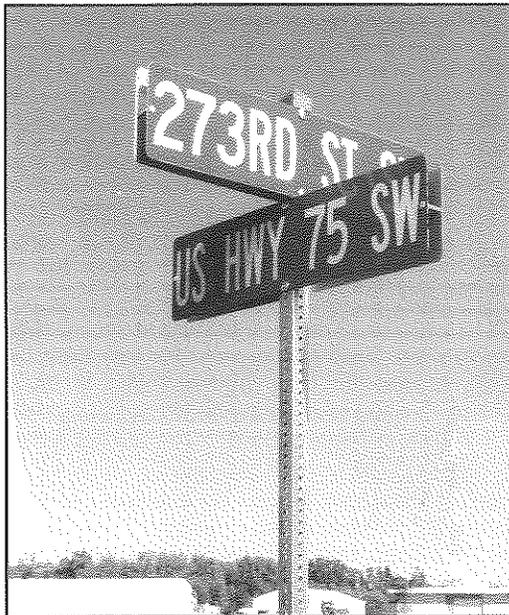


FREE
Take One

Polk County *Newsletter*

Fall 2003



This rural intersection sign, located on U.S. Highway 75 north of the American Crystal Sugar Co. plant in Crookston, was one of the first to be erected.

Rural addressing

Intersections to be signed

All 2,465 rural road intersections in Polk County will be signed before Christmas as a part of the rural addressing project.

The cost of the signing — \$314,714 in the installation contract awarded to Newman Sign Co., Jamestown, N.D. — will be paid for from the Highway Department's Survey Account.

"This is money that has been saved over several years to pay for the re-mentumation that is needed when we do road construction," county highway engineer Richard Sanders says. "Since there wasn't an immediate need for all of those funds to be used for that purpose, the County Board decided to use money from the account to pay for signing the intersections.

"Some counties have chosen not to

sign all intersections, or they have decided to spread the cost of erecting the signs over several years, but because the Polk County Board wanted to 'do it once and do it right' and because money was available to pay for the work, we'll have all 2,465 intersections in the county signed this year. Installation of the signs began in late September."

The rural addressing project involves four-counties — Marshall, Pennington, Polk and Red Lake. Its center point is near St. Hilaire with the NW, SW, SE and NE designations transcending from that location. Individual addresses in the four counties, which were assigned and became effective in Polk County earlier this year, were determined by global positioning system (GPS) technology.

See RURAL ADDRESSING, Page 2

For efforts to reduce chemical use by youth

'The minor League' & county program win award

"The minor league" of Polk County and the Polk County Chemical Health Initiative have received the 2003 Certificate of Recognition from the State Community Health Services Advisory Committee (SCHSAC) for their efforts to reduce chemical use by youth.

The award, presented by Minnesota Department of Health commissioner Diane Mandernach, was made at the Community Health Awards Reception at start of the 2003 Health Emergency Preparedness Conference at Breezy Point, Minn., on Sept. 10.

The minor League™ is a youth-led and adult-guided program designed to promote healthy decision making and reduce alcohol, tobacco and drug use by minors. A need for



the program became obvious in 1998 when a Polk County community health assessment showed an increase in chemical use among youth despite several programs that were targeting "at-risk" youth.

Funding for the position of county chemical health initia-

tive coordinator and for the support activities came in 1999 when the Polk County Family Services Collaborative committed \$240,000 in grant money to the effort over three years. The initiative has been active in providing information on the dangers of chemical use

to parents and youth through presentations, media events, letters to graduating seniors, calendars and restaurant placements featuring the artwork of elementary school children. Children also "back-packed" information home to their families.

The youth action teams that were established in each school district in the county last summer formed The minor League. These teams have had projects during Red Ribbon Week, Alcohol Awareness Week, Kick Butts Day and World No Tobacco Day, while also planning chemical-free activities at their schools for homecoming and prom.

The minor League board of directors, consisting of three

See AWARD, Page 6

Joe & Elsie Stroot:

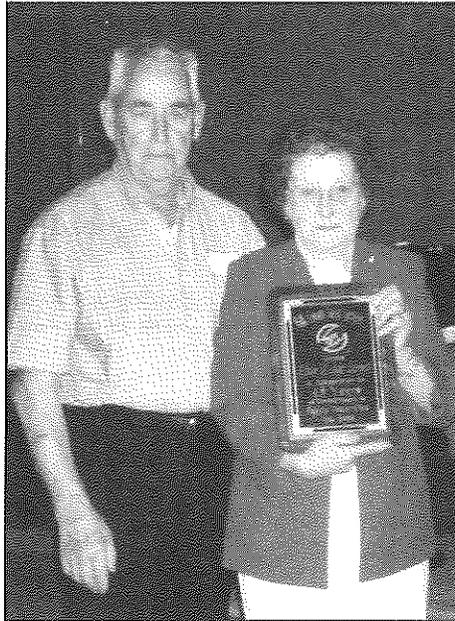
45 years of commitment to foster care

Joe and Elsie Stroot, rural Euclid, were honored at Polk County Social Services' annual Foster Care Banquet for 45 years of commitment to foster care.

