

POLK COUNTY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2017



Construction of an 18,000-square-foot addition to Polk County's Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) in Fosston (the incinerator) has begun. The building will house a new and expanded tip floor for incoming waste while freeing up space in the existing Material Recovery Facility (MRF) for new processing equipment to recover materials that can be recycled. The solid waste expansion and improvement project for the six-county regional solid

waste organization also includes a new scale at the RRF, new transfer stations at Crookston (Polk County) and Park Rapids (Hubbard County), modifications to the transfer station at Bemidji (Beltrami County), and a compost facility at the Polk County Landfill near Gentilly. The timeline for the work is listed on Page 2.

Work begins on Solid Waste Expansion Project

A major expansion of the Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) in Fosston has begun.

The work consists of the construction of an addition to house the incoming waste material tip floor, a new truck scale, existing building improvements/repairs and new processing equipment.

The 18,000-square-foot addition is to the east side of the existing RRF building.

Kennedy Scales, Coon Rapids, MN, and Reiersen Construction, Bemidji, installed the new truck scale and scale-related equipment. That work started in July with the scale put into operation in August.

The scale project was required to be

completed prior to the start of work on the building addition so that trucks would have the necessary room to get on/off the scale.

Vercon Inc., Menasha, MN, was the successful bidder on the building addition. Vercon's bid of \$2.88 million was below the engineer's estimate.

Vercon broke ground in August. Footings and other concrete work began in September. Erection of the steel package is scheduled to occur in October. Substantial completion of the building addition is expected by mid-December 2017.

The other major part of the RRF expansion project consists of upgrades to the Material Recovery Facility (MRF)

processing equipment.

Waste processing system design and installation is a specialized service and not subject to bidding. Polk County contracted with Titus MRF Services, Fontana, CA, for the design, equipment procurement and installation work. Polk had previously worked with Titus in 2013-2014 on a smaller MRF modification project with favorable results.

The process equipment project is broken into two portions — front end (inside the new addition) and back end (inside the existing portion of the MRF).

The two phases of the project are significant for two reasons: No. 1. State cost-share funds are broken into two projects based upon the years they were

See **PROJECT ON PAGE 3**

Regional Solid Waste Expansion Project

Project Timelines

Phase I Projects:

Beltrami Transfer Station – Bemidji: Acquisition and Modification

July 2017	Acquire building, land and existing equipment
August 2017	Purchase new equipment, design modifications and obtain permits - \$5M
September 2017	Bid and award modification project for new Transfer Station
October 2017	Start construction activities
Early 2018	Complete construction

Polk County Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) – Fosston: Building Addition

July 2017	\$2.88M contract awarded to Vercon, Inc for building addition and related work
August 2017	Subgrade work – excavation, utilities and prep work.
September 2017	Concrete work – footings, slabs, walls and lot work.
October 2017	Structural steel – erect main beams, perkins, girts and panels.
November 2017	Install interior panels, insulation, plumbing and electrical services.
December 2017	Substantial completion of addition – lights, HVAC, sprinkler, doors and finish work.
Early 2018	Modification of existing building for baler pit, HVAC, equipment footings, etc.

Phase I and Phase II Projects:

Polk County Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) – Fosston: Equipment Upgrades

September 2017	\$8M contract to Titus MRF Services for design, procurement and equipment integration.
October 2017	Procure equipment for Phase I and Phase II equipment upgrades.
January 2018	Install Phase I equipment in new building addition
February 2018	Test Phase I equipment and temporary install of Phase II equipment in new addition
March 2018	Remove existing processing equipment (Operation on Phase I equipment in new addition).
April 2018	Modify equipment and structure for new process equipment.
May 2018	Install new process equipment in existing processing area.
June 2018	Test Phase II equipment in existing processing area.
July 2018	Relocate temp equipment to permanent locations, tie together Phase I and Phase II Equipment.
August 2018	Substantial completion of Phase I and Phase II equipment upgrade projects.

Phase II Projects:

Source Separated Organic Material (SSOM) Compost Facility – Gentilly: New Pad and Equipment

September 2017	Design and permit new Compost Pad - \$1.5M
October 2017	Bid new Compost Pad and Equipment Quotes
November 2017	Construct new Compost Pad
Early 2018	Compost-related equipment procurement

Hubbard County Transfer Station – Park Rapids: New Transfer Station and Equipment

October 2017	Design new Transfer Station and procure equipment - \$4M
December 2017	Permit new Transfer Station
January 2018	Prepare Bid Specs
February 2018	Bid Construction Project
May 2018	Start Construction of new Transfer Station
August 2018	Complete Transfer Station construction

Polk County Transfer Station – Crookston: New Transfer Station and Equipment

October 2017	Design new Transfer Station and procure equipment - \$5M
December 2017	Permit new Transfer Station
January 2018	Prepare Bid Specs
February 2018	Bid Construction Project
May 2018	Start Construction of new Transfer Station
July 2018	Demolition of existing Transfer Station
August 2018	Complete Transfer Station construction



The new scale at Materral Recovery Facility in Fosston became operational in August

Solid Waste Project

Continued from Page 1

funded (2015 and 2017), and No. 2. The logistics to maintain facility operations throughout construction.

The MRF will continue to operate using the existing process equipment in place while Titus installs the new equipment in the building addition. Once the new processing equipment is installed in the addition, Polk will operate out of the new addition while Titus removes old equipment and installs the new equipment there.

When both portions of the project are complete, the MRF will be down for about 7-10 days for work to tie the two processes together. This should allow for maximum up-time during the project.

In planning the project, Titus was scheduled to begin the MRF equipment procurement in August, begin installation of equipment in January 2018, and complete the project in May 2018.

However, the actual timeframe for equipment installation has been somewhat delayed. Polk was prohibited from entering into the contract using the 2017 funds appropriated by the Legislature until the state executed its contract with Polk County. That has now occurred allowing Titus to begin MRF equipment design and procurement. The installation timeline will be delayed.

Polk County Transfer Station:

The Polk County Transfer Station (TS) in Crookston was acquired in the early 1990s. A former implement dealership building, it was converted to a TS to replace an outdoor facility.

