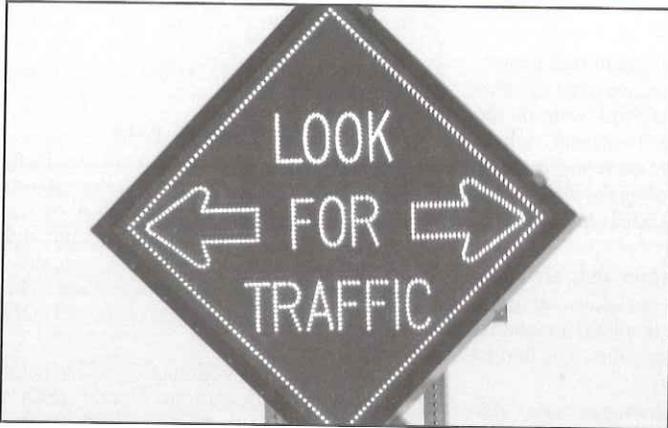


Polk County

Newsletter

Spring 2012



The Highway 75-Polk Co. Highway 21 intersection midway between Euclid and Angus now has lighted traffic signs that are designed to alert drivers to the dangers of cross traffic. See Page 6 for more information.

Truck weight laws to be explained at April sessions

As part of a truck weight/road damage solution for Polk County roads, the Polk County Highway Department along with Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Alexandria Technical College will offer two one-day classes to individuals who would like to learn the laws on truck weights.

The classes are scheduled for April 11 & 12 at the Polk County Law Enforcement Center in Crookston. The first 50 to register for each class will be accepted.

Truck traffic is increasing each year in Minnesota. New legislation has changed some long-standing truck-weight laws. Additional gross weights are possible for several commodities providing the trucks are configured correctly and the additional weight is authorized by the regulating road authority.

The Minnesota Truck-Weight Education Program, funded through 2013, addresses concerns from state, county, city, and township transportation authorities regarding damage from heavy trucks.

Explanations are provided that explain road weights during various times of the year including the winter load increase and spring load restrictions.

The program promotes voluntary compliance to reduce damage to public roads and highways from overweight vehicles.

The goal is to provide information and explanations on how to haul the most legal weight without violating the truck-weight laws. How you configure your truck, with proper axle spacing and tire size, makes a difference. — **Richard Sanders, Polk County engineer**

County begins search for next administrator

— Schmalenberg plans retirement —

The Polk County Board will be dealing with a number of issues in 2012, according to new chair Bill Montague. Chief among them, he says, may well be how it will go about replacing John “Jack” Schmalenberg, the county’s top administrator.

Schmalenberg has told the board that he intends to retire at the end of 2012. “This will be a key replacement. We have to find the best person possible for that job,” Montague says.

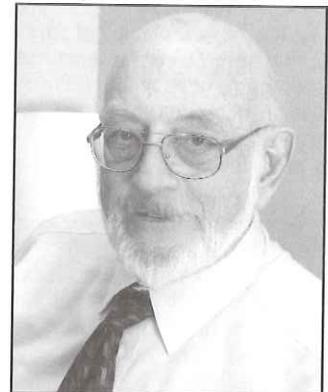
“Ideally, we would like to have a successor in place by about mid-year so that some of Jack’s knowledge and experience can be passed on in the final months of his tenure.”

In addition to finding the replacement for Schmalenberg, the board is also in search of new human resources/special projects coordinator. After 10 years in that key position, Tangee Bouvette left in early March to accept a job with the City of Grand Forks.

Search firm hired

An executive search firm, Springsted, Inc., St. Paul, has been contracted to create a field of candidates for the administrator position.

Montague succeeded Warren Affeldt as board chair when the board re-organized at its first meeting in January. Craig Bunes was elected the vice chair. The chair and vice chair positions rotate annually among the five county commissioners.



John “Jack” Schmalenberg

Further re-organization of county government will occur in July when Commissioner Warren Strandell is slated to succeed Bunes 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.

A county employee since Nov. 7, 1971, Schmalenberg’s administrative responsibilities were expanded by a change in role and job title — from coordinator to administrator — that became effective on Jan. 1, 2011.

After first working on personnel and other issues in the Auditor’s office, Schmalenberg became the executive secretary of the Polk County Board on June 5, 1978.

Change in protocol

Over the years, that job transitioned into that of coordinator for the County Board’s policies and directives. In that role, although it

See ADMINISTRATOR, Page 2

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Board to continue its focus on efficiency

Much of the focus of the County Board in 2012, according to Board Chair Bill Montague, will be directed at further fine-tuning operations to provide the most efficient ways of doing things... both in today's workplace and beyond.

"Some of the things that the county has done in recent years, have worked out really well," Montague says. "We need to keep looking for ways of doing things better and more efficiently."

In particular, Montague points to three areas where successful and efficient changes have been made. Those areas include:

- The merger of the Fosston-based Incinerator operations into the Crookston-based Environmental Services Department;
- Combining the auditor-treasurer, assessor and recorders offices into the Taxpayer Service Center and
- The development of the Information Technology Department and other areas of technology, such as the GPS mapping effort that is nearing completion and will soon become available to the public via the county website.

Can do more

"Everything seems to be working well in those areas and in others, too," he says, while noting that more of those kinds of things can be done not only within Polk County but also in conjunction with neighboring counties. "We need to be ready to be good partners when there are opportunities to work together... to share equipment and staff in ways that will provide the best service and the most efficiency. That opportunity is probably most likely in the areas of social services, public health and mental health (through Northwestern Mental Health). We are cur-

rently talking with Norman-Mahnomen County Public Health about possibilities to do some things together."

Also on the plate for commissioners, Montague notes, is the task of negotiating fair, yet sustainable three-year wage contracts for county employees to cover the years 2013-15.

"That's really important today in these times of ongoing revenue shortfalls," Montague says.

'Re-opener' talks

"But even before we can get to that negotiation process later this year, we need to complete negotiations for the third year of the current contracts. Those contracts, which didn't provide for any cost-of-living increases in the first two years, called for a 're-opener' in this, the third year (2012) of the agreements.

"Five employee units (four that are organized and the fifth that is not) have agreed to terms. We are currently involved in mediation with the two remaining units. The budget is always an issue," he says.

On the staff subject, Montague notes that the county has many employees, who need to be given the opportunity to advance themselves into positions where they can provide greater contributions to county government.

Work as a team

"I'd like for employees to not only be able to share in successes but also to have some responsibility when things don't go so well," he says. "It's not a major problem when things don't go so well because you learn from the issues involved and can work to turn problems into successes. We all need to be a part of the team and I think that we are."

Infrastructure work in 2012 will include a project that will make space in the Law Enforcement Center more useable and to update that building's 35-year-old heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system. Bids on that work are to be opened in early spring.

The Center houses the Sheriff's Department, the Dispatch Center and the Red River Valley Juvenile Center. Prior to completion of the new Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail in 2008, it also housed the old 32-bed jail facility. It is the old jail space that will be the focus of the remodeling work.

Reserves will pay for work

The project, which will be paid for from county reserves, will involve the conversion of that area into space that can be used by the Sheriff's Department for a training room and the secure storage of evidence, property, equipment, cold case files, and records. The work will include the removal of the old steel jail cells.

Also, the Emergency Management Division and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) will be relocated in the building with its former space made into conference rooms.

