

# Polk County Newsletter

Spring 2013

## County goal for 2013: 'Staying the course'

Keeping Polk County on course and moving forward. That's what Commissioner Craig Bunes sees as one of the main goals for the Board of Commissioners in 2013.

"We don't want to drop the ball. The county has been fortunate to have had strong leadership and we need to keep that going," he says. "I attended an orientation conference in St. Paul in January with new Commissioner Nick Nicholas and Administrator Chuck Whiting. After listening to the problems that commissioners from other counties are having, I commented on the ride home that I was sure glad that we were heading back to Polk County. We don't have the issues that a lot of those other counties are having.

"Looking forward that to me," he says,

"is one of the biggest things... for us not to drop the ball and to continue doing what we are doing. I think that we are going in the right direction. Another thing that I think is important is that we continue to be transparent... that everything that we do is out front. And it is important that we are there for any questions and issues that people might have."

The commissioner from District 1, Bunes, who lives in Crookston, succeeded the retiring Bill Montague as chair when the board re-organized at the first meeting in January. Don Diedrich, rural Warren, is the new vice chair. The chair and vice chair positions rotate annually among the five county commissioners.

### Nicholas starts term

Nicholas, Crookston, who won election

to his first term in November, is the new commissioner from the Third District. Montague had represented that district for three four-year terms. Both Bunes and Diedrich, rural Warren, were also re-elected in November, Bunes to his second term and Diedrich to his third.

Further re-organization of county government will occur in July when Commissioner Warren Affeldt, Fosston, is slated to succeed Warren Strandell, East Grand Forks, as chair of the Polk County Social Services Board. That board, which meets monthly as a separate body, is made up of the five county commissioners and two at-large members, Cathy Gutterud, Fosston, and Paula Waters, Crookston.

See **STAYING COURSE**, Page 2



After 112 years of service (including the 20 years since it became owned by Polk County), the Pro Building has been cleared for redevelopment. See story on Page 2.

## Sheriff's Office changes make for a busy year

A lot of things are going on in the Polk County Sheriff's Office.

Issues currently on Sheriff Barb Erdman's plate include the pending retirements and replacements of three veteran members of the department including the chief deputy, the creation of a new Transport Division, having a new officer still in the training portion of his employment, working through the installation of a new computer-based phone system in the Dispatch Center that will expand the types of incoming 9-1-1 calls, and information that can be received, and dealing with "next gen" communications issues as the Dispatch Center works to convert to an 800 MHz radio system.

There's also the possibility that the Crookston and East Grand Forks police departments will have their dispatching done by the Polk County Dispatch Center.

On top of that the Law Enforcement Center building, the department's home base, is in the

See **SHERIFF'S OFFICE**, Page 3

# Staying the course

Continued from Page 1

Business in 2013, Buness says, will include decisions on how to proceed with making the Professional Building site in Crookston available for redevelopment, installing the equipment in the Dispatch Center that is needed to handle new ways receive 9-1-1 calls (text and video in addition to voice), deciding how to proceed with the conversion of the Dispatch Center to 800 MHz "next gen" radio equipment, completing the Law Enforcement Center remodeling project, overseeing the first year of the joint powers agreement in which the Polk and Norman-Mahnomen public health departments are working together, and the creation of a Transport Division in the Sheriff's Department.

### Weight watching

"We also have to continue our efforts to control overweight trucks so as to mini-

mize the deterioration of the 950 miles of county roads. Those roads are probably one of Polk County's biggest assets and we don't want to jeopardize them. With funding getting tougher all the time and gas tax dollars not keeping up with the demand, it obviously makes sense to protect what we have.

"We have to work with the farming and manufacturing distribution interests that are hauling the heaviest loads to keep them legal. We need a good working agreement with these users of the roads," Buness says.

"This is also the first full year with Chuck Whiting as county administrator. I'm sure there will be a learning curve there and some adapting... the board to his leadership and him to the board's preferred direction. We were fortunate that Chuck was able to start last August and have opportunity to work with Jack

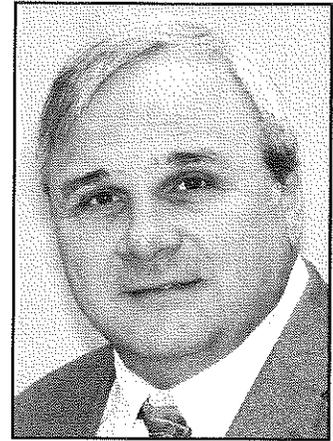
Schmalenberg for several months before Jack retired."

Buness notes that a tax-forfeited property in downtown Crookston that had fallen into an advanced and dangerous state of disrepair was eliminated and removed in November in a joint project with the City of Crookston. Because the two properties shared a common roof and wall, the project required the purchase of the adjoining Rocks Jewelry property.

The county and City of Crookston split the \$25,000 purchase price for the Rocks property. It is anticipated that the City of Crookston will redevelop the site. Donarski Brothers of Crookston removed the two buildings at a cost of \$48,500.

### Dispatch issue

Another issue, Buness says is that the county is waiting to hear responses from Crookston and East Grand Forks about an invitation to develop a plan to consolidate the three individ-



Craig Buness

ual dispatch operations into a single dispatch center. He also envisions more collaboration with other counties in the effort to do things more efficiently.

"I hope that we can keep that thought going as we all try to do things better and at less cost," he says.

## The end comes for 112-year-old former hospital, nursing home

# 'Pro Building' site to be available for development

Its purpose now fulfilled over a life of some 112 years, the old Pro Building has been taken down to make way for the potential redevelopment of the more-than-one-block piece of property located north of downtown in Crookston.

A contract to demolish and remove the two-story building was awarded to Donarski Brothers, Inc., Crookston, as a part of the Jan. 15 meeting of the County Board. The \$86,000 contract includes removal of all materials including foundation walls and all concrete plus backfilling of the site. Asbestos had been previously removed.

Built as St. Vincent Hospital in 1901 by a small group of Benedictine Sisters, who had come to Crookston from Duluth, the building was converted into St. Vincent Rest Home in 1950 when the 100-bed St. Francis Hospital opened. It became a privately-owned office building in the 1980s with the name Crookston Professional Center then adopted.

### Seven-year plan

Facing a growing shortage of office space, Polk County purchased the building in 1992 with the expectation that it could fill that need for about seven years.

The decision by the County Board to provide for other office space came following a tour of the building in summer 2003. After the tour, William Montague, the board chair then, noted, "We've known for some time that major improvements would be needed to have the building comply with fire and safety code regulations. But because of its age and general condition we can't justify spending a lot of money on something that has such a limited future. The building, which was never meant to serve as an office building in the first place, has served the county well but the board is in full agreement that the time has come for the building to be replaced."

During its use by the county, the building had housed three units of the Social Services Department (the Income Maintenance and Child Support divisions in addition to a unit of social workers). It also provided office space for the Polk County Attorney, Minnesota Public Defenders, Polk County Probation Services, and Migrant Health Services.

The decision to seek other office space to replace that provided by the Pro Building evolved into construction of the

combination Polk County Justice Center and Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail complex in southwest Crookston.

### More and better space needed

At the time, the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) was adamant that additional and improved jail space was required. It was even threatening closure of the jail.

Construction of the Justice Center portion of the complex provided space for all court-related activities with the District Court and court administration relocated there from the Government Center along with the county attorney, the public defenders and probation offices from the Pro Building.

When district court activities were moved to the new Justice Center, the social service offices that had been in the Pro Building were able to move under the same roof in the Government Center as the other divisions of that department.

Demolition and removal of the Pro Building is expected to be complete by spring. Several options are expected for the sale of the site to developers.

# Sheriff's Office

Continued from Page 1

middle of a remodeling project that will convert the old jail cellblocks into more useable space while also replacing the roof and updating the heating and air conditioning systems. With that work underway, several office areas and access to and the use of different areas of the building are in a state of disarray.

One of the issues — that of naming a new chief deputy — has been accomplished. Sgt. James Tadman is set to succeed Karl Erickson in that position on April 1.

Erickson, who is retiring after 30 years in law enforcement, has spent nearly 29 of them with Polk County. The replacement of longtime road patrol deputies Randy Lee and Michael Murray, who both plan to retire about mid-summer, will be completed later. A new investigations sergeant will also be selected to replace Tadman, who has held that position.

## New deputy

The new deputy, Kyle Lindberg, who was hired in December and is currently in the training phase of his employment, grew up at Fertile where he will be stationed. He attended Minnesota State University Moorhead before completing his POST (Police Officer Skills Training) certification at Alexandria Community College. Lindberg comes to Polk County after working with the Red Lake Tribal Police.

The Transport Division is being created through an agreement with Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC), which operates the Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail.

This new two-officer unit will focus on the transportation of federal prisoners to and from U.S. District Court appearances. The cost of adding the transport officers will be funded by TCCC, which will reimburse the Sheriff's Office from revenue that it receives from housing prisoners for the U.S. Marshals Service.

The Marshals Service requires that there be two armed law enforcement officers when prisoners are transported.

## Revenue needed

TCCC, which has jail space available to house additional prisoners, has a need for more operating revenue if it is to avoid asking increases in the assessments collected from the three partner counties (Polk, Norman and Red Lake) to fund its operations. In addition to the corrections officers

that it employs to operate the 212-bed jail, TCCC also provides probation services in the three counties.

## 9-1-1 upgrade slated

The 9-1-1 upgrade, for which the County has budgeted more than a quarter million dollars this year, is required to prepare the Dispatch Center to receive 9-1-1 calls and information via text and video in addition to the current voice method.

