

Polk County Newsletter

Spring 2009

Budget is 'the' issue for County Board

The three most important issues to be dealt with by the Polk County Board of Commissioners in 2009, according to new chair Don Diedrich, will be budget, budget and budget.

Diedrich, rural Warren, the commissioner from District 5, succeeded Bill Montague, Crookston (District 3), as the new chair when the board re-organized at its first meeting in January. Warren Strandell, East Grand Forks (District 2), was elected the vice chair. The chair and vice chair positions rotate annually through the five county commissioners.

Also as a part of the Jan. 6 meeting, Craig Bunes, Crookston, who was elected the District 1 commissioner succeeding Jerry Jacobson, Fertile, took the oath of office and joined the board.

Further re-organization of county government will occur in July when Commissioner Warren Affeldt, Fosston (District 4), is slated to succeed Diedrich as chair of the Polk County Social Services Board. That board, which meets monthly as

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

Program aid cuts unknown

"The cut-backs in our revenue," Diedrich says of the problems that are the result of the state's budget shortfall and the state of the national economy, "could be horrendous. We've been discussing the budget at every meeting for the past four or five months and we still don't know where things are.

"The numbers that were used in developing the county budget for 2009 were based on expected revenue that isn't going to be realized. Because of that," he says, "we are probably going to have to dip even further into our fund balances. It is a good thing that we have reasonable reserves but we aren't going to be able to rely on them for very long.

"At the same time that we are expecting huge reductions in County Program Aid from the state, we have a number of pro-

jects that need to be addressed, including what to do with the Wayne Hotel and Z Place buildings in Crookston and the project to convert space on the upper floor of the Government Center for the Income Maintenance and Child Support units of the Social Services Department that are still operating from the old Professional Building.

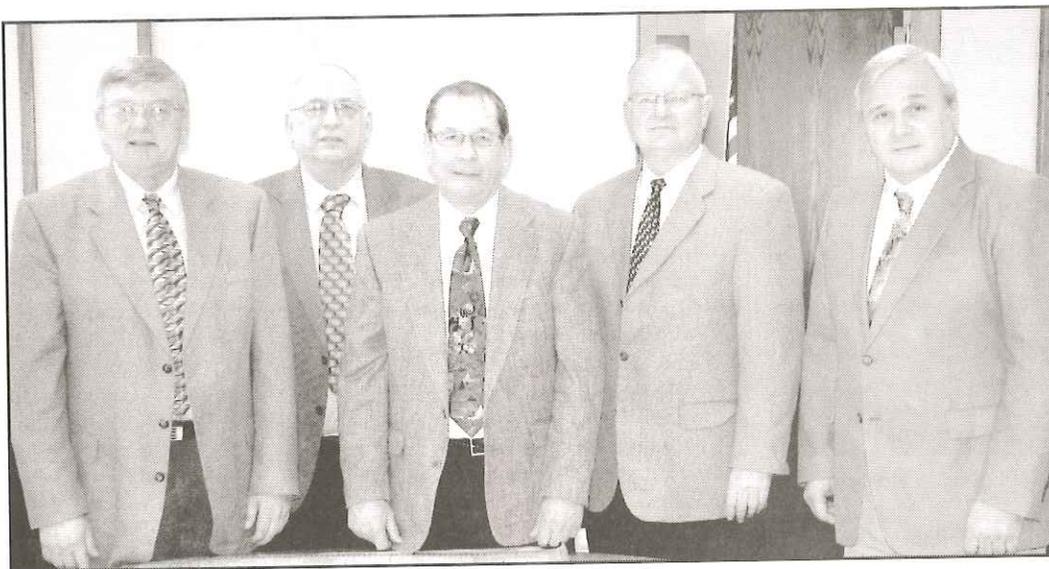
"We need to get completely out of the Pro Building and close it down. We just can't afford to keep it open... to keep heating and maintaining it."

Outlived planned use

The Pro Building, which was constructed 109 years ago as a hospital, served as St. Vincent's Nursing Home for many years before being converted into an office building in 1980s. The county purchased the two-story structure in 1992 with the expectation that it would provide needed office space for about seven years.

Other than the remaining Social Services units, the other offices that had been locat-

See **BUDGET**, Page 2



Board of Commissioners — Members of the 2009 Polk County Board of Commissioners, from left, are: Warren Affeldt, Fosston; Chair Don Diedrich, rural Warren; Warren Strandell, East

Grand Forks; Bill Montague, Crookston; and Craig Bunes, Crookston. Bunes joined the board in January.

New plat book in the works

A new, full-color Polk County Plat Book is currently being published and is expected to be available for sale by about mid to late spring, according to County Auditor-Treasurer Gerald Amiot.

The 300 copies of the book, which will be printed in an 8 ½ by 11-inch format, will sell for \$27 each plus tax. The book will be available at the Auditor-Treasurer's Office. The last plat book was published in 1999.

Further information about the availability of the book will be announced in the news media.

Budget

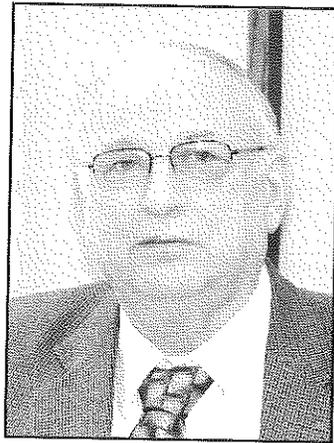
Continued from Page 1

ed in the building — the County Attorney's Office, public defenders, and Polk County Probation — were moved to the new Polk County Justice Center in early 2008.

At the same time, the District Court system moved from the Government Center to the new Justice Center freeing up space for the Social Services units that are still located in the Professional Center Building. Some remodeling still needs to be done to accommodate that move.

GASB requirement

The County learned during the audit report on its 2007 operations — which were accomplished without any accounting issues of significance — that new Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) requirements will require that the county keep up to as much as \$2 million in its General Fund balance to satisfy any liabilities as a result of "post-employment benefits." Polk County doesn't offer any post-employment benefits other than the federally-guaranteed right for retired employees to remain on the county insurance plan by paying for the pre-



Don Diedrich

mium themselves.

While county officials are still trying to sort through that requirement, the effect of the rule could mean that a significant amount of money could be tied up at a time when it is desperately needed for other purposes.

Negotiations

An issue later in 2009 will involve employee salaries. The current three-year wage and benefit contracts will expire at the end of the year. "One of our goals as we address the budget problem," Diedrich says, "will be to avoid lay-offs."

Some changes are also in the

works for the former jail portion of the Polk County Law Enforcement Center building. The Northwest Regional Corrections Center part of name has been eliminated with the building now known as the Polk County Law Enforcement Center.

Old jail space

Space vacated with the retirement of the old 32-bed secure jail along with that formerly used for the administrative offices of Tri-County Community Corrections has been taken over by the Polk County Sheriff's Office, which had become squeezed for room in the old arrangement.

The Sheriff Department's Dispatch Center and Emergency Operations will remain in the Law Enforcement Center building. The old jail cells, which will remain in place at least partly because it would be very costly to remove them, are being used for such things as secure evidence storage and for the storage of equipment and supplies of the Sheriff's Office.

Also remaining in place in the building will be the Red River Juvenile Center, which is a part of Tri-County Community

Corrections.

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, it had served as the 49-bed minimum-security detention facility for Tri-County Community Corrections.

Used for storage

That building will now be used for storage, including that needed for many of the paper records currently kept in lower levels of the Government Center and in the Professional Center building. The old doctor's and nurses residences on the site were taken down last fall.

A goal of the County Board, Diedrich says, "will be to be as transparent as possible. We want everybody to know and understand what is happening and why. If anybody has any ideas about how to address the budgeting problems, please let us know."

Hedlund to join Middle-Snake-Tamarac Water Board

Marvin Hedlund, rural Oslo, will succeed Arlyn Stoble, Angus, as Polk county's representative on the Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District (MSTWD) Board of Managers, effective April 1.

Hedlund was appointed to serve out the balance of a term that is scheduled to end on Aug. 26, 2011, in action taken by the County Board on March 3. Stoble has served on the board of managers since the fall of 2003.

A career farmer before retiring in 2005, Hedlund has extensive experience in township government and in working on agricultural and church boards.

A native of the Oslo area where his family had farming interests, Hedlund moved with



Marvin Hedlund

his family to another farm site south of Alvarado when he was five years old. He graduated from Alvarado High School in 1964 and, after completing a military obligation through the

North Dakota National Guard based in Grand Forks, began farming fulltime in 1967.

He and his wife, Lynnett (Tinnes), who were married in 1966, purchased the Hedlund family farm south of Oslo in 1974. They have two children: Melissa Glander, who is an accountant for MeritCare in Fargo, and Mark (Bonnie), who is a cardiovascular technician at a St. Cloud hospital.

Hedlund, who is now in his sixth year as chair of the Higdem Town Board, had earlier served as the town board treasurer for 10 years beginning in the late 1970s. He also served on the Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association board of directors for the East Grand Forks factory district for 12 years, including four as its treasurer and four as chair.

