



It may not look like this yet, but it will... the remodeling of the Human Service center in East Grand Forks will be done soon

Despite Pandemic, other things...

County's Human Service Center soon ready

An extensively remodeled Polk County Human Service Center in East Grand Forks will soon be ready for the return of the staff who for the past six months have either been working from home or from temporary space provided by the City of East Grand Forks.

County staff left the building this spring to allow for the start of construction work and to address COVID-19 pandemic concerns. Those concerns continue and will likely affect the date of any full return to work in the center.

Remodeling in the building actually began more than a year ago when work was started to accommodate expansion of Northwest Mental Health Center organization in East Grand Forks.

That work was completed and the space

fully occupied earlier this year. But then came an early April storm that dumped 11 inches of snow on the community.

The storm occurred while a reroofing project was underway. When the snow melted, water pooled up on the roof before it poured through openings left unprotected and into the finished quarters.

That repair work has since been completed... and paid for by the contractor's insurance. Northwestern Mental Health has full use of the space again but it is not in full use because of the work-at-home staff precautions that are being taken.

The work in the rest of the building that is now nearing completion involves rearrangement of space for the County Social Service, Public Health and Veterans Service offices and in the space

that is rented by the Tri-Valley Opportunity Council organization and by the State of Minnesota for its DEED (Department of Employment & Economic Development) office.

In addition to the new roof, the interior remodeling and the re-arrangement of space, new rooftop heating and air conditioning units have been installed and the electrical service has been updated. The building will also get a new exterior look with signage, wall covering and painting.

The building was constructed for a super market in 1973 and extensively remodeled for Maury's TV & Appliance store when Maury Finney acquired it in 1990. Polk County acquired the 20,000 square-foot building in 2001.

See HUMAN SERVICE, Page 2

CARES Act funding is being put to work

Polk County is using the \$3,985,249 in CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act) funding that it has received to cover a variety of costs incurred by local government bodies, social support organizations and small businesses as they

respond to and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 public health crisis.

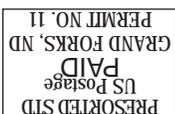
These, of course, include expenses to enable compliance with public health measures such as facilitating distance learning and improving tele-work capabilities.

In addition to impacting the health and safety of residents, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in numerous business and social support service shutdowns, income loss, and unemployment in the county.

Of the funding, a minimum \$775,000 is being utilized to

provide necessary community support and resources, either directly or through grants and/or loans to non-profit organizations based in Polk County to meet the needs of residents in obtaining or maintaining safe housing, food, elderly and vulnerable populations, education, and access to health and mental health services.

See CARES, Page 2



Human Service Center

Continued from Page 1

Polk County first established a social service office in East Grand Forks in 1975 when a single social service worker was assigned to small quarters in the basement of the then East Grand Forks Federal Savings & Loan building downtown.

As needs and staffing increased, the office moved first to the second floor of that building and then to the OPTIONS building also downtown. After quarters there were remodeled once to accommodate programs and staffing, the Social Service office moved in 1990 to a location on Central Avenue North. That site was expanded once before it, too, became

insufficient and the decision to acquire the Maury building was made.

The county had considered constructing an office facility in East Grand Forks in 1995 and an architect was engaged to determine needs and begin design. That effort was terminated the next year, however, because of budget concerns that made it impractical to construct the \$3.5 million, 25,000-square-foot county office building that was being proposed.

After the county acquired the Maury building, Service-to-Sentence inmates were used to completely strip the interior before officing for seven different county and regional organizations was created.

CARES Act funding

Continued from Page 1

Three areas of support and supervision have been created — for public health concerns, local government and support organizations, and for small businesses — to provide assistance in the use of funding.

Those under public health have Sarah Reese, Polk County Public Health director, as the main contact.

Local government/support organizations and the Small Business Relief partners have Polk County Administrator Chuck Whiting as the maintain contact.

Long-term care/disability service providers are working with Victoria Ramirez from the Social Services Department as the contact.

The County is utilizing a minimum of \$450,000 of CARES funding to provide support for recovering operational losses and expenses for the organizations and the populations they serve.

The County has earmarked \$775,000 of the allocation to provide emergency grant funding to sustain operations for small businesses and to help eligible local businesses with costs associated with reopening under public health guidance and protocols.

Eligible businesses are those that are locally owned and operated, have an establishment within Polk County and have at least two and no more than 50 employees.

Funding will be used to recover COVID-19 related costs of operations changes due to the virus, including acquisition of personnel protective equipment, enhanced sanitary and cleaning supplies acquisition, social distancing modifications to workplace and building environments, tele-commuting costs and person-

nel costs resulting from time incurred for adjusting to working from home and servicing COVID-19 related initiatives, programs and work place adjustments.

A minimum of \$2,000,000 in the Coronavirus Relief Fund shall be utilized to recover these costs and expenses.

Use of the funds is required by Nov. 30. Unused funds will need to be returned to Polk County, which will follow requirements to assure that the funds are used properly and expeditiously. The funds have been earmarked as follows:

Public Health Partnerships

School districts and private schools, \$250,000; Northwestern Mental Health, \$75,000; New American Integration Center, \$10,000; North Country Food Bank, \$100,000; Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, \$100,000; Inter-County Community Council, \$70,000; Migrant Health Services, \$10,000; Care N Share, \$10,000; Long-term care facilities in county (12), \$120,000; University of Minnesota-Crookston, \$15,000; Northland Community & Technical College, \$15,000.

Polk County Partnerships

Tri-County Community Corrections, \$100,000; East Polk Co. Soil & Water Conservation District, \$10,000; West Polk Co. Soil & Water Conservation District, \$10,000; Polk Co. HRA, \$140,000; Polk County DAC, \$100,000; Fosston DAC, \$25,000; ODC, \$25,000; Polk County Social Services home-care vendors (2), \$40,000.

Small Business Relief

City of Crookston, \$250,000; City of East Grand Forks, \$250,000; City of Fosston, \$150,000; Other county cities and townships, \$125,000.

Preliminary levy increase set at 4.938%

The Polk County Board of Commissioners has set 4.938% as the preliminary property tax levy increase for 2021. This percentage would raise \$25.5 million, or be an increase of \$1,200,029 over 2020.

The preliminary levy amount, which by state law has to be set each year by Sept. 30, can be lowered but cannot be raised as work continues to refine the budget, which will be finalized in December. It has annually been the practice of the County Board to reduce the preliminary levy as budget issues are addressed in the last months of the year.

The preliminary levy is used to calculate the maximum property tax levy for the notices that are mailed to property taxpayers in October.

Also, the County Board has set 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 15 as the time and date for the public hearing on the 2021 budget. The final budget will be approved on Tuesday, Dec. 22. These meetings will be held at the Transfer Station meeting room, 320 Ingersoll Ave., Crookston.

Absentee ballots available

Interested voters can apply for an absentee ballot and vote at the Polk County Taxpayer Service Center right up until the day before the General Election on Nov. 3.

