

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

STEARNS COUNTY *Minnesota*



Why Apply?



This is an excellent opportunity to lead and elevate an established and professional county government in the heart of central Minnesota. Stearns County is looking for a seasoned and experienced county administrator upon the retirement of the current administrator. The County is fiscally strong, with no levy-supported debt and an S&P AA+ bond rating. The County Board and staff are committed to professionalism, innovation, and entrepreneurship in public service. With its mix of urban and rural communities, Stearns County is among the most economically diverse and thriving counties in Minnesota. The area's natural beauty—shaped by lakes, parks, and trails—is complemented by a wide range of recreational and cultural opportunities. Ideally located within two hours of both the Twin Cities and northern lake country, Stearns County offers convenient access to the very best of Minnesota.

Welcome to STEARNS COUNTY



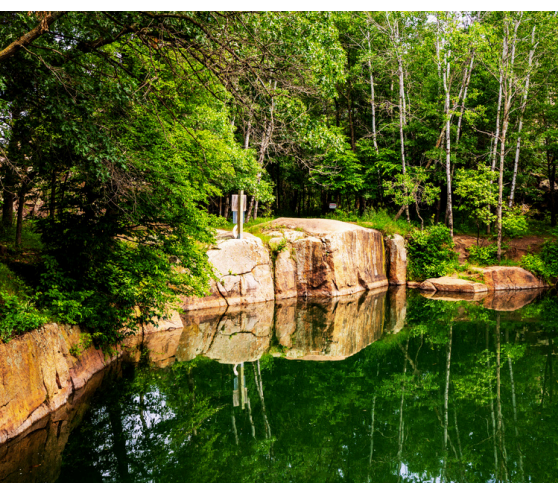
Located in central Minnesota, Stearns County is a dynamic region of 164,000 residents known for its scenic lakes, rolling farmland, and vibrant communities. Positioned along Interstate 94, the county serves as a key commercial and tourism gateway in Central Minnesota, offering convenient access to the Twin Cities alongside the area's natural beauty and relaxed pace of life.



Stearns County is home to 30 cities and 34 townships and is the 7th most populous and 14th largest county in the state. Historically, the county developed through agriculture and dairy production—industries that continue to play a significant role in the local economy. Today, Stearns County has diversified into healthcare, education, retail, service, and manufacturing. In recent years, Stearns County has experienced an influx of new residents, and steady population growth is expected for decades to come.



The county seat and largest city is St. Cloud (pop. 70,000), which serves as the region's cultural and economic center. The city offers a blend of urban amenities and small-city charm, with a revitalized downtown, diverse dining options, and access to the Mississippi River. St. Cloud is also home to St. Cloud State University, one of the largest universities in the state, as well as a regional healthcare system anchored by CentraCare.



Nearby communities include Sartell and Waite Park, both rapidly growing communities that contribute to the area's economic vitality and residential appeal. St. Joseph, home to the College of Saint Benedict and St. John's University, offers a distinctive small-town atmosphere with a strong arts and cultural presence. The county's many smaller towns and rural townships reflect its agricultural roots and close-knit community character.

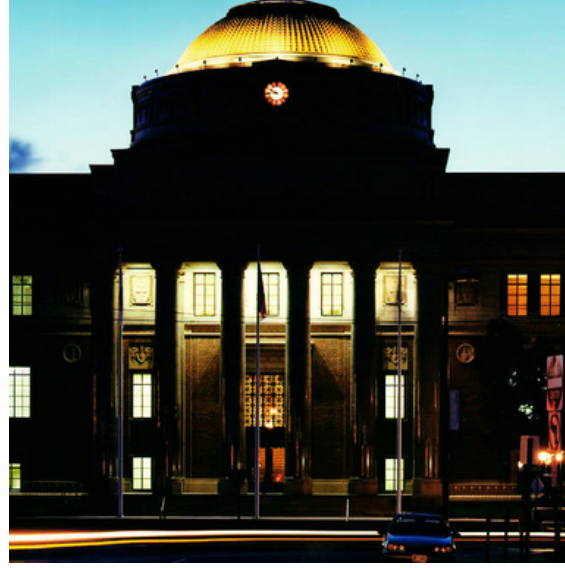
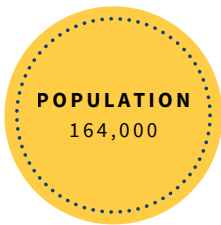
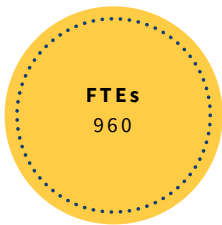
The numerous lakes and rivers in Stearns County support a thriving tourism industry. The Stearns County Parks system is a point of pride, including the popular 757-acre Quarry Park and Nature Preserve, which features unique quarry lakes and opportunities for swimming, rock climbing, cross-country skiing, and even scuba diving.

STEARNS COUNTY

Established in 1855, Stearns County serves a population of 164,000 across 1,390 square miles with a 2026 budget of \$212 million and a team of 960 FTEs across 14 appointed and 3 elected departments. The County is governed by a five-member Board of Commissioners, with one member elected from each of five districts to serve a four-year term. The core mission and primary obligations of the County are:

- Maintain county infrastructure
- Maintain public safety
- Protect the environment
- Protect vulnerable adults and children

Stearns County collaborates with a broad network of intergovernmental partners, including 30 cities, 34 townships, 9 neighboring counties, 13 independent school districts, 5 higher education institutions, 9 state legislators, and 2 members of the U.S. House of Representatives.



