Renville COUNTY
Service · Stewardship · Shared Responsibility

THE COUNTY MESSENGER

2026 | Issue 3 | Fall



Beaver Falls County Park Recreational Area Shelter

Issue Snapshot:

- Special Family Child Care Provider Wanted ..... Page 2
- 2027 Proposed Budget.....Page 3
- Well and Septic Loans .....Page 3
- SCOPE Renville Co. Grants.....Page 4
- Snow on Road Notice.....Page 4
- County Awarded $3.2 Million Federal EDA Grant.....Page 5
- County Resource Guide .....Page 5
- Renville County Soil and Water Conservation District.....Page 6
- Work for Renville County .....Page 6
- Restorative Justice.....Page 7
- West Wing Apartments Rent Special .....Page 7
- RibFest a Success.....Page 8
- Winter Weather Awareness Week .....Page 8
- Birch Cooley's Township Treasurer Retires After 63 Years.....Page 9
- Operation Green Light.....Page 9
- Small Business Development Center.....Page 9
- The Gathering Grounds..... Page 10
- Energy Assistance..... Page 10
- 2027 Recycling Schedule..... Page 11
- Renville County Parks..... Page 12

MNbenefits: A Safe and Easy Way to Apply for Benefits

Did you know you can apply for several Minnesota assistance programs from the convenience of your home? MNbenefits provides one easy online location where individuals and families can apply for programs that may help with food, child care, housing, and other essential needs. You can complete one application, submit documents, and check your application status online.



Programs available through MNbenefits include SNAP food assistance, cash programs, emergency cash assistance, child care assistance, and housing support. Eligibility varies by program and is based on factors such as household size, income, and individual circumstances.

If you or someone you know could benefit from additional support, MNbenefits is a convenient place to start. **Visit MNbenefits.mn.gov to learn more and apply.** Help is available, and taking the first step can be as simple as completing an online application.

WEST WING
Child Care and Rentals



WE ARE LOOKING FOR A

Special Family Child Care Provider!

Rent a unit at West Wing Child Care in Renville and run your Special Family Child Care business in a supportive, community-focused setting.

Shared Spaces

Indoor and outdoor common play areas, shared with three other providers.

Affordable Unit Rent

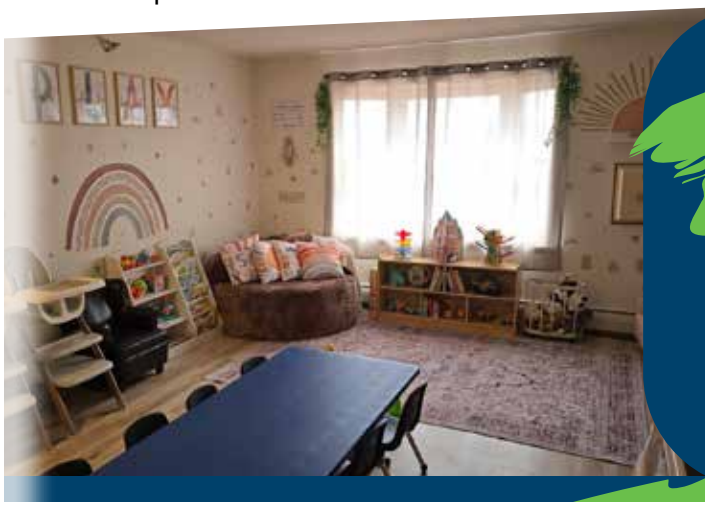
Just $150 per month for the unit! Utilities and internet included.

Great Location

Located at West Wing Child Care Apartment building in Renville.

Not a Residence

Providers do not live in the unit - it's for your child care business only!



Make a Difference in the Lives of Local Families!

INTERESTED?

Contact Stefanie Ryan, Communications and Grants Coordinator, at stefanie.ryan@renvillecountymn.gov or 320-522-4817 to learn more or apply for a unit!

Need Child Care?



Visit licensinglookup.dhs.state.mn.us to find a list of local providers!

