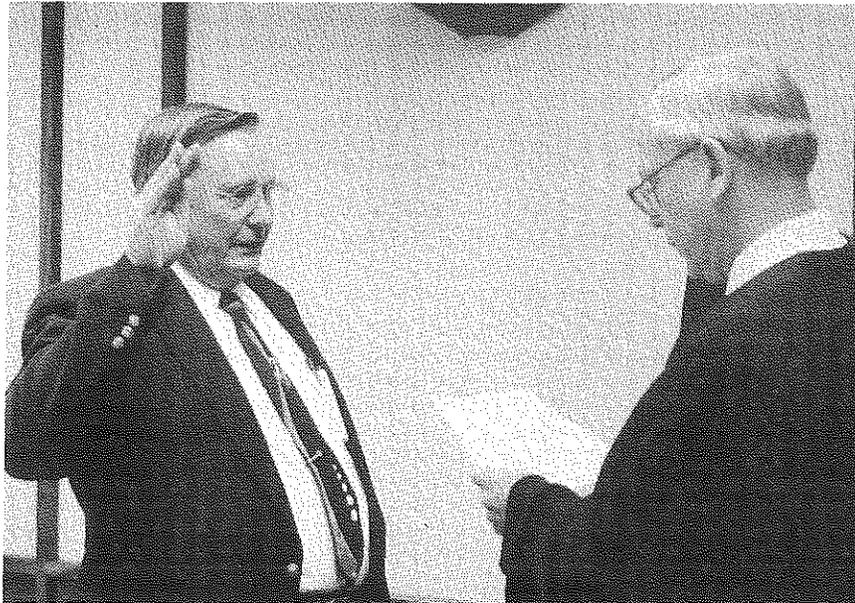


Winter 1997



Commissioner Lyle Eisert takes oath from Dist. Judge Russell Anderson

## Eisert is new chair; Vasek begins term

A new year in Polk County government begins with District 3 Commissioner Lyle Eisert, Crookston, becoming the board chairman and Henry Vasek, rural Warren, assuming the seat given up by the retiring District 5 Commissioner Eugene "Jeep" Mattson, rural East Grand Forks. Mattson was the board chairman in 1996.

Eisert, Vasek and District 1 Commissioner Don Bakken, Fertile, all won four-year terms in the November general election. Bakken will serve as the board's vice chairman. Other members of the board are Rupert Syverson, rural McIntosh, who represents District 4, and Warren Strandell, East Grand Forks, who represents District 2.

As chairman, Eisert says he would like 1997 to be a year of greater cooperation between state, county and township units of government. Eisert, who is starting his third term, says, "There needs to be a lot of cooperation if we are going to get the job done." He sees the control of spring flooding and drainage, cost-control, and personnel matters to be among major concerns of the county this year.

"We have to make sure that we develop containment areas for water so that we don't flood out our neighbors both in town and in the country," he says. Eisert was recently named to the International Coalition, which deals with water issues in the Red River Basin from Lake Traverse to Winnipeg. The organization has a 20-member board with representation from Minnesota, North Dakota and Manitoba.

Vasek joins the board with "a desire to be a part of the decision-making process and to help Polk County manage its affairs." He defeated David Tucker, East Grand Forks, in a two-way race for the chance to succeed Mattson. District 5 includes three wards in the City of East Grand Forks and nine townships in the northwestern part of the county.

A native of Northland Township, Vasek has extensive experience in local government. He is

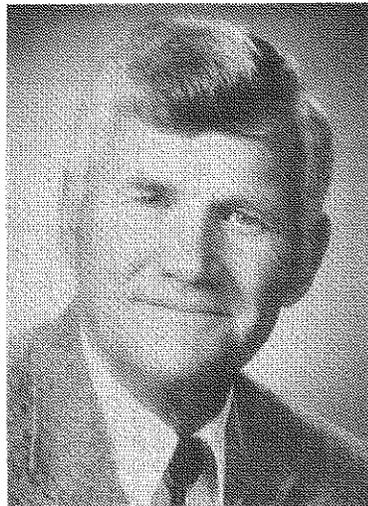
See BOARD RE-ORGANIZES, Page 2

## Mattson retires from board

Eugene "Jeep" Mattson, rural East Grand Forks, says his 12 years as the Polk County commissioner from District 5 were both rewarding and challenging... but mostly rewarding.

