

FREE
Take One

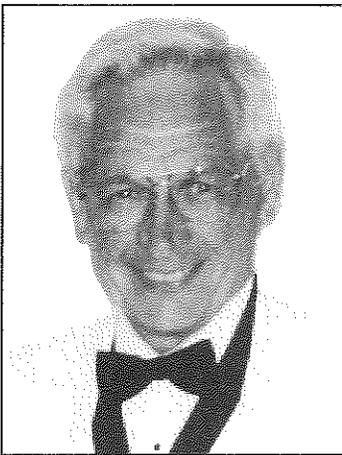
A hammer may
miss the mark but
never a compliment

POLK COUNTY Newsletter

Spring 2000

Budget battle remains on Board agenda

Vasek is new Board chair



Henry Vasek

The budget battle will continue to be the focus of the Polk County Commission in 2000. Like in the past four years, attempts to balance the budget will be forefront as the board continues its resolve to match revenues with expenditures while not falling further behind in the areas of equipment maintenance and replacement, road work, and the many services it provides.

The task of balancing the budget will remain extremely difficult in the face of ever rising cost of doing business, an ag economy that has been hardhit by several years of disaster and poor prices, and the state-mandated levy limits that put stringent limitations on the revenues that can be raised.

However, the county's total market value has still shown substantial increases. This new market value (see story on page 4) has the potential to generate additional revenue without adversely affecting those taxpayers whose property values have not increased.

New property value that has come on the tax

rolls since the flood totals \$70.9 million and additional sizable increases to the county's total market value are expected to materialize in 2000 and 2001 before stabilizing in future years.

Rising costs for health insurance and for "out of home" placements for juveniles, plus the need for additional jail space will also be among major issues to be dealt with during the year.

As a part of the re-organization, Dist. 5 Commissioner Henry Vasek, rural Warren, was elected chair of the board. He succeeds Warren Strandell, East Grand Forks, (Dist. 2).

The new vice chair is Warren Affeldt, Fosston, (Dist. 4). Affeldt will temporarily serve as chair while Vasek recovers from his recent illness. Other commissioners are: Don Bakken, Fertile, (Dist. 1), and Lyle Eisert, Crookston, (Dist. 3). Bakken will continue as chairman of the Social Services Board until July 1.

Study shows need for more jail space

The draft determination of a study being conducted to ascertain jail space needs for Polk, Norman and Red Lake counties shows just what was expected: There is definitely a need for more bed space.

Issues still to be addressed in the study will deal with recommendations concerning the number of additional beds that are needed, estimated costs for expansion, and whether new construction is justified.

The study, which is being financed through a grant from the State Legislature, is being conducted by Dave Voorhis, a national jail study consultant with expertise in matching low-cost construction and operational costs in jail settings. Voorhis, who is associated with the National Institute of Corrections, Boulder, Colo., is currently working on three other jail-planning projects in Minnesota.

An important aspect of the jail study is a survey requested by commissioners to ascertain public interest in supporting

expansion costs. Surveying will be completed through the mail in late February and March with the results published in a future edition of the county newsletter.

The jail and jail annex, both located in Crookston, are owned by Polk County. The

Jail Study Committee memberships on Page 2

Tri-County Regional Corrections Board, which is made up of two commissioners each from the three counties, jointly operates the jail facilities along with the associated corrections services. Costs of jail and corrections operations for each county is determined by their percentage of use.

The jail has been operating above capacity for a number of years. Purchasing additional jail space in other counties because of local jail crowding, cost taxpayers more than \$80,000 in 1999 and is expected to continue to rise. While county commissioners are aware of these costs they are

also being sensitive to the cost of any additional new construction or renovation and will be seeking out the advice not only of the study recommendations but of their constituents as they seek a solution.

In Minnesota, all jails are licensed by the State Department of Corrections and have established bed-space limits. While it is not unusual for jails to exceed these limits from time to time, the DOC has legal recourse when facilities habitually exceed them.

In 1999, the average population per day exceeded Department of Corrections limits by more than 25 percent on an ongoing basis. Shortages in space have resulted in early releases from incarceration and required waiting lists for persons to begin serving their sentences. These factors stress all local criminal justice systems on a daily basis. — Sue Mills, director, Tri-County Community Corrections



Karen Warmack

Warmack heads Unit on Family Preservation

Karen Warmack has been named supervisor of the Family Preservation Unit of the Polk County Social Services agency.

Warmack, who was chosen in an open selection process and began work on Dec. 1, directs activities in the areas of child and family mental health services, out of home placements, and child protection services throughout the county. She works from the East Grand Forks office.

