



BLUE EARTH COUNTY

COMMUNICATOR

Effectively & Efficiently Delivering Essential Services

FALL ❄️ WINTER 2014



Historic Courthouse Turns 125

The Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse was completed on October 1, 1889 and continues to serve the people of Blue Earth County 125 years later. Today, the Historic Courthouse is home to the Board of Commissioners, Administration, Taxpayer Services, Finance, Facilities Management and University of Minnesota Extension Services. Blue Earth County Historical Society recently held a special Ghosts From the Past event “Law, Lore and Lady Justice” featuring characters and stories from the Historic Courthouse’s past to help celebrate the iconic landmark turning 125.

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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

CODE RED®

BLUE EARTH COUNTY LAUNCHES NEW CODE RED SYSTEM TO PROVIDE EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SERVICES

Residents and Businesses Encouraged to Sign-up for Alerts

Following an extensive evaluation and review of alerting systems, Blue Earth County has implemented the CodeRED system, a high-speed emergency notification service provided by Emergency Communications Network.

The CodeRED system will serve as the backbone for the County's emergency planning and communications outreach to both citizens and staff by using the system capabilities to send telephone calls, text messages and e-mails in an effort to effectively inform residents to protect lives and property. Notification information will also be sent out to those who follow Blue Earth County on social media via Twitter and Facebook.

CodeRED, among other notification systems available, was selected for its reliability and accuracy, as well as the system's global use.

"CodeRED's robust system will provide officials with a reliable, easy-to-use interface to quickly disseminate critical information to our citizens during emergencies," stated Mike Maurer, Blue Earth County Emergency Management Director. "We are very eager to use this technology to enhance our emergency preparedness plans."

Public safety officials across the United States have credited CodeRED notifications for many successful events including locating missing

children, apprehending wanted criminals and issuing timely evacuations. The County anticipates using the system to notify residents in specific geographic locations regarding critical emergencies such as tornado warnings, evacuation notices, flooding and missing child alerts. CodeRED is capable of sending important messages to landlines and cellular phones.

Residents and businesses are encouraged to register for emergency notification alerts on the Blue Earth County website at www.blueearthcountymn.gov by clicking on the CodeRED button. When registering, you may contribute additional information if you wish, such as mobile phone numbers, work telephone lines and alternate emergency contact information. Those without internet access can sign-up using computer terminals at any of the three Blue Earth County Library locations in Lake Crystal, Mankato or Mapleton or by contacting Blue Earth County Emergency Management at 304-4806 for assistance. All contact information provided remains private and is only used for emergency notification purposes.

Additionally, mobile app options and further information about the CodeRED system is available on the Blue Earth County website at www.blueearthcountymn.gov/CodeRED. ■

EMERGENCY ALERT SIGN-UP IS EASY!

Residents and businesses are encouraged to register for emergency notification alerts on the Blue Earth County website at:

www.blueearthcountymn.gov

by clicking on the CodeRED button.



USES

The CodeRED system will be used to send critical communications, such as tornado warnings, evacuation notices and missing child alerts.

CALLER ID

When you see the following displayed, you will know the call is from us. If you would like to hear the last message delivered to your phone, simply dial the number back.

- **EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS**
(866) 419-5000 or Emergency Comm
- **GENERAL NOTIFICATIONS**
(855) 969-4636 or ECN Community

PRIVACY

Your contact information remains private and will only be used for community notifications.





**DON'T FORGET TO VOTE
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4**

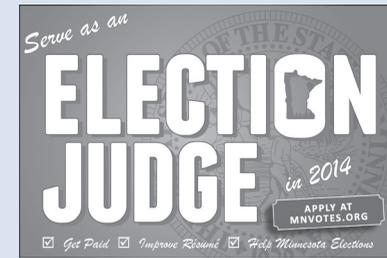
GET READY FOR THE 2014 ELECTION

General Election Day on November 4, 2014 is fast approaching and there are a number of ways to get ready and be prepared by being aware of important dates, understanding voting eligibility and knowing how to vote in Minnesota. These topics and all election information can be found in one place by visiting the Minnesota Secretary of State website at www.mnvotes.org.

The website allows voters to get informed ahead of time by providing information about candidates, issues and to educate voters with sample ballot examples. The site also serves as a platform for voters to get registered. Rather than waiting until Election Day at the polls, voters can now register to vote online or by completing a voter registration form and returning it to their County elections office. The deadline to pre-register to vote is Tuesday, October 14, 2014.

In person absentee voting is available at the Blue Earth County Elections Office located in the Government Center at 410 S. 5th Street in Mankato.

Additionally, MNVOTES.ORG provides information to voters on where to vote, hours of polling places (most are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.) and helpful polling place information. ■



Election Judges Needed for City of Mankato Polling Places

Election judges are responsible for the administration of election procedures in the voting place. Election judges help to guarantee that the rights of voters are protected on Election Day.

