

Polk County Newsletter

Spring 2002

Plan for county purchasing is shelved

The effort by Polk County to develop a "county-based" program to purchase services for its medical assistance (M.A.) clients has been placed on hold by direction of the County Board.

The action comes as a result of a number of complexities and hurdles that have made the process of gaining state and federal approval too cumbersome and time-consuming to continue to pursue, according to County Board Chair Warren Affeldt.

Work performed and information collected to date, he says, will not be discarded, however. "The plan, which would have coordinated and provided for the health care needs of M.A. clients locally as much as possible, isn't dead. It is simply being put on the shelf for now. A lot of people... especially County Coordinator Jack Schmalenberg, have put in hundreds, even thousands of hours of work on this project since 1997. We, as a board, couldn't see continuing until some things change in the approval process."

Besides an expected cost savings in meeting the needs of M.A. clients, a county-based purchasing plan was seen as a way to support local health providers over insurance plans

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Affeldt is board chair

Warren Affeldt, Fosston, is chair of the Polk County Board for 2002. He succeeds Warren Strandell, East Grand Forks.

The new vice chair is Eugene "Jeep" Mattson, East Grand Forks.

The leadership changes occurred as a part of the annual re-organization in January. The board chair and vice chair positions rotate through the commissioners.

Mattson also serves as the chair of the Polk County Local Social Services Agency Board, with District 3 Commissioner Bill Montague, Crookston, as vice chair. The Social Services Board, which meets monthly as a separate body, is made up of the five



Warren Affeldt

county commissioners and two at-large members. Its fiscal year will end on June 30, with Montague scheduled to become chair on July 1.

The most pressing issues

that the County Board will deal with in 2002 will be those dealing with budget and how the county will be affected by the actions that the State Legislature and governor take in dealing with the state's revenue shortfall. Local government officials — also including cities, schools and townships — are all waiting, he says, to see how they will be affected by adjustments in how state programs are funded.

The turn-around in the economy and the events of Sept. 11, Affeldt notes, came at a bad time for Polk County. "We were just starting to get our financial house in pretty good shape when all of this

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Polk County Public Health is introducing its new logo this spring!

The heart shaped "o" signifies both a caring, committed staff and a healthy heart that demonstrates the importance of making positive lifestyle choices.

The slogan, "We put healthy ideas to work" speaks to public health activities in promoting health with individuals, families and the community at-large.

Our nation's health care expenditures topped \$1.3 trillion last year! Less than 4 percent of every health care dollar is spent on prevention.

And we have a growing uninsured population. Half of the causes of death in the United States

can be linked directly to negative health behaviors — such as violence and tobacco, lack of exercise, poor diet, alcohol and illicit drug use — and are therefore preventable.

These behaviors result in high economic and social costs as well as impact the quality of life for individuals.

Primary prevention is what public health is all about. Public health has the governmental responsibility to promote and protect the health of our citizens. In order to do that, we must have media savvy in order to compete with the many messages and ads that people are exposed to on a daily basis. And unfortunately, many of

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Polk County incinerator eyes debt-free status

Partners agree to new contracts

The Polk County Solid Waste Resource Recovery Plant — known by most as the Polk County incinerator at Fosston — will continue to operate with the same four county partners through Dec. 31, 2008.

Beltrami, Clearwater, Mahanomen and Norman counties have agreed to new five-year contracts to continue to deliver their solid waste to the plant. The new agreements, which will begin on Aug. 16, 2003, amount to an extension of the original 15-year contracts developed when the plant was constructed in the late 1980s.

The plant, which is owned and operated by Polk County, began processing municipal solid waste from these five counties in 1988. An advisory board comprised of commissioners from the five counties oversees the operations.

In 1966, a materials removal facility (MRF) was added primarily to remove problem and objectionable items, most of which are recyclable. The MRF was named "Material Recovery Facility of the Year" by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers at the north American Waste to Energy Conference in May 2001.

Final payment on bonds

Good news for residents of these counties is that the final payment on the bonds sold to finance construction of the plant will be made in December. As a result, a reduction in the tip fee to \$55 per ton is projected. That rate will begin when the new contracts become effective in August 2003. Currently, the tip fee is \$70 per ton.

Tip fees will cover the cost of the retrofits needed to comply with the new, more restrictive federal clean air rules that recently came into effect. Those rules,

which have been adopted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, address dioxin, furan, mercury, lead, cadmium and acid gas emission requirements.

Compliance will be accomplished with the help of a \$1,425,000 matching grant received from the Office of Environmental Assistance. The local share of the overall \$2.95 million project will come from monies accrued in regular operations and by continuing the \$70-per-ton tip fee through the full length of the original contract even though the cost of the debt service will end some eight months sooner.