Nationwide, the 9-1-1 system is gearing up to being able to handle these new types of calls and information.

The County Board this month took action to proceed with conversion to the Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response (ARMER) 800 MHz radio system for its communication with deputies in the field and with other public service agencies including law enforcement, fire departments, ambulance services and state agencies. The action sets the stage for the county to apply for grant funding to aid in the conversion.

The State Patrol, Department of Transportation, Department of Natural Resources, and Emergency Services have already completed the switch to ARMER. So have 69 of the state's 87 counties.

## Consolidation question

Crookston, which does its own daytime dispatching, and East Grand Forks, which does all of its own dispatching 24-7, must soon decide whether to upgrade their radio equipment or to have the county's only recognized Public Safety Answering Point — the Dispatch Center — do dispatching for them. That's where the possibility of consolidation could occur.

Sheriff Erdman acknowledges that 2013 will be a busy and exciting year with many new challenges. "No one could have predicted that all of this would occur in one year but when the dust settles, we will have accomplished much," she says. "Not only will we be updating critical public safety infrastructure by looking at what we can do to streamline delivery of our 9-1-1 operations but also introducing five new deputies, who will be well trained and ready to serve the citizens of Polk County.

"In all of my years of service, we have never experienced so much change at once but it is critical that you stay abreast of the challenges while working in an ever-changing environment and sometimes trying conditions."

# Remodeling of old jail to extend life, provide better space

Work is underway on a remodeling project that will not only create more usable space in the Polk County Law Enforcement Center building but also prepare it for a greatly extended life.

See Floor Plan on Back Page

The \$2,088,078 project involves removing the jail cells and converting that space for other uses, while also upgrading the heating and cooling systems and replacing the roof of the 36-year-old building. The project will be paid for from existing county funds.

General contractor for the project is KUE Contractors, Inc., Watkins, Minn. Sub-contractors are Air Mechanical, Fargo, and Wiebolt Electric, Bemidji.

The building was constructed to serve as a county jail and to house the Polk County Sheriff's Office and its Emergency Management Division. An addition was constructed in 1996-97 for a new Polk County Dispatch Center and to create the Red River Valley Juvenile Center.

## Space conversions planned

Richard Rude Architectural, Bemidji, designed the scope of the current project. The work will convert one cellblock into space for secure evidence storage and another for a training room. Other former jail cell space will be converted to house the Emergency Management Division and the Sheriff's Department Drug Task Force.

The former Adult Basic Education program classroom will become a public meeting/conference room. The remaining former jail space will be cleared of the jail cells and left unfinished for future use.

Considering the solid construction of the structure, Rude advised the County Board during discussions about future use of the building and the need for upgrades to the roof and to heating and cooling systems, that an investment in the structure now would "make it very functional for another 50 years or more."

By contrast, if not maintained, the option to some day have to remove it, he said, would be very expensive because of the secure jail construction that was built into the structure.

# New plat book at the printers

A new Polk County Plat Book is in the making.

Mapping Solutions, Lathrop, MO, will publish 350 four-color books featuring updated township maps that show property owners of all land parcels of 5 acres or more.

The maps will show cities, ditches, roads, school districts, and commissioner districts. The book will also include government and

business directories.

The current plat book was printed in 2009. Of the 500 books printed then according to Michelle Cote, county director of property records, only 15 remain unsold. The price of this book is \$35.

The new books are expected to be available in 5 to 6 months. The price has not yet been determined. Advance orders are not yet being accepted.

'30 years in law enforcement long enough'

# Karl Erickson plans retirement

Polk County Chief Deputy Karl Erickson will end a 30-year career in law enforcement on March 31 but retirement from that field doesn't mean that he will be retiring from work.

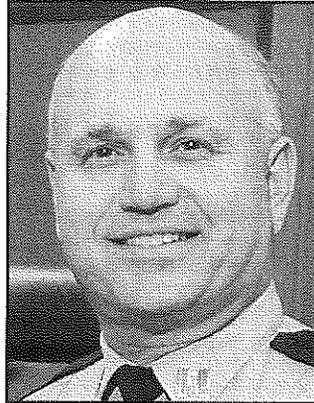
"Thirty years in law enforcement is long enough," he says. "It's just time to do something else. I don't have anything planned. I'm just going to go out the door and see what the wind blows up. I don't think there will be a shortage of opportunities or things to do."

A native of Bagley, where he graduated from high school in 1978, Erickson earned a B.A. degree in criminal justice at Moorhead State University in 1982 and received his law enforcement skills certificate at the Hibbing, Minn., Area Vocational & Technical College in November 1982.

### Started at Fosston

His first job in law enforcement was as a patrol officer for the City of Fosston beginning on Feb. 1, 1983. It ended only 15 months later when then Polk County Sheriff Earl Mosher recruited him to become a deputy sheriff.

Erickson's time with Polk County officially began on May



Karl Erickson

9, 1984, when as a patrol officer he was stationed out of East Grand Forks. He then worked in investigations for seven years starting in 1986. Erickson took leave to campaign for sheriff in 1994 but, while an unsuccessful candidate by the slimmest of margins, it didn't create any problems in the department.

### Promoted

The successor in that election, Doug Qualley, immediately promoted him to sergeant and made him a shift supervisor in January 1995. Qualley later moved Erickson up to the position of chief deputy (captain) in August 2000.

"Mark (Letexier) asked me to stay on as his chief deputy when he was elected sheriff in the fall of 2000," Erickson says. He remained chief deputy when Barb Erdman was elected sheriff in 2010.

Erickson and his wife, Susan Rasmussen, an attorney who works for Garden Valley Telephone Co., live south of Erskine. "We will have been married for 30 years in June. We have a yellow Lab named Lilly. We aren't going anywhere, we aren't leaving the area," he says.

### Certified emergency manager

Active in the community, Erickson is a member of the Winger Lions Club and secretary-treasurer of the Grace Cemetery Association. He's also a certified emergency manager.

"I've been so very lucky. I'm not unhappy about anything in law enforcement. I've been treated very well and been trained very well," he says. "I had some very good advice from some senior deputies and from family and friends and it has paid off. I'm leaving the department now because I can and because I want to explore some other opportunities."

## Polk County Attorney's Office

Activity Summary  
Jan.-Dec. 2012

### Felony & Gross Misdemeanors

Complaints prepared	389
Sentencing hearings	362
Committed to state prison	67
Probation violation hearings	475
Committed to state prison	47
Total committed to prison	114
Jury/Court trials	10/1
Cases with convictions	9/0

### Misdemeanors

Guilty pleas	73
Trials	2

### Appeals

Polk County Attorney Office	12
Minnesota Attorney Gen. Office	0

### Juvenile Cases

Delinquency petitions	24
Child in need of protective services (CHIPS) petitions	91
Delinquency hearings	385
EJJ probation	0
CHIPS hearings	363

### County Welfare

Commitment petitions*	27
Commitment hearings	41
Guardianship petitions	14
Guardianship hearings	20

\* Mentally ill and/or inebriate

### Child Support

Child support hearings	153
Paternity hearings	275

25-year member of the department

# Tadman to become chief deputy

Sgt. James Tadman has been selected by Polk County Sheriff Barb Erdman to become chief deputy of the department effective on April 1... the day after current Chief Deputy Karl Erickson retires.

A 25-year member of the department, Tadman currently heads up the investigations unit and evidence storage. He also supervises department training and serves as the Use of Force Defensive Tactics, Firearms, and Taser instructor.

A native of Esko, Minn., where he graduated from high school in 1983, Tadman attended the University of Minnesota-Duluth before earning an associate degree in law enforcement and his POST

(Police Officer Skills Training) certification at Hibbing Community College. He began work for Polk County on Feb. 1, 1988.

### Interned in Polk

Tadman had worked in patrol, boat & water, investigations, and in other aspects of law enforcement in Polk County during a 640-hour internship in 1987.

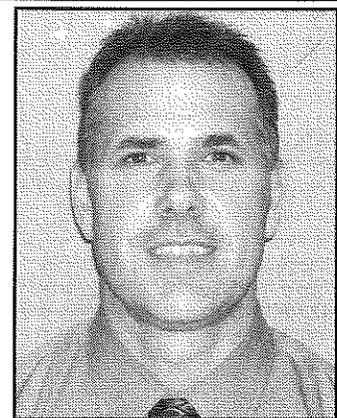
"When the internship was over," Tadman says, "Sheriff Doug Qualley and Chief Deputy Walt Keller invited me to come back to the department and work with the Polk/Norman County Narcotics Task Force."

For the first year and a half,

Tadman worked in under cover in narcotics investigation. He then worked patrol for four years before going back to investigations. In 1996, he became a canine officer and in 2000 returned again to investigations. Tadman was promoted by past Sheriff Mark LeTexier to sergeant and the head of investigations in 2004.

He and his wife, Stacy (Sandberg), have lived in the Erskine community for the past 18 years. They have three children who attend the Win-E-Mac Schools. Their son, Austin, is a sophomore; daughter, Sydney, is a seventh grader, and daughter, Kianna, is in first grade.

Tadman has been a member



James Tadman

of the Win-E-Mac Board of Education for 10 years. He is also a member of the Erskine Volunteer Fire Department, a member of Lodge #8 Fraternal Order of Police and is an instructor at Northland Community College.

