

Inaugural Edition — Summer 1996



Groundbreaking

Participating in the Juvenile Detention Center groundbreaking event, from left to right, were: Warren Olson and Henry Aaby, Norman County commissioners and Regional Corrections Board (RCB) members; Bill Brummer, Northwest Minnesota Multi-County Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA); Susan Mills, administrator; Doug Qualley, Polk County sheriff; Lee Nielson, Red Lake County commissioner and RCB member; Jack Schmalenberg,

Polk County coordinator; Lee Meier, Northwest Multi-County HRA (hidden); Lyle Eisert, Polk County commissioner and RCB member; Norvald Anderson, security director; Don Bakken, Polk County commissioner; Bret Burkholder, deputy administrator; Lisa Mangino, juvenile center director; Eugene Mattson, Polk County commissioner and RCB member; Steve Trudeau, Kraus-Anderson Construction Co.

County has extensive road improvement plan underway

Polk County has an extensive road improvement program underway this year. Included are approximately 22 miles of regrading of existing roadways. The roads to be regraded include 15 miles on CSAH 19, 27 and 44 and seven miles on CR 220 and 232.

Other improvements include 46 miles of projects on various county roads involving bituminous overlay surfacing with aggregate shouldering. A bituminous surface with aggregate shouldering has been placed on CSAH 54 located northeast of Crookston.

It is also anticipated that two to five

bridges will be replaced in the county this construction season.

A contract has been awarded for approximately 63 miles of seal coating. The seal coat process serves the purpose of sealing hair line cracks that have developed in a bituminous surfaced roadway. Sealing the cracks prevents moisture from draining through the surface to the aggregate base and eventually into the subgrade. Allowing moisture to penetrate into the aggregate base weakens the roadway and causes eventual deterioration of the bituminous surface.

— Roger Diesen, County Engineer

Juvenile Detention Center work underway

Construction of the new Juvenile Detention Center in Crookston began in May. Located adjacent to the Corrections Center in Crookston, it will have space for up to 14 male and female juveniles.

The west part of the building will have space for up to eight "secure" detention beds, while the east area will house up to six juveniles in a "non-secure" treatment setting. Juveniles taken in under arrest will stay up to eight days (excluding weekends and holidays) in the secure detention portion of the building, while the non-secure treatment program unit will hold juveniles from 30 to 90 days.

The result of a considerable planning effort on the part of local officials concerned about the lack of local space for detention and treatment of juveniles, the new facility will provide a needed resource to the area. The existing facility has seven beds and was full during most of 1995 into the first quarter of 1996. In addition, current building use restrictions have not provided the security deemed necessary for juvenile offenders awaiting court disposition.

The new building will also include a new Polk County Sheriff's Department Dispatch Center for emergency services. The current dispatch center is located in the Regional Law Enforcement and Corrections Center. Changes in technology and increased volume in emergency communication needs will be accommodated in the new center, which will also provide back-up surveillance for the secure juvenile detention areas of the building.

Cost of the detention, treatment and dispatch facilities will be \$2.9 million. Included in the cost is an updated heating systems for the Corrections Center and Annex buildings. The new system will

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Todd Spray is first fulltime investigator

Polk deputy assigned welfare fraud position

The Polk County Sheriff's Department, in a joint effort with Polk County Social Services, has assigned Deputy Todd Spray to work welfare fraud investigations.

Spray has been with the Sheriff's Department since May of 1989, and has worked as both a patrol deputy and as an investigator.

The current contract is set up to provide 80 percent of Spray's time for welfare fraud investigations. At present, Spray is working full-time to catch up on backlogged cases.

