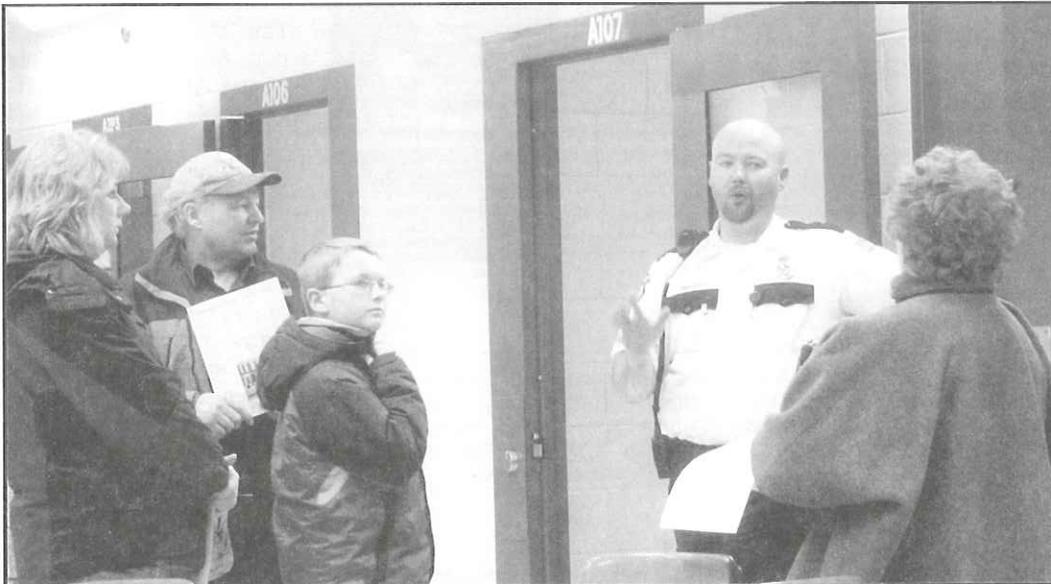


Polk County Newsletter

Spring 2008



Tour guide — Andrew Larson, jail administrator at the new Northwest Regional Corrections Center, briefed Ron and Sharon Weiss and

their son, Matthew, 10, of Red Lake Falls, during the open house event at the new jail. Weiss, a Red Lake County commissioner and member

of the Regional Corrections Board, brought members of his family to see the new detention facility.

4,000 tour new jail & justice center

Despite the cold temperatures and extremely high winds that severely reduced visibility on the second day of the formal dedication and public open house events for the new Polk County Justice Center and Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail, almost 4,000 people have been able to tour the facility.

The largest crowd visited the new facility on Saturday, Feb. 16, when Russell A. Anderson, chief justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court, was the dedication program speaker.

"Except for the weather problem on the second day, we had a really good opening," Susan Mills, executive director of Tri-County Community Corrections, the organization that is operating the new jail, says.

"We had a really nice crowd come through on Saturday...

probably more than 2,000 people including the more than 350 who crowded lobby areas for the dedication program.

Event went well

Because of the poor travel conditions on Sunday (Feb. 17) visitors that day were almost all from the immediate Crookston area. "But, all in all, the opening went really well. A lot of people got to see the new jail and to learn about how it will operate," Mills says.

For the 225-bed jail, the opening events likely marked the only time that members of the public will be able to walk through the detention facility "on their own terms."

Participating in the tours as an educational experience were some 700 students in grades 8-12 from schools in the three counties (Norman, Red Lake and Polk) that are served by

Tri-County Community Corrections.

Also touring the facilities in advance of the events of the open house weekend were some 400 county and Tri-County Community Corrections employees and their families. Several professional groups also toured the facilities.

Among the people most exposed to jail life were the 14 who participated in the "lock-in" event that was held the night of Saturday, Feb. 16.

That group included: Natalie Ostgaard, Crookston Daily Times; Destiny Harmoning, Red Lake Falls Gazette; Laura Hamilton and Karen Bingham, Fosston Radio Station KQ-107; Kendra Hartsell and Melissa Thompson, both of The Exponent, East Grand

See **OPENING**, Page 2

Bond sale will spur road work

What would have been a relatively slow road construction year for the Polk County Highway Department because of a shortage of state funding is now going to become just the opposite.

That's because the County Board, at the encouragement of County Engineer Rich Sanders, recently sold \$4 million in general obligation state aid highway bonds that will be used to advance three major projects from 2009 to this summer.

Those three projects are in addition to five other somewhat smaller projects that had been on the normal work schedule during 2008.

There were three convincing reasons for issuing the bonds, See **ROAD WORK**, Page 6

Courthouse is renamed

With the new Justice Center and the Corrections Center now operating in the new building, the County Board has formally renamed the "old courthouse" as the Polk County Government Center.

"The change became appropriate," Montague says, "since what we have known as the Courthouse for See **COURTHOUSE**, Page 2

Justice Center, Corrections Center opening

Continued from Page 1

Forks; Barb Novak, Oklee Herald; Kristen Bro-haugh, Norman County Social Services; and Pamela Paradis, Chelsey Paradis and Cindy Det-erman, all of Brooks.

Locked up, too

Other "lock-in" participants were Polk County commissioners Bill Montague, Jerry Jacobson and Don Diedrich.

In addition to Chief Justice Anderson, who had served as a District Court judge in Polk County prior to being named to the Supreme Court in 1998, several others participated in the dedication program.

They included: Montague, who as chair of the Polk County Board of Commissioners served as

the master of ceremonies and made remarks; Warren

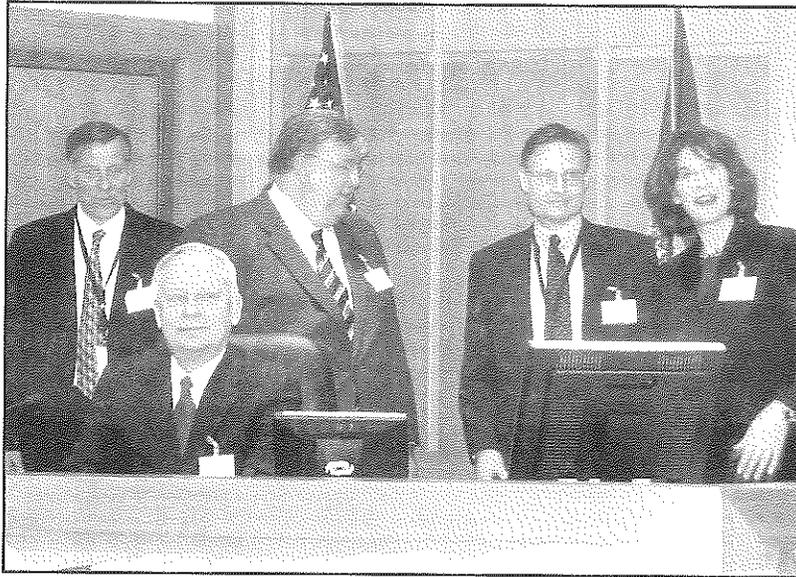
Strandell, chair of the Northwest Regional Correc-

tions Board; District Judge Tamara Yon; District Judge Jeffrey Remick; project architect Bruce Omtvedt, Klein McCarthy Architects, St. Louis Park, Minn.; and construction manager Gary Otterstad, Construction Analysis & Management, Inc., Brainerd, Minn.