Except for the updating of the HVAC system, no significant changes are planned for the 1997 addition to the LEC building that is home to the Dispatch Center and to the Red River Valley Juvenile Center.

The County Information Technology (IT) Department, which had been located in the LEC building, was moved in January to the second floor area above the new jail that had served as a computer-training lab. A new computer training facility has been created in another second floor area above the jail.

Administrator

Continued from Page 1

was regarded as the top operational position, department heads answered directly to the County Board.

With the change in governance a year ago, all departments now answer directly to the administrator.

"The change in role," according to Montague, "was made to allow the administrator to make many decisions about day-to-day operations, rather than for department heads to have to take the matter to the County Board."

A factor in the job change, too, Montague says, was to have the administrator position established in advance of the time when Schmalenberg would retire.

Schmalenberg, who was presented the "Joe Ries Award for Excellence in County Management" by the Minnesota Association of County Administrators 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.

Oversaw construction

Most recently, Schmalenberg was integral in the construction of the \$25.9 million Polk County Justice Center and adjoining Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail that were put into use four years ago. That facility is a model for efficiency for court and corrections systems.

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 and also of the Tri-County Community Corrections Advisory Committee from 1975 to present.

Army Airborne

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.

Schmalenberg and his wife, Kate, live at Fisher. He has four children — Kristi Schmalenberg (husband Randy Sauer) of Warren, N. J.; John Jr. (wife Deb) of Fertile, Minn.; Derrick of Chanhassen, Minn.; and Justin (wife Anne) of Grand Forks. He also has four grandsons, Bennett and Max in New Jersey and Bradley and Alex in Fertile; a granddaughter, Aurora in Chanhassen; two stepsons, Jared and Jonathan; and a step-grandchild, Michael.

Reese is new Public Health director

Sarah Reese has been selected as the new director of Polk County Public Health/administrator of the Community Health System (CHS).

Reese, a Polk County Public Health employee since 2006 and a Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) coordinator for the past two years, succeeds Sheri Altepeter, who resigned last fall to pursue other career interests.

Altepeter had served as public health director/CHS coordinator since 2005 and had been a Polk County public health nurse since 1987.

Crookston native

A native of Crookston, Reese (Sarah Keller) had been a community facilitator working with Chemical Free Polk County to prevent youth alcohol, tobacco and drug use before being named to head the SHIP program.

She has a B.S. degree in community health education from the University of Minnesota-Duluth in 2005 and received a masters degree in health promotion from Nebraska



Sarah Reese

Methodist College in Omaha in 2007.

Reese received the Jerry O'Konski Award in 2010 for volunteers who have made significant contributions in preventing child abuse in Minnesota. As chairperson of Polk County Child Abuse Prevention, she headed efforts that have increased awareness of child abuse/violence and positive parenting skills through programs and other activities.

Reese has other previous work experience as a health promotion consultant for Norman-Mahnomen County Health. She and her husband, Jerrod, who operates the family business, Reese Electric, have a daughter, Jennika.

Nursing supervisor

Linda Hanson, RN, who had served as the interim public health director/community health services administrator, will continue as the department's nursing supervisor, a position that she has held since 2007.

Hanson, who earned a registered nurse diploma from the Hennepin County Medical Center School of Nursing in Minneapolis and a B.S. degree in nursing from Moorhead State University, has worked for Polk County Public Health for 20 years.

Her previous nursing experience includes positions with the University of Minnesota Hospitals, Hennepin County Medical Center and the Loyola University Hines Veterans Administration Hospital in Riverside, Ill.

Extension to fill crops, 4-H positions

The University of Minnesota Extension Service plans to have a new regional crops educator and a new Polk County 4-H program coordinator in place by spring or early summer.

The openings occurred in December with the planned retirement of Russell Severson, who had been a crops educator in Polk County for 25 years, and in late November when Emily Espersen, the 4-H youth development educator, resigned her position.

Search committees

Search committees, according to Deb Zak, director of the Regional Extension Office, are currently working to find replacements for both openings.

Severson, who begun his career as research scientist at the Northwest Research and Outreach Center in Crookston in 1973, joined the Extension

Service as the crops educator in 1986. He had served both Polk and Red Lake counties in that position in recent years before moving into the regional office in Crookston in 2008.

During his 38 years of work in agriculture in Polk County, Severson received several awards including the U.S. Department of Agriculture Award for Service from the Farm Credit Mediation Program, the National Association of County Ag Agents Achievement Award and also its Distinguished Service Award, the West Polk County Soil & Water Conservation District Friend in Conservation Award, and the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association Honorary Premier Seedsman Award.

Espersen, who grew up on a family dairy farm near Brainerd, Minn., and earned a

bachelors degree in animal science at the University of Minnesota-Crookston in 2010, became the Polk County 4-H youth development coordinator in May 2010. She had previously worked as the summer 4-H intern in preparation for the 2009 Polk County Fair.

In the 32-hour per week coordinator position, Espersen worked in the Polk County Extension Office in McIntosh under 4-H Youth Development Extension Educator Karyn Santl, Extension Regional Office, Roseau.

Office to move

Another change in Extension, Zak notes, is likely to occur this summer when the regional office moves from the University of Minnesota-Crookston campus to quarters in the Valley Technology Park facility located just to the north of the university.

New medical examiner to reduce costs for travel

Polk County has begun using the Forensic Sciences Center of the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences for those instances when an autopsy examination is required to determine the cause and manner of death.

The change in medical examiners, which occurred in January, was made to reduce the costs involved with transportation by having autopsies done in Grand Forks as opposed to St. Paul.

Previously, the examinations were done by the M. B. McGee, P.A. forensic pathology firm that has served as Ramsey County medical examiner for the past 26 years. The firm, working in cooperation with Ramsey County, does autopsies for a number of counties statewide.

Polk County Attorney Greg Widseth and Sheriff Barb Erdman, who toured the Grand Forks facility and researched the operations, recommended the change in medical examiners to the County Board.

Both noted that there was no concern about services provided by Dr. McGee and his staff, but that the costs of transporting bodies to Grand Forks vs. St. Paul was the reason for making the change. A law enforcement officer must accompany a body to the place of autopsy.

Mary Ann Sens, MD, PhD, who is chair of pathology for the UND School of Medicine and Health Sciences, performs and/or supervises autopsies that are done at the Forensic Sciences Center.

Re-appointed to new 4-year terms on state body

Tiedemann, Mykleseth on BWSR

Gene Tiedemann, Euclid, and Keith Mykleseth, Crookston, have been re-appointed to four-year terms on the Minnesota Board on Water & Soil Resources (BWSR).

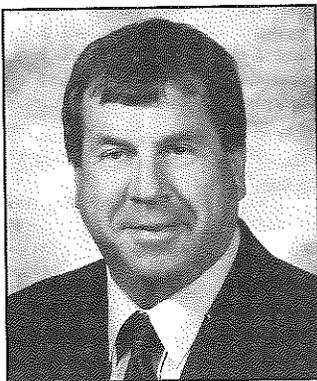
Tiedemann, who represents watersheds, is one of Polk County's two members on the Red Lake Watershed Board of Managers. He farms near Euclid.

Mykleseth, who represents non-metro cities, is a member of the Crookston City Council. He is the Northwest Minnesota Renewable Energy coordinator for The Nature Conservancy.