Debt-free goal

"We're really hoping to get through this retrofit debt-free and we will do that if we can avoid having to install bag-house equipment," facilities manager Willard "Bill" Wilson says. A bag-house, at a cost of \$1.1 million, will become necessary if other measures aren't successful in bringing emissions into compliance and may require new debt service. Wilson is hopeful that the bag-house won't be needed. The total project cost without adding baghouses will be about \$1.7 million.

The first two of four possible phases in the retrofit project have already been completed. Phases one and two involved making upgrades to the electrostatic precipitators, the installation of data acquisition system for reporting and record-keeping, and some stack testing to determine baseline levels of the various pollutants that must be further controlled. Economizers, which transfer heat in the flue gases to the water that runs through the coils in the units, will also be installed.

"The benefit of the economizers is that they reduce the temperature of the gases

after they come out of the boiler. This at a place in the system where dioxins and furans form or are reformed. For best control, the temperature of the flue gases should be less than 400 degrees. We're expecting to be able to control them to a temperature of 375 degrees and don't want to drop the temperature too much because, with a steel stack that is 170-foot tall, if you do, condensation will result and that moisture will eventually eat up the stack.

Added benefit

"An additional benefit from the function of the economizers is that the heat they collect in the water is routed to the plant's boiler, thus adding to the steam that is created and can be sold," Wilson says.

Phase three, which will begin in May, will involve the construction of a 4,000-square-foot addition to the incinerator building that will house equipment to blow a reagent into the flue to neutralize acid gas. This will happen right after the economizers and the reagent will be circulated for three or four seconds before going through the electrostatic precipitators, where it will be removed. In removing the reagent, the precipitators will serve as a filter to meet the new, lower particulate emission limits.

The back-up plan, Phase four is the bag-house which will only become necessary if the other work doesn't bring the plant into full compliance. "I don't believe it will be necessary, but if it does, we'll have to raise the tipping fee to \$59 per ton. The partner counties are in agreement with that," Wilson says.

Board re-organizes

Continued from Page 1

occurred," he says. "While we still would have had budget concerns, we had been able to make a significant improvement in our overall financial condition in the last couple of years. But, with what has happened at the federal and state levels because of the effect of the economy and the terrorist attacks, no one is sure what is going to happen."

As a prelude to possible reductions in state and federal programs and support, county department heads have been advised to begin thinking about where additional cuts in their operations and county services might be made. Additionally, the County Board has determined that

all staff "replacement" requests will come under review. Normally, replacement positions — those that become vacant by resignation or retirement — have been regularly filled.

"Positions deemed critical to operations will be re-filled," according to Affeldt, "but even those jobs will be scrutinized, possibly to include a look at how duties might be re-organized. In a worst case scenario, we could be forced to eliminate some county services. We hope it doesn't come to that and I don't think that it will, but, if it does, we have to be ready to respond, because if we don't the situation will only get worse."

On the positive side of budget discussions is that neither the House nor Senate is proposing a reduction in HACA (Home and Agricultural Credit Aid) to counties, and that both the legislature and the governor are supporting a large bonding program as a way to promote economic recovery.

Among projects that could be financed through additional bonding are additional county road projects. The County Highway Department is prepared for that possibility and has several projects ready for construction as early as this summer.

Cost of social services in Polk ranks 62nd out of state's 87 counties

When compared to other counties in Minnesota, the portion of local taxes that Polk County residents pay to provide social services for its residents ranks at the lower end of the scale.

Statistics for the 2000 year, which are the latest available, show that the delivery cost per capita in Polk County ranks 62nd out of the 87 counties in the state. This is a marked improvement from the 37th place position that Polk County held in 1998 and the No. 14 spot of 1999. Final statistics for 2001 won't be available until about mid-year.

"I feel really good about where we are going in terms of providing services to our residents in the most effective way possible and at the least cost to county residents," Kent Johnson, social services director, says. "Our low-cost position is a tribute to all management level personnel and their staff. It is both the result of a team effort to access as much as possible all state and federal reimbursements for the services that are provided and from a change in the way we deal with situations when a juvenile might have otherwise been placed out of the home."

Reimbursement revenue

While the effort to capitalize on reimbursement opportunities has contributed to administrative costs that appear to rank as the 13th most expensive in the state, the net result has been more than offset by the revenues that have been generated.

Although state audits don't readily make a note of it, Polk County regularly acts as the fiscal host for a number of multi-county consortiums in the northwest region of the state. "As a result of our role as the host county, monies granted and spent on programs in from five to seven other area counties are often attributed to Polk County alone," fiscal supervisor Doug Axtell relates. "This can give the public the impression that the cost of providing social services in Polk County are at the high end when, in fact, they are at the low end."

