

# Polk County Newsletter

Spring 2011



Gerald "Jerry" Amiot

## *After 44 years, retirement is planned*

### Amiot: Stepping away to be difficult

"It is going to be hard to walk away," Polk County Auditor-Treasurer Jerry Amiot says of his pending retirement on about July 31. "I have some mixed feelings about that day. I've really enjoyed working with the county staff and having daily contact with the public, with other local government and with state agency people."

Amiot, who was named the "Auditor of the Year" by the Minnesota Association of County Officials (MACO) at the organization's winter conference in Minneapolis in January 2007, has worked for Polk County for 44 years, including 25 as county auditor.

In addition to county auditors and auditor-treasurers from all of the state's 87 counties, the MACO organization includes county auditors, auditor-treasurers, finance directors and recorders from all of the state's 87 counties.

#### Grew up near Gentilly

A native of the Gentilly area, Amiot grew up on his family farm and graduated from Cathedral High School in Crookston in 1960. He took accounting classes at the University of Minnesota-Crookston and helped his father, Patrick, now almost 93, on the farm until tak-

ing a job in 1963 as a clerk at the J. C. Penney store in Crookston.

Amiot was hired as a bookkeeper in the Polk County Highway Department in 1967. At the time, Bernie Lieder was the engineer and the office was still located in the old courthouse building. The Highway Department moved into the lower level of the then new courthouse (now the Government Center building) the next year.

#### Tax books were hand-written

When the Auditor's Office needed another staff person in 1969, Amiot transferred there to work under then Auditor Martin Vanseth. "At the time," he says, "all of the tax books were hand-written. Those books contained the tax list for the county. Extra staff was brought in to prepare the tax bills.

"In 1970, the county got an NCR (National Cash Register) machine that allowed you to insert a page on which you could enter the name, address, assessed value of the property and tax rate and the machine would calculate the tax. We had an Addressograph machine that stamped the names and addresses on the statements.

See AMIOT, Page 2

## When needed, flood fight plans in place

With the likelihood of a flood again very real throughout the Red River Basin, the Emergency Management Division of the Polk County Sheriff's Office has the operational plans in place to provide all of the assistance and coordination that it can.

"Our responsibility rests mainly outside the cities of Crookston and East Grand Forks, which both have their own flood fight systems and policies," Nancy Shafer, Emergency Management director and supervisor of the Dispatch Center, says.

"To address concerns in the other parts of the county, we have met with township officials and city leaders to outline our response policies and also what is expected of them."

See FLOOD PLAN, Page 2

## *Focus to be on providing best possible public safety*

### Sheriff Barb Erdman assumes office

New Polk County Sheriff Barb Erdman plans no major changes in how the Sheriff's Department will operate.

"We'll focus on the basics of trying to provide the best possible public safety," she says, noting that because of budget concerns the time isn't right to expect to be able to expand services.

"Sure, there will be some minor realignment but we will perform the same duties and have the same structure in the department... all with the pos-

sibility that we could have less people on staff," she says. "I'm a conservative by nature and understand that there are going to have to be some cut-backs. We'll just try to move forward from what has already been done and become even more efficient."

Among upgrades that have been made in recent years, Erdman says, was in providing lap-top computers for some of the patrol cars. The communication link that these units pro-

See ERDMAN, Page 2



Sheriff Barb Erdman

Continued from Page 1

"The system has come a long way since then. Now, we outsource the work... send the files by e-mail to a Twin Cities area vendor that does all of the processing and mailing."

When Vanseth died in office in 1978, Lawrence "Larry" Fontaine became auditor. When Fontaine ironically also died in office, Amiot succeeded him on Aug. 20, 1986.

### Offices combined

Amiot became "auditor-treasurer" on Sept. 15, 1993, when the offices were combined following the retirement of

Treasurer Florence Rood.

The auditor position was elective until 2002 when Polk County received authority from the Legislature to make it appointive. Amiot, who had been elected to the position in 1994 and re-elected in 1998, was then appointed to the position by the County Board in January 2003.

He has been a member of MACO's Ditch Committee for 19 years and been its chairman for the past 16 years. He also serves on that state organization's Legislative Committee and has served as district chair-

man of the Northwest Minnesota County Auditors.

### French ties

Locally, Amiot is a member of the Crookston Noon Day Lions Club, Polk County Historical Society and of AFRAN (Association of French of the North), which sponsors Chautauqua, the French Festival of Old Crossing at Huot. He is a former member of the both the Gentilly and Crookston Jaycees and was active in Pioneer Days, now known as Ox Cart Days, serving both as its president and as co-chair of the parade.

In retirement, Amiot plans to make much more use of his place along Lake Winnipeg near Gimli, Manitoba, and to remain active with French festivals. A more recent involvement has been with I.F. (Initiatives in French) Midwest, a regional historical and cultural organization.

"Before I leave the county," he says, "I'd like to do another tax forfeiture sale. We didn't have one in 2010 because there weren't that many tax-forfeited parcels. I've served as the auctioneer for those sales in the past and would like to do one more."

## Plans for flood fight have been made

Continued from Page 1

The message to townships and cities is that they should be as self-reliant as possible... but that help is available when their capabilities are threatened or exceeded.

Polk County, Shafer, who has become certified as an emergency manager, says, has some 270,000 sandbags on hand. The Emergency Management Office will maintain a list of firms that can provide gravel. Sandbag distribution sites will be established both in Crookston and East Grand Forks.

### Flood hotline

A flood hotline — 218-470-8300 — will be active to give important flood information, outline procedures and policies for procuring sandbags, where to get them and who to contact in emergencies.

The Polk County Sentence to Service program will have two crews available on a first come first serve basis to help sandbag. Contact the Emergency Management office at 218-281-0437 for more information.

### Watch out for neighbors

"We are asking that people watch out for their neighbors. Townships and cities should have plans for evacuation, if needed," Shafer says. "And if they have elderly people who are living by themselves, contact should be kept up with them. People with pets, should also make evacuation plans for those pets."

Sheriff Barb Erdman has directed that deputies have a more involved role in observing conditions this spring. "They will be out checking on possible trouble spots and bridges and will be helping us watch for overland flooding," Shafer relates.

Should it be needed, Polk County Social Services and the American Red Cross will be in charge of arranging for emergency sheltering. Feeding of flood victims will be provided by the Salvation Army.

## Erdman

Continued from Page 1

vide allows deputies to work from their cars. "This keeps those units on the road, gives these deputies mobile offices that allows them to file their reports and get information while in their vehicles. It makes them more visible and more proficient," Erdman says, "so, we'd like to get lap-tops for the remaining units."

### Change made

One change in department's organization has included the promotion of Brian Lundeen, who had been an investigator, to the sergeant position that Erdman held. The resulting vacancy in the investigations department has not been filled.

After graduating from NDSU, Erdman was hired to work with a Victim Services Program grant in Polk County. Directors of this "stand alone" program included Cindy Ostlie, who was a Polk County assistant attorney, and Susan Mills, the executive director of Tri-County Community Corrections.

The connections with law enforcement led to her being hired by the County Attorney's office as an interviewer in vulnerable adult and child cases. That position, in turn, became a civilian position in the Sheriff's Department, which then progressed into her earning certification as a law enforcement officer in 1987.

### Several roles

As a deputy, Erdman has had roles in investigation, on patrol, in boat and water safety, in a predatory program, in child abuse cases, in education in the schools, and in adminis-

tration, including budgeting. She was promoted to sergeant in 2001 when she moved into the administrative and supervision roles of the department.

"After Mark (LeTexier) announced that he wasn't going to seek re-election to a third term, I was encouraged by some officers and others in the community to run for sheriff," Erdman says. "And I wanted to progress in my career, too. I have been interested in and directly involved in budgeting issues for some time and am concerned about where the department might go, including what could be done for Drug Task Force funding."

### Prepared for the job

I wanted to be a part of those determinations and I believed that I was prepared to become the next sheriff." She defeated Patrolman Jim Juve, Fosston, for the position in the General Election.

Erdman, who grew up at Drayton, N.D., graduated from high school there in 1975 and earned bachelors degrees in both sociology and design at North Dakota State University in 1980.

Barb (Pederson) and Doug Erdman were married in 1981. They have two children. Megan, 28, a graduate of Concordia College, works in medical research and is in graduate school at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, and Eric, 27, a graduate of the University of North Dakota, farms with his father and is a substitute teacher during the school year.

# What happens in St. Paul won't stay in St. Paul

The main issue that will be before the Polk County Board in 2011, according to new chair Warren Affeldt, will center on how the county is affected by what the Legislature and Gov. Dayton do to address the state's more than \$6 billion problem.

Affeldt, rural Fosston, who is the commissioner from District 4, succeeded Warren Strandell, East Grand Forks, as chair when the board re-organized at its first meeting in January.

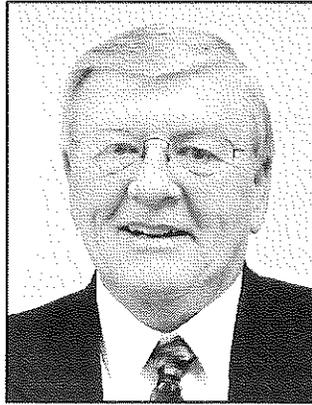
Bill Montague, Crookston, was elected the vice chair. The chair and vice chair positions rotate annually among the five county commissioners.

Further re-organization of county government will occur in July when Commissioner Craig Bunes, Crookston, is slated to succeed Montague as chair of the Polk County Social Services Board. That board, which meets monthly as a separate body, is made up of the five county commissioners and two at-large members, Cathy Gutterud, Fosston, and Paula Waters, Crookston.

## Big issues ahead

"I believe that we are going to be dealing with some extreme issues in 2011," Affeldt says of what develops as the legislature and governor work to balance the budget. "We are hearing that there could be a big reduction in market value credits. For Polk County, the number being mentioned amounts to about a \$328,000 reduction in funding."

Market value credits represent the amount of the property tax



Warren Affeldt

bill that the state of Minnesota annually finances.

"The market value credits issue and the uncertainty about the amount of County Program Aid that counties receive will be determined in St. Paul," Affeldt says.

## Human services targeted

"Some really hard budget decisions are going to have to be faced both in St. Paul and in the Polk County. With talk that there will be limited dollars from the state to support programs that it mandates, services are going to be reduced, probably most heavily in the area of human services."

