Worker shortages are everywhere, including vacancies within city and county offices. Since 2021, South Central Service Cooperative has acted in the crucial role of Search Consultant for high level administrative positions. In addition to serving the nine-county south central region, SCSC has served as Search Consultant throughout the state in over a dozen successful searches.

The value of a Search Consultant is multi-faceted. First, because elected officials at both city and county levels have full-time roles demanding their energies, they often have limited time and resources to complete a personnel search. The city and county staff are busy with daily operations and do not have the necessary time and expertise. Also, when the top official is moving on in their career and has accepted another position or has already separated from their role, having existing staff complete the search can be awkward. Further, the search process is very time consuming—it is not unusual for it to take two to four months from the start (identifying the needs of the organization) to completion (having the new administrator in place).

Understanding the role of the top appointed official and the operations are key to finding candidates with the right qualifications and expertise to be successful in city or county administration. SCSC’s Local Government Solutions Team brings more than 70 years of combined experience and a passion.
Search Services continued from page 1

for local government to each executive search. SCSC staff typically presents a pool of five qualified candidates from which city or county representatives select the candidate they see as the best fit for their communities. SCSC staff facilitates this process by developing a profile of the organization and its culture, promoting the open position through city/county job sites and social media, and by including both elected officials and staff personnel in the interview process.

In addition to serving as a Search Consultant, there are other roles SCSC can facilitate in the hiring process. Frequently, cities or counties need an interim executive to help keep operations running and on track. Often existing staff are not comfortable taking on the role of interim or it is not appropriate as an existing staff member may be interested in the top position. SCSC has developed relationships with several top officials available on a part-time, short-term basis. SCSC can either facilitate this introduction and/or contract with this person to provide interim services.

Another significant role of SCSC is mentorship. Over 600 of the 850 cities in Minnesota have populations of 2500 or less. Many candidates for these positions are new to city/county management, with limited experience, and are still maturing professionally. SCSC staff can serve as a mentor for the new hire, which may include introducing them to other professionals in the region, serving as a sounding board and a resource for problem solving, or being a friendly face at a conference. All contribute to a new hire’s success in their new position.

Historically, the goal of service cooperatives is to harness the power of a group and work together collectively to be more efficient and cost effective than individual organizations. SCSC’s team works with city and county officials and staff to educate and promote cooperative’s services that are available for mutual long-term benefit. SCSC offers local government services at a more affordable cost than other alternatives.

If your local government is experiencing personnel shortages, keep SCSC in mind. SCSC will facilitate your search for top level administrative positions, provide short-term services, and mentorships for newly appointed positions. Contact Mike Humpal, Manager of Local Government Solutions, 507-389-5766.
South Central Service Cooperative is thrilled to be a recipient of a 2022 School Finance Award from the Minnesota Department of Education, Division of School Finance. The award recognizes schools who meet statutory deadlines for submission of audited fiscal financial and reporting criteria.

Out of 575 eligible reporting entities, 451 met the qualifying criteria. There is no application process; eligibility is based on final fiscal year 2021 Uniform Financial Accounting and Reporting Standards (UFARS) financial data.

A special kudos to SCSC employees, Carol Wessman, Administrative Director of Business Operations, and Mary Hylen, Finance Specialist, for their commitment to fiscal integrity and high-quality financial reporting.

Cooperative Purchasing Connection’s (CPC’s) contracts meet Minnesota’s competitive solicitation requirements so you can move forward on your project without having to go to bid. Leverage our Facilities and Grounds contracts to stay on top of your preparedness as we plow through another Minnesota winter!

**ServiceMaster**

Winter is a constant test of your preparedness and burst pipes are the leading cause of property damage from winter weather. With ServiceMaster Recovery Management (SRM), CPC Members are a top priority. Whether you have damage in a single room of your facility or an entire complex of buildings, SRM will respond quickly to get you back on course.

**Best Plumbing Specialties**

Having repair parts on hand is vital. Best Plumbing’s catalog includes thousands of items including general repair parts, fittings, drain cleaning equipment, chemicals, tools and more!

