



Renville

COUNTY MESSENGER

CONNECTING YOU WITH YOUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Volume 10

Fall 2011

Issue 3

Renville County Participates in a Civic Leadership Exchange



A delegation of Ukrainian guests and Renville County commissioners, staff and family members sporting Loftness manufacturing hats at the completion of the Loftness plant tour.

A historic civic leadership exchange was held during the week of September 25th in and around the St Paul and Minneapolis metro area and in Renville and Kandiyohi counties. In Renville County the exchange was between government officials, professionals, students, and family members from Boryspil, Ukraine and the county administrator, two county commissioners, department heads, county staff, family members and individuals from private enterprise in Renville County held on September 29th. The first exchange of this group was a pilot program designed to provide a civic leadership sharing experience held in May, 2011 in Boryspil,

Ukraine. The exchange program was the brainchild of Richard and Irina Fursman of the Brimeyer Fursman Group located in Maplewood. In May, Sara Folsted, Renville County Administrator, was one of the first participants from Minnesota who traveled to the Ukraine to participate in this unique experience. The program was designed to build capacity and advance the skills and awareness of local government officials in the Ukraine through emergence in open government practices, civic engagement and participation, and economic development. The main objective of the program is to create an opportunity for local managers and elected officials to learn

from each other through the exchange of ideas, strategic dialogue, and the development of ongoing relationships.

The week long exchange started on Sunday, September 25, with the Ukrainian delegation being greeted with an opening ceremony and reception at the Minnesota Valley Country Club located in Bloomington. On Monday the focus for the delegation was to observe state government and regional economic development in the metro area. On Tuesday, the emphasis for the day was centered on community engagement and corporate citizens in Hopkins. On Wednesday, the delegation spent the day in Albertville and St Michael. The day began with a meeting at the Albertville City Hall including a discussion on local government's role in economic development.

Day four began in St Louis Park with the delegation being greeted by Sara Folsted who rode in the new Renville County Heartland Express Bus driven by Mike Schroer to pick them up. The group rode out together to Renville County to experience communities, businesses and economic development in rural Minnesota. The first tour of the day was hosted by Loftness Manufacturing located in Hector. The group was introduced to

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Natalia Krasnobayeva from the Ukraine, serves the group as an interpreter during the Loftness plant tour with Steve Haley of Loftness Manufacturing explaining the work on the floor. Natalia is currently studying at the U of M on a Fulbright scholarship.

the owners of Loftness Manufacturing, Gloria Nelson, and her sons, Steve and Dave Nelson. Jerry Sechler, vice president of sales, for Loftness Manufacturing then explained how the business was started in 1956 by Dick Loftness, a local Hector farmer, building a customized snowblower for his own use. Soon his neighbors wanted one too and after building several snowblowers a business was launched. Marv Nelson, a local farmer began working as a distributor for Loftness by purchasing the snow blowers and then selling them to

farm implement dealers throughout the upper Midwest. The company grew and in 1979 Marv Nelson purchased Loftness Manufacturing and the Nelson family has continued to expand the business. In addition to snowblowers the company now manufactures a wide range of products including grain bag loaders and unloaders, row-crop shredders, sod rollers, and a timber Ax that runs with a skid-steer. Loftness products are sold all across the United States and internationally in Canada, Mexico, Chile, France, Japan and Australia. Melcher told the group their key markets are in the grain growing business. Currently Loftness Manufacturing employs 100 individuals including 40 salesmen in the field selling to dealers. Jerry attended an AgriHort exhibition show in 2010 held in Kiev, Ukraine. Loftness manufacturing now has a dealer, Equipment Direct in Odessa, Ukraine. Melcher is very optimistic about the introduction of the grain bag loader in the Ukraine and plans to do more business there. The delegation asked if Loftness would consider building a manufacturing plant in the Ukraine and Melcher replied, “it would depend on sales.” The group then had a guided tour of the manufacturing floor and observed how the components that make up the various pieces of equipment are made with state of the art technology.

The group was off to their next stop on the tour, Schweiss Bi-Fold Doors located in rural Renville County north of Fairfax. The owner, Mike Schweiss, described how he began designing and building the first bi-fold door in 1980. The Schweiss Bi-Fold Doors company has grown from Mike’s early beginnings with 3 employees to a company with 74 employees. The delegation toured the Schweiss manufacturing process and observed firsthand the various steps involved in making these unique doors. Schweiss specialty doors are made to order and delivered and installed by trained Schweiss staff. Schweiss has recently developed a strap-lift system that replaces the conventional cable system used by most mechanical door manufacturers. Schweiss has branched into creating specialty doors that are both decorative and functional.



Mike Schweiss, owner of Schweiss Bi-Fold Doors, takes the group on a tour of his bi-fold door manufacturing process.



The delegation enjoys a picnic lunch in Birch Coulee Park.

These specialty doors have been designed and built with a modern flare and have been installed all over the world in businesses such as the Red Bull Headquarters in Santa Monica, California, a shop in the Dallas Galleria mall, Cycle City in Maui, Hawaii, store fronts in Bushwick, New York, Shanghai, China and even the Guthrie theatre in Minneapolis.