Both men were initially appointed to BSWR by then Gov. Tim Pawlenty and were reappointed by Gov. Mark Dayton last fall.

The BWSR consists of 20 members, including 15 local government representatives and five representatives from state agencies. The local government representatives are appointed by the governor.

As the state's soil and water conservation agency, BWSR administers programs that prevent sediment and nutrients from entering lakes, rivers and



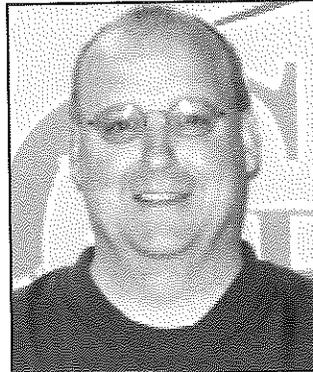
Gene Tiedemann

streams; enhance fish and wildlife habitat; and protect wetlands.

Heads soil & water districts

The board is the state's administrative agency for 90 soil and water conservation districts, 46 watershed districts, 23 metropolitan watershed management organizations, and 80 county water managers.

Core functions include implementing the state's soil and water conservation policy, comprehensive local water management, and the Wetland Conservation Act as it relates to the 41.7 million acres of pri-



Keith Mykleseth

vate land in Minnesota.

Mykleseth serves on BWSR's Administrative Advisory, Grants Program & Policy, and Northern Planning Review committees, while Tiedemann is a member of the Grants Program & Policy, RIM Reserve Management Planning, and Dispute Resolution committees.

Also a BWSR member from northwestern Minnesota is Beltrami County Commissioner Quentin Fairbanks. He serves on the Dispute Resolution, Wetlands, and Planning Review committees.

Polk County Attorney's Office Activity Summary Jan.-Dec. 2011

Felony & Gross Misdemeanors

Complaints prepared	354
Sentencing hearings	368
Committed to state prison	67
Probation violation hearings	534
Committed to state prison	32
Total committed to prison	99
Jury/Court trials	6/2
Cases with convictions	4/2

Misdemeanors

Guilty pleas	91
Trials	14

Appeals

Polk County Attorney Office	8
Minnesota Attorney Gen. Office	0

Juvenile Cases

Delinquency petitions	57
Child in need of protective services (CHIPS) petitions	81
Delinquency hearings	342
EJJ probation	0
CHIPS hearings	309

County Welfare

Commitment petitions*	25
Commitment hearings	52
Guardianship petitions	15
Guardianship hearings	23

* Mentally ill and/or inebriate

Child Support

Child support hearings	173
Paternity hearings	274

Commissioner assignments & positions

Craig Bunes (Dist. 1) — Polk County Social Service Board (chair), Lake Agassiz Regional Library Board, Pembina Trail Resource Conservation & Development Association Board (vice chair), Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) Transportation Policy Committee, AMC Annual Conference Planning Committee, Polk County Senior Health Care Providers Committee, Land of the Dancing Sky Region 1 Area Agency on Aging Committee (chair) and Negotiating Task Force, Polk County Retired Senior Volunteers Program Committee, Northwest Regional Radio Board, Sandhill Watershed District Advisory Committee, Red Lake-Polk County Joint Ditch 72 Committee, Crookston Downtown Task Force.

Warren Strandell (Dist. 2) — Polk County Social Service Board (vice chair), Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) past state board member representing District 3,

AMC past state General Government Policy Committee chair, AMC Public Safety Policy Committee, Northwest Regional Corrections Board (chair), Minnesota Rural Counties Caucus (alternate delegate), Northwest Regional Development Commission (NWRDC) Board of Directors (vice chair), NWRDC Transportation Advisory Committee (vice chair), MnDOT Dist. 2 Area Transportation Partnership (vice chair), Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization (chair).

Bill Montague (Dist. 3) — Polk County Board chair, Polk County Social Services Board, Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) State Board of Directors representing District 3, Minnesota Department of Human Services Legislative Steering Committee on Performance and Outcomes, State Community Health Advisory Board (past state chair), Tri-Valley Opportunity Council (past chair), AMC Health & Human

Services Policy Committee, Northwest Mental Health Board, Red Lake-Polk County Joint Ditch Committee, Regional Solid Waste Advisory Board, Polk County Public Safety Committee, Northwest Regional Radio Board (chair), Northwest Regional Development Commission Enterprise Fund Committee, Polk County Law Library Board of Directors, Judicial Ditch 60 Committee, 5-County Solid Waste Advisory Committee (alternate), Household Hazardous Waste Advisory Committee (alternate), Polk County Community Health Board, Crookston Downtown Task Force.

Warren Affeldt (Dist. 4) — Polk County Social Services Board, Minnesota Rural Counties Caucus delegate & past state chair, Northwest Regional Corrections Board, Association of Minnesota Counties Environment & Natural Resources Policy Committee, Red Lake-Polk County Joint Ditch 72 Committee, Regional Solid Waste

Advisory Board, 5-County Solid Waste Advisory Committee, Household Hazardous Waste Advisory Committee, Inter-County Community Council Board, East Polk County Development Achievement Center Board, Local Water Planning Board, Polk-Red Lake Joint Ditch 4 Committee.

Don Diedrich (Dist. 5) — Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust Board of Directors (representing Dist. 3), Polk County Social Services Board, Polk County Extension Service Committee, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Association of Minnesota Counties General Government Policy Committee, Northwest Mental Health Board, Joint Powers Board of the Red River Basin in Minnesota, Red Lake-Polk County Joint Ditch Committee, Red Lake-Polk County Judicial Ditch 72 Committee, Judicial Ditch 60 Committee, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District Citizens Advisory Committee.

Fanfulik appointment approved

Cameron Fanfulik was approved to serve as the new executive director of the Northwest Regional Development Commission at the organization's annual meeting held in December in East Grand Forks.

The action effectively removed the "interim" designation from the role that Fanfulik had held since the retirement of Leon Heath last summer.

Employee since 2000

An employee of the seven-county government service agency since 2000, Fanfulik has worked extensively in economic development field, especially in the area of value-added products and renewable energy projects.

He will continue to work in those areas and with the agency's economic and community development programs. He has been manager of the Loan Fund since 2004.

Heath retired

Heath had held the dual role of executive director of the agency and manager of its Economic and Community Development Programs for 20 years. He had a 32-year career with the commission during which it experienced substantial growth.

NWRDC operates the Area Agency on Aging, Northwest Regional Arts Program, Economic Development, Enterprise Fund (business loans), Community Development, Transportation, and Emergency Operations Planning programs in Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau counties. Its offices are in Warren.

Greer on the job as new director of Tri-County Community Corrections

Phillip Greer is settling into his position as the new executive director of Tri-County Community Corrections agency.

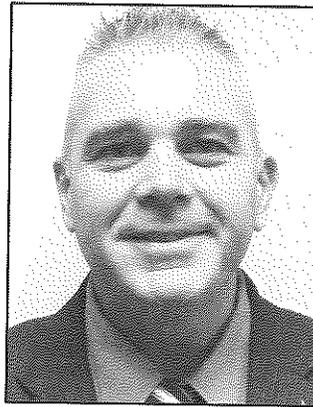
The agency operates the Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail, the Red River Valley Juvenile Center and the Probation & Community Services programs for Norman, Red Lake and Polk counties.