**Carrier**

HVAC systems are highly important all year long but their upkeep is especially critical during Minnesota winters. Freezing conditions can create an unsafe environment for employees and community members utilizing your facilities. Carrier offers solutions in air conditioning, heating, and building controls. Their products set the standard for performance, energy efficiency, and sustainability. Carrier service offers new equipment start up, preventive maintenance, and comprehensive service and repairs.

Review all of CPC’s Facilities and Grounds contracts at PurchasingConnection.org

Contact Jerome Evans, CPC representative, 651-371-1258 or Jerome@purchasingconnection.org.
Welcome, Jessica Maday
by Crista Krosch

SCSC is pleased to announce that our team has grown! Jessica Maday began as Administrative Services Coordinator in December. In her new role, she supports SCSC’s Wellness and Insurance, Local Government Solutions and Marketing and Communications departments.

Prior to coming to SCSC, Jessica worked as the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Martin County West School District. Interesting fact about Jessica: She lives on a farm and has five horses that she camps with and rides during the summer months. She is also one of 44 grandchildren!

Happy First Workversaries, Tana and Magen!
By Crista Krosch

In January, we celebrated Tana Flatland’s first year workversary!
As the face of SCSC, Tana welcomes everyone to the cooperative with her friendly smile! In addition to handling a variety of cooperative business, Tana is an integral part of the low incidence team: managing the low incidence library inventories (that means sometimes she gets to shop!), scheduling audiology appointments, and supporting the low incidence communities of practice. Tana also runs the Center for Interactive Learning (CILC) helpdesk, completes contact manager updates, and provides support for Infinite Campus. Tana can’t believe that a year has already past and contributes that to her busy schedule, “there is never a dull moment!”
This year has been a great transition year and Tana is looking forward to whatever heads her way next.

In February, we celebrate Magen Borkenhagen’s first year workversary!
As an early riser, Magen practices what she preaches by devoting time to moving, mindfulness/meditation and self-improvement before the rest of the world is out of bed. Magen spends her day coordinating resources and tools to assist school nurses in their work. Her day consists of ZOOM meetings, emails, phone calls, in-person meetings and school site visits, which are always rewarding. Magen loves seeing Licensed School Nurses in their element! They are rock stars!
Magen has been blessed with the opportunity to work with a wonderful group of people from the grant, MDH and MDE. She really enjoys working with her team on projects. The best thing this year, however, was the opportunity to fill in at a school for a few weeks. The kids are the BEST! It is a rewarding reminder of why we all continue to do the work we do!
Magen appreciates knowing that the work being done makes a real difference and has a huge impact.

Thank you both for all you do for SCSC!
Wellness Corner
By Hannah Keltgen

**Random Acts of Kindness Day is February 17, 2023!**
Sometimes it is the smallest act that makes the biggest impact – a kind word, a lending ear, a comforting hug, or a warm and simple smile.

National Random Acts of Kindness is celebrated every February 17. It originated in 1995 in Denver, Colorado and in 2004, spread to New Zealand and the observance of the holiday became more and more widespread. The idea behind this celebration is to make the world a little brighter and better through little and simple kind gestures, words, and actions.

While National Random Acts of Kindness Day is observed on only one day of this month, sprinkling kindness around is something you can do the entire year!

Make someone’s day by doing a kind act for them anonymously and leave one of the kindness cards to start a ripple of kindness that has no end!

