Building our Future

While Preserving the Past

Rice Lake was founded as a Township in 1870 and incorporated as a City in 2015. Since incorporating, we have been working to balance our rural lifestyle with economic development, in an effort to provide additional services to our community. We have just completed a sewer and water main extension, with the help of funds from two State Appropriations, so we are now poised for commercial development along the Rice Lake Road Commercial Corridor. St. Louis County has secured \$34,546,000 in Federal and State grants to reconstruct Rice Lake Road, within the city limits of Rice Lake, to assist in promoting development while protecting the rural character in the rest of the community.

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Building our Future, While Preserving the Past

Since Rice Lake incorporated as a city in 2015, we have been working at leaving behind the township mentality and moving towards city priorities. Our citizens have shown overwhelming support of remaining rural in character while providing a few additional services and amenities to our community. We have been working with St. Louis County and the Metropolitan Interstate Council to create a transportation plan for the Rice Lake Commercial Corridor. St. Louis County has been awarded \$34,546,000 in Federal and State grants to reconstruct the corridor to improve traffic safety, reduce traffic congestion, and manage access. We also just completed a sewer and water main extension on Rice Lake Road with \$2.8 million in State Appropriation funds to spur commercial growth and to allow for residential development in this area to help address the housing shortage throughout the state. These projects will get the City poised for development along the Rice Lake Commercial Corridor thus allowing for additional services and amenities in our community and creating a larger commercial tax base to help alleviate the tax burden on our homeowners.



Regional Public Safety Center

With increased commercial and residential growth comes a demand for increased City services. Rice Lake has a state bonding request to plan and construct a public safety/emergency shelter for \$8 million. This facility would be used to train fire and EMT personnel for Rice Lake and the surrounding townships, as well as an emergency shelter for our regional needs. Rice Lake works well with our smaller surrounding communities and could help facilitate a much needed regional public safety center and training facility for our area. This center would also serve as a dedicated backup Emergency Operations Center for St. Louis County, which currently does not have a backup center. Rice Lake City Council would like to request our legislators help in supporting our bonding request.



It's essential that we come together to share both the challenges and accomplishments of Northeastern Minnesota. Rice Lake will continue fostering these important conversations with our elected officials, ensuring that our voices are heard. While we speak boldly for our local needs, we remain united in advocating for the shared priorities that impact our entire region."

Suzanne Herstad, Mayor, City of Rice Lake





Momentum: Minnesota Made

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- ✓ Construction finalizing on legislative-supported investments
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Game-Changing Infrastructure, Massive Regional Opportunity

There are limited opportunities to be bold as a community, while also being smart and safe with significant investments. Hermantown has just such a historic opportunity.

Favorably positioned to support the economic revitalization of northeast Minnesota, Hermantown is poised to move forward on a game-changing infrastructure addition by bringing utilities to the southwest corner of the city. This section of Hermantown is primed for substantial economic growth because it is uniquely positioned as a transportation and logistics hub. Few places in the region boast available, constructible land for industry seeking trunk highways and Class 1 rail, as well as proximity to an international airport and the shipping capabilities of Lake Superior.



Further, significant power infrastructure exists and has planned expansion. Minnesota Power has noted southwestern Hermantown as key for growth, with their exciting and continued upgrades at the Arrowhead Substation.

With these core elements in place – power, multi-modal freight options, a growing population of available workforce – the time is now to invest in the final piece of the puzzle, and unlock the economic power of this key area; the water utility.

Hermantown is looking to the state as a partner in a game-changing project, expected to be nearly \$70 million, to provide this area with the infrastructure necessary to fuel future development with basic water needs. While Hermantown will bear the largest share of the project, the benefit of development in this area goes beyond Hermantown's borders and even St. Louis County, to our entire region and state.

Introduction of a bill requesting \$10 million in state support for a portion of this project has been submitted.

A bold request, but also a smart and safe use of the state's resources to spur incredible growth supporting all northeastern Minnesota.



Hermantown has an unparalleled opportunity to make a positive impact for Northeastern Minnesota and beyond. We have an energetic plan to create a significant economic driver for the region. This low-risk endeavor leverages logistics already in place in southwest Hermantown and it takes advantage of existing resources to spur economic growth that will have strong benefits outside our border.”

Wayne Boucher, Mayor, City of Hermantown





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At UMD, we cultivate a different kind of classroom. One that's interconnected with the thriving community and natural beauty of Duluth, and where local change is a stepping stone to global transformation. Here, every day delivers a chance to connect - with Bulldogs, neighbors, and the natural world.

