



# POLK COUNTY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2022

## Polk County Community Level

Polk County's Current COVID-19  
Community Level is **LOW**

<b>Low</b>	Limited impact on the healthcare system, low levels of severe illness
<b>Medium</b>	Some impacts on the healthcare system, more people with severe illness
<b>High</b>	High potential for healthcare system strain, high level of severe illness



April 22, 2022

TOGETHER WE CAN build a better future

## Bonds sold to finance roof, building issues

As has been noted in recent newsletters, a rainstorm last year during a roofing project ruined Polk County's juvenile detention facility at the Law Enforcement Center. As of this writing, reconstruction and remodeling of the facility has started with hopes it is completed and back in use by mid fall. The low bid for the project was approximately \$1,350,000. While the county is litigating for damages resulting from the roofing project, the Board has discussed how best to pay for these improvements. As we have done in the past, capital improvements bonds were chosen as the vehicle. Generally, an amount this low would not be bonded for but other building issues are on the list to address, specifically issues at

the Justice Center building. The Justice Center is still considered a new building for the county, but it is coming up on its 15th year and it is time to take care of a few things. First, the roof leaks and should be replaced, estimated at almost \$1.5 million. Second, an issue was found with the glycol distribution system in the building where the couplers for the system's many pipes need to be replaced. This was discovered when a coupler separated dumping out hot glycol. Fortunately, no one was hurt but it needs to be addressed, estimated at \$600,000. The building is also very expensive to heat, so newer more efficient boilers will replace the existing ones.

See **BONDS**, Page 2

## Redistricting adds one race to commissioner elections this fall

Commissioners for three of the five Polk County commissioner districts will be decided in elections this year. One of the elections not normally scheduled will occur in District 5 where the 2020 Census determined that a reduction in population/size was required for it to comply with a state law that states that populations in the commissioner districts not vary more than 10 percent from the average for all districts. The census determined District 5 to have a population of 6,965. The total county population of 31,192 divided by the five districts makes the average per district to be 6,238 and the 10 percent threshold to be 624. The difference of 727 between the District 5 population and the county average exceeded the 10% threshold. Following a Redistricting Hearing held as part of its regular meeting on April 19, the County Board removed two townships from District 5 (Brandt and Belgium) and added them to District 3. District 5 is represented by Mark Holy, who is now in the second year of a four-year term. The election to be conducted in District 5 this fall will be for a two-year term. This con-

tinues the staggered state law practice of having commissioners in two districts of the county — District 2 and 4 — be elected in one four-year cycle, while those in the other three districts — Districts 1, 3 and 5 — to be elected in the other four-year cycle beginning two years later. This arrangement prevents a change of no more than three commissioners in one election. While growth in District 5 required a reduction in size/population, population changes in Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4 remained within 10 percent threshold. Districts 1 and 3, which like District 5 are in the mid-term year of the four-year office period, will not require a mid-term election because of population changes. This means that Commissioners Gerald Jacobson, District 1, and Gary Willhite, District 3, will not have to stand for election to remain in office. The four-year terms of commissioners Warren Strandell in District 2 and Joan Lee in District 4 end this year. Regular elections will be held this fall in those districts as normal. Commissioner District 1 includes Wards 1 and 5 in the

See **ELECTIONS**, Page 2

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# Bonds

(Continued from Page 1)

In all there is about \$2.75 million in work to do.

This April the board sold capital improvement bonds for about \$3.2 million to help address all these projects. The bond payments were structured to pay interest only through 2026, then principal and interest thereafter. The original bonds for the Justice Center

building construction will be paid off in 2026, therefore it made sense to push the bulk of the new debt after that.

Justice Center work will likely begin later this year. Plans and specifications have just started to be drawn up. — **Chuck Whiting, county administrator**

# Elections

(Continued from Page 1)

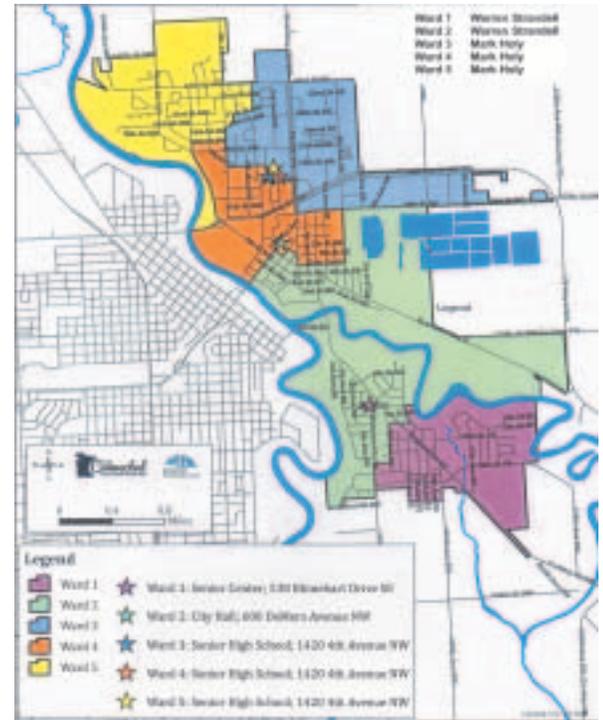
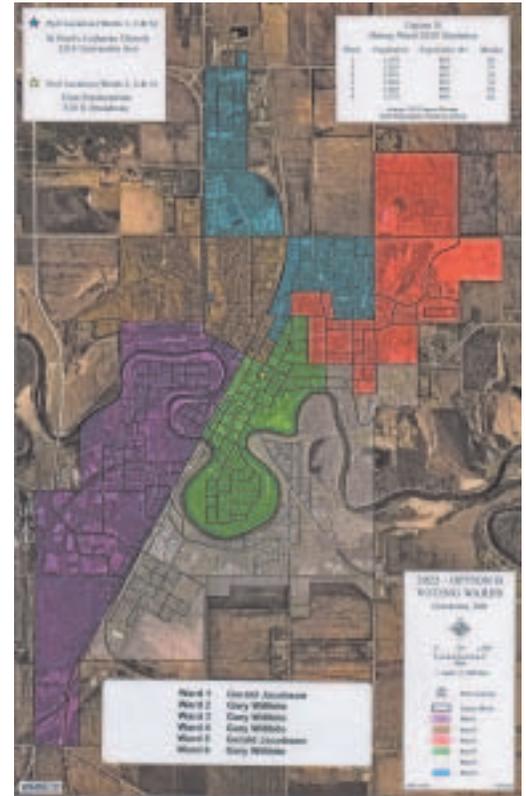
City of Crookston, the cities of Fertile, Mentor and Beltrami, and 11 townships (Garden, Garfield, Godfrey, Grove-Park Tilden, Fairfax, Kertsonville, Liberty, Onstad, Reis, Russia and Woodside).

Commissioner District 2 includes Wards 1 and 2 in East Grand Forks, the cities of Climax, Fisher and Nielsville and 14 townships (Andover, Bygland, Fanny, Fisher, Hamond, Hubbard, Huntsville, Lowell, Nesbit, Roome, Scandia, Rhinehart, Tynsid and Vineland).

Commissioner District 3 includes Wards 2, 3, 4 and 6 in the City of Crookston and 5 townships (Crookston, Gentilly, Parnell, Belgium and Brandt).

Commissioner District 5 includes Wards 3, 4 and 5 in the City of East Grand Forks and 13 townships (Angus, Brislet, Esther, Euclid, Farley, Grand Forks, Helgeland, Higdem, Keystone, Northland, Sandsville, and Sullivan and Tabor).

See new Commissioner District map on Page 3.



## Filing period to open on May 17

The filing period for candidates will open on Tuesday, May 17, and close at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 31. If more than two candidates file for any seat, a primary election will be conducted on Aug. 9. This will be done to narrow the field to two candidates for the General Election on Nov. 8.

Candidates must be at least 18 years of age, a United States citizen and reside in the district for which they are running. The terms of the offices will begin on Jan. 2, 2023.

Anyone interested in filing can contact Director of Property Records/Elections Michelle Cote at 218-281-2554 for more information.

## Sorenson reappointed to Red Lake Board

Terry Sorenson, Mentor, has been reappointed by the County Board as the East Polk County representative on the Red Lake River Watershed District Board of Managers.

The West Polk County representative is Gene Tiedemann, Euclid. Tiedemann is vice president of the board. Sorenson is treasurer.

