



SCALE

Scott County Association For Leadership And Efficiency

It was another packed house on Friday, April 12, when the newly installed **Chair Joe Thill** (Jordan) and **Vice Chair Jay Whiting** (Shakopee) welcomed members and several guests for a morning agenda marked by crisis... as a topic, that is.

First, the “immediate” crisis topic: **New Prague Police Chief Mark Vosejпка**, **New Prague Area Schools Superintendent Larry Kauzlarich**, and **New Prague City Administrator Michael Johnson** recapped the lessons learned from the coordinated response to the recent school shooting hoax at the Middle School. After Chief Vosejпка summarized the events of the morning of March 20 (in which a 12-year-old caller from inside the school falsely reported an active shooting), he effusively praised the efforts and skills of all of the responding agencies that arrived to render assistance. “By my estimate, we had over 55 law enforcement professionals on-scene within minutes,” the Chief said, noting that “...although this was, thankfully, a hoax, it served as great training experience for all of us. It couldn’t have worked any better.” Chief Vosejпка’s comments were echoed by Superintendent Kauzlarich, who again noted that the schools’ multiple “Code Red” emergency tests truly paid off. “It was automatic,” he said. “The doors were shut, the lights turned off, and the kids were absolutely quiet. Everyone did exactly as they were supposed to do.” City Administrator Johnson credited the partnerships fostered by SCALE in helping such a large-scale co-ordinated response develop so quickly.

Next, the “longer term” crisis topic: Managing solid waste for the present and the future. In beginning his presentation, **Scott County Environmental Health Manager Al Frechette** noted that “...we’re all in the business of protecting public health, and the problems associated with poor waste management is of a more chronic nature.” Frechette then provided an overview of the history of waste management (and, in many cases, mismanagement), the citizen outcry that followed the unsafe and unsanitary conditions that ensued, and the public sector’s response to the demand for action. And while many significant environmental and public health problems endured during 20th century have been identified and mitigated, many still remain: most specifically, the greenhouse gas generated by the production and disposal of products associated with food and other industrial and household goods. (Methane is particularly dangerous, Frechette said, as it is a greenhouse gas 22 times more potent than carbon dioxide.)

But there are large and small steps we can, and should, take to reduce these harmful effects, Frechette added: “At the macro level, we concentrate our efforts on source reduction, re-use of existing materials, recycling when and where possible, energy recovery from waste products, and safe disposal when all of the above aren’t feasible.” He also noted that Scott County has long been considered a leader in good waste management policies, relying exclusively on the private sector for collecting and managing waste. Frechette then summarized a series of steps that everyone can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions: recycle, buy recycled products, donate reusable items, bring household hazardous waste to the County’s HHW facility, avoid heavily packaged products, mulch or compost grass and leaves, bring yard waste to an organics processing facility, find substitutes for more hazardous household products, buy longer-lived products, shop at thrift stores and garage sales for reusable items, and “Get Informed, Get Active, and Get the Word Out!” His full presentation will be available online soon at www.scaleinfo.org.

The full agenda was then rounded out by the “intermediate” crisis: an update on the 2013 Legislative Session. **Scott County Legislative Coordinator Claire Robling** outlined several new and emerging policy bills that would affect local governments, but also noted that many of the “omnibus” (large) bills are still working through the committees.

The next SCALE meeting will be held on May 10, 2013, from 7:30 – 9:30 a.m. at Prior Lake City Hall. Mark your calendars!