

POLK COUNTY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015

Sorter doing job at Resource Recovery Center

The Polk County Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) includes the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) and the Waste-to-Energy (WTE) incinerators.

The MRF processes incoming waste and recyclable materials to extract those materials intended for recycling and processes residual materials for use as fuel for the WTE incinerators. The processed waste is combusted to generate steam for steam customers.

Polk County's most recent improvement involves the use of a spider — correctly spelled as Spyd-IR in this case. The Spyd-IR is an optical sorting device (optical sorter) manufactured by NRT of Nashville, Tenn.

The optical sorter is used to eject specific types of plastic materials out of the waste or recycling material stream being

processed. The following link, provided by NRT, shows how the optical sorter works: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6sBn_T3QcQ

The optical sorter was purchased as a used unit from a decommissioned solid waste facility in the Twin Cities.

Polk County employed Titus MRF Services of Fontana, Calif., to modify the MRF, install the optical sorter (the green equipment in the picture) and related equipment to allow the county to mechanically remove select plastics from the incoming waste and recyclable material streams.

Titus Services RRF maintenance staff and local area professionals worked long hours over the course of two weeks to incorporate this new equipment into the MRF with minimal inconvenience to the

public, local waste haulers and our partner counties.

Though there are continued refinements, which will be necessary going forward, the optical sorter went online as scheduled on Feb. 23. Its performance is meeting all expectations.

The optical sorter allows the RRF to extract those select plastic materials that were not recycled by the waste generator without decreasing the processing capacity of the MRF.

This allows staff to process the plastic fraction of the recyclable stream received in a matter of hours rather than days and provides flexibility to modify how recovered plastic is prepared for sale based upon future changes in the marketplace.

See SORTER, Page 2



The Polk County Resource Recovery Facility at Fosston — known by many as the “incinerator” — has added a Spyd-IR optical sorting device to more efficiently remove certain recyclable plastics from the waste prior to incineration. The Material Recovery Facility also separates out for recycling the aluminum cans, steel cans and cardboard.

FEMA is updating floodplain maps for Polk County

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is in the process of updating the floodplain maps (FIRM) for Polk County. The updated maps 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 Minnesota Department of Natural Resources website — ftp://ftp.dnr.state.mn.us/pub/waters/floodplain/County_data/Polk/

• Or by visiting the Polk County Environmental Services office at 320 Ingersoll Avenue in Crookston.

Based on a 100-year floodplain, the maps determine whether or not property owners with mortgages are

See FLOOD MAP, Page 2

Sorter

Continued from Page 1

Based on the numbers from the first few weeks of operation at our RRF, the optical sorter removes approximately 80-90 lbs/hr of plastic (#1 PET) from the waste stream.

This number equates to about 10,000 bottles per day. That rate extrapolated would come to over 2.5 million soda bottles per year removed from the waste stream and recycled.

For more information on the optical sorter, please contact the Polk County Resource Recovery Facility at (218) 435-6501. — **Jon Steiner, Environmental Services administrator**



The Spyd-IR optical sorter in its place in processing system

Floodplain is being updated

Continued from Page 1

required to carry flood insurance and whether or not building permits can be issued for new construction projects.

The new maps, which are still preliminary, incorporate Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data that shows elevation variations in 2-foot increments. The new, much more detailed map, is currently under a 90-day appeal period. During this time appeals will be heard regarding any issues with the proposed maps.

After the 90-day appeal period comments and appeals will be reviewed by FEMA and the final map preparation will take place. The new FIRM should become effective in late 2015 or early 2016 and will replace maps that have been in use since 1983.

If you have questions regarding the floodplain map in Polk County, feel free to contact Polk County Planning & Zoning at (218) 281-5700. — **Josh Holte, Polk County Planning & Zoning administrator**

County and partners seek funding to expand solid waste infrastructure

Polk County and its partner counties of Beltrami, Clearwater, Mahnomon and Norman sought to apply for funding in 2014 to modify, expand and add to its existing solid waste infrastructure to become a regional service provider for solid waste, recycling and composting.

The project sought \$12.5 million in state appropriated funds for the project, which included:

- A building addition, processing equipment and new boiler/steam equipment at the Resource Recovery Facility in Fosston.
- Processing equipment, building addition and site work for solid waste, ash and compost materials at the Landfill Complex near Gently.
- Transfer Station improvements at Crookston.
- A new transfer station in Bemidji (Beltrami County).

The legislative bills for the projects' funding were authored by Sen. Leroy Stumpf and Rep. Deb Kiel. However, funding for the project was not appropriated in the 2014 Minnesota Bonding Bill.

Back again this year

Polk County and its partner counties — now also including a commitment from Hubbard County — are again seeking state funding for the Regional Solid Waste Expansion Project in 2015.

Rep. Kiel and Rep. Dave Hancock have authored HF 1019 in the House, and Sen. Stumpf and Sen. Rod Skoe have authored SF 821 in the Senate to again attempt to secure the funding necessary for the project.

HF 1019/SF 821 would appropriate \$15 mil-

lion in funding for a 2015 project. The additional funds are intended for Hubbard County to modify its transfer station and solid waste facilities to utilize that regional infrastructure.

Should funding be appropriated in 2015, final designs and site work would be anticipated in 2015 with major construction and equipment modifications occurring in 2016-17.

A phased-in approach would be utilized in order to minimize bond debt incurred while also being able to deliver core services with minimal interruption of service. The repayment of any bond debt would be made from tip fees and additional revenues from material sales.

Polk and the other partner counties are thankful for the hard work and support shown by our local area legislators whom have signed on as authors and co-authors of these Bills.

If you would like to view the bill text, track the progress of these bills or find out which legislators are signed on as supporters/co-authors of the bills, or encourage our supporters of these bills, the links are as follows:

HF 1019:

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?b=House&f=HF1019&ssn=0&y=2015>

SF 821:

<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/bill.php?f=SF821&y=2015&ssn=0&b=senate>

For more information on the proposed project, please contact Polk County Environmental Services at (218) 281-6445. — **Jon Steiner, Environmental Services administrator**

Joan Lee becomes county's first woman commissioner

Joan Lee, rural McIntosh, became the first woman to serve on the Polk County Board of Commissioners when she took the oath of office from District Judge Anne Rasmusson at the first meeting of the year on Jan 6.

Lee, who succeeds Warren Affeldt as the commissioner from District 4, defeated Kerry Winkelmann, rural Fosston, 1,054 to 902 in the General Election in November. Affeldt, rural Fosston, had retired after serving on the commission for 16 years.

