



POPULAR ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020



Our Vision: Being Minnesota's favorite place.
Our Mission: Serve well. Deliver value. Drive results.
Our Values: Be responsible. Treat people right. Build a better future.

The Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) has given an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting to Crow Wing County for its Popular Annual Financial Report for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2020. The Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting is a prestigious national award recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government popular reports.

In order to receive an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting, a government unit must publish a Popular Annual Financial Report, whose contents conform to program standards of creativity, presentation, understandability and reader appeal. An Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting is valid for a period of one year only. Crow Wing County has received a Popular Award for the last seven consecutive years (fiscal years ended 2013-2019). We believe our current report continues to conform to the Popular Annual Financial Reporting requirements, and we are submitting it to the GFOA.



Government Finance Officers Association

Award for
Outstanding
Achievement in
Popular Annual
Financial Reporting

Presented to
Crow Wing County
Minnesota

For its Annual Financial Report
for the Fiscal Year Ended

December 31, 2019

Christopher P. Morrell
Executive Director/CEO

Financial Report Message

We are pleased to present Crow Wing County's eighth Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR). The PAFR is a condensed version of the 2020 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (Annual Financials).

The Annual Financials is a more inclusive document, detailing the County's financial statements, notes, schedules, and statistics. The Annual Financials was prepared in conformance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and audited by CliftonLarsonAllen. The Annual Financials received an unmodified (clean) opinion.

This report provides a summary of the financial position of the County in a simple, easy-to-read format for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2020. The PAFR also provides information on the property tax levy and other noteworthy activities. The PAFR is consistent with GAAP, and is unaudited.

Thank you for your interest in Crow Wing County. For a complete review of the County's financial position, please consult the 2020 Annual Financials available on the County's website at www.crowwing.us, or contact Finance at 218-824-1047 or Finance.Dept@crowwing.us.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicholas A. Mielke
Finance Director

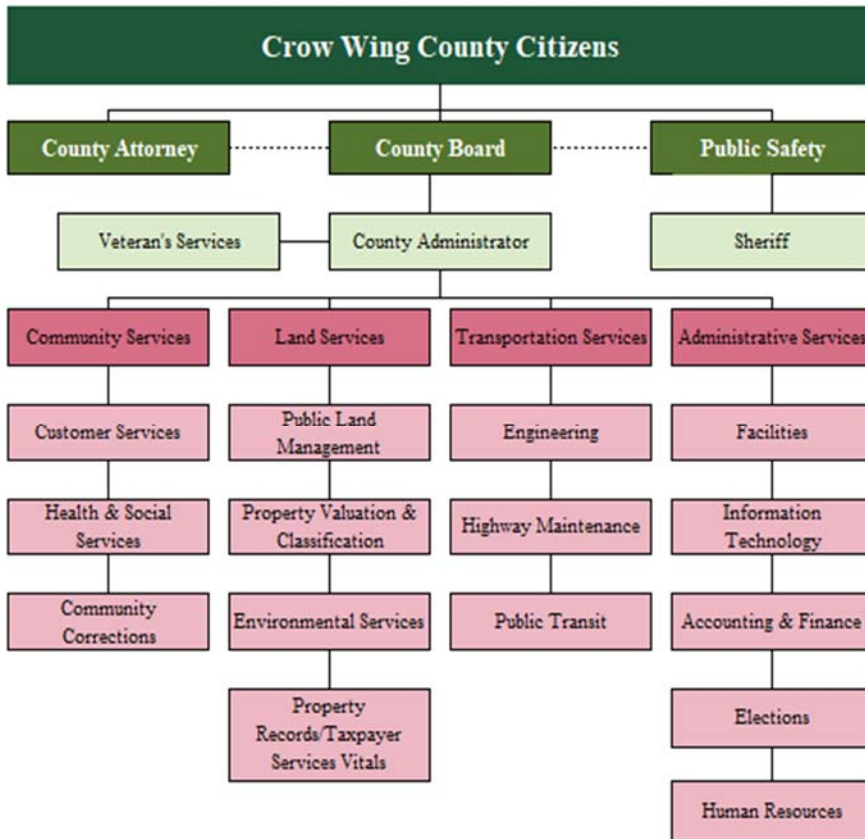


About Crow Wing County

Crow Wing County was established in 1857 and formally organized in 1870. It is located in north-central Minnesota, about 125 miles northwest of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area, and covers 999 square miles. The County seat is the City of Brainerd, which is the largest community in the County with a population of 13,434 residents in 2019.