As the usage and scope of the TS changed, modifications to the aged structure occurred. In order to make more effective use of the waste and recyclable processing capabilities of the RRF, and the

Project Finances

Phase 1.....	MN CAP Grant	\$8.00 (m)
Phase 2.....	MN CAP Grant	\$9.25 (m)
Local Share Bond Issue.....		\$7.00 (m)
Total Project.....		\$24.25 (m)

Notes:

- The project was supported by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Funding approved by the Legislature.
- The Local Share Bond includes \$5 (m) for the total project and \$2 (m) for the transfer station in Crookston. The bond will be paid back with revenue from tip fees at the incinerator, sale of recyclable materials recovered from the waste stream, and other income.

services offered at the Polk County Landfill Complex (LF) near Gentilly, additional modifications were required.

Over the last few years, significant defects in this aged building have resulted from the county's use of the structure for a purpose for which it was not designed or constructed. Rather than incur extensive and expensive modifications to an already substandard building, Polk applied for and received funding cost-share for the construction of a new \$5 million station.

Demolition of the existing and reconstruction of a new TS in Crookston was both more cost-effective and efficient than a remodel and retrofit of the existing building. That Polk County could, for the same or less local dollar investment (\$2 million in local funds), end up with a new building under full warranty vs. a modified old building with no warranty made the decision to demolish the existing building and construct a new building in its place an easy decision.

Polk County will move forward with demolition of the existing TS and reconstruction of a new TS at the same site in 2018. The new building would be designed and constructed for the purpose of operating a TS. Stronger floors, adequate utilities, higher ceilings and changes to the lot will allow for better and safer operations for employees and the public.

As planned, Polk County will begin final design, permitting and bid spec preparation for the new TS in the upcoming winter and will be out for bids for construction in March 2018. Construction would begin and be completed in the summer of 2018.

Polk County Compost Facility:

The Polk County Landfill Complex (LF) consists of municipal solid waste (MSW), demolition debris and ash landfill areas.

A source-separated organic compost (SSOM) facility was permitted at the Landfill under a variance in 2011. The intent was to assist the state with issues encountered with a multi-state pilot project with a requirement the county upgrade the facility once state statutes were modified.

Those statutes were modified in late 2014 and went into effect in 2015. The modifications were incorporated into our 2015 landfill permit renewal which was not issued until February 2017.

Partial funding for the SSOM was appropriated by the 2017 Legislature. Construction of a new, compliant SSOM compost pad and necessary equipment will occur this fall.

Once completed there will be opportunity for local businesses and residents to compost the organic fraction of their waste as an alternative to disposal. — **Jon Steiner, administrator Polk County Environmental Services**

Sgt. Olson named 'Supervisor of the Year'



Sgt. Michelle Olson

Sgt. Michelle Olson, a Tri-County Correction Center corrections officer, has been named the recipient of the 2017 Minnesota Sheriff's Association Supervisor of the Year Award.

Criteria for nomination of the award included problem solving skills appropriate to the needs of the jail, setting a firm, fair and consistent leadership example; setting high professional standards for themselves and staff under their supervision, and being a strong team player.

The nomination letter submitted by Jail Adminis-

trator Dave Casanova specifically cited Sgt. Olson's exceptional work ethic, energy and commitment to the agency.

"She makes herself available to assist her subordinates during periods of heavy workloads, which makes her shift run more efficiently, and demonstrates a team attitude to her officers. She often seeks feedback from her subordinates in an effort to improve her leadership skills."

An employee of the Northwest Regional Corrections Center since 1985, Sgt. Olson has seen major changes in the corrections field.

The average daily population of the jail in her first two years with the agency (1985 – 1986) was approximately 43. The average daily population of the jail in 2016 was 185.

Despite the many challenges that come with a 430 percent increase in jail population, Sgt. Olson still takes the time to show a level of empathy and compassion that is unique in the field of corrections.

Sgt. Olson was formally presented with the award at the 35th Annual Jail Administrator's Conference held at Cragun's Resort earlier in September.

'Local' jail numbers are down allowing...

'Per diem' paying prisoner population to go up

The Northwest Regional Corrections Center (NWRCC) and Red River Valley Juvenile Center (RRVJC) have maintained solid numbers through the first half of 2017. While this type of statement would not typically be seen as a positive, it is the reason for the sustained numbers that give reason for optimism.

There were significant increases in local county inmates at the jail in 2016, which resulted in fewer beds being available to house "per diems." Thus far through 2017, both the adult jail (NWRCC) and juvenile center (RRVJC) are on track to meet or exceed projected revenue for housing of per diems from other jurisdictions.

Local inmate numbers at the NWRCC have decreased from the dramatic increase seen in 2016 while the RRVJC continues to see expanded usage from non-member counties. Residents housed for non-member counties exceeded the housing of local county adolescents for the months of February – July. August stats not yet been compiled.

Compliance reached

The NWRCC obtained Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) compliance in the late fall of 2015 and the RRVJC

joined its adult counterpart in being audited and obtaining compliance in March 2017.

A lengthy process of policy development and review, staff training, resident education and physical plant updates culminated in an on-site audit of the RRVJC on March 27 and 28. This work and dedication resulted in the RRVJC meeting all PREA standards with the auditor noting evidence that a culture of safety exists within the center.

Security System Update

Significant progress has been made in stabilizing the electronic security system for both the RRVJC and the NWRCC. Out-dated equipment had resulted in a significant loss of confidence in the long-term viability of security systems at both the jail and juvenile center.

With preliminary cost estimates for upgrading the security system in both facilities fast approaching \$1.5 million dollars, a plan was developed to replace sections of the system in a phased approach to soften the financial impact and allow for the use of fund balance to pay for the majority of the work.

While the concept of completing the project in phases was more financially palatable, the prioritization of phases added a level of

complexity to the project due to the ever-changing order in which the work needed to be completed.

Key physical plant improvements occurred at NWRCC this spring. The CCTV system was upgraded to an IP-based monitoring and recording system that allows for expanded monitoring and recording capabilities. Video quality has also been addressed through the replacement of cameras, which had out-lived their usefulness and were no longer capable of providing the video quality needed within a correctional environment.