The delegation then went on to enjoy lunch at Renville County’s historic Birch Coulee Park. The group ate lunch while listening to a presentation given by Cheryl Glaser, program officer, for the Southwest Initiative Foundation. Cheryl shared the details of a new program, the “Early Childhood Initiative” that the Southwest Initiative Foundation is currently taking part in. The initiative is designed to bring the importance of early childhood care and education into the forefront for public discussion. Carl Colwell, Renville County Historical Society director, brought a muzzle loader that was used during the Battle of Birch Coulee on the battle grounds located above the park where the delegation had lunch. Carl explained that the Battle of Birch Coulee was part of the Dakota War in 1862 against the United States Army. It began along the Minnesota River and hundreds of military

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Bob Thurston, president of Thurston Genetics, a division of BASF Plant Sciences, reviews translation terms of his presentation with Natalia Krasnobayeva.

personnel, civilians, and Indians were killed. The Battle of Birch Coulee lasted over 30 hours and those involved were without food or water. The Battle was thought to be the most deadly for the U.S. Forces in the Dakota War of 1862. Thirteen soldiers and ninety horses were killed, forty-seven men were severely wounded and others less severely hurt. The Dakota War resulted in thirty-eight men of the Dakota Sioux tribe convicted of murder who were later executed in Mankato.

After lunch the delegation was back on the bus and headed for a tour of the Southern Minnesota Sugar Beet Cooperative (SMSBC) located outside of Renville. While on the bus ride, Annie Tepfer, coordinator of the Renville Alliance for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drugs (RAPAD) presented the group with the work of the RAPAD coalition. Annie explained that the RAPAD coalition was established in 2006

and the focus is to prevent underage drinking, and the use of tobacco and drugs in Renville County. The coalition is made up of concerned citizens addressing best practices for prevention of underage alcohol, tobacco and other drugs use in Renville County. The delegation arrived at SMSBC plant and was welcomed by staff. The group learned about the sugar process from the beets growing in the ground through the manufacturing process.

The last stop of the day for the delegation was the MinnWest Technology Campus (MWTC) located in Willmar. The group learned how the MWTC was once a state owned and operated healthcare facility originally constructed in 1907. However, due to changes made by the state to healthcare delivery systems in 2004 most of the buildings on the campus soon were empty. In 2005, business owners and economic development leaders began discussing how the campus could be given new life. Two years later, the 100 acre property was purchased from the State of Minnesota by private businesses in Willmar. The purchase was possible because of a collaboration of city, county and state government entities. The historic facility was transformed into a high-tech, high-functioning home for its key anchor companies engaged in bioscience, agri-business, technology, and bioenergy. MWTC currently has 26 business tenants employing over 300 full time employees. The group toured the MWTC campus and ended the day with a reception followed by dinner and a presentation given by Robert Thurston, the president of Thurston Genetics, a division of BASF Plant Sciences, a national and international corn genetics licensing company. Thurston has worked in the seed

corn industry his entire adult life. The focus of Thurston's presentation was "How will we provide enough corn for the world in the next 40 years to be used for food, feed, and fuel". The evening ended with John Stahl, Renville County Board Chairman, delivering a message from Renville County to the group, "Renville County recognizes the Civic Leadership Program with the hope that it will lead to opportunities and collaboration in economic and community development." It was a good day to remember in Renville County History and hopefully will be repeated. The delegation spent Thursday evening as guests in Renville county homes and then was off on Friday to experience local public and private partnerships including the Minnesota Zoo, Light Rail, and Target Field in the metro area.



Sergiy Linkevych, and Yaroslav Pavlivskyi, from the Ukraine and Sara Folsted, Renville County Administrator, and John Stahl, Renville County Board Chair share reflections on the day.

COUNTY PHONE NUMBERS

Administrator	320-523-3710
Assessor	320-523-3645
Attorney	320-523-2661
Auditor/Treasurer	320-523-2071
Court Services/Probation	320-523-3663
Court Administration	320-523-3680
Environment & Community Development	320-523-3768
Extension	320-523-3713
Hawk Creek	320-523-3666
Heartland Express	320-523-3589

Heartland Express	800-450-7964
Heartland Community	320-523-1842
Action Agency Inc.	or 877-523-1842
Hospital	320-523-1261
HRA/EDA	320-523-3656
Human Services	320-523-2202
Landfill/Solid Waste	320-523-1505
License	320-523-3612
Public Health Nursing	320-523-2570
Public Works	320-523-3759
Recorder/Abstractor	320-523-3669

Sheriff	320-523-1161
Veterans Service	320-523-3763
Water Planning & HHW	320-523-3706

<i>County Commissioners:</i>	
Ralph Novotny, District #1	320-848-6392
Bob Fox, District #2	507-557-8265
Paul Setzepfandt, District #3	320-365-3270
John Stahl, District #4	320-523-1283
LaMont Jacobson, District #5	320-765-2578

RENVILLE COUNTY TOBACCO- FREE & SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT POLICY EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1ST, 2012

On July 26, 2011, based on recommendations from the Renville County Wellness Worksite Team, the Renville County Board of Commissioners passed a policy declaring all Renville County grounds and county vehicles and equipment Tobacco Product Free excluding county parks, trails, and fairgrounds.

