

# Polk County Newsletter

Fall 2004

## Need for more jail space changes focus

Earlier thoughts about replacing the aging Crookston Professional Center by constructing an addition to the Polk County Courthouse have been put on the shelf.

A building project is still very much on the table, but the focus has changed.

The change has been spurred by the realization that the overcrowding problem that has haunted the Northwest Regional Corrections Center for several years is a problem that shows no signs of going away and has started to become very costly. As a result, the need to provide addi-

tional jail space has moved a step ahead of the Professional Center issue on the county's "most needed" list.

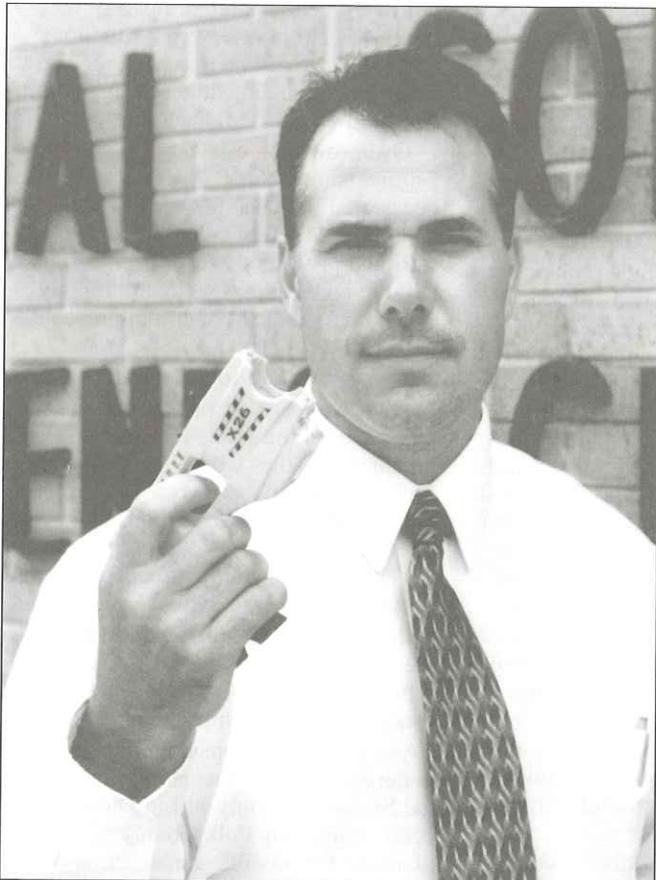
While moved a rung down, the concerns about safety and efficiency at the 104-year-old Professional Center building have not been forgotten. Instead, they will now likely be addressed as part of any project to provide additional jail space.

Because of overcrowding in the jail, which is operated by Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC), an ongoing need to house about 10 prisoners a day at other institutions has become

standard. TCCC is the organization that was formed by Polk, Norman and Red Lake counties in 1975 to operate jail and probation services for the three counties.

At an average cost of \$55 a day to "buy" a bed at another facility, if a bed is available, the numbers translate into an operational cost in excess of \$200,000 a year. Add in the cost of travel and deputy time for the Sheriff's Office to provide transportation and the need to address the overcrowding problem becomes even stronger.

See JAIL on Page 2



Investigator Jim Tadman with an X-26 Taser

### 50,000-volt attention getter

## Tasers give deputies new level of respect

Polk County field deputies are now carrying a tool that is making some of the more rambunctious people that they deal with a lot more cooperative.

The prospect of being on the receiving end of a 50,000-volt shock from an X-26 Taser quickly eliminates any fight in anyone who knows anything about a Taser. And most individuals working on the wrong side of the law do know about the Taser. People in jail and in the criminal community talk to each other. The word spreads that you don't want to get zapped.

"Criminals have a lot of respect for the Taser. Our officers," Investigator Jim Tadman says, "are feeling a lot more confident when approaching an assailant now that they have the Taser. The effect that it has on subjects make it a great tool. It fits between soft empty hand techniques and impact weapons on our use of force policy. The Taser is at the same level as Mace. Where there is still the need for Mace, the Taser gives the officer another less lethal tool on their duty belt. The Taser may decrease the chance of using a higher level of force, which could escalate all the way up to deadly force. No officer wants to be involved in a deadly force situation.

#### Used once

"We've had one deployment of the Taser since the officers started carrying them in January," Tadman says. "In that case, an assailant attacked the deputy who stepped aside and then

See TASERS on Page 3

# Jail needs expected to increase

Continued from Page 1

The extent of the new vision is quite broad. In its discussions now, the Polk County Board is considering the construction of a facility that could house a new jail along with all of the components involved with the corrections and court systems in the same building. This thinking is based on efforts to become as efficient and user-friendly as possible.

By having the court facilities in the same setting as the jail, the cost of having sheriff's deputies transport and watch prisoners when they make appearances in court at the courthouse could be eliminated. There would also be efficiencies from having the District Court judges and their support personnel, Court Administration, County Attorney's office, public defenders, County Probation office, and all TCCC staff and administration in the same building.

## Use of upper floor

When vacated by the court system, the upper floor of the Courthouse could then be used to house the Income Maintenance and Child Support divisions and the one social service worker unit of Polk County Social Services Department that are currently located in the Professional Center. Also currently housed in the Professional Center are the offices of the County Attorney, public defender and Polk County Probation.