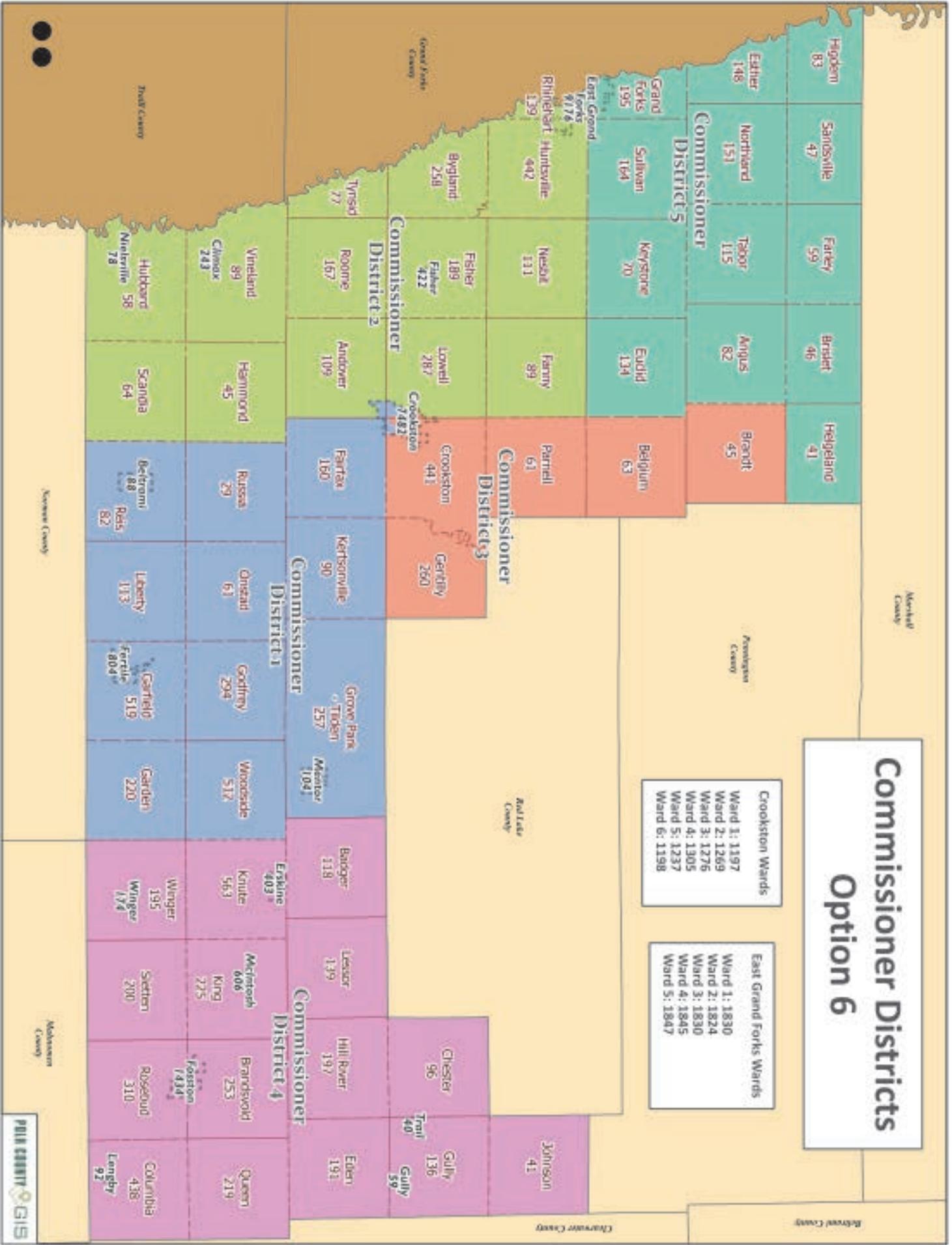
Other members of the board of managers are: Dale Nelson, Pennington County (president); Leroy Ose, Marshall County (secretary); Tom Anderson (Clearwater County); Allan Page, (Red Lake County); and Brian Dwight, (Beltrami County).

Option 5	EGF Net Changes for Comm. District	CRK Net Changes for Comm. District	Population in 2020 Census after CRK and EGF redistrict	Polk County Redistricting Changes	Population after changes	High to Low District Range	5% Threshold	Net Change	Under Threshold ?	Need to Run in 2022	
1. Jacobson			5767		0	5767			85	Yes	No
2. Strandell			6521			6521			308	Yes	Yes
3. White		85	5810	45+63	108	5918	1090	312	193	Yes	No
4. Lee			6129			6129			0	Yes	Yes
5. Holy	308		6965	-45-63		6857			416	No	Yes
			31192			31192					

Standard Deviation 400

# Commissioner Districts Option 6

- Crookston Wards**
  - Ward 1: 1197
  - Ward 2: 1269
  - Ward 3: 1276
  - Ward 4: 1305
  - Ward 5: 1237
  - Ward 6: 1198
- East Grand Forks Wards**
  - Ward 1: 1830
  - Ward 2: 1824
  - Ward 3: 1830
  - Ward 4: 1845
  - Ward 5: 1847



## Law enforcement having staffing problems

Many — make that most — law enforcement organizations in the region, the state, and throughout the country, are having difficulty in maintaining a full-staff status in their departments. Some of this is because the law enforcement profession has often been portrayed badly in news accounts — some of which might be justified because there will always be that very small percentage of officers who aren't the best and some of it is because protesters are able to succeed in sensationalizing news coverage.

Polk County is among the local government agencies that are struggling to keep their ranks up to full staff, but things are not so far out of touch that the policing effort is having to be seriously scaled back.

### Here's some of what Sheriff Jim Tadman has to say about the subject:



**Jim Tadman**

“We are currently short three deputies in our office. This is due to open positions in other law enforcement agencies that have better financial offers, opportunities for career advancement and because of a recent retirement. We currently have two of our officers being backgrounded by other agencies, which means that while we are down three officers right now, if those two get offers elsewhere, just like that we could be down five.”

Besides the regular law enforcement duties of our

patrol and investigators in responding to calls for service such as domestic assaults, burglaries, vehicle accidents, other law enforcement related crimes, and calls for general assistance, the Sheriff's Office also has the responsibility of having to manage the Justice Center.

“This is part of the statutory duties of the Sheriff's Office is called the Court Security and Transport Unit. These duties include serving as bailiffs for the court system, providing security for the Justice Center building, serving warrants and civil papers, the transportation of warrant pickups for Polk County, and prisoner transports to and from state prison facilities.”

“New deputies coming into the Sheriff's Office start in the Justice Center, which for most is not the most appealing role. Most people who go to school to begin a career in law enforcement want to start out as a patrol officer. They are eager and ready to protect and serve. They don't want the duties of hauling prisoners around the state, serving as bailiffs during court trials, or having to secure the Justice Center building. The Sheriff's Office has the responsibility of those duties, though, and that is the job where we start most new deputies.

“While in that role, we try to give them the opportunity, as situations allow, to also train with our patrol training officers to make them ready to move into road patrol positions as openings occur. As training has progressed through the years, we have implemented that all new deputies have to a complete PTO training before they are promoted to patrol positions.

### Is there a shortage of people wanting to be police officers?

“The number of people coming out of school to be law enforcement officers has been declining. I feel this is because of the bad publicity law enforcement officers are receiving due to past officer related deaths. Add protests, numerous riots, and

the continued lack of support in some areas from the public and our government officials. Officers are leaving the profession at a high rate. A few months ago, when we posted adds to fill deputy positions, we didn't even get one application. We reposted that notice again a few weeks ago and received five applicant. We interviewed three qualified for the position. We are currently doing background checks on two of them. There are a lot of openings in police departments, state agencies, sheriff's offices in the region and state, but there aren't enough people graduating from law enforcement schools to begin filling them. We are all fighting for the same pool of candidates. It is hard with budgets. We try to attract good officers and make our office look the best as we can with salary and equipment as well as training and advancement possibilities.

### How about positions in your Dispatch Center?

“The same shortage of people to fill positions is occurring at the Dispatch Center, which the sheriff's office manages.

“We're just not finding the right people or people who have the abilities and interest to become the telecommunicators that we need in our Dispatch Center. This is an issue throughout the state. I am currently serving on the Minnesota Sheriffs Association's Public Safety Answering Point Committee (PSAP) representing the 87 sheriff's offices in the state. Our task is to work with PSAP managers, sub-committees, legislators, and training facilities to support our PSAPS.

“Without telecommunicators answering 911 calls, how do we get the first responders to the victim needing assistance? There aren't schools out there that train people to be telecommunicators. That training must occur on the job.

“When people apply to work in our dispatch center, most believe they know what they are getting into. Things are different now from the old days when you could just push the radio button and talk to a deputy, fire department, or ambulance and send them out on a call.

“Now, everything is technical and computerized. You have five or six computer screens in front of you to assist you in getting the right first responders to where they are needed. There are multiple steps to make sure that everyone that should be involved is informed and that they all get to the right location. You answer the phone by computer. You are able to see where deputies are out on patrol using AVL to help send the closest deputy to the call.

“That next 9-1-1 call could be a mother screaming that her child is choking, or a bad accident that just happened, or some other tragedy. Those situations are very traumatic. People might just say that this isn't what I signed up for. We're finding that a lot of the younger generation doesn't want to deal with critical incidents. With the vast use of cell phones now, we are likely to get several calls about the same incident and have to deal with all of them.

“Knock on wood, we are currently training people for the last two open dispatcher positions. Dispatchers go through four different phases of training. It could be a total of 30 weeks of training. We've had numerous issues where someone will get through the first two phases but when they come down to the last two phases, which is answering 9-1-1 calls and getting the response information to the right people and dispatching them, the pressure and stress of that role, especially in situations where someone's life might be at risk, they might decide that I'm just not made to do this.”

### Why do you like being a police officer?

“While there has been a lot of negativity directed at the law enforcement profession in recent years, there still is the other side of the job I love.