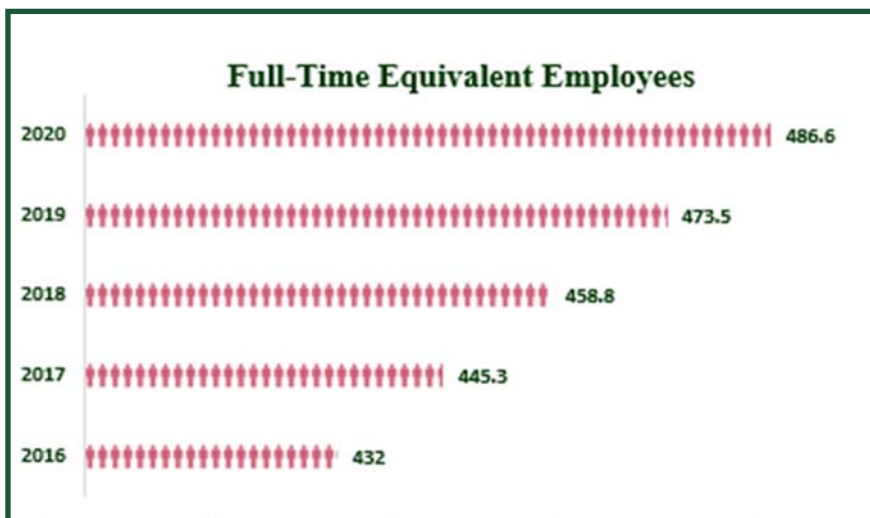
The original County Courthouse was built in Brainerd in 1872; it was replaced in 1920 by the building now known as the Historic Courthouse. Other County structures include the Sheriff's Office, Jail, Judicial Center, Community Services, Central Services, and Land Services buildings. The Highway Department is located off-site near the Brainerd Lakes Regional Airport, and the Solid Waste offices are on the County Landfill property.

Crow Wing County



Crow Wing County is governed by the Board of Commissioners. There are five members of the County Board, each representing one of five Districts, elected to four-year overlapping terms. The County Board appoints a County Administrator who is the chief appointed administrative officer of the County. The Administrator is responsible for the administration of Board policy and for the management of various County division and departments. The Attorney and Sheriff are elected officials.

The County provides a full range of services contemplated by statute. These services include public safety, highway, health, attorney, human services, recreational, maintenance of property records, vital statistics, issuance of various permits and licenses, administration of property tax assessment and collection, and the distribution of local governments' property taxes within the County.



Service Areas

While the County presents the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles in regards to fund structure, internally the County operates under a different organizational structure. Offices and departments of the County are grouped under different service areas. The County reports six different service areas: Governance, Public Safety, Community, Land, Transportation, and Administrative Services.

Each service area is a broad grouping of similar customer deliverables, with comparable expectations and focuses. Most service areas are managed by a department head who oversees the various departments or offices within the area.

Grouping various functions under a single service area allows the County to streamline operations, promote efficiencies, enhance communication within and across departments, and overall provide a better customer experience.

Did you know?

The 2021 budget, which was approved and adopted by the County Board in December 2020, was only the third year of the past eleven years that the County had an increased tax levy. For the years of 2010 to 2018, there was a zero or negative levy. The 2021 budget was approved for a 4.97 percent increase over 2020, which is 1.98 percent lower than 2020's levy increase.

In a 2021 comparison of four nearby counties, Crow Wing County had the second lowest County tax levy per capita at \$634.27. The chart to the right shows the trend of the County's property tax levy per capita over the past nine years.

Dividing Up Your Tax Dollar

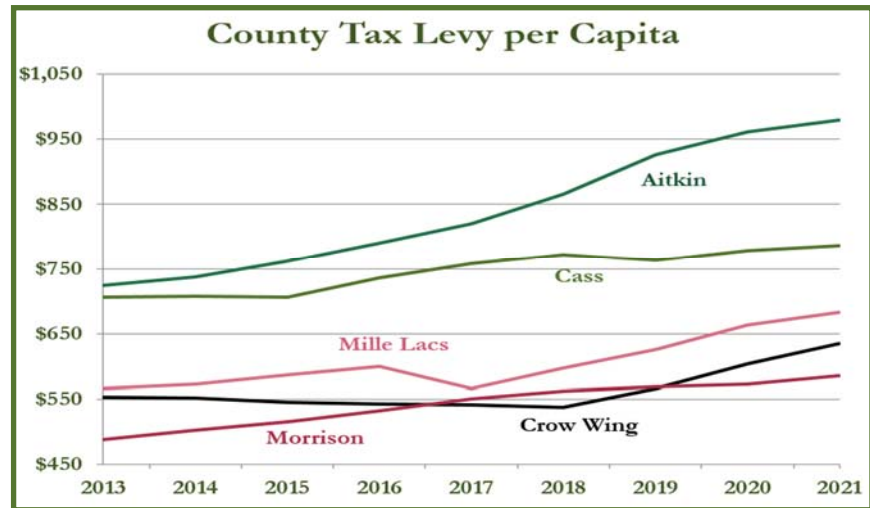
What happens when you pay your property taxes?