The multi-county consortiums usually include Kittson, Mahanomen, Marshall, Norman and Red Lake counties, Axtell says, with Pennington and Roseau counties also a part of other collaborative efforts.

Human services spending in Polk County during the seven-year period from 1994 to 2000 increased by an average of only two percent annually for purchased

services and aids. During the same time the average increase statewide was five percent. Polk County's average annual increase in the cost of administration of programs in the seven-year period has been eight percent compared to the state average of seven percent. The costs in Polk County, however, include those for the administration of program grants awarded to the multi-county consortiums.

Fund balances rebuilt

As a result of revenues generated by qualifying for state and federal reimbursements and from a sharp reduction in the cost of "out of home placement" of juveniles, the Social Services Department has been able to significantly rebuild its operating fund balances, Axtell notes.

The state auditor has recommended that the department have enough funds on hand to cover from three to six months of operations. It wasn't long ago that the department's low operating balances were a concern. At one point about 10 years ago, a short-term loan was needed from the county's general fund to pay for normal operations while the department waited for state and federal program monies to arrive.

The department's success in reducing out of home placement costs has gained attention statewide. These cost reductions were attained by a change in the approach to the problem.

In traditional practice, troubled juveniles are routinely placed in a variety of facilities when their own homes are determined to be unsafe or lacking appropriate parenting. The daily per diem cost for placements in these area facilities, depending on the services prescribed, ranges up to \$300 a day.

Review started in 1997

The method used to determine how these placements were ordered in Polk County came under review in mid-1997 when out of home placement costs, which are largely the responsibility of local taxpayers, reached an all-time high of \$2.4 million.

In 1999, at the urging of social services staff, the County Social Services Board, despite not having any budget money available, authorized the employment of five "para-professionals." The role of these para-professionals was to "follow up" on programs determined by social service case management staff to improve conditions in the home and family. The

new program focus doesn't eliminate the need for out of home placement in the most severe situations. Instead, whenever possible it works to find solutions to problem situations by working with clients — both juveniles and their parents — in the home setting.

Return on investment

The return on the \$150,000 investment made in hiring and training of the para-professionals to work with regular staff in dealing with out of home placement issues has been significant. In 1999, before the five new positions were filled, just over \$2 million was spent on out of home placements. In 2001, the cost was down almost 50 percent to just over \$1.1 million.

Additionally, the share of the total cost of out of home placement that is paid through the local tax levy has been reduced from about 70 percent four years ago to near 50 percent today. The "local cost" average in the state is about 70 percent.

At the onset, the request to employ the five para-professionals was most aggressively promoted by administrative assistant William Green. As supervisor of the department's family preservation unit, Karen Warmack directs the program.

Positive impact

Besides the financial savings, there have been other important benefits from the new approach to out of home placement. "We've had an overall positive impact because of this," Johnson says. "We are being regarded now as an agency that works with juveniles and their families. We have staff that is able to work with the schools and that is able to work with clients in their homes, both children and parents." Keeping students in their homes, Johnson explains, is financially very important to schools because the foundation aid payments generated by those students is lost when they are in 'placement' out of the district.

"This certainly isn't something that we have done by ourselves," Johnson says. "Active participants with us in this effort have been the schools, Tri-County Corrections' Probation Department, County Attorney's Office, law enforcement, and the court system. It has been a cooperative effort by all parties and a very good investment of resources in people. We are really feeling good about the direction we are heading in social services."

Will be ready in late summer

Maury's building to become one-stop service center for 7 different agencies

The former Maury's TV & Appliance store building in East Grand Forks will soon become a one-stop service center for seven different agencies that provide services for Polk County residents.

A 20,000-square-foot building located along Central Ave. NE (Highway 220 North), the 28-year-old masonry structure was purchased by Polk County last fall to provide additional space for its satellite offices in East Grand Forks.

The need for additional space for the East Grand Forks-based satellite offices has been a concern since the early 1990s.

Earlier plans considered

In 1995, a plan to construct a new 25,000-square-foot building had to be put on hold when budget concerns made it impractical to proceed with the \$3.5 million facility that was to have been built along DeMers Avenue.

An effort to acquire the former Valley Elementary School, a 30,000-square-foot building that at the time was being used as the temporary East Grand Forks City Hall, proved unsuccessful in 2000.

"The Maury's building will meet our needs well," Commissioner Warren Strandell, a member of the County Building Committee, relates. "The agencies are inter-related... their missions are compatible, so it makes a lot of sense to have everything in one place. All of them have been in the community for some time, so they aren't new.

