



SCALE

Scott County Association For Leadership And Efficiency

On Friday, January 14, Savage Mayor and current chair of the Scott County Association for Leadership and Efficiency **Janet Williams** welcomed a standing-room-only crowd to the annual SCALE legislative meeting in Prior Lake. Attended by **Senator Claire Robling, Senator Al DeKruif, Representative Michael Beard, Representative Mark Buesgens, Representative Kelby Woodard, Representative Pam Myhra, and Representative Ernie Leidiger**, Chair Williams convened the meeting with a summary overview of the history and mission of the SCALE organization.

After brief introductions, SCALE executive committee members Williams, Scott County **Commissioner Jon Ulrich**, Shakopee **Mayor John Schmitt**, Savage City Administrator **Barry Stock**, Scott County Administrator **Gary Shelton**, Shakopee Community Development Director **Michael Leek**, Deputy County Administrator **Lezlie Vermillion**, and Prior Lake City Manager **Frank Boyles** presented the *2011 SCALE Legislative Priorities* (www.scaleinfo.org) before taking comments and observations from the legislators.

Senator Claire Robling, newly appointed Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, began by reiterating her concerns over the state's forecasted \$6.2 billion biennial deficit, and noted that the 2010 cuts to local government and county program aid would likely be extended in the 2011 fiscal year. "A horrible mess," Robling added. "It's a huge problem. We don't have any answers yet, but we'll be looking to focus on priorities first...[and] we'll need everyone's ideas." Robling also noted that **Governor Mark Dayton's** budget proposal is expected on February 15, to be followed by the February economic forecast on the 28th.

Representative Mark Buesgens commented that he's staying as close to his principles, priorities, and philosophy as possible at this point in the session. "We were all elected by a particular constituency to do a particular job," he noted, "and it seems that we should begin by using our resources in areas that make the most sense...[including] what the Constitution requires of us: safety, infrastructure, and education."

Representative Michael Beard, newly appointed Chair of the House Transportation Committee, agreed with his colleagues' statements, and spoke more specifically on transportation, transit governance, and the Metropolitan Council's policies on infrastructure development. "These will likely be the more significant things I'll be doing," he added.

Representative Kelby Woodard — commenting that he, too, agreed with what was previously articulated by his colleagues — stated that one of his first priorities in the legislature is to closely examine un- and underfunded mandates. "Local control, cutting taxes, and compelling the state to live within its means," he emphasized.

Senator Al DeKruif noted that he has had "...a lot to learn" but reiterated his focus on preserving and promoting job expansion and statewide economic development. "We need to get out of the way of business owners," he stated, specifically singling out ways to improve the permitting process and reducing commercial real estate taxes. "We need to help out the businesses on Main Street as much as we do the large corporations."

Representative Ernie Leidiger spoke next, adding his voice to the previous comments advocating for small business support and economic development. “And getting spending under control is truly number one... that’s how we can help the private sector.” Leidiger also noted that “...I like how you do this here in Scott County, bringing together all of these elected officials and decision makers once a month. I’m truly happy to be here.” **Representative Pam Myrha** echoed these comments, thanking the SCALE members for inviting her.

Concluding the meeting, Chair Williams stated that “...we just want to emphasize that we are your partners, and we want to continue hearing from you. We really appreciate your attendance, and look forward to your continuing participation.”

“The mission of SCALE is to forge new and innovative ways in which government entities can collaborate to provide superior services while making the most of limited resources.”