Although you make your property tax payments to Crow Wing County, not all of those funds are kept by the County. The County essentially acts as an "in-between", and collects funds levied by your city or township, school district, and other special districts.



These funds are then later distributed to these other districts. On average, for all property taxes collected, the County keeps 32¢ of every dollar to provide services. The remaining 68¢ is distributed to cities, townships, school districts, and special districts such as hospitals, HRAs, or sewer districts.

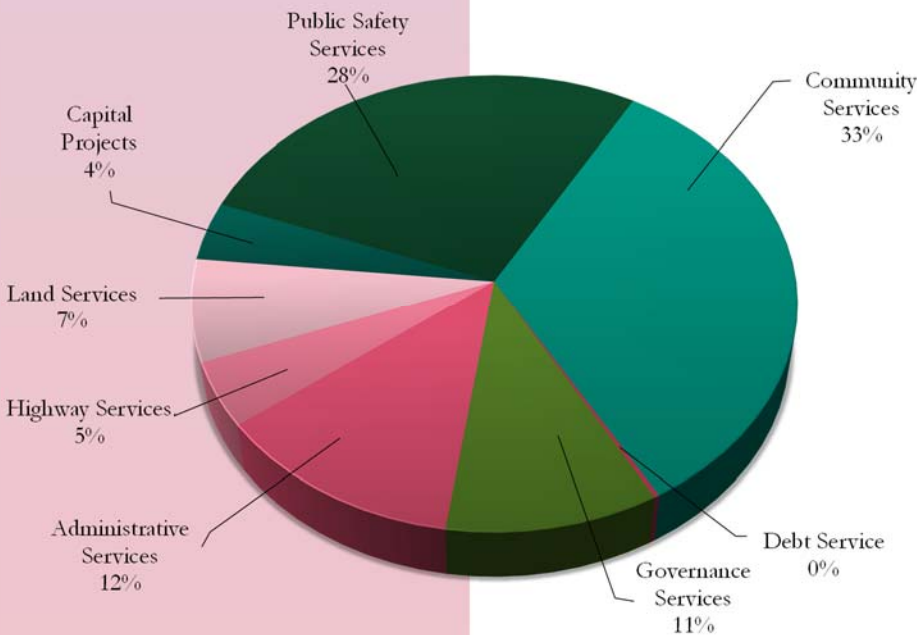
*In most instances, commercial and seasonal recreational properties will pay state general tax in addition to a portion of the school district tax.



Crow Wing County Property Tax

How we allocate resources.

The pie chart to the left shows where your County property tax dollars go. This does not include the portion of your taxes that go to the city/township, school, or special taxing district. For 2020, the County property tax levy was \$41,262,480.