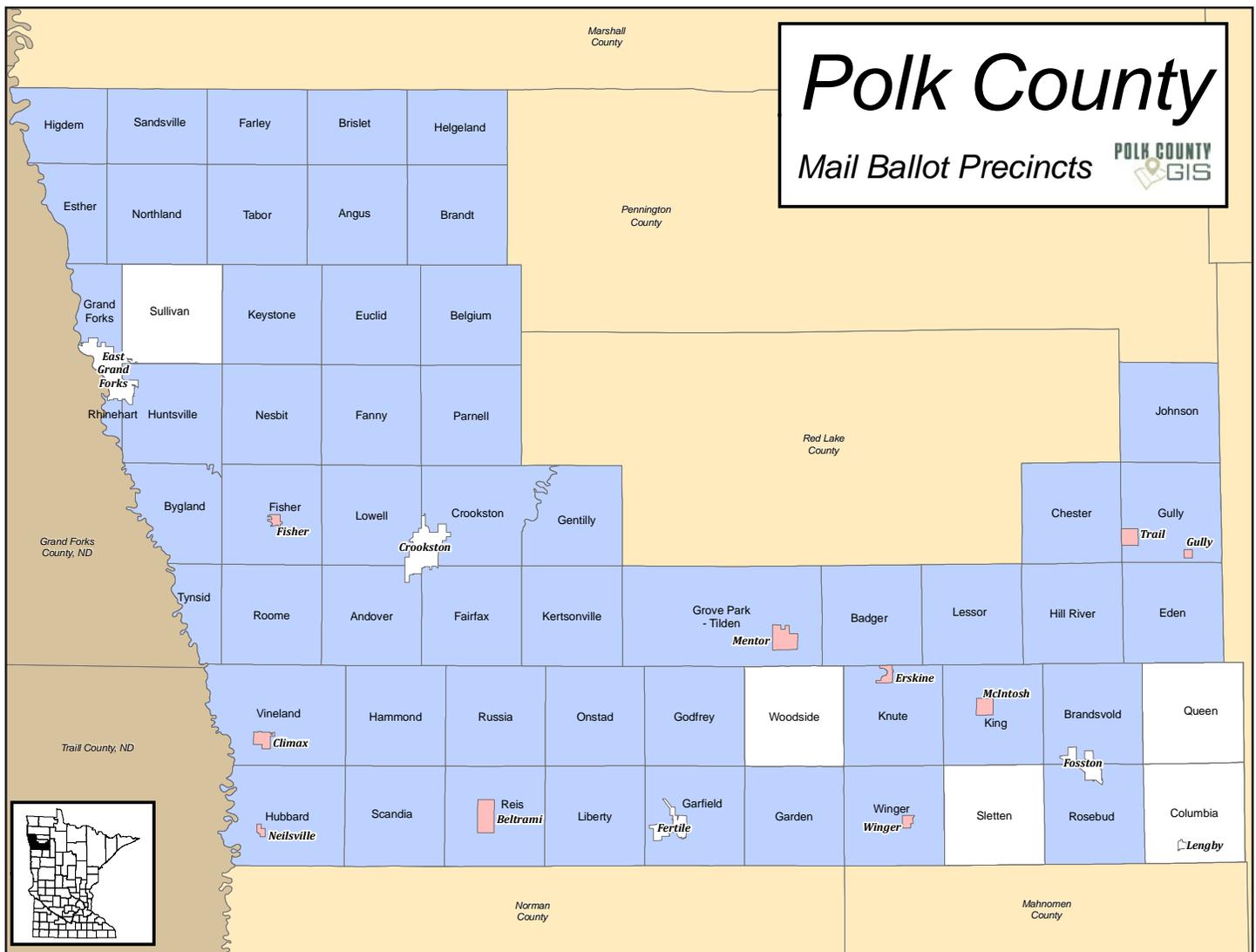
When requesting an absentee ballot that must be mailed, keep in mind that sufficient mailing time is critical. For application requests that are to be mailed the county election officials mail the ballot materials to the voter and the voter mails it back.

The US Postal Service is recommending voters mail their ballots at least 7 days before Election Day. Absentee ballot voting began on Sept. 18.

Persons who would like an absentee ballot can either apply in person at the Taxpayer Service Center in Crookston or online by going to mnavotes.org where they will be allowed to apply online or print a paper application that will need to be returned to the county.

Residents of the City of East Grand Forks may apply and vote at the East Grand Forks City Hall.

People should avoid applying more than once for an absentee ballot. Applications are reviewed by the county of residence to prevent the possibility of duplication.



Polk County
 Mail Ballot Precincts POLK COUNTY GIS

Five townships (indicated on the map) and cities now have the only precincts that vote at polling places

5 townships & cities will vote at polling places

63 of 82 precincts voting by mail

Voters in 63 of the 82 precincts in Polk County will cast their 2020 General Election ballots through the U.S. Mail rather than at polling places in township halls or at sites within the cities.

The number of precincts electing to vote by mail is up 6 from the previous election cycle. Those precincts are the townships of Bygland, Garfield, Hill River, Huntsville, Winger and Esther. Several of these made this choice based on the COVID 19 pandemic.

In the 2020 Primary Election 84% of the ballots cast were by mail.

Mail balloting is available to non-metro townships of any size and to cities with less than 400 registered voters.

By state law, mail ballots must

be delivered to registered voters between 14 and 46 days prior to the election date. The ballots can then be filled out and mailed back to the Polk County Taxpayer Service Center as soon as the voter has decided how to vote up until Election Day.

Mail ballots can also be hand delivered on Election Day to the Polk County Taxpayer Service Center, which serves as the official polling place for all mail ballot precincts.

“Our target for this mailing,” Michelle Cote, Polk County director of property records, says of getting the ballots out, “is to have them in the mail at around the 45-day mark. This is so the ballots won’t arrive so early that people forget about them or so late that we are getting phone

calls from voters who are looking for their ballots.” Cote is the county’s election administrator.

The precincts that use mail voting have reduced election costs such as or election judges and staffing at the polling place on Election Day. In addition, they will not have the expense of updating election equipment.

The cost to the precinct for the mail ballots has historically been approximately \$2 per ballot. “Mail balloting is typically a more economical choice versus paying for equipment,” Cote says.

For the General Election, approximately 6,300 mail ballots will be mailed out to registered voters in the mail ballot precincts.

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 Jim Tadman

1-218-435-7872

Commissioner elections

Two of the three Polk County commissioner positions will be decided in the General Election on Nov. 3.

Those contests are in District 1 where voters will decide between incumbent Jerry Jacobson and his challenger,

Travis Johnson, and in District 5 where the contest between Tim Finseth and Mark Holy will decide who succeeds the

retiring Don Diedrich.

District 3 Commissioner Gary Willhite does not have competition.

1st District Commissioner candidates

Jerry Jacobson

Jacobson, a retired advertising publication developer and owner, grew up at rural Fertile where, except for three years in the Seattle, Wash., area in the 1960s, he has always lived.

Jacobson has served as a county commissioner for 12 years over two different periods (2000-2007) and (2016-2020). He is the current vice chair of the County Board and chair of the Polk County Social Service Board.

After graduating from high school in Fertile in 1960, Jacobson attended Bemidji State University for a year before working in office equipment sales in the Seattle, Wash., area for three years. Upon returning to Fertile in 1963, he married his high school sweetheart, Lynn Erikson of Beltrami.

In the regional business area, Jacobson continued an office equipment and graphic arts sales career that led him to start the Valley Shopper publication in 1969.

After the Valley Shopper was sold in 1976, he started the North Star Shopper in Thief River Falls along with the Printing Plus print firm. The North Star publication has since been sold and the print firm has been taken over by a son.

Jacobson serves on the boards of several public service organi-



Gerald Jacobson

zations including Minnesota Rural Counties, Northwest Minnesota Mental Health, Northwest Regional Development Commission, Land of the Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging/Senior LinkAge Line, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, and he is chair of the Rural Transportation Coordinating Council that is being developed to provide transportation for seniors to medical facilities.

He has also served as board chair at Little Norway Lutheran Church near Fertile. Jerry and Lynn, a retired elementary school teacher, were recently named Red River Valley Farm Leaders of the Year for 2020.

They have four children: sons, Geoffrey, who has taken over the print shop in Thief River Falls, and Steven, Erskine, and daughters, Amy Bounds, Jordan, Minn., and Elizabeth Jacobson, Moorhead; and three grandchildren.

Travis Johnson

A native of Louisiana and a retired U. S. Army veteran, Johnson has been involved in livestock farming near Beltrami since retiring to Minnesota in 2018.

Upon retirement he enrolled at the University of Minnesota-Crookston to study animal science. He has been selected by his fellow veteran farmers to be the chair of the organizing committee for a Minnesota state chapter of the Farmer Veterans Coalition.

After graduating from South Lafourche High School in Galliano, La., in 1988, Johnson attended Nicholls State University at Thibodaux, La., for a year before working as a health and safety instructor for the American Red Cross in New Orleans.

