

Polk County Newsletter

Fall 2013

Preliminary tax levy is set at 4.1%

The Polk County Board has adopted a "preliminary" tax levy increase of 4.1 percent for 2014 to pay for the operations that are dependent upon local property taxes.

The budget and the actual levy needed to pay for expenses will be developed over the next two months and reviewed at a public meeting before the County Board on Dec. 3.

The first step in the budget process occurred on Sept. 3 when the board set the preliminary levy, which now cannot exceed 4.1 percent but can be reduced as proposed spending issues are analyzed. The final budget will be adopted at a meeting of the board on Dec. 17.

The overall levy projection would raise \$20,124,708, or about \$464,618 more than in 2013. The final approved levy for 2013 was \$19,660,090.

The \$20.1 million figure includes \$1,382,194 for bond repayment. This amount is \$266,840 less than in 2013

See TAX LEVY Page 2

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www.co.polk.mn.us — The new Polk County website has information about permitting, job and bidding opportunities, GIS mapping, public notices, announcements and much more.

Looking ahead...

Budgeting reflects priorities, addresses issues

Government budgeting might be more fun if we started off with a ceremonial "throwing out the first debit" or something, but the reality in Polk County is budgeting is important to reflect the county board's priorities and meet key issues facing our residents, all while working towards effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

Next year's budget process has started and while we are still early, a few of those key issues have presented themselves. First, the legislature responded to signs that the state's economy is improving and after a few years of recession and belt tightening they decided to ease funding options for local units of government.

While the primary local revenue source remains the property tax levy, options now exist to consider a "wheelage" tax of \$10 per vehicle, a local sales tax option and an increase in state funded County Program Aid.

Wheelage tax adopted

In July, Polk County commissioners chose to implement the wheelage tax for January of 2014 generating approximately \$300,000 of new revenue for county high-

See BUDGETNG Page 2

Budgeting

From Page 1

way improvements.

The board chose not to pursue the sales tax option sharing the concerns of most border counties that such action will drive business across the state line.

Polk County is receiving an increase in County Program Aid and in addition the legislature relieved counties and cities of some sales tax expenses on our operational purchases. Counties and cities around the state view these legislative changes as positive by allowing more latitude locally to offset property tax levels.

The Polk County Board and administration share this view but remain focused on minimizing the impact of property tax increases.

Levy limits

The second key factor coming from the legislature was implementing limits on how much local units of government can increase their property tax levies, a natural action after having allowed the above noted options for diversifying county revenue streams.

For Polk County, it meant the property tax could increase by up to 9.2 percent, but that won't happen. The board chose on Sept. 3rd to set the county's preliminary levy limit increase at a maximum of 4.1 percent, meaning that as the budget continues to develop this fall, the property tax levy cannot increase over this amount. See the figures in box at right:

While this chart shows the levy subject to the state's levy limit is \$18,742,514 for the 4.1 percent increase, the real overall levy of \$20,124,708 for next year is a 2.3633 percent increase.

New bargaining agreements approved, another unit is formed

The 2013-2015 Polk County collective bargaining agreements were all settled by mid-July this year.

The county's labor relations board was made up of commissioners Warren Affeldt and Warren Strandell, County Administrator Chuck Whiting, Human Resources Coordinator Linsey Rood, and Mike Rengel, labor relations attorney.

Some of the highlights that were determined among all the contracts were:

- Base wages were increased 5 percent for 2013, and will increase 2 percent in both 2014 and 2015
- Contributions for health insurance coverage were increased to \$745/month in 2013, \$785/month for 2014, and \$835/month for 2015.
- Other benefits include that offices will close at noon on Dec. 24 in years when when that

Preliminary 2014 Property Tax Levy	
General Revenue	\$11,308,222
Human Services.....	4,823,891
Road & Bridge	2,370,586
Library	239,815
Total (4.1% & Library request).....	\$18,742,514
Bond Redemption (Special Levy)...	
<u>1,382,194</u>	\$20,124,708

The lower percentage increase is due to a decrease of the county's debt levy (which is outside the levy limit) when the board paid off the Law Enforcement Center bonds early last winter.

County residents should be aware that the dollar levy is spread across all properties and individual property values change year to year, so the percentage increases noted above may not be the same as what taxpayers see on their property tax notice.

Preliminary notices in November

Watch for this when preliminary tax notices come out in November. The board has set the public meeting for the 2014 budget and levy at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 3, in the Board Meeting Room at the Government Center in Crookston.

Between now and then, staff and the board will be working to finalize a budget and levy for that meeting. The board can still lower the levy from the figure shown above but cannot increase it. The preliminary budget will be revised until ready for review in December. The final board approval of the 2014 budget and levy will be held on Dec. 17. — **Chuck Whiting, Polk County administrator**

day falls between Monday through Thursday.

The Board of Commissioners went into negotiations with the intent to raise 2013 wages more than normal due to recent recession years when there were little or no increases for wages (zero percent in both 2009 and 2010 and a one-time cash payout averaging about 2 percent in 2011).

The board also addressed some other wages for some other positions mid-summer to assure that Polk County is in compliance with pay equity requirements of the state.

A new bargaining group has formed for Sheriff's Department sergeants and the dispatch supervisor. A final agreement for this group is currently being developed for the years 2013 to 2015. — **Linsey Rood, human resources & special projects director**

Tax levy

From Page 1

that were sold in 1997 to finance construction of the addition to the Law Enforcement Center to house the Red River Valley Juvenile Center (RRVJC) and the Polk County Dispatch Center.

Jail bonds

The remaining bond payment amount covers construction of the Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail that was opened in 2008.

Among new expenses to be incurred will be an increase in personnel costs to cover the salary and benefit increases provided for in wage contracts.

This cost will total \$413,875. Another \$420,000 could be needed to meet the county's share of increased expenses for the operation by Tri-County Community Corrections of the jail, probation services, and the RRVJC.

Added revenue

On the plus side of budget considerations are an increase of \$140,535 in state provided County Program Aid (following a \$300,000 reduction for 2013), the elimination of having to pay some sales taxes on purchases of supplies and materials needed for operations, and the effect of adding \$20,769,400 of valuation from "new construction" to the county's total valuation.

This "new construction" addition plus that resulting from the re-valuation of other properties, mainly agricultural land, has increased the county's total valuation pool to \$4.269 billion.

This increase of \$441.4 million in valuation will spread the cost of operations and help to keep tax bills in line.

New Dispatch Center is a part of remodeling

Polk County Dispatch will soon move into new, expanded quarters in the Law Enforcement Center (LEC) in Crookston. The new quarters are in the area that served as the education classroom in the former jail portion of the building.

The move is a part of a \$2.3 million remodeling project that will convert the former jail cellblocks into useable space for the Sheriff's Office.

Included in the work was a much needed updating of the heating and cooling systems and a new roof. With this investment in the building, architect Richard Rude, Bemidji, has told the County Board that the LEC, building because of its secure construction as a jail, is a fortress that will be "functional for another 50 years or more."

The move of the Dispatch Center, however, involves more than just jumping from one area of the building to another. The switch in location is keyed to the installation of new, state-of-the-art electronic communication equipment that will expand the types of incoming 9-1-1 calls can be received and upgrade how that information is dispatched to law enforcement and other public safety agencies.

Upgrade was inevitable

With the current communications equipment in need of updating, the County Board decided a year ago that it didn't make sense to try to maintain the old VHF system when it was inevitable that there would soon have to be a change to a new 800 MHz system.

Toward that end, Sheriff Barb Erdman wrote a grant request to State Radio Board that resulted in the receipt of a \$354,000 award that will be applied toward the about \$700,000 cost of this new equipment.

With the new system in place, the Dispatch Center will be able to communicate better with all local public safety agencies and also with state agencies including the State Patrol, Department of Transportation, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Emergency Services and others.

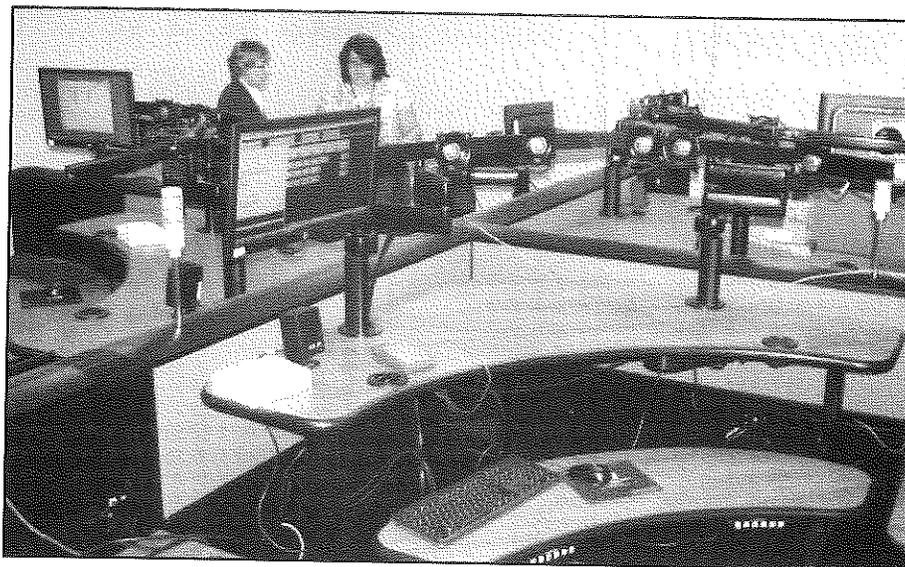
State agencies have already made the switch to 800 MHz as have most of the state's 87 counties.

