Our Vision: Being Minnesota's favorite place.
Our Mission: Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.
Our Values: Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.

AGENDA

Crow Wing County Committee of the Whole
Regular Meeting

08/18/2026
9:00 AM
County Board Room, 3rd Floor, Historic Courthouse, Brainerd MN

*Note: Times are approximate

The agenda has been published as shown below but is subject to change to include such business as may come before the Board.

ATTEND IN-PERSON OR BY MICROSOFT TEAMS (CALL 218-302-1725, CONFERENCE ID: 491 110 781#); LIVESTREAM AVAILABLE AT WWW.CROWWING.GOV OR ON THE CROW WING COUNTY YOUTUBE CHANNEL

ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF THE COUNTY BOARD MAY ATTEND REMOTELY

9:00 AM - Crow Wing Master Gardener - Brittany Georges

Master Gardener Program Update

9:15 AM - MICA Update - Nathan Jesson

2026 MICA Briefing

10:00 AM - AIS Discussion - Jessica Shea

2027 AIS Proposals

For more information, call 218-824-1067
Crow Wing County Committee of the Whole meeting agendas are available online at
www.crowwing.gov

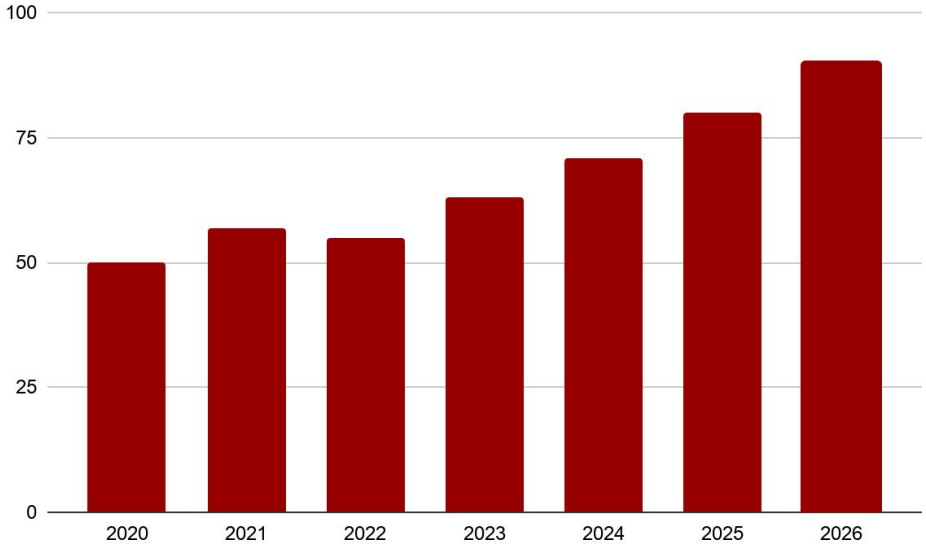
Crow Wing Master Gardener Volunteer Program Update