He enlisted in the Army in 1991. During his 20 years of active duty he served in such places as Germany, Fort McPherson in Georgia, Fort Carson in Colorado, Portugal, Korea, Washington, D.C., and at the U.S. Embassy in Amman, Jordan. Johnson served two combat deploy-



Travis Johnson

ments to the Middle East.

While in the Army, Johnson earned a B.A. degree in human resources from the University of Maryland in 2008 and a masters degree in International Relations with a conflict resolution concentration from the American Military University. He retired from the Army in 2018 at the rank of sergeant first class.

Johnson and his wife, Terri (Weber), a native of the Crookston area, have three children: a son, Christopher, 25, an engineering student at the University of North Dakota; and two daughters, Alexis, 23, a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota; and Jamee, 17, a senior at Crookston Central High School.

Elevator replacement is delayed... not again!

A delay in the receipt of parts will set the replacement of the elevator in the Government Center in Crookston back again... probably into some time even into December.

Problems with the elevator have been traced to a more than 50-year-old electrical control system, which may not have been new when originally installed in 1968. The elevator has worked fine since

electrical control adjustments were made last spring but riders have been encouraged to have their cell phones with them just in case.

The elevator is turned off and unavailable to anyone who might be in the building during non-regular office hours.

Earlier this year, the elevator malfunctioned several times, including at least once when people were aboard. The tele-

phone in the elevator telephone also failed at that time, too. In another incident, the carriage stopped short and the doors, which had not fully closed, could not be opened by those inside.

While there are no concerns about safety, replacement is needed and will be done by Thyssen Krupp Elevator Corp., Fargo, which has provided the low quote for the work at \$118,500.

5th District Commissioner candidates

Tim Finseth

Finseth, who served five terms as a Minnesota state representative from District 1-B, has been the owner of the Hardware Hank store in Warren for the past 14 years.

After growing up on the family farm north of McIntosh and graduating from McIntosh-Winger High School in 1982, Finseth attended Northland Community College in Thief River Falls for two years before earning a B.A. degree in political science at Moorhead State University in 1986.

He started a 19-year career that included managing the Marshall County Soil & Water Conservation District office in Warren in 1989.

Finseth won a special election to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 1993 to complete the term of Wally Sparby, who had received a presidential appointment to a position in the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In his five terms in the House, Finseth served on a number of committees including 4 years as chair of the Agriculture Committee. He also served on the Environment and Environment Finance committees, Ways & Means Committee, Housing Committee and several others.

Finseth chose not to run for re-



Tim Finseth

election in 2002 after reaching a decision to put family first and stay home. He purchased the Hardware Hank store in 2006.

In the Warren community, Finseth has served as the council vice chair, a deacon and trustee at Evangelical Covenant Church. He served on the Warren-Alvarado-Oslo Education Foundation Board for nine years, and was chair of the Warren Hospital Board also for nine years during the time when the new hospital was established and the fund raising was done.

Finseth and his wife, Ruth, who live on an acreage in Farley Township, have two children, a son, Cameron, 26, who works at the North Star Nursing Home in Warren, and a daughter, Sarah, a senior at Warren-Alvarado-Oslo High School.

Mark Holy

Holy, who farms mainly in Northland Township, has government experience from his two terms as an East Grand Forks city council alderman and from involvements with several professional organizations.

After graduating from East Grand Forks Senior High School in 1975, Holy attended North Dakota State University in Fargo for a year before transferring to the North Dakota State School of Science where he completed a degree in business aviation in 1980 that included earning a commercial multi-engine pilot's license.

He flew for Merrill Pulkrabek Airspray for a couple of years, before starting his own airspray business in 1982. That business was transformed into a fixed base operation at the Grand Forks International Airport in 1990. It was after he sold the business in 2002 that he took over



Mark Holy

his father Don's farming operation.

Holy served on the East Grand Forks City Council (1998-2005) and has also served on numerous boards and commissions including being on Gov. Jesse Ventura's Citizens Advisory Group for several years and serving on several aviation boards and commissions. He has also been a church council member and president.

He and his wife, Charlene, have three sons, Ryan, Grant and Austin.

Ketring named to MnDOT post

Brian Ketring has succeeded Lou Tasa as the Northwest District 2 state aid engineer for the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

A native of rural Fisher and a 1991 graduate of Fisher High School, Ketring earned his B.S. degree in civil engineering at North Dakota State University in 1997. He became assistant county engineer in Roseau County in 1998 and was promoted to county engineer in 2003.

Tasa, who retired after 43 years with MnDOT, had spent virtually all of his career with Northwest District 2 in Bemidji working with bridge design, pre-design, surveys, right of way and as project engineer. He was promoted to district state aid engineer in 1992.

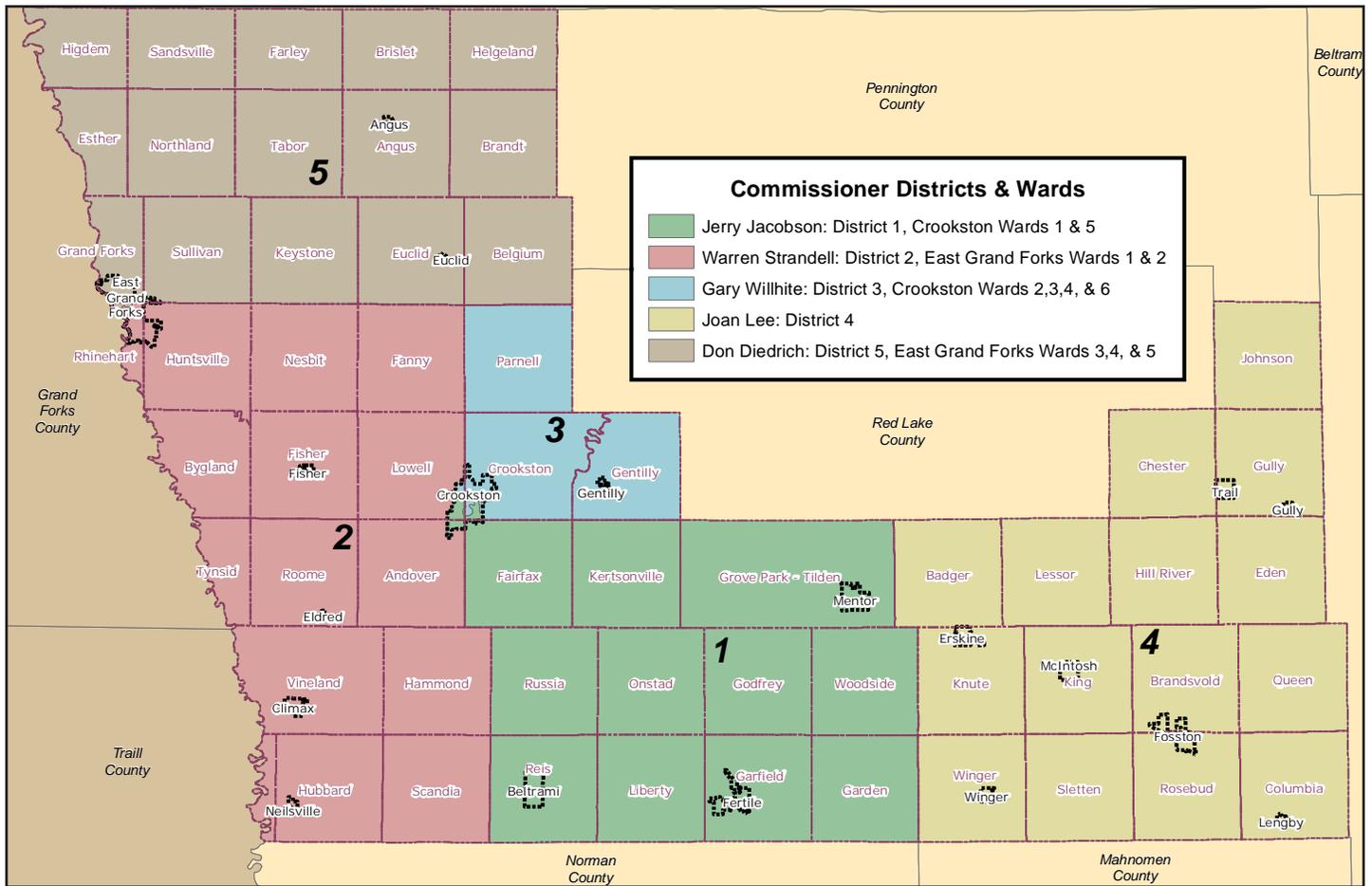
Tasa had worked with elected county and city leaders and



Brian Ketring

engineers in many improvement and safety projects

District 2 comprises 1,800 miles of state highway across 15 counties and employs 270 people who handle snow and ice control, roadway construction, traffic, land acquisition, business operations, planning, design and other duties.