# Polk County Employee Anniversaries in 2013

<u>Hire</u>	<u>Employee</u>	<u>Department-Position</u>
6/1/78	Neil Parkin	Highway Dept.-stock clerk
10/3/78	Sylvia Nelson	Soc. Svcs.-child support supervisor I
11/16/83	Brian Hoiseth	Highway Dept.-engineering tech IIIC
1/4/88	Jay Rhone	Solid Waste-maintenance supervisor
1/4/88	Shawn Sebenaler	Incinerator-waste combustion operator
2/22/88	Michael Murray	Sheriff's Dept.-patrolman
3/21/88	Velma Axtell	Soc. Svcs.-family based service provider
4/15/88	Ricardo Ramon	Soc. Svcs.-eligibility worker
5/9/88	James Tadman	Sheriff's Dept.-sergeant
6/1/88	Michelle Cote	Director of Property Tax Records
9/1/88	Arla Meyer	Finance Dept.-administrative assistant II
9/12/88	Lynette Lindgren	Soc. Svcs.-accounting technician
9/27/88	Clarisse Miller	Soc. Svcs.-child support officer
10/17/88	Ron Larson	Facilities Operation Manager
10/20/88	Marvin Berg	Environmental Services-landfill tech
11/21/88	Randy Beggs	Soc. Svcs.-accounting technician
1/4/93	Darrin Caristrom	Highway Dept.-project engineer
6/2/93	Maxine Newhouse	Taxpayer Svc. Center-adm. assistant I
8/23/93	Deborah Berhow	County Attorney-clerk typist cashier IIIA
9/7/93	LeAnn Holte	Soc. Svcs.-financial assistance supr. II
9/16/93	Jill Sonsteli	Public Health-Reg. Nurse II
9/20/93	Cherie Chaput	Soc. Svcs.-accounting technician
3/6/98	Heath Hanson	Sheriff's Dept.-patrolman
7/6/98	Darcy Bjorgo	Finance Dept.-accounting clerk II
8/3/98	Wesly Oian	Taxpayer Svc. Center-appraiser/tax off. IV
9/1/98	Michael LeBlanc	Highway Dept.-maintenance II
9/1/98	Kimberly Tweten	Soc. Svcs.-social worker (CPS)
9/9/98	Lori Oian	Finance Dept.-clerk typist cashier IV
1/6/03	Greg Widseth	County Attorney
1/22/03	Scott Buhler	Assistant County Attorney
5/5/03	Lisa Wiersma	Sheriff's Dept.-accounting clerk II
11/6/03	Gail Strom	Incinerator-sort line operator
11/10/03	Rebecca Halvorson	Taxpayer Svc. Center-appraiser/tax off. II
2/20/08	Denise Zier	Soc. Svcs.-social worker (CPS)
4/7/08	Heather Olson	Soc. Svcs.-eligibility worker
4/14/08	Jeanette Knott	Soc. Svcs.-social worker
5/1/08	Jacob Snyder	Environmental Services-technician
5/5/08	Kathi Stromberg	Sheriff's Dept.-clerk typist cashier III
5/21/08	Sara Preusser	Soc. Svcs.-support enforcement aide
5/27/08	Ryan Melsa	Information Technology-technical analyst
6/4/08	Brittney Palm	Soc. Svcs.-social worker
6/9/08	Todd Peterson	Facilities-custodian I
6/9/08	Laura VanErem	Soc. Svcs.-child support officer
6/18/08	Angel Korynta	Public Health-Reg. Nurse II
7/7/08	Ryan Carslay	Incinerator-loader operator
7/17/08	Melissa Hayes	Public Health-Reg. Nurse II
8/19/08	Brandi Mcatee	Incinerator-sort line operator
11/3/08	Jonathan Street	Soc. Svcs.-eligibility worker
12/1/08	Elizabeth Rowan	Soc. Svcs.-eligibility worker

## Juvenile & Dispatch Center bonds paid off

The bonds that were sold in 1996 to construct the Red River Valley Juvenile Center and to provide new space for the Polk County Dispatch Center have been paid off early by action of the Polk County Board of Commissioners.

The \$895,000 that remained to be retired from the \$2,050,000 in bonds that were originally issued by the Northwest Minnesota Multi-County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, based

in Mentor, became callable on March 1.

The money used to pay off the remaining four years of debt payments came from county reserves.

The benefit to the county is that the early pay-off saves \$92,420 in interest costs. Interest rates on the four years of remaining debt had ranged from 3.85 percent in 2013 to 4.15 percent in the final scheduled payment year of 2017.

## Waldner is new director of Dancing Sky AAA

Darla Waldner is the new executive director of the Land of the Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging (AAA). The agency serves residents in 21 northern and western Minnesota counties.

She succeeds Shannon Henrickson, who has become chief executive officer of Marshall County Group Home, Inc. in Argyle. Henrickson had been director of the AAA programs for four years.

The new position for Waldner is a promotion. She had been AAA's program developer for the past nine years during which she maintained an office at Park Rapids. Waldner plans to relocate closer to the agency's administrative office at the Northwest Regional Development Commission in Warren in the spring.

### Big service area

AAA provides Older Americans Act programming in a service area created through a partnership between the 7-county Northwest Regional Development Commission service area, the 5-county service area of Region 2 in northern Minnesota, and the 9 counties of the West Central Area Agency on Aging in western Minnesota. An umbrella board meets quarterly to discuss and approve major items such as the area plan and dollar allocations, while advi-



Darla Waldner

sory councils and the Joint Powers Board meet on a monthly basis to make decisions that affect their local counties.

Waldner, who earned B.S. degrees and sociology and social work at Evangel University, Springfield, Mo., has 20 years of experience as a social worker, including 14 years in supervisory roles.

Her work history prior to that with AAA includes serving as director of social services for the Springfield Residential Center in Springfield, Mo., being a program supervisor/case manager for the Girlstown Foundation in Belleville, Mich., and serving as director of home and community-based services for Wellwood Youth and Family Services at Ann Arbor, Mich.

## Hangsleben retires after 30 years of service

# Franks, Powers join Planning Commission

Robert Franks, rural Warren, and Mike Powers, East Grand Forks, are new members of the Polk County Planning Commission.

Franks, who succeeds Barbara Hangsleben, East Grand Forks, is the representative from the 5th Commissioner District. Hangsleben retired this year after having served on the commission for 30 years.

Powers, who succeeds former East Grand Forks City Council member Wayne Gregoire, is the representative for East Grand Forks Mayor Lynn Stauss.

### Wright reappointed

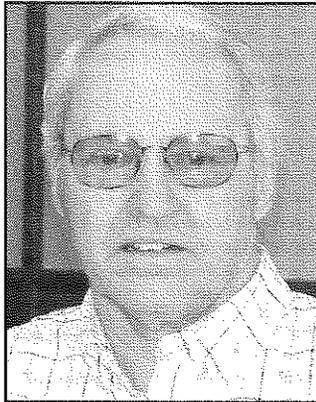
The County Board also recently approved the reappointment of Don Wright, Mentor, to serve another three-year term on the commission. The representative from Commissioner Dist. 1, he was first appointed to the commission in 2007 and then reappointed in 2010.

A native of East Grand Forks, Powers attended the Sacred Heart Schools through the ninth grade before his family moved to Grand Forks. He graduated from St. James High School in Grand Forks in 1964 and earned a degree in history and political science at the University of North Dakota (UND) in 1969.

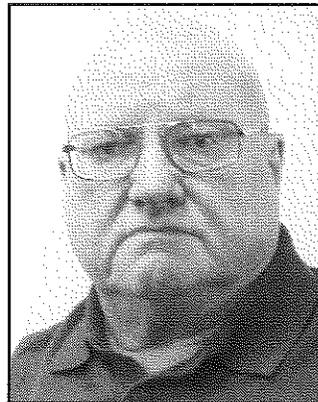
### Worked at UND

He was a civilian employee through the U.S. Air Force at Honeywell International, Inc. for two years before starting a 32-year career at UND, first in the Housing Office before moving into the safety and security field as a fire marshal-building inspector.

Powers, who retired from UND in 2004, has served on the East Grand Forks City Planning Commission for five years and has been that commission's representative on the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Commission for three



Robert Franks



Mike Powers

years.

He served on the board of directors of St. Anne's Guest Home from 1995 until 2008. He was its chair for 11 years.

Powers has been an election judge and served as the first president of the Crestwood Homes Association town home development where he and his wife, Harriet, live. He is also a 21-gallon member of the Greater Grand Forks Blood Bank.

Franks grew up on the farmstead in Farley Township three miles southwest of Warren where he still lives. He recently retired as a lineman for PKM Electric Cooperative, Inc., in Warren.

### Served lake association

During the past 12 years, Franks has served as a council member and as both vice president and president of the Island Lake White Wind Association. The lake is located south of Lengby in Mahnomen County. Franks has also served on the board of directors of First Lutheran Church in Warren.

He and his wife, Bernie, a 25-year employee of Good Samaritan Nursing Center in Warren, have a daughter, Carrie (Jay) Michalski, Warren, and three grandchildren.

Other members of the Planning Commission are: Osmund Moe,

Bygland, Commissioner Dist. 2; Courtney Pulkrabek, Crookston, Dist. 3; Kerry Winkleman, Fosston, Dist. 4; Wayne Melbye, Crookston, representing Crookston Mayor David Genereux; Rolland Gagner, Erskine, representing the Union Lake Sarah Improvement District; Dennis Yell, Mentor, representing the Maple Lake Improvement District; and Delores Myerchin, Crookston, representing Polk County townships.

### 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.

The Planning Commission members who represent the five commissioner districts (Wright, Moe, Pulkrabek, Winkleman 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.

Winkleman serves as chair of both the Planning Commission and the Board of Adjustment.

