

POLK COUNTY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2014



A scene from Polk County's Cross Lake-Tilberg Park campground — with the new bathhouse under construction in the background. Also see pages 10 & 11.

DWI Court program to begin in early 2015

A DWI Court program is scheduled to begin Polk County early next year.

The program, a collaborative effort of the District Court judges, the Polk County Attorney's Office, Polk County Sheriff's Office, Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC), the public defenders, Polk County Social Services, and area treatment programs, is designed to assist persons 18 years of age and older who have had three or more driving while intoxicated convictions within the past 10 years.

In the process of striving to reach an alcohol-free lifestyle, participants in the program will make frequent court appearances, undergo random testing and receive ongoing counseling, according to Maria Pahlen, who as the problem solving court coordinator for the program in northwestern Minnesota, will oversee the program.

The program integrates treatment and other resources within the court system and reduces recidivism, thereby enhancing public safety and providing cost savings.

Funded by a \$300,000 grant from the Minnesota Office of Traffic Safety, the DWI Court will provide a variety of programs and supervision designed to help participants

See DWI COURT, Page 2

Stretching county dollars

By Chuck Whiting, Polk County Administrator



Most people associate summer ending with school beginning, football season and changing colors of trees. For those like me it is now budget season and time to get down to business for next year.

Polk County is in good position financially and after two full days of budget discussions, the County Board has opted for a 3% preliminary levy increase for 2015.

This is the early levy, or property tax, target for funding the 2015 county budget. For Polk County, property taxes comprise about 30% of all

revenues the county collects, be they fees, state or federal funds, grant dollars or program revenues.

Counties and cities are required to set a preliminary levy in September, with the final actual levy approved in December each year. The final levy cannot exceed the preliminary levy that was set in September.

That preliminary levy for Polk County is \$20,654,891, or an increase of \$601,599 (3%) over the actual 2014 levy set last December.

In September the County Board reviewed the

See STRETCHING, Page 2

County's valuation now totals \$5.23 billion

As determined by the Polk County director of assessment services for the purpose of assessing property taxes that will be payable in 2015, the 2014 valuation of real estate in the county now totals \$5,237,930,400.

This new total amount of valuation represents an increase of \$972,471,800 over 2013, or about 22.8 percent.

Of the new total valuation amount:

- 63% is for tillable agricultural lands.
- 4.1% is for all other agricultural property.
- 21.6% is for residential properties.
- 3.8% is for seasonal recreational properties.
- 2.7% is for commercial properties.
- 0.8% is for industrial properties.
- 2.7% is for building sites (rural homes and garages on 1 acre*).
- 1.3% is for "all other" property classifications.

New construction accounted for \$29,008,200 of the total valuation increase. The balance of the increase is the result of the re-valuation of existing properties.

Note — The figures above are based on the 2014 Spring Mini Abstract. Last year's figures were based on the 2013 Fall Mini Abstract.

The valuation total does not take into account railroad or utility values.

* — Included in "all other" agricultural property

DWI Court

Continued from Page 1

obtain and maintain an alcohol-free lifestyle.

The money will pay for the salaries of 1.5 full-time TCCC probation agents and a .5 Polk County assistant attorney in addition to program and testing supplies, mileage for agents, a share of the salary and mileage expenses of the program coordinator, and training for all staff involved.

Training and hiring have begun

That training has already begun and the hiring process for the 1.5 probation agents (one full-time agent working in Polk County with quarter-time agents in each of Norman and Red Lake counties) and one additional assistant county attorney has begun.

Because of the heavy workload in the Polk County Attorney's Office, the Polk County Board of Commissioners approved providing the other half of the funding needed to make the assistant county attorney position fulltime.

County officials voice support

About the program's purpose, Polk County Attorney Greg Widseth says, "I believe that instituting the DWI Court here in Polk County will allow us to better address issues underlying a defendant's DWI offense, including greater focus on the addiction issues, with an aim of reducing recidivism and improving public safety in Polk County and the surrounding area."

Sheriff Barb Erdman adds, "The constant supervision, the treatment and the random checks made in this program give it the potential to make an immense change in the how the peo-

ple who are at the highest risk of reoffending conduct themselves. From a public safety perspective, this program makes a lot of sense."

Program staff in Polk County will consist of two rotating District Court judges, an agent for the county, law officers from the sheriff's department and the Crookston and East Grand Forks police departments, the city attorneys in Crookston and East Grand Forks, social services personnel, treatment providers, and defense counsel.

Incentives are there

"Incentives are given for compliant behavior and immediate sanctions are given for negative behavior," Pahlen says. "The program continues for 18 months as long as the participant follows the recommendations of the staff and treatment programs. Those who do not comply with the requirements may be placed in jail, moved back in phases of the program or simply terminated from the program."

District judges Jeffrey Remick and Anne Rasmusson will preside over DWI Court work in Polk, Norman and Red Lake counties. District judges Kurt Marben and Tamara Yon, who preside over existing DWI Courts in Pennington and Marshall counties, will also assist in Polk, Norman and Red Lake counties when needed. New District Judge Eric P. Schieferdecker will have the ability to participate after he has completed DWI Court training.

Pahlen oversees programs that are operating successfully in Roseau, Kittson, Pennington, and Marshall counties.

Stretching county dollars

Continued from Page 1

initial department budget proposals and sorted through its priorities for next year.

The most visible set of priorities is updating the boilers at the Government Center and making adjustments to the Justice Center HVAC system. The latter is expected to reduce electric and gas usage and costs for the building, thereby stretching county dollars for future budgets.

Some staff increases have been proposed and are being reviewed as the budget process continues.

The Sheriff's Department has added positions to take over security at the Justice Center while also performing court bailiff and prisoner transporting responsibilities. An added plus is it will also provide a pool of candidates for road deputy positions when vacancies occur.

The board is also preparing to refinance the bonds that were used to pay for the construction of the Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail. It is anticipated interest payments can be saved by half.

Finally, the county has been working on options to expand the waste to energy facility in

Fosston. It will be asking the Legislature to fund approximately half the cost. Polk County would borrow the other half of a roughly \$15 million project.

Tip fees to cover the costs

Agreements are being secured with the other counties in our solid waste group to guarantee waste for a number of years where tip fees cover the facility expansion cost operations and debt. No property taxes figure in the project.

This model has worked for years and if the state comes through, this will be the major county project for 2015.

The County Board will continue to develop the budget for next year at each board meeting through October and November. A public hearing on the budget will take place Tuesday, Dec. 2, at 6 p.m. in the Board Room at the Government Center.

Final Board action will take place on the budget at its Dec. 16 meeting. Public comment is welcome at all County Board meetings and can also be directed to the County Administrator's office at 218-281-5408.

Good financial state of county accomplished...

Affeldt to leave County Board after 16 years

The greatly improved financial condition of the county that has occurred during the past 16 years will be marked in Warren Affeldt's mind as the greatest accomplishment that was achieved during his four terms as the Polk County commissioner representing Commissioner District 4.

Considered a strong budget watchdog, Affeldt, who lives near Fosston, will retire at the end of the year. "It's just time," he says of the decision not to seek re-election. "Deb is going to retire later this fall. We'd like to go somewhere warm for a couple of months... somewhere where they don't sell lawn mowers or snow shovels. Next summer, I'll help our son, Mike, get into farming a little more and I'll probably have some other projects, too."

To miss the people

Affeldt says he will miss the people that he has worked with... all of the previous and current Polk County commissioners, commissioners from other counties, some *but not all* state officials, and all Polk County employees.

"I'm going to miss those outside relationships and, of course, those within the Polk County organization. This county has very good, very competent employees; some of the very best anywhere," he says. "I'd like to think that I have been a small part of making Polk County a good place to live and work and also a place to feel safe and secure."

Not just the budget

While spending and budget issues generally topped Affeldt's priority list, they weren't the only things on his plate.

One of the most contentious issues probably came in 2004 when as the chair of the Minnesota Rural Counties Caucus, he had the assignment of representing outstate counties when the Association of Minnesota Counties' Transportation Work Group took up the subject of how to best increase and allocate funding for state transportation needs. It was a showdown of metro vs. rural counties.



Warren Affeldt

Representing the Metropolitan Inter-County Association in that fray was Dakota County Commissioner Paul Krause, a former defensive back for the Minnesota Vikings.