Balstad and French join Extension Committee

Marlys Balstad, Fosston, and Rae French, Crookston, are new members on the Polk County Extension Committee.

The Extension Committee hears reports and provides input for Extension Service activities involving agriculture and for the 4-H program. The committee also makes recommendations to the County Board concerning staffing and budgeting.

Balstad succeeds her husband, Scott, as the appointment from Commissioner District 4. French, the appointment from Commissioner District 3, succeeds Amy Theis, who did not seek reappointment.

The Balstad “switch” occurred in July when Scott retired to focus on other commitments and Marlys was appointed to succeed him. French was appointed in December.

Balstad, who grew up on a



Marlys Balstad

farm in Andover Township and was active in 4-H as a youth, graduated from Crookston High School before earning a degree in elementary education at Minnesota State University Moorhead in 1986. Since then, she has been a 4-H leader, a substitute teacher, a past member of the Fosston School Board, and a bank customer service representative. She is



Rae French

the office manager for the Balstad farming operation.

Over the last 25 years at the University of Minnesota Crookston, Rae, who was adopted with a twin sister from South Korea, has served as a recruiter for the admissions office, director of First Year Programs, International Programs coordinator and helped start the study abroad

program. She volunteered for one year in each of six different countries in her passion for study abroad. At UMC, she is working with inbound international students who come from 22 different countries.

She and her husband, George, have children in grades 10 and 11, who are busy with animals, theater, sports and school.

Other committee members are: Connie Hannesson, Crookston, member at-large; Aaron Rongen, Fertile, Commissioner District 1; Danny Anderson, Fisher, District 2; and Brad Grunhove, Euclid, District 5.

County commissioners Joan Lee and Gary Willhite serve on the committee and County Taxpayer Service Center Director Michelle Cote serves as committee secretary.

Based on success and experience

Sheriff would like a second canine team

Based on the performance of the department's new canine team and his own past experience as a handler, Sheriff Jim Tadman would like the county to have a second canine team.

And judging by the way that gifts and donations keep coming in to support the canine program that could very well happen.

"It takes about \$27,000 to get and outfit a dog and to pay for the costs involved with the training. We're about halfway there right now. It takes about \$14,000 to \$16,000 just for the dog. Then there's the vehicle, the equipment and the training," Tadman says.

Things have been going well with Buffy and Deputy Kyle Olson, her handler, in the three months that they have been on duty. "I would really like to have a second canine team... one for each patrol shift. That would give us 24-hour coverage and be a real asset for the county," Tadman says.

While Olson has pledged to have himself and Buffy available whenever needed, a second canine team would eliminate the need to have them be called out when not on duty.

Buffy, an energetic three-year-old Belgian Malinois shepherd from the Czech Republic, and Olson have been on the job since late June. Trained to do narcotics inspections, Buffy has made several detections during traffic stops and has also assisted Pine-to-Prairie Drug Task Force officers in their activities.

Buffy and Olson trained at the McDonough K9 Training Facility at Anoka, Minn., for three months before coming on duty.

It was during a call to the McDonough K9 facility early last year that Tadman, who was the county's first canine handler (Nieko 1996-2003), and owner Mark McDonough determined that they had likely trained together and



Sheriff Jim Tadman shows off the promotional shirt that can be purchased in support of an effort to raise the money needed to fund the purchase, training and outfitting of a second canine team.

gone through canine certifications at the same time.

The conversation spurred McDonough to donate both a dog (Buffy) and the training for Olson as its the handler.

McDonough worked for the Coon Rapids Police Department for 32 years and was a handler for 22 of those years.

In addition to work in Polk County, the Olson and Buffy team plan to work

and train regionally with detection dog teams from Marshall, Pennington and Mahanomen counties and the White Earth Reservation.

Persons and organizations that might like to contribute to the Polk County Sheriff's Department Canine Program can contact the Sheriff's Office (218-281-0431) and ask to speak with either Sheriff Tadman or Chief Deputy Mike Norland.

County Board Meeting Times

8:00 a.m. on 1st Tuesday of the month

9:30 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, vice chair

Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell

Dist. 3 — Gary Willhite, chair

Dist. 4 — Joan K. Lee

Dist. 5 — Don Diedrich

An advertisement for foster parent recruitment. It features three photographs: a young boy smiling, a young girl in a pink dress, and a young woman. The text reads: "Make a Difference Change a Life Become a Foster Parent! Polk County Social Services 1-877-281-3127".

Tobacco 21 law increases legal age to buy products

The minimum legal sales age increased from 18 to 21 on Aug. 1 for the purchase of all commercial tobacco products including tobacco-related devices, electronic delivery devices (natural or synthetic nicotine and non-nicotine substances) and nicotine delivery products.

The state Tobacco 21 law is the latest step in the movement to reduce youth access to addictive tobacco products, including e-cigarettes. This effort was driven by the 75 local communities that have passed Tobacco 21 since 2017.

Youth tobacco rates have risen dramatically in recent years, driven by youth vaping high nicotine e-cigarettes.

According to the 2019 Minnesota Student Survey (MSS), Polk County youth (all grades – 8th, 9th and 11th) reported e-cigarette use on one or more occasion in the past 30 days. This was an increase from 11.7% in 2016 to 22.2% in 2019 (www.sumn.org).

This landmark law is an opportunity to protect young people from lifetime addiction and encourage all people who use commercial tobacco to make a quit attempt.

The National Academy of Medicine

estimates raising the tobacco age to 21 will lead to enormous health gains, including a 25 percent reduction in smoking initiation among 15-to-17-year-olds. Nearly 95 percent of addicted adult smokers started before age 21.

Tobacco 21 is meant to keep commercial tobacco products out of teen social circles. There are many 18-year-olds but few 21-year-olds in Minnesota high schools.

“Youth are heavily targeted by the tobacco industry, because they are highly susceptible to the effects of nicotine. The younger you start using tobacco the harder it is to quit. Increasing the age to 21 is a huge step in helping save youth lives,” according to Bethany Satrom, wellness coordinator for the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP).

Raising the state tobacco age aligned Minnesota with the federal Tobacco 21 law that was passed in December 2019 and immediately went into effect.

In addition to aligning with the federal tobacco age, the state Tobacco 21 law updates the state’s tobacco definitions, penalties and signage requirements to ensure strong compliance and enforce-

ment and also aligns nicely with the state’s SHIP in working with local communities to prevent tobacco use.

Tobacco 21 is an important step to promote lung health, which is urgently needed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Early studies have found COVID-19 may be particularly dangerous for people with lungs weakened by chronic disease, asthma and tobacco use.

Minnesota residents of any age can access free help to quit commercial tobacco in all forms, including cigarettes, chew, cigars, snuff and vapes, through the state’s Quit Partner program www.QuitPartnerMN.com.

Quit Partner offers quitting support via coaching and quit-tobacco medications, such as nicotine patches, gum, and lozenges. Through Quit Partner, residents can access tailored quitting programs, including a teen support program called My Life, My Quit.