A native of Willmar, Minn., she is a 1986 graduate of Bemidji State University, where she earned a degree in social services with minors in chemical dependency and psychology. Warmack worked for Polk County from 1986 until 1994 in the areas of child protection, adult mental health and chemical dependency. She worked for Clay County in child protection and assessment before returning to Polk County in 1996 to work with adult foster care and child care licensing. Following the flood of 1997, she served as coordinator/supervisor of the flood recovery-mental health outreach services.

Warmack and her husband, Jim, live in East Grand Forks and have two children: Kate, 8, and Jimmy, 4.

Johnson to do trial work as new member of County Attorney's office

Andrew Johnson is a new member of the Polk County Attorney's Office.

A native of Minneapolis, Johnson began work on Jan. 5. He fills one of two openings in the office.

Johnson, who attended Minneapolis South High School, earned bachelor degrees in physics and political science with a minor in math at Macalester College. He worked as an intern in Washington, D.C., for two years before returning to the

Twin Cities to attend law school at the University of Minnesota. He graduated there cum laude in 1998 and had been associated with the Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Criesi law firm in Minneapolis before accepting the Polk County position.

The son of Rev. Ronald and Barbara Johnson, he is mainly interested in trial work and will fill the opening created when Scott Buhler resigned and moved to Milaca, Minn.



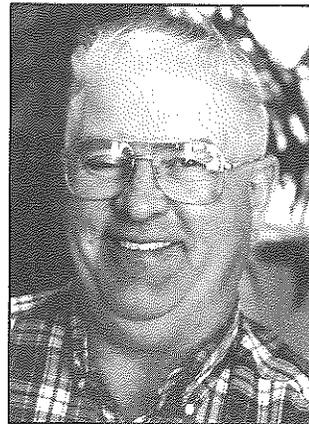
Andrew Johnson

Succeeds retiring Wally Jorgenson

Love to serve on RLWD Board

Roger Love, rural East Grand Forks, has been named by the Polk County Commission to serve a three-year term on the Red Lake Watershed Board of Managers. He succeeds Wally Jorgenson, Fisher, who retired from the board in January after serving three years.

Love, who has served on the Red Lake Watershed Advisory Board for 10 years, representing the Marais drainage area, has been a Nesbit Township farmer since 1963 and a trucker and truck line operator since



Roger Love

1958. He was a member of the Nesbit Town Board for 15 years and has long been active in local drainage and

water issues.

He is a member of the Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association and a former member of state Hereford and swine associations. A pilot and small airplane builder, he is a member and past president of the Experimental Aircraft Association, Chapter 380. Love and his wife Eva, have four grown children: Richard, Caroline (Tinkham), Marlys (Pester) and Dwight.

Dennis Nikolayson, rural Erskine, is the other Polk County member on the RLWD Board of Managers.

Jail Planning Task Force Committee

*Lyle Eisert, Polk Co. commissioner
*Warren Strandell, Polk Co. commissioner
*Don Anderson, Norman Co. commissioner
*Warren Olson, Norman Co. commissioner
*Edward Larson, Red Lake Co. commissioner
*Lee Nielson, Red Lake Co. commissioner
Jack Schmalenberg, Polk Co. coordinator
Doug Qualley, Polk Co. sheriff
Al Morken, Red Lake Co. sheriff
Myron Thronson, Norman Co. sheriff
Wayne Swanson, Polk Co. attorney
Susan Rantala-Nelson, Norman Co. attorney
Dan Geller, Red Lake Co. attorney
Paul Monteen, Crookston police chief

Mike Lealos, East Grand Forks police chief
Greg Holmvik, Ada police chief
* — Tri-County Corrections (TCC) Board member

Jail Planning "Options" Sub-Committee

Kent Bruun, Crookston, public/business rep.
Prof. Wendelin Hume, Univ. of No. Dakota
Lloyd Rath, TCC court services department
Norvald Anderson, TCC security director
Paul Bissonette, TCC support svcs. coordinator

(Jail Planning Task Force Committee members are also members of the sub-committee)

2000 census important to Polk County

Results of the 2000 Census will be important to Polk County for several reasons, including whether it retains its status as being part of a metropolitan statistical area (MSA), which is often a determining factor for federal and state aids.

The cities of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, lost 3,475 people following the flood — a loss great enough to threaten the current MSA status of the two-county area.

Grand Forks County and Polk County had combined population prior to the flood of 1997 of 101,298, just above the 100,000

minimum total for MSA status. Estimates following the flood, showed a total of 97,823. Without a population recovery, the combined two-county population falls below the minimum amount.

