



# Renville

## COUNTY MESSENGER

CONNECTING YOU WITH YOUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Volume 16

Fall 2017

Issue 3

## Minnesota Buffer Law Implementation in Renville County

➤ **NOVEMBER 13th at 6:30 pm**  
Public Hearing on the proposed County Buffer  
Ordinance in the County Government Services Center

The Minnesota Buffer Law was passed into law in 2015. The state legislature amended the law this past session to clarify several details. A structure has been developed to implement the new buffer law affecting public waters in Minnesota.

The law currently requires the establishment of perennial vegetation buffers up to 50 feet along all public waters (rivers, lakes, and streams).

All public drainage systems will require a 16.5 foot buffer. The original buffer legislation included private drainage systems, but amendments to the buffer law later declared them to be exempt. Alternative practices based on Natural Resource & Conservation Service (NRCS) guidelines or approved by the Board

of Soil & Water Resources (BWSR) are allowed for both public waters and public drainage systems, as identified by BWSR.

### Important Deadline Dates:

- The first implementation deadline for **public waters** requires that buffers must be seeded by **November 1, 2017**. A buffer map is available on the state's DNR website to see if your property is impacted by the law at: [www.dnr.state.mn.us/buffers](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/buffers).
- For **public drainage systems**, the deadline requires the buffers to be seeded by **November 1, 2018**.

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE

### Financial Assistance Available:

If you need to comply with the buffer requirement, you can obtain financial assistance through programs offered through the **Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)** at **320-523-1559**.

### Implementation:

As the implementation of the buffer law progresses there will be public meetings sponsored by the Renville County Drainage Authority and SWCD. Check out the county's website [www.renvillecountymn.com](http://www.renvillecountymn.com), local newspapers and local radio stations for dates and places where the meetings will be held.

### Enforcement:

The county will be passing and implementing a **County Buffer Ordinance**. There will be a **public hearing on the ordinance on November 13th at 6:30 pm in the County Government Services Center** as part of the Planning Commission's agenda for review of the ordinance's requirements. Once the public review

process is complete the ordinance will be recommended to the County Board for adoption later in November. The Renville County SWCD will be monitoring all parcels impacted by the buffer law for compliance. Those found to be out of compliance will be turned over to the Renville County Drainage Authority for enforcement. The penalty for noncompliance is a monetary fine based on a graduated scale defined in the proposed County Buffer Ordinance. Copies of the proposed Buffer Ordinance are available in the Public Works Office located in Room 319 in the Renville County Government Services Building in Olivia for public review.

**If you have questions regarding buffers, please contact the Renville County SWCD at 523-1559.**

## MOVED



### Environmental Services Department in **TEMPORARY SPACE**

The county's Environmental Services Department has been temporarily moved due to remodeling. The department can be found in **Room 121B in the lower level of the County Government Services Center**.

## NEW COUNTY LOCATION For Driver's License Exams

The driver's license examiners station has been moved to the lower level of the Courthouse in Olivia. Driver's license examiners are in Olivia every Wednesday to conduct written and road tests.

No appointment is required for the written tests that are given from 10:00 am to 11:15 am. Appointments for the Drivers Test need to be made by calling the Willmar Exam station at 320-231-1735 and requesting a time in Olivia.

## FREEZING FOR FOOD

Please plan to contribute to the **DONATION DRIVE** for The Renville County Food Shelf

**December 6th, 7th and 8th**

• B & D Grocery Store in Olivia

**Watch local papers for dates at:**

- Marynard's Grocery Store in Renville
- Island Market Grocery Store in Bird Island

**YOU MAY  
DONATE CASH  
OR FOOD.**





# 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.

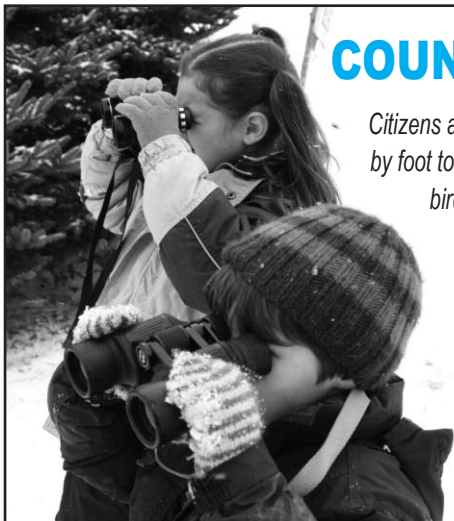
The Energy Assistance Program is taking applications for the upcoming heating season. If you own your home, the program may pay for emergency home furnace repairs or replacements. The program may also pay up to \$500 in emergency benefits. The program is based on how much it costs to heat your home, 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	\$6,250
2	\$8,173
3	\$10,096
4	\$12,019
5	\$13,942
6	\$15,865



