

Polk County Newsletter

Fall 2011

Market Value Credits issue compounds budgeting

When the residential Homestead Market Value Credits program was eliminated as a part of Minnesota's budget-balancing legislation, Polk County homeowners inherited the liability of having to make up for the loss of an expected \$1.3 million payment from the state that would have reduced their property tax bills.

While the new tax law saved the state \$56 million, it transferred that cost directly on to homeowners around the state. Polk County's share would have been the \$1.3 million.

Counties have the duty of preparing and sending out the property tax statements and then of dispersing the collected dollars to the individual local governments... the cities, school districts, townships, watersheds and other local government operations including the county.

Misdirected heat

Without the Market Value Credits payment from the state, those local government units could be in line to take heat for increases in the bottom line of tax state-

ments even though they have held their budgets in check.

There is some good news for Homestead residential property owners, though, in that the "value exclusion" provision of the new tax law will generally shield them from a big tax hike. The exclusion provides for a reduction in the taxable market value of the home. That valuation amount is used in the tax calculation.

Offset for homeowners

This valuation reduction could make up for the loss of the Market Value Credit money for many homeowners and reduce the effect for others.

Left to shoulder the brunt of the effect of the lost revenue will be the owners of properties that fall under all tax classifications other than "residential Homestead" properties and the lands in the Ag Homestead category, which was not affected.

"Non-homestead" ag lands are likely to take the biggest hit. Some of that is, of course, because of valuation increases brought on by skyrocketing land sale

prices.

In developing its budget for 2012, the Polk County Board has approved a 1.5 percent increase in the tax levy. The amount of money generated by that levy increase — about \$283,000 — will pay for most of the expected normal increases in the cost of doing business. County reserves will be tapped to pay for some other capital improvement projects.

Significant increases

"The effect of the lost market value credits payment from the state," County Board Chair Warren Affeldt says, "could mean a fairly significant increase in property tax bills for the owners of non-homestead ag lands and commercial and industrial properties.

"We have county reserves and have used them to pay for some major capital expenses in the past... and we will do some of that again, but to expand the practice of dipping into reserves as a way to pay for

See **BUDGETING**, Page 2



A loaded sugarbeet truck is weighed on the Transfer Station scale

Overweight truck issue to be subject at conference

Polk County Engineer Richard Sanders will lead a panel presentation on the road damage that is being caused by overweight trucks at the Association of Minnesota Counties annual conference in Minneapolis in December.

Other panel members will include area county engineers David Overbo of Clay County, Mick Alm of Norman County and Kelly Bengtson of Kittson County.

See **OVERWEIGHT**, Page 2

Polk County's total property valuation tops \$3.4 billion

As determined by the Polk County director of assessment services for the purpose of assessing property taxes that will be payable in 2012, the valuation of real estate in the county now totals \$3,430,389,900.

This new total amount of valuation represents an increase of \$95,275,600 over 2011, or about 2.9%.

Of the new total valuation amount:

- 48% is for tillable agricultural lands.
- 6.1% is for all other agricultural property.
- 29.7% is for residential properties.
- 5.5% is for seasonal recreational properties.
- 3.7% is for commercial properties.
- 1.6% is for industrial properties.
- 3.9% is for building sites (rural homes and garages on 1 acre).
- 1.5% is for "all other" property classifications.

New construction accounted for \$17,877,900 of the total valuation increase. The balance of the increase is the result of the re-valuation of existing properties.

Note — The valuations total does not take into account railroad or utility values.

The figures above are based on the 2011 Spring Mini Abstract. Last year's figures were based on the 2010 Fall Mini Abstract. The 2011 Fall Mini Abstract is not yet available due to programming for the special session changes.

Budgeting

Continued from Page 1

normal operating costs just drains those reserves," he says. "That practice only solves the problem for that one year. The deficit doesn't go away, it is still there the following year."

Other issues

Budget considerations beyond normal operating costs and the effect of the market value credits issue include salary negotiations and a 13.9 percent increase in the cost of medical insurance (about \$300,000 more in premiums), along with several building and infrastructure improvement projects that are designed both to meet current needs and to prepare the county for the future.

Some adjustment in salaries for the almost 300 county employees is likely needed for 2012, Affeldt says. "The current three-year wage and benefits contracts, which didn't provide for any cost-of-living increases in either of the first two years, called for a 're-opener' to discuss salary and health insurance costs in the third year. We are currently involved in those 'third year' negotiations."

Stenberg building

The county is in the process of acquiring the former Stenberg Welding building in Fosston under favorable terms.

The building, which is located adjacent to the Polk County Waste to Energy incinerator operation, will be used to house the county's recycling facility.

The recycling operation is currently located in nearby rented property that has become inadequate. The cost of purchasing the building — \$192,900 — will be paid for from funds that have been accumulated over several years by the Environmental Services program.

Also in planning is an upgrading of the 35-year-old heating/cooling system in the Law Enforcement Center (LEC) along with a remodeling of space in the old jail portion of the building. The LEC houses the Sheriff's Department and its Emergency Management offices along with the 9-1-1 Dispatch Center and the Red River Valley Juvenile Center.

IT to move

The county's Information Technology (IT) office, which has also had quarters in a former conference room in the LEC building in recent years, is in the process of moving its operations into the former computer training room at the new Polk County Justice Center. That move was neces-

sitated to provide for additional workspace and a more controlled environment.

The computer servers will continue to be located in temperature-controlled quarters in the Law Enforcement Center. The operation of the servers will be monitored both electronically and through period visits.

A new computer training room is being created in previously unfinished space on the second floor of the Justice Center building.

Other projects

Other capital projects will involve the final stages in the remodeling of space on the first floor of the County Government Center (former courthouse) along with planning for the removal of the former Professional Building.

"As a county board, we work hard to provide county services at a reasonable expense and to maintain and update the infrastructure... and to do those things without increasing property taxes beyond the rate of inflation," Affeldt says.

"The 1.5 percent increase in the levy for 2012 will accomplish most of that but with the state-funded Market Value Credits reduction now gone, there will likely be a bump in the property tax bill for some."

Homestead Market Value impact example:

Under the now ended residential Homestead Market Value Credit program, a home with a taxable market value of \$141,100 received a \$245 credit toward property taxes in 2011.

Rather than provide a credit toward property taxes on homestead properties, the new law offers a provision that will reduce the taxable value (or net tax capacity) of most homes. Under the new law, the taxable market value of that \$141,100 home would be reduced to \$116,559.

Calculation of the amount of exclusion for this example begins with a reduction of 40 percent of the first \$76,000 of market value (or \$30,400). The amount of value that is over \$76,000 (or \$65,100) is then multiplied

by 9 percent (\$5,859). This \$5,859 amount is subtracted from the \$30,400 providing a net valuation reduction of \$24,541.

