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# Polk County Newsletter

Fall 2002

Fund balances have been rebuilt...

## Audit shows county's financial condition dramatically improved

Polk County's financial status has been dramatically improved in recent years with fund balances having been rebuilt to levels that meet and even exceed the minimum recommendations of the state auditor.

"The county is doing a lot better than a few years ago," Robert Johnson, local government auditor-audit director of the Moorhead office of the State Auditor's Office, reports.

"It is certainly in much better shape than it was in the mid-1990s. There was a time when we were really concerned about the fund balances of the county, but over the last four or five years, the county has done a great job of bringing expenses in line with revenues and getting the fund balances back into pretty decent financial condition.

"The state auditor," Johnson says, "recommends that a county's General Fund have enough cash on hand to continue

operations for at least six months without any additional revenues. The balance in Polk County's General Fund is very good now. In fact, the county currently has funds to finance up to nine months of operations."

### General Fund was in the red

By contrast, the General Revenue Fund, which supports much of the regular operations in the county, had a negative balance at times in 1996 and frequent low balances through the mid-1990s. As a result, the county was forced to borrow from other funds several times in order to pay its bills.

Fund balances fluctuate greatly because revenues from real estate tax collections are received only twice a year. As a result, the General Fund has larger balances in June and December after receipt of the May and November property tax payments. The lower balances naturally occur in the months before those payments are

received.

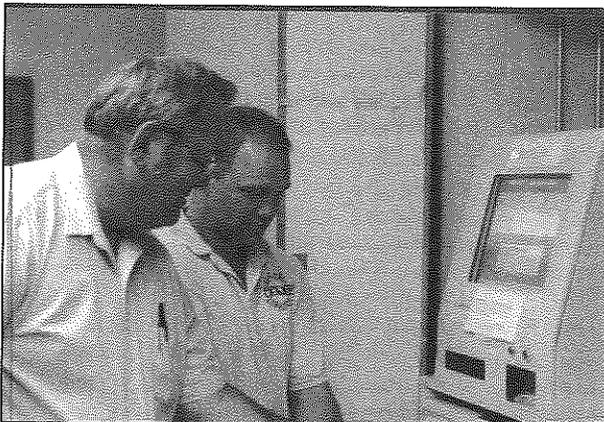
The 2001 annual state audit that was completed in June showed the General Revenue Fund with a cash balance of \$4,908,083 at year-end. The two other major funds — Road & Bridge and Welfare — also had healthy cash balances. The Road & Bridge Fund, which fluctuates greatly, depending on when state funds are received and the road construction projects that are underway, had a balance of \$982,499. The Welfare Fund had balance of \$4,384,405. The balances in all three funds were significantly above those at year-end in 2000.

### Concentrated effort

"We're very happy with what we have been able to do with the county's financial situation," Board chair Warren Affeldt relates. "The turn-around is the result of teamwork... of a concentrated effort from

See FINANCIAL STATUS, Page 4

## 'Booking' info now goes to state, federal data banks



Corrections counselor Chuck Goering (right) rolls the thumb of Norvald Anderson over the live scan fingerprint machine that sends prints to state and federal data bases within minutes. Anderson, the Corrections Center's security director, was just part of the demonstration.

Smile, you're in the system.

The photos and fingerprints of persons "booked" into jail at the Tri-County Community Corrections Center now quickly become a part of Minnesota and national information databases that are readily available to law enforcement agencies throughout the state and country.

With the benefit of three state grants totaling more than \$110,000, Tri-County Corrections Center has installed and begun using equipment to digitally photograph and fingerprint all persons entering the jail and then send that information to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension's (BCA) Minnesota Repository of Arrest Photos (MRAP) and the State Department of Corrections' (DOC) CrIMNet database systems.

A \$66,000 grant paid for the live scan finger printer. Another \$40,330 grant provided the equipment used to record and digitize the photos, including the computer and laser printer. And a \$6,500 grant was for software to integrate Tri-County Corrections' jail management software with that of the state and federal databases.

"With the new equipment, the BCA now receives information on every prisoner within 15 minutes of the booking," says Bret Burkholder, Tri-County Corrections deputy administrator. "In addition, we transmit the information to the CrIMNet system every night."

For security reasons, information is

See BOOKINGS, Page 3

## At Polk County Waste to Energy Plant

# Air pollution control retrofit underway

The Polk County Waste-to-Energy Plant in Fosston is proceeding with an air pollution control retrofit project designed to meet revised air emission rules and regulations. This is a multi-phase effort with the first two phases now complete and the third phase in progress. A fourth and final phase may or may not be necessary.

The phases now completed consist of data acquisition equipment for new recording and reporting requirements, and stack testing to establish base levels for various pollutants affected by the revised rules. The electrostatic precipitators have been upgraded with new technology controls and modified electrodes to improve overall particulate collection efficiency.

Phase 3 consists of incorporating economizers into the flue gas stream to reduce the temperature of the flue gas for control of dioxin/furans, and dry sorbent injection equip-

ment to control acid gas emission levels. The building addition was required (4,000 sq. ft.) to provide space for the new equipment as well as future space for Phase 4, if it is needed.