“At least for me, I think the reward of being a law enforce-

**See LAW ENFORCEMENT, Page 5**

## Sales show residential properties under-valued

As those of us who live in Northern Minnesota thaw out from another tough winter, the warmer weather naturally brings our thoughts to the rites of spring, like baseball, gardening, and, of course, Property Taxes.

During the period of late March and early April, Polk County property owners receive two notices in the mail: Valuation Notices and Property Tax Statements. While Property Tax Statements are a finalized statement billing each property for its share of the local tax burden for the current tax year (2022); Valuation Notices inform taxpayers what their current year (2022) valuation and classification for a particular property is estimated to be. This is used for the next year's (2023) property tax bill.

### Appeals are possible

Taxpayers need to be aware that they can appeal the values and classifications on the Valuation Notices. The Polk County Assessor's office encourages anyone with questions regarding their valuation to call our office or attend their Local Board of Appeal and Equalization meetings. Contact information is listed on the Valuation Notice. If you are

questioning your valuation or classification, now is your opportunity to appeal.

If you have paid attention to real estate markets over the past year, you know that residential sale prices in particular have grown rapidly. Over the past 12 months, U.S. home prices are up 18.8%, the fastest rate of growth since the housing bubble burst in 2008. This has been true in greater Minnesota as well and is reflected in the recent sales of residential property in Polk County.

### Properties undervalued

For Polk County's most recent sales study, residential parcels were found to be undervalued compared to the actual sales price by about 15%, and even more so on lakeshore property.

In mass appraisal, when property values are consistently lower than what the sales are, market adjustments have to be made on all similar properties to comply with State of Minnesota valuation requirements, and those adjustments were made for the 2022 Assessment. Assessors use those sales to estimate the most probable sale price for each property for that assessment year.

As a result of these market

driven changes, residential values have increased an average of 15% for Polk County with some real estate markets being especially healthy. Among these are lakeshore properties (especially Maple and Cable) and the cities of McIntosh, Winger and (to a lesser extent) Crookston. If you notice a large increase on your 2022 Valuation Notice, it is likely that these are due to the market changes that were applied to all similar properties in that jurisdiction.

### Some increases greater

Polk County is not alone in experiencing these market changes. Other nearby counties are seeing even greater increases in residential, lakeshore, and agricultural properties than we are. Discussions with personnel from other counties and with Department of Revenue sources have indicated that there are many areas where countywide residential increases are well over 20%, with lakeshore increases on certain lakes coming in at 50% and as high as 100% in extreme cases in lake country.

Bringing this topic full circle, taxpayers may be asking, what do these value increases mean?

For example, will a 15% increase in value for 2022 mean

a corresponding 15% increase in property taxes for 2023? Probably not, as the Minnesota property tax system as designed makes it so that if all parcels of a jurisdiction change the same percentage and there is no increase in the budgetary levy needs within that jurisdiction, then there would be no tax changes to parcels in that jurisdiction.

It is actually possible for valuations to increase but for taxes to decrease and that happens more often than you would think. In the real world, however, with all the variables in property tax calculation, it is probably most likely that a large increase in valuation percentage will result in a smaller increase in property taxes but the best answer is, unfortunately, "it depends."

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Assessor Office via phone at 218-281-4186. Remember to read your Valuation Notices and don't miss your Local Board of Appeal and Equalization if you want to appeal. Once appeals season is over, your value is not changeable, so the time to appeal is now. — **Mark Landsverk, county assessor**

## Law enforcement

### Continued from Page 4

ment officer is being able to help a person in need... someone who might be dealing with a mental health issue, or has been in a critical incident, or for someone who has been in an accident. The reward is being able to help people go down the right path, should that be getting them to a doctor, a health facility, or connecting them with resources to help.

"Those are some of the types of assistance we have a chance to provide. No one day is the same in the line of duty for a law enforcement officer, especially in a county like ours with the vast amount of acreage and miles that we cover. The biggest reward that I get as a deputy is making a difference in someone's life."

### Do you still think Law Enforcement is a good career?

"I was always attracted to law enforcement, but things have changed over time. We have law enforcement officers who are getting out of the profession they love because of the negative public perception.

"As you can see from news coverage, an officer might have someone standing in front of them spitting in their face and yelling and screaming at them. They just have to stand there and take it. A lot of young people just aren't buying into that. They can get paid a lot more somewhere else and not have to take that abuse. There are many other jobs where they don't have to wear a bullet-proof vest and carry a gun with possibility of having to use it either to protect themselves or someone else.

"If something bad happens relating to officer involvement, like what occurred down in the Twin Cities, it can be portrayed that officers are out there just intentionally violating a person's rights. Law enforcement officers can get thrown into one negative group. Young people thinking of a career in law enforcement are second-guessing the profession and questioning why they would put family through this? Law enforcement can be very difficult these days."

### What does it take to have a successful career in Law Enforcement?

"It takes a strong will, a supportive family, and a great community to make it 30 years in this profession. Our office is very fortunate to have a community that supports our law enforcement throughout the county. It is very nice to hear the support when you are out in the public attending a meeting, the fair or just visiting one of the businesses. Our office is only as strong as the community's support. Information coming into our office about criminal activity or traffic issues is greatly appreciated. We can't be everywhere and usually we don't get lucky enough to have criminal activity happen in front of us. All the information received is passed through our office.

"We have a very professional office. Our deputies and dispatchers have the best interest in serving and protecting our county residents. Thank you so much for the wonderful support. We are grateful to be living and working in a community that cares about each other."

# Have we been rescued yet?

**Chuck Whiting, Polk County administrator**



Last year about this time Polk County was notified it was to receive \$6,092,089 from the United States Treasury called “the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds” or more simply, American Rescue Plan funds.

The purpose of these funds is to “ensure governments have the resources needed to fight the pandemic and support families and businesses struggling with its public health and economic impacts, maintain vital public services, even amid declines in revenue, and build a strong, resilient, and equitable recovery by making investments that support long-term growth and opportunity.”

### How to do it

Treasury provided details on how best to do this through several related categories meant to generally address public health, local fiscal needs and vulnerable populations, and to do this with these funds by the end of 2024. After several refinements to their guidelines, Treasury issued its final guideline this past January 6, that entities receiving less than \$10 million can claim its amount to offset overall revenue losses due to the pandemic.

We haven’t questioned their reasoning for this, but it does make it easier for smaller counties like Polk to use these funds. It is still not easy however.

### \$1 million earmarked

The Board of Commissioners and Administration have been reviewing and refining options for the use of these funds since last year. As the 2022 budget was developed, just over \$1 million was earmarked for various public health and safety responses to the virus, a new communications staff position and supplemental revenue for various Social Services assistance programs, particularly those that address

mental health, foster care, childcare and substance abuse.

### Requests being reviewed

Once into 2022 the Board has been reviewing requests from local entities and County departments. The consensus of the Board has been to still meet needs around the county. For instance, funds for an assisted living facility, grandstand repairs at the fairgrounds, a generator for a fire department, public housing facilities improvements, and assisting a rural water system development are among the projects being reviewed. In addition, the Board is considering addressing County needs for new radio and dispatching equipment in the Sheriff’s Department, finance software, road improvements, rural septic systems assistance, and additional public health assistance. As might be expected the list has exceeded the funds. As spring rolls on the Board and Administration are refining the list and will commit to many of these within the limits of the funding.

### Funding needed to happen

An important side note to all of this and one that the Board is well aware of, many of these projects either would not happen or could happen only using local tax dollars. As the Board balances its choices, using the funds for the purposes intended while identifying present or future County needs has helped guide the decision-making process, and forestalled having to use property taxes or fund balances for County expenses. The Board has been clear in preferring to spread the use of the funds over the three year time period as well in order to retain some flexibility if circumstances change. The primary concern is always to spare the property tax from being overly extended.

## Cell 14 to be added to Landfill

The Polk County Landfill near Gentilly is scheduled to add another Mixed Solid Waste (MSW) lined sanitary landfill cell in 2022 — Cell 14.

Each MSW cell is approximately 3 acres in size and based on its location and construction will last between 3-5 years.

In addition to the construction of Cell 14, this project will also include final cover over older portions of the MSW landfill and construction of a new leachate collection and storage infrastructure that will serve Cell 14 and other future cells for the next 15-20 years or more.

The construction portion of the \$2.4 million project has been awarded to R.J. Zavoral & Sons of East Grand Forks. R.J. Zavoral’s portion of the project was \$2,026,489.90. Purchase of other materials which make up the total project cost previously occurred. The purchase of those materials in 2020, such as the Cell 14 liner and final cover material, has resulted in the savings of well over \$150,000.



## Report Welfare Fraud

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

### You may remain anonymous

If you suspect someone of misusing or abusing Minnesota assistance programs, call the Polk County Sheriff’s Office at this number 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:  
1-218-281-0431 (ask for extension 2249)

You may wish to report: Persons not reporting income; incorrect reporting of persons living in the home; misuse of food stamps or Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards; falsifying of information on application; unreported property and assets; or persons receiving dual benefits (from more than one state).

### Information you should report:

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

## Supporting veterans is the goal

### Loewen on job as veterans service assistant

New assistant Polk County Veteran Service officer Kelly Loewen, an Air Force veteran, is further fulfilling a lifetime interest with his work in support of veterans.