Other public service involvements include six years on the West Polk County Agricultural Stabilization Committee, 12 years (including five as chair) on the Farmers Elevator Cooperative Board of Alvarado-Oslo, several years as a 4-H leader and several positions with New Hope Lutheran Church, Alvarado.

The Polk County Board appoints one member to the seven-member watershed board. The Marshall County Board appoints the other managers, including: Doug Sorenson, Warren, chair; John W. Nelson, Oslo, vice chair; Ben Kleinwachter, Strandquist, secretary; Alvin Nybladh, Stephen, treasurer; Elden Elseth, Warren; and Loren Zutz, Warren.

Buness joins County Board of Commissioners

New District 1 Polk County Commissioner Craig Buness, Crookston, isn't new to local government. He got a good taste of that during a four-year term on the Crookston City Council that he completed in December 2008 before being sworn in as a county commissioner in January.

Buness, who served on the Crookston City Council from 2005 through 2008, won election to the County Board in November 2008 by defeating two-term incumbent Jerry Jacobson, Fertile.

Gone well

"I think that things have gone real well so far. We have an excellent group of commissioners and I think we'll be able to make the best decisions that affect the county," Buness says. "I may not have realized



Craig Buness

the full extent of the county's involvement with such things as environmental services, social services, public health, and all of the other areas of responsibility but some things are similar to what we had at the city except that everything

is about five times larger.

"There is definitely a learning curve with the county being so big and having its smaller cities, larger cities, smaller farms, larger farms, the recreational lake homes, and the fact that each area has its own issues.

Larger but the same

"Although everything with the county is on a larger scale, a lot of it is still the same as it deals with personnel issues and making budget decisions. Things are changing all the time and you have to be able to change with the situation."

A native of Crookston and a 1969 graduate of Crookston Central High School, Buness returned to Crookston in 1972 after serving in the Army through 1971. He then combined school and work over a

period of several years while earning an associate degree in business-sales and marketing at the University of Minnesota-Crookston in 1977.

Buness then worked as a regional driver for Midwest Motor Express for five years and for Consolidated Freightways for 20 years before joining Roadway Express for a couple of years before retiring as a driver on Sept. 30, 2004.

Want to bring something

"When you run for public office," he says, "you hope that you can bring something to the organization. Personally, I want to be a viable part in the direction of the county and to look out for all of the citizens — no matter where they live or if they are young or old — so that the county is an affordable, safe place to live."

Agencies unite to battle invasive weed species

Chaired by Polk County Agricultural & Drainage Inspector Jody Beauchane, 10 government agencies have joined to form the Polk County Cooperative Weed Management Area (PCCWMA).

The participating agencies are the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Pembina Trail Resource & Conservation Development, East and West Polk County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, University of Minnesota Extension Service, Farm Service Agency, The Nature Conservancy, Minnesota Department of Transportation, and Polk County.

Work cooperatively

The purpose of the PCCWMA is to work cooperatively to reduce the economic and environmental impacts that invasive plant species have on lands in the county.

Representatives from these agencies are focusing on cooperative partnerships with policies, funding opportunities and time committed to reduce invasive weed species in Polk County.

The overall objectives are on public education and the mapping and control of invasive species with the specific goal to prevent, reduce and eliminate weeds through the use of chemical, mechanical and biological efforts to achieve success.

Not a new idea

The formation of cooperative weed management areas is not a new concept. From Washington to New York, state federal, local and private land managers have worked together to combat invasive plants.

The idea is to join forces to combat a problem that is affecting everyone. Invasive species threatens cropland by reducing yields, pastures by lowering weight gain in livestock, and native habitats by reducing productivity of native fauna and flora.

In 2008, the PCCWMA focused on development of a purpose statement and the drafting of a memorandum of understanding. On the ground accomplishments included: Increased surveillance for mapping invasive weed problems focusing on existing sites

and new invasive weeds coming into the county, pooling funds to purchase chemicals needed for county sprayers to increase coverage, field trips to discuss biological control methods, grant funding for township involvement and specific site control of over 10 invasive plant species.

Polk County officials also approved the purchase of a new spray truck with GPS/GIS capabilities to assist with this new concept in combating weeds.

In 2009, it is hopeful that the memorandum of understanding will be finalized and signed by all participating agencies.

Increase membership

Other goals for 2009 include: Increase the number of agencies participating in the PCCWMA, organization of public meetings to disseminate information about invasive weed control, township and landowner assistance with invasive weed control, and greater efficiency with controlling weeds.

"While this won't solve all our weed problems, it certainly helps when we are all working

together," Beauchane says.

"It's nice to know that there are others out in the field working towards a common goal," he added asking that the public be watchful for other information about the PCCWMA and how they can get involved.

Goodwin earns Veterans Service employment award

Polk County Veterans Service Officer Les Goodwin has been presented the "Above and Beyond Veterans Service Employment Award" by the Minnesota State Council on Disability.

Goodwin, who was named the Polk County veterans service officer in 1999 following a 33-year military career during which he rose to the highest enlisted personnel rank in the Air Force (chief master sergeant), was cited for his contributions in developing initiatives for the employment of returning Minnesota veterans who have disabilities and to protect their individual rights.

Myerchin joins Planning & Zoning Commission

Delores Myerchin, rural Crookston, joined the Polk County Planning & Zoning Commission in December. She is representing the county's townships.

Myerchin succeeded Chuck Lariviere, Crookston, who retired from the commission after representing the townships since April 1995.

"I'm finding the issues that come before the Planning & Zoning Commission to be very interesting," Myerchin says of her appointment which became effective in December.

"I've always been interested in local government," she says, noting her 15 years as a township clerk. "But while I am enjoying this, I'm finding it to be a little more involved than I first anticipated."

Crookston Township clerk

Myerchin, who was elected clerk of Crookston Township as a write-in in 1994, continues to serve in that capacity.

A native of the Beltrami area



Delores Myerchin

of Polk County, she moved with her family to Crookston when she was in the eighth grade and graduated from St. Joseph's Academy in 1956.

After a 20-plus-year career with Tri-Valley Opportunity Council in Crookston, where she was the administrative secretary for the Head Start program, she served as director of the Crookston Senior Center

for 6 years before retiring in 2005.

Myerchin and her husband, Dennis, who marked their golden wedding anniversary in November, have five children, 11 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

Other members of the Commission are:

- **Don Wright**, Mentor (representing Commissioner District 1);
- **Earl Beiswenger**, Fisher, (District 2);
- **Courtney Pulkrabek**, Crookston (District 3);
- **Kerry Winkleman**, Fosston (District 4);
- **Barb Hangsleben**, East Grand Forks (District 5);
- **Don Osborne**, past Crookston mayor (City of Crookston);
- **Dick Grassel**, East Grand Forks Council president (City of East Grand Forks);
- **Roland Gagner**, Erskine (Union Lake Sarah Improvement District); and

• **Dennis Yell**, Mentor (Maple Lake Improvement District).

The Planning & Zoning Commission is charged with the task of reviewing applications for zoning changes, plat/subdivisions, conditional use permits and assists in the drafting of amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and/or Comprehensive Plan. The findings of the Planning & Zoning Commission are forwarded as recommendations to the County Board.

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

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

Second funding attempt is planned

Time running out on Wayne Hotel

Should MetroPlains Development, LLC, St. Paul, not be able to secure the funding that it feels is necessary to proceed with a project to rehabilitate the Palace/Wayne Hotel in downtown Crookston by this fall, the building will come down.

MetroPlains' first attempt to obtain the tax credits that it says are needed — in addition to significant grant funding — to renovate the building into 24 income-based housing units did not succeed.

A second attempt is planned for later this year.

Preliminary plans for resurrecting the deteriorating three-story hotel have been prepared by JLG Architects,

Grand Forks, which has also been involved in the effort to save the historic building.

Constructed in the 1890s, the building has been vacant and in a state of deterioration since 1996. Located in the Crookston Historical District, the building is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Polk County inherited the legal obligation to serve as caretaker of the property for the State of Minnesota when the building tax-forfeited on Sept. 3, 2003.

With restoration — as opposed to the cost of demolition — in its best interests, Polk County has offered to donate an adjacent parcel of land for parking and to pro-

vide a 30-year \$250,000 deferred, interest-free loan to assist the project.

The loan, which would not be disbursed to the developers until substantial completion of the project had been reached, would provide for lump sum repayment at maturity.

Demolition and removal, the alternative to a restoration project, would require the completion of an environmental worksheet to address potential hazardous materials in the building while also complying with certain historical requirements. The cost of demolition was estimated several years ago to be in excess of \$250,000.

Grant to aid activities for veterans

Polk County has received a \$6,500 State Enhancement Grant that will be used to support activities that are of benefit to veterans in 2009-10, according to Veterans Service Officer Les Goodwin.

The money will be used as follows: \$2,500 will be placed in fund to pay for postage for the veterans newsletters; \$1,000 will be used to fund the Veterans Booth at the Polk County Fair; and \$3,000 will be made available to transport veterans to medical facilities.

The Polk County grant was among 121 grants totaling \$1.45 million that were made by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs to establish and maintain veterans' services and programs in the state.

