

# Minnesota Association of Townships



## Township Government: Square One

Teacher-Student DVD Workbook

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**MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIPS**  
*'Grassroots Government of Minnesota'*

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2007

Dear Educator:

As you teach your students about the world in which they live and grow, you help students understand the roles and rights they have as American and Minnesotan citizens. We feel that it's very important for them to develop these understandings as they grow into tomorrow's leaders.

We'd like to encourage you to take your students one step further by exploring township government. Students will learn about the grassroots impact of government for the people, by the people.

We invite you and your students to explore township government through the use of our educational activities and DVD. We have enclosed a complimentary copy of our latest DVD, *Township Government: Square One*, and an activity booklet for your use. The DVD has been updated to better reach students at the middle and high school levels.

The Minnesota Association of Townships understands the determination that Minnesota's teachers and students have towards meeting our state standards. According to the current Minnesota State Social Studies Standards, township government education may help students meet goals in the following areas:

**Minnesota History (II. G. 4.) *Post-World War II to the Present***

Students will identify and describe significant land use changes in Minnesota, issues related to land use, and analyze the impact of those changes and issues.

**Government and Citizenship (VII. A.) *Civic Values, Skills, Rights and Responsibilities***

The student will understand the importance of participation in civic life and demonstrate effective civic skills.

**Government and Citizenship (VII. B.) *Beliefs and Principles of United States Democracy***

Students will know the purpose, function and limits of our republic. The student will know symbols, songs, traditions, and landmarks/monuments that represent the beliefs and principles of the United States.

**Government and Citizenship (VII. D.) *Governmental Institutions and Processes of the United States***

The students will know the functions of Minnesota state and local governments and describe their relationship with the federal government.

Please make use of this perfect opportunity to introduce your students to Minnesota's grassroots township government. We would appreciate the comments from you and your students regarding our DVD and Teacher-Student Workbook.

If you have any questions about this program or about townships in general, give us a call at 763-497-2330 or visit our website at [www.mntownships.org](http://www.mntownships.org).

Sincerely,  
David Fricke, Executive Director

# TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT: SQUARE ONE

## TEACHER INFORMATION:

**Purpose:** To teach students in Minnesota about the local ‘Grassroots Government of Minnesota,’ township government. Materials in this packet may be reproduced for instructional purposes only.

## Materials:

- ✓ DVD: *Township Government: Square One.*
- ✓ Background Vocabulary Worksheet and Definition Sheet
- ✓ DVD Questions Sheets (fill-in-the-blank and multiple choice) w/answers
- ✓ Blank Minnesota map of counties
- ✓ Listing of number of townships per county
- ✓ Role Play script of a Mock Meeting (*currently being developed*)
- ✓ Any additional information supplied by your local township officers

## Suggested activities to accompany the DVD:

1. Have students answer background questions on a sheet of paper. \*You may want to use the KWL (what students know, what they would like to learn, and what they learned) strategy.
2. If you have already been studying government, you may want to review the hierarchy of levels of government with your students. If not, you should discuss this with your students before showing the DVD.
3. Prepare students for the DVD by introducing the important vocabulary words which appear in the DVD.
4. Have students watch the DVD and answer the DVD questions in the process. \*You may want to stop the DVD periodically to discuss the questions because the information comes fast.
5. Discuss your local township government information. \*You may wish to have a township official or supervisor come in to speak to your students and answer questions. Students may write a letter to a local public official to learn about current local issues.
6. Have the students role-play a board meeting or create your own classroom board. Discuss the role of your school’s school board, city council, or student council. Watch a recent taping of the above.
7. For a math connection, have students create a graph of the number of townships per county.

# TOWNSHIPS

## GRASSROOTS GOVERNMENT OF MINNESOTA

### IMPORTANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

#### VOCABULARY

annexation	legislature
annual	rural
board	suburban
chairperson	supervisor
clerk	surveying
cooperative	taxes
county	territory
democracy	town
government	treasurer
grassroots	urban

#### LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

- United States of America
  - state – Minnesota
    - county
      - local
        - city
        - township

#### BACKGROUND QUESTIONS:

1. What (country, state, county, city/town) do you live in?
2. How do you figure out which state, county, city/town you live in, using a map?
3. Do you live in a rural, suburban, or urban area?
4. What township/city do you live in?
5. Who is in charge of your local government?