The goal of the tobacco free worksite is to improve the health of all employees, clients, visitors, vendors, and contractors. The policy will take effect on January 1, 2012 and is a total ban on all tobacco product use by employees, clients, visitors, vendors, and contracted personnel on the county owned grounds, in privately owned vehicles when parked on county owned property, and when using county vehicles and equipment.

Tobacco Product-Free Policy Frequently Asked Questions:

Why is Renville County moving to tobacco product free grounds?

- ~ The mission of Renville County is to keep and enhance the quality of life for our family of citizens through services, stewardship of resources, and shared responsibility.*
- ~ Tobacco product use and exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of heart and lung disease, asthma, and cancer and is the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S. of 450,000 deaths nationwide each year.*
- ~ To further the health of employees and the public, the Renville County Commissioners are committed to being proactive to reduce exposure to second-hand smoke and the use of harmful tobacco products.*
- ~ To assist in correcting the misperceptions, especially among youth, that tobacco product use is prevalent and an acceptable behavior.*
- ~ To respond to requests of employees in a healthy behavior survey to eliminate second-hand smoke exposure on county owned grounds.*

Are other Minnesota counties approving tobacco free ground policies?

- ~ Yes, Kandiyohi County passed a tobacco free grounds policy in 2002, and most recently Hennepin, La qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lyon, Nobles, Pope, and Wabasha Counties have passed tobacco free grounds policies.*

Where can I find a copy of the Renville County Tobacco-Free and Smoke-Free Environment Policy?

- ~ You can find the policy on the Renville County's website home page at, www.co.renville.mn.us.*

The policy is not intended to make people stop smoking, but is intended to provide clean air for everyone to breath.

Are you ready to quit using TOBACCO PRODUCTS?

Check with your health insurance plan. Many health plans (PrimeWest, Medica, Blue Cross Blue Shield) have tobacco cessation programs that are free of charge to their members.

ClearWay
MINNESOTA

ClearWay Minnesota:
1-888-354-PLAN or
www.clearwaymn.org

**AMERICAN
LUNG
ASSOCIATION.**
Fighting for Air

American Lung Association Help Line:
1-800-LUNGUSA or
www.alamn.org

**Renville
County**

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Olivia, MN 56277

Phone: 320-523-3710

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Web site: www.co.renville.mn.us

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Important 2012 Property Tax Law Change

The 2011 Legislature repealed the Homestead Residential Market Value Credit and replaced it with a new program called the Homestead Market Value Exclusion. This change is impacting the property taxes on all homesteaded and non-homesteaded property paid in 2012. This change will save the State of Minnesota \$261 million dollars. The legislation was designed to be a cost saving measure that the state is intending to use to close the \$5 billion two-year state budget deficit.

Under the old law all homesteaded property with a value of less than \$413,800 received a homestead residential credit. This credit reduced the property taxes due with a promise by the state to pay the reduction to local taxing districts. Due to budgetary issues over the past few years, the state has not been able to pay this credit to the local taxing districts. This funding gap left local taxing districts with a deficit in their annual budgets.

The new law will provide for homestead market value exclusion for property valued at less than \$413,800. Homesteaded property taxpayers will no longer receive a credit that will reduce the property taxes paid. Instead, a portion of the homestead's property value will be excluded from taxation. The homestead market value exclusion excludes from taxation 40% of the value on the first \$76,000 of a property's value. Then the exclusion rate drops as the homestead market value rises. For a homestead valued at more than \$413,800 there will be no homestead exclusion.

Taxable Market Value	Estimated Market Value	Homestead Exclusion (After Homestead Exclusion)
\$76,000	\$30,400	\$45,600
\$150,000	\$23,740	\$126,260
\$250,000	\$14,740	\$235,260
\$350,000	\$5,740	\$344,260
\$400,000	\$1,240	\$398,760
\$425,000	0	\$425,000

The impact of this state change will vary for each property depending on a variety of factors. However, in general, the elimination of the homestead credit and replacement with homestead exclusion is going to mean higher property taxes for most property owners, even if property tax levies adopted by local governments do not increase. Since the state is no longer providing a homestead credit, the entire levy is being paid by local property taxpayers. The new homestead exclusion lowers the tax base, which has led to increases in the property tax rates of most local taxing jurisdictions. A property tax rate is calculated by dividing the property tax levy by the total tax base. If a property is non-homestead, including commercial and industrial property, the higher property tax rates are likely to mean higher property tax bills even if the values have declined. For properties that are homestead, the new homestead exclusion may not be enough to offset the increases in tax rates and the elimination of the homestead credit, thus many homestead properties will most likely experience tax increases.