Felony & Gross	
Misdemeanors	
Complaints prepared	347
Sentencing hearings	317
Committed to state prison	48
Probation violation hearings	539
Committed to state prison	38
Total committed to prison	86
Jury trials	11
Defendants convicted	7
Misdemeanors	
Guilty pleas	109
Trials	4
Appeals	
Polk County Attorney's Office	11
Minnesota Attorney's Gen. Office 0	
Juvenile Cases	
Delinquency petitions	61
Child in need of protective services (CHIPS) petitions	62
Delinquency hearings	405
EJJ probation	0
CHIPS hearings	367
County Welfare	
Commitment petitions*	22
Commitment hearings	51
Guardianship petitions	10
Guardianship hearings	25
* <i>Mentally ill and/or inebriate</i>	
Child Support	
Child support hearings	163
Paternity hearings	297

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.

Shafer adds duties in emergency management, Wagner to retire

Nancy Shafer, the director of the Polk County Dispatch Center, is taking on more responsibilities within the Polk County Sheriff's Office as she succeeds the retiring Allen Wagner as the deputy director of the Emergency Management Division.

Wagner, who has held the position since 1999, plans to retire on March 31.

In addition to his responsibilities as the assistant director of emergency services, Wagner has also been the transportation officer for the Sheriff's Office and has managed all areas of radio communications and vehicle maintenance during his multi-faceted, almost 19-year career in law enforcement.

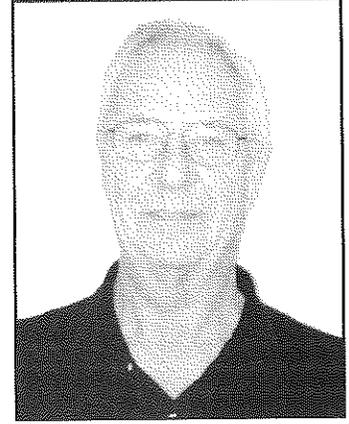
Shafer's new role began in March, according to Sheriff Mark LeTexier, who is the director of the Emergency Management Division.

"Combining the dispatch director position with that of assistant emergency management director is a natural," LeTexier says of the restructuring move.

"Everything in an emergency involves the Dispatch Center and the communications that evolve from there. Communications are just such a big part



Nancy Shafer



Allen Wagner

of emergency management." Shafer, a native of Crowley, Tex., graduated from high school there in 1987. After a year of college in Texas, she relocated to Devils Lake, N.D., where she served as a dispatcher at the Lake Region Law Enforcement Center in Devils Lake for three years.

While in Devils Lake, Nancy met and married Kent Shafer, a Devils Lake city police officer. They moved to Crookston in 1992 and Nancy became a Polk County dispatcher in 1994 and was made director of the department in 2006. She and her husband have two sons, Phillip, 17, and Sam, 11.

Wagner, who grew up on a farm just west of Crookston,

graduated from the Northwest School of Agriculture in 1964 and, after serving in the Army for two years and working at Crookston Welding, began farming in 1968.

He started working part-time for the Sheriff's Office as a deputy in 1990 and became fulltime when he quit farming in 1997. Wagner has four daughters: Wendy Wagner, D'Ann (Brad) Johnson, Heather Wagner and Angela Wagner. His wife, Kathy, died in January 2008.

Jim Buckmiller, who has been a part-time emergency management employee, will continue in that role.

Ash-amended road projects providing benefits

Polk County has now completed four demonstration research projects (DRP) utilizing combustor ash from the Waste-to-Energy plant in Fosston.

Three of the projects used the ash as a partial replacement of aggregate in asphalt road paving projects. A fourth project used the ash as a replacement for clay binder materials in Class 5 road base materials.

The asphalt projects substituted from 12 to 15 percent combustor ash for natural aggregate, while the Class 5 project consumed 20 percent ash substituting completely for the clay binder materials.

As a conservative measure, all ash amended materials were encapsulated with virgin asphalt and Class 5 mix.

The results for all four projects show lit-

tle or no environmental impact and no worker health and safety issues. The three ash-amended asphalt projects demonstrate improved structural performance and greater flexibility as compared to conventional asphalt.

Performance data is not yet available for the ash amended Class 5 project. In total these four projects have consumed over 18,680 tons of waste combustor ash saving valuable landfill space and natural resources. The waste combustor in Fosston generates over 6000 tons of ash each year.

Economically the three ash-amended asphalt projects are competitive in cost to conventional asphalt on a per-ton basis. Also economic evaluation indicates that ash amended Class 5 has the potential to be competitive with virgin Class 5 mix when

included in the bid documents.

Responses from the Contractor and Highway Department Inspectors have been very positive.

Polk County, in conjunction with the Highway Department, is currently negotiating with the MPCA to perform another ash amended Class 5 project in 2009. This is the continuation of the original CSAH 41 which extends another 5 1/4 miles to the east. The Highway Department will include the use of ash in the Class 5 base materials in the bid documents and will include hauling of the ash from the landfill to the crusher as an alternate bid. — **Bill Wilson, Polk County Solid Waste, and Rich Sanders, Polk County Highway Department**

Tax law changes involve Green Acres, land classes, disabled vets & more

You may have heard that there have been a lot of changes in Minnesota tax law this past year.

One of the changes has been in the Green Acres program. Green Acres is a program to hold the value of productive agricultural land at an agricultural value when there is pressure from other outside influences for a higher value.

Currently, in Polk County, our agricultural values are not high enough to trigger using the Green Acres program on a countywide basis according to the formula applied by the Minnesota Department of Revenue.

New land class

We also have a new class of land called Rural Vacant Land. This is for land rural in nature, but not used for a

more rapid rate.

Across the county the tillable values will increase for the 2009 assessment from 10 to 30 percent. This would be approximately a 17 percent increase in the county's total agricultural land value. Non-tillable lands have not increased for this assessment.

On a more positive note the Legislature has added BROTHERS and SISTERS to the list of relatives qualifying for the Relative Agricultural Homestead treatment and also for the Relative Special Agricultural homestead.

The agricultural homestead first tier limit has been raised from \$890,000 to \$1,010,000 and the tax capacity rate from .55 to .50 percent.

Disabled exclusion

See map showing Tillable Ag Land valuation increases on back page

productive agricultural pursuit. All rural lands must now be categorized as productive agricultural use or non-productive (no apparent agricultural) use.

If a parcel of non-productive land is not contiguous to a parcel of productive land under the same ownership it cannot be homesteaded.

Working to reclassify

The Assessor's Office staff has been working very hard to get all of the lands in Polk County reclassified into the productive and non-productive categories.

If you have a parcel of non-productive land that has lost its homestead classification, the parcel may be eligible for the Managed Forest Program with a reduced tax capacity rate.

To qualify for managed forest you will need to work with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to develop a Managed Forest Plan. Once the plan is completed you may apply with the Assessor's Office for this program.

Values stable

Despite the national trend, residential property values in Polk County have remained stable to rising a little. Farmland values have been rising at a

The Legislature has also passed a Disabled Veterans exclusion for real estate taxes. The Veterans Administration has notified all Veterans who qualify for this exclusion by letter.

To qualify you must be 70 percent or more permanently disabled. If you are a very recently disabled veteran, please contact the Assessor's Office or your Veteran's Service Officer for information.

Boards of Appeal later

Local Board of Appeal and Equalization and open book meetings will be starting April 20th this year. The lateness is due to the amount of Legislative changes, the office work involved and the complexity of the computer programming to accomplish these changes.

Hopefully, next year we will be back on schedule for early April meetings.

The County Board of Appeals and Equalization will meet on June 16th. The dates and times of your Local and County meetings will be on the valuation statement you should receive in late March or early April of this year. — **Robert Wagner, Polk County assessor**

Thompson Bridge replacement to begin this year

With the influx of federal funds coming to Minnesota and North Dakota thru the federal Stimulus Package, we were able to move the reconstruction of the Thompson Bridge over the Red River from 2012 to 2009.

The project will consist of replacing Bridge No. 5871 (ND Bridge No. 18-146-30.0) with new Bridge No. 60561. The new bridge will be a 12-span steel beam bridge with a total length of approximately 1,108 feet. The proposed deck width will be 43 feet-4 inches which will result in a curb-to-curb width of 40 feet.

The new bridge will be constructed with features that will allow for adjustments to be made to accommodate movements that occur due to instability of the Red River Valley soils. These features are common on bridge crossings of the Red River of the North due to the very poor and very unstable nature of the native soils.

In addition to the bridge construction, approximately 7,900 feet of approach reconstruction will be necessary to transition between the existing roadway and the new bridge. The roadway alignment will be altered in the vicinity of the bridge in order to improve sight lines.

The new bridge will be constructed approximately 200 feet downstream from the existing bridge and will be constructed with a top of deck elevation approximately 12 feet higher than that of the existing bridge. This new alignment will remove the existing sag vertical curve currently located in the vicinity of the crossing and will meet a design speed of 55 mph, which matches the regulatory speed for the roadway. Construction is scheduled to begin in August and be completed by Oct. 1, 2010.