#### THE DVD WILL HELP STUDENTS FIND OUT:

- I. History of townships
  - a. What a township is
  - b. How a township works
- II. Why townships are important
- III. How townships fit in today
  - a. Minnesota Association of Townships
  - b. Today's issues
  - c. Newest township
  - d. Annexation
  - e. Environmental concerns
  - f. Working together
  - g. Signs for future
  - h. Public safety

# TOWNSHIPS

## GRASSROOTS GOVERNMENT OF MINNESOTA

### VOCABULARY

1. \_\_\_\_\_ annexation
2. \_\_\_\_\_ annual
3. \_\_\_\_\_ board
4. \_\_\_\_\_ chairperson
5. \_\_\_\_\_ clerk
6. \_\_\_\_\_ cooperative
7. \_\_\_\_\_ county
8. \_\_\_\_\_ democracy
9. \_\_\_\_\_ government
10. \_\_\_\_\_ grassroots
11. \_\_\_\_\_ legislature
12. \_\_\_\_\_ rural
13. \_\_\_\_\_ suburban
14. \_\_\_\_\_ supervisor
15. \_\_\_\_\_ surveying
16. \_\_\_\_\_ taxes
17. \_\_\_\_\_ territory
18. \_\_\_\_\_ town
19. \_\_\_\_\_ treasurer
20. \_\_\_\_\_ urban



- a. something owned together and operated for mutual benefit
- b. administrative subdivision of a state
- c. an organized body of administrators
- d. the elected people (senators/representatives) who make the laws
- e. something that happens every year
- f. the exercise of authority over; a system of ruling, political administration
- g. to determine the boundaries of land by measuring distances
- h. an area of land (part of the US, not admitted as a state)
- i. person in charge of a meeting, committee, etc.
- j. required payments of a percentage of income, property value, etc. for the support of a government
- k. of, like, or living in the country
- l. an official who keeps the records
- m. living in a community outlying a larger city
- n. a civil and political division of a state, exercising powers of local self-government (often synonymous with the term 'township')
- o. the act of attaching, adding, joining, or uniting one thing to another
- p. one in charge of the funds or revenues, money
- q. an elected officer on a town board responsible for financial decisions for the township for the good of its people (on a three or five person board of supervisors)
- r. of, in, or constituting a relatively densely populated and developed city
- s. the common people
- t. government by the people, directly or through representatives

**TOWNSHIPS**  
**GRASSROOTS GOVERNMENT OF MINNESOTA**

**VOCABULARY DEFINITIONS:**

**ANNEXATION** - the act of attaching, adding, joining, or uniting one thing to another

**ANNUAL** – something that happens every year

**BOARD** – an organized body of administrators

**CHAIRPERSON** - person in charge of a meeting, committee, etc.

**CLERK** - an official who keeps the records

**COOPERATIVE** – something owned together and operated for mutual benefit

**COUNTY** – administrative subdivision of a state

**DEMOCRACY** - government by the people, directly or through representatives

**GOVERNMENT** - the exercise of authority over; a system of ruling, political administration

**GRASSROOTS** - the common people

**LEGISLATURE** – the elected people (senators/representatives) who make the laws

**RURAL** - of, like, or living in the country

**SUBURBAN** – living in a community outlying a larger city

**SUPERVISOR** – an elected officer on a town board responsible for financial decisions for the township for the good of its people (on a three or five person board of supervisors)

**SURVEYING** – to determine the boundaries of land by measuring distances

**TAXES** – required payments of a percentage of income, property value, etc. for the support of a government

**TERRITORY** - an area of land (part of the US, not admitted as a state)

**TOWN** - a civil and political division of a state, exercising powers of local self-government (often synonymous with the term ‘township’)

**TREASURER** - one in charge of the funds or revenues, money

**URBAN** - of, in, or constituting a relatively densely populated and developed city

# TOWNSHIPS

## GRASSROOTS GOVERNMENT OF MINNESOTA

### DVD Questions

Fill in the Blank (*DVD Chapters noted*):

1. Government in Minnesota (CH 1):
  - a. How many states are there in the United States? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. How many counties are there in Minnesota? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. How many cities are there in Minnesota? \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. How many townships are there in Minnesota? \_\_\_\_\_