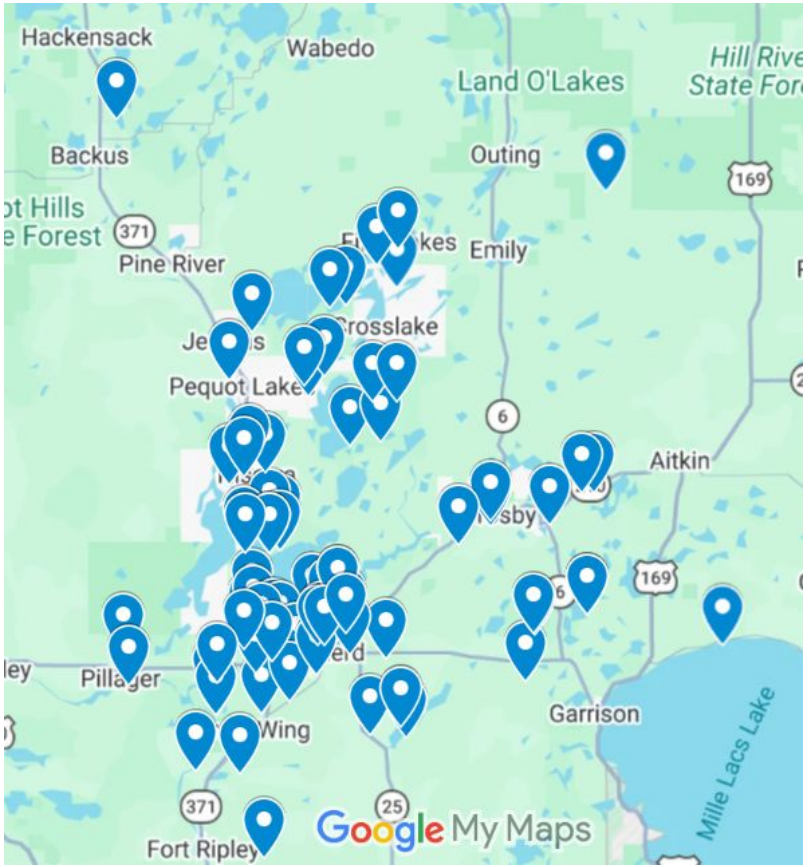
Dan Lee
Jennifer Lee
Brittany Goerges

CWC Committee of the Whole Meeting **Tuesday, August 18th, 2026**

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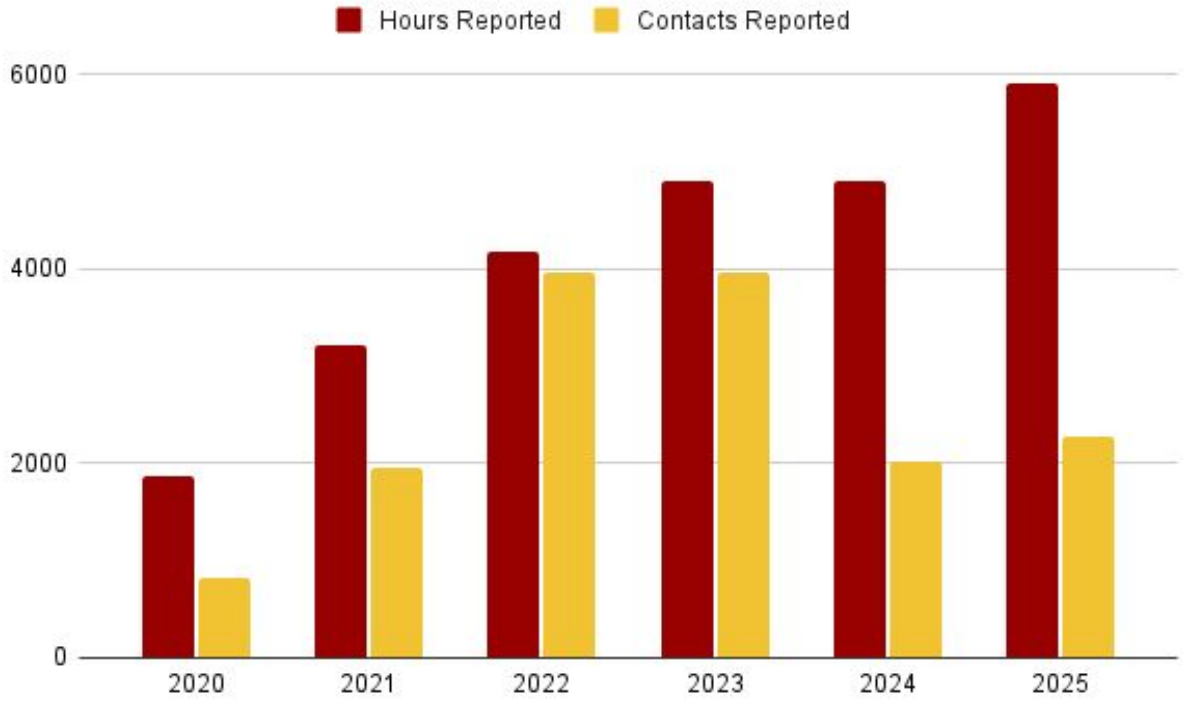
A Growing Program





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Increasing Impacts



$38.16 value of volunteer hour in MN=$227,352.32

*2,751.5 reported YTD

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New Initiatives





Ribbon cutting at the new Giving Gardens at Cuyuna Range Food Shelf

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Crosslake Community Center and Library





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Crosslake Campgrounds

Linda Ulland Memorial Gardens



PAUL BUNYAN SCENIC BYWAY

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CLC Native Garden









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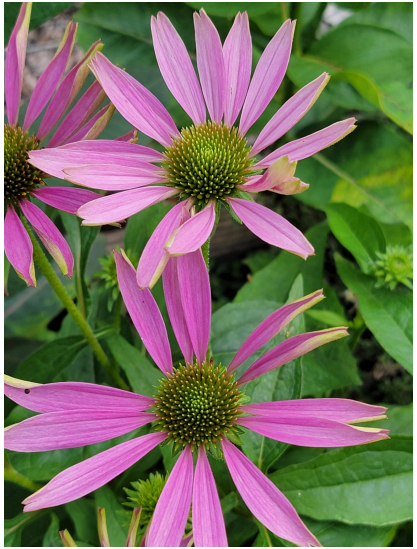
Baxter Elementary





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South Long Lake Park







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Education in Action

2025 statistics

- 354 attended the monthly Library series
- Presentations at CRMC, Bay Lake Association, Headstart, Crosslake, Brainerd, Nisswa, Ramsey, Tri-county, Aitkin, Carver, and CLC
- 825 contacts at County Fair
- Over 1,500 newsletter recipients
- 81 YouTube subscribers
  27 videos, over 910 views
- 45 Helpline calls





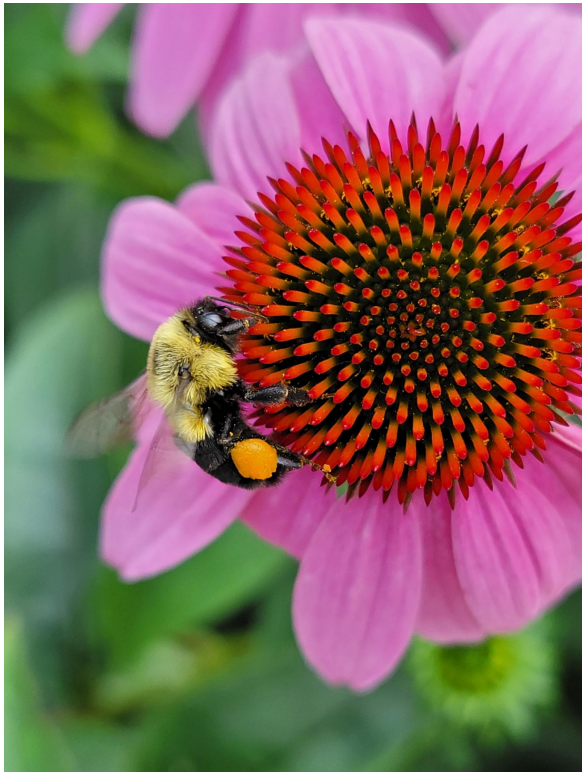


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Demonstration Gardens and Green Space