"Their co-location now will allow them to work together to better meet the needs of our residents, while also reducing the chance for any duplication of services.

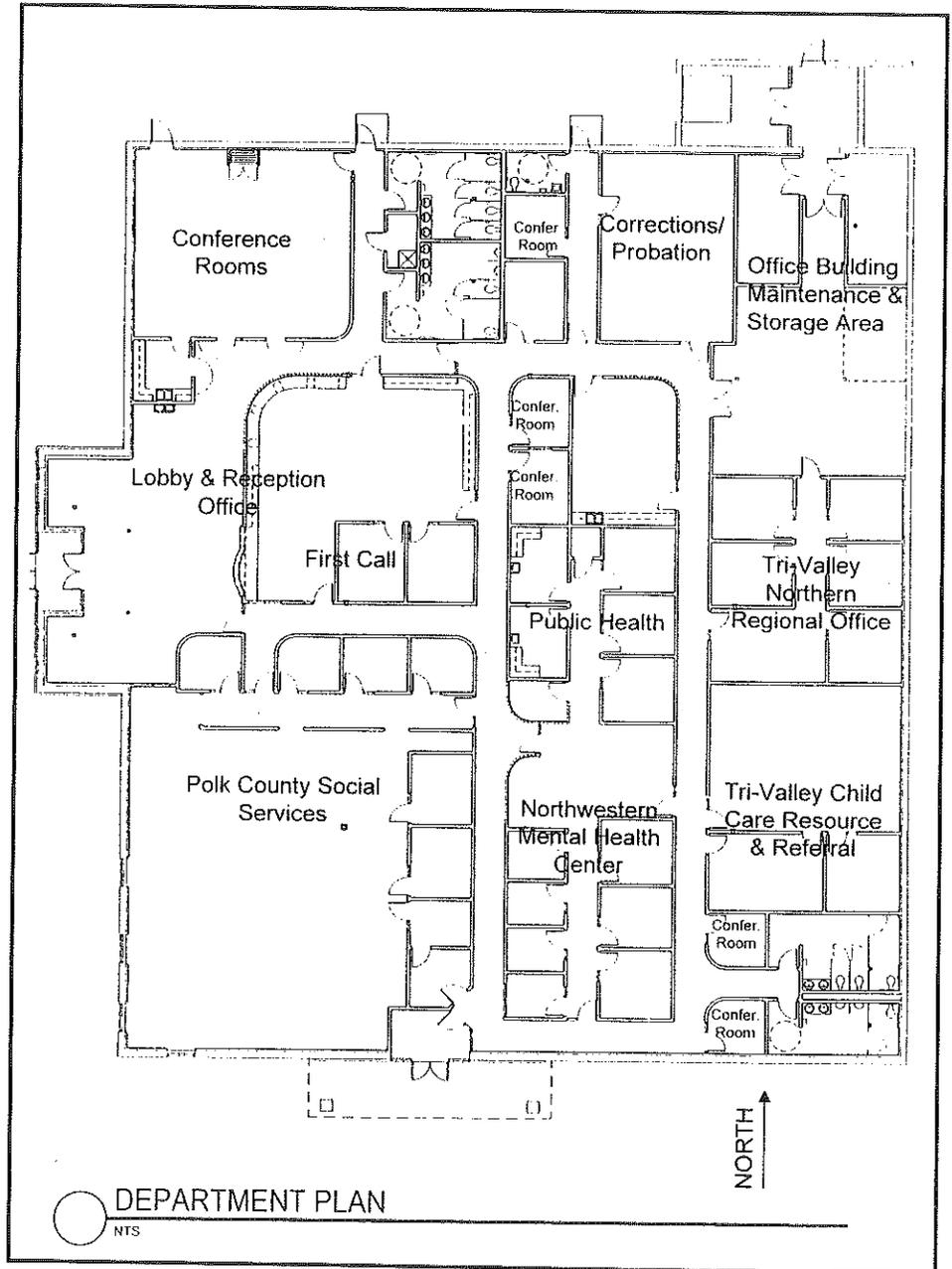
To come without debt

"And, the building will come without debt... it won't add 5 cents to the tax bill. In fact, the project will reduce operating costs because the county will no longer be renting space (at the cost of more than \$96,000 a year) and the building will generate rental income to pay for its operation and maintenance," he says.

Internal fund transfers will cover both the \$500,000 purchase price and the cost of remodeling.

Agencies that will have space in the "all under one roof" design include:

- Polk County Social Services;



Floor plan shows where agencies will be located

- Polk County Public Health;
- Polk County Veterans Service/ Sheriff's Dept.;
- Northwest Mental Health;
- Tri-County Corrections;
- Tri-Valley Opportunity Council Northern Regional Office;
- Tri-Valley Opportunity Council Child Care Resources & Referral; and

- First Call for Help program, which will provide reception services for all offices in the center as a part of its mission of matching residents to the appropriate agency for their need situation.