ARMER system

The 800 MHz system will operate on the Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) System, which uses a combination of state and county-owned towers. This will provide improved communications coverage for all public safety entities.

To fill in a gap in radio coverage in the ARMER system in Polk County, the State of Minnesota constructed a new tower near Eldred and this year replaced an existing tower at Marcoux Corner site that had become damaged by time and weather.

With the new "Next Gen" 9-1-1 equipment



A new Dispatch Center is being developed in the Law Enforcement Center

that was installed in the Dispatch Center this summer, incoming communications will be expanded to receive both text and video.

This computer-based Next Gen phone system, which will soon become operable, will be transferred to the new quarters when the move is made about early October.

Next Gen equipment is being put into use throughout the nation. For Polk County, this required expansion of how 9-1-1 calls can be received, involved a \$250,000 investment.

Paid for from reserves

All of the costs of the remodeling, the cost of establishing a new Dispatch Center, and the cost of new communications equipment that is not covered by the grant will be paid for from existing county funds.

The decision to move the Dispatch Center to different quarters within the LEC was made for two reasons. First, the current center, which is located in the Red River Valley Juvenile Center (RRVJC) portion of the LEC building, had not only become too small but also needed extensive remodeling.

Second, because new equipment was going to be installed, any interruption or affect on daily operations would be avoided if that work was done in another area.

"We hope to have a seamless changeover... to be able to shut down the old system one day and start up the new the next," Erdman relates. "There will, of course, be the need for our dispatchers to have some time to become familiar with the new equipment but we expect to be fully functioning in the new center by the end of the year and to be comfortable with the equipment by early in 2014."

Consolidation possible

Should Crookston and/or East Grand Forks decide to have Polk County do their dispatching, it could likely occur at that time, she says.

"We just want to have everything in place and be comfortable with it before any consolidation might take place," Erdman says.

By state statute, all 9-1-1 calls automatically go to the county PSAP (Public Safety Answering Point), which is the Dispatch Center. Depending upon where the information must be given, dispatchers then communicate with the proper response agency... sheriff's deputies in the field, police departments, fire departments, ambulance services, State Patrol, etc.

The Crookston Police Department currently does its own dispatching during the normal workdays hours from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Dispatching is done by the county at all other times.

The East Grand Forks Police Department does its own dispatching 24-7. The 9-1-1 calls for assistance originating from that community are answered by Polk County and then redirected to the Police Department for law enforcement calls or to the Fire Department for medical or fire calls.

Dual-band equipment

Since the new equipment going into the PSAP is "dual-band," the County Dispatch Center will be able to communicate with all agencies regardless of whether they are using VHF equipment or have updated to 800 MHz systems. As the entities now using VHF systems make the inevitable switch to 800 MHz there should be no communications issues.

An additional benefit for moving the Dispatch Center to different quarters in the LEC is that the old space can be taken over by the RRVJC, which has been operating both its education program and recreation/exercise area in the same tight quarters. When the space occupied by dispatch becomes available, the center's education programming will move into that area.

County's valuation now totals \$4.2 billion

As determined by the Polk County director of assessment services for the purpose of assessing property taxes that will be payable in 2014, the valuation of real estate in the county now totals \$4,269,583,900.

This new total amount of valuation represents an increase of \$441,401,300 over 2013, or about 11.53%.

Of the new total valuation amount:

- 56.7% is for tillable agricultural lands.
- 4.9% is for all other agricultural property.
- 25.1% is for residential properties.
- 4.5% is for seasonal recreational properties.
- 3% is for commercial properties.
- 1.2% is for industrial properties.
- 3.2% is for building sites (rural homes and garages on 1 acre).
- 1.4% is for "all other" property classifications.

New construction accounted for \$20,769,400 of the total valuation increase. The balance of the increase is the result of the re-valuation of existing properties.

The figures above are based on the 2013 Spring Mini Abstract. Last year's figures were based on the 2012 Fall Mini Abstract. The 2013 Fall Mini Abstract is not yet available.

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

Sanders serving in state & federal transportation leadership positions

Polk County Engineer Richard Sanders is serving in leadership roles in transportation in both Minnesota and the nation.

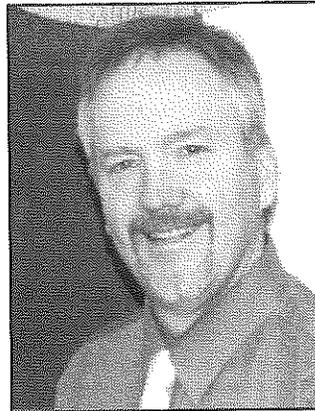
He was elected the North Central vice president of the National Association of County Engineers (NACE) in April. Before that he was voted in as president of the Minnesota County Engineers Association MCEA.

Sanders is also a member of the Minnesota Local Road Research Board and its Research Implementation Committee.

Number of meetings

In these roles, he has attended or will participate in a number of meetings and conferences during the balance of the year including:

- The Mid-America Association of Transportation Officials conference in Milwaukee, July 15-19, and the Executive Board meeting of NACE in Fort Worth, Tex., July 19-21;
- National Local Technical Assistance Program Association annual conference in Boise, Idaho, July 22-25;
- American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials conference in Denver, Colo., Oct. 16-21;
- NACE Executive Board meetings in Laughlin, Nev., Nov. 5-9; and
- Iowa County Engineers Association annual meeting in Ames, Iowa, Dec. 9-12.



Richard Sanders

The expense of attending these sessions is paid for by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), NACE and MCEA.

Sanders notes that transportation funding is a major concern both in Minnesota and the nation.

Funding sought

"County engineers were hoping that the legislature would pass a comprehensive transportation bill this year that would have provided more funding for our ailing state and county transportation systems," he says. "We came close but, in the end, the legislature decided to wait until next year and try to put together a bill that the residents of the state could get behind."

"As a part of this discussion," he says, "we've formed a task force that will look into how current state funding is distrib-

uted to the various counties. We have the original formula that was established in 1958 and the new formula for the money created as a part of the 2008 Transportation Bill. Hopefully, this task force can come up with a recommendation upon which all counties and commissioners can agree."

Overweight permits

MCEA is also working with industry and the MnDOT on a "one-stop" oversize, overweight permit policy.

"A lot of overweight loads are being carried without permits due to the fact that many counties don't have such a permit and many local agencies just don't have the ability to enforce the laws," he says, noting that overweight vehicles cause significant damage to the roads.

State and county transportation officials are also working toward Zero Deaths on their roads, Sanders notes.

Counter productive

"The legislature had a bill to raise our rural two-lane road speed to 60 miles per hour but we convinced them that this would be counter productive to our TZD efforts.

"That would also have been tough on our budgets because of the signing changes that would have been required. I'm happy that our speed limit remains at 55 mph and hopefully that it will stay that way for some time."

Flashing speed signs up or going up

Flashing electronic signs that indicate the speed of approaching vehicles are in place or soon will be at nine different locations where county roads enter cities in Polk County.

Five cities are participating in a cost-sharing program in which the county will pay one-half of the \$4,400 cost of each of the fixed, solar-powered signs. Those cities are Crookston, East Grand Forks, Fosston, Gully and McIntosh.

The purpose of the program is, of course, to get motorists to reduce their speeds to the posted speed limits. It was initiated as a result of concerns that many vehicles were speeding as they entered the towns.

The Polk County Highway Department arranged for the purchase of the signs and has done, or soon will complete the installation of them.

Locations chosen for the signs by the participating cities

are:

- Crookston — 1 sign, east on CSAH 11;
- East Grand Forks — 1 sign, south on CSAH 72;
- Fosston — 3 signs, southwest on CSAH 1, northeast on CSAH 6, and north on CSAH 30;
- Gully — 2 signs, north and south on CSAH 2; and
- McIntosh — 2 signs, north on CSAH 8 and west on CSAH 41.

\$6 million in bonding to speed up roadwork schedule

The \$6 million in highway bonds that the county sold in July allowed two additional road projects on the County State Aid Highway (CSAH) system to be done ahead of schedule this summer.

Several more are programmed earlier than previously scheduled during the next two years.