The County Board, Affeldt says, will also be dealing with a possible re-structuring of the auditor-treasurer position following the retirement of long-time Auditor-Treasurer Gerald Amiot that is slated to occur about July 31.

## Finance division

"We've had some discussions about possibly creating a finance division that would work directly under the new county administrator position. That would amount to a change in how things are done. We're looking at trying to become more efficient in today's world.

"And we are going to have to find a way to keep up our road system," he says. "Costs keep going up and up and up and there is the question about where the dollars are going to come from just to maintain the system that we have."

To address budget shortfalls, some counties, Affeldt says, have reduced the number of hours that their employees work; reduced them to 36 and even 32 hours a week.

## Have reserves, but...

"That might be something that we might have to look at, too. We have good reserves but we will have to ask ourselves how much we can spend them down to control the property taxes without creating other problems. News that salaries are being frozen is coming from all over the place."

The salary issue for Polk County employees will be addressed later in 2011, Affeldt notes. While the current three-year wage and benefit contracts did not provide cost of living salary increases for county employees for the years 2010 and 2011, the contracts, however, have an "opener" clause that calls for the salary issue to be

addressed for 2012.

Even without a "cost of living" increase in salaries for county employees, the cost of honoring step increases that are in the salary schedules and of a bump in the benefits package to cover an increase in health insurance premiums added more than \$300,000 to the county's personnel costs for 2010, which was the first year of the contracts.

That cost for 2011 could be close to another \$300,000.

Affeldt notes that while the county is solid financially, the focus of the board will be to keep it that way. "It took us a long time to get to the point of financial stability and we can't just let it slip back to the days when the county's General Fund didn't always have enough money to pay the monthly bills."

## Affects of census

Another issue, he says, will be how the 2010 census results will affect the Congressional and state legislative districts, and even how it could affect the commissioner district boundaries.

"We should know more later in the year about how the new congressional and legislative districts might look. That will also tell us if our commissioner districts might have to change.

"We accomplished a lot during 2010 and are pretty well positioned for the future but 2011 is going to be a very key and important year," Affeldt says. "Some very big decisions are going to be made both in St. Paul and in Polk County."

## Public Health to have role as the 'safety net'

# 1,355 students received flu vaccinations

The federal government provided influenza vaccine for school-located flu vaccination clinics in October, November and December. Polk County Public Health staff administered 1,355 influenza vaccinations to students in our seven school districts.

This was accomplished with our partnerships between public health, school nurses and school administration. The vaccine

opportunity was a one-time event funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Looking to the future, we are working with many community partners to plan for the influenza vaccination campaign for the 2011-2012 flu season.

We will be asking people to get their influenza vaccinations through their medical provider or

their pharmacy. All of our clinics provide influenza vaccine for people age 6 months and up and many of our pharmacies also offer influenza vaccine for people age 18 and up.

Public Health is the safety net for needed services that are not provided by private agencies. Our agency will have a smaller amount of influenza vaccine for people, who do not have health insurance.

Influenza vaccine is a very important way to prevent the serious illness of influenza. We strongly encourage all people over the age of 6 months to be vaccinated. Other ways to protect yourself include hand washing, covering your cough with your sleeve or tissue and staying home if you are sick. — **Sheri Altepeter, PHN, Polk County Public Health director**

## Retirement planned later in year

# Mills to complete distinguished career in corrections

Susan Mills, who has been the executive director of Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC) for the past 25 years, is expecting to retire about Nov. 1.

Mills, who has been a pioneer in the development of jail operations policy for the state of Minnesota and the nation, has served two terms as president of the Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Act Counties. She received the association's Jack Young Award for dedication to corrections programs and efforts in 2002 and was inducted into the Northwest Minnesota Women's Hall of Fame in 2006.

The Regional Corrections Board, which is made up of two commissioners from each of the three county partners (Norman, Red Lake and Polk), could name a successor as early as mid-year to allow time for the new director to work with Mills before she leaves the office.

### Well prepared

The new director will come into an agency that is well prepared for the years ahead. The new Regional Corrections Center jail will meet all needs well into the future. The 90 full and part-time members of the staffs of the Probation Department, the Corrections Center and the Red River Valley Juvenile Center and other program areas are in place and well trained.

The only foreseeable hurdle will be in the area of funding as the state of Minnesota seeks answers to its budget shortfall.

Mills graduated from the Wilson Campus School on the campus of Mankato State University in 1965 and from the university with degrees in sociology and psychology four years later.

She joined TCCC as its research and training coordinator in 1976. In that position, she tracked every probation case in the agency establishing



Susan Mills

the first computerized statistical reporting mechanism while working with the University of Minnesota-Crookston.

At the time of Mills' arrival in Crookston, TCCC was in its first year of operation. The agency had been created in 1975 under the Regional Jails Act by Norman, Polk and Red Lake counties through a joint powers agreement. The then new jail-law enforcement center building was constructed in 1976. It housed the first Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail and the agency's administrative offices, the Polk County Sheriff's Office and the Crookston Police Department.

### Over building

When that jail was being planned, Mills recalls, that the Department of Corrections (DOC) was concerned that TCCC was over-building. "The jail was to have 28 beds and two holding cells for the three county partners but the DOC believed that we would never have more than five felons at one time," Mills says.

Jail over-crowding was instead a major problem by the early 2000 years with the DOC then threatening the close down of the just over 32-year-old jail if plans were not begun to expand or replace the facility. Jail structures at that time were built with a life expectancy of 25 years given the 24 hour/7 days a week of operation.

In addition to the DOC's close-down threat another factor in the decision by the Regional Corrections Board in 2005 to construct a new facility was that TCCC was paying a lot of money to house prisoners in other jails as NWRCC didn't have room for them. That cost reached \$431,000 in 2007, the last full year before the new jail was opened.

With special temporary permission from the DOC, there were days prior to opening the new facility when the old jail was holding more than 50 prisoners with many sleeping on the jail floors.

### Jail policy manuals

TCCC, along with sheriff's offices in Olmsted and St Louis counties and the DOC were jointly awarded a National Institute of Corrections grant early in Mills' career that paid for part of her salary. The grant paid to pay for a project to develop jail policy manuals not only for the state of Minnesota but also for other states in the nation.

"We were the only regional jail in the nation at that time," Mills says of her involvement in the three-year process that dealt with national jail accreditation.

"That multi-year project became my deep end education in jail operations. Our Regional Corrections Center in 1979 was the first small, rural jail in the country to be nationally accredited. Norvald Anderson, long time jail Security Director for many years, now retired, was central to the implementation of the many changes the project required."

Mills started working for Richard Jensen, who was the first director of TCCC. He had stayed on when the building opened in 1976. In 1978, Harley Nelson came in as director but soon left to return to the DOC. Larry Morris, who followed Nelson, left in 1984 with Mills, who was the deputy director at the time, elevated to

the director position. She was the first female corrections director in Minnesota.

That was in 1985. At the time, the agency didn't have a juvenile center, a transition program, or several of the other programs that are provided today and have become very successful.

Mills was a key person in the planning and design for the new Regional Corrections Center that was opened in February 2008.

The new facility, which is expected to take care of all jail needs for the next 50 years and more, is now taking in "revenue-producing" prisoners from other counties and from state and federal agencies. The jail is licensed for 180 beds and, with some additional staff, could house more than 200 prisoners.

Facility planning and layout also provides capability to add on to the building at low cost if needed in the very distant future.

### Biggest project

"Construction of the new jail has certainly been one of the biggest projects in my time," Mills says. "I partnered with Jack Schmalenberg (Polk County administrator) and Jan Skyberg (Polk County buildings & grounds supervisor) in that project. We had to make a lot of tough decisions and had disputes over many details.

"The Polk County Board members were centrally involved in the early part of the planning. They set budget limits and were also involved in the early design stage."

Mills also credits the Corrections Center Transition Team, which, she says, "was the heart and energy for moving into the new facility and implementing policy and procedure."

She notes that from beginning to end the entire process took more than 10 years to research, design and complete. Initially, a

See MILLS, Page 5

**Polk County  
Attorney's Office**  
Activity Summary  
Jan.-Dec. 2010

<b>Felony &amp; Gross Misdemeanors</b>	
Complaints prepared	398
Sentencing hearings	374
Committed to state prison	66
Probation violation hearings	466
Committed to state prison	31
Total committed to prison	97
Jury trials	5/1
Cases with convictions	5/0
<b>Misdemeanors</b>	
Guilty pleas	118
Trials	7
<b>Appeals</b>	
Polk County Attorney Office	7
Minnesota Attorney Gen. Office	0
<b>Juvenile Cases</b>	
Delinquency petitions	40
Child in need of protective services (CHIPS) petitions	30
Delinquency hearings	371
EJJ probation	0
CHIPS hearings	220
<b>County Welfare</b>	
Commitment petitions*	32
Commitment hearings	57
Guardianship petitions	12
Guardianship hearings	22
* Mentally ill and/or inebriate	
<b>Child Support</b>	
Child support hearings	182
Paternity hearings	247

**Maps Available**

Polk County maps showing the street and avenue locations in the rural addressing system are available at the Highway Department and Auditor-Treasurer's Office. The cost is \$2 each.

Role & job title changed

**Schmalenberg becomes administrator**

John "Jack" Schmalenberg has expanded administrative responsibilities in his new role as the Polk County administrator.

The change in role and job title — from coordinator to administrator — was approved by the County Board in December and made effective on Jan. 1.

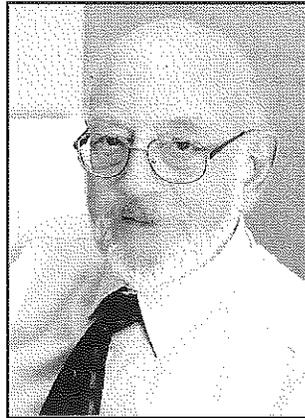
An employee of Polk County since Nov. 7, 1971, when he joined the Auditor's office to work on personnel and other issues, Schmalenberg became the executive secretary of the Polk County Board on June 5, 1978.

Over the years, that job transitioned into that of serving as the coordinator for the County Board's policies and directives. In that role, although it was regarded as the top operational position, department heads still answered directly to the County Board.

In the new position, all departments in the county now answer first to Schmalenberg, who in turn, carries out the directions of the County Board.