Up and running

The District Court and Court Administration, Polk County Attorney's office, state public defenders and Tri-County Community Corrections Probation and Administration offices have been in their new quarters in the Justice Center since early to mid-January.

Inmates were moved to the Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail on March 12 after all state inspections and licensing requirements had been completed.



Behind the bench — Russell Anderson, chief justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court, tries out the seat on the bench in the new Polk County Justice Center while 9th District Chief Judge Jon Maturi,

Grand Rapids, and District Judges Jeffrey Remick, Kurt J. Marben and Tamara Yon, left to right, share thoughts. Justice Anderson was the dedication event speaker.

Courthouse name changed

Continued from Page 1

so many years now no longer houses any of the court system, thus the name of the building has been changed to the Polk County Government Center."

The move of the District Court system to the new Justice Center has freed up space on the upper floor of the "Government Center" that will allow all of the Crookston-based Social Services units to be located in that building.

Remodeling planned

Currently, the department's Income Maintenance and Child Support units are in the Professional Center Building. Some minor remodeling will be done beginning this summer prior to their moving into the Government Center.

The Social Service units are the only offices still in the Professional Center Building. The building was constructed 108 years ago as a hospital. It later served as St. Vincent's Nursing Home for many years before being converted into an office building in the 1980s. The two-story building was purchased by the County

in 1992 with the expectation that it would provide needed office space "for about seven years."

The offices of the Polk County Attorney, Tri-County Community Corrections' Probation Office and the state public defenders all moved from the Professional Center to quarters in the new Justice Center in January.

Not an option

"Major updates would have been needed to address fire and other code regulations to keep the Professional Center in use but, because of its age and general condition, that was never really an option," Montague says of factors involved with the decision to construct the new Justice Center.

It is expected that some of the Professional Center's building materials — such as the brick and woodwork — can be salvaged before it is taken down.

Some changes are also in the works at the former Northwest Regional Corrections & Polk County Law Enforcement Center building.

For one thing, that name has also been altered somewhat. The old 32-bed jail and the administrative

offices of Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC) are no longer housed in that building. Its new name has simply been reduced to the "Polk County Law Enforcement Center."

Sheriff gets space

The space that became available in the "Law Enforcement Center" when the jail and TCCC left building is being taken over by the Polk County Sheriff's Department, which has become squeezed for room.

The Sheriff Department's Dispatch Center and Emergency Operations units remain in the Law Enforcement Center building.

The jail cells themselves will remain in place at least partly because it would be very costly to remove them. Space in the cells will be used for such things as secure evidence storage and for the storage of equipment and supplies of the Sheriff's Department.

Also remaining in place in the building will be the Red River Juvenile Center. A part of Tri-County Community Corrections, it has its own sign, which won't change.

Annex for storage

Also located on the Law Enforcement Center campus is the Annex Building, which was constructed as the Sunnyrest Tuberculosis Sanitarium in the 1920s and later served as the home of the Glenmore Chemical Dependency Agency.

Up until the opening of the new Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail, the Annex had served as the 49-bed minimum-security detention facility for Tri-County Community Corrections.

The two-story Annex building will now be used for storage, including many of the paper records currently kept in lower levels of the Government Center. Other paper records will be moved to the Annex from the Professional Center.

Staying put

The offices of the Auditor-Treasurer, Assessor, Recorder, Veterans Service and Coordinator will all remain in the "Government Center." Some changes are in the works to make accessing those offices more customer friendly.

Montague: County Board's 2008 focus will be on state's finances, reshaping 'Government Center'

Bill Montague, Crookston, is serving as the chair of the Polk County Board in 2008.

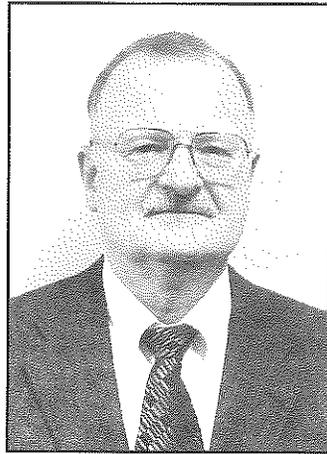
Montague, the commissioner from District 3, had been the vice chair last year. He succeeds Warren Affeldt (District 4), Fosston.

The new vice chair is District 1 Commissioner Jerry Jacobson, Fertile. The chair and vice chair positions rotate annually through the five county commissioners.

Social Service Board

Further re-organization of county government will occur in July when District 5 Commissioner Don Diedrich, rural Warren, is slated to succeed Jacobson as chair of the Polk County Social Services Board.

The Social Services Board, which meets monthly as a sep-



Bill Montague

arate body, includes the five county commissioners and two at-large members, Cathy Gutterud, Fosston, and Paula Waters, Crookston.

Major issues and concerns that the county is expecting to

have to deal with in 2008, according to Montague, include what might happen at the Legislature as it relates to the state's financial situation and the effects of a recession, if indeed the state is in a recession.

Good financial shape

By contrast, he says, Polk County continues to be in "very good shape financially."

Other issues will involve finding a new county planning & zoning administrator (following the departure of Dan Johanneck, who has taken a position with the City of Crookston).

Also an issue will be the reallocation of the space vacated by District Court and Court Administration on the upper floor and in making changes on the first floor of the Government Center to make it

more customer-friendly.

The new Polk County Justice Center, Montague says, is being paid for from funds that were accumulated over several years as the County Board prepared for a major building project of some kind. "There will be no debt associated with that facility," he says.

Paid first two years

And, Montague notes that Polk County property owners have already paid the first two years of debt service on the \$17.5 million in bonds sold to finance construction of the Corrections Center.

"The first two years of payment against the bond issue were included in the past two Property tax bills. Polk County taxes won't be going up because of the new jail," he says.

To compensate for damage from hauling

County, 10 townships share 'gravel tax' collections

The Polk County Highway Department and 10 townships are sharing \$98,377.49 in Aggregate Material Tax collected from gravel importers and operators in the county during 2006.

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.

Tax distribution

By law, the tax is distributed 60 percent to the County Road & Bridge Fund (\$59,026.50) and 30 percent to the Township Road & Bridge Fund (\$29,513.24). The remaining 10 percent (\$9,837.75) 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.

For 2006, which is the latest year that totals are available, the \$29,513.24 that was collected has been distributed to the townships in the following amounts:

Belgium, 4.0 miles, \$6,450.99; Brandt, 1.4 miles, \$2,257.84; Brislet, 1.5 miles, \$2,419.12; Chester, 1.5 miles, \$2,419.12; Garden, 2.0 miles, \$3,225.49; Gully, 1.5 miles, \$2,419.12; Helgeland, 1.4 miles, \$2,257.84; Hill River, 2.5 miles, \$4,031.86; Liberty, .5 miles, \$806.37; and Onstad, 2.0 miles, \$3,225.49.

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

statewide 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.

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.

Activities monitored

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 super-

visor and has now also retired, monitored the extraction and hauling activities in years that followed. Jerry Kovar has performed the duty since succeeding Juvrud as maintenance supervisor in January 2007.