With better than anticipated fund-balance and a significantly reduced cost-estimate for completing the remaining phases of the security system upgrade, the Corrections Board approved completion of all of the remaining phases to occur in 2017.

While still a significant financial burden for the agency, the final cost will be approximately 40 to 45 percent less than originally anticipated and will greatly improve system reliability and functionality across both departments.

Probation Restructuring

Restructuring of positions within the Probation

Department has been implemented to more clearly define roles and responsibilities and to create opportunities for advancement.

A non-competitive position of Career Agent was created and approved for implementation following the July Corrections Board meeting.

The Career Agent will allow for the development of probation staff with expanded decision-making authority along with expectations of participating in the training of new staff.

A comprehensive application and interview process will take place in the second half of 2017 and will involve eligible agents being interviewed by a panel of supervisory and administrative level staff from agencies across all three probation delivery systems — Community Corrections Act (CCA), County Probation Officer (CPO), and Department of Corrections (DOC) — within the state of Minnesota.

The position will provide advancement opportunities for probation agents that did not exist previously and will help to bridge the wage gap between TCCC and other agencies within our region. — **Andrew Larson, TCCC executive director**

A changing of the guard

Wagner retires as assessor, Landsverk moves up

A lot of changes in the job of appraising properties for assessment purposes occurred during the 30 years that Robert “Rob” Wagner was a part of the process, first as an appraiser and then as the Polk County assessor for the last 23 years.

Wagner’s start came in 1987 during the “pencil and paper era.” That was when the information about each piece of property, after having first been collected when in the field, had to be hand-entered into the county’s property records system when back in the office.

In digital world now

Today, appraisers collect and record the information digitally on laptop computers and then transfer it into the county system with the click of a few buttons all while still in the field.

Wagner, who started doing agricultural land valuations, took over management of the East Grand Forks office when that community quit doing its own appraising and was merged into the county system in the mid-1990s. He became the county assessor in December 1996.

Introduction into the computerized era began in 2004. It took about seven years to convert all of the old hard-copy information to digital form.



Rob Wagner

Appraisers started using tablets in the field in 2013. Not having to hand-enter the information into the system when back in the office immediately made them far more efficient and productive.

The county began placing valuation information on the Internet in 2012 and has had it available to all on the county website for the last two years.

Much more training

While the use of laptops and notebooks may have been the biggest work change during Wagner’s time in the department, the amount of formal education and training along with different



Mark Landsverk

levels of state certification have also changed much of the on-the-job way that things were done in the past.

New Polk County Assessor Mark Landsverk, who first joined the department in 2006, took over supervision of the seven-member appraisal staff of the Assessment Services Division of the Polk County Taxpayer Service Center on June 1.

He reports directly to Michelle Cote, who with Wagner’s retirement has now assumed full management of the Taxpayer Service Center. Cote, as the director of property records, and Wagner, as the director of

assessment services, had served as co-department heads of the Taxpayer Services Center.

The center was created in 2011 when the Auditor’s, Assessor’s and Recorder’s offices were merged following the retirement of Auditor Jerry Amiot.

Fosston native and resident

Landsverk, who grew up and still lives in rural Fosston, earned a B.S degree in geography & history at the University of North Dakota in 1987 and then farmed with his brother for nearly 20 years.

He joined the Assessor’s Office in 2006 working mainly with rural properties and agricultural land. Landsverk achieved the Senior Accredited Minnesota Assessor License designation (the highest level of licensing) in 2013 and assumed added supervisory responsibilities in the office when he became chief deputy assessor on Aug. 1, 2014.

His work has included performing statistical analyses of sales data in the determination of property values, providing staff training, completing reports to the State of Minnesota, and serving as the county’s lead appraiser. He represents Region 8 on the Agricultural Committee of the Minnesota Association of Assessing Officers.

Scanning project working toward completion

A massive project is underway in Polk County that will convert boxes and boxes of paper records to an electronic form that will both save valuable storage space and make those “papers” much more easily accessible whenever there might be a need to reference them.

Polk County Director of Property Records Michelle Cote is directing this “scanning” effort. In addition to the several part-time employees who have been hired specifically to do scanning, Cote is using members of her fulltime staff in the Taxpayer Service Center Office along with staff from other county departments when they are available.

Cote provides this report on the scanning projects that are

currently in progress:

Sheriff Scan Project

As of mid-August we have scanned 80,850 records. This has allowed us to destroy some 747 boxes of paper records. This detailed process involves the scanning and indexing of primarily criminal cases. The electronic records are validated to ensure quality and accuracy. All boxes are then logged before being destroyed.

This project is about 90 percent complete with the continued anticipation that it will be finished by the end of the year. Some 20 plus people are involved in this work from almost every department in the county.

Military records - DD214s

All the military discharges are

being scanned and indexed for archival purposes. All of the DD214s that were in books have been scanned. We are transitioning the remaining scanning to the Veterans Service Office. Our portion is complete.

Administration/HR Project

All active and inactive employee files have been scanned in addition to the County Board packets. This project is complete.

Temporary Part-Time Recorder staff Project

I currently have four staff working on this project. This includes scanning marriage records, validating images from an out-sourced scan project and the fixing of poorly scanned images that are black with white

writing. In addition, I have a person who is indexing the images to provide a more complete electronic record.

Tax Book

The Tax Book project is complete. It encompassed over 7,000 books.

As we conclude these projects we are always looking ahead by continuing to encourage other departments to evaluate their paper records and retention schedules. Here in the Taxpayer Service Center, we will be tackling historical school records and road orders for 2018

Without the continued dedication and time commitment from those employees involved none of these projects would be possible.”

The Good News and the Bad News

By Chuck Whiting
Polk County Administrator



Remember the old good news, bad news jokes? I remember they existed, but cannot remember any specific ones anymore. I am finding myself looking at the County's 2018 budget that way, however.

We get some good news that the state increased county program aid (CPA) so we will get added revenue to offset the county levy for next year.

