

POLK COUNTY NEWSLETTER

FALL 2019

Solid waste projects put into use



The Resource Recovery Facility at Fosston. The building addition has the double doors



The new Transfer Station in Crookston

Over the course of the past two years, grants from the State of Minnesota totaling \$17.25 million in cost-share funding have been used to provide various regional solid waste projects.

The projects include:

- Building addition at the Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) in Fosston for receiving waste and recyclables;
- Upgrade of waste processing equipment (Phase I) in Fosston;
- Transfer Station purchase and renovation in Bemidji;
- Advanced waste processing equipment (Phase II) in Fosston;
- New Transfer Station construction in Park Rapids;
- Organic Material (SSOM) Compost Facility at the Polk County Landfill Complex near Gentilly; and
- Construction of a new Transfer Station in Crookston.

The total cost of all of the projects within the region (located in Beltrami, Hubbard and Polk counties) exceeds \$30 million.

Wrap-up underway

As the 2019 construction season begins to wrap-up, so do these regional solid waste projects. All major construction associated with the scope of these grants is now completed, with only the punch-list items, seasonal work, shake-out and warranty work still occurring.

Each component of these grants has now been placed in service and is fully operational. Fine tuning, non-grant modification
See SOLID WASTE Pages 2-3

Vaping, Juuling now said to be an epidemic

Beginning Aug. 1, Minnesota law prohibits the use of e-cigarette products indoors where cigarette use is prohibited, including bars and restaurants.

Vaping, Juuling, and e-cigarette popularity is escalating at an alarming rate. Teens who previously seemed impervious to smoking traditional cigarettes are now vaping at such a significant rate that the surgeon general and FDA have declared youth use of e-cigarettes an epi-

demic.

What is vaping? Vaping is the use of battery-powered devices called vapes or e-cigarettes to inhale nicotine aerosols that are often flavored. The most popular vaping device is JUUL, with 75% of dollar market share. (Truth Initiative. Behind the explosive growth of JUUL. 1/3/2019)

See VAPING on Page 3

PRESORTED STD
US Postage
PAID
GRAND FORKS, ND
PERMIT NO. 11

ECRWSS
POSTAL CUSTOMER

Solid waste projects put into use

Continued from Page 1

cations and tweaks based on actual performance will likely be ongoing for a while, which is normal when significant changes are made, experience is gained and new systems are learned. These activities will be small in comparison, and provide minimal impact on operations.



Waste in the transfer station loaded for transport to Fosston

Crookston Transfer Station – Polk County

The Crookston Transfer Station project involved the demolition of the old, dilapidated building and construction of a new, larger facility at the same location. The larger structure includes a larger office area, large tip floor, higher tip floor ceiling height, combination interior loading dock/truck scale, exterior truck scale, parking lot and illuminated canopies over the waste drop-off area for the public. A new payloader and material handler were also part of this project.

Limited operations on the new tip floor began in December 2018, and the new office was occupied and full operations in the new facility began in April. Since full operations began, multiple punch-list and warranty items have been worked on, and some still persist. Various improvements are pending the closeout of the project with Nor-Son, Inc., the general contractor the project that was awarded to through the bid process. Whether these additional improvements get done this fall or carry over into 2020 will depend upon how long it takes to close-out the project.



Compost material is turned on the new pad

Compost Facility – Polk County

The Source Separated Organic Material (SSOM) Compost Facility project involved the removal of the old, non-compliant compost pad, and the construction of a new, compliant, all-season compost pad designed for the management of SSOM (i.e. – food



Food waste is being composted

waste and similar organic materials).

Both the old compost pad, and new compost pad are in the same general location, and are located over the old, unlined solid waste landfill disposal area that was closed in the early 1990s. The compost pad acts as an enhanced cover, which is preferred by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). In addition to the



Tires are shredded for re-use in other ways

compost pad, a new payloader and portable trommel screen were also a part of this project.

Limited use of the compost pad began in December 2018. Use was limited until summer of 2019 due to the early, unseasonably cold weather that fall which had prevented the compost pad from fully curing. Some re-grading, modified drainage and final grading remained. A few final punch-list items, including re-vegetation, remain to be completed.

Fosston Resource Recovery Facility – Polk County

There were multiple projects associated with the Resource Recovery Facility (RRF) project. The 18,000-square-foot building addition was completed in the spring of 2018. It included a large tip floor with high ceiling heights, new exterior scale, material handler and payloader.

The Phase I process equipment includes the new front-end equipment to process material faster and more efficiently. It did the primary sorting of materials in roughly the same manner as the old process equipment.

This Phase I equipment was placed in service in the summer of 2018. The Phase II process equipment includes the new advanced processing equipment that sorts materials mechanically — including paper and plastics. The Phase II equipment — and entire new



Recyclable cardboard is manually removed from waste stream

processing facility – was placed in-service in December 2018.

Various modifications to this system have had to be made since placed in service. The defective scale deck and concrete pads were replaced. Key equipment modifications had to be made to gain the required performance, and various guards, pans and support modifications had to be made for safety and performance reasons. Though many minor modifications will be made over the course of the next few years, the facility is now fully operational.

Beltrami and Hubbard County Transfer Stations

Beltrami County had contracted the operation of its solid waste programs to a private contractor. The contractor owned and operated these facilities located in Bemidji and Blackduck. Beltrami

County purchased those assets from the contractor and utilized the funds from these grants to modify and upgrade the facilities. Beltrami has now purchased these assets, completed the modifications required, and, starting in 2020, will take over the management and operation of the new facilities.