Economizers were purchased from E-Tech of Tulsa, Okla., and installed by Wrigley Mechanical of Fargo. The breeching (duct work) from the economizer outlet to the electrostatic precipitators has been extended to allow sufficient retention time for the sorbent to react and neutralize acid gases in the flue gas. Downtime for the economizer and breeching installation was about one week for each unit. Considering the amount of work required this was excellent. Both economizers are working properly and as designed. An added benefit from the economizers is that steam flows have been increased by about 500 to 1,000 pounds per hour from each boiler.

The building addition is under contract to Mark II of Fosston, which poured footings and foundation walls. Construction of the building under a subcontract to Sand Buildings of Emerado, N.D., began in mid-August. Lee Plumbing and Heating of Thief River Falls, which has the mechanical contract, completed the underground piping in July.

The under floor heating was also installed in July and the floor was poured Aug. 1. Al's Electric of Lengby is handling electrical work. The Bemidji office of Wiseth Smith Nolting handled the engineering design work for the building addition.

Two vendors have submitted proposals for the dry sorbent injection equipment and a decision for the procurement is pending evaluation. A stack test was performed in August to measure compliance with dioxin/furan emissions. The lower flue gas temperatures

afforded by the economizers should reduce dioxin/furan levels substantially.

All work is proceeding satisfactorily with only slight delays due to inclement weather and material deliveries. The building addition, including offices, should be completed and the dry sorbent injection equipment installed by the end of this year. The proposed deadline to be in compliance with the revised air rules is Dec. 31, 2003.

This timetable allows sufficient time to evaluate the new equipment through stack testing and to determine if the fourth phase of the project is necessary. The fourth phase would include the installation of a polisher baghouse after the electrostatic precipitators on each unit as a final pollution control device. Sufficient space for these units is included in the new building addition. — Bill Wilson, manager, Polk County Waste to Energy Facility.

## Thorson rejoins Planning Commission

Doug Thorson is again a member of the Polk County Planning Commission.

Thorson, who succeeded Scott McFarlin in March as the representative of the Maple Lake Improvement District, had first served as the lake district's representative to the Planning Commission from 1997 until his term on the lake district's board of directors ended in 2000.

McFarlin gave up his position on the Planning Commission in November 2001 when he felt that his appraisal business presented a conflict of interest. He is now a member of the Minnesota Lake Improvement District Association.

Other members of the Planning Commission and their areas of representation are:

Donald Diedrich, a retired Warren area farmer, has represented the 3rd Commissioner District since 1986. He is chairman of the commission and is a member of the Board of Adjustment.

Helmer Homme, a retired Winger area farmer, has represented the 4th Commissioner District since 1988. He is the vice chair of commission and is a member of the Board of Adjustment.

Barb Hangsleben, a rural East Grand Forks resident who works in real estate, has represented the 5th Commissioner District since 1982. She is a member of the Board of Adjustment and serves on the Minnesota State Planning Board.

Clayton Engelstad, a semi-retired Fertile area farmer, has represented the 1st Commissioner District since 1991. He is also a member of the Board of Adjustment.

Barb Reitmeier, rural Crookston, has represented the 2nd Commissioner District since 1994.

Chuck Lariviere, owner-operator of Red River Cabinets, Crookston, has represented the county's townships since 1995.

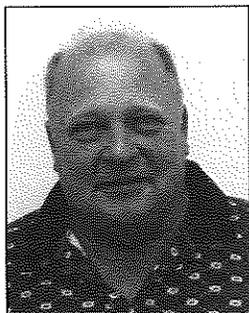
Rolland Gagner, a retired contractor, has represented the Union Lake and Lake Sarah Improvement District since 1997.

James Gander, a former 22-year member of the East Grand Forks City Council, has been the appointee of the mayor of East Grand Forks since 1999. He is also a member of the Board of Adjustment.

Kim Goering, a secretary in Crookston City Planning & Zoning-Building Official's Office, has been the appointee of the mayor of Crookston since 2001.

The five-member Board of Adjustment decides "variance" issues in addition to normal zoning matters. These issues deal with requests to deviate from the county's zoning rules. The findings of the Planning Commission and the Board of Adjustment become recommendations to the County Board, which makes the final decisions.

The Planning Commission and of Board of Adjustment representation from the Commissioner Districts 3 and 5 areas could change in January when the redistricting that became necessary after the 2000 census takes effect.



Doug Thorson

# The County Election Ballot

## **PRIMARY ELECTION** **Tuesday, Sept. 10**

### **Sheriff:**

\*Douglas Qualley  
Dan Chapa  
Mark LeTexier

## **GENERAL ELECTION** **Tuesday, Nov. 5**

### **Sheriff:**

The top 2 vote-getters in the Primary Election advance to the General Election

### **County Attorney:**

\*Wayne H. Swanson  
Gregory A. Widseth

### **Comissioner-Dist. 1:**

\*Gerald "Jerry" Jacobson

### **Comissioner-Dist. 2:**

\*Warren Strandell  
Monte Ruch

### **Comissioner-Dist. 3:**

\*Bill Montague

### **Comissioner-Dist. 4:**

\*Warren K. Affeldt

### **Comissioner-Dist. 5:**

\*Eugene "Jeep" Mattson

\* - Indicates incumbent

### Soil & Water

### Conservation Districts:

#### **Dist. 1 (E. Polk County):**

Kenneth O. Pederson

#### **Dist. 2 (E. Polk County):**

Bruce Grundyson

#### **Dist. 1 (W. Polk County):**

Mark McWalter

#### **Dist. 3 (W. Polk County):**

No filings for office

## **Auditor-treasurer and recorder positions no longer on the ballot**

Absent from the Polk County election ballot this fall are the positions of auditor-treasurer and recorder.