**12 FUN KINDNESS IDEAS TO CELEBRATE RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS DAY**

- **POST INSPIRATIONAL STICKY NOTES AROUND THE NEIGHBORHOOD, OFFICE, SCHOOL, ETC.**
- **LEAVE CHANGE IN A VENDING MACHINE.**
- **DAY FOR THE PERSON IN LINE BEHIND YOU.**
- **SEND A ‘THANK YOU’ CARD OR NOTE TO THE OFFICERS AT YOUR LOCAL POLICE OR FIRE STATION.**
- **TIP EXTRA OR PUT YOUR LOOSE CHANGE IN TIP JARS.**
- **COOK A MEAL FOR A FAMILY OR SOMEONE WHO MIGHT NEED ONE.**
- **KNOW PARENTS WHO COULD USE A NIGHT OUT? OFFER TO BABYSIT FOR FREE.**
- **LET SOMEONE GO IN FRONT OF YOU IN LINE WHO ONLY HAS A FEW ITEMS.**
- **SURPRISE A NEIGHBOR WITH FRESHLY BAKED COOKIES OR TREATS!**
- **LEAVE A GAS GIFT CARD AT A GAS PUMP.**
- **COMPLIMENT THE FIRST THREE PEOPLE YOU TALK TO TODAY.**
- **LEAVE A BOX OF GOODIES IN YOUR MAILBOX FOR YOUR MAIL CARRIER.**

Help us stay in touch
SCSC would like to stay connected with our members and partners!

Do you have new hires who may benefit from receiving our newsletter or emailed communications?

Has your contact information changed in the last year?
We want to hear from you! Please let us know by email: sscscinfo@mnscsc.org or reach out to Tana Fladland at 507-389-1425.

Thank you!
HONOREE: KEVIN DIEKMANN
Honored by Megan Morgan, Martin County West School District
“Kevin is the first one to school every day ensuring our building is safe and clean. He is one of the hardest workers I have ever met. He is our go-to for everything and can fix just about anything you ask him to. Although quiet in demeanor, Kevin speaks volumes daily in all his behind the scenes work. Thank you, Kevin!”

HONOREE: ROBERTA JENSEN
Honored by: Hannah Keltgen, South Central Service Cooperative
“I am pleased to nominate Roberta for the SPOTLIGHT recognition award! I have known and worked with Roberta for three years and have always found her dependable, efficient, creative, and self-motivated. Also, her willingness to take on difficult projects and see them to successful completion has repeatedly impressed! Her skills do not end with her office work. She also provides a warm, cheerful attitude to the staff, members, and community.”

HONOREE: JEN HATTON
Honored by: Liz Stiernagle, New Richland Heartland Ellendale Geneva Public Schools
“Jen is a dedicated, thoughtful, and detail-oriented individual. She is always finding creative ways in the classroom to engage her students academically, socially, and personally. Her ability to connect with students is unmatched.”

HONOREE: JESSICA MADAY
Honored by Ashley Olson, Martin County West School District
“Jessica has gone above and beyond for the district with taking on additional work, substitute teaching in classrooms when needed, and helping to maintain our district finances. She does all this with little recognition. But we see her and want her to know she is appreciated!!”

HONOREE: ERIN MORRIS
Honored by Megan Morgan, Martin County West School District
“Erin is kind-hearted and shows patience with all her students. Year after year her students adore her, and it is evident to all who work in the building. Not only is she an excellent teacher, but she is also a great co-worker! We appreciate you, Erin!”

HONOREE: ASHLEY PARISH
Honored by Laurie Sherman, Truman Public Schools
“Ashley works with students in the regular education classroom as well as the resource room. She is there to offer assistance as needed and she does a fantastic job with keeping the students on task, reminding and helping with missing assignments. She is a quiet, efficient person who goes the extra mile with all students who need help with an assignment, need someone to explain the assignment in an
alternative way or need someone to listen to their needs and find a way to meet them. Ashley is an asset to my room, helping all students reach their potential.”

HONOREE: TAMMY SCHINDLER
Honored by: Sherri Blasing, Mankato Public Schools
“Tammy has gone above and beyond to ensure the students in her program are included in all aspects of our school community. One of her students sang in the talent show with some athletes as back-up dancers, and his song was a crowd favorite. She invited the football players into her room for a special “pep fest” with her students before the state tournament, giving the players a “Scarlet Torch” that her students made, and the team carried it onto the field with them at US Bank Stadium. Tammy advocates and creates opportunities for her students, taking inclusion to a whole new level.”

HONOREE: VICKIE SMITH
Honored by Kristie North, Martin County West School District
“Vickie’s dedication to MCW kids and co-workers is outstanding. She has gone above and beyond for our team, not only during the school year, but the summer as well! She has a positive attitude, a great sense of humor, and is caring. Vickie is such an asset to our team!”