"The change in role," according to County Board Chair Warren Affeldt, "was made to have decisions about many day-to-day operations made by the county administrator, rather than by County Board action. The new arrangement clears our table of those decisions and gives us more opportunity for budgeting, planning and policy making."

A factor in the job change, too, Affeldt says, was to have the administrator position established in advance of the time when Schmalenberg might retire. "That could happen in a couple of years and the board thought that having the scope and duties of the county administrator position established beforehand would make the transition easier for



**John (Jack) Schmalenberg**

both the county and the new administrator."

Schmalenberg, who was presented the "Joe Ries Award for Excellence in County Management" by the Association of Minnesota Counties in 2009, has regularly been a lead player in major decisions over the years. This includes the establishment of the Tri-County Community Corrections agency in 1975.

Most recently, Schmalenberg was integral in the construction of the \$25.9 million Polk County Justice Center and adjoining 218-bed Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail. A model

for efficiency for court and corrections systems, that facility was constructed at a cost much less than that of comparable facilities. It will serve Polk County and its partner counties in Tri-County Community Corrections (Norman and Red Lake) many years into the future.

Schmalenberg's involvements in northwestern Minnesota have included serving on the Community Health Services Advisory Board from the 1980s to the present and as a member of the Lake Agassiz Regional Library (LARL) Board from 1988 through 1994. He was president of the LARL Board in 1991 and 1992.

A native of East Grand Forks where he graduated from Sacred Heart High School in 1964, Schmalenberg earned a degree in economics from the University of North Dakota in February 1969. He worked for the City of East Grand Forks during the flood fight of 1969 after which he joined the U.S. Army (Airborne). He served in Vietnam where he earned the Bronze Star.

**Mills**

**Continued from Page 4**

study focused on expansion of the existing jail, she recalls. Given the cost of large addition and remodeling that was not feasible. The idea of constructing a new "direct-supervision" facility emerged following a legislative grant-funded visit by key staff and corrections board members to five jails in Kansas.

That trip provided the first on site look at that then new concept in jail operations.

**Efficient & safe**

"Our new direct-supervision jail is a very efficient and safe

facility," she says, noting that it has become a model for jail and justice center construction.

"Having spent so much of my work life on incarceration issues, I have greatly valued opportunities to collaborate with many human service agencies on programs and services that can limit the need for incarceration for adults and juveniles," she says.

**Wonderful staff**

"I am profoundly grateful for the opportunities these agencies have provided. I also have great respect for the profes-

sionalism of our staff and appreciate having had the opportunity to work with so many wonderful folks."

Mills has two sons, who live in Crookston. She and her husband, Keith, who retired a year ago as a lead probation officer, have six grandchildren. They have no definite plans except to spend more time with their children and grandchildren and to do some traveling.

"Right now, I'm just focused on what will happen between now and November," she says.

**NWRDC board has changes**

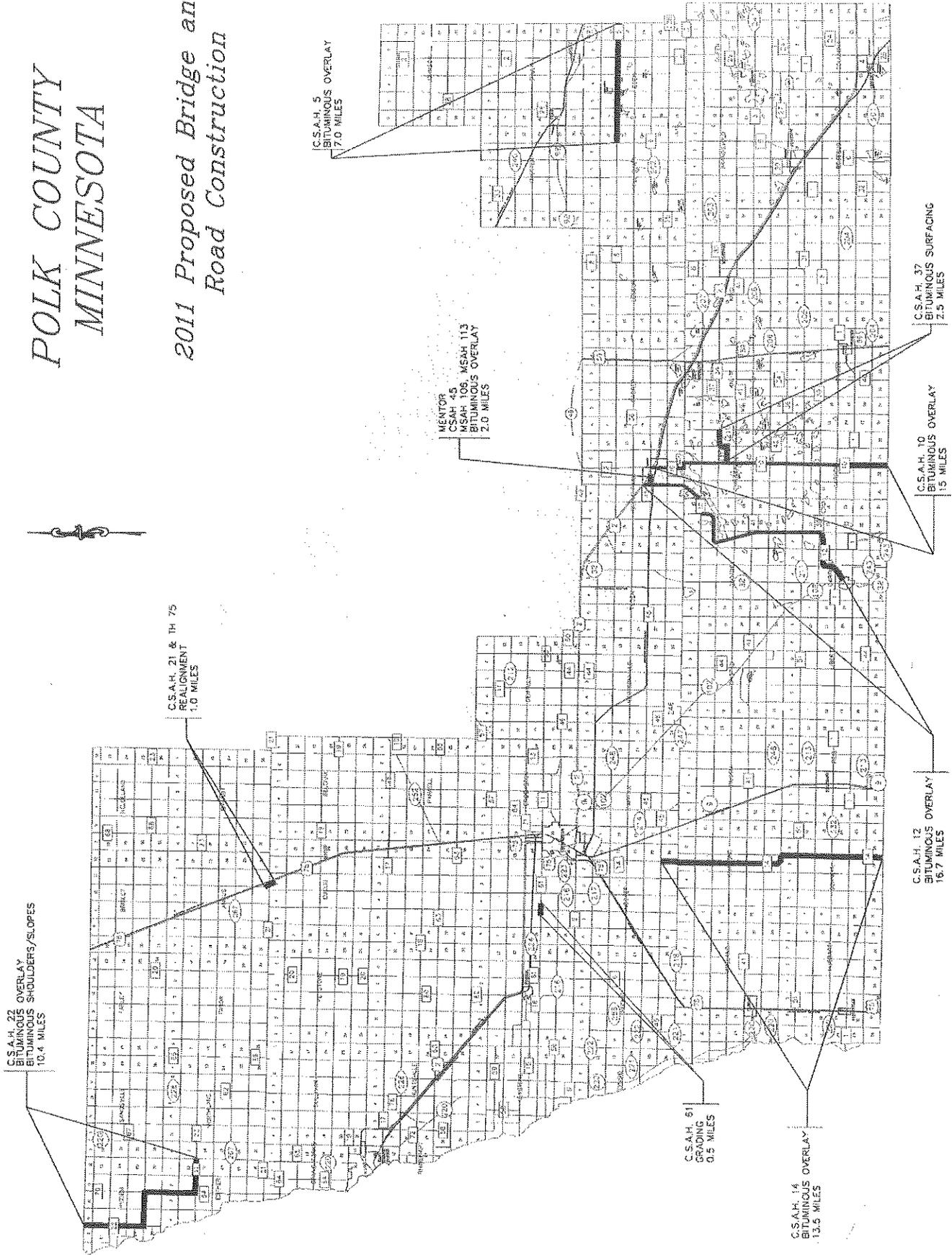
Norman, Red Lake and Roseau counties have appointed new representation to the board of directors of the Northwest Regional Development Commission (NWRDC).

The new directors, all county commissioners, are: Nathan Redland, Norman, who succeeds Warren Olson; John Lerohl, Red Lake, who succeeds Velma Oakland; and Mark Foldersi, Roseau, who succeeds Alan Johnston.

Other members of the seven-county organization are: Elvera Cullen, Pennington; Kimberly Johnson, Kittson; Gary Kiesow, Marshall; and Warren Strandell, Polk. Joe Bouvette, Kittson County, serves as the non-voting chair of the board.

# POLK COUNTY MINNESOTA

## 2011 Proposed Bridge and Road Construction



# Big county road construction program slated

The snow was piled high during the winter and there remains the potential for flooding but the change in seasons also means that is time to start awarding contracts for the projects that are in the summer construction program.

This year's work program is going to be a little bigger than normal because we are advancing federal aid and state aid funds to complete some disaster work from 2009. And there is also some minor work to be completed at the Thompson Bridge site.

The projects scheduled for this year include:

**CSAH 5** — Overlay from CSAH (County State Aid Highway) 6 from north of Fosston to the east county line. This road has damage due to heavy truckloads that has required major patching in the last couple of years.

**CSAH 10** — Overlay from the south county line to TH 2 in Mentor. This is a routine overlay using federal funds

**CSAH 12** — Overlay from TH 32 in Fertile to TH 2 in Mentor. This is also a routine overlay using federal funds.

**CSAH 14** — Overlay from the south county line to CSAH 45. With the amount of truck traffic on CSAH 14, this stretch of roadway has begun to show deterioration and needs to be overlaid before we end up with sections that deteriorate to gravel. This project will be completed by Oct. 1, 2011.

**CSAH 21 and TH 75** — We are looking at different safety improvements for this intersection. One alternative is to realign TH 75 so that it crosses CSAH 21 perpendicularly. If this is the selected alternative, the project will be paid for 50-50 by MnDOT and Polk County using federal safety funds and CSAH funds.

**CSAH 22** — Mill and overlay from the intersection with TH 220 north of East Grand Forks to the north county line. This project is a routine overlay along with some slope paving that qualified for disaster funding. This was due to the damage done by the 2009 flooding of the Red River. The overlay will be paid for with federal funds.

**CSAH 37** — Surfacing and overlay. The areas that were ground up to gravel will be

patched this year and an overlay done from CSAH 10 to CR (County Road) 210. This will help strengthen the roadway for the heavy loads that are delivered to the grain facility.

**CSAH 45 and 113 in Mentor** — These roads will get a routine overlay.

**CSAH 61 (3 miles west of TH 75 at Crookston)** — The roadway will be realigned to move it further away from the Red Lake River. This project will be paid for with FEMA and CSAH funding. The roadway has been closed since September 2010 because of sloughing into the river.

If funding becomes available, we also anticipate replacing a number of township bridges with box culverts.

Remember to drive safely through our work zones. Not only will it keep the workers safe but yourself, too.

If you have any questions concerning this year's construction program, please give our office a call at 218-281-3952 and talk with either Darin Carlstrom at ext. 8254 or me at ext. 8253. — **Richard Sanders, Polk County engineer**

## State legislation changed tax rate, method of distribution

# Record gravel tax collections are distributed

The Polk County Highway Department and 11 townships are sharing \$124,766.29 in the Aggregate Material Tax that was collected from gravel importers and operators in the county during 2009.

The collection, an all-time high, is almost double that which was collected for 2008. This is the result of changes in the tax rate that were made by the Legislature.

For townships, the method of distribution of "the gravel tax" was also changed for 2009. It is now based on the number of pits within a township rather than by the number of miles of road that are affected by the hauling.