As noted earlier, the calculation reduces the taxable market value (or net tax capacity) of the home to \$116,559.

Using the example for the \$141,100 home, the tax bill under the old market value credits program (applying a 1.00% tax rate) was \$1,222. Under the exclusions provision, the tax in 2012 would be \$1,212.

Note — The exclusion amount is reduced as the value of the home increases. Thus, there is no valuation exclusion for homes valued at \$413,800 or more. The law applies only to residential homestead properties.

Overweight truck presentation

Continued from Page 1

In leading off the presentation to be made before county commissioners from throughout Minnesota, Sanders will report on the information that was gleaned from a "weigh in motion" scale that has been imbedded in Polk County Highway 14 south of Crookston.

40 percent overweight

The information included that more than 40 percent of the heavy commercial trucks were overweight, including some that were grossly overweight.

Sanders is also slated to talk about meetings that have been held with American Crystal Sugar Co. and with area sugar-beet growers about the overweight problem and ways that it might be addressed.

He notes, however, that isn't just the beet trucks that are the problem. "Other commodities are also to blame," he says, "but much of the attention focuses on the beet harvest because of its intensity during a short period of time."

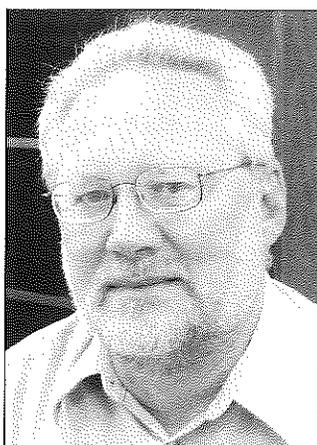
Report subjects

At the conference, Overbo will report on road damage issues in Clay County and the overweight permit program that his county has developed. Alm is scheduled to speak about the road damage policy that has been adopted in Norman County (and also in Red Lake County), and Bengtson will address the effect of super singles tires and how a newly paved road in Kittson County was severely damaged by overweight trucks in just its first year of use.

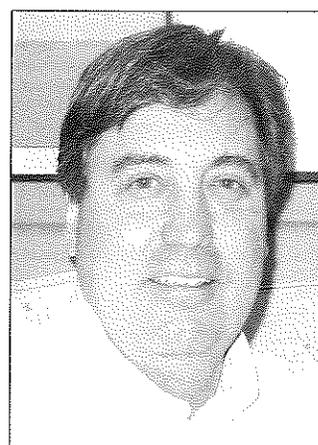
Sanders and Bengtson are members of a state research committee that is reviewing the super singles issue. The Federal Highway Administration and Minnesota Department of Transportation are involved in that study along with the states of Illinois, Texas and Michigan.



Michelle Cote



Robert Wagner



Ron Denison

In the new Taxpayer Service Center

Responsibilities expanded to account for auditor-treasurer duties

New responsibilities and titles have been developed for two Polk County department heads and for the county's lead financial supervisor all as a part of the blending of the Auditor-Treasurer, Recorder and Assessor offices into the new, one-stop Taxpayer Service Center.

The changes are part of an effort to become more efficient in the delivery of county services.

Reassignments

That effort involves the reassigning of responsibilities previously held by Gerald Amiot, who retired on July 31 after 44 years with the county. Amiot had been the auditor-treasurer for past 25 years. The auditor-treasurer position is not being retained in the new organizational arrangement.

The distribution of those duties involve:

- **Robert Wagner**, who expands his role of county assessor into that of "director of assessment services." His responsibilities now also include property records management, the recording of levies, calculation of tax rates, and tax-forfeited land administration.

- **Michelle Cote**, who expands her role of county

recorder and head of the License Center into that of "director of property records."

Her responsibilities now also include serving as chief election administrator, administering ditch law, supervising collections, serving as the recipient of bids for construction projects, equipment and services, administering the confession judgments, the issuing of wine, beer, auctioneer, charitable gambling and other licenses, and serving as a member of the Extension Committee.

Denison leads division

Also with a new title and expanded responsibilities is Ron Denison, who has become the county's "finance officer" and will lead the newly created Finance Division.

The lead accountant in the former Auditor-Treasurer's office, Denison now works under County Administrator John Schmalenberg.

Schmalenberg was advanced from coordinator to "administrator" effective on Jan. 1. Under state law, administrators have significantly more authority in running the daily business of counties than do coordinators. All departments now answer to the administrator, who in turn answers to the County Board. Under the pre-

vious coordinator system, the different county department heads answered to the County Board.

The role of the new "Finance Division" includes the development of the annual financial statement, maintenance of financial records, handling of payroll, preparation of the annual county budget, performing miscellaneous financial functions, making settlements, and handling the investment of county funds.

Share oversight

Wagner and Cote share oversight of the new Taxpayer Service Center, which was created a year ago and is made up of a blend of county employees from the Auditor-Treasurer, Assessor and Recorder offices.

Michelle Snyder is the immediate supervisor of the center at which county residents can record property titles and other documents, check on their property values, pay their property taxes and more all in a single stop.

The License Center maintains its previous office entry. Prior to creation of the Taxpayer Service Center that entry was also that of the former Recorder's Office.

Dispatch capability assessments planned for 5 sites in Polk County

Corban Group, a Mounds View, Minn., firm that provides communications consulting services, will conduct an assessment this fall of the five separate agencies that provide emergency services communications in Polk County.

Those agencies are the Polk County Sheriff Office's Dispatch Center in Crookston and those at the police and fire departments in both Crookston and East Grand Forks. The Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center also provides after hours dispatching for the City of Crookston.

Currently, all 9-1-1 calls go directly to the Polk County Dispatch Center. The Center dispatches for the Sheriff's Office and for fire departments in communities other than Crookston and East Grand Forks.

Calls for law enforcement and fire emergencies in East Grand Forks are immediately routed from the County 9-1-1 Center to the respective police or fire department.

Fire emergency calls for the City of Crookston are routed from the County 9-1-1 Center to the Crookston Fire Department. Law enforcement emergency calls in Crookston are dispatched by the County 9-1-1 Center.

Medical emergency calls for all of Polk County, with the exception of East Grand Forks, are paged out by the County 9-1-1 Center to the appropriate first responder and/or ambulance service for that specific area.

For East Grand Forks, the County 9-1-1 Center routes the medical calls to the East Grand Forks Fire Department for first responder help and

then calls Grand Forks 9-1-1 to request an ambulance from Altru Hospital.

The assessment will deal with the current technology and radio systems in each agency and with the individual call volumes, facilities, operation costs and staffing.