"I have had always had an interest in the military. After observing the 9-1-1 news coverage on TV as a young child I decided that I wanted to join the military and to serve my country," Loewen says. "When (after completing six and one-half years of active-duty military service) I saw that Polk County was hiring an assistant veteran service officer, I knew immediately that this job would be the most rewarding job a person could ask for."

Loewen began with the county on Feb. 22 as the successor to Laurie Anderson, who had completed her 45-year career with Polk County on Jan. 10. After first working in the Auditor's Office for 34 years, Anderson had spent the last 11 years as the administrative assistant for the veteran service officer. In retirement, she is a member of the Fisher City Council.

Born in Pratt, KS, Loewen lived there with his parents Keith Loewen and Lisa Buchweitz for nine years before moving to Langdon, ND for six years and then to Minot where he graduated from Magic City High School in 2003. At 17 years old and not old enough to join the military, Loewen joined the Air Force Delayed Entry Program to prepare for military service. That began when he shipped off for Lackland Air Force



Kelly Loewen

Base, TX, on Oct. 3, 2003, for six weeks of basic training followed by 65 days at the Security Forces Academy there to learn basic law enforcement and base defense tactics. After training in convoy operations, desert ground combat and urban warfare in Colorado and Nevada came a first deployment to the Kuwait-Iraq border.

He became a working dog handler when he joined the 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces Unit. He trained for that role in Texas, became certified with his bomb dog Mix, and was returned to Balad Air Base in Iraq to work at the job of finding bombs — roadside mainly — and weapons caches. The eight months in that role were the most stressful of his time in the military.

A later planned deployment to Afghanistan in 2007 was cancelled and he instead received a special duty assignment at Hanscom Air Force Base near Boston assisting the Secret Service providing secu-

rity for generals, foreign diplomats and even the President of the United States. In his time with the Secret Service, Loewen traveled to the United Arab Emirates, Georgia (the country), Turkey, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Ireland, England and Canada.

After Loewen was honorably discharged in June 2010, he spent time at Rochester, Minn., as a dog trainer and while attending Rochester Technical College. Later in Grand Forks, he was a student at the University of North Dakota, the owner of a College Pro Painters franchise, a driver for Rochester Armored Car, and worked in retail sales at Lowe's. It was there that service to a kitchen cabinets customer grew into matrimony. He and Ashley Elwood were married on Jan. 2, 2021. The Polk County veteran service officer advertisement came about after two and one-half years of working at Sherwin-Williams.

The Veteran Service Office in Crookston is open 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Polk County Veteran Service Officer Kurtis Ellefson has office hours from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Polk County Human Service Center in East Grand Forks.

Office hours at the Civic Center in Fosston are from 9 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays.

The office at the Bjella Building in McIntosh is open from 1 to 3:30 p.m. on Wednesdays.

## Load limits soon, highway work plan set

When and if spring arrives, road restrictions will arrive, so please keep your weights down on gravel and restricted paved roads. We need them to last as long as we can.

One way to maintain our

**See 2022 Highway Construction Map on Page 8**

roadways is to apply bituminous overlays. They typically last 15 to 20 years.

The overlays scheduled this year are:

- CSAH 1 from east limits of Beltrami to TH 32 in Fertile.
- CSAH 34 from TH 2 in Erskine to TH 59.
- CSAH 35 from TH 35 to CSAH 8 north of McIntosh.
- CSAH 72 from west limits of East Grand Forks to TH 220.
- CSAH 73 from TH 2 to CSAH 19.
- CSAH 76 from TH 2 to CSAH 17.

For the first time in 16 years Polk County will be totally reconstructing a gravel road:

CSAH 46 from TH 102 to TH 2.

Hopefully, we will end up with a normal summer with some normal rainfall.

These projects will be paid for with our CSAH funds that come through the gas tax, tab fees and motor vehicle sales tax, and by federal funding with some from our local option sales tax for transportation and some from American Relief Funding.

Polk County will also do three culvert replacements in Mentor and in the townships of Brandsvold, Eden, Crookston, Euclid and Grove Park. These projects will hopefully be completed by October 1st.

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

## County Board Meeting Times

8:00 a.m. on 1st Tuesday of the month

9:30 a.m. on the 3rd Tuesday

8:00 a.m. on the 4th Tuesday

**All meetings are open to the public**

### County Commissioners

- Dist. 1 — Jerry Jacobson
- Dist. 2 — Warren Strandell, v. chair
- Dist. 3 — Gary Willhite
- Dist. 4 — Joan K. Lee, chair
- Dist. 5 — Mark Holy

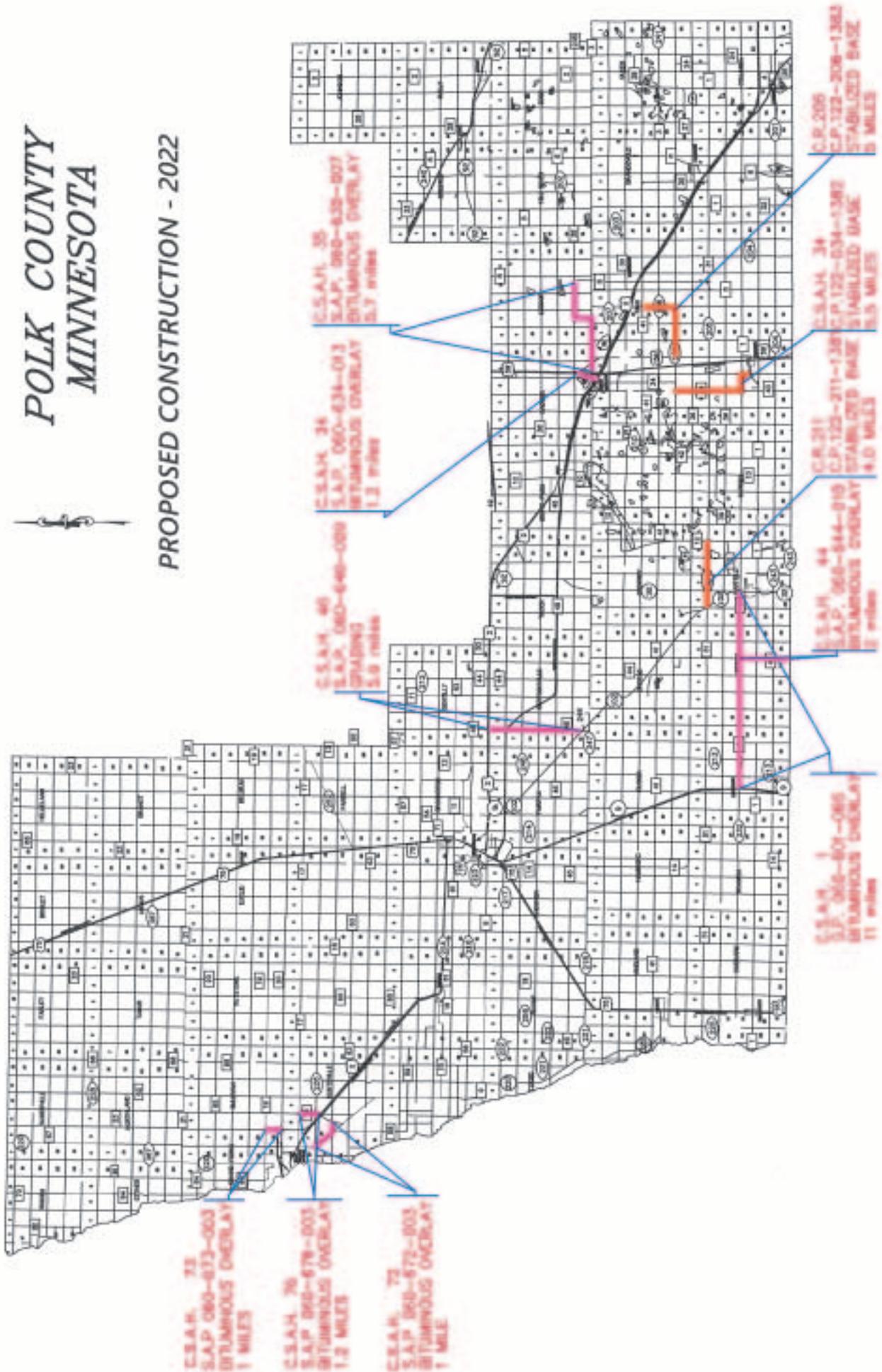
## Extension members are reappointed

Connie Hannelson, Crookston, an at-large member, and Aaron Roger, the member representing Commissioner District 1, have been reappointed to their second three-year terms on the Polk County Extension Committee.

# POLK COUNTY MINNESOTA



## PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION - 2022



## Steps taken to manage jail staff shortage problem

Staffing challenges in nearly all employment sectors have been well-publicized in recent years. These difficulties are magnified in an atmosphere such as corrections and/or law enforcement due to the stressful work environment and non-traditional work hours.

Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC), and more specifically the Northwest Regional Corrections Center (NWRCC), has not been immune from staffing shortages and these shortages reached a critical juncture in late 2021.

Unprecedented staffing shortages at the NWRCC necessitated a special Corrections Board meeting in December 2021 to consider the closure of one of the NWRCC housing units as required staffing levels could no longer be maintained.