Under the revised law, the tax is now distributed 42.5 percent (\$50,734.39) each to the Township Road & Bridge Fund and to the County Road & Bridge Fund, with 15 percent (\$17,779) placed in the Reserve Fund for Pit Restoration, and 5 percent designated for annual administrative fees provided by

the County Auditor-Treasurer's office.

For 2009, which is the latest year that the total of tax collections is available, money in the Township Road & Bridge Fund has been distributed to the townships in the following amounts:

Belgium, 2 pits, \$4,579.48; Brandt, 1 pit, \$2,289.74; Chester, 5 pits, \$11,448.81; Gently, 2 pits, \$4,579.48; Grove Park-Tilden, 1 pit, \$2,289.74; Gully, 1 pit, \$2,289.74; Hill River, 2 pits, \$4,579.48; Liberty, 4 pits, \$9,158.96; Onstad, 2 pits, \$4,579.48; Parnell, 1 pit, \$2,289.74; and Woodside, 1 pit, \$2,289.74.

The 2009 collections total were almost double the \$64,299 that was collected for 2008.

### Special legislation

The ability to collect the tax was created by special legislation at the request of Polk and Norman counties when Bernie Lieder was the Polk County engineer. It has been available to counties since 1980. By 1986, 22

counties statewide were using the tax as a way to help maintain roads.

Currently, 32 counties and three individual townships collect the tax, which is determined at the rate of 21.5 cents per cubic yard or 15 cents per short ton.

Initially, the legislation called for voluntary compliance by aggregate producers. In an effort to bring all producers into compliance, the law was amended in 1997 to give county auditors (and/or township clerks) full access to an operator or importer's business records.

### Activities monitored

Also at that time, the Polk County Board retained Dave Goosen, who was the maintenance supervisor for the County Highway Department at the time, to monitor activities at gravel pits and report to the auditor-treasurer. Don Juvrud, who succeeded Goosen as maintenance supervisor and has since also retired, monitored the extraction and hauling activities in years

that followed. Jerry Kovar has performed the duty since succeeding Juvrud as maintenance supervisor in January 2007.

Gravel tax collections in 1997 totaled only \$3,325. The next year, collections increased to \$78,035. The \$64,298.67 that was collected in 2008 was the second lowest amount, while the \$104,077 that was collected for 2005 when construction activity was at a peak, was the previous high amount.

History of Gravel Tax Collections:

1997 .....	\$3,325
1998 .....	\$78,035
1999 .....	\$77,655
2000 .....	\$90,678
2001 .....	\$90,391
2002 .....	\$73,975
2003 .....	\$86,007
2004 .....	\$72,362
2005 .....	\$104,077
2006 .....	\$98,377
2007 .....	\$66,497
2008 .....	\$64,299
2009 .....	\$124,766

## Polk County Employee Anniversaries in 2011

Hire	Employee	Department-Position
11/9/71	John Schmalenberg	Administrator-Co. Administrator <b>40 Years</b>
3/10/76	Robert Bjerk	Highway Dept.-Engineering Tech. III-C <b>35 Years</b>
12/6/76	Thomas Nelson	Highway Dept.-Maintenance II
12/27/76	Laureen Anderson	Veterans Service-Administrative Asst. II <b>30 Years</b>
8/17/81	Valerie Bjerk	Administrator-Administrative Asst. II <b>25 Years</b>
1/7/85	Cynthia Peterson	Soc. Services-Financial Asst. Specialist
2/18/86	Douglas Axtell	Soc. Services-Fiscal Supervisor II
8/1/86	Jennifer Kvaale	Soc. Services-Financial Asst. Specialist <b>20 Years</b>
3/1/91	Richard Sanders	Highway Dept.-Co. Engineer
4/19/91	Michelle Erdmann	Environmental Services- Sec./Receptionist <b>15 Years</b>
1/8/96	Jon Volker	Highway Dept.-Engineering Tech III-B
4/1/96	Todd Rue	Incinerator-Utility Maintenance
4/3/96	Rosa Guterrez	Soc. Services-Financial Worker
6/10/96	Mama Kelly	Soc. Services-Social Worker
8/26/96	Steve Nelson	Facilities-Custodian I
8/26/96	Carolyn Woehle	Soc. Services-Social Worker
9/9/96	Joanne Martin	Incinerator-Sort Line Operator
9/9/96	Mary Winkler	Incinerator-Sort Line Operator
9/23/96	Stephanie Olson	Public Health-Dietician
10/12/96	Rick Kappedal	Incinerator-Sort Line Operator
11/1/96	Clarisse Miller	Soc. Services-Child Support Worker
11/26/96	Bruce Hanson	Incinerator-Loader Operator <b>10 Years</b>
11/1/01	William Montague	County Board-Commissioner
1/22/01	Phillip Juve	Sheriff's Dept.-Deputy Patrol
3/12/01	Anita Klinge	Recorder-Clerk Typist Cashier III
4/18/01	Susan Gorder	Soc. Services-Social Worker
5/8/01	Kathryn Plafte-Ziermeier	Soc. Services-Social Worker
5/21/01	Jody Beauchane	Highway Dept.-Ditch/Ag Inspector
5/29/01	Jennifer Stene	Highway Dept.-Clerk Typist II
8/20/01	Mary Efta	Soc. Services-Social Worker
9/3/01	Holly Duciaume	Sheriff's Dept.-Dispatcher
11/13/01	Merrie Janorske	Highway Dept.-Engineering Tech II-B <b>5 Years</b>
3/1/06	Cheryl Pitts	Soc. Services-Financial Worker
5/8/06	Darren Paulson	Incinerator-Waste Combustion Operator
5/22/06	Lynette Bosse	Public Health-Registered Nurse II
5/26/06	Mary Wieg	Auditor/Treasurer-Clerk Typist Cashier III
6/12/06	Crystalynn Kuntz	Public Health-Registered Nurse II
6/19/06	Wendy Reitmeier	Sheriff's Dept.-Clerk Typist Cashier III
7/5/06	Amy Solie	Soc. Services-Case Aide
8/21/06	Nicole Marcott	Soc. Services-Financial Worker
10/2/06	Richard Kuzel	Highway Dept.-Maintenance II
10/2/06	Mark Landsverk	Assessor-Appraiser Tax Officer III
10/2/06	Jay Wallace	Highway Dept.-Maintenance II
10/24/06	Howard Nettum	Highway Dept.-Maintenance II
11/3/06	Kristen Fagerlund	Public Health-Registered Nurse II
12/1/06	Tamara Conn	Public Health-Dietician
12/1/06	Sarah Reese	Public Health-Community Facilitator
12/18/06	Chelsea King	Assessor-Clerk Typist Cashier III

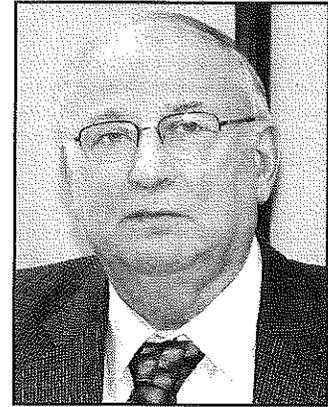
## Diedrich elected to Minnesota counties insurance position

Polk County Commissioner Don Diedrich was elected to a four-year term as member of the board of directors of the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT) during the organization's annual meeting in St. Cloud, Minn., in December. Diedrich succeeds Pennington County Commissioner Charles Naplin, Thief River Falls, who retired.

MCIT is a joint risk sharing entity that was created by counties to offer property, casualty and workers' compensation coverage as well as relevant risk management and loss control services to county governments and other related public organizations.

Diedrich, who farmed in the Warren, Minn., area for 36 years (1964-2000), has been a Polk County commissioner for the past six years. As a commissioner, he serves on the boards of directors of the Northwest Mental Health Committee and of Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, is a member of the Polk County Personnel Committee and serves on several ditch committees.

Prior to his election as a commissioner, he served on the Polk County Planning & Zoning Commission for 20 years, including many of those years as its chair. During his tenure on the commission, he was instrumental in helping to re-write the county's zoning



Don Diedrich

ordinance. He also served as chair of the Brislet Town Board for 20 years.

In the community, he held all chairs of the Warren Lions Club, helped to resurrect the financially troubled Marshall County Cooperative Oil Co. as one of its three directors, and lead a sports boosters organization that raised over \$500,000 to construct a track complex for Warren High School. He was one of the founding members of the Warren Education Foundation and serves on the Alumni Association Board of Directors for the Northwest School of Agriculture from where he graduated as the class valedictorian. He has been involved in liquid fertilizer sales since 1965.

Diedrich and his now deceased wife raised three children, who now have careers in business and medicine.

## Jacobson joins Corrections Board as a Norman County representative

Steve Jacobson, Hendrum, has succeeded Warren Olson, Halstad, as one of Norman County's two commissioner members on the Regional Corrections Board (RCB).

The board governs the Tri-County Community Corrections agency, which includes the Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail, Tri-County Community Corrections Probation Department and the Red River Valley Juvenile Center.

The change in representation was made when Olson, who had served on the board for 16 years,

did not seek re-election as a commissioner. A four-term commissioner, Olson had followed his father, Harold Olson, as both a Norman County commissioner and a member of the RCB.

Norman County's other commissioner member of the RCB is Steve Bommersbach, Twin Valley. RCB members from Red Lake County are commissioners Ron Weiss, Red Lake Falls (vice chair), and Brent Strand, Erskine.

The Polk County members are commissioners Warren Affeldt and Warren Strandell (chair).

*Bob Rudh finds chance meetings 'very fulfilling'*

## Old students tell of having success

When now retired teacher Bob Rudh meets a former student somewhere out in the community, the conversation obviously begins with the usual greetings and then progresses into what has transpired over the years.

"They're so nice," Rudh says. "They want to know what I am doing. Then, I'll ask them, 'how's it going for you? I get all kinds of answers. There are some real success stories. Some will say that they own their businesses. Others will say that they've stayed out of trouble for the last 10 years, or whatever.'"

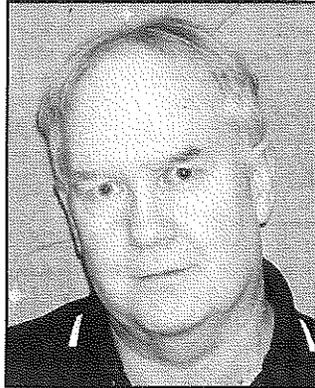
### Taught in jail

The answers, Rudh says, "are very fulfilling." That's especially so since his 23-year career has been spent with the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program inside the Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail.

