BLUE EARTH COUNTY
COMMUNICATOR
Effectively & Efficiently Delivering Essential Services
SPRING ✿ SUMMER 2013

Celebrating the Work of Counties

Blue Earth County is participating in National County Government Month throughout the month of April to highlight the programs and services provided by its 14 departments. Each year, counties across the nation take part in the initiative to raise public awareness and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of counties. This year's theme is Smart Justice: Creating Safer Communities. Several activities are planned including public tours of the Justice Center on Mon., April 29 from 5 to 8 p.m. To learn more, or view the *Why Counties Matter* video visit ***www.blueearthcountymn.gov.***
Pictured: 2013 Citizens Academy participants engage in discussion with Phil Claussen, Human Services Director and the Human Services Management Team as part of the six-week educational program.

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THE COMMUNICATOR

The Blue Earth County Communicator is published biannually to increase public awareness and involvement in county government.

BLUE EARTH COUNTY

For more information about the publication, or to submit questions and/or comments, contact:

Communications Office
Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse
204 S. 5th St., Mankato, MN 56001

Phone 304-4491 – Fax 304-4344
info@blueearthcountymn.gov

Award-Winning Publication

by the National Association of County Information Officers

WHAT'S NEW

Blue Earth County Awarded for Excellence in Financial Reporting

The Blue Earth County Finance Department was recognized for receiving the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) of the United States and Canada. This marks the 25th year that Blue Earth County has received the Excellence in Financial Reporting award for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR).

The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and it's attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management. Blue Earth County's CAFR was judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program including demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR.

The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving approximately 17,500 government finance professionals with offices in Chicago and Washington, D.C. To learn more about the association visit ***www.gfoa.org***.

O'Connor Named to Honor Roll

The Minnesota Association of County Officers (MACO) recently named Patty O'Connor, Director of Taxpayer Services for Blue Earth County, to its Honor Roll.

The Honor Roll is the highest honor awarded each year by the MACO organization and is presented to individuals in recognition of outstanding service and contributions to MACO. The award has been given annually since 1996. O'Connor is recognized for her efforts in promoting best interests of the MACO organization including her many years of involvement in the legislative process and serving in leadership positions for the organization.

Patty O'Connor, Director of Taxpayer Services

Stay Informed with www.blueearthcountymn.gov

Visit Blue Earth County's new website ***www.blueearthcountymn.gov*** to sign up for news and updates through the Notify Me subscriber list. And don't forget to like us on Facebook and Twitter!

Board of Commissioner meetings are now available for viewing and can easily be accessed on TV or online.

CCTV plays the meetings on Fridays at 9 p.m. and Sundays at 6 p.m. on Charter Cable Channel 12 or HickoryTech Cable Channel 10.

Visit the County's website at www.blueearthcountymn.gov or CCTV's website at accesscctv.net to view Board Meetings online.

Blue Earth County and I&S Group Recognized for Drainage System Improvement Project

The Minnesota Chapter of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC/MN) presented Blue Earth County's Drainage System Improvement Project on Ditch 57 with the Honor Award for Engineering Excellence. The awards are presented annually by ACEC/MN, to recognize achievements that demonstrate the highest degree of merit and serve to advance the profession.

Blue Earth County Ditch No. 57 encompasses a 6,000 acre watershed, and was constructed nearly 100 years ago. The existing system was undersized and in need of repair. However, instead of simply replacing the aging system with larger pipes and ditches, the landowners agreed that protection of water quality, both within the watershed and in the downstream receiving waters, was an important consideration for the project.

I&S Group designed an improvement to the system that incorporated numerous storage/treatment practices to improve water quality for the watershed while also improving the drainage capabilities of the system. The State of Minnesota saw the innovative nature of the project and awarded it LCCMR (Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources) funding for construction and monitoring, helping to make the improvements feasible. This project has become a model for future drainage projects across the State and represents a fundamental shift in the way rural drainage systems interact with the landscape.

Property Tax Statements and Valuation Notices

By Michael Stalberger, County Assessor

Blue Earth County property taxpayers received their annual Property Tax Statement and Valuation Notice in late March. The county's Taxpayer Services Department mails this important information as part of the multi-year assessment and taxation process in Minnesota. The tax statement and valuation notice are sent in a single mailing whenever possible.

The valuation notice, which has a new look this year, provides information regarding each taxable property's classification (the actual use of the property), its valuation, and any special program enrollment. The estimated market value is the county's estimate of what each property would likely sell for, and the taxable value is a calculated value used for tax purposes. The information is based on property reviews, local property sale information, and analysis conducted by the Assessor's Office staff.

The value notice is the foundation for the property tax calculation process that will result in tax statements in 2014. The notice also marks the start of the informal and formal appeals process. The appeals process is listed on the bottom of the notice, as well as on its reverse side. Please note the deadlines associated with appealing property information.

Taxpayers should review the valuation notice, especially classification and valuation information, as it plays an important role in determining the amount of tax each property will pay in 2014. Please contact Taxpayer Services at 304-4251. Taxpayer Service Specialists are available in the Historic Courthouse weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Property and assessor office information may also be obtained by visiting the county's website at ***www.blueearthcountymn.gov*** and clicking on the property tax quick link on the homepage. Copies of the tax statements and valuation notices are available on the website as well.

The tax statement is the second item in the mailing and is the 2013 tax bill for property owners. It is based on valuation and classification information determined in early 2012. That information was mailed in Spring 2012 and can now only be appealed in a court setting.

For more information contact the Taxpayer Services Department at 304-4251.