The U of M System has a \$235 million budget request to support core mission, the student experience, and research. We are also requesting \$200 million for Higher Education Asset Preservation and Replacement (HEAPR) projects. UMD would receive about \$18 million of the \$200 million request.

Our top project is:

Library Annex and Sales Center

This donor-supported project converts an old library annex into student-focused space, updates regional archival resources, and adds a state of the art sales center that aligns with the new professional sales major.



UMD Facts

- 9,253 students in fall 2024
- Highest-ranked regional university in Minnesota according to US News and World Report
- 1/3 of UMD seniors have worked with a faculty member on a research project or plan to do so
- \$23 million in annual research; more than all MN and WI regional universities combined



State support is fundamental to providing a quality educational experience for our students. Legislative support is critical to help us fulfill local workforce needs and drive research innovations.”

Charles Nies, Chancellor, University of Minnesota Duluth



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DULUTH ENERGY SYSTEMS

Lake Superior College’s Emergency Response Training Center (ERTC)

Introduction:

Lake Superior College (LSC) is a two-year community and technical college in the Minnesota State System serving Duluth and the surrounding communities. For 80 years, students have earned credentials that employers need to flourish. Students often transfer to universities or go directly into healthcare, manufacturing, construction, aviation, and first responder fields.

Legislative Request:

As part of the Minnesota State System, LSC relies on state appropriations and HEAPR funds. Beyond these necessary funds, the ERTC campus in Gary/New Duluth needs state support to continue to follow the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s PFAS (forever chemicals) remediation work (originating from firefighting foam used from 1994-2014). LSC cannot continue spending its dollars intended for students’ education on environmental clean-up.

Without new state funds to capture and remove PFAS from water runoff (preventing it from flowing into the St. Louis River and Lake Superior), the annual training of 3,500 safety professionals and current students will halt. This will harm fire and police departments who depend on the facility and hinder training of new firefighters needed to replace retiring firefighters.

Exact future costs are unknown, but remediation and monitoring efforts are projected to extend over multiple years, imposing a substantial financial burden on LSC.



[More at lsc.edu/pfas](https://lsc.edu/pfas)



The ERTC campus is a critical first responders training asset for all of Minnesota. Thousands of emergency response and industry safety personnel sharpen their perishable skills annually through hands-on training exercises in addition to our regular firefighting students. Without state funds for PFAS remediation work, the ERTC campus will likely close, and the college will have severe financial challenges.”

Dr. Patricia Rogers, President, Lake Superior College



Thank You

Thank you, Minnesota Legislators, for helping our students transform the world.

This academic year, 30% of full-time undergraduate students received Minnesota State Grants.

30%

Our students are future educators, caregivers, healthcare professionals, artists and business thought leaders who will go on to make a difference in their communities.



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Lava to Lakes

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Summer 2025

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The advertisement features a large image of a shark with a lava rock in its mouth, set against a blue background. The Great Lakes Aquarium logo is in the bottom right corner.

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IRON WORKERS LOCAL 512

The advertisement shows two ironworkers in hard hats and safety vests. One vest has the Ironworkers Local 512 logo. A circular logo with "I.W." and "LOCAL 512" is in the bottom left.

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The advertisement features a yellow excavator at a mining site. The Iron Mining Association of Minnesota logo is in the center.

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The advertisement shows a scenic view of Duluth, Minnesota, with a prominent stone tower in the foreground and a lake in the background.

Save the Minnesota State Grant Program

Valued Legislators,

The College of St. Scholastica urges your support in protecting the Minnesota State Grant program, a cornerstone of higher education access in our state. This program is facing a funding shortfall that could result in significant reductions or eliminations of grants for students in the upcoming academic year.

At The College of St. Scholastica, the impact of this program is profound:

- **565 students at CSS** in the 2022-23 academic year received State Grant funding.
- The **average award** was \$5,897.
- Collectively, Saints received more than **\$3.3 million** in State Grant support.



This program doesn't just help individual students—it has a direct impact on addressing Minnesota's workforce shortages. St. Scholastica is a leading provider of healthcare professionals in Minnesota, with approximately 60% of our graduates entering healthcare-related fields. We also operate one of the state's largest private nursing programs and are expanding our offerings in physical therapy, occupational therapy and physician assistant studies.