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
2006	\$98,377

Passport News from the Polk County Recorder's Office

PASSPORT "CARDS": Beginning Feb. 1, 2008, U.S. citizens were able to apply for the new U.S. passport card.

The U.S. Department of State has developed the passport card as a more portable and less expensive alternative to the traditional passport book.

The passport card is a basic component of the PASS (People Access Security Service) system announced in January 2006 and will meet the specific requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) to secure and expedite travel. WHTI is the Administration's plan to implement a provision of the Intelligence Reform Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, which requires citizens of the United States, Canada and Bermuda to have a passport or other designated document that establishes the bearer's identity and nationality to enter or re-enter the United States from Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean.

Not good for air travel

Passport cards are NOT valid for air travel, they are valid ONLY for entering by land and sea.

The passport card will contain a vicinity-read radio frequency identification (RFID) chip. This chip will link the card to a stored record in secure government databases. There will be no personal information written to the RFID chip itself only a unique number that can be associated with a stored record will be transmitted.

The passport card is designed for the specific needs of border resident communities and is not a globally interoperable travel document as is the traditional passport

book. The passport book is the appropriate travel document for most international travel.

The cost of an adult passport card is \$45 and is valid for 10 years and \$35 for a child (15 and under) and is valid for 5 years. Passport cards may also be purchased in conjunction with the traditional passport book.

TWO-PARENT CONSENT LAW: As of Feb. 1, 2008, the passport Two-Parent Consent Law will be modified to encompass children under the age of 16.

This means that passport agents nationwide will require the consent of both parents from children under the age of 16. The previous standard applied only to children under the age of 14. If the second parent is not available to sign the appearing parent must present evidence of:

- Sole legal custody of the child (or)
- Notarized written consent of the other parent for the issuance of a passport (or)
- Written statement explaining why non-applying parent consent cannot be obtained.

FEE CHANGES: Effective Feb. 1, 2008, a new fee schedule for the U.S. Department of State has been implemented.

The execution fee, which is the portion retained by the acceptance agencies for processing the applications, has been reduced and the portion submitted to the Department of State has been increased. The overall increase to the customer is \$3.

QUESTIONS?? Please contact the Polk County Recorder's Office at 281-3464 for any passport questions. — **Michelle Cote, Polk County recorder**

For land/sea travel:

Identity documents must provide photo, name, date of birth

The United States ended the practice on Jan. 31, 2008, of accepting oral declarations of citizenship at the border for persons returning via land/sea travel from the Caribbean, Bermuda, Mexico and Canada.

U.S. citizens ages 19 and older must now present documentation that proves both identity and citizenship. Identification documents must include a photo, name and date of birth.

Children ages 18 and under are only required to present proof of citizenship, such as a birth certificate.

At a later date (to be determined), the implementation of the full requirements of the land and sea phase of Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) will begin.

The proposed rules will require most U.S. citizens entering the United States at sea or land ports of entry to have either a U.S. passport; a U.S. passport card; a trusted traveler card such as NEXUS, FAST, or SENTRI; a valid Merchant Mariner Document (MMD) when traveling in conjunction with official maritime business; or a valid U.S. Military identification card when traveling on official orders.

What's new in the Polk County License Center:

FAST Tracking speeds titles and driver's licenses

The Polk County License Center is pleased to offer a new service to our customers. We are now able to FAST Track titles and driver's licenses.

Fast Tracking is an expedited processing program that guarantees production of a driver's license, identification card or a title within 3 business days for a \$20 fee.

The motor vehicle parameters are that the customer must have all documents required for application. All documents

must be correct and complete and the \$20 fee collected.

- Applications that are processed online are continuing to be processed online
- Applications that create a suspense cannot be FAST Tracked unless the suspense can be eliminated with the proper documentation
- Applications involving a salvage title cannot be FAST Tracked
- Applications that clear a suspense can be FAST

Tracked. Customer must have all documents required for application.

The Driver's License parameters:

The parameters for FAST Tracking Driver's Licenses are that the application must be correct and complete and the \$20 fee collected. Applications that can be processed online are not eligible for FAST Track.

Please contact the Polk County License Center at 281-

5423 for additional information regarding the FAST Track Program. — **Michelle Cote, Polk County recorder**

Certified Clerks

License Center clerks Mary Kaye Erickson and Rebecca Halvorson have received "certified" status after successfully completing studies and exams in the Title, New to Fleet and Sales Tax areas of the Title and Registration Certification Program.

**Polk County
Attorney's Office**

Activity Summary
Jan.-Dec. 2007

**Felony & Gross
Misdemeanors**

Complaints prepared	350
Sentencing hearings	399
Committed to state prison	64
Probation violation hearings	506
Committed to state prison	34
Total committed to prison	98
Jury trials	10
Defendants convicted	7

Misdemeanors

Guilty pleas	130
Trials	8

Appeals

Polk County Attorney's Office	15
Minnesota Attorney's Gen. Office	0

Juvenile Cases

Delinquency petitions	63
Child in need of protective services (CHIPS) petitions	80
Delinquency hearings	436
EJJ probation	0
CHIPS hearings	334

County Welfare

Commitment petitions*	24
Commitment hearings	47
Guardianship petitions	18
Guardianship hearings	21
* Mentally ill and/or inebriate	

Child Support

Child support hearings	163
Paternity hearings	238

Maps Available

Polk County maps showing the street and avenue locations in the rural addressing system are available at the Highway Department and Auditor-Treasurer's Office.

The cost is \$2 each.

Sand/salt sheds, shop projects to aid County's winter road maintenance

In its ongoing effort to become more efficient with its winter maintenance of county roads, the Polk County Highway Department has developed new sand and salt shed facilities at both Trail and Fosston, constructed an addition to its shop at Fosston to provide additional storage space for the equipment that is based there, and has plans in the works to construct a new shop at Fertile.

"The projects at Trail and Fosston are making snowplowing, sanding and ice control more efficient in the eastern one-third of Polk County," County Engineer Rich Sanders says.

"The new, five-stall shop at Fertile will replace the current, three-bay shop that is located on the Polk County Fairgrounds."

New site

The new Fertile shop is to be built this summer on a three-acre site near the intersection of Polk County State Aid Highway 12 and Trunk Highway 32 at the north edge of Fertile. The land is being provided by the City of Fertile as a part of an exchange in which it will assume ownership of the current county shop.

The property exchange is beneficial to both government units, according to Sanders. For the county, which has outgrown the current 50x50-foot shop building and would have had to acquire additional property to expand its operations on the fairgrounds site, the new location will provide ample space for the new 50x100-foot shop that is in planning.

More efficient

"The Fertile shop has barely enough room now for the motorgrader and the two trucks that are stationed there," Sanders says. "The new shop will allow us to also store the loader and possi-

bly move another truck from Crookston to Fertile. This would reduce our travel time to the Mentor area. We are planning for occupancy of the new shop by October."

The combination of the cost of acquiring additional property at the fairgrounds and that of constructing an addition to current shop facility, Sanders says, would have been near the cost of a new, much larger facility "which will be in a location that is better suited for us."

Both the Trail and Fosston sand/salt sheds have a 300-cubic-yard capacity. They also serve Minnesota Department of Transportation's winter road maintenance efforts.