Remodeling is slated to begin this spring with the building to be ready for occupancy in late summer.

Getting more for less with...

County solid waste programs

Polk County is making changes — for the better — in its solid waste programs. Service fees are being reduced for residential and non-residential properties.

The number of free recycling services available to county residents has been increased. Recycling services are now more convenient for residents of eastern Polk County.

Preferred disposal facility

The State of Minnesota has created a 'solid waste processing credit' for counties that utilize a preferred solid waste disposal facility. The Polk County Waste-to-Energy Incinerator in Fosston is one of the state's preferred disposal facilities.

Therefore, Polk County receives a credit for each ton of waste disposed of at that facility. The intent of the processing credit is to make facilities like the incinerator more economically competitive.

Because of the processing credit, Polk County has been able to reduce its solid waste service fees by approximately 5 percent for 2002. This service fee reduction applies to residential and non-residential assessments.

County residents who pay the solid waste service fee have had access to free services such as recycling of glass, plastic, paper, metal and cardboard, the recycling of used oil and oil filters, and the disposal of household hazardous waste.

Now, the list of free services is being expanded to include disposal of appliances (washers, dryers, refrigerators, air conditioners, etc.), car and light truck tires (maximum 8 per month, 24 per year); and auto and marine batteries. Once these programs are established and have been evaluated, additional items may be added.

At two sites

In an effort to make services more accessible and convenient to residents throughout Polk County, all of the aforementioned services will be provided at both the Transfer Station in Crookston and the Polk County/ODC Recycling Center in Fosston.

Polk County encourages its residents to utilize these services. If you would like to know more about the services offered, or have questions about a specific item, please contact Jon Steiner at Polk County Environmental Services (218) 281-6445 or 1-800-482-6804...

Another busy year set for Highway Department

The Polk County Highway Department is anticipating another busy construction season in 2002. Several projects are scheduled including grading, bituminous surfacing, bridge replacements consisting of span bridges, concrete box culverts and metal span culverts, chip sealing and maintenance graveling. In addition to the new projects, the county has one carry-over project in the Fosston area.

The grading projects include the northern portion of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 66 from CSAH 23 to the north county line, a project that is 6.5 miles long. The south portion of CSAH 66 from CSAH 17 to CSAH 23 was completed in 2001 involving 11 miles.

Marshall County is also planning to do 1.5 miles of CSAH 21 from the south Polk County line to MN TH 1. Surfacing of the entire 19 miles is planned within the next few years.

Another grading project involves CSAH 6 from CSAH 3 to CSAH 35, a distance of 5 miles. This project involves widening the existing roadway embankment and resurfacing the riding surface.

Other projects include resurfacing CSAH 6 from the south limits of Fosston to the south county line in addition to rebuilding the segment between MN TH

2 and the south limits of the city.

Other surfacing projects include bituminous surfacing CSAH 24 from MN TH 2 to CSAH 27 and CSAH 27 from CSAH 24 to the east County Line. Clearwater County will also be surfacing their CSAH 44 from the west County Line to the junction with CSAH 7.

It is also anticipated that CSAH 60 from MN TH 2 to CSAH 17 will be resurfaced.

Additionally, several bridge replacement projects of various types are being planned and will be ongoing during the construction season. It is anticipated these projects will involve 12 to 15 sites with an estimated cost of approximately \$750,000.

The chip sealing project will be primarily located in the west end of the county. The practice has been to work one part of the county one year and another part of the county in the alternating year. The countywide maintenance graveling contract is just what the name of the project signifies.

In addition to the contracted projects, the county maintenance crew will be performing the usual maintenance duties associated with upkeep of the county road system. — **Roger Diesen, county highway engineer**

County web site 'under construction'

Polk County Highway Department engineering technician Rick Thompson is in the process of developing a web site that will help to make information from the Highway Department — and from other Polk County departments, too — more readily available to the public.

The inspiration for Thompson to become involved in adding a site to the "information highway" came from listening to technicians from other counties talk about their web sites.

"When they talked about some of the information that was posted on their sites... maps, construction plans, detour routes, both pre-design and after project completion pictures, their five-year plans, application forms for moving permits, and things like that I really became interested in having a site for Polk County," he says.

Thompson, who enrolled in a class at the University of Minnesota-Crookston a year ago, uses time during the "off season" in highway work to develop the site.