Understanding the 2013 Property Valuation Notice

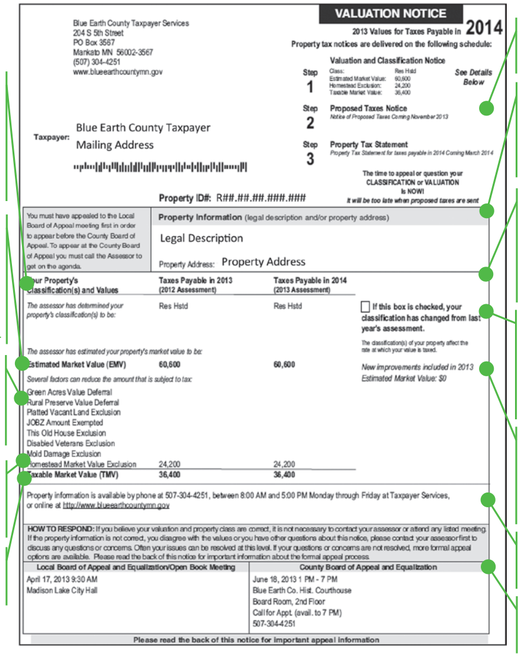
The class and value section has two columns for comparison. The class is based on the use of the property and affects the final tax bill. "Res Hstd" is common and describes property occupied by the owner. There are many classes.

Estimated Market Value is our office's estimate of what your property would likely sell for as of the Jan 2 assessment date. The value listed in the 2014 column can be appealed by calling our office if you do not feel it represents market value.

Several special programs reduce estimated market values based on special qualifications. If there is a value listed in these rows, they are subtracted from the estimated value.

The Homestead Exclusion is an additional reduction in value for property occupied by owners or qualifying relatives.

Taxable Market Value is the value used to calculate taxes to be paid in the next year and is not appealable.



Blue Earth County Taxpayer Services
204 S 5th Street
PO Box 3567
Mankato MN 56002-3567
(507) 304-4251
www.blueearthcountymn.gov

VALUATION NOTICE

2013 Values for Taxes Payable in 2014

Property tax notices are delivered on the following schedule:

Step 1 — **Valuation and Classification Notice** — Class: Res Hstd; Estimated Market Value: 60,600; Homestead Exclusion: 24,200; Taxable Market Value: 36,400 — *See Details Below*

Step 2 — **Proposed Taxes Notice** — *Notice of Proposed Taxes Coming November 2013*

Step 3 — **Property Tax Statement** — *Property Tax Statement for taxes payable in 2014 Coming March 2014*

Taxpayer: Blue Earth County Taxpayer
Mailing Address

Property ID#: R###.##.##.####.###

The time to appeal or question your **CLASSIFICATION** or **VALUATION** is NOW!
It will be too late when proposed taxes are sent

You must have appealed to the Local Board of Appeal meeting first in order to appear before the County Board of Appeal. To appear at the County Board of Appeal you must call the Assessor to get on this agenda.

Property Information (legal description and/or property address)
Legal Description
Property Address: Property Address

ur Property's Classification(s) and Values	**Taxes Payable in 2013 (2012 Assessment)**	**Taxes Payable in 2014 (2013 Assessment)**
The assessor has determined your property's classification(s) to be:	Res Hstd	Res Hstd
The assessor has estimated your property's market value to be:		
Estimated Market Value (EMV)	**60,600**	**60,600**
Several factors can reduce the amount that is subject to tax:		
Green Acres Value Deferral		
Rural Preserve Value Deferral		
Platted Vacant Land Exclusion		
JOBZ Amount Exempted		
This Old House Exclusion		
Disabled Veterans Exclusion		
Mold Damage Exclusion		
omestead Market Value Exclusion	24,200	24,200
axable Market Value (TMV)	**36,400**	**36,400**

☐ **If this box is checked, your classification has changed from last year's assessment.**
The classification(s) of your property affect the rate at which your value is taxed.

New improvements included in 2013
Estimated Market Value: $0

Property information is available by phone at 507-304-4251, between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM Monday through Friday at Taxpayer Services, or online at http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov

HOW TO RESPOND: If you believe your valuation and property class are correct, it is not necessary to contact your assessor or attend any listed meeting. If the property information is not correct, you disagree with the values or you have other questions about this notice, please contact your assessor first to discuss any questions or concerns. Often your issues can be resolved at this level. If your questions or concerns are not resolved, more formal appeal options are available. Please read the back of this notice for important information about the formal appeal process.

Local Board of Appeal and Equalization/Open Book Meeting	**County Board of Appeal and Equalization**
April 17, 2013 9:30 AM Madison Lake City Hall	June 18, 2013 1 PM - 7 PM Blue Earth Co. Hist. Courthouse Board Room, 2nd Floor Call for Appt. (avail. to 7 PM) 507-304-4251

Please read the back of this notice for important appeal information

The Value Notice has a summary section with important information about the property's assessment.

This section describes the property by Property ID, legal description, and address. You will receive more than one notice if you own more than one parcel.

Two years of assessment info is provided for comparison purposes. The 2013 taxes column info was based on the 2012 assessment; the 2014 column is the current one to review for this year's assessment.

This box is checked if your property's class (or use) has changed for tax calculation purposes. If this is checked but you have not changed how you use the property, call our office.

If your value increases due to improvements made to your property (for example, a new deck or basement finish), the amount shows here.

Our property info is available for your review online and in our offices in the Historic Courthouse.

The 2014 column class and value can be appealed. Note the deadlines and instructions.

PUBLIC WORKS

County Road 12 Project Recognized

Blue Earth County received a certificate of recognition from Governor Mark Dayton for demonstrating the ability to save money and creatively address engineering challenges on County Road 12 in an environmentally friendly way. More than 16,000 cubic yards of recycled tire shreds, equating to roughly 820,000 recycled tires were used to stabilize the embankment supporting the DM&E Railroad bridge on County Road 12. The tire shreds provided the most effective and cost-efficient way to address the slope stability problem. Tire shreds can be used in a variety of civil engineering projects to correct soft soils, aid in drainage, control water runoff, reduce weight, provide insulation and increase strength.