- 400+ educational signs installed
- Shoreline and water quality events

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Community Giving Project - since 2020



Five Pillars – by the numbers

- Bedding Plant Team – started 2,726 bedding plants
- Patio Garden Team – distributed 1,377 patio gardens
- Youth Gardening Team – taught 77 youth
- Adult Gardening Team – taught 119 adults
- Giving Garden Teams – Arboretum, Ideal Corners, Personal Produced and distributed 20,684 pounds to food shelves and organizations countywide (2020-2025)

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Patio Garden Recipients

CWC Social Services
CWC WIC (Women, Infant, Children)
Home Instead
Vets Administration
CRMC Social Workers
Garrison Senior Center
Heartwood Senior Living
Cuyuna Food Shelf
Emily Food Shelf
Garrison Food Shelf
Crosslake Food Shelf
Pequot Lakes Food Shelf
Lighthouse Beginnings



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2026 Patio garden feedback

Thank you so much for the beautiful plants. Through your generosity our team at Cuyuna Regional Medical Center is able to share plants with patients and families who receive care at CRMC.
Here are two responses I received this year recognizing the importance of this – the first from our dietician and the second from a patient.

1. Being able to provide produce plants to my patients empowers them to grow fresh fruits and veggies at home, improving access to nutrient-dense foods while helping reduce food insecurity and grocery costs. This supports long-term healthy eating habits and behaviors, encourages consumption of fresh produce, and promotes overall wellness through sustainability. My patients are truly so happy, grateful, and blessed to receive a produce plant. *(Miranda Larson, RD, LD)*

2. We downsized a couple years ago and no longer have a large outdoor space for a garden. We received a tomato plant from our social worker at CRMC. We have had a tough year with medical issues and have not had time to focus on gardening. This beautiful tomato plant is giving me a small task to do every day and brings joy when I see it on my patio. I am excited for them to ripen so we can enjoy them. Thank you! ~ *"D"*

KariLee Pietz, Licensed Social Worker
Director of Behavioral Health, Care Management, and Quality Department



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G101 Students

A Visit from Ms. CWC Carrot



Graduation Day



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You're Invited to a Garden Open House



Monday, August 17th, from 10:00-11:30

Located in the Community Giving Gardens at the Northland Arboretum



Questions? Comments?

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2026 MICA Briefing

Crow Wing County – August 18, 2026

Nathan Jesson, Executive Director

MINNESOTA
INTER-COUNTY ASSOCIATION

Who We Are

- Voluntary organization of 17 of Minnesota's most populated counties outside of Hennepin and Ramsey
- We work on statewide issues to solve common problems for our membership
- Produce and share high quality information on issues of concern to our members and their residents

Personnel at the Capitol

- Nathan Jesson-Executive Director, Covers tax and general government issues
- Nancy Silesky-Covers health and human services
- Amber Backhaus-Covers transportation and capital investment
- Rachel Sosnowchik/John-Paul Yates-Cover environment
- Emilio Lamba-Informational resource on corrections & public safety, also represents AMC