In other election results, Sheriff Barb Erdman and County Attorney Greg Widseth were both re-elected unopposed as was 2nd District Commissioner Warren Strandell, East Grand Forks.

Also unopposed were West Polk County Soil & Water Conservation supervisors Mark McWalter and David Moulds, and East Polk County Soil & Water Conservation District supervisors Kenneth and Bruce Grundyson.

In the annual re-organization of the County Board, Strandell assumed the chairmanship. He succeeds 5th District Commissioner Don Diedrich, rural Warren. The new vice chair is Nick Nicholas, Crookston. He represents Commissioner District 1. The chair and vice chair positions rotate annually among the five commissioners.

Social Service Board

Further re-organization will occur in July when District 3 Commissioner Craig Bunes, Crookston, will succeed Commissioner Nicholas as chair of the Polk County Social Service Board. This board meets monthly as a separate body. It is made up of the five commissioners and two at-large members. The at-large members are Paula Waters, Crookston, and Cathy Gutterud, Fosston.

Prior to her desire to become a commissioner, Lee and her husband, Mark, had operated an organic dairy farm near McIntosh. The time needed to



Joan Lee

serve as a commissioner developed last spring when they sold the cows to another organic dairy farm.

Lee is the secretary-treasurer for the East Polk County Farm Bureau and is chair of its Promotion and Education Committee. She has served on the state Farm Bureau Board of Directors.

A recent graduate of the two-year Minnesota Agriculture Rural Leadership (MARL) Class VII, Lee spent 10 days in Ecuador a year ago to learn about agriculture there. The Lee's have been active in the Midwest Dairy Association and have hosted the Polk County 4-H Breakfast on the farm for 16 years.

On the agenda

Without the emergence of some new and unexpected issues, the county's focus during the year will likely center on conducting regular county business and the continued upgrading of county buildings to make them as efficient as possible for the years ahead.

Included on the business side will be the formulation of new wage and benefit contracts for county employees. The current three-year wage contracts for the seven organized employee groups and another two that are unorganized will all expire in 2015.

With upgrades in the new 9-1-1 Dispatch Center in the Law Enforcement Center (LEC)

Tax payments can be made electronically

You can pay your taxes on line... that's a new feature of the Polk County website (<http://www.co.polk.mn.us/>).

The technology is now in place for county property owners to pay their property taxes by using a credit card or E-check while at their computer or other electronic device.

The website also has information about the different county departments, property valuations and sale prices, GIS mapping, public notices, highway information, parks, camping, county board agendas, minutes and much more.

building now in place, including the recently implemented automatic vehicle locator (AVL) system that tracks the county's law enforcement and social service vehicles, the one remaining issue concerns a lack of space in the server room and along with the unsuitable environment created by the heat that is generated by the equipment.

Server room

Currently under study is the possibility of expanding the server room, which would set it up for the long-term while also addressing the air conditioning (cooling) needs in that area.

Also on the table is the expansion of the waste to energy incinerator plant in Fosston. A second attempt is being made to secure a state grant of \$7.5 million to pay for half of this \$15 million project. Tip fees collected from existing county partners along with other income from operations would cover the balance of the project.

Funding for septic upgrades is available

Polk County Environmental Services continues to have 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.

Applications will be accepted until June 1st. After June 1st applications will be accepted and reviewed on a first-come first-serve basis.

The loan will have a .0001% interest rate and is to be paid back over a 10-year term. Income restrictions will apply but have been adjusted up slightly from last year.

There might be a few other improvements made to this program before spring so stay tuned. If interested in the septic loan program, please contact the Planning and Zoning Office.

Also remember that Polk County requires building/land use permits for all construction projects in the county. If you are planning a building/land use project this spring or summer, contact Polk County Planning & Zoning prior to construction to determine setback and ordinance requirements that may apply.

More information on building/land use regulations and permit applications 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. — Polk County Planning & Zoning Administrator Josh Holte

Lake Agassiz Library Board re-structures

Polk County Commissioner Craig Bunes continues to be a member of the board of trustees of the Lake Agassiz Regional Library (LARL) system following a re-structuring of the consolidated seven-county library organization.

The LARL system includes 13 branch libraries and nine link sites. In addition to Polk County, the seven counties in the system are Becker, Clay, Clearwater, Mahanomen, Norman and Wilkin.

Polk County has five branch libraries — at Crookston, Fosston, Fertile, Climax and McIntosh.

Changes in the governing structure included a reduction in the membership on the board of trustees from 24 to 15 members. In that reduction process, the positions of nine appointed trustees — including those of Teri Eidenschink, Climax, and Ilene Rue, Fosston, from Polk County — were eliminated.

The 15 trustees include county commissioners from the seven counties and city council representatives from the branch libraries located in Breckenridge, Crookston, Detroit Lakes, Mahanomen and Moorhead. Crookston City Council member Clayton Briggs represents the City of Crookston.

In addition to serving on the board of trustees, Bunes is a member of LARL's executive committee, which was reduced from seven members to five in the restructuring process. He is also member of the organization's finance committee.

Meat and Potatoes

By Chuck Whiting, Polk County Administrator



2015 is off and running for Polk County and it promises to be a busy year. The County Board and staff are looking closely at our basic operations, our “meat and potatoes” issues, as we move through this new year.

County buildings in Crookston, in particular, show promise for reduced operational costs by addressing heating and cooling options that will save energy expenses.

In the Government Center, new contemporary boilers will replace the building's original 1969 boilers saving energy costs and freeing up space.

At the Justice Center, modifications to the air intake, heating and cooling systems look to save substantial energy costs and address some nuisance humidity issues that arise periodically in the building.

As always seems the case, an updated software system is needed to handle the door locking security system for both the jail and juvenile detention facilities. The Board budgeted to address some of these issues and is working with Tri-County Community Corrections on the jail items.

Fortunately options exist to minimize or offset the costs of these projects. In addition to energy savings, the Board will likely refinance the remaining outstanding jail bonds from when the building was constructed almost a decade ago resulting in a projected savings of over \$100K.

Ten times that was saved by refinancing the main portion of the jail bonds last year, so this low interest rate environment is being capitalized on by the Board. The original bonds had over a 4% interest rate, while today's market rate is under 2%. That's a big difference in annual debt service costs.

The Board will continue to evaluate county buildings this spring. The City of Fosston contracts for county law enforcement and office space modifications are being looked at for better security.