## IT manager position is in planning

Increasing demands and complexity in computer and software systems management has led to a proposal for the creation of a management position to oversee the County's Information Technology (IT) Department.

The board has responded by budgeting for a new position and approving a position description. Discussions have included expectations of the position and areas to address going forward, specifically enhancing the county's website, integrating existing software and data practices for improved efficiencies, better coordinating purchase and use policies and long term planning for IT development.

There is a need to address communications and streamline payroll and finance processes within the county, where departments, over the years, have developed processes that are not always consistent from unit to unit.

The nature of information and data the county maintains, whether financial, property oriented or legal based is complex and subject to state and federal laws, yet needs to be managed to be useful for board and administration planning and decision making.

Currently, the IT department consists of three staff with outside consulting being utilized. Additionally, the board has discussed Board Room improvements that can make better use of the technology available for information sharing, presentations and reduction in paper. — **Chuck Whiting, County administrator**

## 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

## Polk County Commissioners

Dist. 1 — Craig Bunes, chair

Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell

Dist. 3 — Nick Nicholas

Dist. 4 — Warren Affeldt

Dist. 5 — Don Diedrich, vice chair

## From Crookston Board of Education to County Board

# Nicholas begins term as Dist. 3 commissioner

After having served on the Crookston Board of Education for 10 years, Nick Nicholas had a good idea of how government boards work before he joined the Polk County Board of Commissioners in January.

"But it's different than school board," he says. "You obviously understand some of it from the government entity side but the size of county government just means that there are more challenges with a county than with any of the other boards that I have sat on," he says.

### Succeeds Montague

Nicholas, who lives in Crookston, succeeds Bill Montague, who did not seek re-election after serving three four-year terms as the commissioner from the Third District.

"The comfort zone for me is that I'm on with four experienced people, two of whom have been on the board for a number of years. I look to them for a lot of direction. I didn't realize how many different organizations fall under the County Board. It is really broad-based."

For Nicholas, the extent of

the involvement of county government became a reality when he went on tour of county facilities... to Fosston and McIntosh and to East Grand Forks in addition to those departments and entities that are based in Crookston.

### Ready for challenge

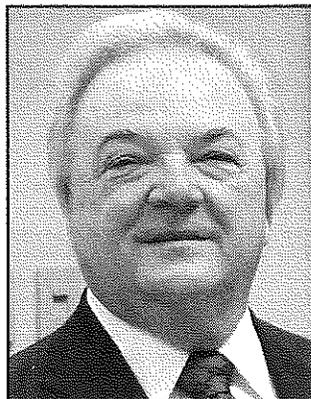
"I'm really enjoying sitting on this board. I am ready for the challenge," he says.

Nicholas, who grew up at Strasburg, N.D., and graduated from Emmons Central High School there in 1968, attended the University of Wisconsin for two years before being drafted into the Army in January 1971. After serving much of his time in Germany, he enrolled in the business economics program at North Dakota State University.

### Joined VISTA

"In my senior year there," he says, "I joined the AmeriCorps VISTA national service program. There were about a dozen of us students who joined VISTA. That group included Denise Borth, who would later become his wife.

"I worked in finance and she in home economics for United Tribes in Bismarck for about a year and a half. While we



Nick Nicholas

were in VISTA, we were enrolled in school and were taking classes but we were not on campus," he says.

After VISTA, Nicholas' 38-year career in accounting and finance includes a job at a small accounting firm in Bismarck, a brief time in banking, and 12 years with Richmond's Inc. as officer manager at locations in Bowman, N.D., and Rochester, Minn.

He then became corporate controller for the United States Division of CEDA International, a Calgary, Canada-based firm that provides a variety of specialized industrial services. His time

with CEDA took him to positions in Texas and Colorado.

"It was when we were in Colorado and I was going to be transferred back to Houston that we decided to come back to this area. We had moved around quite a bit. We were tired of it and decided to come back to this area. I sent out a resume and got a job with Dee, Inc. in Crookston as their corporate controller. That was in 1993 and we've been here since."

After working for Dee, Inc. for 17 years, Nicholas and two partners began purchasing the company. They completed the final buy-out on July 1, 2012. Nicholas is the chief financial officer.

### Served as board chair

Nicholas' time on the Crookston Board of Education included four years as its treasurer and the last four as chair. He served on the board of directors of Vila St. Vincent for six years and on the Crookston United Way Board, also for six years.

Nicholas and his wife have four grown children: Travis (Jamie) in Crookston, Laura (Jay) Tupa in Bemidji, Michael in Syracuse, N.Y., and Benjamin in Sioux City, Iowa. They have four grandchildren.

## In jail, juvenile center, administrative office

# Corrections employees recognized for service

Several Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC) employees have been recognized for their accomplishments, contributions and years of service to the agency.

The TCCC organization operates the Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail and the Red River Valley Juvenile Center and provides Probation and Community Services in the three partner counties, Norman, Red Lake and Polk.

Excellence Award winners were Andrew Larson, jail administrator, and Raelene Aarhus, work release coordinator at the jail.

Annette Erickson, administrative accountant, received the Director's Service Award for initiative and dedicated performance of duties.

Daryl "Oscar" Meyer, program director at the RRV Juvenile Center, was also cited for this award.

### Detention Worker of Year

Jason Raupp, youth counselor at RRV Juvenile Center, received the Minnesota Juvenile Detention Association Award as Detention Worker of the Year.

Milo Mathison received the Volunteer Service Award for his ministry work to men and women in the jail and to youth

in the juvenile center.

Persons were nominated for the recognitions by their peers with final selections determined by local department heads and Minnesota Corrections directors from throughout the state.

In addition to those receiving awards, other nominees were Connie Anderson, Dale Arnold, Kurt Ellefson, Chad Johnson, Amber Latozke, Craig Magsam, Joshua Plante, Charity Reese and MarDee Spurgeon.

Those recognized for years of service were:

**Five Years** — Aarhus, Amanda Bochow, Nicolee

Ireland, Amber Kruta, Sharon Lewis, Magsam, Abby Morris, Sandra Nielson, Jessica Peterson, Plante, Raupp, and Jason Schraeder.

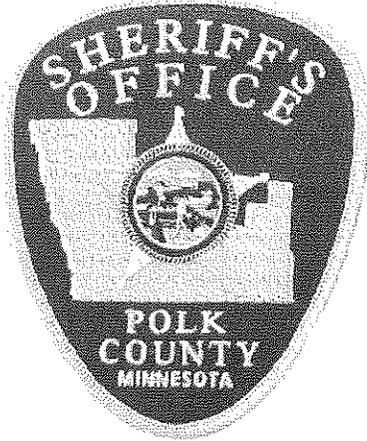
**10 Years** — Catherine Barstad, Larson, and Phil Schroeder.

**15 Years** — Ryan Chisholm, LaVonne Dale, Dave Grubb, and Joey Pederson.

**20 Years** — LaRayne Arvidson, Paul Bissonette, Dan Dale, and Kim Moronez.

**30 Years** — Anderson.

The recognition event was held in early January at the University of Minnesota-Crookston.



## *'Paying customers' to bolster revenue*

# New Transportation Division will facilitate housing federal prisoners at Corrections Center

The Northwest Regional Corrections Center in Crookston is unique. It is the only jail in the State of Minnesota that is operated by a community corrections department. All other jails within the state are operated under the auspices of the county sheriff.

Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC) operates the jail. This allows for many unique programming opportunities for the inmate population and equally allows for a continuity of service to offenders in all phases of the criminal justice system, from pre-trial detention to custodial detention to community post-release supervision.

While community corrections oversight of the jail has multiple benefits, one glaring difficulty exists: transportation of per diem-paying inmates from other jurisdictions.

### **Income to offset operating costs**

As a regional jail, the Northwest Regional Corrections Center offers bed space to surrounding jurisdictions at a daily per diem rate. The income generated assists in offsetting the cost of operating the jail to the three member counties of Norman, Polk and Red Lake.

Historically, the Polk County Sheriff's Office has performed all transportation services for the Northwest Regional Corrections Center. While this has benefitted TCCC by generating revenue from bed space rental, it has also taken sworn deputies from their daily duties of serving the citizens of Polk County.

TCCC has maintained a contract to house federal inmates for the U.S. Marshals Service at a per inmate daily rate, however, the contract requires that transportation be provided to and from the Federal Courthouse in Fargo.

### **Two officers required**

Under federal guidelines, transportation must be performed by two sworn and armed law enforcement officers. This transportation requirement has dramatically impacted the number of federal inmates housed at the Northwest Regional Corrections Center and resulted in a loss of the opportunity to earn this revenue.

To ensure that transportation exists at all times, TCCC is

dedicated to supporting the Polk County Sheriff Office's ability to perform this function without impacting the sheriff's daily services to the citizens of the county.

### **Deputy costs to be fully funded**

TCCC is in the process of entering into a contract with the Polk County Sheriff's Office to provide this service. In the agreement, TCCC will fully fund the salary and benefits of two transportation deputies in the Polk County Sheriff's Office whose primary duty will be to conduct transportation of U.S. Marshals Service inmates.

With dedicated transportation services in place, the U.S. Marshals Service anticipates having a continuous and steady inmate population at the Northwest Regional Corrections Center.

The substantial increase in federal inmate population and the dependable revenue source it provides will allow TCCC to not only fund the transportation unit but also derive additional revenues that are needed to support the cost of operating the jail facility for the three-member counties.

Initiated by TCCC, the transportation plan is vastly impacted by the oil boom in western North Dakota. With the influx of population there comes an influx of crime, which results in North Dakota local jails exceeding their rated capacities.