Their adventure started in October 1958 when they contacted Social Services about becoming a foster home after reading an article in the paper about mistreated children who needed homes. They applied and were granted a Foster Boarding Care License from the Department of Public Welfare. At that time they had Carolyn, age 7, and Joe, Jr., age 9, living in their home. Their two oldest children, Beverly and Marlene, had already left home.

In a file entry in March 1959, a social worker stated, "On the whole, I feel that this home could provide the love and security, which foster children would need." This was to be tested with their first placement in September 1960 of two children (ages 9 months and 2 years) for 36 days before they were moved to their grandmother's custody.

A week later they took placement of a 14-year-old boy and a month later added a 2-month-old baby. They have fostered a child with cerebral palsy, a baby with an extreme case of eczema and many other children with special issues. The Stroots have enjoyed seeing the changes in the children.



Joe & Elsie Stroot

In 1977, they were featured in an article in the *Grand Forks Herald* with the headline, "Ma Stroot is a typical farm wife - with 60 kids." Information in the story noted: "She cans applesauce, enjoys gardening and fixes

scrumptious dinners for the men at work out in the fields. Mrs. Stroot has also been the gentle mother to over 60 kids. She has touched the lives of many an infant, young child and teen by giving them the care they often missed in their own homes."

In those kids, they have seen the result of alcoholism, broken homes, mental illness, and child abuse. Joe has hung in there providing the father figure in the childrens' lives. He has been supportive and a strength for this family. A few children stayed only overnight, many stayed two or three years, some became a part of the Stroot family over a period of several years.

Joe and Elsie continue to foster children — they felt lost if the house wasn't full. I cannot imagine all they have experienced. It takes very special people to be foster parents, let alone to stick with it for all these years. Elsie recently told me they have had around 200 foster children in their home.

Joe and Elsie would like to encourage families to become family foster homes. They say, "The rewards are many."

Thank you Joe and Elsie for your 45 years of service to our children! — Jackie Jeffrey, Polk County Foster Care coordinator

Osiers named Foster Parents of the year

Jim and Debbie Osier, rural Fisher, were presented the Foster Parent of the Year award at the annual Polk County Social Services Foster Care Banquet.

"Our appreciation for these foster parents is too great for words," stated Molly Demarais, a social worker for Polk County Social Services, in presenting the award. "Jim and Debbie are committed to helping their foster children in every way. They provide a structured and loving environment for the children in their home. They include their foster children as their own in every aspect of their lives."

This family is a blessing to our agency and they are true advocates for children. Their dedication to the children of Polk County should not go unnoticed. They are truly appreciated for all their hard work. — Jackie Jeffrey, Polk County Foster Care coordinator

Rural addressing

Continued from Page 1

Individual rural address signs have been placed at 4,349 locations (where a private driveway meets a roadway) in Polk County. Completed earlier this summer, that work was done by H & R Construction Co., Dalton, Minn. The \$113,715 contract also included the placement of an additional 634 posts at locations that were not initially determined to warrant an address.

The address signs for those additional locations, plus both the signs and posts for another 198 locations that were either missed in the earlier surveys or were created since that time, will be erected by Polk County Highway Department personnel. That work is also to be done yet this year.

Rural residents will receive a one-time assessment of \$25 on their 2005 tax statements to pay for the address signage at their properties. As new addresses are created in the future, signage for those locations will be erected by Highway Department personnel for a one-time charge of \$50.

The rural addressing project also includes parcel mapping of all properties in the county. "This mapping, which is being

done for us in a digital format by the Northwest Regional Development Commission, will result in a much higher degree of accuracy," Sanders says. "This mapping will become a part of the county's GIS (geographical information system) data bank and will be used in a number of ways... for road design and construction, right of way and easement purchases, property determinations, tax assessments, planning and zoning, and a number of other ways all of which will provide improved efficiency and accuracy."

The mapping, which will include every parcel in the county with the exception of those in the cities of Crookston and East Grand Forks, is to be completed in January 2004.

Maps Available

The new Polk County map, with labels showing the street and avenue locations in the new rural addressing system, is available for sale at both the County Highway Department and at the County Auditor's Office. Cost of the maps is \$2 each.

Home Health Care program ended

Public Health to have new home

Change can be difficult but it can be exciting, too.

That's the case for the Polk County Public Health Department, which experienced a difficult time earlier this summer when its longtime role in providing home health care came to an end. By contrast, there is excitement about a planned move of the agency offices this fall to a new location in Crookston.