It was his job to help inmates earn their General Educational Development (GED) certifications. Having a GED, the equivalent to a high school diploma, is very important in getting a job and becoming a contributing member of society.

Over his years in the "classroom," Rudh has been a part of the GED accomplishment for about 600 or more mostly young people, who after running afoul of the law, have responded by taking steps to turn their lives around.

About 50 percent or more of those who have to do jail time, Rudh says, are high school dropouts. Besides preparing the inmates for GED examinations, the ABE program also works on other academic and



**Bob Rudh**

employability related skills.

"Bob used to take the GED graduates' pictures with an old Polaroid camera," Kim Moronez, the chief para under Rudh, notes. "Bob would provide a cap and gown for each inmate to wear for the picture. I think he took two photos, one for the photo album at the jail and one for the inmates to give to their families. We kept in albums and for years we would have inmates come in and look through those old albums, still so very proud."

A 1965 graduate of Sacred Heart High School in East Grand Forks, Rudh served three years in the Army beginning in 1968. The last year and a half was spent with a NATO unit in West Germany.

Following his discharge, he earned a B.A. degree in history at the University of North Dakota in 1975 and continued to work at the family's furniture store in East Grand Forks.

### Returned to school

"Rudh Furniture had been started by my grandfather and his brother in 1916," Rudh says. "It was being operated by my dad and his brother

when I worked there." When the store was closed in 1982, Rudh returned to UND to earn a degree in education. He became an instructor at the Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail in February 1988.

Tri-County Community Corrections has had an ABE program as a part of its programming since 1976. Dawn Newton was the first instructor. Rudh followed her in that role 12 years later.

### New teacher

The new fulltime instructor, Sarah (Mlodzik) Hillier, began work in December. A 2003 graduate of East Grand Forks Senior High School, she earned a degree in education, majoring in history, at the University of North Dakota in 2007.

After two years of teaching at Senior High School, Hillier served as a para for the Grand Forks Public Schools last year and worked briefly at Community Options in Grand Forks before becoming the new instructor in December. She lives in East Grand Forks with her husband, Dan.

Initially, the ABE program was totally paid for by federal and state funding. Over the years, that funding has been reduced several times by budget issues. The TCCC partner counties (Norman, Red Lake and Polk) have supplemented the program as needed to make up for some of the lost funding.

### Staff reduced

"When I started, there were two teachers and one para (teacher's helper)," Rudh says. "Then it was reduced to one fulltime teacher, a half-time



**Sarah Hillier**

teacher and a para. As the budget shortfalls have grown in the last few years, it has been reduced to one fulltime teacher, a fulltime para (Kim Moronez) and a part-time para (Jessica Gosser).

### Over 900 GEDs

"Over the life of the program, including the time before I was involved, we've helped over 900 people earn their GEDs. Several have gone on to earn college degrees. And several more have their own, successful businesses."

The amount of state and federal funding that is provided for the ABE program is based on the number of "contact hours" spent with inmates.

"When I started, we were reporting about 4,000 contact hours a year. When I retired (on Dec. 31, 2010), the total number of contact hours was 19,600. The program has really grown over the years.

"I really commend Susan Mills (TCCC executive director) and the Regional Corrections Board for their support of the education program," Rudh says. "Without their backing, we never would have been able to help so many people get their GEDs."

## Red Lake Watershed District is selected as 'District of the Year'

The Red Lake Watershed District (RLWD) has been named the "Watershed District of the Year" for 2010 by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' Division of Waters.

The award was announced at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts in Alexandria on Dec. 3.

The district was recognized for its water quality monitoring

programs, maintenance of an informative website, the construction and maintenance of water storage and retention sites that include natural resource enhancements, and for its work in updating county

flood insurance rate maps.

Gene Tiedemann, Euclid, and Albert Mandt, McIntosh, represent Polk County on the RLWD Board of Managers. The district's offices are located in Thief River Falls.

# Solid Waste programs appear unchanged

For most functions related to Polk County's Solid Waste programs, barring any unforeseen developments in federal or state law, 2011 seems to be shaping up to be much like 2010. However, many significant things have occurred that will support or enhance these programs going forward.

## General:

**Fee Assessments:** Fee assessments for 2011 will remain at the same rate as 2010. Polk County fee assessments pay for tip fees and associated state solid waste tax for burnable municipal solid waste (MSW) and for the operational costs of the recycling, household hazardous waste (HHW) and special waste programs. Most items accepted from Polk County residents for disposal or recycling are at a reduced or no charge.

**Stormwater Permits:** Minnesota adopted Federal Industrial Stormwater Permit requirements. These Industrial Stormwater Permits target certain industrial activities, including waste related operations. To comply with these requirements, several changes will be made or implemented which will impact how the county collects, consolidates and stores waste materials at all of its facilities.

## Incinerator:

**Tip Fees:** Tip fees at the Incinerator will remain at the same rate (\$65/ton) for 2011 as they were in 2009 and 2010. Polk County is entering the third year of a six-year contract with

Beltrami, Clearwater, Mahnomon and Norman counties.

**Steam Contracts:** Steam contracts between Polk County and its three steam customers (Minnesota Dehydrated Vegetable, Specialty Products and SunOpta) were renewed for the period 2011-2013. Securing these steam contracts allows for the continuation of a mutually beneficial partnership with our steam customers.

**Pharmaceutical Disposal:** For communities that do not utilize an incinerator as its waste disposal method, there are various state programs aimed at removing over-the-counter and prescription drugs from disposal via landfilling or being sewered. The incinerator successfully amended its operational plan to accept household pharmaceuticals from various programs around the state. Incineration of these materials at our facility is beneficial to the environment, provides these communities with a more cost-effective disposal option and brings in additional revenue to off-set operational costs at the facility.

## Landfill:

**Permits:** Polk County successfully renewed its permit for the Polk County Landfill near Gentilly. Permit renewal was granted on Feb. 11, 2011. Landfills are permitted for both total capacity (landfill site) and operation capacity (five-year capacity). Polk's permit renewal is within the total site capacity previously permitted but for the next five-year term —

2011 thru 2015.

**Yard Waste Composting:** The aforementioned landfill permit was modified to accept compost material at the landfill. Leaves and grass clippings accepted at the Transfer Station in Crookston must be screened from branches and limbs. The lawn and grass clippings will be composted at the Landfill, and resulting compost used as cover material for filled portions of the Landfill.

**Source-Separated Organic Composting:** The aforementioned landfill permit was modified to allow for the acceptance of source-separated organic material for composting. Restaurants, grocery stores and institutional cafeterias (schools, hospitals, etc.) are able to separate their organic waste (food scraps) from their garbage. These separated organic materials may be taken to the Landfill for composting. These compost materials must be mixed with proper ratio of yard waste to generate a finished product. The landfill permit requires the resulting compost must be used as cover material for filled portions of the landfill. In the future, the Landfill may apply to modify the permit to utilize the compost generated from these materials off-site.

## Recycling:

**Contracts:** Recycling contracts with the Occupational Development Center (ODC) have been secured for 2011. Polk County has had a long working relationship with ODC to staff and operate many aspects of the

Recycling Program. The contract calls for an early termination option, as Polk County continues to explore efficiencies in the recycling program through additional use of the material recovery facility in Fosston.

**Fosston Recycling Facility:** Polk County secured a purchase option for property adjoining the Incinerator facility. Acquiring the building and land adjoining the incinerator property would allow the Incinerator and Recycling facility to comply with the new Industrial Storm Water Permit requirements and resolve many operational and storage issues encountered due to expansion and increased use of the Fosston recycling program over the last several years. — **Jon Steiner, administrator, Polk County Environmental Services**

## 422 building permits were issued in 2010

The Polk County Environmental Services Department issued 422 land use permits during 2010.

That number of "building permits" was less than the 464 that were issued in 2009 but more than the 370 issued in 2008, according to Josh Johnston, Polk County zoning administrator.

Of the 422 permits, 106 were issued for storage buildings, 56 for homes, 31 for garages, 66 for grain bins, 56 for additions to homes, and 100 for septic systems. Smaller categories included four for towers, two for billboards and one for business.



## 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** — Fraud suspected; **When** — Date of occurrence; **Where** — Address of person

**Call the Polk County Sheriff's Office:**  
1-218-281-0431

or the toll free  
**Minnesota Welfare Fraud Hotline**  
1-800-627-9977

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**You may remain anonymous**

## Buness is vice chair of Pembina Trail RC&D

Polk County Commissioner Craig Buness is the new vice chair of the board of directors of the Pembina Trail Resource & Conservation Development Association.

Buness' election occurred in February as a part of a board re-organization that followed the retirement of Pennington County Commissioner Charles Naplin, Thief River Falls. Naplin had served as the chair. Marshall County Commissioner LeRoy Vonasek, Warren, who had been the vice chair, was elected the new chair.

### Vettleson on board

Polk County is also represented on the board by Lawrence Vettleson, Gully.

Other members of the board from the seven county service area are: Red Lake County Commissioner Ron Weiss, Red Lake Falls (secretary-treasurer); Linda Mickelson, Oklee; Kittson County Commissioners Betty Younggren, Hallock, and Craig Spilde, Karlstad; Tracy Anderson, Warren; Norman County Commissioner Steve Bommersbach, Twin Valley; Brian Borgen, Hendrum; Trudy Wilde, Thief River Falls; Neil Peterson, St. Hilaire; Roseau County Commissioner Glenda Phillipe, Warroad; and Marguerite Miller, Roseau.

In addition to serving as vice chair, Buness is also a member of the executive, finance and state summer conference planning committees.

### Walchuk advances

January also marked the promotion of Debra Walchuk to the staff position of coordinator of the association. She succeeds Shawn Balstad, who has become a National Resource & Conservation Service district conservationist at Ada.

The Pembina Trail RC&D is a part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



Craig Buness

Its purpose is to help people in rural areas plan and carry out activities that increase conservation of natural resources, support economic development, and enhance the environment and standard of living in local communities.

The RC&D Council, which has offices in Red Lake Falls, meets six times a year to provide leadership and coordination for programs and projects in northwestern Minnesota.