The Regional Corrections Board approved the implementation of a population reduction plan at the NWRCC to be implemented the week of Dec. 6, 2021. The plan consisted of the closure of a jail housing unit which reduced the NWRCC inmate capacity from 200 to 140. The population reduction was achieved through the following measures:

- Reduced housing of U.S. Marshal inmates.
- Reduced housing of Mahnomon County inmates.
- Temporarily housing some local inmates in Pennington County.

### Staffing levels required

The reduction in the jail's capacity provides much needed relief to staffing levels

that must be maintained to comply with minimum staffing requirements established by the Minnesota Department of Corrections. Closure of a jail housing unit reduced minimum staffing levels by nearly 5 full-time staff and also reduced workload in other areas such as court movement, jail intakes, and day-to-day inmate movement and activities.

TCCC is taking advantage of the temporarily reduced staffing requirements and is exploring several operational changes to address issues with staff turnover experienced in recent years. TCCC contracted with David Down Associates, a human resource firm, to conduct a staffing study and compensation analysis to identify areas within the workplace that can be improved upon and to determine if compensation levels are competitive with other public safety/corrections agencies.

### Staffing study

The staffing study, which consisted of interviews with existing employees, identified a variety of areas which could be improved upon to make the work environment better for new and existing employees.

Areas of focus included the need for additional training for new employees, improvements in technology and infrastructure, increased staffing levels and the desire for more opportunities to be recognized for the positive contributions made to the agency.

TCCC has been active in recruiting new employees to fill open positions and continues to explore new on-line job search engines to reach prospective employees that

have not been reached previously.

### Training changes

Comprehensive changes to the new employee orientation training have been implemented in response to feedback received from the staffing study. The changes in training include expanded time at all jail posts prior to independent assignment and a revision to the manner in which training is conducted.

To allow new employees the opportunity to become more comfortable in the jail atmosphere, new employees receive training at posts with limited inmate management responsibilities during the initial stages of training. Once this training is completed, more time is devoted to being trained at posts with higher volume of direct inmate contact.

In addition to ongoing recruitment efforts and changes in training, an updated salary grid has been approved by the Corrections Board that is designed to address wage and step inconsistencies between positions and make TCCC wages highly competitive when compared to other employers.

It is believed that the changes being implemented will help to address and hopefully resolve the staffing challenges encountered for the last several years. Based upon existing staffing levels and training progress, it is anticipated that the jail capacity will be returned to its full capacity of 200 inmates in June 2022. — **Andrew Larson, exexecutive director TCCC**

## Corrections officers awarded, milestones marked

Four corrections officers received special awards and 41 others were cited for marking milestones in their careers when Tri-County Community Corrections held its Employee Recognition Event at the University of Minnesota-Crookston on March 17.

The first Compassion in Corrections Award was made to Sgt. Catherine Barstad. The award is in memory of Sgt. Chuck Goering, a COVID victim, who died in November 2021. Sgts. Goering and Barstad, who will be retiring later this year, had been partners for many years.

Case Aide Kalie Drinkman and Corrections Officer Sergeants Craig Magsam and

Candace Stordahl were honored with Excellence in Corrections Awards. The awards were based on nominations made by fellow officers — their peers. The final selection was made by corrections officers at other corrections agencies in Minnesota.

Others nominated for Excellence in Corrections Awards were Cpl. Hannah Cordes, Officer Bryan Drinkman, Sgt. Chad Johnson, Officer Scott Gunderson, and office support staff member Denise Cole.

"This is something we like to do every couple of years," Tri-County Corrections Center Executive Director Andrew Larson said of the recognition

event, "but because of COVID, it happened a little bit later than what we would have wanted. It is just an opportunity to recognize employees for their years of service. We recognize employees that have been with us for two years, five years, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years."

Two Years of Service — Scott Gunderson, Jessica Grabowski, Candace Stordahl, Doug Peterson, Kalie Drinkman, Daniel Macias, Teanna Storey, Gabriela Trevino Valdez, Patty Dillabough, Kaytlin Avelsgard, Jodi Sullivan, Timothy Ingle, Matthew Marshall, Jake Mutzenbeger, Ashley Cardova, Hannah Cordes, Joan Forney.

Five Years — Donovan Hoffman, Matt Olson, Kelvin Kaste, Justin Schill, Guy Gullekson, Ricky Fillion.

10 Years — Arika Hitchen, Melissa Hendry, Lindsay Cournia, Travis Nicholas, Kyle Allen.

15 Years — Shawn Hogenson, Amanda Bochow, Josh Plante, Dorene Erickson, Raelene Aarhus, Nicolee Thompson.

20 Years — Lisa Larson, Andrew Larson, Phil Schroeder, Catherine Barstad.

25 Years — Joey Pederson.

30 Years — Troy Cymbaluk, Paul Bissonette.

## After damage from summer rainfall that came when roof was being replaced

# Reconstruction begins at Juvenile Center

Reconstruction of one area of the Red River Valley Juvenile Center (RRVJC) in Crookston has begun.

The RRVJC has been closed since Oct. 11, 2021, due to water damage sustained during a rain event earlier in that year.

While the secure detention side of the RRVJC was briefly re-opened, the Regional Corrections Board for Tri-County Community Corrections voted to temporarily close the RRVJC until the reconstruction of the non-secure detention side of the facility nears completion in 2022.

The Corrections Board took several factors into consideration before ultimately deciding to temporarily close the entire RRVJC.

- The anticipated reconstruction time frame of the Non-Secure Detention (residential) side of the facility is much longer than originally anticipated and includes many unknowns that could delay construction even further. A representative with ICON Architecture Group spoke with the Corrections Board about product shortages ranging from blue junction boxes to Styrofoam panels in addition to long-term delays of 26 weeks or more for air-handling units, all of which will impact construction time frames.

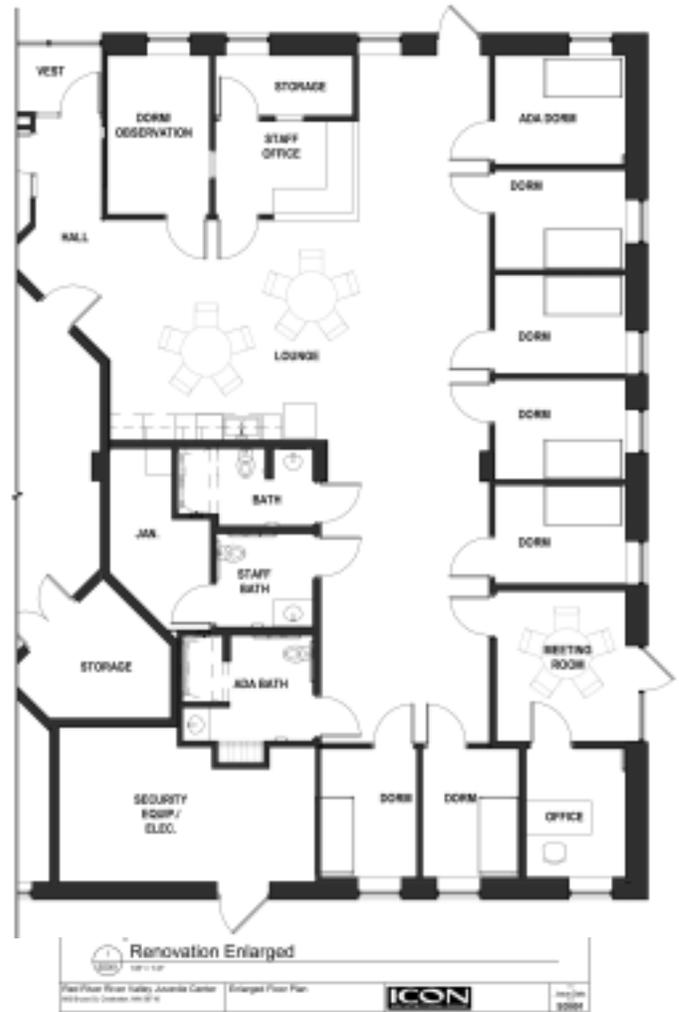
- Reduced staffing options have been implemented since the Secure Detention side of the facility re-opened in July; however, even with the reduced staffing that is in place the costs required to operate the Secure

Detention side are significant. Even with reduced staffing in place, the RRVJC must continue to operate with two-staff on duty 24 hours/day to allow for cross-gender supervision and to ensure safety within a secure detention environment is maintained.

- The lack of a non-secure detention environment would potentially result in prolonged secure detention placements. Data shows that prolonged detention for adolescents can be detrimental to their mental and physical wellbeing. With the Non-Secure Detention side of the facility closed for reconstruction, the ability to transition adolescents into a less-restrictive setting is negatively impacted. The prolonged housing of adolescents in a secure detention setting would have a detrimental effect on local adolescents but would also reduce placements from non-member counties.

The Polk County Board of Commissioners contracted with ICON Architectural Group to develop plans and manage the reconstruction project at the RRVJC.

Diversified Contractors based out of West Fargo, ND, has been awarded the general contractor bid with a project proposal of just over \$1.3 million with a 210-day completion time frame. With necessary permits and approvals being received from the State of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Corrections, reconstruction officially began on Monday, April 11.