Duties include:

- Opening and closing the polls (judges work from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. or later)
- Being responsible for all election materials
- Ensuring only qualified voters are permitted to vote only once
- Distributing ballots
- Helping voters requiring assistance
- Maintaining order in the voting place throughout the day
- Registering new voters at the polling site
- Processing absentee ballots
- Obtaining the results after the polls are closed
- Certifying the precinct election results

For more information or to view online application materials visit www.mnvotes.org or call 304-4341.

★ ★ ★ GET READY TO VOTE IN 2014 ★ ★ ★



Requirements:

- ★ U.S. citizen.
- ★ At least 18 years old on Election Day.
- ★ A resident of Minnesota for 20 days.
- ★ Finished with all parts of any felony sentence.
- ★ See more eligibility requirements at mnvotes.org.



GET REGISTERED

- ★ Register to vote online – it's quick and easy.
- ★ Or complete a voter registration form and mail it to your county elections office.
- ★ Or register at your polling place on Election Day.

GET INFORMED

- ★ Learn about the candidates and issues.
- ★ View your sample ballot.

GO VOTE

- ★ Vote at the polling place on Election Day – most polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- ★ Find where you vote.
- ★ Or vote early by absentee ballot.

**YOUR VOTE STARTS AT
MNVOTES.ORG**

Visit www.mnvotes.org for further details or contact Blue Earth County Elections at 304-4341.

Interested in Learning More About County Government & Getting Involved?

Apply for the 2015 Blue Earth County Citizens Academy!

Get an inside look at county functions through seven hands-on sessions with facility tours and the opportunity to meet the people behind the services on selected Tuesday evenings in March and April 2015.

To learn more, contact Jessica Beyer at 304-4491 or by e-mail at jessica.beyer@blueearthcountymn.gov.





Minnesota's "No Texting" Law Works to Combat Distracted Driving

Distracted Driving Contributes to 25 Percent of All Crashes

In Minnesota, it is illegal for drivers to read, compose or send texts/emails, as well as access the web on a wireless device while the vehicle is in motion or a part of traffic – including at a stoplight/stop sign or stopped in traffic. It also is illegal for drivers under age 18 to use a cell phone at any time.

Minnesota's "no texting" law was enacted in August 2008 and citations have increased each year:

2009	388
2010	847
2011	1,270
2012	1,718
2013	2,189

Driver Distractions Go Beyond Texting

Daydreaming/taking mind off driving; reaching for items; manipulating radio/music/vehicle controls; eating/drinking; dealing with rowdy passengers and grooming all can be driver distractions.

Tips to Minimize Distractions

- **Cell phones** – Turn off cell phones or place them out of reach to avoid the urge to dial/answer or read or send a text. If a passenger is present, ask them to handle calls/texts.
- **Music and other controls** – Pre-program radio stations and arrange music in an easy-to-access spot. Adjust mirrors and AC/heat before traveling or ask a passenger to assist.
- **Navigation** – Designate a passenger to help with directions. If driving alone, map out destinations in advance and pull over to study a map or program GPS.
- **Eating and drinking** – Avoid foods and beverages when driving (especially messy foods) and have others' drinks secured.
- **Children** – Teach children the importance of good behavior in a vehicle; do not underestimate how distracting it can be to tend to children while driving.
- **Passengers** should speak up to stop drivers from distracted driving behavior.
- If making/receiving a call to/from someone driving, ask them to call back when they are not driving. ■

According to the Office of Traffic Safety

- More than 86,000 crashes were attributed to distracted driving during 2009 to 2013 – 25 percent of all crashes in those five years.
- On average, distracted driving accounts for approximately 60 fatalities and 8,000 injuries annually.
- In 2013, inattention was the contributing factor in 17,598 crashes (23 percent of all crashes), 68 fatalities and 8,038 injuries.



For more information visit the Minnesota Department of Public Safety website at www.dps.mn.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions for Roundabouts

How Do I Turn Left in a Roundabout?

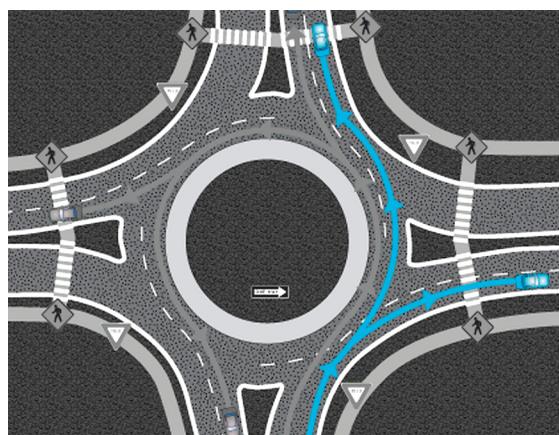
Slow down and pay attention to the signs as you approach the roundabout. If you are going to turn left, get in the left lane and if you are going to turn right, get in the right lane.

Yield to vehicles already in the roundabout. When you can safely enter the roundabout and stay in your chosen lane, proceed around the roundabout's center island and then exit at your desired street. The roundabout's design provides for exits from the inside lane.