Public Health's leased office space in Crookston will come up for renewal in 2016 and options are being looked at for the best position-

ing of that department.

While the County leases some offices, it also leases space to other entities, particularly in East Grand Forks where we are moving toward more standardized terms for office space with our tenants.

2015 is also a labor negotiations year. The Board will soon start working on terms and options to negotiate on with our seven collectively bargained groups and non-represented work force.

Wages and benefits are always the core matters of bargaining and, with our current contracts now in their last year, the Board must contemplate two or three years out beyond 2015.

Of more immediate action is settlement of the county attorney's salary for 2015. By state statute, the county attorney can contest the wage set by the County Board in court if the two sides are not in agreement. An action was filed by County Attorney Greg Widseth in December contesting the wage the County Board had set for his position for 2015. This matter will play itself out this year likely with a court-determined settlement.

Finally, the county continues to pursue operational efficiencies not only for cost savings but for internal organizational consistency. Staff is implementing an electronic time card system and looking at software upgrades to help streamline payroll systems throughout the County's workforce.

A new network-based phone system was also approved at the end of 2014 and will be rolled out this spring.

Improvements to the county website now include options for residents to pay property taxes or other services with a credit or debit card.

Again, these are basic operations day-to-day, meat and potatoes type efforts. Maybe not too exciting but basic for providing services within a meat and potatoes budget.

Pipe for Sandpiper is being stored at 2 locations in Polk County

Pipe for the Sandpiper Pipeline Project is currently being delivered and stored at two rail locations in Polk County.

At Trail, pipe is being transferred from the railroad siding to a pipe yard located nearby.

Pipe is also being delivered to a rail siding at Crookston.

Due to the size of the pipeline project and in order to maintain

an orderly project timeline, project supplies had to be ordered years in advance.

North Dakota Pipeline Company (Enbridge) has worked with the township and county officials in Polk County regarding the development of the pipe yards and the subsequent delivery of the pipe.

Pipe is being hauled 10-12 hours per day Monday through

Saturday. It is anticipated that the haul will last approximately eight weeks.

The project's first priority is the safety of the people and workers within the communities along the project route. To that end, message boards have been posted to make area drivers aware of where trucks will be entering and leaving the pipe yards.

Pipe yards are used as a storage point and serve as access points to various locations for the construction/installation of the pipe. Security will be present at the pipe yard to protect the safety of crews and community members.

Further information is available by calling 1-855-788-7805 or emailing sandpiperproject@enbridge.com

Beauchane certified in emergency management

Polk County Emergency Manager Jody Beauchane recently completed the Homeland Security Emergency Management (HSEM) Professional Certification and Training Program.

He received the Certification in Emergency Management for County Director designation at the Governor's Convention held in Brooklyn Center, Minn., on Feb. 12.

The Emergency Management Director's curriculum is a level of training designed for county, city and tribal emergency management directors, deputy directors, assistant directors and coordinators. The Director's Curriculum Track is for those who play specific roles in emergency management within Minnesota.

The certification completes Beauchane's qualifications as an emergency manager. He was appointed the county's emergency manager in January 2014.

The emergency manager position was in addition to serving as manager of the



Jody Beauchane

county's Ag and Drainage Department. The Emergency Management department is a part of the Sheriff's Office, while the Ag and Drainage Department is a part of the Highway Department.

The dual role for Beauchane was created when Nancy Shafer's position as both emergency manager and director of the Dispatch Center was changed to focus on the Dispatch Center at a time when it was migrating to the use of

new, digital 9-1-1 emergency call equipment.

To earn the certification, Beauchane completed 261.5 hours of course study, much of it done during the slower winter times for ag and ditch concerns. The curriculum included 27 online FEMA courses and 15 on-site Homeland Security-led courses.

The on-site courses were completed at training stations at Camp Ripley, at the Minnesota Emergency Operations Center in St. Paul, and at the Hennepin County Emergency Management Center in Medina, Minn. Some of the training sessions required three to four-day stays.

In the event of a major incident — a tornado, flood or other situation, Polk County now has several resources on staff.

Beauchane would lead the response with backup and support from Shafer, who has experience as the previous emergency manager. Also, Planning & Zoning Director Josh Holte earned emergency

manager accreditation while working in Norman County several years ago. And Sheriff Barb Erdman has completed many of the credits needed for the Elected Public Officials Emergency Management certification that is recommended for sheriffs who are not serving as the actual emergency manager.

A 1988 graduate of Lafayette High School in Red Lake Falls, Beauchane studied mechanical drafting at Northwest Minnesota Technical College in Moorhead prior to working the construction field for 11 years. His time in construction included serving as a job superintendent on commercial and public construction projects in a two-state region.

Beauchane joined the Polk County Highway Department as an engineering technician in May 2001 and became the ag and ditch inspector in June 2002. He and his wife, Stacy, who live near Fertile, have five children: Jozi, 25; Cody, 19; Wyatt, 16; Alea, 11, and Erin, 1 1/2.

Balstad, Swenson reappointed to Sand Hill Watershed Board

Scott Balstad, Fosston, and Philip Swenson, Fertile, have been re-appointed to three-year terms on the board of managers of the Sand Hill Watershed District.

Balstad, who was first appointed to the board of managers in 2010, currently serves as the district's vice chair.

Swenson, who was first appointed in 2012, is the treasurer.

Their re-appointments were recommended by the Sand Hill Watershed Advisory Committee in December and

subsequently approved by the County Board in January.

Other members of the district's board of managers are: Stuart Christian, Erskine, (chair); Bill Brekke, Nielsville, (secretary); and Roger Hanson, Beltrami.

The district includes a 475-square-mile drainage area most of which is located in southern Polk County. Smaller areas are located in Norman and Mahnomen counties. The district has its office in Fertile.

Polk County allocated funds to fight aquatic invasive species

The Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$4.5 million to be spent in 2014 and \$10 million to be spent in 2015 and years after to support aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention efforts in the counties.

The amount designated for each county was based on the number of watercraft trailer launches as well as the number of watercraft trailer parking spaces in the county.

Polk County was allocated \$24,932 for 2014 and \$55,405 for 2015 and years following.

The legislation required that counties establish a plan and develop guidelines for the use of the funds to prevent the introduction or limit the spread of AIS at water access sites.

Late last year, the County Board approved a plan and designated oversight of Polk County's AIS prevention

efforts to Polk County Environmental Services.

