

MEDIA ALERT

“Stock the Shelves” event partners rise to occasion to respond to emergency facing northern Minnesota food shelves

Senator Tom Bakk's 12th annual event raised over \$220,000 to alleviate food insecurity

(St. Paul, Minn.) – Minnesota Senate DFL Leader Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook) hosted the 12th Annual Stock the Shelves event Monday night, where attendees raised over \$220,000 for Arrowhead regional food shelves and the Cook Emergency Challenge. The generous donations will alleviate looming food insecurity for thousands of northern Minnesota families.

“Hunger and food instability affect every region of Minnesota,” Bakk said. “I am grateful to the sponsors who have helped stock the shelves in my home area, which faces some of the highest unemployment in the state. I encourage those who are able, to give back to their community this holiday season.”

At this year’s event, Senator Bakk introduced the Cook Emergency Challenge. Cook, Minnesota and surrounding communities were dealt a blow just before Thanksgiving when a fire at Zup’s Food Market left the community without its lone grocery store. The loss of this store makes it more difficult for low-income residents to purchase food.

Bakk continued, “We’re excited to partner with the local food shelves and community to respond to the need. The Iron Range town will struggle to meet its food needs this winter after the devastating fire of the only full-service grocery store in nearly 30 miles.”

The Cook Emergency Challenge will provide temporary emergency food access resources, including increased capacity of Cook Community Food Shelves, access to a mobile food shelf, community-based services to provide rides and shopping services, and more. A portion of the dollars dedicated to the Cook Emergency Challenge come from the Minnesota Food Shelf Program, which distributes food to nearly 300 food shelves throughout the state. These local food shelves provide food to individuals and families suffering from hunger as they work to become economically self-sufficient. To contribute to the Cook Emergency Challenge today, visit <http://bit.ly/Cook-Challenge>.

“When a grocery store disappears from a community like Cook, the community needs to rally together to make sure everyone has access to healthy food, and we have certainly seen that here,” said Colleen Moriarty, executive director at Hunger Solutions Minnesota. “We have worked with the Department of Human Services for years on the Minnesota Food Shelf Program grant. Our partnership is responsive and nimble in being able to help local food shelves steps up and help fill the gap for low-income residents and seniors in the community.”

The "Stock the Shelves" event began eleven years ago when Iron Range food shelves were having trouble keeping their shelves stocked into the holiday season. Today, unemployment is still higher in the Arrowhead than across the state. This means many families are stretched to the limit and relying on food shelves to eat.

According to Paul Carlson, Executive Director at the AEOA, “It’s great to see the larger Minnesota community rally around the community as they figure out solutions to meet the needs of the community that was effected by the loss of the only grocery store in Cook. Thank you Senator Bakk for continuing to be a champion for Iron Range communities.”

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Cook Emergency Challenge sponsors include Thomson Reuters, Ameriprise Financial, Twin Metals Minnesota, and Delta Dental of Minnesota.

Donate Online: <http://bit.ly/Cook-Challenge>

WHO:

Minnesota State Senator Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook)
Colleen Moriarty, Executive Director, Hunger Solutions
Paul Carlson, Executive Director, AEOA
Arrowhead Regional Food Shelves

NICK MORGAN

weberjohnsonpa.com | @weberjohnsonpa
952-334-9941 cell | @nickmorgan73

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