"Getting out of home health care has been a really difficult time for our agency," Brenda Menier, public health director, says. "We had to say goodbye to some 150 clients and to 23 staff members (13 home health aides, 4 LPNs, 3 RNs and 3 clerical employees) when we ended home health care services. And another three fulltime employees who were working as community organizers in chemical health had to be dropped when the grants that paid for those positions came to an end."

The agency had 51 full- and part-time staff members (36 fulltime equivalents) a year ago. It now has 23 employees (16.6 FTEs).

Difficult time

"This has been a huge transition for us... it's been difficult for the nurses and clerical personnel who had to be laid off and it's been difficult for staff who survived but had to watch their friends and colleagues go," Menier says. "As an agency, we've had to accept the fact that we can't be all things to all people... with the limited resources that county governments have."

The home health care program was not terminated, Menier says, until "both our staff and the County Board was satisfied that no one was going to fall through the cracks... that all clients would be served by another provider."

Private providers who have assumed the client load include Riverview Home Care in Crookston, First Care Medical Services in Fosston, and Altru Home Services and Intrepid USA Healthcare Services, both located in Grand Forks.

While the staff reductions will translate into a much smaller budget request for the department in 2004, the revenue brought in from home health care services will be lost. "In county tax levy dollars, our 2004 budget request is 15 percent less than our 2003 budget. Had we remained in home health care, it would have been 15 percent more," Menier says.

Restructuring process

"We will spend the next few months in a restructuring process — prioritizing and focusing on our core public health functions," Menier says. Those core functions include: Preventing epidemics; protecting the environment, workplace, home, food and water; promoting healthy behaviors; monitoring the health status of county residents; responding to disasters; assuring the quality, accessibility and accountability of medical care; reaching out to link high-risk and hard-to-reach people to needed services; developing new insights and innovative health care solutions; and leading the development of sound health policy and planning.

Menier notes that half the causes of death in the United States can be directly linked to negative health behaviors — violence, tobacco, diet, lack of exercise, alcohol, illicit drug use — that are preventable. While half the deaths are linked to unhealthy behavior, less than three percent of health care dollars are spent on promoting healthy behaviors and preventing problems before they start.

"There are compelling reasons to do more to promote the health of the people," she says.

New location

The agency's move to leased quarters at 721 Minnesota St. in mid-October is expected to both be more conducive to office activities and less expensive to maintain.

Because the agency has largely been the sole occupant of the former Central High School, Polk County has shouldered the high cost of heating the building. The County Board had determined in 2002 that conversion of the school building to permanently house Public Health along with several other county departments was not feasible because of the \$3.5 million estimated cost for remodeling. In addition to that cost were those associated with lead-based paint and asbestos issues and the need for extensive roof repairs.

Concept good; cost too great

"The concept was good but the cost of remodeling a building that was already 50 years old was just too great," according to commissioner Bill Montague, co-chair of the County Board's Building Committee. "The board just couldn't justify putting that much money into the building."

"Everybody's excited about going to the new location where we will have some privacy and where, with increased efficiency, we will be able to do more things," Menier says. "We like our current location but it is just too big and too expensive. And it's not well laid-out for an office."

The change, she says, will also help the agency "close one chapter in its health care life (the end of home health care) and start a new one."

ICWC program is terminated

The Institutional Community Work Crew (ICWC) that was housed at the Northwest Regional Corrections Center in Crookston when not on the job was disbanded in July because of financial reasons.

Created by the Minnesota Department of Corrections to teach carpentry skills to state inmates in the final year of their sentences, the program

had constructed housing for low-income residents in Marshall, Norman and Polk counties. The participating inmates have either been returned to the State Prison System or reassigned to other ICWC programs in the state.

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Crookston, dropped its sponsorship of the crew after absorbing several con-

struction cost overruns and experiencing other problems in recouping funds invested in several of the ventures.

Another area ICWC team, which is sponsored by the Northwest Regional Development Commission, continues to operate. Inmates in that program are housed at the Pennington County Jail in Thief River Falls.

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.

Commissioners:

Dist. 1 — Jerry Jacobson

Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell

Dist. 3 — Bill Montague

Dist. 4 — Warren Affeldt

Dist. 5 — Eugene Mattson, Chair

Income Maintenance Unit cited for record of accuracy

The Income Maintenance Unit of Polk County Social Services has been presented a special award for achieving a 0.0 percent error rate for three consecutive years in its administration of the USDA Food Stamp Program.

The award, which was made at the annual Big 10 Food Support Program Conference held in August at Milwaukee, Wis., acknowledges the superior work of the unit's staff members, according to Kent Johnson, Social Services director.

"To have attained an error-

less record in one year is fantastic, but to have done that for three consecutive years is really almost unbelievable," Johnson says. "We are truly proud of the work that the members of Income Maintenance Unit have done. We congratulate them for their work and dedication to excellence."

Also at the conference, Minnesota received an award for having the lowest program error rate among all states in the Big 10 Conference.