HONOREE: DARTAN WILK
Honored by Megan Morgan, Martin County West School District
“Dartan is new to our district, but he is a quick learner and has really fit well into his role. He is kind and helpful. He consistently helps when/wherever asked and wears many hats in and around our building. He ensures we are safe and that facilities are well maintained plus handles the million other responsibilities we do not see. We appreciate all that he does for both staff and students!”

HONOREE: KAYLA ZEHMS
Honored by Megan Morgan, Martin County West School District
“Kayla is the kind of teacher we all want our child to have. She is energetic, compassionate, and fun! She is so creative with her lessons and brings reading to life for her students! She is usually the first one to jump in and offer help anywhere it is needed. Thank you for all that you do, Mrs. Zehms!”

SCSC’s SPOTLIGHT award program recognizes SCSC members for outstanding contributions they make to their organizations.

Names for recognition may be submitted throughout the year and honorees are announced quarterly.

Honor someone today at mnsccsc.org/spotlight
Read Around the Planet Collaboration Project

Read Around the Planet celebrates the use of interactive virtual learning to promote literacy! This multifaceted Digital Learning Festival encourages collaborative connections among peers by matching school groups for an hour-long live virtual visit where they work together on reading activities.

This is the 22nd year the Center for Interactive Learning & Collaboration is sponsoring Read Around the Planet in celebration of the National Endowment of the Art’s Read Across America as well as the United Kingdom’s World Book Day! Registration is currently open and will remain so until February 3, make sure to sign up your group of learners for this collaborative global adventures for NO COST today using this link. Join us for the kick-off event on March 2; Collaborative Connections will occur March 6-10.

New Year: New Community of Learning Focus

Since March 2020, learners from around the world have been tuning in for CILC’s weekly Community of Learning series to investigate an array of different topics through live virtual visits with treasured museums and renowned experts.

In the New Year, the CILC educational livestream series will be focused on specific subjects to offer schools a consistent curricular resource that is FREE to access! Weekly broadcast will continue to air at 12:00 noon CT, where they focus on Literacy and Art on Tuesdays, then talk all things STEM on Wednesdays, finally on Thursdays we will be throwing it back to learn about past with topics in history!

 Reserve your virtual seats for the upcoming Community of Learning series for FREE here!
School Nurses

Communities of Practice
February 16, 2023
8:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
SCSC Conference Center

The South Central Regional School Nurses Community of Practice is open to all school nurses in the area. Our intent is to have regularly scheduled meetings that support leadership, professional growth initiatives and provide opportunities for communication and collaboration. Communities of practice harness the power of the group, helping leaders make connections that foster collaborative problem solving and professional growth.

For more information or to register visit the event page.

Our Spring COP meeting will be held April 20.

School Health Conference
March 23, 2023 • 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.
SCSC Conference Center
FREE to attend

This conference is for professionals supporting student mental and physical health in schools. Join us at any of the three locations: Southwest West Central Cooperative-Marshall, South Central Service Cooperative-Mankato, and Southeast Service Cooperative-Rochester. The keynote speakers will be streamed, along with in-person regional breakout sessions and networking.

Keynote Speakers:

Katie Dorn is a licensed school counselor, a marriage and family therapist and a social-impact entrepreneur with a focus on helping students, families and educators build resilience.

Becky Hudlow is an experienced registered nurse, school nurse and health services director. She has worked in public health, education, wellness, safe and drug free schools.

Dr. Salome Thomas-El (aka Principal EL) is an award-winning teacher, principal, and internationally recognized educator.

For more information or to register visit the event page.

This conference is made possible through COVID-19 Public Health Workforce supplemental funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), administered by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Additional sponsors include Medica, Minnesota Department of Human Services, and EmpowerU.
Career and Technical Education (CTE)
By Kim Mueller

Student Career Exploration Events

Career Navigator
This 9th grade event will reach over 3,000 students this year! Students from area districts are invited to visit the campus of South Central College (North Mankato and Faribault) to explore careers by hearing from professionals who love what they do. Each student learns about career fields, clusters, and pathways during the interactive experience and gets exposed to careers they may have never heard of before.