MINNESOTA
INTER-COUNTY ASSOCIATION

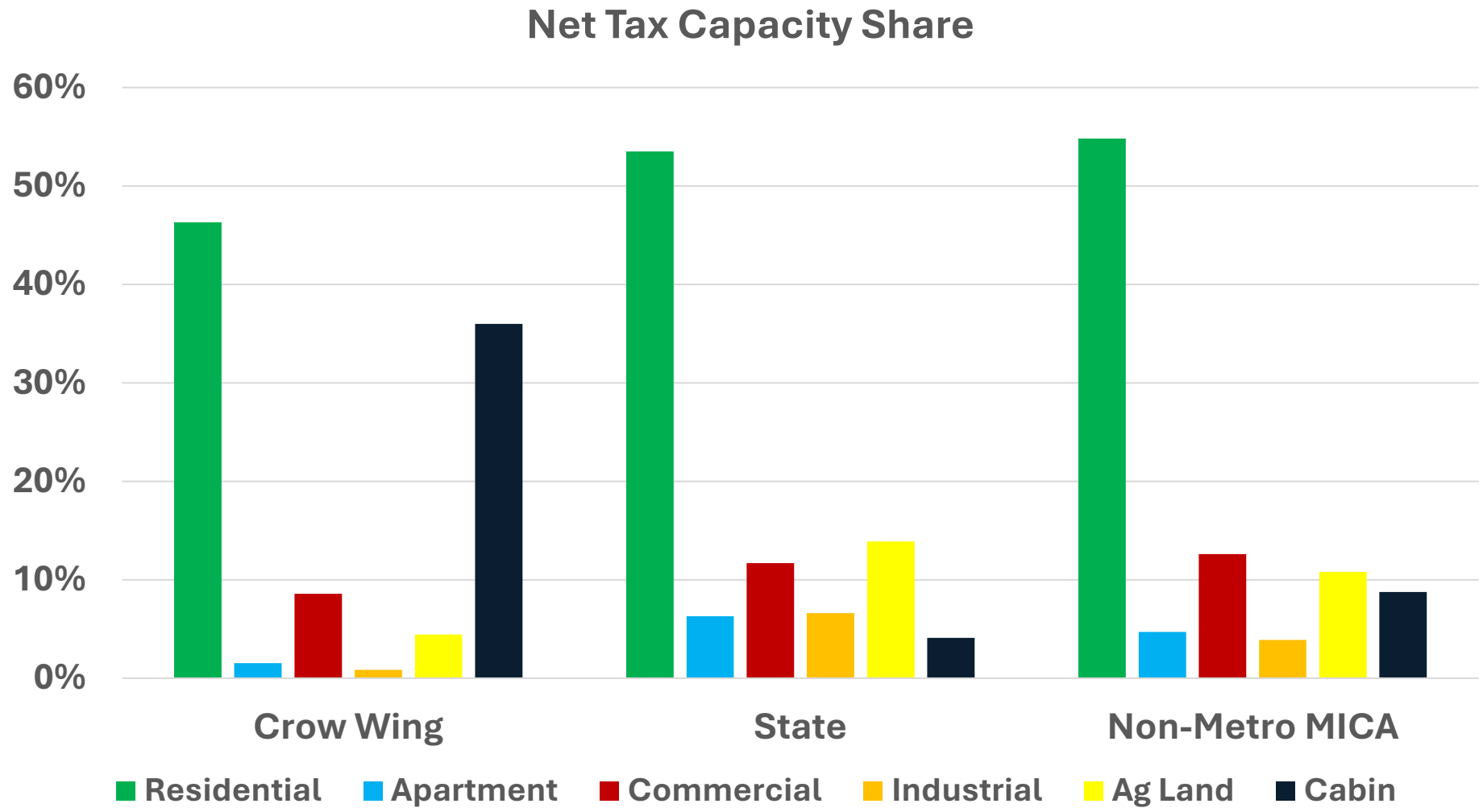
Our work

- At the capitol every day during session, making connections at the capitol and at the county level
- Weekly updates from the capitol
- Regular board and policy committee meetings
- Annual legislative forum
- Provide analytical lens at the capitol and to county officials
- Property tax comparisons, levy data, economic forecast breakdowns

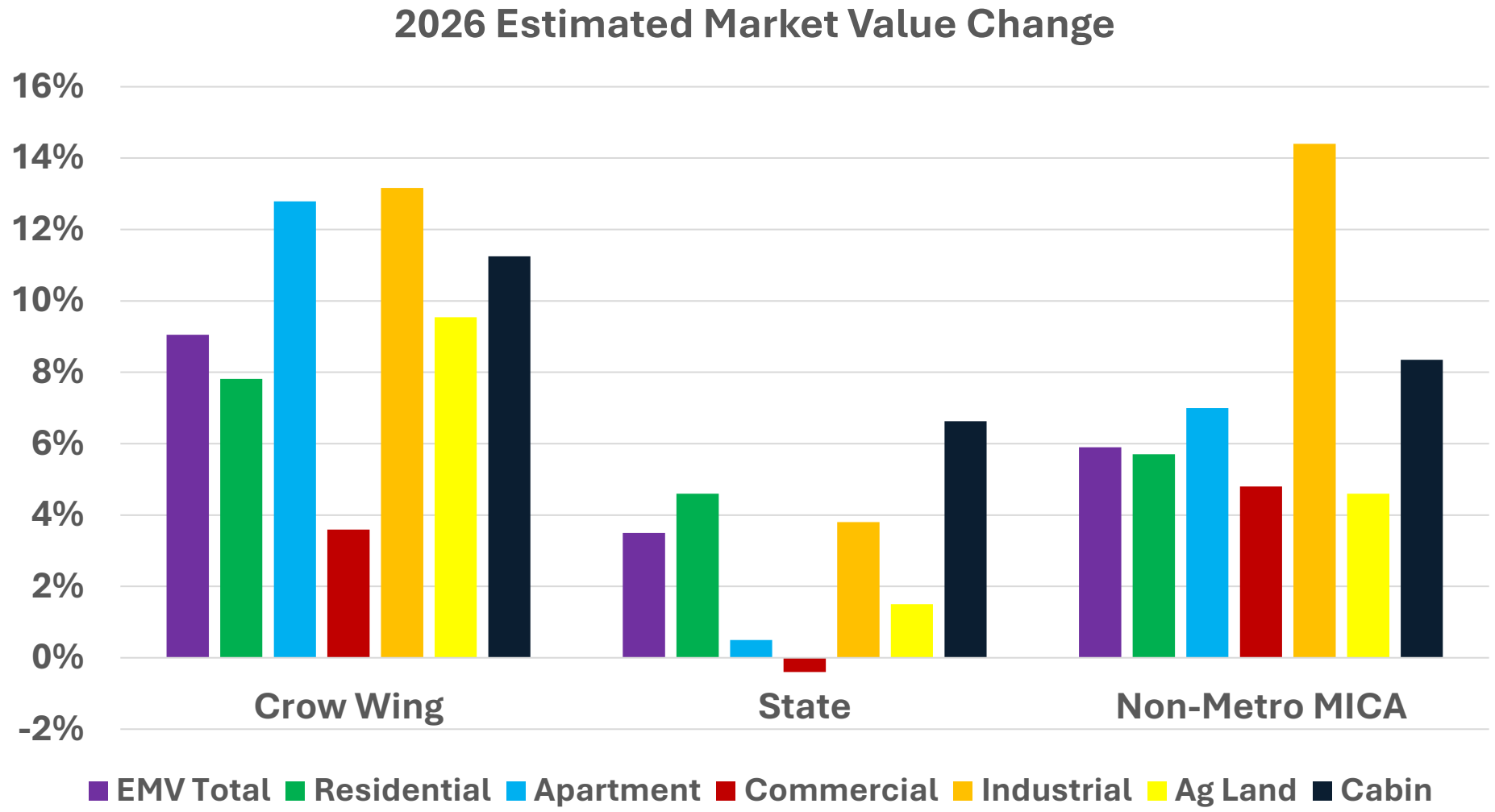
Value MICA provides

- Small enough to be quick and responsive
- Provide avenues for connection and comparison between similar county members at the staff level
- Every MICA county has two representatives on the Board of Directors

