Businesses wanting to grow can apply for free assistance program

Applications are now open for the Economic Gardening Program in Scott County, a free program aimed at cultivating "second stage" business and helping local businesses grow and thrive! The program is designed to help growing companies make better decisions while maneuvering through all of the many challenges associated with growth. It will also help to foster growth of seasoned businesses through strategic research, facilitated CEO discussions of relevant issues, and interest forums.

The best part — all of the fees associated with the Economic Gardening program are covered by Scott County. Over the course of eight months, accepted companies will participate in CEO roundtables and forums, as well as receive approximately 50 hours of research specific to their business needs through collaboration with a dedicated research team. If you are able and willing to devote time to the program, Economic Gardening may be the answer you're looking for to take your business to the next level.

To be eligible, businesses must meet the following criteria:

- Be a for-profit, privately held company headquartered and operating in Hennepin, Ramsey, Carver, or Scott Counties.
- Have between $1 million and $50 million in annual revenue or working capital in place from investors or grants.
- Employ 10 to 99 full-time equivalent W-2 employees, including the owner.
- Maintained its principal place of business in Hennepin, Ramsey, Carver, or Scott Counties for at least the previous two years.
- Demonstrated growth in either revenue or employees in two of the last five years.
- Provide product(s) and/or services beyond current service area to regional and/or international markets.
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If you're interested in applying or learning more, please contact Stacy Crakes, Business Development Director with the Scott County Community Development Agency at (952) 496-8613, scrakes@scottfss.org, or visit online at https://economicgardeningmn1718.nationalcentereg.org. Applications will be accepted in August -- don't delay and don't miss out on this exciting opportunity!

Deadline is Aug. 15 for FAST-TRACK Challenge

Applications for the Scott County FAST-TRACK business competition are available on the Scott County First Stop Shop (FSS) website at: www.scottfss.org/FAST-TRACK, along with other FAST-TRACK Challenge information. **But don't wait -- applications are due by August 15, 2017.**

Start-up businesses and entrepreneurs with a business concept are encouraged to apply. An interest survey, posted during the month of May, drew responses from 19 businesses/entrepreneurs in six Scott County cities. Submittal of the interest survey was used to gauge potential participation levels. If businesses did not submit their interest, they may still submit a formal application to the FAST-TRACK Challenge.

Focus areas for the competition include, but are not limited to, health and personal care solutions, professional and business services with a technology component, educational products, and apps/software publishing. A category for 501(c)3 organizations is also included for non-profits with new products or services that meet the evaluation criteria. Applications will be reviewed in August, with the top five or so business ideas to present their "pitch" to a panel of esteemed judges at a live event in October.

A judges' panel is being confirmed, and the prize package(s) for FAST-TRACK Challenge winner(s) is also in the process of being developed with assistance from the Technology Village Board of Directors and FSS. Over $5,000 in legal and accounting services, graphic design and web development, and business training services are among the professional services donated thus far. The winner(s) will also receive access to shared office space and meeting facilities, media exposure, free educational programs, and opportunities to network with other business entrepreneurs.

The Challenge, which will be held in October 2017, is *free* to enter and there is no minimum age requirement. In order to be eligible, individuals must reside within Scott County, have a start-up business in Scott County or be willing to locate their business in Scott County, have a viable product or service idea, and be willing to participate in the *FAST-TRACK* Challenge live event.

Businesses interested in serving as sponsors of the event or interested in providing a service as a part of the prize package(s) are asked to contact Jo Foust, Business Development Specialist, Scott County FSS at (952) 496-8830 or via email at jfoust@scottfss.org.

SWCD to host cover crop field days

The Scott SWCD is hosting a Cover Crop Aerial Seeding Field Day later this summer. This field day will show the aerial seeding of cover crops into soybeans. There will be a followup field day in the fall to view the cover crops.

The exact date of the event will depend on field conditions. The date and time will be posted at scottswcd.org once the schedule is finalized. You can also email Sarah Gossman at sgossman@co.scott.mn.us or call the Scott SWCD office at (954) 492-5425 to receive a notice with the date and time.