The bad news, social services funding has been reduced. Unfortunately, there is no punch line here.

Make it work

Our job is to make this all work and that's what we're going to do, so while there will be some good news, there will be some bad news, too.

How about one handed lawyer jokes? You know, the ones that go along the lines of if you do this, that happens, but on the other hand, if you don't, something else happens.

So, when we are looking for certainty in our actions, the reality is one action begets the next. Budgeting can be like that. It's important to recognize when directions need to shift, new realities need to be accommodated and past purpose may not serve the present. I've been doing this for over 30 years, and it never gets any easier.

To be clearer, much of Polk County's budget is frankly routine year-to-year business stuff. Our goal has been to provide good and capable service to you, our residents in as affordable and competent manner as we can, and always with the perspective of improving how we do things.

Primary to this has been to maintain fiscal stability. This means no wild swings in the property tax levy, and steady reliable provision of County services. This is again our objective for 2018.

The Enbridge tax appeal

This approach has served Polk County well, but we face some risks in 2018. Foremost is the Enbridge tax appeal. We don't know what will happen, but according to Enbridge officials, they are looking for what could amount to a property tax refund

of \$1.8m, a third of which would be from Polk County. The good news is they have added over \$25m of property value in the county and told us they will not appeal that new value. The bad news is that the original appeal is for years 2012 to 2014, so 2015 to 2017 will also be appealed.

Such refunds in these amounts are not routine business for the County. On the other hand, we will have to be hopeful while waiting for the tax court's ruling and then just deal with it.

Valuation is up

Good news is the county's valuation, particularly new construction value, grew over last year, spreading the levy over more tax base.

Bad news is other tax valuation appeals have been filed as well, specifically BNSF Railroad and Walmart. Based on the state's court process we could still be a few years away from a court decision.

So, good news, bad news and we will try to keep the ugly to a minimum.

In light of these tax issues, the Board set the "preliminary levy" for 2018 at an increase of 5% over the 2017 levy. This preliminary levy is a statutory requirement so to notify all county taxpayers of how the levy may affect them next year.

More work to do

The County Board and staff are not done working on the budget, but once the preliminary levy is set, the final budget levy cannot exceed that 5% increase.

The goal is to finish more in the neighborhood of past levy increases, around 3%. If you are a taxpayer in Polk County you will soon receive your notice on this levy for next year, and see that the County's public hearing for your questions on the budget is set for Tuesday, December 12 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room at the Government Center in Crookston.

You are welcome to attend and voice concerns, ask questions or give your input into the budget for next year. You can also call me directly at any time prior to that at 218-281-5408.

Will start on Jan.1

Quarter-percent county sales tax to support road projects

A one-quarter percent tax will be collected on retail sales in Polk County beginning in 2017. The proceeds from the tax, which will be collected on anything that is currently subject to sales tax, will be used to support a specified list of county transportation projects.

Wheelage Tax to end

While this new local option sales tax will begin in January, the \$10 Wheelage Tax that has been collected on each registered vehicle in the county since 2014, will be terminated.

The County Board voted to end the Wheelage Tax in July to meet a state-set deadline for that possible action. The decision to enact the quarter-percent sales tax was made in September to allow time for it to be put in place for 2018.

Estimates by the Minnesota Department of Revenue indicate that the sales tax will generate about \$600,000 each year. That's about twice the \$300,000 collected through the Wheelage Tax, which based on the number of registered vehicles in the county.

Dollars from the Wheelage Tax were dedicated solely to support projects on County Roads that do not qualify for state gas tax dollars. Dollars generated by the sales tax can be used to support construction and improvement projects on all roads within the county. The county will concentrate on its list of County Roads and County State Aid Highways first.

Options not used

In dealing with the deadline concerning the Wheelage Tax, the county had the options of continuing the \$10 tax, increasing the rate by any dollar amount up to \$20 per vehicle, or the termination.

In addressing the local option sale tax question, the county chose the one-quarter percent rate over a one-half percent tax option.

The county also had the option of imposing a \$20 per vehicle excise tax on vehicles sold or acquired from any person engaged in the business of selling vehicles in Polk County. That option was not approved.

As prepared by County Engineer Richard Sanders, the initial list of road projects that can be funded by the sales tax dollars includes those on County Roads 202, 203, 211, 213, 223, 225, 226, 228, 232, 238, 281/221, and County State Aid Highways 6 10, 11, 12, 19, 21, and 44. The list can be amended as determined by need.

Not all sales are subject to the quarter-percent tax, including, of course, those for food and clothing. Among those also not subject to the tax are crop production materials, farm machinery, machinery repairs, or the labor to perform those repairs.



Platform added to patch trailer



Swing boom dispenses oil

Highway mechanic builds a ‘Better Mousetrap’

The improvements that Ryan Wagner, a Polk County Highway Department mechanic, created and made to the county’s asphalt patch trailer have earned him the second place finish in the Minnesota Build a Better Mousetrap competition.

And when advanced from the state program to the federal level, his work received the third place overall recognition for the entire nation.

The Better Mousetrap competition is conducted by the Minnesota Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) and by its national parent organization.

Wagner, who works as part of the county’s four-member equipment maintenance team,

came to Polk County two years ago with experience in welding and metal fabrication. He completed the 3-week improvement project during the winter’s slower work schedule.

According to the LTAP competition description, the project addressed this issue:

Problem: Members of the county’s patch trailer crew had no safe way to load tack oil into the top of the machine without climbing on the trailer tongue and then on the propane fuel tank to reach the fill port.

In addition, the tack oil-dispensing wand was too short to reach more than one lane of the road surface without positioning

the truck/trailer between both lanes of traffic on two-lane roads.

Solution: Wagner designed and fabricated a platform with an access stairway that allows workers to safely maintain three points of contact while ascending and descending the platform to perform required duties, including filling the tack oil tank, monitoring asphalt material hopper levels, and servicing the tack oil pump.

He also designed and fabricated a swinging boom to support the added weight of the extended tack oil dispensing wand to reduce operator fatigue and provide an extended reach for two lanes of traffic and roadway shoulders. The boom also prevents the excess



Ryan Wagner

hose from lying on the roadway, thereby eliminating tripping/entanglement hazards for the other workers on the patch crew.