Held his ground

Affeldt and Krause tangled repeatedly. The metros, led by Krause, wanted a greater share of all funding. Affeldt and his outstate compatriots held their ground despite unfavorable odds. Eventually an agreement was reached on how new monies would be allocated. But the formula for the allocation of the existing gas tax dollars was unchanged in the proposal that was presented to the state legislature.

Affeldt was also known to take on state and federal agencies when he thought they were overstepping what was needed to address environmental issues or were pushing to purchase farmlands thus taking them off the tax roles.

Affeldt cites being a part of advances in the county's building program as major accomplishments. That includes construction of the new Polk County Justice Center and the Northwest Regional Corrections Center jail, the remodeling of the Government Center to accommodate the creation of the Taxpayer Service Center and provide space for all of the Crookston-based Social Services Department.

Current projects

Also just wrapping up now is the remodeling of the Law Enforcement Center where the old jail space has been converted to space that houses the new Dispatch Center, the Emergency Management Department, the Information Services Department, and quarters for the Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force. There's space, too, for training and for secure evidence storage.

"We currently have projects underway to address a couple of roof and maintenance problems... one at the Highway Department and another at Environmental Services' Transfer Station building. Except for the bonds that were sold to construct the new jail," he says, "everything was done with available funds. We've been able to pay cash for the work."

Roads, operations good

Affeldt also notes that the county road system has been maintained very well and that county operations are top-notch in every area.

"Because of retirements, we have had a lot of new faces in management areas. They all understand the budget constraints. We have a very good team in place in Polk County. That includes all of our staff."

First elected in the fall of 1998, Affeldt succeeded the retiring Rupert Syverson. His current and past work assignments have included serving as the board chair four different times, being the county's delegate to and the past state chair of the Minnesota Rural Counties Caucus organization, serving on the Polk County Drug Task Force.

He is also serving on the Regional Corrections Board, the Association of Minnesota Counties Environment & Natural Resources Policy Committee, the Polk County Public Works Committee.

And also on the Red Lake-Polk County Joint Ditch 72 Committee, the Red Lake-Polk County Judicial Ditch 72 Committee, the Regional Solid Waste Advisory Board, the 5-County Solid Waste Advisory Committee, the Polk County Household Hazardous Waste Advisory Committee, the Inter-County Community Council Board, the East Polk County Development Achievement Center Board, the Local Water Planning Board, the Polk County Community Health Board, the Fosston Law Enforcement Committee, and the Polk-Red Lake Joint Ditch 4 Committee.

Schieferdecker is new 9th District Judge; Aandal resigns

Eric P. Schieferdecker became a 9th Judicial District Judge in April by the appointment of Gov. Mark Dayton.

Schieferdecker, who has chambers in Warren, succeeded Judge Donald J. Aandal, who resigned and has since become a county attorney in Marshall County.

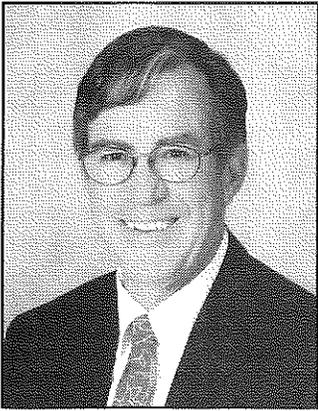
Schieferdecker, while in Bemidji, had been a Minnesota assistant attorney general prosecuting primarily murder, drug and implied consent cases in the 7th and 9th Districts.

Previous to that he had been a chief assistant county attorney in Beltrami County and

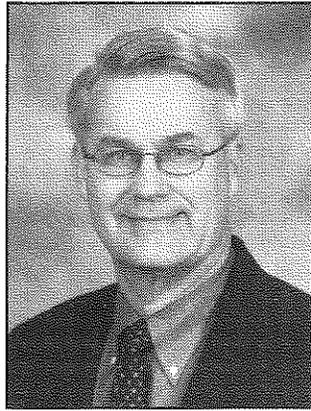
had worked in private practice in Bemidji. He earned a bachelor of arts degree from Minot State University and his law degree from the University of North Dakota.

Gov. Jesse Ventura had appointed Aandal a district judge on Oct. 25, 2000. He was elected in 2002 and re-elected in 2008. His term would have continued until January 2015.

A native of Thief River Falls, Aandal earned a B.A. degree from Moorhead State University in 1981 and his law degree from the University of North Dakota in 1984.



Dr. Ronald Dorman



Dr. Rolf Hanson

Dr. Dorman becomes medical consultant; Dr. Hanson retires

Dr. Ronald Dorman, a family medicine doctor at the Altru Clinic in Crookston, became the Polk County Public Health Medical Consultant on June 1. He succeeded the retiring Dr. Rolf Hanson, who had been the county's medical consultant since September 2006.

"We are thankful for the many years of service that Dr. Hanson provided for Polk County Public Health," Sarah Reese, Public Health director, states. "Dr. Hanson and his wife, Linda Hanson, who was a longtime public health nurse and supervisor, were and continue to be great advocates for public health.

"We look forward to having Dr. Dorman serve as our medical consultant. His personal interest in health and wellness

as well as many years of family practice experience will be beneficial. We appreciate his interest in and commitment to Polk County Public Health."

As part of an integrated system of community health services pursuant to the Local Public Health Act (Minnesota Statute Chapter, 145A), public health departments are responsible for having a medical consultant provide medical advice and direction to local health departments.

The medical consultant provides medical consultation and information to fulfill responsibilities in disease prevention and control, emergency medical services, family health, health promotion, and environmental health services and other services as requested.

Voters in almost half of county's 82 precincts now cast their ballots by mail

Voters in 39 of the 82 precincts in Polk County cast their General Election ballots through the U.S. Mail rather than at polling places at township halls or at different sites within smaller cities.

By state law, mail ballots must be delivered to registered voters between 14 and 46 days prior to the election date. The ballots can then be filled out and mailed back to the Polk County Taxpayer Service Center as soon as the voter has decided how to vote up to Election Day.

Mail ballots can also be delivered on Election Day to the Polk County Taxpayer Service Center, which serves as the official polling place for all mail ballot precincts.

"Our target for this mailing," Michelle Cote, Polk County director of property records, says of getting the ballots out, "is to have them in the mail at around the 30-day mark. This is so they won't arrive so early that people forget about them or so late that we are getting phone calls from voters who are looking for their ballots." Cote is the county's election administrator.

Mail balloting is available to

non-metro townships of any size and to cities with less than 400 registered voters. Besides usually resulting in greater participation in the election process, advantages to those precincts that use mail voting are that they do not have pay to train poll judges or staff a polling place on Election Day. The cost of mailing of the ballots amounts to about \$2 per ballot.

For the recent Primary Election, approximately 2,700 mail ballots were mailed out to registered voters.

Townships that use the mail ballot option are:

Andover, Angus, Belgium, Brandt, Brislet, Chester, Crookston, Eden, Fairfax, Fanny, Farley, Fisher, Gently, Grand Forks, Gully, Hammond, Helgeland, Hubbard, Johnson, Kertsonville, Keystone, Liberty, Lowell, Pernell, Onstad, Reis, Roome, Rosebud, Russia, Sandville, Scandia, Tabor, Tynsid, and Vineland.

Cities that have elected to use the vote by mail ballot are:

Beltrami, Climax, Gully, Nielsville, and Trail.

Funding became major problem

ART is dissolved; counties are maintaining trail

The 52-mile multi-use trail from Crookston to Ulen is now owned and being maintained individually by the three counties rather than by the Agassiz Recreational Trail (ART) joint powers organization that was created for its construction.

The ART is being dissolved by action of each of the Polk, Norman and Clay county commissions. The staffs in each of the three counties are now each performing the needed maintenance on the portion of the trail that is located within their county, while also planning for future trail needs.

During the past three years, the ART, which had relied on reimbursements from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for operations, did not have the

funding stream needed to cover expenses. This issue was a factor in prompting the dissolution action. Outstanding bills and fiscal obligations are being split between the three counties.

Other factors in the dissolution involved CRP lands that were put back into production in recent years and some encroachment and drainage issues that occurred at points along the route.

Ditch assessments also came into play two years ago when Norman County assessed the trail for tax purposes. The ART Board was able to negotiate with the DNR to pay the 2012 assessment but that agreement came after the cutoff of the department's fiscal year and couldn't be

paid. The 2013 assessment has been paid.