Other projects scheduled for completion this year are:

- Grade widening and overlay of **CSAH 41** from CSAH 12 to CSAH 42.
- Surfacing of **CSAH 41** from TH 75 in Climax to CSAH 14.
- Reconstruction of **CSAH 4** in Lengby.
- Overlay of **CSAH 25** from CSAH 4 to Polk/Mahnomen County line.
- Surfacing of **CSAH 37** from CSAH 10 to CR 210.

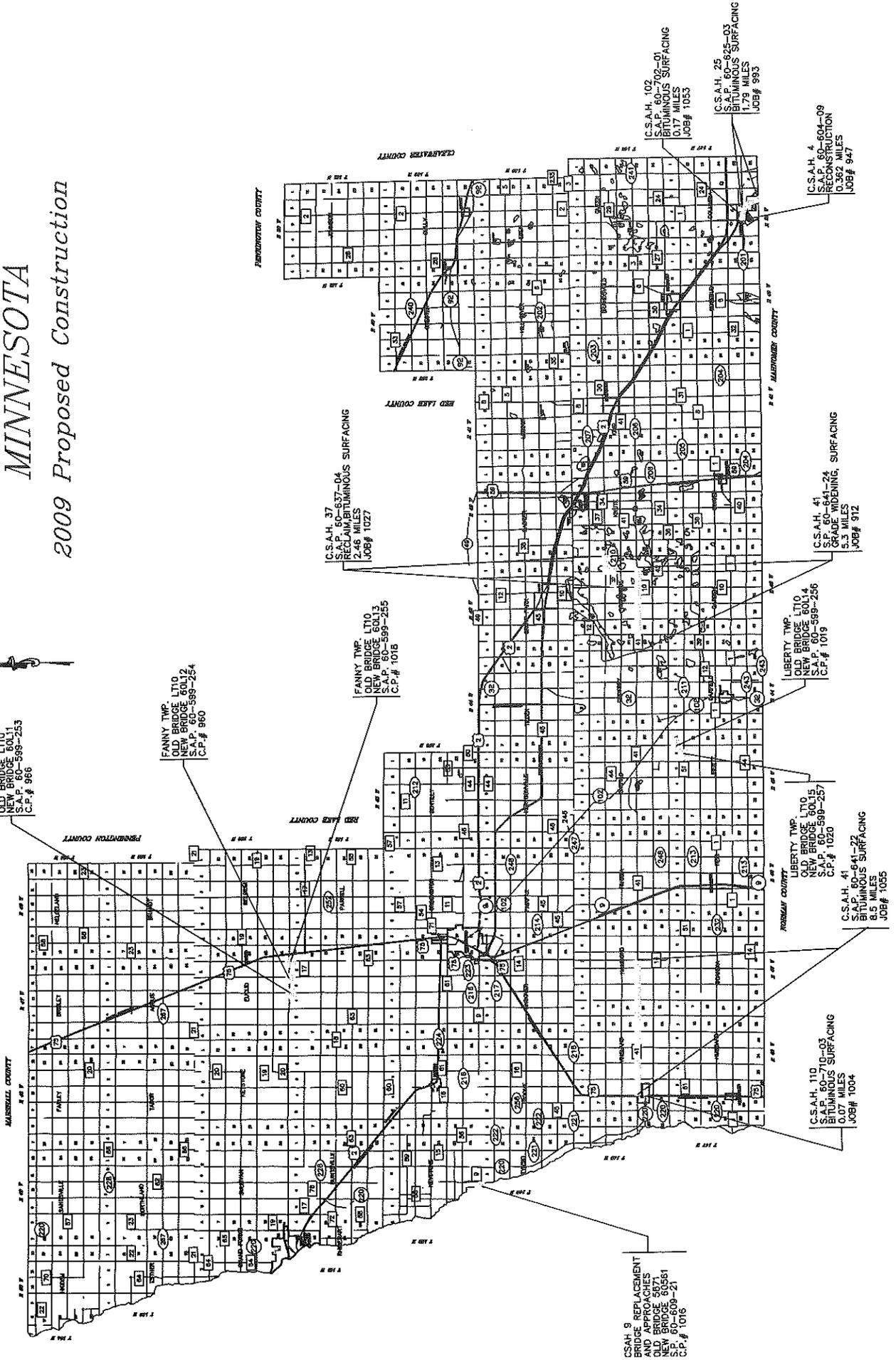
We also anticipate replacing 3 township bridges with box culverts. This work is scheduled to be completed by Oct. 1st.

With the new stimulus money, the 2009 and 2010 construction season will be busy throughout the state. Please remember to slow down and be alert to the construction equipment. This will help in preventing any accidents, which could result in fatalities.

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

POLK COUNTY MINNESOTA

2009 Proposed Construction



'File of Life' information is valuable

TRIAD chapters help to keep seniors safe

"The information that is provided in a File of Life is extremely helpful, especially when the person isn't quite clear about things," Jeff Voigt, an East Grand Forks assistant fire chief and emergency medical technician, says of answering emergency medical calls and finding that medical information packet attached to the side of the person's refrigerator.

"The medical history and medication information that is provided in those packets really helps us out in determining what can or cannot be provided by us as the first responders... and it is very useful to the ambulance attendants when they arrive," he says.

"It gives them a medical baseline along with information that can be given to the hospital emergency room. I've personally been on a number of calls where that information was really useful. We just wish everyone had a completed File of Life that would tell us about such conditions as diabetes, heart disease, allergies, their doctors, next of kin and things like that."

All firefighters in East Grand Forks double as first responders on medical calls. Ambulance attendants in Crookston and Fosston can tell the same story. The File of Life Program is also being offered in those communities through the Polk County Triad organization.

3 chapters in county

Triad, a national organization that is now in its 21st year of helping to keep seniors safe in their communities through collaboration with local law enforcement and emergency services, has active operating chapters in Crookston, Fosston and East Grand Forks. There are 10 such chapters in Minnesota.

Sponsored by the National Sheriff's Association, Triad's stated purpose is to keep seniors and the disabled from being victimized, to enhance their sense of security through education, training and involvement, and to improve their overall quality of life.

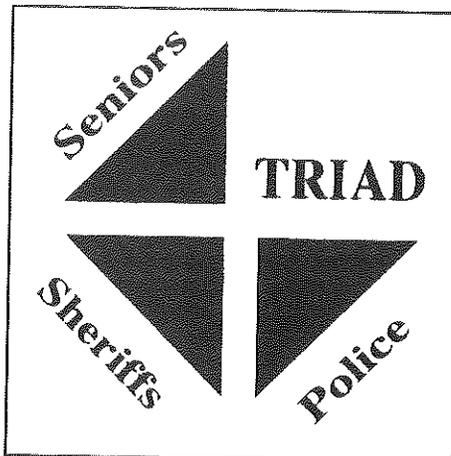
The Triad logo is the symbol of unity between local police, the sheriff and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

Triad is not an acronym... although the TRIAD letters could appropriately stand for "The Right Information and Directions" as it concerns the File of Life program and how persons can avoid being victimized.

Started in 1994

Polk County Triad was first organized with a chapter in Crookston in the spring of 1994 by former Sheriff Doug Qualley, former Crookston Police Chief Paul Monteen, former Polk County Attorney Wayne Swanson and the Polk County chapter of the RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteers Program).

Current board members of the Crookston chapter, which has hosted two state conferences, the last one in 2007, are: President



Lisa Wiersma, Allen Chesley, Polk County Commissioner Bill Montague, Dale Halos, Deana Patenaude, Sheriff Mark Letexier and Jim Buckmiller.

The Fosston chapter was started in 2000, again with the backing of Sheriff Qualley. Deputies Jim Goss, Mike Norland and Phil Juve were among the original core group.

Norland is the working president with Lois Dokken as secretary-treasurer. Polk County Deputy Justin Swang heads up the chapter, which includes about a dozen seniors who meet on a monthly basis to exchange information and plan activities.

The East Grand Forks chapter was begun in July 2006 by Sheriff Mark LeTexier and Buckmiller, who is a member of the Polk County Emergency Management staff.

Bill Cummings is president of the East Grand Forks chapter. Lynda Vanderhoof serves as secretary-treasurer. Among others who are currently actively involved are Fire Chief Randy Gust, Police Chief Mike Hedlund and Polk County Commissioner Warren Strandell.

File of Life program

All three chapters promote the "File of Life" program through which seniors and disabled list their personal medical information on a card that is kept by a magnetized holder on the side of their refrigerators. Should a medical emergency arise, ambulance attendants have access to information about the person's medications, possible allergies, medical conditions, emergency contacts, doctor's name, and Medicare and insurance numbers to assist them in providing immediate care.

"File of Life" stickers on the front doors of homes of the participants alert providers that the information is on the refrigerator.

File of Life information cards and holders have been distributed to over 4,000 people in the county. Polk County Public Health and Triad members have worked with the program in Crookston and Fosston and recently, some 55 instructors and students in the medical programs at Northland Community &

Technical College (NCTC) in East Grand Forks assisted 169 seniors in completing the File of Life information cards in that community.

'Taste of Italy' event

In other activities, the Crookston chapter conducts an annual "Taste of Italy" dinner each spring at which a guest chef prepares a several course meal. Uniformed law enforcement officers from both the Sheriff's Department and Crookston Police then serve the sit down meal.