Construct Tomorrow
Over 900 students from the region attended the annual Construct Tomorrow event at the Mayo Clinic Health System Event Center this fall. High School students explored union trades through hands-on activities.

Tour of Manufacturing
We are happy to share that the Tour of Manufacturing was back face to face this year and served over 800 area students! These tours showcase one of the most in-demand fields in south central Minnesota and highlight the importance of manufacturing in our economic landscape.

Big Ideas Trailer
The Big Ideas Roadshow has visited several districts this fall. Students learn about careers in trade & industry through this interactive experience. From driving a forklift, welding, using a bandsaw, and more, students are given an opportunity to see what it feels like to do jobs that they normally would not be able to try.

Professional Development
Carl D. Perkins supports area teachers and administrators through on-going professional development opportunities throughout the year. Here are a few highlighted events that members attended this fall:

- CTE Works! Summit
- MACTA (Minnesota Association for Career & Technical Administrators) CTE Monthly Webinars
- ACTE Vision 2022 National Conference
- CTE Articulation Meetings
- Regional Communities of Practice (Counselors, Work-Based Learning Coordinators, Family & Consumer Science Teachers, Business Education Teachers)
- SB3T (Strategies for Building Tomorrow's Talent Today) Workgroup

Grant Awards
Congratulations to the following districts who were awarded grants from the Future Ready CTE grant last fall! We cannot wait to see the great things that happen because of these initiatives.

Blue Earth Area Schools: Introducing Drone Technology
Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop: Thunderbird Manufacturing Program Support
Madelia: Intro to Manufacturing Course Development
Mankato Area Public Schools: Career Exploration through Virtual Reality
St. Peter: Animal Science (Swine) Course Support
United South Central: Coffee Shop

As a recipient of a Future Ready CTE grant, St. Peter’s Ag teacher, Gina Lilienthal, is able to provide animal science students with first hand experiences.

Dr. Alexia Pffarr from Kind Vet demonstrates ultrasounds.

Neil Anderson of Anderson Seeds introduces the first lambs of the year.

Triton and one of the chickens students use to test rations.
Career Expo 2023

Develop the Next Generation of Leaders by Sharing Your Story
By Ryan Vesey, Greater Mankato Growth

Over 50 storytellers are needed for Mankato’s 2023 Career Expo. This expo, taking place on March 15, 2023, serves over 1,600 10th grade students from South Central Minnesota. The expo has three components, an interactive exhibit area, a labor market game show, and a roundtable career storytelling area.

MyStory is an opportunity for individuals to share their career journeys. It isn’t a recruiting event, but rather, an opportunity to shape students’ visions of what future opportunities might look like. Whether you knew exactly what you wanted to do and made conscious decisions to get there, or your current career field is the result of a series of twists and turns, students want to hear your story.

Each storyteller can sign up for a morning or afternoon session (or both!) within each session, storytellers will meet with 60–80 students (eight groups of 8–10) with storytelling followed by Q&A. Lunch is provided to all storytellers.

In an effort to share the wide range of opportunities, we are hoping for a diverse group of storytellers, both in the form of backgrounds and careers. As you consider your own participation in the expo, I hope you will also consider engaging additional individuals within your organization.

Some specific careers/industries that were underrepresented last year include doctors or nurses, truck drivers, production careers at all levels (assemblers, machinists, welders, team leads, production supervisors are some examples), electricians/plumbers/HVAC, and broadcast/print/digital media.

Additional details regarding the event and time commitments are available in the 2023 MyStory Volunteer Job Description (Google Docs)

Registration is requested by March 6, 2023; however, we would appreciate early registration when possible as it helps us target and invite storytellers from underrepresented industries. Sign up at Career Expo Storyteller Registration (google.com).

I have personally volunteered as a storyteller in the past and found it very rewarding.
Young Writers & Artists Conference
By Mary Hillmann

Registration is available for the Young Writers & Artists Conference! Students in grades 3-8 can attend either March 7 or March 8. The conference is held at Bethany Lutheran College from 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. A brochure of sessions and registration link can be found at mnscc.org/ywac.