The two projects done ahead of schedule this year were the widening and overlay of 4 miles of CSAH 12 from U.S. Highway 2 to CSAH 49 north of Mentor and the overlay of 6 miles of CSAH 11 from CSAH 22 near Gentilly to the Red Lake County line.

This work used about \$2 million of the bond money. The balance of the \$6 million will be spent in years 2014 and 2015.

Without the two projects that were "advance-funded" by the bond money, this year's work schedule would otherwise have included only two other jobs.

Those projects, which were part of five-year improvement plan schedule, were an overlay on 8 miles of CSAH 19 from near East Grand Forks to CSAH 20 and an overlay on 3½ miles of CSAH 70 from CSAH 22 to the Marshall County line between Alvarado and Oslo.

Ambitious work plan

With the use of the bond money in addition to the regular funding that comes from the county's apportionment of the gas tax collections, County Engineer Richard Sanders' construction program for the next two years on the CSAH system will be very ambitious. The work will include:

2014

- Reconstruction of a half-mile of CSAH 1 from U.S. Highway 2 to the east city limits of Fosston.
- Overlay of 8.2 miles of CSAH 1 from the east city limits of Fosston to the Clearwater County line.
- Widening and overlay of 5 miles of CSAH 15 from Trunk Highway 220 to Fisher.
- Overlay of 6 miles of CSAH 59 from Trunk Highway 220 to CSAH 15 west of Fisher.
- Overlay of 4.2 miles of CSAH 58 from Trunk Highway 220 to County Road 225.
- Overlay of CSAH 30 from Fosston to 4.5 miles north.

2015

- Widening and overlay of 4 miles of CSAH 34 from CSAH 36 to Erskine.
- Overlay of 6 miles of CSAH 2 from CSAH 3 to Trunk Highway 93 at Gully.
- Overlay of 6.5 miles of CSAH 8 from CSAH 1 to McIntosh.
- Widening and overlay of 4 miles of CSAH 41 from U.S. Highway 59 to McIntosh.
- Overlay of 2 miles of CSAH 41 from CSAH 34 to U.S. Highway 59.
- Overlay of 10 miles of CSAH 45 from U.S. Highway 75 to Trunk Highway 9.
- Overlay of 3.4 miles of CSAH 36 from CSAH 34 to CSAH 42 south of Union Lake.
- Overlay of 3 miles of CSAH 42 from CSAH 36 to CSAH 41 also south of Union Lake.
- Overlay of 3 miles of CSAH 53 from CSAH 11 east of Gentilly to the Red Lake County line.
- Widening and overlay of 6.8 miles of CSAH 19 from CSAH 20 to Euclid.

The bonds, which were sold at a less than one percent interest (.9824%), will be repaid over five years by directing about \$1.2 million a year for that purpose from the county's annual apportionment (about \$7.4 million) of the gas tax that is paid at the pump.

No tax consequences

As a result, there will be no property tax consequence for county residents.

By selling the bonds for less than the one percent interest rate when highway construction costs go up annually by from 3 to 4 percent, the action gives the county more bang for the buck while also improving roads ahead of the regular schedule.

An additional benefit from this work is that resurfacing will bump up a number of roads to a 10-ton rating. "By the time the construction program is completed," Sanders says, "virtually all of the hard-surface roads will be increased to at least 9-ton ratings and there won't likely be any 7-ton roads remaining in the system."

The practice of selling bonds to speed up highway improvement work has been done at least twice in the past and may have been done three times. The sales done in the late 1990s and most recently in 2006 were both for \$4 million.

Wheelage Tax to pay for 3 'County Road' jobs

The \$10 wheelage tax that is to be added to vehicle registration fees in 2014 will finance three County Road projects that otherwise would not likely have gotten any immediate attention, according to Highway Engineer Richard Sanders.

The three projects, all a part of the County Road system, are:

2014 — Crack and overlay of .6 miles of County Road (CR) 233 to the west from U.S. Highway 75 at the American Crystal Sugar Co. plant in Crookston.

2014 — Overlay of 4 miles of CR 214 south of Crookston from CSAH 45 to U.S. Highway 2.

2016 — Hard-surfacing of .5 miles of CR 210 south from U.S. 2 that will support traffic to the grain-loading terminal there and to the Rydell National Wildlife Refuge.

Levy dollars

The "County Road" system depends totally upon tax levy dollars to pay for its maintenance. This is unlike County State Aid Highway system roads, which are constructed and maintained by allocations from the gas tax that is collected in the price of gas paid at the pump.

County Roads are indicated by three-digit numbers in the 200 series, while CSAH roads have two-digit identification numbers.

Wheelage tax collections, Sanders says, are expected to bring in \$304,000 a year, based on the 30,400 vehicles in the county that will be subject to the tax. Several categories of vehicles are not subject to the tax including motorcycles and mopeds, trailers and semi-trailers, and other vehicles that do not require annual registration.

Said 'No' to sales tax

While the County Board acted in July to approve the wheelage tax, it did not endorse another provision of new state tax law allows counties to initiate a one-half cent sales tax that would have provided more funding for road projects.

Six area counties have also endorsed the \$10 wheelage tax. They are Marshall, Pennington, Norman, Clearwater, Beltrami and Clay. None of them approved the sales tax provision.

Drees begins phased retirement

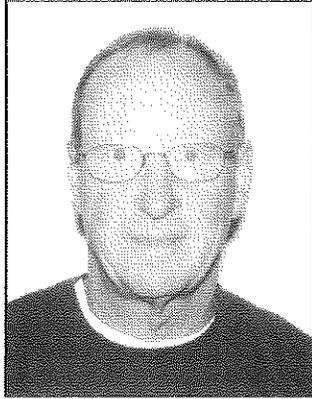
Nick Drees began a one-year Phased Retirement Option (PRO) contract on April 1 that could result in his retirement as administrator of the Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District (MSTWD) at the end of that period.

Or, the agreement could be extended for another year should both Drees and the MSTWD Board of Managers agree. In fact, according to provisions of the Minnesota Public Employees Retirement Association, a PRO can be extended to cover up to five years.

"The agreement is working out well for me," Drees says. "I cannot work more than half-time and am pretty much free to work the hours that I want to work. That sure has been nice this summer. I'm still the administrator but when I'm not there, the staff is running the organization.

"I have been at the watershed for over 40 years. It was my job and, outside of family, was my life. So, I don't walk away from it easily, either," he says.

Drees was the first employee hired by the watershed when it



Nick Drees

was organized in 1971. "I was a technician. Ron Adrian was brought in as an engineer and the administrator about three years later," he says. Drees became the administrator in 2006 when Adrian took a position with Houston Engineering, Thief River Falls.

A native of St. Hilaire, Drees graduated from Lincoln High School in Thief River Falls in 1968. After attending college at both the University of North Dakota and the University of Minnesota-Moorhead, Drees took a summer job with the Soil Conservation Service that

transitioned into a fulltime job with the watershed that began on Dec. 1, 1971.

The Marshall County Board of Commissioners recently re-appointed John Nelson, Oslo, and appointed Tom Neibauer, Middle River, to the watershed's board of managers.

Niebauer, a retired teacher, succeeds Doug Sorenson, Warren, who did not seek reappointment.

Marshall County, which has by far the largest amount of land in the watershed (79.5%), appoints six of the managers. Polk County (17% of the land) appoints one manager. Pennington (1.8%), Kittson (1.1%), and Roseau (.6%) have smaller amounts of land in the district.

Roger Hille, Warren, is president of the board. Ben Kleinwachter, Newfolden, is the vice president; Marvin Hedlund, Oslo, is secretary; Alvin Nybladh, Stephen, is the treasurer, and David Bakke, Newfolden is assistant secretary-treasurer. Hedlund is the manager representing Polk County.

Polk County Attorney's Office

Activity Summary
Jan.-June, 2013

Felony & Gross Misdemeanors

Complaints prepared	239
Sentencing hearings	138
Committed to state prison	40
Probation violation hearings	285
Committed to state prison	18
Total committed to prison	58
Jury/Court trials	11/2
Cases with convictions	10/1

Misdemeanors

Guilty pleas	28
Trials	2/1

Appeals

Polk County Attorney Office	17
Minnesota Attorney Gen. Office	0

Juvenile Cases

Delinquency petitions	16
Child in need of protective services (CHIPS) petitions	48
Delinquency hearings	198
EJJ probation	0
CHIPS hearings	161

County Welfare

Commitment petitions*	10
Commitment hearings	15
Guardianship petitions	10
Guardianship hearings	13

* Mentally ill and/or inebriate

Child Support

Child Support hearings	96
Contempt/Paternity hearings	181

After 4 1/2 years in dual role

Shafer to focus on Dispatch duties



Nancy Shafer

Nancy Shafer, who has been both the director of the Dispatch Center and the director of Emergency Management for the past 4 1/2 years, is now just concentrating on the dispatch position.

