



On Friday, May 11, SCALE Chair **LuAnne Lemke** (Louisville Township) welcomed SCALE members and visitors and thanked them all for attending, "...especially those of you who are avid fishermen," she added in recognition of the Minnesota Fishing Opener weekend.

Chair Lemke then walked the group through two organizational documents — the Five Year Strategic Plan and the SCALE Bylaws — which were both subject to proposed amendment, particularly due to the inclusion of new SCALE members (e.g., the Community Development Agency, the Shakopee Area Catholic Schools, the Three Rivers Park District, Metro Cities, and two watershed districts). The amendments were unanimously adopted.

Moving on to the morning's primary topic, Chair Lemke introduced Scott County Administrator **Gary Shelton**, who, with the assistance of the Library Director, **Vanessa Birdsey**, presented *Library Services: Past, Present, and Future*. "A significant part of the reason we thought it was both appropriate and timely to present this information to SCALE members," he began, "was due to the vast amount of new information I personally learned following research completed by Ms. Birdsey and [Deputy County Administrator] Lezlie Vermillion. In fact, I can safely state that our Library System was 'SCALE' before there was a 'SCALE.'" Explaining that the unique library partnership among the cities, the County, and now the Community Development Agency long predated the cooperative nature of the SCALE organization, "Libraries are one of our most successful and longest collaborations." Later, Savage **Mayor Janet Williams**, herself a former Director of the Scott County Library System, would add that this partnership even predated the formation of the Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA).

Shelton then walked through the historical roles of and perceptions about libraries, primarily as a place that lent books and other materials, facilities for research, or a "quiet place to kick back." Given that the contemporary world is becoming increasingly digitized, he asked, "Are public libraries obsolete?"

Noting that libraries have generally stayed well ahead of the technological curve, Shelton's response was a definitive no. "While our libraries still serve all of their traditional functions, they have emerged as a gathering place for families, a place for kids to hang out, and even a shelter for the homeless," he stated. "Further, libraries are increasingly becoming a vital resource for people seeking employment, a primary (if not only) location of internet access, and spaces for public meetings."

Specific to Scott County, Shelton continued, in a population of under 130,000, "... over 100,000 library cards have been issued, and almost a million items were checked out last year alone." So while today's libraries may look and function differently than in the past, "... they are still very relevant, and quite busy." For those using the system for educational purposes (42%), most are doing homework, learning about educational programs, applying for financial aid, and even taking classes online. For the 40% of users who are engaged in employment activities at the library, most are searching for jobs, researching job-related information, and working on resumes. "And we've seen the highest usage of the law library services than any other metro county," he added. For the full presentation, please visit the SCALE website at www.scaleinfo.org.

Reflecting the multi-dimensional functions of the contemporary library system, Shelton invited everyone to the May 17 (4-8 p.m.) Grand Opening of the new Elko New Market library, which features a full County Service Center and is co-located with the Market Village Senior Residence. He also invited the public to the May 18 (11 a.m.) groundbreaking ceremony for the new, mixed-use Jordan Library — which will be partnered with the Brentwood Court Apartments, a St. Francis Medical Center Clinic and a pharmacy.

Echoing the sentiments of many SCALE members, Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District member **Emily Javens** said, "I've been really moved by what I've heard here today. In fact, I'm ready to go out and volunteer at my local library!" The next SCALE meeting will be held on **Friday, June 8, at 7:30 a.m.** at the Prior Lake City Hall.

"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."