This fund-raising event, which also includes a cake auction, has generated money to purchase four automated external defibrillators (AEDs) that the chapter has placed in Polk County and City of Crookston squad cars and at the Golden Link Senior Center and Sheriff's Department office.

In other activities, Crookston Triad members assisted seniors and others following the 1997 flood and have presented citizens police academy training sessions during which seniors were educated on ways that they can be victimized and in the ways that law enforcement works.

Both the Fosston and Crookston chapters also participate in National Night Out events.

Events at Fosston include a pot-luck picnic that gets the community and law enforcement together to discuss issues and concerns. "This event and our regular meetings," Norland says, "give us another set of eyes as to what is going on in the community as far as schemes, drug issues, burglaries, and even dogs running at-large. The information is valuable and helps to tell us what can be done to keep seniors from being victimized."

Booth at fair

The Fosston chapter also has a booth at the community's health fair where it distributes information and meets with individuals.

The East Grand Forks chapter, which has been assisted financially by NCTC, American Legion Auxiliary 157 and Commercial Printing, is currently planning another program at which a pharmacist will work one-on-one with seniors to evaluate the interaction that is possible with their medications, both prescription and non-prescription.

The chapters meet monthly, Crookston at 10 a.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at the Golden Link; Fosston on the fourth Thursday at the Embassy Center, and East Grand Forks at 10 a.m. on the fourth Thursday, usually at the Senior Center.

Additional information is available by calling by calling the chapter presidents, the law enforcement offices in the three communities or the Polk County Sheriff's Office.

Triad can provide speakers for community and church organizations. The individual chapters are, of course, always looking to increase their memberships.

Chemical dependency treatment program begins

New jail now taking in 'paying customers'

After a year of getting used to its new facility and the new, highly-efficient "direct supervision" method of supervising prisoners, the staff at the new Northwest Regional Corrections Center is set to further expand upon the immediate focus of housing prisoners.

That growing expanded area of purpose includes taking in revenue-producing inmates from other counties in the region and also from the Federal Bureau of Prisons, the Federal Probation Department and the U.S. Marshal Service.

The Center has also embarked on a program to provide drug and alcohol abuse treatment that begins while the person is incarcerated.

"Things are going very well," notes Susan Mills, executive director of the Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC) organization that operates the jail for Polk, Norman and Red Lake counties.

Taking federal prisoners

"We wanted to grow into the new jail in an orderly and safe way, which we've accomplished, and even during that process we've been able to house some prisoners from other area counties when they didn't have room for them in their own facilities. And now, we're starting to take in federal prisoners, as well."

A contract was developed earlier this year to house Federal Bureau of Prisons and the Federal Probation Department prisoners. Another contract is with the U.S. Marshal Service. The daily per diems to be received for housing federal prisoners will range from \$65 to \$76 a day depending upon the services that are provided.

The Polk County Sheriff's Department is recruiting and training active and retired licensed law enforcement officers to provide transportation of federal prisoners to

and from their court appearances.

Polk County will be reimbursed for those costs. Mills notes, "I'm very grateful to the Polk County Sheriff's Office for their partnership in creating the transport team. This is a crucial piece in our performance for the federal contracts we hold."

Role reversed

After spending \$70,276 during the first three months of 2008 — the time before the new jail was in operation — to house prisoners elsewhere when there wasn't the room to keep in the previous jail facilities, TCCC was able to take in \$164,921 for housing prisoners from other counties as it was settling in to the new quarters during the final nine months of the year.

That turn-around followed a situation in the final full year of operations in the old facilities (2007) when TCCC was forced to spend \$430,889 to house prisoners from its three-county area in other jails when it didn't have room to hold them. That money, which does not include the cost of transporting prisoners, was spent mainly in Pennington and Clearwater counties but also with other counties as far away as Morrison County (Little Falls).

The new jail, which received a 100 percent compliance rating in all 214 areas of both mandatory and essential rules for operation when inspected last summer, has been licensed to hold up to 185 prisoners at current staffing levels. The average daily population has regularly ranged from 125 to 128 with a high of 156.

Safety is first concern

While budgets in all areas of county government are certain to be reviewed in view of the state's revenue shortfalls, little change in operations of the jail is likely. "Our first responsibility," Mills says of operations, "is for the safety of both the

inmate and staff. Any reduction in staff would make safety a big concern. We are already operating at the most efficient staffing levels possible for a setting in which one corrections officer can supervise up to 60 prisoners."

According to Mills, the new adult chemical dependency treatment program "is a way for those inmates, who qualify after going through the assessment phase, to use their incarceration time in a positive way... they can begin drug and alcohol treatment while they are in jail and not have to wait until they are released."

Getting started

While still in its infancy in mid-February, the program had 13 inmates involved in the screening phase to determine if they are truly serious about treatment, and another 15 in the actual in-jail program. Five others were already continuing treatment in the community after having completed their jail time.

The program is a collaborative effort between TCCC, Glenmore Recovery Center, and the social services departments in Norman, Polk and Red Lake counties.

The jail building is licensed as a chemical dependency site by the state Department of Human Services. Glenmore Recovery Center provides the treatment programming under its licensure. TCCC received a two-year, \$100,000 grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services to pay the salaries of 1.9 staff positions for the program.

Expectations of the program, according to Mills, include reductions in recidivism and relapse rates, a safer community and improved relationship skills and employability. Depending on the success of the program, the grant could be renewed for up to five years.

Spring wheat, dry beans, sugarbeets

Polk County is No. 1 in 3 areas of ag production

Polk County ranks No. 1 in the state in three areas of crop production, according to statistics developed by the Agricultural Marketing Services Division of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

By individual category, the state is first in the production of spring wheat, dry beans and sugarbeets, second in the production of soybeans, third in

barley and ninth in oats.

Overall, Polk County ranks seventh in total agricultural production behind the high corn and hog production counties of Martin, Renville, Stearns, Blue Earth, Kandiyohi and Redwood.

In the area of livestock production, Polk County ranks 58th and for beef cows, it is No. 16.

For spring wheat, northwestern Minnesota claims eight of the top nine spots. After Polk, in order, that includes Marshall, Kittson, Norman, Clay and Roseau in the Nos. 2-6 spots and Pennington and Red Lake at Nos. 8 and 9. Wilkin County is No. 7 and Becker County No. 10.

The economic profile of Polk County includes that it has 144 industries, 19,207 jobs of

which 3,260 are farm-related and 15,947 are non-farm.

Ag production and processing provides an industry output of \$695.7 million and the 4,641 jobs, while manufacturing has an output of \$537.7 million and employment for 1,189 people. Government ranks third in economic output with health and human services fourth and wholesale and retail trade fifth.

Drainage levy set, 93 systems have met maintenance amounts

The 2009 drainage levy has been set at \$88,100, which is significantly less than previous years.

Also, 93 out of 129 drainage systems have met their ideal maintenance amount and will not be assessed in 2009. Each drainage system has a maintenance account that is used to pay for repairs, inspections, engineering costs, viewing and publications.

A brief history of levy changes over the years will provide a better understanding of past assessment changes that have taken place:

- In 1998 the drainage levy was \$1,879,286.57 with none of the systems at maintenance balance.
- 2003 the drainage levy was \$461,304.89 with 43 systems at maintenance balance.
- 2008 the drainage levy was \$191,525.00 with 78 systems at maintenance balance.
- 2009 the drainage levy is \$88,100 with 93 systems at maintenance balance.

These accomplishments were achieved while continuing to complete needed repairs, surveys, cleanings, culvert replacements, brush and cattail control throughout all drainage systems.

Cattails under control

Cattail acreages in the drainage systems needing treatment continue to decline on a yearly basis. The drainage systems are divided into three sections in Polk County, the Northwest, Southwest, and East half. Only one section a year receives cattail control on a three-year rotation. Cattails take approximately three years to re-establish themselves from dormant seed left behind by the last Cattail stand that was previously eradicated.

In 2008, 170 acres equaling 113 continuous miles of cattails were controlled in 45 drainage systems located in the Southwest

section of Polk County. The estimated reduction in Cattail acreage since it was last sprayed in 2005 was approximately 34 percent. Other sections of the County are following similar patterns of reduction. The drainage systems in the East half of Polk County will be sprayed in 2009.

More noxious weeds

Noxious weed acreages controlled by Polk County along county and state roads have increased for the sixth year in a row. In 2008, the increase was largely due to a \$12,000 grant received from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife that allowed Polk County to go beyond its normal budgeted amount.

The grant was used to identify, map, and control non-native invasive plant species with a herbicide that leaves a residual behind to control any new noxious weed seeds that could germinate after an area is initially treated.

The final total resulted in treating more than 2,456 acres equaling over 1,193 continuous miles of invasive noxious weeds along county and state roads within Polk County.

The Polk County Ag Department will be working through the Polk County Cooperative Weed Management Area (PCCWMA) to continue to eradicate weed problems. County Weed Management officials will utilize matching grant dollars and in-kind services to map, control and disseminate information about noxious weeds in the County in 2009.