Soil & Water Conservation Districts can assist in the process of establishing required buffers

The Minnesota Buffer Initiative §103F.48 that was signed into law by Gov. Mark Dayton in June 2015 was amended on April 25, 2016, and further amended on May 30, 2017.

This law requires that landowners owning property adjacent to a water body identified and reviewed on the Department of Natural Resources buffer protection map must establish and maintain a buffer to protect the state’s water resources as follows:

- DNR Public Waters — a 50-foot average width continuous buffer of perennially rooted vegetation must be seeded by Nov. 1, 2017.
- Public Drainage Systems — a 16.5-foot minimum width continuous buffer must be seeded by Nov. 1, 2018.

Polk County has affirmed jurisdiction and enforcement, including administrative penalty authority granted in §103B.101.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are not the enforcement mechanism regarding buffers under state statute, yet must track and inventory compliance with §103F.48.

Landowners are ultimately accountable for the installation and maintenance of buffers as identified on the DNR buffer protection map <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/buffers/index.html>.

Multiple options (CCRP, EQIP, MAWQCP, etc.) exist and various resources are designed to assist landowners with all measures of compliance with the state’s buffer law.

West Polk SWCD staff are qualified to assist with any inquiries relative to buffer legislation/requirements and identify options with direction to resources.

West Polk SWCD has technical and financial (10-year cost-share contract [\$200/acre]) assistance available, which if sought prior to Nov. 1, 2017, may grant an establishment deadline extension to noncompliant parcel owners that require buffers along public watercourses.

If you are an absentee landowner, we recommend that you instruct your renter or manager to contact our office. It is West Polk SWCD’s intention to assist you with guidance and respond to all inquiries. Detailed information regarding the Minnesota Buffer Program can be found on the Board of Water and Soil Resources buffers page <http://bwsr.state.mn.us/buffers/>. — **Aaron Habermehl, district technician, Wetland Conservation Act administrator LGU, West Polk Soil & Water Conservation District**

Lee now chairs County Social Services Board

Commissioner Joan Lee succeeded Commissioner Don Diedrich as chair of the Social Service Board in an officer change that occurred in July.

Lee had been the vice chair. The new vice chair of the Social Service Board is Commissioner Warren Strandell.

The positions of chair and vice chair change in July for the Social Service Board,

while the positions of chair and vice of the County Board change in January.

The Social Service Board meets monthly as a separate body. It is made up of the five county commissioners and at-large members, Paula Waters, Crookston, and Cathy Gutterud, Fosston. Waters is secretary of the Social Services board.

Help Us 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 Law Library & Legal Services offer help to people who represent themselves in civil court

The Polk County Law Library in partnership with Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota is offering a Self Help Clinic that can assist county residents who are representing themselves in civil court matters.

The clinic, which is open from 2 to 4 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, is located in the Law Library at the Polk County Justice Center at 816 Marin Ave. in Crookston.

The service, which is free of charge to residents and is focused on the areas of family law, landlord-tenant issues and all other civil matters, provides explanations of the legal process and options, assisting and reviewing court-approved pro-se forms, and the referral to appropriate resources.

District Judge Tamara Yon, one of the organizers of the clinic, notes that the clinic "will provide guidance to ensure that unrepresented individuals have access to the court system. This joint venture between the Polk County Law Library Board and Legal Services of Northwest Minnesota is intended to increase the accessibility and efficiency of the legal system."

In the first four months of 2017, 19 people used the clinic. The Polk County Law Library

Board is hoping to spread the word, so that more people in need of assistance are aware of this free resource.

According to Charles "Corky" Reynolds, president of the Law Library Board of Directors, the Law Library has contracted with Legal Services of Northwestern Minnesota to pay for the clinic services at a one-year cost of \$5,280. The

Law Library is funded by fees that are paid as a part of civil filings and by court-ordered fees in criminal matters.

Crookston attorney James Fischer has been contracted to provide the legal service at the clinic on a first come, first serve basis. Services will involve personalized help for persons in understanding and completing forms dealing with non-criminal matters that are to go before the court. Fischer will not be available to undertake any representation of any client and his assistance provided will be "advice only."

If necessary, an appointment to meet individualized needs can be made by Legal Services of Northwestern Minnesota, by calling 1-800-450-8585 or 218-233-8585.

NEED HELP WITH COURT FORMS?

WHEN
2:00-4:00 p.m.
2nd & 4th Tuesdays of each month
(first come, first serve)

WHERE
Polk County Justice Center
Courthouse Law Library
816 Marin Ave.
Crookston, MN

SELF HELP LAW CLINIC CAN ASSIST FREE OF CHARGE WITH:

- Divorce
- Domestic Abuse
- Name Change
- Child Support
- Child Custody
- Parenting Time
- Criminal Expungement
- Landlord-Tenant
- Or any other legal, non-criminal matters

Sponsored by:
Polk County Law Library Board



QUESTIONS OR TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT, CALL 1-800-450-8585



The "East End" Sheriff's Department office is located in the Stenberg Building

Sheriff's 'satellite' office opens

The Polk County Sheriff's Department now has an "east end" base of operations for deputies who are assigned to do patrol and conduct investigations in that area of the county.

Space in the county-owned Stenberg Building located on property adjacent to the Polk County Waste to Energy Incinerator in Fosston is the location of that "satellite" office.

"This fulfills a great need," Sheriff Barb Erdman says, noting among other things that it gives deputies direct access to the electronic technology needed to send their case reports to the main Sheriff's Office in the Law Enforcement Center office, to the County Attorney's Office and to the courts all located in Crookston rather than having to drive them there.

"This office also provides a safe

environment in which to do interviews, to store equipment and to conduct DUI and drug testing. And the 'sally port' in adjoining garage space provides secure movement of a suspect from a patrol car to the office," she says.

"Having secure storage space in the building is a real advantage for our operations because it eliminates much of the need to relay resources to the east end of the county. Instead, that equipment can be stored there and be available to us as a situation unfolds, making us better prepared and more efficient."

