



Scott O. Arneson
County Administrator
Scott.Arneson@goodhuecountymn.gov
509 West 5th Street
Red Wing, MN 55066

March 31, 2025

To whom it may concern,

As the Minnesota Legislature considers a budget for the FY 2026-27 biennium, I wish to voice Goodhue County's strong support for the Sentencing to Service (STS) program and make an appeal for its continued funding in the Department of Corrections budget.

At minimum, I request that program cuts—if deemed unavoidable by the legislature—be delayed for at least one year, to avoid a disorderly cessation and costly replacement of the many essential services that the program provides to Goodhue County.

Sentencing to Service is widely used by Goodhue County District Court as an alternative to, or in combination with jail and fines for low-level, non-violent offenses or as a probation sanction. Court Services recorded 329 days of service ordered for adults in 2024, and 76 days for juveniles in our community. Such reliance on the program has developed as a direct result of the many benefits that accrue to all parties involved.

The attached document details the extensive amount of labor provided through STS for the repair, maintenance and operation of public facilities in Goodhue County. The work of the two eight-person crews includes over 20 regular maintenance duties on 13 public properties, including all County buildings, parks, and vacant or forfeited properties. We estimate the cost of contracting for this work with private parties, should this program abruptly end, would cost taxpayers approximately \$489,000 annually.

The document goes on to list an additional 28 special projects of various sizes not included in the above cost estimate that were completed by STS crews in recent years.

Sentencing to Service stands as an example of restorative justice, by fostering a sense of accountability while making meaningful contributions of time and work. By developing practical job skills, work ethic, and a sense of social responsibility, participants are less likely to offend. Incarceration is costly. STS is also a cost-effective solution because it can reduce the length of sentences for non-violent offenders allowing detention resources to be allocated more efficiently.

Find your Good here.



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Through the years numerous individuals that have participated in this program have written letters of thanks to our crew leaders for teaching them skills they would not have otherwise learned and how they have brought those skills into the workforce. Some even creating their own business with the skills they had learned.

I have also included letters of support for STS from some of the cities, townships, and organizations that benefit from this program—including the local school district. Please consider maintaining funding for this important program.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott O. Arneson".

Scott Arneson
Goodhue County Administrator

Find your Good here.

Goodhue County Sentence to Service Program

- Two crew leaders & typically four to eight crew as available, available 7 days/week
- State owned vehicles & trailers
- County owned mowers, trimmers, leaf blowers, misc. equipment

Estimated value of regular property maintenance duties: \$489,000/YEAR

Properties Maintained

1. Government Center
2. Justice Center
3. Law Enforcement Center
4. Health & Human Services
5. Public Works Red Wing Facility
6. Public Works Cannon Falls Shop
7. Public Works Zumbrota Shop
8. Public Works Keynon Shop
9. Recycling Center
10. Byllesby Park
11. Cascade Park
12. Dakota/4th Street vacant lot
13. Various tax forfeited properties

Regular Duties

- Garbage pickup at all county parks
- Weekly mowing, trimming & blowing all properties
- Playground equipment repair and maintenance
- Lawn repair from snow & salt damage
- Irrigation system repairs
- Landscape mulch – rake, turn over or replace as needed
- Mechanical or hand edging of sidewalks
- Hedge trimming
- Weed pulling & spraying of landscape mulch/rock beds
- Tree pruning and tree removal
- Perennial & annual flower maintenance
- Regular maintenance of landscaping equipment
- Trail and canoe access maintenance
- Install and remove swim ropes and docks
- Paint and repair picnic tables
- Pressure wash shelters and playground equipment
- Snow removal of all facility entrances and stairwells
- Clearing of pedestrian intersections/street crossings
- Apply salt and sand as needed
- Setup and teardown for Goodhue County Fair and Cannon Valley Fair