Special legislation was approved for Polk County during the last session of the Legislature to make both positions appointive rather than elective.

In asking for the change in procedure, the County Board noted that the positions require extensive knowledge of the office and that to have them be decided by popular vote, rather than by ability and experience, could adversely affect the county operations. Similar legislation has been approved for several other Minnesota counties in recent years.

The new law provides that elected officials are to serve out their terms before they are eligible to be appointed to the office by the County Board.

Both Auditor-Treasurer Gerald Amiot

and Recorder Marlene Hanson will be eligible to be appointed to their respective positions when their terms end on Jan. 6, 2003. Amiot was re-elected to his current four-year term in 1998, while Hanson was appointed by the County Board on Sept. 30, 2000, to complete the term of Sheryl Cariveau, who was retiring.

Besides the positions of the county commissioners, the two positions that continue to be elected by popular vote are sheriff and county attorney. A difference between these positions and those of auditor-treasurer and recorder, is that state law has minimum qualification requirements for both sheriff and county attorney. The sheriff must be qualified to be readily licensed as a law enforcement officer while the county attorney must have the qualifications to practice law.

## **Voter**

## **Information**

### **Voting Hours:**

**Cities** — 7 a.m.-8 p.m.

**Townships** — State law requires township precincts to be open from 10 a.m.-8 p.m., however, some townships have extended hours and some use mail ballots.

**Mail Ballots** —The following 16 townships use mail ballots: Andover, Belgium, Brandt, Brislet, Fanny, Fisher, Hammond, Kertsonville, Keystone, Liberty, Parnell, Russia, Sandsville, Scandia, Tynsid and Vineland.

Persons who have not lived in a mail ballot township for 20 days prior to an election, or who do not receive a ballot in the mail have the option to vote at the County Auditor-Treasurer's Office during regular business hours (8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday) and until 8 p.m. on an election day.

**Absentee Ballots** — Persons who are going to be absent from their precinct on election day can either vote in advance at the County Auditor-Treasurer's Office, or they can apply to the auditor-treasurer by mail, fax or in person for an absentee ballot.

**Questions** — Questions concerning voter eligibility requirements, precinct locations and other issues can be directed to the Auditor-Treasurer's Office at (218) 281-2554.

## **Booking**

**Continued from Page 1**

protected from the public by name and password, but is readily available to law enforcement. "We're about nine months into the program in Minnesota. It is very helpful to law enforcement and probation agents," Burkholder says, "and will become even more so, especially if the court system is eventually integrated into the system and there is a complete record of the individual."

Current MRAP database information allows law enforcement to run line-ups and do searches for specific attributes. For example, when it is known that the offender in a crime is between 5-10 and 6-2 in height, has black hair, a mustache, and a tattoo of a skull on the right hand, a search of the database for those attributes can be done to determine if anyone matches the description.

CrimNet has jail and probation information and photos but it can't do the more extensive investigatory searches that MRAP can. CrimNet collects and stores the history of individuals as provided by all but six of the state's 87 counties. The adult probation departments in all 87 counties of the state report their information to the state. Probation information about juveniles is just beginning to be collected from each county. That phase of the program was only initiated in July.

Burkholder notes that, in the past, there have been times when, if one jurisdiction had known what an individual had done in another jurisdiction, a person would have been arrested and a crime solved or further crime averted. "The information that is available on these new data bases will go a long way in speeding up investigations by law enforcement," he says.

# Financial status

Continued from Page 1

everybody to both control expenses and to maximize the access to state and federal funds. Increases in tax levies have been minimal but we have still been able to keep the county moving forward. Now, the challenge for the Board — and for all of us — is to guard against a return to a situation where expenses are allowed to exceed revenues.

"The use of 'reserves' to support normal operations can only be allowed in an extreme emergency or, when appropriate, for one-time, capital expenses," Affeldt says. A recent "one-time" expense was the development of new quarters for county and other agency satellite offices in East Grand Forks. The \$1.5 million total cost for the purchase and remodeling of the former Maury's TV & Appliance store is being paid in full from available county funds.

## Major needs ahead

In addition, there are at least two other future needs for major capital expenditures. One is replacement of the 102-year-old Professional Building, which is quickly coming to the end of its useful life.

Located on property adjacent to the Courthouse in Crookston, the building houses the Income Maintenance Division of Social Services, the County Attorney's Office, and the county's probation program.