"We are only in the beginning stages of planning for such a project, but it sure seems like the way to go," Polk County Board chair Bill Montague says. "There are some questions yet to be answered, of course, but with just one major building plan we can address two issues — overcrowding in the jail and the need to replace the Professional Center.

"We have available property on which to locate the justice center. It could either be attached to the current Law Enforcement Center or built elsewhere on that campus," Montague says.

"And by moving the Social Services offices that are now in the Professional Center to the space that would be vacated in the courthouse, which is where most of that department's offices are located, additional efficiencies would be realized by having all of that agency's Crookston-based services under the same roof."

As currently conceived, the new jail would have several "pods" that would allow options for the separation and management of prisoners. Because of design and sightlines that are possible, those pods, based upon other facilities in the state and region, could allow one jail staff

person to supervise up to 60 prisoners in a double-bunking arrangement.

## Economy of scale

The number of beds provided in a new construction, according to Polk County Commissioner Warren Strandell, who is chair of the three-county Regional Corrections Board, will likely be determined by some multiple of 60... either 120, 180 or 240 beds.

"We are currently housing 100 or more prisoners in the Law Enforcement Center and the Annex facility, which is used for minimum security prisoners," Strandell relates. "With that number currently incarcerated and a consultant predicting that TCCC could need up to 180 beds by 2012, we are considering a 180-bed facility in a plan that would be expandable to 240. To provide for anything less would mean that we would likely be facing another overcrowding problem in just a few years. The drug problem is the main reason for the large increase in the number of beds that will be needed."

Any beds in a new facility that are not immediately needed for prisoners from the three partner counties could be "sold" to other counties thus providing a source of revenue to help operate the jail.

## More beds needed

In addition to bed shortages in county jails in the region, the State of Minnesota reports being short some 1,000 beds and the federal government also has a need for additional jail space. Planning will include exploration of these possible revenue sources, according to Susan Mills, executive director of the TCCC.

A new jail plan will include replacement of the minimum-security beds that are currently provided in the Annex building, which is located on the Law Enforcement Center campus. Constructed in the 1920s as a tuberculosis sanitarium and later owned and used by the Glenmore Chemical Dependency Agency, the building was acquired by the county in 1985. It has 49 minimum-security beds on the two floors, an arrangement that requires two staff members. While structurally sound, the two-person staff requirement of the building results in a high operational cost for limited prisoner classification housing.

The Northwest Regional Corrections Center building was constructed in 1976 to provide corrections programming and jail space for the three partner counties, who, as the result of the possible closure of their individual facilities by the Department of Corrections, had formed the TCCC organization the year before. As the host county, Polk County owns the

center. The three counties share in operational costs on the basis of their percentage of use.

## Needs have changed

Originally built to house 24 adults and four juveniles, the building was put into use at a time when the jail population averaged 19. Now licensed for 32 beds, the facility houses those prisoners who require medium or maximum security. Despite the license limit, the Minnesota Department of Corrections has allowed TCCC to hold up to 41 prisoners at one time. Combined, the two buildings are licensed for 81 prisoners.

The Juvenile Detention Center, which was constructed in 1996 as an addition to the Law Enforcement Center building, has space for up to 14 male and female juveniles. In any new plan, it will be continued to be used as it is currently operated. Also unchanged would be the Dispatch Center that was constructed at the same time as the juvenile facility. It is operated by the Sheriff's Department.

While it would not be practical from an operational cost basis to continue to use the 32 medium and maximum-security beds in the current facility when a new jail would be put into use, the cells would not likely be dismantled. Instead, they could be held in reserve for situations when there might be mass arrests or for other law enforcement needs that could warrant putting them back into use.

"Overcrowding, especially in the Law Enforcement Center," Mills says, "creates occasional violence between prisoners and presents safety concerns for the jail staff and prisoners. We've been fortunate that the DOC allows us to continually exceed our licensure, but that presents other concerns.

## Problem to get worse

"After we reach 41 prisoners," she says, "we have to find space for any additional prisoners in other jails. That's expensive. We've had to go as far away as Little Falls to find beds. We regularly have prisoners at two or three or more places, which results in additional costs for transportation. There is a real shortage of jail beds in the this state and all indications are that it is only going to get worse, especially as the DOC uses local jail space to ease their space needs."

As a part of the considerations currently underway, David Prachar, administrator of the St. Louis County Jail in Duluth, has been retained by Polk County to assist in planning for possible construction of a new jail. That action, which was request-

See JAIL on Page 3

# Tasers

Continued from Page 1

deployed the Taser. In an instant, the man changed from being extremely violent to being very cooperative. The incident ended with no one injured."

Tadman, who trains department members on the use of the Taser as a part of his role as a "use of force" instructor, says the department has specific procedures in the use of the Taser when dealing with assailants. The Taser is not used indiscriminately, he says, and deputies make every attempt in situations not to use force.

"In the numerous instances where the Taser has been drawn," Tadman says, "the officer has had lots of cooperation. It gives him a lot more confidence when dealing with people before a back-up officer can get to the scene. We don't just take it out and deploy it. We give verbal commands to get the person's attention if time and the situation permits."

### How it works

Upon firing the Taser, compressed nitrogen in a cartridge at the business end of the weapon is released projecting two metal probes at the target at a speed of 180 mph. The probes are connected back to the Taser by thin insulated wire, which transmits the 50,000-volt electrical signal to the area where the probes make contact with body or clothing. The effective range is greater than Mace with no lasting effects.

The probes do not depend upon impact or body penetration to deliver their five seconds of pulsating electrical charge. That charge interferes with communication between the brain and the muscular system resulting in loss of the attacker's neuromuscular control and any ability to perform coordinated action.