### Areas of assistance

Types of projects include technical and planning assistance, information gathering, education activities, grant writing assistance, organizational support, fiscal agent services, and services that benefit other projects and activities conducted in the service area.

Recent major projects have included the Polk County Weed and Thief River Watershed Weed Management projects, a grazing workshop and tour, the Clearbrook elementary school garden project, the Roseau County 4-H Rain Barrel project, and a Buy Fresh Buy Local marketing campaign conducted through the University of Minnesota-Crookston that assists local farmers and food producers.

Pembina Trail currently has \$1.9 million worth of projects under contract.

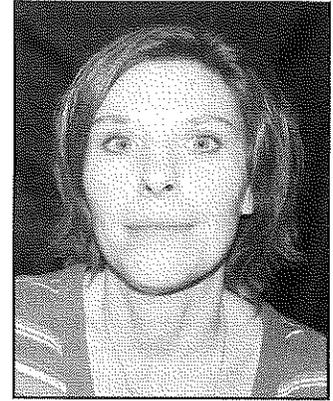
## Eidenschink joins regional library board

Terri Eidenschink, Climax, has joined the Lake Agassiz Regional Library Board as one of two members that are appointed by Polk County Board of Commissioners. She succeeds Kim Tweten, also of Climax, who had not sought reappointment.

Ilene Rue, Fosston, is the other Polk County member on the board of trustees. Craig Buness, Crookston, is the Polk County Board's commissioner representative. Representing the City of Crookston as a member-at-large is Frank Lindgren.

LARL, which has its offices in Moorhead, is the oversight board for libraries in the seven counties in northwestern Minnesota that are a part of the Minnesota Library System. Member libraries in Polk County are located in Climax, Crookston, Fertile, Fosston and McIntosh.

Eidenschink was appointed to a three-year term. "We're all readers," she says of her family. "My husband, Gary, grew up using the Crookston Library. Our daughters, Hailey



Terri Eidenschink

(13), and Alyssa (11), and I regularly use the Climax Library."

A native of Mahanomen, Eidenschink graduated from high school there in 1990. She earned an associate degree in restaurant management at the University of Minnesota-Crookston. Her involvement in kitchen management has included seven years with the Climax School System where she is the head cook. She also works with Quality Catering in Ada.

## New plat books for sale

The new, full-color Polk County Plat Book is available for sale in the Taxpayer Service Center (former Auditor-Treasurer's Office) at the Polk County Government Center in

Crookston.

Printed in an 8½ by 11-inch format, the book sells for \$35 plus tax. The most recent previous plat book was published in 1999.

## County Board Meeting Times

8:30 a.m. on 1st Tuesday of each month, 11 a.m. on the 3rd Tuesday, and 8:30 a.m. on the 4th Tuesday

### Polk County Commissioners

- Dist. 1 — Craig Buness
- Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell
- Dist. 3 — Bill Montague, vice chair
- Dist. 4 — Warren Affeldt, chair
- Dist. 5 — Don Diedrich

All meetings are open to the public

# Wayne is down; so, what happens to the site now?

After several years of attempts to save and resurrect the historic Wayne Hotel in downtown Crookston, the fate of the building concluded with the demolition of the structure and debris removal in November.

Due to the advanced deterioration of the hotel and the unsafe conditions which resulted, asbestos-containing materials could not be removed prior to the structures' demolition. As such, all demolition debris was required to be handled, transported and disposed of as asbestos material.

Industrial Builders of Fargo, N.D., was awarded the hotel demolition project at the bid amount of \$339,669. The contractor hauled a total of 173 loads of debris to the Polk County Landfill in Gentilly.

Of the hotel debris, 3,260 cubic yards of asbestos-containing demolition debris was sent to the demolition cell and an additional 200 cubic yards of asbestos-containing mixed municipal solid waste (MSW) went to Polk County's MSW cell.

The total disposal bill for the debris was \$108,200 plus the state disposal surcharge and disposal tax.

The final number of loads was less than

anticipated. The volume difference (from the 230 to 270 loads that were anticipated) was likely due to the material crumbling and packing extremely well.

With freezing temperatures, the contractor did not have to add as much water (to control the spread of hazardous materials) as was planned. This allowed the contractor to run larger loads than expected.

## Money saved

A benefit to the reduced number of loads of demolition material was that the project was completed in a shorter period of time. In addition, because Polk County was allowed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to modify its Landfill Permit for asbestos debris disposal, approximately \$70,000 was saved in disposal tip fees and an additional \$20,000 was saved in disposal surcharges and taxes paid to the state of Minnesota.

The bottom line is that the total disposal cost for the Hotel project was significantly less than was projected.

Given the poor condition of the hotel structure, the extent to which the project would be completed before the onset of winter was of concern. Regulatory delay, a request for a

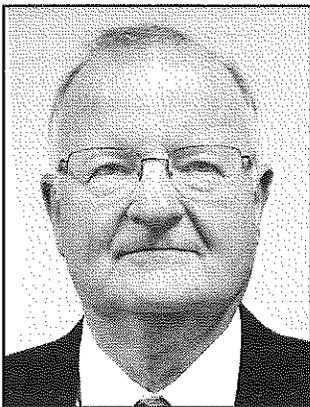
temporary restraining order to prevent the hotel demolition and the onset of adverse weather conditions threatened the project timeline.

However, the majority of the demolition project was completed without incident. A few outstanding demolition-related activities remain but should be completed once site conditions allow.

The question of what to do with the empty site has been a topic of discussion by the Crookston Downtown Task Force. Under Minnesota tax forfeiture law, the state of Minnesota owns the property with the county serving as caretaker.

If the site is to be disposed of, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has the first option to acquire it. If the DNR is not interested, it could be sold at public auction.

It could also be given to the City of Crookston for some public use. That action would, however, prevent the property from being sold or developed commercially. — **Jon Steiner, administrator, Polk County Environmental Services**



Bill Montague

## Represents 8 northwestern Minnesota counties

# Montague on AMC Board of Directors

Polk County Commissioner Bill Montague, Crookston, has succeeded Mahnom County Commissioner Charles Pazdernik, Waubun, as the District 3 director for the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC).

The district director serves on the AMC executive board.

District 3 includes eight counties (Kittson, Mahnomen,

Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau) in northwestern Minnesota.

Montague, who had been the district's alternate director, assumed the office in January.

## To lead district meetings

In addition to serving on the state board of directors, he will lead semi-annual meetings in

the district to refine the association's policy and platform positions and to receive and provide information on specific county government issues and concerns.

A new alternate director for the district will be elected at the summer meeting on June 9.

# Committee dealing with overweight truck issue

Polk County has organized a committee to determine ways to address the effects that overweight trucks are having on the roadways. This includes both township roads and paved and unpaved county roads.

"The committee will consider different solutions to address the problems, which are greatest during harvest and hauling operations. The study will involve both enforcement alternatives and education," according to County Engineer Richard Sanders.

## Weigh scale

A "weigh in motion" scale that

was imbedded in the roadway of Polk County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 14 south of Crookston to monitor traffic revealed that heavy commercial vehicles (19,488) constituted 55 percent of the traffic that was northbound in October.

Of those vehicles, 8,716 or 44 percent weighed more than the legal load limit of 80,000 pounds. Another 2,897 weighed more than 88,000 pounds and 662 weighed over 98,000 pounds.

The 10 percent overweight permit that is available through the

Minnesota Department of Transportation applies only to travel on state highways, which generally are built to handle 10-ton axle limits versus the 9-ton and lower limits of the county and township road system.

## Weight causes damage

"The weight of these heavy commercial vehicles causes a rapid decline in our county highways," Sanders notes.

"With the cost of maintaining roads increasing every year and a corresponding decrease in maintenance funds, we either have to eliminate the excessive wear that

is being done by truck traffic or accept the fact that some of our paved roads will have to go back to gravel."

Township roads face an even bigger damage problem because they were built for much lighter loads.

The study committee, which includes farm operators and county and township officials, has had initial meetings with more in the planning. "Stay tuned for further reports as this committee works to iron out the details," Sanders says.

# History is being captured and preserved via digitization

A scanning and digitizing project is underway in the Polk County Recorder's Office that will preserve every real estate document ever recorded.

The creation of this electronic archive is being done to protect the history of Polk County. Should the books become damaged (by fire for example) the digital version will be safe.

## Imperfections remain

The digital version does not appear significantly different than the actual original document. Historical images frequently have imperfections such as tears, holes and smears. These are not altered or fixed. The images are not cropped; the entire page is captured and preserved.

The images will be loaded in bulk into our system, which is backed up nightly. Duplicate tapes are stored off site. Documents that are recorded in our office are scanned daily.

Prior to the current project, the documents going back to 1974, which included microfilm, had been converted to scanned images. The documents prior to 1974 had remained in books. The early books were hand transcribed as no technology existed to copy an image.

## 750,000 images in project

This project is large as it includes approximately 1,200 books with 640 pages each creating over 750,000 images.

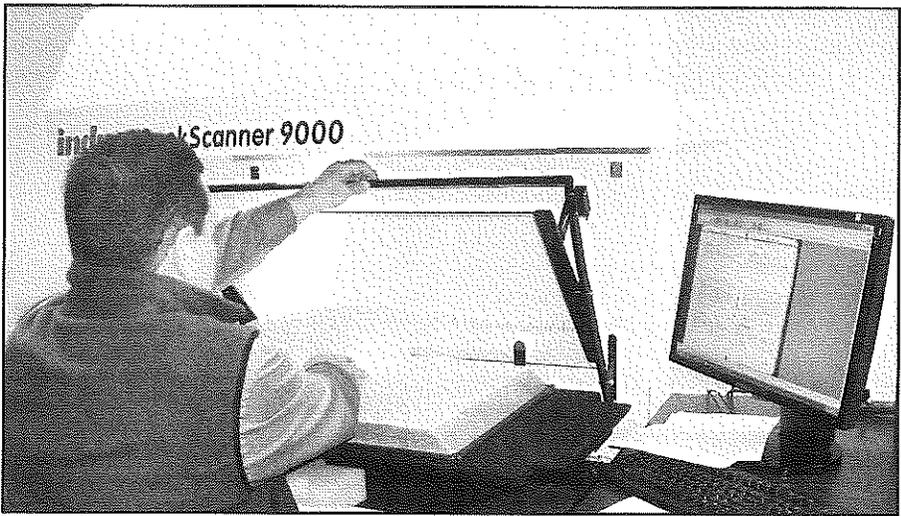
The project, which was awarded to Kvien Document Imaging, Inc., and will cost approximately \$170,000, is being funded from the Recorder's Technical Fund.

