

Polk County Newsletter

Spring 2007

Property line issues point out need for surveys

Is your house actually on your property? Is the tree the neighbor is cutting down his or yours? Can you build your dream home someday on the lot you just purchased?

These are all seemingly simple questions, with easily justifiable answers. The previous owner received a permit for the house, the former owner and current neighbor both agreed that tree was on the neighbors property and the seller told you that you could build on the property and gave you a deed.

Unfortunately, there are instances where a permit was received — unfortunately they did not find the actual lot line before construction, or the neighbors agreed on the lot line — yet the assumed lot line does not match the legal description. Or you did receive a deed — yet the lot does not meet the minimum standards for being buildable because county approval of the lot split was not required.

Polk County has been finding these and other similar issues at a more frequent rate. Whether the reason for these errors was due to technology changes, intentional deception or a simple misunderstanding, these issues place the potential buyers at risk, expose the

seller to liability and compromise the integrity of county records.

No simple fix

Finding solutions to these issues years after they were created is difficult, frustrating and expensive. Many times there is no simple fix.

Several of the county departments that rely on accurate legal descriptions and lot lines recently made recommendations to the County Board to require certificate of surveys when transferring title to property, creating new lots and developing property in shoreland or floodplain areas of the county.

Recognizing the need to have a deliberate and organized system of updating county records and preventing new situations from being created, the County Board has approved exploring options to address this situation. As such, the board has authorized these county departments to begin taking input on proposed measures to require certificates of survey.

The County Board and representatives of those affected Departments met on March 6 with a few representatives of various professional fields that work closely with surveys, abstracts and loans. The purpose of that

meeting was to receive input on how to achieve the goals of promoting compliant construction in shoreland/floodplain areas, providing a system to update county land records, ensuring the creation of buildable legal-sized lots, and maintaining and updating geographic information system (GIS) parcel maps and the 911 rural address system within Polk County.

Recommendations to be made

Input from various sources will be sought in the process of developing recommendations that will be given to the County Board on how to achieve these goals.

If the board approves the recommendation and authorizes the county departments to proceed, public hearings will be set up to disseminate the resulting proposal and to receive further input from the public.

After those public meetings, the county departments will meet with the board to review the proposal and input received before determining how to proceed. It is expected that these meetings will take place in late spring or early summer. — **Jon Steiner, administrator, Polk County Environmental Services**



The doors to individual cells line walls of dayroom in general population pod in the new jail

Justice Center expected to be operational by about Nov. 1

The new Polk County Justice Center is expected to be in full use by about Nov. 1... maybe sooner.

"We want to have all of the different agencies that will be located there to be in the building and operating from there before next winter arrives," Polk County Coordinator John Schmalenberg says.

The Justice Center, which is to include the District Court and the offices of all of the agencies

See JUSTICE CENTER, Page 2

Justice Center & jail both ahead of schedule

(Continued from Page 1)

involved in the county level of the legal system, is a part of the massive concrete building that is under construction along U.S. Highway 75 in south Crookston.

The other part of the building — on the north end — will contain a new, 224-bed Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail. The jail is projected to be ready for use by Jan. 1, 2008... or, as in the case of the Justice Center, maybe sooner.

Ahead of schedule

Both projects are progressing ahead of schedule and both are within the budget allowances.

"We've had over 100 people on the job at times and we are ahead of schedule," Jon Otterstad, on-site construction manager for CAM (Construction Analysis & Management), Inc., Brainerd, Minn., says. CAM has been contracted by Polk County to serve as its construction manager.

"I may be a little optimistic but I expect that the jail will be ready for Tri-County Corrections to begin their training by early fall. The Justice Center should be fully completed by late October," Otterstad says.

"I couldn't be happier with how the work is progressing and with the contractors and the quality of work that they are doing. We haven't had any real problems."

"It is important," according to Schmalenberg, "that the Justice

Want to spend a night in jail?

No kidding. The pleasure could be yours.

While plans are still in the brainstorm stage, there will likely be a chance for a somewhat limited number of county residents to spend a night in the new Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail... that is before it begins to house the criminal element.

As envisioned, persons would be given the opportunity to make a contribution to their favorite charity in exchange for a night in the new jail. Some thought is being given to having the experience include an arrest, being handcuffed, sent through the jail intake process and maybe even be routed through District Court in the new Polk County Justice Center.

With the possible involvement of schools, there is some thought, too, of offering the opportunity for students to tour (not stay overnight) the facility... to experience the chill that goes up your back when the heavy doors slam behind you.

The two-person cells — only about 7 by 10 feet with no windows, two bunks, a toilet and a sink — don't provide a whole lot of freedom. And when put into real use, the 'guests' won't get to choose their roommate.

At this point, it's all in the formative stage. Stay tuned. Opening day is now only a few months away.

Center be in operation before any prisoners are housed in the building. It wouldn't really make a lot of sense to have prisoners in the new facility and not have the court system operating there."

Occupants of the Justice Center will include the District Court and Court Administration offices, judges, court reporters, law clerks, Polk County Attorney's Office, public defenders, Polk County Probation and the administrative offices of Tri-County Community Corrections.

The three-county (Norman, Red Lake and Polk) corrections organization will operate the new jail.

Training required

While not far behind the Justice Center in its construction schedule, the jail won't be put into use until corrections officers have undergone training to prepare them for the new "direct supervision" concept. In the new facility, they will work from inside the dayrooms of each of the different cell block areas.

That design, while totally new

to Tri-County Corrections, has been proven to be safe and effective in jails throughout the country. Among its benefits are that one corrections officer is able to supervise up to 60 prisoners.

The Polk County Attorney's Office, public defenders and Polk County Probation are currently located in the Crookston Professional Center building, which is located just northeast of the Courthouse. The District Court, Court Administration, judges, court reporters and law clerks are located on the upper floor of the Courthouse.

Tri-County Community Corrections is located in the Law Enforcement Center building where the current 32-bed jail is located.

Law Center occupants

Remaining in the Law Enforcement Center after the opening of the new center will be the Polk County Sheriff's Office, Polk County Dispatch, Polk County Emergency Services and the Red River Valley Juvenile Center.

The Polk County Social Services and Public Health agencies will take over the space vacated in the courthouse by the move of the court system. Since Social Services and Public Health often work closely together, their co-location will improve efficiencies. It is expected that the 106-year-old Professional Building will be razed after it is taken out of service.

Commissioner assignments and positions

Gerald Jacobson (Dist. 1) — Northwest Mental Health Board, Red Lake-Polk County Joint Ditch Committee, Red Lake Watershed-Polk County Judicial Ditch 72 Committee, Lake Agassiz Regional Library Board, Polk County Public Safety Committee, Resource Conservation & Development (Pembina Trails) Commission, Northwest Regional Development Commission, Retired Senior Volunteer Program Board, AMC Environment & Natural Resources Committee (alternate), Northwest Agency on Aging, Northwest Council on Aging, Minnesota Counties Insurance Trust (delegate), Agassiz Recreational Trails System (secretary).

Warren Strandell (Dist. 2) — AMC General Government Policy Committee (past state chair), AMC District 3 (vice chair), AMC

Corrections Sub-Committee, Tri-County Community Corrections Board (chair), Minnesota Rural Counties Caucus (alternate delegate), Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Northwest Regional Development Commission Board (vice chair), NWRDC Transportation Advisory Committee (vice chair), NWRDC Area Transportation Partnership (delegate), Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization, East Grand Forks Community Marketing Task Force, Fisher Chamber of Commerce.

Bill Montague (Dist. 3) — Polk County Board vice chair, State Community Health Advisory Board (past state chair), Tri-Valley Opportunity Council (chair), AMC Health & Human Services Policy Committee, Northwest Mental Health Board, Red Lake-Polk

County Joint Ditch Committee, Regional Solid Waste Advisory Board, Polk County Public Safety Committee, Northwest Regional Development Commission Enterprise Fund Committee, Polk County Law Library Board of Directors, Judicial Ditch 60 Committee, Solid Waste Advisory Committee (alternate), Household Hazardous Waste Advisory Committee (alternate), Polk County Community Health Board, Glenmore Recovery Center Advisory Board.

Warren Affeldt (Dist. 4) — Polk County Board chair, Minnesota Rural Counties Caucus (delegate and past state chair), Tri-County Community Corrections Board, AMC Environment & Natural Resources Policy Committee, Polk County Extension Service Committee, Red Lake Watershed-

Polk County Joint Ditch 72 Committee, Regional Solid Waste Advisory Board, 5-County Solid Waste Advisory Committee, Household Hazardous Waste Advisory Committee, Inter County Community Council Board (chair), East Polk County Development Achievement Center Board, Joint Beaver Advisory Board, Local Water Planning Board, Polk-Red Lake Joint Ditch 4 Committee.

Don Diedrich (Dist. 5) — Polk County Extension Service Committee, Joint Powers Board of the Red River Basin in Minnesota, Red Lake-Polk County Joint Ditch Committee, Red Lake Watershed-Polk County Judicial Ditch 72 Committee, Judicial Ditch 60 Committee, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District Citizen Advisory Committee and Brandt-Angus flood retention project team.

Transition team developing operating plan for new jail

A three-member transition team at Tri-County Community Corrections is in the process of developing the operating policies and procedures that will be used by corrections officers in the new Northwest Region Corrections Center jail when it opens on Jan. 1, 2008... or possibly sooner.

"Every footstep needs to be mapped out and put into a procedures manual that will determine both the staff training that will precede opening and operations that will be ongoing once we start using the new jail," Susan Mills, administrator of the Tri-County Community Corrections agency that will operate the jail, says.