Hubbard County has owned and operated its solid waste facilities in Park Rapids. As the facility was not designed to sort waste and had no holding capacity, a new Transfer Station was constructed on the same site. The Transfer Station in Park Rapids was completed in the summer of 2019 and is now fully operational.

Both the Beltrami and Hubbard County improvements, much like Polk County’s station in Crookston, utilize the same methods of waste management and trailer loading. This has allowed all locations to better utilize the waste services offered at the RRF in Fosston and Landfill Complex near Gentlyly.

Moving Forward

As construction of this new infrastructure wraps-up, the focus for these programs switches to that of refinement and adjustment. Finding ways to modify, streamline or tailor operations to take advantage of the options these new facilities offer will allow for additional cost savings and benefits.

One example of these types of benefits is the ability to share a common hauling contract between facilities. In 2019, these three counties began utilizing a common hauling contract and trailer fleet that has substantially reduced the cost associated with transporting waste and recyclable materials for all parties. As other opportunities present themselves, additional modifications will be made.

Regardless of any additional modifications, each of these new facilities will serve the communities in which they are located for the next 20+ years, and are well positioned to be able to respond to future changes or demands as may be required. — **Jon Steiner, administrator, Polk County Environmental Services**

Vaping

Continued from Page 1

Nicotine is highly addictive and can harm brain development as teens grow. No amount of nicotine is safe for youth. Besides nicotine, e-cigarette aerosol contains harmful chemicals that reach deep into the lungs.

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is currently working with local public health and health care providers to investigate reports

of severe lung injury potentially related to vaping and e-cigarette use among teens and adults.

E-cigarettes are not FDA-approved quitting aids for smoking and they are not proven to help people quit. Free quitting medications and counseling are available to all Minnesotans by visiting QUITPLAN® Services at www.quitplan.com or by calling 1-888-354-PLAN (7526).

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, chair
- Dist. 3 — Gary Willhite, vice chair
- Dist. 4 — Joan K. Lee
- Dist. 5 — Don Diedrich

Construction season was different, yet much the same

This summer’s construction season has been quite different. But, then again it is somewhat the same.

We had an early start with overlays being done in May. This is different. But, we still have grading and paving that will need to be completed by Oct. 15. This is the same.

Another challenge this year is that because of all the rain in southern Minnesota last year, the companies that supply precast box culverts are behind in production. As a result, one of township bridge replacements that we were hoping to have completed by the start of the beet harvest won’t get completed until at least November.

This year’s projects that were completed are as follows:

CSAH 3 - Grading and bituminous surfacing from CSAH

- 30 to CSAH 6
- CSAH 3 – Gradewiden/overlay from CSAH 6 to CSAH 29
- CSAH 3 – Overlay from CSAH 29 to Polk/Clearwater county line
- CSAH 10 – grading/surfacing/curb and gutter at East Shore/Maple Lake
- CSAH 36 – Overlay from CSAH 34 to CSAH 42
- CSAH 41 – Overlay from CSAH 42 to CSAH 34
- CSAH 42 – Overlay from CSAH 36 to CSAH 41
- CSAH 61 – Mill and overlay in Fisher.
- CSAH 111 – Mill and overlay in Fisher.
- Andover Township – Bridge replacement
- Fanny Township – Bridge replacement.— **Richard Sanders, Polk County engineer**

County property valuation increases

As determined by the Polk County Assessor for the purpose of assessing property taxes that will be payable in 2020, the 2019 valuation of real estate in the county now totals \$5,577,373,300.

This new total amount of valuation represents an increase of \$114,902,300 over 2018, or about 2.1 percent.

Of the new 2019 total valuation amount:

- 55.9% is for tillable agricultural lands.
- 7.0% is for all other agricultural property.
- 26.2% is for residential properties.
- 4.8% is for seasonal recreational properties.
- 2.4% is for commercial properties.
- 2.0% is for industrial properties.
- 3.1% is for building sites (rural homes and garages on 1 acre *).
- 1.8% is for "all other" property classifications.

New construction accounted for \$31,652,300 of the total valuation.

The overall increase is mainly due to an increase in the valuations for residential properties throughout the county and also because of a fairly large increase in the valuations of lake properties.

Note — the figures above are based on the 2019 PRISM 2 report (Final).

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

* — Included in "all other" agricultural property

Updated: Sept. 20, 2019



License Center

The remodeled License Center office in the Government Center provides service that better meets the needs of customers whether they are standing or seated at one of the 3 stations that are arranged in a linear design. The \$32,000 project included new furniture, updated electrical service, and new floor covering.

2020 Census Day to be held April 1

The 2020 Census will determine the number of seats that Minnesota has in Congress, the number of Electoral College votes that the state will have in presidential elections, and any adjustments of the boundaries of the political district that are used for federal, state and locally elected offices.

There will also be the state's share of the annual distribution of \$400 billion in federal funding for infrastructure and services.

And the population numbers will be used to guide businesses on economic opportunities, market trends, and where to grow their industries. The people who deal with transportation infrastructure, housing, health care facilities, and schools will use the numbers, too, in preparing for the needs in those areas.

Current projections show that Minnesota has gained residents since 2010, but not as quickly as other states such as Texas and Florida. With a slower growth rate, Minnesota is vulnerable to dropping from eight U.S. Representative seats to seven. Losing a U.S. Representative seat means Minnesota would have less influence over federal policies and one fewer Electoral College vote.

To ensure Minnesota has the best chance to retain all eight of its congressional seats, the state needs an accurate count of its whole population.