The census will be taken April 1 following a mailing to all country addresses.

In other developments regarding populations, residents could also be affected by proposals by the Census Bureau and Office of Management & Budget to abandon the MSA system. Created instead would be three "politan" population designations — mega-politans (1,000,000 or more resi-

dents), macro-politans (50,000-999,999 residents), and micro-politans (10,000-49,999 residents).

Polk County and East Grand Forks would lose under that scenario. The bright spot, however, is that "transportation law" funding would not be affected and qualifying road and bridge work would likely be financed as it is under current programs.

While these possibilities and situations are uncertain, the underlying message to county residents is simply this: Make every effort to participate in the census and help to make sure that everyone is counted.

Assessor's Office to be computerized

The first steps have been taken in a plan to computerize the Polk County Assessor's Office but full implementation of project will not be realized for several years.

"The new computer hardware has been ordered and installed, and we'll soon be getting the Computer-Aided Mass Appraisal (CAMA) software," Assessor

Robert Wagner says, "but it is going to take three to four years before we get the full benefit of the system."

The reason that implementation of the new system will take several years is because all records — years of hand-written information on each property in the county — must be entered into the new programming before full use can be made. Also to be entered into the system is the information collected in the county's soil study that is nearing completion along with parcel mapping geographic information system (GIS) data.

One of the most obvious advantages of the new system is that it will allow appraisers to download information from the main data base to a lap-top computer, take the information out into the field and update it on site.

Upon returning to the office, the appraiser will be able to electronically transfer the updated information back into the main data base. The new system will make all mathematical computations involved with setting property values.

"All information has to be entered by hand three times now... once on the appraiser's notes in the field, then from the notes into the permanent record cards when the appraiser comes back to the office, and then when the clerical staff enters the information into the county's main computer for tax calculations," Wagner says.

"Our efficiency will be greatly improved. We'll have more current and accurate information and, when appropriate, we'll be able to adjust the values for just one property or an entire jurisdiction in just a matter of seconds."

The method of valuing property will not change, Wagner says. "If anything, this should improve the fairness and quality of the assessment system," he says.

Planning and budgeting for the computerization project has been ongoing for several years.

Busy year planned for Highway Department

The year 2000 looms as a relatively busy year for the Polk County Highway Department. Although a 3 to 5-year construction hearing was not held in 1999, work is progressing on the projects for 2000 that were outlined in the program that was established in 1998.

It appears that "state aid" of various sources will continue to provide the greater percentage of the revenue available for projects on the highway systems in the county. These sources include our regular state aid allotment, federal funds for road construction and bridge replacement projects, bridge bonding for bridge replacement projects, and town bridge funds for bridge replacement projects.

It appears that our total state aid allotment for 2000 will be about the same or slightly greater than it was in 1999. It also appears that the state legislature and the governor are seriously looking at continuing a strong bonding program for local bridges, which is definitely needed after several years of luke warm support previous to action taken in 1998.

The established program for 2000 lists several paving projects, including approximately six miles on CSAH 35 between TH 59 and CSAH 8 located in Badger, Knute, King and Lessor townships, and five miles on CSAH 24 between TH 2 and CSAH 27 located in Columbia and Queen townships.

We also have a safety resurfacing project planned for the south two miles of CSAH 13 located in Crookston Township. It is proposed to utilize a percentage of ash in lieu of aggregate in this project. (See a separate story on ash utilization in this newsletter.)

Also included in the program are several grading projects including two projects on CSAH 51 between TH 75 and CSAH 14, however, one of these projects may have to be deferred as it was planned to be funded with local funds. A project is also planned for CSAH 18 between TH 2 and CSAH 17, which may be done in two phases over a span of two years. The project involves aggregate base and bituminous surfacing.

The department also has several bridge replacement projects planned for the coming construction season including township bridges and some county bridges. The replacement structures may be a bridge or culverts of various shapes and materials depending on the site situation.

The department also has a few projects that are carried over from 1999 that will be completed this year. The major work in this category is the project on CSAH 71 located near the University of Minnesota-Crookston. The remaining work on that project includes curb and gutter, some storm sewer, aggregate base and bituminous surfacing. —Roger Diesen, Highway Engineer

10 to 15 percent increases planned

EGF & lakeshore valuations going up

The valuation of properties located in the City of East Grand Forks and on the shores of Maple Lake, Cable Lake, Union Lake and Lake Sarah is going up.

But before these property owners hit the roof, they need to know that property taxes don't necessarily increase at the same percentage of valuation increases. There are many other factors other than valuation that contribute to an increase or decrease in tax such as legislative changes in the tax system or changes in local levies.