### **Shortage of beds**

As these jail beds run dry, the U.S. Marshals Service loses the ability to house their inmates at the local level within North Dakota. The extreme shortage of jail beds in North Dakota will prove beneficial for the Northwest Regional Corrections Center, which has the staff, capacity and ability to house a greater inmate population.

The Polk County Sheriff's Office is now in the process of filling the transport deputy positions. Following ratification of the contractual agreement between TCCC and the Sheriff's Office, successful applicant candidates will undergo the background investigation process prior to being hired, sworn and trained. It is anticipated these deputies will be in service by June, with an immediate placement of inmates by the U.S. Marshals Service. — **Phillip Greer, TCCC administrator**

*Knudson is new environmental field technician*

## Holte returns as County zoning administrator

Josh Holte has returned to Polk County Environmental Services. This time, he has increased responsibilities as the county's planning and zoning administrator.

After joining Polk County in the summer of 2008 as an environmental field technician, Holte left in March 2011 to become the zoning, solid waste and emergency management administrator for Norman County.

### Succeeds Johnston

In the new position with Polk County, he succeeds Josh Johnston, who left in late December to become the solid waste and emergency management director in Marshall County.

A native of Grygla where he graduated from high school in 2004, Holte earned a B.S. degree in geography (regional planning and land use) with a minor in environmental studies at Bemidji State University in 2008.

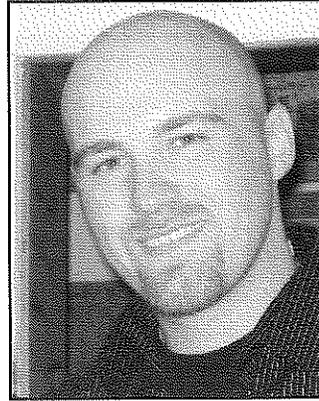


**Josh Holte**

During his time in college, he did internships with the Beltrami County Highway Department and Cass County Environmental Services.

Holte and his wife, Amanda, live near Crookston. She works at Digi-Key in Thief River Falls. They have a son, Levi, and are expecting another child in August.

Also new to the Environmental Services De-



**Chad Knudson**

partment is Chad Knudson, who is an environmental field technician. He succeeds Galen Gruber, who recently left for a similar position in Todd County.

### From Rochester

Knudson grew up at Rochester, Minn., and graduated from John Marshall High School there in 2001. He earned a degree in environmental studies at St. Cloud State

University in 2005 and then worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture for a brief time before joining the Minnesota Conservation Corps, an AmeriCorps Program, for about three years. In that role, he worked for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources in the areas of prairie restoration and invasive species removal.

He became an environmental technician for Dodge County in southeastern Minnesota in 2008.

Knudson and his wife, Allison, a native of Lakota, N.D., moved to Grand Forks in November 2012. She is a certified first assistant in surgery (CFA, CSA) and works at Altru Hospital. They have three children: Slade, 4; Deker, 3; and Brexten, 18 months.

The additions of Holte and Knudson bring the Planning and Zoning Division of Environmental Services to full staff in time for the start of the 2013 construction season.

## Polk County Board assignments and positions

**Craig Bunes (Dist. 1)** — Polk County Board chair, Polk County Planning Commission, Polk County Social Services Board, Polk County Extension Service Committee, Lake Agassiz Regional Library Board, Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) Transportation Policy Committee, AMC Annual Conference Planning Committee, Land of the Dancing Sky Region 1 Area Agency on Aging Committee (chair) and Negotiating Task Force, Northwest Regional Radio Board, Sandhill Watershed District Advisory Committee, Polk-Norman-Mahnomen County Joint Community Health Board, 5-County Solid Waste Advisory Committee, Polk Household Hazardous Waste Advisory Committee (alternate), Red Lake-Polk County Joint Ditch 72 Committee, Red Lake-Polk Judicial Ditch 72 Committee, Polk County Park Committee, Crookston Downtown Task Force, Polk-Red Lake Joint Ditch 4 Committee.

**Warren Strandell (Dist. 2)** — Polk County Social Service Board

(chair), Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) past state board member representing District 3, AMC past state General Government Policy Committee chair, AMC Public Safety Policy Committee, Northwest Regional Corrections Board (chair), Northwest Regional Radio Board (alternate), Northwest Regional Development Commission (NWRDC) Executive Board (vice chair), NWRDC Transportation Advisory Committee (vice chair), MnDOT Dist. 2 Area Transportation Partnership (vice chair), Polk County Community Health Board, Polk County Public Safety Committee, Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization (past chair).

**Nick Nicholas (Dist. 3)** — Polk County Social Services Board, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, AMC Health & Human Services Policy Committee, Northwest Mental Health Board, Red Lake-Polk County Joint Ditch Committee, Regional Solid Waste Advisory Board, Polk County Public Safety Committee, Polk County Law Library Board of Directors, Polk County Retired

Senior Volunteers Program Committee, Judicial Ditch 60 Committee, Polk County Park Committee, Polk County Community Health Board, Minnesota Rural Counties Caucus (alternate), Polk-Norman-Mahnomen County Joint Community Health Board, Polk County Senior Health Care Providers Committee, Crookston Downtown Task Force.

**Warren Affeldt (Dist. 4)** — Polk County Social Services Board (vice chair), Minnesota Rural Counties Caucus delegate & past state chair, Polk County Drug Task Force, Northwest Regional Corrections Board, Association of Minnesota Counties Environment & Natural Resources Policy Committee, Polk County Public Works Committee, Red Lake-Polk County Joint Ditch 72 Committee, Red Lake-Polk County Judicial Ditch 72 Committee, Regional Solid Waste Advisory Board, 5-County Solid Waste Advisory Committee (chair), Polk County Household Hazardous Waste Advisory Committee (chair), Inter-County Community Council Board (past chair), East Polk County

Development Achievement Center Board, Local Water Planning Board, Polk County Community Health Board, Fosston Law Enforcement Committee, Polk-Red Lake Joint Ditch 4 Committee.

**Don Diedrich (Dist. 5)** — Polk County Social Services Board, Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust State Board of Directors representing Dist. 3, Polk County Extension Service Committee, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, AMC General Government Policy Committee, Northwest Mental Health Board, Joint Powers Board of the Red River Basin Commission in Minnesota, Red Lake-Polk County Joint Ditch Committee, Red Lake-Polk County Judicial Ditch 72 Committee, Judicial Ditch 60 Committee, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District Citizens Advisory Committee and Brandt-Angus Project Work Team, Polk County Community Health Board, County Public Works Committee, Law Library Board of Directors, Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization (alternate).

# Capistran, Byrne selected for Extension Committee membership

Nancy Capistran and Cheryl Byrne are new members of the Polk County Extension Committee.

Capistran, who lives with her husband, Wayne, in rural Crookston, is the at-large member. She succeeds Curt Knutson, Fisher, who had served the maximum number of two three-year terms on the committee.

Byrne (pronounced Burn) of Erskine, is the representative of Commissioner District 1. She succeeds Patricia Erickson, Fertile, who also had served the maximum number of terms.

## Rosendahl re-elected

Paul Rosendahl, Fosston, representing Commissioner District 4, has been re-elected chair of the committee. Commissioner District 5 member Kaydi Strickler, Euclid, continues as vice chair.

Other members of the Extension Committee are Carol Svendson, East Grand Forks (District 2), and Stephanie Olson, Crookston (District 3). County commissioners Don Diedrich and Craig Bunes also serve on the committee.

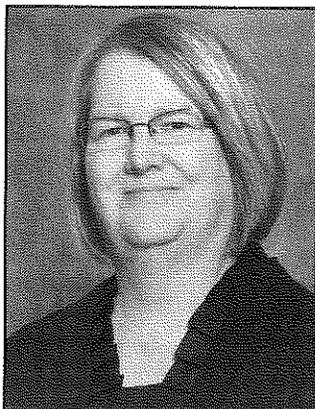
County Director of Property Records Michelle Cote serves as secretary of the committee. The committee oversees Extension Service activities in the county and also makes recommendations to the County Board concerning staffing and budgeting.

## Pleased with appointments

Of the new committee members, Deb Zak, director of the Regional Extension Office, says, "I am very pleased with the appointments of Cheryl Byrne and Nancy Capistran."

Byrne, a native of Staten Island, N.Y., graduated from Countess Moore High School there before earning an associate of applied science (A.A.S.) degree in equine science at State University of New York in 1975.

She then owned and operated a horse boarding and training



Nancy Capistran



Cheryl Byrne

business (Black Creek Hollow Farm) near Rochester, N.Y., before going back to school at Wells College at Aurora, N.Y., and earning a B.S. degree in biology in 1996. She has also done graduate work at Cornell University in large animal reproductive physiology, large animal physiology and large animal nutrition.

## Taught at UMC, NCTC

Byrne taught for a year (2002-03) in the Equine Department at the University of Minnesota-Crookston before teaching biology at Northland Community College in Thief River Falls for three years (2003-06).

"At that time, my horse business was growing and I had to pick one or the other," Byrne says. "I love teaching but I came to the conclusion that I could only climb on the back of two-year-old horses for so many years and that I could probably teach when I was less physically competent."

Byrne's horse training business, Glacial Ridge Equine, was started in Crookston in 2006 and is now located near Erskine. About her appointment to the Extension Committee, she says, "My interest is in kids and horses. I'm very happy about the appointment to the Extension Committee."

## Organized club

Capistran and her husband, Wayne, have more than 20 years of involvement in 4-H activities. In fact, the

Capistrans and a few of their farm friends and neighbors organized the Busy Bees 4-H Club in 1979.