A goal of the 2020 Census is to make the count at a lower cost per household (adjusted for inflation) than the 2010 Census. New technology makes it possible to maintain high-quality results at an affordable cost.

For the 2020 Census, individuals will for the first time be able to complete and submit their census forms online. People who are unable to complete the Census online will again have the option to be counted by mail, over the phone, or in-person by a door-to-door Census taker.

By April 1, 2020, citizens will receive an invitation to participate in the Census. The invitation will provide three options for completing the census form:

- Online;
- By phone; or
- By mail.

Persons will be able to sign up to receive a reminder from the Census Bureau by email letting them know the first dates that the Census form can be completed.

The Census Bureau is required by law to keep your answers confidential. That means they must protect your personal information and will never share it with any other people or organizations, inside or outside of government.



Polk County Human Service Center in East Grand Forks

Elevator, building projects underway

Projects to replace the elevator in the Government Center in Crookston and to prepare the Human Service Center in East Grand Forks for a new roof-top heating and air conditioning system and a new roof are being undertaken this fall.

The work at the Human Center will precede a more extensive remodeling and rearrangement of the interior space that is planned over the winter months.

The Government Center elevator has malfunctioned a few times, including when people were aboard. The telephone in the elevator telephone has failed, too. In a recent incident, the carriage stopped short, did not fully close the inside doors and did not open while someone was inside. The problem has been traced to a more than 50-year-old electrical control system and that may not have been new when it was installed in 1968.

While the elevator now works fine virtually all of the time, riders have been encouraged to have their cell phones with them just in case. The elevator is turned off and unavailable to anyone who might be in the building during non-regular office hours.

While there has been nothing to worry about it has concerned safety, the time has come for replacement and will be done the Thyssen Krupp Elevator Corp., Fargo, which provided the low quote for that work at \$118,500. The new elevator is scheduled to be in operation by about the first of

the year.

Remodeling of the Human Service Center building in East Grand Forks actually began about a year ago when additional space was created for the Northwest Mental Health Center. That work was completed this summer.

Custom Aire Mechanical Contracting & Service, Grand Forks, is upgrading the heating and cooling systems prior to the re-roofing of the building. This will include replacing the air handlers and redirecting how each of those three units serves specific areas of the building. Completion is expected in late fall or next spring after which Herzog Roofing Co., Detroit Lakes, has a \$287,000 contract to provide the new roof. The roof in place now has experienced leaking.

The interior remodeling will rearrange the use of space by county's Social Service and Public Health offices. New space will be created for the County Veteran Service office and for the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) office that is also located in the building.

After 18 years of county ownership, the work will set the building up for many more years. Before Polk County acquired it in 1999 the building had been home to the Maury's TV & Appliance store after having been built initially in the 1970s for Warehouse Foods.

County to assist with school elections

The Polk County Taxpayer Service Center will provide assistance for elections in three school districts in the county on Tuesday, Nov. 5

The elections will be conducted in the Crookston,

Fertile-Beltrami and Fisher school districts. A school election is also being held for residents who live in the Red Lake Falls School District that is within Polk County.

In 2020, the county will

conduct the presidential nomination primary election on March 3. The March Township Elections will be held the following week on March 10.

Permits required for all projects

Don't forget your building permits for all building activity in Polk County.

Polk County Environmental Services would like to remind residents that building/land use permits are required for all construction projects in the county.

If you are planning building/land use projects, please contact Polk County Planning & Zoning prior to construction to determine setback and ordinance requirements that may apply.

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

People sometimes forget to apply for a building permit or don't think they need a permit for a deck, small shed, septic system, etc. However, permits are required for almost any construction project.

Septic systems involve obtaining a design from a licensed septic contractor as well as approval through a permit. All fixing of septic systems requires a land use permit. Any land alterations or landscaping activity in the shoreland or floodplain zoning districts may also require permits.

Also remember that 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. The costs can add up quick especially if setbacks aren't met or a variance or conditional use permit is required. In certain situations penalty fees may be over \$1000.

So, make sure to apply for your land use/building permits early and plan ahead to avoid unnecessary delays or penalty fees. Our office is more than happy to answer questions and assist you through the permitting process. For more information contact Polk County Planning & Zoning at (218) 281-5700. — **Jacob Snyder, Polk County Planning & Zoning administrator**

Drug Task Force officers discover airsoft gun

During a recent search warrant exercised in Crookston, Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force officers discovered an airsoft gun which is used to replicate a firearm.

Airsoft is a recreational sport started in the 1970s with games run similar to paintball. Airsoft guns project 6 mm. plastic beebees. Airsoft is designed for use in a certified or regulated sporting event or competition, in military or civil defense activities and theatrical productions.

With the addition this year of an officer from Marshall County the Pine to Prairie Drug Task Force now has 13 law enforcement officers who work in an eight-county area of northwest Minnesota.

In the first six months of 2019, the team combined to make 81 arrests in the eight counties (Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Norman, Marshall, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau). Drugs seized in those arrests included 563 grams of methamphetamine, 2.8 grams of heroin, .61 pounds of marijuana, and 16 prescription pills. Five weapons were seized

The 81 arrests compares to the 91 arrests made in the first six months of 2018. Seven weapons were seized then.

Polk County and the cities of Crookston and East Grand Forks each provide an officer to the task force. Thief River Falls and Pennington County cooperate to provide an investirecent gator. Counties that provide investiga-



Airsoft gun resembles the real thing

tors are Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Norman and Roseau. The U.S. Border Patrol also commits four agents and U.S. Homeland Security also provides an investigator. While not committing a full-time officer to the task force, Kittson and Red Lake counties assist as needed.