What Do I Do When I See a Police Car With Sirens Blaring Coming Into the Roundabout?

Remain calm when you first hear the sirens and try to recognize from which direction the emergency vehicle (police, fire, rescue) is approaching. Once you see where the emergency vehicle is, you can choose the appropriate action to get out of its way. If you are already in the roundabout, this generally will mean proceeding and exiting the roundabout. Once out of the roundabout, then move to your

right and stop to let the emergency vehicle pass. If you are not in the roundabout, stay out and let the emergency vehicle pass before starting your maneuver through the roundabout.



Should I Use My Turn Signal in the Roundabout?

No, using a turn signal in a roundabout can often be misunderstood. Don't rely on a turn signal to determine when to enter the roundabout. Be a

defensive driver and assume all vehicles (even if signaling) will be traveling across your path. You should yield to all lanes of traffic. Slow down, wait your turn and then proceed safely into and out of the roundabout.

Am I Allowed to Pass in the Roundabout?

Never pass in a roundabout.

I Can't See the Opposite Side of the Roundabout, Why?

The design of a roundabout includes a mound in the middle that prevents drivers from seeing the opposite side. The mound helps prevent motorists from driving straight through the intersection instead of following the road. The center mound also helps keep traffic moving. By limiting the sight for a driver at the yield line to the intersecting road's adjacent legs, drivers still have enough sight distance to safely enter and exit the roundabout. Research has shown that more sight distance than necessary actually causes more problems as drivers desire and wait for larger gaps in the traffic flow before proceeding. ■

To learn additional information regarding roundabouts in Minnesota visit www.dot.state.mn.us/roundabouts.



Minnesota's Homestead Property Tax Benefit

By Michael Stalberger, County Assessor and Deputy Taxpayer Services Director

Homestead property in Minnesota can receive significant reductions to property taxes. To qualify for homestead, you must own and occupy residential or agricultural property as your principal place of residence. You must also make application to the Taxpayer Services Department and meet other requirements. Taxpayer Services mails three notices to taxpayers annually; each of these notices will identify property as homestead or not.

Beyond the reduction to the property tax bill that a homestead receives, having the homestead designation on your property may make you eligible for other property tax programs, including Minnesota's Property Tax Refund. The Property Tax Refund is administered by the state and provides a refund check for homeowners when their property taxes exceed certain income limits or their property taxes have increased dramatically in any year. The refund application can be completed online for free.

Residential Homesteads

Residentially-used property that is occupied by the property's owner or a grandparent, parent, child, grandchild, sibling, aunt, uncle, niece, or nephew of the owner, may qualify for a residential homestead if the property is used as a principal place of residence. This means the occupant must live in the property and claim it as their "home." The County will review individual circumstances when there is any question about a property being used as a principal place of residence.

The residential homestead benefit works as a value reduction program, essentially reducing a property's tax bill. Up to \$30,400 of value can be excluded, depending on the value of the property.

Agricultural Homesteads

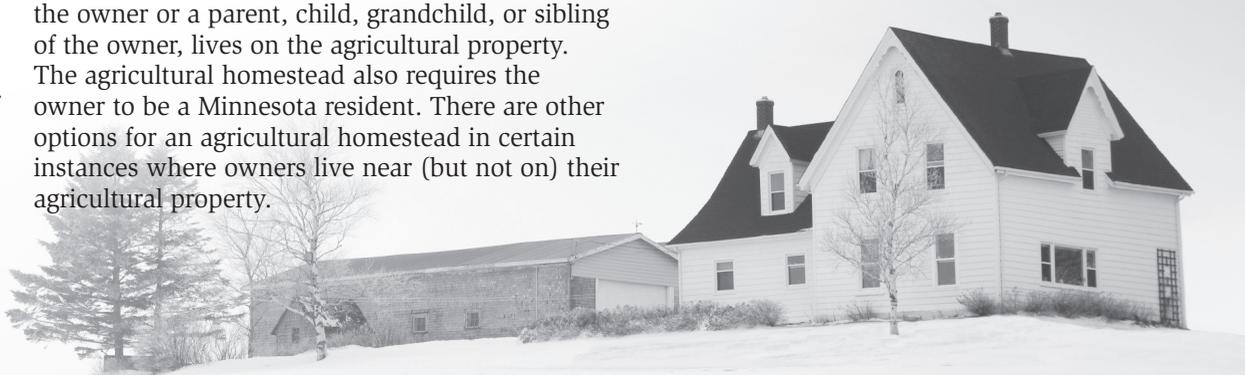
In addition to the residential homestead described above for the homesite on an agricultural property, agricultural homestead properties may be eligible for additional benefit. For taxes payable in 2014, the agricultural buildings and land that are part of an agricultural homestead will receive an additional property tax credit of up to \$345, essentially reducing the tax overall tax bill. Starting with taxes payable in 2015, the agricultural homestead benefit will be a maximum of \$490. The actual credit amount is based on the value of the agricultural land and buildings.