The trail, which was constructed on abandoned railroad grade, parallels State Highways 102 and 32. The section from Crookston to Fertile was added in 2013 giving Polk County a total of 25 miles of the trail. Another 23 miles are located in Norman County and five are in Clay County. An advisory committee with representation from each of the counties is being considered to address regional trail issues and opportunities.

At the request of the DNR, which may provide some operating funds through grants directly to each county, the operating name of the trail will now be the Polk-Norman-Clay Agassiz Recreational Trail.

District 4 has race for commissioner

Voters in Polk County's District 4 will have a decision to make in the General Election on Tuesday, Nov. 4, the regarding their representation on the Board of Commissioners.

That decision? Who to elect to succeed Warren Affeldt of Fosston when his term ends in January. Affeldt is retiring after serving four terms on the commission.

Candidates for the position are Joan K. Lee of rural McIntosh and Kerry Winkelmann of rural Fosston.

Also on the county ballots but unopposed for re-election will be Sheriff Barb Erdman, County Attorney Greg Widseth, and District 2 Commissioner Warren Strandell of East Grand Forks.

Unopposed, too, are West Polk County Soil & Water Conservation supervisors Mark McWalter and David Moulds, and East Polk County Soil & Water Conservation supervisors Kenneth Pederson and Bruce Grundyson..

Joan Lee

I was born and raised on a dairy farm near Princeton, Minn. After graduating from high school, I earned degrees in legal secretarial and junior accounting at St. Cloud Business School.

I met my husband, Mark, during recovery from a severe car accident. We were married in 1986 and moved onto his family farm in 1989. We have raised our three children there. All three graduated from Win-E-Mac High School. Rebecca and Joseph are both graduates of the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities and Samantha is a junior at the Carlson School of Business at the University of Minnesota.

We belong to Salem Lutheran Church in McIntosh where I have been the organizer for 27 years. I am the treasurer for our WELCA group and the treasurer for Lessor Township. I am the current vice president and princess coordinator of the Midwest Dairy Association. We have worked with the Dairy Association and local businesses to host the Polk County Breakfast on the farm for 16 years.

I was a 4-H leader for many years and was the Polk County Federation treasurer for two years. I am the secretary-treasurer for the East



Polk County Farm Bureau and chair of its Promotion and Education Committee. I was the representative for our region on the Minnesota State Farm Bureau Promotion and Education Committee for six years and was elected its chair. This included having a seat on the state Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

I am a recent graduate of the Minnesota Agriculture Rural Leadership (MARL) Class VII. During this two-year program I spent 10 days in Ecuador in February learning about agriculture there.

This past spring, Mark and I made a decision to sell our milking cows to another organic dairy farm. This decision has opened up my time greatly and I feel that with my past leadership opportunities I would be able to be an effective county commissioner.

Kerry Winkelmann

I was born and raised on the family farm south of Fosston.

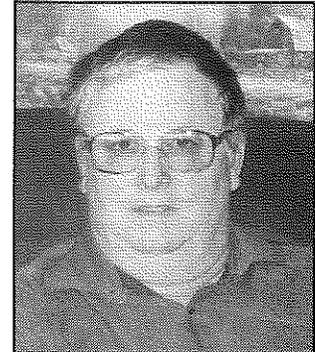
After graduating from Fosston High School in 1973, I worked for Fosston Implement and farmed with my father and brother. Later, I worked for the Fosston Ag Service and bought the farm from my parents.

In 1985, I married Cheryl Bitker, daughter of Leon and Patricia Bitker of Fosston. Leon had a machine shop in Fosston. In 1990, he and I formed K & L, Inc.

For several years we sold and serviced Gehl equipment and we still currently do welding and agriculture equipment repairs.

Cheryl and I have two adult children, Timothy and Katelyn. Both have engineering degrees from Bemidji State University and are involved in farming. We raise grain crops and Buelingo beef cattle (otherwise known as the Oreo Cookie cows). Both kids were active in 4-H and FFA.

I am currently the chairman of Rosebud Township. I



have been on the board for 20 years.

I am also the chairman of the Polk County Planning and Zoning Commission, including the Board of Adjustment and Boundary Commissions.

I have been the chairman of First English Lutheran Church, board chairman and secretary of Rosebud Coop Oil Board, and I have served as president, director and secretary of Lake Itasca Region Pioneer Farmers Board.

My campaign promise is simple: It is to listen to your concerns and to help make your voices heard.

County Board Meeting Times

- 8:15 a.m. on 1st Tuesday of month
- 10:30 a.m. on the 3rd Tuesday
- 8:15 a.m. on the 4th Tuesday

All meetings are open to the public

County Commissioners

- Dist. 1 — Craig Bunes
- Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell, vice chair
- Dist. 3 — Nick Nicholas
- Dist. 4 — Warren Affeldt
- Dist. 5 — Don Diedrich, chair

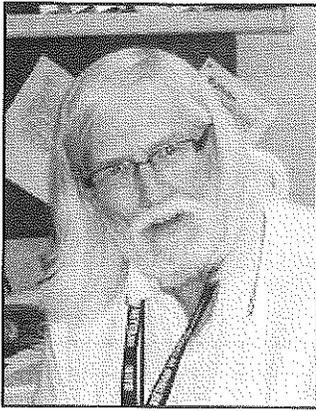
Tax-forfeited property sale

Thirty tax-forfeited properties are scheduled to be sold at public auction beginning at 9 a.m. Monday, Oct. 13, at the Polk County Government Center in Crookston.

A listing of the properties can be viewed on the county website — <http://www.co.polk.mn.us>.

Parcels will be sold to the highest bidder beginning at the minimum acceptable bid amount, according to Robert Wagner, Polk County director of assessment services.

Terms of sale will be cash only. The balance of any special assessments levied against the properties may be reassessed by the municipality or agency.



Jim Arneson



Victoria Ramirez

Arneson retires as social services supervisor; Ramirez is successor

After of almost 25 years of service as a social services supervisor with Polk County Social Services, James Arneson retired on June 30. He has been succeeded in the position by Victoria Ramirez, who has worked for Polk County for 12 years.

During his years with Social Services, Arneson supervised many staff under a variety of programs areas.

Served elderly, disabled

"Most recently, he administered programs that served the elderly and disabled. Jim's dedication to provide needed services to the residents of Polk County is greatly appreciated. We wish him the best of health and happiness as he enters retirement," Kent Johnson, director of social services said.

Arneson, who has a masters degree in social work, served in Vietnam while in the Army (1969-71).

After moving to Crookston as a migrant worker in 1993, Ramirez earned first an associate degree in marketing followed by a bachelors degree in business management both from the University of Minnesota-Crookston in 2001.

She has also taken several graduate level courses in public administration at the University of North Dakota.

12 years with county

Ramirez has worked for Polk County Social Services for the past 12 years helping people with disabilities connect to the available resources.

Her earlier work history includes time as a paraprofessional for the Crookston Public Schools and in providing residential services for both REM and Lutheran Social Services in Crookston.

Ramirez serves on the Habitat for Humanity Board of Directors, on the advisory committee of the Area Learning Center, and on the InProgress Board of Directors, a non-profit organization that teaches digital art to youth and promotes cultural diversified dialogue.

She and her husband, John, have four children: Desiree, 15; Joseph, 12; Isaac, 8; and Dukessa, 7.

Serve and advocate

"I'm very excited and honored to be the newest member of the management team at Polk County Social Services," Ramirez says of her new position. "My passion in life is to 'serve' and 'advocate' for our clientele through 'person-centered' fiscally prudent case management. I'm looking forward to the challenges and opportunities of my new position."

\$177,846 in gravel taxes to support 'haul roads'

The Polk County Highway Department and the townships where gravel pits were active in the fourth quarter of 2012 and during all of 2013 are sharing \$177,846.18 in Aggregate Material Taxes.

The tax — \$45,538.96 in the fourth quarter of 2012 and \$132,307.22 in 2013 — was collected from gravel operators working in the county.

The amount of tax collected last year (in 2013) — the \$177,846.18 total mentioned above — is the second highest total.

The total amount of tax collected in 2012 — \$197,253 — set the single year record for the tax.

The previous high single year of collections came in 2011 when \$165,101 was collected.

The higher tax collections during the past three years are due to changes in the tax rate that were made by the Minnesota Legislature.

Currently, 32 counties statewide use the tax as a way to help maintain roads. By law, the tax rate is set at 21.5 cents per cubic yard or 15 cents per ton of aggregate material excavated.