Polk County is currently forming an AIS committee that will oversee the program and will help determine how to best utilize the funding.

Initially, the funding priorities will be divided into education and public awareness, decontamination efforts, inspections and enforcement, and other special projects. This funding provides Polk County with a valuable resource in trying to protect lakes and rivers against the spread of AIS.

Look for more information in the near future regarding the Aquatic Invasive Species program in Polk County and remember to do your part to help protect our area lakes and rivers. — **Polk County Planning & Zoning Administrator Josh Holte**

County Board Meeting Times

8:15 a.m. on 1st Tuesday of month

10:15 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, chair

Dist. 3 — Nick Nicholas, vice chair

Dist. 4 — Joan K. Lee

Dist. 5 — Don Diedrich

Polk County Employee Anniversaries in 2015

<u>Hire</u>	<u>Employee</u>	<u>Department-Position</u>
2/1/80	Ilene Yanish	Public Health-Home Health Aide 35 Years
1/1/85	Kent Johnson	Social Services-Director 30 Years
5/20/85	Brian Lindberg	Highway Department-Maintenance II
10/7/85	Debora Strandle	Social Services-Eligibility Worker
11/1/85	Dean Rasmussen	Highway Department-Const. Engineer
11/1/85	Rick Thompson	Highway Dept.-Surveyor/GIS Engineer 25 Years
5/1/90	Scott Bixby	Sheriff's Department-Patrolman
9/4/90	Patricia Frydenlund	Environmental Svcs.-Accountant/Sec. 20 Years
1/1/95	Warren Strandell	Board of Commissioners
1/9/95	Wade Burrack	Incinerator-Waste Combustion Opr.
3/15/95	Brian Lundeen	Sheriff's Dept.-Sergeant
3/15/95	Jonathan Steiner	Environmental Services-Administrator
4/14/95	Denise Waxler	Sheriff's Dept.-Dispatcher
5/8/95	Mary Kaye Erickson	License Center-Clk/Typist/Cashier III
5/22/95	Terri Oliver	Public Health-Administrative Assistant 15 Years
1/24/00	Danelle Amiot	Social Services-Eligibility Worker
2/7/00	Ruth Sannes	Social Services-Eligibility Worker
3/13/00	Molly Paulsrud	Social Services-Supervisor
3/20/00	Wendie Dobias-Osborn	Social Services-Family Based Services
3/23/00	Valerie Bower	Social Services-Family Based Services
6/26/00	Michelle Quirk	Social Services-Soc. Worker/Child Prot.
7/3/00	Chandra Selzer	Social Services-Eligibility Worker
7/6/00	Beth Greenwood	Social Services-Family Based Services
7/10/00	Kenneth Dionne	Sheriff's Department-Patrolman
8/21/00	Kenneth Sannes	Highway Department-Maintenance II
10/5/00	Lori Nystad	Public Health-Accounting Clerk III
10/12/00	Melissa Hesby	Social Services-Child Support Officer
10/16/00	Michael Norland	Sheriff's Department-Sergeant
11/1/00	Cheryl Smart	Social Services-Child Protection Spec.
11/13/00	Anita Brekken	Social Services-Child Protection Spec. 10 Years
1/1/05	Don Diedrich	Board of Commissioners
3/4/05	Troy Cymbaluk	Sheriff's Department-Bailiff
3/4/05	Michelle Olson	Sheriff's Department-Transport Officer
4/4/05	Matthew Hitchen	Sheriff's Department-Patrolman
5/2/05	Jaime Delzer	Social Services-Child Support Officer
7/1/05	Amy Ryan	Social Services-Child Protection Spec.
7/5/05	Miranda Casetta	Social Services-Child Protection Spec.
8/1/05	David Lehmann	Highway Department-Maintenance II
10/19/05	Megan Starr	Social Services--Child Protection Spec.
11/14/05	James Juve	Sheriff's Department-Patrolman 5 Years
1/11/10	Timothy Disrud	Fosston Recycling Ctr.-Facility Yard Opr.
5/18/10	Leah Reitmeier	Public Health-Wellness Coord./WIC
5/19/10	Michelle Snyder	Taxpayer Service Center-Supervisor
9/15/10	Sara Manning	License Center-Clerk/Typist/Cashier III
10/4/10	Joanne Johnson	Information Center-Systems Analyst II
10/19/10	Julie Seeger	Public Health-R.N./Waivered Services
11/4/10	Kelsey Helgeson	Public Health-R.N./Health Promotion
11/17/10	Katie Hann	Social Services-Eligibility Worker
11/18/10	Anita Swanson	Social Services-Eligibility Worker

Highway work to focus on CSAH system roads

Spring arrived in the middle of March marking an early time to start thinking about the 2015 road construction season.

Again this year the work will be made up mostly of projects on County State Aid Highway (CSAH) roads that will be receiving a bituminous overlay. Those projects include the following:

- **CSAH 2** from CSAH 3 to Trunk Highway (TH) 92 south of Gully.
- **CSAH 8** from CSAH 1 to TH 2 south of McIntosh.
- **CSAH 17** from TH 75 to the Polk/Red Lake County line.
- **CSAH 45** from TH 75 to TH 9.
- **CSAH 58** from TH 220 to CR 225.
- **CSAH 59** from TH 220 to CSAH 15.

Other projects where we will be constructing include the grade widening and overlay of **CSAH 15** from TH 220 to the west city limits of Fisher.

As in the past two years, we will be using a mixture of County State Aid Highway Construction funds from the State Gas Tax, Motor Vehicle Sale Tax, and tab fees, along with money from the State Aid Bonding we did 2 years ago for \$6 million.

We have \$2.5 million remaining that we need to use this year to meet the requirements of the bond sale. We will use those remaining funds on CSAH 15

and CSAH 17.

The other funding we are collecting is the County Wheelage Tax from the \$10 that everyone is paying when they renew their license plate tabs.

Polk County receives a little over \$300,000 each year in funding from this revenue source. We used \$200,000 last year to overlay County Road 233 from Old TH 75 (in Crookston) west to the north gate of American Crystal Sugar Co.

The County Board wants us to use this funding to enhance our County Road System (roads that are maintained by local property tax dollars). Our next project where we will use this funding on is an overlay of CR 214 from CSAH 45 to TH 2 at Crookston. This project is estimated to cost \$700,000, so it will not happen for a couple of years.

We also anticipate replacing a number of township bridges with box culverts if funding becomes available.