"I always tried to help people with their problems or direct them to the people who could. Like other commissioners when they first come on the board, I thought I could solve all the problems," he says. "But, after you've been around for a while, you find out that it is much better to involve department heads in finding the solutions right from the start."

His most difficult decision, he says, was to support the Minnesota Department of Transportation's preferred route for eight miles of State Highway 220 improvements south from Alvarado. "I really would have preferred to have the highway go straight north from East Grand Forks all the way to Highway 1, but that would have meant that Polk County would have had to take over the maintenance of the original road. The county just didn't have



Eugene "Jeep" Mattson

the money to take that over and it wouldn't have made sense to have two paved roads just a mile apart."

Mattson had earlier campaigned endlessly through the Transportation

See MATTSON, Page 2

# Mattson

Continued from Page 1

Advisory Committee of the Northwest Regional Development Commission for Highway 220 improvements, finally succeeding in getting the project moved to a high priority position for work in northwestern Minnesota. The completion of other roadwork — the reconstruction and paving of both CSAH 20 and CSAH 21 — also ranks among his most satisfying efforts, he says.

Jeep, who was feted by county employees at a retirement coffee party on his last meeting day Dec. 19, was first elected in the fall of 1984 when he was part of a four-way primary election race with Henry Vasek, Richard Kuzel and Jim Mongoven. He defeated Mongoven in the general election. Mattson won re-election to a second four-year term by winning a race with Vasek in 1988, and he was elected to his third term in 1992 without opposition.

Regarded as one of the hardest working commissioners, Mattson says he now wants to take a break. "I want to phase out of almost everything," he says, noting that he will likely only remain active with the East Grand Forks Heritage Foundation.

The initial months of "retirement" will find Jeep and his wife, Mary Ann, spending time in Texas and Phoenix, AZ, where they have a daughter, Rebecca. While officially retired, Mattson expects to find a few things to keep him busy in the Mattson farming operation now headed by his son, Scott. The Mattsons also have two other daughters, Christine, who lives in Bloomington, MN, and Susan, Moorhead, and a son, Erick, Grand Forks.



Henry Vasek



Don Bakken

## Board re-organizes

Continued from Page 1

a former chair of both the Northland Township Board and the Polk County Township Officers Association. Vasek is also a former vice chair of the Road & Bridge Division of the Minnesota Township Association and is a former board member of the Middle River-Snake River Watershed District.

He and his wife, Doris, who served on the Alvarado School Board for 21 years, have been married 44 years. They have five grown children: Jim, Poway, CA; Ron, Angus; Carol (Rick) Bye, Warren; Donna (Joe) Pawlowski, Omaha, NE; and Mike, Fisher.

Eisert was first elected in 1988 when he won a four-way race. He was re-elected in 1992 and won again in November winning a re-match with Crookston City Council member Bill Thorp. Eisert had served in the Polk County

Sheriff's Department for 28 years and was the county's director of emergency management for three years before becoming a commissioner.

He and his wife, Iris, have two daughters: Kristi (Mrs. Bob) Holder, Grand Forks, and Kim (Mrs. Mark) Windland, Maple Plain, MN.

Bakken, who has won election six times, is starting his 17th year on the board. He was first elected in 1980, carrying 72 percent of the vote. He ran again just two years later after a redistricting. Bakken was also re-elected in 1984, 1988, 1992 and 1996.

"I've really enjoyed being a commissioner," he says. "I like to work with the people. Things have become much more complex over the years, though." Bakken believes that finding ways to more efficiently handle solid waste and to comply with new regulations for emissions at the incinerator will be big issues this year.

