



Brandt Richardson
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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dakota County Manager to retire in 2016

Brandt Richardson will conclude 28 years of service to Dakota County

Brandt Richardson, Dakota County Manager/Administrator since 1992, announced today that he will retire in May 2016. Richardson's retirement will bring to a close a career of nearly 40 years in public service.

Richardson is responsible for managing the county's operations, a workforce of nearly 2,000 employees, carrying out all decisions, policies, ordinances and resolutions of the board of commissioners, preparing the recommended annual budget, and long-range planning.

"It has been an honor and privilege to work with our dedicated employees and governing board in service to the residents of Dakota County," said Richardson. "I have been very fortunate to work with such passionate people who are deeply committed to the success and stewardship of Dakota County. I look forward in these next few months to preparing for a seamless transition to my successor."

"Brandt is an outstanding and highly-respected leader who we will miss greatly," said Nancy Schouweiler, chair, Dakota County Board of Commissioners. "His thoughtful, collaborative style has been so beneficial to the county, and his commitment to hiring quality staff and mentorship has helped draw many people to pursue a career in public service. He and his team are tremendous stewards of public dollars. The residents of Dakota County and our board of commissioners have been very fortunate to have Brandt as our manager."

Under Richardson's leadership, fast-growing Dakota County has been recognized for its low property taxes (lowest per capita county tax rate in Minnesota), strong financial management, and focus on performance measurement and accountabilities that have led to high-quality services and high resident satisfaction levels. The county's population has grown by 107 percent over three decades. Dakota County, which now has more than 412,000 residents, is known for innovation and strong stewardship of its financial and environmental resources. Under Richardson's stewardship, the county gained AAA bond ratings and became debt-free.

During his tenure, Dakota County made significant investments in infrastructure, growing the capacity and safety of the county highway road system, implemented the state's first bus rapid transitway (METRO Red Line) and constructed numerous miles of trails in parks. It is the only county in Minnesota that has no deficient bridges. Most of the county's existing facilities were constructed, including two major service centers, six libraries, the Empire Transportation Shop, Juvenile Services Center, Administration Center, Lebanon Hills Visitor Center, and Dakota Lodge at Thompson County Park, and additions to the county's adult detention center.

Numerous service improvements were also accomplished during Richardson's tenure through centralization, efficiency enhancements, and investments in technology. Richardson underscores that many people made these changes possible and that they would not have happened without others' work and contributions.

Consolidation of service delivery and the development of local government partnerships has been a hallmark of Richardson's tenure. The county aided the consolidation of multiple dispatch centers and constructed one modern facility, the Dakota Communications Center, to serve the entire county. The 800 MHz emergency communications system was installed to enable communications among public safety agencies across the county with their regional partners. And the county's Medical Examiner office was consolidated with Hennepin and Scott counties.

Broader authority for operations was also achieved through adoption of the County Manager form of government, and the Board assumed oversight of the Community Development Agency to coordinate housing and economic development activities. The county also formed the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board with Scott County, the largest water management organization in the Metropolitan area.

Dakota County is recognized as a leader in protecting its natural resources and open spaces. During Richardson's tenure, the county opened Whitetail Woods Regional Park, added numerous in-holdings to its regional parks, and launched the state's first county Farmland and Natural Area Program, a voter-approved land conservation plan that has protected almost 11,000 acres of open space from development. The county adopted plans for a county-wide system of greenways in collaboration with partnering jurisdictions, and worked with landowners to institute buffer protections for its key water resources.

In 2014, the Minnesota City and County Management Association (MCMA) recognized Richardson for management excellence with the organization's Robert Barrett Award. In 2005, Richardson was presented with the Joe Reis Excellence in County Management Award through the Minnesota Association of County Administrators (MACA).

Richardson began his public service career in Wisconsin after graduating from Miami University (Ohio). He went on to receive graduate degrees from the Institute of Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (M.S.) and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University (M.P.A.). During his career, Richardson also worked at the Dane County (Wis.) Regional Planning Commission, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Minnesota Water Planning Board and Scott County.

Richardson and his wife Mary are long-time residents of Dakota County, where they raised two children.

The Dakota County Board of Commissioners will likely commence a national search for Richardson's successor.

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