The RRVJC reconstruction project will include replacement of areas damaged during the water intrusion event, in addition to upgrades to HVAC systems, plumbing systems, redesign of office and meeting spaces, along with upgrades to wall-covering material and improved rooms for monitoring at risk adolescents.

Absent unforeseen delays in construction or difficulties obtaining needed construction materials, it is anticipated that the reconstruction project should conclude on or around the end of October 2022. — **Andrew Lrason, executive director TCCC**

## Transfer Station to resume normal operations this spring

The Polk County Transfer Station in Crookston will resume normal operations in spring 2022. The completion of the public yard waste drop off area will be put into service for receiving yard waste from residents. The entire area is on concrete and provides both a larger and wider area for the public to drop off leaves, grass clippings, and twigs.

There will also be a separate area in the yard waste area for placing larger trees, limbs and branches that require shredding to compost.

There will be a slight charge for those materials from residents. For commercial entities, all materials will require a slight charge to cover hauling costs, and the cost of shredding for the larger tree waste. Residents with larger

tree wastes or commercial entities with yard waste or tree wastes are encouraged to avoid the hauling portion of the fees by delivering their materials directly to the compost site at the landfill complex.

Also this spring 24/7 access to recycling bins will resume. Access to the recycling bins was curtailed during the pandemic due to a number of fac-

tors, not the least of which related to abuses by people not eligible to use the services and large volumes of contamination (materials Polk County does not accept for recycling) being placed in and around the containers. The transfer station will monitor the use of the recycling containers to determine if the access will be allowed to remain available.

# Robotics could be the fix for staff shortage

The Polk County Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) in Fosston has undergone many changes over the last 10 years.

Creation of the public drop-off yard for recyclable materials and special or non-processable wastes, adding the ability to process single stream recyclables with the material recovery facility (MRF), adding Hubbard as a partner county, and most noticeable has been the large building expansion to house the new processing equipment.

These changes have allowed the RRF to process more waste and recyclable materials from within our partnership area, improve facility emissions and support future growth when the time comes.

## More staff was needed

These changes to the RRF resulted in the need for more staff to provide these services and make the system perform efficiently and effectively. Unfortunately, leading up to and worsening during the pandemic was a shift in the workforce.

Over the last several years we have been unable to attract and hire qualified enough people to fill those open positions. Despite efforts to make the positions more attractive, such as offering a paid family insurance option as part of the benefits package, the results have remained largely the same.

At times in 2020 and 2021 the continuation of services has been threatened, and the MRF regularly operates with some of its processing equipment to extract recyclables from the waste being turned off due to no staff to do the quality control needed to market the material.

In May 2021 Polk County filed an application for a Phase III project with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to receive state bond funds.

## Robotic sorters

The Phase III project was to purchase and install robotic sorters into these quality control areas to replace the quality control staff needs to market materials. Some sorting will still be required to be done by staff and robot techni-

cians will be needed to service the robots installed.

## Technicians needed

However, one robot technician is needed for every 2-4 robots in service. Other components of the Phase III proposal include a few equipment changes to improve the efficiency of the existing equipment related to opening bags, capture of materials missed by the equipment and improvement of composting operation.

In early 2022 Polk was notified that its application was included in the Governor's Bonding Proposal for 2022. The request is for \$2.4 million of state bond funds to match \$2.4 million of local funds for a \$4.8 million total project cost.

## Funding requested

Polk County has submitted legislation for this request to improve the likelihood of receiving funding for this project. House File 3762 and Senate File 3623 were introduced for this purpose.

With the rapid inflationary period we are experiencing, it is unknown if the bonding request is adequate for all aspects of the project and with the delayed timeline to use the funds if appropriated, nobody can state what the actual cost for the project will be.

Other solid waste proposals (from other counties or cities not associated with Polk) included with Polk's in the governor's bonding proposal are now indicating inflationary increases of 20-40% in project costs to their proposals.

However, Polk's project is scalable, so should the funding appropriated not be sufficient for all aspects of the project as intended at the time the application was submitted, some parts of the project could be delayed, scaled-back or eliminated to ensure the critical needs are met.

At this point Polk County believes it is more important to stay within the original budget rather than increase the budget trying to attain maximum efficiency. — **Jon Steiner, Polk County Environmental Services director**



Kristie Jerde



Richard Kuzel

## Jerde and Kuzel join Planning Commission

Kristie Jerde, Crookston, representing Commissioner District 1, and Richard Kuzel, rural Tabor, representing Commissioner District 5, are new members of the Polk County Planning Commission.

They succeed Donovan Wright and Robert Franks, who had represented Districts 1 and 5, respectively, before retiring.

Wright, rural Mentor, had served on the commission since 2007 and Franks, rural Warren, had served on the commission since being appointed in 2013. In addition to serving on the Planning Commission both had also served on the Board of Adjustment, which hears requests for variances to the rules of the Polk County Zoning Ordinance.

Jerde, who serves on the Crookston City Council, works in student affairs for NASPA (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators) on college campuses primarily at the University of Minnesota-Crookston and North Dakota State University. She has a masters degree in educational leadership that focused on higher education administration.

A native of California, Jerde has lived in Crookston for the past 16 years. Her husband, Justin, owns an insurance agency in Crookston and raises bison on the family farm at Fertile. They have two young

children.

Kuzel, who has served on the Tabor Township Board since 1970, retired from the Polk County Highway Department in 2018. He is a retired grain farmer and had beef cattle.

Other members of the commission are: Chair Mike Powers, East Grand Forks (appointed by East Grand Forks Mayor Steve Gander); Vice Chair Rolland Gagner, Erskine (Union Lake Sarah Improvement District); Don Cavalier, Crookston (appointed by Crookston Mayor Don Steinbrook); Len Vonasek, East Grand Forks (Commissioner District 2); Tom Noah, Crookston (District 3); Paul Jore, McIntosh (District 4); Arlet Phillips, East Grand Forks (Polk County Township Officers Association); Mike Schulz, Mentor (Maple Lake Improvement District); and County Board Chair Joan Lee.

The county board chair serves on the commission during the year that he/she is chair of the County Board.

Five members of the Planning & Zoning Commission also serve on the Polk County Board of Adjustment. This body hears requests for variances to the rules of the County Zoning Ordinance. That membership includes Powers (chair), Gagner (vice chair), Jerde, Kuzel, and Noah. Jore and Phillips are alternates.



Darla Waldner



Heather Pender

## NWRDC leadership undergoes changes

Darla Waldner has been advanced to the position of executive director of the Northwest Regional Development Commission (NWRDC) as the successor to Cameron Fanfulik, who retired at the end of the December after 20 years as head of the agency.

Waldner had been director of the Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging program at NWRDC, which serves 21 counties in northwestern and western Minnesota. Her replacement in that role is Heather Pender, who had been a lead community living specialist for the Dancing Sky agency.

The NWRDC works with the delivery of regional, state and federal support programs including the Dancing Sky Area on Aging program, the Senior Linkage Line, the Northwest Regional Enterprise Loan Fund for economic development, emergency operations planning, community development assistance, and does work in the area of transportation planning and maintenance.

The agency, based in Warren, serves the counties of Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau while also overseeing the 21-county Dancing Sky Area on Aging program.

Other changes in administration of the agency involve adjustment in roles of Sean Ranum, the economic develop-

ment director and Loan Fund manager, and of James Retka, who advances from economy resiliency specialist to that of community development director.

Waldner, who earned a B.S. degree in social work at Evangel University in Springfield, Mo., in 1992 and a masters degree in sociology from the University of Arizona in 2018, had been director of the Dancing Sky program for the past 17 years, a time during which the program grew to 24 employees.

Pender, who lives in Audubon, Minn., attended college at Minnesota State University Moorhead obtaining a B.A. degree in gerontology with emphasis in health and B.S. degree in community health. She has a background working in nursing homes. Heather has been with the Northwest Regional Development Commission and Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging for seven years as a community living specialist.

The six Dancing Sky community living specialists live and work in communities around the 21-county service area that includes Becker, Beltrami, Clay, Clearwater, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomen, Marshall, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Roseau, Stevens, Traverse, and Wilkin counties.

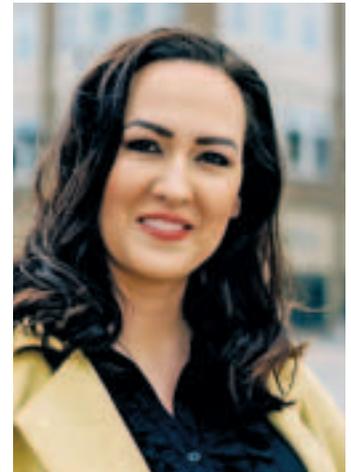
## GF-EGF Metropolitan Planning Organization chooses director

Stephanie Halford will become Executive Director of the Grand Forks-East Grand Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) beginning May 16, 2022.

Halford will succeed Earl Haugen, who after 29 years with the organization retired earlier this year. Haugen joined the MPO as a Planner in February 1993. In 1997 he was promoted to executive director, a position he held until his retirement.

Halford will be supervising two full-time employees; Teri Kouba, senior planner, who joined the MPO in August 2007 and Peggy McNelis, office manager, who joined the MPO in November 1993.