Also, Minnesota's Limited Market Value Law restricts taxable value to an 8.5 percent increase in value or 15 percent of the value increase, whichever is greater.

Determined by sales study

In East Grand Forks, the valuations of residential buildings will be increased by 15 percent. This increase, which is based on comparable sales, is designed to correct the 82 percent valuation ratio that was determined in the current sales study.

By state law, property valuations are required to fall within a range of 90 to 105 percent of their actual sale or market value. The effect of the 15 percent increase in East Grand Forks will "barely meet that minimum," according to Polk County Assessor Robert Wagner.

The lakeshore property valuation increases include:

Maple Lake — 10 percent on both land and buildings.

Cable Lake — 10 percent on land with adjustments to building values to be made on an individual basis.

Union Lake — 15 percent on both land and buildings.

Lake Sarah — 15 percent on both

land and buildings.

While both Union and Sarah properties are scheduled for general increases, those properties that were physically damaged or made inaccessible by the high-water conditions will be looked at and adjusted on an individual basis.

Going out of sight

"Lake property sales just keep going out of sight. Even properties that are inaccessible or under water are selling at prices beyond our previous adjusted valuations," Wagner says.

Maple Lake properties have been especially hard-hit by valuation increases. State-mandated increases of 15 and 10 percent were made in 1997 and 1998, respectively. Another 25 percent approximate increase was made in 1999 with 10 percent more scheduled for 2000. All Union and Sarah lakeshore properties received a 20 percent state-mandate increase in 1999 and Union got a 15 percent hike in 1997.

The increases made by the Polk County Assessor's Office, Wagner says are "so that the value falls within the acceptable range of what the State Department of Revenue would otherwise mandate." A valuation that is set by the county, he says, can be contested at Board of Reviews, while a state-mandated increase cannot be challenged. "At least, when the county changes values, it can be questioned," Wagner says.

Today's market

"People have to realize that it is not what they paid for their home, or the amount of money that they have invested in a home that determines its valuation," Wagner says. "Valuation is determined by what that home or property would sell for in today's market.

Valuation increases build the tax base and as the tax base broadens the tax burden is spread out."

No valuation increases are planned on farmland where the current study showed them to be valued at about 95 percent compared to an 89.9 percent mark a year ago. This change means that values have "slipped slightly," Wagner says. "We've seen some sales that have been high and some that have been low, and it hasn't really mattered where in the county they occurred."

Rural residential sales strong

Rural residential properties are being adjusted on an individual basis as needed. "Some of these sales have been very strong," Wagner relates. Other individual adjustments are being made in the City of Fisher, Garfield Township near Fertile, and in Rosebud, Columbia and Brandsvold townships near Fosston. Wagner notes that there has been new construction throughout the county with the flood recovery going on in East Grand Forks leading the way.

Board of Review notices will be mailed to all county property owners who get a \$1,000 or more increase in valuation or who receive a classification change. The Board of Review is the place to challenge valuation and classification changes. However, taxpayers with questions or concerns may contact the Polk County Assessor's Office prior to the board of review.

Board of review notices are mailed at least 10 days prior to the date of the review but are mailed much earlier in Polk County. The local boards of review are conducted April 1 through May 9 with the county board of review held in June.

— 1997 flood —

20 properties acquired; Thiel Addition buy-out program started

Polk County has acquired 20 properties that were found to be substantially damaged as a result of the 1997 flood. The structures on those properties have been removed and the site restored to a natural condition. As required by the grant guidelines, all acquired properties shall be kept free of structures or in a compatible open space land use.

Polk County has identified additional properties in Grand Forks Township, just north of East Grand Forks, that may be subject to additional flood hazards. Funding for this additional project, located in and immediately around Thiel's Subdivision, has been sought

from various state agencies.

Funds have been received to begin this project and purchase offers have been made to four additional property owners in this area. Acquisition in this identified area will continue until funds are depleted, or all eligible property owners have accepted or declined their purchase offers.

This second acquisition program will conclude in August 2000 as the grants from these funding sources expire. — **Jon Steiner, Polk County director of Environmental Services**

Bank erosion forces relocation of graves

The West Polk Soil & Water Conservation District has been working on a project to mitigate the erosion of gravesites at the Fisher Lutheran Church Cemetery.

The Red Lake River is located 300 feet from the cemetery but, over the past four years, erosion and high water have taken a toll on the streambanks of the river. The bank to the south of the river has been collapsing and bank failures have worked their way into the cemetery.

When called to the site, the most recent failure was less than 20 feet from one of the graves. Over 650 graves were at risk.

