

ROSEAU COUNTY COORDINATOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 28, 2006

RE: **Roseau County Board of Commissioners Meeting**

Contact: County Coordinator Trish Harren, 463-4248

The Roseau County Board of Commissioners met in regular session today. The meeting began with a discussion on eminent domain. Loren Zutz presented a proposal to the Board to adopt a resolution that would support the passage of legislation clarifying the authority watershed districts have in using eminent domain proceedings to take private property for natural resource and wildlife enhancements. James Stengrim of Warren described the resolution as protecting landowners from the unnecessary acquisition of land for projects not specifically for public use. He stated that the Minnesota legislature does not give entities such as watersheds eminent domain for any projects that are not directed at public usage.

Roseau Watershed District Director Ferill Erickson affirmed the need for the watersheds to be able to work with private landowners to solve flooding issues, and that restricting eminent domain would limit the watershed's effectiveness. "Every landowner affected will ride us to no end if we don't address flood control," Erickson replied. "If we have a piece of land that is marginal and we need it for flood control, having to go through another layer makes what we need to do more difficult and people are unhappy." Erickson sees the proposed resolution as unnecessary. "There are different entities that we need to battle all the time, all the way to Washington, to protect agriculture and protect cities. Adding one more layer to that will stop us cold," Erickson stated. Mr. Stengrim stressed that their proposed resolution was not to prevent watersheds from doing their job. "Our concern is that watersheds and the DNR are using eminent domain to take land from landowners for projects that do not serve the public use."

"I can see both sides; both sides have merit," said Commissioner Orris Rasmussen." The Board requested assistant County Attorney Lisa Hanson review the resolution request. Ms. Hanson advised the Board to defer action on the matter as litigation is underway that may set a precedent on the scope of watersheds and other entities rights to exercise eminent domain. Ms. Hanson noted that eminent domain is a hotly debated topic at the Minnesota Legislature this session and it is likely that the definition of public use will be clarified

The Board passed a resolution to adopt a public information request form to standardize the dissemination of public information process. Information request forms help clarify the kind of data, costs, and time involved for procuring the information being requested. The Board sees it as a good business practice that provides the public with uniform costs and processes across all county departments.

The Board approved Engineer Brian Ketring's request to call for bids on replacement of two bridges that are part of the CSAH No. 2 project. Funding for these bridge projects is part of this session's bonding bill and Engineer Ketring is optimistic that funding will be allocated. Ketring informed the Board that spring road restrictions went into effect last week and presented requests for variances for Cenex Bulk Plant on CSAH No. 28 and for Jim Kukowski Seed Company on CSAH No. 6. Ketring stated these variances would not compromise these segments of road in question and the Board approved the variances.

Today was the scheduled sale of \$6,100,000 in general obligation jail bonds. Auditor Anne Granitz announced that Roseau County received a 'AAA' rating from Standard & Poor, with outlook defined as stable. This reflects the county's excellent fiscal management. Ehler's & Associates, Inc. managed the bid sale and were very pleased with the results. Nine bids were received with rates ranging from 4.0954% to 4.1980%. The Board acted on Ehler's recommendation to approve the sale of bonds to Stephens, Inc. at a true interest rate of 4.0954%. Proceeds of the sale will be available on April 20, 2006 and will be used to fund the construction of the new Roseau County Jail.