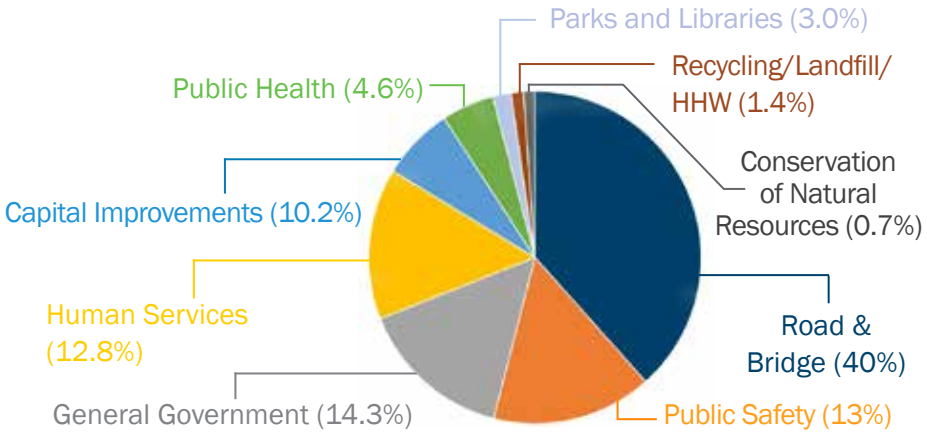
You can search by City or County for an expanded provider list.

2027 Renville County Budget Proposed at $60,437,570

2027 Preliminary Levy: $22,189,007
(9.75% increase from 2026)

HRA/EDA Preliminary Levy: $327,056
(2.09% increase from 2026)
The Housing and Redevelopment Authority and Economic Development Authority has a separate levy.

THE $60.4 MILLION BREAKDOWN:



2027 Revenue Sources

Renville County's funding comes from a variety of federal, state, and local revenues and service fees.



Agricultural Property Taxes (22.1%)
Non-Agricultural Property Taxes (16.7%)
State Aid (37.4%)
Federal Grants (10.5%)
Fees (0.2%)
Miscellaneous (13.0%)

Renville County Board of Commissioners
BUDGET MEETING

Thursday, December 10, at 6:00 p.m.

In-Person: Renville County Government Services Center 105 - 5th Street South, Suite 313, Olivia, Minnesota

Virtual: www.renvillecountymn.gov
(Find meeting link on the homepage under the Government tab at Agendas and Minutes)

Low-Interest Loan Programs for Well and Septic Improvements

Renville County administers low-interest loan programs to assist property owners with upgrading or replacing a failing septic system and/or for repairing or replacing a damaged or contaminated well. Loan terms are seven years for septics and 10 years for wells with an interest rate of 3%. This loan amount is added to property taxes as a special assessment with payment due twice a year.

Income-Based Septic System Grants

The County also administers an income-based grant program that is available to property owners in Renville County that have an existing, noncompliant septic system. Funds are intended to fix septic systems that are currently failing codes or functionality.



Minimum Grant Qualifications:

- Funding must be for a homesteaded, single-family home with an existing, failing subsurface sewage treatment system (SSTS) in Renville County
- The applicant must be the owner of the property
- Taxes must be current
- Income guidelines must be met

A full listing of guidelines is available at www.renvillecountymn.gov or by contacting Environmental Services at 320-523-3768 or ES@renvillecountymn.gov.

Sustainable Change for Opioid Prevention Efforts in Renville County



Sustainable Change for Opioid Prevention Efforts (SCOPE) Renville Co. was formed to serve as Renville County's advisory task force on how to spend funds from the National Opioid Settlement. The group brings together a variety of community voices, including law enforcement, restorative justice, public health, community members, and individuals with lived experience.

Each member brings unique experiences and insights to help the group better understand the challenges surrounding opioid use and find ways to make a meaningful difference in the community.

SCOPE Renville Co. recently completed its first grant application period and received seven applications for funding. Task force members reviewed and scored each application using the same scoring tool, which helped ensure that funding recommendations followed state requirements for the use of opioid settlement funds while also addressing local community needs.