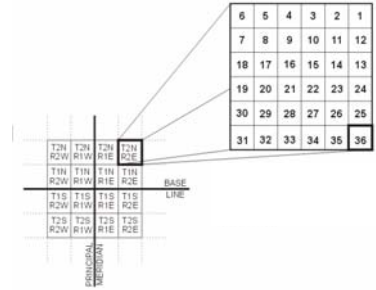


2. Township Day in Minnesota is the 2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_. (CH 1)  
*day* *month*
3. On Township Day, what two events occur? \_\_\_\_\_(CH 1)
4. The first townships were part of a federal law in 1787 called: \_\_\_\_\_ (CH 2)
5. The original townships were divided by an invisible line into square sections. These square sections were \_\_\_\_\_miles by \_\_\_\_\_ miles. (CH 2)

\_\_\_\_\_ miles long

= \_\_\_\_\_ square miles

\_\_\_\_\_ miles wide



6. Minnesota became a territory in \_\_\_\_\_. (CH 2)  
*year*
7. Each township elects at least five officers. There are three positions to be held in each township. Name the three positions the officers hold. Discuss the role of each position (CH 2) (vocab)
  1. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. \_\_\_\_\_
  3. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Townships are responsible for the maintenance of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. (CH 3)
9. How can small and large townships help each other? (CH 3)  
 \_\_\_\_\_



10. What is the Minnesota Association of Townships, and what does it do for township governments? (CH 4)

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11. What are some issues which townships deal with today? (CH 5)

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12. What is annexation and how does it impact townships? (CH 7)

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13. How might the increase in population in an area lead to environmental concerns for townships? (CH 8)

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14. How is working together an essential part of local government? (CH 9)

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15. How is modern technology impacting local governments? (CH 10)

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16. How do concerns about public safety impact local government? (CH 11)

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17. About how many people are served by township government in Minnesota? (CH 12)

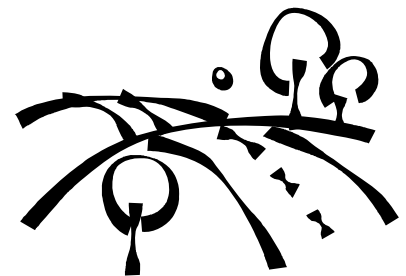
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## Multiple Choice (*DVD Chapters noted*)