Bissonette moves to new Corrections post

Paul Bissonette has assumed the new position of facilities supervisor as a part of a re-organization of duties and responsibilities within Tri-County Community Corrections, the three-county organization that is responsible for jail and probation services.

Responsibilities of the new position include oversight of adult and juvenile detention facilities, food service operations, and support services including the Sentence to Service program, Chore Services program, and jail caseworkers.

The position was created as a part of a re-organization that occurred following the retirements last spring of security director Norvald Anderson and director of court services Lloyd Rath.

Bissonette, 38, who had previously been support services coordinator, has been a Tri-County employee since 1992. A native of Babbitt, Minn., he earned a degree in criminal justice at St. Cloud State University in 1986. He had worked for J.C. Penney Co. and the Mesa, Ariz., Police Department before getting into corrections.

"I really like my job. It can be stressful at times, but we work through it," Bissonette says. "I took two temporary positions as a sub for corrections personnel at the St. Louis County Jail in Duluth, who had gone on maternity leave, to see if I wanted to work in corrections. I found then that I liked the field." He joined Tri-County on March 16, 1992.

"Things have changed since then," he notes. "When I got here we had an average of from 48 to 52 people between the two buildings (jail and minimum security annex). The population has been going up, up, up ever since. With people who are awaiting trial, awaiting sentencing, are waiting to go to a state prison, or are serving their time here, the daily average now is into the mid-80s."

Bissonette and his wife, Elva, a native of Guadalajara, Mexico, met on a bus in Mexico in 1990. For the benefit of their families, they were married twice — on March 21, 1998, in Crookston and again on Oct. 3, 1998, at Guadalajara. They have a daughter, Elena, 4, and live in Crookston. Elva, a certified public accountant, is a stay-at-home mom.

Few problems noted in county's road construction schedule

The 2003 construction season was one in which just about everything went well. The year started out slow with the rain in June and early July, but after that it was full go with virtually no interruptions.

The status of each of the road construction projects includes:

County State Aid Highway 1 (3.5 miles east of Fertile) — A complete reconstruction of the road in this area was completed in late August by Mark II of Fosston. Northern Paving of Bemidji was a subcontractor on the project. The roadway had to be totally reconstructed and its elevation raised due to high water at this location.

CSAH 6 (CSAH 35 to TH 92) — This grade widening and overlay project was completed by Thorson, Inc., a division of Northstar Material, Inc. of Bemidji, in mid August. R.J. Zavoral & Sons, East Grand Forks, and Lawntech, Fosston, were sub contractors on the project.

CSAH 7 (TH 220 to Red River Bridge), CSAH 16 (CSAH 9 to CSAH 15) and CSAH 17 (TH 75 to CSAH 13) — These projects were completed by Thorson in early September. CSAH 7 and CSAH 16 were overlay projects with CSAH 17 being a bituminous surfacing project.

CSAH 17 (TH 2 to 3 miles east) — This grade widening and overlay project was completed by R.J. Zavoral & Sons in late August. Thorson, Thygeson Construction Co. of Thief River Falls, and Sherbroke Turf of Pelican Rapids were subcontractors on the project.

CSAH 76 (TH 2 to CSAH 17) and CSAH 44 (TH 2 to CSAH 53) — These complete grading jobs have been completed by R. J. Zavoral & Sons, Thorson, Thygeson, and Sherbroke Turf were subcontractors. A complete description of the CSAH 76 project is contained in another article in this newsletter.

CSAH 31 (CSAH 8 to CSAH 1) — A complete grading job, this project was completed mid September. R.J. Zavoral & Sons was the contractor with Thygeson and Lawntech as subcontractors.

Bridge projects

There were also a number of township bridges that were replaced this year. Most of these projects have been completed with the others to be completed by winter freeze up.

Along with the regular construction projects, the Polk County Highway Department maintenance forces did a project on County Road 222 (CSAH 9 to 4 miles south). This road has been soft and muddy for many years. This year, we applied lime spalls to the roadway.

This was done by stripping off the existing gravel and hauling in and spreading about four inches of the lime spall material. Gravel was then spread back over the top in the low and/or soft areas.

Lime spalls

A by-product of American Crystal Sugar Company's processing operations, lime spalls seem to have the same characteristics as crushed concrete. We believe this should take care of the problem.

Polk County intends to use both lime spalls and coal ash from the American Crystal plants in East Grand Forks and Crookston in addressing future maintenance project throughout the county.

If you have any question concerning this year's construction work or upcoming construction projects, feel free to contact assistant county engineer Darin Carlstrom or me at our office. — **Richard Sanders, County Highway Engineer**



Andrew Larson

Larson is new security director

Andrew S. Larson has been named security supervisor for Tri-County Community Corrections in its operation of the Northwest Regional Corrections Center in Crookston.

Larson succeeds Norvald Anderson, who retired June 1 after a 34-year career in corrections including 28 years with Tri-County Corrections.