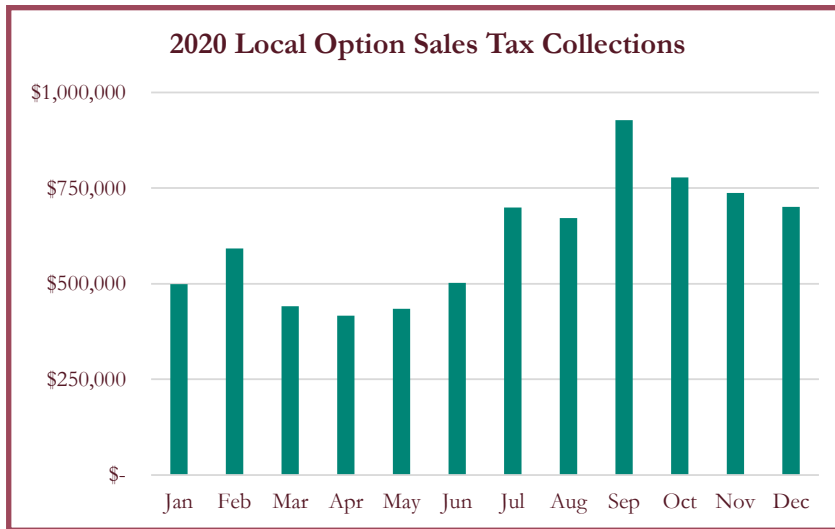


| Department | Levy |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| Community Services | \$ 13,751,355 |
| Debt Service | \$ 94,746 |
| Governance Services | \$ 4,307,422 |
| Administrative Services | \$ 5,124,153 |
| Highway Services | \$ 1,892,143 |
| Land Services | \$ 3,008,624 |
| Capital Projects | \$ 1,710,691 |
| Public Safety Services | \$ 11,373,346 |

Local Option Sales Tax

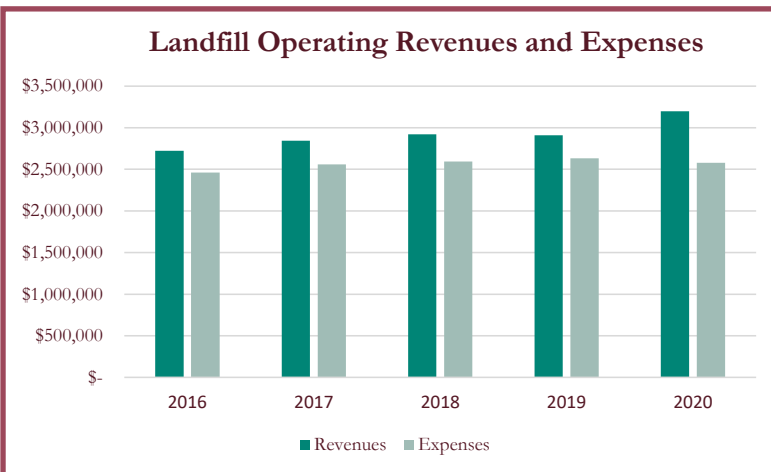
Improving your transportation experience.

The Crow Wing County Board of Commissioners approved a 0.5 percent sales tax effective April 1, 2016. The local option sales tax allows the County to generate additional revenues not only from those who live in our County, but also those who visit. These sales tax funds are dedicated to County road system improvements and maintenance. Sales tax collections in 2020 totaled \$7,401,638. Initial estimates at the time of adoption anticipated annual collections of approximately \$4 million per year.



Landfill Enterprise Fund

Keeping our lakes and forests clean.

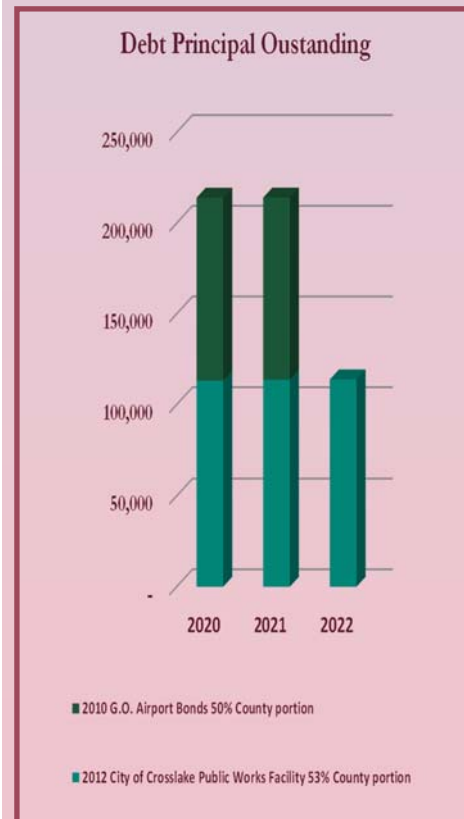


The County's Landfill Fund operates like a business, supporting itself with user fees and charges. For 2020, the Landfill Fund reported an operating income of \$618,235. Operating revenues and expenses are those that occur

in the normal course of business. The principal operating revenues are charges to customers for services provided and for the issuance of licenses and permits. Operating expenses include the cost of services, administrative expenses, depreciation, and costs relating to landfill closure and post closure. All revenues and expenses not meeting this definition are reported as non-operating revenues and expenses. During 2020 the Landfill accepted 47,803 tons of municipal solid waste; an increase of 1.08 percent from 2019. Since 2011, municipal solid waste brought to the Landfill has increased 33.03 percent.