The two contract deputies serving the City of Fosston will continue to maintain their office in the Fosston City Hall but, for the most part, Erdman says, all of the rest of law enforcement work in East Polk County will be based from the Stenberg Building.

Key Highway Department personnel end careers

With work in the current highway construction season now complete, there won't be a lot more impact this year. But that may not be the case for the time ahead.

That's the assessment that Polk County Engineer Richard Sanders makes in how the retirement of three key members of his Highway Department staff will affect work in the future.

The retirements are those of Kathy Glass, who had 49 years of service, Dean Rasmussen, 31 years of service and Bob Bjerck, who following his first 9 years in the Auditor's Office had 32 years with the Highway Department for a total of 41 years with the county.

Department accountant

Glass, the department's accountant, handled all of the finances involved with the running a highway department. Rasmussen and Bjerck were senior engineering technicians.

"Having these key people retire leaves a big hole in our department, but we have filled the positions with people who can learn and grow into those positions," Sanders says.

"One of them, Matt Teiken, who lives near Lengby, had been working with a consulting engineering firm in Bemidji. He is coming in as a senior engineering technician with a lot of design and inspection experience. Bryce Wilson, East Grand Forks, has a lot of knowledge on pipe and earthwork construction from working for R. J. Zavoral and Sons, Inc. of East Grand Forks. He comes in at an entry level but with on-the-job training and certification classes, he can advance to the higher technician levels in a short time."

60 years of experience

Combined, Rasmussen, who retired on June 30, and Bjerck, who retired on July 28, had over 60 years of experience in doing the surveying, design and inspection work involved with developing and constructing county highway construction projects.

Glass, who retired earlier on May 31st, has come back to work temporarily to help with training her successor. That successor has not yet been selected.

Make a Difference
Change a Life
Become a Foster Parent!
Polk County Social Services
1-877-281-3127

Kyle Allen selected to be the successor

'Oscar' Meyer leaves mark on Juvenile Center

Long-time Red River Valley Juvenile Center (RRVJC) Program Director Daryl "Oscar" Meyer will be retiring effective Oct. 3.

A broad regional recruitment effort has resulted in the selection of Kyle Allen, a senior probation agent from Tri-County Community Correction's own Probation Department, to the role of Red River Valley Juvenile Center program director.

In the six years that he worked in the Probation Department, Allen, who has a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from the University of North Dakota, supervised both adults and juveniles and recently managed a predominantly specialized caseload.

In addition to his experience with Tri-County Community Corrections, Kyle has an extensive military background dating back 13 years and has had leadership positions for the last seven years in the North Dakota National Guard. He currently holds the rank of first



Daryl "Oscar" Meyer

lieutenant.

Allen will have many challenges in filling the shoes of the out-going program director but comes with a wealth of experience in corrections in both the adult and juvenile system. He will train with Meyer through September to aid in the transition and to limit potential disruption to operations.

"Oscar" leaves his mark

Oscar Meyer has been a



Kyle Allen

fixture with TCCC for the past 33 years. During this time, he devoted his life to improving the lives of children and families in our community. Oscar has served in multiple capacities during his time with TCCC, just a few of which include:

- Youth counselor with the Special Workers Assisting Treatment (SWAT) Program (1984-1988).

- Youth counselor with the

Crookston Area Learning Center (1988-1993).

- Project coordinator for a Life Skills Grant (1993-1994).

- Probation agent with specialization as the school based probation agent (1994-2000).

- Red River Valley Juvenile Center program director (2000-2017).

In his 17 years at the helm of the RRVJC, Meyer led the development of activities and programs that have served juveniles not only from the three partner counties of Polk, Norman and Red Lake but also the growing number who come from other counties in a large part to benefit from our extra activities and educational programs.

It is difficult to quantify the impact that Oscar has had on the lives of adolescents in our region but anybody who has worked with Oscar can attest that he has touched the lives of hundreds of children and families. — **Andrew Larson**
TCCC executive director

Aggregate Material Tax collections are down

The \$141,271 in Aggregate Material Tax collected for gravel excavations made in Polk County in 2016 is down from \$175,864 in 2015.

Distribution of the 2016 tax included \$57,038 each to the Township Road & Bridge Fund and to the Polk County Road & Bridge Fund, \$20,131 to the Reserve Fund for Pit Restoration, and the \$7,064 that was credited to the county auditor-treasurer for administration.

The tax was based on the mining of 854,653 tons (60,806 yards) of gravel. The county and townships each receive

42.5 percent of the tax while the restoration fund receives 15 percent and the auditor-treasurer retains 5 percent.

Active pits

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

The tax is used 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.

The ability to collect the tax

was created by special legislation at the request of Polk and Norman counties when Bernie Lieder was the Polk County engineer. It has been available to counties since 1980.

Initially, the tax called for voluntary compliance by aggregate producers. In an effort to bring all producers into compliance, the law was amended in 1997 to give county auditors (and/or township clerks) full access to the business records of an operator or importer.

Distribution

The settlement payments sent to each township for 2015 included: Chester, 7 pits, \$14,787.68; Columbia, 1 pit, \$2,112.53; Gentilly, 5 pits, \$10,562.65; Grove Park-Tilden, 4 pits, \$8,450.12; Hill River, 2 pits, \$4,225.06; Kertsonville, 1 pit, \$2,112.53; Knute, 1 pit, \$2,112.53; Lessor, 1 pit, \$2,112.53; Liberty, 1 pit,

\$2,112.53; Queen, 1 pit, \$2,112.53; and Trail City, 2 pits, \$4,225.06; Woodside, 1 pit, \$2,112.53.