Share facilities

"We've developed a plan to share our salt facilities," Sanders says. "We can use material from some of MnDOT's facilities and they can use material from ours. We just keep track of who takes how much. This arrangement reduces the travel time previously lost by both the county and the state in having to go all the way back to their own salt facilities when another site was close by," he says.

The Fosston Shop addition provides room for one of the three new snowplow-sanding trucks that was purchased by the county last year when it began a program of improving its ice control efforts. The addition also provides space for the tractor-loader that is used to load the truck.

The other new snowplow-sanding trucks are located at Fertile and Crookston. Future plans include upgrading ice control facilities in the western part of the county. All of the improvements are being financed within current budgeting.

Success of using ash in roads being documented

Polk County has now completed three Demonstration Research Projects (DRP) utilizing ash from the incinerator in Fosston as a partial replacement of aggregate in asphalt road paving projects.

These projects substituted from 12 to 15 percent combustor ash for aggregate during asphalt mix production. As a conservative measure, no ash was included in the wear course of any of these projects.

No negative issues

The results of these projects show no negative environmental or worker safety issues and demonstrate improved structural performance and greater

flexibility from the ash-amended asphalt as compared to conventional asphalt.

In total the three projects have consumed over 3,300 tons of waste combustor ash and saved valuable landfill space.

The incinerator generates over 6,000 tons of ash each year. Economically, these projects show that ash-amended asphalt is competitive in cost to conventional asphalt on a per ton basis.

Based on these results, Polk County has submitted an application to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for issuance of a Case-Specific Beneficial Use

Determination (CSBUD) that would allow Polk to perform future similar projects without prior MPCA review and approval.

However, concerns from MPCA Air Quality Division due to a slight increase in stack emissions of mercury when adding ash into the asphalt plant has delayed approval of this request.

3rd project in '07

The third DRP CSAH 13 was completed in fall of 2007 and included ash in the non-wear course of a 6.2-mile asphalt road overlay project managed by the Polk County Highway Department. The primary goal

of this DRP was to perform another stack test on the hot mix asphalt plant with and without the addition of waste combustor ash to verify mercury emissions.

The test was performed and the results indicated an incremental increase in mercury emissions of 0.08 pounds or 32 grams for the entire 6.2-mile project. This amount is considered trace and definitely insignificant.

Accordingly a report was submitted to the MPCA Feb. 15, 2008 with a follow up request for approval of the CSBUD. — **Bill Wilson, Facilities Manager, Polk County Solid Waste**

County to gain from gas tax hike

Polk County's share of the money that will be generated by Minnesota's new transportation bill will be significant, according to early calculations made by County Engineer Rich Sanders.

"We can expect to receive an additional \$834,000 a year to improve and maintain our County State Aid Highway system beginning with the 2010 allotment. That's when the full effect of the additional 5 cents a gallon in gas tax collections will show up," he says.

Based on current usage

The calculation for 2010, Sanders notes, is based on continued current gasoline usage. The county's gas tax allotment will also increase somewhat in 2009 but with only a partial year of collections at the new, higher gas tax rates, it won't be nearly as much.

Polk County currently receives about \$6.3 million a year from the state gas tax collections. The \$834,000 figure for 2010 and the lesser amount for 2009 would be in addition to that amount.

"Without a gas tax increase in the previous 20 years, the need for additional funding for transportation was becoming critical statewide," Sanders says.

No lack of needs

"No determinations have been made for how the additional money will be spent in Polk County but we certainly aren't going to have to go out looking for projects. We'll likely just speed up projects on our five-year plan and address other needed maintenance."

For townships in the county, the new gas tax (again based upon current usage) is expected to provide about an additional \$88,150 for the Town Road Fund and another about \$50,000 for the Town Bridge Fund. Examples of the additional money that will be directed to townships to maintain their roads and bridges include that Huntsville will likely get additional \$3,000, Lowell will receive an additional \$1,600 and Rosebud will get almost \$2,000.

Road work

Continued from Page 1

which were sold on March 4 at an interest rate of 2.94 percent.

First, the interest rates are now as low as they have been for a number of years.

Second, the cost of road construction has been going up at a rate of about 10 percent a year.

No taxpayer obligation

And third, the action does not obligate county residents since the bonds will be repaid over a five-year period from the state-aid allotments that are made to the county each year. These allotments, which are used for road construction and total about \$3.5 million annually, come from the county's share of state gas tax revenues.

In addition to the fact that the cost of interest on the bonds is significantly less than the rate of inflation for road construction, the benefit to motorists in selling the bonds now to finance the road projects is that they will be completed and put into use well ahead of the normal schedule.

The county has had previous experience with the practice of issuing highway bonds to speed up road construction having sold \$4 million in bonding in 2003 and \$2 million in 1998.

'03 bonds to be paid off

The 2003 bonds, which were issued the same year that the final payment was made on the 1998 bond issue, will be paid off this year. Money from the 2003 bond sale was used to advance the reconstruction of Polk County Highway 9 (the KT Road) from Crookston to the Red River by several years.

Projects that will be fully or partially funded in 2008 with the \$4 million in bond funds are:

- Reconstruction of **County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 4** from the Polk/Mahnomen county line to Lengby.
- Grade widening and overlay of **CSAH 41** from Trunk Highway (TH) 102 to CSAH 12.

Park hosts set for new camping season

Park hosts have been arranged and a new campground reservation system is being developed in preparation for the upcoming summer operation of Polk County's Maple Lake and Cross Lake/Tillberg parks.

Jim Wenger will return as one of the hosts at Maple Lake Park with Richard Vaudrin to serve his first year as the second host there.

At Cross Lake/Tilberg, located northeast of Fosston, Glenn Halvorson will return as the host for a second year.

With the new reservation system for each campground, persons will be able to reserve a weekend campsite via the internet and pay for

it either with a credit card or by printing out a voucher and paying with cash.

These projects are expected to spend approximately \$3.2 million of the bond funds.

Another project using up the remaining amount of the bonds will be the reclamation and resurfacing of **CSAH 37** from CSAH 10 to CSAH 34 near Erskine will be constructed in 2009.

Projects that are to be done in 2008 as a part of the normal schedule are:

- Bituminous overlay of **CSAH 1** from TH 32 at Fertile to CSAH 10.
- Bituminous overlay of **CSAH 23** from TH 75 at Angus to 3.25 miles east.
- Bituminous overlay of **CSAH 4** from Lengby to TH 2.
- Bituminous overlay of **CSAH 44** from CSAH 1 to TH 102.

Also scheduled for 2008 is work on **CSAH 8** from the north city limits of McIntosh to the Polk/Red Lake county line. This segment of roadway will be grade-widened and overlaid with bituminous surfacing in a project that is expected to start in June and be completed by mid-September.

"We also anticipate replacing 10 township bridges with box culverts and replacing two bridges with actual bridges, but this is reliant on how much bonding the legislature approves this year for bridge replacements," Sanders says.

"If you come across construction work, not only on Polk County Roads, but also state and other roads in the county, please be patient," he says. "Contractors and government employees will be working long hours to get this work completed in an efficient manner."

Questions concerning this year's construction program can be addressed to Darin Carlstrom (ext. 8254) or Richard Sanders (ext. 8253) at the Polk County Highway Department (218-281-3952).