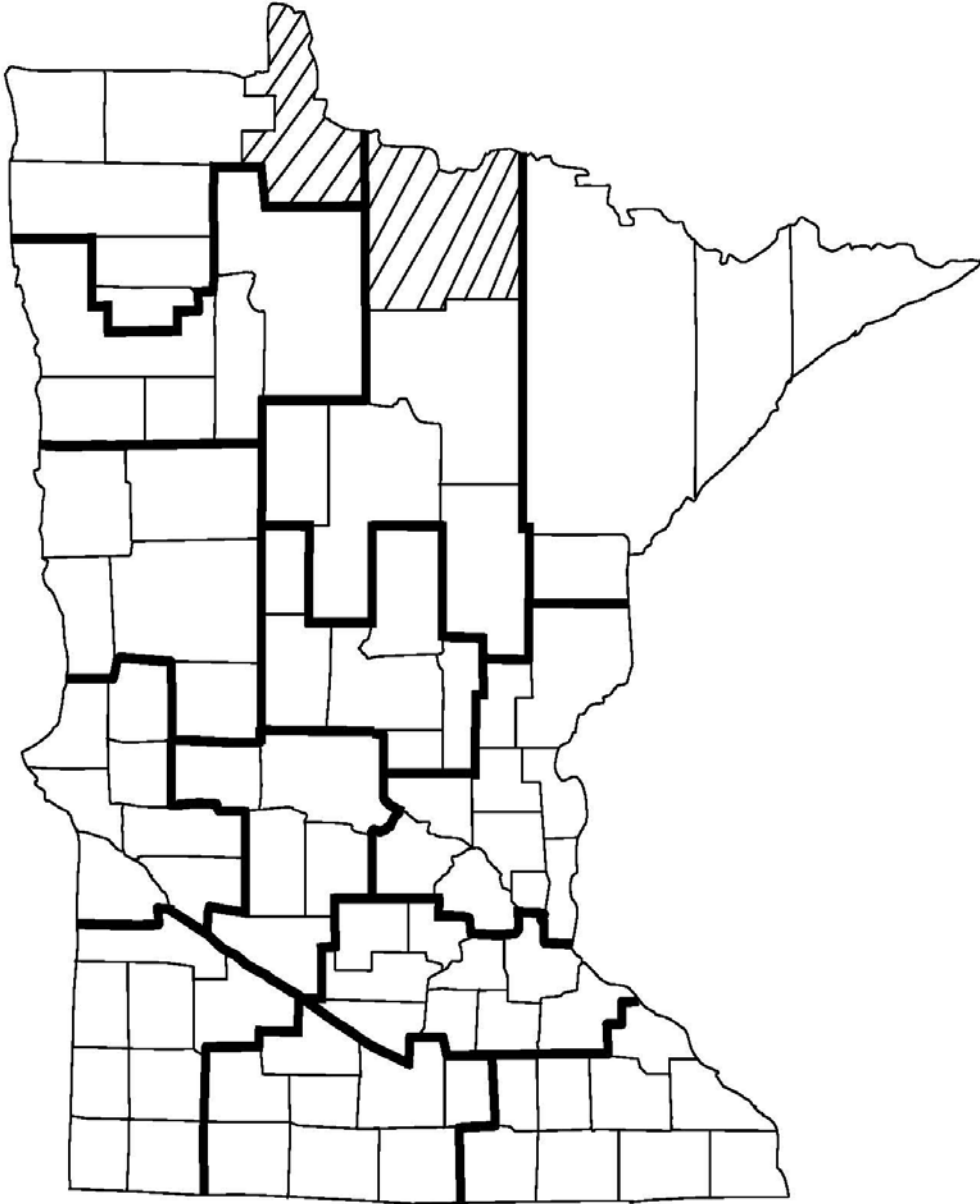
1. At a Township Annual Meeting, residents: (CH 1)
  - a. set the amount of property taxes they will pay to the township.
  - b. give the town board the authority to do certain things
  - c. have the right to speak
  - d. all of the above
  
2. How did the land that is now Minnesota become part of the United States? (CH 2)
  - a. treaty
  - b. purchase
  - c. gift
  
3. An area of land one mile by one mile is called \_\_\_\_\_. (CH 2)
  - a. an acre
  - b. a section
  - c. a plat
  
4. What federal law regulated the surveying of new territories? (CH 2)
  - a. Articles of Confederation
  - b. Constitution
  - c. Northwest Ordinance and 1785 Land Ordinance
  
5. From what country did Americans take the idea of town government? (CH 2)
  - a. France
  - b. England
  - c. Spain
  
6. When did Minnesota become a state? (CH 3, same as oldest township)
  - a. 1847
  - b. 1858
  - c. 1869
  
7. The township road system provides access to other road systems to: (CH 3)
  - a. deliver crops to markets
  - b. deliver logs to saw and paper mills
  - c. provide access to lake properties
  - d. all of the above



8. Townships may provide which services to their property owners? (CH 3)
- a. police and fire protection
  - b. water and sewers
  - c. land use planning
  - d. zoning
  - e. paved roads
  - f. parks
  - g. cemeteries
  - h. public buildings
  - i. all of the above
9. Townships also have differences. What is the biggest difference today between one township and another? (CH 3)
- a. The number of lakes and rivers
  - b. The size and population
  - c. The number of parks and roads to take care of
10. Local township, county and city officials are represented by statewide organizations. Township officials are represented by the: (CH 4)
1. Minnesota Towns Association
  2. Greater Association of Minnesota Towns
  3. Minnesota Association of Townships
11. The purpose of this organization is: (CH 4)
- a. to provide training to township officials
  - b. to provide educational materials
  - c. to be a voice for township government at the state and national level
  - d. all of the above