On-site application

"We expect to have the manuals ready in June and to be able to begin some on-site application of those practices at that time."

The transition team members are corrections officers Chad Johnson, Phil Schroeder and Connie Holmer. All are veteran corrections officers who have been assigned since September 2006 to devote all of their focus on developing the operations and procedures manual. TCCC Director of Security Andrew Larson and Facilities Supervisor Paul Bissonette are also working closely with the team.

Besides moving into a jail that is three times bigger — from the current 32-bed secure unit in the Law Enforcement Center and the 49-bed Annex minimum-security facility to the new jail's 224 beds — the transition will involve adapting from the traditional design where jail cells are lined up off a protected walkway to an arrangement where the officers work inside a cell block day-room and are right among the prisoners.

Effective & safe

While that arrangement won't be used for the most dangerous of prisoners, it has proven to be both effective and safe for the officers when dealing with the general jail populations. And it is highly efficient since one corrections officer can supervise up to 60 prisoners in the large pods.

"We don't do direct supervision in our secure jail now. Instead, the officer walks through the facility checking in each cell repeatedly during their shifts. They have much less direct contact with the prisoners. The visual contact is very limited.

"In direct supervision, the officer is posted right in the middle of the housing unit and has to be highly skilled in handling people and know how to deal with the issues and attitudes the inmates present. Officers need to be personable and yet firm to keep each living unit in the facility safe and secure.

"We've sent some officer groups to the St. Louis County Jail at Duluth to spend time with the security staff that works with direct supervision there. We'll be sending the entire staff over there as a part of the training."

8.5 new positions

Because of the greater numbers of prisoners that can be held in the new jail, the corrections staff will be increased by 8.5 fulltime positions. Currently, a staff of 31 full- and part-time officers is used to work the 32-bed secure jail in the Law Enforcement Center and the 49-bed minimum security Annex facility.

In the new setting with state approval of staffing plans, 39.5 positions will be needed to operate the 224-bed facility.

Hiring for those jobs will begin in August with training for both the new officers and the existing staff to occur in September and October. While the new positions will increase the cost of operation, those costs will be more than paid for by a redirection of the \$300,000 to \$400,000 that has been budgeted in each of the past two years to pay for housing prisoners in jails in other counties when there wasn't room for them locally.

Income opportunity

With the additional beds, there will be the opportunity to generate income by boarding prisoners both from other counties and from state and federal agencies.

"There's so much that will be different," Mills says of the new jail. "It's not just about locking and unlocking doors, although that will be part of it. There's so much new, sophisticated technology that we will have to learn how to use. Everybody who works in the facility will have to be trained and learn how things interact... all the procedures. That will include the cooks, custodians, caseworkers, attorneys, nurses, teachers and everybody else."

Emergency situations

The training of that group of support people will include how to handle an emergency, should one occur. "In some instances, some of them may have to assume back-up roles," Mills says. Included in that group of employees will be the security staff that will work the front door of the combined jail and justice center building.

"None of this training will be more than the staff can handle but the new operation procedures must be learned and practiced before we can operate the new facility. It will be a very different setting," Mills says. "Our operation will become very efficient and our staff even more professional than we are today."

Soil & Water Conservation District members

East Polk County

Chair: Lawrence Vettleson, Gully, Dist. 5

Vice chair: Scott Balstad, Fosston, Dist. 4

Secretary: Al Bauer, Erskine, Dist. 3

Treasurer: Kenneth Pederson, Mentor, Dist. 1

PR & I: Bruce Grundyson, McIntosh, Dist. 2

District Manager: Gary Lee

District Secretary: Ruth Mandt

Office: 240 Cleveland Ave., McIntosh

Telephone: 218-563-2777

Fax: 218-563-2378

Board meetings: 8 a.m. on the second Thursday of each month

Districts

District 1 — Tilden Grove Park, Godfrey and Garfield townships

District 2 — Badger, Lessor, Hill River and King townships

District 3 — Woodside, Knute, Garden and Winger townships

District 4 — Brandsvold, Sletten, Rosebud and Columbia townships

District 5 — Johnson, Chester, Gully, Eden and Queen townships

West Polk County

Chair: Dale Peterson, Warren, Dist. 2

Vice chair: Todd Radi, Fisher, Dist. 3

Secretary: Mark McWalter, East Grand Forks, Dist. 1

Treasurer: Russ Severson, Crookston, Dist. 4

PR & I: Ben Larson, Climax, Dist. 5

District Manager: Nicole Bernd

Office: 528 Strander Ave., Crookston

Telephone: 281-6070

Fax: 281-6071

Board meetings: 7 a.m. on the third Thursday of each month

Districts

District 1 — Higdem, Sandville, Esther, Northland, Grand Forks, Sullivan, Rhinehart and Huntsville townships.

District 2 — Farley, Brislet, Helgeland, Tabor, Angus, Brandt, Keystone, Euclid and Belgium townships.

District 3 — Nesbit, Fanny, Parnell, Bygland, Fisher, Tynsid and Roome townships.

District 4 — Lowell, Crookston, Gentilly, Andover, Fairfax and Kertsonville townships.

District 5 — Vineland, Hammond, Russia, Onstad, Hubbard, Scandia, Reis.

NW Minnesota Council of Collaboratives receives award

The Northwest Minnesota Council of Collaboratives received the Association of Minnesota Counties' 2006 Achievement Award in recognition of its work and accomplishments at the state organization's annual meeting Dec. 4 in Rochester.

Membership in the council includes six county governments, one mental health agency, six county social service agencies, six county law enforcement agencies, four public health agencies, 24 school districts, a multi-county corrections agency, and four community action agencies. The six counties are Kittson, Mahanomen, Marshall, Norman, Polk and Red Lake.

The Polk County Collaborative is based in the Northwest Mental Health Center in Crookston. Colleen MacRae is the coordinator.

Maximize efficiency

The primary goal of the council is to promote the welfare of youth and families in the five-county area by coordinating human and financial resources to maximize the efficiency of services offered by its members. The council also works to expand the funding and resource base available to meet the growing needs of its population of almost 60,000.

Member organizations from Polk County include the Climax-Shelly, Crookston, Fisher, Fosston and Win-E-Mac public schools, and the Polk County Public Health, Sheriff's Office, and Social Services agencies.

Multiple county organizations in the collaborative in which Polk County is a member include Tri-County Community Corrections, Northwest Mental Health Center, Northwest Community Action, and Tri Valley Opportunity Council. Tri-

See NW COUNCIL, Page 11

Affeldt heads County Board in '07

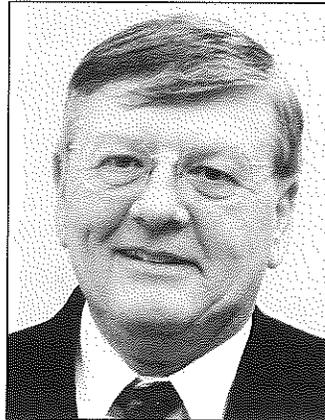
Warren Affeldt, Fosston, is chair of the Polk County Board in 2007. The commissioner from District 4, he succeeds Warren Strandell, East Grand Forks, who served as the chair in 2006.

The vice chair this year is Bill Montague, Crookston. The chair and vice chair positions rotate through the five county commissioners.

Further re-organization of county government will occur in July when Commissioner Don Diedrich, rural Warren, is slated to succeed Montague as chair of the Polk County Social Services Board. That board includes the five county commissioners and two at-large members, Cathy Gutterud, Fosston, and Paula Waters, Crookston.

Issues in '07

The major issues that the County Board is expecting to have to deal with in 2007, according to Affeldt, include the completion of construction of the new Northwest Regional



Warren Affeldt

Corrections Center jail and Polk County Justice Center.

"We need to make sure that this project stays on schedule for completion late this year and that it stays within budget," Affeldt says. "So far, everything has been going really well, in fact, construction is a little ahead of schedule."

Negotiations underway

Also very high on the list of issues, he says, is the negotia-

tion of new wage and benefits contracts for six different organized groups of employees and one large group that is not organized.

"We have some really good employees and we need to be as fair with them as we can without breaking the budget. Commissioners Montague and (Jerry) Jacobson are leading the effort to develop the new, three-year contracts.

"And, we need to keep close tabs on the budget. This will be a key year in maintaining the the very good fiscal health of the county," Affeldt says, noting that expenses and revenues need to balance.

Tight reins

"Dipping into reserves or raising taxes beyond normal inflation to pay for regular operations is something that we can not allow," he says.

"Spending down reserves to pay for regular operations got the county in trouble a few years ago and this board isn't about let that happen again."

Flu season was slow in coming

The annual influenza season in Minnesota was slow in starting. There wasn't a huge demand for influenza vaccine until recently. We had more flu vaccine than we could give away.

Four children died in Minnesota in February from influenza complications. Three of them did not have the influenza vaccine and had been healthy. One had the influenza vaccine but had other health conditions.

A Health Alert Network message from the Minnesota Department of Health reports that another child and a 44-year-old person have died from complications of influenza. The number of flu deaths in Minnesota may be different when this article is published.

We expect 36,000 annual deaths from influenza in the United States each year. It always grabs people's attention and hearts when a child dies. On average, there is one death

for every 1,000 to 2,000 influenza cases. The complications are usually pneumonia, secondary bacterial infections or myocarditis, an infection around the lining of the heart.