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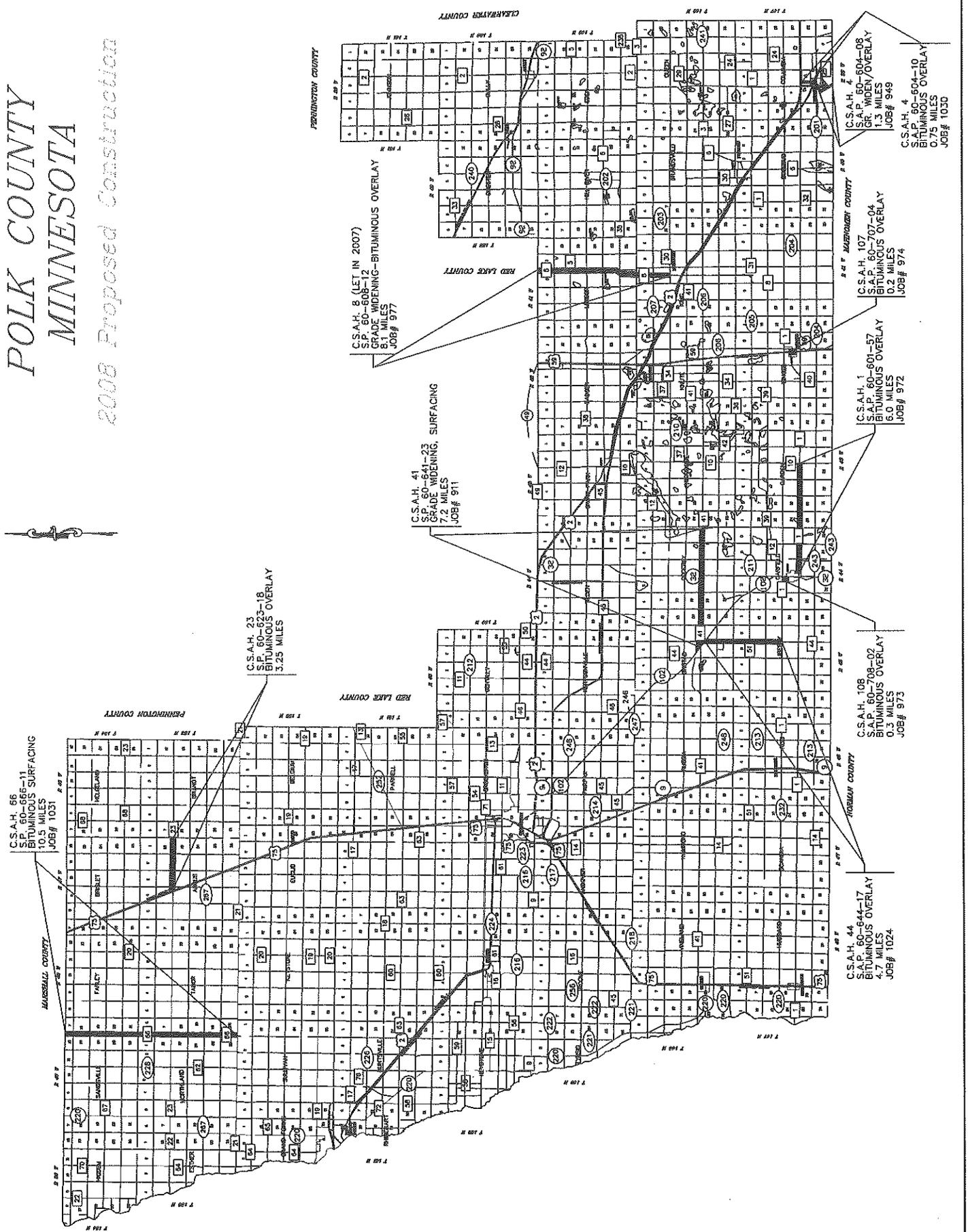
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POLK COUNTY MINNESOTA

2008 Proposed Construction



New, high-tech truck to be put into service

Additional spraying planned for 2008 season

During the 2007 season our spraying peaked at 1,900 acres on county and state roadsides within Polk County. This is a significant increase from 1,390 acres in 2006 and 1,150 acres in 2005.

Polk County expects to spray well over 2,000 acres of county and state roadsides in the upcoming season.

To help keep up with the demands of weed control along the county and state roadways Polk County is purchasing a new injection type roadside spray truck with a boomless spray system.

The new spray truck will be equipped with a G.P.S. recording system to accurately map when, where and what type of herbicide was applied and record the exact locations of noxious weed infestations along county and state roadsides for future planning and monitoring.

Contractor necessary

Due to the large number of county and state road miles within Polk County and the short time frame for effective application of herbicides to infested areas, it is still necessary to contract with a private commercial applicator. The contractor will assist Polk County in maintaining a more comprehensive, improved weed control program.

Polk County has awarded a new (three-year) contract to L & M Road Services, Lake Park, Minn. The contractor's spray truck will also be equipped with a G.P.S.

recording system to accurately map when, where and what type of herbicide was applied and record the exact locations of noxious weed infestations along county and state roadsides for future planning and monitoring.

L & M Road Services will charge Polk County by the applied acre. The cost will run \$29.59 per acre for Thistle and Spotted Knapweed control, \$35.79 per acre for Leafy Spurge control, and \$57.02 for cattail control.

CRP weed control better

Noxious weed infestations and complaints on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands are decreasing. In the last three years, this improvement is largely due to the excellent job landowners are doing to properly maintain their CRP lands and also due to the Farm Service Agencies (FSA) within Polk County for their improved inspection and enforcement programs. The FSA is doing a great job of holding CRP property owners accountable to their contracts, which requires them to control weeds on their CRP acreage.

Ditch abandonments

The Nature Conservancy would like to retain more water and restore wetlands on lands they own and would like to abandon small portions of County Ditch No.140 and Judicial Ditch No. 66.

The outcome of these abandonments

would not prejudice or damage other property owners and property remaining in the system. In fact, the drainage systems would benefit because water will be retained on the Nature Conservancy's property and the amount of water flowing into the legal drainage systems would be reduced.

The abandonment hearing will be held at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, May 21, at the Youngquist Auditorium on the UMC campus.

Effective programs

Largely because of cleaner, more efficient drainage systems and lower water tables, the cattail and beaver control programs have also been very effective.

The cattail control program in the county drainage systems is proving to use less herbicide as the years go by. Currently, one-third of the county drainage systems are sprayed for cattail control each year. The drainage systems in the south west part of the county are scheduled to be sprayed for cattail control in late August of 2008.

The beaver control program has also been very effective over the last four years. In 2007, only 24 problem beaver s were removed from the drainage systems. That's down from 59 in 2006, 71 in 2005, and 110 in 2004. — **Jody Beauchane, Polk County ag and drainage inspector**

Pulkrabek joins Extension Board

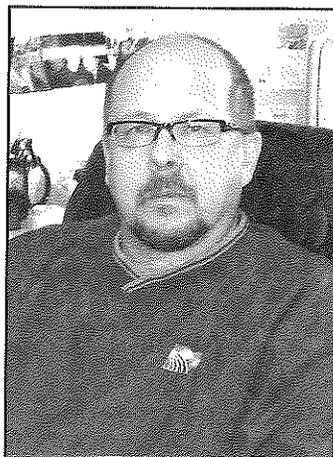
James Pulkrabek, Jr., rural Euclid, is a new member of the Polk County Extension Committee.

