

Greetings from Le Sueur County

As I have written in my last several monthly columns, we were waiting to see the impact upon the County due to state and federal legislative changes, primarily in the Human Services arena. With the State Legislature wrapped up and Congress passing their final reconciliation bill, the picture is becoming somewhat clearer, but there are still things to unpack and discover potential impacts upon the County.

Currently, it appears as though State and Federal legislative changes will have relatively minor impacts upon the 2026 County budget and operations, but we will experience some decreased revenues along with some increased workload. Larger unknown impacts in future budget years will remain a concern, but this is what we know thus far.

In the area of Human Services, the main impact upon the County will be additional administrative workload in terms of County staff being required to do more work in verifying eligibility for public assistance programs, such as Medicaid and the federal nutrition program otherwise known as SNAP. The federal law was changed to require work requirement verification every 6 months for able bodied adults aged 18-64 enrolled in those programs.

Another change was how the SNAP program is paid for. Traditionally, the federal government has paid for 100 percent of the benefit cost and reimbursed Counties 50 percent the administrative costs. The federal law has been changed so that the federal government will only reimburse 25 percent of administrative costs, which will translate to a revenue decrease for the County that will need to be absorbed in the County budget.

Starting October 2027 States will now be required to pay 5 to 15 percent of the SNAP benefit payment. Currently, it's unknown whether the State or County will be responsible for making this payment.

Over the last several months, there was much discussion about state and federal program eligibility as it related to citizen status. The State has changed the law that undocumented individuals over the age 18 are no longer eligible to enroll in MinnesotaCare. Undocumented children remain eligible. On the federal level, for Medicaid, only lawful permanent residents will be eligible, as for SNAP, undocumented individuals have historically not been eligible, but now the federal law also disqualifies individuals with legal immigration status.

While the State did not implement many of the feared long-term care Human Services cost shifts to Counties, they established a task force to identify \$178 million in savings. If this task force is unable to find savings, Counties will be responsible to pay \$89.5 million towards medical assistance costs not paid for by the federal government for a person receiving certain services.

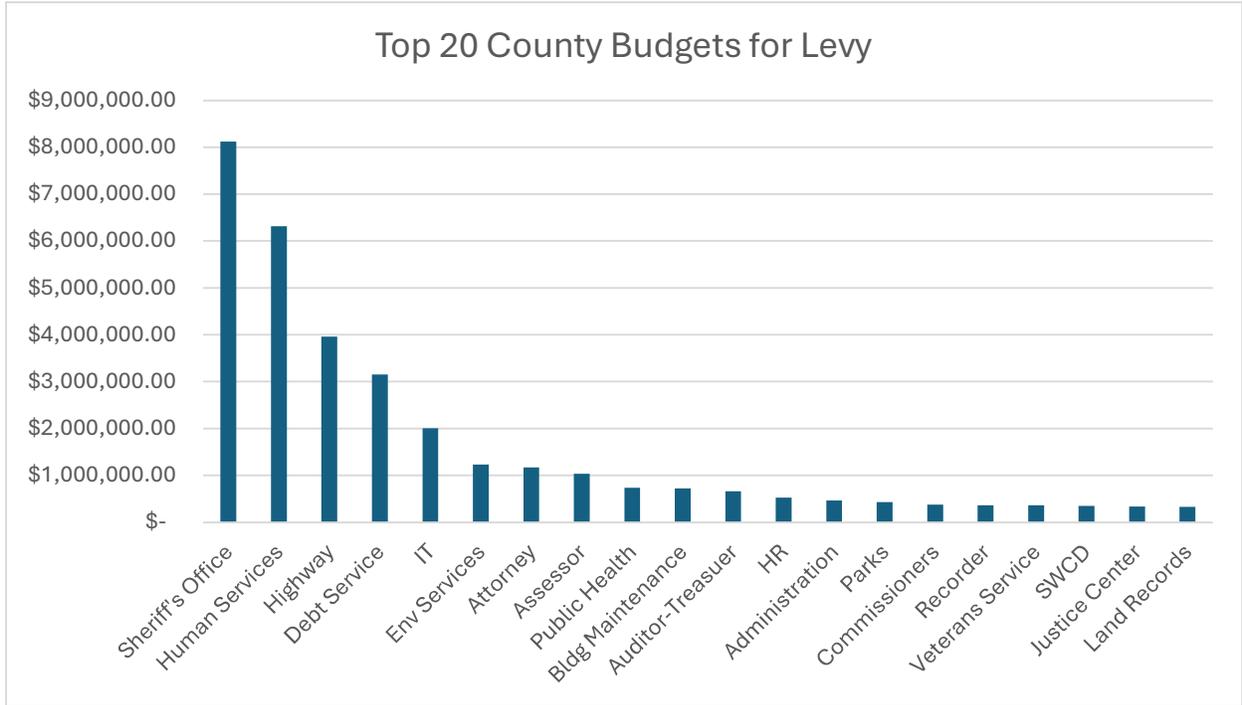
In terms of Board news, the County Board started holding budget work sessions and evaluating initial budget requests. In reviewing all initial budget requests, an additional \$3.8 million has been requested in the budget, which translates to a 13.5% increase to the property tax levy. To put that into perspective, last year's increase was 3.9 percent. In rolling up all the preliminary numbers the requested levy stands at around \$32 million.