While disabling, the electrical shock is non-destructive to nerves, muscles and other body elements. No deaths have ever been directly attributed to the Taser. A person hit by the probes will be dazed for several seconds but recovery is fast and the effects stop the instant

that the Taser shuts off.

### Stun gun feature, too

Should the probes miss the target, the officer can apply the Taser directly to the assailant and use its equally effective stun gun feature.

The department currently has 13 Taser X-26 handguns that are spread between the deputies when answering calls, on patrol or performing other duties, especially when working alone. Additional units will be added as funds become available. The Tasers were purchased in several ways – with county funds budgeted for training, with money made available by the cities of Fosston and Fertile through their contract policing arrangements with the county, and with some \$2,200 that Tadman personally raised through requests to service clubs in the county.

Tasers cost \$799.00 each plus the \$22 for the nitrogen cartridge. The power supply consists of a digital power magazine (battery). There can be up to 300 uses on the digital power magazine.

### Not pleasant

As a part of the certification needed to carry and use the Taser, officers must themselves be subjected to the Taser. "The officer must be exposed; he or she must know what it feels like. When you're hit, your body is paralyzed. You can't move and you go down. You're incapacitated. It isn't a pleasant experience, but it is a requirement of our training. The officer must be exposed before being able to carry the Taser.

"I've been exposed three times and one of our officers, who was the subject during training and some of the demonstrations that we've given has been exposed five times. After the fifth time, he finally said that was enough... no more. Our female officers have been exposed and an officer with a pacemaker has been exposed. No one was injured," Tadman says.

# Jail Facts

## Dept. of Corrections

### Licensed Jail Capacities:

Center (med. & max. security)....32  
Annex (minimum security).....49

### Actual Average

#### Daily Populations:

1991.....72  
1997.....82  
1999.....99  
2001.....89  
2003.....86  
2004 (Jan.-June).....104  
*DOC recommended daily pop. 65*

### No. Beds Leased From Other Counties:

2003 (Full year).....274  
2004 (Jan.-June).....1,599

### Cost of Leased Jail Beds:

2003 (Full year).....\$13,152  
2004 (Jan.-June).....\*\$78,378  
*(\*All costs not yet compiled)*

### No. Resident Days Incarcerated:

	Male	Female
1998.....	29,485.....	2,823
1999.....	32,726.....	3,541
2000.....	27,094.....	3,004
2001.....	29,604.....	2,708
2002.....	25,123.....	2,632
2003.....	27,783.....	3,464
2004 (male & female/Jan.-June).....	18,908	

## 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

*All meetings are open to the public.*

### Commissioners:

Dist. 1 — Jerry Jacobson  
Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell  
Dist. 3 — Bill Montague, chair  
Dist. 4 — Warren Affeldt  
Dist. 5 — Eugene Mattson

# Jail issue

Continued from Page 2

ed by the Regional Corrections Board, which is made up of two county commissioners from each of the three counties in the Tri-County Community Corrections partnership, and approved by the Polk County Board, is intended to provide assistance in the development of a plan that will provide the highest degree of efficiency in operation and staffing.

Prachar, who has extensive experience in jail operation and recently oversaw con-

struction of the 200-bed St. Louis County Jail, limits consulting services to only one client at a time. The selection of a construction manager and of an architect is scheduled to occur this fall. The development of preliminary cost estimates will follow.

### Cost to have influence

"The cost of such a project will, of course, have a big influence on how we proceed," Montague says. "But the one thing that has been constant in our visits

with city councils and other organizations around the county is the message 'don't build it too small.'

"The people seem to have accepted the fact that the time has come when we have to address the jail space issue. They want the people who commit the crime to do their time and, with the drug problem contributing more and more to the jail crowding problem, we are now in the position where we have to do something."

*Here's what to look for:*

# Citizens can help uncover meth labs

Methamphetamine, or meth as it is commonly called, is an illegal and very addictive drug that is often manufactured in illegal laboratories set up in bathrooms, basements, garages and many other places, including secluded areas in the outdoors and even in vehicles while the vehicle is being driven.

Made in this area with anhydrous ammonia and household products, meth gives off toxic fumes that attack mucous membranes, skin, eyes and the respiratory tract. According to the Minnesota Department of Health, meth is the fastest growing problem in Minnesota schools, is the No. 1 drug in rural America and is present in all 87 counties of the state. Using meth only a second time, state officials report, can "hook" the user for life.

## Help appreciated

"Meth labs pose a significant health risk to all of us in Polk County," Sheriff Mark LeTexier notes. "As a citizen, you can help law enforcement not only in Polk County but everywhere try to stop the manufacture of this drug by watching and reporting actions that might suggest that such an activity could be taking place."

Things to watch for and common habits of those who manufacture and deal in meth, include:

1. Places where there are frequent visitors at all times of day and night.
2. Frequent late night activity.
3. Windows blackened out or curtains always drawn.
4. Visitors with expensive vehicles.
5. Unemployed people who drive nice vehicles.
6. People who, at times, seem to have plenty of cash.
7. People who pay their bills with cash.
8. People who are unfriendly and appear secretive about their activities.
9. People who watch cars suspiciously when they pass by.
10. People who are paranoid, have odd behavior, or who want extensive security.
11. People who go outside to smoke cigarettes.
12. People whose places of residence, garages or detached buildings give off chemical odors.
13. People whose garbage frequently includes packaging from cold medications or chemical containers.
14. People who place their garbage in another person's container or collection area.