"The duties and future responsibilities of both positions have just become too much," Sheriff Barb Erdman says of the dual role.

"With all of the new, high-tech equipment that has been put into the Dispatch Center and with the possibility of consolidations with other law enforcement agencies, it just became more than one person can handle. Nancy started out as a dispatcher for Polk County, so that is where she is going to concentrate going forward."

Shafer, who joined the Dispatch Center in 1994 and became its director in 2006, took on the added duties of deputy emergency manager in March 2009 when Allen Wagner retired.

A native of Crowley, Tex., Shafer graduated from high

school there in 1987 and after a year of college in Texas, relocated to Devils Lake, N.D., where she served as a dispatcher at the Lake Region Law Enforcement Center for three years. She and her husband, Kent Shafer, moved to Crookston in 1992.

Ashley Halley, a criminal justice graduate of Bemidji State University, is a new dispatcher in the Dispatch Center.

A native of Neche, N.D., she had previously worked in security as a part of a work-study experience. Halley succeeded Jackie Erickson, who retired in July after 11 years at the center.

A successor as emergency management director has not

County Board Meeting Times

8:30 a.m. on 1st Tuesday of each month

10:30 a.m. on the 3rd Tuesday

8:30 a.m. on the 4th Tuesday

All meetings are open to the public

Jail beds to house inmates for U.S. Marshalls

Transport plan to generate revenue for TCCC

Tri-County Community Correction's (TCCC) long anticipated plan to house an increased number of federal inmates is rapidly approaching fruition.

During the fall of 2012, TCCC approached the Polk County Sheriff's Office with a unique plan to generate revenue by filling empty jail beds in the Northwest Regional Corrections Center (NWRCC) jail with federal U.S. Marshal inmates at a per diem rate.

The uniqueness of the plan, approved by the Regional Corrections Board and Polk County Commission, hinged upon TCCC funding two full-time transport deputies for the Polk County Sheriff's Office.

Two officers required

The U.S. Marshals Service requires two armed sworn law enforcement officers to provide transportation and guard service.

Funded by TCCC, these deputies would provide transportation of federal inmates to and from the Federal Courthouse in Fargo, as well as provide ancillary transportation for medical needs and guard service for hospitalized inmates.

Individuals who are arrested or detained for violation of federal statutes must be brought before a magistrate or judge for an initial hearing. After the hearing, prisoners

may be released or remanded into the custody of the respective U.S. Marshal to stand trial.

The Marshals Service is dependent upon state or local governments for the provision of detention space and services for federal prisoners. In support of this requirement, agreements are established with local and state governments, such as TCCC, that are willing to provide detention space for federal prisoners.

North Dakota jails full

The oil-boom in western North Dakota has resulted in increased local incarceration rates within North Dakota, limiting the number of available jail beds for U.S. Marshal inmates.

As a result, the Marshals Service is in need of alternate secure housing and the NWRCC has the opportunity to generate revenue by leasing empty beds.

TCCC will use generated income to not only pay the cost of the additional deputies but to assist in managing and reducing the overall financial contributions of the TCCC member counties of Norman, Polk and Red Lake.

Two correction officers from the NWRCC, both with Minnesota Peace Officer certification, were selected from

the pool of applicants to fill the transport deputy roles. Training, which was initiated by the Polk County Sheriff's Office in early August, will continue until these deputies have received a full course of internal job-specific training.

To and from Federal Court

Upon completion of the required training, regularly scheduled transportation will begin, moving federal inmates to and from the NWRCC and the Federal Courthouse in Fargo.

This transportation initiative provides benefits to all organizations involved as well as the taxpayers of the TCCC member counties.

The U.S. Marshals Service benefits by acquiring an additional inmate housing solution, the Polk County Sheriff's Office benefits by acquiring two full-time employees, who can be utilized to complete alternate duties when not conducting transportation, and TCCC benefits by managing a monetary resource which generates revenue and in turn reduces the cost of operations to the member counties, and subsequently the taxpayers of our communities. — **Phill Greer, TCCC administrator**

Officers trained for transport duty

Two former corrections officers at the Northwest Regional Corrections Center will make up the newly created prisoner transportation team of the Polk County Sheriff's Office.

Now Sheriff's Department deputies, Mark Hudon and Zachary Folkert have both completed their certifications as law enforcement officers and are currently completing eight-week training programs with existing deputies that are specific to the requirements for the transportation of inmates, especially for the U.S. Marshals Service.

A native of Wyoming, Minn., where he grew up on a hobby farm, Hudon graduated from high school there in 2007 and earned a B.S. degree in criminal justice at the University of Minnesota-Crookston in 2011. He completed his Law Enforcement Skills Training certification at Alexandria Technical & Community College in the summer of 2011.

Student security officer

Hudon started in law enforcement working part-time as a student security officer at UMC during his first semester in college. The job became full-time in 2008.

He joined the Crookston Police Reserve in 2010, advancing to a level 3 officer. Hudon began part-time employment as a corrections

officer at the Northwest Regional Corrections Center last year.

"These opportunities," he says, "gave me unique experiences with law enforcement agencies in the area. I am very excited about being able to further my career in criminal justice through this position with the Polk County Sheriff's Office."

Hudon and his wife and two children live in Crookston.

Bemidji native

Folkert, who was born and raised in Bemidji, graduated from high school there in 2005. He then studied construction electricity at Northland Technical College in Bemidji and worked in that field for a time. He moved to Crookston in the fall of 2009 and worked in the electrical field until being laid off in the spring of 2010.

At that time, he decided to return to school at Northland Community & Technical College, Thief River Falls, and become a law enforcement officer. He graduated with honors in the spring of 2012 and started work as a part-time corrections officer at the NWRCC.

He also worked starting in January of this year as police officer at Climax. "I'm excited to start my career with the Polk County Sheriff's Office," he says.

Affeldt is Social Service Board chair

Commissioner Warren Affeldt, Fosston, became chair of the Polk County Social Service Board in July when he succeeded Commissioner Warren Strandell, East Grand Forks.

Commissioner Don Diedrich, Warren, is the new vice chair. The position of chair rotates annually among the five county commissioners.

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

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

After 40 years, time to slow down

Wilkens considering retirement from Sand Hill

The Sand Hill River Watershed District Board of Managers may soon need to find a successor to Administrator Daniel Wilkens, who has indicated a desire to retire or to at least slow down.

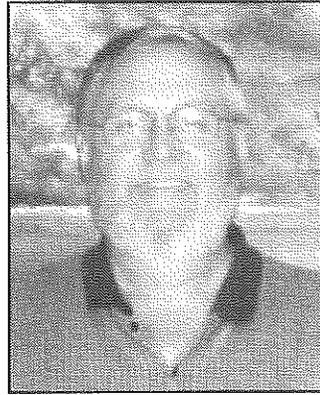
"After 40 years working in this field it is time to slow down and help someone else take over the work," Wilkens says. "It is time for projects undone and some traveling mixed with fishing."

A PRO (Phased Retirement Option), which would allow Wilkens to continue on a year-by-year basis, part-time, is a possibility.

Five-year window

This provision of the Minnesota Public Employees Retirement Association can be extended annually for up to five years when both the individual and employer agree.

A lifelong resident of the Fertile and Crookston communities, Wilkens is a graduate of the Northwest School of Agriculture in Crookston. He earned a B.S. degree in agricultural engineering and agricultural economics at the University of Minnesota and had farmed in the Fertile area until 1987.



Dan Wilkens

His interest in water management began as a child when his family and neighbors were experiencing problems with flooding and poor drainage and he decided that he would try to work on solving some of those problems.

One of the originators

Wilkens was instrumental in establishing the watershed district in May 1975 as a way to solve water problems where he lived but soon found out that there were a lot of water problems that needed solving.

He served on the original Sand Hill Board of Managers from 1975 until 1999 when he

resigned to accept the position of administrator.

He also serves as treasurer of the Red River Watershed Management Board organization that promotes water management basin wide in the Red River Valley of northwestern Minnesota. He is the Sand Hill River Watershed District's representative to that organization and the only original board member.

Membership list

His other memberships and involvement in basin wide, state and even international water organizations has been extensive. He is a member of the:

- Red River Basin Commission, which covers Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Manitoba,
- Flood Damage Reduction Work Group,
- Minnesota Drainage Inspectors,
- The U.S. representative on the International Red River Board, which covers the Red River Basin for the International Joint Commission, and
- Legislative Drainage Work Group, which deals with

changes to the Drainage Code.

He is also active on the committees of these organizations and is involved with many local organizations.

Dan and his wife, Pam, have been married 45 years and have 5 children.

Christian is reappointed to Sand Hill WD

Stuart Christian, Erskine, has been reappointed to the board of managers of the Sand Hill Watershed District for another three-year term.

Christian, who was first appointed to the board of managers in 1999, currently serves as its chair. His reappointment was recommended by the Sand Hill Watershed Advisory Committee in April and subsequently approved by the County Board.