There are many options for agricultural property to qualify for homestead. Most common is where the owner or a parent, child, grandchild, or sibling of the owner, lives on the agricultural property. The agricultural homestead also requires the owner to be a Minnesota resident. There are other options for an agricultural homestead in certain instances where owners live near (but not on) their agricultural property.

Making Application

To be granted any homestead, the owners (and relatives) must make application to the Taxpayer Services Department. The application should be made when the property is purchased. Depending on when property is occupied as homestead, an application can be made as late as December 15 to be granted for the following year's taxes. Applications are available on the Blue Earth County website at www.blueearthcountymn.gov or by contacting Taxpayer Services at 304-4251.

If you have current homestead property that you are no longer using as your homestead, you are required to notify our department so the benefit can be removed. ■



For more information contact Blue Earth County Taxpayer Services at 304-4251 or visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov

Planning an Upcoming Trip and Need a Passport?

Visit Taxpayer Services on First Floor of the Historic Courthouse

Applications for passports are accepted from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, at Taxpayer Services located in the Historic Courthouse at 204 S. 5th Street, Mankato. Passport applications are available online to download and complete prior to visiting Taxpayer Services.

Adobe Acrobat Reader is needed to view and print passport applications from the Blue Earth County website at www.blueearthcountymn.gov. Applications are four pages and must be printed on separate sheets of paper (not double-sided). Please read all instructions prior to printing and filling out any information. Applicants filling out printed applications prior to visiting Taxpayer Services must use black ink and should not sign their name until the application is presented in-person to staff.

Passports generally take four to six weeks from the time of application to arrive and expedited services are available. Please contact Blue Earth County Taxpayer Services at 304-4251 for prices and further details.



SAVE THE DATE

Truth-in-Taxation Notices

Property owners should watch the mail in late November for their annual Truth-in-Taxation Notices. The Taxpayer Services Department mails the notices to inform property owners of upcoming public meetings to discuss proposed property taxes and proposed budgets for 2015 taxes. Blue Earth County's meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, December 2 at the Historic Courthouse located at 204 South 5th Street in Mankato. Meetings for other taxing authorities will be listed on the notice.

For more information please contact Blue Earth County Administration at 304-4284.



ADULTS AND YOUTH NEEDED!

Human Service Advisory Committee

The committee is appointed by the Blue Earth County Commissioners. The purpose of the committee is to provide input to the County Human Services Director and the County Board relating to service developments, priorities, budgeting and evaluation within the Human Services Department. This includes the program areas of mental health, community health, social services, and financial assistance.

Task Forces Appointed by the Blue Earth County Commissioners, Advisory to the Blue Earth County Advisory Committee:

Social Service Task Force

This group is authorized as part of the Human Services Act which provides partial definition of how services will be provided in Blue Earth County. Members of this task force provide community input on policies and services related to child protection, child and adult foster care, adoption, family based services, vulnerable adult/adult protection, family daycare licensing, developmental disabilities, childcare funding, sexual violence and chemical dependency.

Mental Health Task Force

This group is authorized by the Adult and Children's Mental Health Acts in Minnesota statues and has specific responsibilities to fulfill as they advise the County Board. Members of this task force provide community input on policies, treatment and services that addresses the mental health needs of children, adults and families.

For more information on Blue Earth County Committees contact Noelle Bruender at 304-4064 E-mail: noelle.bruender@blueearthcountymn.gov

All About the WIC Nutrition Program

WIC (Women, Infants & Children) is a nutrition program that helps families eat well and stay healthy. You may qualify if you are pregnant, nursing or if you have a child under age five. WIC can provide nutrition education, support for breastfeeding, and help connect you with other services in the community. WIC also provides vouchers for healthy foods like milk, cereal, eggs, beans, peanut butter, whole grain bread, vegetables, fruit and baby foods. You may qualify for WIC if a family member uses Medical Assistance, Minnesota Care, Food Support, Free or Reduced Price School Lunch, Head Start, Fuel Assistance, or if you meet the income guidelines listed to the right.

At WIC, we are happy to serve you and your family! WIC will provide information and suggestions specific to your family's needs along with foods to help feed your family in a healthy way. ■

If you have further questions or would like to make an appointment, call 304-4163. The Blue Earth County WIC clinic is located in the Blue Earth County Government Center at 410 S. 5th Street, Mankato. Additional information about Blue Earth County WIC services can be found online at www.blueearthcountymn.gov.

Household Size (Pregnant woman count as 2)	WIC Basic Income Guidelines		
	Annual	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$21,590	\$1,800	\$416
2	\$29,101	\$2,426	\$560
3	\$36,612	\$3,051	\$705
4	\$44,123	\$3,677	\$849
5	\$51,634	\$4,303	\$993
6	\$59,145	\$4,929	\$1,138
Each Additional Member Add	\$7,511	\$626	\$1,445



Free Prescription Discount Card Available

Take Advantage of the Savings!

The Coast 2 Coast Free Discount Prescription Card is available to Blue Earth County residents and may be obtained in Human Services on first floor of the Blue Earth County Government Center located at 410 S. 5th Street in Mankato. Cards are also available at participating pharmacies, by contacting (800) 931-8872 or may be printed online at www.coast2coastrx.com.