On behalf of Governor Dayton, State Representative Kathy Brynaert presented the award to Blue Earth County. Pictured (left to right) are: Commissioner Vance Stuehrenberg; Alan Forsberg, Blue Earth County Engineer; Commissioner Will Purvis; Commissioner Kip Bruender; Commissioner Mark Piepho (Board Chair); Commissioner Drew Campbell; Minnesota State Representative Kathy Brynaert; Monte Niemi, CEO of First State Tire Recycling.

New Metropolitan Planning Organization Update

The Mankato area passed the 50,000 population threshold after the 2010 census of 64,000 residents, making it a federal mandate to form a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). A MPO is a transportation policy-making organization made up of representatives from local government and transportation authorities that is required and funded by federal law for populations over 50,000.

Local government agencies have been working on formulating the Mankato/North Mankato Area Planning Organization (MAPO) for the last several months with a group of staff and elected officials holding the organization's first official meeting in March. Commissioner Mark Piepho was elected chair of the MAPO.

2013 Construction Project List

Upcoming Road Projects

- County Road 17 reconstruction from Mankato to Eagle Lake
- County Road 26, Madison Lake Main Street
- County Road 26 segment on the north side of Eagle Lake
- Wearing Course Pavements:
  - County Road 26 from County Road 12 to Madison Lake, except at north shore of Eagle Lake
  - County Road 10 new curves east of Good Thunder
  - County Road 12 from County Road 3 to 17
- Maintenance:
  - 10 miles of bituminous pavement overlays

Upcoming Bridge Projects:

- County Road 46 over stream just east of County Road 7
- Minneopa Creek tunnel repair under County Road 69
- Crystal Lake Outlet Control Structure Replacement

Visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov to view a map of these County projects taking place throughout the 2013 construction season.

For more information on road projects please contact the Blue Earth County Highway Department at 304-4025.

Summer Activities At Blue Earth County Parks!

Reserve a Campsite Online at blueearthcountymn.gov

PARKS	ACTIVITIES																							
	Tent Camping Sites	Mobile Camping Sites	Electrical Hook-ups	Bathhouse	Boat/Canoe Launch	Canoe Rental	Drinking Water	Dump Station	Fire Rings/Grills	Fishing	Fishing Dock	Horseshoe Pits	Interpretive Center/Log Cabin	Nature Trail	Paddleboat Rental	Picnic Shelters	Picnic Tables	Playground	Primitive Restrooms	Resident Caretakers	Restrooms	Swim Beach	Tennis Courts	Volleyball Courts
BRAY (102.3 ACRES)	10	33	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•
DALY (92.41 ACRES)	15	71	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•
DUCK LAKE (31.66 ACRES)				•	•	•	•		•	•					•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•
LAKE GEORGE (4.2 ACRES)					•				•	•	•						•	•	•			•		
RAPIDAN (38.69 ACRES)	20				•		•		•	•		•		•		•	•	•	•	•				
RED JACKET TRAIL PARK (4 ACRES)					•		•		•	•				•		•	•							
WILLIAMS NATURE CENTER (65 ACRES)							•						•	•							•			
INDIAN LAKE (120 ACRES)														•										
SCHIMEK (30 ACRES)									•	•				•		•	•							
WILDWOOD (28 ACRES)										•														
EAGLE LAKE (1 ACRE)					•					•									•					
LONE PINE (1.4 ACRES)					•					•														
HUNGRY HOLLOW STOP (4.2 ACRES)					•				•								•							
WATONWAN STOP (7 ACRES)					•				•	•						•	•							

CAMPING RESERVATIONS: Camping reservation systems are available at Bray and Daly Parks. Reservations are taken by phone, online or in person at the park for which the reservation is requested. Park personnel will take reservations from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. A deposit is required to hold each camping site.

Daly Park:
11056 571st Lane
Mapleton, MN 56065
507-524-3000

Bray Park:
2214 Oriole Rd.
Madison Lake, MN 56063
507-243-3885

PUBLIC SAFETY

Two Medicine Collection Sites Now Available

American Red Cross Tornado Alert App

Get your family and home ready for a tornado with the official Tornado App from the American Red Cross. The tornado warning app puts everything you need to know to prepare for a tornado in the palm of your hand. From your mobile phone, call ***"**REDCROSS" (**73327677)*** and a link will be sent to download the app to a phone or directly from the iTunes or Google Play app stores.

Features

- Simple step-by-step instructions to help you know what-to-do even if the cell towers and TVs are down. Prioritized actions for before, during, and after requires no mobile connectivity.
- Audible siren that automatically goes off even if app is closed when NOAA issues a TORNADO WARNING helping to reduce the chance of sleeping through an actual warning.
- Push notification sent when a WARNING expires – especially important if power goes out while you or your family are in your safe room.
- Help distant friends and family in tornado alley with ability to receive tornado watch and warning alerts based on their location from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
- Red Cross location-based open shelters map for when you need it most.
- Be ready should a tornado hit by learning how to assemble an emergency kit for your family in the event of power outage or evacuation.
- Reduce your household's stress and anxiety should a tornado hit by learning to make and practice an emergency plan.
- Preloaded content means you have instant access to all safety information at anytime, even without reception or an Internet connection.
- Interactive quizzes allow you to earn badges that you can share with your friends and show off your tornado knowledge.
- Know how many tornadoes have occurred in your area.
- Know the difference between a tornado warning and a tornado alert.
- Learn how to deal with food and water impacted by floods and power outages.
- Simply let friends/family know you're safe with customizable "I'm Safe" notification sharable thru social media, text and email.
- Let others know where you are with the Toolkit's strobe light, flashlight and audible alert functions.

As part of spring cleaning, don't forget to properly dispose of unwanted or unused medications!

Medicine collection boxes are located in the lobby of the Sheriff's Office at the Blue Earth County Justice Center (401 Carver Rd, Mankato) and in the lobby of the new Mankato Public Safety Center (710 S. Front St., Mankato).

