



Vol. 31, No. 2

The mission of Scott County is to advance safe, healthy, and livable communities through citizen-focused services.

April/May 2019

U of M students seek solutions for challenges facing County

This winter marks the midway point for Scott County's partnership with the University of Minnesota's Resilient Communities Project (RCP). With the end of fall semester, over 30 students from across the University presented their research findings to project leads and stakeholders. Students presented findings on how changes to state eminent domain laws have impacted the cost and settlement rates for county highway projects, the effectiveness of employer-assisted housing in attracting and retaining a local workforce, and the potential impacts of autonomous vehicles on land use and transportation systems in the county.

Another project this fall focused on ways of sharing early childhood data between county programs and area school districts. More and more communities across the nation are discovering that better data sharing, tracking, and coordination among early childhood programs could strengthen planning, collaboration, accountability, and achievement of child outcomes. Second-year U of M law student Sarah LeNeave and County Library Director Jake Grussing convened a group of County and local school district staff to discuss legal implications surrounding sharing early childhood data. The group plans to continue to meet to determine how best to use data to support children and families in the County while also exploring ethical considerations. The research will continue through spring semester when a group of Public Affairs students in-

terested in education policy and reform will pick up the project and build on LeNeave's findings.

Looking ahead to spring semester, there are several new topics being investigated. A team of students will be focusing on how the County can more effectively manage household waste. Another student will be assisting County staff evaluate the cost of providing local government services for different rural land uses. Another spring semester project will look at alternative methods for property assessments.

U of M Housing Studies students will use research gathered by Public Affairs students from fall semester to inform how tenant and landlord educational programming can be used to increase landlord participation in rental assistance programs. Another housing project will look at creating a community land trust to promote homeownership for lower-income households.

Public Policy students will be partnering with staff in the Public Health department to analyze policies and ordinances in the County's cities and townships that either support or hinder active living practices, such as walking to school or biking to the store.

To learn more about the Scott County's partnership with the U of M's Resilient Communities Project, or about the End-of-Year Celebration planned for May 9 at Coffman Memorial Union on the U of M campus, go to

<https://www.scottcountymn.gov/1812/Resilient-Communities-Project>.