It is important to note that the card does not act as insurance. However, it can provide users savings on prescriptions and discount benefits for services such as dental, vision, hearing and veterinary services under the program.

For more information on the Coast 2 Coast Free Discount Prescription Card please contact (800) 931-8872.

Coast2CoastRx
Free Discount Prescription Card
Blue Earth County

- Save up to 75% on prescriptions
- Individuals or families can use
- 60,000 participating pharmacies
- Use immediately with no paperwork to fill out
- No health restrictions – Everyone is accepted
- No fee ever charged for the card
- Save on brand and generic drugs
- Covers drugs not covered in health plans
- Covers many pet prescriptions

Save on your family's dental, vision, veterinary, hearing, diabetic equipment/supplies, lab and imaging services – all non-insurance discounted benefits – call 1-800-931-8872 or go to www.coast2coastrx.com for more information on all benefits and to print out a card. Search for a provider and see frequently asked questions.

Coast2CoastRx Blue Earth County
Bin#: 008878 Group#: BLUEMN
ID Number: ()
ID Number is patient's 10-digit phone #, please add 01, 02, etc. for dependents after 10-digit #. (Example: 12345678901)

Processor NetCard Systems/RxWest
Pharmacy Only Help Desk: 1-888-886-5822
To Cardholder: If you have any problems processing your prescription please call 1-800-931-8872 while at the pharmacy
Coverage: Individual & Family • PBM is WellDyneRx
THIS PLAN IS NOT INSURANCE



Veteran Burial Benefits: *What Families Should Know*

For Burial in a National Cemetery

Burial benefits available include a gravesite in any of our 131 national cemeteries to Veterans with available space, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a Government headstone or marker, a burial flag, and a Presidential Memorial Certificate at no cost to the family. Some Veterans may also be eligible for burial allowances. Cremated remains are buried or inurned in

national cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains. Burial benefits available for spouses and dependents buried in a national cemetery include burial with the Veteran, perpetual care, and the spouse or dependents name and date of birth and death will be inscribed on the Veteran's headstone at no cost to the family. Eligible spouses and dependents may be buried, even if they predecease the Veteran.

The Veterans family should make funeral or cremation arrangements with a funeral provider or cremation office. Any item or service obtained from a funeral home or cremation office will be at the family's expense.

Preparing in advance gravesites in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) national cemeteries cannot be reserved in advance. You should advise your family of your wishes and where your discharge paper are kept. These papers are very important in establishing your eligibility.

At the time of need, families should contact a funeral home who will assist them with making burial arrangements at the national cemetery. You may wish to make pre-need arrangements with a funeral home. To schedule a burial; Fax all discharge documentation to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at (866) 900-6417 and follow-up with a phone call to (800) 535-1117.

Donating Burial Flags in National Cemeteries

Most of the Department of Veterans Affairs national cemeteries display an Avenue of Flags on patriotic holidays and during special events. The Avenues consist of burial flags donated by the families of deceased Veterans and provide a unique visible tribute to all of our Nation's Veterans.

A Certificate of Appreciation is presented to the donor for providing their loved ones' burial flag to a national cemetery. Please contact the cemetery of your choice for information on how to donate a Veteran's burial flag. ■

For more information on VA Burial Benefits and other Veterans benefits, please contact Blue Earth County Veterans Services at 304-4246.

Second Step Clubhouse Celebrates 25 Years With an Open House in Their New Location

The Blue Earth County Adult Mental Health Community Support Program and Resource Center, known as the Second Step Clubhouse, hosted an open house on Thursday, June 26 at its new location in the VINE Adult Community Center at 421 East Hickory Street, Suite 404 in Mankato. The event commemorated 25 years of the program's mission to help persons with mental illness reach their full potential and to have fulfilling and productive lives in the community. It was an opportunity to showcase progress of the program, recognize clubhouse members, educate the public about Second Step Clubhouse services, and to feature the new resource center space. To learn more about community mental health services and the Second Step Clubhouse visit; www.blueearthcountymn.gov/clubhouse. ■



Blue Earth County Community Farm Update

The Blue Earth County Community Farm (BECCF) is in the process of wrapping up its third growing season at Weigel Park, located off Highway 66 near the Red Jacket Trail and Mount Kato. Main highlights from the 2014 season included Andrew Hermanson taking over as Community Farm Manager, setting up raised beds to better protect crops and the installation of a drip irrigation system.

The focus of the farm is to supply a sustainable source of produce for local food assistance programs such as the ECHO Food Shelf and the Salvation Army.

During each of the last two growing seasons, BECCF has harvested about 7,500 pounds of fresh vegetables to be donated to the community including the opportunity for youth and adults to take part in experiential learning/volunteer opportunities. The project is also a 2012-2013 Local Government Innovation Award recipient from the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota and InCommons. For more information about BECCF or to follow season activities visit the BECCF Facebook page. ■





Celebrate Halloween at the Library!