"It has been an amazing transition into this three-county organization that really focuses on providing the best services," he says of his first months in the position.

Honored

"I'm honored to have been selected to take over from Susan Mills. She has done a wonderful job of putting together this organization and building it and sustaining it. In that regard, I know that I have big shoes to fill. I am excited to be involved with the multiple program services that we provide and I have felt a great outreach from the community in making me feel welcome here."

Mills, who joined the agency in 1976 and had been its executive director for the past 25 years, officially retired on Nov. 1, but had continued to supervise the agency on a part-time



Phillip Greer

basis until Greer arrived on the job Nov. 14.

Administrated jail

Greer had been the jail commander for the Pennington County Sheriff's Office in Rapid City, S.D., for the previous four years.

In addition to running the Pennington County Jail, Greer has been an auditor/consultant for the American Correctional Association at Alexandria, Va., since 2004. He continues in that position.

The association inspects correctional programs throughout the country to determine compliance with governing standards, policy, procedure and practice in determining accreditation in the areas of probation

and parole, work release, community corrections residential programs, electronic monitoring, therapeutic communities, and prison and jail operations.

Extensive background

A criminal justice graduate of Park University in Parkville, Mo., Greer has worked in the fields of law enforcement, probation, parole, inmate transportation, and juvenile detention for agencies including the RSI Community Corrections Centers in Norfolk and Newport News, Va.; the Missouri Department of Corrections; and the Johnson County, Kansas Department of Corrections.

He has also been an adjunct professor for the ITT School of Criminal Justice at Kansas City, Mo.

Greer's wife, Wendy, an elementary school teacher, and their daughter, Victoria, 16, will join him in the Tri-County area this summer.

The Regional Corrections Board, which includes two commissioners from each of the member counties, governs the agency. Those board members are Steve Bommersbach and Steve Jacobson of Norman County, Ron Weiss and Dave Sorensen of Red Lake County, and Warren Affeldt and Warren Strandell of Polk County.

Winkleman, Pulkrabek re-appointed to 3-year terms on County Planning Commission

Kerry Winkleman, Fosston, and Courtney Pulkrabek, Crookston, have been re-appointed to three-year terms on the Polk County Planning Commission and to the county's Board of Adjustment.

Winkleman represents county Commissioner District 4, while Pulkrabek, represents District 3.

Other members of the Planning Commission are: Don Wright, Mentor (representing Commissioner District 1); Earl Beiswenger, Fisher (District 2); Barb Hangsleben, East Grand Forks (District 5); former Crookston Mayor Don Osborne (representing the City of Crookston); East Grand Forks Council member Wayne Gregoire (representing City of East Grand Forks); Rolland Gagner, Erskine (representing Union

Lake Sarah Improvement District); and Delores Myerchin, Crookston (representing Polk County townships).

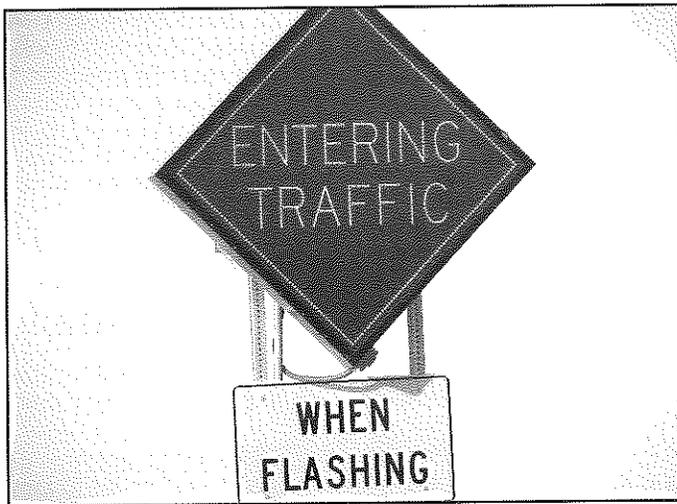
The findings of the Planning Commission are forwarded as recommendations to the County Board, which makes the final decision.

The Planning Commission members who represent the five commissioner districts (Wright, Beiswenger, Pulkrabek, Winkleman and Hangsleben) also serve on the Board of Adjustment. This board makes the final decision on requests to vary from the county's zoning rules.

Winkleman serves as chair of both the Planning Commission and the Board of Adjustment.



East-west travelers on Polk Co. Highway 21 now see the sign above when north-south traffic at its intersection with Highway 75 is not imminent. When traffic on Highway 75 is approaching, the sign changes to the message shown in the photo on Page 1. North-south traffic will see the sign below when east-west cross traffic is nearing the intersection. The Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) lighted signage was installed by the Minnesota Department of Transportation in conjunction with the Polk County Highway Department as a way to address the history of accidents that have occurred at the intersection. A vision issue (because of the combination of the passenger side A-pillar in automobiles and the 21-degree skew of the intersection) has been a factor in the accident history. The intersection is located midway between Euclid and Angus.



Road construction agenda to be about typical in size

This year's construction schedule is typical in size. Due to deteriorating pavements, we are doing a lot more overlays than normal.

The projects for this year are as follows:

CSAH 5 — overlay from CSAH 8 (north of McIntosh) to CSAH 6. This will complete the overlay of CSAH 5 and strengthen it to a 9-ton axle weight capacity

CSAH 17 — overlay from CSAH 20 to TH 75 (north of Crookston). This is a routine overlay using excess federal funds that were left over from last year's CSAH 22 letting.

CSAH 23 — overlay from 4 miles east of Angus to the east county line. This is a routine overlay that will strengthen the pavement to 9-ton axle weight capacity.

CSAH 37 — after last year's construction from CSAH 10 to CR 210, we realized that the rest of CSAH 37 to CSAH 34 was going to need the same major fix. Therefore, we will be grinding up the existing bituminous and constructing a new bituminous surface over the remainder of CSAH 37.

CSAH 46 — from TH 2 to CSAH 11 will receive a routine overlay using federal funds. The shoulders will be paved.

CSAH 70 — The bridge over

Judicial Ditch 1 will be replaced with a concrete beam bridge.

CR 233 from old TH 75 to North Scale at American Crystal Sugar in Crookston. The roadway will receive some grinding to smooth out the existing concrete and will have some full depth concrete repairs. This work could be delayed if prices are higher than expected.

CR 252 from TH 75 (north of Crookston) to CSAH 13. This roadway will receive a routine 1-inch overlay.

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

Overall, the warm temperatures and the manageable snowfall has made our Maintenance Budget look pretty good.

Remember to drive safely through our work zones. Not only will this keep the workers safe but yourselves included.

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 Richard Sanders at ext. 8253.
— **Richard Sanders, Polk County engineer**

Map on Page 7 shows planned work, location of lighted intersections

The location of planned road construction is shown in the map at right on next page. In addition to noting the road and bridge work that is proposed are symbols that indicate where intersection lighting has been installed both by Polk County (in 2011) and by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (2010 and 2011).