In addition to information from the Highway Department, the site will also be made available to other county departments. Plans are to include a bulletin board along with stories and information from current issues of the Polk County Newsletter. The site's address is: co.polk.mn.us.

Polk County Employee Anniversaries in 2002

Hire Date	Employee	Position
35 Years		
6-12-67	Kathryn Glass	Accountant
7-24-67	Gerald Amiot	Co. Auditor-Treasurer
30 Years		
12-11-72	Mariys Lovejoy	Financial Worker
25 Year		
1-17-77	Marlene Hanson	Co. Recorder
9-19-77	Donald Fall	Dispatcher
10-04-77	Donna LaFleur	Custodian I
20 Years		
8-16-82	June Bergh	RN II
9-07-82	Brenda Menier	Public Health Dir.
10-18-82	Marilyn Juvrud	Administrative Asst. II
15 Years		
1-05-87	Douglas Qualley	Co. Sheriff
2-17-87	Sheri Altepeter	Home HealthCoord.
4-01-87	William Hadler	Agriculture Inspector
8-05-87	Brenda Johnson	Case Aide
11-01-87	Barb Erdmann	Patrol Sergeant
11-16-87	Robert Martin	Chief Boiler Operator
11-16-87	Roland Boucher	Land Fill Supervisor
12-14-87	Bonnie Swenson	Accounting Tech.
10 Years		
1-02-92	Cynthia Ross	Social Worker
2-03-92	Kathy Kelly	Case Aide
2-03-92	Carlos Martinez	Financial Worker
3-16-92	Karen Audette	Financial Worker
3-27-92	Cheryl Pitts	Clerk Typist Cashier II
4-01-92	Linda Hanson	RN II
4-29-92	Becky Overmoe	Home Health Aide
6-15-92	Julie Baumann	Sec.-Bookkeeper
6-29-92	Denise Hammer	Social Worker
6-29-92	Daniel Malinowski	Patrol Officer
8-04-92	Debra Montague	Clerk Typist Cashier II
9-18-92	Randy Lee	Patrol Officer
10-20-92	Caryl Forseth	Financial Worker
11-05-92	Rebecca Gronberg	RN II
5 Years		
1-08-96	Jon Volker	Engineering Tech IIB
1-22-96	Dave Emanuel	Patrol Officer
4-01-96	Todd Rue	Utility Maintenance
4-03-96	Marna Johnsen	Social Worker
4-23-96	Linda Widrig	Clerk Typist Cashier II
4-27-96	Judee Butenhoff	Dispatcher
5-01-96	Colette Ketchum	Clerk Typist Cashier III
8-26-96	Steve Nelson	Custodian I
8-26-96	Carolyn Woehle	Social Worker
9-09-96	Joanne Martin	Sort Line Operator
9-09-96	Mary Winkler	Sort Line Operator
9-23-96	Stephanie Olson	Dietician
10-12-96	Rick Kappedal	Sort Line Operator
11-26-96	Bruce Hanson	Loader Operator

Plan

Continued from Page 1

and services provided through a state program. Interest in county-based programs, Affeldt relates, has waned statewide over the years because of the many hurdles involved. At the end, Polk County was one of the few counties that was still attempting to gain approval for a county plan.

As a result of the board action, the health needs of M.A. clients will in the future be provided under terms of the state's enhanced Pre-Paid Medical Assistance Plan.

County hires first human resources/projects coordinator

The newest Polk County employee, Tangee Bahl, is also its first human resource/special projects coordinator.

Based in the County Coordinator's office, the position had been in planning for several years to meet growing personnel issue demands and to provide research and analysis of financial matters. It was created following the retirement of Judy Luetjohann, who had served as confidential secretary and clerk of the county board.

A native of Grand Forks, Bahl earned a B.S. degree in psychology at South Dakota State University in 1997 and added



Tangee Bahl

a masters degree in industrial/organizational psychology with an emphasis in human resource development from Antioch University in Seattle, Wash., in 2001. She has previous work experience

as a counselor at a mental health shelter in Eugene, Ore., and also as an office manager-project manager and estimator for a construction company in Seattle, Wash.

"I'm really excited about working for Polk County," she says. "I'll be dealing with personnel issues and with the insurances and other benefits, and I'll be doing budgetary research and other projects for the County Board and Coordinator Jack Schmalenberg."

Bahl, the daughter of Bob and Kerry Bahl, Grand Forks, and Thain Bouvette, Grand Forks, are to be married Aug. 3.

Not just in flood areas

Mold problems surfacing

Polk County Public Health staff have been receiving an increasing number of calls from residents with questions about mold. And the callers are from around the county, not just the communities that sustained heavy water damage from the 1997 flood.