Remember to drive safely through our work zones. Not only will it 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 me, Richard Sanders, at ext. 8253. — **Richard Sanders, Polk County engineer**

Attorney, County Board differ on compensation, hearing is scheduled

Each December the County Board approves by resolution non-represented employees' wages for the following year. This includes the two elected staff, the sheriff and county attorney.

The Board set the county attorney's 2015 annual salary at \$105,500, up from \$98,144 for 2014.

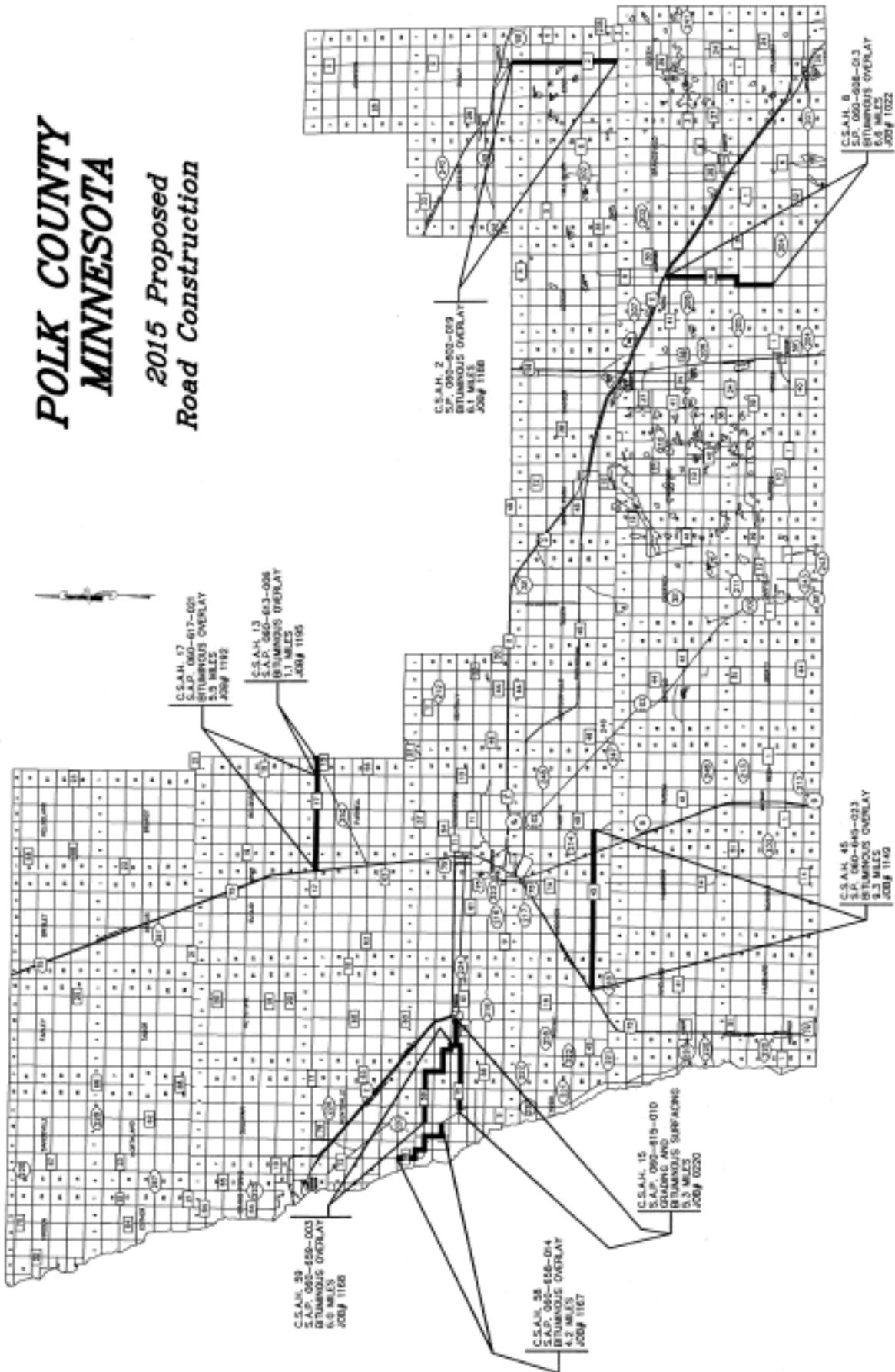
Shortly thereafter, County Attorney Greg Widseth appealed the Board's decision to District Court on the

grounds that the Board's wage determination was arbitrary and unreasonable for the duties of the office and failed to consider the salaries of county attorneys in similar counties.

State statute allows for such an appeal recognizing the elected offices of both sides in the decision-making process. A court hearing is scheduled on the matter for July 24. The County Board is represented by its labor attorney, Mike Rengel.

POLK COUNTY MINNESOTA

2015 Proposed Road Construction



Whiting, Cote take on new leadership roles

County officials have history of working with state organizations that influence government

Polk County has a history of having local officials serve on the state organizations that influence how local government is delivered.

County Administrator Chuck Whiting and Director of Property Records Michelle Cote are the latest county officials to be advanced to leadership positions in state organizations.

New vice chair

Whiting is the newly elected vice chair of the Minnesota Association of County Administrators. The vice chair is slated to become chair of the organization in the following year. He had been chair of the association's Intergovernmental Relations Committee in 2014.

Now in his third year with Polk County, Whiting became county administrator in August 2012 in the process of succeeding John "Jack" Schmalenberg, who was retiring at the end of the year. He had previously been the city administrator at Faribault, Minn., and before that the administrator in St. Croix County Wisconsin.

Will advance to president

Cote was advanced to second vice president of the Minnesota County Recorders Association (MCRA) at the group's annual conference in Bloomington on Feb. 5. She is on path to become the association's first vice president in 2016 and the president in 2017.

A county employee for 26 years, Cote worked in the Auditor's Office for a year before moving across the hall to the Assessor's Office in 1989. Cote was appointed the county recorder on June 19, 2006, and became director of property records in 2011 when the Assessor's, Recorder's and Auditor-Treasurer's offices were combined into the Taxpayer Service Center.

Awaiting election results

Polk County Engineer Richard Sanders, the current vice president of the North Central Region of the National Association of County Engineers (NACE), is a candidate for the position of secretary-treasurer at the national level of NACE. That position will be decided by election in April.

The secretary-treasurer automatically advances to president-elect and then to president of NACE.