## 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 October 31 through April 15, 2018.**

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  
Environmental Services: 320-523-3768**

# Consider Your Risk Factors

by Jill Bruns, Public Health Director

It would be so much easier to really enjoy your life if there weren't so many things trying to do you in every day. The problems begin even before we wake up. Falling out of bed kills 600 Americans every year. There's the early-morning heart attack, which occurs 40% more often than those later in the day. What about the drive to work with the maniacs on the road? What if you slip on the ice or choke on your bite of steak?

As smart as we are, you would think we would be pretty good at separating out the things that are likely to kill us from the ones that are long shots. But you would be wrong. We agonize over Ebola, which has killed two in the US, but have to be convinced about the merits of getting an annual flu shot, which contributes to the deaths of 51,000 Americans each year. We worry about the mad cow pathogen that isn't in our hamburger and worry far less about our basic diet and activity that contributes to the heart disease.

We all have a confounding habit of worrying about mere possibilities while ignoring huge probabilities. Grocery shoppers are still skeptical about buying fresh spinach for fear of E. coli while filling their carts with sugar laden sodas and fat-drenched French fries.

## The most prominent causes of death in the United States are

- #1. Tobacco
- #2. Diet and activity patterns
- #3. Alcohol
- #4. Microbial agents
- #5. Toxic agents



- #6. Firearms
- #7. Sexual behavior
- #8. Motor vehicles
- #9. Illicit use of drugs

## Why We Guess Wrong: The Psychology of Risk

Which risks get attention and which get overlooked depends on many factors. The most important is dread. The more pain or suffering something causes, the more we tend to fear it. The cleaner or at least quicker the death, the less it troubles us. For instance, we dread anything that poses a greater risk for cancer more than the things that injure us in a traditional way, like a car crash.

We also dread catastrophic risks, those that cause the deaths of a lot of people in a single episode, as opposed to those that kill in a chronic way. Unfamiliar threats are scarier than familiar ones. Novel and unusual diseases capture the headlines and shake us up.

We also misjudge risk if we feel we have some control over it. The decision to drive instead of fly is a common example. Behind the wheel, we're in charge. So people fearful of flying routinely choose the car, ignoring the fact that at most a few hundred people die in US commercial airline

crashes in a year, compared with 44,000 killed in car accidents.

We tend to get mad when we see someone driving erratically while on a cell phone, even if we've done the very same thing...that same day! We tell ourselves we're different, because we were able to pay attention to the road. This is the convenient belief that risks that apply to other people don't apply to us.

And finally, some risk gives us pleasure. Drinking alcohol or eating too much ice cream is immediately gratifying and we talk ourselves into ignoring almost any long-term costs.

## Rational Response to Risk

Take the time to learn more about the real odds. Look at the numbers and your life choices. In Public Health, we need to frame warnings so that people understand them. For instance, pollutants in fish can be dangerous, but for most people, the cardiac benefits of fish easily outweigh the risks. If people begin to thoughtfully compare both sides, they can make reasoned choices. Most people would be far likelier to protest a nuclear power plant than a tobacco company, but it's tobacco, not nukes, that kills an average of 1,200 Americans every single day.

We as individuals have substantial control over everything on the list. The first three factors on the list — tobacco, diet, and physical activity — account for most premature deaths and chronic diseases. In other words, the actual, underlying "cause" of premature death in our country comes down to bad use of our feet (lack of physical activity), our forks (poor dietary choices), and/or our fingers (holding cigarettes).