A second project deals with the need to develop additional jail space. Occupancy in the Corrections Center facility, which is owned by Polk County, regularly exceeds its maximum capacity limits and the State Department of Corrections is strongly pressing for an increase in jail space.

## Balances important

Having healthy fund balances is especially important now in view of state budget shortfalls that are expected to exceed \$1.6 billion in the next biennium — \$2.7 billion when inflation is factored in.

"Legislators are going to have to deal with that in the next session and the funding for many programs is likely to be scrutinized," Affeldt says. "What the legislature does to fix the budget is likely to affect counties and it is certainly a good feeling to know that we have a little cushion going into next year. We are in a much

better condition than a lot of other counties in the state."

Johnson's recent exit interview with county officials following completion of the annual audit did not note any significant "findings" or recommendations for changes in reporting.

## GASB requirements

Adjustments in accounting practices will be needed soon, however, to implement the new Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement 34 requirements that are to begin in 2003. One change then will require consolidation of the Welfare Fund general ledger into a single county ledger.

Members of the county committee that is working on GASB implementation are: Gerald Amiot, auditor-treasurer; Douglas Axtell, Human Services fiscal supervisor; Ron Denison, chief accounting officer in the Auditor-Treasurer's Office; Tangee Bahl, human resources/special projects coordinator; Kathy Glass, Public Works accountant; John Schmalenberg, county coordinator; and Affeldt, as the board chair.

## Other alternatives to be investigated

# Cost nixes school conversion idea

The projected cost of converting the former Crookston Central Junior High School building into an office facility for several Polk County departments has rendered the proposal too expensive.

The County Board made that judgment in June after receiving a \$3.5 million cost estimate for remodeling from the architectural firm of Widseth Smith Nolting & Associates.

An asbestos issue also figured into the board's decision to abandon the proposal and to begin consideration of other alternatives to provide office space to replace that in the county's 102-year-old Crookston Professional Building.

## Was hospital, nursing home

The Professional Building, located on property adjacent to the Courthouse, was built as a hospital and served as the St. Vincent's Nursing Home before becoming an office facility and being acquired by the county. Currently located there are the Income Maintenance Division of Social Services, the County Attorney's Office and the county's probation pro-

gram.

Although the school proposal has been taken off the table, one Polk County department has its offices there. Public Health moved into the locker bay-commons and shop areas of the Central building in July 2001 just as the lease at its former location was about to end. Based there are 24 fulltime nurses and staff, plus the home health aides who spend their time in the field.

In the proposal to convert the school to office space, the county had sought to place "under one roof" all Social Service programs and staff based in Crookston — both those located in the courthouse and those in the Professional Building. Public Health was, of course, slated to become a permanent resident as were the county probation program and possibly other government units. At the same time, the Crookston School District was to continue to use the gymnasium and locker rooms for school activities.

## Concept was good

"The concept was good, but the cost of

remodeling a building that was already 50 years old was just too great," Commissioner Bill Montague, Crookston, a member of the County Building Committee, says.

"The board just couldn't justify putting that much money into the building. We're going to be looking at some other alternatives, but with the state budget problem still unsolved and how that could affect counties, we've gone into a holding pattern at least for now."

## \$6 million for new construction

Another proposal investigated by Widseth Smith Nolting & Associates was the possible construction of an addition to the courthouse. At about \$6 million, that idea, too, has been dismissed.

As an interim solution that allows Public Health to remain the Central building, the County Board has approved a rental agreement with the Crookston School District. The agreement, which is for an undetermined period of time, covers much of the cost of heating the building.

## Material to come from American Crystal plant

# Ash to be used in CSAH 76 road base

A pilot road construction project is on tap for next summer that will blend ash from the American Crystal Sugar Co. plant in East Grand Forks into the sub-base of newly designated Polk County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 76.

The 1.2-mile-long roadway was recently upgraded to CSAH status, which allows it to qualify for state funding for re-grading and later for hard-surfacing. A north-south road, CSAH 76 (recently known as Co. Road 238) connects CSAH 17 to Minnesota 220 at its intersection with U.S. 2 east of East Grand Forks. It is heavily used, especially by farm-to-market traffic.

The work, according to Polk County Highway Engineer Rich Sanders, will involve a full re-grading project in which a three-foot sub-cut will be removed from the road crown. In the process, unsuitable materials will be discarded and those that are suitable will be replaced in a blend of 25 percent ash to 75 percent clay.

### One year's generation

The 5,000 cubic yards of ash that will be needed represents approximately the amount that is generated at the East Grand Forks American Crystal plant in a single year. The ash is from the burning of coal at the plant and will be provided at no cost to the project, Sanders relates. After reconstruction, the road will have a 44-foot top with four-to-one side-slopes. All field entrances and culverts will be replaced.

The new roadway and driving surface will be evaluated for strength and any environmental effects over a period of two to three years, Sanders says, after which it is expected to be ready for hard-surfacing. Strength tests on other projects using ash as a part of the sub-grade, he notes, have made roads several times stronger.