Trunk of confiscated car holds all the items needed to manufacture meth

As it relates to the manufactures of meth, the word "laboratory," according to Nate Brouse, clan lab investigator with the Polk County Sheriff's Office and a member of the Northwest Drug Task Force, is misleading because it suggests the use of glassware, beakers, measuring devices, etc. "Most 'labs' in our area are comprised of pop bottles, jugs, silverware, garden hose or other rubber/plastic tubing, water coolers, 20-pound LP tanks, etc.

## Made on the move

"Many of the 'cooks' in our area," he says, "have performed different stages of the process at different locations to avoid detection. Often times, the pills are ground up and 'washed' prior to and at a different location than actual cook. We've had information that past defendants have started the process up by Middle River, finished another stage at Warren, and completed the cook near Beltrami in rural Polk County."

Recent trends have been to do the cook on township roads late at night in areas with flat terrain and no trees so approaching vehicles can be seen for miles in any direction. Most indoor or vehicle cooks will have some sort of ventilation system in place such as a fan in the window, or blower connected to dryer vent tubing. Cooks will also use painter's masks and other forms of breathing apparatus to try protect themselves from vapors and fumes.

The household products used in making meth do not necessarily have to be mixed to be dangerous. Meth is not explosive but the cooking process can be.

Open camp fuel cans, starting fluid cans, or isopropyl alcohol bottles may cause an explosion because of the vapors if the lithium strips from batteries are exposed to humidity or moisture causing them to spark.

Most of the expensive vehicles that are involved in drug activities, Brouse says, are driven by major dealers with ties to gangs or criminal organizations that supply dope to local dealers.

## Cash rich, then cash poor

"Most users/dealers in our area drive older cars and spend all their proceeds from manufacturing on more supplies and other drugs to feed their own habit. Most cooks will have cash for short periods of time after they sell the finished product but are unable to hang on to it long enough to acquire any wealth because of their habits.

"Some will live in hotels while and shortly after they are selling but when the cash is gone," Brouse says, "they will float between different residences while they obtain pills and other supplies from stores for another cook. They might also have other people get the supplies for them in exchange for finished product."

Things to look for at residences and apartments, he says, include security cameras, spotting scopes and barricaded doors. Paranoia and fear of someone stealing their cash, supplies and product is common.

Should you recognize any of these situations or habits, contact the Polk County Sheriff's Office at 218-281-0431 or your local police department.

## National events have local effect

# Polk Co. Public Health facing new challenges

Polk County Public Health is facing new challenges. The September 11th terrorist attack, the anthrax episode that unfolded in Florida and on the East Coast and the SARS outbreak in Toronto demonstrate how much the world has changed.

National and international events can send seismic shock waves that reverberate down to the local level.

Prior to the 1997 floods, Public Health had only a minor role in emergency preparedness. Then throughout the flooded areas in the Red River Valley, Public Health staffs were heavily involved in the emergency response system by staffing shelters, setting up triage clinics, administering tetanus shots, finding shelter for individuals with special needs, providing education to the public, and tracking down medications and medical equipment.

### Looking into the future

In addition to responding to natural disasters, we now look into the future and prepare for scenarios that a few years ago seemed only to be in the realm of scary Hollywood movies.

The federal government, the state of Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Health, local hospitals and local public health agencies including Polk County

Public Health, have entered into a contract to develop and coordinate emergency preparedness plans to protect the public's health in the event of an infectious disease outbreak or an act of bioterrorism.

These plans are also being incorporated into the primary disaster response plans established by local emergency management officials.

Polk County Public Health, Polk County Emergency Management and East Grand Forks Emergency Management are developing a plan to receive supplies from the National Strategic Stockpile (SNS).

The Center for Disease Control developed the National Strategic Stockpile in 1999 to assist states and communities in responding to public health emergencies.

The SNS program stands ready for deployment and will arrive within 12 hours to any location across the nation to augment local medical resources such as medicines, antidotes, medical supplies and medical equipment.

### Designated supply site

Polk County is a designated site to receive and distribute supplies for nine counties and one tribal government in the northwest area.

Each public health department must develop a plan to medicate or vaccinate (depending on the nature of the incident) the entire county's population within three to five days. Staffing these mass clinics will be a challenge and will require the support of local clinics, hospitals and community volunteers. This plan must also provide for the priority vaccination of personnel who will be responding to the incident.

Other emergency preparedness responsibilities include: Development of a communication plan; participating in drills; coordinating planning efforts with partners at the local, regional and state level; and identification of people who are homebound or more vulnerable due to special needs.

### Working together

Hopefully, we will never have to implement these plans. However, the planning that has taken place so far has resulted in strengthened relationships among agencies and identification of other areas for working together.

As with any disaster, we are all in this together, so joint planning and communication will serve us all well. — **Brenda Menier, director, Polk County Public Health**

## Menier planning to leave position as director of County Public Health

Polk County Public Health Director Brenda Menier has announced plans to resign her position sometime this fall.

Menier, who joined the agency as a family health and home care nurse in 1982 and became its director in 1987, will move to Lake Park with her husband, Jerry Nagel, when the offices of Northern Great Plains, Inc., are relocated to Fargo. Nagel is president of that multi-state rural development organization.