If you ever wonder where all the levy money is spent, the vast majority goes for personnel costs, with very small amounts being allocated for discretionary costs. For example, in 2025, we are projected to spend around 98 percent of the collected levy just on personnel, while the proposed 2026 budget estimates around 94 percent for personnel costs. The top five budgets comprise 73 percent of total levy (Sheriff's Office, Human Services, Highway, Debt Service and IT).

In terms of road related updates, the Commissioners received a report from the Minnesota Department of Transportation (DOT) on their 10-year capital plans for road projects in the area. The State reported that work on Highway 22 is going well with the goal of reopening the segment in late Fall or early winter. The next major project scheduled in the County is the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Highways 99 and 13. The next project will likely be on Highway 99 in the City of Le Center, with potential construction of roundabout(s). The State continues to monitor the road condition of Highway 13 and 19, but major construction on those segments is further out on their timeline. However, they stated that they may conduct patching and overlays on certain segments if conditions worsen.

The Board also approved a use permit and set a surety bond amount to allow Vetter Stone Company to expand operations in Kasota Township.

Top 20 Budgets in 2026 Levy Request



Following is a chart that shows a breakdown by budget and the differences between the annual levy requests.

Department	2025 Levy	2026 Requested Levy	Difference
Human Services	\$ 4,479,599.00	\$ 6,176,737.00	\$ 1,697,138.00
Sheriff's Office	\$ 7,629,411.00	\$ 8,121,679.00	\$ 492,268.00
Building	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 291,850.00	\$ 261,850.00
Public Health	\$ 586,006.00	\$ 736,237.00	\$ 150,231.00
Highway	\$ 3,815,406.00	\$ 3,960,249.00	\$ 144,843.00
IT	\$ 1,866,676.00	\$ 2,003,485.00	\$ 136,809.00
Assessor	\$ 924,319.00	\$ 1,030,883.00	\$ 106,564.00
Courts	\$ 116,000.00	\$ 195,500.00	\$ 79,500.00
Auditor-Treasurer	\$ 586,249.00	\$ 660,144.00	\$ 73,895.00
Bldg Maintenance	\$ 670,968.00	\$ 724,577.00	\$ 53,609.00
Election	\$ -	\$ 51,909.00	\$ 51,909.00
HR	\$ 479,275.00	\$ 521,873.00	\$ 42,598.00
SWCD	\$ 311,559.00	\$ 348,649.00	\$ 37,090.00
Attorney	\$ 1,131,586.00	\$ 1,167,270.00	\$ 35,684.00
Veterans Service	\$ 329,919.00	\$ 358,899.00	\$ 28,980.00
License Bureau	\$ 115,335.00	\$ 141,811.00	\$ 26,476.00
Commissioners	\$ 354,685.00	\$ 374,415.00	\$ 19,730.00
Parks	\$ 407,826.00	\$ 427,398.00	\$ 19,572.00
Land Records	\$ 310,118.00	\$ 329,251.00	\$ 19,133.00
Drug Court	\$ 1,371.00	\$ 16,263.00	\$ 14,892.00
Finance	\$ 168,136.00	\$ 182,314.00	\$ 14,178.00
Extension	\$ 250,621.00	\$ 263,673.00	\$ 13,052.00
Administration	\$ 454,265.00	\$ 466,442.00	\$ 12,177.00
Env Services	\$ 1,223,952.00	\$ 1,228,645.00	\$ 4,693.00
E911	\$ 12,226.00	14822	\$ 2,596.00
Justice Center	\$ 334,074.00	\$ 336,180.00	\$ 2,106.00
PH/Ext/4-H Bldgs	\$ 64,272.00	\$ 66,083.00	\$ 1,811.00
Ag Inspector	\$ 14,578.00	\$ 15,791.00	\$ 1,213.00
Fair	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ -
HRA	\$ 8,500.00	\$ 8,500.00	\$ -
Surveyor	\$ 100,250.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ (250.00)
Recorder	\$ 366,571.00	\$ 364,134.00	\$ (2,437.00)
Victim Witness	\$ 65,629.00	\$ 60,500.00	\$ (5,129.00)
Senior Citizen/Tr	\$ 33,900.00	\$ 28,100.00	\$ (5,800.00)
Machine Room	\$ 108,536.00	\$ 86,027.00	\$ (22,509.00)
Probation	\$ 330,291.00	\$ 301,620.00	\$ (28,671.00)
Debt Service	\$ 3,882,385.00	\$ 3,149,859.00	\$ (732,526.00)