### Polk County Board of Commissioners

- Dist. 1 — Don Bakken, Fertile
- Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell, East Grand Forks
- Dist. 3 — Lyle Eisert, Crookston
- Dist. 4 — Rupert Syverson, McIntosh
- Dist. 5 — Henry Vasek, Warren

The board meets three times each month: At 8:30 a.m. on the first Tuesday; at 1:20 p.m. on the third Tuesday; and at 8:30 a.m. on the fourth Tuesday. Meetings are open to the public. For special accommodations, call John Schmalenberg, county coordinator, 281-5408.

## Logan, Ostlie, Kennedy to leave county

Three valued members of the Polk County management staff have announced plans to leave their positions.

**Katherine Logan**, director of environmental services, will move to Rochester, MN, at the end of the school term to join her husband, Greg Turosak. Turosak recently became news editor of the Rochester Post-Bulletin. Logan has been

the environmental services director since Sept. 3, 1991.

**Cindy Ostlie**, first assistant in the county attorney's office, plans to move to Missouri also in May. She will join her husband, Don Auger, who is doing post-doctoral work in genetics research at the University of Missouri. Ostlie has been with the county attorney's office for the past 18 years.

**Kathleen "Kitty" Kennedy**, county zoning administrator, has accepted a position as zoning administrator for the City of Ely, MN, and will start work there on March 3. She has been zoning administrator in Polk County since March 1994. Kennedy has also recently announced that she and Jim Blaich of Ely will marry. A date for the wedding has not been set.

# Wagner named assessor

Rob Wagner, who was named the new Polk County assessor in mid-December, would like to see the office become computerized in the years ahead.

"That would improve our efficiency quite a bit," he says. "For one thing, by using lap-tops when we are in the field we would be able to eliminate a lot of the transcribing that has to be done when we get back to the office."

Wagner succeeds Dale Halos, who retired in December. Halos had been the county assessor for 13 years and was an assessor for the City of Crookston for 18 years before that.

Wagner, a graduate of the University of North Dakota, had been the county's East Grand Forks city appraiser for the past six

years. He started with the county assessor's office in 1986 and worked in the Crookston office the first four years.

"I feel quite comfortable coming into the position," he says. "I've worked in the Crookston office before. We have a really good staff but we are down some positions, so there might have to be some restructuring." One change has already been made. JoAnn Kerian, a senior member of the department, has assumed the East Grand Forks appraiser position.

Wagner is a native of Fisher. He and his wife, Jane, a registered nurse at Grand Forks Clinic, live in East Grand Forks and have three sons: John, 13; Thomas, 11; and Max, 8.



Robert Wagner

# Plowing snow drains man & machine

Plowing snow, that's a subject near and dear to those dedicated people who operate the machines that accomplish the task of providing safer roadways for the motoring public. It is also a subject that is very much on the minds of operators and supervisors at this time of the year... especially this year.

Unofficially, we have received about 58 inches of snowfall since Nov. 16. In fact, as I sit here writing this article (Jan. 10), we are experiencing another beautiful blizzard with visibility less than one block in the city. One can easily imagine the conditions out in the countryside.

But I digress. The article is supposed to explain or relate the plan and method of operation of the Polk County Highway Department as it relates to plowing snow.

After each snow storm we send the plows out very early in the morning, sometimes by 2 a.m., depending on the severity of the storm and the snow conditions. When we get a real early start we can get over much of the road systems before traffic has had the chance to compact the snow. However, if the wind is still blowing, we will delay the starting time.

We generally start clearing the snow on the most heavily traveled roadways which includes the County State Aid Highways within the city limits of all the cities in the county. We go over all

of the roads and then we go back and "wing" the snow off and widen the areas that are troublesome.

In general, we will not attempt to send the plows out into the rural areas when wind speeds are 20 mph or more. Experience has shown that we can do more harm than good if the wind is still blowing that hard.

When we have areas where high snow banks have accumulated or around bridge ends, we will use the two blowers that we have to widen out the areas in an effort to lessen the problem.

