



Renville

COUNTY MESSENGER

CONNECTING YOU WITH YOUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Volume 14

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Issue 3

Ribbon Cutting Celebration for New RC Hospital & Clinics Medical Center



The ribbon is cut! Pictured (L to R) LaMont Jacobson, Paul Setzepfandt, John Stahl, Nate Blad, Bob Fox, Randy Kramer and Sara Folsted

On a beautiful day this past September, a crowd of people gathered, including RC Hospital & Clinics staff and board members, county commissioners, local, state and federal officials, investors, partners, and citizens to be a part of the ribbon cutting ceremony for the county's new state of the art medical center. Along with the ribbon cutting ceremony, over 1,000 people toured the new facility. The project was years in the making, with planning and approval for the new county facility beginning in 2013. A ground breaking ceremony was held in April of 2014. Construction started in 2014 and was completed in the fall of 2015. Funding for the \$25 million project was made available through several lenders including USDA Rural Development, AgStar, United Farm Credit Services, F&M Bank of Olivia, and HomeTown Bank of Olivia.

The new county medical center covers 65,000 square feet on a 12.8 acre parcel. The facility has 16 private patient rooms, including two maternity suites, two state of the art operating rooms, therapy services, an outpatient clinic, emergency services space, Renville County Hospice space and mental health clinic space. In addition,

the medical center has been equipped with diagnostic imaging equipment including a wide-bore MRI scanner, a CT scanner and the latest technological equipment for surgical and minimally invasive procedures. The patient rooms were designed to provide a healing environment with sleeping accommodations for family members. Also included in the facility is the Healthy Way Café where patients and staff can get a bite to eat. Eventually the café will be open to the public. The medical center also includes its own helipad to airlift emergency patients quickly to other facilities when needed.

The RC Hospital & Clinics Capital Campaign Committee worked hard to raise funds to purchase equipment for the new medical center. In addition to the new equipment, donations were made to include two special spaces, the M.E. Rauenhorst Family Chapel and the F&M Bank Hearth Room. Donations from local citizens have added special touches to the healing grounds of the new facility. The grounds have two gardens, Alma's Garden made possible by Patricia Buschette in honor of her mother, and the Sweet Garden

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Ribbon Cutting Celebration for New RC Hospital & Clinics Medical Center

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made possible by the Southern Minnesota Sugar Beet Cooperative, complete with walking paths and the beautiful Mehlhouse Family Fountain.

The RC Hospital Board members include John Stahl, serving as Chairman, Dr. Paul Buhr, Bob Ehlers, LaMont Jacobson, Dr. Dean Lindquist, Robert Mehlhouse, and Dolores Nelson. Nathan Blad is

the RCH&C CEO.

Renville County Commissioners include Randy Kramer of District 1, Bob Fox of District 2, Paul Setzepfandt of District 3, John Stahl of District 4, and LaMont Jacobson of District 5 along with Sara Folsted, Renville County Administrator.



RAPAD COALITION RECOGNIZED WITH AWARD

On October 22nd the Renville Alliance for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drugs (RAPAD) Coalition received the Prepared & Aware award from the Minnesota Department of Human Services Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division. The award is presented annually at the Program Sharing Conference hosted by the Minnesota Department of Human Services to an organization that has promoted Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug prevention by showing support for implementing and creating community change.

RAPAD has been working diligently to reduce substance use among youth in Renville county since 2006. Organizing the county for change is the core function of the coalition. Since its inception, some of the accomplishments include:

- *Creating community awareness around underage substance use through awareness events, educational presentations, local media public service announcements, youth engagement activities such as Sticker Shock, Red Ribbon Week, Above the Influence Campaign, Town Hall Meetings, and Youth Leadership Training*
- *Conducting free Responsible Beverage Server Trainings for all liquor establishments in Renville County*
- *Passing a Social Host Ordinance at the county level and by nine cities located in the county including: Bird Island, Buffalo Lake, Danube, Fairfax, Hector, Morton, Olivia, Renville, and Sacred Heart*



Receiving the Prepared and Aware Award

Front Row (L-R) Tania Castillo, *TADA Youth; Sarai Schemmel, TADA Youth; Delilah Angeles, TADA Youth; Annie Tepfer, RAPAD Coalition Coordinator

Back Row (L-R) Alex Loesh, Pact For Families Evaluator; Janine Kramer, House of Hope; Sarah Reznechek, RCW TADA; LaMont Jacobson, County Commissioner; Jill Bruns, Public Health Director; Olga Angeles, RCW parent; Hope Torma Regional Prevention Coordinator *TADA-Teens Against Drugs and Alcohol

- *Conducting a Positive Community Norms Media Campaign*
- *Instrumental in passing a County Tobacco Ordinance Amendment which included: minimum price for cigars, sales prohibited by pharmacies, education requirements for all employees of tobacco licensees, 1000 ft proximity restrictions from youth-oriented facilities, increased administrative penalties for compliance check failure, and no sampling/vaping of tobacco allowed indoors.*

FREEZING FOR FOOD!