The first grant period had $60,000 available. After reviewing the applications, SCOPE Renville Co. submitted its funding recommendations to the county commissioners. The commissioners approved the recommendations and awarded funding to four projects:

1. **Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart Schools (BLHS)**: Retention of the school resource officer
2. **Project Turnabout**: Creation of calm rooms/spaces and related resources
3. **RIPple Drug Education**: Youth prevention education, a media campaign, leave-behind kits, and harm reduction libraries
4. **Brown, Lyon, Redwood, Renville Drug Task Force**: Surveillance equipment

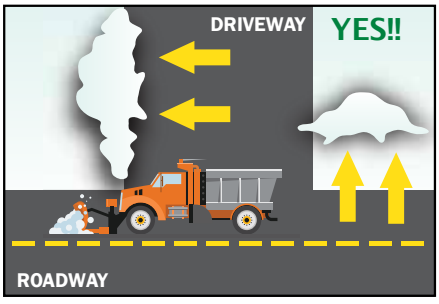
While SCOPE Renville Co. was not able to fund every project submitted during this first grant period, the task force is grateful for the strong community interest and for the organizations that took time to apply. Organizations whose projects were not selected, as well as new applicants, are encouraged to apply during the next funding opportunity.

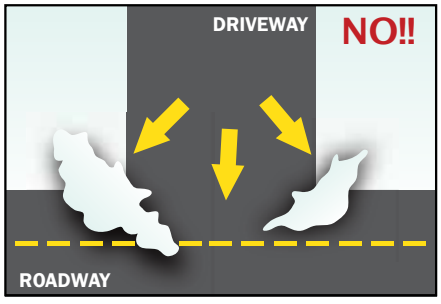
The next SCOPE Renville Co. grant application window will be January 1–31, 2027. Through collaboration, community input, and thoughtful investment of opioid settlement funds, SCOPE Renville Co. hopes to support lasting efforts that strengthen opioid prevention and help build healthier communities throughout Renville County.

You can find more information about SCOPE Renville Co. and the opioid settlement funds on the Renville County website: https://bit.ly/4cIlaxP. If you have any questions, you can reach out to Jess Johnson, Community Health Educator & Prevention Specialist, at scope@renvillecountymn.gov or 320-523-3726.

Snow on Road Notice

The Renville County Public Works Department would like to remind County residents that it is unlawful to deposit or push snow or ice, in any fashion, onto a public roadway or across the road right-of-way.





Minnesota Statutes 160.2715 and 169.42 prohibit the plowing, blowing, shoveling, and placing of snow from sidewalks, driveways, and parking lots onto public roadways.

This can include the ditch and right-of-way area. Violations of these statutes are a misdemeanor. Piles of snow left on or near the road can freeze into a solid mass creating a hazardous situation for vehicles and snowplows. Accidents and damages caused by snow placed in the roadway may result in liability to the property owner.

Renville County Awarded $3.2 Million Federal Grant for CSAH 21 Improvements

Renville County has been awarded $3.2 million in grant funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) to support improvements to County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 21. The federal grant will help fund a $4.3 million project, with Renville County committing the remaining $1.1 million in matching funds. The EDA Fiscal Year 2025 Disaster Supplemental Grant Program made approximately $1.45 billion available to support economic recovery activities in areas that received major disaster declarations occurring in calendar years 2023 and 2024.



The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission was a key partner throughout the application process, and the County greatly appreciates its guidance, expertise, and assistance in securing this significant federal investment in local infrastructure.

The project will include pavement reconditioning and reconstruction of approximately three miles of County State Aid Highway (CSAH) 21 roadway (from U.S. Highway 212 to CSAH 11) to address existing deficiencies and improve roadway safety and resiliency.

Improvements include:

- Full-depth reclamation and construction of a stabilized aggregate base with bituminous surfacing,
- Raise the roadway profile to enhance drainage, and
- Upgraded cross-slope, ditch drainage, and stormwater management features to improve surface and subsurface water conveyance.
- Additional components include paved and aggregate shoulders, safety edge treatments, pavement markings, erosion control measures, and all other related appurtenances.

Construction is expected to begin in May 2027, with completion anticipated in August 2027. Renville County extends its appreciation to the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration for its significant investment in this project. The $3.2 million federal grant will help the County address critical infrastructure needs, improve transportation safety and reliability, and support continued economic development throughout the region.