In years past, the county would erect wooden snow fences in an effort to reduce the amount of drifting in problem areas. This work was labor intensive and as soon as the drift was as high as the fence, the effectiveness no longer existed. Some years ago, it was decided to experiment with building snow ridges with the plow equipment on the adjacent fields. This method proved very effective and is used almost exclusively at this time. One big advantage to this type of snow fence is that Mother Nature will remove it in the spring.

In closing, I would ask the readers of this article to remember to allow adequate distance between their vehicle and the snow removal equipment.

— Roger Diesen, county highway engineer

# Holewa is court administrator

"The people here have been great. Everyone has been very helpful," says new Polk County Court Administrator Sally Holewa.

She moved to Crookston just in time for a northwestern Minnesota snowstorm and immediately received two days of vacation when the courthouse was closed because of the storm. Holewa's first day on the job was Dec. 18. She succeeds William Scanlon, who has taken a court administration position in Illinois.

A native of Foley, MN, Holewa graduated from high school there and earned a bache-

lors degree at St. Cloud State University in political science with minors in both minority studies and journalism. Among her work before serving as the deputy court administrator in Benton County for eight years was a year in construction. "I worked for my sister's brother-in-law doing weatherization and roofing.

Holewa and her husband, Curt Kantor, have two children: Emily, 7, and Nicholas, 6. Kantor has been employed by Elk River Concrete Products, Elk River, and is hoping to be able to transfer to Crookston.



Sally Holewa

## Now processing almost all incoming trash

# 'Up-front' separation unit on line

Polk County recently incorporated an "up-front" processing facility ahead of the incinerator in the waste-to-energy plant in Fosston primarily to remove problem and objectionable items prior to incineration.

The objectives of this system are to:

**Separate problem** materials from the incoming waste stream before it is burned in the incinerator. These problem materials include items causing increasing amounts of maintenance and down-time of the facility. The major items of concern are ferrous and grit materials which when processed through the incinerator system cause:

- Significant wear and tear on the refractory inside the primary burning chamber,
- Damage to the ash removal and conveying system, and
- Consumption of valuable space in the lined ash cells at the landfill.

**Facilitate compliance** with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's waste combustion air emission rules to reduce the quantity and toxicity of the ash, reduce mercury emissions and reduce overall air emissions from the incinerator.

**Increase the "through-put"** capacity of the plant by separating materials for

management in a more environmentally preferred manner.

**Supplement** the source-separated recycling programs (curbside and drop-off) by the recovery of marketable materials (ferrous, aluminum and cardboard initially) which have not been, nor are likely to be captured entirely by the recycling programs in the five counties.

**Add the potential** to separate out materials in the MSW stream that can be composted to decrease landfill use and increase the energy recovered per ton processed.

The system began operation in September and is now processing almost all of the incoming trash.

Waste is deposited on the existing tipping floor and placed into a feed hopper by the incinerator loader operator. The waste proceeds to the corrugated and non-processible picking stations. Clean pieces of corrugated are manually removed and dropped down a chute and onto a conveyor that feeds the baler. Other objectionable and non-processible items that can be seen are also removed in this area.

**After the hand-pick** station, the material proceeds to the separation trommel for bag-opening and size separation. The front section of the trommel functions as a bag opener. The next section consists of two

screens to "size-classify" the incoming waste stream into three categories: "Under 3 inches," which is largely food wastes, grit, stone, broken glass, etc.; "3 inches to 7 inches," which is comprised mostly of aluminum, steel and plastic containers; and the "over 7-inch size," which is mainly contaminated paper, plastic and other combustibles.

**The under 3-inch** stream contains many recyclables and is conveyed through magnetic separation for removal of scrap iron, followed by an eddy current system for the removal of aluminum. The aluminum and ferrous materials are temporarily stored in containers or bunks prior to being baled or placed into roll-off boxes as needed for shipment to market. The remaining fraction is conveyed to combine with the over-size material.

All of the over-sized materials, including the mid-size fraction, are conveyed to the final hand-pick station for removal of other recyclables or objectionable and problem materials. The balance is conveyed back to the tipping floor as processed fuel for the incinerators.