Please plan to contribute to the **DONATION DRIVE** for The Renville County Food Shelf
December 2nd, 3rd and 4th
at B & D's Grocery Store in Olivia, MN.

You may donate cash or food!

Renville County has experienced decreases in substance use among our youth. A fact that has been documented in the Minnesota Student Survey taken over the past several years. Congratulation to the members of the RAPAD Coalition for their achievements in Renville County!

Energy Assistance Guide

The rising heating costs for the upcoming heating season is a concern for all of us. The Energy Assistance Program assists households with some of the costs of heating their homes. The program can also use 30% of the assistance to pay toward the electric bill. Energy Assistance Program Staff are encouraging households to set up a monthly payment plan with their heating company.

The Energy Assistance Program is taking applications for the upcoming heating season. If you own your home, the program may pay for emergency home furnace repairs or replacements. The program may also pay up to \$500 in emergency benefits. The program is based on how much it costs to heat your home, the number of people in your home and the amount of gross income all household members received in the previous three months from the month you apply. For an application, please call Renville County Energy Assistance at 320-523-5522 or 320-523-2202. See gross income guidelines below.

La cuesta de caliente esta ascendiendo por la estacion de invierno afectan todos. La programa de energia ayuda casas con parte de la cuesta de caliente para su casa. Podemos usar 30 porcentaje de asistencia a pagar la cuenta de eléctrica. Nosotros estamos promover todas casas pagan cada mes con una planea de pagos entre su compania de caliente.

El Programa de la Ayuda de la Energía toma las aplicaciones para la temporada que calienta. La programa puede pagar \$500 en beneficios emergencias. Si usted posee su hogar, la programa puede pagar para las reparaciones de horno de hogar de emergencia o reemplazos. El programa se basa en cuánto cuesta para calentar su hogar, el número de gente en su hogar y la cantidad de los ingresos que todos recibieron en los previos tres meses del mes que usted aplica. Para una aplicación, por favor llamada Renville County Energy Assistance en (320) 523-5522 o (320) 523-2202.

Income Guidelines/Pautas de Ingresos

Household Size/Miembros de Hogar	Maximum 3 Month Income/Maximo ingresos de 3 meses
1	\$5,987
2	\$7,829
3	\$9,671
4	\$11,514
5	\$13,356
6	\$15,198



County Parks **OPEN** for Winter Recreational Activities

Citizens are welcome to enter any of the seven county parks by foot to enjoy hiking, snow shoeing, cross country skiing, bird watching, and fishing as well as any other winter recreational activity. Lake Allie, Skalbekken and Vicksburg parks have designated winter parking areas located inside the parks. **All other county parks will be closed to motorized vehicles from November 2, 2015 through April 15, 2016.**

Snowmobiling is allowed on signed trails specifically designated for such use within each park. Services such as restrooms and

trash pickup will not be available during these months. **Archery deer hunting is allowed by permit only** in Skalbekken, Vicksburg, Beaver Falls, Birch Coulee, Mack Lake, and Anderson Lake County Parks from **November 1st – December 31st**. If you have any questions regarding use of the parks during the winter and early spring, please contact:

**Renville County Division of Environment
& Community Development: 320-523-3768**

RENVILLE COUNTY AMENDS COUNTY TOBACCO ORDINANCE



Back Row: Annie Tepfer, RAPAD Coalition Coordinator; Jill Bruns, Public Health Director; Liz Hatch, Youth; Samantha Harmon, Youth; Rita Felton, Public Health; Hannah Abraham, SHIP; Steve Hettig, Attorney and cancer survivor; Harry Hawkinson, Veterans Office; Leah Schueler, SHIP.
Front Row County Commissioners: Bob Fox, Randy Kramer, Lamont Jacobson, John Stahl, Paul Setzepfandt

Lifetime smoking and other tobacco use almost always begins by the time teens graduate from high school. A recent Surgeon General report states that “Tobacco use is started and established primarily during adolescence. Nearly 9 out of 10 cigarette smokers first tried smoking by age 18, and 99% first tried smoking by age 26.” The younger a person is when they start using tobacco products, the more likely they are to continue to use it as an adult. This means if we can keep kids tobacco free until age 18, most will never start using it.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of death in Renville County, Minnesota and the nation. It is the main contributor to a variety of cancers, heart disease, stroke and lung disease. Overall, roughly one-third of all kids who become regular smokers will eventually die from smoking. Many more will have quality of life issues later in life, such as shortness of breath or poor circulation.