In the years that followed, Nancy served as a club leader, was treasurer of the county federation and served in other roles as three Capistran children went through the 4-H program.

"It is a wonderful thing for children to be involved in," Capistran says. She was also was a member of Homemakers programs through the Extension Service.

A 1968 graduate of Crookston Central High School, she attended the University of Minnesota-Duluth for two years before becoming a farm wife while also serving as a religion education coordinator at Crookston Cathedral High School. She was science lab coordinator at the University of Minnesota-Crookston from the late 1980s until retiring in 2007.

## Semi-retired volunteer

"Now, I'm semi-retired and a volunteer. Wayne is retired from farming but he stays busy with his Capistran Seed business," she says.

Their grown children are: Karen Capistran, who works for the Minnesota State Auditor's office in St. Paul; Kevin (Lorri), who has taken over the family farm; and Katie Capistran, who is an occupational therapist in Las Vegas, Nev. Kevin and Lorri Capistran have two children.

## 3-year wage settlements approved by 4 bargain groups

Polk County has been able settle labor agreements with several of its bargaining groups. Effective Jan. 1, three-year settlements (2013-2015) have been agreed to with three public works groups and the general administration group.

Wages and benefits were the main focus of the settlements with annual percentage increases of 5 percent for 2013, 2 percent for 2014 and 2 percent for 2015.

The county's contribution to the employee's insurance cafeteria plan for 2013 is \$745 per month, \$785 per month for 2014 and \$835 per month for 2015.

## Follows zero years

These increases follow the last three-year set of agreements for 0 percent, 0 percent and 2 percent wage increases. The recession dictated those adjustments and affected staffing reductions, employee retention and hiring.

Of more fortune to the county was a low health insurance premium renewal for 2013 of less than 2 percent, which allowed more flexibility on the first year of wages. Polk County's 5 percent increase for 2013 is one of the highest settlements among county units of government but helps address comparative wage issues with other counties, many of which Polk competes with for quality employees.

Law enforcement groups have not yet settled. Deputy and dispatch groups have switched to Teamster representation delaying initial negotiations, but meetings are taking place.

Non-union employees received the same wage and benefit adjustments effective Jan. 1. — **Chuck Whiting, County administrator**

# Springing Ahead...

By Chuck Whiting, Polk County Administrator



I've been asked to reflect on my first six months here with Polk County as county administrator. I must say I am very pleased with the work the organization, the County Board and my predecessor has done in preparing not only for the transition from Jack Schmalenberg to me, but with the whole change that comes from moving from a county coordinator to a county administrator.

Jack and I got to work together for four months before his retirement at the end of this past December. I found him to be not only gracious with his knowledge and time for me, but invaluable in his awareness of and insights on issues facing the county. You may see us lunching together from time to time going over just that!

The staff and employees left for me have been great and truly are an asset to Polk County. County employees are often an extension of the communities in which they live and our employees are no different. They work hard and represent Polk County well, often in leadership roles in our region and across the state, but most importantly right here in our county communities. It has been a pleasure to join and work with them these last six months.

And there is work to do. The County Board has been clear about making county business work for residents and that will continue. The development of the Taxpayer Services Center at the Government

Center has helped residents conduct their business at one stop.

Offices in East Grand Forks, Fosston, McIntosh as well as Crookston help bring services where the people are. Coming improvements to the county website will be geared to making more information and access to services available to residents throughout the county.

Emergency communications systems are being upgraded to better connect our first responders and law enforcement agencies serving county residents and businesses. Polk County is also a regional leader in waste management and recycling with our incinerator, landfill and recycling programs from Fosston to Crookston.

What I hope to do in my first full year of 2013 is keep this momentum going and continuously work to improve our operations. The County Board has been very supportive of moving ahead with some difficult and expensive improvements, but has done so with balanced long-term view of the best interests of the county.

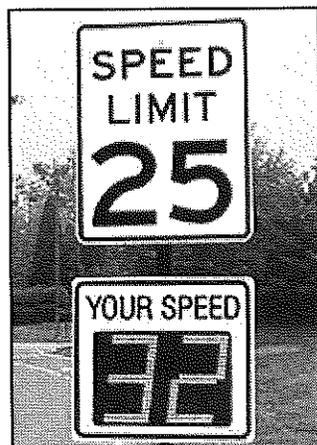
I look forward to continuing their work and working with you, the residents of Polk County. I'm at the Government Center in Crookston, or feel free to call at 218-281-5408 or e-mail at [chuck.whiting@co.polk.mn.us](mailto:chuck.whiting@co.polk.mn.us) with any county matter you may have. I look forward to meeting you.

## 6 communities participating with county in cost-sharing of speed signs

Six cities are participating in a cost-sharing program that will make it known to drivers at 10 different locations in Polk County if they are speeding as they enter those communities.

The plan splits the cost of purchasing flashing electronic signs that indicate the speeds of vehicles. The purpose is, of course, to get speeds reduced to the posted speed limits. The electronic units will cost about \$5,000 each with the communities and the county splitting that price.

The program was initiated as a result of concerns that many vehicles were speeding as they entered towns. The signs are to be purchased through the Polk County Highway Department, which will seek quotes from



vendors to furnish and install the signs.

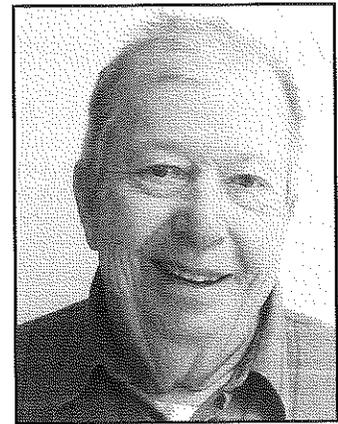
Each community will be responsible for arranging the electric power that is needed

and for paying for that power.

Communities that have indicated a desire to participate in the program and the number of signs and the locations where they want them to be are:

- **McIntosh** — 2 signs, north on CSAH 8 and west on CSAH 41;
- **Gully** — 2 signs, north and south on CSAH 2;
- **Fosston** — 3 signs, southwest on CSAH 1, northeast on CSAH 6, and north on CSAH 30;
- **Crookston** — 1 sign, east on CSAH 11;
- **Fisher** — 1 sign, east on CSAH 61; and
- **East Grand Forks** — 1 sign, south on CSAH 72.

The signs will go up after the snow and frost are gone.



Albert Mandt

## Mandt is reappointed to RLWD Board

Albert Mandt, rural McIntosh, has been reappointed to serve as the East Polk County representative on the Board of Managers of the Red Lake Watershed District.

Mandt first joined the board in 2010 when he succeeded Jim Votava, McIntosh.

Now retired, Mandt farmed in the McIntosh area until he went to work for Minnesota Limited Pipeline Co. in 1997.

He served on the King Town Board for 30 years and on the East Polk County Soil & Water Conservation District Board for 15 years.

West Polk County is also represented on the board of managers by Gene Tiedemann, Euclid.

## County Maps Available

Polk County maps showing the streets and avenues in the rural addressing system are available at the Highway Department and at the Taxpayer Service Center in the Government Center (former Auditor-Treasurer Office).

The cost is \$2 each.

## Adams on joint powers board for Agassiz Recreational Trail

Dean Adams, Crookston, has been named Polk County's new at-large member on the joint powers board that operates the Agassiz Recreational Trail.

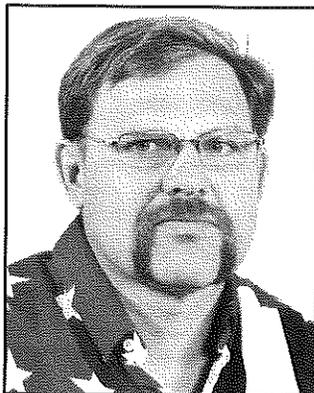
Built on an abandoned railroad grade, the 32-mile multi-use trail runs from Fertile to Ulen as it parallels State Highway 32. Owned by Polk, Norman and Clay counties, the trail was developed through a joint powers agreement.

Other at-large managers are Harold Allrich, Twin Valley, and Glen Visser, Ada, both representing Norman County, and Jerry Waller, Glyndon, representing Clay County.

County commissioners on the seven-member board are: Craig Bunes, Polk; Marv Gunderson, Norman, and Frank Gross, Clay.

Gunderson succeeds Steve Bommersbach, Twin Valley, on the board and Gross has succeeded Waller.

Waller, who did not seek reelection as a commissioner last fall, is now Clay County's at-large member replacing Russell Borgen, Ulen, who retired.



Dean Adams

In the recent re-organization of the board, Waller was elected chair with Allrich continuing as the vice chair. Dan Wilkens, Fertile, serves as both the secretary and treasurer, while Gordie Gudvangen, Fertile, continues as the trail administrator after having had the dual-role of also serving as Polk County's at-large board member.

The trail was one of seven trail projects in the nation that was honored for construction and design at a Capitol Hill ceremony during National Outdoors Week in Washington, D.C., in June 2010.



### Honored retirees

Linda Hanson, JoAnne Lemke and June Bergh (left to right) all retired from Polk County Public Health in 2012. Hanson had 20 years of service, Lemke 25 years and June Bergh 30 years of service to the organization. Sarah Reese, direc-

tor of Polk County Public Health, states, "It is with great respect, that we honor these fine women for their expertise and dedication in serving the mission of Polk County Public Health."

## Joint effort at providing public health is at work

Public Health works every day to PREVENT disease, PROMOTE healthy living and PROTECT the public from health threats.