Contagious time

We now have been experiencing an increased interest in the influenza vaccine and have been scheduling extra flu shot clinics around our communities. There have been many influenza cases reported in the schools. Children often are spreading contagious illnesses to each other, teachers and families. A person is contagious for one day before symptoms begin and for an additional seven days after.

The flu season always gives us extra challenges and frustrations. There are often problems with the production of the vaccine. We often have shortages and difficulty with distribution. It seems that we either have too much vaccine or not enough.

It is not too late to get a flu shot. We highly recommend the annual flu shot for people over the age of six months. Those at higher risk are children, ages six months to two years, pregnant women, those over the age of 60 and those with heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, etc.

Tips to stay healthy include frequent hand washing, covering your cough with a tissue, good nutrition, rest and exercise and staying at home if you are sick with influenza symptoms. These symptoms come on rapidly with severe head and body aches, fever, dry cough, fatigue.

We are working with many county partners in preparing for the next influenza pandemic. It is not a question of "if" but a question of "when" we will have another pandemic.
— Sheri Altepeter PHN, Director, Polk County Public Health

There's been a very good return on the investment

Out of Home Placement costs under control

A "leap of faith" that has paid off many times over.

That description applies to the decision by the Polk County Board now more than 10 years ago to hire five para-professionals as a part of a program designed to address out of home placement costs that in the three years from 1994 to 1997 had ballooned from \$1.3 million to \$2.4 million a year.

With those spiraling costs staring the County Board in the face and there being no sign of a slow down in sight, a plea to come up with a strategy to address the problem was given to County Social Services Department supervisors, the County Attorney's Office, Tri-County Community Corrections and Court Administration.

As discussions were held, the group grew to also include representatives from County Public Health, the Sheriff's Office, Northwestern Mental Health Center, public defenders, and public school officials. Social Services had the lead role.

In traditional practice, troubled and/or abused juveniles are almost routinely placed in "out of home placement" facilities when their own homes are determined to be unsafe or

lacking appropriate parenting. The daily per diem cost for placements, depending on the services prescribed, can range up to more than \$300 a day.

Change of strategy

Instead of continuing that practice, the result of discussions in Polk County was a plan in which para-professionals would be hired and trained to work directly with juveniles and their families to address the issues that lead to out of home placement.

The role of these para-professionals was to "follow up" on programs determined by social service case management staff as a way to improve conditions in the home and within the family that would make "out of home" placement less necessary.

But to suggest to a County Board that it hire five new employees with no guarantee of a return on that investment was a longshot!

By nature, commissioners immediately translate such a suggestion into higher tax bills, which their constituents don't appreciate and remember at election time.

Hard sell

Despite that obstacle, Social Services supervisors, with Bill Green, then the department's

Out of Home Placement Costs	
Year	Total
1991	\$1,320,718
1992	1,305,510
1993	1,216,930
1994	1,289,133
1995	1,611,049
1996	2,260,549
1997	2,404,232
1998	1,816,161
1999	2,012,686
2000	1,600,929
2001	1,055,938
2002	1,047,551
2003	1,155,971
2004	1,091,721
2005	1,205,637
2006	961,739

administrative assistant, leading the charge, made a passionate plea to the County Board in 1999 that it invest in five new positions.

With no other plan on the table, the County Board voted to somehow find the money to fund the plan.

That was the leap of faith because, at the time, the county's financial situation wasn't very good at all.

While it took a few months to recruit and train the para-professionals, who have become officially known as family-

based service providers, there was some immediate return on the \$150,000 investment made in their hiring and training.

Cut in half

In 2000 with part of the full program in place for part of the year, the total out of home placement cost was reduced to \$1.6 million. The next year, with the new tools in place for the full year, the cost was reduced by more than 50 percent from the high years to just over \$1.1 million.

During the past six years, despite normal cost increases due to inflation, out of home placement costs in the county have remained in the \$1 million range or just slightly above that mark.

Under \$1 million

While it probably isn't realistic to believe that it can continue at this number, the 2006 total even came in under \$1 million mark at \$961,739.

An additional benefit to county residents is that the share of the total portion of out of home placement that is paid through the local tax levy has been reduced from about 70 percent in the 1990s to near 50 percent today. The "local cost" average in the state is about 70 percent.

The leap of faith is paying off.

Thanks for believing in us, director says

I cannot give enough praise to the Board for believing in the direction of our efforts to address the alarming growth of the number of our children in out-of-home-placement by investing in a strategy that added targeted resources into what was at that time a resource poor system as it related to direct family supports.

These new positions and additional positions added to our agency over time have given staff from Social Services and Polk County Probation, who must place children out of their homes when necessary, some additional critical supports in dealing with overwhelming caseload sizes.

When the Board provided the go ahead to this project, then Administrative Assistant Bill Green met the challenge and did a great job finding, hiring and training talented people to fill the

approved "family based services" positions and we were quickly on our way to providing critical new supports for families where children were currently at risk of out-of-home placement.

The job is ongoing

After the project was up and running, the reins were turned over to Social Services Supervisor Karen Warmack, who has done a super job in continuing to move services forward and has done extremely well in planning for the use of resources and needed service delivery.

The success of this venture cannot, from my perspective, be questioned but working relationships with invested partners in the ongoing development of a system to better serve our families is where things have significantly progressed over time. This mission continues to require committed partnerships and what I believe is

a shared common goal of better and more effective services.

Many of our partners have committed time and dollars to develop services that provide positive outcomes that we are experiencing. Social Services is only one part of a system that can help ensure successful outcomes for our children and families and we are very fortunate to have committed partnerships with many agencies.

The results of the Board's commitment have not only reflected in a huge cost reduction to local taxpayers in dollars spent for out-of-home placement but has also allowed progress in developing a system of care that better serves the needs of children and families. — **Kent Johnson, director, Polk County Social Services**

Test plots show 2 new herbicides dramatically improve thistle control

Thistle is a tough plant to eliminate.

One popular technique of trying to control thistle is to simply mow it down. But guess what that does? It makes the root system go horizontal.

The root system can spread up to 20 feet in one growing season and will send up new stems along the way. At the end of one growing season the mowed areas have a higher density of thistle than the un-mowed areas.

If you were a thistle farmer, the mowing method would be a great way to increase your yield of thistle plants.

Another common method is the use of the herbicide called Curtail. Recent test plot results, which were completed in the Polk County area, have shown that Curtail applied at one quart per acre gave a visual reduction of 65 to 76 percent.

Dramatic reduction

Those are low percentages when compared to two new herbicides called Forefront and Milestone that became available in 2006. Test plots done in the Polk County area targeting thistle control have shown that the use of either of these two herbicides can dramatically reduce a thistle population.

Forefront, at two pints per acre, gave a visual reduction of thistle from 91 to 99 percent. Milestone, at five ounce per acre, gave a visual reduction from 95 to 99 percent.

Because of these positive results of the herbicide comparison studies, Polk County has decided to replace Curtail with Milestone for the 2007 roadside spraying program.

Roadside spraying

There are over 1,250 miles of county and state roadways in Polk County. On the average, about 325 miles of roadways are sprayed yearly for the purpose of controlling noxious weeds.

When noxious weeds are located near a field edge or ditch back slope adjacent to a field crop, it most often cannot be sprayed due to the likelihood of crop damage. The repercussions of crop damage could result in the spray truck operator and his

employer being held liable.

A considerable amount of farming practices have encroached into the county and state Right of Ways with their field crops. Any type of cultivation and/or crops in the right of way is not permitted.

This makes it difficult for weed control. It also destroys the grass cover and fills in the ditch bottom with soil thereby decreasing the efficiency of the roadway ditch.

Timing is crucial

Polk County has a yearly budget for purchasing herbicides and labor hours for proper application of the herbicides. Applying herbicide treatments to the noxious weeds at the right time is critical for maximum absorption.

Spraying can be done all summer long, but if the weeds do not absorb the herbicide, the result is wasted money and time. Wind, temperature, humidity and rain also need to be within a certain tolerance to apply the herbicides.

Polk County's plan for 2007 is to have two commercial spray type trucks spraying simultaneously to cover the most ground at the time when thistle is the most vulnerable (pre-bud stage to early flowering stages of development) to achieve the best results

C.R.P.

From 2004 to 2006, approximately 3,641.40 acres of conservation reserve program (CRP) lands were found to be in non-compliance as a result of major weed infestations.

A payment reduction of \$18 per acre resulted in \$65,545.20 being withheld from the CRP participants by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). In December of 2006, the Minnesota State FSA established a new minimum payment reduction of \$30 per acre for noncompliance as a result of non-control of weeds on CRP lands. The \$30 per acre minimum payment reduction will also be assessed when noxious weeds have not been controlled prior to going to seed. — **Jody Beauchane, Polk County Ag and Drainage Inspector**

Extension Agent Ray Bisek is in Polk County 1 day a week

County Extension educator Ray Bisek is working one day a week in Polk County during 2007 as part of an arrangement that will allow county Extension educator Jim Stordahl to voluntarily reduce his time by one day per week.

Bisek, who grew up in Mahnomon County, earned a B.S. degree in agriculture education in 1981 and a masters degree in plant and soil sciences in 1985, both at the University of Minnesota.

Farm Info Line

He is a specialist in farm business management and grain drying and is also one of two extension agents in the state who works with the toll-free Farm Information Line service that provides information for farmers on topics of interest.

Bisek also has experience in soil fertility and agronomic consulting, animal science (beef, dairy, sheep, swine and equine), home horticulture, urban forestry, natural resources and resource conservation.