County Board Meeting Times

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

10:30 a.m. on the 3rd Tuesday

8:30 a.m. on the 4th Tuesday

All meetings are open to the public

Polk County Commissioners

Dist. 1 — Craig Bunes, vice chair

Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell

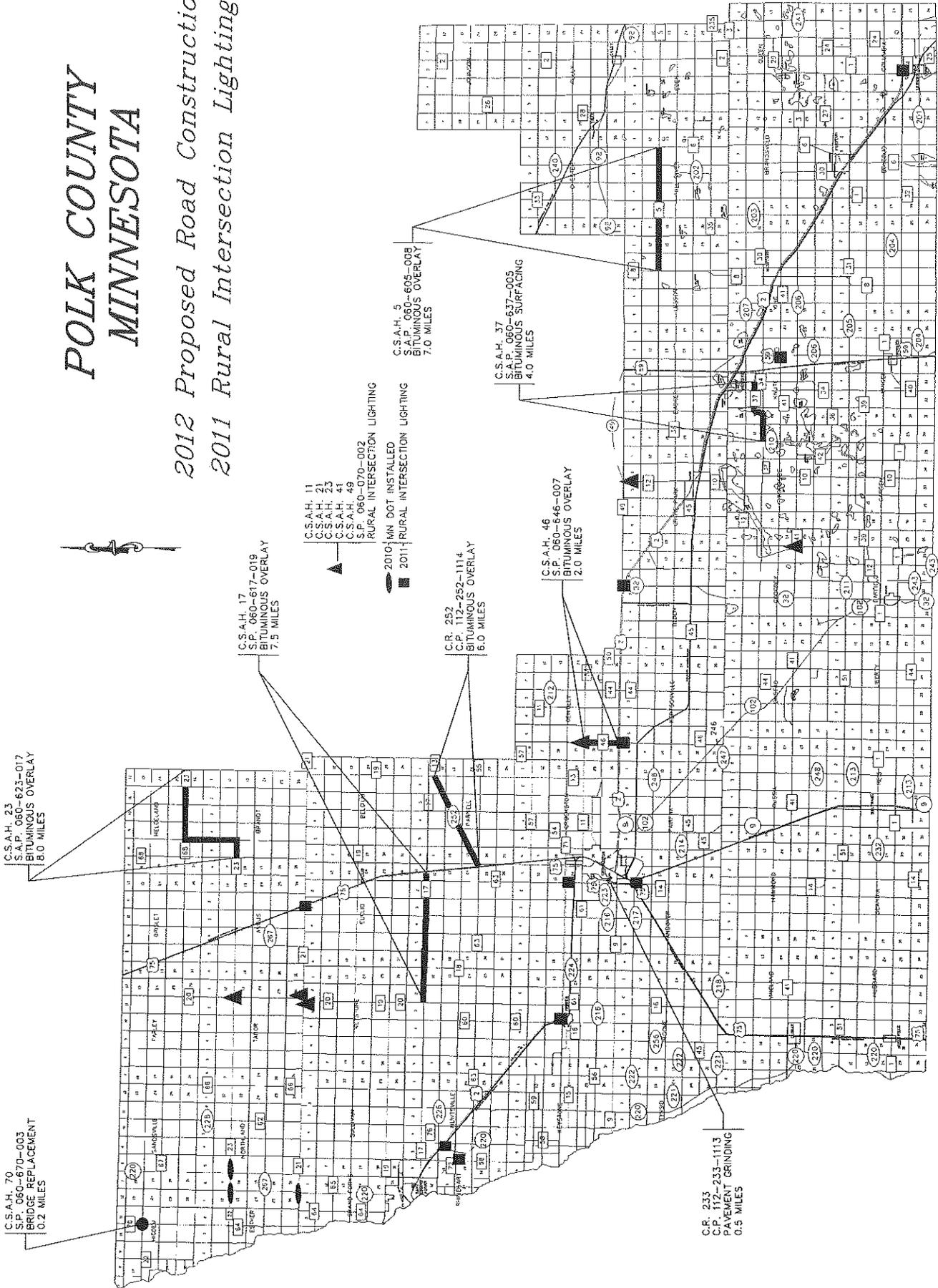
Dist. 3 — Bill Montague, chair

Dist. 4 — Warren Affeldt

Dist. 5 — Don Diedrich

POLK COUNTY MINNESOTA

2012 Proposed Road Construction 2011 Rural Intersection Lighting



Working 'in-house'

Shop team keeps Highway Dept. equipment rolling

As long as they have the tools, they can fix it.

That's the mindset of shop foreman Randy Huot and preventive maintenance technicians Bruce Lindgren and Brad Driscoll at the Polk County Highway Department shop.

It really doesn't make any difference how big or how small that piece of equipment is.

For instance, the largest job was a recent complete overhaul of the 235-horsepower diesel engine from one of the county's motor graders. The team pulled the engine out of the chassis, put it up on a stand and went through it all.

From camshaft to end gates

They have also done camshaft jobs as a part of the overhaul of two truck engines, rebuilt and/or swapped out Allison transmissions, rebuilt pickup transmissions, changed out the differentials on three trucks, rebuilt a few dump boxes, and repaired endgates and box corners.

The smallest jobs? Well that would likely be maintenance of a few walk-behind lawn mowers and the chainsaws.

"We keep everything running," Huot says. "We try to do everything that we can in-house... in the Highway Department shop. Seldom do we have to go outside for service, other than for the warranty work."

Experience and innovation are a big part of their accomplishments. In that category, Driscoll has 25 years of engine repair and overhaul experience and Lindgren is the group's welding specialist.

Fabricated wheel assembly

Lindgren recently fabricated a wheel assembly that was welded onto the front mount snowplow of one of the trucks. The idea was to save on the wear of the blade and, on gravel roads, to throw less of the gravel into the ditch.



Brad Driscoll, Bruce Lindgren and Shop Foreman Randy Huot

The first one, done on a trial basis, worked so well that the wheel is being added to the blades on six of the department's 14 plow trucks.

"The three new trucks that we will be getting for next year will come with wheels already on them," Huot notes. "Three of the remaining trucks in the fleet are nearing the end of their life, so they probably won't be upgraded to get the wheels.

"The drivers just love those wheels. They push so much easier... and those skids (previously used on the blades) were expensive to replace."

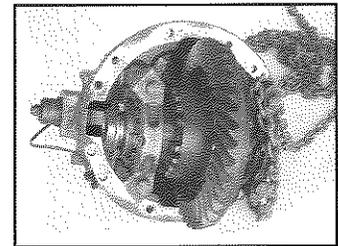
Increased mileage

The work on the differentials of the three trucks involved changing the gear ratios. "We wanted to be able to reduce the rpm's, which had been running too high," Huot says. "By re-gearing them, we were able to increase the fuel mileage by one mile per gallon, which is huge. The change in fuel consumptions paid for the parts in just 30 days."

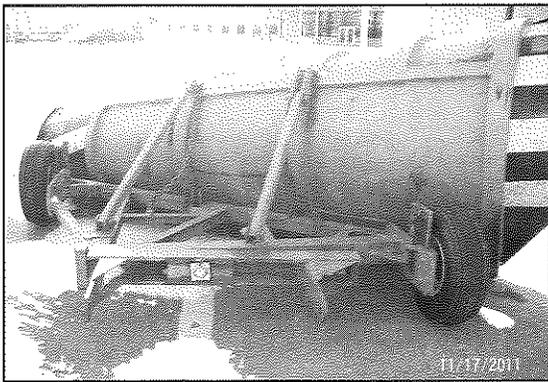
With this winter's lack of snow, the maintenance team has been able to catch up work "and

even drag some work out of the corners," Huot says.