Mankato Library

Saturday, October 25 - 10:30 a.m.

Mapleton Library

Wednesday, October 29 - 5 p.m.

Halloween events at the Blue Earth County Libraries in Mankato and Mapleton will include a comedy and magic show that celebrates the 40th anniversary of the Ronald Dahl classic, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, presented by Robert and Lynn Halbrook. Children are invited to trick-or-treat around the libraries following each of the special programs.

Holiday Reindeer Event at the Library

Monday, December 8 at 5 p.m.

Blue Earth County Library, Mankato

All ages are invited to visit the Blue Earth County Library for a special evening program featuring live reindeer. Attendees will have a unique opportunity to experience an up-close look at the animals and learn about the role reindeer played in Nordic life and culture.



Don't Miss Scott Wolter from History Channel 2's America Unearthed Show

The Blue Earth County Library System is bringing Scott Wolter, author and host of History 2 (H2) Channel's "America Unearthed", to the Verizon Wireless Center on Thursday, November 13, 2014 at 7 p.m. for a special program that is free and open to the public. Wolter is a world-renowned forensic geologist and President of the Minnesota-based American Petrographic Services. He began developing a new science called archaeopetrography, a scientific process used to date and understand the origins and mysterious stone artifacts and sites. The first artifact Wolter studied using the this new science was the Kensington Rune Stone. Wolter will discuss his studies, discoveries and experiences with his television series in addition to



Scott Wolter Presentation

Thursday, November 13, 2014

7:00 p.m. Verizon Wireless Center, Mankato

answering questions from the audience following his presentation. This program is made possible through a Traverse des Sioux Library Cooperative Grant and Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. ■

For more information on contact the Blue earth county Library system at 304-4001 or visit www.beclibrary.org

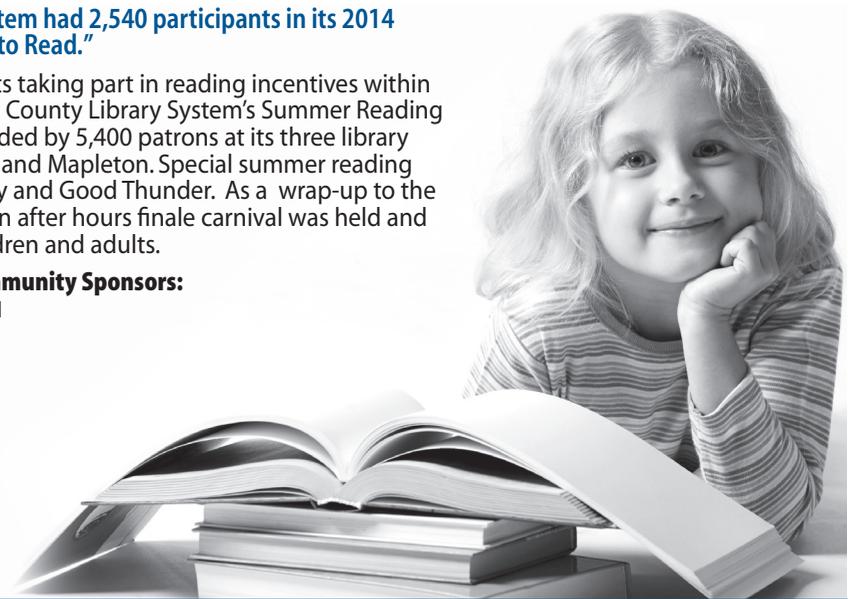
Thank You 2014 Summer Reading Program Sponsors, Volunteers and Participants!

The Blue Earth County Library System had 2,540 participants in its 2014 Summer Reading Program, "Paws to Read."

In addition to program participants taking part in reading incentives within four age categories, the Blue Earth County Library System's Summer Reading Program included 54 events attended by 5,400 patrons at its three library locations in Lake Crystal, Mankato and Mapleton. Special summer reading programs were also held in Amboy and Good Thunder. As a wrap-up to the 2014 Summer Reading Program, an after hours finale carnival was held and attended by more than 1,000 children and adults.

Many Thanks To Our Generous Community Sponsors:

Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of MN
Friends of the Deep Valley Libraries
Papa Murphy's Pizza
Noodles and Company
Chipotle Mexican Grill
Baker's Square
Old Country Buffet
Mankato MoonDogs
Pizza Ranch
Insomnia Cookies



2014 Key Sponsor:

Taylor

Reading incentives paired with the ability to provide educational and fun programs for all ages is contingent upon the generous support of our community sponsors.

Stop by the Blue Earth County Library in Mankato to See the New Renovations!



AFTER



BEFORE



AFTER



BEFORE



Thank You to Library Supporters!

The Blue Earth County Library thanks all the generous sponsors to the libraries in Mankato, Lake Crystal and Mapleton Communities. To view a listing of individual and organization sponsors or to learn more about supporting the Blue Earth County Library, visit <http://www.beclibrary.org/supporters>

PUBLIC WORKS



**Interested
in joining 4-H?**

Major 2014 Road Projects Completed

Three significant road projects for Blue Earth County were recently completed including County Road 17 from Mankato to Eagle Lake, County Road 26 on the North shore of Eagle Lake and Main Street in Madison Lake.