**Renville**  
COUNTY

Service • Stewardship • Shared Responsibility

500 E. DePue Ave.  
Olivia, MN 56277

Phone: 320-523-3710

Email: [lisah@renvillecountymn.com](mailto:lisah@renvillecountymn.com)

Web site: [www.renvillecountymn.com](http://www.renvillecountymn.com)

ECRWSS

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# HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWS

105 South 5th Street, Suite 318

Olivia, MN 56277

(320) 523-3656 • [www.renville.com](http://www.renville.com)

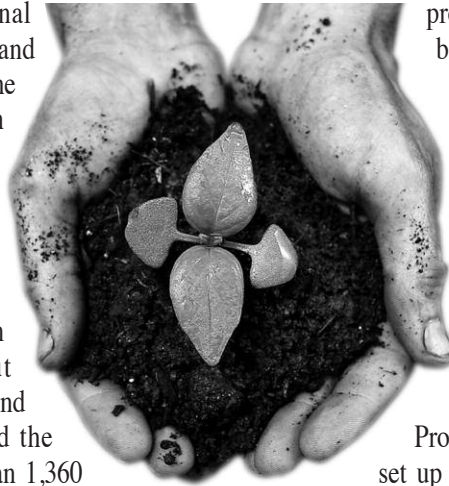
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## 2017 Fall Harvest Field Trip

The Fall Harvest Field Trip is an educational opportunity that ProAg of Renville County and the Ag & Renewable Energy Committee of the Renville County EDA provide for area sixth grade students. It is a day spent in the field with area farmers and agricultural experts where students get their hands dirty and experience a tiny piece of Renville County Agriculture. The students visit farm operations and agricultural industries in Renville County where they learn about economics, conservation, career exploration and everything in between. "We just completed the seventh Fall Harvest Field Trip and more than 1,360 students have attended this field trip over the years" said ProAg member, Dan Edwards. "We want students to come away from this event with a better understanding of farms, livestock, harvest and what is growing in the fields around where they live" said Ag and Renewable Energy committee member, Barb Frank. Students learn how sugar beets grow, they see the sugar beets harvested as they stand in the field, then they see the trucks hauling the beets into the co-op and watch as they are dumped and weighed. The CEO of the Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative, Steve Domm, accompanies the students on the tour and explains the



process the sugar

beet goes through to become the different forms of sugar that are produced at the Renville beet plant. Domm also explains the products that contain sugar from Renville County, interesting sugar facts, the economic impact the cooperative has on the area as well as some of the career opportunities that the plant offers. This is just an example of two of the stops that students have had the chance to experience as a result of this tour. A group effort makes the day possible for the students.

ProAg and the Ag & Renewable Energy Committee set up the hosts and the helpful and willing area farm operations and agricultural industries providing tours for the students. ProAg also reaches out to Ag experts who participate as chaperones on the tour to continue, clarify and enhance the Agricultural education on the bus between the site visits. Over the years, students have had the opportunity to observe corn harvest, corn drying, sugar beet harvest, large dairy operations, a sheep farm, United Acres Garden in Olivia, Willmar Aerial Spraying, the Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative, Revier Cattle Company, Co-Op Country's fertilizer plant, and the Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District.

For more information about the Fall Harvest Field Trip contact Susie at (320) 523.3656 or at [susiel@renvillecountymn.com](mailto:susiel@renvillecountymn.com)

## Rental Rehab Program



The Renville County Housing Redevelopment Authority and Economic Development Authority have created a new loan program that will be available starting in January 2018. It is designed to assist in the rehabilitation of residential rental properties. This interest free loan will match the project funds of the property owner dollar for dollar on permanent repairs to the home up to \$5,000. Repair and upgrades for windows, roofs, siding, foundations, electrical systems, heating units, and plumbing work are examples of eligible projects. Loans are repayable in equal monthly installments. *Additional details about this new funding option for residential rental rehabilitation is available at [www.renville.com](http://www.renville.com), or by calling the EDA at (320) 523.3656.*



# Property Assessed Clean Energy



The Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program is a new method for financing energy efficiency and renewable energy improvement projects. PACE eliminates the burden of upfront costs by providing low-cost, long-term financing. Energy saving

measures pursued by the participants receive project financing and are repaid as a separate item on their property tax assessment for a set period of time. Programs exist for both residential properties (commonly referred to as residential PACE or R-PACE) and commercial properties (commonly referred to as commercial PACE or C-PACE). If your business is considering an energy efficiency upgrade, please consider PACE as a potential funding option.

The new program is available to businesses and nonprofits in the Rural Minnesota Energy Board's (RMEB) counties. It has the potential to benefit business and industry in the area. The program is administered by the Southwest Regional Development Commission.

## PROGRAM DETAILS:

- Energy efficient and renewable energy retrofit of existing commercial / industrial buildings.
- Property must be classified as Commercial or Industrial.
- Businesses, multi-family housing, nonprofits, including places of worship.