Debt Refunding

On July 10, 2013, the County issued \$29,520,000 of General Obligation Refunding Bonds and contributed \$4,943,100 to advance refund \$37,105,000 of outstanding General Obligation bonds. Refunding a bond is comparable to refinancing your mortgage for a lower interest rate. The County reduced its total debt service payments by \$12,022,858 and obtained an economic gain of \$5,022,710. Economic gain is the difference between the present value of the debt service payments on the old and new debt. The new debt was paid off in 2020. During the refunding, Standard & Poor's reaffirmed the County's AA bond rating. The table below shows a side-by-side comparison of outstanding principal on the old and new debt as of the end of each year. The 2013 G.O. bonds were paid off in 2020.



Fund Types

The County maintains five types of governmental funds: general, special revenue, debt service, capital projects, and permanent; an enterprise fund, the Landfill Fund; and many fiduciary funds.

The **General Fund** is the primary fund for the County. It accounts for all revenues and expenditures associated with the general operations of the County not required to be accounted for in separate funds.

Special Revenue Funds account for proceeds of specific revenue sources that are restricted or committed for specific purposes. The County maintains seven Special Revenue Funds: Highway, Community Services, Public Land Management, Solid Waste (Non-Landfill), Unorganized Townships, Small Cities Development Program, and Ditch.

The **Debt Service Fund** is used to account for financial resources used for the repayment of debt.

The **Capital Projects Fund** is used to account for the financial resources used for the acquisition or construction of capital facilities and other capital assets.

The County maintains one **Permanent Fund**, the Environmental Trust, to account for resources that are non-spendable or restricted for environmental purposes pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 373.475.

The County reports one **Enterprise Fund**, the Landfill Fund, which is operated and accounted for much like a business.

Fiduciary Funds are used to account for resources held for the benefit of parties outside the government. Fiduciary funds are not included in the government-wide financial statements because the resources of these funds are not available to support the County's own programs.

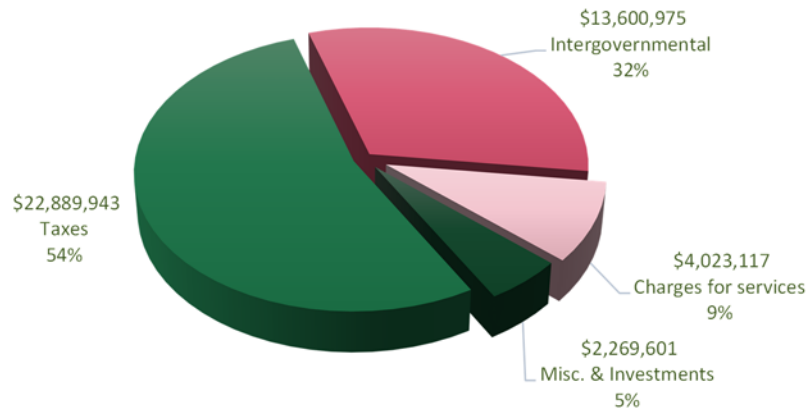
General Fund Revenues

The General Fund is the primary fund used for County operations. It accounts for revenues and expenditures associated with the general operations of the County that are not required to be accounted for in separate funds.

The General Fund accounts for services such as attorney; public safety, including

dispatch, bomb squad, the County Jail, and boat and water; maintenance of property records; vital statistics; elections; administration of property tax assessment and collection; and the distribution of local governments' property taxes within the County.

Where does the money come from?



The General Fund also accounts for internal services such as human resources, payroll and finance, information technology, and facility services.

Revenues for the General Fund totaled \$42,783,636 for 2020, an increase of \$13,419,295 or 45.7 percent, from 2019. Property taxes were the largest revenue of the General Fund, at \$22,889,943.