His work experience includes teaching agriculture at Mahnomon High School (1981-82), serving as the soil and water district manager at Mahnomon (1986-88), teaching adult farm management program at Halstad (1988-89) and serving as a county and regional extension educator in Norman County on Mondays and Tuesdays and in Mahnomon County on Wednesdays and Thursdays.

McIntosh office

In Polk County on Fridays, Bisek works from the Extension Office in the McIntosh Municipal Building (218-563-2465).

The one-year arrangement is a part of the recently approved memorandum of agreement between the University of Minnesota and Polk County that outlines how extension programming will be provided. Normally, both Stordahl and Extension agent Russ Severson work in Polk County four days a week with Severson in Red Lake County and Stordahl in Clearwater County each for a day.

Snowplow/sanding trucks prove their worth

In past years, the half-inch of freezing rain that fell over most of Polk County on Feb. 21 would have created a nightmare in trying to get the ice off the roadways.

Not any more. We now have the three new snowplow/sanding trucks that were ordered last year. With the minimal amount of precipitation, we didn't have to use the until the Feb. 21 event when they really came in handy.

One truck is stationed in Fosston, one in Fertile and one in Crookston. These trucks have allowed us to cut down on the

amount of miles each plow is responsible for maintaining from 75 centerline miles, or 150 total miles, to 55 centerline miles.

Our policy is to sand and salt all intersections, curves and hills. This year we ordered an extra 200 tons of salt, which allowed us to salt all areas that were in need of it.

Two new salt sheds are to be constructed before next winter. Located near Trail and in Fosston, these sheds will allow the trucks in the east half of the county to load and apply salt more efficiently.

We also have intentions of cooperating with the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the City of Crookston to build a large salt dome that can hold large quantities of sand and salt. This will allow us to stockpile salt in case of an emergency or bad winter.

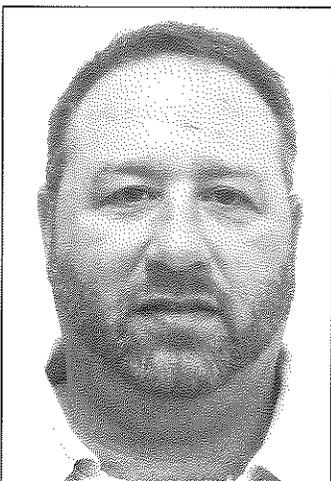
When coming upon a snowplow, slow down and give it room. The operators have enough to worry about with just trying to plow snow, apply sand and salt and stay on the road. — **Richard Sanders, Polk County highway engineer**

Wright and Swanson join Planning Commission

Don Wright and Steve Swanson, both of the Maple Lake area, joined the Polk County Planning Commission in January.

The representative from the First Commissioner District, Wright succeeds Clayton Engelstad, who retired at the end of 2006 after having served on both the Planning Commission and on the Board of Adjustment since 1991.

Swanson is the appointment



Steve Swanson

from the Maple Lake Improvement District. He succeeds Doug Thorson, who had been the district's representative from 1997 to 2000 and again from 2002 through 2006.

Wright has lived on Maple Lake since 1995 and is a member of the Godfrey Town Board. After growing up at Caledonia, N.D., he had a 36-year career in ground services management for a commercial airline carrier at Minot, N.D.

"After retiring," he says, "my wife, Jean, and I moved to the lake. My family has had property there since 1957."

Swanson, who grew up in Grand Forks but spent a lot of time as a youth at his parents' cabin on Maple Lake, has lived on the lake since 1995. "We bought land and built our home there in 1994-95. We have lived on the lake year around since then," he says. "My parents bought a cabin there in 1954."

He and his wife, Kristi, who teaches in Crookston, have three children: Ashley, 17; Branden, 13; and Lauren, 12.

Swanson operates his own public relations and print management business.

Other members of the Planning Commission are:

- **Earl Beiswenger**, Fisher, (representing Commissioner District 2);
- **Courtney Pulkrabek**, Crookston (District 3);
- **Kerry Winkleman**, Fosston (District 4);
- **Barb Hangsleben**, East Grand Forks (District 5);
- **Former Crookston Mayor Don Osborne** (representing the City of Crookston);
- **East Grand Forks Council President Dick Grassel** (representing East Grand Forks);
- **Roland Gagner**, Erskine (representing Union Lake Sarah Improvement District); and
- **Chuck Lariviere**, Crookston (representing Polk County townships).

The findings of the Planning & Zoning Commission are forwarded as recommendations to the County Board, which makes the final decision.

The Planning Commission members representing the five commissioner districts (Wright, Beiswenger, Pulkrabek, Winkleman and Hangsleben) also serve on the Board of Adjustment. This board makes the final decision on requests to vary from the county's zoning rules.

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



Don Wright

\$104,077 in gravel tax collections are all-time high

The Polk County Highway Department and 11 townships are sharing in the all-time high of \$104,077 in Aggregate Material Tax collected from gravel importers and operators in the county during 2005.

Commonly referred to as the "gravel tax," the money is meant to compensate local governmental units for damage done to their roads by the hauling of gravel.

By law, the tax is distributed 60 percent to the County Road & Bridge Fund (\$62,446) and 30 percent to the Township Road & Bridge Fund (\$31,223). The remaining 10 percent (\$10,408) is placed in the Reserve Fund for Pit Restoration.

Money in the Township Road & Bridge Fund is passed on to the individual townships on the basis of their percentage of the number of miles of roads

affected by the hauling.

\$31,223 to townships

For 2005, which is the latest year that totals are available, the \$31,223 that was collected as a result of hauling activity has been distributed to the townships in the following amounts:

Belgium, 4.0 miles, \$6,488; Brandt, 2.8 miles, \$4,460; Chester, 1.5 miles, \$2,433; Garden, 2.0 miles, \$3,244; Gully, 1.5 miles, \$2,433; Hill River, 3.5 miles, \$5,677; King, 1.0 miles, \$1,622; Liberty, 1.0 miles, \$1,622; and Onstad, 2.0 miles, \$3,244.

Special legislation

The ability to collect the tax, which was created by special legislation at the request of Polk and Norman counties when Bernie Lieder was the Polk County engineer, has been available to counties since 1980.

By 1986, 22 counties were using the tax as a way to help maintain roads. Currently, 28 counties and four individual townships collect the tax, which is determined at the rate of 10 cents per yard or 7 cents per short ton.

Access to records

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

Also at that time, the Polk County Board retained Dave Goosen, who had recently retired as the maintenance supervisor for the County Highway Department, to monitor activities at gravel pits and report to the auditor-treasurer.

Don Juvrud, who succeeded

Goosen as maintenance supervisor and has now also retired, monitored the extraction and hauling activities in years that followed.

Gravel tax collections in 1997 totaled only \$3,325. The next year, collections increased to \$78,035 and since then have ranged from the low of \$72,362 that was collected in 2004 to the high of the \$104,077 that was collected for 2005.

History of Gravel Tax Collections

1997	\$3,325
1998	\$78,035
1999	\$77,655
2000	\$90,678
2001	\$90,391
2002	\$73,975
2003	\$86,007
2004	\$72,362
2005	\$104,077

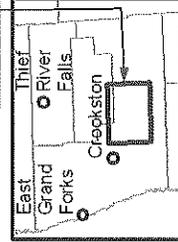
**Glacial Ridge
National Wildlife
Refuge**

**Polk County,
Minnesota**

Legend

-  County Boundary
-  Lake
-  Municipality
-  Refuge Boundary
-  The Nature Conservancy
-  US Fish & Wildlife Service
-  Minnesota Department of Natural Resource