**Township Government: Square One**  
**Fill in county names...**



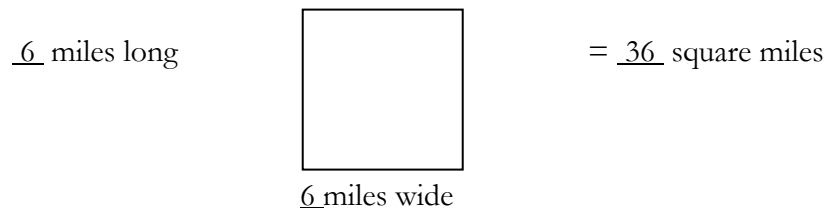
# TOWNSHIPS

## GRASSROOTS GOVERNMENT OF MINNESOTA

### DVD Questions - Answers

#### Fill in the Blank:

- Government in Minnesota
  - How many states are there in the United States? 50
  - How many counties are there in Minnesota? 87
  - How many cities are there in Minnesota? 854
  - How many townships are there in Minnesota? 1788, or nearly 1800
- Township Day in Minnesota is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday in March.  
*day month*
- On Township Day, what two events occur? 1. Township Elections and 2. Annual Meeting
- The first townships were part of a federal law in 1787 called: The Northwest Ordinance.
- The original townships were divided by an invisible line into square sections. These square sections were 6 miles by 6 miles.



- Minnesota became a territory in 1849.  
*year*
- Each township elects at least five officers. There are three positions to be held in each township. Name the three positions the officers hold. Discuss the role of each position
  - Supervisor/Chair – an elected officer on a town board; chair runs meeting
  - Clerk – an official who keeps the records
  - Treasurer – one in charge of a treasury (the funds or revenues)
- Townships are responsible for the maintenance of roads and bridges.
- How can small and large townships help each other?  
Work together to provide services like fire and public services (cooperatives)

10. What is the Minnesota Association of Townships, and what does it do for township governments? (CH 4)  
Non-profit organization consisting of 13 districts with a district director from each to serve on the Board of Directors. MAT publishes a newspaper, maintains a website, conducts training, has an insurance trust to benefit townships and lobbies at the legislature.
11. What are some issues which townships deal with today? (CH 5)  
Environment, Land Use and Planning, Public Safety, Annexation
12. What is annexation and how does it impact townships? (CH 7)  
The act of attaching, adding, joining, or uniting one thing to another. Most often cities annex portions of townships changing their size and population.
13. How might the increase in population in an area lead to environmental concerns for townships? (CH 8)  
Overpopulation may lead to problems with wastewater, stormwater, wetlands, feedlots – air quality
14. How is working together an essential part of local government? (CH 9)  
Smaller and larger township as well as townships and cities are able to share resources and services. They are also able to come to agreements about annexation and land use issues.
15. How is modern technology impacting local governments? (CH 10)  
New signs, share voting equipment
16. How do concerns about public safety impact local government? (CH 11)  
Police and fire, maintenance of public property
17. About how many people are served by township government in Minnesota? (CH 12)  
Over 900,000