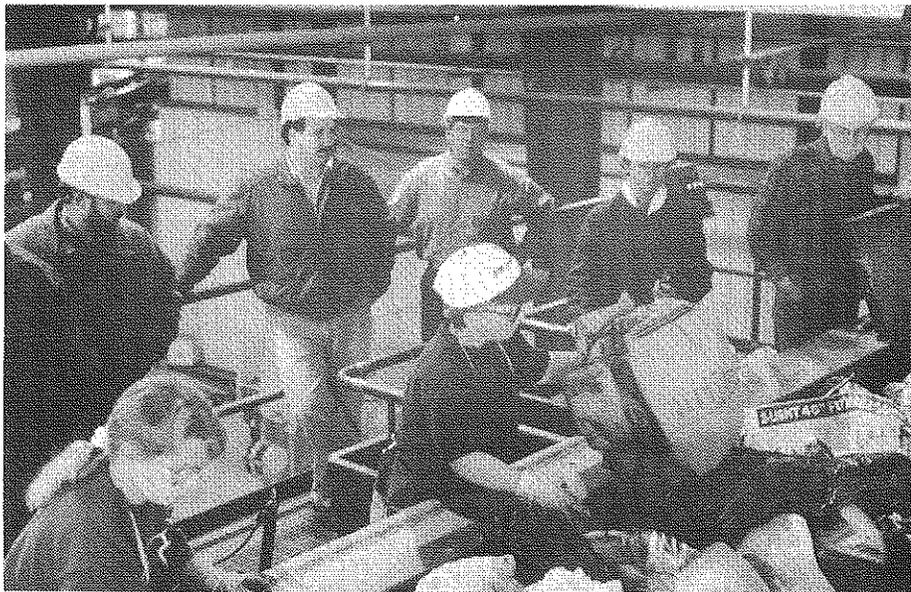
**The system** is almost up to full speed with many start-up problems being resolved by the contractors and Polk County personnel. There is still a ways to go, but so far, it appears as though the planned objectives are being met.

Ash has been reduced substantially when burning the processed material, resulting in hauling savings. This is somewhat off-set by the "finds" coming out of the trommel which are hauled to the landfill.

**In October**, the plant processed almost 700 tons of MSW in one week where previously it was limited to 600 tons per week, thus saving on landfill space. The most recent stack test showed that the plant would be in compliance with mercury limits under the new air emission rules. Burning the processed material has many more advantages, all of which will increase the life of the facility and should reduce maintenance expenses.

All in all, the system should be a big success in the long run. Since start-up, we have received over \$30,000 in revenues from corrugated, scrap iron and aluminum that has been removed. These revenues, along with other savings, are ultimately expected to cover the entire cost of the new system.

— Bill Wilson, solid waste director



### Hand-pick station

Watching operations at the hand-pick station during a recent tour, left to right, are: Jay Rhone, county maintenance supervisor; Rod Ambrosie, Wenck Associates; Steve Ahlschlager, Ace Services; Kim Badurek, The 13 Towns newspaper; and Don Bakken, county commissioner. Sort line operators are Renae Sistad, left, and Jo Martin.

# Committee is writing new feedlot rules

On June 18, the Board of Commissioners passed a resolution to adopt an interim zoning ordinance that prohibits the permitting of new feedlots in Polk County and the expansion of existing feedlots beyond an additional 200 animal units for a period of one year.

This interim ordinance is the result of negative reaction to a proposed 4,800 hog finishing operation planned near Fosston. The board directed Planning and Zoning to establish a feedlot advisory committee to study the impact of feedlots on the environment and determine how they can co-exist with human activity.

Twenty-three members were selected to represent the following interests: Pork, beef, dairy and poultry producers; cities, schools, industry, citizens, veterinary medicine, Minnesota Extension Service, SWCD's, township association, and planning commission. This group has been meeting twice per month since Sept. 9, with the goal of developing and adopting a Feedlot Section in the Polk County Zoning Ordinance by approximately March 1997.