Marshall and Norman counties and the cities of Thief River Falls and East Grand Forks each

have canine officers that are made available to the task force.

A Minnesota National Guard counter-drug analyst, who compiles information on arrest activities for the team, started work on June 3

The task force receives \$200,000 in state funding annually. This money is split between the cities and counties to reimburse them for a portion of the

salaries of the investigators. A part of the grant is also used for training and to purchase necessary equipment.

The task force answers to a 14-member advisory board. That board is made up of East Grand Forks Police Chief Mike Hedlund (president), Crookston Police Chief Paul Biermaier (vice president), Polk County Sheriff Jim Tadman, Pennington County Sheriff Ray Kuznia, Thief River Falls Police Chief Dick Wittenberg, Crookston City Council member Bob Quanrud, East Grand Forks City Council member Mark Olstad, Polk County Commissioner Warren Strandell, Marshall County Commissioner Jim Duckstad, Roseau County Sheriff Steve Gust, Assistant Roseau County Attorney Mike Grover, Norman County Sheriff Jeremy Thornton, Norman County Chief Deputy Ben Fall, Lake of the Woods County Sheriff Gary Fish, Lake of the Woods County Attorney James Austad, and Marshall County Sheriff Jason Boman.

Associate (non-voting) advisory board members include Polk County Attorney Greg Widseth, Red Lake County Sheriff Mitch Bernstein, Ada Police Chief Jody Bueng, Kittson County Sheriff Mark Wilwant, U.S. Border Patrol Agent Eric Kuhn, and Homeland Security Investigations Agent Josh Goldberg.



Items, drugs, a handgun and money were discovered during a recent drug bust

Warmack leads Social Service Department

As the director of Polk County Social Services, Karen Warmack is looking forward to working with agency staff in providing necessary resources to help residents access services.

“We have many knowledgeable staff who enhance the lives of others through implementation of our programs,” she says. “We are here to work with the people in the community; to make sure that they get the services and support needed to strengthen them so that they can become self-sufficient and reach their potential.”

Warmack was selected to lead the Social Service Department in August following the resignation of Peter Sedgeman. A native of Willmar, Minn., Warmack joined the Polk County Social

Services Department in 1986 after earning a B.S degree in social work with minors in psychology and chemical dependency at Bemidji State University.

Changes in the department will include the selection of replacements for the duties that Warmack had most recently held. That includes the supervision of the 12 staff, who provide services in the areas of child welfare, mental health, adoption, adolescent services, minor parent, chemical health, and adult mental health, along with other areas of overall supervision in the department.

Cheryl Smart, who has been with the department for 19 years, has been selected to supervise the family based service providers (FBSP), child

protection and adoption unit, and the social workers who work in the area of long-term care services.

In her 32 years with the county Warmack has worked in and supervised a number of areas of social services. Of special significance is work that included being a part of a team that successfully instituted operational changes that reduced Polk County’s cost for out of home placements from a high of \$2.4 million in 1997 to less than \$1 million over the course of several years. And as a resident of East Grand Forks and a flood victim herself, she supervised services there for flood victims following the flood of 1997.

“We have dedicated staff, who are doing good work for the citizens of Polk County,”



Karen Warmack

she says. “We plan to continue to provide those services in a cost-effective way that meet the needs of people as things evolve and change in the county.”

DNR confirms Chinese Mystery Snails in Lake Sarah

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has confirmed the presence of Chinese mystery snails in Lake Sarah near Erskine. These snails most likely were introduced from humans inadvertently transporting a live adult snail into the water body.

The Chinese mystery snail is a snail that was shipped to California from Asia in the 1800s for Asian seafood markets. The different shades of brown snails grow up to two inches long and are normally referenced as being the size of a golf ball.

The CMS (Chinese mystery snail) got its name from how it gives birth in the spring to young fully developed snails that suddenly and mysteriously appear.

This invasive species can form dense populations and out-compete native species for food and habitat in ponds, lakes and streams. The snails can carry parasitic worms and can transmit trematodes that can kill waterfowl. There is currently no threat to human wellbeing from this infestation and it is believed that Lake Sarah has had them for many years, as they are quite prevalent with a thick adult population.

There is no evidence to support this theory but some believe that young CMS can be transferred from lake to lake by hitchhiking in bait buckets and boat bilges. What also doesn’t help us is they can survive out of water for days by just tightly shutting their trap door to hold in moisture. It is nearly impossible to get rid of mystery snails.

The only way people can help is to make sure that they are not transferring the snails and water out of the lake and by reporting any new infestations in other lakes nearby. Awareness is vital for preventing the spreading of them.

The Polk County Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force urges lake users to be on the alert to not bring these species to other water bodies. Dispose of bait water, bilge waters and clean all equipment used in fishing or recreation. Public awareness is



Chinese Mystery Snails are the size of a golf ball

vital to controlling the spread of this species into other water bodies. Due to this infestation, the task force will be working with the DNR to evaluate how susceptible Union Lake and Bradley Lake are to this infestation, as there are water connections to both lakes from Lake Sarah. Please don’t transport these large snails to other lakes. Remove snails that wash up on lakeshore beaches and throw them in the trash. And spread the word to others. Please contact Polk County Environmental Services at 281-5700 with any questions or comments regarding this article. — **Jacob Snyder, Polk County Planning & Zoning administrator**

2020 Foresight

Chuck Whiting
Polk County Administrator



Seems like yesterday I was preparing for Y2K. Now it's budgeting for 2020, the year everyone wants things to come into focus (get it?).