For townships, the method of distribution of "the gravel tax" is based on the number of "active" pits within a township rather than by the number of miles of road that are affected by the hauling.

After a deduction of a 5 percent fee for the county to administer the program, 42.5 percent of the tax is distributed each to the Township Road & Bridge Fund and to the County Road & Bridge Fund. The remaining 15 percent is placed in the Reserve Fund for Pit Restoration.

The following 11 townships shared the \$18,386 from the fourth quarter of 2012 that was earmarked for the Township Road & Bridge Fund. The settlement for the number of active pits and dollar amount sent to each township for that three-month period included:

Chester, 5 pits, \$3,404.88; Columbia, 1 pit, \$680.98; Gentilly, 4 pits, \$2,723.89; Godfrey, 1 pit, \$680.98; Grove

Park-Tilden, 5 pits, \$3,404.88; Gully, 1 pit, \$680.98; Hill River, 2 pits, \$1,361.95; Kertsonville, 2 pits, \$1,361.95; Liberty, 2 pits, \$1,361.95; Onstad, 3 pits, \$2,042.93; and Woodside, 1 pit, \$680.98.

The 2013 collection of \$53,419.04 for the Township Road & Bridge Fund was distributed to 12 townships in this manner:

Belgium, 2 pits, \$3,956.96; Brandt, 1 pit, \$1,978.50; Chester, 5 pits, \$9,892.40; Columbia, 1 pit, \$1,978.50; Gentilly, 3 pits, \$5,935.44; Godfrey, 1 pit, \$1,978.50; Grove Park-Tilden, 5 pits, \$9,892.40; Gully, 1 pit, \$1,978.50; Hill River, 2 pits, \$3,956.96; Kertsonville, 2 pits, \$3,956.96; Liberty, 2 pits, \$3,956.96; and Onstad, 2 pits, \$3,956.96.

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.

Initially, the tax 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.

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
2010	\$144,335
2011	\$165,101
2012	\$197,253
2013	\$177,846

By using regular appropriation with bond dollars

Ambitious summer road program completed

The turning leaves of fall mark the end of a very busy road construction season that the Polk County Highway Department was able to finance by combining the regular appropriation of County State Aid Highway dollars generated by the state gas tax with money from the \$6 million in highway bonds that were sold in July 2013.

This funding allowed a number of projects to be completed in a program that focused on the eastern half of the county. Those projects included:

- Reconstruction of **CSAH 1** from Trunk Highway (TH) 2 to the east limits of Fosston.
- Overlay of **CSAH 1** from east limits of Fosston to the Polk-Clearwater county Line.
- Overlay of **CSAH 17** from TH 2 to CSAH 20.
- Overlay of **CSAH 30** from TH 2 to 4.5 miles north.
- Overlay of **CSAH 41** from CSAH 34 to TH 59.
- Widening and overlay of **CSAH 41** from TH 59 to the west city limits of McIntosh.

We also received federal

funds to do some safety projects on the following roads:

- Pave 2-foot shoulders on **CSAH 3** from CSAH 6 to CSAH 29.
- Pave 2-foot shoulders on **CSAH 34** from CSAH 41 to south limits of Erskine.
- Overlay **CSAH 6** and pave 2-foot shoulders from the Polk-Mahnomen county line to TH 2.

The 2015 construction program is being developed. The final program will be dependent on some environmental permits we are currently waiting for.

Here is our current program for 2015.

- Widening and overlay of **CSAH 34** from CSAH 36 to Erskine.
- Overlay of **CSAH 2** from CSAH 3 to TH 93 at Gully.
- Overlay of **CSAH 8** from CSAH 1 to McIntosh.
- Overlay of **CSAH 45** from TH 75 to TH 9.
- Widening and overlay of **CSAH 15** from TH 220 to Fisher.

— **Richard Sanders**,
Polk County engineer

'Wheelage tax' supports roads that don't qualify for state aids

In August of 2013, the Polk County Board approved a \$10 Wheelage Tax for transportation projects. The tax is estimated to collect \$300,000 per year based on the number of registered vehicles in the county.

The money has been earmarked for use on county roads that do not qualify for state aid dollars and must instead be maintained by local levy property tax dollars.

This year we used approximately \$200,000 to construct a bituminous overlay on County Road (CR) 233 from Trunk Highway (TH) 75 South to the North Gate of American Crystal Sugar Co. in Crookston. This project also included the realignment of CR 233 at the intersection with Highway 75 to make the intersection more safe.

The next project that is scheduled to use the Wheelage Tax money is an overlay of CR 214 from TH 2 to County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 45. This project will be constructed in 2016 and will cost approximately \$600,000 using the tax dollars

collected in 2015 and 2016 along with the remainder of the funds not used in 2014.

Originally the surfacing of CR 210 was scheduled to use Wheelage Tax funds on a project from CSAH 37 to the Cenex Harvest States facility at TH 2.

Instead the county used maintenance funds to construct a stabilized aggregate base on this stretch of roadway. In the future, a riding surface (chip seal) may be added to the roadway but, until then, the county will continue to apply calcium chloride to the roadway to help reduce dust and keep the stabilized aggregate base from softening.

The current state legislation allows for a \$10 Wheelage Tax until 2017 at which point the county will be able to levy any amount up to \$20 per vehicle. If the county board chooses to levy a \$20 Wheelage Tax, we will then be able to spend additional funds on local county roads and possibly some of our county state aid highways. — **Richard Sanders**, Polk County engineer

Sanders is v.p. of engineer group

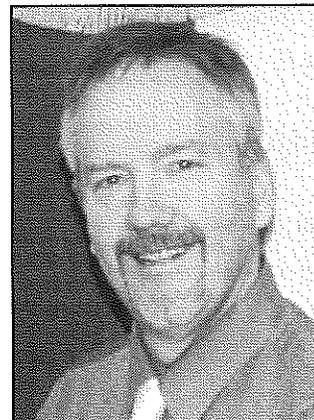
Polk County Engineer Richard Sanders is serving as the North Central Region Vice President of the National Association of County Engineers (NACE).

In that position, he serves on the association's executive board on issues that come before the national organization. He represents the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Montana and Wyoming. The board meets by teleconference eight times a year and on site at national conferences four other times.

Sanders' two-year term will

end in April at which time he can consider becoming a candidate for the secretary-treasurer position. The secretary-treasurer automatically advances to president-elect and then to president of the organization.

Currently, Sanders is also serving as past president of the Minnesota County Engineers Association, is on the University of Minnesota Local Transportation Assistance Program Steering Committee and on the National Association of Counties Transportation Steering Committee.