The PCCWMA is hoping to expand the current partnership of 9 agencies to include all township officials and other organizations to elevate the efficiency and success in battling invasive species that negatively affect all citizens and landowners in the County. — **Jody Beauchane, Polk County ag & drainage inspector**

Grant to digitize, protect County drainage records

Polk County has received a \$50,000 grant from the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) that will be used to digitize vital documents for the county controlled legal drainage systems.

The documents are currently stored at the Auditor-Treasurer's Office in the Government Center and at the Ag and Drainage Inspectors office at the Highway Department.

"This grant will serve Polk County in two ways," Jody Beauchane, Polk County ag & drainage inspector, states. "First, it will protect the documents of the drainage systems from possible damage due to fire, water or other disasters. Second, in the digitized form, the documents will be incorporated into Polk County's Geographic Information System (GIS).

"The digitalization process and incorporation into the GIS program will provide county personnel and the public easier access to the information."

The types of documents to be digitized are the viewers and engineer reports, benefited and drainage areas, right of way, construction plans, and history of the drainage systems.

The modernization effort is being promoted statewide and is being monitored by the BWSR. The anticipated completion date is Dec. 31, 2010. Polk County was one of 17 drainage authorities — out of 44 statewide applicants — to be approved to receive a grant to support this project.



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 2009

Hire Date	Employee	Department-Position
35 Years		
10/14/74	Michael Pahlin	Highway Dept.-Maintenance II
30 Years		
1/2/79	Norma Johnson	Attorney-Office Manager
25 Years		
5/9/84	Karl Erickson	Sheriff Dept.-Chief Deputy
11/5/84	Char Brekken	Highway Dept.-Adm. Secretary
20 years		
1/1/89	Willard Wilson	Waste/Energy Facility-Manager
4/2/89	Teresa Genereux	Soc. Services-Accounting Tech.
5/17/89	Todd Tranby	Solid Waste-Landfill Tech.
5/24/89	Jaclyn Jeffrey	Soc. Services-Social Worker
6/1/89	Rhea Grove	Attorney-Adm. Assistant I
6/12/89	Celeste Morris	Auditor-Clerk Typist Cashier IV
6/18/89	Betty Solie	Soc. Services-Office Support Supr.
10/1/89	Joanne Lemke	Public Health-Clerk Typist II
10/2/89	Larry Orvik	Attorney-Assistant Co. Attorney
12/20/89	James Arneson	Soc. Services-Soc. Service Supr.
15 Years		
1/24/94	Randall Sondrol	Sheriff Dept.-Deputy Patrol
5/2/94	Karen Biermaier	Soc. Services-Child Support Officer
5/11/94	Pam Cournia	Attorney-Clerk Typist Cashier IIIA
6/6/94	Debra Hanson	Soc. Services-Case Aide
6/6/94	Nancy Shafer	Sheriff Dept.-Dispatch Ctr.
10 Years		
8/1/94	Randall Olson	Highway Dept.-Maintenance II
8/1/94	Cheryl Pitts	Soc. Services-Financial Worker
8/3/94	Rosa Gutierrez	Soc. Services-Financial Worker
8/29/94	Randal Huot	Highway Dept.-Shop Foreman
1/1/99	Warren Affeldt	Dist. 4 County Commissioner
1/21/99	Ron Denison	Auditor-Accounting Officer
2/3/99	Erik Sandberg	Environmental Svcs.-Transfer Station Operator
2/22/99	Brad Hillman	Soc. Services-Social Worker
Team		Leader
6/1/99	Todd Lewis	Highway Dept.-Maintenance II
6/28/99	Peggy Vizenor	Soc. Services-Case Aide
8/1/99	Connie Desrosier	Recorder-Clerk Typist Cashier III
8/1/99	Les Goodwin	Veterans Service Officer
9/1/99	Karen Broekemeier	Soc. Services-Social Worker
Team		Leader
12/13/99	Scott Oliver	Highway Dept.-Engineering Tech. IIIB
5 Years		
2/19/04	Amy Zabinski	Public Health-Registered Nurse II
4/1/04	Jeffrey Durbin	Environmental Svcs.-Transfer Station Operator
5/3/04	Debbie Kappedal	Incinerator-Secretary/Receptionist
6/14/04	Raymond Austin Jr.	Soc. Services-Social Worker
6/16/04	D'Anne Johnson	Public Health-Health Educator
7/6/04	Lrona Carriere	Public Health-Registered Nurse II
8/9/04	Judy Keasler	Public Health-Clerk Typist Cash III
8/13/04	Kathy Girdler	Public Health-Registered Nurse II
9/1/04	Crystal Bergerson	Soc. Services-Off. Support Spec.
9/7/04	Jesse Haugen	Sheriff Dept.-Deputy Patrol
10/11-04	Sara Spicer	Facilities-Custodian I
11/22/04	Michelle Ostgard	Soc. Services-Social Worker

9 townships to share in Ag Material Tax receipts

The Polk County Highway Department and 9 townships are sharing \$66,497 in the Aggregate Material Tax that was collected from gravel importers and operators in the county during 2007.

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 (\$39,898.35) and 30 percent to the Township Road & Bridge Fund (\$19,949.18). The remaining 10 percent (\$6,649.73) 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 2007, which is the latest year that totals are available, the \$19,949.18 that was collected has been distributed to the townships in the following amounts:

Belgium, 4.0 miles, \$4,749.80; Brandt, 1.4 miles, \$1,662.43; Brislet, 1.5 miles, \$1,781.18; Chester, 1.5 miles, \$1,781.18; Grove Park-Tilden, 1.0 miles, \$1,187.45; Gully, 1.5 miles, \$1,781.18; Helgeland, 1.4 miles, \$1,662.43; Hill River, 2.5 miles, \$2,968.63; and Onstad, 2.0 miles, \$2,374.90.

The 2007 collections total is down significantly from the \$98,377 collected in 2006. The reason, county officials note, was because of a sharp decrease in construction activity.

Special legislation

The ability to collect the tax was created by special legislation at the request of Polk and Norman counties when Bernie Lieder was the Polk County engineer. It 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 (and/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 supervisor and has since 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 \$66,497 that was collected in 2007 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
2007	\$66,497

Many citizens involved in local government

Polk County-appointed representatives serve on a number of county and regional commissions, committees and agencies:

Polk Co. Planning Commission — Earl Beiswenger, Fisher; Barbara Hangsleben, East Grand Forks; Kerry Winkelman, Fosston; Richard Grassel, East Grand Forks; Courtney Pulkrabek, Crookston; Delores Myerchin, Crookston; Don Osborne, Crookston; Donovan Wright, Mentor; Dennis Yell, Mentor; Rolland Gagner, Erskine; 2009 Co. Board Chair Don Diedrich.

Polk Co. Board of Adjustment — Donovan Wright (Commissioner Dist. 1), Earl Beiswenger (Dist. 2), Courtney Pulkrabek (Dist. 3), Kerry Winkelman (Dist. 4), Barbara Hangsleben (Dist. 5).

Northwest Regional Corrections Board (Tri-County Community Corrections) — Commissioners Warren Strandell, Warren Affeldt.

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council — Commissioners Bill Montague, Diedrich.

Inter-County Community Council — Affeldt.

Northwest Regional Development Commission — Strandell (board of directors-vice chair); Montague (public interest-financial institutions); Jerry Jacobson, Fertile (public interest-labor); Kathy Twite, East Grand Forks (public interest-business); Keith Mykleseth, Crookston (municipalities); Suzanne Reitmeier, Crookston (townships); Tracey Sundeen, Crookston (public interest-seniors).

Pembina Trail Resource Conservation & Development Association — Commissioner Craig Bunes (board of directors), Lawrence Vettleson, Gully (delegate); Russ Syverson, Crookston (alternate).

Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization — Strandell.

Northwest Mental Health Board — Montague, Diedrich.

State Community Health Services Advisory Committee — Montague.

Northwest Regional Joint Powers Radio Board — Montague, Bunes.

Minnesota Rural Counties Caucus — Affeldt

(delegate), Strandell (alternate).

Joint Red Lake/Polk County Ditch Committee — Montague, Diedrich, Bunes.

Red Lake Watershed/Polk Co. Joint Ditch No. 72 Committee — Affeldt, Diedrich, Bunes.

Red Lake/Polk Co. Joint Ditch 4 Board — Affeldt, Bunes.

Polk County Audit Planning Committee — Board Chair Diedrich, Co. Coordinator Jack Schmalenberg, Co. Auditor-Treasurer Gerald Amiot.

Red Lake Watershed Board of Managers — Gene Tiedemann, Euclid; James Volava, McIntosh.

Red Lake Watershed Citizen Advisory Committee — Diedrich.

Sand Hill Watershed Board of Managers — Robert Brekke, Nielsville; Gordon Sonsteli, Erskine; Harold Vig, Fosston; Stuart Christian, Erskine; Roger Hanson, Beltrami.

Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed Board of Managers — Arlyn Strobbe, Angus (Polk Co. representative).

Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District Project Work Team (Brandt-Angus Flood Retention Project) — Diedrich.

Polk Co. Law Library — Montague.