Homeowners may be eligible for a property tax refund. The form to apply for the state property tax refund is the M1PR, available at: http://taxes.state.mn.us/pages/current_forms.aspx



MEET LEE STOCK NEW RENVILLE COUNTY VETERAN'S SERVICE OFFICER

Lee Stock, new Renville County Veteran's Service Officer, was passed the leadership baton this past June from Bert Wasierski, who held the position for 21 years. Lee grew up as a farm kid near Appleton, Minnesota. He joined the National Guard in 1983 and in 1986 he was based in Olivia working for Harry Hawkinson. Lee worked for the National Guard as a logistician five days a week at the Olivia armory building. Then 911 happened and life for Stock and his family changed.

Lee was transferred to Camp Ripley located outside of Little Falls, Minnesota in 2003. The state-owned 53,000 acre Camp Ripley is a multi-faceted training center that balances the needs of the military, state agencies and communities statewide. Camp Ripley serves as a world-class military training center for all branches and components of service. In this new position, Lee was a Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) and was responsible for the ranges. Camp Ripley features numerous ranges and state of the art training facilities to support unit training requirements. The post has a full complement of automated small arms and tank ranges as well as several specialized training facilities. The post also has maneuver training areas capable of supporting a heavy brigade. Stock's duties included ensuring that all safety regulations were being met on the ranges for every device fired, from pistols to tanks utilized by active duty and reserve members of the Marines, Army, Navy, Air Force and the National Guard. Stock was responsible for risk management of the ranges with the assistance of 14 full time employees.

From 2005 to 2006, Stock was deployed to Iraq with his National Guard Unit, the C 1-151 Field Artillery Unit, out of Morris, MN. Lee served with his unit in Iraq as an Operations Sergeant. There were 152 soldiers in his unit assigned as military police in Baghdad. Stock was deployed a second time to Iraq with the Marshall, Minnesota National Guard Unit, the A 1-151 Field Artillery Unit from 2008-2010 as a First Sergeant with a 135 soldiers. The unit ran convoy security from Kuwait to the Turkish border. When Stock returned from his second deployment in Iraq he served in operations with the NCO for the regional training unit at Camp Ripley.

After serving with 25 years of active duty, Lee decided it was time to make a change. He knew that Bert Wasierski and Karen Davis managed the best Veterans Service Office in the State of Minnesota and he wanted to continue the legacy. When Stock was offered the position he knew he would have big shoes to fill. His working philosophy is, "it doesn't matter who comes to me, a superior, a peer, or a veteran I consider everyone to be my customer. I will treat them the way I would want to be treated. I will get them an answer and I will try my best to help obtain benefits for veterans and their families." Lee began his new position by working with veterans' and soldiers' medical claims and will be attending accreditation training to help him with this work. He expressed his excitement regarding changes to the St Cloud Veterans Association. The facility has recently opened two surgical units which is a significant benefit for local veterans and their families. Stock plans to work with Bert Waiserski, former Renville County Veterans Services Officer, to continue the work she started with the Orth Foundation to benefit Veterans in Minnesota. Stock said, "Renville County is a great place to work with a very positive atmosphere. The glass is not half empty here. Our department has great staff, with our new van driver, Mike Harmon, driving veterans to their appointments; Karen Davis is a wealth of information and great to work with; and Harry Hawkinson is a very dedicated assistant." This winter Lee plans to visit local veterans in nursing homes and be involved in local Legions and VFWs. Watch for more information on a Renville County Veterans' seminar that Stock and his staff are planning to hold on February 4, 2012 at the Bird Island Ballroom.

Lee is happy to be back working and living in Olivia. His wife, Jackie, is a bookkeeper for Tri-County Community Action located in Todd and Morrison counties. Lee and Jackie have two daughters, Kayla age 17 and Kalley age 12. Their family commutes to be together on the weekends. Lee didn't want to leave Olivia back in 2003, but he had to go where he was assigned. Now, he wakes up every morning excited to come to work in his new position for Renville County.



Renville County Food Shelf Requests up 20% in 2011

Drop by 902 ½ DePue Avenue at the right time and you will find a busy place. More than fifty volunteers make the work of the Renville County Food Shelf and Clothing & More Center possible. On the first Wednesday of the month, the Food Shelf and Clothing and More Center board members travel from most of the towns in the county volunteering their time and expertise to oversee the work of the organization. The board members are Ardis Wertish -Olivia, President, Mary Schroepfer -Olivia, Treasurer, Sylvia Welsh -Bird Island, Secretary, Pastor Russ Jacobsen -Olivia, Hilda Bach -Renville, Yvonne Porter -Buffalo Lake, Beryl Perry -Sacred Heart, Darlene Clark -Danube, Vivian Erickson -Bird Island, Elmer and

Vernette Knutson -Fairfax, and liaison representatives, Karen Serbus from Renville County Human Services and Kelly Ehrenberg from Heartland Community Action Agency.