So, to with the County's budget. As of this writing the budget itself has a ways to go but a couple of things are clear.

First, the remodeling of the County's building in East Grand Forks, commonly referred to as the Human Services Building, is moving along in its planning.

Approximately \$2,000,000 in remodeling for Polk County Social Services and Public Health departments, along with existing tenants in the building will set the County up for the foreseeable future. A roof replacement and redoing of the HVAC system along with remodeled office spaces should help make the building more energy efficient and an improved client and work space environment.

Improvements made in 2019, very successfully, expanded the office space for Northwest Mental Health's offices in East Grand Forks. We hope that quality work can be replicated in the rest of the building.

To pay for this the Board of Commissioners is considering a capital improvements bond sale after Jan. 1. Included in this bond sale will be some additional improvements to the Government Center, a storage building for the Sheriff's impound lot and roof improvements to the Highway building (leaks!). These increase the bond total to about \$3,000,000 to be paid over 10 years starting in 2021.

The second item of clarity is the preliminary levy increase of 5.5%. All local government jurisdictions must set a preliminary levy before the end of September, a levy that cannot be exceeded by the final levy determined in December.

Also, the County budget public hearing is set for Dec. 3rd at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room at the Government Center in Crookston. Everyone is invited to attend and voice their questions and concerns on the 2020 budget. Watch for the notice of this hearing on the Truth-in-Taxation notice that you will receive in the mail in November. Feel free to call anytime as well if you have questions.

As noted, the preliminary levy is the cap on the final levy as the Board and staff continue to work on refining the 2020 budget through October and November.

A couple of other things of note, employees are budgeted to receive a 2.5% cost of living adjustment to the unified wage grid, one collective bargaining agreement is yet to be done, and the Legislature increased Polk's county program aid to almost \$1.2 million.

The goal for the final levy is to get it in the 3-3.5% increase range. The addition of about \$30 million of new construction valuation should help spread that increase out.

The final matter thought that cannot be forgotten and must remain clear-eyed is the likelihood of a large tax refund due to Enbridge Energy. I will avoid repeating the details that can be read in previous newsletter, but we do not expect good news on behalf of county taxpayers.

Like the other 12 counties, we just have to wait until we are told what the refund will be and when it has to be paid. At that point, I may retake my eye test for 2020...

Buffer compliance to be actively evaluated

Agriculture fields in Minnesota require water resource protection (buffers) along designated public waters and public drainage systems. Minnesota Statute §103F.48 — the "buffer law" — has been incorporated into the Polk County Land Use/Zoning Ordinance and current compliance will be actively evaluated by on-site/field checks on an individual parcel basis.

Required buffers on public waters (50 feet) were to have been established (seeded) by Nov. 01, 2017; buffers on public drainage systems (16.5 feet) were to be seeded by Nov. 01, 2018.

Soil & Water Conservation Districts (WCDs) are obligated to perform compliance tracking and monitoring and report findings to Polk County and to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BSWR).

Compliance with the buffer law must be achieved by seeding required buffers with one or more perennial species to the prescribed widths. To facilitate/expedite compliance status, landowners/tenants are to inform SWCD staff when the buffers are seeded. West Polk SWCD has provided technical guidance and worked directly with many landowners/tenants to identify parcels applicable to the buffer law and determine compliance status. It is recommended that absentee landowners make arrangements to seed/establish buffers as soon as practicable. Notification of seeding/establishment is certainly the most

effective way to avoid receiving official notices from Polk County including potential monetary fines.

If a Notice of Noncompliance or Corrective Action Notice is issued, the resolution is simplified by timely seeding buffers on applicable parcels to the prescribed widths as outlined in Minnesota statute.

West and East Polk SWCD staff are available to assist with technical inquiries and maintain the commitment to work with landowners/tenants to achieve compliance with §103F.48 "State buffer law." Inquiries regarding Enforcement or Administrative Penalty Order procedures should be directed to Polk County Planning & Zoning P.O. Box 375 320 Ingersoll Ave Crookston, MN (218-281-5700-).

The www.westpolkswcd.org and/or www.eastpolkswcd.org buffer page(s) have direct links to BSWR and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources web pages for current available information regarding buffers. Persons can also visit the West Polk SWCD office (co-located with NRCS) at 528 Strander Ave. in Crookston) or the East Polk County SWCD office in the Bjella Building at 240 Cleveland Ave. in McIntosh. — **Aaron Habermehl, Wetland Conservation Act administrator, West Polk Co. Soil & Water Conservation District**

Lee elected to AMC position

Polk County Commissioner Joan Lee has been elected to serve a two-year term as the alternate director for District 3 in the Association of Minnesota Counties. Pennington County Commissioner Darryl Tveitbakk is the district director. The district includes eight counties in northwestern Minnesota.

AMC is a voluntary, non-partisan statewide organization that assists the state's 87 counties in providing effective county gover-

nance. The association works closely with the legislative and administrative branches of government in seeing that legislation and policies favorable to counties are enacted and also provides legislative advocacy, educational programs and training, research and communications for the member counties.

The district director serves on AMC's board of directors and conducts semi-annual meetings in the district.

New bed contract fills void as area jails open

In anticipation of three new jails opening in our region, Tri-County Community Corrections (TCCC) explored alternative contract options to replace contracts ending as those new facilities were opening.

TCCC was able to successfully secure a contract with Mahnomon County that guarantees 30 beds/day at a reduced per diem rate for the next three years.