Renville County Resource Guide Available Online



The Renville County Resource Guide provides quick access to information about programs and services available to individuals and families throughout the county.

Find your guide online today at www.renvillecountymn.gov. *Select "County Resource Guide" under the "Services" tab.*

Call Public Health for a printed copy: 320-523-2570

Managing Conservation Reserve Program and Reinvest in Minnesota Easement Land: Know Your Options

- **Submitted by Renville County Soil & Water Conservation District**



Cole Erickson, Farm Bill Biologist

Cole Erickson is excited to be introduced as the new Farm Bill Biologist with Pheasants Forever for Renville and Redwood Counties. He works out of the Olivia and Redwood Falls Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices, where his primary role is providing technical assistance on the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). He is also happy to assist landowners with any conservation-related questions, even if they're not enrolled in CRP.

If you have an interest in wildlife conservation or have areas in your fields that are frequently wet, highly erodible, challenging to farm, or have low productivity, Cole encourages you to reach out to discuss conservation opportunities that may be a good fit.

Through CRP, landowners can receive annual incentive payments in exchange for establishing native grasses and wildflowers, which provide benefits including improved wildlife habitat, enhanced water quality, and reduced soil erosion.

Contact Cole at 320-523-0539 or cerickson@pheasantsforever.org.

Does your CRP or Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easement land need management, but you're not sure what to do? Here are a couple of management options you can take for your RIM easement to better support wildlife and pollinator habitat!

Renville County is in the prairie parkland region of the state, meaning that historically, our region was tall grass prairie. Most prairie plants need an ecological disturbance to thrive. Examples of disturbances are haying, grazing, or a prescribed burn.

You are allowed to hay or graze on a RIM easement if you first develop a plan with your local SWCD. Together, we can create a plan that best suits your management and habitat goals. CRP also requires effective vegetation management, such as controlling weeds. If you have concerns about your CRP cover, you can contact Cole or your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) to discuss management options.

On RIM acres, haying and grazing during different times of the year have different effects. Some goals that haying or grazing can help achieve are suppressing cool-season or warm-season grasses, enhancing wildflower diversity, managing brush, and reducing the litter layer. Again, if this is of interest, contact the SWCD office, as you are required to have a plan in place before any activities commence.

Are you looking for other ways to manage your easement? Some accepted maintenance activities include spot mowing or chemical treatment of noxious weeds such as Canada thistles or wild parsnip, prescribed burns, or removal of trees or shrubs from grassland areas. It is important to control noxious weeds and undesirable trees as they can outcompete the native vegetation and take over the easement. It is vital that these activities occur after the establishment of the native grasses and trees as to not harm the desirable vegetation. **Contact the Renville County SWCD at 320-523-1559 to learn more.**

We Work for You, Will You Work for Us?

Did You Know that 1 in 50 American workers are county employees? Renville County employees serve residents every day - supporting housing, recreation, economic development, community health, public safety, and so much more. **Find your opportunity to serve by checking out our job openings at renvillecountymn.gov/employment or call Human Resources at 320-523-3710.**



YOU Can Make a Difference: Become a Restorative Justice Volunteer Today!

Restorative Justice offers a different way of responding when harm has occurred because of a crime or other wrongdoing. At its heart is the belief that repairing harm involves more than addressing what happened - it also means working to rebuild the relationships affected by it. Restorative Justice is both a philosophy and a practical approach to strengthening individuals, families, and communities.

What Happens in a Circle?
A Circle is a purposeful way of bringing people together for open and meaningful conversation. Through the Circle process, participants build relationships, address concerns, take responsibility, solve problems, and work toward healthy decisions.

Each Circle is centered around the individual or family and the circumstances that brought them there. Together, participants and volunteers explore what is going well, identify concerns or challenges, and consider meaningful steps that can be taken to repair harm and move forward. Everyone has an opportunity to listen, share, and contribute to the conversation.

You Can Make a Difference
There is a growing need for connection, encouragement, and positive relationships within our communities. Youth and families sometimes need an additional source of support, and a caring volunteer can have an impact simply by being willing to listen, encourage, and share experiences and lessons learned along the way.