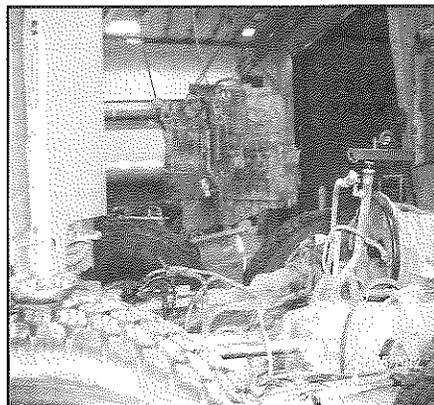
"And we've gotten a head start on getting things ready for summer... the tractors and the mowers. We try to salvage everything that we can and piece things back together when needed. We just keep everything running."



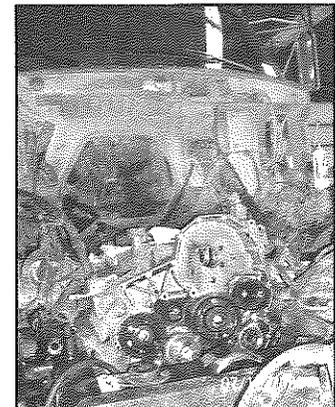
Differential overhaul



Wheels on plow save blade wear and road gravel



Engine lifted from grader chassis



Truck engine overhaul

Johnson succeeds Melby as director of Inter-County Community Council

Catherine Johnson has succeeded Robert Melby as executive director of the Inter-County Community Council. The council, based in Oklee, operates community action support programs in Clearwater, East Polk, Pennington and Red Lake counties.

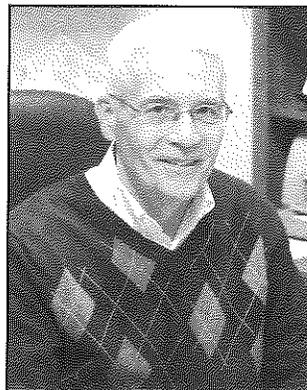
Melby retired last May after 34 years with the agency. Johnson, who had served as the agency's family service director for the past 10 years, was selected to follow him as head of the organization.

A native of the Plummer area, Johnson, who was hired by Inter-County on May 1, 2011, has a B.S. degree in social work from Bemidji State University and a masters degree in that same field from the University of North Dakota.

She and her husband, JJ Johnson, who manages CHS fertilizer plants at Warren and Stephen and also farms with his family, live at rural Oklee with their two children, Jennifer, 6, and Ethan, 4.



Catherine Johnson



Robert Melby

"It was an honor to be hired by the board to try to fill Bob's shoes," Johnson says of being chosen as the new executive director. "I am committed to seeing that ICCC continues to provide quality services respectfully to low-income people in our service area."

Melby, who began with the agency in 1976, had held the positions of weatherization director, energy assistance director, housing director, administrator/planner, and assistant director, before

becoming executive director in 1986. He received the Steve Chadwick Advocacy Award at the 45th annual Minnesota Community Action Program (CAP) Conference in Duluth last September.

Inter-County provides assistance in the areas of housing, energy conservation, family services, self-sufficiency, employment and training, and the Head Start programs. Its offices are located in Oklee.

Knutson re-appointed to Development Association

Curtis Knutson, Fisher, has been re-appointed to another three-year term on the board of directors of the Minnesota Red River Valley Development Association. The appointment was recently approved by the County Board.

Knutson represents West Polk County. The East Polk County representative is Jerome "Jerry" Erickson, Fertile. Erickson was re-appointed to another three-year term on the board in 2011.

The 14-county member association was created by citizen groups in 1914 to encourage and develop the agriculture industry in northwest Minnesota.

In the 1970's the emphasis shifted more to the recognition of outstanding contributions by citizens living in the Red River Valley.

Northwest Mental Health renews effort to find next director

With the selection of a new Northwest Mental Health Center executive director not yet selected, Dan Wilson continues to head the organization.

Wilson, who has been in that position for the past 25 years, had hoped to retire at the end of 2011. However, when last summer's initial efforts to find a new director were unsuccessful, he agreed to remain on the job until a successor is found.

Team is at work

A transition team is working on finding that person. The team includes three members of the board of directors (Polk County Commissioner Bill Montague, Marshall County Commissioner Curtis Carlson, and Dr. Rolf Hanson), two county social service directors (Kent Johnson, Polk County, and Kathy Johnson, Kittson County) and three staff members (Don Christie, Dr. Thea Rothman and Dr. Michal Jorgens).

"We had a few big projects recently that took some of the focus off finding a successor," Wilson says. Those activities included the preparation of an application for a \$9 million federal grant that would allow the

center to improve service.

"With that grant application completed, the focus is now back on finding a new director. The transition team is working hard to get the right person in the job and until that happens, I plan to be there," Wilson says.

Services at seven sites

Based in Crookston, the center has a \$6.5 million annual budget and a clinical staff of 95 persons. Services are provided at seven sites in northwestern Minnesota.

A non-profit corporation, the center, which is owned by Kittson, Marshall, Mahnomen, Norman, Red Lake and Polk counties, provides an array of services designed to prevent the emergence of mental health problems, provide early intervention, limit the impact of mental health issues, and treat serious mental health problems.

A board of directors acts as the governing body. It is made up of two county commissioners from each of the six counties, two at-large members, and a representative of

the county social service departments in the six-county area. Polk County's second representative on the governing board is Commissioner Don Diedrich.

Served in Peace Corps

A native of Bovey, Minn., Wilson graduated from Greenway High School in Coleraine, Minn., and attended Macalester College before earning a degree in sociology from the University of Minnesota in 1967.

He interrupted his time in graduate school at Tulane University in New Orleans to serve in the Peace Corps for three years (1969 to 1972) before earning a masters degree in social services in 1973.

Wilson joined the Northwest Mental Health Center in March 1973 as its developmental disabilities coordinator. He became the assistant director in 1976. Wilson left the agency 1981 to serve as director of the Polk County Development Achievement Center for five years and then returned to begin serving as its executive director in 1986.

SOLID WASTE UPDATE

Transfer Station: The Transfer Station in Crookston continued to operate throughout 2011 without any incidents. The Station received approximately 6,000 tons of burnable garbage from the western portion of Polk County, which was shipped to the Incinerator in Fosston.

Approximately 600 tons of non-burnable waste and 1,100 tons of demolition debris received at the Station were shipped to the landfills in Gently. In addition, the Station processed 800 tons of yard waste, 150 tons of tires, 1,300 appliances, and 80 tons of electronic wastes.

With the conversion of the Crookston recycling center from a staffed processing facility to an unstaffed collection site, the Transfer Station has taken on more duties related to emptying/switching the recycling containers and purchasing aluminum cans from the public. The Transfer Station will purchase aluminum cans from the public on Mondays from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and Fridays from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. These are the same days and hours allotted for this service when previously offered through the recycling center.

Incinerator: The Incinerator and Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in Fosston continued operations through 2011 without incident. The Incinerator received approximately 32,000 tons of burnable garbage from the counties of Beltrami, Clearwater, Mahanomen, Norman and Polk.