Children and teens are easy targets for the tobacco industry. Tobacco companies spend 135 million dollars every year in Minnesota on tobacco advertising. Today’s newer market campaigns include e-cigarettes and juices. Teens don’t realize how addicting these products are and what a struggle it can be to quit. The majority of kids who try to quit smoking in high school will fail. Because of the addictive power of nicotine, about three out of four teen tobacco users will end up using into adulthood, even if they intend to quit after a few years.

We can no longer justify writing off adolescent tobacco use as a rite of passage or that “kids will be kids.” The data and science is too clear, the facts are too compelling, the health and social consequences are too devastating, and the costs are simply too high. Teen tobacco use is one of our biggest preventable public health problems.

In an effort to reduce youth access to tobacco products, a group of dedicated people worked on updating the 1998 Tobacco Ordinance for Renville County. Updates to the ordinance include:

- *Electronic cigarette additions compatible with state law*
- *Sales prohibited by pharmacies*
- *Education requirements for all employees of tobacco licensee*
- *Minimum price per cigar at \$2.10 in packages of less than seven*
- *1000 foot or more proximity of retailers from youth-oriented facilities*
- *Increased administrative penalties for failing compliance check; and*
- *Prohibiting hookah, sampling or smoking lounges*

The amendments to the ordinance passed at a public hearing on Aug. 11, 2015. “The real winners are the youth in Renville County!” stated Jill Bruns, Public Health Director.

The entire ordinance can be found on the Renville County website.
<http://www.co.renville.mn.us/>

**Renville
County**

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**Redwood/Renville Regional
Material Recovery Facility**

The New Joint County Material Recovery Facility Will be Ready Soon

In 2012, the Renville and Redwood County Boards decided to form the Redwood/Renville Regional Solid Waste Authority (RRRSWA) to address the counties' changing recycling and solid waste needs. The current seven member board includes Renville County Commissioners Bob Fox and Paul Setzepfandt, Redwood County Commissioners, Lon Walling and Dennis Groebner, Renville County citizen member, Harlan Hultgren, Redwood County citizen member, Bill Lightfoot, and an at-large member, Dr. Steven Medrud. The RRRSWA applied and received a \$1.9 million Minnesota Business Development Capitol Project grant to help build, staff, and operate a Joint Regional Material Recovery(recycling) and Municipal Solid Waste(MSW) transfer facility. The 39,000 square foot facility was completed and an open house with guided tours was held this past October. The facility will provide the infrastructure necessary to collect, process, and market recyclables for both counties and a more efficient method for transporting municipal solid waste. The Redwood County facility was operating at full capacity and was in need of several major structural repairs. Renville County did not have a facility. Building the facility with the required equipment for the two counties met both counties' needs while saving money by avoiding duplication. The facility was designed to accommodate further expansion for additional recycling activities. The two counties are seeking to improve their recycling needs and municipal solid waste collection by creating a system that will be more efficient. The RRRSWA will provide quality environmental programs with expanded services, special collection events and a household

hazardous waste disposal program. Jon Mitchell is the executive director for the Redwood Renville Regional Solid Waste Authority(RRRSWA) and for the Renville Redwood Regional Material Recovery Facility (RRRMRF). Brian Sams is the facility manger of the (RRRMRF)

With the new facility will come some changes to the way recycling and solid waste are handled. A new easier, method will be used by the counties' citizens to recycle. It will now be single stream recycling, which means no more separation of recyclable materials. Renville and Redwood County curbside residents and some businesses will place all of their recyclable materials in a 95 gallon wheeled cart. It is planned that carts will be delivered to city residents in both counties this December. Then new single stream collection will begin in January 2016. The current recycling bins may be returned or kept by residents for another use. Watch for more details in the near future. *Mitchell and Sams predict, "there will be a 25 - 50% increase in recycling with the new single stream method."*



The new facility for the RRRSWA.



Truck dumping recyclable inside the new facility.

The new facility was designed and constructed to handle both municipal and rural solid waste and recyclable materials. When a truck brings a delivery of solid waste or recyclables to the new facility, the driver backs into the building through a large door and dumps the load inside. The building was designed to be tall enough just for this purpose. The building is divided with municipal waste placed on one side of the building and the recyclable materials placed on the opposite



Redwood/Renville Regional
Material Recovery Facility

The New Joint County Material Recovery Facility Will be Ready Soon

side of the building, so the two are not mixed. The recyclables then are put through a presorting process where workers pull off large pieces of cardboard, plastic bags, large pieces of plastic, garbage and anything else that is a non-processable item.

