



Marty Kelly
Goodhue County Sheriff

430 West 6th Street
Red Wing, MN 55066
Office (651) 267.2600
Dispatch (651) 385.3155

Date: October 15, 2026

To: Goodhue County Board of Commissioners

From: Earl Merchlewitz, Goodhue County Emergency Management Director

Re: Goodhue County Emergency Operations Plan (GCEOP), Revision 26 (2026) – Goodhue County Board Review and Approval, November 3, 2026 Meeting

Goodhue County Commissioners,

I ask the Board to review and approve the revised Goodhue County Emergency Operations Plan (GCEOP) at your November 3, 2026 meeting. This letter explains why we rewrote the plan and how it differs from the version the Board reviewed in 2022.

- A. **Requirement.** The Minnesota Emergency Management Act of 1996 (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 12) requires the Emergency Management Director to plan for the emergency operations of county government in cooperation with the County Attorney and other appropriate county officials and private sector representatives. The Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) also requires Goodhue County to have an emergency operations plan. The GCEOP meets both requirements, and the Emergency Management Director maintains it.
- B. **Review cycle.** The plan is updated annually and undergoes a four (4) year review cycle. The Board last reviewed the plan in 2022, and this review completes the current cycle. The Board affirms its review by resolution signed by the Board Chair; a resolution is attached.
- C. **Why the plan was rewritten.** Over the past several years, the first thing scrutinized in the aftermath of a disaster has been whether an agency or organization followed its plans. Two problems come up repeatedly. In many cases, the plan did not cover the specifics of how that particular emergency unfolded. In other cases, the plan contained so much detail that it forced people to change direction or deviate from procedure mid-event.
- D. **Feedback on the 2022 Plan.** The 2022 plan was a good plan, and this rewrite is not intended as a criticism of it. However, I received a great deal of feedback, with many people indicating that the plan was difficult to navigate and that finding the information they needed was challenging. During annual regional reviews over the past several years, I was repeatedly encouraged to refine and streamline a plan that had grown to fill three large binders. This rewrite focuses on improving the plan's overall usability by making it more concise, easier to navigate, and more practical for those who need to reference it during planning, training, and response activities. Things have also changed over the past three to four years, and our plan needs to evolve accordingly.
- E. **Current best practice.** In the wake of recent disasters, the recommended best practice is the format used in the new plan: a streamlined document that identifies the primary and supporting agencies for each function during an event, and leaves the specifics to be generated based on the nature of the event. The format is intentionally simple so that the experts on hand at the time of an incident can work through the event without being locked into detail written years earlier.

OFFICE OF THE GOODHUE COUNTY SHERIFF

ADULT DETENTION
CENTER
651.267.2804

CIVIL DIVISION
651.267.2601

RECORDS DIVISION
651-267-2600

EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT
651.267.2639

EMERGENCY
COMMUNICATIONS
651.385.3155

An Equal Opportunity Employer

- F. **How the structure compares.** The 2022 plan had eight sections (Introduction and Table of Contents, Basic Plan, Hazards Summary and Mitigation Process/THIRA, Situation, Response and Recovery Priorities, Concept of Operations, Functional Annexes, and Hazard, Threat and Incident Specific Annexes) supported by additional plans and datasets. The new plan is organized as follows:

Feature	2022 plan	Revision 26 (2026)
Format	Eight sections, plus supporting documents, plans and datasets; three large binders	Base Plan, 15 Emergency Support Functions (ESFs), and Functional Annexes
Event-specific content	Hazard, threat and incident specific annexes written in detail	Primary and supporting roles are identified; specifics are generated based on the nature of the event
Updating	Edits can affect the larger, intertwined plan	Modular: each ESF or annex can be edited without changing the rest of the plan
Future threats	Requires reworking existing sections	New functional annexes can be added as new threats emerge
Finding information	Difficult for users to locate what they need	Simple, easy to navigate and aligned with current best practice

The new plan's 15 ESFs are:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ESF 1 – Public Works and Transportation | ESF 9 – Search and Rescue |
| ESF 2 – Communication | ESF 10 – Oil and Hazardous Material Response |
| ESF 3 – Public Works and Engineering | ESF 11 – Agriculture |
| ESF 4 – Firefighting | ESF 12 – Energy |
| ESF 5 – Emergency Management | ESF 13 – Public Safety and Security |
| ESF 6 – Mass Care, Housing, and Health and Human Services | ESF 14 – Cross-Sector Business and Infrastructure |
| ESF 7 – Logistics | ESF 15 – External Affairs |
| ESF 8 – Health and Medical | |

The plan also includes four Functional Annexes: Damage Assessment, Debris Management, Family Assistance Center, and Evacuation and Shelter.