"I have some mixed feelings about leaving this position," Menier says. "How many people, after 22 years, can say they love their job? I can. I have learned so much from my colleagues, staff and the clients we serve. Polk County is fortunate to have so many dedicated health and human service professionals who care about people. And I



**Brenda Menier**

have been blessed to have good support from our county commissioners over the years. I enjoy public service and enjoy trying to make a difference in peoples' lives. A part of me will always be with this agency."

The current chair of the Local Public Health Association of Minnesota, Menier was presented with that state association's Regional Leadership Award in 2002. She has represented the Northwest Region 1 Public Health coalition on numerous statewide committees over the years.

A native of Walhalla, N.D., Menier earned an LPN degree at the North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton in 1973 and her bachelor of science in nursing from the University of North Dakota in 1982. She and her husband have two children: Dustin, 28, who teaches at Maple Grove, Minn., where he lives with his wife, Rebecca Hargreaves, and Terra, 21, a student at the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

## Veteran Facts:

- No. of veterans in Polk County — 3,233.
- Benefits received by county veterans — \$3,480,869.
- No. of Polk County veterans who received care at a V.A. medical facility in FY 2003 — 950 (includes both in-patient and out-patient visits).
- Amount of V.A. medical care received by these county veterans — \$4,673,610.
- Total dollars received by county veterans — \$8,160,932.

# The Meth problem: *County officials are fighting back*

The meth crisis in Minnesota is following the same course it has in many states south and west of Minnesota — rural saturation followed by an urban epidemic. The health, social and economic effects are being felt by the whole state but the early impact has been hardest in rural areas.

Meth is a significant issue for Polk County and is commanding a lot of attention and resources. Polk County officials are trying to get ahead of the curve to ensure that meth labs and meth use does not escalate further.

Polk County Public Health recently convened a task force to address the broad range of issues related to the cooking of meth and meth use.

### **Task force membership**

The task force includes representatives from law enforcement, Tri-County Community Corrections, Polk County Social Services, Polk County Attorney's office, Polk County Board of Commissioners, Riverview Health, Polk County Planning and Zoning, the schools and the community at-large.

The problems facing our communities arise from the use of this powerfully addictive drug, as well as from the dangerous manufacture of it in makeshift "labs."

Meth addicts are characterized by their paranoia, violence, and unpre-

dictable, aggressive behavior. The cost of their care and handling is just part of the huge expense associated with meth and meth labs.

Serious health effects for users of the drug and children born to users include: damage to several organ systems; cardiac problems; psychiatric problems, including persistent depression; and neurological damage mimicking stroke, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.

### **Children at risk**

Children removed from lab environments are also at risk from exposure to toxic chemicals used in the manufacturing process, ill treatment from user-parents and biological contamination. The manufacture of meth involves highly toxic chemicals such as anhydrous ammonia, solvents, acids and bases. There is also risk of fire and explosion as 30 to 40 percent of Minnesota labs are discovered when they catch fire or explode. Without adequate cleanup, contamination from meth labs pose risks for future inhabitants.

The task force members are very committed to this issue as meth destroys the lives of individuals who become addicted and rips apart their families. — **Brenda Menier, Director of Polk County Public Health and chair of the Meth Task Force**

## **Authority on meth to speak in county**

Deborah Durkin, one of Minnesota's leading authorities on the effects of methamphetamine use, will make presentations to high school students and health professionals in Polk County on Thursday, Oct. 7.

An environmental scientist with the Minnesota Department of Health and coordinator of the state Meth Lab Program, Durkin will address students and the public at Fosston High School in the morning, speak to health professionals at Altru Clinic in Crookston at noon, meet with news media at 2:30 p.m., and make a presentation to the public at Crookston High School at 7 p.m.

The programs, which are being arranged by the Polk County Meth Task Force and Polk County Public Health, will focus on damage that this illegal drug does and will set the stage for a staff and professional in-service day on Friday, Oct. 8. Interested community members may also participate in this training event.

Participants in the in-service program will include: Cinda Lutz, an agent with the Drug Enforcement Agency; members of the Northwest Drug Task Force; Carol Ackley, director of the River Ridge Treatment Center; Tom Fuchs, director of the Glenmore Treatment Center; Jeff Guith, Morrison County Social Services; and Polk County Attorney Greg Wisdeth.

## **Veterans Office, Goodwin are recertified**

The Polk County Veterans Service Office and its director, Les Goodwin, have again been certified by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA).

Each year the MDVA provides training and education to county veterans services officers with each training session earning points toward certification. In addition, each county veterans service officer is required to take and pass a test administered by the MDVA.

Goodwin, a 33-year military veteran who rose to the highest enlisted personnel rank in the Air Force, was named the Polk County veteran service officer on Aug. 1, 1999.

## 750 have earned GEDs

# **Tri-County Corrections' prisoner education program is approved**

The Adult Basic Education (ABE) program of Tri-County Community Corrections has been approved for another five years by the Minnesota Department of Corrections.

The program, which provides educational opportunities for prisoners with the intent of making them more employable when released from jail, is conducted at the Northwest Regional Corrections Center in Crookston.

Through the years, the program, which was started in 1976 when the center was constructed and the Tri-County (Polk, Norman and Red Lake

counties) organization was initiated, has helped more than 750 persons earn GEDs (general education diplomas), according to Bob Rud, ABE director.

In a recent report to the Regional Corrections Board, Rud noted that 65 percent of persons held at the jail are high school dropouts, 64 percent have no specific job skills, and that the average reading level of the inmates is below the fifth grade level. The 421 enrollees in the program in fiscal year 2004 received 18,239 hours of instruction.