Safety SCENE
By Luke Hennen
Scott County Sheriff

Enjoy our waters safely

One of the best parts of summer is enjoying the great outdoors. The outstanding weather, sunshine, and abundant natural beauty draw most of us out of our homes during our warmest season. Scott County is home to great parks, trails, and bodies of water, and for many of us, these resources play an important part in our summers.

The Scott County Sheriff's Office has jurisdiction on all public waters within the County. Sheriff's Deputies receive specialized training to enforce laws and respond to emergency calls on the water, and have equipment to assist with responses on our water bodies. Scott County has one full-time Deputy assigned to this task of Recreational Safety. Other Deputies and Reserve deputies also assist with water patrol, respond to calls for service on the water, manage the placement of buoys, and do equipment maintenance.

Before a Deputy is assigned to work on the water, he or she must first undergo a lot of training. Typical training for our Deputies includes launching, landing, and operation of patrol boats. Additional training includes water survival, aquatic invasive species (AIS) enforcement, boating while intoxicated detection and enforcement, drowning victim recovery, and watercraft inspections. All this training helps us enhance your safety on the water while also protecting the lakes and rivers of our community.

The responsibility to help provide safety and security on our bodies of water also requires us to have several pieces of equipment. Currently, the Scott County Sheriff's Office uses four patrol boats that can be towed behind any of our squad cars. We also have a side-scan sonar unit and an underwater camera for locating objects beneath the water.

While most of us view boating as a fun outdoor activity, we can't forget that it can be dangerous. Two of the biggest issues on our lakes are ignorance of the law and poor judgement. Minnesota does not require any training for those 18 and over to operate watercraft, and while this makes it easier for all of us to enjoy our waters, it also means there are many on the water that do not have the knowledge or skills to safely operate a boat or personal watercraft.

Even though you don't need a license to boat, you are still required and expected to follow all laws and rules of navigation. **Just like driving a car, ignorance of the law is not a defense.** The Minnesota DNR Boating Guide covers most of the laws relating to boat operation. If you will be operating a boat, we recommend taking a full boating course. The DNR's Boating Guide can be found at http://10.4.51.1:8181/http:/files.dnr.state.mn.us/rlp/regulations/boatwater/boating-guide.pdf.

It's also important to remember that some activities, while legal, might put you in a dangerous position. For example, if someone decides to go paddle boarding or kayaking on a very busy day and they venture into an area where boats are operating at a high speed, the paddle boarders/kayakers may have the right of way, but they've also just put themselves into a dangerous situation. Like any activity you are involved in, when you are on the water you should always make safety your top priority.

Without a doubt, one of the most dangerous things you can do on the water is to be impaired while operating a watercraft. The laws relating to impaired boating are the same as the laws relating to any other motor vehicle. If an impaired boater is stopped, they can expect to be arrested and jailed. BWI (Boating While Intoxicated) convictions can have an impact on a person's driver's license, and can include fines and jail time. Please think before you drink and drive a boat. If you need a ride, call for one.

Sheriff's Deputies are also responsible for the rescue and recovery during a drowning. Being able to quickly locate and recover a victim is important to families and also to our investigative process. The most important piece of information that we need to get quickly in order to conduct a timely water recovery is the *exact* location where the victim was last seen. The accuracy of the location along with our special equipment helps us find the missing person quickly.

More importantly, we can all take steps to prevent a drowning. Wear life preservers, don't overestimate your swimming skills, and make safety a priority. It's vital to remember, especially with children, that drowning is often silent. It is usually not the splashing, gasping, and yelling scene we see in movies. This is why it is extremely important to keep a constant eye on swimmers.

The waters of Scott County belong to all of us, and each of us has a responsibility to keep those waters safe and enjoyable for all. Do your part: Know the rules of boating, wear your life preserver, and do not operate any vehicle, including a boat, if you've been drinking. Please enjoy your summer, and we'll see you on the lake!