- G. **Relationship to other plans.** The GCEOP is independent of the All Hazards Mitigation Plan approved in 2024 and the Lake Byllesby plan and procedures. The plan is a supporting document to the Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant (PINGP) Emergency Plan. Those plans remain in effect separately and are not changed by this rewrite.
- H. **County Plan Review.** As part of the rewrite process, we sought review and input from Emergency Management Peers, Subject Matter Experts, and department heads and staff within Goodhue County. The product that is presented is the final product you see.
- I. **State review.** Our Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) Regional Program Coordinator reviewed the new format, supports it, and approved the plan in December 2025 as meeting all state and federal planning requirements.
- J. **Access to the plan.** An electronic copy of the plan has been made available by email, and it may also be viewed in person by request at the EOC/Director's office. The Goodhue County Administrator, County Attorney, Sheriff, and Department Heads have also been provided access to the plan for review.

- K. **Requested action.** I respectfully request that the Board review the GCEOP, Revision 26 (2026), and approve the attached resolution at the November 3, 2026 meeting.
- L. Additional information or questions may be directed to the Goodhue County Sheriff's Office, Emergency Communications and Emergency Management Division, or directly to me at 651-267-2639 or earl.merchlewitz@goodhuecountymn.gov.

Earl Merchlewitz, Emergency Management Director
Goodhue County Sheriff's Office
P: (651) 267-2639
E: earl.merchlewitz@goodhuecountymn.gov

CC:

1. MN HSEM Regional Program Coordinator
2. Chairman, Goodhue County Board of Commissioners
3. Administrator, Goodhue County
4. Attorney, Goodhue County
5. Sheriff, Goodhue County
6. Department Heads, Goodhue County

Attachments:

1. Electronic Document, Goodhue County Emergency Operations Plan (GCEOP), Revision 26 (2026)
2. Resolution Adopting the Goodhue County Emergency Operations Plan

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE 2026 GOODHUE COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

WHEREAS, an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is required by several state and federal laws, including Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 12, Section 12.25, and Title VI of Public Law 100-707, the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988 (42 U.S.C. § 5121 et seq.); and

WHEREAS, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management (MN HSEM) require the Goodhue County Board of Commissioners to review the Goodhue County Emergency Operations Plan (GCEOP) every four (4) years; and

WHEREAS, as part of the four-year plan review cycle, in 2025 the MN HSEM Region 1 Regional Program Coordinator reviewed the GCEOP, found that the plan adequately addressed all state and federal planning requirements (MNWALK), and approved the plan; and

WHEREAS, the established plan review cycle now requires the Board to review the plan again; and

WHEREAS, the Goodhue County Sheriff's Office and Emergency Management have requested that the Goodhue County Board of Commissioners review the GCEOP to satisfy the requirements of FEMA and MN HSEM; and

WHEREAS, the amended Emergency Operations Plan is a complete rewrite of the existing document that incorporates lessons learned from real-world emergencies that have affected our community over the past several years, reflects necessary changes to operational processes, and directs attention to our most vulnerable communities; and

WHEREAS, the amended Emergency Operations Plan was developed with the input of many Goodhue County agencies, our municipal partners, and outside subject matter experts, in order to better prepare the County for disasters in the decades to come;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Goodhue County Board of Commissioners that the Board affirms it has reviewed the Goodhue County Emergency Operations Plan, Revision 26 (2026), as presented to it by Emergency Management; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Goodhue County Board of Commissioners hereby approves and adopts the Goodhue County Emergency Operations Plan, Revision 26 (2026), as the County's official plan for emergency operations, and directs Emergency Management to submit this resolution and the approved plan to MN HSEM as required.

**RESOLUTION APPROVING THE 2026 GOODHUE COUNTY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS
PLAN**

Goodhue County

By:

Susan Betcher

County Board Chair

By:

Scott Arneson

County Administrator

By:

Marty Kelly

Sheriff

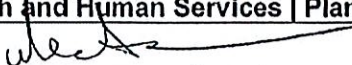
**CERTIFICATION OF PLAN APPROVAL**

This section documents the review and approval of the Goodhue County Emergency Operations Basic Plan.

Public Works | Plan Reviewed by:

 Director & Engineer, Public Works, Goodhue County	Date July 29, 2026
--	-----------------------

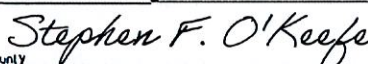
Health and Human Services | Plan Reviewed by:

 Director, Health and Human Services (Public Health), Goodhue County	Date 8/19/2026
--	-------------------

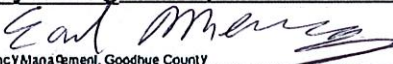
Land Use Management | Plan Reviewed by:

 Director, Land Use Management, Goodhue County	Date 8/24/26
--	-----------------

Attorney | Plan Reviewed by:

 County Attorney, Goodhue County	Date September 16, 2026
---	----------------------------

Emergency Management | Plan Reviewed by:

 Director, Emergency Management, Goodhue County	Date 9-16-26
---	-----------------

Sheriff | Plan Reviewed by:

 Sheriff, Goodhue County	Date 8-25-26
--	-----------------

Administrator | Plan Reviewed by:

Administrator, Goodhue County	Date
-------------------------------	------

Board of Commissioners | Plan Reviewed by:

Goodhue County Board of Commissioners, Chair	Date
--	------