## Centennial Apartment Updates

Centennial Apartments in Franklin has been undergoing several updates over the years. One of the largest projects to date has been the modernization of the building's elevator. The Renville County HRA was fortunate to be awarded a POHP (Publicly Owned

Housing Program) funds project through Minnesota Housing and Finance Agency to receive a new elevator. Other updates to Centennial Apartments included replacement of carpet with vinyl plank flooring.



To inquire about available apartments contact the Renville County HRA at (507) 637-4004 or email [amanda@radc.org](mailto:amanda@radc.org)

- Applicant(s) is/are the legal owner of the property described in the application.
- Property must be located in the 18-County RMEB Area. (Blue Earth, Brown, Cottonwood, Faribault, Freeborn, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Martin, Mower, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, Rock, Sibley, Watonwan)
- Property owner is current on all mortgages. Property owner is not in bankruptcy and the property is not an asset in a bankruptcy.
- There are no federal or state income liens, judgment liens, or similar involuntary liens on the Property.
- Must have an Energy Audit performed by approved energy auditor. Must show significant cost savings.
- Maximum PACE Loan will be up to 20% of the assessed property value or \$100,000.
- Minimum PACE Loan will be \$5,000.
- Greater than a 1:1 savings to investment ratio (projected savings based on energy audit should exceed investment costs).
- Maximum of 20 years to repay loan. Loan term must not exceed estimated life expectancy of improvement.
- Interest rate determined by RMEB Review Committee, currently 4%.
- 1.0% origination fee.

For more information on the PACE program, call Robin Weis at the Southwest Regional Development Commission at (507) 836.1638

## What's Happening

### November 11th

~Holiday Happenings, **Hector**

### November 18th

~Beneath the Village Wreath, **Morton**

### November 19th

~RCHS Pancake Fundraiser, **Morton**

### December 1st

~Unforgettable Christmas, **Hector**

### December 7th

~Holiday Happenings, **Olivia**

### December 7th

~Old Fashion Christmas, **Bird Island**

(Above) Jim Kroona, Willmar EMS, Mary Erickson, Renville County TZD Member, Jeff Nelson, Renville County Sheriff Investigator and Patrol Deputy, demonstrating The Rollover Simulator.

The committee met on October 12 and reviewed the fatal and serious injury crash reports. The findings showed that seat belt use is still an issue that needs to be addressed among drivers in Renville County. Other notable findings included *distracted drivers, impaired drivers, the need to obey traffic signs, speed and ATV safety*. Annette Larson the South Central Southwest Toward Zero Deaths Regional Coordinator wants to remind all of us,