We urge you to prioritize full funding for the Minnesota State Grant program in the upcoming legislative session. Your advocacy can ensure that students across our state have the resources they need to thrive and contribute to Minnesota's future.



Supporting the Minnesota State Grant program is about equity, access and Minnesota's commitment to empowering the next generation. **Thank you for your leadership and support of higher education in our state.** Together, we can ensure that these vital opportunities remain within reach for Saints and all Minnesota students."

Dr. Barbara McDonald, President, The College of St. Scholastica





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Transforming Care for Our Communities

Health care today is facing tremendous challenges: rising costs; declining reimbursement; and rural workforce pressures. To sustain high-quality health care for our patients, Essentia Health is committed to overcoming these obstacles. This is particularly critical as more than 84% of areas we serve are rural.

We can't do it alone. Our lawmakers play an important role in supporting healthy, thriving communities through policies that keep patients and families at the heart of their decision making. We thank them for their partnership.



Essentia receiving an American Hospital Association Award for screening patients to support social needs

Medical training to address rural workforce pressures

With the Minnesota Department of Health reporting that 1 out of 3 rural practitioners will leave the profession within the next 5 years building an Academic Health Sciences Center for the University of Minnesota Medical School – Duluth Campus, at the site of the former St. Mary's Medical Center, is fundamental in addressing physician shortages in rural areas across NE Minnesota. Essentia is dedicated to recruiting and retaining medical professionals to care for our rural and underserved communities. We support a variety of innovative programs and educational partnerships to train health care professionals at our 121 training sites across Northern Minnesota.



Adequate reimbursement

Government health insurance programs such as Medicaid and Medicare pay only about 70 percent of the actual cost for care, leaving non-profit hospitals to absorb the remainder of the cost. Reimbursement rates must be improved. This is especially critical at Essentia where more than 65 percent of our patients are covered by government health insurance programs. Minnesotans, no matter their zip code or economic status, deserve access to high quality healthcare and Essentia is honored to deliver those services in the far reaches of our state.

We are committed to making a healthy difference in our communities.



As a non-profit healthcare system, we at Essentia Health are committed to partnering with our communities to address the serious challenges facing health care today. It will take all of us, working together, to find innovative solutions to the financial pressures and workforce shortages affecting health care.”

David C. Herman, MD, Chief Executive Officer, Essentia Health





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2025 Legislative Priorities

Nearly one year into our affiliation with Aspirus Health, the integration is going well. We are committed to our mission to heal people, promote health and strengthen communities. We look forward to working with legislators this session to advance important initiatives that support our mission and entire region.

Health Forward Initiative

We thank lawmakers for supporting infrastructure development in the Downtown Duluth Medical District. Your support made possible the new state-funded, city-owned Medical District East parking ramp, which opened in July 2024. This was key to our continued investment, including a \$70 million expansion of Building A. Moving almost 60 intensive care and cardiac care beds into this expanded tower, we now have all critical care services in this one building – Emergency Department, Cath Labs, Operating Rooms, Intensive Care and Cardiac Care.



Improve Medicaid Reimbursement

Medicaid currently underpays Minnesota hospitals and health systems by almost \$837 million below the actual cost of care each year.* We ask lawmakers to increase Medicaid reimbursement to cover the actual costs of caring for low income and underserved residents. Hospitals are committed to caring for all Minnesotans, but we are increasingly challenged by these underpayments.



Support Discharge and Care Coordination Package

We respectfully request lawmakers' support in reimbursing hospitals for delays in discharges. Hospitals often face challenges in transitioning patients from acute care to a lower level of care as soon as appropriate, due to factors beyond our control. We ask for resources and/or reimbursement to help address discharge delays.

Expanding Health Sciences Education into Downtown Duluth

We believe a new University of Minnesota academic health sciences building in the Downtown Duluth Medical District is a vital growth opportunity that deserves the support of our state. Having these students in the medical district would fuel even greater collaboration and create powerful opportunities to grow our future healthcare workforce and benefit our state.

*Minnesota Hospital Association Community Benefit Report, August 2023



Caring for our region is a privilege, done in partnership with many people – including our state lawmakers. We thank them for the vital role they play in our ability to provide excellent care for our patients.”

Nick Van Deelen, MD, Aspirus SVP & President, MN Region



TKDA helps build and grow communities, institutions, and businesses across the Northland. Founded in 1910, our roots in this region date back to the earliest days of our firm with the design of the Allouez Ore Docks and work for Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing. Today, our engineers, architects, planners, and specialized experts are proud to build on this legacy, working with clients to create solutions for the future of Duluth, St. Louis County, and the greater region.