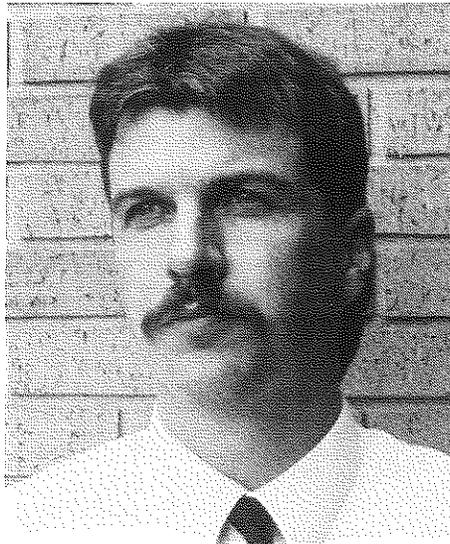
"In the past, there has not been anyone assigned to a full-time role in welfare fraud investigations. Consequently, it has been hard to do an efficient job of investigating the ever-increasing case load coming into the Sheriff's Department," Spray says.

With the new assignment (which was approved by the County Board on Feb. 26, 1996), it should be easier to effectively manage the welfare fraud case load.

Since February, there have been 57 cases in which action has been taken. This action ranges from case preparation to the interviewing of suspects. The total amount of overpayments in the cases worked totals of \$92,190 in benefits.

The backlogged cases have been reduced significantly and we are now up-to-date on the new cases, Spray reports.

With the new assignment, a different approach to welfare fraud investigations has been implemented. A proactive investigation method is being used in an effort to meet the ever-increasing problem of welfare fraud in Polk County. This includes also working with the Polk County Drug Task Force to uncover poten-



Deputy Todd Spray

tial fraud situations that could otherwise be overlooked.

Spray works closely with Arnie Roseland, fraud prevention specialist for the Polk County Social Services. The front-end, or initial investigation and case referral to the Sheriff's Department is handled by Roseland, and the back-end investigation is handled by Spray. Together, Roseland and Spray determine whether or not it is justifiable to refer a case to the Polk County Attorney's Office for prosecution.

"We hope that the new arrangement will result in a more efficient way of investigating welfare fraud in Polk County as well as reduce the enormous amount of overpayments of welfare benefits," Spray says.

Bonds sold to speed road work

The Polk County Board sold \$2 million in bonds in April to be used for construction projects on County State Aid Highways in the county.

The questions frequently asked are: How are these bonds to be used? Why are we issuing the bonds? Who pays back the issue? And, what are the benefits?

How are these bonds to be used? The bonds will be used to finance one grading project in 1996 on County State Aid Highway 27. In 1997, it is planned to expend the remainder of the bond issue on three different grading projects. Two projects will be funded with bond monies entirely and one project will be funded partially with bond monies.

Why are we issuing the bonds? The demand to improve our local road system is always being voiced. The concept of larger projects and more projects that can be incorporated into one contract enables the county to achieve lower overall costs. The cost of the bonds recently issued was very low because of the low interest rates.

Who pays back the issue? The bonds are retired with funds from future State Aid allocations. State statutes provide for selling bonds of this type without going to a referendum to get approval from county voters. The County Board is authorized to make this decision if it is deemed in the best interest of the county. The construction portion of the annual allotment is utilized to pay the principal and the maintenance portion of the annual allotment is utilized to pay the interest. It is anticipated that increases in the annual allotment will offset a portion of the payback.

What are the benefits? The biggest benefit to the residents of Polk County is that we are able to advance projects to an earlier construction schedule. Also we are able to consolidate or coordinate projects into larger contracts resulting generally in lower unit prices.

Offices in East Grand Forks to be 'co-located'

The Polk County Board has started the planning process to co-locate several county departments that provide county services to the residents in East Grand Forks and the surrounding areas.

The departments currently provide these services from various locations in East Grand Forks. In reaching the decision to co-locate services, the board carefully weighed factors affecting cost-efficient use of personnel, safety, and convenient delivery of services to our customers.

The decision to co-locate has led to a

partnership with the East Grand Forks Economic Development Authority to construct an office building to house the departments. The current plan is to locate the building in the Burlington Northern Triangle across the street from the recently completed East Grand Forks Police Department building.

Construction of the building is expected to begin in the spring of 1997 with substantial completion in early 1998.

The county departments and affiliated service organizations that will have offices

in the building are: Assessor, Attorney (part-time), Court Administration, Income Maintenance section, Nursing Service, Sheriff (part-time), Social Services, Veterans Services (part-time), Tri-County Community Corrections, Northwest Minnesota Emergency Medical Services, Minnesota Department of Economic Security, Minnesota Public Defender (part-time), and Northwestern Mental Health Center.