The Fisher Streambank Stabilization Project was identified as a Polk County Local Water Plan objective and is ranked as a high priority project through 2001. If the failures in the streambank were to continue into the cemetery, the river could be contaminated by chemicals and pathogens. Sediment concentrations from the erosion were a concern.

In March 1999, a meeting of local citizens and representatives from 15 government agencies was held in Fisher. A plan of action was developed that included relocating over 200 graves, de-watering the land to the south of the cemetery, sloping the streambank and looking into options to control erosion in the channel.

In July, over 70 graves were relocated. This included 32 older graves that required the assistance of Dr. John Williams, a forensic anthropologist at the University of North Dakota. He donated a great deal of time and expertise to the project. The remaining graves were contained in vaults and were able to be moved by a contractor. Local landowners contributed greatly to this process by donating time and equipment.

Construction was completed on the first portion of the upper bank area last fall. Nearly 4,000 cubic yards of soil were removed from the critical area. This was done to remove some of the weight that was contributing to the bank failures. The bank was then sloped and seeded. A grant of \$40,000 was approved under the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources to assist in the cost of this project.

Additional work was necessary to prepare an addition to the cemetery on land acquired to the south. This property will be used for future burials and for graves that will be relocated this summer. The material removed from the bank was used to raise the ground level. This was done to prevent water from pooling south of the cemetery and causing saturated soils in upcoming years. Volunteers from the University of Minnesota-Crookston mapped the area that will be worked on this summer. They are compiling information from church records and from markers in the cemetery that will be beneficial for relocation of graves.

The Army Corps of Engineers is conducting a feasibility study on the project and will provide a design for work in the channel. Engineering was provided at no cost through the Northwest Minnesota Joint Powers Board for SWCDs.

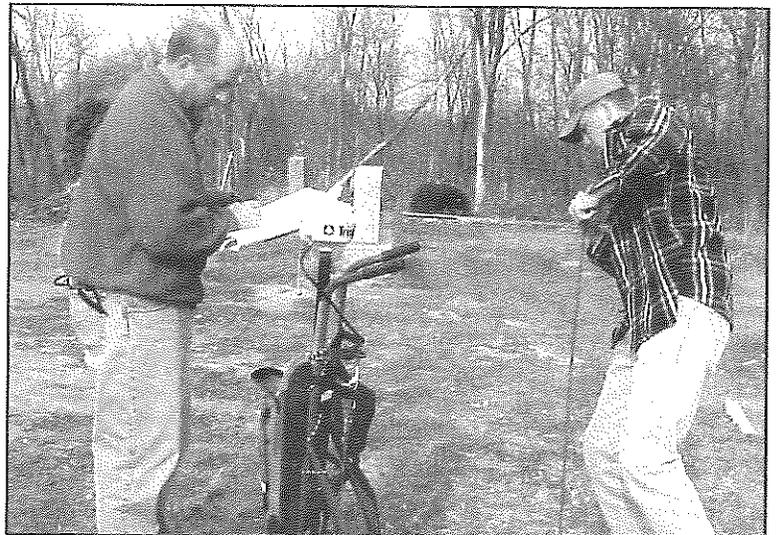
We hope to complete much of the construction this year and are pleased with the cooperation we have received from local citizens and the many agencies involved. Cost of the project for the first year was over \$77,000. Volunteer labor, donated equipment, cash donations and grant funds offset these costs. — Nedra Hoberg, West Polk Co. SWCD



Volunteers working on gravesite relocation in July 1999.



Dr. John Williams (kneeling in grave) and his UND students worked methodically on the relocation of un-vaulted graves,



UMC volunteers (instructor Phil Baird and one of his students) did GIS mapping of gravesites to be moved this summer.

Talking trash

Receipts up in 1999, budget outlook improved at Polk County incinerator

The Polk County Solid Waste Resource Recovery Plant at Fosston had a good year in 1999 with trash receipts up almost 1,000 tons from 1998," according to Willard "Bill" Wilson, plant manager.

"This will help the budget in many ways. After last year's fiasco with several unplanned stack tests, low steam sales due to MDV (Minnesota Dehydrated Vegetables) and Northern Food & Dairy being out of operation for part of the year, and major secondary refractory repairs, we needed all the help we could get."

When all receipts and bills are known, Wilson is expecting a \$100,000 favorable report for 1999. This compares to a budget deficit of over \$300,000 in 1998.

"The tip fee has now been increased from \$65 to \$70 per ton, which should enable us to meet budget projections for 2000 and hopefully for several years beyond then," Wilson says.