The report will also include information about equipment and the software updates and replacements that will be required as state agencies and the federal government — along with counties and cities — move toward 800-megahertz communications systems and other technology upgrades in the coming years.

The information will be used to make recommendations on how services could be delivered more effectively and efficiently, including the possibility of consolidation.

All three law enforcement agencies (Sheriff's Office and the Crookston and East Grand Forks Police Departments) currently have the same records management software and, with some updates, have the ability to share information and potentially save costs.

The Polk County call center also has GeoComm mapping capacities that can be used to determine the origin of an emergency call from a cell phone or land line.

In the review, Rob Chaffee, who will serve as principal project leader for Corban, will make on-site visits to the different call centers. Polk County Emergency Services/Dispatch Center Director Nancy Shafer will serve as project manager.

Polk County Attorney's Office Activity Summary Jan.-June 2011

Felony & Gross Misdemeanors	
Complaints prepared	177
Sentencing hearings	174
Committed to state prison	33
Probation violation hearings	276
Committed to state prison	17
Total committed to prison	50
Jury trials	4/1
Cases with convictions	4/1
Misdemeanors	
Guilty pleas	46
Trials	11
Appeals	
Polk County Attorney Office	7
Minnesota Attorney Gen. Office	0
Juvenile Cases	
Delinquency petitions	32
Child in need of protective services (CHIPS) petitions	54
Delinquency hearings	155
EJJ probation	0
CHIPS hearings	175
County Welfare	
Commitment petitions*	14
Commitment hearings	34
Guardianship petitions	11
Guardianship hearings	13
<i>* Mentally ill and/or inebriate</i>	
Child Support	
Child support hearings	88
Paternity hearings	153

Pembina Trail RC&D in process of dissolving

After 19 years of serving residents in seven counties in northwestern Minnesota, the Pembina Trail Resource Conservation & Development Association has begun the process of dissolving.

The action to terminate all activities became necessary when the association's funding — through the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Resource Conservation Service — was permanently ended earlier this year.

Incorporated on Feb. 2, 1992, Pembina Trail had focused on projects to reduce erosion/sedimentation, develop renewable energy opportunities, identify and manage noxious weeds, protect water quality, reduce water pollution, and to promote community development.

Sponsors of the association were the

county boards and soil and water conservation districts in Polk, Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Red Lake and Roseau.

The governing council was made up of 14 at-large representatives. Polk County was represented on the council by Commissioner Craig Bunes, who served as vice chair, and by Lawrence Vettleson of Gully. The association had offices in the Minnesota Wheat Growers Building at Red Lake Falls.

As a part of the process of dissolution, the responsibility and the accompanying grant funding for the East Polk County Weed Management Area Project has been transferred to the East Polk County SWCD. The next and likely final meeting of the association is to be held on Nov. 18.

Hedlund reappointed to Middle-Snake-Tamarac Watershed Board of Managers

Marvin Hedlund, rural Oslo, has been reappointed as Polk county's representative on the Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District (MSTWD) Board of Managers for a three-year term.

Hedlund was first appointed to to the board on April 1, 2010, to serve out the balance of a term that was scheduled to end on July 27, 2011.

A career farmer before retiring in 2005, Hedlund has extensive experience in township government and in working on agricultural and church boards.

The Polk County Board appoints one member to the seven-member watershed board. The Marshall County Board appoints the other managers, including: Doug Sorenson, Warren, chair; John W. Nelson, Oslo, vice chair; Ben Kleinwachter, Strandquist, secretary; Alvin Nybladh, Stephen, treasurer; David Bakke, Newfolden; and Roger Hille, Warren. Hedlund serves as the assistant secretary/treasurer.

GIS database to provide wealth of information

The day is fast approaching when persons, while at their computers either at work or in their homes, will have access to a Polk County GIS (geographic information system) database that will contain all kinds of information about land issues.

In effect, the database will be a digital plat book... and a whole lot more.

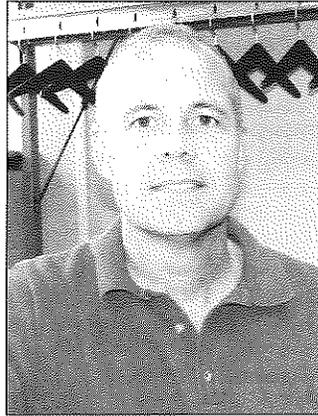
While the website will be of value to the general public, the greatest benefit will be in the efficiency that the database resource provides for the county departments that deal with land issues... property records, valuations, taxation, planning and zoning, highway construction, ditches, etc.

While much of the information will be available at no cost to the public, there will continue to be a cost for some of the information — such as that used by realtors, banks, mortgage companies and other businesses — that is currently only provided for a fee. In today's world of government revenue shortfalls, the county isn't likely to give up on any source of income.

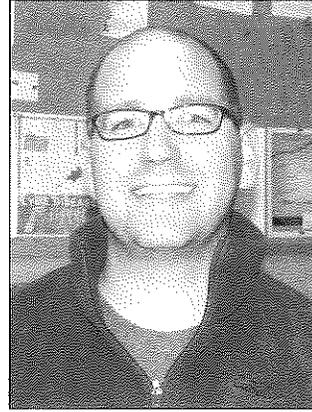
Database builders

The key information collectors and managers of the GIS database project are Rick Thompson and Nate Smith, who have their workstations in the Polk County Highway Department building. Thompson heads up the effort. He joined the Highway Department in 1985 as an engineering tech working mainly with right of way, centerline and other road building issues. Over time, he became the department's computer guru and by 2004 had migrated full-time into GIS activities.

Smith joined the effort on a part-time basis about a year ago and took a fulltime position as a GIS specialist earlier this year. A native of Stephen, he earned both bachelors and masters degrees in geography-GIS at the University of North Dakota. Smith worked on GIS projects for Trempealeau



Rick Thompson



Nate Smith

County in Wisconsin, at Spokane, Wash., and for the Bureau of Land Management at Portland, Ore., before coming to Polk County.

Instead of each department having to develop and maintain its own land issue information, the database will have combined all of the information on one site.

Land issue information developed by other sources will be

included, too, including the corner pins that are being determined and updated as a part of a five-year, countywide remonumentation project. The Wiseth Smith Nolting engineering firm in Crookston is doing the remonumentation survey work on a contract basis.