## Multiple Choice:

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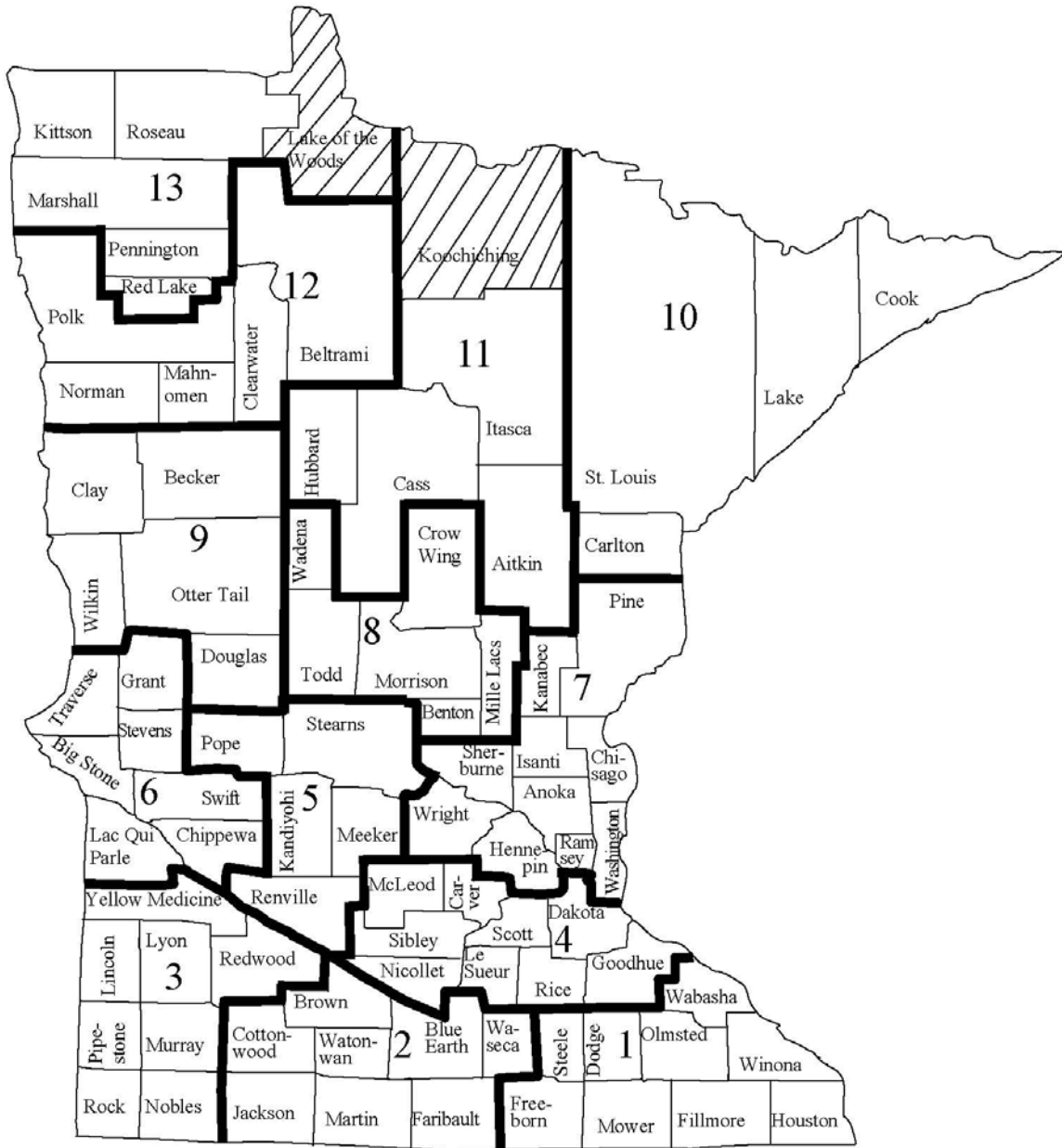
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# Township Government: Square One

County names filled in.

Bold lines outline 13 MAT districts

Two shaded counties on top indicate unorganized areas (no townships in these counties)



*Minnesota Association of Townships*



Number of Townships in Each County  
As of January 2007

County	Twps	County	Twps	County	Twps
Aitkin	40	Isanti	13	Polk	58
Anoka	2	Itasca	42	Pope	20
Becker	37	Jackson	20	Ramsey	1
Beltrami	42	Kanabec	15	Red Lake	13
Benton	12	Kandiyohi	24	Redwood	26
Big Stone	14	Kittson	26	Renville	27
Blue Earth	23	Lac Qui Parle	22	Rice	14
Brown	16	Lake	5	Rock	12
Carlton	19	Le Sueur	14	Roseau	33
Carver	10	Lincoln	15	St. Louis	73
Cass	50	Lyon	20	Scott	11
Chippewa	16	McLeod	14	Sherburne	10
Chisago	10	Mahnomen	16	Sibley	17
Clay	30	Marshall	48	Stearns	34
Clearwater	22	Martin	20	Steele	13
Cook	3	Meeker	17	Stevens	16
Cottonwood	18	Mille Lacs	17	Swift	21
Crow Wing	28	Morrison	30	Todd	28
Dakota	13	Mower	20	Traverse	15
Dodge	12	Murray	20	Wabasha	17
Douglas	20	Nicollet	13	Wadena	15
Faribault	20	Nobles	20	Waseca	12
Fillmore	23	Norman	24	Washington	6
Freeborn	20	Olmsted	18	Watonwan	12
Goodhue	21	Otter Tail, East	31	Wilkin	22
Grant	16	Otter Tail, West	31	Winona	19
Hennepin	1	Pennington	21	Wright	18
Houston	17	Pine	33	Yellow Medicine	21
Hubbard	28	Pipestone	12		

Total Number of Townships in Minnesota  
1,788

Township Government: Square One