"We will need to perform several stack tests this year, two of which will be compliance tests. To prepare for these tests, we will be upgrading both electrostatic precipitators with new transformers and controls as well as installing newly designed electrodes. This should improve our overall flue gas collection efficiency and help us to meet the upcoming air rules, which will have more stringent limit."

An engineering stack test will be per-

formed in late February to show the results of the ESP upgrade. Acid gas levels will be measured and a test conducted by injecting reagents designed to neutralize acid gases. "The engineering tests will help determine equipment and reagents we can utilize to meet the new air rules due to be released this spring," he says.

Northern Food & Dairy, which is in the middle of a \$4.5 million plant expansion, plans to begin manufacturing an all natural additive in early summer that extends the shelf-life of various packaged food products such as fig-newton bars, Wilson says. The company's steam purchases are expected to increase dramatically when those operations begin.

The resource recovery plant's up-front facility continues to produce many benefits for the entire operation, according to Wilson. "All in all, this system has been a big success. Two other plants in Minnesota have submitted grant applications to construct a similar system. However, grant funding may not be available. They are looking for other funding options as they are convinced this type facility is a definite must for resource recovery plants."

The EPA's new incinerator air rules are expected to be released in the next several months, according to Wilson. "We will have two to three years to come into compliance and we have a grant approved to provide almost 50 percent

funding assistance for whatever retrofit project we need to meet the new rules," he says.

Discussions have begun with the other four counties that are members of the incinerator operation regarding a possible extension to the waste supply contracts that will expire in August 2003.

"A five-year extension is being reviewed and seems acceptable," according to Wilson. "The main concern is with the tip fee, which is now substantially greater than the tip fees at landfills. When the current contracts expire, the incinerator and up-front debt service will be paid off. At that time, the potential exists to make a significant reduction to the tip fee. We hope to have some resolution to this matter by this spring."

Recent improvements in the county's landfill operation include construction of an equipment storage building and the purchase of a used Bomag trash compactor. The building, built to house the track equipment used to spread and compact the trash and ash, was constructed last summer near the disposal sites at the landfill. The trash compactor, which was purchased after Winona County closed its landfill, will improve compaction ability and result in a more efficient use of the lined landfill cells. "The landfill now has a projected life of over 30 years. Use of this compactor could increase that life even further," Wilson says.

Material to be substituted for a portion of gravel in asphalt mix

Ash utilization test slated on CSAH 13 this summer

About 1.5 miles of CSAH 13 will be used this summer for a test project utilizing ash in the construction of a hard-surface roads.

The effort, which has been in planning with state highway and environment officials, was first proposed several years ago. The ash will come from the incinerator at the Polk County Solid Waste Resource Recovery Plant in Fosston with the Polk County Highway Department conducting the test as part of this summer's road work schedule.

The Office of Environmental Assistance has approved a \$52,400 grant to finance the project, which proposes to substitute

ash for a portion of the gravel used in asphalt mix. The proposal has been submitted to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency for its final review and approval for such concerns as design, environmental monitoring, base line sampling and performance evaluation.

Approval has been given to a mix that would include 40 percent "old" ash and 20 percent "new ash" as a percent of total aggregate. The old and new ash references are to ash collected prior to the installation of the up-front separation unit at the incinerator in 1996 and those that were generated after the up-front unit was put into use. The ash samples were tested by the

Minnesota Department of Transportation office in Bemidji. These tests produced an acceptable asphalt mix design for use in a construction project.

The incinerator, which is owned by Polk County and became operational in August 1988, receives solid waste from five area counties — Beltrami, Clearwater, Mahanomen, Norman and Polk. The resulting ash is currently being disposed of in the Polk County landfill facility near Gently. Using ash in road work is expected to extend the life of the landfill, while putting the material to a good and environmentally safe use.

State takeover of court system slated July 1

The administration of the 9th Judicial District Court system will be taken over by the State of Minnesota on July 1.

This is good for Polk County because it means that the state will assume all costs and responsibility for operating the court system at a time when those costs are escalating quite rapidly with projections to increase even more.

The takeover was approved by the 1999 session of the State Legislature. In return for being relieved of court operation costs,

counties in the 9th District will give up all fine revenue plus an amount of their HACA (Homestead and Agricultural Credit) aid that is equal to the cost of operating the court system during 1999.

The increasing court costs are largely for such things as court interpreters, guardian ad litem orders, psychiatric examinations and new programs for which there has been no state funding.

The legislation included state takeovers in the 5th, 7th and 9th districts along with

making permanent the state takeover trial that has been underway for the past four years in the 8th District.