"This is an opportunity for American Crystal to develop less expensive ways to manage their ash, since they are currently required to dispose of it in a lined landfill," says Sam Lucido, a project engineer for Wenck & Associates of Maple Plain, Minn. Wenck & Associates is a consulting environmental engineer for American Crystal. "It also presents an opportunity to use a material that has some well known and good qualities for an engineering purpose, rather than just disposing of it."

### County to gain

"Polk County," Lucido says, "has a lot to gain from this project. Because of the engineering properties of this material there is an opportunity to greatly improve the strength of the soils underneath its roads. This could increase the longevity of the road and it could reduce the cost of construction because the amount of Class 5 and bituminous required in construction would be decreased."

Sanders agree that the project is likely to be a "win-win" situation. Because it will save the cost of land-filling, it will benefit the beet farmer and because it is expected to reduce road construction costs, it will benefit all county taxpayers. The ash from American Crystal is clean. It looks like cement. Fly ash has been used as an ingredient in concrete for a long time.

The ash material generated by American Crystal, Lucido says, has a very low environmental risk, which makes for minimal requirements regarding its use. "Ash is a regulated solid waste so a permitting process is involved, but PCA is comfortable enough with this product and the type of use that we are proposing so that approval should be obtained quite easily."

The project with American Crystal will be the second ash-utilization pilot project for the county. In the first, ash left from burning

garbage at the Polk County Incinerator at Fosston was used to replace 10 percent of the aggregate in the lower layers of the bituminous materials developed for a surfacing project on one and one-half miles of CSAH 13 east of Crookston.

"The first project was completed last June and has turned out really good," Sanders says. "The first project has three different segments. One segment used 'old' ash... ash, which had been generated before the front-end separation unit was installed at the incinerator in Fosston. The second used ash generated after the separation unit was in place and the third segment used no ash at all," Sanders says. "Both the old and new ash were recovered from the Polk County Landfill near Gentilly and hauled to the bituminous plant for production. There have been no problems with the road. The surface has stood up really well."

### Being monitored

The CSAH 13 pilot project received funding from the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance and is being monitored by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Polk County Solid Waste Department for environmental effects and by the Polk County Highway Department and Minnesota Department of Transportation for its structural performance.

Players and monitors in the upcoming project will be the Polk County Highway Department, American Crystal, Wenck & Associates, the Minnesota Department of Transportation, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

A third ash utilization project, Sanders says, is also being considered for CSAH 44 between U.S. 2 and the Polk County Landfill. This project will again utilize ash generated by the incinerator at Fosston.

## 8 construction projects underway in county

Late summer finds highway construction at its peak. We have eight projects under construction and, to the relief of many property owners in the Fosston area, finally have bituminous surface in place on County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 6 from Fosston to CSAH 3.

Other projects in varying stages of completion include:

The bridge on CSAH 17, at the Grand Marais, has been removed and box culverts have been constructed in its place. All work is to be done before beet season.

CSAH 11 is in the process of being overlaid with bituminous surfacing. The CSAH 11 project includes the construction of a new bike path from Central High School east to

Barrette Street in Crookston.

CSAH 66 from CSAH 23 to TH 1 in Marshall County is being regraded.

CSAH 60 from Trunk Highway (TH) 2 to CSAH 17 has been overlaid with bituminous surfacing. In conjunction with the CSAH 60 project, 1.8 miles of Rhinehart Drive south of East Grand Forks was surfaced in a project arranged and financed by local property owners.

CSAH 6 from CSAH 3 to CSAH 35 is being reconstructed. New alignment is being constructed east of the Brandvold Cemetery, slopes are being flattened to 4:1, and the roadway will receive a two-inch bituminous overlay.

Projects that will have or had later starts include: CSAH 6 reconstruction from TH 2 to the south limits of Fosston; CSAH 6 bituminous overlay from the Polk/Mahnomen county line to south limits of Fosston; CSAH 24 bituminous surfacing from TH 2 to CSAH 27; and CSAH 27 bituminous surfacing from CSAH 24 to Polk/Clearwater county line.

There are also 16 township bridge replacement projects that are taking place. Three are span bridges, five are span CSP-A culverts and eight are box culverts.

All construction is expected to be completed prior to winter suspension. — **Rich Sanders, Highway Engineer**

## Succeeding Roger Diesen

# Sanders is new highway engineer

Richard Sanders, an 11-year veteran of the Polk County Highway Department, is the new county engineer.

The selection of Sanders, who first served the county as a project engineer and then as its construction engineer, was made by the County Board in June following a search and interview process. Sanders succeeds Roger Diesen, who retired in late May.

Diesen, a native of Roseau County, had held positions in Montana, Minneapolis, the state of Washington, and in Marshall, Lake of the Woods and Benton counties in Minnesota before coming to Polk County in October 1995. He and his wife, Judy, plan to move soon to the Sartell, Minn., area.

"It has been going well," Sanders says of the new position. "I'm enjoying the job and the responsibilities and challenges that go with it. Polk County has a really good, very competent Highway Department staff. We're going through a really busy time of the year."

The son of a career military man, Sanders grew up in Duluth, Germany, Omaha,



**Richard Sanders**

Neb., Berlin, Wis., and Grand Rapids, Minn. After graduating from high school in Grand Rapids, he attended Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids for two years and the University of North Dakota, where he received a B.S. degree in civil engineering in 1989. He worked for a private consulting firm at Worthington, Minn., for two years before coming to Polk County.