This housing contract will benefit not only TCCC and Mahnomon County, but will likely have a positive impact on the court and public defenders as nearly all inmates (if not all) will be housed in one location for the first time in many years.

An additional benefit available with TCCC is the use of technology to facilitate first appearances by ITV, which saves additional transport time.

Female population

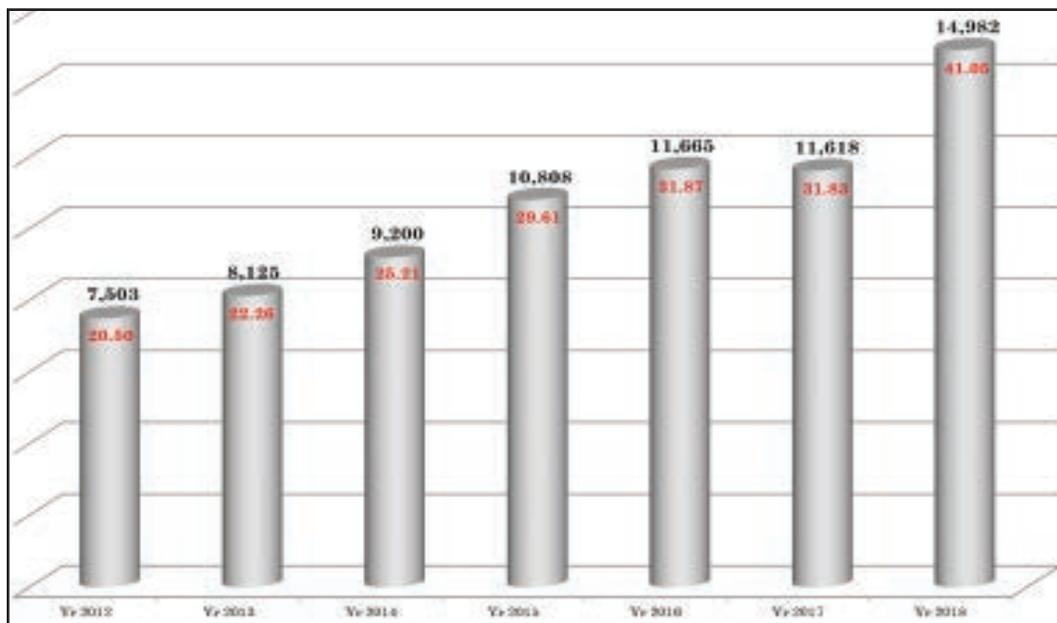
The female population has risen dramatically in the last three years. The average female population has risen 29% forcing operational housing adjustments including housing female overflow in a second unit that was previously used for male Special Management Housing.

This change in housing demographics has placed separation space at a premium for the NWRCC and has often resulted in what once were rather easy classification decisions to now be much more complicated due to increased limitations to effectively separate.

Juvenile Center

The Red River Valley Juvenile Center is attempting to expand its footprint within northwest Minnesota.

Numerous presentations have been conducted with social service, law enforcement and probation departments throughout northwest Minnesota in an effort to educate agencies on the programs and services that the RRVJC offers. These efforts have resulted in consistent referral numbers from Becker, Mahnomon and Marshall counties, and the White Earth Indian



Total inmate bed days (in black) with average female daily population (in red)

Reservation. While overall facility numbers did see a decrease in 2018 with an average daily population of approximately 8.4 adolescents/day, the average daily population through July 2019 is approximately 10.5 adolescents/day. Roughly 60% of the population served at the RRVJC has been from non-member counties.

Recidivism Reduction Grant

In September 2018, TCCC was awarded a two-year Recidivism Reduction Grant in the amount of nearly \$300,000 through the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs.

The project proposed by TCCC in partnership with the Northwestern Mental Health Center (NWMHC) has the overarching theme of recidivism reduction (targeting the highest risk population/s) through the following objectives and activities.

A. Expand offender access to services and programming: The NWMHC will dedicate staff to serve the needs of the offender population at the NWRCC. Therapists will offer psychoeducational groups, individual counseling sessions, and facilitate involvement in treatment programs.

B. Provide comprehensive

release planning: A Care Coordinator will facilitate release planning following a three-phase approach of preparation, transition and stabilization, which will be initiated while the offender is in jail and aid them in their return to the community.

C. Provide specialized supervision for female offenders: The pathway for women's involvement in the criminal justice system follows a very different path than men and requires a more targeted approach. The creation of a specialized caseload allows for a more targeted approach through the use of gender-specific risk assessments to better target risk factors specific to female offenders, alternative supervision strategies, and more focus on cognitive behavioral and trauma programming tailored to this population.

Staffing challenges

From 2016 through 2018, the NWRCC has seen an average of over 19 staff resignations per year.

High staff turnover continues to pose significant challenges operationally and administratively, especially in the Corrections Officer ranks of NWRCC. The most obvious is the lack of experience and the impact that this has on day-to-

day operations.

Additionally, the increased demands of high staff turnover are also significant on those responsible for training, recruiting, interviewing, backgrounding, scheduling and budgeting. — **Andrew Larson, executive director, Tri-County Community Corrections**

**Help Us
Fight
Crime**
*The Polk County
Sheriff's
Tip Line is
completely*

Anonymous

Help us to fight drugs and all crime. Your tips, especially when combined with other information that we already might have, could help someone's child, parent, relative or friend.