Drop-off Hours:
Sheriff's Office: Mon. - Fri. 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Public Safety Center: 24 Hour Lobby

Accepted Medicines:

- Prescription Medications
- Over-the-counter Medications
- Narcotics and Other Controlled Substances
- Medication Samples
- Pet Medications
- Vitamins & Supplements
- Liquid Medication in Glass or Leak-proof Containers (please put in an additional plastic bag)
- Medicated Ointments and Lotions
- Inhalers
- Street Drugs

Sheriff's Office Participates in Toward Zero Deaths Grant: Expect Stepped up Seat Belt Enforcement in May

What is TZD?
The Toward Zero Deaths approach is based on the belief that even one traffic-related death is unacceptable. This "zero deaths" idea was first adopted in Sweden in 1997 as "Vision Zero" and since then has evolved to several state DOTs, including Minnesota, that have identified zero deaths as a core objective in their Strategic Highway Safety Plans. TZD uses a data-driven, interdisciplinary approach that targets areas for improvement and employs proven countermeasures, integrating application of education, enforcement, engineering, and emergency medical and trauma services (the "4 Es"). A combination of strategies from different focus areas is often most effective for solving a particular problem. Created in 2003, Minnesota TZD is the state's cornerstone traffic safety program, employing an interdisciplinary approach to reducing traffic crashes, injuries, and deaths on Minnesota roads. The Toward Zero Deaths Enforcement Grant Program provides federal funds to law enforcement agencies to conduct enhanced traffic enforcement. The grant is formally known as the Safe & Sober grant, which Blue Earth County has participated in since 1999. The Blue Earth County Coalition, comprised of several area law enforcement agencies, is part of this newly named grant.

May Mobilization
In May, as we prepare for the summer vacation season, law enforcement will be stepping up seat belt enforcement, in the "Click It or Ticket" campaign. Minnesota has a primary seat belt law which means drivers and all passengers must be buckled up or in the correct child restraint, and law enforcement can stop motorists or passengers for belt violations. This law has saved lives and has helped Minnesota reach a record-high daytime seat belt compliance rate. However, the percentage of unbuckled motorists among our crash fatalities remains nearly constant at half of the total. These unfortunate and preventable deaths also claim a higher percentage of teen and young adults. When you ride, speak up and insist all vehicle occupants are buckled up. If not, your vehicle may be stopped and unbuckled passengers ticketed. This can be avoided. Please, "Click It or Ticket."

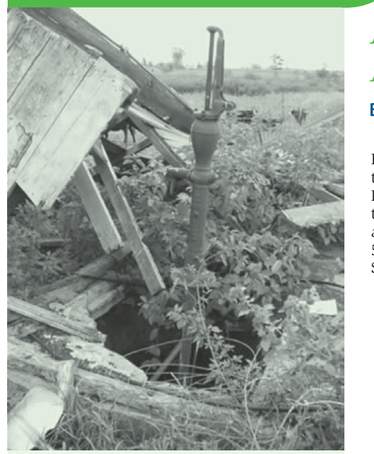
TOWARD ZERO DEATHS

Help Feed Blue Earth County

Take part in the Letter Carriers' Food Drive throughout Blue Earth County Saturday, May 11

Help stamp out hunger by putting non-perishable food donations in a bag by your mailbox or leave it at your local post office. Letter carriers will deliver it to a local food bank.

For more information contact your local post office.



Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 103I.301 requires all wells that are not in use or improperly sealed to be properly sealed by a licensed well contractor. Unused/improperly sealed wells often pose a significant threat to public health and the environment. In many cases, they provide a direct pathway for surface or near surface contamination to reach groundwater that is relied on as a drinking water resource. Sealing unused/improperly sealed wells provides protection of the groundwater from contamination.

This marks 23 consecutive years Blue Earth County Environmental Services will be administering a well sealing cost share program. The County was again able to secure a State grant from the Board of Water & Soil Resources for well sealing cost-share assistance. This program is aimed at assisting property owners with the costs to have old, unused or improperly sealed wells sealed by a licensed well contractor. It has successfully assisted in the proper sealing of 1,006 wells in Blue Earth County since 1991. All private, unsealed wells which have been replaced with a new well prior to 1989 are eligible for cost-share assistance under this program.

To find out more information about this program or to receive a 2013 well sealing cost-share application, please contact Blue Earth County Environmental Services at 304-4381. A well sealing application may also be obtained from the Blue Earth County website at www.blueearthcountymn.gov/costshare.

Blue Earth County Shoreland Buffer Initiative – A Successful Partnership

By Julie Conrad, Land Use and Natural Resources Planner

CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

Blue Earth County is working in partnership with the Blue Earth County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and landowners on a new initiative to ensure there are 50-foot, vegetated buffers along all rivers, streams and lakes in agricultural areas. This 50-foot buffer is required by County ordinance and State rules.

Shoreland is:

- Land within 1,000 feet from the ordinary high water level of lakes
- Land within 300 feet from the ordinary high water level of rivers, streams and altered watercourses

Shoreland in Blue Earth County:

- 368 miles of rivers
- 186 miles of unnamed streams
- 43 lakes
- 6,129 Parcels of land in shoreland
- 3,122 parcels with cropland

Buffers required in Blue Earth County:

- 6,970 acres of buffers required in shoreland
- 94% already buffered
- Only 365 acres of buffer are needed for Blue Earth County landowners to be in compliance with rules

Since the project started in August 2011, more than 200 landowners have contacted the SWCD to determine what they need to do to be in compliance and project results have been successful. Some are enrolling in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM), but most are establishing the buffer at their own expense. The total buffer area needed by each owner ranges from .1 to 10.7 acres. The average is less than one acre to be in compliance.

The County Environmental Services Department is reviewing more than 3,000 parcels of agricultural land in shoreland to determine compliance with the buffer standard. The County estimates there are 400 property owners who need to establish a combined total of 365 buffer acres. Notices have been sent to nearly 300 landowners. The remaining 100 will be notified early in 2013.

The SWCD is a partner for this project because they have experience working with landowners to establish buffers and other best management practices, and they have knowledge of financial incentive programs available. The County and SWCD received a Clean Water Fund grant from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment so SWCD staff can be devoted to working with landowners until December 2013 on this project.