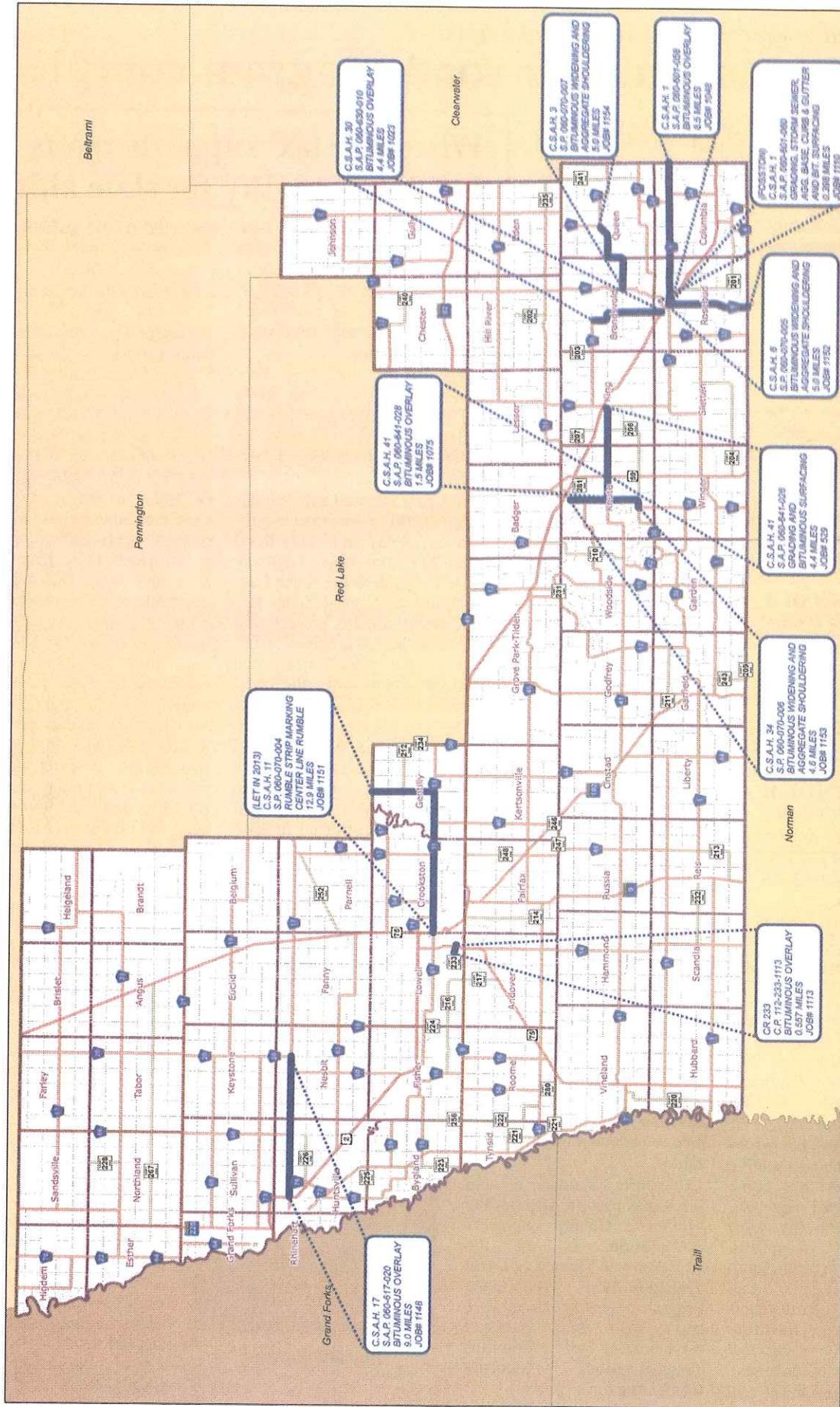
Richard Sanders

Plat books still available

Although going quickly, some copies of 2013 edition of the Polk County Plat Book remain available at Taxpayer Service Center in the Government Center in Crookston.

The book features updated township maps showing property owners of all land parcels of 5 acres or more along with ditches, roads, etc. It also has aerial pictures of the townships and maps of school districts, commissioner districts, and cities.

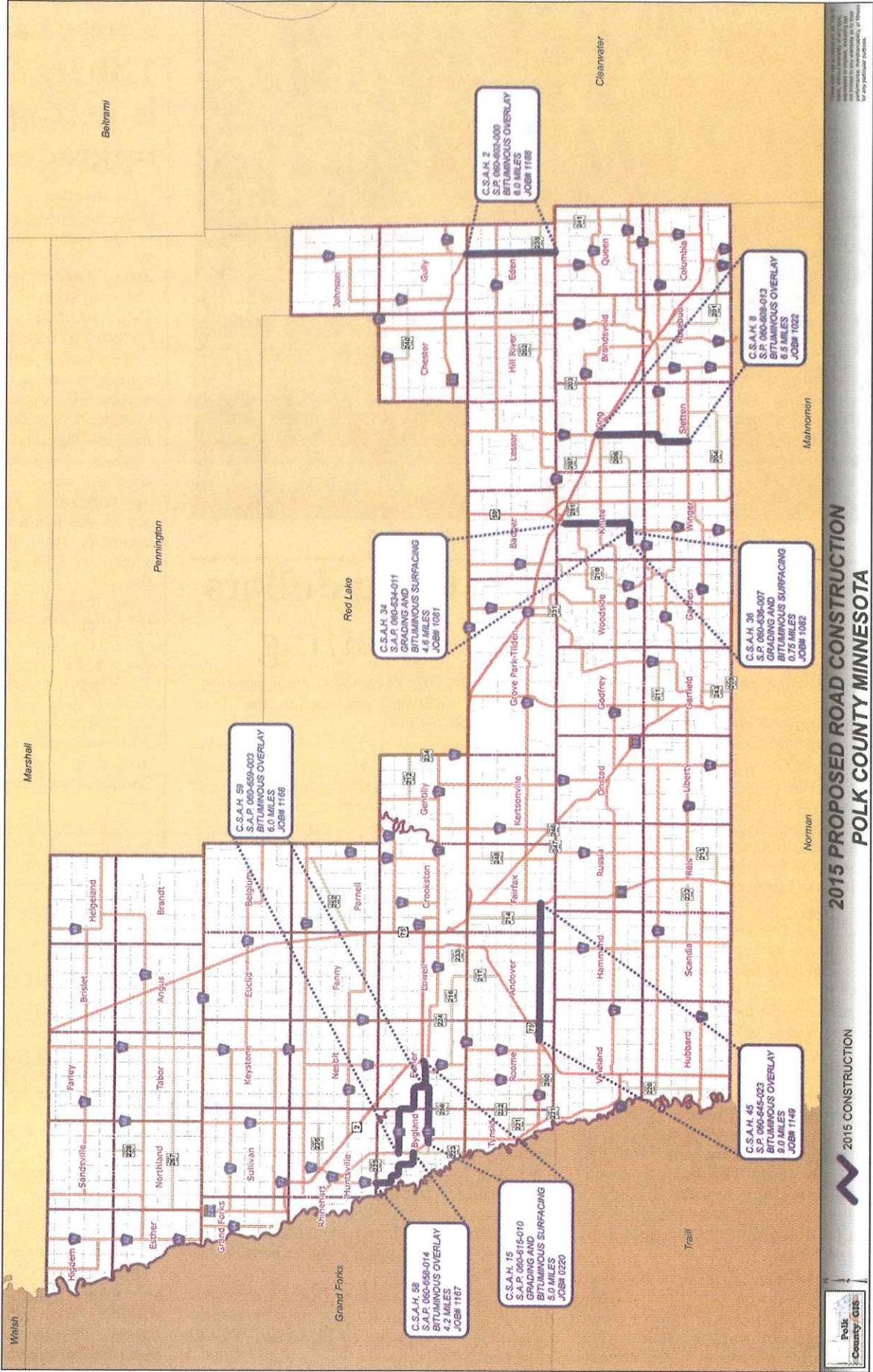
The price of the 189-page book is \$30.



**2014 ROAD CONSTRUCTION
POLK COUNTY MINNESOTA**



Map prepared by Polk County GIS, 2014. All rights reserved. No part of this map may be reproduced without the written permission of Polk County, Minnesota.





A scene at Polk County's Cross Lake-Tilberg Park

Higher inmate numbers bring dollars along with need for added staffing

The inmate growth at the Northwest Regional Corrections Center has created revenue for Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC) by housing "per diem" detainees; inmates that other jurisdictions pay TCCC to hold.

While the inmate population of the TCCC member counties (Polk, Norman and Red Lake) has remained relatively steady, the growth realized is derived from contracts with Clay County, the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, the U.S. Marshals Service and the Minnesota Department of Corrections.

During the months of June, July and August the NWRCC saw an average daily population of 175 inmates, with 55 to 65 of them as per diem-paying inmates.

These inmates account for more than \$100,000 in revenue each month. Prior to the expansion of per diem contracts, the daily population of the jail averaged 120 inmates between 2009 and 2012.

With an increase in inmate population comes an increase in cost to operate the jail. A full staffing analysis was completed following an approved methodology by the National Institute of Corrections. This analysis identified the need for multiple security positions, a support position, a transportation officer and an assistant jail administrator, as required by Minnesota Jail Rules.

The Minnesota Department of Corrections reviewed and concurred with the staffing analysis and the Regional Corrections Board approved a staggered implementation plan, adding 7.5 fulltime positions to the compli-

ment of jail staff. These additional positions will add a \$438,000 expense to the 2015 TCCC overall budget.

As TCCC prepares the 2015 budget it is critical to account for all increases in personnel costs. In addition to the new staff allotted to the jail division, the organization also incurs an approximate \$224,500 increase in agency expenses due to negotiated salary increases, \$29,400 in monthly benefit contributions, and \$37,000 in natural tier increases for employees not at the top of their salary schedule. The result for TCCC is a \$728,900 personnel cost increase between the 2014 and 2015 budgets.

TCCC has drafted multiple budget options for consideration by the Regional Corrections Board. These budget drafts range from a total overall increases of \$160,364 to \$324,773.