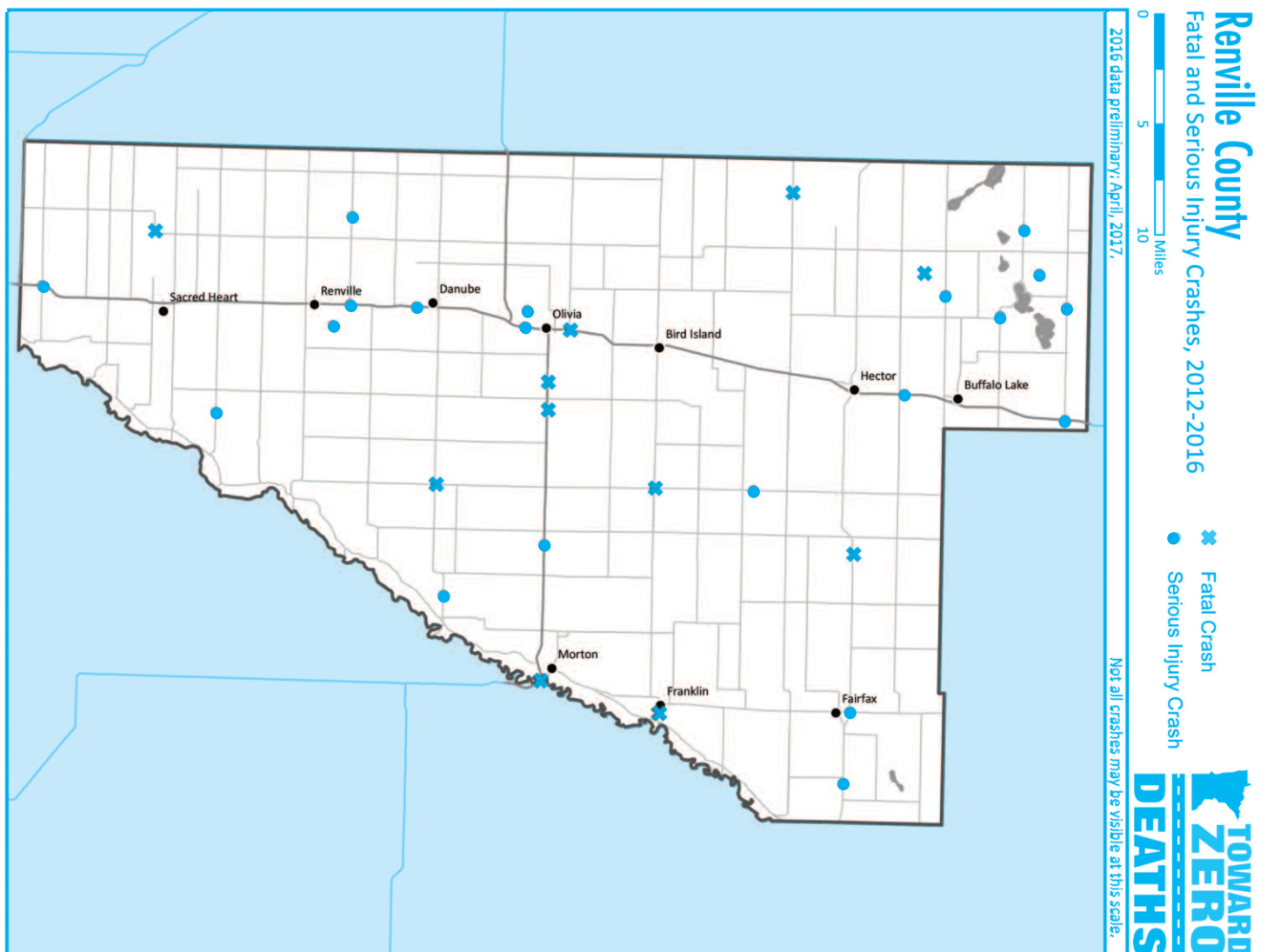
**“One life lost on our roadways is one life too many.”**

The fatal and serious crash review committee would like to extend their sympathy to those who have lost a loved one to traffic crashes. They would also like to remind everyone to please drive safely as they work toward having zero deaths on our area roadways.

The coalition applied and received a federal grant to fund their educational work with local county schools, clinics, community members, and to raise the public’s awareness of traffic safety issues. The county’s coalition coordinator, Mary Erickson will work with the county’s Sheriff’s staff to implement the grant along with Annette Larson. The members meet in the even numbered months of the year. The coalition is looking for new members. Their meetings are open to the public and the next meeting will be held on December 14, 2017.

If you would like to be a coalition member, please call or text Mary Erickson at 320-579-3356 or Annette Larson Office: 507-304-6110; Cell: 507-720-2101; or email at [Annette.l.larson@state.mn.us](mailto:Annette.l.larson@state.mn.us).

**Remember “Click it or Ticket”!**







# Water Protection and Management

Fall 2017

## Renville County Geologic Atlas

### Understanding Renville County's Geology and Groundwater Resources

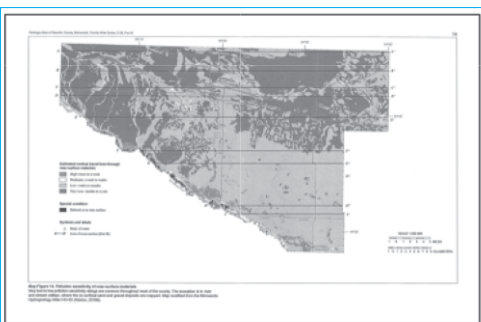
Little is known about our groundwater supplies and the aquifers that store our water resources. In 2009, Renville County started the initial steps towards completing a County Geologic Atlas. The Atlas project is a study of the County's geology and its groundwater resources. It is a collaborative effort between Renville County, the Minnesota Geological Survey (MGS), and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Geologists from the MGS investigated the earth materials beneath the land surface, which contain groundwater and control the flow from the land surface to aquifers. Hydrologists from the DNR investigated the quantity, quality, and pollution sensitivity of the County's groundwater.