Molds are simple, microscopic organisms found virtually everywhere, indoors and outdoors. Molds can be found on plants, foods, dry leaves, and other living material. Mold spores are very tiny and lightweight; this allows them to travel through the air.

When molds are present in large quantities, they can cause allergic symptoms similar to those caused by plant pollen. Some of these symptoms include cough, wheezing, nasal congestion, sneezing, sore throats, fatigue, and headaches. Individuals have different sensitivities to mold.

For mold to grow, it needs:

- A food source such as leaves, wood, newspapers;
- A source of moisture and
- A place to grow.

The following are sources of indoor moisture: Flooding, backed-up sewer,

leaky roof, humidifiers, ice dams, damp basement, constant plumbing leaks, and moisture not exhausted from dryers or other combustion appliances. It is important to take care of the moisture problems to prevent potential health problems related to mold.

Additionally, wood that is damaged by periods of wetting, can eventually warp and cause walls to crack or become structurally weak. Homeowners and landlords should pay attention to these issues and correct them as soon as possible to protect their health, the health of their tenants and to protect their investments.

The Minnesota Department of Health does not recommend testing as the first step to determine if you have a mold problem. Testing can be expensive.

If you can see or smell mold, you have a moisture and mold problem. The first step is to identify the moisture source and correct it. Then clean, disinfect, and dry the moldy area.

Please call (218) 281-3385 for more information on mold; how to check for moisture problems in your home and general instructions on clean-up procedures.



Paula Waters



Jeanne Sanden



Catherine Gutterud

Waters succeeds Sanden on Social Services Board

Paula Waters, Crookston, has joined the Polk County Local Social Services Agency Board as a lay member. The board, which meets monthly on social service issues, is comprised of the five county commissioners and two lay members.

A social worker in Polk County for 28 years before retiring in 1995, Waters has a four-year term. Her appointment, which was approved in February, was made by Michael O'Keefe, commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services upon the recommendation of the Polk County Board.

Waters succeeds Jeanne Sanden, East Grand Forks, who retired. The second lay member on the Local Social Services Agency Board is Catherine Gutterud, Foston.

Never lost interest

"I'm enjoying my involvement on the board," Waters says. "I didn't lose my interest for what goes on in that department when I retired. I've had no regrets about retiring, but this allows me to have some involvement again and I hope I will have something to contribute."

A number of operational changes occurred during Waters' time in the department, she says, noting that separating the income maintenance duties from those of providing services was probably the most significant. "When I started in the Adult Services Division in October 1966, there were only three adult social service workers who were doing both the financial eligibility duties and providing services. Through the years, the federal government made changes saying that social workers couldn't continue to do both tasks and the Financial Service Division and Social Service Division were created."

Waters was supervisor of the Social Ser-

vice Division for the last 10 years of her time in the department. After her retirement, she was appointed a member of the Minnesota Long-Term Care Advisory Board by the Minnesota Department of Human Services and has served in that capacity since 1996.

She and her husband, Roy, have two children: Eric, lives in Minnetonka, Minn., and Karen and her husband, Randy Lee, and their two children live in Circle Pines, Minn.

Served six years

Sanden, who is vice president of Rural American Bank in East Grand Forks, served on the board for six years. She was appointed in 1996.

"I've added some responsibilities at the bank that are taking a lot more of my time, and I didn't feel that I could do justice to the board; that I should let someone who could give it more attention have my spot," Sanden says. "I certainly learned a lot during my six years. It was very interesting. I certainly enjoyed my time on the board, but with everything becoming so intricate now, it deserved more time than I could continue to provide."

Gutterud, who has been a lay board member since 1976, is the social service director at Greens View Care Center in Bagley. Before her assuming her position at the nursing home, she and her husband, Lyle, had operated a grocery store at Lengby for 14 years.

"I've certainly learned a lot during my time," Gutterud says of her 26 years on the board. "For me, it's been a two-way benefit. The experience on the board has helped me on my job and my job at the nursing center has helped me understand some of the issues that come before the board."

Tilden pact in place; fund is established

An agreement has been finalized with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to provide that the 24,142-acre Tilden Farm properties will continue to generate real estate taxes, or an equivalent amount. The payments will come from an endowment fund of about \$2.5 million that will be built and maintained from the sale of gravel, rent from lands that will continue to be farmed, and from the sale of lands that don't fit into the habitat restoration project.

TNC, which acquired the property from a group of Missouri-based investors in 2000, has plans to donate it to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for restoration to a tall grass prairie and wetland. The first phase of the restoration effort, which has been given the name, the Glacial Ridge Project, was started last summer. It is the largest tall grass prairie and wetland restoration effort in the country.