Marshall-Polk Rural Water System — Wayne Nelson, Oslo; Rodger Stordahl, East Grand Forks; Paul Driscoll, East Grand Forks; Michael Kasowski, Fisher.

Lake Agassiz Regional Library Board — Bunes; Kim Tweten, Climax; Alayne Rue, Fosston.

Polk Co. Extension Committee — Patricia Erickson, Fertile (Dist. 1); Carol Svendsen, East Grand Forks (Dist. 2); Stephanie Olson, Crookston (Dist. 3); Doug Fjerstad, Fosston (Dist. 4); James Pulkrabek, Euclid (Dist. 5); Curt Knutson, Fisher (member at-large); Diedrich (co. board chair); Montague (co. board representative); Co. Auditor-Treasurer Gerald Amiot (secretary).

Solid Waste Advisory Board — Affeldt (delegate), Montague (alternate).

Red River Valley Development Association — Jerry Erickson, Fertile; Curt Knutson, Fisher.

State Community Health Advisory Committee — Montague; Dr. Eric Kanten, Crookston; Joyce Benoit, Crookston; Gary Cariveau, East Grand Forks; Barb Roth, East Grand Forks; Kathy Twite, East Grand Forks; Joe Campos, East Grand Forks; Marcy Sedler, Fosston.

Association of Minnesota Counties voting delegates — Bunes, Strandell, Montague, Affeldt, Diedrich, Schmalenberg, Amiot, Co. Engineer Richard Sanders.

Association of Minnesota Counties Dist. 3 Director/State Board of Directors — Strandell.

Association of Minnesota Counties policy committees — Strandell (General Government-delegate); Montague (Human Services-delegate); Affeldt (Environment & Natural Resources-delegate/Ag & Rural Development-alternate No. 1); Diedrich (Public Safety-delegate/Ag & Rural Development-alternate No. 3).

Association of Minnesota Counties Ag Task Force — Affeldt.

Red Lake River Corridor Committee — Montague.

Co. Ditch 126 Advisory Committee — John Barrett, East Grand Forks; Randy Driscoll, East Grand Forks; Kevin Krueger, East Grand Forks; Brian Love, Euclid.

Joint Ditch 60 Advisory Committee — Dan Bratvold, Crookston; Gerald Michaelson, Crookston; Dennis Goodyke, Crookston.

Private Industry Council — Tom Anderson (Rehabilitation Services), Carolyn Toupin (Public Employment Services).

Retired Senior Volunteer Program — Bunes.

Land of the Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging — Bunes.

Northwest Regional Arts Council — Dale Knotek, Crookston; Pat Jacklich, East Grand Forks.

Northwest Minnesota Multi-County Housing & Redevelopment Authority — Doug Oman, Crookston.

New highway shop completed in Fertile; salt shed is planned

A new highway shop has been constructed in Fertile completing an arrangement in which Polk County swapped its former shop to the City of Fertile in exchange for land at the north end of town, just east of TH 32 on CSAH 12.

The new shop provides a significant improvement in vehicle storage, access and safety for Polk County.

With the new shop complete, we have moved one of our snowplows from Crookston to

the new facility. This plow is in charge of plowing in the Maple Lake/Mentor area.

Polk County, the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the City of Crookston are planning to construct a new, 5,500-yard salt shed in Crookston. This will allow us to store enough sand/salt mixture for one year of use making sure that we never have a shortfall of salt on hand. — **Richard Sanders, Polk County engineer**

Polk County to consider taking over 2 state trunk highways

Polk County and the Minnesota Department of Transportation are considering an arrangement in which Polk County would take over ownership of State Trunk Highway (TH) 102 from TH 32 at Fertile to TH 9 southeast of Crookston and TH 220 from TH 75 at Climax to TH 2 east of East Grand Forks.

This could benefit Polk County twofold. First, it could provide more gas tax funds to

Polk County. Secondly, it could make our snowplow routes more efficient.

Polk County will be having an informational meeting concerning these turnbacks in April. If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact the Polk County Highway Department at 218-281-3952 or voice your concerns at the informational meeting. — **Richard Sanders, Polk County engineer**



DAC Open House — An open house for the new, \$1.3 million Polk County Developmental Achievement Center (DAC) in East Grand Forks was held Jan. 29. DAC staff members, who participated in the ribbon-cutting event, front row, left to right (most with name tags), were: Ardys Burley, Debi Driscoll, Shellie

Vingelen, Kristi Skeie, executive director Jo Bittner (with scissors), Karen Haarsager, Jessica Knutson, Dereck Williams and Joe Bailey. In the back rows (with black hats) are members of The Chamber Ambassadors welcoming group. The building is owned by the DAC organization.

Modifications, additions to be made to County Zoning Ordinance

Polk County Planning & Zoning is again making modifications to the County Zoning Ordinance. The last revision was made on May 1, 2007. The current effort is scheduled to run a similar timeline for adoption.

Many of the Zoning Ordinance amendments being considered are aimed at clarifying existing language or modifying existing language to be less restrictive.

Two main initiatives

The two larger initiatives for this Ordinance amendment process are: (1) addressing wind energy development, and (2) addressing adult entertainment uses.

Wind energy ordinance initiatives being considered relate to the multiple inquiries received and the monitoring towers that have been permitted in Polk County over the last two years.

Specifically, the Planning Commission and County Board will be reviewing the Ordinance requirements to obtain a County approval (permits) for small wind power generators and for large wind power generators.

The second initiative is related

to adult entertainment uses in Polk County. On Nov. 25, 2008 the Polk County Board of Commissioners adopted an interim ordinance that placed a moratorium on any new or expansion of existing adult entertainment uses within the County.

This moratorium shall remain in effect until the Zoning Ordinance is amended in a manner to adequately address this issue.

On the horizon

Polk County is aware of, or subject to, several potentially large changes in its zoning ordinance in the next one to two years.

Polk County is required by law to adopt the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Septic System regulations by spring 2010. This law has already been passed and the deadline to adopt is fast approaching. This will have significant changes in how septic systems are designed, inspected and installed for homeowners and businesses alike.

The other potentially large ordinance change that is expected to come in the next two years is the

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources revisions to the shoreland regulations. These regulations are in the drafting stages currently and would impact properties located within 1,000 feet of a DNR classified protected lake/pond, within 300 feet of a DNR-protected river/stream, or within the 100-year floodplain.

100-year floodplain

The DNR has a related initiative regarding the remapping of the 100-year floodplain in Polk County and the entire Red River Basin in Polk County.

However, the floodplain remapping project has not progressed since Phase I was complete in early 2008 (the East Grand Forks levee project). The timeline for Phase II (main stem of the Red River) and Phase III (remainder of Polk County) remains uncertain due to state and/or federal funding.

For more zoning related information, please contact Polk County Planning & Zoning at 281-5700. — **Jon Steiner, Polk County Environmental Services administrator**

Knutson reappointed to RRV Development Association

Curt Knutson, Fisher, has been reappointed to another three-year term as one of Polk County's two representatives on the board of directors of the Red River Valley Development Association.

The other Polk County representative, who was reappointed to the board in 2008, is Jerome "Jerry" Erickson, Fertile.

The Red River Valley Development Association was the early efforts of citizen groups to encourage and develop the agriculture industry in northwest Minnesota. It started in 1914 with the purpose of assist development of farming and to promote the general welfare of the area.

14-county organization

The RRVDA is made up of 14 counties. In the earlier years the organization was quite active in common public concerns such as conservation policies, establishing county ag and home agents and vocational ag teachers, etc.

In the 1950's the emphasis shifted more to educational efforts related to the ag industry. In the 1970's the emphasis shifted more to the recognition of outstanding contributions by citizens living in the Red River Valley.

Current Projects

The current projects of the RRVDA include the Valley Farmer & Homemakers Honor Banquet, Emerging Leadership project, Builder of the Valley project, NW Minnesota Youth Scholarship Award, and 4-H Youth Leadership recognition in all 14 counties.

Recycling charges to return

Electronic Waste Program undergoing changes

Electronic waste has been at the forefront of the recycling industry for the last few years. It has been singled out as a large and growing percentage of the solid waste stream and disposal was projected to increase significantly.

The federal requirement for television broadcasters to convert from an analog to a digital signal in February 2009 added to the electronic waste estimated projected growth.

Minnesota enacted a ban in 2006 on the disposal of cathode ray tubes (CRTs), which are a component of televisions and computer monitors. In 2007, Minnesota passed a law which required the manufacturers of televisions and computer monitors to recycle a specified amount of residential electronics each year based upon their sales of those items.

In Minnesota's first program year, it recycled nearly 34 million pounds of waste electronics. This volume exceeded all industry projections for what was available to be recycled in Minnesota and resulted in the highest per capita electronics recycling rate in the nation.

84,000 pounds

In Polk County alone, over 84,000 pounds of residential electronics were collected and recycled.

Before the manufacturers were required to recycle these products, the cost was approximately \$600 per ton in Polk County. At that time, Polk had been charging

residents \$10 to \$30 per television or computer monitor, depending upon screen size.

After the law, Polk was able to sell the electronics for \$40 per ton. Polk dropped its rates for recycling electronics to \$0, making the collection at their facilities free to residents.