Then a second sorting process occurs where the Rigid – 3 dimensional materials such as glass, aluminum, steel and metals are separated from Fibers – 1 dimensional materials such as newspapers, office papers, envelopes, and magazines. The rigids go by conveyor to a rigid sort room where workers sort the plastics into two categories. The first category is number 1 plastics such as pop bottles and water bottles and the second category is number 2 thru 5 plastics such as milk jugs and detergent bottles. These materials are dropped into separate bunkers, and will eventually be baled. The steel, aluminum, and glass automatically fall off the same conveyor into individual bunkers without human intervention. The fibers go from the pre-sort conveyor through the disc screen and polishing screen and then to the fiber sort room where anything non-recyclable is pulled off by workers. Fiber material is further separated and dropped into four different bunkers, newspaper, office type paper, paper board, and magazines.

Then recyclables stored in the bunkers, depending on the type of material, are automatically or physically pushed onto a conveyor that sends the material to a baler. The end results are separate bales of cardboard, different types of fiber, metal, and plastics. The bales are loaded onto trailers through doors in the back of the facility and then hauled to vendors who purchase the recyclables.

All of the solid waste will be hauled to the Renville Count Landfill until the last cell is full which is predicted to be sometime in 2017. The demolition cell at the landfill has another 10 plus years plus before it is full. The more recycling that is done by county citizens and businesses the longer the landfill cells will be open.

For more information and tips about recycling and solid waste collection in Renville and Redwood Counties check out our website at: www.renvillecountymn.com/services/RRMRF/resources.php

HINT: Place your recyclables in the carts, do not put your recyclables in plastic bags and then in the carts. The plastic bags jam up the machinery at the recycling facility.

You can recycle plastic bags by putting all of your plastic bags in one large plastic bag and then tying a knot at the top.



Fiber Bunkers



Sort rooms and conveyor to baler.



Nellie Wersal will be weighing all trucks before they enter the facility.



Jon Mitchell with the first run of baled card board.



Plans are in the works to have secure document shredding service available.



HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS

105 South 5th Street, Suite 318 • Olivia, MN 56277 • (320) 523-3812 • www.renville.com

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HRA/EDA FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the HRA/EDA?

The Renville County Housing and Redevelopment Authority and the Economic Development Authority make up the HRA/EDA. Together they coordinate and administer housing programs and enhance and expand economic development opportunities in Renville County. The HRA/EDA provides its residents with home improvement loans, down payment assistance, business revolving loan funds, business assistance and development. The HRA/EDA also promotes tourism, recreation, community events, agricultural and renewable energy endeavors and education.

~ HOUSING QUESTIONS

What's the difference between the Section 8 and public housing programs? Is the Section 8 waiting list open?

The Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) allows housing clients to rent from a private landlord with a portion of the rent paid directly to the landlord. Families can expect to pay about 30% of their gross monthly income for rent with the remaining rent paid to the landlord by the Housing Authority. The Public Housing program houses clients in units owned and operated by the HRA, including the 17 unit Centennial Apartment building in Franklin and two and three bedroom single family homes located in Morton, Sacred Heart, and Franklin. Public Housing is an income qualified program and rent is based on 30% of annual adjusted gross income.

The section 8 waiting list is currently closed, except to applicants who have: Lived, worked or attended school in Renville County for six or more months **OR** ~ Households with a head, spouse, co-head who is 62 years or older **OR** ~ Households with a head, spouse, co-head who is disabled.

I applied for housing, what is my status on the waiting list?

To inquire on your waiting list status please call the housing staff at (507) 637-4004, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00am and 4:30pm.

Does the Renville County HRA/EDA offer emergency assistance for housing?

No, the HRA does not offer emergency assistance for housing. Please contact Renville County Human Services at (320) 523-2202.

I am interested in purchasing a home. Is there a program to help me?

Yes, the Renville County EDA offers a down payment assistance program. Up to \$5,000 may be available to help pay closing costs or used for a down payment. This is a 0% interest loan that is deferred until the first mortgage is paid off, the home is sold, or is no longer owner occupied. This program is operated by the EDA staff at the Olivia office.

I own a home and need help fixing it up. Are there funds available for that?

Yes, there are home rehab funds available through the EDA. This is a 0% interest loan program that will provide half the costs of your project up to \$5,000 for permanent repairs to your home. This program is operated by the EDA staff at the Olivia office.

Where is the office for housing assistance located?

The Renville County Housing Authority office is now located at 200 South Mill Street in Redwood Falls and is staffed by Amanda Hillmer and Pat Dingels. The office phone number is (507) 637-4004.