Besides helping prisoners attain a high school equivalen-

cy diploma, the program assists persons in the areas of career assessments, resume and cover letter composition, basic computer orientation and computer-related competency, interview competency, and in developing individualized employability skills.

In addition to Rud, the ABE staff, which was reduced in recent years as a part of budget reductions, includes one half-time instructor and a part-time para-professional. Funding for the program comes from the state and federal governments.

## Primary Election results for 5th District County Commissioner

Don Diedrich . . . . .151  
Darrel Loeck . . . . .174  
Gordon Swanberg . . . . .110

The top two vote-getters advance to the General Election ballot on Nov. 2. There were no other issues on the Primary Election ballot. Voter turnout in Polk County was just over 11 percent. Statewide, the turnout was only 6.7 percent.

## Election information

**Election Day** — Tuesday, Nov. 2.

**Voting Hours:**

**Cities** — 7 a.m.-8 p.m. except for the cities that use mail ballots.

**Townships** — State law requires township precincts to be open from 10 a.m.-8 p.m., however, some townships have extended hours and some use mail ballots.

### Mail Ballots

**Townships** —The following 19 townships use mail ballots: Andover, Belgium, Brandt, Brislet, Fanny, Farley, Fisher, Hammond, Helgeland, Hubbard, Kertsonville, Keystone, Liberty, Parnell, Russia, Sandsville, Scandia, Tynsid and Vineland.

**Cities** — Three cities use mail ballots. They are: Beltrami, Nielsville and Trail.

Persons who have not lived in a mail ballot township or city for 20 days prior to an election, or who do not receive a ballot in the mail have the option to vote at the County Auditor-Treasurer's Office during regular business hours (8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday) and until 8 p.m. on election day.

**Absentee Ballots** — Persons who are going to be absent from their precinct on election day can either vote in advance at the County Auditor-Treasurer's Office, or they can apply to the auditor-treasurer by mail, fax or in person for an absentee ballot.

**Questions** — Questions concerning voter eligibility requirements, precinct locations and other issues can be directed to the Auditor-Treasurer's Office, (218) 281-2554.



The Wayne Hotel has been a landmark in downtown Crookston for many years

## The Wayne Hotel...

### Restoration or demolition?

What to do with the Wayne Hotel?

That's an issue that is now before the Polk County Board as the result of a tax forfeiture action that transferred ownership of the property to the county on Sept. 3, 2003.

The three-story building, located at the intersection of Main Avenue and Second Street in downtown Crookston, has been vacant since 1996. The structure is in the Crookston Historical District and is listed on the National Register of Historical Places.

Because of its historical significance, a "condition assessment survey" is needed before either renovation or removal activities can take place. The building is in poor condition and continues to deteriorate.

Jon Steiner, Polk County Environmental Services director, told a group of persons meeting recently to discuss the building's future that mold is evident on walls and

ceilings, that floors are severely buckled and that large sections of the roof are damaged, allowing water to enter the structure. He also cited safety concerns and possible public health issues related to conditions within the building.

Some groups and individuals have expressed interest in saving the former hotel building and are investigating grant possibilities. If sufficient funds to renovate the building can be obtained, proposed uses include low- to moderate-income housing, condominium units, commercial opportunities or some combination of these uses.

Based upon experience with similar projects, redevelopment representatives have estimated that restoration would cost \$150 per square foot. At that rate, restoration of the building could total more than \$4.6 million and would become significantly higher if structural defects are present.

## Loeck, Diedrich advance to General Election

A race between Darrel Loeck, East Grand Forks, and Don Diedrich, Warren, will decide who will be the new District 5 representative on the Polk County Commission beginning in January.

Eugene "Jeep" Mattson, the incumbent commissioner, did not file as a candidate for re-election. He had served as the commissioner from District 5 from 1984 until 1996 and, after not running in 1996, came out of retirement to be elected again in 2000.

Loeck, who farms in Esther Township north of East Grand Forks, topped vote-getters in a three-way race in the Primary Election with 174 votes. Diedrich, a retired farmer who lives in Brislet Township, had 151 votes and Gordon Swanberg, East Grand Forks, a retired rural mail carrier, had 110 votes.

Incumbent commissioners Jerry Jacobson, Fertile (First District) and Bill Montague, Crookston (Third District), are unopposed in their bids for re-election.

# Operating plan is 'regulating' release of waters in Parnell Impoundment

The operating plan adopted earlier this year to control the release of waters collected in Parnell Impoundment following rainfall events was instituted several times during the 2004 growing season with positive results.

In the plan, the Red Lake Watershed District (RLWD) uses information from several staff gauges in and around the impoundment as well measurements at several "trigger points" located along each of the two ditch systems into which it outlets to regulate the release of waters.

The outlets are: Polk County Ditch 126, which flows west into the Grand Marais Coulee and eventually into the Red River; and Judicial Ditch 60, which flows south into the Red Lake River.

## Advisory committees

The RLWD is also using information provided by members of two advisory committees to assist it operating the impoundment. Those committees, which are made up of local landowners from along the two ditch systems, were appointed by the county boards in Polk and Red Lake counties to allow the watershed to better factor downstream conditions into decisions concerning regulation of the outlet gates.

County Ditch 126 Advisory Committee members are: John Barrett, Randy Driscoll, Kevin Krueger and Brian Love.

Judicial Ditch 60 Advisory Committee members are: Dan Bratvold, Dennis Goodyke and Gerald Michaelson. Lateral 2 of Judicial Ditch 60 has representation from Brian Moran and Neil Beyer in Red Lake County.