Sanders, who became a licensed professional civil engineer in 1994, has Minnesota Department of Transportation certifications in concrete, grade and base, bitu-

minous and bridge construction. He is the past president of the Lake Agassiz Chapter of the Minnesota Society of Professional Engineers and as a member of the Minnesota County Engineers Association, serves on its automation, technical conference (co-chair), bituminous liaison, and technician certification committees. He's also a member of National Association of County Engineers and of the American Public Works Association.

In Crookston, Sanders is a member of the Evangelical Covenant Church and serves on its board of trustees. He and his wife, Ruth, have a son, Jacob, 13, and daughter, Rachel, 10.

## Montague heads Welfare Board

Polk County Commissioner Bill Montague, Crookston, became chair of the Polk County Local Social Services Agency Board in July. Montague, who had been the vice chair, succeeds Commissioner Eugene "Jeep" Mattson, East Grand Forks. The new vice chair is Commissioner Jerry Jacobson, Fertile.

## EGF Satellite Service Center to open Sept. 23

Most, if not all, of the agencies that will locate in the new Polk County Human Service Center in East Grand Forks are planning to be in place and operating by Monday, Sept. 23.

Conversion of the 20,000-square-foot former Maury's TV & Appliance store building into a one-stop service center for seven different agencies, is to be completed by Sept. 9. The building was purchased by the county last fall to provide additional space for its East Grand Forks offices.

Agencies that will be in the "one-stop" service center include: Polk County Social Services, Polk County Public Health, Polk County Veterans Service/Sheriff's Dept., Northwest Mental Health Center, Tri-County Community Corrections, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council Northern Regional Office, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council Child Care Resources & Referral, and the First Call for Help program, which will provide reception services for all offices in the center.

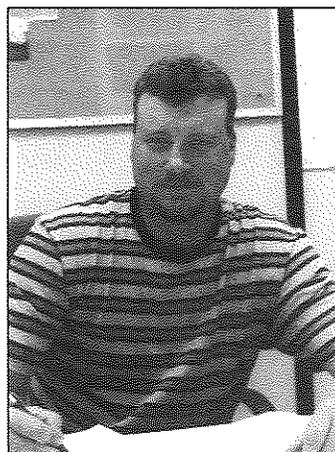
A public open house is planned in mid-October.

# Beauchane on job as county ditch inspector

New Polk County ditch inspector Jody Beauchane is literally adjusting to his new position on the run.

The hectic pace is the result of an inordinate "run" of drainage problems and issues that are the result of summer storms that dumped up to 10 inches of rain on parts of the county. While virtually all areas of the county had significant crop losses, the Climax-Eldred-Fisher area was probably the most heavily damaged.

"It's been very busy," Beauchane says of the more than 30 requests for ditch cleaning and repair that immediately followed the heavy rains. Those new requests for work are in addition to the regular projects that were underway or had been



**Jody Beauchane**

planned for this summer and fall. "A lot of crops were flooded and a lot of problems surfaced as a result of the storms.

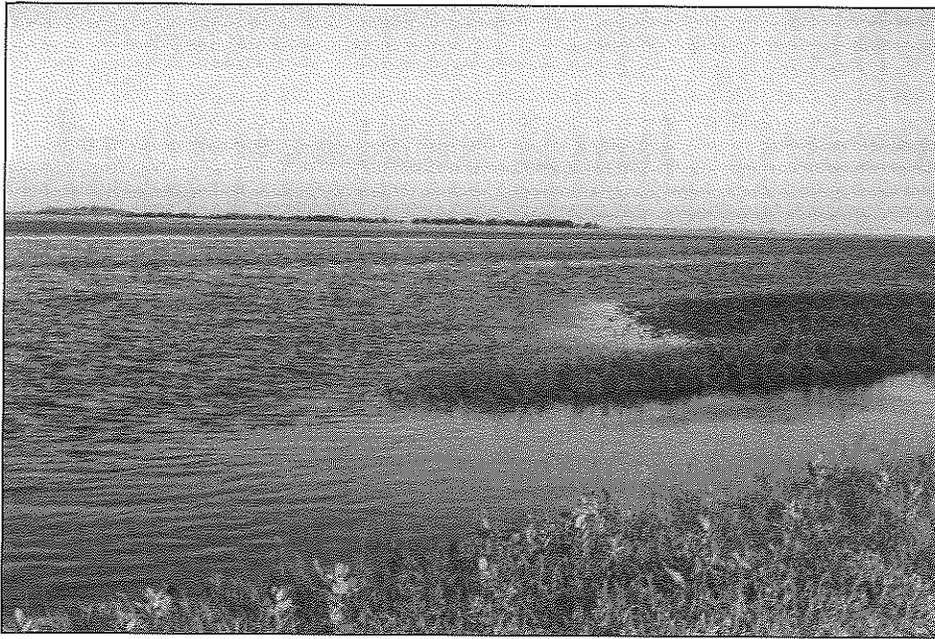
"I'm learning a lot about ditch law as I research ditch issues and meet with farmers and landowners to try to develop and coordinate the work and corrections that are needed," he says of his baptism by fire.