Polk County Administrator Sally Holewa and her staff will become state employees as a part of the takeover. Some new procedures will come with the change involving jury management, shared use of interpreters and other employees, and improved methods for the collection of fines and other money that is owed the courts. Wage scales and benefit programs, she says, will not change significantly.

Anniversaries

Hire Date	Employee	Job Description	Years
7-1-70	Delbert Desrosier	Maintenance II	30
9-14-70	Richard Vaudrin	Maintenance II	30
1-1-75	Marlys Lovejoy	Financial Worker	25
1-6-75	Sandra Schultz	Dispatch Records	25
5-19-75	Marilyn Egeland	Financial Worker	25
10-3-75	Gerald Kovar	Shop Foreman	25
2-19-80	Carole Olson	Clerk/Typist Cash. IV	20
7-15-80	Virginia Spear	Accounting Clerk I	20
8-4-80	Nicolette Love	Fin Asst. Sup I	20
10-1-80	Carole Juvrud	Clerk/Typist Cash IV	20
10-1-80	James Goldsmith	Maintenance II	20
12-1-80	Judith Luetjohann	Confidential Secretary	20
2-1-85	Larry Ranum	Maintenance II	15
5-15-85	Margaret Schumacher	Appraiser Tax Officer IV	15
5-20-85	Brian Lindberg	Maintenance II	15
10-7-85	Debora Strande	Financial Worker	15
11-1-85	Dean Rasmussen	Engineering Tech IIIC	15
11-1-85	Ricky Thompson	Engineering Tech IIIC	15
1-1-90	Terrie Bangen	Appraiser Tax Officer IV	10
1-2-90	Jacqueline Rogers	Financial Worker	10
3-19-90	Cheryl Fontaine	Financial Worker	10
5-1-90	Scott Bixby	Patrolman	10
8-13-90	Paulette Wagner	Social Worker MSW	10
9-4-90	Patty Frydenlund	Accountant/Secretary	10
9-10-90	Betty Gulsvig	Clerk Typist Cashier II	10
10-23-90	Ruth Hulst	RN	10
10-29-90	Patty Hemdon	Soc. Worker (child prot)	10
11-19-90	Dan Chapa	Sergeant	10
11-23-90	Alan Erickson	Waste Combustion Oper.	10
12-10-90	Greg Landa	Appraiser Tax Officer IV	10
12-10-90	Don Blasey	Maintenance II	10
1-1-95	Warren Strandell	County Commissioner	5
1-9-95	Wade Burrack	Loader Operator	5
1-16-95	James Umess	Transport Officer	5
2-6-95	Davey Mills	Social Service Sup. I	5
3-6-95	Mark Johnson	Patrolman	5
3-15-95	Brian Lundeen	Patrolman	5
3-15-95	Jon Steiner	Environmental Ser. Off	5
3-27-95	Leslie Ball	Loader Operator	5
4-14-95	Denise Waxler	Dispatcher	5
5-8-95	Mary Kaye Erickson	Custodian	5
9-6-95	Linda Gill	Case Aide	5
10-2-95	Roger Diesen	Highway Engineer	5
12-12-95	Joan Shulind	Soc. Worker MSW/CPS	5
12-18-95	Jan Skyberg	Bldg. Grounds Supt.	5

New judge delayed but preparations will continue

It was initially thought that the new 9th Judicial District Court judge that is coming to Polk County would be seated by July 1. That has now changed to a date later in the year but plans to arrange for his/her chambers on the "courtroom floor" of the courthouse will not be put on hold.

The project to free-up space there for the new judge and his/her court reporters and law clerks will likely result in the relocation of the Tri-County Corrections' probation and parole services to the nearby Professional Building facility. Also likely to be moved from the courtroom floor of the courthouse is a portion of the law library. That collection is slated to move to the ground floor and to share space there with the video conference center.

Currently, District Court judges John M. Roue and Richard C. Taylor have chambers on the courtroom floor, while Judge Michael J. Kraker has chambers in Mahanomen.

The three judges work in Polk, Norman and Mahanomen counties on a rotating schedule handling an annual average of 246 major criminal cases, 105 civil cases, 169 family law cases, 324 juvenile matters, 3,758 minor criminal cases, 427 minor civil cases, and 78 probate matters. Those workloads are far above the state average.

When the new judge arrives, it is anticipated that Pennington and Red Lake counties will be included with Polk, Mahanomen and Norman counties in a five-county, five-judge work area.

Plans are also being made to add one or more new hearing rooms to the courtroom floor space layout. This will allow the two existing courtrooms to be made available for jury trials five days a week.

The new judge was provided for in the Omnibus Crime Prevention & Judiciary Funding Bill passed by the 1999 session of the legislature.