The Renville County Geologic Atlas has recently been completed. Information developed during the Atlas project was compiled and printed as maps. Part A, which contains the geologic maps, was released in 2013; however, the hydrology maps, or Part B, were only recently completed. The geologic maps show the various bedrock units, geologic material at the land surface, and the sediments that lie in between. The hydrology maps include aquifer groundwater flow directions, pollution sensitivity, and recharge areas. The maps are available in both paper and GIS formats.

For information about the Renville County Geologic Atlas Program or to access maps on line, visit:

Department of Natural Resources – [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us) (search under County Geologic Atlas)

Renville County Environmental Services – (320) 523-3768 or [www.renvillecountymn.com](http://www.renvillecountymn.com)



Renville County Geologic Atlas map of pollution sensitivity. Very low to low pollution sensitivity ratings are common throughout most of the County.

## Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program



The Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, or MN CREP, is a voluntary, joint federally-state funded natural resource conservation program that targets environmentally sensitive land. The \$500 million program has the potential to protect 60,000 acres across 54 counties, including Renville County. Landowners enroll in the federally-funded Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for 14-15 years. The same land will also be enrolled into a state-funded perpetual conservation easement through the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program. Private ownership continues and the land is permanently restored and enhanced for conservation benefits.

MN CREP will focus on four main Conservation Practices (CP) that have been identified through the federal CRP. These include: grass filter strips (CP21); wetland restorations, including floodplain and non-floodplain (CP23 and CP23A); and wellhead protection areas (CP2).

Upcoming sign-up deadlines are **Oct. 15, 2017** and **Nov. 15, 2017**, with more batching periods to follow. If you would like more information or need assistance, please call the Renville County SWCD at (320) 523-1559.

## Low-Interest Loan Programs for Well and Septic Improvements



Renville County administers several low-interest loan programs to assist property owners with upgrading or replacing a failing septic system or loan funds for repairing or replacing a damaged, noncompliant, or contaminated well. Loan terms are for 10 years with an interest rate of 3%. The loan amount is added to

*"Low-Interest Loan Programs" continued on back*

## Buffer Cost-Share Available



The Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is offering Renville County landowners a flat rate cost-share program to implement riparian buffers as required by the Buffer

Law. Rates are \$100 per acre for non-native grass and legume seed mixes and \$175 per acre for native grass seed mixes.

Seed mixes must be pre-approved by the SWCD and consist of at least four species with no one species comprising more than 25% of the mix. With consultation through the SWCD, haying, seed propagation, bio-energy production, and prescribed burning are allowed if these activities occur outside of the primary nesting season of May 15<sup>th</sup> to August 1<sup>st</sup>.

The cost-share application must be signed and approved before seeding can occur. Invoices and seed tags must be submitted and a field inspection is required before payment is made. A land occupier or landowner cannot accept any other state or federal funds for the riparian buffer. Applicants must complete and submit the BWSR Flat Rate Conservation Practice Assistance Contract (Effective July 1, 2016 version) to the Renville County SWCD prior to February 27, 2018. Maximum of 10 acres per entity. For more information, please contact:

### Renville County SWCD

1008 West Lincoln Avenue, Olivia  
(320) 523-1559 • [www.renvilleswcd.com](http://www.renvilleswcd.com)

### "Low-Interest Loan Programs" continued from front

property taxes as a special assessment with payment due twice a year along with property taxes. Loans for new building sites or already completed repairs or installations are not eligible. The application process is simple, and the loan can be paid in full at any time.

For more information on low-interest septic or well loans, please contact Renville County Environmental Services at (320) 523-3768.



Installation of a septic system drainfield.

**RECYCLE**  
Your Holidays<sup>™</sup>.ORG

Don't know what to do with those old or no longer working string of holiday lights? Renville County, along with sponsoring drop sites, will once again be collecting light strings for recycling. The *Recycle Your Holidays* program also accepts electrical cords, such as extension cords or cords from appliances. For collection site locations or other recycling related questions, visit: [www.renvillecountymn.com](http://www.renvillecountymn.com) or call (320) 523-8002.

## Protect Your Health – Test Your Well Water

If you own a private drinking water well you should test your well when serviced or whenever you notice a change in taste, color, or odor. In addition, regular testing should be conducted as shown below. Well water test kits are available from Renville County Public Health. The homeowner collects the sample and mails it with payment to a certified testing lab. For more information contact Renville County Public Health at (320) 523-2570.

Test For:	Annually	Once
Total Coliform Bacteria	X	
Nitrate*	X	
Arsenic		X
Lead		X

\*Always test before giving to an infant.

## 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 Environmental Services office at (320) 523-3768.