On the second Tuesday of each month, a dozen or more volunteers move an average of 10,000 pounds of food from the Second Harvest delivery truck into the Food Shelf. For every \$1.00 donated to Second Harvest, the food shelf can purchase what would cost about \$9.00 at a grocery store. Mary Schroepfer devotes many hours searching the Second Harvest web site for the items that are needed to stock the shelves of the Food Shelf.

During food shelf regular hours (Wednesdays 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.; Thursdays 5 – 7 p.m. and Fridays and Mondays from 1 – 3 p.m.) the building is buzzing with activity. In 2010 about 154,000 pounds of food was supplied during 2,426 family visits providing at least 79,776 meals. A record 252 families received food in June 2011. Needs have increased by 20% this year. During the first eight months of 2011, 1,972 family visits were provided with 106,830 pounds of food, enough to prepare at least 56,600 meals. How thankful the Food Shelf volunteers and families are for the generous donors who bring many pounds of food, both from grocery shopping and from their gardens (string beans, cucumbers, zucchini, squash, corn on the cob, potatoes, tomatoes, and peppers), as well as individual cash donations that make it possible to purchase food from Second Harvest and from the grocery stores in the county who also give a discount. Several county businesses also donate food items to the Food Shelf.

Every day volunteers assist with stocking the shelves, bagging items and helping the clients select their food. More volunteers are needed. Contact Ardis Wertish at 523-1515 if you would like to join the team. *“Thank you”* seems inadequate to express our appreciation for the generosity of our county residents. Might it help to add thank you in some other languages?

*“takk”, “tack”, “danke”, “gracias”,
“merci”, “asante”!*

**Renville County
Food Shelf**
Thanks you for your support...

Transit Fare Increase

The Renville County Transit Advisory Committee with a membership makeup of Renville County Transit staff, Human Services staff, Public Health staff, a County Commissioner and members at large met on August 11, 2011. After a review and discussion of gasoline prices, expenses, state contributions, and ridership levels the committee voted to increase the Renville County Heartland Express fare rates effective October 1, 2011. The fares were last set in October, 2006.

The transit program's primary objective is to meet the transport needs of Renville County residents. The transit program expects to exceed 50,000 trips this year, with 47,000 trips on the bus and another 3,000 plus with volunteer drivers. The transit ridership continues to grow but the State continues to cut program funding. Renville County Heartland Express program could possibly lose up to 15% of their funding.

Effective October 1st, 2011 Fare Rate

- **One-Way/In Town: \$2.00**
(Includes Olivia to Bird Island)
- **One-Way to Danube: \$3.00**
- **One-Way from Town to Town: \$4.00**
(Excluding Danube & Bird Island)
- **One-Way to Willmar: \$5.00**
- **One-Way Rural farm (within 5 miles) to town: \$4.00**
- **Package Delivery around Olivia: \$4.00**
- **Package Delivery to/from Willmar: \$10.00**
- **Pets in carriers: \$5.00**

To schedule a ride please call: Renville County Heartland Express 320-523-3589



Bill Mangum on behalf of his mother, Mary, presents a memorial donation to Rachel Schneiderman, Director of Renville County Heartland Express, for the transit program.

Heartland Express Receives Mangum Memorial Donation

In 2006 Mary Mangum moved to Renville County from Roseville, Minnesota to be close to her family. Mary lived with her son, Bill Mangum on his farm site located north of Bird Island. Then she moved to Olivia where she lived the last year of her life. Mary had some health issues and needed to have dialysis three days a week. It had become difficult for Mary to get in and out of vehicles especially SUVs and trucks. Mary wanted to keep her independence so she contacted Renville County Heartland Express. The Heartland Express team was able to help Mary travel to and from her doctor and dialysis appointments. Mary either rode the Heartland Express bus or was given a ride by a volunteer driver to her appointments. She loved the kindness and caring help of the Heartland drivers. Mary passed away this past September and because of her appreciation and fondness for the Heartland team, her family decided to have memorials made to the Renville County Heartland Express.

If you would like to give memorials to Heartland Express please contact the office by phone at 320-523-3589 or 1-800-450-7964.



*Heartland Express Staff
Front (l-r) Robin Schwer,
Rachel Schneiderman,
Jackie Garberich Back (l-r)
Mike Schroer, Glen Rodel,
Greg Erickson, Al Eischens
(Not pictured Phil
Standfuss, Jack Carlson,
Chris Clobes, Elaine
Groslags, Janelle Schmoll,
and Jane Schroder)*

WE NEED YOU!

The Renville County Heartland Express is in need of volunteer drivers for each city in Renville County! If you are interested in becoming a volunteer driver here are a few questions and answers, which may help you decide:

Who do I contact to become a volunteer driver?

~Renville County Heartland Express – 320-523-3589

Do I use my own car?

~Yes

Do I have to take out extra insurance?

~No

Do I need to drive every day?

~No, you can drive as often as you like.

Can I choose my preference as to where I drive?

~Yes, you can drive locally or take longer trips, it is your choice.

Do I need a van?

~No, you can drive your regular car, truck or van.

Do I receive a wage?