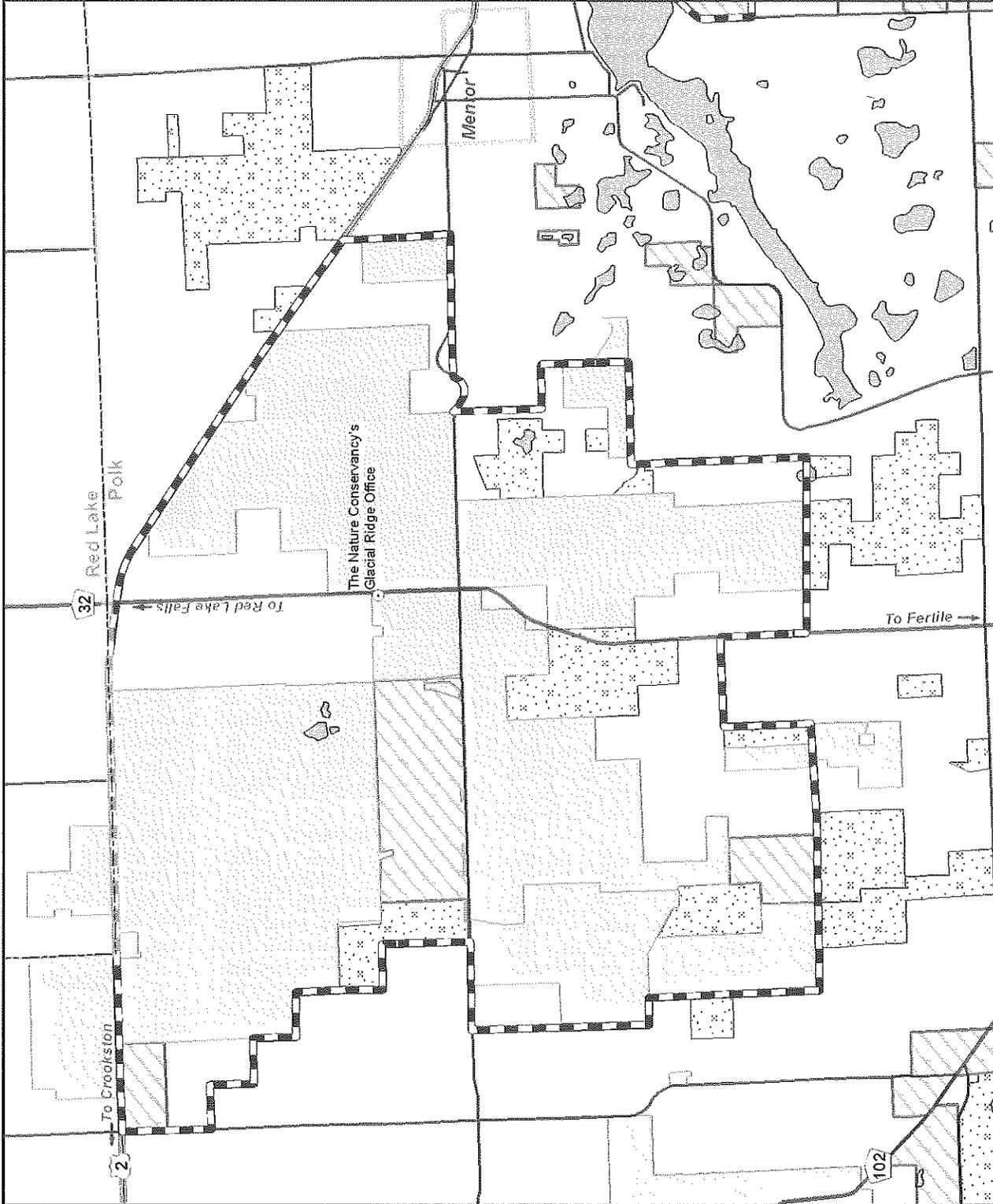
Detail Area



East Thief River Falls
Grand Forks
Crookston

0 0.5 1 Miles

The Nature Conservancy
Map created by The Nature Conservancy
Minnesota Area Office, 2007



Restoration now well underway

Glacial Ridge is protecting prairie & wetlands

In 2000, the Minnesota chapter of The Nature Conservancy purchased more than 24,000 acres in Polk County east of Crookston for the Glacial Ridge Project, which has become the largest prairie and wetland reconstruction project in U.S. history.

The project forms the heart of the 35,000-acre Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge that was established in October 2004.

The Conservancy and its partners are transforming a landscape of fields and ditches and giving the land a chance to heal itself. The project ultimately will protect more than 16,000 acres of native and restored tallgrass prairie and more than 8,000 acres of restored wetlands from wet meadows to open water marshes.

Because of its size and location, Glacial Ridge will serve as a hub connecting other natural areas, including 11 state wildlife management areas, two scientific and natural areas, three waterfowl production areas and the Conservancy's existing Pembina Trail Preserve.

Exceptional opportunity

Less than one percent of Minnesota's native prairie remains unplowed and unpaved and the few prairies that do survive often exist in isolated patches. Though 17,000 acres here have been altered by agriculture and gravel mining, the sheer size of the project and the small patches of native prairie that survive make Glacial Ridge an exceptional restoration opportunity.

Since June 2001 when restoration began, land stewards, partners and volunteers have restored 101 wetlands, seeded just over 9,000 acres of tallgrass prairie and filled in 55 miles of ditches.

Plans are to restore 25 additional wetlands and seed 1,300 acres of prairie in 2007 and, by the time the project is completed, fill in an additional 57 miles of private ditches and 14 miles of county ditch systems.

As the land is returned to health, plants

and animals are thriving. Glacial Ridge is becoming a significant stopover point for migrating birds, including sandhill cranes, northern harriers and marbled godwits. The preserve's prairie chicken population is also doing exceptionally well.

30-plus supporting partners

Glacial Ridge enjoys the support and active participation of more than 30 partners, including the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the University of Minnesota-Crookston (UMC) as well as other federal, state and local governments.

The Conservancy works closely with NRCS through the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), which is the main funding component for the Glacial Ridge Project. More than 12,000 acres have been enrolled and neighboring landowners have added to the project area by enrolling an additional 3,500 acres.

The Conservancy hopes to enroll more than 5,000 acres by the end of 2007. Glacial Ridge project manager Keith R. Mykleseth remarked, "We would not be where we are today without the WRP program."

Endowment pays taxes

The Conservancy pays full property taxes on the land it owns in Polk County. It also set up a \$2 million endowment fund with proceeds from agricultural land to pay for all property taxes associated with the Glacial Ridge National Wildlife Refuge. The interest that is generated will be enough to pay the difference, in perpetuity, between the USFWS' revenue sharing payments and the full property tax value.

The endowment will also pay all Polk County taxes not covered by the USFWS payments in lieu of taxes (PILT) when the refuge is wholly-owned by them. The conservation community has in the past and will continue to urge Congress to appropriate funds to compensate counties at the full property tax rate through PILT.

Glacial Ridge is becoming an integral part of neighboring communities, and enjoys the active support of local counties and the city of Crookston. The benefits of the restoration — ecological and hydrological improvements — are contributing to economic activities as well.

Surrounding agricultural lands are being enrolled into perpetual conservation easements for the benefit of farms and the surrounding communities. Local farmers are cultivating prairie plants and selling the seed for the restoration activities.

Clean water supply

Also, two wells on the property are enabling the City of Crookston to secure a clean water supply. "The Tallgrass Prairie and Wetland Restoration project is a great fit with Crookston's Minnesota Department of Health wellhead protection planning process," according to Mykleseth.

The potential for nature-based tourism is also providing new growth areas for the local economy. The Conservancy and USFWS have four prairie chicken blinds that are set up each spring. The Crookston Chamber of Commerce sets up reservations for persons to view the birds. The blinds have attracted visitors from all over the United States, including Nebraska, Texas and Florida.

Several area schools visit Glacial Ridge annually. One of the major youth events — Earth Day — is organized by the NRCS with help from the Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited and USFWS. In addition, students from Red Lake Falls have been conducting science classes at Glacial Ridge for the past four years and plan to continue this into the future.

The Glacial Ridge Project presents the Conservancy and its partners with an unequalled opportunity to conserve and restore a unique landscape, not only benefiting wildlife habitat but also contributing to our community.

Veterans benefits in Polk County increased

Military veterans in Polk County received \$4,232,605 in benefits in the 12-month reporting period from October 2004 through September 2005.

Of that amount, according to the Minnesota State Department of Veteran Affairs, \$4,228,000 came through the V.A. regional office for such things as compensation, pensions, education, vocational rehabilitation and insurance.

Another \$4,605 was paid based on income guidelines for such items as glasses, dental work and subsistence.

The total benefits amounts are increases over the previous year when Polk County veterans received a total of \$3,869,652.

Polk County had 2,794 veterans in 2006, a decrease from the 2,873 that were known in

2005.

In addition to the benefit amounts that were paid above, veterans also received medical care from V.A. medical centers. The value of those services, which was not reported, was extensive, according to Les Goodwin, who is the Polk County veterans service officer. Marilyn Juvrud is his assistant.

Leake named to board of Pembina Trail RC&D

Ellen Leake, Crookston, has been appointed as a member at-large on the Board of Directors of the Pembina Trail Resource Conservation & Development Commission representing Polk County. She succeeds Charles Schulstad, Erskine.

New electronic voting equipment worked well

The new electronic voting equipment that was used in last fall's Primary and General Elections performed well, according to Polk County Auditor-Treasurer Gerald Amiot.

"The precinct counters that actually counted the ballots worked very well. We did, however, have 3 out of the 45 Auto Mark assisted voting machines that acted up a bit in the General Election. We had to send two of them back to the company for repair and they have since been returned.

Extremely satisfied

"All in all, I think we were extremely satisfied with the equipment and the lack of

problems. And, of course, with the early hour that we had all votes counted and the reporting done. We were all done by 10 o'clock in the Primary and by 11:45 for the General. In the past, we've regularly gone to two or three in the morning.

Some long nights

"And, in the old days when we were still using paper ballots, there were times when we'd have to wait until seven or eight o'clock the next morning before everything was counted," Amiot relates.

"I have the utmost confidence in the new equipment. In the post-election review that was required, you had to have an accuracy rate that was within

one-half of one percent and we were right on. The only issue to come up was in Ward 4 in East Grand Forks, which shares equipment with Ward 3. There, Ward 4 came up with two Ward 3 ballots.

Caught in recount

"That wasn't caught until we did the recount for the District 595 school referendum. The recount ended up with a net change of two votes.

"A pencil had been used in marking two of the ballots and the machine had not picked up the pencil marks. The machine will count pencil marks but not a very light pencil. We provide blue or black ball-point pens to the polling places and that is

what we recommend that voters use," Amiot says.

Experience in hand

"We now have both the Primary and the General of '06 behind us and that set of elections, I believe, proves that the precinct counters worked very well and I think the company is trying to improve the Auto Marks."

Having a problem with the Auto Marks, Amiot says, "wasn't critical because voters could still get assistance from the election judges or from someone that they wanted to assist them, so, it wasn't the end of the world if there was a problem."

Johanneck becomes new zoning administrator

New Polk County zoning administrator Dan Johanneck, who joined the County Environmental Services Department on March 5, has extensive experience in planning and zoning issues as well as public administration.

"I'm really excited about coming to Polk County and being back in northwestern Minnesota where we have family and friends," he says of the new position.