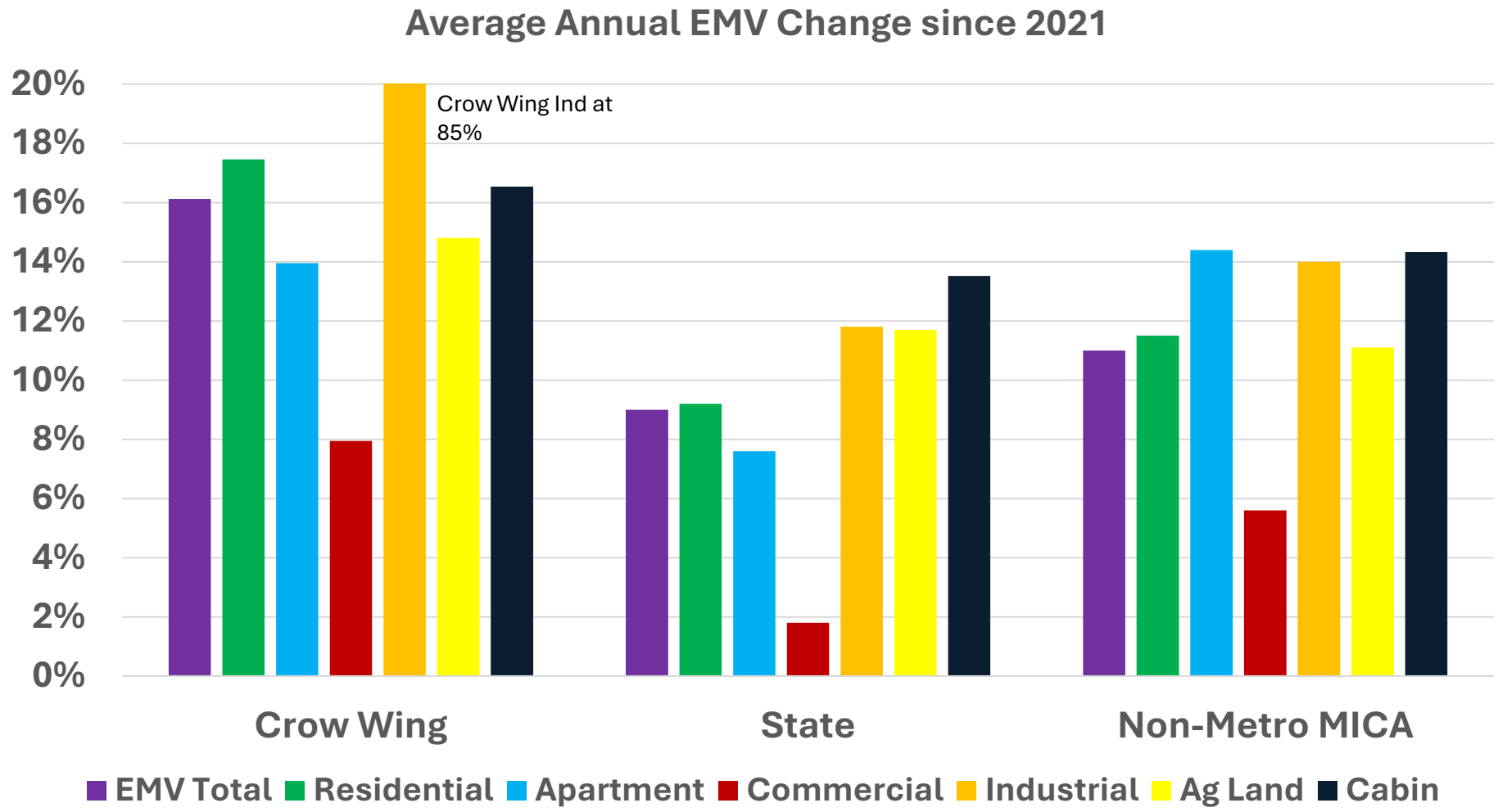
Crow Wing Comparisons



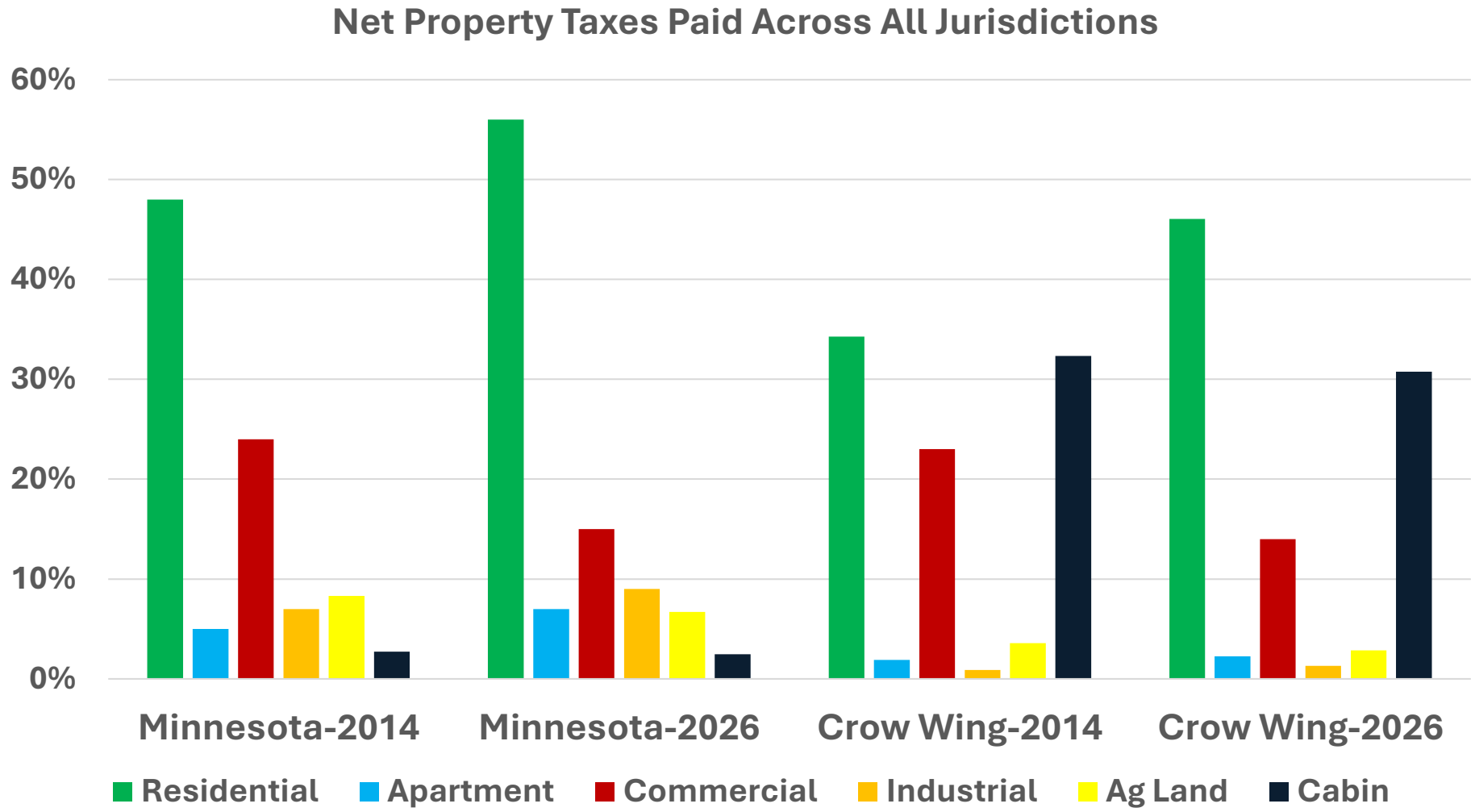
Crow Wing Comparisons



Crow Wing Comparisons



Crow Wing Comparisons



Work Groups and Task Forces

Human Services Systems Modernization Advisory Group

- Oversees IT modernization spending that was approved in 2026
- Has county and state agency representatives
- Will likely start meeting in September

Duty Disability Work Group

- Started meeting in June to try to come to resolution on how to treat and pay for duty disability benefits
- Legislators and public employee and employer groups serve on the working group
- Unless a funding source is identified, this benefit will shift to an unfunded mandate

Property Tax Task Force

- A property tax task force was approved by both the House and Senate but not included in the final bill that became law
- The Department of Revenue is facilitating a task force that will issue a report in December

Transportation

POST 2026 SESSION | Funding Opportunities

Local Road Improvement Program

$50M general obligation bonds ($3M for townships)

Application Timeline: Tuesday, September 1 – Wednesday, November 25

Unfunded 2025 Applications: Simplified resubmittal process for 2026

TBD: Split between county/MSA/non-state aid awardees; 7-county vs. Greater MN

Transportation

2027 SESSION | What's on the Horizon

WATCH

Attacks on Transportation Funds

The state's estimated budget deficit makes funds statutorily dedicated to transportation (like the sales tax on auto parts) an easy target for balancing the budget. Additionally, many legislators are calling for the 2023 tab fee increases to be permanently reduced.

⚠ *If Democrats regain full control in 2027, expect new conditions on road/bridge projects and funding shifts toward transit.*