A recent past president of the Minnesota County Engineers Association, Sanders is also a member of several other state and national transportation committees and study groups.

County Attorney Greg Widseth is a member of the board of directors of the Minnesota County Attorneys Association. He has also been appointed by the Minnesota Supreme Court to serve on the Advisory Committee of the Minnesota Rule on Criminal Procedure.

County Commissioner Don Diedrich is a member of the board of directors of the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust insurance organization and serves on its Governance Committee.



Michelle Cote



Chuck Whiting

Director of Assessment Services Robert Wagner served as president of the Minnesota Association of Assessing Officers (MAAO) in 2007 and was the Northwest Minnesota Region 1 representative on the Tax Advisory Board for the Minnesota Counties Computer Cooperative (MCCC) from 1998 to 2012 representing this area in the development and maintenance of our tax programming.

Taxpayer Service Center Supervisor Michelle Snyder has been the representative from Region 1 on the MCCC

Tax Advisory Board since Wagner stepped down in 2012.

Deputy Assessor Mark Landsverk serves on MAAO's Agriculture Committee. Appraiser Amber Hill is on the Editorial Board, and Appraiser Sam Melbye, is on the Information Systems Committee.

Previous presidents

Note — Prior to Wagner, Polk County had two other MAAO presidents... in 1984 when Dale Halos was the county assessor and in 1965 when Henry Gredvig was the assessor.

Others who have served on state organizations in recent times include:

- Environmental Services Administrator Jon Steiner served on the board of directors of the Minnesota Solid Waste Administrators Association for six years and was the organization's president for two years. He has also served as a regional executive director on the organization's advisory board since 1997.

- Former Commissioner Warren Affeldt was president of the Minnesota Rural Counties Caucus in 2004.

- Former Administrator John "Jack" Schmalenberg earned the Minnesota Association of County Administrators' Jack Reis Award for Excellence in County Management in 2010.

- Former Auditor Gerald Amiot was named the Auditor of the Year by the Minnesota Association of County Officials in 2011.

- Former Commissioner Bill Montague served as a member of the board of directors of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) representing northwest Minnesota District 3. He also served on the Minnesota Department of Human Services Legislative Steering Committee on Performance and Outcomes and as chair of State Community Health Advisory Board.

- Commissioner Warren Strandell served on the board of directors of AMC representing northwest Minnesota District 3. He has also served as chair of AMC's General Government Policy Committee.

- Former Tri-County Community Corrections Executive Director Susan Mills served as president of the Minnesota Association of Community Corrections Act Counties in both 1989 and 2005 and received that organization's Excellence in Corrections Award in 2002.

Jore, Vonasek take seats on Planning Commission

Paul Jore, rural McIntosh, and Leonard “Len” Vonasek, East Grand Forks, are new members of the Polk County Planning Commission.

Jore succeeds Kerry Winkelmann, rural Fosston, as the representative from the 4th Commissioner District. Jore will serve a three-year term. Winkelmann retired this year after having served on the commission for 11 years, including 9 as chairman.

Vonasek succeeds Osmund “Ozzie” Moe, Bygland, who also retired. Moe had served on the commission since 2012. As the representative from the 2nd Commissioner District, Vonasek will serve out the balance of Moe’s term, which ends Dec. 31, 2016.

A native of the McIntosh area, Jore graduated from McIntosh-Winger High School in 1973 and earned an associate degree in agriculture business at the University of Minnesota-Crookston. He worked at Farmers Cooperative Elevator in East Grand Forks for two years and also worked at a McIntosh bank before also completing a taxidermy program in North Carolina.

Jore and his wife, Sandra, operated a traveling family



Paul Jore

craft business for almost 20 years. The business involved their three children (sons Kyle and Adam and daughter Siri) as they were growing up. Jore, who has done taxidermy since 1980, was a Lessor Township supervisor and its treasurer for 12 years. Sandra, a graduate of Concordia College, Moorhead, is a teacher in the Win-E-Mac Schools.

Vonasek, who grew up on a farm near Tabor and graduated from East Grand Forks Senior High School in 1970, has worked with building codes and regulations for over 40 years.

He was the owner and operator of the Projects Unlimited construction firm in East Grand



Len Vonasek

Forks for 26 years and worked as a crew manager on residential and commercial projects for employee-owned Quality Concrete of Fargo, N.D., from 2001 until retiring on Dec. 31, 2014.

Vonasek has served as Huntsville Township’s zoning official and building inspector for the past 20 years.

A hobbyist with a collection of Minneapolis Moline tractors, Vonasek works part-time as superintendent of buildings and grounds at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church campus in East Grand Forks. He and his wife, Gayle (Enright), have three grown children: Kate (Jim) Normandin, Colorado Springs, Colo.; and Blayne

(Emily Horken), and Abby Vonasek, both of East Grand Forks. The Vonasek’s have four grandchildren.

Other members of the Planning Commission are: Donovan Wright, representing Commissioner Dist. 1; Courtney Pulkrabek, Crookston, Dist. 3; Robert Franks, Warren, Dist. 5; Wayne Melbye, Crookston, representing Crookston Mayor Gary Willhite; Mike Powers, representing East Grand Forks Mayor Lynn Stauss; Rolland Gagner, Erskine, representing the Union Lake Sarah Improvement District; Dennis Yell, Mentor, representing the Maple Lake Improvement District; and Arlet Phillips, East Grand Forks, representing Polk County townships.

The conclusions of the Planning Commission on matters dealing with the interpretation, application and enforcement of the rules and regulations in the Polk County Zoning Ordinance and those required by state or federal law are forwarded as recommendations to the County Board, which makes the final decision.

Powers is the chair of the Planning Commission and Melbye is the vice chair.

Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force bigger, stronger

The Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force now has 10 fulltime officers working in the seven-county area of northwest Minnesota.

Originally, the task force had only three members — Polk County and the cities of Crookston and East Grand Forks. Each of them contributed one officer to the task force.

Expansion of the organization has brought seven other law enforcement agencies into the effort. All are now working together through a joint powers arrangement in which they combine resources and share information.

The seven local government units that joined the effort beginning in January are Kittson, Roseau, Marshall, Lake of the Woods and Red Lake counties, and the combined city-county units of Pennington County-City of Thief River Falls and Norman County-City of Ada.

The new members are participating in one of three ways — by providing a fulltime officer to the task force (Roseau and Pennington-

Thief River Falls), by providing an officer to work with Pine-to-Prairie agents as needed (Marshall, Kittson and Lake of the Woods counties), or by providing money and other resources to help pay for operational expenses (Norman-Ada and Red Lake County).