Do I have to go to the HRA office in Redwood Falls for housing assistance?

No, the housing staff will schedule a time to meet with you in Renville County.

What are the housing staff hours in the Renville County office?

The housing staff does not have set hours in Renville County. You can schedule an appointment to meet with staff in Renville County.

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NEWS FROM OUR NEIGHBORS

BUFFALO LAKE ~

Welcomes a new business to Main Street. Sweet Home Bakery recently opened for business next to Main Street Market.

UPCOMING EVENTS ~

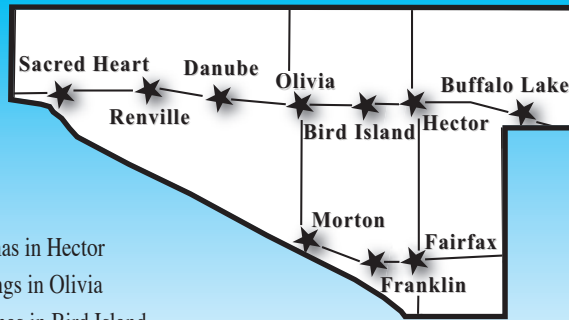
December 3rd: Unforgettable Christmas in Hector

December 3rd-5th: Holiday Happenings in Olivia

December 4th: Old Fashioned Christmas in Bird Island

December 5th: Santa's Breakfast 9:30am-12:30pm at Community Center in Buffalo Lake

February 17th-21st, 2016: Winter Fest in Buffalo Lake



CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

~ BUSINESS QUESTIONS

Where is the Economic Development Authority office located?

The EDA office is located in Suite 318 on the 3rd floor of the Renville County Government Services building at 105 South 5th Street, Olivia. The phone number is (320) 523-3656 and is staffed by Susie Lang, Economic Development Coordinator and Carrie Tersteeg, Administrative Assistant.

I am interested in starting my own business. How do I start?

Contact the Renville County EDA staff at (320) 523-3656 or e-mail hra_eda@renvillecountymn.com. We can connect you to the resources that can answer your questions and help position you for success.

My business is in need of some additional funding. Can the EDA help me?

The EDA offers a Revolving Loan Fund program that may be of assistance. Staff will assist you through the process of exploring your current position and business

goals and will research other funding resources that may be available to you and your business.

Do you have a project idea but not sure where to go next?

The EDA can get you connected with experts to help make your idea a reality.

Expanding your business or operation?

Contact the EDA for information about available seed, grant money and permitting information.

Are you interested in alternative energy?

The Agricultural and Renewable Energy Committee (Ag & R.E.) of the Renville County EDA can be a catalyst to help you and your project get started.

Do you have ideas about processing Ag products?

The Ag & R.E. Committee is prepared to make investments, loans, and grants to help you get your project started.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND

The Business Revolving Loan Fund is a unique and flexible source of supplemental financing for businesses that have a positive economic impact on Renville County.

INTEREST RATES AS LOW AS 2 %!

Building & Plant Renovations

Energy Efficiency Upgrades

Permanently Retaining Existing Jobs

Creating New Permanent Jobs

Working Capital Loans

Start-up

For more info contact, **Susie Lang**,
Renville County HRA/EDA.

Phone: (320) 523-3837 or E-Mail:
susiel@renvillecountymn.com

Funds made available by the Renville County Housing & Economic Development Authority, The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act, & a grant from the USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) Program.

CENTENNIAL APARTMENTS

If you are a low income individual or couple looking for an apartment, you may want to consider Centennial Apartments in Franklin.

ONE-BEDROOM APARTMENT:

Maximum Income Qualifying **\$34,000** for One person, **\$38,850** for Two people

THE BUILDING IS EQUIPPED WITH A COMMUNITY ROOM, ELEVATOR, PATIO, LAUNDRY ROOM, FREE WIFI IN COMMON AREAS, OFF STREET PARKING AND OVERLOOKS A PARK.

INTERESTED IN RENTING AN APARTMENT, CALL THE HRA AT 507-637-4004



Would Your house like a little TLC?

Do you need a new furnace, or maybe some insulation or windows? Those are just some of the eligible improvements under the Renville County Homeownership Program.

Homeowners in Renville County may qualify for a no-interest loan of up to \$5,000 for half the cost of their home improvement project. Downpayment assistance also available to first time homebuyers.

For more information email Susie at susiel@renvillecountymn.com or call (320) 523-3837. Renville County HRA/EDA

Maximum incomes

- 1 person \$41,450
- 2 people \$47,350
- 3 people \$53,300
- 4 people \$59,200
- 5 people \$63,950
- 6 people \$68,650
- 7 people \$73,400
- 8 people \$78,150





Renville 150th Anniversary ~ 2016

CONNECTING YOU WITH YOUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In this issue, the 150th Renville County Historical insert is dedicated to all of the men and women of Renville County who have served and are currently serving our Country in the armed services through war time and peace time. We thank all of them for their sacrifices to keep our country safe and free. These are the military experiences of three men who currently live in Renville County.