The MPO is responsible for carrying out transportation planning and programming for the cities of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks. The MPO Executive Policy Board includes two members each from the two cities, one member each from the city planning commission of each city, and one member each from the county boards of Grand Forks



Stephanie Halford

and Polk counties.

Halford was the senior planner for the City of Grand Forks for over the past seven years. Prior to that, she was with MPO for about two years. She earned a B.S. degree in urban planning at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City in 2012, a Smart Cities Certificate from the University of Zurich, and had training in public involvement in transportation decision making and traffic incident management.

## Used docks need to be kept out of water 21 days

Polk County AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) Task Force reminds lake property owners looking for used docks and lifts to be mindful of from where the equipment is coming.

Zebra mussels can easily survive on docks and lifts and be transported from lake or lake and river to river by used equipment sales. Minnesota Law requires that docks and lifts remain out of the water for at least 21 days after removal from a water body before they can be placed into another body of water regardless of whether that lake was infested with aquatic invasive species or not.

In addition, anyone who transports a dock or lift from a water body should check for AIS, must clean them prior to transportation or placing them in a new lake. The

dock/ lift must remain out of water for 21 days. High temperature water can kill some AIS species but allowing the dock or lift to dry for a 21-day period is what dooms AIS species.

Water is the enemy to the spread of AIS throughout Minnesota and docks/ lifts can harbor areas that remain wet for long periods of time. Lake property owners play an important role in detecting invasive species and protecting the lakes we all enjoy.

Everyone should have a vested interest to keep our area lakes clean and AIS free. For more information visit [www.co.polk.mn.us](http://www.co.polk.mn.us) or join us on facebook under Polk County Environmental Services group. — **Jacob Snyder, assistant Environmental Services administrator**

# Drug Task Force makes 4-plus arrests each week

The Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force made 228 arrests in 2021. That's more than 4 arrests a week in the eight-county north-west Minnesota area.

The Task Force is made up of law enforcement officers provided by the eight counties and three major cities in the service area.

The arrests resulted in the seizure of 7,798 grams of meth, 58.4 grams of fentanyl, 38.2 grams of heroin, 16.24 pounds of marijuana, 84 prescription pills, and 32 weapons.

The mission of the Task Force is to identify, disrupt and dismantle local drug manufacturers and distributors, and also to assist local law enforcement agencies in violent crime investigations. The Task Force works to identify trafficking sources both local and regional and to assist in the apprehension of violent offenders in the eight-county area. It also works with other agencies in the greater region.

Some of the significant cases in Polk County during the year included:

- The arrest of two men in connection with the death of a 32-year-old woman from Erskine, who overdosed on M-30 fake Percocet pills. The pills, which contained fentanyl, had been the cause of a number of other overdose cases in the area. Sixteen pills were recovered.

The woman was found unresponsive outside a stalled vehicle near Fertile. In the vehicle were two young children. The children, physically unharmed, they were placed in protective custody.

One of the men arrested, George Pialkoff, 29, of Erskine, who also overdosed, was taken to a Crookston hospital. He recovered only to be arrested for his part in providing the pills for the woman. The other man, Andre Metcalf, 32, of Crookston, was charged with 3rd degree murder.

- After a year-long investigation, Cipriano Mello, 27, of Crookston, was arrested and charged with aggravated controlled substance crime in the first degree, conspiracy to commit a controlled substance crime in the first degree, and two counts of controlled substance sale in the first degree.

- The Task Force brought intelligence to the Grand Forks Drug Task Force that resulted in the arrest of two men, Matthew Carlson, 37, of Thief River Falls, and Adam Wicks, 37, of Grand Forks, at a Grand Forks motel, for the possession of drugs intended for sale.

Upon entry into the motel room, fentanyl went airborne instead of going down the toilet resulting in a hazmat response. No officers were injured.

- Participated in the arrest of Eric Reinbold, 45, rural Red Lake Falls, after a month-long search that was conducted in connection with the death of his wife. He was charged with 2nd degree murder.

- Participated in the arrest of Matthew Kuznia, 22, of Grand Forks, in connection with 31 burglaries in Polk County, 5 in Pennington County, 2 in Marshall County, and several more in Grand Forks and

Grand Forks County in North Dakota.

In other cases, information given to probation workers resulted in the seizure in Crookston of a large amount of methamphetamine and two large totes of paraphernalia. In another case a hiding spot in East Grand Forks was discovered for approximately one pound of meth.

M-30 pills, which contain fentanyl, "have been flooding the region and are extremely deadly as they are the cause of a number of overdoses," according to a Pine to Prairie official report.

Polk County and the cities of Crookston and East Grand Forks each provide one officer to the team, while the City of Thief River Falls and Pennington County cooperate to provide an investigator. Counties contributing full-time investigators to the force are Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Norman and Roseau. While not committing a full-time member, Kittson and Red Lake counties assist as needed.

Polk County has two officers who manage drug dogs. Marshall and Norman counties along with the cities of Thief River Falls and East Grand Forks each have canine officers that are made available to the Task Force.

The Task Force receives \$200,000 in state funding annually. The money is split between the cities and counties to reimburse them for a portion of the salaries of the investigators that they provide to the team. A portion of the grant is also used for training and to purchase necessary equipment.

# Public Health offers Healthy Homes Assessments

Polk-Norman-Mahnomen County Health Services is now accepting referrals for Healthy Homes Assessment and Environmental Intervention services. This service is provided free of charge for residents of Polk, Norman and Mahnomen counties.

The healthy homes approach uses well-documented, evidence-based interventions to address housing-related health hazards. A public health healthy homes specialist will provide a home visit, including:

An assessment: Assessment of potential housing threats that can exacerbate existing/potential health conditions or lead to other illness/injury.

Client education: Understanding the relationship between the health of the occupants, the housing conditions and the choices individuals make on the utilization of his/her living space.

Recommendation/mitigation supplies: Healthy homes recommendations, education and, as applicable, allowable intervention supplies (such as a vacuum, track mats

for doors, non-toxic cleaning supplies, radon test kits, fire extinguisher, dehumidifier, etc) that are low-cost, reliable, and practical methods to reduce health and safety risks will be provided.

Follow-up: Contact will be made with families who received supplies to assess

effectiveness in alleviating the healthy homes hazard.

Healthier homes directly result in healthier people, leading to lower health care costs and more vibrant communities.

For more information, call Polk County Public Health at 218-281-3385.



**HEALTHY HOMES**

"My child has asthma, and he is having asthma flare-ups a lot lately. Does Healthy Homes address asthma risks in the home?"

**ANSWER**

"Yes, a Healthy Homes assessment will look at various areas of the home that could be triggering your child's asthma and develop a plan with you to mitigate these potential issues. Education about ways to make a home healthier for someone dealing with asthma will also be provided."

**TOGETHER WE CAN** build a better future!

Polk-NORMAN-MAHNOMEN  
COUNTY HEALTH SERVICES



Solar-powered boat cleaning unit

## Boat cleaning station to combat spread of invasive species in county lakes

The Polk County Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Task Force has made a recent purchase to help protect waterways in the county.

As authorized by the Polk County Board, the Task Force used grant funding saved in prior years to purchase a CD3 Wayside Solar boat cleaning station from Minnesota-based CD3 systems.

CD3 systems products aim to give the public tools and equipment to combat AIS spread throughout the country by the clean, drain, dry philosophy.

The clean, drain, dry initiative aims to keep boats and watercrafts free of water which ultimately keeps aquatic invasive species where they are. Responsible lake and river users need to take necessary steps to take the time to look over all watercraft equipment when recreating on lakes and rivers.

Aquatic hitchhikers continue to spread all throughout Minnesota on boats and watercrafts. The cleaning stations will help lake and river users have the necessary tools to

combat aquatic invasive species from hitching rides on watercrafts.

The AIS task force knows how important our lakes and rivers are for people recreating in Polk County. They aim to keep our waterways clean and productive for future generations of lakes and river users. We are proud to have a CD3 system in our toolbox to combat AIS spread in Polk County. In the 2022 boating season the CD3 makes its home at East Shore public launch area located on the northeast side Maple Lake off County Highway 10.