An 11-year veteran of the construction industry including seven years as a project superintendent managing large commercial and civil projects mainly in North Dakota, Beauchane joined the Polk County Highway Department as an engineering technician in May 2001. He was named bridge inspector in June after Wayne Mager, the county's first ditch inspector, left to take a civil service position at Grand Forks Air Force Base. A member of the County Highway Department,

the ditch inspector works directly under the guidance and direction of the county engineer.

A 1988 graduate of Lafayette High School in Red Lake Falls, Beauchane studied mechanical drafting at Northwest Minnesota Technical College-Moorhead and has extensive experience in surveying and in reading architectural, structural and mechanical blueprints. He has certifications in bridge construction inspection and in concrete, aggregate, grading, and road base production/construction.

Beauchane and his wife, Stacy, live near Fertile and have three children, a daughter Jozi, 12, and sons, Cody, 6, and Wyatt, 4.



Thousands of acres of crop were destroyed when the brunt of a July storm dumped some 10 inches of rain in an area between Climax and Fisher.

## County roads, ditches, crops damaged by summer rainstorms

Polk County sustained in excess of \$350,000 in damages to its roads and ditch systems during the June 9-10 and June 22-23 rainstorms, while township roads and drainage systems sustained another \$306,900 in damages, according to Allen Wagner, Polk County Emergency Management director.

The following July 9-10 rainstorm caused an additional \$117,000 in damage to county and townships roads and drainage systems, including damage that was done in areas where repairs had been made following the June storms. Some of the repeat damage was worse from the second storm than the first, Wagner says.

Polk County has petitioned for an extension of the disaster declaration to cover damage to infrastructure done in the July 9-10 rainstorm and Minnesota officials are assisting in trying to get FEMA to extend declaration period. The earlier federal disaster declaration, which covers 18 counties in northwest Minnesota, includes only the period from June 9 to June 28.

All parts of the northwest area of the state had varying degrees of damage with 18 counties declared federal disaster areas for the period of June 9-28. Crop damage estimates, according to the Farm Service Agency in St. Paul, totaled more than \$370 million on some 1.2 million acres of land. Besides crop and infrastructure losses, the agency says the flooding in the region caused \$63.1 million damage to land, a \$28 million loss to dwellings, and a \$760,000 loss to livestock.

In Polk County, the most serious damage to crops and property occurred during the July

storm in an area between Climax and Fisher. The storms on the weekends of June 8-9 and June 22-23 hit hardest in Roseau, Norman and Mahnomen counties.

Polk County assisted Roseau, Norman and Mahnomen counties in several ways during the periods when heavy rains hit hardest in those areas of the northwest region. Polk County Emergency Management delivered pumps to flood areas at two different times along with manpower to assist their flood fights, according to Wagner. And the Polk County Assessor's Office provided appraisers to assist Roseau County in determining the property damage estimates that were needed for its disaster assistance requests. East Grand Forks also sent pumps along with its sandbagging machine to both Roseau and Mahnomen counties and provided city utility and other staff to assist both in the flood fight and the following recovery effort.

Among volunteers assisting with sandbagging efforts at both Roseau and Ada during the height of the flood events were prisoners enrolled in the state's Institution Community Work Crew Program (ICWC), which houses the inmates at both the Tri-County Corrections facility in Crookston and the Pennington County Jail in Thief River Falls. The Sentence to Service programs at Tri-County Corrections also had prisoners on the sandbag lines in both communities. The Sentence to Service programs allow persons the opportunity to reduce their jail times by working on community projects while the ICWC program teaches state convicts the carpentry trade as they near the end of their sentences.

## Farris named administrator of Red Lake Watershed

Harry Farris, who served as an engineer for 25 years during a military career that took him around the world, is the new administrator for the Red Lake Watershed District Board of Managers.

Farris, 46, assumed the position in April, relieving Dale M. Nelson of the dual role of interim administrator and that of serving as the manager representative from Pennington County. Nelson is president of the board.

Prior to accepting the new position, Farris had been an advertising sales representative for the Thief River Falls Times/Northern Watch publications in Thief River Falls. Immediately following his retirement from the military, he had been a production supervisor at New Flyer in Crookston.

A native of Idaho who grew up there and in Utah and Oregon, Farris served in the U.S. Army from May 1973 until March 1999. During that time he had assignments at Forts Leonard Wood, Carson, Campbell, Lewis, Sill, Bliss and Belvoir, plus overseas duties in Germany, Egypt, Turkey, Kuwait, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Korea, Bosnia, the Fiji Islands and Central America. A trained engineer, his career included five years when he served directly under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Washington, D.C. He was also a drill sergeant and served as an advisor to the U.S. Army Reserve and the National Guard. He retired as a command sergeant major.