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Additional grant funds were also provided by the Prairie Ecology Bus Center.

Winter Chess Tournament
By Mary Hillmann

SCSC and Mankato Community Education/Recreation partnered January 14 to offer the Winter Chess Tournament at Lincoln Community Center in Mankato. Students in grades 1-11 from across south central Minnesota participated.

The tournament was a Swiss-style tournament in which students are not eliminated. SCSC and CER feel these tournaments foster a competitive spirit without discouraging young players from continuing to play chess.

For information about area chess tournaments or starting a chess club in your school or community, please contact Mary Hillmann at mhillmann@mnscc.org or Melanie Schmidt at mschmi3@isd77.k12.mn.us.

Congratulations to the students that participated!

Winter Chess Grade Level/Division Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>Robbie Mann, Homeschool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Briggs Hoffmann, Monroe Elementary, Mankato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>Toddy Casper, Roosevelt Elementary, Mankato</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>Lola Welle, Maple River Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Hunter Mann, Homeschool</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

K-3 Division Medalists
Gold | Briggs Hoffmann, Monroe Elementary, Mankato
Silver | Toddy Casper, Roosevelt Elementary, Mankato
Bronze | Lola Welle, Maple River Elementary

| Grade 4 | 1st | Sai Krishna Baskar, Tanglen Elementary, Hopkins |
|         | 2nd | Markus Wingert, Bridges Community School, Mankato |

| Grade 5 | 1st | Laina Gangi, Bridges Community School, Mankato |
|         | 2nd | Gage Brothers, Homeschool |

6-12 Division Medalists
Gold | Sai Krishna Baskar, Tanglen Elementary, Hopkins
Silver | Laina Gangi, Bridges Community School, Mankato
Bronze | Markus Wingert, Bridges Community School, Mankato

Grade 6
1st | Carter Milbrath, Jackson County Central Middle School

Grade 7
1st | Tobin Gangi, Dakota Meadows Middle School, Mankato
2nd | Asher O’Brien, Loyola Catholic School, Mankato

Grade 8
1st | Zebulon Davis, St. Peter Middle School

Grade 9
1st | Sarah Jordan, Kato Public Charter School

Grade 11
1st | Grace Timm, St. Peter High School

Grade 11
1st | Grace Timm, St. Peter High School

6-12 Division Medalists
Gold | Zebulon Davis, St. Peter Middle School
Silver | Tobin Gangi, Dakota Meadows Middle School, Mankato
Bronze | Carter Milbrath, Jackson County Central Middle School
Math Mania Tournament
By Mary Hillmann

Students in grades 6–8 are invited to participate in the Math Mania Tournament where teams of five students compete by demonstrating mathematical thinking and problem solving. Students will compete in individual and team rounds with awards for both components. Don’t have a team? Individuals are invited to participate independently in the individual rounds!

The tournament will be held February 14 at the SCSC Conference Center located in North Mankato. Online participation is available upon request. Learn more and find a link to registration at mnsccsc.org/student/math-mania.

Synergy Leadership Exchange
We Want to Recognize Your Minnesota Promising Practices!
By Barb Bergseth

Has your school created a successful practice that promotes character development? Apply today for a Minnesota Promising Practice Award! Promising Practices are unique and effective practices created and implemented by schools, districts and youth-serving organizations that promote character development and align with one or more of the 11 Principles framework.

Celebrating success is a good motivator for continued success which is why Synergy & Leadership Exchange recognizes these statewide practices each year to celebrate the great things happening in your communities!

There is no cost to apply. Applications are evaluated by an outside panel of practitioners. Award honorees are celebrated at the Character Recognition Awards luncheon in May presented by Synergy & Leadership Exchange and hosted by Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus. Applications are due February 10, 2023.

How to Apply:
1. Review the application evaluation criteria and applicant tips.
2. Download the application for reference.
3. Complete the online application (contact information, overview of the practice, three questions about the practice) by February 10.

Download the PDF to view examples of award-winning Minnesota Promising Practices.