The changes to the federal and state regulation provide an opportunity to review and update our current ordinances. — **Polk County Public Health**

Landowners need to work with Soil & Water Districts

Buffer Law compliance enforcement underway

Polk County is moving forward with the enforcement of the Minnesota Buffer Law §103F.48.

The zoning ordinance was amended in 2017 to incorporate the rules, regulations, and enforcement procedures of the buffer law consistent with the state statutes §103F.48.

There are two agencies responsible for the buffer program in Polk County, the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Polk County Planning & Zoning Department.

Landowners should work with their local SWCD and take the appropriate steps to follow all buffer requirements on their specific parcel.

Also, landowners should contact their local SWCD office (West Polk SWCD at 218-281-6070 or East Polk SWCD at 218-563-2777) to notify the district if steps were taken to

implement the buffer areas.

The SWCD determines compliance with the buffer regulations and Polk County assists in the violation enforcement highlighted below.

The ordinance requires that landowners owning property adjacent to a water resource 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 Watercourse (rivers & creeks): a 50-foot average width and 30-foot minimum width continuous buffer of perennially rooted vegetation.

b) Public Drainage Systems (ditches): a 16.5-foot minimum width continuous buffer.

If you receive a Corrective Action Notice (CAN) it requires the landowner to take

action to correct the noncompliant buffer or an APO with monetary penalties will follow. Landowners that receive a CAN must contact the local SWCD to determine the steps to take to get the buffer into compliance.

Spring planting season is right around the corner so don’t forget to seed the required buffer areas on all the parcels adjacent to public waters and public ditch systems.

If landowners fail to establish and maintain a required buffer, they may be subject to Administrative Penalty Orders (APO) and/or criminal enforcement by Polk County. APO monetary penalties for initial violations are as follows;

i. \$0 for 11 months after issuance of the Corrective Action Notice;

ii. \$50 per parcel per month for the first six (6) months (180 days) following the time period

in i; and

iii. \$200 per parcel per month after six (6) months (180 days) following the time period in ii.

For more information on buffers, visit the Polk County website at www.co.polk.mn.us. Under the Environmental Services and Planning & Zoning Department page is a buffer mapping tool available on the website to assist landowners in determining the watercourse or public ditches in relation to their specific parcels.

The goal of the buffer program in Polk County is to get buffers put in place and not have to enforce parcels through the APO enforcement procedures.

For more information contact Polk County Planning & Zoning at (218) 281-5700. — **Jacob Snyder, Planning & Zoning administrator**

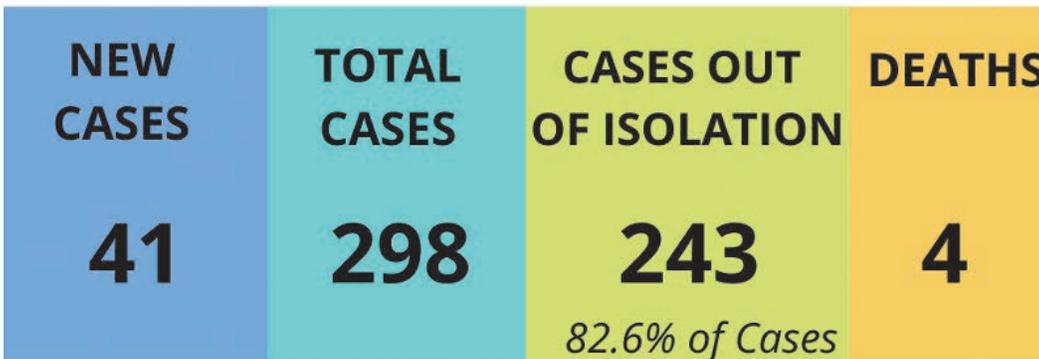
COVID-19 updates

How the coronavirus-19 pandemic is affecting residents of Polk County is updated weekly on the county website (<https://www.co.polk.mn.us>). Click on the COVID-19 HUB button, then scroll through the information that is provided by Polk County Public Health and Minnesota state public health and emergency management agencies.

COVID-19 Weekly Update



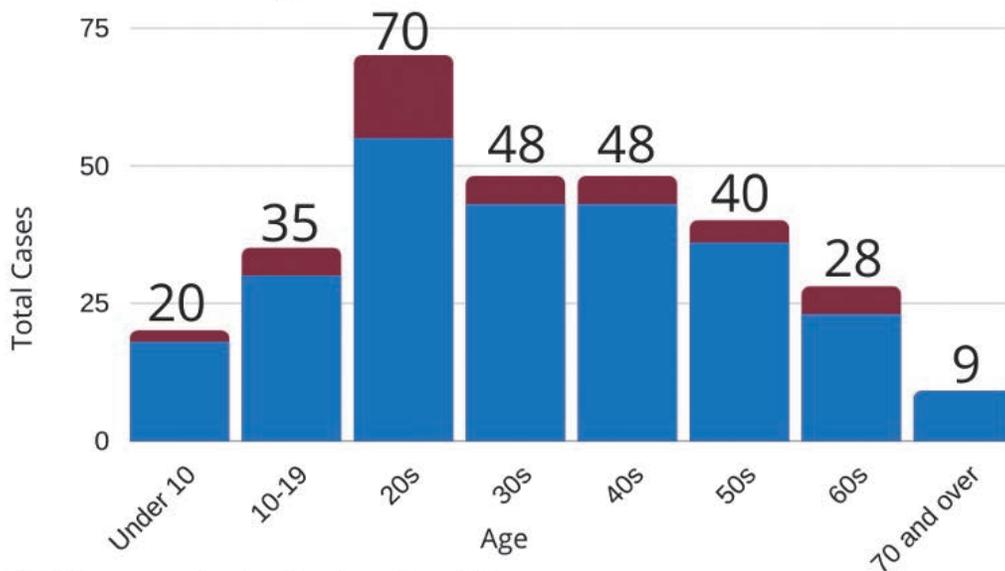
Polk County Public Health



For more information

Visit the Polk County Coronavirus Response Hub:
<https://coronavirus-response-pcg.hub.arcgis.com/>

Age Range of COVID-19 Cases in Polk County



■ Cases prior to September 17

■ Cases from September 17 - September 23

298 Total Cases

Despite COVID, road work completed

The year of COVID is hopefully coming to an end soon, along with our 2020 construction season. With minor modification things went well considering.

We actually got started in early May with the overlay of CSAH 1 from CSAH 10 to TH 59 in Winger, MN. We then finished the work that was carried over from last year as shown below:

- CSAH 3 — Grading and bituminous surfacing from CSAH 30 to CSAH 6.
 - CSAH 3 — Gradewiden/ overlay from CSAH 6 to CSAH 29.
 - CSAH 3 — Overlay from CSAH 29 to Polk/Clearwater County line.
 - CSAH 10 — grading/surfacing/curb and gutter at East Shore/Maple Lake.
 - Andover Township — Bridge replacement.
- Other work completed this year was as follows:
- CSAH 16 — Overlay from TH 75 to CSAH 9.
 - CSAH 20 — Overlay from CSAH 19 to CSAH 21.
 - CSAH 21 — Overlay from TH 220 to TH 75.
 - CSAH 23 — Gradewidenoverlay from TH 220 to 1 mile east of Tabor.
 - CSAH 1 — mill and overlay in Beltrami.
 - CSAH 1 — mill and overlay in Neilsville.
 - CSAH 113 — mill and overlay in Beltrami.
 - CR 210 — Surfacing from CSAH 37 to TH 2.

—Richard Sanders, county engineer

Vision? Hasn't been 2020



Chuck Whiting, Polk County Administrator

A year ago, you could hear all the jokes and double entendre heading into 2020. Things will become clearer; we can see where we are going, focus-focus-focus.

In reality, it has hardly been a less clear year. Scary at times, confusing at others. Everyone seems to want to get it over. Me, too. In 35 years of local government, I am at a loss to think of a time more counter-intuitive than this one. All I want for Christmas right now is Christmas.