Minnesota's statewide public health system is referred to in state statute as "Community Health Services" or CHS. The CHS system uses a coordinated approach among state and local public health departments to protect, maintain and improve the health of all Minnesotans.

For local governments, the CHS system is designed to assure that the community's health and safety are protected. The system is designed to be flexible so that local governments may identify and address locally identified public health priorities.

After nearly a year and a half of planning meetings, Polk County entered into a joint powers agreement with Norman County and Mahnomon County to establish a joint Community Health Board — officially named the Polk-Norman-Mahnomon Community Health Board — that became effective in 2013.

The Community Health Board has a 7-member governing board including Mahnomon County Commissioner Karen Ahmann, who is the chairperson; Polk County Commissioner Craig Bunes, the vice chair; Norman

County Commissioner Marvin Gunderson, the recording secretary; Norman County Commissioner Steve Bommersbach; Polk County Commissioner Nick Nicholas; Norman-Mahnomon County Community Representative Charlie Pazdernik and Polk County Community Representative Barbara Muesing.

Why the Polk-Norman-Mahnomon Community Health Board? There are increased efficiencies in how we do business; how we serve our constituents and with resources/staff expertise.

We will reduce duplication, be able to provide additional staff training opportunities, create a learning/resource network among staff and have future funding opportunities. Additionally, the public health landscape is changing, thus we need to be proactive.

We are also enhancing prior informal/formal partnerships between Polk County Public Health and Norman-Mahnomon Public Health.

This is a win-win opportunity... a well thought out and executed formal partnership has been formed between Polk County Public Health and Norman-Mahnomon Public Health. — Sarahlic Reese, Polk County Public Health director

## Help Us 2... Fight Crime

### The Polk County Sheriff's Tip Line is completely Anonymous

Help us to fight drugs and all crime. Your tips, especially when combined with other information that we already might have, could help someone's child, parent, relative or friend. — Sheriff Barb Erdman

1-218-435-7872

# POLK COUNTY

## 2013 ASSESSMENT PROPOSED TILLABLE CHANGES

PRIOR TO STATE BOARD ADJUSTMENTS

HIGDEM 30% \$3,386	SANDSVILLE 35% \$3,311	FARLEY 35% \$3,279	BRISLET 30% \$2,470	HELGELAND 15% \$1,513
ESTHER 30% \$3,561	NORTHLAND 35% \$3,502	TABOR 30% \$3,201	ANGUS 15% \$2,579	BRANDT 5% \$1,437
GRAND FORKS 30% \$4,271	SULLIVAN 35% \$4,763	KEYSTONE 20% \$3,397	EUCLID 15% \$2,828	BELGIUM 5% \$1,413
RHINEHART 25% \$4,383	HUNTSVILLE 20% \$4,604	NESBIT 15% \$4,394	FANNY 20% \$3,191	PARNELL 5% \$1,528
	BYGLAND 20% \$4,122	FISHER 20% \$4,229	LOWELL 20% \$3,969	CROOKSTON 20% \$2,501
	TYNSID 20% \$3,453	ROOMIE 20% \$3,851	ANDOVER 20% \$3,806	FAIRFAX 20% \$3,280
	VINELAND 20% \$3,706		HAMMOND 15% \$3,119	RUSSIA 15% \$2,640
			SCANDIA 15% \$2,545	REIS 15% \$2,123
				LIBERTY 10% \$1,056
				GARFIELD 10% \$1,285
				WOODSIDE 20% \$1,689
				KNUTE 20% \$1,732
				KING 10% \$1,521
				BRANDSVOLD 10% \$1,746
				ROSEBUD 10% \$1,779
				COLUMBIA 0% \$1,161
				QUEEN 0% \$1,177
				EDEN 10% \$1,395
				HILL RIVER 15% \$1,311
				LESSOR 10% \$1,204
				BADGER 15% \$1,180
				GROVE PARK 10% \$1,001
				TILDEN 10% \$1,001
				GENTILLY 25% \$1,523
				KERTSONVILLE 25% \$1,108
				ONSTAD 15% \$1,166
				WINGER 20% \$1,858
				SLETTEN 20% \$1,751
				WINGERS 20% \$1,858
				LESSOR 10% \$1,204
				CHESTER 20% \$978
				GULLY 20% \$808
				JOHNSON 10% \$752

KEY	
	TILLABLE PERCENTAGE CHANGE
	PROPOSED AVERAGE TILLABLE VALUE PER ACRE

# From little change in 2012 to busy time in 2013

## 2012:

The year 2012 ended in much the same manner as the previous year. The basic services offered to the public remained essentially unchanged, there were no new legal requirements with which to comply, and normal operations were continued.

For Polk County, tonnages continued to remain at normal levels at the Transfer Station and Incinerator. And the Incinerator continued to receive normal tonnage levels from its partner counties: Beltrami, Clearwater, Mahanomen and Norman. Those things that did change were the result of the completion of ongoing projects.

### Drop-Off site

The Recycling and Waste Drop-Off site in Fosston — next door to the Incinerator — went fully on-line late last fall with the addition of compactors, completion of paving and final staff movement to that facility.

The last thing that signaled the completion of the project was the removal of the unmanaged containers at the Incinerator.

The change from an unmanaged drop-off site to a managed one is significant — it has resulted in a more organized and clean area for the public to use, eliminated program abuses that were occurring at the previous recycling site location, continues to show significant disposal cost savings, and has allowed us to comply with the federal and state industrial stormwater standards, which are a requirement of our operational permit for the Incinerator.

### Single Stream Recycling

The switch to single stream recycling for Polk County that began in 2012 has been better refined and some modifications at the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) to process that recyclable material have been made.

With the addition of the Recycling and Waste Drop-Off area next door to the Incinerator, those staff serve a dual purpose — both the operation of that facility to accept materials and help the public when using the facility, and to assist in the recycling



## Fosston Recycling & Waste Drop-off Site

The front of the building serves as the office area for the staff. The storage area inside the building is used to consolidate baled aluminum, paper and plastic until truckload quantities are received. The single stream recycling roll-off containers are located outside the fenced area near the road. The gated

portion of the lot contains those areas for special waste items such as tires, appliances, electronics, used oil/filters, and non-burnable wastes. A compactor is installed for deposit of burnable MSW by residents (the compactor container was not hooked up at the time of the photo).

cling program when processing the single stream recyclables.

Specifically, these staff members are aiding in the cleaning of the plastic and paper recyclables to make them marketable. Plastic and paper are the two recyclable material streams that the MRF was not designed to process for recycling.

### Landfill cell

Completion of the two-acre municipal solid waste (MSW) landfill cell (Combined Cells #9 & #10) was completed in October with the frost protection completed for the liner in early December. The movement of waste from the existing portion of the landfill to provide the required depth of frost protection restored capacity in Cell #8.

Construction of these new MSW cells will result in landfill disposal capacity that will likely last 4-7 years, depending upon the volume of waste received over that period of time.

## 2013:

Tip fees at Polk County disposal facilities for burnable and non-burnable MSW were changed for 2013.

At the Incinerator, the intent of

the tip fee increase was to raise the average revenue received in 2013 by \$7.50/ton, which will average over the course of the calendar year a tip fee of \$72.50/ton.

The tip fee at the Landfill for non-burnable MSW is raised from \$70/ton to \$72.50/ton to match that of the Incinerator.

The tip fee increase at the Landfill was delayed until March 1, 2013 to coincide with the truck scale installation at the Landfill.

The Landfill converted from a volume-based tip fee to a weight-based tip fee on March 1. The volume-to-weight system conversion and tip fee increase were timed to be implemented on the same date to avoid confusion for customers over how their bills were calculated.

### Stack test

The Polk County Incinerator will conduct its periodic performance stack test in April. This stack test is required every three years if superior performance is achieved, as it has with Polk County's Incinerator.

Maintaining our superior performance status is important to avoid being mandated to conduct

these costly stack tests annually for three consecutive years, which is required to document compliance and regain that superior performance status.

### Solid Waste Plan

Polk County is beginning a required Solid Waste Plan update in 2013. The last plan was adopted in 2000. In 2000, plans were required to be updated every five years. However since that time a two-year extension and five-year extension were granted in state law to pave the way for changes to that law.

State law now requires plans be reviewed and updated every 10 years. Polk County is splitting the cost of this required plan update with the counties of Beltrami, Mahanomen and Norman. This allows each of these counties to realize significant savings on the cost of updating their plans.

### Contracts to expire

Polk County is quickly coming upon the expiration of the current contract between the partner counties and steam customers.

Polk County is now in year five of a six-year contract that is set to expire on Dec. 31, 2014.

Continued on next page

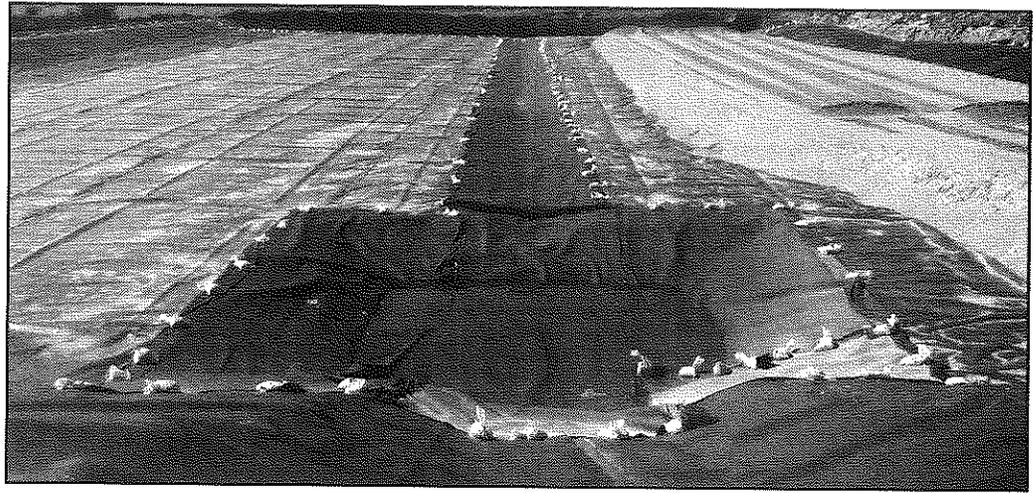
# Solid Waste

Continued from Page 14

Therefore, the county will also begin contract discussions with its current partners and any other potential partners for service beyond 2014.