This fund is generated from recording fees. The cost to record a typical document is \$46 of which \$10 is credited to the Recorder's Technical Fund. About 8,000 documents are recorded each year.

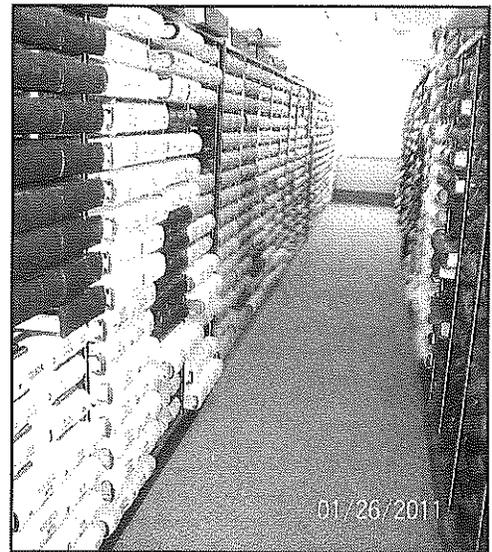
The scanning project started in November 2010 and we hope the scanning will soon be done. — Michelle Cote, Polk County recorder

## Erickson reappointed to Development Commission

Jerome "Jerry" Erickson, Fertile, has been reappointed to another three-year term as Polk County's representative on the board of directors of Red River Valley Development Association.

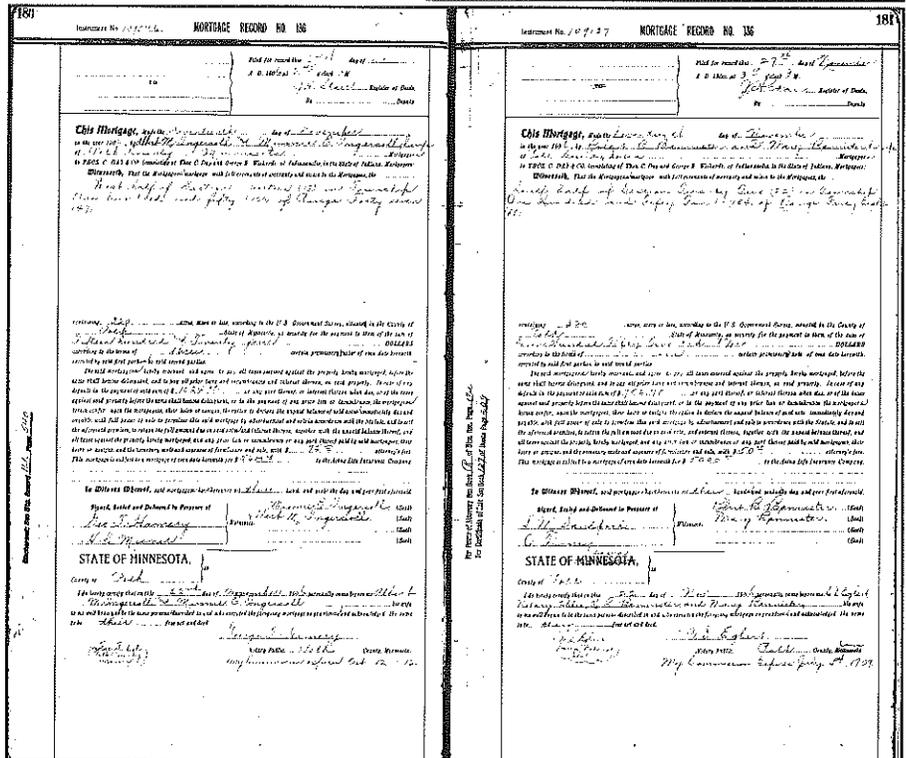


The scanning process... one double page at a time



Rows of recorder books — all now scanned and backed up digitally

Two hand-written mortgage documents from an old book



## Communications tower proposed near Eldred

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) is proposing to construct a communications tower approximately 2.25 miles north of Climax, or 3.6 miles south of Eldred. The location is in section 18 of Vineland Township with the site located on west side of Highway 75.

Because the tower may be visible from various properties around the proposed area, Mn/DOT would like to take this opportunity to inform property owners throughout the area of the need and purpose of the tower.

The Minnesota State Legislature passed legislation (Minn. S§ 403.21-40) that directs the Departments of Public Safety and Transportation to design, construct and operate a statewide radio system backbone that includes, radio towers and associated structures and equipment related to the system backbone.

The radio system that has been designed and is now being implemented is called the Allied Radio Matrix for Emergency Response system or ARMER. You may log-on to [www.srb.state.mn.us](http://www.srb.state.mn.us) for more information about the ARMER system.

### **The project**

Mn/DOT proposes to begin construction of a 330-foot self-supporting communications tower during the late summer/fall of 2011. The tower would be completed and operational by late 2011.

Once operational the tower will provide vital two-way radio communications to the Minnesota State Patrol, Mn/DOT, and

Department of Natural Resources. The tower will also have capacity to accommodate communications equipment from Polk County and other local government public safety agencies at no cost.

The "Eldred Tower" also serves as a link that interconnects other portions of the ARMER system to the towers located throughout Minnesota.

### **Appearance**

The proposed tower will be a three-legged self-supporting tower (no guy wires). It will have a galvanized gray color finish. By Federal Aviation Administration rules, the tower will require an aircraft warning light system be installed at the top of the tower.

The system will consist of a medium intensity white strobe light for daytime illumination, and a red beacon light at the top for nighttime illumination. At the base of the tower will be a 12x30-foot equipment shelter. The shelter is made of concrete and be covered with a brown stone aggregate finish. Once completed, the entire land use area of the tower compound will comprise of a 75x75-foot area that will be enclosed with a 7-foot high chain-link security fence.

### **Site selection**

Why this site? Towers for the ARMER system must be placed in specific locations so that they can work in conjunction with radio equipment on other towers. Mn/DOT has been working with the Statewide Radio Board and the Regional

Advisory Committee (RAC), which includes representatives from Polk County, to determine the best location for the tower.

Mn/DOT has completed the Federal Communications Commission required environmental review to determine if the tower will have a negative impact to the environment. The review includes: endangered species – plant and animal, protected waterways including wetlands, migratory birds, archaeological, tribal and historical sites, wilderness areas, wildlife preserves, and floodplains. The review revealed no impact and therefore is categorically excluded from a full Environmental Assessment.

Mn/DOT has evaluated other possible locations to meet the radio needs in this area. However, this location has been determined to be best suited. The other options that were considered but were eliminated for the following reasons:

- Wetland issues on eligible lands;
- Landowner(s) in target area not willing to sell land;
- No available state or county land within target area; and
- No suitable existing towers within target area or excessive lease fees.

Additional information is available by calling or writing to: Michael Hogan, Minnesota Dept. of Transportation, 1500 West County Rd B2 – MS730, Roseville, MN 55113; telephone (651) 234-7977, or e-mail: [mike.hogan@state.mn.us](mailto:mike.hogan@state.mn.us).

## *Shafer is chair of Advisory Board*

## Montague re-elected Regional Radio Board chair

Polk County Commissioner Bill Montague has been re-elected chair of the 14-county Northwest Regional Radio Board organization that is overseeing efforts to "encourage, create and maintain functional and interoperable public safety communications between all parties."

Pennington County Commissioner Oliver "Skip" Swanson was re-elected the vice chair. In addition to Pennington and Polk counties, other members of the organization are Beltrami, Clay, Clearwater, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Red Lake and Roseau counties and the City of Moorhead.

The group, which was organized in February 2008, reports to the Statewide Radio Board.

### **Shafer is chair**

Nancy Shafer, Polk County dispatch and emergency management supervisor, has succeeded former Polk County Sheriff Mark LeTexier, as chair of the Northwest Minnesota Radio Advisory Committee.

This group meets at the Minnesota Department of Transportation/Pennington County Highway Department

Building in Thief River Falls every other Wednesday.

The committee is conducting communication assessments in each of the 14 counties and the region as a whole to determine the infrastructure and capability of the radio system, the impact of the new FCC (Federal Communications Commission) narrow band regulations and communication interoperability within the region.

The committee is working to determine needs and issues as they relate to resources, rules of use, operational procedures, education, coverage, capacity, efficiency, cooperation alternatives and the need for and cost of communication system improvements.

Involved in these assessments are officials from local law enforcement agencies, fire departments, emergency medical services, agencies dealing with hazardous materials, public safety communicators, public transportation, emergency management, homeland security, public works, public health, hospitals, the military, and federal and state agencies.

Additional information about the Northwest Regional Board and communications projects throughout the state can be found on the Internet at [www.nwmnradio.org](http://www.nwmnradio.org).

## Lundeen advanced to sergeant post

Brian Lundeen is the new administrative sergeant in the Polk County Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Barb Erdman had previously held the position.

A native of Detroit Lakes, where he graduated from high school in 1988, Lundeen earned a B. S. degree in criminal justice with minors in Spanish and sociology at Bemidji State University in 1992.

While in college, he interned

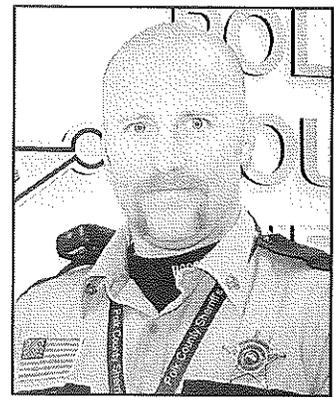
with the U.S. Marshal Service and, following graduation, completed the post police officer standardized training program at Range Technical College in Hibbing in 1993.

He was a part-time deputy for the Clearwater County Sheriff's Department for six months in 1993 while also working in construction. Lundeen joined the Mahnommen County Sheriff's Department in January 1994. He joined the Polk County depart-

ment in March 1995 as a patrol officer.

Lundeen worked with the Drug Task Force in 1996 and 1997, returned to patrol in 1998 and became an investigator for the department in 2005.