Tri-County Community Corrections is a joint powers agreement involving Norman, Polk and Red Lake counties.

Responsibilities of the security supervisor position involve the day-to-day administration of the jail. Larson assumed the position May 1.

A native of Valley City, N.D., Larson earned a B.S. degree in human resource management from Valley City State College in 1998. Prior to joining Tri-County Corrections as a probation officer and director of its Productive Day Program in October 2001, Larson had been a correctional officer and a caseworker for the North Dakota Department of Corrections at the James River Correctional Center in Jamestown.

"I'm really enjoying the new position," Larson says. "There are problems dealing with jail capacity limits, but we have been able to juggle things to make everything work. We have a great staff, which really helps to make everything run as smoothly as possible."

Larson and his wife, Lisa (Brault), a TCC probation agent, live in Crookston.

Menier to lead Local Public Health Association of Minnesota

Polk County Public Health Director Brenda Menier will become chair of the Local Public Health Association of Minnesota in November.

Menier, who was presented the state association's 2002 Regional Leadership Award last November, has been a Polk County public health nurse since 1982 and the agency's director since 1987. She is the current chair-elect of the state organization and has been the Region 1 representative on its executive, membership and legislative committees for several years.

In announcing the leadership award, 2002 LPHA chair Mary McGlothlin of Washington County, said Menier's selection was based on her "dedication to representing the entire northwest region of the state at statewide meetings. She has been persistent and vocal in encouraging a strong public health system while recognizing that each unit of local government many choose to



Brenda Menier

offer public health differently."

Region 1 includes Becker, Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnommen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau counties.

A native of Walhalla, N.D., Menier earned her LPN degree at North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton in 1973 and her RN degree from the

University of North Dakota in 1983. Her work experience before joining Polk County Public Health includes hospitals, nursing homes and as campus health nurse at NDSCS.

"I knew when I went back to school to get my nursing degree that I wanted to work in public health," Menier says. "I was hired as a family health and home care nurse in Polk County by Lil Snyder right after I received my degree. It's such an exciting and rewarding field."

Menier served as co-chair of the Crookston School District bond referendum campaign prior to construction of the new Crookston High School and has been active in numerous other local campaigns. She and her husband, Jerry Nagel, who is executive director of Northern Great Plains Inc., have two children: Dustin, 27, and Terra, 20.

Knutson named to assistant county attorney position, succeeds Gross

Tracey Knutson has been named an assistant county attorney in the Polk County Attorney's office.

Her appointment, which is contingent upon passing the bar exam, was approved by the County Board Sept. 2 on the recommendation of County Attorney Greg Widseth. Knutson, who succeeds John Gross, will learn the results of her bar examination in October.

Gross, who had served the office since Nov. 1, 2000, resigned earlier this year to take a position with Nobles County in southwestern Minnesota.

A native of Polk County and



Tracey Knutson

daughter of Dennis and Toby Magsam, Knutson grew up in

Crookston, graduating from Central High School in 1997. After a year at Northland Community College, Thief River Falls, she received a B.S. degree in social work at the University of North Dakota in 2000. She earned her law degree in 2003 also from UND.

While attending law school, Knutson worked for Polk County as a law clerk. Since her graduation in May, she had worked fulltime as an interim assistant county attorney under the student practice rules. She and Justin Knutson, who were high school sweethearts, were married Sept. 20. They live in Gentilly.

State budget cuts forced the issue

Workforce to 'co-locate' in EGF center

The East Grand Forks office of the Minnesota Workforce Center will soon join the family of agencies located in the Polk County Human Service Center in East Grand Forks.

Prompted by reductions in funding for Workforce Center programs that occurred as the legislature dealt with a \$4 billion revenue shortfall, the new location has a silver lining in that it meets the statewide objective of "co-locating" Workforce centers and county social service agencies.

"We really liked our downtown location," Carolyn Toupin, field operations area manager IV, says, "but we're excited about moving to the Polk County center because of all the possibilities that it provides... especially being in the same building as social services. Over the years, we've worked with almost all of the agencies that are in the center."

The Workforce Center has been at the downtown location (406 3rd St. NW) since 1998. It had moved there from rental space on Central Avenue where, at one time, both it and the Polk County Social Service office had been in the same building.

Agencies in the center

Besides Polk County's Social Service, Public Health and Veterans Service satellite offices, other agencies in the human

service center are Northwest Mental Health Center, Tri-County Corrections, and three Tri-Valley Opportunity Council programs — its Northern Regional Office for Head Start, the Child Care Resource and Referral Office, and the First Call for Help program. The center, which had previously been the Maury's TV & Appliance store, was opened a year ago following an extensive remodeling project.

Had not space been made available in the Polk County facility, Toupin says, the likely alternative would have been closure of the East Grand Forks Workforce Center office and a consolidation of services in the Crookston office.