UNRESOLVED

GHG Transportation Offset & Mitigation Program

There are still many questions surrounding implementation of this program, and it's likely the portfolio assessment deadline (Aug 1, 2027) is not going to be met, putting highway expansion and interchange projects in limbo.

LIKELY TO RETURN

Highway Expansion Restrictions

Bills stipulating highway expansion projects have 60-year maintenance plans (HF3728), new project development processes (HF3740), and purpose/need statements (HF4531) did not advance but are expected to return if the DFL regains full control.

Health and Human Services

SNAP

Counties will be paying an increased share – due to recent action at the federal level. Administrative costs: Minnesota is one of only three states where counties are responsible for a portion of administrative costs

2026 Legislature appropriated $10.7 million in one-time funding:

- Allocated to counties based on their proportional share of SNAP administrative costs
- Effective October 1, 2026, the county share will be increased from 50% to 75% due to federal law.
    - Estimated at $35 million/annually.

Benefit Share: Effective July 1, 2027, the federal government is requiring states to pick up a % of the benefit:

- Ranges from 5-15% of the benefit cost - depending on payment error rate.
- Estimated at $138 million annually to counties statewide
- Efforts in progress to delay implementation date, would require federal law change

Health and Human Services

Minnesota African American Family Preservation and Child Welfare Disproportionality Act (MAAFPCWDA)

The 2026 Legislature appropriated one-time funding of $15 million (FY27) to address county implementation costs.