With the construction season fast approaching, Johanneck's first days on the job were spent at a state training conference getting his certifications up to date and in becoming familiar with Polk County ordinances. He succeeds Nancy Ellis, who left the



Dan Johanneck

position in July 2006 to become a planner for the City of East Grand Forks through the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks

Metropolitan Planning Organization.

A native of Red Lake Falls, Johanneck had recently been the development specialist/senior business analyst for Contractors Property Developers Co., Roseville, Minn. In those positions for the past three and a half years, he researched and worked with city, county and township codes and ordinances that dealt with residential development and served as a project manager on selected projects. Prior that work, he had been the city administrator or clerk treasurer for the cities of Red Lake Falls, Ada and Bayport, Minn., and also had been a senior pricing analyst for Arctic Cat in Thief River Falls.

Following his graduation from Lafayette High School in Red Lake Falls in 1984, Johanneck studied computer science at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., for a year and a half before transferring to the University of North Dakota where he earned a bachelor of business and public administration degree in 1989.

He and his wife, Jodi, who grew up in Grand Forks, have three children. They are moving to Polk County from Somerset, Wis. Johanneck has been a member of the Jaycees, Knights of Columbus and, while in Red Lake Falls, was a member of the volunteer ambulance service as a registered emergency medical technician (EMT).

Report Welfare Fraud

People who give false information or withhold facts in order to receive Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) aid, food stamps, general assistance, childcare or medical assistance may be guilty of fraud.

You may wish to report: Persons not reporting income; Incorrect reporting of persons living in the home; Misuse of food stamps or Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards; Falsifying of information on application; Unreported property and assets; Persons receiving dual benefits (from more than one state)

What you should report: **Who** — The name of the person; **What** — Fraud suspected; **When** — Date of occurrence; **Where** — Address of person

Call the Polk County Sheriff's Office:
1-218-281-0431 (Ext. 2249)
 or the toll free
Minnesota Welfare Fraud Hotline
1-800-627-9977
 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

You may remain anonymous



NW Council

Continued from Page 4

County Community Corrections, which includes Norman, Polk and Red Lake counties, is the administrative entity for the council.

Web site informs

The council's web site (www.councilof-collaboratives.org/html/about_us.cfm) lists activities, membership, resource links, and information about programs, grant and funding opportunities and topical issues.

An Emergency Response Crisis Management (ERMC) grant for \$399,627 that was awarded to the council in September is supporting an 18-month program designed to improve the ability to develop and sustain a full network of prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery activities inclusive of multiple hazards in schools and communities.

In the program, 20 school districts, special education districts, public health agencies, mental health agencies, law enforcement, homeland security, county emergency operations, county social services and community action organizations in the five counties are developing plans for emergency preparedness.

The Stephen-Argyle School District is serving as the fiscal host on behalf of the grant partners.

Initiative underway

Also in progress is a six-year, \$7.5 million "Our Children Succeed Initiative" to develop a comprehensive spectrum of mental health and other necessary services which are organized into a coordinated network to meet the multiple and changing needs of children and their families. This grant incorporates the participation of the full membership of the Northwest Minnesota Council of Collaboratives.

Polk County, the fiscal host for the grant, is providing support for activities slated for six counties — Kittson, Norman, Mahnomon, Marshall, Polk and Red Lake — in northwestern Minnesota. The Northwestern Mental Health Center in Crookston is the programmatic host for this grant.

Amiot is named 'auditor of the year' in Minnesota

Polk County Auditor-Treasurer Gerald Amiot was named the "auditor of the year" by the Minnesota Association of County Officials (MACO) at the organization's winter conference in Minneapolis on Jan. 11.

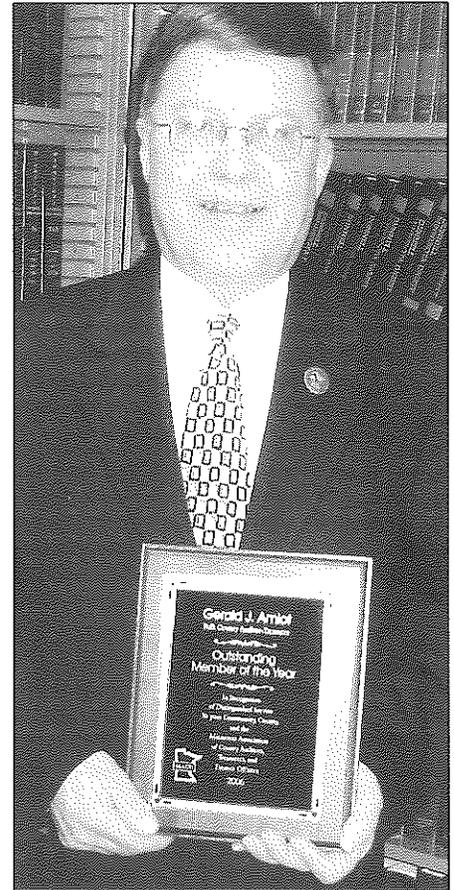
"They kept it a surprise. I don't know how they did it, but they did," Amiot says of county staff, family and fellow auditors and auditor-treasurers from around the state who were involved in choosing him for the award in a nomination process that was conducted several weeks ahead of the conference. "My whole family, except for nieces and nephews, was there, which made it extra special for me."

Family members at the banquet included his father, Patrick, who is almost 89, his brothers, Tom and Ron, and sister, Joyce, and all of their spouses. County employees at the conference included Laurie Anderson from the Auditor-Treasurer's office staff, County Recorder Michelle Cote and County Assessor Rob Wagner.

In addition to county auditors and auditor-treasurers from all of the state's 87 counties, the MACO organization, which was formed in 1960 with the name of Better County Government, Inc., initially included registers of deeds, probate judges, clerks of district court, welfare department directors, county recorders and county assessors. The membership now includes county auditors, auditor-treasurers, finance directors and recorders.

A native of the Gentilly area, where he grew up on his family's farm, Amiot took a job in 1963 as a clerk at the J. C. Penney store in Crookston. He was hired as a bookkeeper in the Polk County Highway Department in 1967 and transferred to the Auditor's Office two years later. He became the county auditor on Aug. 20, 1986 and, following the retirement of County Treasurer Florence Rood, became auditor-treasurer on Sept. 16, 1993.

Amiot has been a member of MACO's Ditch Committee for 15 years and its chairman for the past 12 years. He also serves on the state organization's Legislative and



Gerald Amiot

License Center committees and has served as district chairman of the Northwest Minnesota County Auditors.

Locally, Amiot is a member of the Crookston Noon Day Lions Club, Polk County Historical Society and of AFRAN (Association of French of the North), which sponsors Chautauqua, the French Festival of Old Crossing at Huot.

He is a former member of both the Gentilly and Crookston Jaycees and was active in Pioneer Days, now known as Ox Cart Days, serving both as its president and as co-chair of the parade.

Rongen becomes Polk County 4-H coordinator

Aaron Rongen, Fertile, became the Polk County Extension Service 4-H Program coordinator in October after serving in an interim role during the summer months.

Prior to joining Extension, Aaron worked at Bergeson Nursery at Fertile. His interest in horticulture led him to an exchange program in Australia where he learned the art of topi-

ary.

An alumnus of the Polk County 4-H Youth Development Program, Rongen was a very active member of the Fertile 4-H Club. Along with his 4-H project work, he served as a club officer, had committee leadership roles and helped with the club's community service projects. He also served as a Polk

County 4-H Ambassador, was a 4-H multi-county camp counselor, and was on the Polk County 4-H livestock judging team and the 4-H shooting sports/wildlife team.

After graduating from the 4-H program as a member, Aaron became a 4-H leader in Polk County and worked with the shooting sports program.

Construction season quickly approaching

Before you know it, the construction season will be upon us and the orange construction signs will start going up.

The map on the adjoining page shows the construction work planned for Polk County in 2007. Not only will there be county road projects but also township bridge replacements.

Red Lake County will be overlaying both its County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 49 and CSAH 6. To coincide with this work, we will be overlaying CSAH 6 from Red Lake County State Aid 10 to Polk County CSAH 75, and CSAH 49 from TH 32 to CSAH 12. These projects will be awarded by Red Lake County and will be completed by the end of the construction season.

Other work scheduled in Polk County includes:

CSAH 66 from CSAH 21 to the north county line will be aggregate-surfaced and strengthened. Due to limited construction funds for roadways, we will be unable to surface this stretch of roadway in one contract. This year's construction will include placing Geogrid under six inches of aggregate base. This will allow us to surface the roadway with bituminous in the next couple of years.

CSAH 8 from TH 2 to north limits of McIntosh will be reconstructed with curb and gutter, sidewalks, storm sewer, water main, sanitary sewer, aggregate base and bituminous surfacing. The City of McIntosh is participating in this project with their utilities cost. This project is the first step in constructing CSAH 8 from TH 2 to the north county line.

CSAH 13 from 2.25 miles north of CSAH 11 to County Road (CR) 252 will be grade-widened and overlaid with bituminous surfacing. This project is expected to be started in June and be completed by mid-September.

CR 210 from TH 2 and 0.75 miles south will be surfaced with bituminous. This will be designed to a 10-ton strength, which will allow the trucks going to the new grain terminal to haul legal loads and will decrease our cost of maintenance for this stretch of roadway.

Depending on how much funding is remaining after these projects, the following could also be undertaken:

- Reconstruction of **CSAH 17** between Business TH 2 and TH 2 at East Grand Forks.
- Overlaying **CSAH 1** from TH 32 in Fertile to CSAH 10.