Corner pins

When completed, that project will provide corner pins every

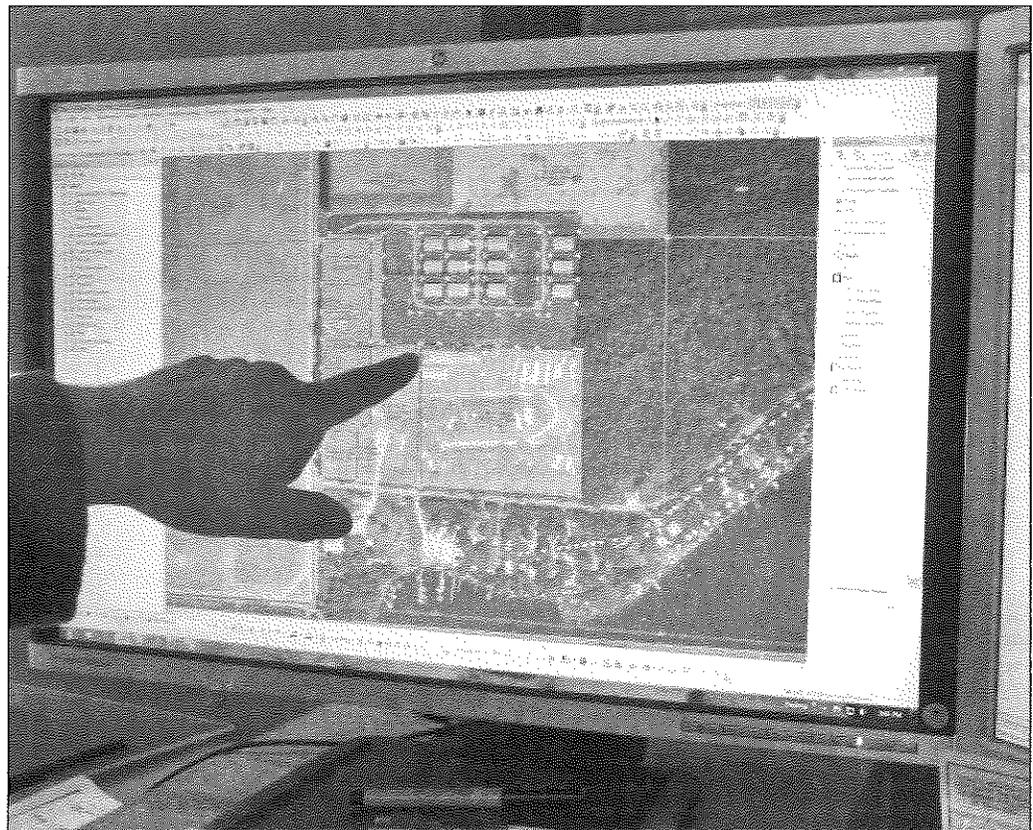
three miles and more often in the lake country where the property lines become more complicated.

Also a part of the database will be the elevations that are being determined in the updating of the 100-year floodplain maps. This is being done by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources through the Light Reduction and Ranging (LiDAR) process conducted via aerial flights over the region.

On the website, users will be able to choose from a number of "layers" of data to get the specific information that they want.

The group of county departments that will benefit most from the database includes the new Taxpayer Service Center that recently combined the former Recorder's, Auditor-Treasurer's and Assessor's offices into a one-stop convenience center.

See GIS, Page 6



Parcel mapping is main focus of current work

Fanfulik is named interim executive director of NWRDC

Cameron Fanfulik, the manager of the Loan Fund program of the Northwest Regional Development Commission (NWRDC), has assumed the added duties of serving as the agency's interim executive director.

The decision to ask Fanfulik to serve as the top administrator of the agency was made by the commission's Executive Committee in July.

An employee of the agency since 2000, Fanfulik has been manager of the Loan Fund Program since 2004. He has also worked extensively in economic development field, especially in the area of value-added products and renewable energy projects.

Heath retires

The change in administration followed the retirement of Leon Heath in June. Heath had served in the dual role of executive director of the agency and manager of its Economic and Community Development Programs for the past 20 years. He had a 32-year career with the commission during which it

experienced substantial growth.

Heath was instrumental in assisting local units of government with flood recovery efforts, zoning and planning issues, community housing, business assistance, tourism promotion, workforce training, and grant writing through a variety of programs and projects.

The NWRDC has 13 full-time employees and an annual budget of \$4.8 million. Base funding for the agency is done through a local tax levy.

Supportive partnerships

Funding also includes supportive partnerships with the Federal Economic Development Administration, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Minnesota Department of Human Services, Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Minnesota Arts Board, Minnesota Board on Aging, and private foundations, including Blandin, McKnight, and Northwest Minnesota.

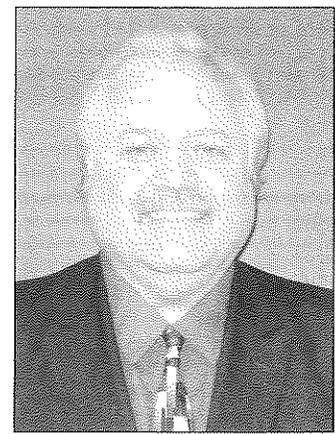
NWRDC operates the Area Agency on Aging, Northwest

Regional Arts Program, Economic Development, Enterprise Fund (business loans), Community Development, Transportation, and Emergency Operations Planning programs that serve seven northwestern Minnesota counties (Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau). Its offices are in Warren.

Fanfulik, who grew up near Angus and graduated from Warren High School in 1973, studied political science and agricultural economics at Moorhead State University and North Dakota State University while also working on the family farm.

Worked with Farm Wrap

After he and his brother, Brian, ended their 5,200-acre farming operation (sugarbeets, wheat, barley, corn and beans) in 1999, Fanfulik joined NWRDC as an associate in the Farm Wrap Program that assisted farmers with financial planning, legal assistance referrals, and the transition into other occupational pursuits.



Cameron Fanfulik

Fanfulik earned a B.S. degree in applied studies with emphasis in rural economic development at the University of Minnesota-Crookston in 2003.

He and his wife, Joanne (Kuznia), have two daughters, Heather and Jennifer, and two granddaughters, Taylor and Madison. A son, Michael is deceased.

Buness chairs Polk Social Service Board

Polk County Commissioner Craig Buness, Crookston, is the new chair of the Polk County Social Service Board. He assumed the position in July when he succeeded Commissioner Bill Montague, Crookston.

Commissioner Warren Strandell, East Grand Forks, is now the vice chair. He will become chair in July 2012.

Lay-Board Member Paula Waters, Crookston, is secretary of the board. The secretary position alternates annually between the two lay-board members, Waters and Cathy Gutterud, Lengby.

In addition to the five county commissioners, the make-up of the Social Services Board includes the two lay-board members.

Waters' reappointment to the board for another two-year term was recently approved by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

GIS database

Continued from Page 5

Others include the Highway Department, which regularly deals with right-of-way and centerline issues, plus the Planning & Zoning, Ag & Drainage, Emergency Management, Environmental Services, County Attorney, Sheriff's Department, and the Information Technology (IT) offices.