Other members of the board of managers are: Scott Balstad, rural Fosston (vice chair); Bill Brekke, Nielsville (secretary); Phillip Swanson, Fertile (treasurer); and Roger Hanson, Beltrami. The district has its office in Fertile.

Townships share \$197,253 in aggregate taxes

The Polk County Highway Department and the townships where gravel pits were active in 2012 shared in a record Aggregate Material Tax collection of \$197,253. The tax was collected from gravel operators working in the county.

New record amounts

The amount of tax collected in 2012, which included that from the 4th quarter of 2011, set a new record for the third year in a row. The previous record was \$165,101 collected in 2011.

Tax collections have increased in each of the last four years as the result of changes in the tax rate that were made by the Legislature. Currently, 32 counties statewide use the tax as a way to help maintain roads. By law, the tax rate is set at 21.5 cents per cubic yard or 15 cents per ton of aggregate material excavated.

Active pits

For townships, the method of distribution of the gravel tax is based on the number of "active" pits within a township rather than by the number of miles of road that are affected by the hauling.

After the deduction of a 5 percent fee for the county to administer the program, the aggregate material tax was distributed 42.5 percent each to the Township Road & Bridge Fund and to the County Road & Bridge Fund. The remaining 15 percent was placed in the Reserve Fund for Pit Restoration.

Distribution

The following 12 townships shared \$22,194 from the fourth quarter of 2011 that was earmarked for the Township Road & Bridge Fund. The settlement for the number of active pits

and dollar amount sent to each township for that year included:

- Belgium, 1 pit, \$924.75;
- Chester, 8 pits, \$4,623.75;
- Gentilly, 3 pits, \$2,774.25;
- Grove Park-Tilden, 4 pits, \$3,699.00;
- Gully, 1 pit, \$924.75;
- Hill River, 3 pits, \$2,774.25;
- Kertsonville, 2 pits, \$1,849.50;
- Liberty, 2 pits, \$1,849.50;
- Onstad, 2 pits, \$1,849.50;
- and Woodside, 1 pit, \$924.75.

The \$57,446.75 that was collected for the Township Road & Bridge Fund in 2012 was distributed to 10 townships in this manner:

- Chester, 5 pits, \$10,638.25;
- Columbia, 1 pit, \$2,217.70;
- Gentilly, 4 pits, \$8,510.60;
- Godfrey, 1 pit, \$2,127.65;
- Grove Park-Tilden, 5 pits, \$10,638.25;
- Gully, 1 pit, \$2,127.70;
- Hill River, 2 pits,

- \$4,255.30;
- Kertsonville, 2 pits, \$4,255.30;
- Liberty, 2 pits, \$4,255.30;
- Onstad, 3 pits, \$6,382.95;
- and Woodside, 1 pit, \$2,127.70.

History of Gravel Tax collections

1997	\$3,325
1998	\$78,035
1999	\$77,655
2000	\$90,678
2001	\$90,391
2002	\$73,975
2003	\$86,007
2004	\$72,362
2005	\$104,077
2006	\$98,378
2007	\$66,497
2008	\$64,299
2009	\$124,766
2010	\$144,334
2011	\$165,101
2012	\$197,253

As representative of townships

Phillips joins Planning Commission

Arlet Phillips, rural East Grand Forks, has joined the Polk County Planning Commission as the representative of the Polk County Township Officers Association. She succeeds Delores Myerchin, rural Crookston.

The Huntsville Township clerk since 1986, Phillips also serves as vice president of the Polk County Township Officers Association.

The County Board approved her appointment to the Planning Commission in April. Myerchin, who is no longer a member of the Crookston Township Board, had served on the 11-member commission since December 2008.

Other members of the Planning Commission are: Donald Wright, Mentor, representing Commissioner District 1; Osmund Moe, Bygland, Dist. 2; Courtney Pulkrabek, Crookston, Dist. 3; Kerry Winkelmann, Fosston, Dist. 4; Robert Franks, Warren, Dist. 5; Wayne Melbye, Crookston,



Arlet Phillips

representing Crookston Mayor David Genereux; Michael Powers, East Grand Forks, representing East Grand Forks Mayor Lynn Stauss; Rolland Gagner, Erskine, representing the Union Lake Sarah Improvement District; and Dennis Yell, Mentor, representing the Maple Lake Improvement District.

Planning Commission members serve three-year terms

except that the mayor representatives serve terms coinciding with the terms of the mayors. The chair of the County Board serves on the commission during the year that he/she is the chair.

Conclusions forwarded

The conclusions of the Planning Commission on matters dealing with the interpretation, application and enforcement of the rules and regulations in the Polk County Zoning Ordinance and those required by state or federal law are forwarded as recommendations to the County Board, which makes the final decision.

Planning Commission members who represent the five commissioner districts (Wright, Moe, Pulkrabek, Winkelmann and Franks) also serve on the Board of Adjustment. This board makes the final decision on requests to vary from the county's zoning rules.

Winkelmann is chair of both the Planning Commission and the Board of Adjustment.



Lori Kasprick

Kasprick is new ABE instructor

Lori Kasprick is the new adult basic education (ABE) instructor at the Northwest Regional Corrections Center in Crookston.

Kasprick, who grew up on an Angus Township farm, has 25 years of experience in the education field as an instructor and para professional. Most recently, she was the assurance of mastery instructor at the Roseau Public School System's Area Learning Center. In that role, she worked with students who were not successful in the traditional classroom setting.

She earned an associate of science degree at the University of Minnesota-Crookston in 1981 and a B.S. degree in elementary education at the University of North Dakota in 1987.

Her work experience includes time as a substitute elementary school teacher, as a special education para professional and later as an instructor for the Roseau School District's Area Learning Center. In between those positions, she was an instructor at the Thief River Falls Area Learning Center at its Roseau site.

In her work for the Area Learning Centers, she planned, developed and implemented core classes and electives to help students earn General Educational Development (GED) certifications, which are equivalent to a high school diploma. The ABE program also works to develop other academic and employability related skills.

Kasprick succeeds Sarah Hillier, who has taken a position with the Crookston School District's Adult Learning Center.

Judge Kraker retires

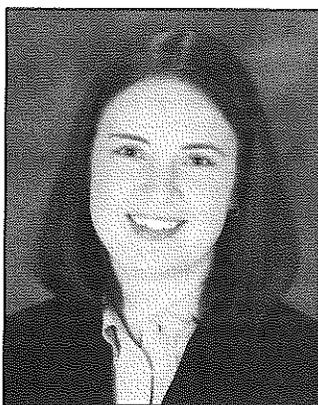
Rasmusson appointed district judge

Gov. Mark Dayton appointed Anne M. Rasmusson as a District Court judge on April 23 to succeed retiring Judge Michael J. Kraker.

Judge Rasmusson was sworn onto the bench on June 14. Her chambers are located in Mahnomen, but she serves in the counties of Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk and Red Lake rotation with Judge Kurt Marben, Judge Donald Aandal, Judge Jeffrey Remick, and Judge Tamara Yon.

Prior to taking the bench, Judge Rasmusson was a partner at the Rust, Stock, Rasmusson & Knutson law firm in Crookston, the firm where she started her career as a law clerk.

Judge Rasmusson has a B.A. degree from St. Catherine



Judge Anne Rasmusson

University in St. Paul, a J.D. degree from the University of Minnesota School of Law and an M.A. from the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, which is also at the University of Minnesota.

She has served as chair of the

14th District Bar Association, chair of the Polk County Development Achievement Center and chair of the Riverview Healthcare Association Board of Directors. She and her family live in Crookston.

Also appointed to fill Ninth District judge vacancies in April were Jana M Austad, Baxter, Minn., who is chambered in Walker in Cass County, and Judge Corey Wahwassuck, Solway, Minn., who is chambered in Grand Rapids in Itasca County.

The Ninth District includes 17 counties. They are Aitkin, Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Hubbard, Itasca, Kittson, Koochiching, Lake of Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau.

Dietz becomes director of building & grounds

Polk County has a new building & grounds director.

Mark Dietz assumed the position on July 1 when he succeeded Jan Skyberg, who retired in June after working in that role for the county for 18 years.

A native of Northfield, Minn., Dietz had worked for Bergstrom Electric, Grand Forks, as a power quality/thermal imaging technician and a Minnesota state journeyman electrician for the past 3½ years.

While attending the University of Minnesota following his graduation from Northfield High School in 1975, Dietz took a part-time summer job with the 3M Company at its photo finishing Dynacolor plant in Northfield. That job led to a fulltime position.