We also anticipate replacing 10 township bridges with box culverts but this is reliant on how much bonding the legislature approves this year for bridge replacements.

If you have any questions concerning this year's construction program, please give our office a call at 218-281-3952 and talk with either Darin Carlstrom at ext. 2003 or me at ext. 2001. — **Richard Sanders, Polk County highway engineer**

Work on drainage systems provides long-term benefits

The 2007 maintenance season for the Polk County Drainage Systems is just around the corner. And if the county experiences the same type of summer and fall weather conditions as in 2006, conditions would be excellent to work on those systems.

The county has over 140 drainage systems which brings the total to over 810 miles of area to maintain. A majority of these systems have money in their accounts for the purpose of maintenance.

The Polk County Drainage Authority can, under its own motion, authorize a cleaning and repair to a drainage system. The drainage authority would prefer to operate on a repair by request system, therefore, a basic one-page petition is required to be completed and submitted to the county by the appropriate landowners to ask for a cleaning project to go forth.

Request for work

The petition is a formal request that maintenance work be done to a designated drainage system into which the requested group of landowners have paid assessments.

Some drainage systems have not been petitioned to be cleaned to original design grade for over 10 years. Low maintenance leads to poor drainage, less capacity and higher water elevations that back water into fields and over township roads when larger rain events occur.

Other common problems are steep back slopes, blocks, washouts and culvert failures.

Many times a drainage system will fill in with soil not from erosion of the drainage system but from years of it being blown in from nearby fields. Early assessment and repair of drainage problems results in a savings to the landowners. High seasonal rain events may cause more damage to a drainage system and/or crops in the areas that are not well maintained.

Forms available

Petitions are available at the Polk County Highway Department or they can be accessed on the Polk County Ag and Drainage web site at: www.co.polk.mn.us/highway/html/drainage.html.

Some systems require more work than others. For example a drainage system with a .02 grade for a long stretch will silt in more frequently than a drainage system with a .05 or greater grade.

Many Polk County drainage systems do not need expensive improvements; they just need to be petitioned to be cleaned to original grade and design.

Some Polk County drainage systems have been turned over to local watershed districts for the purpose of being re-designed and improved. This in turn has helped reduce drainage pressures on neighboring Polk County drainage systems that are located near the new, improved watershed project.

Farming in the right-of-way

One problem that is causing major harm and expense to our drainage systems is the farming practice of plowing and/or cultivating the top and edge of the back slopes in the right of way. Every drainage system has right of way for the purpose of maintenance.

The practice of ripping off the established grasses within 16.5 feet (one foot) of the back slope results in the back slope eroding into the bottom of the drainage system and forming a block. The block will need to be removed and also the back slope will need to be repaired.

Not only do the other landowners who pay assessments into the drainage system end up paying for the repair costs because of their neighbor's actions, they also experience poor drainage because of the situation. Farmers, landowners, neighbors and renters need to communicate to stop this destructive, unnecessary and costly farming practice.

Cattail problem

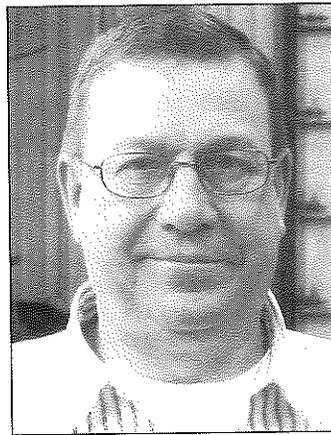
Cattail spraying is an ongoing practice in the drainage systems. Drainage systems in the east end of the county were sprayed in 2006. Drainage systems in the northwest part of the county will be sprayed for cattail control in 2007.

For cattail control to be effective, the root systems must be killed off. The best time to spray cattails is late summer to fall months when cattails are in the early to full bloom stage. This is the only time the plant is storing energy and therefore transporting the chemical down to its root system.

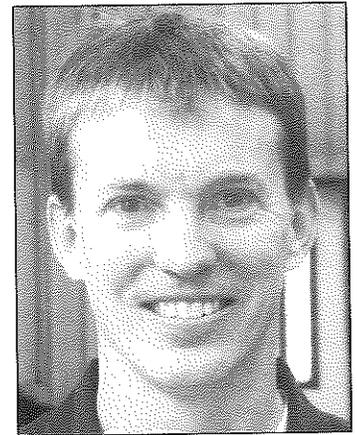
An application of a herbicide called Rodeo at 4.5 to 6 pints per acre is recommended for cattail control. Cattails can re-establish themselves again in that same area within one to four years depending on the amount of dormant seed located nearby. — **Jody Beauchane, Polk County Ag and Drainage Inspector**

Polk County Employee Anniversaries in 2007

Hire	Employee	Department-Position
40 Years		
6/12/67	Kathy Glass	Highway-accountant
7/24/67	Gerald Amiot	County Auditor-Treasurer
30 Years		
5/1/77	Don Fall	Sheriff-dispatcher
10/4/77	Donna LeFleur	Facilities-custodian
25 Years		
8/16/82	June Bergh	Public Health-RN II
10/1/82	Marilyn Juvrud	Veterans Service-admin asst II
20 years		
1/18/87	Catheryn Gutterud	Soc Svcs-Board member
1/5/87	Robert Wagner	County Assessor
2/17/87	Sheri Altepeter	County Public Health director
8/5/87	Brenda Johnson	Soc Svcs-case aide
11/1/87	Barb Erdman	Sheriff-deputy patrol
11/16/87	Roland Boucher	Solid Waste/Incinerator-landfill supervisor
12/14/87	Bonnie Swenson	Soc Svcs-accounting tech
15 Years		
1/2/92	Cynthia Ross	Soc Svcs-social worker
2/3/92	Kathy Kelly	Soc Svcs-case aide
4/1/92	Linda Hanson	Public Health-RN supervisor
6/15/92	Julie Baumann	Solid Waste/Incinerator-sec/accountant
6/29/92	Denise Hammer	Soc. Svcs.-social worker
9/18/92	Randy Lee	Sheriff-deputy patrol
10/20/92	Caryl Forseth	Soc Svcs-financial assistance specialist
10 Years		
2/1/97	Lisa Wiersma	Sheriff-admin asst
3/3/97	Linda Emery	Soc Svcs-social worker
3/7/97	Marlys Demarias	Soc Svcs-accounting tech
3/24/97	Jaclyn Jeffrey	Soc Svcs-social worker
5/1/97	Steve Carlson	Assessor-appraiser/tax officer IV
5/19/97	Emma Tosh	Soc Svcs-child support officer
6/23/97	Joann Munter	Public Health-clerk typist/cash II
11/3/97	Karen Barnes-Moulds	Soc Svcs-social worker
11/18/97	Elizabeth Miller	Soc Svcs-financial worker
12/1/97	Allyson Cwikla	Soc Svcs-CPS
5 Years		
1/1/02	Jacolyn Erickson	Sheriff-dispatcher
1/7/02	Tangee Bouvette	Coordinator-human resource director
1/7/02	Nathan Rasch	Sheriff-deputy patrol
2/1/02	Paula Waters	Soc Svcs-Board member
6/17/02	Kathleen Colley	Soc Svcs-social worker/MSW
7/1/02	Holly Hanson	Soc Svcs-social worker/CPS
7/1/02	Sheila Razmyslowski	Soc Svcs-financial worker
7/8/02	Darin Kelly	Highway-engineering tech IIB
8/1/02	Kelly Piker	Soc Svcs-social worker
8/19/02	Laurie Holtman	Soc Svcs-family based service provider
8/20/02	Doreen Narlock	Public Health-RN II
9/11/02	Rachel Kuchan	Soc Svcs-financial worker
11/12/02	Juliana Nelson	Soc Svcs-social worker
12/2/02	Victoria Ramirez	Soc Svcs-social worker
12/6/02	Chad Strom	Solid Waste/Incinerator-mech maintenance tech



Jerry Kovar



Randy Huot

Juvrud completes highway career

Kovar heads road maintenance; Huot becomes shop foreman

Jerry Kovar, a 31-year veteran of the Polk County Highway Department, has succeeded the retiring Don Juvrud as road maintenance superintendent.

In a related follow-up action, Randy Huot, who has been with the county since 1994 as a preventative maintenance technician in the equipment division, has succeeded Kovar. Kovar had been the shop foreman.

Juvrud remembers well the winter of 1996-97. "We had a lot of snow and cold that winter with the worst of it coming in an ice and snow storm late in the season. That was a real taxing time for us," he recalls.

A county employee for more than 37 years, Juvrud officially retired on Dec. 31. He had started with the Highway Department as an engineering tech in 1969 and moved to the road maintenance division in 1979, working mainly in the Fisher area. He became the maintenance superintendent when Dave Goosen retired from that post in 1997.

Juvrud and his wife, Marilyn, who have three grown children, plan to spend time visiting them and possibly doing other travel. Marilyn is the assistant to County Veterans Service Officer Les Goodwin.

Kovar, who grew up near East Grand Forks and now lives at rural Fisher, graduated from Sacred Heart High School in 1970 and from the auto technician program at the Thief River Falls Area Vocational Technical College in 1972. After working for LePier Tire Center,

Crookston, for three years, he joined the road maintenance division of the Highway Department in 1975.

"I operated a snowplow truck for 15 years and a motor-grader part-time for 15 years before moving to the preventive maintenance side in 1990," he says. Kovar became the shop foreman in 1994 and became the road maintenance superintendent on Dec. 1.