— John Schmalenberg, County Coordinator

'Improve' or 'Repair'

When a ditch needs work there's a big difference

Two procedures that provide for doing work on a legal drainage ditch are called an "improvement" and a "repair."

First, let's look at a repair.

Under the "repair" procedure, a ditch can be cleaned to its legal depth and width. The legal depth and width of the ditch was determined and documented when the ditch was first constructed. In some cases in later years the legal depth and width was changed as part of a ditch proceeding, but in most cases it has remained unchanged. By setting the depth and width of the ditch the capacity of the ditch to carry water was set, too.

The repair procedure is the way to go if it is determined that the ditch cleaned to its legal depth and width has adequate capacity for the drainage area it serves.

Some considerations in this determination are the present/future land use and drainage improvements/changes that may have been made since the ditch was first constructed.

A repair is started by a request from landowners affected by the ditch. Repairs on most ditches in Polk County are done by the County Board.

If the capacity of the cleaned ditch would not be adequate, then the "improvement" procedure is the way to go.

Under an improvement procedure, an existing ditch can be deepened and/or widened (resulting in a larger capacity to carry water), it can be extended, or an entirely new ditch can be constructed. A part of the improvement procedure is a new determination of who pays and what

portion they will pay for the ditching costs. There are several hearings required and, in general, an improvement is a much more involved procedure to get to completion. An improvement is started by affected landowners asking the watershed district to do a project. Note this difference: Repairs can be done by the county, but improvements must be done by the watershed district.

If a ditch needs work, one of the first steps is to make sure that a repair of the ditch will provide adequate capacity. In Polk County, the majority of existing ditches in a clean condition will have what most consider to be an adequate capacity.

— **Blake A. Carlson, County Ditch Engineer**

Diesen is new Polk highway engineer

New Polk County highway engineer Roger Diesen brings a wealth of experience to the job.

Most recently the county engineer in Benton County where he served for five years, Diesen has 35 years of experience as an engineer. He joined the Polk County High Department in October, succeeding Mike Rardin, who moved to St. Louis Park, MN, to become its public works director.

A native of Roseau County, Diesen grew up on a farm in the Skime area, graduating from Roseau High School in 1955. He attended the University of Minnesota for one year, North Dakota State School of Forestry in Bottineau for two years, and earned a degree in civil engineering while at North Dakota State University in Fargo for two and a half years.

Diesen worked one year for the U. S. Forest Service, then was an engineer for the Montana Highway Department for 12



Roger Diesen

years. In 1974 he became an engineer for a consulting firm in Minneapolis, and from 1975 to 1984 was the Marshall

County engineer. He was a public works director in the state of Washington for three years before returning to Minnesota to be the Lake of the Woods County engineer for three years. Diesen moved to Benton County in 1990.

"This has been a really good move," Diesen says of coming to Polk County. "The staff here is very good, very competent and Polk County has a much bigger construction and maintenance program. We've found the people here to be really good."

Diesen and his wife, Judy, who met at school in Bottineau, N.D., have two children: Todd lives in Mankato, MN, and Heather Jackson and her husband, Richard, live in Seattle, WA, with their daughter, Emelia.

Juvenile Center

Continued from Page 1

provide more economical and efficient heating in both buildings.

The project is a partnership between Tri-County Community Corrections for Polk, Norman and Red Lake counties and Polk County. Community Corrections will operate the facility as it does the adult detention facility and all other local cor-

rection programs and services.

With an opening date in January 1997, the facility should fill a gap in resources for dealing with serious youthful offenders in the local area.

— **Susan Mills, Director, Community Corrections**

County Commission

- Dist. 1** — Don Bakken, Fertile
- Dist. 2** — Warren Strandell, East Grand Forks
- Dist. 3** — Lyle Eisert, Crookston
- Dist. 4** — Rupert Syverson, McIntosh
- Dist. 5** — Eugene Mattson, East Grand Forks

The Board meets three times each month: At 8:30 a.m. on the first Tuesday; at 1:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday; and at 8:30 a.m. on the fourth Tuesday. The meetings are open to the public. For special accommodations, please call 281-5408.