Shoreland Buffer Initiative Project Results

August 2011 through January 2013

- **Number of Landowners Notified: 289**
- **Number of Landowners who contacted the SWCD: 203**
  - **43** have enrolled or are in the process of enrolling in a State or Federal program easement (CRP or RIM)
  - **126** are establishing a buffer on their own
  - **21** are undecided about which option will work best for them
- **Number of Landowners to be Notified in 2013: About 100**

For more information, please contact Blue Earth County Environmental Services at 304-4381.

How Often Should You Pump Your Septic Tank?

By Pete Otterness, Environmental Health Specialist

Septic tanks must be pumped out periodically in order for septic systems to operate properly and to extend the life of the system. Pumping removes the solids that accumulate in the tank. How often you need to pump your septic tank depends on its size, the number of people using the system, and how careful you are about using it. Without this maintenance, the solids that have accumulated in the tank can pass into the drainfield causing clogging that may result in freezing, surfacing, and potential backups in your home.

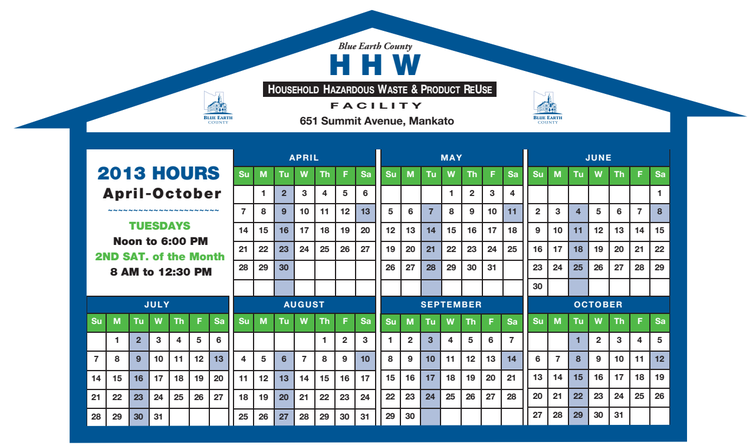
Tanks should be pumped every one-to-three years and never go longer than three years between pumpings. Having a licensed professional help you with scheduling your maintenance can help you decide how often is right for your system.

Minnesota codes require that pumping be done through the tank's manhole by a licensed, septic-maintainer business. Proper pumping removes the majority of the scum and sludge. The contractor should inspect the tank to make sure baffles are in place and functioning properly. The contents of the tank are mixed until liquefied and then removed. If this is not done, and only the liquid is removed, floating scum is left in the tank and solids may enter the drainfield as the tank fills. Pumping leaves a black film on the sides of the tank and a small amount of liquid on the bottom. These contain bacteria, which allow the tank to begin working again. There is no need to add a starter after pumping.

Most tanks have one or two manholes on each tank. Newer systems have manholes at or above the ground surface and should be accessible year round. An older system's manholes are often buried below the ground surface. A little digging may be necessary to find them. Once they have been dug open, a recommendation of extending those manholes to the surface will make future maintenance much easier.

Remember, a few dollars spent every one or two years on proper maintenance can save you big dollars on repairs or replacement.

For more information, please contact Blue Earth County Environmental Services at 304-4381.



Affordable Rain Barrels & Compost Bins Available

Blue Earth County is partnering with the Recycling Association of Minnesota to bring residents affordable rain barrels and compost bins. Pre-orders are currently being taken on a selection of rain barrels and compost bins offered at special pricing during this spring promotion. Discounted pricing includes $69 for rain barrels (regularly $139) and $55 for compost bins (regularly $105). Orders will be accepted while supplies last and all orders must be picked up between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. on May 18, 2013 at the Blue Earth County Household Hazardous Waste Facility located at 651 Summit Avenue in Mankato.

For more information or to place an order visit www.RecycleMinnesota.org or call 952-473-0048.

Borrow a Recycling Bin

Do you need a recycling bin for an upcoming graduation party, family reunion, or maybe for a softball or soccer tournament this summer? Blue Earth County can help.

Whether you need just one, or several recycling bins, borrow them from the Environmental Services Department.

These Clear Stream bins are portable and sturdy. They come with a clear bag and a labeled lid, so only recyclables end up in the container.

Visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov or call 507-304-4381 for more info.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Don't Miss Earth Day at the Library

Saturday, April 20 – 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Something for everyone – all ages are welcome!

- Crafts
- Games
- Facepainting
- Balloon Sculptures
- Muttnik from the MoonDogs
- Informational Brochures for Adults

BLUE EARTH COUNTY LIBRARY
100 EAST MAIN STREET, MANKATO

Stay Informed Online

Visit ***beclibrary.org*** and follow us on social media to keep up to date with the latest library information.

New Enhancements to Library Services

By Tim Hayes, Library Director

In an effort to modernize and enhance library services, public meetings were held last fall in communities throughout Blue Earth County to obtain input and discuss library service options. Input from citizens and communities helped formulate plans to provide patrons with service delivery that will be more convenient, timely and cost efficient. The Blue Earth County Library System will continue providing services for communities in all areas of the County through the utilization of US Mail, online services and mini-library sites located in communities.

"We are excited about the expanded services to rural communities in Blue Earth County and the efficiencies, convenience and enhanced service options for library patrons throughout the County," stated Tim Hayes, Blue Earth County Library Director.

Residents in Madison Lake, St. Clair, Good Thunder, Garden City, Vernon Center, Amboy and Pemberton will have direct library services provided to them through the U.S. Mail. Patrons may go online or order their library materials over the phone. The materials will be mailed directly to them with an enclosed postage-paid return envelope container. All County patrons will also have full access to the regional library system's extensive eBook and audio book collection which can be downloaded from the Blue Earth County Library website, ***www.beclibrary.org,*** to their personal reading/listening devices. Residents of these communities will have access to an enhanced mini-library site in their communities at city offices/town halls (with the exception of the mini-collection site being located in the Post Office in Garden City and no site in Vernon Center). The Amboy Community Library will receive additional support from the Blue Earth County Library System with a comprehensive selection of materials to add to their collection and share resources to host programs and events for its residents. The Pemberton Academic Learning Services (PALS), located in the Pemberton Main Street Plaza will receive materials specific to its young participants on a monthly basis. These new options will take the place of the former bookmobile service.