Parcel mapping

"Our main focus now is that of updating the parcel mapping," Thompson says. "Parcel mapping is the basis of the project. We hope to have the initial piece of that work done in the next six to nine months. We're currently researching the records and redrawing the parcels using information from the Recorders Office. We will

be bringing in information from the Vanguard System that is maintained by the Assessor's office and from all of the tools used by assessors in determining the valuation of properties. Also from township tax records, from aerial photographs, especially around the lakes, and from everything else that is available."

Ongoing project

The work, he says, will be ongoing. "There are always going to be changes. The site will be able to show every parcel, all the property lines from those of the townships down to sections, quarters and lots. It will show ZIP codes, commissioner districts, school districts, rural address points, trails, golf

courses, cemeteries, ditch records and benefit areas... virtually everything," Thompson relates. "We're moving forward all the time. We know what we want to accomplish. It will be an especially great tool for all of the different county departments that need and use the information."

Each of the departments using the database will be able to view the latest information as it is developed. The county's Information Technology department will provide the technology needed to maintain the website and to make it user-friendly. A "users guide" is being planned to assist the public in accessing the information being sought.

Solid Waste report

No increase in tip fees or fee assessments in 2012

Polk County has set the Tip Fees and Solid Waste Fee Assessments for 2012. As anticipated, there was no increase in tip fees or fee assessments from the current (2011) rates.

Tip fees at the Incinerator will remain at \$65/ton for a fourth consecutive year. Tip fees at the Landfill will also remain at the same rates.

And for the third straight year the Solid Waste Fee Assessment (Assessment) for a primary residence will remain at \$100 per year, and for a second/disabled residence, the Assessment will remain at \$60.

Transfer Station

Some changes to the Transfer Station in Crookston will be made in order to comply with Minnesota Industrial Storm Water Permit (Storm Water) requirements. Expected changes would include modification to containers and changes in material storage and handling. These changes will be minor and will not impact operations or public service levels.

Hours of operation at the Transfer Station will remain the same: Monday, 7 a.m.-7 p.m., and Tuesday-Friday, 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Access to containers is limited in the last 15-20 minutes before closing and loads need to be across the scale no later than 15 minutes before closing in order for the facility to close on time.

Incinerator

Normal waste volumes continue to come in from all five counties that use the Incinerator: Beltrami, Clearwater, Mahanomen, Norman and Polk.

Sales to the three steam customers (Minnesota Dehydrated Vegetable, SunOpta Ingredients and Specialty Products) are down from normal levels due in part to factors beyond our customers control.

However, the Material Removal Facility (MRF) that extracts recyclable materials found in the waste stream has benefitted from the current strong recycling markets. The excess revenue from the MRF has helped reduce the steam sales shortfall for the year.

Despite mechanical difficulties to start the year, the turbine generator, which creates electricity from the excess steam that is available when not used by our customers, has generated enough electricity to come in near budget.

Disposal of waste pharmaceuticals at the Incinerator, through the state's collection

program, has been slower than anticipated. However, pharmaceutical loads have been received at the Incinerator from all areas of the state this year and interest from new programs in the future is promising.

Recycling

Changes will begin to occur through the end of the year in the recycling program. In Fosston, the recycling program will move from the present location (across the street from the Incinerator) to the former Stenberg Welding building (property adjacent to the Incinerator).

In addition to the change in location in Fosston and due to our required Storm Water Permit for the facility operations, there will be a change in public access to certain recyclable and waste disposal opportunities.

Certain recycling and waste disposal opportunities will be available only during staffed operational days and hours in Fosston.

However, these changes will allow the Fosston solid waste facilities to maintain compliance with their operational permits and ensure that access to these services will remain available now and in the future.

The county will also be transitioning from accepting segregated recyclables (each type of recyclable material separate from the other) at its recycling sites to accepting co-mingled recyclables (same recyclable materials mixed together).

All co-mingled recyclables will be processed in Fosston, using the Material Removal Facility (MRF) attached to the Incinerator. Using the MRF's mechanical separation equipment, and the employees on the sorting line, the county's co-mingled recyclables will be separated, baled and sold to various recycling markets.

Acceptable recyclable materials include: plastic #1 & #2, tin/steel cans, aluminum cans, cardboard, office paper/news-print, glass containers.

Landfill

Due to the wet spring and early summer, the Landfill incurred significant difficulties. Though the county received a permit to compost source separated organic solid waste (cafeteria/restaurant food scrap, spoiled agri-products, dirty paper, etc.), our ability to complete the necessary work was delayed.

However, that work should be completed prior to freeze-up, which should allow for

this program to be offered to interested schools/businesses going forward.

In addition, roads to access the demolition and municipal solid waste landfills have been created/improved and final cover is being installed on the older portion of the demolition landfill that has reached final grade.

Household Hazardous Waste

The number of participants and waste volumes for the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Program are up from previous years. In addition, the number of residents utilizing the HHW Product Exchange is up markedly from previous years.

The Product Exchange is an area of the Transfer Station in Crookston where reusable HHW is placed on shelves in the Product Exchange Room for public use. Residents are able to obtain these products at no charge.

Typical products found on the Product Exchange include: paints, stains, varnish, paint thinner, floor/tile adhesive, cleaning products, lawn/garden chemicals and automotive fluids.

Electronic Waste

Earlier this summer, Polk County applied for and received a grant from the state for collection and processing of residential electronic waste (e-waste).

Polk County has partnered with the counties of Clearwater, Mahanomen, Norman and Red Lake to consolidate this residential e-waste to gain a more favorable contract. The grant is effective through June 30, 2013, or when funding is expended in full, whichever comes first.

For more information on any of the programs or services offered, please contact Polk County Environmental Services at (218) 281-6445 — **Jon Steiner, Environmental Services administrator**

Maps Available

Polk County maps showing the street and avenue locations in the rural addressing system are available at the Highway Department and Auditor-Treasurer's Office.

The cost is \$2 each.

More homes are needed

Foster homes have impact on lives of children

Each May, which is Foster Care Appreciation Month, Polk County Social Services recognizes the people who provide foster homes for children and adults in the county. The letter that follows, which was a part of this year's acknowledgement, shows the value of the program.

The writer, Jenny, is the parent of a child that has been in the foster care system in Polk County. With Jenny's consent, the letter is being used to create awareness and support for children in need of foster care.

This is just one example of the impact that Polk County foster homes have had on the lives of children... and their parents! — **Molly Paulsrud, Polk County Social Services supervisor**

Jenny's Letter

I am writing this letter in the hope that more people can give the same kind of help to someone else that I got from Gary and Brigid Cariveau. I was in a bad situation when I was younger. I had my baby too young and didn't know the harm of what I was doing. And the worst part is I had my little girl around it all.