Of that material, over 2,500 tons of recyclables were removed from the waste stream by the MRF and sold at market, which yielded just under \$400,000 in sales. Another 6,000 tons of fines were removed from the burnable waste and hauled to the Gently Landfill for use as daily cover.

Over 25,000 tons of processed garbage were

burned, which produced approximately 6,000 tons of ash that were hauled to the Gently Ash Landfill, where it was screened and 2,500 tons were used in a county road project under approval from the MPCA. The heat from the incineration of the waste was used to produce steam which was either sold to three businesses in the Fosston Industrial Park for heat or to process food products, or to power a turbine generator to produce electricity.

Polk County had approximately \$380,000 in net steam sales and \$15,000 in electricity sales in 2011.

The Incinerator will be testing its monitoring equipment — referred to as a RATA — in April. This is an annual test that must be done to ensure all monitors and equipment used to measure emissions while operating are working properly and to document our compliant status.

Following our upcoming RATA, the next test for the facility will occur in 2013, when we will need to conduct a performance test of the pollution control equipment. This is required every three years.

Another item of significance on the horizon for the Incinerator is contract renewals. Polk County has entered year four of a six-year contract with the aforementioned counties for waste disposal service.

In addition, Polk County has contracts with its three steam customers and two waste hauling contracts which are timed to expire in conjunction with the waste contracts. Some exploratory contract talks with our waste customers will begin shortly as we assess our short and long-term needs at the facility and those of our customers.

Landfill: The Polk County Landfill near Gently is comprised of a Municipal Solid Waste Landfill (MSW Landfill), Demolition Landfill (Demo

Landfill) and an Ash Landfill. In 2011, a separate area within the Demo Landfill was set aside for acceptance and disposal of asbestos-containing waste. Also, a Source Separated Organics Composting facility was permitted and established for accepting clean organic materials for composting. All areas of the Landfill operated without incident in 2011.

The MSW Landfill took in approximately 3,000 tons of non-burnable waste. The Demo Landfill took in 12,700 tons of demolition debris, and the asbestos area accepted 200 tons of asbestos-containing materials.

Approximately 6,000 tons of ash were received in the Ash Landfill from the Incinerator, of which 2,500 cubic yards were hauled off-site and used in the Co. Road 37 highway project.

Approximately 750 tons of organic waste was received at the SSOM facility and composted. The resulting compost material is reserved for use in establishing final cover over filled areas of the MSW and Demo Landfill.

A portion of the Demolition Landfill received final cover in the fall of 2011. The MSW Landfill will need to construct a new cell east of the existing operational area. Unless waste volumes increase markedly, the new cell is scheduled to be constructed either in the fall of 2012 or spring of 2013.

In addition, Polk County is exploring incorporating a truck scale into landfill operations, and discontinuing the volume-based pricing at the landfill. This change is likely to occur in the summer of 2012.

Recycling: The Polk County Recycling Program operated through most of 2011 without any major changes. The recycling program consists of two permanent recycling facilities, Crookston and Fosston.

In addition, community collection sites are also established

in eight other Polk County towns. Through all of these sites, the recycling program processed approximately 950 tons of recyclables in 2011.

In September 2011, Polk County acquired the former Stenberg property adjacent to the Incinerator in Fosston to compliment its solid waste programs.

As a result, toward the end of 2011, the recycling program began to make significant changes to transition from individual separated recycling collection to single stream recycling collection.

This included moving the recycling collection site in Fosston from its location across the street from the Incinerator to the new property in Fosston, and transitioning away from a staffed site in Crookston to an unstaffed collection site. — **Jon Steiner, Environmental Services administrator**

Rosendahl heads Extension Committee

Paul Rosendahl, Fosston, is the new chair of the Polk County Extension Committee. He succeeds Curt Knutson, Fisher.

Kaydee Strickler, Euclid, is the new vice chair. She succeeds Patricia Erickson, Fertile.

Other members of the committee are: Carol Svendson, East Grand Forks; Stephanie Olson, Crookston; and both Knutson and Erickson, who remain on the committee.

County commissioners Don Diedrich and Bill Montague also serve on the committee.

County Director of Property Records Michelle Cote serves as secretary of the committee. She succeeds Gerald Amiot, who retired last summer after a 44-year career with the county including the last 25 years as county auditor-treasurer.

Stenberg Building acquisition completed

County's recycling program is centralized

Polk County acquired the former Stenberg Building, located on the lot adjoining the Incinerator in Fosston last fall. After making some necessary repairs and modifications to the building and lot, the county's recycling operation, which had been located across the street from the Incinerator for many years, was moved to this new location.

In addition, Polk County has made a substantial modification to its recycling contract with the Occupational Development Center (ODC) for 2012. The new contract calls for the Fosston recycling program to use a mix of ODC personnel and county employees.

Once all personnel are in place and a few additional modifications are made, the containers for burnable and bypass waste will be moved to the recycling site to create a one-stop location for waste and recyclable materials. This change should occur in the spring/summer of 2012.

Part of the recycling program modification relates to how incoming recyclable materials are accepted.

Single stream method

Polk County has ceased collecting separated recyclable materials — that is requiring each type of recyclable material accepted to be placed in its own specific container. Instead, it has switched to a single stream recycling method, which accepts all of the same recyclable materials but allows all of those materials to be placed loose in the same recycling container.

Polk County accepts the following recyclable materials at all of its recycling stations:

- Cardboard (should be clean of packaging materials and flattened),
- Mixed paper (office paper, newsprint, magazines),
- Aluminum cans, tin cans, plastic con-

tainers (plastic containers stamped with either the #1 or #2 recycling logo), and

- Glass containers (mixed color - green, amber or clear).

All items placed in the recycling containers should be loose (removed from any bags/containers — except shredded paper which should be left bagged).

Of Polk's two permanent recycling facilities located in Crookston and Fosston, only the Fosston location will be staffed going forward.

Collection site

The Crookston location will be operated as a collection site capable of handling larger volumes of recyclables. In addition, Polk County has community collection sites in Erskine, Euclid, Fertile, Gully, Lengby, McIntosh, Mentor and Winger.

The small blue 2-cubic-yard recycling containers previously used to collect separated recyclables have been replaced by larger blue 20-cubic-yard roll-off recycling containers to collect the mixed, single stream recyclable materials.

All single stream recyclable materials collected throughout the county are hauled to the Material Recovery Facility (MRF), which is attached to the Incinerator in Fosston. The MRF is normally used to process waste prior to incineration.

However, one morning per week the MRF discontinues processing waste and instead is used to process all of the single stream recyclable materials collected the previous week from all of the Polk County recycling sites. The MRF is used to sort, consolidate, bale and store all of the recyclable materials received prior to shipment to market.

Two-hour process

The MRF process removes all of the cardboard, aluminum, tin cans and glass out of the single stream recyclables received. The MRF can process an entire

week's worth of Polk County's recyclable materials in about two hours.

The resulting product is comprised of mixed paper, plastic #1 and #2, and some contamination (generally plastic film, non-recyclable paper, and plastic not accepted by Polk for recycling).

This paper/plastic mix is hauled to the new recycle building where a staff comprised of county employees and ODC staff further process the material to separate paper from plastic, and remove the contamination. The sorted paper and plastic is later hauled back to the MRF where it is baled and to await shipment to market.