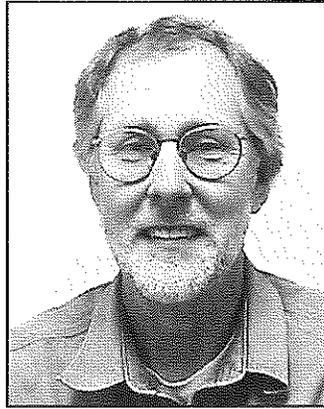
When the plant was closed four years later, he was transferred to the company's ACS (adhesives, coatings and sealers) Division research center in the Twin Cities where he worked for the next 10 years. There, he first worked at developing components for dispensing adhesives and later in the Hardware Development Department where he developed an automated system for dispensing adhesives that was patented.

When 3M offered an early retirement option in 1999, the program came at a time when Dietz and his wife, Diane, were interested in getting out of the Cities.

Moved to Birchdale

"We took them up on the retirement offer and moved up to Birchdale, Minn., where we purchased a 120-acre farm that was about a mile off the Canadian border up by the Rainy River," Dietz says. The land was a part of the Great Louisiana Purchase and hadn't changed hands since then.

"We were the only residents of Manitou Township in



Mark Dietz

Koochiching County. We lived there for 10 years," he says.

During that time Dietz worked at designing and installing furnaces for CENEX for an electrical contractor who needed someone to do the heating part of a major job.

Worked on Engelstad

This led to Dietz earning a journeyman's license as an electrician and starting his own heating and air conditioning business. He operated that for three years before going to work for Ron's Electric in Grand Forks during the construction of Engelstad Arena.

When the arena project was completed, Dietz went to work for Fisher Electric in Thief River Falls. He was building and grounds supervisor for the Thief River Falls School District for a short time before going to work for Bergstrom Electric. He and his wife of 28 years have lived in Thief River Falls for the past 13 years.

"So far," he says of his new position, "I've really enjoyed working with the people here at Polk County. The most important thing about any job is that you have good people to work with and I have experienced nothing but good people here. My desire is to, as much as I can, make buildings and grounds a department that really helps the other people in the county to do their jobs and conduct their business."

Affordable Health Care Act to require hiring more staff

Under the requirements of the Affordable Care Act, as determined by the Minnesota Department of Department of Human Services, Polk County Social Services will need to hire additional staff to perform the eligibility assessments and case management for up to an additional 1,300 potential enrollees.

"From what we have been able to determine to this point," Social Services Director Kent Johnson says, "three eligibility workers will be needed to perform the eligibility assessments and to manage the additional people that will come to us over time. That's beginning from the start of open enrollment on Oct. 1 of this year and continuing."

With 75 percent federal participation

The federal financial participation rate in the cost of these new employees will be 75 percent. "We have been told that there is no determined end to that level of support although it is possible at some point in the future that this could be reduced down to the regular federal financial participation support of roughly 50 percent," Johnson says.

A part of the population that the county will assume is currently served through Minnesota Care, the publicly subsidized program for residents who do not have access to health care coverage. This program is funded by a state tax on hospitals and health care providers, federal Medicaid matching funds and enrollee premiums that are determined on a sliding fee scale based on family size and income.

The benefits for persons served under Minnesota Care are expected to be about the same when converted to the new MnSURE program.

One-stop marketplace

MnSURE, which will also serve persons who have had no access to health insurance, is part of the state's new one-stop insurance marketplace that compares plans and provides a choice of coverage to fits needs. This health care coverage will begin on Jan. 1, 2014.

"Existing staff is going through training to address this new program," Johnson says.

"A new computer program will be used. We won't need all of the new staff initially. Our intent is to work into the new program gradually, learn the new program and gauge our personnel needs based on the new applications that we receive.

Numbers are based upon projections

"The potential numbers that have been given to us thus far are based upon the projections made by the Department of Human Services," Johnson says.

"There a lot of things that are not known about how the rollout is going to work. We're getting new information all the time. Not everyone will be applying right away but over time we know that there will be a lot of additional work as this new federal program develops."

One year & counting

By Chuck Whiting, Polk County Administrator



As they say, time flies when you are having fun. I passed my one-year milestone with Polk County August 20th, celebrated fittingly enough with a daylong county board meeting.

I wouldn't have had it any other way. It has been more than a pleasure working for Polk County residents, the board and with my fellow employees.

The board and my predecessor, Jack Schmalenberg, left a healthy organization well positioned to move to the next level in serving county residents.

Looking back, the opportunity to work with Jack for a few months really helped with our transition and good start for 2013.

Residents likely are already aware of several efforts such as our removal of two downtown Crookston buildings and the former Professional Building adjacent to the Government Center, the borrowing of \$6 million for state aid highway improvement projects, settlement of several labor agreements and remodeling of the Law Enforcement Center.

Website revamped

In August our revamped website was introduced (www.co.polk.mn.us if you haven't seen it yet) as one of many efforts to bring the county organization closer to our residents.

We've added an information technology director, now called management information services director to help us develop further our internal data management and communications along with our external communications.

The County Board Room now has video

screens for more detailed presentations and information for the board's decision making and which might just help us cut down on paper costs to boot.

Pleased with staff

What may not be as visible to residents is our steady development as an organization. I am very pleased with the commitment of our employees and management staff to find ways to improve our services, accessibility and responsiveness to the needs of residents in our county and region.

Polk County's partnerships with other counties in public health, corrections, solid waste management, highways and water management are dynamic and beneficial beyond county borders.

Board members and department heads are not just active in state and region associations but in leadership positions that reflect issues affecting everyday life here in Polk County.

Capitalizing on talent

Staff development is taking place capitalizing on the talent that already exists within the county organization.

While there is still much to do, the willingness to take on challenges facing our county is the first step to adapting and improving on the services that are provided.

Hearing from you is equally important. Visit our website, or feel free to call me at 218-281-5408 or email me at chuck.whiting@co.polk.mn.us with questions, issues or concerns you have with Polk County business.

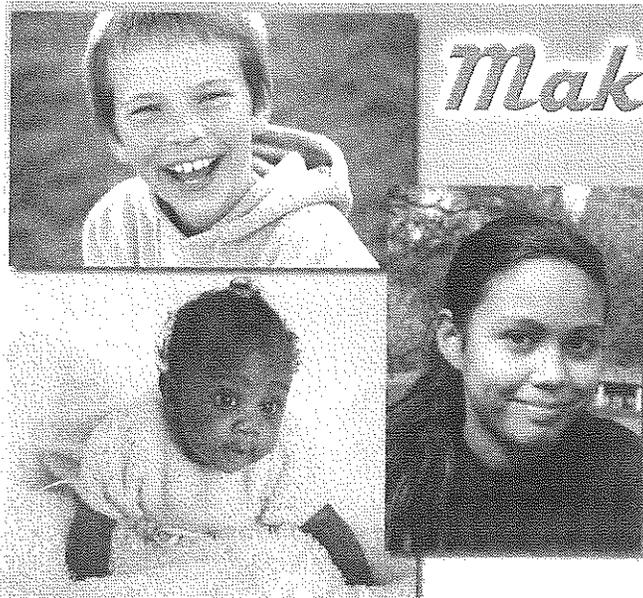
New Plat Book to be out soon

The new 2013 Polk County Plat Book is expected to be available in late October or early November.

The 189-page book, which is being published by Mapping Solutions, Lathrop, MO., will feature updated township maps showing property owners of all land parcels of 5 acres or more along with ditches, roads, etc. There will also be aerial pictures of the townships plus maps of school districts, commissioner districts, and cities.

The price will be \$30. The book will be sold at Taxpayer Service Center in the Government Center in Crookston.

Only 350 copies are being printed. Announcements of the availability of the book will be made by local media.



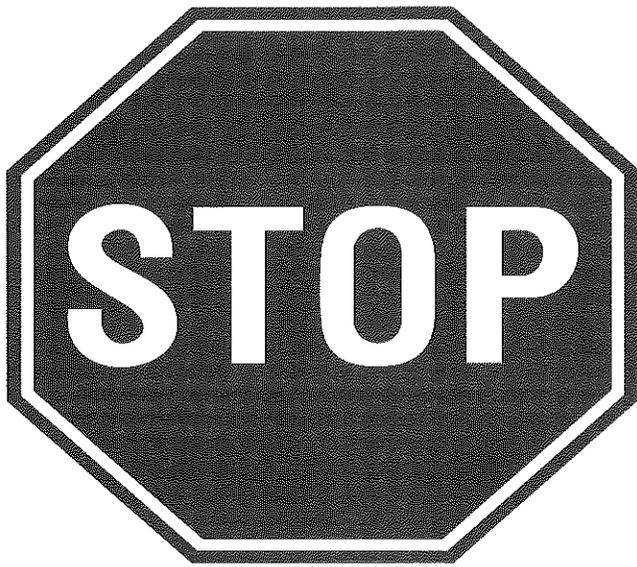
Make a Difference

Change a Life

Become a Foster Parent!

Polk County Social Services

1-877-281-3127



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; or persons receiving dual benefits (from more than one state).