But fate stepped in and sent us some awesome foster parents that helped my daughter as well as myself. When it all first happened, and my baby was taken (from me), I was devastated by it. I was scared that whomever she was with wasn't showing her the love that I as her mother could give.

I was really scared and quit the drugs I was on. But then I turned to drinking. It was a way to turn off the feelings of losing her and worrying about who had her. But as time went on and I met them (the foster parents).

They were the nicest people I had ever met in my life. They showed so much love to my baby, just as if she was theirs.

When I saw that, I knew she was safe. Then I could focus on myself and getting better. And I did! I quit everything I was using.

Now, I have two great children and we just bought our first home last year. I'm very happy. I know that has a lot to do with them. Because they were there to help my daughter when I wasn't and were there to show me how to be a better mom.

And what was so important to me is that they never seemed to judge me for my past and they still don't. Now, they are the Godparents for both of my children and we love them like family.

The most important thing I got from the experience — and that made me see things in a different way then I had known my whole life — was seeing a good family and seeing how good they were with children. I never saw that before, so, of course, I didn't know how to be like that. I liked it, so I followed what they did. I gave my baby love again and she gave me love, too.

And they (foster parents) made me feel like I could trust them because they never looked at me like a bad person. They

never made me feel ashamed. They made me feel proud of my successes and accomplishments. And that felt good. It was like I was graduating towards being a good mom.

I think that if you want to help someone in trouble and help some innocent child that has done nothing wrong — it's not their fault where and who they were born to and every child deserves to be loved — then being a foster parent is a good way to help and change someone's life.

Some people change and some don't. But to me, if you can help one, just like the Cariveau's did for my daughter and me, then it's worth it.

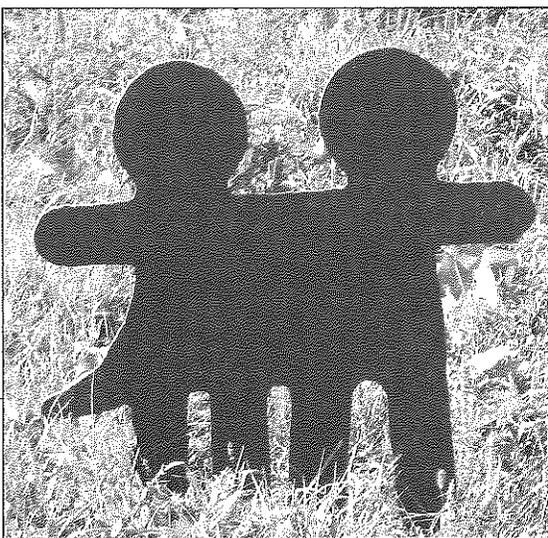
NOTE — Gary and Brigid Cariveau have been licensed foster parents for 11 years and have fostered over 20 children.

Currently, Polk County has 31 licensed child foster homes; one has been licensed for 16 years, one for 15 years, one 14 years and seven homes for 6-11 years.

In addition to the current homes, Polk County is seeking more foster homes. Our need is the greatest in the Crookston community as well as countywide... homes that will accept sibling groups and homes that will accept teenagers.

Polk County also has four homes that are licensed to care for adults.

If you are interested in learning more about the foster care program or would like to become licensed to care for children or adults in your home, please contact Jackie Jeffrey at 1-877-281-3127 ext. 8536.



Blue Kids cutouts lined Highway 2

Blue Kids cutout signs raised funds, awareness, education of child abuse

The "Hwy 2 Keep Kids Safe" campaign gained a lot of attention when over the Labor Day weekend its Blue Kids cutout signs lined the highway from Bemidji to Crookston.

The campaign raised funds to provide services to child victims, raise awareness for child abuse, give knowledge and skills to parents and caregivers, encourage those suffering from sexual and physical abuse to seek help, and to show support for the many survivors of child abuse served by Polk County Coordinated Victim Services.

Individuals as well as businesses sponsored a Blue Kid for a \$20 dona-

tion. Polk County Coordinated Victim Services teamed up with the Bemidji Family Advocacy Center to send the message that **Child Abuse Has NO Place In Our Community.**

Many helped in taking that stand and in being a part of an effort to combat child abuse in northern Minnesota, according to Stephanie Pry, who coordinated the effort for Polk County Coordinated Victim Services.

The Blue Kids, cutouts of a little boy and girl, were painted in blue, which symbolizes the color of child abuse.

Search underway for director of Tri-County Community Corrections

A search is underway for a new executive director for the Tri-County Community Corrections agency that operates the Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail, the Red River Valley Juvenile Center and the Probation & Community Services program for the three partner counties.

Susan Mills, who has headed the agency for the past 25 years and been a key part of the organization since 1976, will complete her fulltime work with the agency on Nov. 1.

In the replacement process, the Regional Corrections Board is scheduled to interview candidates in mid October. All six members of the board — two

commissioners from each of the member counties (Norman, Red Lake and Polk) — will conduct the interviews and make the final selection.

The board members are: Steve Bommersbach and Steve Jacobson of Norman County; Ron Weiss and Dave Sorensen of Red Lake County; and Warren Affeldt and Warren Strandell of Polk County. Springsted Inc., a national a public sector advisor to local governments, has been involved in the candidate search.

With it possible that a new administrator may not be in place by Nov. 1, Mills has pledged to make herself available on a reduced work schedule to assist the agency as it transi-

tions into operating under a new executive director.

In a recent letter to the board of directors that spelled out further her retirement plans, Mills wrote:

"I hope you know that my work for Tri-County Community Corrections has been very fulfilling over these many years. I believe we have had in the past and at present a very fine board willing to spend considerable personal time and effort in making our agency successful. And I'll add that we've taken some risks together that have moved our purpose as an organization ahead of many in the state."

Electronic message warning to be erected at intersection

Polk County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) will be installing an Intelligent Transportation System at the intersection of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 21 and Trunk Highway 75 this fall that will warn motorists about approaching cross-traffic. The intersection is located midway between Angus and Euclid.

This electronic warning message alternative was selected from among several control options that were studied jointly by MnDOT and the Polk County Highway Department to address a history of accidents that have occurred at the intersection, according to Polk County Engineer Richard Sanders. Two lives have been lost and a number of persons injured in the 16 accidents that have occurred there during the past 10 years.

Of the 16 accidents, 14 have been directly attributed to a lack of visibility caused by a combination of the passenger side A-pillar in automobiles and the 21-degree skew of the intersection... as opposed to 90-degree crossing.