Census Facts

• The 1950 census was the first civilian use of an electronic computer... the UNIVAC I. The use of the machine represented the dawning of the "computer age." It provided tabulation of some 4,000 items per minute or double the amount that electro-mechanical tabulating machines could do.

• For the 1950 census and for every decennial census before that,

each housing unit in the country was personally visited by an enumerator. Beginning with the 1960 census, householders in urban areas were the first to be mailed questionnaires. They were asked to complete and hold them until an enumerator came by to pick them up. Today, the vast majority of housing units receive census questionnaires in the mail.



A paddle boat and pieces from a boat dock lead into the home of Roland and Nancy Gagner on Lake Sarah. The picture was taken in September before pumping was started.



A farm tractor was used last fall to begin pumping down the levels of Union Lake and Lake Sarah. Eventually, a 40-horsepower electric motor will provide the power for the pumping operation.

Union Lake and Lake Sarah reduced by 20 inches

Lake levels reduced by first pumping activity

The levels of Union Lake and Lake Sarah are down about 20 inches from their high-point last spring and summer offering some relief to those properties most severely affected by high water.

Most of the reduction — about 16 inches — is the result of the first two months of the lake pumping effort that was finally put into practice late last fall. The combination of evaporation, a dry fall and a late freeze are being credited for the other four inches.

The pumping effort, which was actuated by formation of the Union/Lake Sarah Improvement District, began in late October and was shut down at the end of December.

The shutdown then, according to Dale Knotek, president of the district, was for two reasons. One was that a Dec. 31 shut-down date was specified in the Department

of Natural Resources pumping permit and the second was that a failure occurred about the same time in the outlet pipe installed under Polk County Road 42.

The pipe will be repaired before pumping can resume next spring. Pumping will not be permitted during the nesting period from about mid-May to mid-July and will be controlled to 10 cubic feet per second (cfs).

The pumping done last fall was at rates up to 20 cfs and was powered on a temporary basis by a farm tractor. The permanent pumping arrangement will be powered by a 40-horsepower electric motor. The project, which includes a protected interconnection between the two lakes, moves water into the Sand Hill River system.

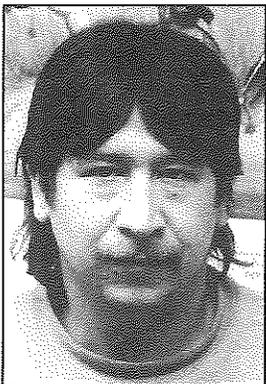
In forming the improvement district, property owners agreed to assess them-

selves the \$610,000 cost of the project. Operating costs for the pumping, maintenance and the lab work that must be done to ensure that the quality of water entering the river system is maintained will also be paid by the property owners. Grants may be used to assist in meeting those costs. Costs for the initial pumping phase and for the lab testing were about \$800 a day.

"There has definitely been some relief for property owners but because of delays in permitting, slowdowns and breakdowns, it hasn't been as much as we had first hoped," Knotek says. "It has been a bit of a bumpy road."

Besides Knotek, lake improvement district directors include Jerome Birkeland (vice president), Bev Sande, Tom Rongen and Roland Gagner. Phil Weiler is the district's secretary-treasurer.

Lewis, Oliver join Polk County Highway Department



Todd Lewis

There are two new employees in the Polk County Highway Department.

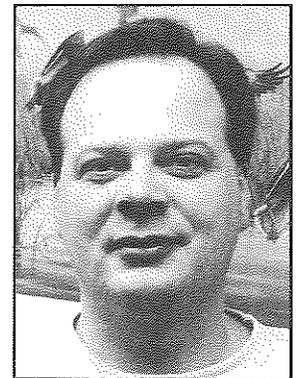
Todd Lewis, who had previously worked for the department on a part-time basis in the summer, joined the department fulltime on Nov. 1 as sign man.

A native of Winger and 1984 graduate of Lincoln High School, Thief River Falls, he had previously been a tire repair person and truck driver for Hartz Foods, Inc., Thief River Falls, and a truck driver, tire repair person and mechanic for LePier's, Inc., Fosston.

He and his wife, Darsey, and children, Jessica, 13, and John, 8, live in Winger.

Scott Oliver, who recently worked in route sales for Ameripride Services, joined the department in December as an engineering technician IIB.

A 1980 graduate of Crookston High School, he had also worked previously in the roasting plant at Dahlgren's, Inc., for 17 years. He and his wife, Terri, have three children: Travis, 17; Ross, 15, and Tanner, 11. They live in Crookston.



Scott Oliver