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
2013	\$177,846
2014	\$254,861
2015	\$175,864
2016	\$141,271

County Board Meeting Times

8:00 a.m. on 1st Tuesday of the month
 10:00 a.m. on the 3rd Tuesday
 8:00 a.m. on the 4th Tuesday
All meetings are open to the public

County Commissioners

Dist. 1 — Jerry Jacobson
 Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell
 Dist. 3 — Gary Willhite
 Dist. 4 — Joan K. Lee, vice chair
 Dist. 5 — Don Diedrich, chair

Public Health Services

Health Screenings and Disease Prevention

SITE	ADDRESS	DAYS	HOURS
Crookston 218-281-3385	816 1/2 Marin Ave Suite 125	Every Tuesday	3:00 – 5:30 p.m.
East Grand Forks 218-773-2431	1424 Central Ave NE	2 nd and 4 th Wednesday of each month*	3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
McIntosh 218-563-2010	250 Cleveland Ave (Bjella Building)	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
(State eligible vaccines available)
- ✓ Limited family planning services:
Contraceptive refills-including Birth Control Pills, Patch, Depo Shot, Emergency Contraceptives, Condoms, Dental Dams, Pregnancy Testing, Counseling, & STI/HIV/Hep C Screening.
- ✓ Mantoux-TB testing
- ✓ Dental varnish- fluoride treatment
- ✓ Cholesterol screening
- ✓ Blood Pressure Check
- ✓ Flu shot
- ✓ Blood Sugar screening
- ✓ Hemoglobin
- ✓ Height and weight checks, including baby weight checks
- ✓ Hearing and vision screening

Family Planning Clinic in the Crookston site on Wednesday's 12:30-4:30 p.m. by appointment only.

Services: Gynecological Exams, Pregnancy Testing, STI Diagnosis & Treatment, HIV, Hep C Screening, Contraceptives, Counseling, Education & Referrals.

Expanded Family Planning Walk-In Hours:

2nd & 4th Wednesday 3-4:30pm
1st & 3rd Thursday 11am-1pm
East Grand Forks Site

Mon & Thurs 2-4:30pm
Tues 2-5:30pm
Crookston Site

1st & 3rd Thursday 9-11am
2nd & 4th Tuesday 3-4:30pm
McIntosh Site

**These times don't work for you?
Call for an appointment**



County's Land Use Plan/Zoning Ordinance updated

As the construction season is winding down for this year, it is a good time to recap some of the updates that have occurred within Planning & Zoning in 2017.

Polk County updated the Land Use/Zoning Ordinance twice in 2017 in order to conform to some recent changes in state statute and to better prepare for future development activities within the county.

Through the ordinance update process this spring, the county updated language that deals with the regulation of signs. The updated language was needed to conform with recent U.S. Supreme Court rulings.

Another major amendment to the zoning ordinance had to do with renewable energy and permitting requirements for solar energy projects.

This fall, a second ordinance update was required to comply with the Minnesota Buffer Initiative §103F.48. After careful consideration and input from landowners, the County Board decided to affirm jurisdiction and elect enforcement of the buffer law.

The zoning ordinance was amended in late August to incorporate the rules, regulations, and enforcement procedures of §103F.48.

The ordinance requires that landowners owning property adjacent to a water body identified and reviewed on the DNR buffer protection map (<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/buffers/index.html>) must establish and maintain a buffer to protect the state's water resources as follows:

a) DNR Public Waters: a 50-foot average width and 30-foot minimum width continuous buffer of perennially rooted vegetation must be seeded by Nov. 1, 2017.

b) Public Drainage Systems: a 16.5-foot minimum width continuous buffer must be seeded by Nov. 1, 2018.

If landowners fail to establish and maintain a required buffer, they may be subject to administrative penalty and/or criminal enforcement by the county.

The first step for landowners should be to work with their local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) office and take the appropriate steps to make sure they are in compliance with any buffer requirements on their property.

Landowners should contact their SWCD office as soon as possible to determine what alternative practices might be acceptable and to see what resources are available to help with implementation.

Building permits

Polk County Environmental Services would also like to remind you that the county requires building/land use permits for all construction projects. If you are planning building/land use projects, please contact Polk County Planning & Zoning prior to construction to determine setback and ordinance requirements that may apply.

More information on building/land use regulations, including new buffer regulations, can be found on the Polk County Website at www.co.polk.mn.us under the Environmental Services and Planning & Zoning Department page.

Our office is more than happy to answer questions and assist you with all land use/zoning requirements. For more information contact Polk County Planning & Zoning at (218) 281-5700. — **Josh Holte, Polk County assistant Environmental Services administrator**



Flag disposal box now at Government Center

In partnership with the National Association of Counties, the National Flag Foundation and the National Sheriff's Association, Polk County has installed a flag retirement box on the 2nd floor main entrance to the Government Center.

Flags should be folded respectfully before being placed in the box.

The United States Flag Code prescribes flag etiquette — everything from flying it near other flags to instructions on how to raise and lower it.

The code, according to Polk County Veterans Service Officer Kurt Ellefson notes that the

“The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem of display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning.”

The Polk County Veterans Services will be responsible for the proper disposal of the worn flags.

Said NACo Executive Director Matthew Chase, “We are pleased to be able to partner in the provision of these flag retirement boxes. Proper disposal of the U.S. flag goes hand in hand with the commitment we make to public service while simultaneously benefiting our residents.”

Billboards are spreading the message



Funding in the Operational Improvement Grant that is given to Polk County by the Department of Minnesota Veterans Affairs each year and from the support grant provided through the Minnesota Aquatic

Invasive Species Task Force program are paying for these signs. The signs are located along Highway 2 near East Grand Forks and Fosston.



Interim named while Collison leads initiative

Mike Ginnaty has been named interim district engineer for the Minnesota Department of Transportation District 2 in Northwestern Minnesota.

Ginnaty most recently served as the assistant district engineer in District 4 for program delivery, managing areas of construction, design, materials and traffic. His appointment will last approximately nine months while District Engineer Craig Collison leads a new statewide

safety initiative.

Ginnaty has spent the past 23 years at the District 4 headquarters in Detroit Lakes.

District 2 comprises over 1,800 miles of state highways across 14 counties and employs approximately 220 people to handle snow and ice control, roadway construction, traffic, land acquisition, business operations, planning, design and other transportation-related duties.