**Sheriff Jim
Tadman**

1-218-435-7872

'Gravel Tax' collections up slightly

The \$148,256 in Aggregate Material Tax collected for gravel excavations made in Polk County in 2018 was a slight increase from the \$146,432 in 2017.

Distribution of the 2018 tax included \$59,858 each to the Township Road & Bridge Fund and to the Polk County Road & Bridge Fund, \$21,127 to the Reserve Fund for Pit Restoration, and the \$7,413 that was credited to the county auditor-treasurer for administration.

Active pits

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

The tax is used as a way to

help maintain roads. By law, the tax rate is set at 21.5 cents per cubic yard or 15 cents per ton of aggregate material excavated.

The ability to collect the tax was created in 1980 by special legislation at the request of Polk and Norman counties.

Distribution

The settlement payments sent to each township for 2018 included: Chester, 5 pits, \$12,470.50; Columbia, 1 pit, \$2,494.10; Crookston, 1 pit, \$2,494.10; Gentilly, 8 pits, \$19,952.80; Grove Park-Tilden, 3 pits, \$7,482.30; Hill River, 1 pit, \$2,494.10; Lessor, 1 pit, \$2,494.10; Liberty, 1 pit, \$2,494.10; Queen, 1 pit, \$2,494.10; and Trail City, 2 pits, \$4,988.20.

History of Gravel

Tax collections

1997	\$3,325
1998	\$78,035
1999	\$77,655
2000	\$90,678
2001	\$90,391
2002	\$73,975
2003	\$86,007
2004	\$72,362
2005	\$104,077
2006	\$98,378
2007	\$66,497
2008	\$64,299
2009	\$124,766
2010	\$144,334
2011	\$165,101
2012	\$197,253
2013	\$177,846
2014	\$254,861
2015	\$175,864
2016	\$141,271
2017	\$146,432
2018	\$148,256



Don Diedrich

Diedrich is vice chair of MCIT board

Polk County Commissioner Don Diedrich has become the vice chair of the board of directors of the Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust (MCIT).

MCIT is a joint powers entity made up of Minnesota counties and associated public entities that pool resources to provide property, casualty and workers compensation insurance coverage to the members. MCIT also offers risk management and loss control services.

Diedrich, who was first elected to the board of directors in 2010 and then re-elected to consecutive four-year terms in 2014 and 2018, had been serving as the secretary-treasurer. He also serves on the personnel, audit and governance committees. Sherburne County Commissioner Felix Schmiesing is the board chair.

The board of directors consists of county commissioners, county auditors/auditor-treasurers, and a county coordinator/administrator. Eight of the nine seats are voted upon at MCIT's annual membership meeting, which is held each year in early December. The ninth member of the board is from the Minnesota Association of County Administrators, which recommends a coordinator or administrator to the MCIT Board.

Board members serve staggered four-year terms. The county coordinator/administrator board member serves a two-year term.

Tri-County recognizes employees

Tri-County Community Corrections held an employee in-service event on January 4 to recognize agency staff for their contributions to making our communities safer. In addition to recognizing employees for multiple years of service, which is becoming a rarity in our field, employees were also recognized for exceptional performance as nominated by their peers and co-workers.

The event concluded with keynote speaker Michael Kutzke and his presentation on the importance of resiliency in the field of corrections. The presentation provided for many laughs but also reinforced the importance of maintaining a healthy perspective and taking the time to take care of ones' self. — Andrew Larson, TCCC executive director

RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Joshua Plante, NWRCC Corporal; Lori Kasprick, ABE Program Manager; Lorraine Aquino-Corona, Youth Counselor; Mindy Piersol, Probation Support Staff.

2 (plus) YEARS SERVICE

Shauna Hoeffner, NWRCC Corporal; Kelvin Kaste, Corrections Officer; Guy

Gullekson, Corrections Officer; Mitchell Lundeen, Corrections Officer; Zachary Tweten, Corrections Officer; Nicholas Norberg, Corrections Officer; Jonathon Dodge, NWRCC Corporal; Matthew Olson, NWRCC Corporal; Matt Benge, Corrections Officer; Taylor Clark, Corrections Officer; Samantha Beck, RRVJC Caseworker; Arielle Sundberg, Probation Agent; Lorraine Aquino-Corona, Youth Counselor; Kurt Proulx, Corrections Officer; Justin Schill, Probation Agent; Jessica Aarestad, Sr Probation Agent; Mindy Piersol, Probation Support Staf; Donovan Hoffman, Youth Counselor; Melanie Lessard, Correctional Case Aide

5 (plus) YEARS SERVICE

Dianne Boyum, Youth Counselor; Denise Cole, Support Staff; Brandon Nienaber, NWRCC Sergeant; Scott Volker, Probation Agent; Lindsay Anderson, S.S. Supervisor; Kyle Allen, RRVJC Program Director; Melissa Hendry, Probation Agent; Arika Darco, Support Staff; Travis Nicholas, Associate Probation Agent; Lori Kasprick, ABE Program Manager/Teacher.

10 (plus) YEARS SERVICE

Doug Ottinger, Corrections Officer; Dale Arnold, Deputy Chief Prob Officer; Annette Erickson, Admin Accountant; Paula Schroeder, Sr Probation Agent; Heather Sabian,

Transition Worker; Jessica Hajicek, Chief Probation Officer; Craig Magsam, NWRCC Corporal; Jason Schraeder, Youth Counselor; Nicolee Thompson, Corrections Officer; Joshua Plante, NWRCC Corporal; Sandra Nielsen, Youth Counselor; Raelene Aarhus, Probation Agen; Amanda Bochow, Transition Worker; Dorene Erickson, Financial Worker; Shawn Hogenson, Support Staff.