TKDA and our employee owners are invested in this region and the ongoing success of our clients, partners, and stakeholders that call this great place home. As the lobby teams visit the Capitol during this event to ask for support, know that TKDA’s continued growth in Duluth and St. Louis County is inextricably connected to our clients’ sustained prosperity and policy priorities.

TKDA is proud to serve as a design solution partner for the following clients and projects in Duluth and St. Louis County:

- University of Minnesota Duluth – Production Kitchen
- City of Duluth – Wade Stadium Improvements
- Twin Ports Interchange
- St. Louis County – Public Works Facilities
- City of Ely – Regional Trailhead Building
- Cleveland-Cliffs – Minnesota Northland Operations
- Cirrus Aircraft – Duluth Innovation Center



Since the earliest days of our company’s founding in 1910, TKDA has worked on projects throughout Duluth, St. Louis County, and the surrounding northland region. Our employee owners have an unwavering commitment and a deep understanding of the unique needs of this area, landscape, and climate. We are optimistic about the prospective growth and support the State of Minnesota’s legislative priorities to positively impact this region.”

Jeff Lipovetz, CEO, TKDA



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Providing comprehensive services for people experiencing homelessness in Duluth

Background:

For over 100 years The Union Gospel Mission of Duluth has served Duluth’s unhoused population by providing free meals and 20 units of temporary housing. As homelessness has increased dramatically in recent years, Union Gospel Mission has outgrown their space. This project seeks to meet the growing demand for services and help bring Duluth’s unhoused population safely indoors, while improving the public safety and business appeal of Duluth’s downtown district.



Project features:

Engagement Center (First Floor)

\$8 million legislative request

- Commercial kitchen and dining space serving 300+ guests per meal (breakfast, lunch, and dinner).
- Summer weekend food program serving 500+ kids per week all summer.
- Warming center space for 100 overnight guests per night.
- Indoor and on premise outdoor space for up to 200 daytime guests.
- Health services serving an estimated 12+ guests per day.
- Additional services such as: individual and group counseling, addiction support, mental illness/medication management, economic services and support, employment/education connection, laundry and hygiene facilities.

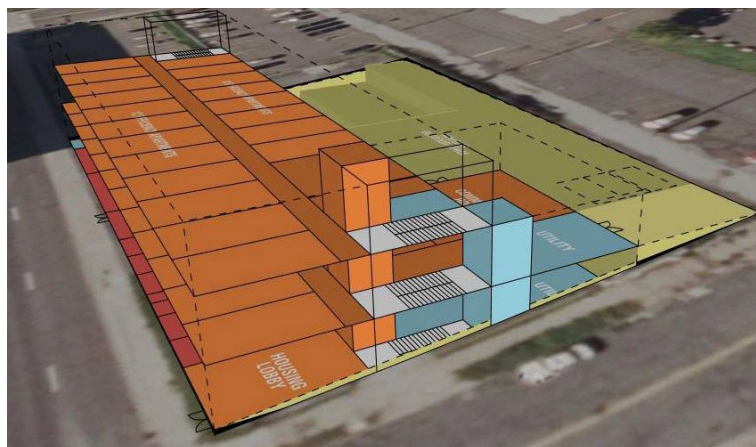
Mission Heights Housing (Second and Third Floor)

\$16 million (estimated) MHFA funding application

- 40 Permanent Supportive Housing Units.

Partnerships:

- Funding and Development Services from the Housing and Redevelopment Authority of Duluth, MN.
- Housing Supports Operation Funding from St. Louis County.
- Land from the City of Duluth.
- Support from local businesses and health care systems.



The homeless response system in the Northland is severely outdated. UGM’s relocation is part of a community-wide plan to end unsheltered homelessness and provide people with dignified person-centered opportunities for long-term housing stability.”

Katie Haggund, Executive Director, Union Gospel Mission



THANK YOU, ON BEHALF OF THE DULUTH AREA CHAMBER

Valued Elected Officials: Thank you for welcoming Duluth and St. Louis County participants to the Capitol, and for listening to our perspectives and requests.

Appreciated Key Stakeholders and Participants: Thank you for your time, attention and resources to help amplify our collective voice at the Capitol.



Matt Baumgartner
President
Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce

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