What you should report:

- Who** — The name of the person
- What** — The fraud suspected
- When** — Date of occurrence
- Where** — Address of person

If you suspect someone of misusing or abusing Minnesota assistance programs, call the Polk County Sheriff's Office at this number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

1-218-281-0431 (ask for ext. 2249)

**You may remain
anonymous**

When it arrives, flu vaccine to be available on Health Service days

When the flu vaccine arrives for the 2013-2014 flu season this fall, it will be made available on Polk County Public Health Service Days.

These days are held every Tuesday in the Crookston office from 3-5:30 p.m., at East Grand Forks on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month from 3-4:30 p.m., and at McIntosh on the 1st and 3rd Thursday from 9-11 a.m.

Flu vaccine includes shots and the nasal mist. Initially flu vaccine will be available for children 6 months through 18 years of age. Children must meet the Minnesota Vaccine for Children program guidelines. Vaccine is free with a donation of \$10 for administration.

What is influenza (flu)?

Influenza is a contagious respiratory disease that can be prevented by immunization. It is not the same as the stomach flu. Flu is caused by a virus that attacks the nose, throat, and lungs and can cause mild to severe illness and at times can lead to death.

Should I get a flu vaccination this year?

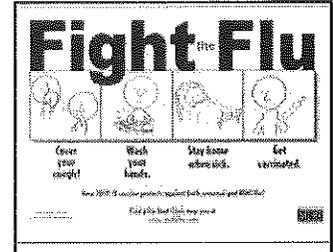
Yes. Everyone 6 months of age and older should get flu vaccine this year. Even if you received flu vaccine last year, you should still get flu vaccine again this year.

Getting a flu shot (or nasal spray) helps protect you from getting the flu, so you won't pass it to people who risk get-

Civil marriages can be performed by county official

Civil marriages can now be performed by Polk County Director of Property Records Michelle M. Cote, who has obtained the proper credentials to perform this service.

To be married, couples must have a valid Minnesota marriage license, acceptable photo



ting very sick — like babies, pregnant women, elderly people, and people who have chronic diseases.

Who is most at risk for getting very sick from influenza?

Those most at risk for becoming seriously ill from the flu include: People age 65 and older, young children, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease.

What are the symptoms of flu?

Influenza symptoms come on quickly in the form of fever, dry cough, sore throat, headache, extreme tiredness, stuffed-up nose and body aches. These symptoms can be severe and put you in bed for several days.

How is the flu different from a cold?

A cold generally stays up in the head while the flu brings body aches, fever and extreme fatigue. A person with a cold will usually keep up his or her normal activities, while someone with the flu will often feel too sick to do so.

identification, and have paid the \$25 fee.

A five-day waiting period is required before a license can be issued. Additional information is available by calling the Polk County Taxpayer Service Center, 218-281-3464.

Has 20 years of information technology experience

Sullivan is new information services director

New Management Information Services Director Sebastian Sullivan comes to Polk County with more than 20 years of information technology experience at both the technical and managerial levels.

He has headed information technology (IT) departments in the food service, media production, retail, call center, repair center, and health-care sectors for organizations ranging in size from small business to global Fortune 500 corporations.

His experience in the healthcare area includes being in charge of IT operations and security for a multi-hospital group based in Southern Illinois and most recently heading the information systems (IS) department overseeing the implementation of systems for a new hospital in Nebraska on a timetable that required having everything in place for a seamless transition from the old to the new in just a 24-hour period.

Oversight responsibility

In one Fortune 500 position, Sullivan had responsibility for 317 computers at the site he was based, which soon grew to include administration of 214 servers located across 17 other U.S. sites and overseas.

About that job, he says, "If a site went down for a minute, it would cost the company \$100,000-plus in lost sales from the calls that weren't coming in. There was high mission criticality in making sure that everything was up and running all the time. No stress there, right?"

Sullivan, who started work in the newly created Polk County position on July 1, has multiple degrees — an A.A.S. degree in engineering; a B.S. degree in management information systems; and an MBA degree in business administration specializing in technology management. He is a certified Six Sigma green belt in techniques designed to make improvements in all types of business, manufacturing and service processes.

A former small business owner, Sullivan started up his own restaurant, bar, and coffee house while working on completing his business degree. The establishment was the first one to provide Internet to its customers and featured private dining rooms, an executive stateroom for banquets, area for live entertainment, a full bar, outdoor tables, and a lobby gift shop.

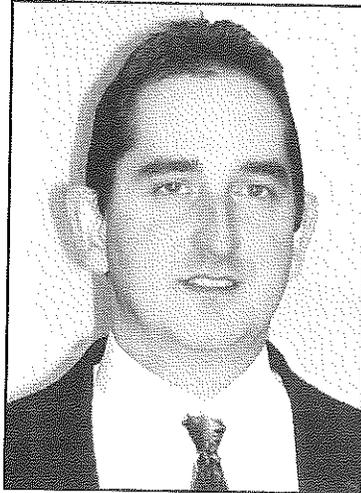
At that time, he was also appointed by then Mayor Chris Grissom to serve a seat on the city's technology committee.

From farming family

Sullivan grew up in a farming family in a small Southern Illinois town with a population of about 300. He currently has a small hobby farm of his own in eastern Nebraska, where he grows Brougham grass and alfalfa and raises livestock. He has a passion for cars and machinery in general and owns a working classic 1950 era International Harvester Farnall diesel tractor that he is restoring.

He also restores antique tube radios, produces video documentaries, enjoys traveling, outdoor activities, water sports, downhill skiing, soccer and is a musician with talents in composing, playing the bass guitar, keyboard and singing vocals in his studio when he has time

While traveling back to Nebraska — where his interests include a girlfriend and keeping watch over his farm operations — one weekend in July, Sullivan had the opportunity to learn firsthand about the friendliness, hospitality and generosity of people after the GPS in his car led him down a minimum maintenance road shortly after it had rained for several hours.



Sebastian Sullivan

Not much clearance

"I was in my Corvette, which only has about three inches of ground clearance on paved roads, so there was really no way to turn around," Sullivan relates of the incident. "The road went from gravel to dirt and then to two ruts with some grass down the middle and steep ditches along both sides. I drove over five miles with mud flying everywhere.

"Smoke was blowing out of the front end of the car by the time I reached the end of 12th Street in Grandin, N.D. The tires were surrounded by so much hardened mud packed up inside of the wheel wells they could hardly spin... that's where the smoke was coming from."

At Grandin, a Good Samaritan — Matt E. Leichtenberg, whose name and address are treasured bits of information — came to Sullivan's aide. "He told me that he just lived a block away and that if I could manage to get the car there, he would let me use his pressure washer to get all of that mud out so I could get back on the road.

He sure saved the day for me and his generosity and willingness to lend a helping hand was deeply appreciated. I was worried that I was going to have to cancel my trip and spend my time off at an auto repair shop."

Enjoys rural lifestyle

Of his move to Polk County, Sullivan says, "I really enjoy the rural lifestyle, as that is what I have been familiar with most of my life. My grandfather owned a 2,000-acre or so ranch on which red Angus cattle were raised and I grew up around that."

His interest in the county position, he says, "is for the opportunity to move out of the private healthcare sector into the public government sector. With national health care reform fully underway, there is a tremendous amount of stress and uncertainty with hospitals scrambling to adjust and meet all of the new mandates and changes being put into effect.

"As a result," he says, "there's a lot of restructuring, realignment, turnover and consolidation going on. To remain viable and achieve a more sustainable business model, a number of smaller independent hospitals are either voluntarily joining up with or being taken over and absorbed by larger groups."

"With so much change going on in that sector right now, I decided that working on the government side would provide more stability while still enabling my work efforts to benefit the community as a whole. At the end of the day, it is all about helping people whether it's in a healthcare or civil service capacity. That is what is most rewarding to me."

County opportunity

A colleague, Sullivan says, brought to his attention a government position in Crookston. While looking into that, he discovered there was also an opportunity with Polk County and chose to pursue it.

"I'm excited to see so much positive change, growth and innovation going on in the county. It clearly stands out as a trend setter throughout the region with other counties watching to see what it is doing and how it is successfully achieving its goals. I think that says a lot.

"One of the things that really impressed me when deciding to join the county, is the fact it has such a strong, forward-thinking and progressive leadership. Unlike many places where there is just a lot of talk, the leadership of Polk is demonstrably moving things forward to truly meet the growing needs of the community and is committed to making new changes and improvements. I feel privileged to be a part of the great team here!"

Environmental Services report:

Loan plan for upgrading septic systems set

Using funding received from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Polk County has established a low-interest loan program for upgrading failing sewage treatment systems (STS) for low-income homeowners, who meet program guidelines.

Polk County recently was approved for additional funding for a 2014 STS loan program.

For more information about Polk County land use permits or on the STS Loan Program, please contact (218) 281-5700.

