

Special Section Commemorating Minnesota's State Emblems



In 2023, the Minnesota Legislature passed a law creating the State Emblem Redesign Commission. Under the law, the Commission was tasked with developing and adopting a new design for the official state seal and a new design for the official state flag that, "accurately and respectfully reflect Minnesota's shared history, resources, and diverse cultural communities." The Commission was provided a deadline of January 1, 2024 to certify its adopted designs in a report to the legislature and governor that describes the symbols and other meanings incorporated in the design.

Descriptions of the symbolism for the state seal and flag are available in Chapter 1.

The Great Seal of the State of Minnesota



State Flag



Special Message

Design can tell stories, shape identities, and unite communities. As a designer and Chair of the State Emblems Redesign Commission, I led a dedicated group of commissioners in a process that reimagined symbols representing all Minnesotans.

Redesigning the state flag and seal was more than a creative challenge—it was a profound responsibility. Thousands of voices contributed to this effort, ensuring our new emblems reflect Minnesota’s diverse cultures, histories, and aspirations. From the initial call for submissions to the final selection, every step was guided by a commitment to inclusivity, clarity, and meaning.

This project reaffirmed my belief that design is a powerful tool for civic engagement. Working alongside my fellow commissioners, community members, flag designer Andrew Prekker, and seal designer Ross Bruggink, we envisioned creating symbols that future generations will proudly stand behind.

As we turn the page on a new era for Minnesota’s identity, I hope these emblems inspire unity, pride, and a deeper appreciation for the state’s evolving story.

— José Luis Fitch Jiménez
Chair, Minnesota State Emblem Redesign Commission



As Chair Fitch wrote, design can tell stories.

Our state emblems tell a story of our state and its people. The original flag and seal told a story from a single perspective, ignoring the viewpoints of many others. It was time for Minnesota’s emblems to tell a new story, one of unity and inclusion instead of conquest and division.

As an historian, I am grateful for the opportunity to assist in the redesign of our state flag and seal. The redesign process was not always easy, but it was necessary. It prompted Minnesotans to consider our collective identity: who we were, who we are, and who we aspire to be. It sparked thoughtful conversations about the meaning and significance of our emblems and how they can best reflect our values. The process also required a better understanding of our state’s history and reevaluating how our flag and seal depict that history.

With significant public input, the Commission created new designs that accurately and meaningfully tell Minnesota’s story. We were particularly inspired by the broad support for the inclusion of the North Star on both the flag and seal. Minnesota is, after all, the North Star State. The North Star serves as a guiding light in the darkness—a powerful, aspirational symbol that reflects the spirit of Minnesota and one that reminds us of the bright future we will create together.

— Dr. Anita Talsma Gaul
Vice-Chair, State Emblems Redesign Commission
(with thanks to David Kelliher, Minnesota Historical Society)

State Emblem Redesign Commission

Members of the Commission (voting members) and Appointing Authority

Luis Fitch, <i>Chair</i>	Minnesota Council on Latino Affairs
Dr. Anita Gaul, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Governor – Member of the Public
Dr. Kate Beane	Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board (CAAPB)
Shelley Buck	Governor – Member of the Public
Michael Harralson	Governor – Member of the Public
Kim Jackson	Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans
President Robert Larsen	Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) – Dakota Community
Denise Mazone	Council on Minnesotans of African Heritage
Lauren Bennett McGinty	Explore Minnesota
Philip McKenzie	Minnesota State Arts Board
Secretary Steve Simon	Minnesota Secretary of State
Kent Whitworth	Minnesota Historical Society
Aaron Wittnebel	Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) – Ojibwe Community

Ex Officio, Nonvoting Members

- Senator Steve Drazkowski, Minnesota Senate – Member of the Minority
- Representative Mike Freiberg, Minnesota House of Representatives – Member of the Majority
- Senator Mary Kunesch, Minnesota Senate – Member of the Majority
- Representative Bjorn Olson, Minnesota House of Representatives – Member of the Minority



Seal Finalists

The State Emblem Redesign Commission invited the public to submit design ideas for the new seal. A total of 399 submissions were received by the commission, which were narrowed down to the five finalists below before the final design was selected for refinement.