Additional projects

- Built garage building at Red Wing Public Works site
- Forfeit property cleanup and maintenance
- Rehabilitation of the plaster walls on the 3rd floor of the Government Center
- Assistance with numerous remodeling projects and moving of furniture and equipment
- Scrap metal recycling/hauling and assistance with removal of heavy furniture or equipment
- Stump grinding/removal at various properties
- Edging and landscape rock removal – replaced with mulch at HHS, Gov Center, LEC, Jus Center
- Frame, drywall & paint new walls for LEC: Admin, Investigations, Programs, Interview rooms.
- Routine sweeping and washing of the ADC garage space, cleaning of garage trench drains
- Painting of numerous office areas at various facilities
- Painting block walls at LEC/ADC: Security Tunnel, Investigations Garage, ADC Garage
- Painted & Refurbished Older Picnic Shelters - Byllesby
- Paint RW Shop - Mechanics Area
- Shingle & Paint Kenyon Salt Shed
- Paint Cannon Salt Shed
- RW Facility Landscape Project
- Moved Picnic Shelter/Poured New Concrete Slab - Byllesby
- Installed New Site Amenities & Concrete Slabs/Footings
- Re-Roofed Picnic Shelters After Storm - Byllesby
- Built/Maintained Kiosks - Byllesby & Cascade
- Built/Maint Shelters for Portable Toilets - Byllesby & Cascade
- Painted Mezzanine Steps & Railings
- Built New Culvert Racking
- Epoxy Brine Room Floor 2025
- Cannon Valley Trail Bridge Repairs
- Install Remaining Plantings, Top-Dress Mulch - Byllesby Park
- Tree Planting - Byllesby & Cascade
- Repair Fishing Pier - Byllesby Park

From: [Lance, Stacy](#)
To: [Lemmer, Nick](#)
Subject: FW: Sentence to Serve Program
Date: Monday, March 24, 2025 1:10:45 PM

From: Goodhue County Fair Treasurer <goodhuecountyfairtreasurer@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 21, 2025 5:23 PM
To: Lance, Stacy <stacy.lance@goodhuecountymn.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Sentence to Serve Program

You don't often get email from goodhuecountyfairtreasurer@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

External Email - Use caution opening links or attachments!

Forwarded Conversation

Subject: Sentence to Serve Program

From: **Goodhue County Fair Treasurer** <goodhuecountyfairtreasurer@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 19, 2025 at 4:42 PM
To: <sen.rich.draheim@mnsenate.gov>
Cc: <bgonsior@1igprint.com>

Dear Senator Draheim,

I am the treasurer for the Goodhue County Fair near Zumbrota, MN. I am emailing you to say how very important the sentence to serve program is for our fair. Every summer that I have been involved with the fair the STS crew comes to the grounds and works countless hours fixing and improving structures, beautifying and cleaning the inside buildings and the grounds. I can not imagine how many people we will need to do what the STS crew has done in the past. We appreciate all of their help.

Some of the more recent tasks they have done include, painting, mowing, weed whipping, raking, roofing, carpentry tasks, setting up the parking lot before the fair ,powerwashing all the bleachers in the grandstand, setting out signage, hanging banners and flags, picking up trash and debris, cleaning display cases, sweeping the floors and after the fair is over for the year, putting everything back away,and so much more.

I am open to speaking to you about the need to continue funding for the sentence to serve program. You can call me at 651-307-1257. Or you can email me at goodhuecountyfairtreasurer@gmail.com or darlavieths@hcinet.net.

Thank you for your consideration! I hope to hear from you or someone in your office.

Thank you!

Darla Vieths
Treasurer
Goodhue County Fair

From: **Goodhue County Fair Treasurer** <goodhuecountyfairtreasurer@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 19, 2025 at 6:33 PM
To: brookins.stephanie@yahoo.com <brookins.stephanie@yahoo.com>

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Cannon Valley Trail

825 Cannon River Avenue
Cannon Falls, MN 55009

Website: www.cannonvalleytrail.com
Email: Info@cannonvalleytrail.com
Phone: 507-263-0508



January 22, 2025

State of Minnesota
Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
75 Rev Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Subject: Letter of Support for the Goodhue County Sentence to Service (STS) Program

Dear Governor Walz,

This letter expresses our strong support for the Goodhue County Sentence to Service (STS) Program and Sentence to Service Programs throughout the State of Minnesota. We believe this program is a valuable asset to our community and plays a crucial role in:

- **Community Improvement:** STS crews contribute significantly to enhancing our community's appearance and functionality. By completing vital projects in parks, public areas, and other spaces, they directly improve the quality of life for all residents.
- **Public Safety:** STS provides a constructive alternative to traditional incarceration for non-violent offenders. By requiring them to contribute positively to society, the program fosters a sense of responsibility and discourages future criminal activity.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** The program effectively utilizes community resources by providing a cost-effective means of completing essential public works projects. This frees up taxpayer funds that would otherwise be allocated to more expensive forms of incarceration.
- **Rehabilitation:** STS offers offenders an opportunity for rehabilitation by providing them with meaningful work experience and the chance to make amends for their actions. This can help them develop valuable skills and a positive work ethic, increasing their chances of successful reintegration into society.

We urge you to continue supporting and expanding the STS program. By doing so, we can create a safer, more vibrant community for all residents.

Sincerely,

Scott Roepke
Trail Manager
Cannon Valley Trail
612-598-6796

Red Wing High School
Student Services Office
2451 Eagle Ridge Drive
Red Wing, MN 55066



Phone 651.385.4600
Feb. 7, 2025

www.redwing.k12.mn.us

Fax 651.385.4610

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the continued use of the Sentence to Serve program within our judicial system.

The Red Wing Public Schools use the Sentence to Serve Program in many, many ways and have for years. The teams come to our school properties to clean, move, repair, and maintain whatever is asked of them without complaint and at little cost to the district. I have been impressed every time with how hard the team works and the respect they give me, my coaches, athletes, and equipment.

The Sentence to Serve program has helped me personally and professionally as a high school gymnastics coach. In the nine years I coached, we used the Sentence to Serve program a minimum of four times. Gymnastics is a unique sport with several pieces of heavy equipment that takes time, care, and muscle to move. The team of individuals that would arrive early on a cold February morning to make countless trips with heavy equipment from the workout gym into a semi, then out of the semi into the high school only to do it again two days later were amazing. This task was/is impossible for our school to do without the help of the Sentence to Serve team. The physical labor, along with a truck and trailer they would bring to supplement the semi, were our only affordable option to be able to host the Section Meet in our school and move gyms when that situation arose.

The people chosen to work on these crews are close to their release date and are given this privilege to go out into the community and work. The work they do, the ability to leave the facility, and the interactions they have with some community members, all make a difference in that person's self-worth. Self-worth is such an important component of a person's ability to move forward in a positive way. A way different than what got them into the situation that placed them behind bars. There is no price tag we can place on that.

Please reconsider the stoppage of this very important Sentence to Serve program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Lisa Hanson".

Lisa Hanson
Red Wing High School

To whom it may concern:

My name is Alan Gaylor and I am the Buildings & Grounds Director for Red Wing Public Schools.

It has been brought to my attention that there are possibilities that the STS program may be uprooted or possibly dissolved. This raises great concern as this could have a severe effect on the district, as well as other entities within the county who have been served by this program which has provided cost effective help.

The School District owns approximately 120 acres in total; 90 or so acres are taken care of by our grounds crew staff consisting of 3 full-time employees (at this time). This consists of playing fields and open green space that gets fertilized and mowed during the summer seasons. The district takes great pride in keeping these spaces looking great and fields in tip top shape for the safe use by athletes and the community that enjoys walking it. Graduation being outside when weather permits on our grounds is of TOP priority in terms of aesthetics and “Winger pride!” The approximate remaining 30 acres is bluff and prairie property that is also enjoyed by the community members as well as staff and students in such ways as hiking and walking, along with student interaction and learning at the different areas.

As the District is continually being forced to make substantial budget cuts to staffing in all areas which will directly influence its ability to maintain all these athletic and community spaces for years

to come, it would be vital to have the ability to reach out to the County program for assistance in achieving these top priorities of the District and County. Without them, the DISTRICT and COUNTY entities would have to scale back maintenance and care, which would lead to substandard playing conditions with more litter across the green spaces within our county and school district, impairing these areas for ALL citizens to enjoy, among other things. If we do not have STS to utilize it will be catastrophic and felt throughout the WHOLE COUNTY to which they are so vital!!!!