So let's reflect a bit just to try to bring some sense to why today, as I write this, I'm busy signing off on upwards of \$2 million of checks to various groups and entities in Polk County.

For the County, and probably for you, the first six weeks of this year were like any other, cold, kids in school, fortunate folks trekking south for some warmth. Feels so long ago it could be 1965.

With COVID-19 pushing its way into our lives, suddenly, and I mean suddenly, we had to do a 180 at the County. I can sum up a three-hour department head meeting on March 27 about what we were facing as denial, grievance, depression and acceptance all before lunch. Perhaps the most fortunate thing for us we had to focus on how to keep the County's work getting done, just doing it in an entirely differently manner. It seemed like we had to do several things in ways that were the complete opposite of what was "normal."

We had to close buildings, public buildings, your tax supported buildings. Not normal outside of evenings, weekends and holidays. We had to

send many employees home and outfit them so they could work there.

Again, hardly normal, and as many of you have faced now with kids, pets and other normally welcome domestic distractions competing for your attention. We were told money from Washington and St. Paul was coming to help pay for all things COVID-19 related which of course has turned more like some things or only certain things.

And it did come, \$4 million. Way more than all our hand sanitizer cost. [We secured a 55-gallon drum of it!] Like 86 other counties, 800 cities and a hundred times more townships in this state we've been reviewing guidelines for getting those funds put to use, adjusting to innumerable revisions along the way and finally, after a few false starts, the Board approved a plan to get half of it out to businesses, public health partners and other entities providing support in our county.

The other half will address County costs, which we anticipate will lead to easing some of the budget demands of 2021 and 2022. Normally government is supposed to work by identifying a problem or issue, developing a plan or program to address that, prioritizing that with all the other issues, prune costs and expenses here and there and figure out where the money is to come from.

This was the opposite. Here's your money, figure out how to spend it. Very not normal, and it takes some time to figure it out. Oh, and you have to spend it by end of the year, except for those you give the money to, they have until the end of November. Otherwise, it all goes back to St. Paul,

or Washington or wherever they are getting it in the first place. Probably us.

I do want to thank all those groups listed elsewhere in this newsletter that are receiving these CARES funds, but particularly to those that are assisting in getting those funds out to others in need. The cities of Fosston, Crookston and East Grand Forks have been great in using their business assistance programs to help get these dollars out to our businesses, even those outside their city limits, a tremendous help to my office. Hopefully it helps. Hopefully we have enough.

Like many things, we all seem to adjust somehow. We now have the Government Center open for the License Center by appointment and the service counter for walk-ins.

We appreciate everyone's cooperation with mask wearing and social distancing. The County complies with the governor's orders, it's our job to do. You are helping us with that, thank you.

I also need to thank our employees during this time. We are very aware we must find ways to continue to perform the services we're here for, with some seeing far greater demands due to the pandemic. But, we are equally aware that we are more fortunate than many during all this, we are still working and despite all the difficulties, inconveniences, confusion, missteps and backtracking we've done along the way, they are still performing.

So, in a few short months, we will see the end to this year and maybe understand more of what it all meant. After all, hindsight's 2020 right?

Sorry, had to do that.

Sanders appointed to national transportation committee

Polk County Engineer Richard Sanders has been appointed to the Transportation Steering Committee of the National Association of Counties (NACo) and will serve as vice chair of its Subcommittee on Highway Safety.

Sanders has had several leadership positions in trans-

portation. He was named the "outstanding county engineer of the year" by the Minnesota County Engineers Association (MCEA) at its annual awards banquet in January 1919.

He was selected by the Minnesota State Departments of Transportation, Public Safety and Health in 2018 as

one of 10 individuals and organizations to receive Star Awards for their efforts in improving traffic safety through the Minnesota Toward Zero Deaths (TZD) Program.

A member of the Polk County Highway Department since 1991 and the county engineer since 2002, Sanders

has been a leader in transportation organizations both in Minnesota and nationally. He was president of the Minnesota County Engineers Association in 2013 and served as president of the National Association of County Engineers (NACE) in 2018.



County's property valuation increases

As determined by the Polk County Assessor for the purpose of assessing property taxes that will be payable in 2021, the 2020 valuation of real estate in the county now totals \$5,740,651,500.

This new total amount of valuation represents an increase of \$163,278,200 over 2019, or about 2.9 percent.

Of the new 2020 total valuation amount:

- 55.5% is for tillable agricultural lands.
- 7.1% is for all other agricultural property.
- 26.4% is for residential properties.
- 4.8% is for seasonal recreational properties.
- 2.4% is for commercial properties.
- 2.1% is for industrial properties.
- 3.1% is for building sites (rural homes and garages on 1 acre *).
- 1.8% is for "all other" property classifications.

New construction accounted for \$25,612,700 of the total valuation.

The overall increase is mainly due to an increase in the valuations for residential properties throughout the county and also because of a fairly large increase in the valuations of lake properties.

Note — the figures above are based on the 2020 PRISM 2 report (Final).

The valuation total does not take into account railroad or utility values.

*— Included in "all other" agricultural property

Updated: Sept. 16, 2020



Maple Lake East Bay

The new recreation park on the east bay of Maple Lake is designed to have motorists enter the area going south and then to back into the parking spots as shown on the sign. Speeds in the area have been reduced as a safety precaution.



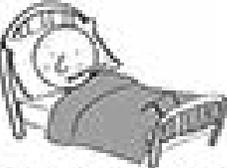
Fight the Flu



Cover your cough.



Wash your hands.



Stay home when sick.



Get vaccinated.

Pandemic has affected Solid Waste operations

The pandemic has adversely affected solid waste programs and facilities across Minnesota and within our region quite differently for a variety of reasons.

Many facilities shut down, suspended programs, discontinued operations or scaled-back services to core or minimal operational levels. This action was in response to lack of staff, to follow government orders, due to concern over health or safety, or because of insufficient numbers of customers or the supplies necessary to justify continued operations.

The Polk County Solid Waste facilities in Crookston, Gentilly and Fosston have been fortunate in that they have been open for business throughout the pandemic. With the exception of the first few weeks of the pandemic, each of these solid waste facilities have offered all of the main services for public use throughout this difficult period.

Personnel impacts

The pandemic had many direct and indirect impacts upon these facilities and programs — especially in terms of the employees who operate them. The “Work from Home” executive order from the governor directed any employee who could work from home to do so.

Compounding that was the desire to split the workforce where possible to ensure if one employee got sick, there was another who could do that work while they were quarantined. Trying to comply with these requirements and still being classified as “essential service” and being told by the state to remain open, proved to be at odds. As such, all employees at these facilities were brought back to work under modified work environment and safety protocols.

Despite all efforts to provide a safe work environment, some employees left during the pandemic. Some cited concern with their health during the pandemic, others for reasons which were not directly associated with the pandemic itself.

Trying to fill those openings proved exceptionally difficult. Applications for open positions was minimal, those that did apply often turned down interview opportunities, and the number of applicants who accepted job offers was low. Trying to maintain operations with these reduced staffing levels proved challenging. Fortunately, the employees who remained at these facilities wanted to work and took up the slack created by those vacancies by working out of their normal job duties and on overtime when necessary.

Financial impacts

Going into the pandemic the economics upon which the solid waste facilities are dependent were marginal. Recyclable material commodity prices were depressed, many near record lows. Markets for recycled paper

and glass — the two materials that make up a majority of the recycling stream — were not only valueless but finding a market willing to accept them was difficult.

Aluminum, many grades of plastic and metal cans were selling for less than 1/3 of normal market rates.

Steam produced at the Polk County Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) in Fosston is sold based on the price of natural gas. The natural gas price had been holding at depressed levels for many years, which has resulted in less steam sales revenue each year.

One of the steam customers was severely impacted by the wet fall in 2019, which resulted in loss of product to process and ultimately their shut-down last fall and lasting through the summer of 2020.

Made things worse

The pandemic had the effect of magnifying a poor economic situation and intensifying its impact upon Polk County programs and facilities. The pandemic triggered the stay home order from the State of Minnesota, resulting in the forced closure of most businesses and re-directing waste generation to households.