Trained and on the job...

Tadman & Nieko give Polk a dynamic duo

During the summer and fall of 1995, the Polk County Sheriff's Department began researching and compiling information regarding the possible formation of a canine program.

Departments with working "K-9s" throughout Minnesota and the region were consulted. In December, the Sheriff's Department received approval from the Polk County Board to proceed with plans to establish a canine program.

During the planning stage, Deputy James (Jim) A. Tadman was selected to become the K-9 handler. Tadman has been with Polk County for approximately 8 1/2 years, working in areas of narcotics, general investigations, and patrol.

Financial donations from service clubs, charitable gambling, and private businesses have played an important role in making Polk County's canine program a reality. The donations have been used for specialized equipment and apparatus for K-9 training.

Deputy Tadman received a new working partner, K-9 Deputy Nieko, in late April. Nieko, a German Shepherd imported from Hungary, had prior training in tracking, obedience, criminal apprehension, agility, and article searches. Jim and Nieko completed six weeks of training at the Evansville, IN, Canine Academy.

Nieko is considered a dual purpose K-9, trained to work both narcotics and patrol. Even though Jim and Nieko have been living and working together for only a short time, they are already successful. The county's new crime fighting duo has recently been involved in several search warrants and vehicle searches for narcotics.

All of Polk County can be proud of their first K-9 Unit. We know Jim and Nieko will do a good job and will be extremely busy. **GOOD LUCK!**

— Deputy Karl Erickson



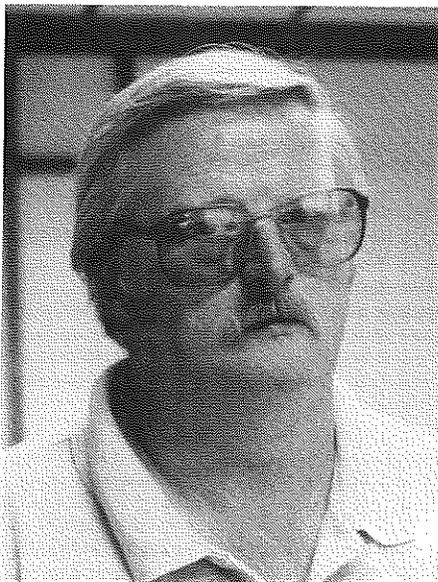
Deputy James A. (Jim) Tadman and Nieko

Skyberg named supervisor of county's buildings & grounds

Jan Skyberg is the new supervisor of buildings and grounds for Polk County.

A native and resident of East Grand Forks, Skyberg began his new position in December. He comes to Polk County with extensive experience in mechanics, construction, building maintenance, and heating plants. Skyberg is responsible for Polk County properties in Crookston, and East Grand Forks.

Before joining Polk County, Skyberg had most recently worked for 144 Associates, which owns and manages apartment properties in East Grand Forks. Prior to that he



Jan Skyberg

worked at the University of North Dakota for 12 years, including the last seven as its heating plant supervisor.

Skyberg has also been a welder for Sims Manufacturing and for Lockwood Manufacturing, both of Grand Forks, ND, and worked in construction for Combined Construction, also of Grand Forks.

Skyberg and his wife, Lonna, have two children: Tom is married and lives in Cleveland, OH, and Janna, will be a junior this fall at Senior High School in East Grand Forks.

Polk Newsletter to provide information about government

This is the first issue of the Polk County Newsletter. Its purpose is to provide information about developments in county government and other news that may be beneficial to the residents of the county.

Most of the articles will be written by department heads and other staff members — the people who are most knowledgeable and involved in that particular subject. Much of the editing and layout of the newsletter will be done by Warren Strandell, county commissioner from District 2. Strandell is a veteran newspaper journalist. The members of the county board will serve as editors.

Suggestions for articles can be directed to any of the commissioners, to department heads, other staff members, or to the County Coordinator's office. The newsletter is to be published three times a year.