You may be surprised by how meaningful two hours every other week can be. Your time, attention, and willingness to walk alongside someone through their circumstances can make a lasting difference - not only in their life, but in your own.

Would you consider giving two hours every other week to participate in conversations and provide support and mentoring? If you would like to learn more about Restorative Justice or explore whether volunteering might be right for you, visit the Restorative Justice Department page at www.renvillecountymn.gov.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Andrew Peltz, Restorative Justice Coordinator, at 320-522-1573 or andrew.peltz@renvillecountymn.gov for more information.



11th Annual Renville County RibFest a Huge Success!

The 11th Annual Renville County RibFest was another huge success! The event was held at the American Legion in Olivia on September 12, with funds raised benefiting our County fire departments. Fire Departments and the County Sheriff's Office competed for top prize in three categories, including People's Choice, Veteran's Choice, and Best Booth. Congratulations to the winning teams! Thanks to all who attended and supported this event. You are invited to save the date for next year's event, which is tentatively scheduled to take place on Saturday, September 11 at the American Legion in Olivia. **Volunteers are needed for all fire departments and ambulance services in Renville County. Contact your city to learn how YOU can join!**



Photo Above: **BIRD ISLAND FIRE DEPARTMENT PARTICIPANTS**
Row 1 (L to R): Chad Christenson, Connor McNamara, Ben Bohlin, Jon Gubbels, Dustin Lynch. Row 2 (L to R): Ryan Johnson, John Thompson, Trent Athmann, Ty Erickson, Jared Krause, Justin Vogt, Brandon Baumgartner, and Cole Christenson



Photo Above: **SACRED HEART FIRE DEPARTMENT PARTICIPANTS**
Row 1 (L to R Sitting): Brent Fagen, Pete Lanning, Paul Peterson, Mitch Agre, Andy Bloom, Chris Giese. Row 2 (L to R Standing): Jeff Agre, Dave DeLong, Brian Peterson, Zach Chapman, Austin Rice, Scott Thompson, and Hudson Hebrink

PEOPLE'S CHOICE:
1ST: BIRD ISLAND
2ND: SACRED HEART
3RD: OLIVIA

BEST BOOTH:
1ST: FAIRFAX
2ND: SHERIFF'S OFFICE
3RD: OLIVIA

VETERAN'S CHOICE:
1ST: SACRED HEART
2ND: SHERIFF'S OFFICE
3RD: OLIVIA

Photo Right:
FAIRFAX FIRE DEPARTMENT BOOTH
The Fairfax crew was not "monkeying around" and was awarded top spot for their efforts!



Winter Weather Awareness Week: November 16 - 20, 2026

Monday: Winter Storms and Blizzards
Tuesday: Extreme Cold, Frostbite, and Hypothermia
Wednesday: Winter Home and Fire Safety
Thursday: Winter Driving
Friday: Outdoor Winter Safety

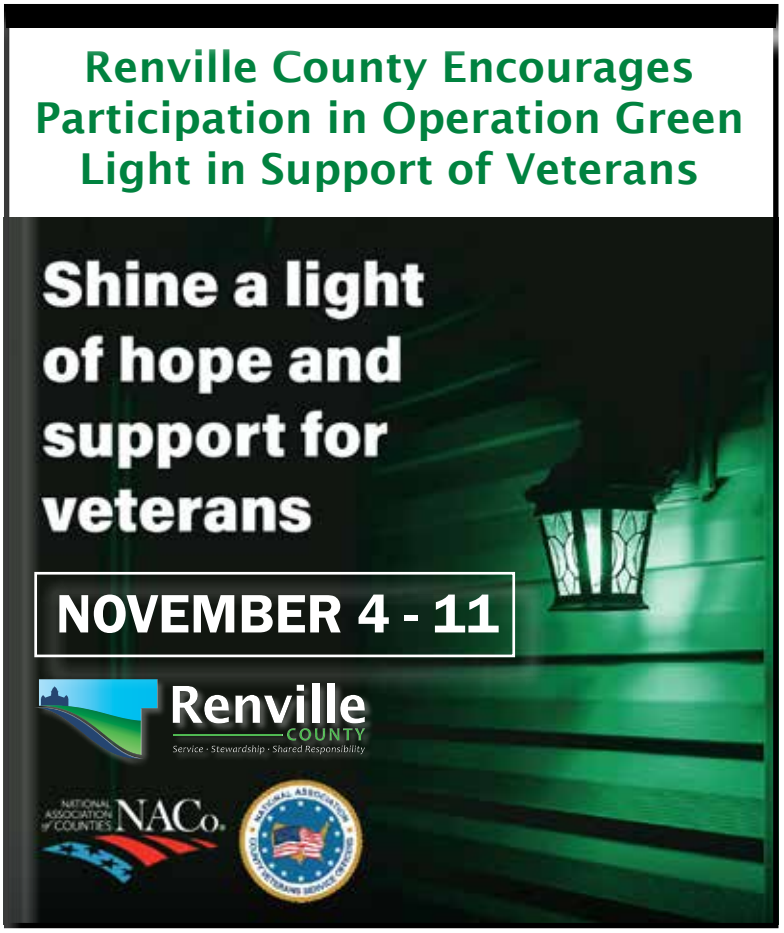
Robert Tretbar Retires After 63 Years as Birch Cooley's Township Treasurer