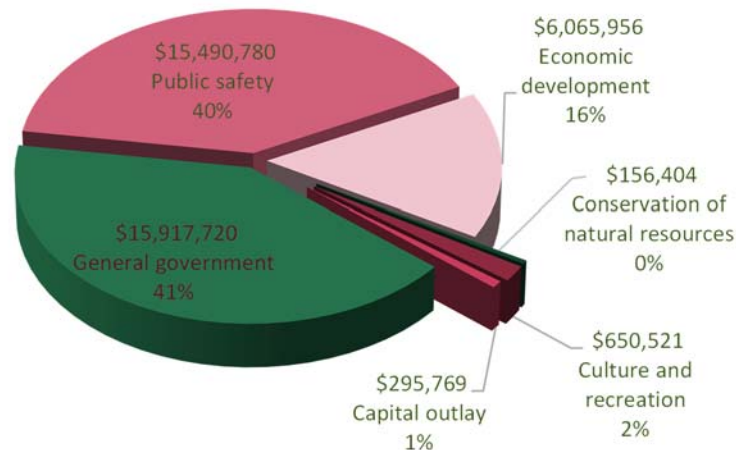
General Fund Expenditures

General Fund expenditures for 2020 were \$38,577,150, an increase of \$7,782,457, or 20.2 percent, from 2019. The largest increases were in general government and economic development in the amount of \$1,782,827 and \$6,065,956 respectively. This is due to an increase in salaries and wages, health insurance, and CARES grant expenditures. The majority of expenditures in the General Fund are for general government and economic development grants. The General Fund had expenditures in excess of revenues in the amount of \$4,206,486.

The General Fund reported a positive variance of \$4,707,844 against the budgeted revenues and expenditures for 2020.

The General Fund continues to maintain a healthy fund balance level, reporting an unrestricted fund balance of \$13,682,064 as of December 31, 2020, which is 35.5 percent of General Fund expenditures.

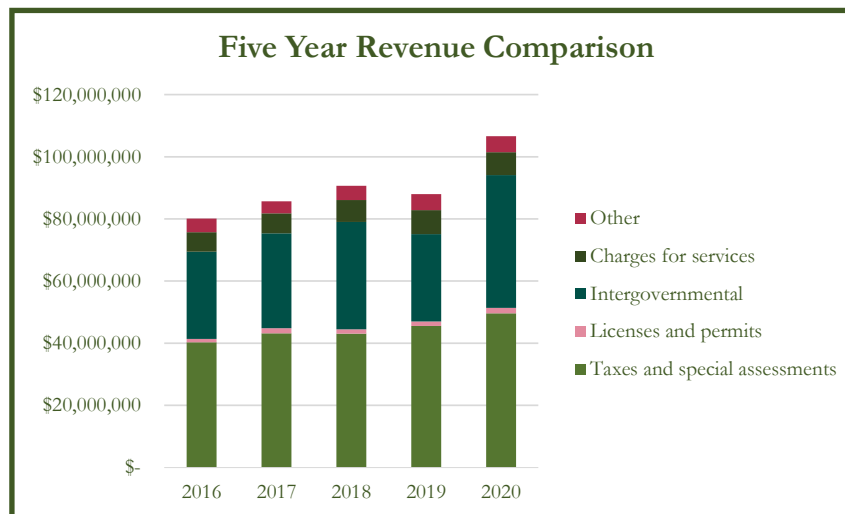
Where does the money go?



Governmental Funds Revenues and Expenditures

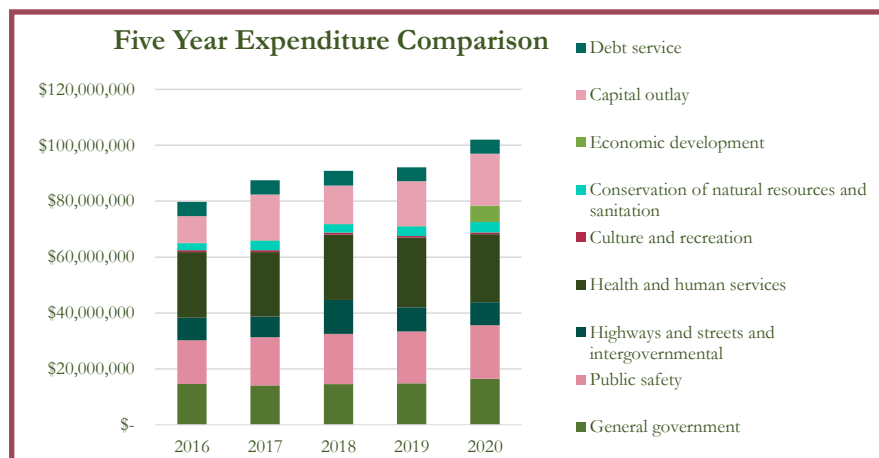
The County's revenues for 2020 (for all funds except the Landfill) were \$106,636,521 an increase of \$18,656,962 over the prior year. Intergovernmental revenues had the largest increase of \$14,624,647 due to CARES grant. Both Highway Fund and Community Services Fund also saw increases in intergovernmental with a combined total \$3,505,980, or 15.61 percent.