Alvin Reckow holding his "Quilt of Valor" honoring his service.

Alvin Reckow WAS STATIONED IN KOREA

Alvin Reckow was born and raised in the Hector area and in 1959 at the age of 23 he enlisted in the U.S. Army. He enlisted for a two year stint but ended up serving for 3 years as President Kennedy asked the men to serve our country for one more year. He was sent to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri for 8 weeks of basic army training and then another 8 weeks at Fort Benning, Georgia for engineering training.

He was then sent to Korea aboard the U.S.S. Breckenridge. Alvin and the other soldiers spent 27 days on the ship before they docked at the U.S. Military Base located at Incheon, Korea to serve with the 802nd Engineer Battalion.

During the Korean Conflict the military had radar that overlooked North Korea, China and Russia known as Radar Hill. It caught fire and burned down. Alvin's battalion was transferred into TDY (Temporary Duty Assignment) to the Air Force to rebuild 21 radar scopes on Radar Hill. The men worked on the project all winter and into the spring in extreme outdoor conditions where the temperatures would go as low as 50 below. If it was hard to get food to the men at noon because of the weather, they ate WWII sea rations. After the radar and a plotting board were rebuilt at Radar Hill, the men moved to the K55, another Air Force base where they constructed a building that was used to check jet engines. The men built walls in this new building so the jets could be separated. If a jet might catch fire, the walls would protect the other jets from catching fire. Again, the men worked on this project through the winter. Alvin and the other troops managed to get work done during the day at this base despite poor living conditions in the barracks. The barracks were poorly heated and noisy, because they were located at

the end of a busy runway.

Alvin shared a special memory of his time in South Korea. He explained, "During the Korean conflict many buildings were destroyed and people had no place to live. Small children were taken in to live in a place know as Christian Town. The GI's stationed with me decided to do something special for these children at Christmas. " They gave the children candy, nuts and fruit that the officers donated and the enlisted men bought gloves, scarves, and hats that were wrapped for each child. A special meal was prepared and Santa passed out the gifts." The children were thrilled and Alvin was touched when one little girl said, "Thank you GI."

Next Reckow and the other men moved on to the Kimpo Air Force base in South Korea where they worked on the airstrip and constructed buildings. While stationed there, the troops that had time off would go to the DMZ. The DMZ was 600 meters total, 200 meters were in South Korea that the American soldiers patrolled, 200 meters were considered neutral, and 200 meters were in North Korea patrolled by their troops. Reckow also remembered, "the American troops worked with Korean men and informally the two taught one another their perspective languages. It made working together better." When Alvin was discharged he came back to Hector where he worked for 56 years as a service technician for John Deere, McCormicks and later Midwest Machinery. Alvin was recently given a "Quilt of Valor" by the Hutchinson DAV group. The quilt has a special message that reads, "We quilt to honor and comfort those touched by war". Alvin said, "I am proud of this quilt and I feel appreciated."

Richard Henry Roper VIETNAM NAVY VETERAN



Richard Roper with a picture of the ship he served on, the U.S.S. Kawishiwi AO-146.

At the age of 19, Richard Henry Roper, a Renville County citizen, enlisted in the Navy at the Armory in Olivia in 1968 and served for four years during the Vietnam War. After enlisting, he spent about three months in boot camp training on the U.S.S. Recruit located at the Naval Training Center in the Point Loma area of San Diego, California and then went aboard the ship, the U.S.S. Kawishiwi AO-146. On his first day aboard the ship, Richard learned that there is a river and a lake in

Minnesota named the Kawishiwi. Both are located within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and the river flows north to the Hudson Bay. Kawishiwi is an Ojibway/Chippewa word that means “River full of Beaver Houses”.

Roper began his deployment on the ship as a machinist in the engine room where he took care of the generators located around the boilers. After working as machinist for awhile he became more interested in the ship's boilers and switched to the position of Boiler Tender. The U.S.S. Kawishiwi held 7 million gallons of oil which was used to refuel other ships and aircraft carriers. The home port for the ship was Hawaii. The U.S. S. Kawishiwi was generally out to sea off the Vietnam coast for 2 weeks at a time and then would go into port to fill up with more oil. Roper said, “It took about 13 to 14 days to travel from Hawaii to Vietnam at 19 knots/17 miles per hour. The ship would be in port 3 to 4 days at a time at different locations including the Philippines, Japan and Hong Kong. The sailors would then take liberty when in port.”