Solid Waste Fee

The Solid Waste Fee Assessments for 2014 will remain at the same level as 2013. Despite increases in tip fees, service provider costs and fuel increases — and decreases in recyclable material sales at markets — Polk County is not budgeting for an increase in the residential and non-residential solid waste service fees for next year.

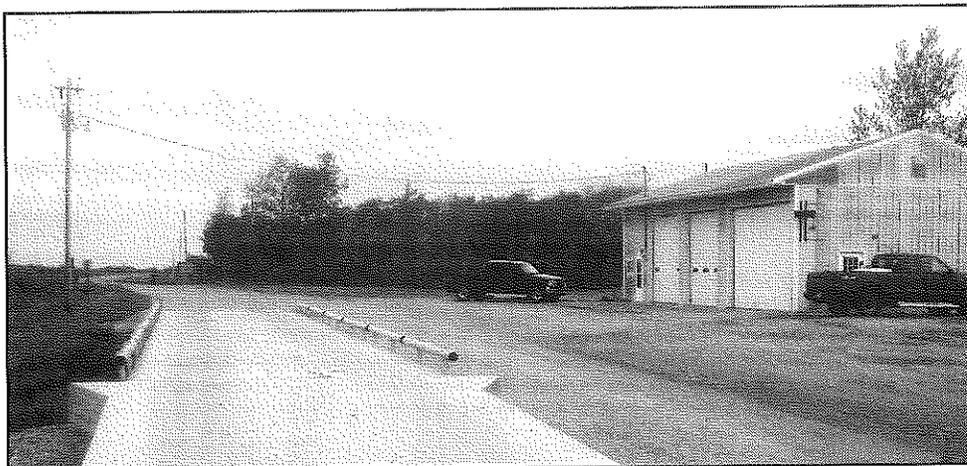
The residential service fee is currently set at \$100 per residential dwelling. This is the fifth consecutive year the assessment has been set at this rate.

Fee funds programs

The residential service fee funds various programs for Polk County residents (except residents/businesses within the City of East Grand Forks, who do not participate in the Polk County program).

There are no tip fees, state tax nor hauling charges imposed on the bagged (burnable) household waste received at the Transfer Station or Incinerator from Polk County residents and businesses.

The recycling program and the household hazardous waste (HHW) program are paid for from this fund as are most of the residential special waste programs. These programs include: yard waste, white goods (appliances), scrap metal, passenger vehi-



New scale

Municipal solid waste (MSW) is now received at the Land Fill on a weight basis rather than volume system that had been in place. This provides a more accurate and fair way for billing among other benefits including permit compliance.

cle tires, used oil/oil filters, fluorescent bulbs/ballasts, auto & marine batteries, and electronic waste.

For more information about Polk County's solid waste programs, please call (218) 281-6445.

Landfill Complex

The Landfill Complex near Gently is comprised of a demolition landfill, municipal solid waste (MSW) landfill, ash monofill and source separated organic material (SSOM) compost facility.

A new MSW cell was added to the landfill last fall and, prior to freeze-up, the groundwork to add a full-length truck scale to the south of the landfill office was completed.

The new scale was set during the spring and became operational shortly thereafter. The scale has allowed Polk County to make the switch from a volume-based system to a weight-based system.

Fair and accurate

This move provides for a more accurate and transparent billing for customers and better operational planning and permit compliance for the facility.

Two other changes will

occur related to the landfill and scale shortly: an addition to the landfill office and installation of a scale communication system. Both changes are geared toward compliance with scale requirements and improving customer service.

For more information on the Landfill Complex, please call (218) 281-5419.

Resource Recovery Facility — Incinerator/Material Recovery Facility

Contracts for waste processing and disposal services between Polk County and its partner counties of Beltrami, Clearwater, Mahanomen and Norman is set to expire Dec. 31, 2014. These counties have all expressed a strong desire to maintain their long-standing partnership with Polk County going forward and contract discussions are ongoing.

It is expected that contracts with these partner counties will be reached in the coming months.

In addition to maintaining relationships with its partner counties, Polk is also exploring new partnership opportunities with some surrounding communities for handling both waste and recyclable

materials at the Resource Recovery Facility in Fosston.

In order to offer that service to other counties, a tip floor addition at the incinerator and upgrade to material recovery facility equipment would need to be completed.

The tip floor addition would be required to manage the larger volumes of both waste and recyclables. The material processing equipment changes are necessary to extract more recyclable materials from the waste and to process the single stream recyclable material at a faster rate.

Grant sought

To assist payment for these facility modifications, Polk County has applied for a Capital Assistance Project (CAP) Grant for 2014 for the Resource Recovery Facility. If awarded, the CAP Grant would fund up to 50 percent of the cost of infrastructure improvements to the facility. A determination on that request will not be known until late spring of 2014.

For more information on the Resource Recovery Facility, please call (218) 435-6501. — **Jon Steiner, Environmental Services administrator**

Public Health Services

Health Screenings and Disease Prevention

SITE	ADDRESS	DAYS	HOURS
Crookston	721 S. Minnesota St	Every Tuesday	3:00 – 5:30 p.m.
East Grand Forks	1424 Central Ave NE	2 nd and 4 th Wednesday of each month*	3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
McIntosh	275 Cleveland Ave	1 st and 3 rd Thursday of each month*	9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

*Immunizations at these locations are available by appointment only

Public Health services available by walk-in or appointment:

- ✓ Childhood and adult immunizations
- ✓ Limited family planning services: pregnancy testing and contraceptives-including oral birth control pills, patch, ring, depo shot, plan b/emergency contraceptives, male/female condoms, dental dams
- ✓ Mantoux-TB testing
- ✓ Dental varnish- fluoride treatment
- ✓ Lead Testing
- ✓ Blood Pressure Check
- ✓ Cholesterol screening
- ✓ Blood Sugar screening
- ✓ Flu shot
- ✓ Height and weight checks, including baby weight checks
- ✓ Hemoglobin
- ✓ Hearing and vision screening

** Comprehensive Family Planning Clinic in Crookston office on Wednesday's 2:30-4:30 p.m. by appointment. Contraceptives, STI Diagnosis and Treatment, Pregnancy Testing, Gynecological Exams, Counseling, Education and Referrals
Additional Crookston Family Planning Walk-In Hours- Mon and Thurs 2:00-4:30 p.m.

Questions or to make an appointment?

Call 218-281-3385.
Walk-ins welcome.

What if I'm not able to come during these times?

Call and schedule an appointment for another date/time.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

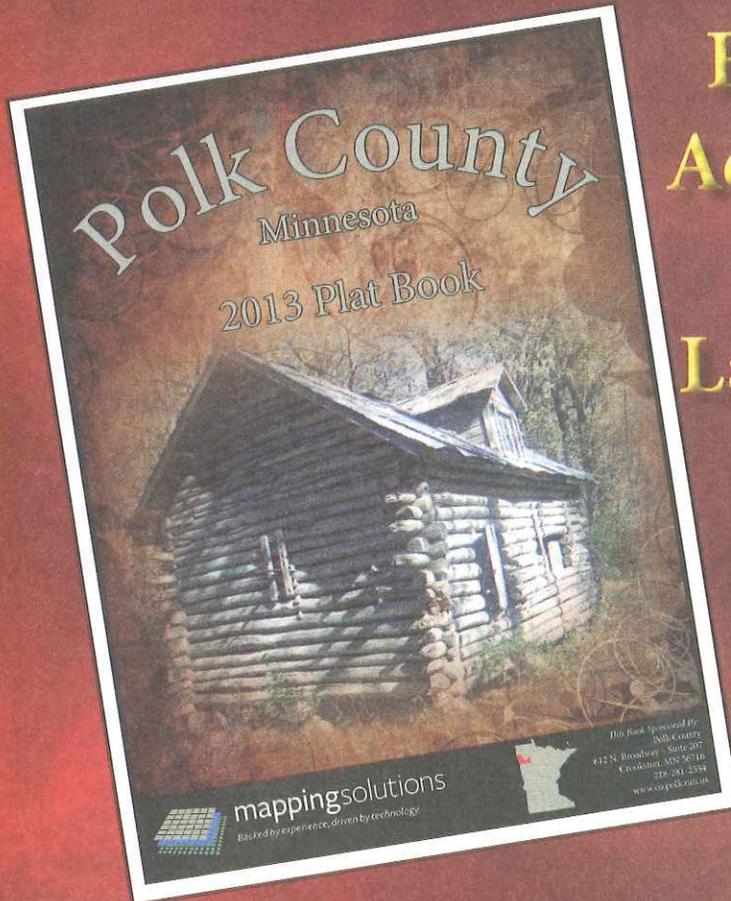
No one will be turned away or denied services due to inability to pay.



Coming Soon!

2013 Polk County Plat Book

**Featuring
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Lake Maps!**



NEW 2013 Edition

**Polk County Taxpayer Service Center
612 North Broadway, Suite 207
Crookston, MN 56716
218-281-2554**