The graph below provides a five-year comparison of governmental revenues. Governmental revenues have grown 33.13 percent, or \$26,535,074, since 2016.



The County's expenditures for 2020 (for all funds except the Landfill) were \$101,973,775, an increase of \$9,826,857, or 10.66 percent, over the prior year. Expenditures for economic development increased \$5,897,789 or 12,367.45 percent due to increased COVID-19 related expenses and local economic grants. Expenditures for capital outlay increased \$2,473,028 or 15.43 percent, primarily due to increase in infrastructure projects.

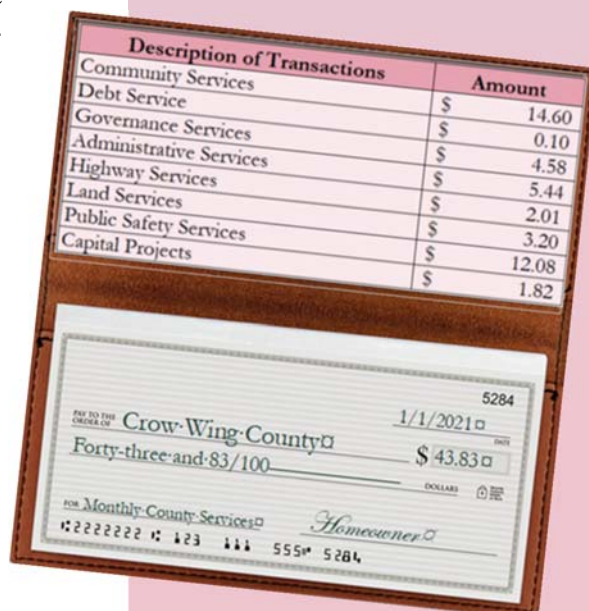
At the end of the fiscal year, governmental funds reported combined ending fund balances of \$45,468,932, an increase of \$3,699,738 or 8.86 percent in comparison to the prior year. Of this total amount, \$27,773,834 constitutes unrestricted fund balance.



How Your Tax Dollars Buy County Services

Residents receive a variety of County services at an affordable price. The cost of County services in 2020 for a homeowner in Crow Wing County with an assessor's market value of \$180,000 (the County's average market value) is \$43.83 per month. The value received from County services compares favorably to charges for other monthly bills.

The checkbook below shows how the monthly cost of property tax-supported services is divided among County service areas. Public Safety Services include sheriff and 911 dispatch, as well as the operation of the County Jail. Land Services includes services such as property tax assessment and collection, environmental services, and the recorder. Administrative Services includes internal support departments such as Finance, IT, Facilities, and also Elections. Transportation Services support road maintenance and improvements within the County. Governance Services provides for County Administrator, County Board, and Attorney.

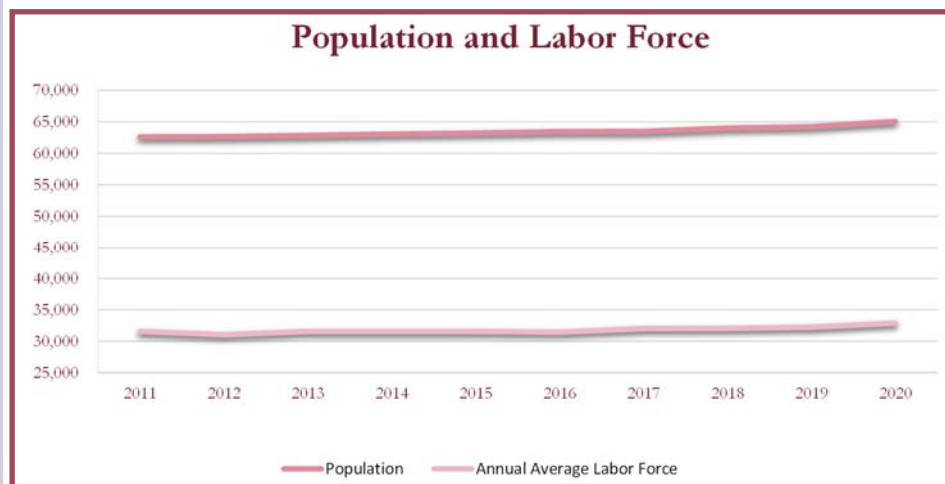


Economic Condition and Outlook

The County contains a variety of commercial and industrial businesses in areas such as retail and wholesale; health care; education; manufacturing and construction; and financial and information services. Tourism is an important facet of the local economy. During the height of tourism season the County's population swells to an estimated 300,000 when tourists and seasonal residents are taken into consideration. Leisure and hospitality industries brought in nearly \$256 million in gross sales in 2019 (the most recent data available). The leisure and hospitality industry is a large industry in the County, with 277 leisure and hospitality businesses with an annual average of 4,359 employed in 2019

The single largest employer in the County is Essentia Health, with 1,496 employees, followed by Grand View Lodge Resort & Spa with 997, and Cuyuna Regional Medical Center with 973 employees. The chart below shows the breakout of employment by industry for the County for 2019. Industry information for 2020 was not available.