- Each county will receive a minimum of $100,000 based on an existing statutory formula:
  - 50% based on the child population residing in the county
  - 25% based on the number of screened-in reports of child maltreatment
  - 25% based on the number of open child protection case management cases in the county

No 2026 funding related to MAAFPCWDA for Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) was approved:

- The case review process was delayed until July 1, 2027
- The working group expires December 31, 2026.
- Remains an issue MICA will push on at the capitol in 2027

Health and Human Services

Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS)

The 2025 Legislature established an LTSS advisory task force to identify areas in which to reduce cost growth:

- Counties and providers are charged with finding $178 million in savings by July 1, 2027.
- Large task force; includes 2 members from MICA, AMC, and MACSSA, along with providers and consumers/family members. Started their work in September 2025; report is due on December 1, 2026.

2026 Legislature did book savings in the LTSS area, but counties and providers were not given credit:

- LTSS Loan Program Reduction: Savings: ($65.2m) (FY26-27); ($5.6m) (FY28-29)
- Disability Waivers: modifications for homes and vehicles
- Replaced $40,000 annual limit with $40,000 every three years

Without legislative action on to book LTSS savings, counties are facing another cost shift on July 1, 2027.

Environment

Key issues, themes in 2027 will build on work in 2026

- Defend Waste to Energy (WTE)
- Push for increased SCORE grant funding
- Battery and electronic waste product stewardship
- Protect packaging and paper extended producer responsibility (EPR) program
- Bonding money for construction and demolition landfill transition costs
- Ensure Clean Water Fund appropriations align with Clean Water Council recommendations

State Budget Picture

End of 2026 Session Budget Picture	26-27	28-29
General Fund Revenue	$67,047	$70,219
General Fund Spending	$71,122	$72,405
($ in millions, not factoring in inflation)		

- State continues to roll over previous surpluses to cover existing structural imbalance between spending and revenue
- Budget reserve remains strong at $3.421 billion, grows depending on size of state budget and revenue volatility factors
- Fiscal year 2026 revenues closed $248 million above forecast, but largely due to timing of payments that will balance out over the next nine months
- Near term US economic outlook weaker than it was earlier this year
- Next economic forecast released first week of December

What's Next

- Retirements having an impact on many committees
- Election on November 3
- Legislature comes back January 12
- MICA will continue to push back against looming cost shifts and unfunded mandates



MINNESOTA
INTER-COUNTY ASSOCIATION

Contact Us

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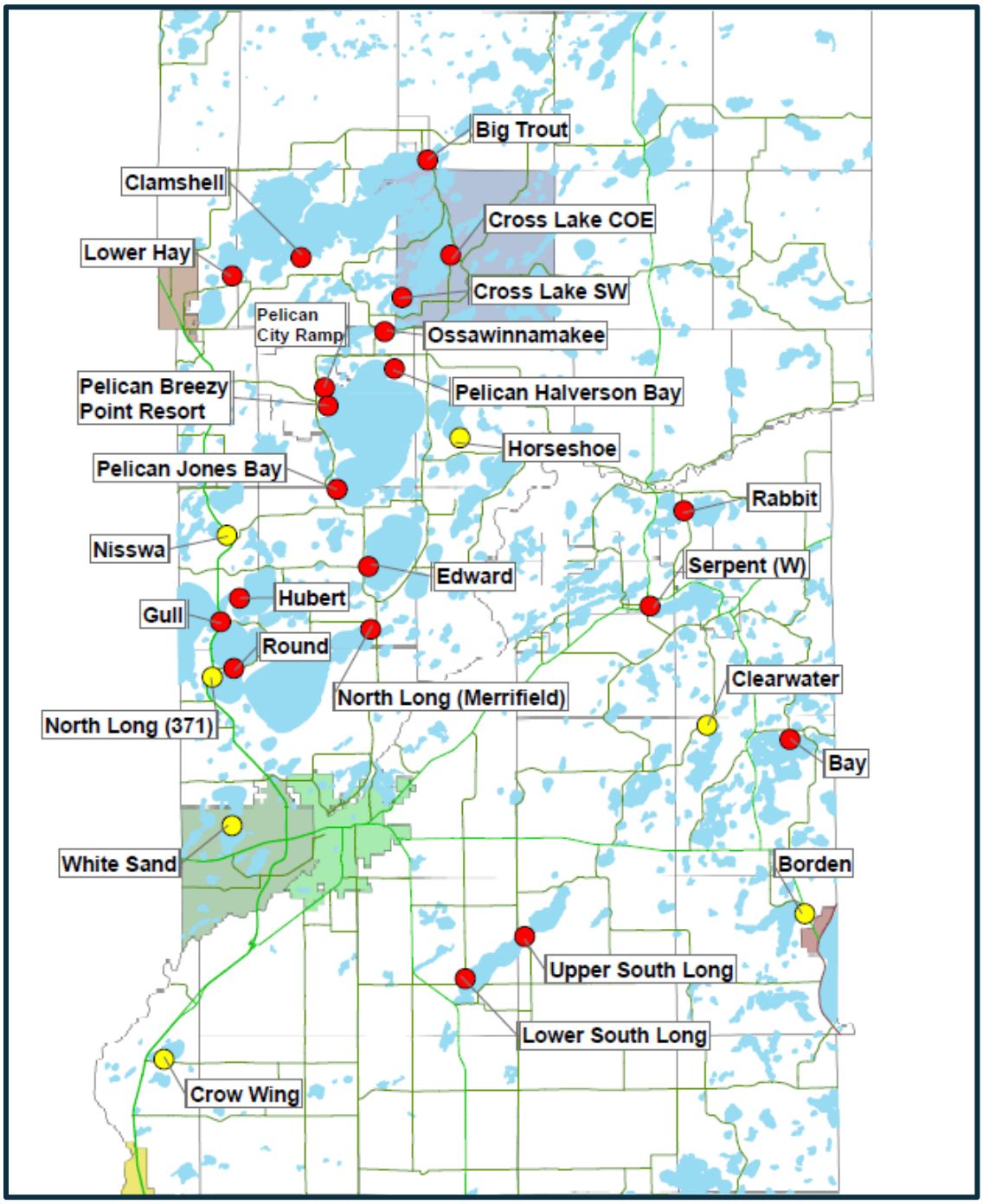
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Environment Legislative Liaison
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402-651-0238 (cell)