For more information, please contact Tim Hayes, Library Director at 304-4007.

4-H Clubs and Camps

Blue Earth County 4-H is home to 11 Clubs across the county. New Members are welcome to join at any time. Joining 4-H is an easy process, and there is no cost to join! 4-H is open to any young person in grades Kindergarden through 1 year past high school. If you are interested in joining 4-H you can contact the 4-H Office at (507) 304-4325 or eppe0018@umn.edu. You can also visit this website to enroll right away: ***http://mn.4honline.com***

Blue Earth County 4-H will be the host to many upcoming summer & day camps as well. You can watch this website for the flyer to be posted in mid to late April: ***www.extension.umn.edu***

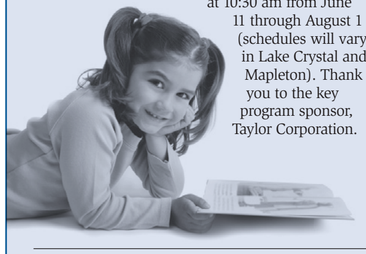
Summer brochures will also be coming out in school folders to all Elementary School students in Blue Earth County in late April.

4-H prides itself on experiential learning, hands-on activities and life-long learning skills.

18 USC 707

2013 Summer Reading

The Blue Earth County Library System's 2013 Summer Reading Program, "Dig into Reading," kicks off on June 3. Children can now earn prizes for time spent reading in four age categories: 0 to 3; 4 to 8; 9 to 12 and 13 to 17. In addition to the reading incentives, the Mankato library will host fun, educational programs on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:30 am from June 11 through August 1 (schedules will vary in Lake Crystal and Mapleton). Thank you to the key program sponsor, Taylor Corporation.



Sign-up begins June 3

BRAND-NEW PROGRAMS

John Duggleby's "Boogie in the Barnyard"

Betsy-Tacy Tea Party

Professor Marvel's Amazing Archeological Adventure

A Fur Trade Historical Experience with Arn Kind

Wally the One-Eyed Robotic Puppet

OTHERS BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

Minnesota Zoomobile University of Minnesota's

Raptor Center

Reptile and Amphibian

Discovery Zoo and much more!

Don't miss programs and prizes this summer at the Blue Earth County Libraries!

For more information, please call 304-4020.

Blue Earth County Library System July - December 2012 Donations

MONETARY

Blue Earth County Library System
- Best Buy
- Crystal Valley
- Suyematsu Estate

Blue Earth County Library - Mankato
- Brown, Amy
- Dow Agrosciences
- Julie Miller Memorial
- Key Cities Conservation Club
- Kwolek, Thomas & Sandra
- Nimps, Phillip
- Ruth Legenhausen Memorial
- Water Fountain Coins

Lake Crystal Public Library
- Glenn Johnson Memorial
- Lake Crystal G.R.A.C.E.

Mapleton Public Library
- Kuball, Richard & Ann
- Mapleton Area Chamber of Commerce

IN-KIND

Blue Earth County Library - Mankato
- Abdo Publishing
- Author Michael Springer
- Bruender, Kip
- Children's Museum
- Compass Books
- Denn, Cyril
- Diversity Council
- Johnston, Lola
- Mankato Area Fair Trade Town Initiative
- Mankato Experimental Aircraft Assn.
- Mankato Moondogs
- Minnesota Historical Society
- Nelson, Darryl
- Noodles & Company
- Papa Murphy's
- Paradox Publishing
- Pediatric Therapy Services
- Pizza Ranch
- Schrader, Julie
- Statham, Denise
- Stenzel, Bryce
- Therapy Dogs International
- New Country Minnesota 93 TJ & Lisa
- Ty, Inc.
- Urdahl, Dean
- Wang, Hyegin
- Women of the Moose

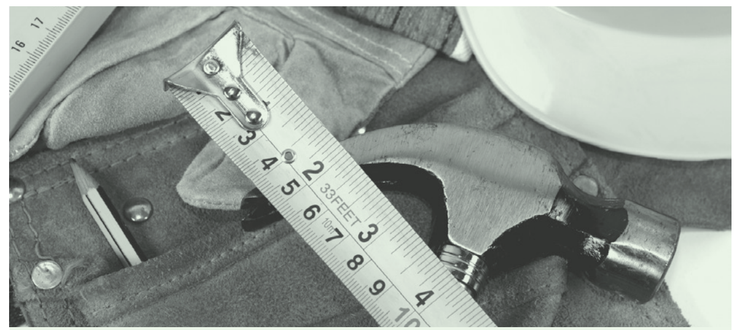
Lake Crystal Public Library
- Edwards, Jackie
- Klevan, Kim

Mapleton Public Library
- Bartholomew, Kim
- Caron, Rita
- Davis, Becky
- Johnston, Lola
- Mapleton Area Chamber

Volunteers
- Blue Earth County Library - Mankato
- Below, Joanna
- Berglin, Janinya
- Bock, Karin
- Burger, Nancy
- District 77 Community Based Workers
- Eichers, Celeste
- Eichers, Elise
- Fitterer, Marge
- Hagemeyer, Belle
- Hoban, Betty
- Kapfhamer, Michelle
- Leinberger, Pam
- Nguyen, Nhi
- Pfarr, Brenda
- Retsland, Bryan
- Wigtil, Noella
- Zoet, Julie

Thank you to all the generous sponsors of the libraries in Mankato, Lake Crystal and Mapleton communities.

If you are interested in making a donation to support the libraries, please contact Sandi Braun at 304-4002.