~No, you will be reimbursed for your mileage at the current Federal rate.

Who would I transport?

~All residents of Renville County -youth, adults, and seniors

When we are unable to transport with a bus, we transport with a volunteer driver. Please consider being a Volunteer with us! Contact Renville County Heartland Express!



HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS

500 E Depue • Olivia, MN 56277 • (320) 523-3656 • www.renville.com

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Volume 10



This Holiday Season, Remember Those Close To **HOME**

Most of us look forward to the holidays. For our neighbors living in poverty, the holidays can bring financial burdens as they struggle to buy gifts as well as the treats most of us take for granted. At the same time, these households are struggling with high heat bills and are recovering from the costs of school supplies, clothes and shoes for growing children.

According to census estimates, in 2009, 11% of the people in Renville County were living in poverty, including 16% of our children. As administrators of rental assistance programs, HRA/EDA staff deal with our neighbors who are in poverty every day. The average income of the 84 households on our Section 8 rental assistance program, which helps tenants rent from private landlords, is only \$10,859 a year. The average income of the 25 households in our Public Housing program is \$15,875. The

households in these programs include 118 children.

Renville County families in poverty are not confined to those who are disabled, elderly, or unemployed. Many of our neighbors in poverty care for our children and for our elderly parents in long term care facilities. Others work in food service, retail sales or the many manual labor jobs in our community.

This holiday, as your mail brings requests from national charities doing annual donation drives, please remember those local charities that serve your neighbors in need. During the holidays, remember programs like Santa's Closet. When you turn up your thermostat, remember Renville County Human Services' Reach Out for Warmth program, under which donations to help families in need heat their homes are matched. All year round, remember the Renville County Food Shelf. These gifts do not go to support an anonymous bureaucracy. They go to help your neighbors.

Manufacturer's Event

In recognition of Renville county manufacturers, the HRA/EDA hosted a luncheon in Fairfax attended by leaders from throughout the county. Gloria Nelson, President and CFO presented an excellent overview of the history of Loftness Manufacturing www.loftness.com and described the expansion now in progress which provides in excess of 80 jobs for our area. Following the luncheon, Mike Schweiss provided a tour of both his manufacturing facility, Schweiss Bi-Fold Doors www.bifold.com in rural Hector, which provides 70 plus jobs for our area and manufactures designer doors and windows such as featured in the Guthrie Theater. Mike also provided a tour of the Schweiss Magister Equitum Stables www.schweisstable.com. Altimate Medical, manufacturer of the Easy Stand www.easystand.com also hosted a tour of their headquarters in Morton MN. This international company provides employment for more than 40 individuals.



Altimate Medical employees from left to right: Todd Tholkes, Jeff Schmidt, Travis Bavier, Don Werner, Jason Serbus, Pat Haala, Justin Weidman, Duane Panitzke, Mike Bavier, Nate Johannsen, Mark Hartle, Ken Mathiowetz, and Cody Knobloch.

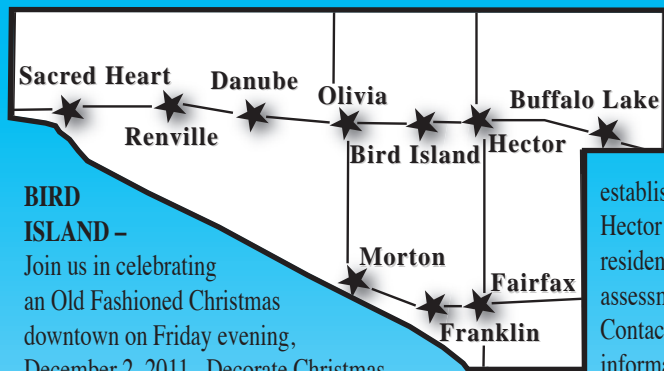
~ 2011 AREA HOLIDAY EVENTS ~

November 19-20 Beneath the Village Wreath, Morton
December 1-3 Holiday Happenings, Olivia
December 1 Mistletoe Madness, Morton

December 1 Unforgettable Christmas, Hector
December 2 Old Fashion Christmas, Bird Island
December 3 Santa's Breakfast, Buffalo Lake

December 10 Santa Day, Franklin
December 17 Santa Day, Sacred Heart

NEWS FROM OUR NEIGHBORS



BIRD ISLAND –

Join us in celebrating an Old Fashioned Christmas downtown on Friday evening, December 2, 2011. Decorate Christmas cookies and do an art project at the Learning Fun House from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm; enjoy FREE horse drawn sleigh rides from 5 pm to 8 pm sponsored by B.I. Lions; Santa will be at the State Bank of Bird Island from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm, enjoy free candy and have your picture taken with Santa sponsored by B.I. C&C Association.