In a simulation conducted at

the intersection earlier this year, A-pillars in automobiles, which have grown in size as air bags have been concealed in them, were determined to have caused blind spots that ranged in length from 8 to 11 seconds for motorists traveling on CSAH 21. The blind spots occur after motorists have come to a stop at the intersection and are looking to the right out the passenger side window.

In the warning message system, flashing electronic signs will tell motorists about approaching cross traffic when it comes to within 700 feet of the intersection. The electric-powered system will alert both the east-west traffic, which is controlled by stop signs, and the north-south traffic of the condition.

Short, Elliot, Hendrickson, a St. Paul-based safety consultant firm, has designed the system, which is to be installed by sub-contractors by Nov. 1. Total cost of the system, which could be replicated at other intersections that have a history of accident issues, will be about \$75,000.

Mills to serve on Juvenile Justice body

Susan Mills, executive director of Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC), has been appointed by the Governor's Office to the state Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC). The committee controls the award of some state and federal funding for juvenile corrections programs including the Transition Program that is operated by TCCC.

Additionally, JJAC has responsibility for review of state juvenile justice policies including facility inspections and provides testimony on many juvenile justice issues to the legislature. One of the major changes in the practice of juvenile justice in Minnesota that JJAC continues to monitor around the state is the statutory change requiring complete sight and sound separation from adult inmates for juveniles held in detention.

Mills, who has headed the TCCC jail and probation agency for the past 25 years and is retiring on Nov. 1, plans to continue serving on the committee through her retirement. The appointment, which was made by Gov. Mark Dayton, had the approval of the Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Act Counties.

"I am very much looking forward to this experience as it is a topic close to my heart," Mills says of the committee's role in juvenile justice.

A pioneer in the development of jail operations policy for the state of Minnesota and the nation, Mills served three terms as president of the Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Act Counties. She received the association's Jack Young Award for dedication to corrections programs and efforts in 2002 and was inducted into the Northwest Minnesota Women's Hall of Fame in 2006. She also serves on the Judicial Selection Committee for judicial district 9.

TCCC is governed by the Regional Corrections Board, which is made up of two commissioners from each of the three partner counties, Norman, Red Lake and Polk.

Montague honored for health work

Bill Montague, Crookston, has been presented the Award for Outstanding Dedication to Local Public Health by the Minnesota Department of Health.

The award was announced by Dr. Ed Ehlinger, Minnesota commissioner of health, at the 2011 Community Health Conference in Brainerd on Sept. 15.

Montague was cited as a champion among elected officials for the broader appreciation of the work done in public health at the county level. A Polk County Commissioner since 2001, he served as chair of State Community Health Services Advisory Committee in 2004 and has worked extensively to encourage county commissioners to increase their participation and knowledge of public health.

Northwest Mental Health Center seeks new executive director

Dan Wilson, who has been executive director of the Northwest Mental Health Center for past 25 years and has been an integral player in building the agency for 38 years, is planning to retire at the end of the year.

The center, a non-profit corporation, is owned by six northwestern Minnesota counties (Kittson, Marshall, Mahnomon, Norman and Polk).

Array of services

It provides an array of services to individuals and families that are designed to prevent the emergence of mental health problems, provide early intervention, limit the impact of mental health issues, and treat serious mental health problems.

A board of directors made up of two county commissioners from each of the counties plus two at-large members and a representative of the county social service directors governs the center.

Based in Crookston, the center has a \$6.5 million annual budget and a clinical staff of 95 persons who provide services at seven sites in northwestern Minnesota. Polk County's representatives on the board are commissioners Bill Montague (vice chair) and Don Diedrich.

Search started

A search has begun for a new director with the expectation that the new administrator will be in place prior to the end of the year.

A transition team that includes three board members, three staff members and two county social service directors, will review applications for the position and reduce the field of candidates from which the board of directors will select the new executive director.

A native of Bovey, Minn., Wilson graduated from Greenway High School in Coleraine, Minn., and attended Macalester College before earning a degree in sociology from the University of

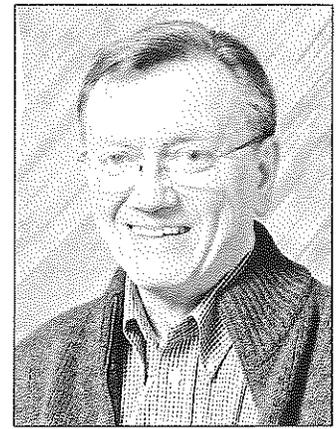
Minnesota in 1967.

He interrupted his time in graduate school at Tulane University in New Orleans by serving in the Peace Corps for three years (1969 to 1972) before returning to earn a masters degree from in social services in 1973.

Wilson moved to Crookston — where he has spent his entire professional career — in March 1973 to become the developmental disabilities coordinator at Northwest Mental Health Center. "I met my future wife, Lori Jensen of Beltrami, shortly after I came to Crookston," Wilson says. "That was early in the summer of 1973. We were married that December and we have lived here ever since."

Became director in 1986

Wilson became the center's assistant director in 1976. He left the agency 1981 to serve as director of the Polk County Development Achievement Center for five years and then returned to begin serving as its



Dan Wilson

executive director in 1986.

He and his wife have three sons. Patrick, a self-employed artist with a masters degree in fine arts, lives and teaches in San Francisco. Timothy is doing post-doctoral work in immunology at Oxford University in Great Britain. Nicholas is a pilot trainer for Delta Airlines in the Twin Cities. The Wilsons have one grandson.

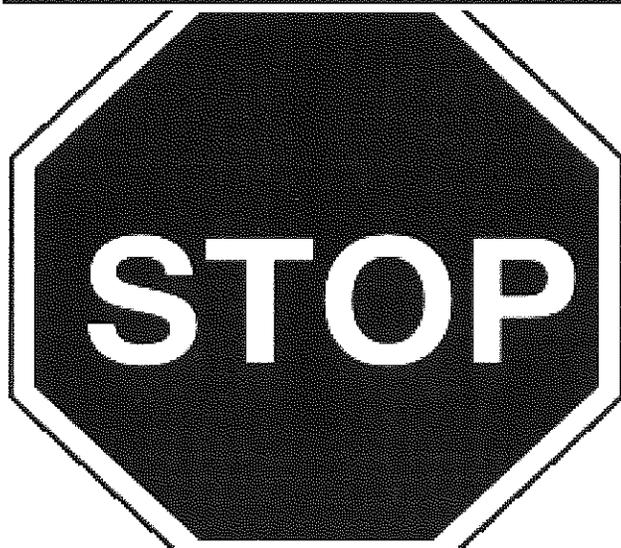
"It has been a great run," Wilson says of his time at the center. "But now it's time to turn it over to younger people. The experience of growing this organization has been wonderful and I'm proud to have been a part of it."