In addition to providing information about rain events and conditions during the growing season, the advisory committees are to meet annually with the RLWD staff to review operations.

## Review in January

"We think the operating plan has worked really well," RLWD administrator Myron Jesme says while citing reports that a significant amount of crop was saved through regulation of the outlets. "And we'll have a joint review meeting with both committees in January to discuss how the impoundment was operated and how the plan might be fine-tuned."

The impoundment, located in Sections 3 and 4 of Parnell Township in Polk County, was constructed by the RLWD in 1997-98 to facilitate the collection and release through fixed outlet controls of waters

flowing into County Ditches 126 and 60.

## No plan initially

Because there was a moratorium on permitting dams at the time of construction of the impoundment, an operating plan was not initially developed. In the spring of 2004, the RLWD petitioned the Polk and Red Lake county boards to use county ditches 126 and 60 as outlets as a part of an operating plan. A hearing was set and both county boards approved the plan.

Anthony Salentine, who lives near the control at the west side of the impoundment, monitors water levels in both ditch systems and, at the direction of RLWD staff, physically controls gates on the two outlet structures. He was selected for the "gatekeeper" responsibility by the RLWD after it had asked area townships to recommend persons for the position.

The position was established at the request of the two county boards to ensure that the impoundment controls can be regulated in a timely manner. None of Salentine's farming operation is affected by waters in the impoundment. RLWD staff provide gatekeeper back-up should Salentine not be available.

## *For single family home construction*

### 3 cities take steps to offer tax abatement plan

The cities of Crookston, East Grand Forks and Fosston have completed the requirements needed for them to offer up to two years of tax abatement of the city, county and school district portions of real estate taxes to persons who build new, single-family homes within their jurisdictions.

The program, which requires participation by all three of the primary taxing authorities — the city, school district and county — is open to all communities in Polk County. Other cities, upon receiving concurrence from their school districts, can also participate by passing and submitting the appropriate resolutions to the County Auditor's Office.

First proposed to the County Board

by the City of Crookston, the idea was expanded by county commissioners to be available to all cities in the county. The program applies to new construction and includes modular, manufactured and stick-built homes.

In the program, the abatement will be offered in the first two years in which payment of property taxes is based upon the completed, full value of the dwelling. Eligible homeowners are to pay their tax bills as normal and then apply for abatement of the city, school district and county portions of that bill.

Cities are charged with the responsibility of initiating and operating the abatement program.

## Affeldt on state 'Futures Project'

Warren Affeldt, Fosston, the Polk County commissioner from District 4, is one of 35 county commissioners and senior county staff members statewide who are reviewing the way in which government services are delivered through the Minnesota County Futures Project.

Initiated by the Association of Minnesota Counties organization, the project is focused on evaluating and possibly improving the way counties carry out the legislature's mandates. One of the goals of the project is to develop better and more efficient ways for government to deliver services through inter-county cooperation, according to Affeldt.

"We are being challenged to think outside the box; how to do things better. Discussions," he says, "have been focused on maximizing efficiency."

Others on the project team from northwest Minnesota are Marshall County Social Services Director Jennifer Anderson and Becker County Commissioner Carolyn Engebretson. Anoka County Commissioner Margaret Langfeld is the project chair.

## AMC Work Group develops transportation funding package

Polk County Commissioner Warren Affeldt, Fosston, and Dakota County Commissioner Paul Krause, Hastings, recently served as co-chairs of the Transportation Work Group of the Association of Minnesota Counties to develop a platform position on how best to increase and to allocate funding for state transportation needs.

Affeldt, who is chair of the Minnesota Rural Counties Caucus (MRCC), represented outstate concerns, while Krause, whose county is a member of the Metropolitan Inter-County Association (MICA) group of counties in the Twin Cities area, represented metro area concerns.

The task force included seven county commissioners from rural counties, five commissioners from "ex-urban" counties, and five from urban counties. Pennington County Commissioner Don Jensen, Goodridge, and Clay County Commissioner Kevin Campbell, Moorhead, were among rural county commissioners on the task force representing the MRCC.

### Formula was topic

The most contentious issue before the group involved the formula to be used to determine how gas tax monies — both any new revenues and existing gas tax dollars — in the County State Aid Highway Fund are distributed between the outstate and metro area road needs.

There was no disagreement about the need to raise additional funding for transportation needs. In early meetings, the work group acknowledged that it would take almost \$1 billion a year for 10 years to fully fund Minnesota's transportation needs. While rec-

ognizing that it is not realistically possible to get to that level of funding on short notice, the consensus of the group was that current funding must be significantly increased and made to grow along with the normal inflation in construction and maintenance costs.

"Current state gas tax revenues fall far short of what is needed not only to maintain our roads but to address growing transportation needs both in the rural and metropolitan areas," Affeldt says. "And with a population that is predicted to be near seven million by 2040, those needs will become even greater."

Key features of the platform position include five-cent gas tax increases in each of the next two years followed by indexing (adjustments for inflation) in subsequent years. Metro counties also supported an option that would allow them to collect a wheelage fee, a registration fee increase, or to impose a one-half-cent sales tax dedicated for transportation and transit.

"Increasing the gas tax and indexing are traditional options for developing more revenue," Affeldt says. "The other methods were promoted by the Twin City metropolitan area members to help address their congestion and transit issues. The rural area needs farm-to-market roads and it needs safe roads as evidenced by the fact that most traffic fatalities occur in the outstate area. The needs of the metro area and of Greater Minnesota are different but, at current funding levels, neither has the resources to address them."