BUFFALO LAKE:

HERE WE GROW, AGAIN! Ground breaking was held Sept. 26 for the \$1.6 million expansion at Buffalo Lake Healthcare Center. The project includes the addition of 14 private nursing rooms, enlarged dining room, and another living room. South Central Grain & Energy is busy with fall grain harvest and looking at plans to enable rail loading and onsite storage. Our remodeled municipal liquor store now offers more room for parties and events. Check out our shoppable off-sale with expanded selections of wine, beer, and spirits. Join us monthly for Fruit of the Vine wine tasting. As you pass by Buffalo Lake on the newly reconstructed Hwy 212, you will notice activity increasing at the beef plant on the East side of town...more, later, on that subject. Hasta luego!

FAIRFAX:

Santa Day in Fairfax is Dec. 9. Fairfax Civic and Commerce Association annual banquet will be January 28 with tickets available for Christmas giving. Work continues on the new Fairfax Public Library located on the site of the former Weir Hotel. City of Fairfax offices will move to the former First National Bank building once remodeling is completed.

HECTOR:

December 1 marks the 5th Annual Unforgettable

Christmas. The children and adults as well can visit with Santa, sleigh rides and businesses have open house & prize drawings in their establishments.

Hector EDA has buildable residential lots for sale, \$100 plus assessments in Sampson's addition. Contact the city office for more information at 320-848-2122.

MORTON:

Beneath the Village Wreath will be held November 18, 19, and 20. Friday events feature the Hospice Tree of Lights and Firemen's Steak Fry. Saturday features crafters, the senior citizen fund raiser, Santa visits and photos, and Lions' Club turkey bingo. Sunday features the Lions' Club Brunch.

OLIVIA:

Looking to improve your storefront with new windows or siding and paint? Thinking about a few interior improvements? The Olivia Economic Development Authority has launched a program to provide an incentive to commercial property owners to spiff up. Funding is provided by the Olivia EDA with the Renville County HRA/EDA Economic Leveraging Fund as an additional resource. Stop in or call City Hall at 320-523-2361 for detailed information on this new program. The Olivia EDA is an equal opportunity provider.

STAFF MEMBERS

Christina Hettig, Executive Director
Linda Larsen, Housing Coordinator
Susie Lang, Development Assistant
Ron Louisiana, Maintenance

HRA/EDA BOARD

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DOING BUSINESS ONLINE?

Wednesday, February 1st, 2012
9AM-Noon
Renville County Service Center
Olivia, MN

University of Minnesota Extension Educator Adeel Ahmed will guide you through the variety of options for using the Internet in your business and finding the best fit for your operation. This hands-on workshop introduces the many options for businesses to develop their online presence and connect with customers today. On the computer, participants will research what other businesses are doing online, explore the use of a number of online tools, and set a plan in place to take advantage of the internet in their businesses.

Register for this free class at
www.businessonline.eventbrite.com

A laptop computer is recommended to bring to this class but not a requirement.

This event is sponsored by the Renville County Economic Development Authority & Mid-Minnesota Development Commission

BLANDIN COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Renville County is working towards a better tomorrow with the help of its residents and the Blandin Foundation's Community Leadership Program (BCLP). Programs are designed to help rural leaders develop and enhance the skills, knowledge and relationships they need to build & sustain healthy communities – ones that thrive in times of challenge and opportunity.

Applications are currently being accepted for the communities of Sacred Heart, Renville, Danube & Olivia.

Please go to www.bclp.blandinfoundation.org to submit your application.

Additional applications for this program have been submitted to the Blandin Foundation for the communities of Morton, Franklin & Fairfax as well as Buffalo Lake & Hector.

Contact Becky Adams at Blandin for more information at 218-327-8736



Water Protection and Management

Volume 10

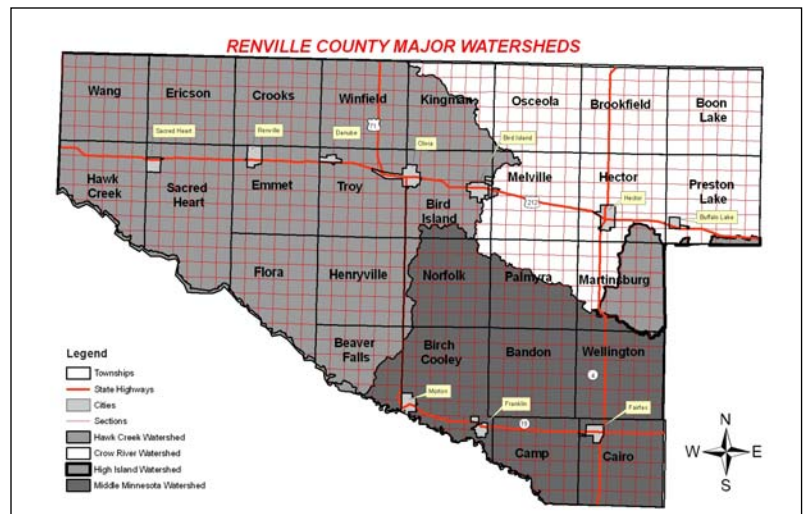
Fall 2011

Issue 3

We ALL Live in a Watershed

A watershed is the total area of land from which water drains into the same place. Activities within a watershed affect the quality and quantity of water that ends up in a specific ditch, stream, wetland, lake, or river. As water flows over the land, it picks up pollutants which can contaminate a water source. If water runs off the land too quickly, erosion and flooding can occur. Watersheds come in all shapes and sizes. Smaller watersheds, also known as sub-watersheds, lie within larger watersheds. The largest watersheds are usually called "basins." Watersheds cross county, state, and national boundaries. The State of Minnesota has 81 major watersheds within 10 basins.