Fosston kids 'Saved by the Belt'

To kick off the statewide Click It or Ticket extra seat belt enforcement campaign last May, the Minnesota State Patrol, Polk County Public Health, Polk County Sheriff's Office, and the Polk County and Northwest Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths Coalition partners held an assembly with more than 300 Fosston Elementary School students to recognize two classmates who were "Saved by the Belt."

Emilee and Jakob Rudie survived a crash where their vehicle rolled several times. Thankfully, their mother Angie Rudie had made sure the children were properly restrained in their booster seats.

"If they had not been buckled, they may not be here today," Angie Rudie said. "We rolled probably six times."

Law enforcement in northwest Minnesota join more than 300 law enforcement agencies across the state in the Click It or Ticket enforcement and education campaign coordinated by the Department of Public Safety.

"Jakob is 8 and I still make sure he rides in a booster seat. Emilee is small for her age and is still in a five-point harness," Rudie says.

"When we were in the crash, Emilee didn't move. Her booster seat stayed in the same place. When we landed, she said, 'Mom, go get my shoe.' I asked, 'Where is your shoe?' It had flown out the window. All I could think about was that could have been Emilee.

In 2016, 79 unbelted motorists lost their lives on Minnesota roads.

Since TZD's inception in 2003, traffic-related deaths have declined by 40 percent. More than half of all deaths occurring on Minnesota roads occur on rural roads. Unbelted crashes continue to be higher in rural areas.

Tax forfeited property sale slated Oct. 20

Thirty-five tax-forfeited properties in Polk County have been approved for sale. Most are on track to be sold at public auction at 10 a.m. Friday, Oct. 20 at the Polk County Government Center in Crookston.

The properties, which forfeited to the State of Minnesota for non-payment of property taxes, have been classified and appraised to determine the beginning price for each in the bidding process. Terms of the sale are cash only.

The properties are advertised in county newspapers and are listed on the Polk County website — <http://www.co.polk.mn.us>.

Road construction, maintenance projects completed for year

September is one of the most beautiful times of the year. Leaves are changing colors, you can wear a sweatshirt and shorts, and construction is typically winding down for the year.

This year is no different as all our construction projects are complete. The year's projects were as follows:

CSAH 18 — Overlay from TH 2 to CSAH 17

CSAH 19 — Grade widening/ overlay from CSAH 20 to TH 75 in Euclid, MN

CSAH 50 — Overlay from TH 2 to CSAH 53

CSAH 53 — Overlay from CSAH 11 to CSAH 53

CSAH 53 — Safety project to remove the two tangents and reconstruct the intersection at CSAH 11

CSAH 54 — Overlay from CSAH 11 to CSAH 57

CSAH 71 — Overlay from TH 75 to CSAH 11

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

Other maintenance type projects that we have done include over \$100,000 in patching bituminous pavements throughout the county. We also spent over \$250,000 stabilizing approximately 20 miles of gravel roads using Base One as a stabilizing product.

Next year looks to have about the same amount of work as done in 2017. Hopefully, that work will involve designing and constructing a new Nielsville bridge. — **Richard Sanders, Polk County highway engineer**

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 extension 2249)

You may remain anonymous

or Call the toll free
**Minnesota Welfare
Fraud Hotline**

1-800-627-9977

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Polk County AIS Taskforce has another busy summer ...

The Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Taskforce has had another busy summer in the fight against aquatic invasive species within the County.



Since 2015 the taskforce has been working on several projects focusing on education and public awareness. Billboards, public access signs, and several promotional items have been developed to help spread the message about the threat that AIS poses in Polk County and around the state.

This summer the taskforce hired three seasonal AIS technicians to conduct watercraft inspections, work on monitoring projects and help with other AIS outreach and educational activities. This summer AIS Technicians conducted close to 2,000 watercraft inspections on public water access sites around the County. The inspectors received training from the Minnesota DNR and were busy inspecting watercraft every weekend during the summer months. The AIS technicians had approximately a 4 % violation rate for boats arriving with drain plugs in and a 2% violation rate for boats arriving with weeds attached. Although these numbers are fairly low, it shows that there is still lots of work to be done to in order to help protect our lakes and rivers. It is up to each watercraft user to make sure they are doing their part to prevent the spread of AIS.

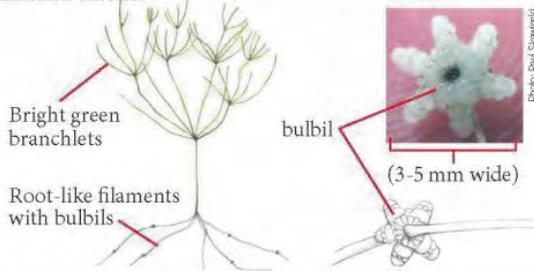
This summer boaters probably noticed new I-LIDS units at Maple Lake and Union Lake. I-LIDS stands for Internet Landing Installed Device Sensor. I-LIDS is a self-contained, solar powered system installed at boat launches to prevent AIS through video capture and remote inspection of launching boats/trailers, and audio education of boaters using the lake. For more information regarding the I-LIDS system, you can visit www.environmentalsentry.com.

Invasive species are species that are not native to Minnesota and cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Minnesota waters are threatened by aquatic invasive species. It is illegal to transport any aquatic species like Eurasian watermilfoil, zebra mussels, starry stonewort, spiny waterflea or other prohibited invasive species. Within Polk County, Eurasian watermilfoil is present on Union Lake, and zebra mussels are present in the Red River. Starry stonewort is still an up and coming invasive species that is appearing in new lakes around the state. It is critical that every boater take the steps necessary to limit the spread of starry stonewort and other AIS.



How to Identify Starry Stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtusa*)

Illustration: Tim Plude



Prevent the transport of invasive species.
Clean all recreational equipment.
www.ProtectYourWaters.net

General Characteristics

• Usually bright green and smooth

Remember, with the waterfowl seasons among us it is just as important for waterfowl hunters to do their part to prevent the spread of AIS. So remember to clean, drain, and dry your boat, gear and equipment every time to help protect our lakes and rivers. For more information visit www.co.polk.mn.us/ais. — Josh Holte, Polk County assistant Environmental Services administrator