



# Saint Louis County

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **County Board chooses Arrowhead Center to manage Camp Esquagama**

Camp Esquagama in Biwabik, a St. Louis County tradition for 77 years, will continue as a summer youth camp, but beginning soon it will be under the management of Arrowhead Center of Virginia. The St. Louis County Board voted 4 to 3 today to direct County Administration to negotiate a long term contract with Arrowhead Center. Arrowhead Center's executive director is Roy Connaughton, who also leads the Connaughton Group, which has managed the camp on an interim basis for the last two years. A proposal by the Duluth Area YMCA also was considered.

The summer camp originally was held in trust by the County on behalf of residents and 4-H participants, but now is owned by the County. The County has historically subsidized camp operations and has provided most of the capital for facility improvements. Earlier this fall, St. Louis County issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) offering the opportunity for interested parties to submit proposals to "provide a viable arrangement for strategic leadership, property management and operation/administration services that would provide for the financially sustainable and self-sufficient operation of vibrant, high-value youth, adult, and community camping and recreation programming on the Camp Esquagama property."

As part of its proposal, Arrowhead Center indicated its top priority would be to maintain a successful summer youth camp, but it hopes to expand programming into year-round opportunities. Additionally, it seeks to eventually develop and operate a residential treatment program elsewhere on camp property. Arrowhead's proposal calls for a \$2.1 million investment from the County over the next five years. Of that, \$1.2 million would be in capital improvements; the remaining would be an operating subsidy.

County Administration will now work with Arrowhead Center to finalize terms of a property management and operations contract. Today's decision allows Arrowhead Center to move forward

with marketing and programming efforts for the 2013 camping season.

The St. Louis County Board consists of seven commissioners, representing the 200,000 citizens who live within the County's 7,000-square-mile boundaries. For more information about the County, commissioners or their meeting schedule, visit [stlouiscountymn.gov](http://stlouiscountymn.gov) or call (218) 726-2450.

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