The result was Polk County residents saved approximately \$25,000 in recycling fees over that 12 month period.

Unfortunately, this overwhelming success comes at a cost. The manufacturers over-recycled electronic waste the first program year, which allowed them to bank recycling 'credits.' Simply put, the law allows a manufacturer who recycles more than they were required to in any given year to receive credit for that extra weight in a future year.

Exceeded requirement

The intent was to encourage the manufacturer to continue to recycle, and not quit upon reaching their statutory goal. At 34 million pounds of electronics, they almost doubled what they were required by Minnesota Statute to recycle that year.

There is a second factor which also impacts this program. In this difficult economic period, the sales of new televisions and computer monitors dropped significantly. Because the manufacturers' recycling obligations from one year to the next are based upon their sales, the manufacturers are not required to recycle as much as

they were the previous year.

With the manufacturers' requirements to recycle reduced and the vast number of recycling credits they have accumulated, most electronics recyclers have terminated their agreements to continue to purchase electronics from collectors such as Polk County.

What this means, at least in the short-term, is that Polk County must again pay for the recycling of residential CRT-containing electronics and the disposal of non-regulated residential electronics. Until the program is operating as intended again, the fee structure for electronics shall be:

Televisions/Computer Monitors: 20-in. and smaller screens, \$10; 20 to 32-in. screens, \$20; and 32-in. screens, \$30.

Other electronic items: \$4.10 per 100 pounds of weight

Through the end of March 2009, Polk County will continue to accept residential waste electronics for recycling at no charge.

After this date, the agreement with our recycler will be terminated and we will be charged for recycling service. Therefore, the aforementioned fee schedule for electronic recycling and disposal will go into effect on April 1, 2009.

Please contact Polk County Environmental Services at 281-6445 for additional information on this program. — **Jon Steiner, administrator, Polk County Environmental Services**

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

County Commissioners

Dist. 1 — Craig Buness

Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell

Dist. 3 — Bill Montague

Dist. 4 — Warren Affeldt

Dist. 5 — Don Diedrich, Chair

All meetings are open to the public

Help Us 2

Fight Meth & all crime

With your anonymous calls to the

1-218-435-7872

The Polk County Sheriff's Tip Line

Help us to fight meth and all crime. Your tips, especially when combined with other information that we already might have, could help someone's child, parent, relative or friend.

Sheriff Mark LeTexier

Svendson, Fjerstad join County Extension Committee

Carol Svendson, East Grand Forks, and Doug Fjerstad, Fosston, are new members of the Polk County Extension Committee.



Carol Svendson

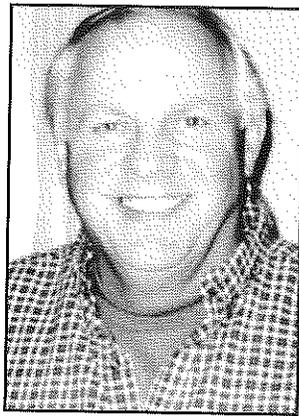
Family Center Board, Grand Cities Children's Choir Board and the Headwaters Estate Planning Council. She also teaches music and serves as a guide and mentor for confirmation students at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in East Grand Forks. Lauris is a high school teacher in Fisher.

Svendson, who represents Commissioner District 2, succeeds Chuck Vanyo. Fjerstad, who represents Commissioner District 4, succeeds Rick Roed.

Both Vanyo and Roed, who had been the chair and vice chair of the committee, respectively, had served the maximum number of two three-year terms on the committee. The Extension Committee oversees Extension Service activities and the 4-H program in the county and makes recommendations to the County Board concerning services and budgeting.

Cottonwood Shelter 4-H

Svendson, who grew up on a farm northeast of Fisher as the daughter of Ron and Jean Peterson and was a member of the Cottonwood Shelter 4-H Club, graduated from Fisher High School in 1981. She earned an accounting



Doug Fjerstad

Fjerstad grew up on a family dairy, beef and grain farm near Fosston and, like his siblings, was extensively involved in 4-H activities. After graduating from Fosston High School in 1972, he earned a B.S. degree in ag education with a minor in economics at the University of Minnesota.

Taught at Blackduck

He taught high school agriculture at Blackduck, Minn., for two years before becoming a farm business management instructor at Northland Community College in Thief River Falls where he has worked since 1980.

degree at Moorhead State University in 1985.

While working in the financial services industry in the Twin Cities for 12 years (1985-1997), she became a certified public accountant (CPA), earned a master of business administration degree from St. Thomas University and was married to Lauris Svendson.

Doug and his wife, Denise, who is a para at Fosston Elementary School, have two children. DeAnna, who earned a degree in business management at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, lives and works in the Twin Cities, and Dylan is a ninth grader at Fosston.

With their two young daughters, Rachel, then 3, and Katie, just 1, they moved to East Grand Forks just in time for the flood of 1997. While Lauris was tending to things at their north-end East Grand Forks home during Blizzard Hannah, Carol was at United Hospital where Katie had undergone major surgery. The hospital was operating on backup power.

"Like everyone else," she says of the flood, "we got a basement full."

As relationship manager at Alerus Financial in Grand Forks, Carol is responsible for generating new business opportunities and managing significant customer portfolios. Rachel, now 14, and Katie, 12, are members of the Willing Workers 4-H Club.

Away from work, Carol serves on the Northland Rescue Mission Board, YMCA

Exchange student

Edreas Samana, 16, a foreign exchange student from The Philippines, is also a member of the Fjerstad family for the remainder of the school year. Edreas is learning about farming through the family's cow-calf operation and by participating in activities of the Pine-to-Prairie 4-H Club in Fosston.

Dylan is involved with beef and other projects through the Pine-to-Prairie Club.

Other members of the Extension Committee are: Curt Knutson, Fisher (at-large member); Patricia Erickson, Fertile (District 1); Stephanie Olson, Crookston (District 3), and James Pulkrabek Jr., Euclid (District 5). County commissioners Bill Montague and Don Diedrich are also serving on the committee in 2009. County Auditor-Treasurer Gerald Amiot serves as secretary of the committee.

Solid Waste Fee set for '09, will increase for 2010

When setting the 2009 budget for solid waste, the decision was made by the Polk County Board of Commissioners to hold the Solid Waste Fee Assessment amount for one more year.

The current assessment amount is \$88 per residence – except within the City of East Grand Forks, which does not utilize the County's waste programs or facilities. The \$88 assessment was set in 2004 and has not been raised since that time. The assessment has been as high as \$96 in 2001.

The Solid Waste Fee Assessment is a special assessment which appears on the property tax statement. It is not a tax, but a fee for specific services available to County residents and may only be used for waste-related activities.

There are specific classifications for residential, second residential, multiple-residential and disabled. There are also non-residential solid waste fee assessments, which vary based upon waste generation.

The Solid Waste Fee Assessment is used to fund the Environmental Services Programs for Polk County. This fee is used to pay the tip fee for household burnable garbage at the Polk County Waste to Energy Incinerator in Fosston, MN, the Polk County Transfer Station, the Recycling Program (collection of glass, plastic, tin, aluminum, paper and cardboard), the Special Wastes Program (collection of auto batteries, fluorescent light bulbs, ballasts, passenger vehicle tires, appliances, used oil and oil filters, yard waste and scrap iron), the Household Hazardous Waste Program (unused or unwanted household chemicals disposal and the household chemical product exchange) as well as solid waste ordinance administration.

The Solid Waste Fee Assessment for 2010 must be increased due to the numerous changes in fees, contracts and expenses incurred since the last time the assessment was adjusted. While the amount of the increase is yet to be determined, Polk County wishes to advise its residents to plan accordingly.

Businesses with large assessments may wish to review their waste and determine what materials may be recycled, which may lower their assessment as well as reduce their collection service charges.

For more information on what materials are accepted at no charge to residents, please contact Polk County Environmental Services at 281-6445 or visit our website at www.co.polk.mn.us/list_departments/environmentalServices and search the recycling or special waste button. — **Jon Steiner, administrator, Polk County Environmental Services**

POLK COUNTY

Tillable AG Land Increases Per Township

HIGDEM 2009: 30% 2008: 15% 2007: 10% 2006: 10% 2005: 0%	SANDSVILLE 2009: 30% 2008: 15% 2007: 10% 2006: 5% 2005: 0%	FARLEY 2009: 20% 2008: 20% 2007: 10% 2006: 5% 2005: 0%	BRISLET 2009: 20% 2008: 20% 2007: 15% 2006: 15% 2005: 0%	HEGELAND 2009: 25% 2008: 25% 2007: 15% 2006: 15% 2005: 0%
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2009 Assessment
 No change for Waste Land (\$250 per acre), Non Tillable (\$900 per acre), and Wildlife (\$900 per acre)
 All Wetland Land to \$500 per acre
 All WRP Land to \$500 per acre

- State 5% Increase (2005)
- State 10% Increase (2005)
- State 20% Increase (2006)

Add State Increase to Local Effort and Year:
 Examples: Reis 2005 +5% Local AND +5% State Increases
 Eden 2006 +25% Local AND +20% State Increases