There has been significant interest expressed by other entities to enhance our existing partnerships going forward and Polk County is currently exploring those opportunities.

To do so, Polk is also currently exploring various opportunities to modify its facilities and expand its available services. — **Jon Steiner, Environmental Services administrator**



## Cell #9 & #10 construction

A sand filter is placed over a synthetic landfill liner. Also shown is the lined trench down the center of the cells, in which later will be constructed a leachate collector system.

The leachate pumping system was added after the sand media was placed around other areas of the cells.

# Ag & Drainage report: Busy times

Although the 2012 construction season saw very little rainfall, work on the Polk County ditch systems remained very active.

Many miles were surveyed and cleaned to legal grade, most notably in the east half of the county. Having a lower water table in 2012 allowed equipment to travel and clean many ditch systems within their rights of way.

In years past it was difficult to clean these ditches to legal grade because the ditch banks were too saturated to support the weight of the equipment. Along with the cleaning projects, many other areas of the ditch systems had significant repairs including culvert replacements, culvert repairs, re-sloping of back slopes, cattail control as well as tree and brush removal.

## Dams removed

Numerous beaver dams were removed along with over 40 beaver. The Drainage Department also installed 600 feet of 48-inch reinforced concrete pipe to the outlet end of County Ditch (CD) 122, located just north of the City of Fertile as part of a FEMA project.

The 2013 season looks like it will be very active also. Six ditches located between the cities of Beltrami and Climax are in the process of a redetermination of benefits. Viewers are cur-

rently working on the data for these ditches — CD 93, 45, 90, 46, 52, and 73.

Once all the information is in, the county will schedule a hearing for the public to voice any concerns.

## Benefit area to be enlarged

The county is also in the process of enlarging the benefited area of CD 126, which is located approximately 10 miles north of the City of Crookston.

It is estimated that approximately 5,400 acres will be added to this system. When all the petitions are in, the county will schedule a public hearing.

The Ag Department treated over 1,500 acres of invasive plants along county roadsides totaling over 700 continuous miles in 2012. The total miles treated was three times higher than in the previous season.

Some invasive plants seem to thrive better in dryer conditions. The most threatening invasive plant along county roadsides is not the thistle varieties as most people would believe, it is Spotted Knapweed. Spotted Knapweed gives off a chemical that kills the established vegetation in its area, which in turn leads to erosion issues.

A very common question asked of the Ag Department is "Why are the broad leaf plants being targeted along the roadsides?"

This question mainly comes from those that are haying the roadsides. The answer is that the county isn't trying to eradicate all broad leaf plants in general, only the invasive plants like the thistle varieties, Leafy Spurge and Spotted Knapweed.

Unfortunately, many times these invasive plants are growing and mixed in with more desirable broadleaf plants like Alfalfa, for example.

## Invasive plants targeted

The county then has no choice but to apply herbicides to eradicate the invasive plants before they overtake the area. The Ag Department uses herbicides that target broadleaf plants and has little or no effect on the local established grasses.

This, in turn, allows the established grasses to move into the areas the invasive plants once held. This creates a thicker stand of established grass leading to less erosion. The county plans to continue an aggressive approach in eradicating invasive plants along its roadsides.

The Ag Department also continues to administer exams for those interested in obtaining a Pesticide Applicators License. An appointment can be made by calling the Ag and Drainage Department at 218-470-8263.

— **Jody Beauchane, Polk County Ag & Drainage inspector**

# Pay-back time reduces road work schedule

This year's road construction schedule is down in size due to the borrowing ahead that was done to complete projects in previous years.

The projects this year are:

**County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 12** – Grade widening and overlay from Trunk Highway (TH) 2 to CSAH 49. This will allow for wider shoulders and rehab the existing pavement to carry 10-ton capacity.

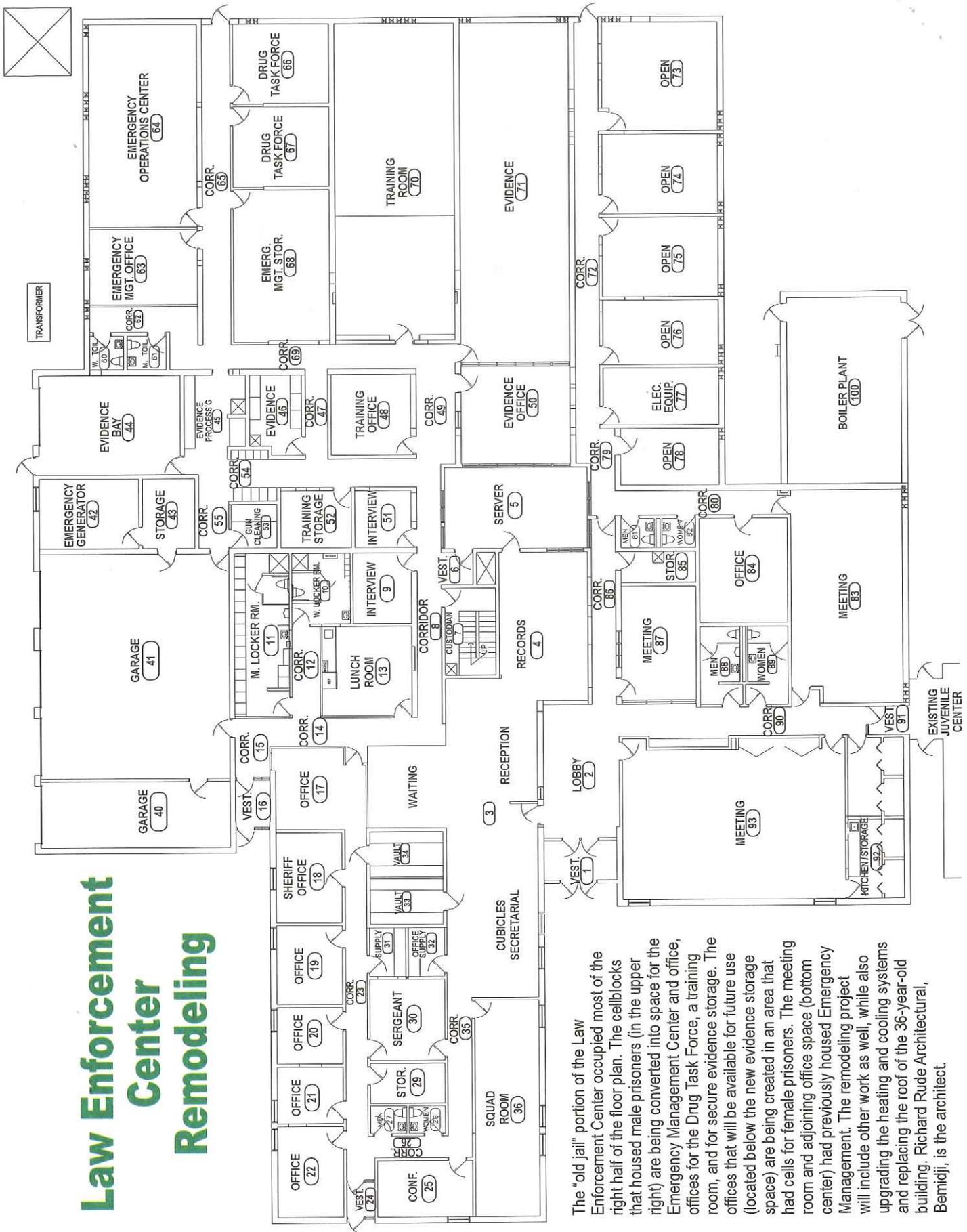
**CSAH 19** – Overlay from 5 miles east of TH 220 to CSAH 20 North (at the O'Meara Piling Station). This is a routine overlay that will strengthen this stretch of roadway to 10-ton capacity.

If funding becomes available, we also anticipate replacing a number of township bridges with box culverts.

Remember to drive safely through our work zones. Not only will this keep the workers safe but you included.

If you have any questions concerning this year's construction program, please give our office a call at 218-281-3952 and talk with either Darin Carlstrom at ext. 8254 or me at ext. 8253. — **Richard Sanders, County Highway engineer**

# Law Enforcement Center Remodeling



The "old jail" portion of the Law Enforcement Center occupied most of the right half of the floor plan. The cellblocks that housed male prisoners (in the upper right) are being converted into space for the Emergency Management Center and office, offices for the Drug Task Force, a training room, and for secure evidence storage. The offices that will be available for future use (located below the new evidence storage space) are being created in an area that had cells for female prisoners. The meeting room and adjoining office space (bottom center) had previously housed Emergency Management. The remodeling project will include other work as well, while also upgrading the heating and cooling systems and replacing the roof of the 36-year-old building. Richard Rude Architectural, Bemidji, is the architect.