Following expected adoption by its general membership in December, AMC will present its proposal to the next session of the State Legislature.

## Eaton named District 2 DOT engineer

Lynn Eaton has been named the new Northwest District engineer for the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT). He succeeds Wes Gjovik, who retired in August after more than 35 years with the department.

Eaton, who earned a civil engineering degree from the University of North Dakota and a master of technology in management degree from the University of Minnesota, began his career with MnDOT in 1984. He had served as the assistant engineer for program delivery in the Northwest District the past four years.

The district includes Kittson, Roseau, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Beltrami, Polk, Pennington, Red Lake, Norman, Clearwater and Hubbard counties plus parts of Koochiching, Itasca and Cass counties.

District headquarters are located in Bemidji with maintenance headquarters in Crookston, a resident construction office in Thief River Falls and 16 truck stations throughout the district.

Eaton, who grew up in Nebraska, and his wife, the former Mary Zavoral of East Grand Forks, have lived in Bemidji since 1984. They have three children: Laura, 19; Todd, 17, and Sarah, 13.

## Road construction Report:

### Summer's road, bridge work at completion

Polk County road construction moved along this summer as planned. As long as the rain stays away, most of the projects will be completed by October.

Here is a brief description of each project and their intended completion date:

**County State Aid Highway 1 (CSAH) from Nielsville to Beltrami** — The grading work was completed in August and the paving was completed in mid September.

**CSAH 1 from Winger to Fosston** — Paving, which began in early September, was completed by mid September.

**CSAH 9 from Crookston west to TH 220** — The grading was completed in August with the paving and shouldering done in September.

**CSAH 44 (Landfill Road)** — The paving was completed in August.

**CSAH 66 from CSAH 17 to CSAH 21** — With the aggregate base completed, paving began in early September and was projected to be completed later in the month.

Four bridges were constructed this summer... two in Northland Township and one each in Angus and Sandsville Townships. The concrete deck was poured on the Sandsville Township Bridge in late August. Work on the other bridges was completed in early September.

Four box culvert projects — two in Angus Township and one each in Tabor and Euclid Townships — were started in mid-to-late late September with completion set for mid October.

All in all, this year's construction season went really well and, hopefully, next year will do the same.

— Richard Sanders, Polk County Highway Engineer

*As successor to Bob Proulx*

## Tiedemann serving on Red Lake Watershed Board

Gene Tiedemann, rural Euclid, has joined the Red Lake Watershed Board of Managers as the representative from West Polk County.

A career farmer, Tiedemann was appointed to the position by the Polk County Board to complete the term of Bob Proulx, who had resigned effective March 31 because of increasing farm responsibilities. The term continues until January 2006.

"It's been interesting," Tiedemann says of his first months on the board of managers. "I'm still in a learning curve. There are always issues to deal with but that's the way it is with water."

Among recent achievements by the watershed, he says, is the development and implementation of an operating plan for the Parnell Impoundment.

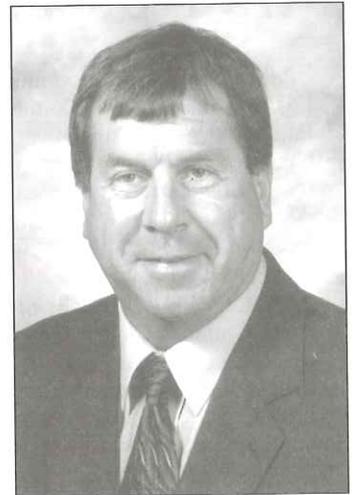
"That's been a good accomplishment. The structure is there, so we have to do the best we can to make it work and now I think that we are," he says.

Tiedemann grew up on a farm near Euclid, graduated from the Northwest School of Agriculture-Crookston in 1967 and earned a degree in finance from Moorhead State University in 1972. After starting to farm with his father and brothers, he now raises small grains, dry beans, soybeans and

sugarbeets in a farming operation with his son, Michael, and a brother, Murray.

He is a member of the board of directors of Mid-Valley Grain Cooperative, Crookston, and of the Red River Valley Farmers Insurance Pool, Fargo. He has also served on the board of directors of the Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association and on the Euclid Township and church boards.

Tiedemann and his wife, the former Sandy Dubuque of Euclid, have four children: Michael (Sue) of Euclid, Jill Broden and Bryce, both of Euclid, and Erin (Tom) LaPlante of Crookston. They have six grandchildren.



Gene Tiedemann

## Report Welfare Fraud

People who give false information or withhold facts in order to receive Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) aid, food stamps, general assistance, childcare or medical assistance may be guilty of fraud.

### You may wish to report:

- Persons not reporting income
- Incorrect reporting of persons living in the home
- Misuse of food stamps or Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards
- Falsifying of information on application
- Unreported property and assets
- Persons receiving dual benefits (from more than one state)

### What you should report:

- **Who** — The name of the person
- **What** — The fraud suspected
- **When** — Date of occurrence
- **Where** — Address of person



## Welfare Fraud

You may remain anonymous

If you suspect someone of misusing or abusing Minnesota assistance programs, call the Polk County Sheriff's Office at this number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

**1-218-281-0431 (ask for extension 2249)**

You can also contact the toll free Minnesota Welfare Fraud Hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at:

**1-800-627-9977 YOU MAY REMAIN ANONYMOUS**