He replaces Robert Bratvold, East Grand Forks, who had completed the maximum number of two three-year terms allowed for members of the committee. Pulkrabek will represent Commissioner District 5.

The Extension Committee oversees Extension Service activities in the county and makes recommendations about staffing and budgeting to the County Board.

Chuck Vanyo, East Grand Forks (District 2), is chair of the committee with Rick Roed, Fosston (District 4), as vice chair. Other members are: Curt Knutson, Fisher (at-large), and Patricia Erickson, Fertile (District 1).

Judie Kanten, Crookston, (District 3), has also served the maximum number of terms. A



James Pulkrabek Jr.

replacement will soon be named.

County commissioners Warren Affelt, Fosston, and Don Diedrich, Warren, also serve on the committee. Polk County Auditor-Treasurer Gerald Amiot serves as

secretary of the committee.

Extension Service educators based in Polk County are Russ Severson at the Crookston office and Jim Stordahl at the McIntosh office. Aaron Rongen, the 4-H program coordinator, is also at McIntosh.

Pulkrabek, who grew up on the family farm near Sherack, graduated from Warren High School and completed the two-year farm management program at the Northland Community Technical College in East Grand Forks. He was involved in the family farming operation for 22 years before starting a crop adjusting business in 2000.

He and his wife, Judy (Burwell), have two children: Jamie, 25, is an agronomist for Cenex Harvest States at Park Rapids, Minn., and Jameson, 22, a heating and air conditioning school graduate, works at Custom Aire, Inc., Grand Forks.

Tips to avoid scams:

1 — Never disclose credit card numbers, check routing information, etc. to a caller.

2 — You don't need to pay in order to "collect your winnings."

3 — If you receive notice that your bank account has been jeopardized, do not disclose your account information. Contact the bank direct.

4 — Be wary of solicitations asking you to wire money or send payment to a foreign country.

5 — Don't believe that a cashier's check is always good.

6 — Never respond to correspondence regarding a foreign lottery.

7 — Don't open spam e-mail, or "click" on attachments, images, or links in e-mail messages or pop-ups.

8 — When shopping online, always use a secure website or a well-known payment service.

9 — Don't be rushed. People often make poor decisions when they are hurried.

10 — If it sounds "too good to be true," it is.

VA Budget Request focuses on health care, disability compensation, helping returning vets

President Bush is seeking a budget of \$93.7 billion in fiscal year 2009 for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with health care and disability compensation for veterans targeted for most of the spending.

Highlights of the 2009 budget request include:

Medical Care

The request includes total budgetary resources of \$41.2 billion for VA medical care, an increase of \$2.3 billion over the 2008 budget. VA's total medical care request is comprised of funding for medical services (\$34.08 billion), medical facilities (\$4.66 billion), and resources from medical care collections (\$2.47 billion).

The budget will provide resources to treat nearly 5.8 million patients, including about 3.9 million veterans who are VA's highest priority patients — veterans returning from service in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom

(OEF), veterans with service-connected disabilities, those with lower incomes, and veterans with special health care needs.

VA will treat about 333,000 OIF/OEF veterans in 2009, a 14 percent increase over the estimated 2008 figure. Medical care funding for these patients will climb to nearly \$1.3 billion in 2009, or 21 percent more than in 2008.

The budget will provide resources for VA to virtually eliminate the patient waiting list by the end of 2009.

Mental Health

Resources for mental health care will reach \$3.9 billion in 2009. This is \$319 million (or 9 percent) above the 2008 level and will strengthen efforts to ensure VA provides equitable access throughout the nation for veterans with mental health disorders.

VA is requesting \$762 million in 2009 for non-institutional long-term care, an increase of 28 percent over 2008. This will allow veterans

to receive extended care services in the most clinically appropriate setting and in the comfort and familiar settings of their homes. The number of patients receiving this type of care, as measured by the average daily census, is expected to reach 61,000, or 38 percent higher than the estimated level for 2008.

Resources in 2009 for the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the VA (CHAMPVA) will total just over \$1 billion. CHAMPVA allows VA to provide health benefits for the dependents and survivors of veterans who are, or were at time of death, 100 percent permanently and totally disabled from a service-connected disability, or who died from a service-connected condition.

Aid returning vets

One of VA's highest priorities in 2009 will be to continue an aggressive research program to improve the lives of veterans returning from service in OIF and OEF. The 2009 budget provides \$252

million devoted to research projects focused specifically on veterans returning from service in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Benefits

Disability compensation payments will be made to 234,000 more service-disabled veterans and their survivors in 2009 than were made in 2007. Total disability compensation payments will increase by \$6 billion.

Vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits for service-disabled veterans will increase by \$14 million.

The budget proposal includes \$35.9 million to provide specially adapted housing grants to severely disabled veterans and service members, providing a barrier-free living environment that affords them a level of independent living they may not otherwise enjoy.

For more information about VA benefits, contact the Health Benefits Service Center at 1-877-222-8387 or go online to www.va.gov/healtheligibility.

County receives grant to aid veterans programs, services

Polk County has received a state grant of \$2,740 that will be used to enhance the benefits, programs and services that are provided for its veterans.

The award was approved from among 84 grant requests from 52 different counties during the second cycle of the Grants to Counties program. The program was first created by the 2006 Minnesota Legislature to allow the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs to support local programs and then expanded for fiscal years 2008-09.

State funding for the first year of the program (in 2007) totaled \$200,000. With a funding increase that was supported by the governor and

approved by the legislature, \$950,000 became available for grants to counties for 2008. Another \$950,000 has been approved for fiscal year 2009.

Polk County will use the grant funds to support Veteran's Service Officer Les Goodwin's work in the area of outreach and re-integration of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan including \$1,640 for postage for the more than 1,000 Veterans Service Quarterly Newsletters that are sent out and \$100 for a Veterans Service Officer's information booth at the Polk County Fair in Fertile. The remaining \$1,000 will be put into a special emergency travel account to pay for trips to various VA hospitals.

Tweten is named to Lake Agassiz Regional Library Board

Kim Tweten, Climax, has been named to a three-year term on the Lake Agassiz Regional Library Board as a representative from Polk County.

She succeeds Norman Ellingson, Crookston, who had served the maximum number of three three-year terms.

LARL, which has its offices in Moorhead, is the oversight board for libraries in the seven counties in northwestern Minnesota that are a part of the Minnesota Library System.

"We're all big readers at our house and we just adore our Climax Library," Tweten, a Polk County social worker, says of her family. Her husband, Larry, also a social worker, is employed by

Marshall County.

Their two children are: Alexandra "Ali," 20, a junior at St. Cloud State University and Zachary "Zac," 14, a ninth grader in the Climax School.

Kim is also a Sunday School teacher at Sand Hill Lutheran Church, rural Climax, and is a member of the Climax Community Club and the Sand Hill Historical Society.

She and her family are foster parents for Retrieve a Golden of Minnesota, an organization that seeks to "re-home" rescued Golden Retrievers. They have a Golden of their own, Toby Ed, and two cats, Skeeter and Scooter. "All," Kim says, "enjoy curling up with anyone who is reading a good book."