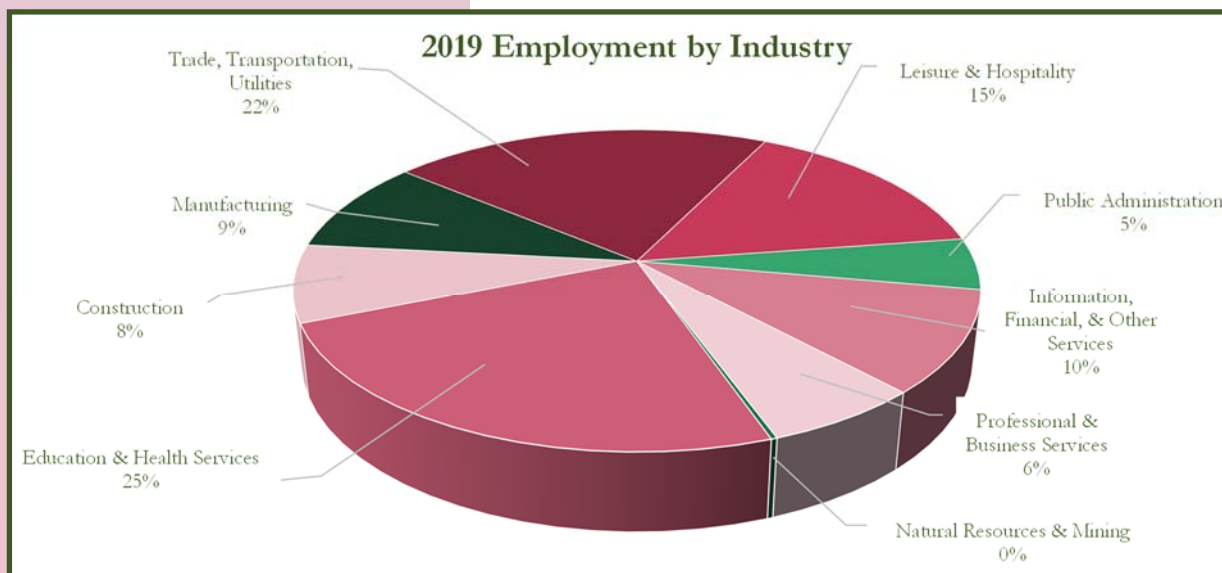
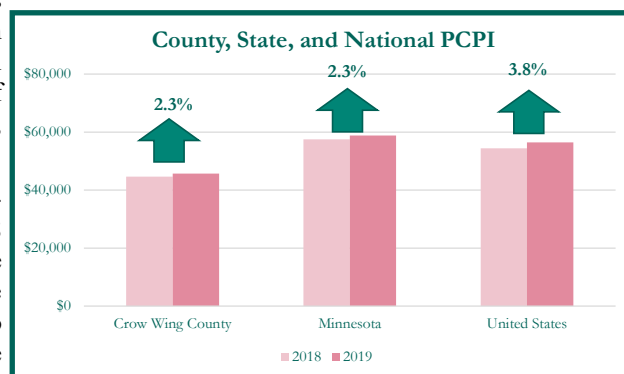
Population, Labor Force and Employment Trends



The State Demographic Center estimated the 2020 population of Crow Wing County at 65,316, an increase of 4.2 percent since 2011. The annual average labor force has been estimated at 32,904 for 2020, an increase of 4.3 percent since 2011 as seen in the graph above.

Other County demographic statistics includes; median age 45 years, median household income \$56,549, mean travel to work 22 minutes, median value of owner-occupied housing units \$198,300, and number of households 26,820.

The County's per capita personal income (PCPI) increased 2.3% from 2018 to 2019 (the most recent data available for the County). This increase is in line with the State of Minnesota. The chart to the right compares the PCPI for the County, State, and the United States.



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