In addition to the five fulltime officers provided by the task force members, the U.S. Border Patrol has committed four officers to the effort and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is providing one officer.

A state grant pays for about half of the salaries of fulltime officers that are being provided by Pennington-Thief River Falls, Polk and Roseau counties and by the cities of Crookston and East Grand Forks.

In addition to their work in the field, the two federal agencies provide a connection to other government resources including prosecution through the U.S. District Court system. The task force also has an arrangement that allows it to work across state lines with the Grand Forks Narcotics Task Force and

with other task forces in Minnesota.

The Pine to Prairie Task Force, which has a base of operations at the Polk County Law Enforcement Center in Crookston, has already worked multiple drug cases this year including some that involved assisting local law enforcement agencies at shootings, other violent crimes and in child pornography cases.

A 17-member advisory board made up of county commissioners, city council members, sheriffs, chiefs of police, and county attorneys monitors activities of the Task Force.

Advisory board members from Polk County include Crookston City Council member Bob Quanrud, Crookston Police Chief Paul Biermaier, East Grand Forks City Council member Mark Olstad, East Grand Forks Police Chief Michael Hedlund, Sheriff Barb Erdman, and County Commissioner Nick Nicholas.

Advisory committee oversees trail

A three-member advisory committee now oversees maintenance of the 52-mile multi-use trail from Crookston to Ulen.

The committee, which was formed following the dissolution of the Agassiz Recreational Trail (ART) joint powers organization last year, is made up of county commissioners Joan Lee from Polk, Marvin Gunderson from Norman and Frank Gross from Clay.

Highway departments in the three counties perform overall maintenance on the portion of the trail located within their county. Winter trail grooming is being provided on contract by the Snow Cruisers Snowmobile Club of Fertile-Beltrami and by the Moonshiners Snowmobile Club of Twin Valley.

Dissolution of the ART organization last year occurred following three years of financial issues during which reimbursements from the Department of Natural Resources did not cover expenses. Outstanding bills and other obligations ended up being split between the three counties.

The trail is located on abandoned railroad grade that 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.

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

Kovar joins Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District board

Bob Kovar, rural East Grand Forks, is the new Polk County representative on the, Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed District (MSTR-WD) Board of Managers. He succeeds Marvin Hedlund, rural Oslo, who had retired on Dec. 31.

Kovar was appointed to the position by the Polk County Board of Commissioners on Feb. 3. He will serve a three-year term.

A career farmer who lives in Section 22 of Northland Township, Kovar is a member of the American Crystal Truck Haul Committee and a member of the Holy Trinity Catholic Church Council at Tabor. He is a former member of Alvarado Fire and Rescue.

Polk County, which has 17 percent of the land in the Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers



Bob Kovar

Watershed, has one member on the seven-member on the board of managers.

Marshall County, with 79.5 percent of the land in the 1,476-square-mile watershed, has the other six managers. Smaller

amounts of land in the watershed are located in Pennington, Roseau and Kittson counties.

The managers from Marshall County are: Ben Kleinwachter, Strandquist (president); John W. Nelson, Oslo (vice president); Tom Neibauer, Middle River (treasurer); David Bakke, Newfolden (secretary); Jim Jubie, Warren (assistant-secretary treasurer) and Roger Hille, Warren.

In other organizational developments, Nick Drees officially completed his retirement on March 1. Drees, who began a phased-retirement in 2013, had worked part-time for the past two years as the district's project and administrative coordinator. He was the district's first employee when it was formed in 1971 and was named administrator in 2006. Dan Omdahl is the district's administrator.

Court Security Transport Unit doing the job

The Court Security Transport Unit recently created in the Polk County Sheriff's Department is providing prisoner transportation, bailiff duties for District Court, and front door security at the Polk County Justice Center and Northwest Regional Corrections Center.

The unit's 8 licensed law enforcement officers are paid slightly less than patrol deputies and do not have "take-home" vehicles. Supervised by Sgt. Phil Juve, the unit members report each day to the Justice Center and are assigned from there.

While both providing bailiffs and the transporting of prisoners to and from other correctional facilities have always been a part of Sheriff's Office responsibilities, the team that began work in December has also taken over the front door security duty.

The security function, which was initiated when the building was opened in February 2008, had been done previously on a contract basis by a private firm.

That contract expired on Dec. 1.

The benefit of having two deputies — rather than contract personnel — provide the security checks at the front entrance and around the building perimeter, too, is that after the busy morning or afternoon traffic eases one of those deputies might also serve as a bailiff.

Or in the event of an incident in the Justice Center or in the jail, one deputy would be able to respond to that situation, thus eliminating the need to call in a road deputy or some other member of the Sheriff's Office.

Because they were not licensed law enforcement officers, the contracted personnel were limited only to making security checks at that front entrance and nothing more.

After the busy morning and early afternoon traffic times had eased, the two contract personnel there had little to do. In the event of an incident elsewhere in the building, they weren't able to respond. And

they couldn't double as a bailiff.

Sheriff Barb Erdman says, "Now when the situation allows... when the courts aren't in session or there isn't a need for transportation, we can have these unit members ride with road deputies for additional training, have them work civil papers or even serve arrest warrants. Working warrants is a duty of the Sheriff's Office, but there isn't much opportunity to dedicate a great deal of time to that effort. Unit members have already executed a number of warrants.

"And, if there is an opening in patrol, unit members now have the first opportunity to be considered for that opening," she says.

The Court Security Transport Unit comes with some expense but much of that has been offset by the elimination of the expense for engaging a private contractor. Much of the overtime that was often required to have other officers provide transportation and work as bailiffs will be eliminated.

'One Watershed, One Plan' to eliminate the expense of separates

Minnesota law has required for a number of years that local units of government (LGU) have a 10-year water plan in place outlining their goals and objectives if they are going to request grant money from the state for various local projects.

The plan requirements varied depending on the type of governmental entity (watershed district, county, or soil & water conservation district) but all needed to be updated every 10 years.

To meet that update requirement, each of the LGU entities would hire a consultant to assist it in that development. That process proved to be very expensive... and the plans that were submitted to the Minnesota Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) ended up being very close to identical.

Because of the high cost of their development and the near duplication involved in the plans of the different LGUs, the process of updating needed changing.