Montague selected to head new Northwest Regional Radio Board

Polk County Commissioner Bill Montague has been elected chair of the newly organized Northwest Regional Radio Board.

This 14-county organization will oversee efforts to "encourage, create and maintain functional and interoperable public safety communications between all parties."

The group was organized in early February at a meeting held in Thief River Falls. Pennington County Commissioner Oliver "Skip" Swanson was elected the vice chair.

Committee members

Other county commissioners who are members of the committee are: John P. Chevalier, Clearwater; Joe Vene, Beltrami; Kevin Campbell, Clay; Craig Spilde, Kittson; Todd Beckel, Lake of the Woods; John C. Peterick, Mahanomen; Gary Kiesow, Marshall; Marvin Gunderson, Norman; and Brent Strand, Red Lake.

Gracia C. Nelson, Roseau, a Northwest Minnesota Radio Advisory Committee (RAC) member, represents Roseau County and Dan Hunt represents the City of Moorhead.

Wendy Mattson, Thief River Falls, a secretary at the Pennington County Sheriff's Office, was selected as the recording secretary.

LeTexier is advisory chair

Polk County Sheriff Mark LeTexier is chair of the Northwest Minnesota RAC. This advisory group meets at the Minnesota Department of Transportation/Pennington County Highway

Department Building in Thief River Falls every other Wednesday.

The committee will conduct communication assessments in each of the 14 counties and the region as a whole to determine the current inventory, infrastructure and capability of the radio system, the impact of the new FCC (Federal Communications Commission) narrow banding regulations and communication interoperability within the region.

Information uses

The information will serve to determine needs and issues as they relate to resources, rules of use, operational procedures, education, coverage, capacity, alternatives and the need for and cost of system improvements.

Involved in the assessments will be officials from local law enforcement agencies, fire departments, emergency medical services, agencies dealing with hazardous materials, public safety communicators, public transportation, emergency management, homeland security, public works, public health, hospitals, the military, and federal and state agencies.

Report to state board

The committee, which will report to the Statewide Radio Board, is planning to meet quarterly.

Additional information about the Northwest Regional Board and communications projects throughout the state can be found on the internet at www.nwmnradio.org.

Provides options for future

County purchases tract near landfill

Polk County has completed the purchase of a 120-acre tract of land just east of its Landfill facility in Gently Township.

"Although the county doesn't have any immediate plans for the property," according to Bill Wilson, facilities manager at the Polk County Solid Waste Management plant in Fosston, "this ownership gives us several important options for the future." The purchase price was \$1,000 per acre.

One possibility for use of the property, which borders from north to south the entire east boundary of the landfill, could be development of land application treatment of leachate from the landfill cells.

Leachate is hauled

Currently, leachate is hauled to Crookston's wastewater handling facility. With the cost of that transportation becoming very expensive, Wilson says, development of land application could become feasible.

A second possibility for the property, he says, is having the capability to construct an industrial waste cell that would make it practical to accept coal ash generated by industry — such as an ethanol plant — over an extended contract.

An industrial waste cell, Wilson notes, is somewhat less restrictive in design than that of a MSW cell since ash doesn't have all of the same toxic elements that end up in an MSW cell.

Allows expansion

"Owning the property the full north-south length of the east boundary of the landfill will allow us to expand the existing MSW cells to the east, although it is doubtful that we would ever need to use all of that property for the construction of MSW disposal cells. But what it does do, though," he says, "is allow us to move our compliance boundary further east from the current east border of the landfill."

"This will allow us to expand our existing cells to the east thus permitting us to remain within the current property lines and still stay within the compliance boundary."

"The best thing about this purchase is that under current conditions the Polk County Landfill now has a significantly greater life expectancy, probably in excess of 50 years," Wilson says.

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

or the toll free

Minnesota Welfare

Fraud Hotline

1-800-627-9977

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

You may remain anonymous



Polk County Employee Anniversaries in 2008

<u>Hire</u>	<u>Employee</u>	<u>Department-Position</u>
40 Years		
5/6/68	Robert Lian	Maintenance II
35 Years		
7/9/73	June Delorme	Soc. Svc. Financial Ass't. Supervisor II
30 Years		
6/1/78	Neil Parkin	Highway Dept. Stock Clerk
10/3/78	Sylvia Nelson	Soc. Svc. Collection Supr. I
25 Years		
2/22/83	LouAnn Olson	Social Worker
11/16/83	Brian Hoiseth	Highway Dept. Eng. Tech IV
20 years		
1/4/88	Jay Rhone	Maintenance Supervisor
1/4/88	Shawn Sebenaler	Waste Combustion Operator
2/1/88	James Tadman	Sheriff's Dept. Sgt.
2/22/88	Michael Murray	Sheriff's Dept. Sgt.
3/21/88	Velma Axtell	Soc. Svc. Family-Based Service Provider
4/15/88	Ricardo Ramon	Soc. Svc. Financial Worker
4/25/88	Carol Evenson	Social Worker
5/2/88	Carol Egeland	Public Health RN II
5/18/88	Gail Schultz	Sheriff's Dept. Acct. Clerk II
6/1/88	Michelle Cote	County Recorder
8/1/88	MaryBeth Solheim	Clerk Typist Cashier III
9/1/88	Arla Meyer	Administrative Ass't. II
9/12/88	Lynette Lindgren	Accounting Technician
9/16/88	Sheila Menard	Lead Dispatcher
9/27/88	Clarisse Miller	Soc. Svc. Child Support Officer
10/17/88	Ronald Larson	Waste Combustion Operator
10/20/88	Marvin Berg	Landfill Technician
11/21/88	Randy Beggs	Accounting Technician
15 Years		
1/4/93	Darin Carlstrom	Highway Dept. Project Engineer
6/1/93	Anita Brekken	Social Worker
6/2/93	Maxine Newhouse	Administrative Ass't I
7/26/93	Bryan Johnson	Mechical Maintenance Tech.
8/23/93	Deborah Berhow	Clerk Typist Cashier IIIA
9/7/93	LeAnn Holte	Soc. Svc. Case Aide
9/16/93	Jill Sonsteli	Public Health RN II
9/20/93	Cherie Chaput	Accounting Technician
10 Years		
3/6/98	Heath Hanson	Sheriff's Dept. Deputy Patrol
3/24/98	Beverly Johnson	Assessor's Office Admin. Asst. 1
5/6/98	Irene Hurd	Social Worker
7/6/98	Darcy Bjorgo	Accounting Clerk I
8/3/98	Wesly Oian	Appraiser Tax Officer IV
9/1/98	Michael LeBlanc	Maintenance II
9/1/98	Kim Tweten	Social Worker
9/9/98	Lori Oian	Clerk Typist Cashier IV
5 Years		
1/2/03	Jane Foley	Soc. Svc. Financial Worker
1/6/03	Sara Bowman	Soc. Svc. Financial Worker
1/6/03	Gregory Widseth	County Attorney
1/22/03	Scott Buhler	Ass't. County Attorney
11//6/03	Gail Strom	Sort Line Operator
11/20/03	Rebecca Halvorson	Clerk Typist Cashier III

New 'eRecording' allows parties to create, sign, transmit, record without ever touching paper

On Jan. 22, 2008, the Polk County Recorder's Office reached a milestone by electronically recording (e-Recording) its first document.