With an increase in personnel expenses of \$728,900 in 2015, it is evident the revenues made through per diem-paying inmate housing has proven beneficial in deferring additional costs to the member counties and in keeping the annual budget growth manageable.

While a \$438,000 expense is associated to appropriate jail staffing to manage the increase in inmates, the natural personnel increases totaling \$290,900 would have been the lowest possible increase to the member counties between the 2014 and 2015 budgets.

The Regional Corrections Board will revisit the budget options at their next regularly scheduled meeting. — **Phill Greer, TCCC administrator**

Cross Lake-Tilberg Park is getting upgrades

Construction of a bathroom along with upgrades to the water and electric systems and the installation of a sewer system are underway at Polk County's Cross Lake-Tilberg Park northeast of Fosston.

In the project, another six campsites are also being developed increasing the total to 34 sites. See aerial map on Page 11.

When completed, 18 sites will have full hook-ups (electricity, water and sewer). Another 8 will have access to water and electricity, and 8 will be primitive.

The work is being done by Schmitz Builders, Red Lake Falls, which provided the low bid of \$445,000. Work began in early spring and has continued through the summer in parallel with normal camping activities, according to Richard Sanders, Polk County engineer.

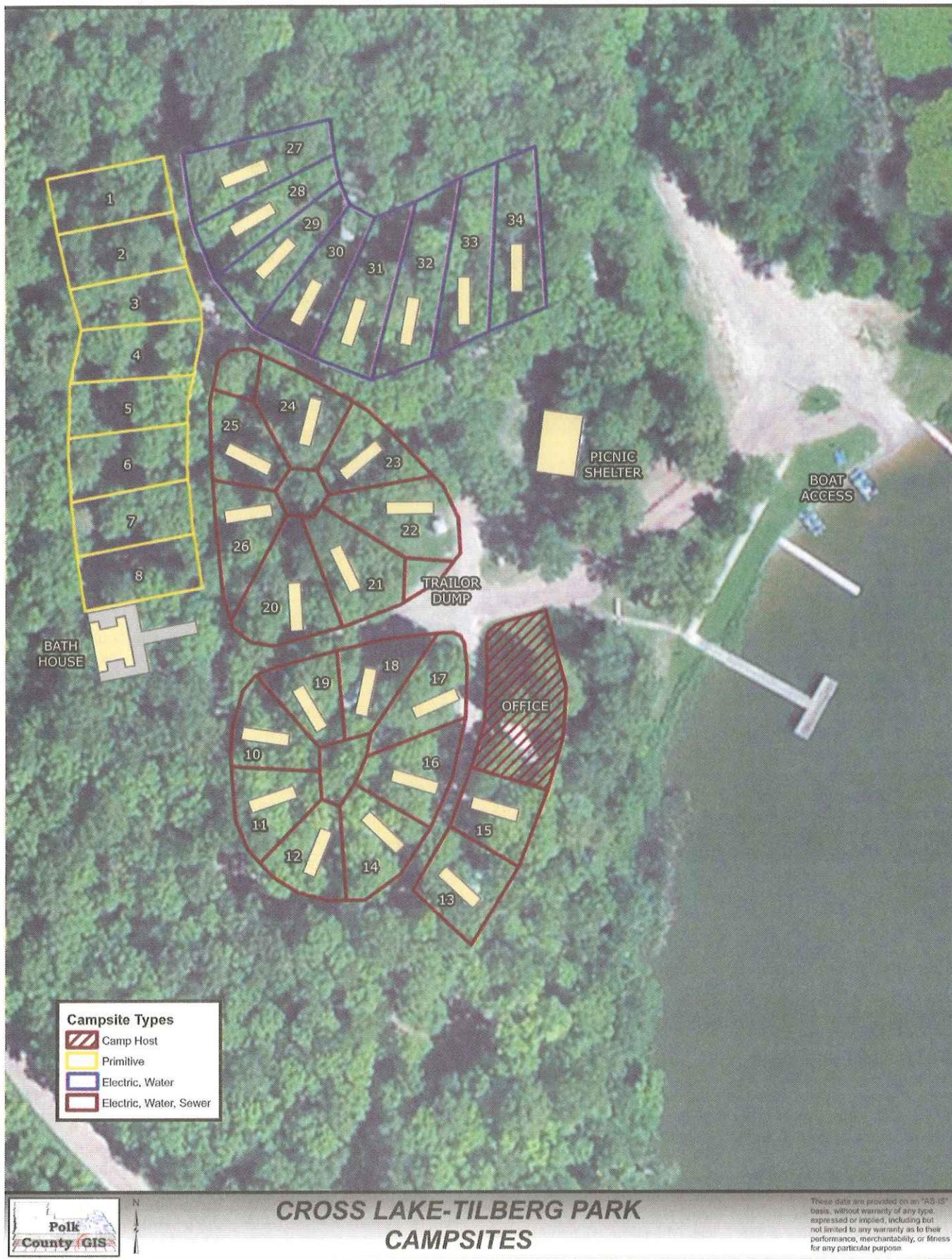
The project is expected to be complete by Nov. 1. The park is located at Cross Lake northeast of Fosston.

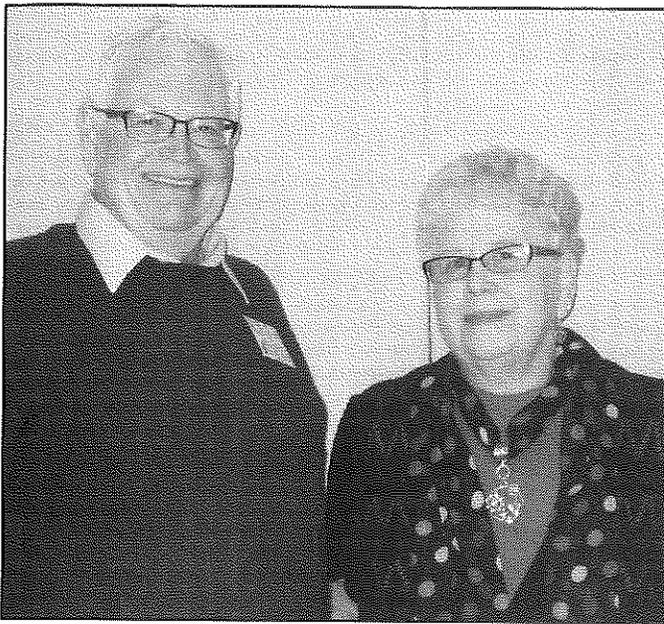
Hanson, Brekke are re-appointed

Two veteran members of the Sand Hill Watershed District Board of Managers — Roger Hanson and Robert Brekke — were re-appointed to new three-year terms in April by action of the Polk County Board of Commissioners.

Hanson, Beltrami, has served on the board since May 1978. Brekke, Nielsville, the current board secretary, has been a board member since May 1999

Other members of the board are: Chair Stuart Christian, Erskine; Vice Chair Scott Balstad, Fosston; and Phillip Swenson, Fertile, treasurer.





Wendel & Judy Webster

Websters recognized at Family Foster Care appreciation event

Polk County has Family Foster Care homes that are licensed to care for children and/or adults. These individuals have graciously opened their hearts and their homes to those who are in need.

On April 29, Polk County Social Services held a banquet in appreciation for the service that these providers offer to our communities.

Along with the foster parents, in attendance were Commissioner Don Diedrich, Commissioner Nick Nicholas, the Honorable Judge Tamara Yon, the Honorable Judge Jeff Remick and Polk County Social Service employees who work with foster care.

Polk County Social Services Director Kent Johnson started

the event with a warm welcome. Pastor Jo Gast, foster parent, delivered the invocation and the Crookston High School Competitive Speech Team provided the evening's entertainment.

Judge Yon presented a brief thank you to the foster parents and all foster parents were recognized individually for their service.

Included in the recognitions were Judy and Wendel Webster, who have had a licensed Adult Foster Care home for 25 years!

Appreciation is extended from Polk County Social Services to all foster care providers as well as the community members that support their work. — **Tiffany Primeau, licensing social worker**

Nicholas chairs Social Services

Commissioner Nick Nicholas, Crookston, became chair of the Polk County Social Service Board in July, succeeding Commissioner Warren Affeldt, Fosston.

Commissioner Craig Bunes, Crookston, is the new vice chair. The position of chair rotates annually among the five county commissioners.

Lay-Board member Cathy

Gutterud, Lengby, is the new secretary of the board. The secretary position alternates annually between the two lay-board members, Paula Waters, Crookston, and Gutterud.