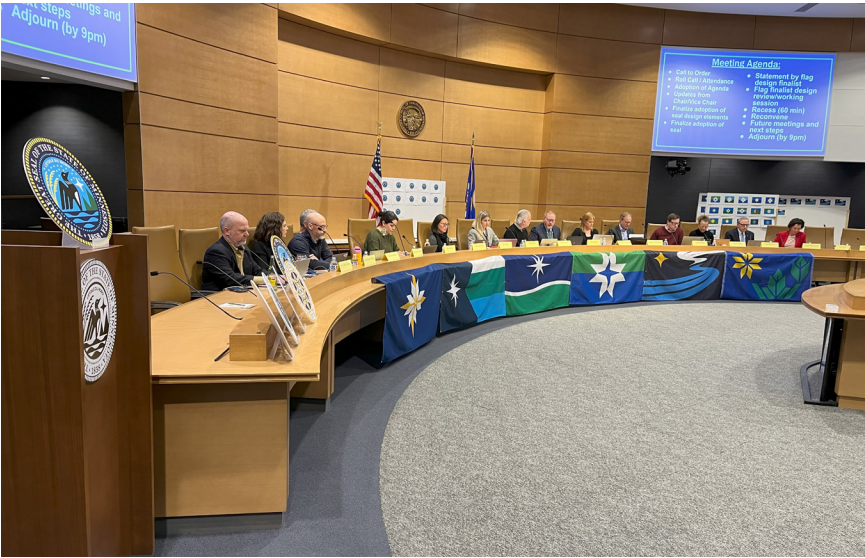


Flag Finalists

The State Emblem Redesign Commission invited the public to submit design ideas for the new flag. A total of 2,128 submissions were received by the commission, which were narrowed down to the six finalists below before the final design was selected for refinement.



December 10, 2023
State flag finalists are displayed at the Mall of America.
Photo Courtesy: Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, Cassandra Knudson



December 12, 2023
 The State Emblems Redesign Commission approved the final seal design, heard statements from those who submitted the final flag designs for consideration, and selected three flag designs to move forward for consideration.
Photo Courtesy: Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, Cassandra Knudson



December 19, 2023
 The State Emblems Redesign Commission adopted the final design for the new state flag.
Photo Courtesy: Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, Cassandra Knudson



May 11, 2024
 The Minnesota National Guard Color Guard folded and preserved the outgoing state flag at a sunrise ceremony.
Photo Courtesy: The Minnesota Historical Society, Francis Sampah



May 11, 2024
 The final historic flag to fly over the Minnesota Capitol Building was presented to the Minnesota Historical Society for preservation.
Photo Courtesy: The Minnesota Historical Society, Francis Sampah



May 11, 2024
 The incoming Minnesota State Flag rising above the Minnesota Capitol Building for the first time.
Photo Courtesy: Tom Olmscheid



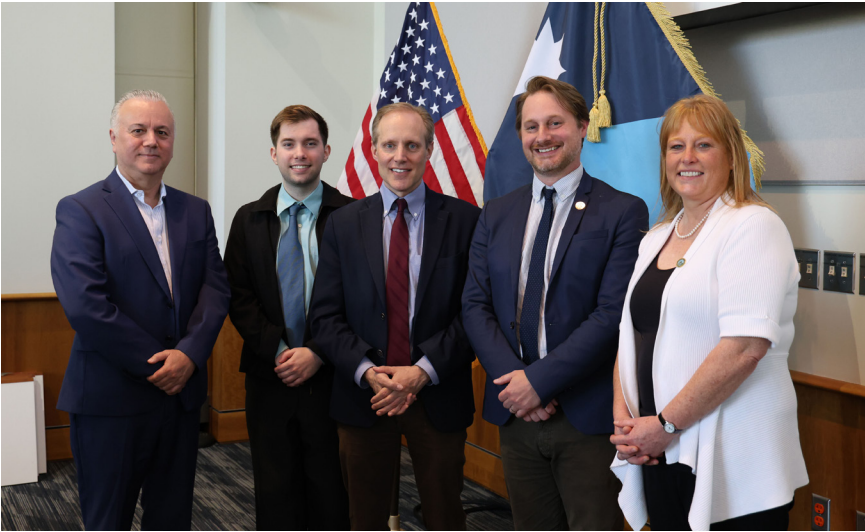
May 13, 2024
 The Minnesota State Flag flies above the Minnesota Capitol Building.
Photo Copyright Minnesota House of Representatives. Photo Andrew VonBank



May 11, 2024
Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon signs the proclamation for Minnesota Statehood Day.
Photo Courtesy: Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, Amanda Scheid



May 11, 2024
Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon unveils the new state seal at a ceremony on statehood day.
Photo Courtesy: Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, Amanda Scheid



May 11, 2024

Minnesota Secretary of State Steve Simon presented the chair and vice-chair of the State Emblems Commission, along with the original designers of the Minnesota State Seal and Flag with the National Association of Secretaries of State Medallion Award at a ceremony on statehood day.

Photographed (left to right): Luis Fitch, Committee Chair; Andrew Prekker, Flag Designer; Secretary Simon, Ross Bruggink, Seal Designer; Dr. Anita Gaul, Committee Vice-Chair.

Photo Courtesy: Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, Amanda Scheid



May 20, 2024

Governor Tim Walz signs the first bill with the new state flag behind him and while wearing a pin featuring the flag's likeness.

Photo Courtesy: Office of Governor Tim Walz & Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan



December 5, 2024

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture choose to decorate the Capitol Christmas Tree using the new state flag and its colors as the theme.

Photo Courtesy: Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, Amanda Scheid



December 5, 2024

Miniature Minnesota state flags decorate the Capitol Christmas Tree.

Photo Courtesy: Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, Amanda Scheid