Roper recalled an emergency incident on the ship that involved his work with the boilers. He said “the ship had been out at sea about 13 days on the way from Hawaii to Vietnam when the boilers quit and the ship had no power, it was dead in the water. A backup generator was maintained if this situation occurred. However, the emergency generator failed.” There was still enough steam left, so Roper's Chief ordered him to light all 4 burners on one of the two boilers to get the ship up and running. He remembered, “it was risky but it worked, if it hadn't worked the ship would have sunk as it is constantly taking on water and power is needed to eliminate the water.”

Richard summarized his experience, “*I feel that I learned more during my time in the Navy then I would have going to college. I missed home while serving, but I was able to come back on leave. After my tour of duty, I returned to farm in Beaver Falls Township. I recently researched the whereabouts of the ship hoping I could find where it was located, but learned it had been sunk off the coast of California in 2014.*”

Andy Lang FLIES BLACK HAWK HELICOPTERS



Andy Lang with a Black Hawk helicopter.

Andy Lang earned a degree in Aviation Science from St Cloud State University and then enlisted in the National Guard in 2002 at the age of 23 with the intent to fly. Andy said, “There were very few good jobs available in the aviation field at the time. So I decided to enlist in the National Guard.” Andy started basic training in January of 2003 at Fort Sill, Oklahoma for three months and then he was off to Officer Candidate School at Fort Meade, South Dakota. Andy was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant one year after he enlisted.

In 2004, he was given a slot to attend flight school at Fort Rucker, Alabama. The year long program starts with Initial Entry Rotary Wing training. The first phase starts with learning primary flying techniques and instruments. The students fly with civilian helicopters during this phase. Then they move on to learning basic combat skills and flying with night goggles with an army helicopter. The last phase of the instruction involves Dunker Training. During this training the pilots learn how to escape their aircraft should they have to land or crash in a body of water. At the end of the summer of 2005, Lang finished his Black Hawk training and it was the first time that he flew what the army considers an advanced aircraft. He continues to fly Black Hawk helicopters also known by the army as the UH60 Utility Helicopter. Andy said, “*I like flying this helicopter because it is flown close to the ground, is a very survivable aircraft, and has been around for a long time*”.

In 2007, Andy received a notice of sourcing that he would be deployed. He was sent to Fort Sill, Alabama for mobilization training. He came home on leave and his son, Elliot, was born. Then Andy deployed to Iraq. He was based in Balad which is 60 miles north of Baghdad for one year. There he flew combat services and support which involved flying soldiers, contractors, and anyone who needed to go from one place to another. Andy came home the 25th of July, 2008 from his first deployment.

From then until 2014 he continued to fly helicopters out of St Cloud or St Paul as often as he could, while staying in compliance with the army's minimum flight requirements. In the fall of 2013 he learned that he would be deployed again and received his orders in February of 2014. His preparation for mobilization was in Fort Hood located in Killeen, Texas. He was boots on the ground on August 1, 2014 in Kuwait for five months and then on to Iraq for four months, this time as a Captain.

When he isn't flying helicopters for the National Guard he works for Renville County as the Parks Supervisor. When asked about future plans Andy said, “I will stay in the guard until they kick me out. Right now, I am waiting for my official promotion to Major. I continue to fly and test every year to ensure I can proficiently fly a helicopter. I plan to work on my Master's Degree through online course work to further my military career.”



Water Protection and Management

Fall 2015

Low-Interest Loan Programs for Septic and Well Improvements

Septic Loans

Renville County works with three Watershed Projects (Hawk Creek, CROW, and Middle Minnesota) to implement low-interest loan programs to upgrade or replace failing septic systems. A failing system would include septic systems that discharge to the ground surface; do not meet a setback to a well; drain into a tile line, ditch, or other waters; or occasionally backs up into the home.

Funding is provided through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and administered through Renville County. Loan terms are for 10 years with an interest rate of 3%. The loan amount is added to property taxes as a special assessment with payments due twice a year with property taxes.

"Low-Interest Loan Programs" continued on back

Minnesota's New Buffer Initiative

Governor Mark Dayton's new buffer initiative law establishes new perennial vegetation buffers of up to 50 feet along rivers, streams, and ditches that will help filter out phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment. The new law provides flexibility and financial support for landowners to install and maintain buffers and boost compliance with buffer laws across Minnesota.

How do buffers protect water resources? Buffers hold soil in place, use up nutrients, filter pollutants, and help maintain ditches by preventing fill-in due to runoff and wind erosion.

What is required? The buffer width will be an average width of 50 feet on Public Waters and a minimum width of 16.5 feet on Public Ditches. Buffer widths on other waters will be determined by Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs).