- **2026 Aide -** $472,193
- **2027 Aide -** $232,407

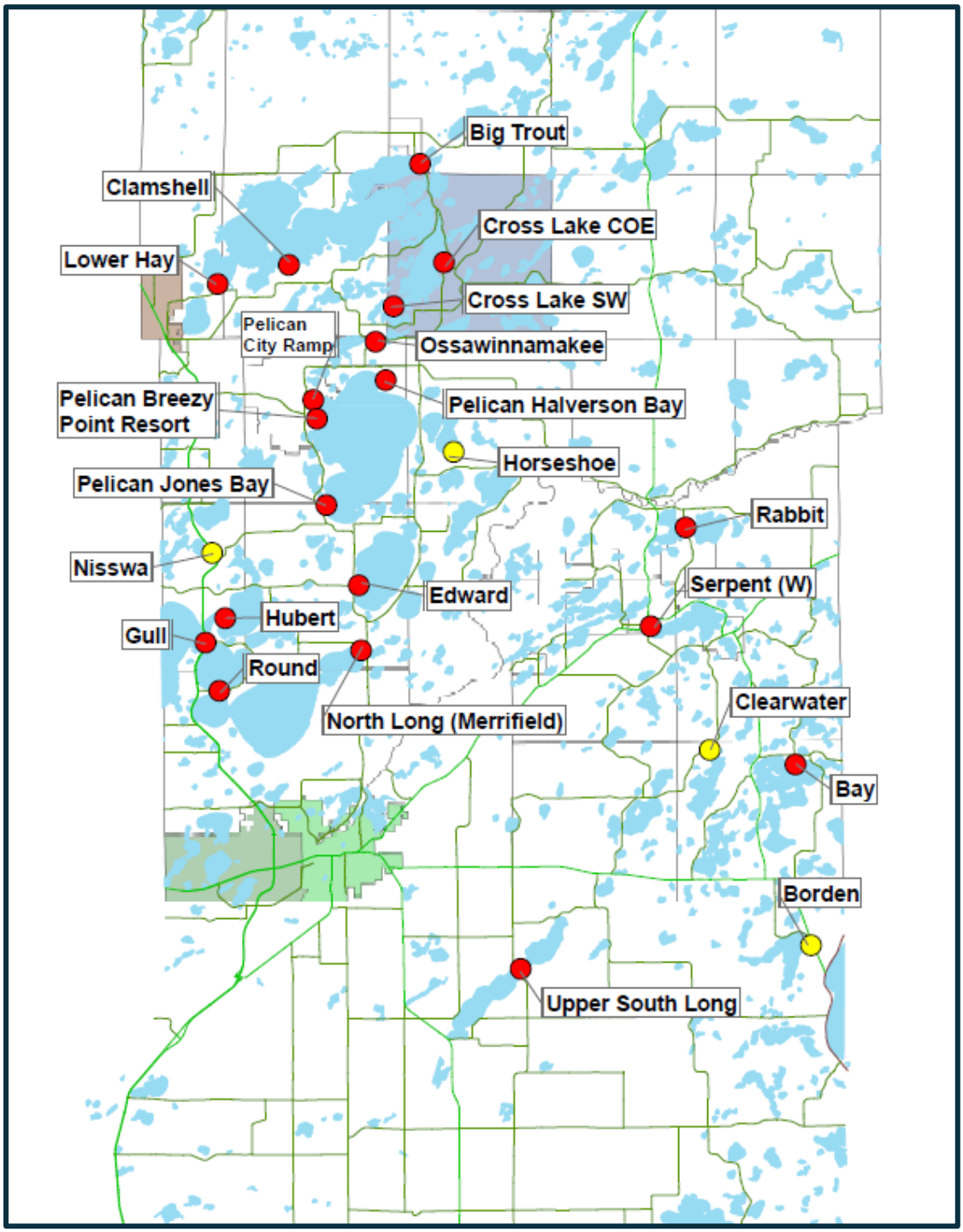
Option 1

- Decrease landings from 43 to 27
    - All Friday – Sunday / Memorial weekend to Labor Day weekend
- Decrease grants to lake associations for treatment by 50%



Option 2

- Decrease landings from 43 to 23
    - All Friday – Sunday / Memorial weekend to Labor Day weekend
- Leave lake association grants at full funding level



Lake Association Grants Available for 2026:

- Eurasian Watermilfoil Prevention – Up to $3,500 per qualifying lake for a survey to be completed.
- Eurasian Watermilfoil Treatment - Up to $3,500 per qualifying lake for treatment of EWM.
- Starry Stonewort Treatment – Up to $2,500 per qualifying lake for lakes that are classified as infected by MNDNR to qualify.
- Starry Stonewort Sampling – Up to $200 grant reimbursement per landing for lakes that follow sampling protocols.
- Zebra Mussel Veliger & Spiny Waterflea Sampling & Testing – Up to $100 grant reimbursement for testing by a reputable facility.
- Publication – up to $100 grant reimbursement for outreach materials to be produced and distributed.

    - In 2026, we budgeted $63,470 and received requests for $62,900