The initial meetings consisted of background information on state statutes, current Polk County and other county feedlot regulations, guest speakers and other relevant feedlot information. The committee is now drafting a proposed section, which will be presented to the Planning Commission, the County Board and the public before adoption into the Polk County Zoning Ordinance.

Feedlots have received much publicity of late, both positive and negative, nationally as well as locally. This has not been an easy issue for the committee to address. I admire and respect the committee members for their patience and abilities while working through this issue. They have attended meetings regularly and provided invaluable input. It has been an interesting learning experience for all involved.

— Kathleen Kennedy, zoning director

## Budget set for 1997

The \$39,971,931 Polk County budget for 1997 will require a combination of gross tax levy and service fees of \$12,006,395. To reduce the impact on real estate taxes, the State of Minnesota will provide \$1,491,625 in HACA (Homestead & Agricultural Credit Aid) property tax relief.

The balance of the revenue will be derived from fees for services, block and categorical grants from the state and federal governments, and other state and federal aids.

The 1997 budget will again require judicious spending. — John Schmalenberg, coordinator

## Welfare Reform:

# *What will it mean?*

An explanation of the Personal Responsibility & Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996:

**Aid to Families with Dependent Children AFDC** — This program changes from an open-ended entitlement to a capped block grant that consolidates AFDC IV-A payments, AFDC administration, emergency assistance, and the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program into a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant to the states. There will no longer be an individual entitlement to federal cash assistance.

The law states that the individual entitlement ends Oct. 1, 1996, but states have until July 1, 1997 to submit their plans. Regardless of the date that the state plan goes into effect, the state's federal expenditures cannot exceed its block grant allocation.

**State legislation** — The state plan must be approved by the State Legislature. It is anticipated that the legislature will act on this plan early in the session. Once the plan is approved, the regulations, rules and guidelines will be sent to the counties for implementation.

**Five-year time limit** — TANF funds cannot be used for any family with an adult who has received assistance for more than 60 months. Up to 20 percent of the caseload could be exempted from the lifetime limit for hardship. The clock for the five-year limit will begin to tick on the date that the state program goes into effect.

**Work requirement** — If an adult in a family receiving assistance is not working, he or she must perform community service within two months of receiving assistance, unless the state opts out of this provision in writing. After 24 months on assistance, an adult must be in a work participation program. The required hours of work per week for all families are 20 in FY97 and FY98, 25 in FY99, and 30 in FY 2000 and subsequent years. For two parent families the requirement is 35 hours a week. If a two-parent family receives federal child care assistance, then both parents must participate in work activities.

**Definition of Work Activity** — There are 12 allowable activities to meet the work requirement. These include unsubsidized and subsidized employment, on-the-job training, community service, job search and job readiness, job skills training or education directly related to employment, and vocational education. Some of these activities have certain limits.

Vocational education is only allowed for 12 months. In addition, no more than 20 percent of the families can count toward the participation rate through vocational education activities. Job search and job readiness activities can only be for six months, and no more than four weeks can be consecutive.

**Work Participation Rates** — In FY97, states must have 25 percent of all families receiving assistance in a work participation program. This requirement increases five percentage points each year until it reaches 50 percent in 2002. The participation rates for two-parent families is 75 percent in FY97 and 1998, and 90 percent for FY99 and subsequent years.

— William Kurpius-Brock, Polk County social services director

## Numbered streets and avenues in four-county area

# Rural addressing to have many benefits

In early May of 1996 Sandy Schultz, dispatch supervisor, asked me if I would like to attend a 911 rural addressing meeting in Thief River Falls. This was a meeting of the four county (Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake and Polk) 911 Rural Addressing Committee. Naturally, because I have been a proponent of rural addressing for a long time, I jumped at the chance.