Electronic Recording (eRecording) is the process of digitally creating, submitting, and recording legally-binding land ownership records via the Internet that would otherwise be sent to the county clerk's or recorder's office for recording by express mail or courier service.

eRecording is more than just converting a paper document to an electronic image for storage. The process encompasses the use of several technologies that allow those involved to create, sign, transmit, record, index, archive and return the original document without ever touching a piece of paper.

Benefits

The Benefits of eRecording are:

- Lender-customers can prepare and transmit documents to the Recorder quickly.

- Lender-customers get immediate feedback when their documents have obvious errors.

- Lender-customers receive recorded images immediately after they are recorded and do not need to wait weeks or months for the document to be returned in the US Mail.

- Fewer errors are made on the part of the lender-customer and the Recorder staff because of software system requirements.

- The Recorder can review documents for statutory requirements and immediately send back any documents that do not conform to law. Notes can be added explaining the problem and the documents are sent back to the customer electronically.

Much faster

- The Recorder can process the documents with the push of a button. The E-Recording system records, receipts, indexes in the grantor-grantee, indexes in the tract, "scans" and "mails" back the document image in one operation. Whereas it would normally take 24 hours to get the document recorded, indexed in the grantor-grantee and scanned, that process takes 8 to 16 seconds per document with electronic recording.

- The majority of documents will continue to be on paper but over time, the use of electronic recording will allow staff to be utilized in different areas and applications.

- Staff time, printing materials and postage are saved for both the lender and the Recorder.

Recording of Assignments of Mortgage, Satisfaction of Mortgage and Certificates of Release are available to submit electronically. Progress continues on electronic recording standards for security instruments (mortgages), deeds and certificate of real estate value.

— **Michelle Cote**, Polk County recorder

County Board Meeting Times

8:30 a.m. on 1st Tuesday of each month, 1:20 p.m. on the 3rd Tuesday, and 8:30 a.m. on the 4th Tuesday

Polk County Commissioners

Dist. 1 — Jerry Jacobson, vice chair

Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell

Dist. 3 — Bill Montague, chair

Dist. 4 — Warren Affeldt

Dist. 5 — Don Diedrich

All meetings are open to the public

Ag-land, non-tillable land valuations increased for 2008 property assessments

Tillable ag land valuations in Polk County are being increased county-wide by from 10 percent to a high of 25 percent for the 2008 property assessments.

Also increasing is the valuation of non-tillable land (woods, pasture and gravel), which will increase by \$100 per acre to \$900. The valuation for waste land will be increased by \$100 to \$250 per acre.

While the new valuations are likely to result in real estate tax increases for the property owners, those taxes will not increase at the same percentage as that of the valuation increases, according to Polk County Assessor Rob Wagner.

There are many other variables in the property tax system that affect the final tax bill, he says, noting that valuation increases simply build the base against which local governments levy taxes to pay for their ongoing operations.

State requirement

State law requires that property valuations be set at from 90 to 105 percent of market (or actual sale) value. Since comparable sales are used to determine the worth of properties, it is actually the buyers and sellers who determine the values, Wagner says.

The effect of the increased valuations will show up in taxes that become payable in 2009.

"A couple of years ago," Wagner says, "a lot of the larger valuation changes were made in the eastern part of the county because of the increased prices of the per-acre sales that were occurring there. More recently, while sale prices have continued to increase county-wide, the increases in valuation have been more balanced as opposed to the east-to-west differences of the past. However, that could change when we determine valuations for 2009."

Sales studied

Information about the price of land sales is required to be a part of the Certificates of Real Estate Value that must be filed as a part of sales agreements. "We spend a lot of time verifying that information," Wagner

says, pointing out that only the actual amount paid for real estate is used in determining values.

All property owners receive a valuation notice each spring prior to Boards of Appeal and Equalization.

Better able to check

With the new CAMA computerized assessment system now in place, Wagner notes that the Assessor's Office is better able to check additional sales before determining valuations.

"We've gone beyond the pencil and paper process that was so time consuming and limited the number of sales that we could look at," he says.

While tillable, non-tillable and waste land property owners are getting valuation increases, Wagner says, homeowners — both in cities and on rural sites — and commercial property owners won't see any across-the-board increases. Each property valuation will be determined on an individual basis.

Property owners on Maple Lake will likely see some increases while those in Fertile and Winger could see changes, both increased and decreased valuations.

Increases by county

The tillable ag land valuation increases include:

25 Percent — Belgium, Brandt, Brislet, Crookston, Helgeland and Parnell.

20 Percent — Angus, Euclid, Fanny, Farley, Gully, Johnson and Lowell.

15 Percent — Andover, Badger, Bygland, Chester, Esther, Fairfax, Fisher, Garden, Garfield, Gently, Godfrey, Grand Forks, Grove Park, Hammond, Higdum, Hill River, Huntsville, Kertsonville, Keystone, King, Knute, Lessor, Liberty, Nesbit, Northland, Onstad, Rhinehart, Ries, Roome, Russia, Sandville, Scandia, Sullivan, Tabor, Tilden, Tynsid and Woodside.

10 Percent — Brandsvold, Columbia, Eden, Hubbard, Queen, Rosebud, Sletten, Vineland and Winger.

Dental health contributes to overall quality of life

Optimal oral health is fundamental to an individual's overall physical, social and emotional well-being.

In addition to the obvious advantages of freedom from pain, discomfort and suffering, sound oral health also contributes to an individual's quality of life, including self-image and self esteem. Dental pain causes children to miss time in school and adults to miss time at work.

Fluoride varnishing schedule

Polk County Public Health provides dental fluoride varnishing on four Tuesdays each month. A Public Health nurse is available on the first Tuesday at the East Grand Forks Human Services Center from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; on the second Tuesday at the McIntosh Public Health office from 9 a.m. to 3:15 p.m., and on the third and fourth Tuesdays at the Crookston Public Health office from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For questions about dental fluoride varnishing, please call our Crookston office at 218-281-3385.

Fluoride coatings

Fluoride varnish is a protective coating that is painted on teeth to help prevent new cavities and to help stop cavities that have already started. The paint-on varnish is sticky, so it attaches to the teeth easily and makes the outer layer (enamel) of the teeth harder, helping to prevent cavities.

Fluoride varnish has been found to be effective in preventing and reducing tooth decay in both primary and permanent teeth. The use of fluoride varnishes to prevent and control tooth decay in children and adults is expanding in both public and private dental practices and nondental settings across the country.

Medical Assistance, MN Care, U-Care, Medica, Blues Plus, and Metropolitan Health Plan cover the cost of dental fluoride varnish. There is a \$10 donation suggested for those without these health plans.

New dental clinic

For people without a dental home, a new dental clinic has opened in Grand Forks. The Valley Community Health Center dental clinic is located at 212 S. 4th Street, Suite 101 in Grand Forks. Their hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number is 701-757-2100.

The clinic serves people of all ages and provides cleanings, exams, fillings and extractions. Medical Assistance is accepted but the co-payment is required. There is a sliding fee based on family size and income. Dental services are available to Minnesota residents, along with North Dakota residents.

Polk County Public Health has worked with the Northern Valley Dental Coalition for many years, with many partners. The new dental clinic is a much needed service for people without a dental home. — Sheri Altepetter, PHN, director, Polk County Public Health