The STS program has been a fundamental part in keeping district lands maintained and healthy. Here is a list of tasks the STS program has been instrumental in completing for our public:

- Field maintenance- Mowing, weed whipping, laying sod, loop holing,
- Fence repairs and installing wind screens seasonally
- Tree removal and trimming, Removal and disposal of over 50 trees that were removed due to Ash Bore
- Helping with snow removal at all facilities post winter storms
- Graduation setup and teardown weather it is inside or outside
- Cleaning up litter and debris throughout the many acres
- Cleaning at the Arena in the winter months
- Ice installation and removal at Arena
- Help in painting weather its fields or in buildings

STS is purposeful, versatile, efficient, and effective in supporting the District and County in their need to serve the public.

651-380-9662

Alan Gaylor

avgaylor@rwps.org

Buildings & Grounds Director

Constituent

February 26, 2025

Scott Arneson
Goodhue County Administrator
509 W. 5th Street
Red Wing, MN 55066

Subject: Letter of Support for the Sentencing to Service (STS) Program

Dear Mr. Arneson,

As Township Board Members of Pine Island Township, we would like to express our strong support for the Sentencing to Service (STS) program in Goodhue County and throughout the State of Minnesota.

Governor Walz's budget proposal for the next biennium does not fund Sentencing to Serve, which could end nearly 40 years of community improvement and rehabilitation that this program represents, despite the overwhelming evidence of its positive effects.

We strongly believe this program is an asset to our community and plays a crucial role in:

- **Community Improvement:** STS crews contribute significantly to enhancing our community's appearance and functionality. By completing vital projects in parks, public areas, and other spaces, they directly improve the quality of life for all residents.
- **Public Safety:** STS provides a constructive alternative to traditional incarceration for non-violent offenders and juveniles. By requiring them to contribute positively to society, the program fosters a sense of responsibility and discourages future criminal activity.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** The program effectively utilizes community resources by providing a cost-effective means of completing essential public works projects. This frees up taxpayer funds that would otherwise be allocated to more expensive forms of incarceration.
- **Rehabilitation:** STS offers offenders an opportunity for rehabilitation by providing them with meaningful work experience and the chance to make amends for their actions. This can help them develop valuable skills and a positive work ethic, increasing their chances of successful reintegration into society.

Please continue to advocate for the state funding necessary to sustain and expand the STS program. By doing so, we can create a safer, more vibrant community for all residents.

Sincerely

David Arndt – Clerk

Glen Betcher – Chairman

Ken Markson – Treasurer

Richard Miller – Supervisor

Jim Ganz - Supervisor

February 19, 2025

Scott Arneson
Goodhue County Administrator
509 W. 5th Street
Red Wing, MN 55066

Subject: Letter of Support for the Sentencing to Service (STS) Program

Dear Mr. Arneson,

As City Administrator of Zumbrota, I would like to express my strong support for the Sentencing to Service (STS) program in Goodhue County and throughout the State of Minnesota.

Governor Walz's budget proposal for the next biennium does not fund Sentencing to Serve, which could end nearly 40 years of community improvement and rehabilitation that this program represents, despite the overwhelming evidence of its positive effects.

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Please continue to advocate for the state funding necessary to sustain and expand the STS program. By doing so, we can create a safer, more vibrant community for all residents.

Sincerely,



Brian Grudem
City Administrator
City of Zumbrota

March 6, 2025

Scott Arneson
Goodhue County Administrator
509 W. 5th Street
Red Wing, MN 55066

Subject: Letter of Support for the Sentencing to Service (STS) Program

Dear Mr. Arneson,

As Assistant Public Works Director of Lake City, I would like to express my strong support for the Sentencing to Service (STS) program in Goodhue County and throughout the State of Minnesota.

Governor Walz's budget proposal for the next biennium does not fund Sentencing to Serve, which could end nearly 40 years of community improvement and rehabilitation that this program represents, despite the overwhelming evidence of its positive effects.

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Please continue to advocate for the state funding necessary to sustain and expand the STS program. By doing so, we can create a safer, more vibrant community for all residents.

Sincerely,
Mitch Rigelman
Assistant Public Works Director