Farris and his wife, Deb (Panek), a native of Thief River Falls, have two children and live at Goodridge where she is a special education teacher. The children are Sean, 7, and Kristin, 3. Farris also has three grown children, Dwayne, 27, in the Marines and currently on undisclosed assignment in Africa; Joe, 25, an employee of the Dana Corporation in Elizabethtown, Ky.; and Ryan, 21, who is in the Army at Fort Durum, N.Y., and will soon be going to Afghanistan.

### County Board Meeting Times

- 8:30 a.m. on 1st Tuesday of each month
  - 1:20 p.m. on 3rd Tuesday
  - 8:30 a.m. on 4th Tuesday
- Meetings are open to the public.

#### Commissioners:

- Dist. 1 — Jerry Jacobson
- Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell
- Dist. 3 — Bill Montague
- Dist. 4 — Warren Affeldt
- Dist. 5 — Eugene "Jeep" Mattson

# Rhinehart Township residents liking their 'do-it-yourself' hard surface road

Residents along Rhinehart Drive south of East Grand Forks are driving on a new, hard-surface road today only because they decided to take on the job themselves. When no governmental unit could do the project, property owners voted to proceed on their own.

The \$195,000 project, which was completed in early August on the 1.8-mile segment of the road, will be paid for by 44 property owners through assessments to be collected as a part of their property tax bills over the next 10-15 years.

"It's just great," Maury Finney, one of a group of residents who spearheaded the project, says of the road. "Everybody's enjoying the road. The old road was so rough your whole vehicle would vibrate. In the spring or after a big rain, it was a mess with all the soft spots and deep ruts. People would get stuck out there. You'd ruin tires; couldn't keep a vehicle in alignment. And when it wasn't wet, you'd choke on the dust.

## No complaints

"The new road saves on vehicles, saves on attitudes and it increases the value of all the properties along the road," he says. "It's just a blessing how the project came together, how good a job we got from the contractor, and how the county was there to supervise the project. I have absolutely nothing but positive things to say about the whole project and I haven't heard one word of complaint."

Prime movers in the project with Finney, were Rhinehart residents Gary Bridgeford of Industrial Contract Services, John Zavoral of Zavoral & Sons Construction Co., Clayton Johnson, Lloyd Hill and the members of the Rhinehart Township Board. Once developed, the proposal was explained at an information meeting held at the East Grand Forks Senior Citizens Center last spring.

The plan, which received immediate support from a vast majority of residents, was contingent on holding the total cost to less than \$225,000. Individual assessments were not to exceed \$5,000. All properties shared equally in the project, including farmland, which, if and when developed, will assume an assessment for each platted lot equal to the assessments of the original list of benefitted properties.

## Lime rock used

The road was readied for surfacing by Zavoral & Sons Construction, which while working at cost, hauled and applied a course of lime rock (from American



Residents along Rhinehart Road south of East Grand Forks got together for a ribbon-cutting and party to celebrate the successful completion of their "do it yourself" paving project. They'll pay for the road through assessments to be added to their property taxes.

Crystal Sugar Co. in East Grand Forks) and or crushed concrete to the roadbed and then did the final grading. The Polk County Highway Department participated in the design work, provided surveying, prepared the bid documents, and inspected the bituminous mix and supervised its placement.

The Rhinehart project was included as a possible addendum to a Polk County project to crack and overlay County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 60 from U.S. 2 north of Fisher to CSAH 17. Northern Paving, Inc., Crookston, was the low bidder for the CSAH 60 work. Its accompanying proposal of \$139,656 to also hard-surface Rhinehart Drive came in under the estimated cost.

## Total cost of \$195,422

Including \$38,000 for work Zavoral & Sons did "at cost" and a 10 percent fee charged for County Highway Department services, the total cost of the project was \$195,422. That amount was well under the \$225,000 figure that had been set by residents as an acceptable maximum.

Financing will be arranged this fall when the project is included in a bond sale that will be held to also finance ditch repairs in the county. An assessment district along the road was created as a method of facilitating the financing and assessment procedure.

## Higher load rating

In the planning, the 22-foot wide road was to have a minimum 9-ton per axle rating. However, the effect of the lime rock and crushed concrete base under the two bituminous courses of two inches each has

resulted in a road that surpasses that rating. "There are parts of the road that tested out at 13 tons," Zavoral says. "It turned out great. There are a lot of people who will be babysitting it...it's their road and they'll be watching to see if anyone starts messing around or runs big loads over it. You can be sure that they'll take good care of it."

## Mold continues to be a concern

Mold continues to be a concern in Polk County and the problem is not limited to properties affected by the 1997 flood, according to Polk County Public Health director Brenda Menier.

Molds are simple, microscopic organisms that can be found virtually anywhere both indoors and outdoors. In large quantities, molds can cause allergic symptoms similar to those caused by plant pollen. Symptoms include cough, wheezing, nasal congestion, sneezing, sore throats, fatigue and headaches. Individuals have different sensitivities to mold.

To grow, mold needs a food source (such as leaves, wood, newspapers), a source of moisture, and a place to grow. If you can see or smell mold, you have a moisture and mold problem. The first step is to identify the moisture source and then to clean, disinfect and dry the moldy area.

Information about mold, how to check for moisture problems in your home, and general instructions on clean-up procedures are available from Public Health at (218) 281-3385.