View job description at gmp.hr.com

THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Appointed by the Stearns County Board of Commissioners, the County Administrator provides results-oriented leadership for County operations and administers all County Board ordinances, regulations, resolutions, policies, programs, and functions under County jurisdiction. The Administrator oversees service delivery in accordance with state law and policy; serves as chief budget officer and chief staff to the County Board; and fosters an organizational culture that advances the County's vision, mission, strategies, and goals.



IDEAL CANDIDATE TRAITS

- Demonstrated leadership and management skills in local government, preferably at the county level.
- Integrity, honesty, and ethical standards beyond reproach.
- Communication skills that are responsive to the public, commissioners, and staff; actively listens and follows up to resolve issues. Is approachable and accessible while seeking and respecting alternative perspectives.
- Visionary leadership that builds teamwork and fosters positive, sustainable relationships with staff, the board, and county stakeholders.
- Critical thinking and analytical skills, with decisive decision-making abilities and a process-oriented approach to resolving issues.
- Ability to analyze the County's organizational culture and work collaboratively toward positive improvements.
- Facilitation skills that foster partnerships and collaboration, drive issues toward results, and build consensus in a positive way.
- Strategic planning abilities that are pragmatic, forward-thinking, and aligned with stated goals and objectives; implements plans with innovation, efficiency, and effectiveness.
- Budgetary and financial skills that reflect responsible fiscal management, balancing the economic realities of expenditures with the needs of the County Board and residents.
- Experience in forging intergovernmental relationships with cities, townships, neighboring counties, legislators, school districts, and higher education institutions; works cooperatively to address regional issues.
- Embraces new technology and seeks to integrate it with next-generation service delivery systems.
- Skilled in identifying and developing policy issues while supporting the County Board in navigating and implementing challenging policy matters.
- Identifies the values and overall needs of staff and the organization and actively advocates for them. Navigates the needs and dynamics of the County Board with a consistent approach, a positive attitude, and as a resource.
- Leads staff through delegation, fairness, support, clear direction, transparency, teamwork, and accountability.
- Supports, defends, and enforces the distinct roles and responsibilities of staff and the County Board for good governance and effective service delivery.





OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

New Justice Center

The County is about to start construction on a new, \$291 million Justice Center, one of the largest public works projects in recent history. While a construction team is in place, the new Administrator will need to oversee the successful construction and opening of this new judicial facility. Additional planning is needed for repurposing surplus buildings such as the historic courthouse, the law enforcement center, and the jail into a redeveloped downtown campus.

Future Finances and Unfunded Mandates

While the County finances are currently in excellent condition, the caseload for Human Services is growing and remains one of the major cost drivers for all county governments. Federal and state assistance has not kept pace with this caseload growth, and continued unfunded mandates are adding to the fiscal pressures. In addition, the state-county information technology management system is significantly antiquated with upgrades behind schedule. Economic growth has enabled the county to maintain stable tax levy amounts but future demands for services and replacing infrastructure will be a challenge.

New Strategic and Comprehensive Plans

The County has initiated a new long-range strategic plan focused on four themes of culture, campus, financial, and connectivity. In addition, the County recently completed an update to the Comprehensive Plan. The new Administrator will be responsible for leading the organization through the next phases of each document and overseeing their respective implementation.

Administration Department Reorganization

The County Board recently approved the addition of a second Deputy County Administrator position. The new Administrator will have the opportunity to fill this position and re-organize the department for increased efficiency.

Analysis of Organizational Culture

As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, the County recently completed the 2026 Employee Engagement Survey. This tool provides a countywide snapshot of employee engagement and experience. Overall results demonstrate positive movement since 2023, with notable gains in engagement and retention indicators. Several themes identify opportunities in areas that influence long-term performance and engagement. The new Administrator will be responsible for working with staff to develop workplans that focus on resources, leadership direction and communication, and employee value and growth.

EDUCATION & EXPERIENCE

- Master's Degree or higher in public administration, business administration or related field.
- 6 or more years of progressive public sector administrative and managerial experience in a county, city or state government agency.
- Five years of supervisory experience managing professional staff.
- Demonstrated knowledge of Minnesota governmental structures, systems, statutes and practices.
- Governmental budget preparation experience.

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

Stearns County offers an annual salary range of \$178,424 to \$261,871, based on qualifications and experience, along with a comprehensive [benefits](#) package. The 2027 salary range is \$187,345 to \$274,965.

- Family and Individual Health, Life, and Dental Insurance Plans
- 11 Paid Holidays with Christmas Eve when applicable
- Paid Time Off
- Wellness Days
- Long- and Short-Term Disability Insurance
- Minnesota PERA Retirement Plan
- Deferred Compensation Match Program based on employee longevity
- Flexible Spending Accounts
- Health Savings Accounts



RESOURCES

[Executive Summary Budget 2026](#)

[2026 Budget Presentation](#)

[Org Chart 2026](#)

[Strategic Plan 2026-2028](#)

[Comprehensive Plan](#)

[Mission & Values](#)

[County Newsletters](#)



TO APPLY

Apply Online: gmphr.com

First Review: **June 7, 2026**

More Info: Jeff Weldon, GMP Consultants
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