This access provides sufficient space to use the unit without hindering people from using public access sites. Even if you are not launching in Maple Lake stop in to test out the new cleaning station. It's free to use! For more information visit [www.co.polk.mn.us](http://www.co.polk.mn.us) or join us on facebook under Polk County Environmental Services group. — **Jacob Snyder, assistant Environmental Services administrator**

# County Populations

Census	2010	2020			
Andover Tsp	119	109	Hammond Tsp	44	45
Angus Tsp	76	82	Helgeland Tsp	54	41
Badger Tsp	117	118	Higdem Tsp	84	83
Belgium Tsp	81	63	Hill River Tsp	157	197
Beltrami	107	88	Hubbard Tsp	75	58
Brandsvold Tsp	245	253	Huntsville Tsp	464	442
Brandt Tsp	50	45	Johnson Tsp	51	41
Brislet Tsp	53	46	Kertsonville Tsp	94	90
Bygland Tsp	272	258	Keystone Tsp	91	70
Chester Tsp	75	96	King Tsp	219	225
Climax	267	243	Knute Tsp	519	563
Columbia Tsp	470	438	Lengby	86	92
Crookston W1	1036	1197	Lessor Tsp	175	139
Crookston W2	1157	1303	Liberty Tsp	108	113
Crookston W3	1476	1420	Lowell Tsp	298	287
Crookston W4	1324	1155	McIntosh	625	606
Crookston W5	1315	1152	Mentor	153	104
Crookston W6	1583	1255	Nesbit Tsp	99	111
Crookston Tsp	413	441	Nielsenville	90	78
EGrndFrks W1	2080	2052	Northland Tsp	160	151
EGrndFrks W2	1694	1910	Onstad Tsp	71	61
EGrndFrks W3	1662	1694	Parnell Tsp	61	61
EGrndFrks W4	1645	1788	Queen Tsp	214	219
EGrndFrks W5	1520	1732	Reis Tsp	79	82
Eden Tsp	168	191	Rhinehart Tsp	139	139
Erskine	503	403	Roome Tsp	177	167
Esther Tsp	165	148	Rosebud Tsp	351	310
Euclid Tsp	151	134	Russia Tsp	27	29
Fairfax Tsp	198	160	Sandsville Tsp	67	47
Fanny Tsp	103	89	Scandia Tsp	74	64
Farley Tsp	45	59	Sletten Tsp	177	200
Fertile	842	804	Sullivan Tsp	173	164
Fisher	435	422	Tabor Tsp	113	115
Fisher Tsp	200	189	Trail	46	40
Fosston	1527	1434	Tynsid Tsp	64	77
Garden Tsp	212	220	Vineland Tsp	87	89
Garfield Tsp	461	519	Winger	220	174
Gentilly Tsp	280	260	Winger Tsp	206	195
Godfrey Tsp	313	294	Woodside Tsp	505	512
Grand Forks Tsp	179	195		<b>31600</b>	<b>31192</b>
GPark-Tilden Tsp	282	257	Est Grnd Frks.....	8,601.....	9,176
Gully	66	59	Crookston.....	7,891.....	7,482
Gully Tsp	136	136			

## COVID-19 VACCINATION IN POLK COUNTY

- Altru Clinic-Crookston**  
Visit your MyChart or Call 218-281-9100
- Essentia Health-Fosston**  
Visit your MyChart or Call 218-435-1212
- RiverView Health**  
Call 218-281-9595
- Sanford Health-East Grand Forks**  
Visit [www.sanfordhealth.org](http://www.sanfordhealth.org) or Call 218-773-6800
- Hugo's Pharmacy-Crookston and East Grand Forks**  
Visit [www.healthmartcovidvaccine.com](http://www.healthmartcovidvaccine.com)
- Palubicki's Pharmacy**  
Call 218-435-1000
- Polk County Public Health**  
Visit [www.co.polk.mn.us/91/Public-Health](http://www.co.polk.mn.us/91/Public-Health) or Call 218-521-8350
- Nord's Pharmacy-Fosston**  
Call 218-435-6645
- Thrifty White-Crookston**  
Visit [www.thriftywhite.com](http://www.thriftywhite.com)

# Voters in 57 precincts to cast ballots by mail

Voters in 57 of the 82 precincts in Polk County will cast their 2022 Primary and General Election ballots through the U.S. Mail this year rather than at polling places at township halls or at different sites within smaller cities.

The number of precincts electing to vote by mail is down 6 from the 2020 election cycle as several precincts had chosen the mail ballot option due to the challenges created by the pandemic.

Mail balloting is available to non-metro townships of any size and to cities with less than 400 registered voters.

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 until 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 46-day mark.” Cote is the county’s election administrator.

Besides usually resulting in greater participation in the election process, advantages to those precincts that use mail voting are that they have reduced election judge costs and less issues staffing a polling place on Election Day. In addition, they will not have the expense of updating election equipment.

The cost to the precinct for the mail ballots has historically been approximately \$2 per ballot. “Mail balloting is a fiscally responsible choice but ultimately it is town board’s responsibility to make the best choice for their residents whether that be mail balloting or maintaining a polling place. It is still possible for precincts to move to the mail ballot voting process for the 2022 elections or return to a polling place.

Should a precinct be considering a change to either their mail ballot or polling place status notification to the auditor must be made 90 days (May 11, 2022) before the Primary Election.

## Pet waste pail kits available at Polk County Transfer Station

Celebrating Earth Day, the Polk County Transfer Station in Crookston is announcing a new organics compost program aimed at collecting pet wastes that will allow residents to drop-off household pet wastes for composting purposes.

Residents who are interested can receive a free organics pet waste kit that will keep pet waste out of the normally bagged household garbage or littered be all over the countryside.

The first step in composting is the collection of organics, pet waste and food wastes that naturally will compost in the right conditions. This compost starter kit will allow house-

holds to not have to mix food wastes with pet wastes as this can become disgusting when the weather heats up.

The Polk County Transfer Station urges residents to stop in and get your free organics pet waste pail kit. For more information about the organics program, call us at 218-281-6445, email us at [environmental.svs@co.polk.mn.us](mailto:environmental.svs@co.polk.mn.us), or visit our website at <https://www.co.polk.mn.us/> under the Environmental Services Department, “NEW Organics Program” — **Jacob Snyder, assistant Environmental Services administrator**



## CHILDREN'S DENTAL SERVICES MONTHLY DENTAL CLINIC

Sites alternating monthly at the Polk County Public Health East Grand Forks and Crookston Office.

Child and Teen Checkups



## Children’s Dental Services offering regular care

Children, adolescents, and young adults are encouraged to see their primary care and dental provider on a regular basis as they grow and develop.

Unfortunately, many low-income families face significant barriers for accessing dental care in rural Minnesota. Polk County Public Health has been working to reduce these barriers and we are excited to announce a new partnership with Children’s Dental Services (CDS), a non-profit dental clinic, providing low-cost dental services in Polk County.

Children’s Dental Services offers services to persons from birth to age 100-plus. This includes pregnant women and is regardless of income level. CDS accepts Medical Assistance and offers an income-based, sliding fee scale

for income eligible families.

CDS will be providing monthly dental services out of the Polk County Public Health offices in Crookston and East Grand Forks, alternating locations each month. The services provided include examinations, x-rays, cleanings, fluoride treatments, plastic sealants, fillings, crowns, extractions, and other treatments as needed.

If you are interested in scheduling an appointment for yourself or your child, please call 612-746-1530 or 866-543-6009.

If you have any questions regarding the child and teen check-ups program or the upcoming Children Dental Services dental clinics, please contact Polk County Public Health at 281-281-3385.

## Christian is reappointed

Stuart Christian has been reappointed by the Polk County Board to another three-year term on the board of managers of the Sandhill Watershed District.

The current chair of the

board, Christian has served on the board since September 1999. Other managers are Clayton Bartz (treasurer), JJ Hamre (secretary), Don Andringa; and Craig Engestad.

# POLK COUNTY

## 2022 ASSESSMENT TILLABLE CHANGES

PRIOR TO STATE BOARD ADJUSTMENTS

<b>KEY</b>
TILLABLE PERCENTAGE CHANGE
AVERAGE TILLABLE VALUE PER ACRE

<b>COUNTY WIDE</b>
<b>2.8%</b>
<b>\$3,464</b>

HIGDEM 3% \$3,798	SANDSVILLE 3% \$3,819	FARLEY 3% \$3,864	BRISLET 3% \$3,208	HELGELAND 3% \$2,112
ESTHER 0% \$4,386	NORTHLAND 0% \$4,487	TABOR 1% \$4,355	ANGUS 2% \$3,581	BRANDT 0% \$1,860
GRAND FORKS 0% \$5,404	SULLIVAN 0% \$5,351	KEYSTONE 0% \$4,975	EUCLID 2% \$3,693	BELGIUM 0% \$2,057
RHINEHART 2% \$5,397	HUNTSVILLE 2% \$5,573	NESBIT 2% \$5,426	FANNY 2% \$4,117	PARNELL 2% \$2,206
	BYGLAND 3% \$5,184	FISHER 0% \$5,218	LOWELL 1% \$4,909	CROOKSTON 2% \$3,651
	TYSID 3% \$5,182	ROOME 4% \$5,213	ANDOVER 4% \$4,846	FAIRFAX 4% \$4,202
	VINELAND 4% \$5,046	HAMMOND 4% \$4,205	RUSSIA 2% \$3,739	ONSTAD 0% \$1,632
	HUBBARD 0% \$4,554	SCANDIA 0% \$3,631	REIS 4% \$3,404	LIBERTY 4% \$1,934
				GARFIELD 4% \$2,339
				GARDEN 3% \$2,785
				WINGER 2% \$2,757
				SLETTEN 2% \$2,725
				ROSEBUD 2% \$2,571
				COLUMBIA 2% \$1,918
				QUEEN 2% \$2,055
				BRANDSVOLD 3% \$2,589
				KING 5% \$2,518
				LESSOR 15% \$2,198
				HILL RIVER 10% \$2,378
				EDEN 8% \$2,055
				CHESTER 15% \$1,829
				GULLY 15% \$1,724
				JOHNSON 15% \$1,740
				TILDEN 15% \$1,660
				GROVE PARK 15% \$1,977
				BADGER 15% \$1,977
				WOODSIDE 0% \$2,385
				KNUTE 2% \$2,545
				GODFREY 0% \$1,976
				KERTSONVILLE 12% \$2,097
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