County Road 17 Mankato to Eagle Lake

The final phase of the County Road 17 project is now complete and the new road features a four-lane divided roadway from Mankato to County Road 12. From the County Road 12 intersection, the road is two-lane with added turning lanes through the City of Eagle Lake. Four roundabout intersections at Carver Road, County Road 12,

County Road 86 and County Road 56 are also part of the finished project. Additionally, there is a new pedestrian trail spanning from Eagle Lake to Mankato with a connection to the State Sakatah Trail.

Main Street in Madison Lake

In cooperation with the City of Madison Lake, Blue Earth County worked throughout the 2014 construction on the Main Street segment of County Road 26 in addition to a section of Cherry Street that connects Main Street to County Road 187 in downtown Madison Lake. The completed project provides the downtown area of Madison Lake with new infrastructure which includes a new street, sidewalks, a water main, sanitary sewer, storm sewer and many aesthetic improvements.

North Shore of Eagle Lake Segment

Reconstruction of the last remaining segment to be completed on County Road 26 between County Road 12 and Madison Lake, was put on hold until 2014 due to Minnesota DNR permitting. The section of road was known for its dangerous curves. Work started on the segment in mid-summer and was recently completed. ■

State Highway 66 Turnback Update

The Blue Earth County Board approved a resolution on October 7, 2014 for the transfer of State Highway 66 ownership from MnDOT to Blue Earth County. Moving forward, through utilization of one-time State turnback funding, the road will be reconstructed from Mankato city limits to Good Thunder. A total of 10.975 miles of rural two-lane paved highway will be reconstructed and put on the County State Aid Highway System. Additionally, the segment from County Road 90 to Mankato city limits will be designated as a "Natural Preservation Route". Construction is slated for 2015 and 2016 with conceptual planning in the works. ■

For more information contact the Blue Earth County Highway Department at 304-4025.



Blue Earth County Highway and Parks Staff at Work for You.
Pictured above: Employees with Blue Earth County Commissioners.



4-H is a learning by doing youth development program with 11 clubs located throughout Blue Earth County for youth ranging from kindergarten through one year past high school. Participants can get involved on a wide variety of different projects including: aerospace, robotics, photography, geospatial, swine, rabbits and much more. New members are welcome to join at any time. For more information contact Amanda Somers, 4-H Program Coordinator at 304-4142 or at eppe0018@umn.edu.

In addition to 4-H programs, the University of Minnesota Extension Office, located on the third floor of the Historic Courthouse at 204 S. 5th Street in Mankato, provides answers and education on topics including food safety, youth leadership, horticulture and ag production. Educational programs are offered for all ages and Blue Earth County residents are invited to participate in topics which interest them.

For additional information on all programs and services offered through U of M Extension visit the Blue Earth County website at <http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/extension> or call 304-4235.



Local television station KEYC was recently awarded with the Outstanding Media Partner of the Year Award from the Minnesota Association of Emergency Managers for its work with Blue Earth County Emergency Management in producing a series of public service announcements for severe weather safety.



WINTER is on the way...
Be Prepared!

Winter Survival Car Kit

Items in Kit Should Include:

- Candle and Matches
- Metal Cup/Soup Can to melt snow
- Whistle
- Brightly colored bandana or ribbon to signal for help
- Flashlight and Extra Batteries
- Garbage Bags and Rubber Bands
- Snack Foods for Energy
- Boots
- Kleenex/Paper Towels
- First Aid Kit
- Hand Warmers
- Emergency Blanket
- Needed Medications

Other Suggested Items:

- Jumper Cables
- Snowmobile Suit
- Sleeping Bag
- Shovel
- Sand/Cat Litter
- Reflectors
- Rope
- Boots
- Gloves
- Extra Clothing

Contact Your Local Emergency Manager for Additional Information
hsem.dps.mn.gov





Don't Forget to Properly Store Hazardous Materials

The Blue Earth County Household Hazardous Waste Facility closes each winter season. It is closed from November through March. However, it's easy to safely store hazardous materials in your home this winter if you follow a few simple rules.

1. Keep materials from freezing. Don't keep them in an unheated garage, shed or barn for the winter. This could destroy the effectiveness of yard and garden chemicals, and will ruin items like latex paint.
2. Keep materials away from furnaces and all other heat sources. If they catch fire, they will give off dangerous gases. Even if they don't catch fire, they could heat to the point of releasing harmful vapors.
3. Check to make sure containers aren't leaking.
4. Keep all products in the original containers with labels attached. If you do need to put a product in a new container, label that container to identify the material within. It's easy to forget what's inside over the long winter months.
5. Don't mix products.
6. Store products out of the reach of children and pets.