Library Renovation Work Underway

The Blue Earth County Library in Mankato's south entrance (across the street from City Center Hotel) and auditorium is closed to accommodate renovation work to the facility and public restrooms. Patrons will need to use the north (bridge side) entrance to enter and exit the building, and alternative public restrooms will be available in the Children's Lovelace Wing. The project is expected to be complete by the beginning of May. For additional information please visit ***www.beclibrary.org***.

BEC Community Farm Makes an Impact

Local Government Innovation Awards with InCommons
lgi
The Public & Nonprofit Leadership Center
Humphrey School of Public Affairs

Blue Earth County Community Farm received a Local Government Innovation Award from Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the U of M in partnership with InCommons. The farm is a unique community collaboration to grow fresh produce for local hunger assistance programs and is located in Weagel Park, adjacent to the Red Jacket Trail off Hwy. 66. In its first season, volunteers helped grow, harvest and distribute more than 7,400 lbs of food. For more information about the Blue Earth County Community Farm, to donate support dollars or volunteer for the upcoming growing season visit: ***www.feedingourcommunitypartners.org/community-farm*** or contact Joe Domeier at jadomeier@threeriversrcd.org.

News for Veterans

HUMAN SERVICES

Pension Benefits for Veterans:

Non-service pension is an income supportive benefit available to eligible veterans from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. To meet general eligibility requirements the veteran must have been an honorably discharged wartime veteran with at least 90 days of service with at least one day of wartime service. Additionally the veteran must be:

- Age 65 or older or
- Permanently and totally disabled if under age 65 or
- A patient in a nursing/assisted living facility

To qualify for pension benefits the veteran's income must be below established income limits. Medical expenses can also be utilized to reduce income. Expenses paid for nursing home and assisted living are considered medical expenses and can be used to offset income.

Pension Benefits for Widows:

The basic eligibility for widows/survivor's pension benefit is the same as veterans pension. The veteran must have had 90 days of honorable service with at least one day of wartime service and it is also income based. Income must be under established income limits and medical expenses can also be utilized to reduced income, including nursing/assisted living expenses. The age of the widow is not a factor, nor do they have to show disability.

For further information or assistance in applying for veterans or widows pension benefits, contact the Blue Earth County Veterans Service Office at 410 S 5th St, Mankato, MN 56001. Call 304-4246 or online at www.blueearthcountymn.gov.

Adults Need Vaccines Too!

Your need for immunizations doesn't end when you reach adulthood. Each time you visit your health care provider, ask what vaccines you might need.

Vaccines for all adults

Influenza: All adults should get flu vaccine every year.

Tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis (Tdap): Every adult should get one dose of Tdap vaccine, and then Td (tetanus-diphtheria) vaccine every 10 years after that. Pregnant women should get a dose of Tdap during every pregnancy, even if they've had it before.

Varicella (chickenpox): Every adult who has never had chickenpox and has never been vaccinated against varicella should get two doses of varicella vaccine.

Vaccines for adults with certain medical conditions or special situations

Pneumococcal: For people who have diabetes; lung, heart, or liver disease (including alcoholism); immune suppression; asplenia; or cochlear implants. Also for smokers and those living in long-term care facilities.

Meningococcal: For people who have asplenia or certain chronic immune defects. Also for microbiologists with occupational exposure.

Hepatitis A: For people with chronic liver disease or clotting factor disorders. Also for men who have sex with men (MSM) and close contacts of newly arriving international adoptees.

Hepatitis B: For people with chronic liver disease, diabetes, clotting factor disorders, HIV or another sexually transmitted infection, or are on dialysis. Also for MSM, health care workers, and developmental disability workers.

Vaccines for adults at certain ages

Meningococcal: Through age 21, if a first-year college student living in a residence hall.

Human papillomavirus (HPV): For all women through age 26, all men through age 21, and certain men through age 26 – those who have compromised immune systems or who have sex with other men.

Measles-mumps-rubella (MMR): If born in 1957 or later. Most adults only need one dose of MMR.

Zoster (shingles): For those age 60 and up.

Pneumococcal: Everyone age 65 and up, even if you had a dose previously.

Vaccines for travelers

If you're traveling outside the United States, you may need to be vaccinated against **hepatitis A, hepatitis B, influenza, meningococcal disease, yellow fever, typhoid, rabies, or Japanese encephalitis.**

Allow several weeks before your trip because some vaccines require more than one dose.

Visit **www.health.state.mn.us/immunize** and click on "For Travelers" for more information and a list of international travel health clinics in Minnesota.

If you don't have health insurance, free or low-cost vaccines may be available. Find a participating clinic at **www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/immunize/adultvax/clinicsearch.html**

For more information on vaccines for adults, visit **www.health.state.mn.us/immunize.**

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

MINNESOTA MDH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

BLUE EARTH COUNTY

1-800-658-2877
immtrack@blueearthcountymn.gov

SERVING YOU

Drew Campbell, Chair
District 1 Commissioner
P.O. Box 1283
Mankato, MN 56002-1283
387-2408 (H) / 304-4282 (O)
drew.campbell@blueearthcountymn.gov

Vance Stuehrenberg
District 2 Commissioner
2316 East Main St.
Mankato, MN 56001
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vances@blueearthcountymn.gov

Mark Piepho
District 3 Commissioner
8 Skyline Drive
Mankato, MN 56001
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Will Purvis, Vice Chair
District 4 Commissioner
52298 140th Lane
Vernon Center, MN 56090
549-3420 (H) / 317-5465 (C)
will.purvis@blueearthcountymn.gov

Kip Bruender
District 5 Commissioner
204 Joan Lane
Eagle Lake, MN 56024
257-2116 (H) / 382-2440 (C)
kip.bruender@blueearthcountymn.gov

Blue Earth County
COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS

Brad Peterson, Sheriff
Blue Earth County Justice Center
401 Carver Rd.
Mankato, MN 56001
304-4800
brad.peterson@blueearthcountymn.gov

Ross Arneson, County Attorney
Blue Earth County Justice Center
401 Carver Rd.
Mankato, MN 56001
304-4600

Bob Meyer, County Administrator
Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse
204 S. Fifth St.
Mankato, MN 56001
304-4235
bob.meyer@blueearthcountymn.gov

Board Information

The Blue Earth County Board generally meets every other Tuesday in the Boardroom at the Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse, 204 South Fifth Street, Mankato. For more information and specific meeting dates and times visit:

www.blueearthcountymn.gov/board

Citizens who wish to address the Board of Commissioners at a meeting must contact Administration at 304-4284 before noon Thursday preceding the Board meeting. This is needed to manage the Board's schedule. The Board will not take action at the time of the presentation, but will direct County staff to respond appropriately to issues raised by citizens.