Photo (L to R): Bill Radermacher, Clerk; Sheila Robinson, Treasurer; Robert Tretbar, outgoing Treasurer; Robert Senkyr, Supervisor, Tom Robinson, Chair; and Don Carbert, Supervisor

Robert (Bob) Tretbar has retired after 63 years of service as Birch Cooley's Township Treasurer. Bob's decades of service reflect a deep commitment to local government and the township he calls home. Bob has lived his entire life in Birch Cooley Township except during his military service in the Navy. We are proud of Bob's leadership and honored him recently in recognition of his many years of service and lasting contributions to Birch Cooley Township. Bob is also the longest serving member of the Franklin Legion Club.

Renville County Encourages Participation in Operation Green Light in Support of Veterans





Southwest Minnesota Small Business Development Center

Confidantial
No Cost
One-on- One
Consulting





- Business Planning
- Financial Analysis
- Marketing Strategies
- Startup Assistance
- General Business Assistance

Contact Us Today!

(507)537-7386
SBDCASSISTANCE.COM
SBDC@SMSU.EDU

The Gathering Grounds is Buzzing in Buffalo Lake

- Submitted by Southwest Initiative Foundation

Since opening its doors in April, The Gathering Grounds has been drawing a steady stream of visitors in downtown Buffalo Lake. This nonprofit coffee shop started as a late-night idea: Deb Deal wanted to have a welcoming place where people could enjoy coffee and connect.



Photo: Coffee shop coordinator Deb Deal is ready to cut the ribbon alongside SWIF staff, Buffalo Lake community leaders and members, and volunteers at The Gathering Grounds' grand opening this spring.

Support from Zion Lutheran Church and a grant from the Paul and Alma Schwan Aging Trust Fund Endowment at Southwest Initiative Foundation helped make it possible. *"The community support has just been overwhelming,"* Deb said. *"It's been nice being open on Saturday mornings when you see some of the people you don't normally see around town. It's a way of meeting your neighbors."*

Today, The Gathering Grounds welcomes regular breakfast and lunch crowds, along with groups that meet during the week for coffee and conversation. Deb often starts her day at 5 a.m. preparing fresh rolls and scones before the morning rush. More volunteers come in around 9:00 A.M. to serve customers. *"It's going really well,"* Deb said. *"It's my new happy place."*

With full parking spots on Main Street and a growing group of regulars, The Gathering Grounds is a great example of how local leadership, volunteer energy, and community investment can make a big difference in a small town.

SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE FOUNDATION



PLEASE KEEP AND POST

Renville County Recycling

Curbside Schedule
January - December 2027

Bird Island - Renville - Sacred Heart

Buffalo Lake - Fairfax - Hector

Danube - Olivia

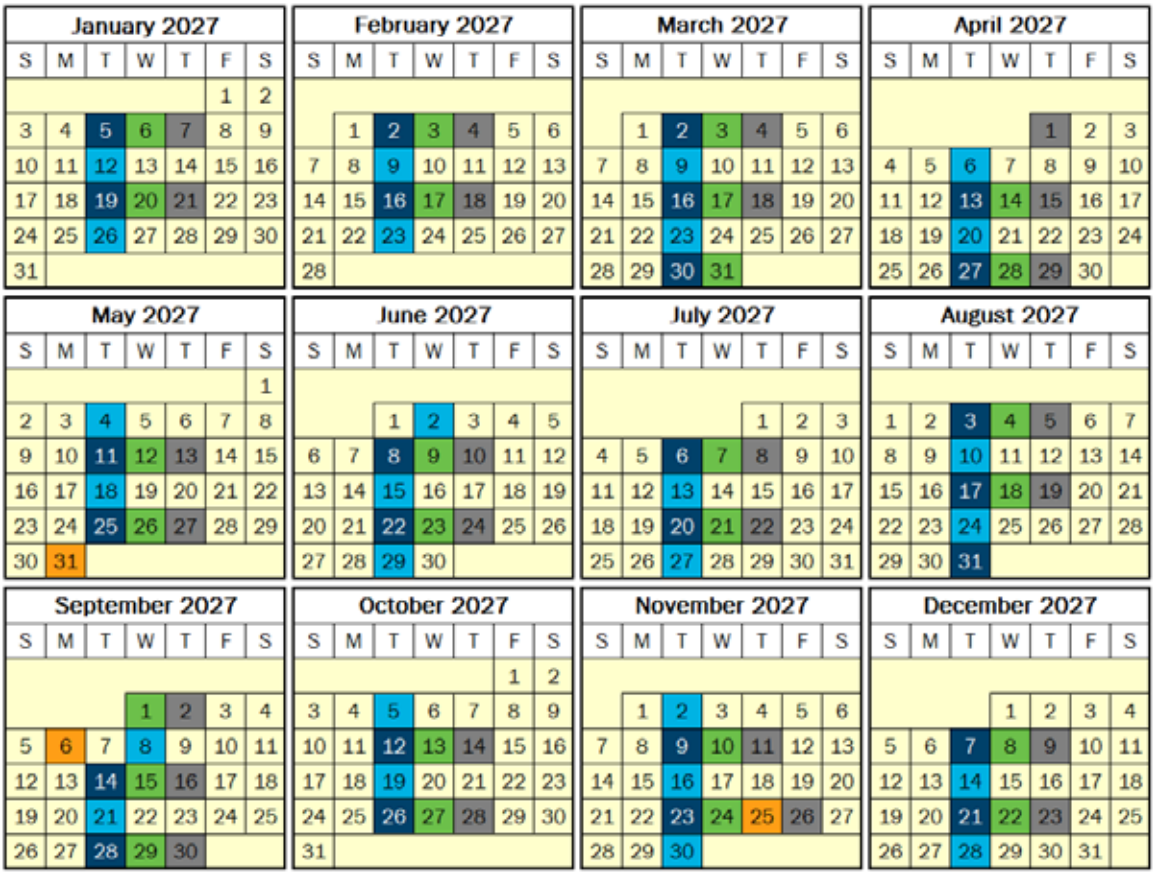
Franklin - Morton *(RF Zone 1)*

Holiday - No Service
(Remainder of the week will be a day later)

RRRSWA:
(507) 637-1800
(320) 523-8002

SCAN ME for Recycling Information

Remember to have your carts to the curb no later than 6:00am



Glass

Single use clear, green, and brown bottles and jars (food and beverage containers only).

- No canning jars, light bulbs, mirrors, ceramics, or dishes.
- Must be empty and clean. No need to remove labels.

Plastic Containers

#1, #2, #5
Leave caps on bottles

- Must be removed from bags
- No Styrofoam
- No bags
- No toys
- No pools
- No siding
- No PVC pipe
- No pesticide containers
- No herbicide containers

Steel and Aluminum

Food and beverage cans, aluminum foil, pie pans, and aerosol cans (must be empty).

- No food remaining (empty and clean)
- No need to remove labels on food cans

Paper

Newspaper, junk mail, paperbacks, catalogs, phone books, envelopes (including windowed) and office paper.