Gutterud's reappointment to the board for another two-year term was recently approved by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Boundary commissions dealing with issues in 2 areas at Union Lake

Polk County has undertaken the task of resolving property line discrepancies in the county.

Boundary commission laws were established by Minnesota statutes in 1990. It has long been recognized that even though efforts to eliminate boundary disputes by using common corners such as those established in the Public Land Survey System or corners established by platting, people continue to occupy property that is not theirs by title.

Minnesota Statute 465.79 allows local units of government (cities, towns, or counties) a means to resolve boundary disputes either with or without cooperation of the affected landowners.

Issues can be costly

Boundary discrepancies and subsequent disputes can be very costly, not only for the current landowners but also for future landowners.

Boundary discrepancies also create problems for local governments.

By resolution, a county board may create a boundary commission. The boundary commission shall review property descriptions of the disputed areas in the respective jurisdiction and establish agreements between adjoining landowners as to the location of common boundaries as delineated by a certified land survey.

Makes recommendations

If agreement cannot be reached, the commission shall make a recommendation as to the location of the common boundaries within the disputed area. The commission shall prepare a plan designating all agreed and recommended boundary lines and report to the county board.

Ideally, many of the discrepancies may be settled on-site with the surveyor showing adjacent landowners where a common boundary could be located.

If an agreement cannot be reached between adjoining landowners, the boundary commission makes a recommendation as to where it feels the common boundary should be located.

These recommendations and a report, along with the survey drawing showing the new proposed boundaries are forwarded to the county board.

Following a public hearing, the county board may petition the district court for judicial approval of the proposed plan.

Court decides

The court shall determine the location of any contested, disputed, or disagreed boundary. After hearing and determining all disputes, the court shall issue its judgment in the form of a plat.

The county board may assess part or all of the cost incurred from the plat against the benefited properties on a per parcel basis. Costs incurred may include such items as professional surveying and attorney fees.

Polk County is currently involved with two boundary commissions, both dealing with properties around Union Lake.

Landowners cooperative

The landowners in these areas have been very cooperative and the process has gone smoothly. We hope to wrap up both boundary commissions by the end of the year.

When the process is complete the affected landowners will have a clear title to their property and know exactly where their boundary lines are for future sale or development.

The boundary commission process is proving to be a very cost efficient way to correct these boundary disputes. — **Josh Holte, Polk County Planning & Zoning administrator**

Greer appointed to position on NACo justice & safety committee

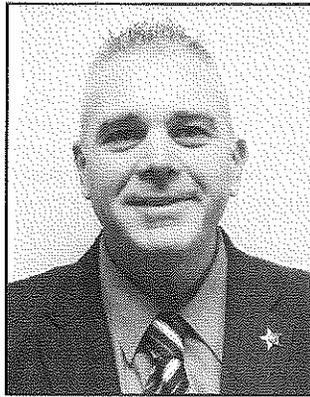
Phillip Greer, executive director of Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC), has been appointed to the National Association of Counties' (NACo) Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee.

NACo has 10 steering committees that form the policy making arm of the association. Each committee is comprised of approximately 60-100 county officials from throughout the nation who meet several times during the year to examine issues critical to local government.

The committee focuses on criminal justice and public safety systems, including criminal justice planning, law enforcement, courts, corrections, community crime prevention, juvenile justice and delinquency prevention, emergency management, fire prevention and control, and civil disturbances.

The steering committee's recommendations on legislative policies and goals are presented to NACo's membership during the association's annual conference. If approved, the recommendations become part of the American County Platform, which is the basis of NACo's efforts in representing counties before Congress and the White House.

As a member of the steering



Phillip Greer

committee, Greer may introduce policy resolutions and platform changes and will vote on other proposed resolutions within the jurisdiction of the committee.

Prior to taking over the top position in TCCC from the retiring Susan Mills early in 2012, Greer had been the jail commander for the Pennington County Sheriff's Office in Rapid City, S.D., for four years.

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

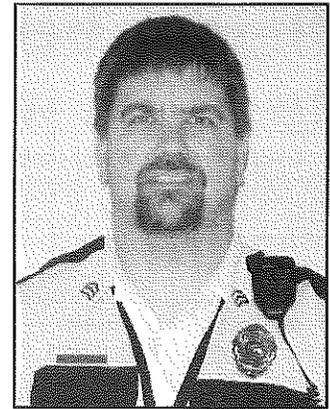
County, Kansas Department of Corrections. He has been an adjunct professor for the ITT School of Criminal Justice at Kansas City, Mo.

Greer has also been an auditor/consultant for the American Correctional Association at Alexandria, VA, since 2004.

The association inspects correctional programs throughout the country to determine compliance with government standards, policy, procedure and practice in determining accreditation in the areas of parole, work release, community corrections residential programs, electronic monitoring, therapeutic communities, and prison and jail operations.

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

TCCC is governed by the Regional Corrections Board, which is made up of two commissioners from each of the three member counties. 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.



Joey Pederson

Pederson now assistant jail administrator

Joey Pederson has been promoted in rank to lieutenant/assistant jail administrator of the Northwest Regional Corrections Center.

The promotion followed a thorough selection process completed by a cadre of corrections and law enforcement supervisors from the region.

Minnesota regulations governing jails require an assistant jail administrator if a jail facility exceeds 60 inmates. This newly created position fulfills Minnesota requirements and adds a critical link to the chain of command within the jail.

Pederson has been a vital member of the Northwest Regional Corrections Center staff for over 18 years, serving the past seven years as a correctional sergeant.

He has wealth of experience and knowledge in the corrections field and proven leadership within the jail. Pederson will now utilize his skill set overseeing multiple facets of jail operations. — **Phill Greer, TCCC administrator**

Hedlund plans to leave Middle, Snake, Tamarac water board

Marvin Hedlund, rural Oslo, has given notice that he will not seek re-appointment to another term as Polk County's representative on the Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Water-shed District (MSTWD) Board of Managers.

He plans to serve until the end of the year or until a successor is appointed.

Hedlund, who holds the

office of board secretary, was appointed to the watershed board on April 1, 2010, to complete the balance of a term that was to end on July 27, 2011. He was then appointed to a three-year term that ended in July of this year.

The Polk County Board of Commissioners appoints one member to the seven-member watershed board. The Marshall County Board appoints the

other six managers.

Besides Hedlund, the other current managers are: Roger Hille, Warren, chair; Ben Kleinwachter, Strandquist, vice chair; David Bakke, Newfolden; John W. Nelson, Oslo; Tom Neibauer, Middle River; and Jim Jubie, Warren. The watershed offices are located in Warren. Danny Omdahl is the administrator.

County maps available

Polk County maps showing the streets and avenues in the rural addressing system are available at the Highway Department and at the Taxpayer Service Center in the Government Center.

The cost is \$2 each.

Bigger, better drug task force to begin work by early next year

A much broader and a better-coordinated effort to control drug traffic in northwestern Minnesota is set to be in place by early next year.

The original Pine-to-Prairie Drug Task Force members — Polk County and the cities of Crookston and East Grand Forks — will be joined in that mission in January by seven other law enforcement agencies.

The seven new county-city members — Kittson, Roseau, Marshall, Pennington-Thief River Falls, Red Lake, Norman-Ada, and Lake of the Woods — have all committed

resources toward the expanded mission.

The new members will participate in one of three ways — by providing a fulltime officer, by providing an officer to work with Pine-to-Prairie agents as needed, or by providing money toward operating expenses.

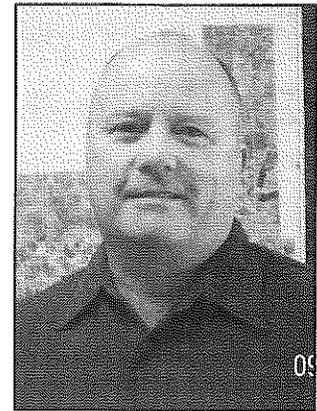
In addition to the county-city members, the U.S. Border Patrol has committed three additional officers (bringing its total to four) and the Department of Homeland Security will provide an officer. The task force will have 10 fulltime officers.

In the new arrangement, the

members will share information and resources. A state grant is being applied for to fund a portion of the activities.

Polk County Commissioner Warren Affeldt, Crookston City Council member Robert Quanrud and East Grand Forks City Council member Mark Olstad serve as Pine-to-Prairie Task Force Board members. For the past year and a half, an East Grand Forks Police detective has been the commander of the task force.