The “contact-less” society that evolved due to the pandemic relied greatly upon mail order and take-out economic transactions. This shift in consumerism required more cardboard boxes to execute the “contact-less” transactions, which then resulted in more cardboard in the waste and recycling streams.

The uptick in paper and cardboard demand bumped the market prices up a little but loss of demand for petroleum negatively impacted the market price for aluminum and plastic. In addition, not only did the one steam customer not come back on-line during the pandemic but the other steam customers ramped-down the steam demand for their operations. The low natural gas price combined with reduced steam sales to steam customers has had a severe impact upon the budget.

Like most other businesses, the third-party vendors and service providers Polk County Solid Waste facilities and programs rely on likewise have been hit hard by the pandemic. Each of these entities is faced with having to pass their incurred costs on to their customers. Increases in service costs due to higher transportation and labor costs, decreased demand and uncertain work environments were passed along to Polk County. Additional increases in service costs from third-party vendors are expected for 2021.

Increased Costs for 2021

After the last several years of resisting increasing the tip fees at the Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) and Landfill (LF) for garbage, the aforementioned financial impacts made doing so again unrealistic. It

was hoped that a combination of efficiency improvements at the facilities, additional diversification of programs and services combined with an improvement in either the recyclable material sales markets or steam sales revenue would allow further delay in tip fee increases. Unfortunately, no such improvement in revenues occurred, and Polk County was forced to raise the tip fees at both the RRF and LF for garbage to all customers. The tip fees for garbage will increase from \$65/ton to \$75/ton starting January 1, 2021.

Increases for other materials and services at these facilities, as well as the Transfer Station (TS) in Crookston, will also occur effective January 1, 2021. Tip fees for construction & demolition debris (Demo) will increase from \$20/ton to \$25/ton. Fees for different types of yard waste will also change, as will fees for contaminated soil, tires and other materials.

Because Polk County pays the tip fee and state taxes (9.75% & 17% tax rates) on burnable solid waste and monies required to do so are generated from the special assessment on the property tax statement, the special assessment rates were adjusted for 2021.

Increases in the special assessment for solid waste will increase from \$120 to \$140 for residential properties and from \$80 to \$100 for second residential & disabled properties. The special assessment for solid waste on non-residential properties likewise increased for 2021. The minimum assessment for non-residential will increase from \$120 to \$180 for 2021 and all other rates in the non-residential fee scale will increase in 2021 by approximately 10%.

Outlook for 2021

Despite the difficulties presented at the end of 2020, there are some positives for 2021 and beyond. Prior to the pandemic, many signs were pointing to better prospects for steam sales in 2021. The state and recycling industry were already placing more priority on development of local markets to utilize domestic recyclable materials in response to China severing its reliance on U.S. materials. The difficulties related to the pandemic served to reinforce the importance of bringing all parts of manufacturing supply chains back from overseas.

As costs for services increase and other services become more scarce, there will be opportunities to forge new partnerships or to improve services that would benefit Polk County and its current partnership group.

Polk County is positioned well to take advantage of any opportunity that may present itself going forward. — **Jon Steiner, Polk County Environmental Services Director**

Protocols developed

COVID pandemic is challenge for corrections

As if working in the Corrections field wasn't challenging enough, the year 2020 has decided to test the mettle of the men and women who work for Tri-County Community Corrections.

Countless hours have been devoted to developing and modifying protocols across all departments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

NWRCC

Because of the risks of introducing a highly contagious virus into a correctional environment (classified as a congregate care setting), numerous safeguards and housing adjustments have been implemented since March of 2020.

NWRCC administration, in consultation with Polk County Public Health, has implemented a screening process and quarantine protocol that requires that all new admissions to the jail be screened as part of the admission process.

The screening is conducted to identify new admissions who exhibit objective symptoms of COVID or self-report contacts with others that necessitates immediate isolation.

If an inmate is not displaying objective symptoms and does not require separation due to close contacts with others, they are placed in a 14 day soft-quarantine. During this soft-quarantine, the inmate is regularly checked for symptoms and has limited time out of their cell.

Prior to completing the soft-quarantine, the inmate is tested on two separate occasions, roughly 5 days apart in order to rule out the existence of COVID-19 prior to being moved to a general population housing unit.

In addition to making changes in how

inmates are screened and housed, several other modifications have been implemented to mitigate the risk of infection. While the mask mandate by Governor Walz may still be new to many, the jail has required staff to wear masks since the pandemic started.

Expanded cleaning and disinfecting protocols have been implemented throughout the facility and an increased reliance on technology for everything from court appearances and mental health appointments to volunteer led programming has been seen.

RRVJC

Many of the challenges in managing COVID-19 at the jail are also seen in the Red River Valley Juvenile Center.

While the overall numbers may be smaller, the challenges are actually magnified because of the physical space limitations which exist and limit the ability to isolate and quarantine children who may be positive. This is especially true on the residential side of the Juvenile Center.

Despite these challenges, both staff and the residents have adapted well and are mindful of the need to maintain social distance and to wear a mask when social distance can't be maintained.

Similar to the jail, screenings and housing protocols are in place on both sides of the Juvenile Center. To limit the amount of time that a resident is required to be quarantined or isolated, which can frequently exacerbate prior trauma among the residents, all new admissions are tested by nursing staff within a couple days of admission and then placed in a soft quarantine status until the test results are received, which is typically a couple of

days.

In order to minimize the punitive feel of the soft quarantine, residents are provided electronic tablets with scaled back and age appropriate content which they can use to help pass the time.

Probation Department

While much of the attention during this pandemic has been devoted to minimizing the risks to staff and inmates or residents in the facilities, several safeguards have also been implemented within the Probation Department.

These safeguards have been intended to minimize the risk to both TCCC staff as well as the people with whom we work in the community. Recognizing the crucial role that probation agents and transition staff play in public safety, I can proudly say that Tri-County agents and staff have maintained contact with those under supervision at much higher frequencies than many other jurisdictions within the state.

While traditional meeting methods, such as face-to-face meetings, had to be suspended during the months of April and May, meetings were regularly held via Zoom or other on-line meeting platforms.

Face-to-face meetings have been reinstated for many people under supervision and it is the hope that programming which had to be suspended will begin later this year.

While it has not been easy (that's the understatement of the year), staff at Tri-County Community Corrections have done a fantastic job in exercising their creative muscles in order to meet the needs of the communities which they serve. — **Andrew Larson, executive director, Tri-County Community Corrections**

Pine to Prairie Drug Task at work

50 arrested, 22 weapons seized during 2nd quarter

Seventy-seven new cases resulting in 50 arrests and 22 weapon seizures were made by officers of the Pine-to-Prairie Drug Task Force during the second quarter of this year.

The Task Force has 13 law enforcement officers that work in eight northwestern Minnesota counties with a focus on mid to upper-level dealers. Polk County and the cities of Crookston and East Grand Forks each provide one officer to the force while the City of Thief River Falls and Pennington County cooperate to provide an investigator.

Other counties contributing investigators

are Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Norman and Roseau. The U.S. Border Patrol and U.S. Homeland Security also commit full-time member to the task force, Kinston and Red Lake counties assist as needed.

Polk, Marshall and Norman counties and the cities of Thief River Falls and East Grand Forks each have canine officers that are made available to the task force.

Among the significant cases made in Polk County during the second quarter was one in which 189 grams of meth was seized while it was enroute to Crookston

and North Dakota. In another major case, Pine to Prairie officers participated with the East Central Violent Crime Enforcement Team in making an arrest that interrupted suspects who were traveling from the St. Cloud area to Crookston with over 2 pounds of meth, mushrooms, pills, and \$17,000 in cash.

The second quarter case/arrest/seizure numbers were down prior to the COVID-19 pandemic from the 85 cases, 81 arrests and 5 seizures that were made during the second quarter of 2019.

Polk County AIS Program updates.....



The Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Taskforce in Polk County is gearing down from a very busy summer as far as boat activity on area lakes. 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 already present in Union Lake, zebra mussels are present in the Red River and Chinese Mystery Snails were confirmed in Lake Sarah during the 2019 season. Starry stonewort is still a new invasive species that is appearing in new lakes throughout the state each year.

Starry stonewort is spread by very tiny amounts of the plants, typically in bait buckets or other water transported from lake to lake. It is critical that every boater take the necessary steps to limit the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species.

Since 2015 the Polk County AIS 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 of Minnesota.

The taskforce hires seasonal AIS technicians to conduct watercraft inspections, and these inspections aid in public outreach/enforcement. They work on monitoring projects, inspections at local access sites as well as help with other AIS outreach and educational activities. This summer, we were able to conduct over 1,700 on-site watercraft inspections on public water access sites around Polk County.

The 2020 season was the fourth year of I-LIDS camera

systems at Union Lake and Maple Lake. I-LIDS stands for Internet Landing Installed Device Sensor. I-LIDS is a self-contained, solar powered system installed at boat launches to capture video and remote inspections of launching boats/trailers, and audio education of boaters using the lake. The I-LIDS system seems to be helping remind boater of their role in preventing AIS spreading from other lakes. We notice boaters stopping at the access sites, seeing the camera system, and taking the time to evaluate their watercraft for possible AIS. In total, we have reviewed-recorded over 12,000 launch videos. I-LIDS is proving to be a very valuable tool in the fight against AIS. For more information regarding the I-LIDS system, you can visit www.environmentalsentry.com.

With boating season winding down for another hard water season around the corner, it is critical that every boater take the necessary steps to limit the spread of AIS while taking boats out for the year. Please take the necessary steps 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/.

Jacob Snyder, Polk County Planning & Zoning administrator

Regulations You Should Know

It is Unlawful to . . .

- Transport watercraft without removing the drain plug.
- Arrive at a lake access with drain plug in place.
- Transport any prohibited species on public roads.
- Launch a watercraft with prohibited species attached.
- Transport water from Minnesota lakes or rivers.
- Dispose of live bait into the water.

Penalties up to \$1,000

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!



- ✓ Remove aquatic plants and invasive species off your boat.
- ✓ Drain your live well and remove your drain plug.
- ✓ Dispose of used bait in the trash.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

www.co.polk.mn.us/ais



Families needing childcare (daycare) homes

Polk County families are in need of family childcare homes (previously called daycare homes).

Children under school age, infants and toddlers of working families have the greatest need for child care. Parents choose home family childcare for many reasons.

Family child care offers a more close knit setting than a larger day care or center (which are also limited locally).

Family child care usually consists of one provider offering care to 10-12 children in the comfort of their own home. Providers are required to do day to day activities with each age group which provide for the physical, intellectual, emo-

tional and social development of the children

The licensing process for a family child care is less complex than opening a center. It takes roughly 6-8 weeks to obtain training, background studies, and complete the inspection of the child care home.

Licensing for Family Child Care is a very thorough process. There are requirements for the amount of indoor/outdoor space and specific training needed. Family Child Care are licensed by the State of Minnesota to comply with health and safety regulations, however, Polk County Social Services can help with the application process and will be the agency

to work with in licensing and will make a final recommendation to the state.

The goal of the Polk County Licensor is to make sure that a licensed provider meets all requirements to ensure that they will provide quality and safe care to children.

Polk County is in need of individuals who have the special gift of caring for children. There are many resources to assist you if you are interested in this career, which include start-up grants. If you would like to speak to someone or receive additional information, please contact Polk County Social Services Licensing Unit, 612 No. Broadway, Room #302, Crookston, MN 56716. 218-281-3127.

Especially in Crookston and Fosston...

Need for child foster homes remains critical

Polk County Social Services has a critical need for child foster care homes in Crookston and in Fosston.

It is important to have foster homes in all communities as we try to be least disruptive in children's lives and prefer to have children entering foster care remain in their communities that are close to their siblings, other family members and friends, attend the same schools, team events, cultural and social activities.

Foster care is a temporary living situation for children providing a safe place to be if a child cannot live with his/her family, or on their own. Foster Parents help by providing stability, affection, consistency, and nurturing. Foster parents also provide for the child's educational, health, cultural and social needs.

In child foster care foster parents open their homes to children whose families are

in crisis. They help children heal and become productive, self-sufficient members of our society. In both child and adult foster care they provide a safe, stable, nurturing environment that is needed at a very critical time in their lives.

When children must leave their homes, placement with relatives is considered first. If this is not a plausible option, the placing agency then looks to licensed foster homes.

Foster parents are as diverse as the children they care for. Some are married; some are single; some are grandparents; some are parents with young children, adolescents or grown children; some hope to eventually adopt children. The characteristics foster parents have in common are a love for children, an ability to commit to challenges and a desire to make a difference in children's lives. It can be very

rewarding, but is also something that is not to be taken lightly.

Homes are also needed for adult foster care. This is provided in a home setting for those who cannot live independently due to physical, emotional, developmental or mental impairments.

Residents receive meals, support, supervision and, as needed, some assistance with personal care and living skills.

Foster homes are licensed through the Minnesota Department of Human Services when the licensing process is completed. Orientation and training are provided by Polk County Social Services.

Foster care parents receive a monthly reimbursement for the care of a foster child. Further information is available by calling **Brittney Palm, Licensing Social Worker at 218-470-8422 or emailing: brittney.palm@co.polk.mn.us**

Seven Serious Myths Regarding Foster Parenting

Myth: A foster parent must be married, own their own home and make lots of money.

Fact: You can be married or single, a homeowner or a renter. The only financial requirement is that you have enough income to support yourself and your family.

Myth: Foster parents have to stay at home with the children.

Fact: No, they do not. Many foster parents work outside of the home. Polk County Social Services will pay the cost of childcare when you work.

Myth: My children are grown and out of the house. I'm too old to be a foster parent.

Fact: There is no age requirement (other than you must be at least 21). Many "empty nesters" find foster parenting to be a rewarding experience.

Myth: I don't have any children and to be a foster parent you need to have parenting experience.

Fact: Not true! Many of our foster parents are childless. They are, however, responsible people who have made a commitment to children and demonstrate an ability to parent or learn.

Myth: Once licensed the foster parent must take any placement they are called to foster.

Fact: Foster parents do not have

to say yes to every placement. Your willingness to accept a placement depends on what the needs of your family are at the time of a request.

Myth: You must license for 0-18 years of age.

Fact: Each family licenses for the age/gender that best matches the family. Yes, some families license 0-18 years, either gender but many license within these perimeters. Some homes license only female, others only school age and still others only teens.

Myth: I can't be a foster parent because I would get too attached. It would be too hard to see them leave.

Fact: It's true. You will get attached and it will be painful when children you love leave. But these children have suffered through things no child should ever face and they need the love and care foster parents provide when they open their hearts and homes.

Truth: Being a foster parent is a rewarding experience that you and your foster child will remember for the rest of your lives!

POLK COUNTY BUSINESS RESILIENCY GRANT PROGRAM



**Grant application deadline is
October 9th**

**VISIT POLK COUNTY WEBSITE FOR MORE
INFORMATION:**

WWW.CO.POLK.MN.US

OR THESE CITY WEBSITES:

WWW.FOSSTON.COM

WWW.CROOKSTONHEDA.COM

WWW.EGF.MN

The Polk County Business Resiliency grant program has been created to help sustain businesses in Polk County that demonstrate economic hardship related to the COVID-19 pandemic; and to help restore consumer confidence in the marketplace while reducing the spread of COVID-19.

**BENEFITING:
All Polk County
businesses not
located in the
city of EGF,
Crookston, or
Fosston**

**For businesses lo-
cated in EGF, Crook-
ston or Fosston, visit
your city's website
for your grant pro-
gram application**

**THIS IS A
GRANT—
NOT A LOAN.**

UP TO \$5,000

**Get your
application in
today!**