In an effort to streamline the grant application requirements, the BWSR, through various governmental roundtable discussions, developed a process that will provide the same result but do it by allowing the different entities in a watershed to develop a single, combined plan.

The change was initiated in 2012, when at the request of BWSR, Minnesota legislators agreed to fund upwards of five pilot projects in various locations in the state where the LGUs could develop a single plan for a watershed. These pilot

projects are referred to as One Watershed, One Plan.

The Red Lake River Watershed — a significant portion of which is in Polk County — was one of five major watershed districts in Minnesota selected for participation in the pilot program. Its plan update will be developed from input provided by an advisory committee, the Red Lake River Planning Group.

This planning group will include members from Polk, Pennington and Red Lake counties; from the West Polk, Pennington and Red Lake soil and water conservation districts; and from the Red Lake River Watershed District and a small portion of the Middle Snake Tamarac Rivers Watershed District.

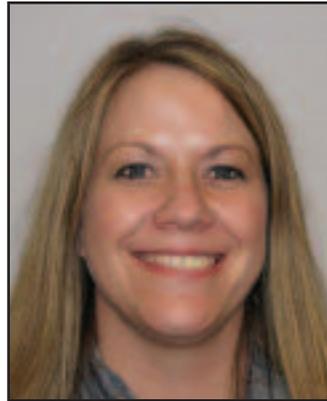
Committee members from the LGUs in Polk County will include:

Polk County — John Barrett and Randy Driscoll, both of East Grand Forks, and Brian Love, Fisher.

West Polk Soil & Water Conservation District — Kevin Krueger, East Grand Forks; Ben Larson, Climax, and Russ Severson, Crookston.

Red Lake River Watershed District — Dennis Goodyke, Crookston; Daniel Schmitz, Red Lake Falls, and Faye Auchenpaugh, Thief River Falls.

The final plan, which is to be completed in 2016, will be based upon the implementation of actions that meet or exceed current standards for water quality and management while also dealing with protection and restoration efforts.



Heather Bruley



Jordan Thompson

Bruley, Thompson join assessment team as appraisers

Heather Bruley and Jordan Thompson have joined the Assessment Services Division of the Polk County Taxpayer Services Center as appraisers. They fill positions that had been open for several months and now return the division to full staff.

Both recently completed classes in the appraisal process and principles at Kaplan University in Bloomington, Minn.

Bruley, a native of Crookston and daughter of Allan and the late Diane Trudeau, is a 1994 graduate of Crookston Central High School.

She earned a degree in radiology technology at Northland Community & Technical College in East Grand Forks

and worked as a radiology technician prior to becoming a licensed property and casualty insurance producer.

Bruley had worked in the insurance field for the past four years. She and her husband, Josh, have three children: Keaton, 13; Abigail, 4, and Hadleigh, 3.

Thompson grew up in Minot, N.D., where he graduated from Bishop Ryan High School in 2007.

He also attended Northland Community & Technical and Community College in East Grand Forks. Thompson worked as a licensed journeyman plumber during the past 5½ years. He and Brittney Boetcher are to be married in October.

Tillberg is ready for new season, upgrades made

A new bathhouse and upgrades to the water, electric and sewer systems are in place for a new season at Polk County's Tilberg Park.

Also ready for use are six new campsites, which increases the park's total to 36 sites.

Of those sites, 16 now have full hook-ups (electricity, water and sewer). Another 10 have access to water and electricity and 10 are primitive.

Work on the improvements began last spring and continued through the summer in parallel with normal camping activities.

Tillberg Park is located at Cross Lake, northeast of Fosston.

Information about the availability of campsites at both Maple Lake Park and Tilberg Park is available by calling the Polk County Highway Department (218) 281-3952.



Randy Huot



Brad Driscoll

Huot, Driscoll get new highway responsibilities

Randy Huot, a 21-year veteran of the Polk County Highway Department, has succeeded Jerry Kovar as the department's road maintenance superintendent. Huot had been the shop foreman.

In a related follow-up action, Brad Driscoll, who joined the county as preventive maintenance technician in the equipment division in 2009, has succeeded Huot as shop foreman.

A county employee for more than 39 years, Kovar retired on Jan. 31. He had started with the Highway Department as an engineering tech in 1975 and had operated a road grader in the Fisher area for 15 years before moving to the vehicle maintenance division in 1990. Kovar became shop foreman in 1994 and the maintenance superintendent in 1997 after Don Juvrud retired from that post.

Huot grew up near Red Lake Falls and graduated from high school there in 1985. He completed the diesel mechanics program at the

Moorhead Area Vocational Technical College and was a diesel mechanic for Ryder Truck Rental in Fargo for eight years before taking a job with Falls Diesel in Thief River Falls for a short time. Huot joined the Highway Department in August 1994.

He and his wife, Mary, live near Dorothy. They have four children: Corinna, 19; Abby, 17; Josie, 15, and Nathan, 11.

Driscoll grew up in East Grand Forks and graduated from Senior High School there in 1981. He completed a two-year course in auto, truck and tractor mechanics at Northland Community & Technical College in East Grand Forks.

His work experience includes 14 1/2 years at the Rydell Truck Center in Grand Forks, a year at Valley Truck in East Grand Forks, and five years at S & S Transport, Grand Forks.

Driscoll and his wife, Carla, have three daughters: Kristin, 24; Molly, 22, and Bethany, 21.

Kofoed is county's new H.R. director

Becky Kofoed is Polk County's new human resources coordinator. She succeeds Nathan Ellingson, who left the county late last year to take a position with Altru Health System.

A native of Crookston and daughter of Rick and Doreen Langlois, Kofoed had been the employee relations manager at Digi-Key in Thief River Falls before joining the county in January.

Following her graduation from Crookston High School in 2000, Kofoed joined the U.S. Navy through the delayed entry program. After going on active duty on 9-11-2000, she served five years onboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier in the weapons division as an aviation ordnanceman. She was discharged as a 2nd class petty officer in 2005.

She then earned an associate degree in dietetics and a B.S. degree in communication at the University of Minnesota-Crookston, graduating in 2009. Kofoed had an internship at the Crookston Chamber



Becky Kofoed

of Commerce in the summer of 2009 and then served as human resource director at Villa St. Vincent in Crookston for four years.

Kofoed has memberships in the American Dietetics Association, the Society of Human Resources Management, and the Crookston Eagles Auxiliary. She and her husband, Steve, who is a math teacher at Crookston High School, have two sons, Evan, 2, and Owen, 6 months.

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