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter @ScottCoSheriffOffice

Recreational Safety Deputy Spencer Autenrieth helps patrol Scott County waters.

Watch for turtles on the road

For millions of years, turtles survived by hiding in their shells until danger is gone. However, this tactic can be lethal on busy Scott County roads. Three out of nine turtle species in Minnesota do not have stable populations, and at least two of these threatened species can be found in Scott County.

In the fall, both adult turtles and some of this year's hatchlings migrate to their wintering grounds. This means that from August to October, some of the most vulnerable of these slow-moving (and slow-reproducing) reptiles will be crossing roads. Now, you might be asking yourself: "What can I do if I see a turtle in the middle of the road?" The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has a few tips you can follow on their website.

Please **do not put yourself or others in danger to save turtles**. If it is safe, pull your vehicle over to the side of the road and turn on the hazard lights. This should be enough to let other drivers know to slow down.

If the turtle is not in danger, **please let it cross** unassisted.

If the turtle is in danger:
- **Pick it up gently** by its shell. Be careful, turtles can bite.
- Always **move the turtle in the direction it was traveling** in.
- Remember to **wash your hands**

A Blandings turtle prepares to cross the road. It is one of three threatened species that live in Scott County. (Photo by Jeff Dankert, Associated Press.)

afterwards.

Contact DNR's Nongame Wildlife Program staff if you encounter any of these three species of turtle: Blandings, Wood, or Smooth Softshell.
- Staff contact information is available online at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/eco/nongame/central.html.
- Let them know where you saw the turtle and if you assisted it across the road.

Help document turtle crossings: DNR and Scott County have an interest in knowing where these reptiles are crossing. Contact either Scott County Natural Resources at (952) 496-8475, or log turtle crossings on *HerpMapper*.
- Guidance for using *HerpMapper* can be found online at http://www.herpmapper.org/content/pdf/mn-turtles-and-roads-project.pdf.

ScottGIS3

developers, realtors, or anyone seeking spatial information with the release of the County's new flagship mapping application called **ScottGIS3** (or coined "SG3"). GIS (or Geographic Information Systems) is a system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present spatial and geographic data.

The new SG3 is an interactive online mapping tool that allows users to search for property information using an address or parcel number. Users also have the option of viewing over 100 data layers, such as elevation contours, parks and trails, zoning data, mailing addresses, and many others. Once a property has been searched for and identified, access to additional information is available, such as taxation and building information.

"We are excited to launch this new, up-to-date online mapping tool," said Patrick Thorsell, a senior GIS analyst who helped bring this new service to the County's website. "It will have all of the same data layers, measuring tools, and searching capabilities of the old application, but enhanced with a lot of great features," he added. SG3 offers several advantages over its predecessor:
- Compatibility with all of the main web browsers (Internet Explorer, Safari, Chrome, and Firefox)
- Viewable on mobile devices such as your smartphone, iPad, or tablet
- House photos show up in search results
- Square footage information for homes is now included in search results
- New locational search options by street intersection or coordinates

SG3 replaced ScottGIS2.0 and the Half Section Mapper, which were phased out in late July. These older applications were simply not compatible with today's more commonly used web browsers. "It was time to move our online mapper to a platform that worked better for our residents and users," said GIS principal analyst Tony Monsour. "We were hearing more and more from our customers that the old application did not work on their web browser, or

SG3 is an easy way to look up property information for every parcel in Scott County.

did not work on their phone or tablet," he said. The County's online mapping application is typically one of the most used services on the website.

Another new enhancement for SG3 is the ability to view spatial information *beyond* the County's boundaries. Because SG3 was built using a customized version of ESRI's Web AppBuilder, the mapping tool allows users to zoom out to the entire region, state, or nation and access ESRI's national mapping features. "We are no longer an island," said Monsour, referring to the older version that just showed spatial information within the County's jurisdiction.