Workforce Center programs, she notes, received funding reductions of 20 percent or more as a result of legislative action. The programs affected include those for dislocated workers, veterans, and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) adult and youth programs. The cutbacks translated into mandated reductions in staff and operating budgets.

"We had to find smaller, less expensive quarters. The space in the Polk County building is almost like it was made to order," Toupin says. "It is right up front in the reception office and is adequate for the three fulltime staff people we will have

located in East Grand Forks. Portable office cubicles will control sound and provide privacy. We will have access to the T-1 line and the telephone system, and we will share use of postage, copier and fax machines, and the services of the receptionist. A lot of savings are possible when you can share services."

In addition to the space it will have in the reception office area, the Workforce Center is hoping to create a wireless resource center in the lobby where clients can look up job openings on a computer.

New for Workforce

"This would be a place where walk-in clients can sit down and look for employment and where they can write up a resume'. We're looking at ways to set it up where it doesn't clutter up the lobby or present a wiring problem," Toupin says. "It would be something completely new for Workforce... probably the first wireless center in the state. It would be portable, so that it could moved into storage when a resource attendant wasn't there to assist people, and then be rolled back in when an attendant was available."

Besides those of co-location, benefits to Polk County and other tenants in the center include that there will be additional rental income to operate the building.

County & American Crystal could benefit from use of ash in road base

If initial indications prove true, the pilot project underway on County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 76 will be a huge success... both for Polk County and for American Crystal Sugar Co.

In the project, the waste ash from American Crystal's East Grand Forks plant that was used to provide 25 percent of the road's sub-base material appears to be contributing to a much stronger driving surface.

"The road surface there is very hard. Using ash in the sub-base of the road appears to have been a wonderful thing," Polk County highway engineer Richard Sanders says of the reconstruction project completed this summer on the 1.2-mile-long roadway. Located a mile east of East Grand Forks, the road connects U.S. Highway 2 and

Minn. State Highway 220 with CSAH 17.

"The long-term effect is yet to be determined but if it proves out, both the county and American Crystal will be big winners," Sanders says.

Polk County will benefit, he says, from reduced costs for road construction and maintenance. American Crystal will benefit because it would be able to avoid having to landfill the ash that is created in the process of making sugar.

As a part of the reconstruction of the road, two feet of the old roadway was excavated and replaced with good clay material and 25 percent ash. After compaction, the road was regaveled. The ash was furnished to the contractor at no charge.

Wenk & Associates, an

environmental engineering firm based in Minneapolis, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency are monitoring the project.

"If the ash does what we hope it will do, which is strengthen the sub-base so that less gravel and bituminous are needed to construct a 9-ton roadway, it will not only save a lot of money but will also extend the county's precious gravel resources," Sanders says.

In addition to the pilot project on CSAH 76, which is scheduled to be hard-surfaced in 2005, the county is planning to test the use of ash on gravel roads and especially on problem soft spots. "We think using ash on them could reduce maintenance costs while greatly increasing the strength of a roadway," Sanders says.

Award

Continued from Page 1

members from each school, plans and coordinates countywide activities. The board has planned and implemented four BASHED (Battle Against Serious Hazards of Every Drug) events, the most recent of which was the BASHED in the Backwoods outing held at the Camp Wilderness Boy Scout camp near Park Rapids in April. It was attended by 99 students in grades 8-12.

The board also has had a booth at the Polk County Fair and this year, distributed 60 signs for posting at county schools to remind visitors that school buildings and grounds are tobacco-free zones.

"Program evaluation information demonstrates that Polk County has made a significant difference with the multi-dimensional approach," program coordinator Jim Shearer says. "Our community partners, parents and our youth have made this a huge success. The challenge ahead is to keep this movement going with far fewer resources."

Plant improvements, final payment, decreased fee assessments... County's solid waste programs moving ahead

This has been a significant year for solid waste in Polk County. The year began with carryover from a milestone event, which occurred at the end of 2002. The last bond payment was then made for the Polk County Incinerator in Fosston, marking the first time that no debt was owed on the facility.

In 2003, Polk County continued its expansion of the special wastes amnesty collections and added a collection site in Fosston for those items in that area. The roller-coaster legislative session ended with recycling and solid waste program funding reductions, placing a larger financial burden on Polk County to fund these mandated programs.

Contract extensions were secured with each of the counties in the Fosston Incinerator group. Polk County then bid a new hauling contract to coincide with the contract extension at the Incinerator. To conclude a busy year in solid waste, both the Incinerator and Transfer Station will be completing upgrades to their facilities.