Write Now!

Write & Tell Us What You Think.

The Blue Earth County Board of Commissioners and other officials are committed to providing quality service to our residents. Responding to your concerns and needs is a priority.

Please fill out the information below and leave it with a receptionist at any County office, or mail it at your convenience to:

Blue Earth County Public Information
P.O. Box 8608
Mankato, MN 56002-8608
or email **info@blueearthcountymn.gov**

With which County department did you have contact?

Please Evaluate:	**Excellent**	**Good**	**Poor**
Courtesy of employees	☐	☐	☐
Knowledge of employees	☐	☐	☐
Timeliness of service	☐	☐	☐
Value of service provided	☐	☐	☐

I would like County officials to know:

I have a suggestion:

If you want us to respond to your comments:

Name:

Address:

Daytime Phone:

Thank you for your feedback. We appreciate your comments so we can serve you better!

SERVICE DIRECTORY

Blue Earth County Justice Center
401 Carver Rd., Mankato

Probation
1st Floor 304-4750
Restitution/Restorative Justice
Adult & Juvenile Probation, Parole, Supervised Release and Diversion
Pre-trial Services/Bail Evaluation
Community Work Service Programs

County Sheriff /Emergency Services
1st Floor 304-4800
Burning Permits
Civil Process Office
Request a Crime Report
Report a Crime

5th Judicial District Court
2nd Floor 304-4650
Traffic Tickets
Small Claims Court
Civil and Criminal Court

County Attorney
2nd Floor 304-4600

Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse
204 S. Fifth St., Mankato

Facilities and Management
Lower Level 304-4249

Finance
Lower Level 304-4182

Taxpayer Services – Property Information/Passports
1st Floor 304-4251
Property Assessment & Tax Collection
Abstracts/Certificates for Registered Land
Mapping
Ditch Management
Passports

Administration
2nd Floor 304-4150
Human Resources 304-4288
Public Information 304-4491

U of M Extension
3rd Floor 304-4325
Agriculture 304-4143
4-H/Youth Development 304-4142
Horticulture 304-4146
Misc. Program Areas 304-4326
Nutrition Education Program 304-4141

County Government Center
410 S. Fifth St., Mankato

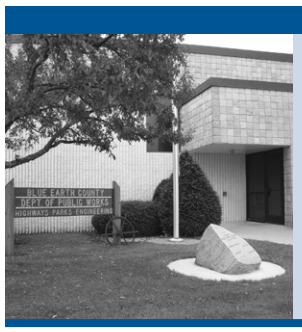
Taxpayer Services – License Center/Elections
Lower Level 304-4340
Driver's Licenses
Motor Vehicle/Boat Registration
Fishing/Hunting Licenses
Birth/Death Certificates
Marriage Licenses
Voter Registration/Absentee Ballots
Filing of Notaries

Veterans Services
Lower Level 304-4246
Federal & State Benefits
Transportation to VA Hospital

Information Technology
Lower Level 304-4204

Human Services
1st/2nd/3rd Floors
Main Line 304-4222
Financial Assistance 304-4335
Social Services 304-4319
Community Health 304-4319
Mental Health Center 304-4319
Child Protection/Intake 304-4444
Child Support 304-4166

Environmental Services
3rd Floor 304-4381
Planning & Zoning
Building & Feedlot Permits
Shorelands/Flood Plains
Water Wells/Septic Systems/Wetlands
Recycling Center/Compost Site/Landfill
Household Hazardous Waste Center
911/Rural Addressing

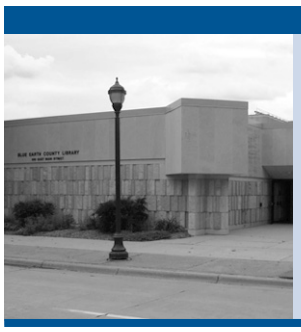


Public Works Department
35 Map Dr., Mankato

Roads & Bridges 304-4025
- Road/Bridge Construction & Inspection
- Permits: Driveway, Overweight/Size Loads, Utility
- Culvert Sales
- Swing-away Mailbox Mounts
- Calcium Chloride for Dust Control

Park & Trail System 304-4025
- Camping & Shelter Reservations
- Firewood Sales & Boat Rental

Agricultural Inspection 304-4025
- Weed Control & Seed Testing



Blue Earth County Library
100 E. Main St., Mankato

General Services 304-4001
Children's & Young Adult Services 304-4020
Adult & Reference Services 304-4022
Fines & Renewals 304-4010
Meeting Room Reservations 304-4002
Bookmobile 345-5120
Administration 304-4002
Mapleton Public Library 524-3513
Lake Crystal Public Library 726-2726

Serving Citizens Through County Government

Other County Facilities/Numbers

Household Hazardous Waste Facility
651 Summit Ave., Mankato, 304-4242

Ponderosa Landfill
20028 Gooseberry Lane, Mankato, 625-7301

Recycling Center
741 Waseca Ave., LeHillier, 345-4255

24-Hour Waste and Recycling Hotline, 304-4242

County TTY/TDD (Hearing Impaired), 304-4399

BLUE EARTH COUNTY

visit us online:
www.blueearthcountymn.gov