Previously, Polk County was staffing two sites, both of which spent the majority of the week processing the separate stream recyclable materials (removing the contamination and non-recyclable materials).

In addition, significant time was spent maintaining those collection sites, repairing/maintaining the small recycling containers, and transporting processed and unprocessed recyclables between the various locations.

More efficient

Currently, under the single stream recycling system, less time is spent maintaining the sites, the larger containers need to be emptied less often (saving time and fuel), the containers are require less repair/maintenance, and mechanical separation at the MRF saves significant time in sorting.

Aside from some change-over issues and unforeseen complications that are experienced whenever there is a change in a program or service, we have been encouraged with the early results. However, there are several refinements than can and will be made in the system to extract additional benefits to Polk County's recycling and solid waste programs going forward. — **Jon Steiner, Environmental Services administrator**

Stordahl re-appointed to Marshall-Polk Water Board

Rodger Stordahl, East Grand Forks, has been re-appointed to another four-year term on the board of directors of the Marshall & Polk Rural Water System Board of Directors.

An original member of the system's board of directors, Stordahl has served the organization since 1973.

Other members of the board are: Paul Driscoll, East Grand Forks; Mike Kasowski, Fisher; Wayne Nelson and Orin Knutson, Oslo; Ron Abrahamson, Warren, and Lawrence Labine Argyle.

The system has offices in Warren. Jason Hillman is the manager.

Dispatch Center discussion rescheduled

A winter storm that socked in areas of Minnesota and southeastern North Dakota forced the postponement of a meeting at which a study of the operations of separate dispatch centers in Crookston, East Grand Forks and Polk County was to be discussed.

Done by the Corban Group, Mounds View, Minn., the assessment involved professionals from St. Cloud and Morris in Minnesota and Fargo who, because of the storm, were unable to travel to East Grand Forks for the planned Feb. 29 meeting.

Addressed in the study were the current

technology and radio systems in each agency, the facilities, operation costs and staffing of each. The assessment includes recommendations on how dispatch services might be delivered more effectively, including the possibility of consolidation, as communications centers statewide transition to the new 800-megahertz system.

The information meeting has been rescheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 28 at the Polk County Human Service Center in East Grand Forks.

43 miles of ditches cleaned, repairs completed

Polk County drainage system projects are on the rise. The 2011 construction season saw just over 43 continuous miles cleaned to legal grade.

Along with the rise in cleaning projects, many other areas of the drainage systems had significant repairs, including culvert replacements, culvert repairs, re-sloping of back slopes, along with tree and brush removal within the right of way. Numerous beaver dams were also removed along with 92 beavers.

A total of \$266,000 was utilized for the maintenance of the drainage systems in 2011.

Unlike many counties in Minnesota, Polk County has a very pro-active policy for maintaining the efficiency of the drainage systems. In the past 10 years, 235 continuous miles have been cleaned and returned to legal grade, over 1,330 continuous miles of cattails have been treated with herbicide to reduce their population, and over 720 beavers have been trapped and removed from the drainage systems.

The county has over 130 legal drainage systems totaling approximately 800 miles. The Polk County Board of Commissioners is the drainage authority and manages the

drainage systems.

If landowners feel a drainage system in their area is in need of repair, they can petition the drainage authority to have it surveyed and cleaned, if needed. Petitions can be obtained from the Polk County Highway Department or on the Polk County web site at: http://www.co.polk.mn.us/list_departments/highway/drainage.aspx

Weed areas decline

Invasive weed control acreages along the county roadsides have declined for the fourth year in a row. This is largely due to the following:

1. The county uses a specialized spray truck equipped with global positioning systems (GPS) to help locate and eradicate invasive species. The GPS information is used to develop spray routes and also to mark specific invasive species (e.g. Leafy Spurge) that usually need more than just one treatment to reduce their population.

2. The county is using specialized herbicide mixtures that target the invasive weeds and either reduce their population or completely eradicate the plant, while still leaving the grass in the area established.

In the 2011 spraying season, the county treated over 560 acres of invasive weeds

along county roads. The county no longer maintains the state highway roadsides. The Minnesota Department of Transportation began its own invasive weed control program in 2010.

The most threatening invasive weed along the county roadsides is not the thistle varieties, as most people would believe.

The biggest threat is Spotted Knapweed, which gives off a chemical that kills the established grasses in the area. Once the grass is gone, erosion issues soon follow. The county has placed Spotted Knapweed at the top of the list for better control in the years to come.

Even though invasive weed control acreages along the roadsides continue to decline, the battle continues. The county plans to continue its aggressive approach to maintaining control of invasive weeds. If not, infestations could rebound, the county would lose ground and the invasive weeds would become an even larger problem. In the past 10 years, the county has treated over 5,000 miles (11,800 acres) of invasive weed infestations along its roadsides. — **Jody Beauchane, Polk County Ag & Drainage inspector**

Alternative Local Standards developed

Septic rule changes made, but still contentious

Starting back in 2006, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) began the process to make significant changes to state rules that regulate the design, construction, maintenance and inspection of individual septic systems and system components.

The resulting rules were formally adopted in 2008 over the objection of many affected parties, including counties. The 2008 Rules required counties to adopt the standards into their local ordinances by spring 2010.

It was the opinion of many, including Polk County officials, that the 2008 Rules exceeded the state's charge to the MPCA to draft rules that set the minimum standards necessary to provide protection to public health, safety and the environment.

Wouldn't adopt

In November 2009, Polk County passed a resolution and sent notice to the commissioner of the MPCA of its intention to not adopt those rules as required by law. Shortly thereafter, additional counties throughout the Red River Valley and lakes regions of the state sent notice to the MPCA that they, too, would not adopt the rules as written.

Since then, the last two legislative sessions

have resulted in legislation to extend the deadline for counties to adopt the rules and to form committees designed to address the unresolved discrepancies in those rules.

Since 2009, there have been two separate rule amendment processes undertaken by the MPCA to address the outstanding issues. Although those amendments made the rules better than the initial version, several items were left unaddressed. As a result, to date there are 50 counties which have not adopted the 2008 Rules.

Language proposed

As we enter the 2012 legislative session, the MPCA has proposed new language to the rules that would allow the 50 counties that have not adopted the rules to adopt what the MPCA classifies as Alternative Local Standards (ALS).

The ALS provision would allow counties to legally adopt the pre-2008 Rules into their ordinance to be used to design, construct, maintain and inspect all septic systems with an average daily flow of 2,500 gallons. Any septic system with a daily design flow in excess of that amount would have to follow the 2008 Rules.

Although there are still issues left unre-

solved in the MPCA's most recent proposal — and the state has not passed that proposal into law at this time — the proposal is significantly better than the initial 2008 Rules.

Should the proposal eventually pass into law, the earliest it could be adopted into the Polk County Zoning Ordinance would be following the 2012 construction season.

Good and bad

The process to work through the septic system rules, from the public hearings on the proposed rules in 2006 to the proposed ALS work to date, has shown both the good and the bad as it relates to the county-state partnership and rulemaking process.

The need to identify and appreciate the role of each entity in the process and to regard the other as an equal partner rather than a common stakeholder, affected party or customer, is essential to any future state rulemaking effort.

It is hoped that the lessons learned in regard to this septic system rulemaking issue will carry over to any and all future rulemaking efforts. — **Jon Steiner, Environmental Services administrator**