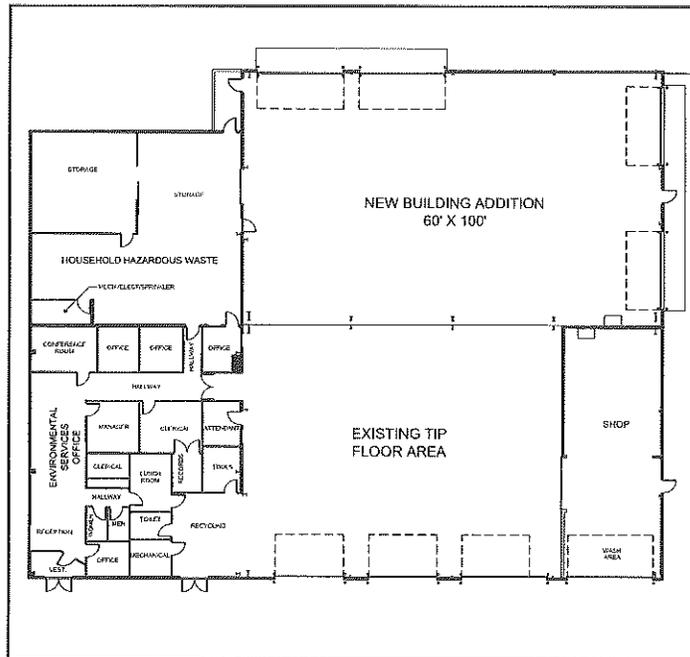
Tip fees

The tip fee, from the time the first ton of household garbage was processed at the Incinerator in 1988, always included a bond repayment component. With the final payment made on the bonds, that is no longer the case. The tip fee was dropped from \$70 per ton to \$55 per ton on Aug. 16.

Special waste amnesty

Polk County ended 2002 by expanding its weeklong appliance amnesty (no charge collection) to a continuous amnesty for the residents who pay the Solid Waste Fee Assessment on their tax statement. The continuous amnesty was expanded again in 2003 to include: Fluorescent light bulbs/ballasts, used motor oil/oil filters, passenger vehicle tires (limit 8 per month/24 per year) and auto/marine batteries.

The Occupational Develop-



Construction is underway on an addition to the Transfer Station building in Crookston that will allow for improvements in the way that waste is transported to the Incinerator. The changes are designed to be more economical and environmentally-friendly.

ment Center recycling facility in Fosston now serves as the collection site in eastern Polk County for these special wastes as well as for standard recyclable materials. In addition, the ODC Recycling Center in Fosston, much like the Transfer Station in Crookston, also serves as an ongoing household hazardous waste collection site.

Facility improvements

Both the Transfer Station in Crookston and Incinerator in Fosston are undergoing improvement projects. The Incinerator is in the process of upgrading its air pollution control (APC) equipment in order to meet the stack emission limits imposed by new state/federal clean air rules.

The Transfer Station is in the process of increasing the size and height of the tip floor area to accommodate the use of a grapple loader for managing the waste materials received at the facility. Both facilities are modifying their processes to take advantage of more eco-

nomical and environmentally-friendly waste transportation options.

The 60 by 100-foot addition to the tip floor is being built by Sand Steel Building Co., Emerado, N.D., on its low bid of \$366,800 including alternatives. Construction is slated to be complete by early to mid-January. The project will be paid for from funds that had been accumulated over several years in the asset replacement account.

Waste hauling

Polk County recently awarded its waste hauling contract to coincide with the contract extension between the Incinerator and the counties in the Fosston Incinerator group for the years 2004-2008. The contract was broken into two parts, the base hauling bid and the alternate, or MSW, hauling bid. The base bid, hauling all wastes except the burnable waste from the Transfer Station to the Incinerator, was awarded to Lenex Sand & Gravel of

Fosston. The alternate hauling bid was awarded to Mark II Inc. of Fosston. Breaking the hauling bid into two components enabled Polk County to transport waste in a more cost-effective and environmentally-friendly manner. It should also reduce equipment maintenance and replacement costs.

Fee assessment

Polk County residents (except those in the City of East Grand Forks) pay a Solid Waste Service Fee Assessment that is included on their property tax. The fee assessment pays for all solid waste-related programs (tip fee for burnable garbage, recycling, household hazardous waste and special waste programs). Despite decreases in state funding for solid waste programs and the county's expansion of services, the fee assessment will decrease for 2004, the second such reduction since 2001.

In addition, Polk County will change the residential assessment categories for 2004. The "seasonal residential" assessment will be replaced with a "second residential" assessment category. Many residents owning a second home did not qualify for the seasonal residential assessment because both properties were occupied for greater than four months of the year.

Implementation of a second residential assessment category should allow county residents who pay a full residential assessment to receive benefit of the reduced rate on their second property. To qualify for the second residential assessment, the property owner must provide copies of both current year tax statements showing each property is held in the same ownership and assessed the full residential assessment.

For more information about Polk County's solid waste programs, please call 281-6445 or 1-800-482-6804. — **Jon Steiner, director, Polk County Environmental Services**

24 years of water management experience

Jesme is new RLWD administrator

Myron Jesme brings 24 years of experience in surveying and dealing with water management issues to his new position as administrator of the Red Lake Watershed District.