No matter where you live, you live in a watershed!



Cost-Share and Incentive Payments Available for Best Management Practices

Low-Interest Loans Available for Upgrading Septic Systems

Renville County lies within four major watersheds: Hawk Creek, High Island Creek, Middle Minnesota River, and Crow River. Each of these watersheds has various types of funding available through watershed organizations or "Projects" to provide cost-share and incentive payments to landowners who implement best management practices (BMPs) that improve the water quality of surface waters. Practices range from alternative tile intakes to additional cost-share for ag waste system improvements. Low-interest loan funds may also be available to upgrade or replace failing septic systems.



For more information contact:

Crow River Organization of Water (CROW)
(763) 682-1933, ext. 112 or www.crowriver.org

Hawk Creek Watershed Project
(320) 523-3666 or www.hawkcreekwatershed.org

High Island Creek Watershed Project
(507) 237-4050

Middle Minnesota River Watershed
(320) 523-3706



Photo:
Installation of
a septic
drainfield.



COLD WEATHER REMINDER: *Properly Store Chemicals!*

Each year numerous household chemicals such as paints, stains, and driveway sealants become household hazardous waste (HHW) simply because they were exposed to freezing temperatures.

"Cold Weather Reminder" continued on back

RECYCLE YOUR HOLIDAYS

Opportunity to Recycle Holiday Light Strings and Electrical Cords

Don't know what to do with those old or non-working holiday lights? Renville County, along with sponsoring collection sites, will once again participate in the Recycle Your Holidays program. Recycle Your Holidays is a statewide recycling program established by the Recycling Association of Minnesota. Recycling efforts are coordinated with Minnesota-based vocational centers to provide jobs and training opportunities for adults with disabilities. Last year the program recycled over 100,000 pounds of holiday light strings and provided employment for 200 people!

Every part of the light string is recycled. The program also accepts electrical extension cords, appliance cords, and phone cords. The Recycle Your Holidays program will run from November 15 through the month of January. Some of the collection sites have agreed to collect light strings and cords year-round. Please check with sponsoring businesses prior to bringing items for recycling after January 31.

Recycle Your Holidays Collection Sites:

Renville Hardware & Rental
401 North Main Street, Renville

Beckler's Hardware Hank
245 South Main Street, Bird Island

Danube Upholstery
315 North Main Street, Danube

Farm Mercantile
110 1st Street SE, Fairfax

Hardware Hank
107 Main Street South, Hector

K & S Millwrights
217 East Hall Avenue, Buffalo Lake

City of Morton – City Office
221 West 2nd Street, Morton

Franklin State Bank
278 2nd Avenue East, Franklin

City of Sacred Heart – City Office
309 1st Avenue, Sacred Heart

Olivia Hardware
124 South 9th Street, Olivia

Renville County Landfill & HHW Facility
32877 County Road 4, Olivia

For more information:
(320) 523-1144 or (320) 523-3706

www.co.renville.mn.us • www.recycleminnesota.org

Consider replacing those old holiday lights with energy-efficient LED light strings.

Incentive Payments Combine with CRP Payments

Would you like to receive a payment ranging from \$3,961.00 – \$4,881.00 per acre plus keep your CRP annual payments to place an easement on your existing CRP filter strip? The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is offering landowners the option to place a perpetual easement on areas next to ditches and natural streams. These filter strips will help reduce sediment in Renville County ditches and help to improve water quality. If you decide to go forward with the easement process, your CRP contract would not be canceled and you would continue to receive your annual CRP payment for the duration of the existing contract.

Statute Requirements / Conditions:

1. Buffer widths must be a minimum of 50 feet and no more than 100 feet, when measured from the top of the bank or water's edge. Width can be less than 50 feet if there is a natural impediment beyond the landowner's control, such as a road or property line.
2. Buffers must be adjacent to public waters, streams, ditches, or lakes (excluding wetlands) as shown on the DNR Protected Waters Inventory (PWI) maps. Land for buffers must have been owned by the landowner for one (1) year prior to application.

If you are interested in the easement program or have questions, please contact Jason Beckler, Farm Bill Biologist, at (320) 523-1559.



"Cold Weather Reminder" continued from front



Remember to read the product label to ensure proper storage. If you are not able to use a product, check with a neighbor to see if they have a use for the chemical or bring it to either the Renville County or Kandiyohi County HHW Facility. If the product is usable, it will be placed on a Product Exchange for others to use. If the chemical can no longer be used, it will be properly disposed of at "no cost" to Renville County residents. For additional information on HHW disposal options, visit www.co.renville.mn.us or call (320) 523-1144.