He and his wife, Renae, have three grown children. Katie, a graduate of the University of North Dakota, is a dietician in Enid, Okla.; Matthew, a mechanical engineering graduate of the University of North Dakota, and his wife, Heather and their two children, live in Randleman, N.C.; and Elizabeth, who graduated from St. Olaf College, Northfield, Minn., in January 2006, is a graduate student at Palmer College, Davenport, Iowa, where she is studying chiropractic.

Huot, who grew up near Red Lake Falls and graduated from high school there in 1985, completed the diesel mechanics program at the Moorhead Area Vocational Technical College. He was a diesel mechanic for Ryder Truck Rental in Fargo for eight years before taking a job with Falls Diesel in Thief River Falls for a short time and then joining the Highway Department in August 1994.

He and his wife, Mary, live near Dorothy and have four children: Corinna, 10; Abby, 8; Josie, 6, and Nathan, 3.

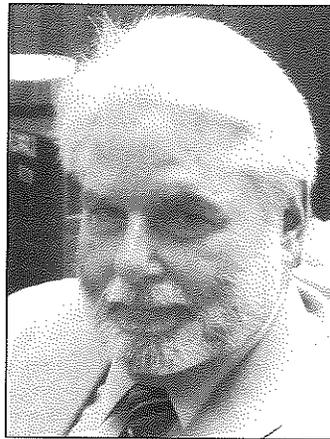
Judd joins County Attorney staff

Joe E. Judd, who had been a prosecutor in Faribault and Todd counties in Minnesota for the past 14 years, has joined the Polk County Attorney's Office as an assistant county attorney.

He succeeds Tracey Knutson, who after having worked in the office for the past three years has taken a position in private practice.

A native of Williston, N.D., where he graduated from high school in 1973, Judd worked as a police officer there until a knee injury first sustained in high school sports forced him to make a career change.

Wanting to stay in the criminal justice area, he then earned a degree from Moorhead State University as a legal assistant in



Joe E. Judd

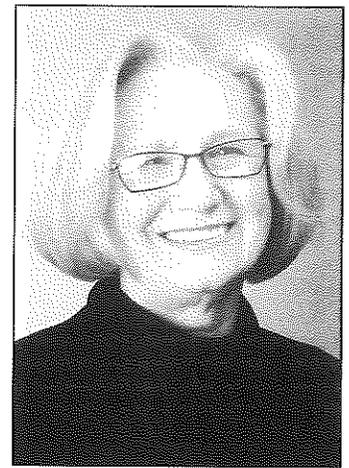
1986. And after working for a prosecutor at Wahpeton, N.D., for a couple of years, he went to law school at the University of

North Dakota graduating in 1991.

Judd served as an assistant county attorney in Faribault County for five years and then in Todd County for over eight years before leaving that position late last year.

"I had corresponded with Greg (Widseth, Polk County attorney) as a part of work on a case and had come to respect him and his philosophy in dealing with crime and criminals," he says.

"So, when I learned that there was an opening in Polk County, I went after it. Including the police work that I have done, I've been on the 'good guys' side of the criminal justice system for 27 years."



Susan Mills

Mills named to state judge selection body

Susan Mills, Crookston, is one of 22 persons who has been appointed by the Minnesota State Supreme Court to serve on its Commission on Judicial Selection.

Mills, who has been executive director of the Tri-County Community Corrections agency since 1985, is the non-attorney representative from the 9th Judicial District.

The commission solicits judicial candidates, evaluates applicants and recommends from three to five finalists to the governor for District Court and Workers Compensation Court of Appeals vacancies that occur during the term of a judge. The commission appointments are for four-year terms, from 2007 through 2010.

Consisting of 49 members — 27 appointed by the governor and 22 by the Supreme Court, the commission includes an attorney and a non-attorney from each of the 10 judicial districts in the state plus an at-large attorney and an at-large non-attorney.

The attorney appointment from the 9th Judicial District is Roger C. Malm, Hallock. He has been the Kittson County attorney since 1994.

Recovery plant's turbine generator soon to go online

The Polk County Solid Waste Resource Recovery Plant in Fosston has installed a steam driven turbine generator to produce renewable energy from excess steam and reduce its reliance on electricity produced by conventional fossil fuel (coal) fired power plants.

Renewable energy is a term applied to energy produced from biomass, wind, hydro, solar and biogas sources thus reducing the nation's dependence on fossil fuels including foreign oil.

The federal government and the State of Minnesota has established that municipal solid waste qualifies as biomass and therefore the energy produced at the incinerator is considered to be renewable energy.

Minnesota is moving forward with a Renewable Energy Standard Bill which requires 25 percent of electricity produced by electric utilities to be derived from wind energy by 2025. An additional five percent must come from other renewable sources by 2020.

Grant dollars used

The Office of Environmental Assistance (now MPCA) is allowing Polk County to use available grant dollars to provide funding for up to 50 percent of the total capital costs of the project estimated at \$750,000.

Minnkota Power Cooperative and the Northern Municipal Power Agency

(NMPA) are committed to supporting renewable energy. Since the electricity that Polk will produce qualifies as renewable, Minnkota, as agent for NMPA, has agreed to pay a premium (\$0.04 per kW) to Polk for all of the electricity produced with the turbine generator. With the help of the grant (approximately \$375,000) and the favorable energy rate, the estimated savings will result in a five to six-year payback for Polk County.

3 steam customers

The Resource Recovery Plant currently has three steam customers who require a varying amount of steam usage throughout the week depending on their production schedules. Because of the varying steam demands excess steam is not always available. As a result, the generator will not be operational all of the time and will only offset a portion of the total electrical requirements for the plant.

The turbine generator is currently in the start up mode and is expected to be online sometime this month (March).

This unit will not only produce renewable energy and provide long-term electrical savings, but will act as a backup to protect the plant in the event there is a total loss of incoming power or one or more of the current steam customers elect to reduce or eliminate steam now furnished by the plant. — **Bill Wilson, facilities manager, Polk County Solid Waste**

Was organized in the fall of 1998

Polk County Posse is an all volunteer group

The Polk County Sheriff's Mounted Posse has just completed its eighth year of service to Polk County and the surrounding area.

First organized in the fall of 1998 by Sheriff Doug Qualley, the posse has logged over 14,663 hours of volunteer service, including 2,428.25 hours in 2006.

Now under the direction of Sheriff Mark LeTexier, the posse has 24 members. The roster has been as high as 27 and has averaged about 25 active members.

All volunteer group

Posse members receive no pay for the time they serve either in Polk County or at events outside of the county. They furnish their own horses, tactical gear, four-wheelers, trailers, and vehicles to pull the trailers. Only when the sheriff activates the posse for an emergency "call-out" is there any reimbursement for their mileage.

The Sheriff's Office provides training in self-defense, woods search and rescue, use of mace, NIMS and other skills. Along with that training, the sheriff requires all members to log 20 hours of ride time with a deputy sheriff.

Special deputies

As sworn special deputies, posse members are required to attend and maintain first aid/CPR certification. All posse members and their horses are required to attend a two-day Posse State Training Certification Course.

Ground support members are also required to attend the state training. Members are taught search and rescue techniques along with crowd control on horseback. Both the members



The Polk County Sheriff's Mounted Posse

and their horses must be certified to do searches, perform security tasks and to ride in public.

The posse organizes several mock search and rescue trainings during the year including one in late December. All members are required to attend 75 percent of the meetings and training sessions held during the year. There is a minimum of 19 meetings a year.

Over the years, the Sheriff's Posse has been called in to do a variety of tasks. While search and rescue is what they love and are trained the most in, they have also assisted in crime scene security, traffic control, crowd security and other tasks that assist the sheriff.

Regular events

Events at which they are regularly seen include the Polk County Fair, Catfish Days, The Frosty Bobber, Heritage Days, Ox Cart Days, the National Night Out in both Crookston and Fosston, and the Extreme

Faith Event in Fosston.

"What the public doesn't often see," according to Curt Knutson, captain of the posse, "are the nights that the posse helps the Sheriff's Office with crime scene security, at accidents and the hours that are spent searching for missing persons. The riders go where four-wheelers and walkers cannot go. And they cover those areas more effectively on horseback."

Wider search width

The effective search width on horseback can be up to seven times wider than on foot because of the height that they have when on horseback, he says. "And posse members have an advantage over four-wheel operators in that, if the missing person is still alive, they hear when persons call out to them while still covering a lot of ground."

In New York City where there has been a resurgence of mounted police, it has been

determined that a mounted police officer is 15 times more effective than one on foot in crowd control. They also burn less gas than a car.

Dedicated group

"I have never been part of a group of people who are more dedicated to serve," Knutson says of the posse. "Members will show up whenever the sheriff calls, do whatever he asks at anytime of the day and in all weather; and they will do it for absolutely no pay. Just to serve. That is very rare in this day and age and I am proud to be part of it. I am humbled to be part of it."

Persons interested in being part of this group of volunteers, can call Knutson at 218-281-2604 for an application. The posse accepts donations to help defray the cost of purchasing new or replacing old equipment. Checks should be made payable to the: Polk County Sheriff's Mounted Posse.

County Board Meeting Times

8:30 a.m. on 1st Tuesday
1:20 p.m. on 3rd Tuesday
8:30 a.m. on 4th Tuesday

Polk County Commissioners

Dist. 1 — Jerry Jacobson
Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell
Dist. 3 — Bill Montague, vice chair

Dist. 4 — Warren Affeldt, chair
Dist. 5 — Don Diedrich

All meetings are open to the public