The task force has its base of operations at the Polk County Law Enforcement Center.



Mark Landsverk

Landsverk now deputy Polk County assessor

Mark Landsverk is now the deputy assessor in the Assessment Services Division of the Polk County Taxpayer Services Center.

The new position, which became effective on Aug. 1, involves assuming added supervisory responsibilities over other appraisers in the office, performing statistical analyses of sales data in the determination of property values, providing staff training, completing reports to the State of Minnesota, and serving as the county's lead appraiser under Robert Wagner, the director of assessment services.

Has top license

Landsverk holds the senior accredited Minnesota assessor license, which is the highest license level. A member of the Assessment Services Division for the past eight years, Landsverk has a B.S. degree in geography-history from the University of North Dakota.

Prior to employment by Polk County, he was a part of the Landsverk family farming operation at Fosston. He served on the board of directors of the Fosston Co-op Elevator for four years.

Currently, there are two open appraiser positions on the Assessment Services staff. These positions will likely be filled by the end of the year.

New FEMA floodplain map can be seen on websites or at county office

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's updated floodplain modernization map for Polk County can be viewed several different ways:

- At the Polk County website — <http://www.co.polk.mn.us> and click on the "GIS Mapping" link.
- At the Department of Natural Resources website — http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/management_section/floodplain/fema_firms.html.
- Or by visiting the Polk County Environmental Services office at 320 Ingersoll Avenue in Crookston.

Based on a 100-year floodplain, the map determines whether or not property owners with mortgages are required to carry flood insurance

and whether or not building permits can be issued for new construction.

Corrections in the map can be made until Nov. 10.

The new map, which is still preliminary, incorporates light detection and ranging (LiDAR) data that shows elevation variations in 2-foot increments. The new, much more detailed map, which will become effective in 2015, will replace maps that have been in use since 1983.

Other northwestern Minnesota counties that will have new floodplain maps in 2015 are Kittson, Mahanomen, Marshall, Norman and Roseau.

Questions about the preliminary floodplain maps for Polk County can be addressed by Polk County Planning and Zoning at (218) 281-5700.

Make a Difference
Change a Life
Become a Foster Parent!
Polk County Social Services
1-877-281-3127

Public Health Services

Health Screenings and Disease Prevention

SITE	ADDRESS	DAYS	HOURS
Crookston	721 S. Minnesota St	Every Tuesday	3:00 – 5:30 p.m.
East Grand Forks	1424 Central Ave NE	2 nd and 4 th Wednesday of each month*	3:00 – 4:30 p.m.
McIntosh	275 Cleveland Ave	1 st and 3 rd Thursday of each month*	9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

*Immunizations at these locations are available by appointment only

Public Health services available by walk-in or appointment:

- ✓ Childhood and adult immunizations
- ✓ Limited family planning services: pregnancy testing and contraceptives-including oral birth control pills, patch, ring, depo shot, plan b/emergency contraceptives, male/female condoms, dental dams
- ✓ Mantoux-TB testing
- ✓ Dental varnish- fluoride treatment
- ✓ Lead Testing
- ✓ Blood Pressure Check
- ✓ Cholesterol screening
- ✓ Blood Sugar screening
- ✓ Flu shot
- ✓ Height and weight checks, including baby weight checks
- ✓ Hemoglobin
- ✓ Hearing and vision screening

** Comprehensive Family Planning Clinic in Crookston office on Wednesday's 2:30-4:30 p.m. by appointment. Contraceptives, STI Diagnosis and Treatment, Pregnancy Testing, Gynecological Exams, Counseling, Education and Referrals
Additional Crookston Family Planning Walk-In Hours- Mon and Thurs 2:00-4:30 p.m.

Questions or to make an appointment?

Call 218-281-3385.
Walk-ins welcome.

What if I'm not able to come during these times?

Call and schedule an appointment for another date/time.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

No one will be turned away or denied services due to inability to pay.



Funding for expansion project will be sought again

Number of topics on table for Solid Waste

This year, 2014, has been and continues to be a critical year for Polk County Solid Waste. Some of the issues include:

- Contracts for solid waste with our partner counties expire on Dec. 31, 2014. Extensions are being secured for 2015 and beyond.

- Contracts for hauling solid waste and recyclable materials between our facilities also expire at the end of the year, as do the steam contracts for our partner businesses in the Fosston Industrial Park.

Costs for equipment, fuel, utilities and labor continue to increase for all areas of solid waste management. This is resulting in tip fees around the region either increasing, or possibly increasing after the end of their existing contracts.

However, Polk County has instead reduced the tip fee for 2015 in anticipation of securing additional waste from our partner counties. The tip fee for municipal solid waste (MSW) is set to decrease from \$72.50 per ton to \$65.00 per ton in 2015.

Missed out on funding

Polk County was unsuccessful in securing funding for its expansion project from the 2014 Legislature.

The county had submitted a request for funding for a comprehensive, shovel-ready regional project to benefit public and private regional entities alike in both the areas of solid waste and recycling.

The expansion project for which funding was sought included:

- State monies to help defray costs related to expansion of the waste processing infrastructure at the Resource Recovery Facility (Incinerator) in Fosston;

- The addition of a larger boiler to supply steam to steam customers;

- The addition of waste processing and composting equipment at the Landfill complex near Gentilly;

- Construction of a new transfer station in Bemidji and other smaller modifications which support our regional system.

These changes would have allowed Polk and its partner counties to increase recycling rates, decrease recycling costs, reduce the total volume of waste going to landfills, extract more recyclables from the waste stream prior to disposal, allow for expanded composting opportunities, and provide the infrastructure necessary to continue our partnerships well into the future.

Will try again

Polk County, on behalf of the counties of Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Mahanomen, Norman and Polk, intends to seek funding for this project again in the 2015 legislative session.

Discussions on a 2015 funding opportunity have begun on the Senate side, and will begin on the House side following the upcoming elections.

Also of note —

PaintCare — A statewide initiative to have the manufacturers of architectural paint pay for the management of unwanted paint was set to be implemented by state law earlier this summer.

The intent of the PaintCare law was to provide a more convenient opportunity for the consumer to deposit this unwanted paint, and to reduce/eliminate the financial burden on local governments

for providing this service currently.

Unfortunately, PaintCare has been unable to comply with the legal requirements to implement that program as required by law, and the future of this program in Minnesota is in jeopardy should compliance not be achieved in the near future.

Source Separated Organic Material (SSOM) Compost — The 2014 Legislature did establish SSOM composting targets for Minnesota counties. SSOM is that portion of the waste stream that is comprised of organic materials (fruits, vegetables, clean/non-recyclable paper products, etc.).

These requirements are in place in the 7-county metro area but are not required statewide at this time. It should be noted that county solid waste plans across the state are required to have addressed the composting of SSOM.

It would be reasonable to believe that the metro composting requirement would be expanded to non-metro areas at some future date.

Commercial Recycling — The 2014 Legislature did establish a requirement for commercial entities to recycle.

Entities generating more than 4 cubic yards of waste per week are required to recycle. This requirement is in effect in the 7-county metro area and not required statewide. Again, it would be one of those requirements that may be expanded to all areas of Minnesota at some future date. — **Jon Steiner, Environmental Services administrator**

Through Minnesota Clean Water Legacy Act grant

Income-based loans available to fix septic systems

Polk County Environmental Services has loan funds available to property owners in Polk County who have a non-compliant septic system.

The funds are made possible through a grant received from the Minnesota Clean Water Legacy Act.

A limited amount of funding is available and preference for loans will be determined based on income status, condition of

existing system, and proximity to priority surface waters.

The loan will have a .01% interest rate and will be paid back over a 10-year term. Income restrictions will apply.

Also remember that Polk County requires building/land use permits for all construction projects in the county. If you are planning building/land use projects, please contact Polk County Planning & Zoning

prior to construction to determine setback and ordinance requirements that may apply.

More information on building/land use regulations can be found on the Polk County Website at www.co.polk.mn.us under the Environmental Services and Planning & Zoning Department pages.

Land Use/Zoning permits that aren't obtained prior to construction are treated as

“after the fact” permits subject to three times the cost of the permit plus an additional \$150 penalty fee. So, make sure to apply for your land use/building permits early. Contact Polk County Planning & Zoning at (218) 281-5700 with any questions. — **Josh Holte, Polk County Planning & Zoning administrator**