15 (plus) YEARS SERVICE

Harvey Uken, Youth Counselor; Judy Moran, NWRCC Corporal; Catherine Barstad, NWRCC Sergeant; Andrew Larson, Executive Director; Phil Schroeder, Lt/Asst Jail Administrator; Lisa Larson, Career Agent; Jim Bregier, Lead Youth Counselor; Chuck Goering, NWRCC Sergeant.

20 (plus) YEARS SERVICE

Chad Johnson, NWRCC Sergeant; Mary Thibert, CD Counselor; Ryan Chisholm, Sr Probation Agent; Joey Pederson, Jail Administrator; Dave Grubb, STS Crew Leader; Nicole Wardner, Probation Agent.

25 (plus) YEARS SERVICE

Jean Clauson, Administrative Assistant; Kim Moronez, ABE Para Professional; LaRayne Arvidson, Program Coordinator; Paul Bissonette, Deputy Director; Dan Dale, STS Crew Leader.

Plat book price is reduced

The final few copies of the 2018 edition of the Polk County plat book are now available at the reduced price of \$29. The books can be purchased at the Taxpayer Service Center in the Government Center in Crookston.

The 192-page book shows the ownership and property boundaries for all rural parcels.

The book includes a Polk County Government Directory and maps of the commissioner districts, school districts, ambulance service districts, the watershed districts, and the cities of Crookston, East Grand Forks, Fosston and 12 other municipalities.



The conference room in the Transfer Station is used for Planning & Zoning Commission meetings

Cost-share grant program available for septic upgrades

Polk County Environmental Services is pleased to announce the availability of a cost-share grant program that is available to property owners in Polk County who have an existing noncompliant septic system. Funds are intended to fix septic systems that are currently failing codes or functionality.

These dollars are made possible through a grant received from the Minnesota Clean Water Legacy Act. Polk County has received confirmation that we were appropriated for more funding in the 2020 calendar year.

There is a limited amount of funding available and preference for funding will be determined based on income status, condition of existing system, and proximity to priority surface waters.

Income restrictions will apply. Polk County uses USDA low-income guidelines to group funding grant contributions. Households must not exceed these income guidelines, must be a homestead not a second dwelling or rental, and applicants will be

required to pay any match requirement upfront if approved. The county will provide a cost share grant contributing 75 percent and up to 90 percent of installation cost up to a maximum of \$12,000.

If you are interested in learning more about this program please call Polk County Planning & Zoning at 281-5700 or email our staff at environmental.svs@co.polk.mn.us. Prior program applications can also be found on our website at www.co.polk.mn.us under the Environmental Services and Planning & Zoning Department pages.

Polk County will update the 2020 program application packets on our website during the winter months. The deadline to apply for the Septic System Fix-Up Program is June 1, 2020. After this date, remaining funding will be available on a first come first serve basis. — **Jacob Snyder, Polk County Planning & Zoning administrator**

Regulations You Should Know

It is Unlawful to ...

- Transport watercraft without removing the drain plug
- Arrive at a lake access with drain plug in place
- Transport any prohibited species on public roads
- Launch a watercraft with prohibited species attached
- Transport water from Minnesota lakes and rivers
- Dispose of live bait into the water

Penalties up to \$1,000



AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS

- Remove aquatic plants and invasive species from your boat
- Drain your live well and remove your drain plug
- Dispose of used bait in the trash

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
www.co.polk.mn.us/ais



How can we help you?



- Accessibility
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter

E-NOTIFICATIONS
Receive Not-ices

GIS MAPPING
Interactive Mapping

PROPERTY TAX
Statements

PERMITS
County Permits

BOARD PACKETS
Board Meeting

CAREERS
Current Openings

CITIZEN HELP CENTER

Click the tabs to easily find assistance.

MEETINGS

HEALTH

EVENTS

FORGOTTEN PROPERTY

REAL ESTATE SEARCH

VOTER REGISTRATION

DISTRICT COURT

ORGANIC

DIRECTORY

SEPTEMBER 2018

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4

TUE, SEP 24
BOARD MEETING

BOARD OFF

TUE, OCT 1
BOARD MEETING

BOARD OFF

WED, OCT 3
COURT DAY

ALL OFFICES WILL BE OPEN.
BOARD OFF

[VIEW ALL DATES](#)

2018 POLK COUNTY PLAT BOOK

The Polk County 2018 Plat Book is now on sale for \$25.00. Available at Polk County Taxpayer Service Center.

[READ ON...](#)

NOW ACCEPTING INITIAL DAMAGE ASSESSMENT FORMS

Any public utility within Polk County working in areas only previously under state and/or municipal jurisdiction should complete and submit their Initial Damage Assessment forms to the Polk County Emergency Management Department.

[READ ON...](#)

PROPERTY TAX STATEMENTS

Property tax statements are now available through the Polk County Plat Book.

[READ ON...](#)



Graphics and Videos by: [ChickFusion](#)

CONTACT US

625 N. Broadway
COLUMBIA, MINNESOTA 55107

Phone: 252-267-6466
Fax: 252-267-3838

Contact Us
Print Us

QUICK LINKS

- [Folder Planning](#)
- [Home Health Care Line](#)
- [Water Registration](#)
- [Employee Manual](#)

SITE LINKS

- [Home](#)
- [Site Map](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Accessibility](#)
- [Copyright Notice](#)



Visit the new Polk County website — <https://www.co.polk.mn.us>