- Do not bundle or tie (place in cart loosely)

Cardboard

Cardboard (folded flat), brown paper grocery bags, and boxboard (e.g. cereal, cracker, pasta, and shoe boxes).

- No packing foam
- No waxed cardboard
- No furnace filters
- No egg cartons of any kind

Do NOT Recycle:

Plastic Bags/Film Plastic: Please purchase and utilize reusable grocery bags, ask for paper, or have your groceries loaded loosely into your cart. Do **NOT** place bags or other film plastic into your recycling container.

Shredded Paper: Please utilize our shredding service, which is FREE for personal papers and a nominal fee for businesses. If you shred your own paper, bag it and bring it to the RRRSWA transfer station, located at 907 West Bridge Street in Redwood Falls.

West Central Sanitation

Good Neighbors You've Come To Trust

4089 Abbott Drive | P.O. Box 796
Willmar, MN 56201
Phone: 1-800-246-7630
www.wcsanitation.com

County Directory:	Phone:
Administration	320-523-3710
Assessor	320-523-3645
Attorney	320-523-2661
Auditor/Treasurer	320-523-2071
Court Administrator	320-523-3680
Court Services/Probation	320-400-0711
Driver and Vehicle Services	320-523-3612
Economic Development Authority	320-523-3656
Emergency Management	320-523-3838
Environmental Services	320-523-3768
Extension *(4-H)*	320-523-3713
HRA *(Housing Programs)*	507-637-4004
Human Services	320-523-2202 or 800-363-2533
Landfill/Solid Waste	320-523-1144
Parks	320-523-3747
Public Health Services	320-523-2570
Public Works	320-523-3759
Recorder	320-523-3669
RRRSWA / Solid Waste / Household Hazardous Waste	320-523-8002 or 507-637-1800
Restorative Justice	320-523-3871
Sheriff	320-523-1161
Veterans Services	320-523-3763



Renville County Board of Commissioners

Back (L to R): **David Hamre**, District 5;
John Robinson, District 2; **Greg Mertens**, District 3;
Front (L to R): **Craig Carlson**, District 1; **Greg Snow**, District 4



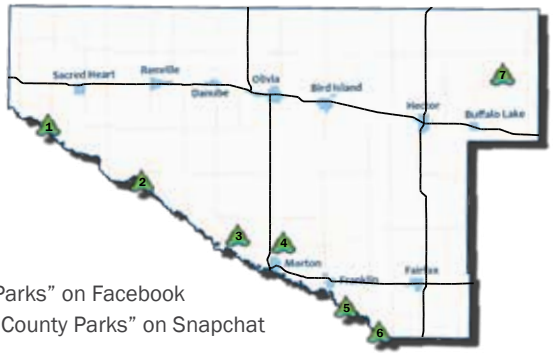
More than just **Camping**

Fall Colors are Calling!

Enjoy the trails and fall colors in Renville County Parks!

Rustic camping is available. Call to make your reservations today!

1 - Skalbekken
2 - Vicksburg
3 - Beaver Falls
4 - Birch Coulee
5 - Anderson Lake
6 - Mack Lake
7 - Lake Allie



Like "Renville County Parks" on Facebook
Subscribe to "Renville County Parks" on Snapchat



Archery Hunt runs until December 31

Renville COUNTY PARKS

If visiting parks during this time, guests are highly encouraged to wear bright colored clothing and be aware of hunters.

Courthouse	Government Services Center	Landfill	RRRSWA
500 East DePue Avenue	105 - 5th Street South	32877 County Road 4	907 West Bridge Street
Olivia, MN 56277	Olivia, MN 56277	Olivia, MN 56277	Redwood Falls, MN 56283

Renville COUNTY
Service · Stewardship · Shared Responsibility
105 - 5th Street South
Olivia, MN 56277
Phone: 320-523-3710
Email: lisa.herges@renvillecountymn.gov
Web: www.renvillecountymn.gov

***Mailing list generated from Renville County Property Records.**

Local Postal Customer

PRSRT STD
ECRWSS
U. S. POSTAGE
P A I D
MARSHALL, MN
PERMIT NO. 20