The lands generated \$94,353 in real estate taxes for the local government bodies in 2000, with Polk County getting the largest share at \$41,768. The lands, which were acquired last year by TNC, are located in Grove Park-Tilden, Kertsonville, Onstad and Gently townships, and in the Crookston, Fertile and Red Lake Falls school districts.

Public health—

Continued from Page 1

these messages are in conflict with making positive lifestyle choices.

Public health has always been in the background, quietly doing its work. We can no longer afford this lack of visibility. Public health must learn to communicate in the broadest sense of the word; and that starts with an identity.

Staff wanted a public image that reflects our public health philosophy, core values and services. It was also important to have a logo that would stand the test of time; one that could be used for a number of years. The design is a product of staff input, grant funds from several sources, and the expertise of a local professional ad agency. The new logo is just the first exciting step in improving our communication with the public. — Brenda Menier, Polk County Public Health

As clerk of the Board

Judy Luettjohann has kept track of county government from the inside

Few people know the location of all the roads and ditches in Polk County any better than Judy Luettjohann.

And not many know the trials and tribulations that county commissioners have gone through in addressing county budget and spending issues any better than she does.

That's what comes from more than 13 years of maintaining the minutes of the County Board, a job that involves not only sitting through the many hours of discussion and deliberation that occur in the board room several days each month, but also accurately recording the actions as they are taken.

Enjoyed the people

"I've especially enjoyed the people," Luettjohann, who recently retired as confidential secretary and clerk of the county board, says. The job also included developing the agenda for board meetings and administering the employee benefit package, including the health insurance issues.

"I've worked with a lot of good commissioners... watch-ed them zero in on some tough budget situations and deal with a lot of difficult road and ditch issues. There have, of course, been a lot of board member changes during the years, but I can say that all of them were very good, dedicated people," she says.

Retirement isn't going to mean a complete separation from the job.

Will keep the minutes

Luettjohann has agreed to continue to keep the minutes at board meetings on a part-time basis when she and her husband, Leo, are not traveling or involved in other activities. As potentate of the Kem Shrine, Leo Luettjohann will visit many Shrine Centers throughout the Midwest this spring, summer and fall and then attend the national Shrine convention in Vancouver, B.C., later in the year. "I'm going to enjoy some flexibility," she says of the new schedule.

To travel

"I'll be traveling with Leo and, after the national convention, we are planning to go on an Alaskan cruise."

A native of Wyoming, Judy was a student at the University of Wyoming when she met Leo on a blind date. Leo, who had grown up at Mentor, was making a career



Judy Luettjohann

in the Air Force.

After he retired in 1973 following duty at Grand Forks Air Force Base, they moved to Crookston where Judy was a secretary at the Northwest Mental Health Center for four years and then worked in the Polk County Emergency Services office for eight years. Lyle Eisert, who later became a county commissioner, was the emergency services director during that time.

The move to the County Coordinator's Office as the confidential secretary and board clerk was made in November 1988. "Jack Schmalenberg was, of course, the county coordinator and Val Bjerk was a secretary.

"Val started working in the coordinator's office in 1981, so she's been there longer than I. But with my years in the Emergency Services office, I have more total time with the county than she does," Luet-

tjohann relates

Electric typewriters

"When I started working for the Mental Health Center, we had just gotten some electric typewriters that could store information on mag cards. We thought that was really something. Then came the computers, which have gotten faster and better all the time, and then the internet," Luettjohann says.

Humongous copiers

"At first, the copiers were humongous. Now, they are much smaller and can do everything... reduce, enlarge, collate, staple and even punch three holes. These things have saved a lot of time, but there have been a lot more things to do, too."

Leo Luettjohann, who retired as postmaster at Euclid in 1997, has worked part-time in the activities department at Riverview Hospital in recent years.

The Luettjohanns have four children: Keith and his wife and two sons live in Highland, IL, where he works for Schwann's; Janet, a cosmetologist at Blondies on Gateway, and her two children live in Grand Forks; Nancy and her husband, Gary Moser, and two daughters, live in Crookston where she is a LPN at Villa St. Vincent; and Roger and his wife, Brenda, and two sons, live at International Falls, where he works for GFG Foodservice.

County Board Meeting Times

• 8:30 a.m. on 1st Tuesday of each month

• 1:20 p.m. on 3rd Tuesday

• 8:30 a.m. on 4th Tuesday

Meetings are open to the public. For special accommodations or to request a spot on the agenda, call John Schmalenberg, Polk County coordinator, 281-5408.

Commissioners:

Dist. 1 — Jerry Jacobson

Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell

Dist. 3 — Bill Montague

Dist. 4 — Warren Affeldt

Dist. 5 — Eugene "Jeep" Mattson