Before accepting the position in April, Jesme, 43, had been a surveyor-engineering technician for the Middle-Snake-Tamarac Watershed District, based at Warren. He succeeds Harry Farris, who had resigned in December to take a regional position with the Minnesota Veteran Service Office.

Surveying experience

A native of the Middle River area, Jesme grew up on a dairy and grain farm. After graduating from Middle River High School in 1978, he spent four years working in surveying for oil and gas explorations in North and South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and Utah.

"I had been working in the mountain range in Utah and I wanted to get away from heli-



Myron Jesme

copter surveying," Jesme says of his decision to move back to Minnesota. "I contacted the employment office when I was in between surveying contracts and home for Christmas. They called a few months later to tell me about a 'surveyor's helper' position that was open with the Middle River-Snake River

Watershed District." Jesme took that job in August 1983 and remained with the watershed for almost 20 years before joining RLWD.

'Big' watershed district

"I think things are going rather well. We've been really busy," he says of his first months in the new job. "Red Lake is a big watershed. I knew it was big but didn't really realize how big it was until I started traveling around the district."

Jesme and his wife, Rose (Grisanti), live in Thief River Falls and have three daughters: Riely, 18; Erin, 16, and Alison, 14. Also a sports official, Jesme has been a high school and junior college basketball referee since 1986 and high school and junior college football referee since 1990.

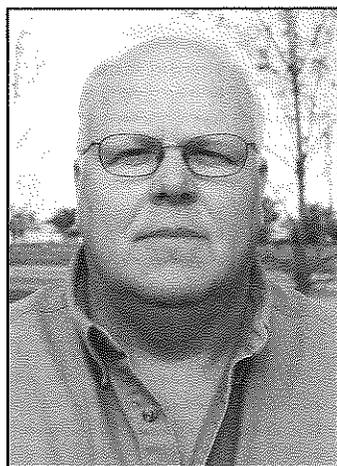
He becomes the fifth administrator of the watershed in the past five years. Since the resignation of longtime administra-

tor Lowell Enerson in December 1998, others who have held the position have been Chuck Fritz (May 1999-summer 2000); David C. Lanning (fall 2000-May 2001); and Harry Farris (April 2002-Dec. 2002).

In addition, Dale M. Nelson, the Pennington County representative on the board of managers, has twice served in the combination role of board chair and interim administrator (following the resignations of Lanning and Farris).

Nelson was re-elected president as a part of the annual reorganization in January. Orville Knott, representing Red Lake County, is the vice chair; Dennis Nikolayson, Polk County, is secretary; and Lowell Smeby, Beltrami County, is treasurer. Bob Proulx is the second Polk County representative on the seven-member board.

Stroble named to Middle-Snake-Tamarac board



Arlyn Stroble

Arlyn G. Stroble, Angus, is the new Polk County member on the board of managers of the Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed. He was appointed to a three-year term to succeed Richard Kuzel, Angus.

Kuzel, who had served on the board since 1987, resigned after accepting a position in the Twin Cities area as a food and vegetable inspector for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

A graduate of Warren High School and of the marketing management program at the University of Minnesota-Crookston, Stroble, 51, has farmed for 38 years first with his father and now with his son. He served as a supervisor and chairman of the Angus Town Board for 15 years and is a past president of the board of directors of the Angus Co-op Elevator, on which he served for 12 years. He is a member of the Minnesota Wheat Growers Association, the Minnesota

Soybean Growers Association and the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association.

Stroble and his wife, Marilyn, who is an elementary school teacher in Warren, have two children: Damon, 25, and Kelsey, 21.

The Polk County Board appoints one manager to the board. Other managers, all of whom are appointed by the Marshall County Board, are: Jim Johnson, Jerome Potucek and Doug Sorenson, all of Warren; Ron Osowski, Oslo; Carl Green, Strandquist, and Alton Nybladh, Stephen.

By law, managers do not represent specific drainage areas although an attempt is made to select representatives familiar with each area. Parts of the watershed district also extend into areas of Pennington, Roseau and Kittson counties. Ron Adrian is the district engineer. District offices are located in Warren.

Watershed managers appointed by county boards to serve 3-year terms

Watershed district managers are appointed by county boards to serve 3-year terms. Managers representing areas in Polk County and the years of their appointments are:

Red Lake Watershed District

Dennis Nikolayson, Erskine (97, 00)

Bob Proulx, Red Lake Falls (02)

Sand Hill River Watershed District

Roger Hanson, Beltrami (78, 81, 84, 87, 90, 93, 96, 99, 02)

Robert Brekke Jr., Nielsville (99, 02)

Stuart Christian, Erskine (00*, 01)

Gordon Sonstelie, Erskine (97, 00, 03)

Harold Vig, Fosston (94, 97, 00, 03)

Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District

Arlyn Stroble (03)

* — Appointed to fill unexpired term