The Scott County GIS team has already been providing training sessions for its GIS user community, but there will also be five drop-in training sessions available to the public, hosted at several of the local libraries throughout the County. "These drop in sessions will be a great chance for the public to see a demonstration of the new mapping service, and then jump on the site and try out the new application with help from County GIS staff," said Thorsell. See below for dates, times and locations for these public sessions:

Sept. 6: Savage Libary, 6:30 - 8 p.m.,

Sept. 12: Prior Lake Library, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m..

Sept. 20: Jordan Library, 5:30 - 7 p.m.

Sept. 26: Shakopee Library, 8:30 - 10 a.m.

Oct. 4: Belle Plaine Library, 10 a.m. - noon.

To view the new mapping application, visit https://gis.co.scott.mn.us/SG3.

EmergenSCENE

**By Captain Scott Haas
Emergency Management
and Communications Director**

Monitoring the weather

In Scott County, the most frequent cause of large scale emergencies is the weather. Severe weather can quickly disrupt our lives. Extreme weather events lead to long term power outages, destruction of property, and even evacuations. In fact, to date, every Presidential Disaster Declaration in Scott County has been due to a weather event. The Emergency Management Division of the Sheriff's Office uses a variety of methods to prepare for and monitor weather events.

Emergency Management regularly communicates with our partners at the National Weather Service (NWS). We regularly review updates from the Storm Prediction Center, meteorologists from the Chanhassen NWS office, and monitor river and weather gauges.

During a severe weather event, Emergency Management gets notified of potentially dangerous weather from NWS. The weather service also passes on warning information through the statewide 800MHz radio system to Scott County's 911 dispatch center. When dangerous weather is predicted in Scott County, we activate the trained spotters from our SAFCOM volunteer unit.

The SAFCOM spotters are positioned throughout the County to monitor and report changing weather conditions. They are each assigned a portable radio and anemometer which they use to report measured wind speeds in excess of forty miles per hour, hail, and tornadic cloud formations. The SAFCOM spotter team reports on a talkgroup that is in every police, fire, and public works radio in the County. Volunteer dispatchers from the SAFCOM unit collect the weather reports and locations from the spotters in the field while monitoring radar feeds, weather stations, and radar indicated wind direction and velocity. Our emergency managers communicate directly with the weather service through a forecast area radio channel, weather chat program, and monitor calls to the 911 Center. Gathering information from all of these sources helps us to quickly direct appropriate warning and resources to areas receiving damage.

The Emergency Management Division is constantly looking for ways to improve this critical service. We are currently reviewing the use of a Mesonet, a network of automated weather stations, to fill gaps in our spotter coverage. Many other states in the country have invested in statewide Mesonet networks. These networks allow the timely transmission of accurate weather information to meteorologists, first responders, and emergency managers to assist in decision making during emergencies. Other partners include highway departments, agriculture, and education.

In Scott County, we strongly believe that one of the best things we can do to minimize the impact of a weather event in our area is to keep our citizens informed. For this reason, we have taken several steps to assure the public has access to timely and accurate information on our local weather. One example of the measures we've taken to keep our citizens notified is **CodeRED**. Those who have signed up for CodeRED's weather alerts at https://public.coderedweb.com/cne/en-US/EA5343CC0ED6 get severe weather alerts whenever they are issued at their location. If you like to sign up for CodeRED but don't have access to a computer, please call (952) 496-8181 during regular business hours and we'll register you for CodeRED over the phone.

Those who follow the Scott County Sheriff's Office on Facebook or Twitter know that our social media sites get local weather notifications posted immediately after they are issued by the National Weather Service. Beyond this, we often share the forecast from the National Weather Service when they are predicting severe weather in our area. By following the Scott County Sheriff's Office on their social media sites, you will likely increase your ability to be notified of potential weather events. Please stay weather aware -- and enjoy the rest of the summer!

SAFCOM volunteers Glady Pauly and Aaron Renneke monitor weather radar feeds while also receiving information from local spotters.