Hanson and Brekke reappointed to Sand Hill Water Board

Roger Hanson, Beltrami, and Robert "Bill" Brekke Jr., Nielsville, have been reappointed to three-year terms on the Board of Managers of the Sand Hill Watershed District.

Hanson, the current vice president of the board, has served as a manager since 1978 while Brekke has been on the board since 1999. Their reappointments were approved by the County Board in July.

Other members of the board of managers are Chair Harold Vig, Fosston; Scott Balstad, Fosston, and Stuart Christian, Erskine. Dan Wilkens is the administrator. The district has offices in Fertile.



Report Welfare Fraud

People who give false information or withhold facts in order to receive Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) aid, food stamps, general assistance, childcare or medical assistance may be guilty of fraud.

You may wish to report: Persons not reporting income; Incorrect reporting of persons living in the home; Misuse of food stamps or Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards; Falsifying of information on application; Unreported property and assets; Persons receiving dual benefits (from more than one state)

What you should report: **Who** — The name of the person; **What** — Fraud suspected; **When** — Date of occurrence; **Where** — Address of person

Call the Polk County Sheriff's Office:
1-218-281-0431

or the toll free
Minnesota Welfare Fraud Hotline
1-800-627-9977

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

You may remain anonymous

Overweight trucks are aid road deterioration

Due to the high frequency of overweight trucks that are traveling on our county road system we have noticed that our pavements are deteriorating at a faster rate. Therefore, we have had to spend more money on maintenance type projects (bituminous overlays) than in the past.

Construction projects that have been completed this year include:

- County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 5 from CSAH 6 to east county line — Bituminous overlay;
- CSAH 10 from south county line to Trunk Highway (TH) 2 — Bituminous overlay;
- CSAH 12 from TH 32 to TH 2 — Bituminous overlay;
- CSAH 14 from south county line to CSAH 45 — Bituminous overlay;
- CSAH 22 from TH 220 to north county line — Bituminous overlay;
- CSAH 37 from CSAH 10 to CR 210 — Bituminous reclamation and surfacing;
- CSAH 37 from CR 210 to CSAH 34 — Bituminous reclamation;
- CSAH 61 3 miles west of Crookston — Road realignment, grading;
- City streets in Mentor — Bituminous overlay and;

Sorensen represents Red Lake County on Corrections Board

Dave Sorensen, Red Lake Falls, has succeeded Brent Strand as one of Red Lake County's two commissioner members of the Regional Corrections Board (RCB).

The board governs the Tri-County Community Corrections agency, which includes the Northwest Regional Corrections Center, Tri-County Corrections Probation Department and the Red River Valley Juvenile Center.

The change in representation was made after Strand, who

• Township bridge replacements throughout Polk County.

This work was completed using state gas tax funds, federal gas tax funds, and township bridge funds.

The road damage that occurred this spring from flooding has been repaired using Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) disaster funds.

We were able to receive over \$500,000 in Town Bridge funds this year because we had several approved projects in place and additional money became available in the state program. This is compared to the \$100,000 that we slated to receive. We also have submitted other bridge replacement project plans that have been approved and are waiting for funding.

If any townships have bridges that are structurally deficient, hydraulically deficient, or functionally obsolete (too narrow for today's equipment), they should call in and talk with us about doing a survey and possibly replacing them. — **Richard Sanders, highway engineer**

had served on the board for six years, resigned as a county commissioner when he moved to West Fargo, N.D.

Red Lake County's other county commissioner member of the RCB is Ron Weiss, Red Lake Falls. RCB members from Norman County are commissioners Steve Bombersbach, Twin Valley, and Steve Jacobson, Hendrum. The Polk County members are commissioners Warren Affeldt and Warren Strandell.

Public Health has flu vaccine for children 6 months-19 years

Flu vaccine for children ages 6 months to 19 years who qualify for the Minnesota Vaccine for Children program will be provided between 3:30 and 5:30 p.m. on the third Wednesdays of October, November and December at the Polk County Public Health office in Crookston.

Appointments are not needed. A \$5 donation is accepted, however, no one is turned away for an inability to pay.

Children who qualify are those who are un-insured, under-insured, are on a Minnesota Health Care Plan or are of Native American and Alaskan descent. Parents or guardians will be asked to complete qualifying forms on arrival at the office located at 721 So. Minnesota St.

The practice of offering flu vaccine to adults at mass clinics throughout the county has been discontinued this year because of difficulties in getting federal and insurance reimbursements.

Instead, Polk County Public Health is directing adults to their medical homes, pharmacies or other private providers that offer the flu vaccine.

The timing for getting the flu vaccinations, which is your "best defense" against the flu, is now throughout the flu season. Seasonal flu can be in our area as early as October and last well into the spring.

New plat books available

The new, full-color Polk County Plat Book is available for sale in the Taxpayer Service Center (former Auditor-Treasurer's Office) at the Polk County Government Center in

Crookston.

Printed in an 8½ by 11-inch format, the book sells for \$35 plus tax. The most recent previous plat book was published in 1999.

County Board Meeting Times

8:30 a.m. on 1st Tuesday of each month, 10:30 a.m. on the 3rd Tuesday, and 8:30 a.m. on the 4th Tuesday

Polk County Commissioners

Dist. 1 — Craig Bunes

Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell

Dist. 3 — Bill Montague, vice chair

Dist. 4 — Warren Affeldt, chair

Dist. 5 — Don Diedrich

All meetings are open to the public

POLK COUNTY

TILLABLE AG LAND VALUE CHANGES PER TOWNSHIP (2007 TO 2011 ASSESSMENTS)

NO STATE INCREASES IN THE FIVE YEAR TIME PERIOD

2011 LAND CHANGES PER ACRE

NON TILLABLE: \$900 (NO CHANGE)
WASTE LAND: \$250 (NO CHANGE)
WILDLIFE LAND: \$900 (NO CHANGE)
WRP LAND: \$500 (NO CHANGE)
WETLAND: \$900 (CHANGED FROM \$500)

HIGDEM 2011: + 5% 2010: + 30% 2009: + 30% 2008: + 15% 2007: + 10%	SANDSVILLE 2011: + 5% 2010: + 30% 2009: + 30% 2008: + 15% 2007: + 10%	FARLEY 2011: + 5% 2010: + 30% 2009: + 20% 2008: + 20% 2007: + 10%	BRISLET 2011: + 5% 2010: + 20% 2009: + 20% 2008: + 20% 2007: + 15%	HEIGELAND 2011: + 5% 2010: + 15% 2009: + 25% 2008: + 25% 2007: + 15%
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