

Legal SCENE

By Ron Hocevar
Scott County Attorney



Collaboration made 2017 productive

Last year was another great year of collaborative work in the Scott County Attorney's Office. Together with our partners in law enforcement, the judiciary, Human Services, the County Board, other private and government agencies, we worked together to deliver what matters – safe, healthy, and livable communities. Here are just some of the highlights from 2017 showing some of the work by my office:

- Assisted in multi-agency investigation of the Shakopee High School former superintendent resulting in 21 criminal charges including Theft by Swindle, Embezzlement of Public Funds and Receiving Stolen Property. *Case is still pending.*
- Charged four individuals for the murder of James Herron. Three individuals have pled guilty, with one remaining to go to trial.
- Charged Sergey Balandin for the murder of his girlfriend. *Case is still pending.*
- Convicted Joshua Sundblad for the murder of his two-month-old baby.
- Started to have the County Attorney's Office go paperless.
- Obtained a conviction on an individual for raping a student in the Shakopee High School.
- Assisted in multi-agency investigation involving the Mexican drug cartel trafficking of heroin. This resulted in the seizure of pounds of heroin and multiple arrests and prosecutions by my office.
- Held several public forums on the dangers of teen sexting.
- Continue to educate our children and the community on the dangers of illegal drugs. Our primary fund raiser, the 12th Annual Tee it up for the Task Force, is coming up on Sept. 7, 2018. See our website at www.ChooseNotToUse.org.
- Charged a day care provider with 1st Degree Assault and two counts of Malicious Punishment of a Child for harm caused to a 6 month old baby in her care. *Case is still pending.*
- Supported Human Services staff in the closing down of a child care provider suspected of harming a child in her care.
- My office argued over 100 tax filing cases supporting the County's position.
- Upheld paternity and child support rights by making 811 court appearances to establish and enforce appropriate child support payments.
- Handled 80 commitment and guardianship cases where individuals could not meet their own health/safety/welfare needs and required a high level of intervention. We were able to get them the help they needed and put a safety net in place for the future.

In 2017, my office handled 7,166 opened files. This is an increase of nearly 10 percent from 2016. And this number does not include the thousands of phone calls and requests for advice or assistance from the public, law enforcement, and other government agencies where no formal file is ever opened.

I am truly blessed to have such an impressive staff of legal support and attorneys working in this office, and on your behalf. Follow me on Twitter @rhocevar1 and "Like" and follow me on Facebook at @C.A.Hocevar.

Credit River Township to vote on changing election date, terms of supervisors

On March 13, during the annual Township election, Credit River residents can vote whether Township Elections should change from the traditional annual March elections to even-year November elections, aligning with the General Elections. This change is prompted by Scott County notifying townships that they will not support March elections after 2018.

Specifically, Scott County elections has informed Credit River Township that going forward, special elections and local elections on any date other than the even year State Primary and General Election dates will be the responsibility of the jurisdiction calling for the election.

Credit River Township supervisors have placed on the ballot at the March 13 election the following Town Question: *Shall the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November be designated as the date of the Credit River Township general election?*

What will change with a "yes" vote:

Supervisor terms will be for four years instead of the three-year terms that are now in effect. With a greater number of township residents voting in November elections, Credit River Township will have more residents involved in the selection of its supervisors.

Credit River will eliminate the cost

of yearly elections that generally have a low turnout, along with the added costs of absentee voting, programming of tabulators, ballot layout, proofing and orders, all equipment testing and public accuracy testing, plus supplies and the general administration of the local election. Up until now, these duties and associated costs have been covered by the County.

What won't change with a "yes" vote:

You'll still cast your ballots at the Credit River Town Hall. The annual meeting will still be held on the second Tuesday in March, and residents will still set the annual levy.

The Credit River Town Board has adopted the following plan for transitioning to November elections if the ballot measure is approved by voters on March 13. Minnesota law does not allow the township to shorten terms of office – only to lengthen them:

The supervisor position that expires in March of 2018 shall be designated "Supervisor Position A" and shall be extended so as to next be on the ballot



SmartLink promotes new Shared Vehicle Program

Coordinated public transportation services offer a lifeline for many older adults in Scott County. A large percentage of adults aged 65 and older do not drive, and while family and friends are often their resource for getting rides from place to place, public transportation services is also essential. SmartLink Transit manages public transportation for Scott and Carver Counties and is committed to finding new and flexible solutions to address growing transportation needs and allow individuals to live independently within their communities.

The Shared Vehicle Program (or "Community Bus") is one such solution being promoted by SmartLink. The Shared Vehicle Program is an incentive program based on the Federal 5310 grant that provides enhanced mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities. The federal grant pays for 80 percent of the cost of the bus, and the local vehicle owner pays 20 percent.

To qualify for the grant, the vehicle must be shared across two or more entities, and used at least 30-40 hours per week. Senior centers, senior living centers, cities, churches, and Community Ed groups are all excellent candidates for the program. SmartLink Transit for Scott and Carver Counties will provide coordinating services for the Shared Vehicle. Coordinating services include partner recruiting, route/time scheduling, and assistance with the Federal reporting required.

A great example of a Shared Vehicle Program started in 2015 in Norwood Young America. Norwood Young America (NYA) and SmartLink worked together to begin the grant application process. NYA saw the opportunity for a community vehicle to be available for several partners, and -- together with SmartLink -- they completed the grant process and purchased a 14-passenger bus to serve the community and partners' needs. The bus was delivered in



Community organizations and businesses can partner to receive a federal grant for a bus.



January 2017, and is operating successfully. Steve Helget, City Administrator for NYA, had this to say: "The City has greatly benefited from SmartLink's involvement in bringing transportation services and public transportation alternatives to Norwood Young America's seniors, persons with disabilities, and its residents. The city has entered agreements with the local Community Ed, St. John's Church, and the Peace Villa Campus. Local residents have also enjoyed the use of the bus for personal trips or outings. The partnership that has been formed between the city of Norwood Young America and SmartLink is benefiting the entire community, and we look forward to expanding our service area."

Through SmartLink's efforts to build awareness for this Shared Vehicle Program, there are many conversations happening now within our communities to promote the idea of leveraging a community bus. Alan Herrmann, SmartLink Transit Supervisor, has been working to create awareness about this solution and connect potential partners to participate in the Shared Vehicle Program. Starting the conversation now is crucial to building future transportation solutions. If you would like to learn more about how a Shared Vehicle may be available for your community or group, contact Herrmann at aherrmann@co.scott.mn.us.

Plans underway for Tee It Up! golf event

Save the date! ChooseNotToUse will be hosting its 12th Annual Tee It Up For The Task Force annual fundraiser which will be held on Sept. 7, 2018, at Stonebrooke Golf Club. Register by contacting Kathy Welter at (952) 239-6885 or kwelter@co.scott.mn.us. Register early, as space is limited -- and the event has filled up quickly in the last few years! Eighteen holes of golf, a cart, and lunch are included with registration. The event will also feature a live auction, hole games, and drawings. Hope to see you there!

Editorial Policy

The purpose of this publication is to provide the public with information about Scott County Government and the opportunities it offers its citizens. If you have questions or suggestions, contact Lisa Kohner, Public Affairs Coordinator, at (952) 496-8780 or lkohner@co.scott.mn.us or Claire Robling, Communications and Legislative Coordinator, at (952) 496-8597 or crobbling@co.scott.mn.us.