In his new position, Lundeen will be involved in scheduling and other day-to-day operations, will manage the fleet and prisoner transports, and will continue to do polygraphs. Lundeen and his wife, Jeana (Northup of Puposky,



**Brian Lundeen**

Minn.), have three children, Mitchell, 14; Courtney, 12, and Alissa, 8, and live in rural Fertile.

### *32 attend first meeting*

## Juvenile Justice Board begins

The Regional Corrections Board has approved the development of a Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC) Juvenile Justice Advisory Board.

The TCCC agency has had an Advisory Board that includes criminal justice and human service representation since 1976. Both adult and juvenile justice issues are included in that board's advisory mission.

Adult corrections issues became the more predominant agenda item, in part, due to construction of the new jail facility in 2006. This left little emphasis on local juvenile justice issues.

### **Met in January**

In January, the agency sponsored its first meeting of this newly organized Juvenile Justice Advisory Board. The meeting was attended by a variety of adolescent service providers who are involved with criminal justice throughout northwest Minnesota.

Also attending were the county commissioners who make up the Regional Corrections Board that governs TCCC and its Red River Valley Juvenile Center (RRJVC) in Crookston. Thirty-two people attended the meeting.

By agreement with the Northwestern Mental Health Center, Psychologist Elizabeth Evenson provided an overview of adolescent brain develop-

ment pointing out that maturity occurs in the late twenties, not the general public expectation that the adolescent brain is fully developed by age 16 to 18 years.

Dr. Evenson's profile of development included examples of what does and doesn't work in communicating with adolescents on issues of misbehavior or responsibilities at home and at school as well as in criminal justice supervision. The intent was to lay groundwork for future discussion on similar topics at each of the three meetings that are to be held each year. Corrections staff also provided brief overviews of the Transition and Restorative Justice programs and of the Red River Valley Juvenile Center (RRVJC).

It is widely known in statewide criminal justice circles that juvenile placements have decreased considerably over the last 18 months. While the reasons for this downturn are not clearly understood as yet, there are facilities that have closed given their dependence on larger census for per diem income.

### **Population is up**

At the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board meeting, RRVJC staff presented information showing that daily population at the facility has increased. This is because of the change in

licensure from a limited 8-day secure hold to a maximum 90-day hold. This has allowed the member counties (Norman, Polk and Red Lake) to discontinue having to transport juveniles to other secure facilities in the region when the 8-day limit was reached.

### **Per diem costs reduced**

Additionally, the Regional Corrections Board has reduced per diem costs to non-member counties to encourage them to use the center's services.

The increase in use has provided additional income to support the center. To date, adolescents have been served from Kittson, Marshall and Mahnommen counties. The response from area human service providers has been very positive to date.

Future topics for the Juvenile Justice Advisory Board may include the judiciary's perspective of local juvenile justice practices, human services, mental health services and probation service collaboration, as well as other topics of interest to members. The next meeting is tentatively scheduled at noon on July 14. Persons interested in joining the group should contact Jean Clauson. She can be reached at 218-470-8105 or e-mail her at [jean.clauson@co.polk.mn.us](mailto:jean.clauson@co.polk.mn.us).

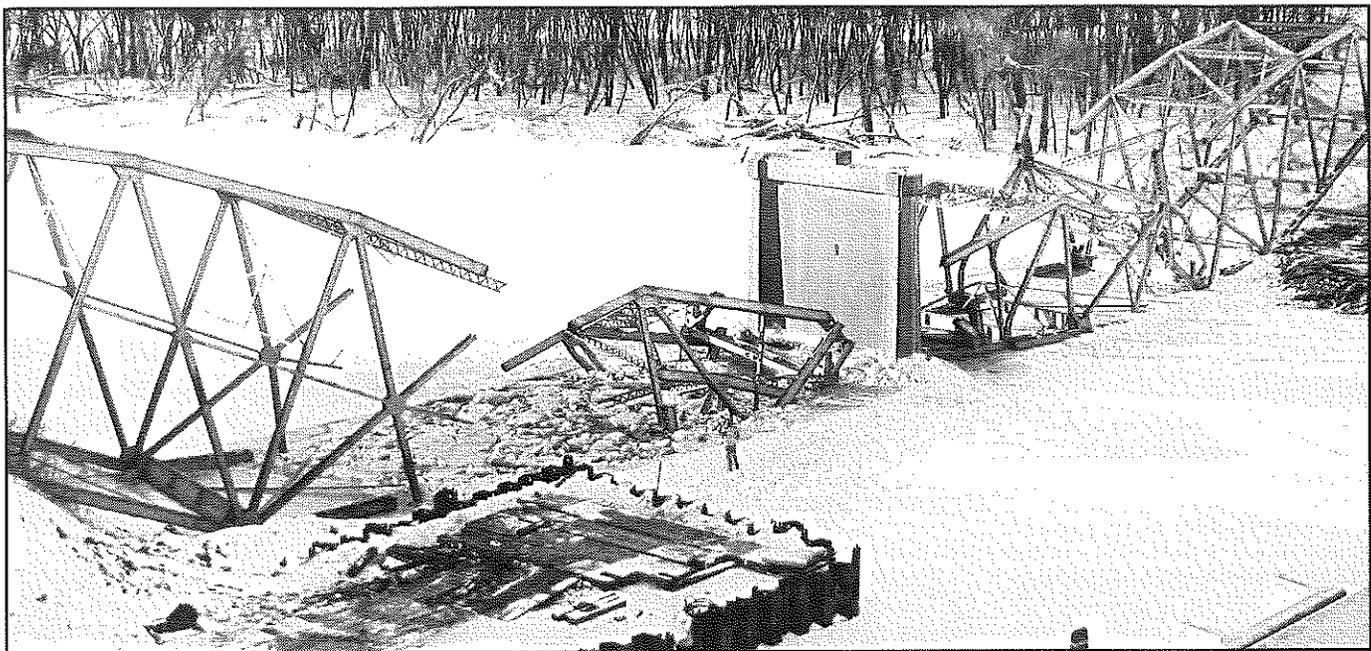
— **Susan E. Mills, executive director, Tri-County Community Corrections**

## Gudvangen reappointed to Agassiz Trail Board

Gordon Gudvangen, Fertile, has been reappointed retroactive to Jan. 1, 2010, to a three-year term as a director-at-large on the Agassiz Recreational Trail Board of Managers, representing Polk County. His new term continues until Dec. 31, 2012.

Gudvangen also serves as administrator of the Agassiz Recreational Trail organization. The trail, which has been built on an abandoned railroad route that follows Minn. Highway 32, runs from Fertile in Polk County, through Norman County, to Ulen in Clay County.

Polk County Commissioner Craig Bunes, represents the Polk County Board on the board of managers. Also a member of the ARTs organization is Dan Wilkens, Fertile, who serves as its treasurer.



The old Thompson Bridge was dropped to (or through) the ice of the Red River when imploded on Feb. 4.

## Rosendahl on Extension Committee

Paul Rosendahl, Fosston, is the new member of the Polk County Extension Committee representing Commissioner District 4. He succeeds Doug Fjerstad, Fosston, who had resigned the position.

As the son of Extension Service agents (both his dad and mom), Rosendahl has an extensive background in the Extension Service and the 4-H program. In addition, his brother is currently a regional 4-H extension educator and both of his sisters have been county extension agents.

"I've been in and around the Extension Service and the 4-H program pretty much my entire

life," Rosendahl says. He and his wife, Lisa (they met through 4-H and were married in 1996), have three children: McKinsey, 10; Olivia, 7, and Nash, 2.

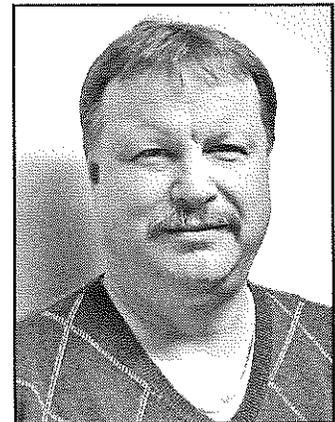
Rosendahl, who grew up in Ada and graduated from high school there in 1984, earned majors in both speech and mass communications and minors in both business and sociology from North Dakota State University in 1989.

He worked for a non-profit organization in Jamestown, N.D., for three years and in St. Cloud, Minn., for six years before moving to Fosston in 1996 to work as a financial planner, first for American Express

in Bemidji and since 2004, as an independent planner through Focus Financial. He has offices in Fosston and Bemidji.

The Extension Committee oversees Extension Service activities in the county and makes recommendations about staffing and budgeting to the County Board.

Curtis Knutson, Fisher (at-large member), is chair of the committee with Patricia Erickson, Fertile (District 1), as vice chair. Other members are Carol Svendson, East Grand Forks, (District 2); Stephanie Olson, Crookston, (District 3); and Kaydi Strickler, Euclid, (District 5).



Paul Rosendahl

County commissioners Don Diedrich and Warren Affeldt also serve on the committee. Polk County Auditor-Treasurer Gerald Amiot is secretary of the committee.

## Veterans Office receives grant

The Polk County Veterans Service office has been awarded a \$2,500 grant from the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs. The money will be used to pay the postage needed to mail a quarterly newsletter to the 3,200 veterans in the county, according to County Veterans Service Officer Les Goodwin.

The grant was one of 120 applications from 62 counties for the \$756,655 that was made available through the "Grants to Counties" program. The program was created by 2006 Minnesota Legislature to provide assistance to veteran service offices in one of two ways.

In the Operational Improvement Grants

category, counties receive a set dollar amount tri-annually to assist with the costs of purchasing office equipment and technology needs.

The Enhancement Grant category, a competitive grant process, is designed to enhance the services provided to veterans including in the areas of collaboration with social service agencies, educational institutions and other relevant community resources, outreach to veterans, reduction of homelessness among veterans, the reintegration of combat veterans, transportation, marketing and advertising, digital records management, and training.

### Anderson joins

#### Veterans Service Office

Laurie Anderson has joined the Polk County Veterans Service office as the administrative assistant. A 34-year employee of the county, her internal move from the Auditor-Treasurer's Office to the Veterans Service Office occurred on Dec. 20.

Anderson succeeds Marilyn Juvrud, who retired at the end of 2010 after serving the county for 30 years, including 12 in Court Administration and the last 18 in the Veterans Service Office.