What is the timeline to be compliant with the buffer deadlines? Buffers need to be installed on Public Waters by November 2017 and on Public Drainage Systems by November 2018. Landowners who have applied for conservation programs or initiated a ditch authority process can be granted a one-year extension.

Where can I find more information? Both the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have provided extensive information on their websites, including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and landowner resource information:

MN Board of Water and Soil Resources
<http://bwsr.state.mn.us/buffers>

MN Department of Natural Resources
<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/buffers/index.html>

For additional local information, please contact the Renville County SWCD office at (320) 523-1559.



Recycle your old holiday light strings and electrical cords through January 31st at the following collection sites:

Maynard's Food Center
304 North Main Street, Renville

K & S Millwrights
217 East Hall Avenue, Buffalo Lake

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

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

Danube Upholstery
315 North Main Street, Danube

Franklin State Bank
278 2nd Avenue East, Franklin

Farm Mercantile
110 1st Street SE, Fairfax

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

Olivia Hardware*
124 South 9th Street, Olivia

Hill's Unique Gift Shop*
Highway 212 East, Hector

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

For more information:
(320) 523-1144 or (320) 523-3706
www.recycleminnesota.org

*Locations offering year-round collection

"Low-Interest Loan Programs" continued from front

All expenses incurred for upgrading or replacing a failing septic system are eligible for loan proceeds. Loans for new building sites or after-the-fact septic installations are not eligible. The application process is simple, and the loan can be paid in full at any time.

Well Loans

Financing is available for low-interest loans to repair or replace damaged, noncompliant, or contaminated wells located in Renville County. Funding is provided through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Best Management Practices (BMP) loan program and administered through Renville County to provide financial assistance to landowners who have problems with their existing wells.

Examples of eligible well concerns include:

- Contamination from bacteria or excessive nitrates.
- Chemical contamination from sources such as pesticides, gasoline, or solvents.
- A well too close to a septic system.
- A cracked or collapsed well casing.
- Contamination due to flooding.

Loans cannot be issued to refinance a previously installed well, install a well for a new home, to resolve low-yield issues, or to eliminate naturally occurring minerals in the water such as iron, magnesium, manganese, or arsenic. Loan terms are for 10 years with an interest rate of 3%. The loan amount will be added to property taxes as a special assessment. The construction or repair of a well must be completed by a licensed well contractor. Properly constructed wells ensure a clean, safe water supply and also help to protect groundwater quality.

For more information on low-interest septic or well loans, please contact Renville County Water & HHW Management at (320) 523-3706.



Cold Weather Reminder: Properly Store Chemicals!

As you prepare for winter, remember to properly store paint and stain cans, driveway sealants, and countless other household chemicals. Each year numerous products are ruined simply because they were exposed to freezing temperatures. Proper storage maximizes the usable life of a product and reduces the amount of household hazardous waste (HHW) needing to be disposed of. Read the product label for safe and proper storage. For free disposal options, please call the Renville County Landfill and HHW Facility at (320) 523-1144.

MANURE APPLICATION DURING WINTER MONTHS



Manure is a valuable fertilizer resource in the production of crops, but when handled improperly, manure can contribute pathogens, nutrients, and biological oxygen demanding materials to surface water and negatively impact water quality.

Application of manure to frozen or snow covered fields shall be applied to slopes less than six percent. If sufficient fields with slopes less than six percent are unavailable, then the manure must be applied to land that is managed to control runoff and erosion with soil and water conservation practices.

Whenever possible, winter application of manure should be avoided to prevent runoff during snowmelt and the spring thaw. Runoff could carry manure into the open water and promote algae growth. If winter application cannot be avoided, a manure application setback of **300 feet** must be met from public and private ditches, tile intakes, lakes, rivers or streams, wetlands, and sinkholes to protect waters of the state.

For questions pertaining to the land application of manure, please contact the Renville County Environment and Community Development office at (320) 523-3768.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) pose an urgent and serious threat to Minnesota lakes and rivers. These nonnative species harm fish population, water quality, and water recreation. They can increase the costs of operating drinking water and power plants and complicate industrial processes. Everyone who enjoys Minnesota's water resources is asked to do their part to prevent the spread of zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil and other AIS. It is illegal to transport any prohibited invasive species or to launch a boat or trailer with these species attached. Required actions include **CLEANING** all boating and water recreational equipment before leaving any water access or shoreland; **DRAINING** water-related equipment (boat, ballast tanks, livewell) and keeping drain plugs out; and **DISPOSING** of unwanted bait in the trash. For more information, visit the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) website at mndnr.gov and search Invasive Species.