It rained the day of the meeting and was quite cold but the anticipation was there to find out what this was all about. When we arrived we found Delton Schulz, Pennington County engineer and Bud Comstock, Pennington County commissioner. The reason I mention them by name is because they played a big part in getting this organized and attended all the meetings. There were also commissioners from Polk, Red Lake and Marshall counties, along with the sheriffs of Pennington and Red Lake counties and fire and ambulance personnel from Marshall County.

At this first meeting we were introduced to Frank Gross, the postal inspector from Fargo, and Phil Sailer, a representative

from Pro-West & Associates of Walker, who shared their knowledge of various addressing systems. North Dakota is presently using a statewide street addressing system, with the exception of their major cities.

The first meeting was a little overwhelming. Big dollar amounts were being bantered around and I thought this was going to be the first and last meeting. However, we persevered and had one meeting a month with the exception of December. Through the course of the meetings we had to face changes, cost considerations and sometimes lack of numbers in attendance.

Polk County Highway Engineer Roger Diesen was pivotal at the remainder of the meetings, setting up maps of Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake and Polk counties, all of whom expressed interest in county addressing. This would mean numbered streets and avenues being assigned throughout the four county borders. The committee agreed to use the intersection of Pennington Co. Road 3 and State Highway 32 as the beginning of the numbering system. From

there we can go 36 miles, or blocks, north and south. With this as a start, we will be able to put an address on all sites and they will be determined in the near future.

What is all of this going to mean in the future?

Quicker response times for emergency services, such as fire, ambulance and law enforcement. It will also assist various county agencies in locating farm sites, whether or not there are any existing buildings on the site. It would also mean easier postal delivery and an addressing system that would be easy for the public to understand and use.

By the time this has been published, we will have had another meeting in January and hope to continue moving forward with the rural addressing. We also hope to have a chance to write another article for the newsletter at a later date to keep you updated on our progress. Thanks again to Roger Diesen for all of his work!

— Don Fall, 911 dispatcher, Polk County Sheriff's Department

## Juvenile Detention Center nearing completion

The new Juvenile Detention center is expected to be ready for use by mid-March. An addition to the Regional Law Enforcement and Corrections Center in Crookston, it will have space for 14 male and female juveniles. Tri-County Community Corrections will operate the center as it does the adult detention facility and other corrections programs and services for Polk, Norman and Red Lake counties.

Construction of the addition is to be completed by mid-February with the balance of the month and early March to be

used for installation of furnishings and such "pre-occupation" activities as tours for classes from area schools, an open house for the general public, and a dedication event.

Also a part of the \$2.9 million project is a new emergency services dispatch center for the Polk County Sheriff's Department, plus an updated heating system for the Corrections Center and Annex buildings.

The project is a partnership between Polk County and Tri-County Community Corrections.

## County reclassifies road systems

The Polk County Board of Commissioners, with the assistance of the County Highway Department, continues to review and reclassify the county's road system.

The County State Aid Highway System (CSAH) was implemented in the mid 1950's and has in some instances become outmoded. The system, as designated at that time, was established to serve the most people in the best way possible while still complying with set guidelines. Over the passing years, consolidation of farms has been a factor in traffic pattern changes. Also, more commuter traffic has led to traffic pattern directional changes.

A number of changes have been implemented over the years to provide better service and address changing needs. For several years, people have been requesting the county to investigate the possibility of designating a "state aid" route beginning in the vicinity of Climax at Trunk Highway (TH) 75 and extending easterly across Vineland, Hammond and Russia townships to the intersection of TH 9 and CSAH 41.

Two other major changes involved:

- North-south route extending presently designated CSAH 66 north to the Marshall/Polk county line and south to intersect with CSAH 17, and;

- An east-west route extending CSAH 17 east to the Polk/Red Lake County Line.

Several other minor changes occurred as a result of this latest review. Factors considered when making changes in the County Road and County State Aid Systems include traffic counts, creating a grid system and connecting population centers. It is intended to further review the County Road system to determine the possibility of revoking some of the very low volume or dead-end County Roads to Township Road status.

It is anticipated that the adopted changes will become official in early spring after the Minnesota commissioner of transportation gives final approval.

— Roger Diesen, county highway engineer