For more information, call the 24-Hour Waste and Recycling Hotline at 304-4242, or visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov

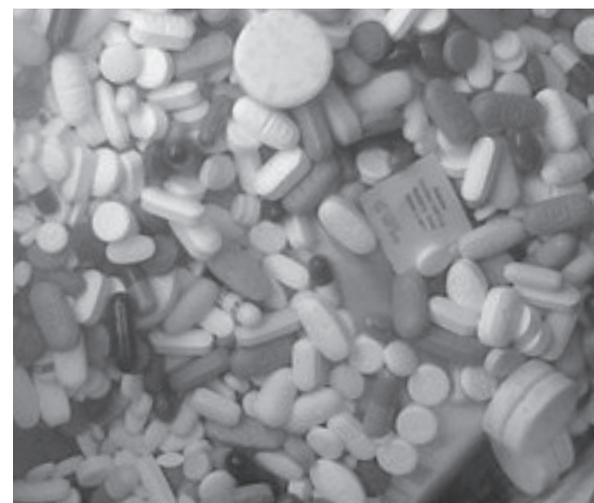
Permanent Collection Boxes Offer Proper Disposal Method for Unused Pills & Medications

By Jean Lundquist, Recycling Coordinator

Blue Earth County has provided a permanent collection box for unused, unwanted and expired medications since December of 2011. The medicine collection box is located in the lobby of the Sheriff's Office at the Blue Earth County Justice Center, 401 Carver Road, Mankato.

Since then, more than 4,480 pounds of medication has been dropped off, and disposed of properly. That's over two tons of medicine kept out of the hands of someone who could misuse them and out of our drinking water and soils.

Using the drop box is a safe and secure way to dispose of both over-the-counter medications, and prescription medications in all forms - tablets, sprays, capsules, powders and liquids.



Quick Tips for Proper and Efficient Disposal:

1. Leave liquids in their original container, and place the container in a plastic bag to catch any leaks
2. Take medications in pill form out of their original container, and put in a secure plastic bag, as this saves space in the drop-box
3. Do not put boxes in the container to conserve space

A second drop box for medications is located at the Mankato Public Safety Center, 710 South Front Street.

Things You Should NOT Put in the Medication Drop-box:

1. Mercury thermometers (take to the Blue Earth County Household Hazardous Waste Facility, 651 Summit Avenue, Mankato)
2. Sharps, such as lancets, syringes and needles (take to the Blue Earth County drop boxes at Hy Vee Pharmacies in Mankato during regular pharmacy hours - there is a \$5 charge per container)
3. IV Bags
4. Bloody or Infectious Waste
5. Hydrogen Peroxide (it can react with certain medications in the drop-box)

For more information, call the 24-Hour Waste and Recycling Hotline at 304-4242, or visit www.blueearthcountymn.gov

Thinking About Stockpiling Dirt or Placing Some Fill?

By Michael Schulte, Land Use Specialist & Feedlot Officer

Whether you call it earth, dirt, soil, or fill, there may be some restrictions or permits required in order to stockpile or permanently place fill on a property.

Permit requirements and restrictions vary depending on location, amount of fill, and nearby sensitive features such as wetlands. Municipalities and townships may also have their own requirements. The following information applies to areas where Blue Earth County is the zoning authority.

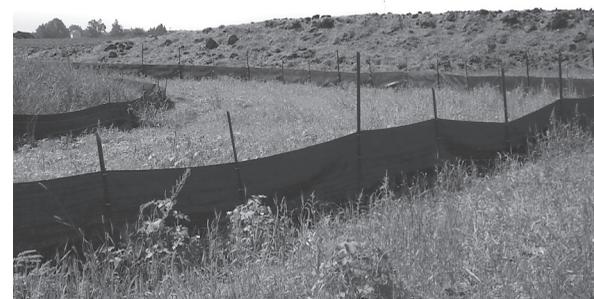
Location restrictions that may limit or prevent the placement of fill include zoning district, proximity to streams and lakes, bluff impact zones, and floodplain areas. In shoreland zoned districts a conditional use permit is required prior to the placement or stockpiling of 50 cubic yards or more of

fill. Within the shore impact and bluff impact zones any placement of fill needs a permit. Placement of fill is prohibited in the floodway district and is a conditional use in the flood fringe district when the cumulative volume of fill exceeds 500 cubic yards.

Stockpiling and placement of fill requires a conditional use permit in the agriculture and conservation zoned districts when the volume of fill is equal to or greater than 500 cubic yards.

Erosion control is another important consideration when placing or stockpiling fill. All projects need to manage runoff to prevent polluting nearby wetlands, drainage ditches, tile inlets, neighboring properties, etc. There are numerous types of erosion control methods and selecting the right type can seem

daunting. Many local contractors are familiar with various erosion control methods. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) also publishes a Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual, available free on their website at <http://goo.gl/5J5WnP>.



When considering a project or for more detailed information on applicable county ordinances, you are encouraged to call the Blue Earth County Environmental Services office at 304-4381.

SERVING YOU



Drew Campbell
District 1 Commissioner
P.O. Box 1283
Mankato, MN 56002-1283
387-2408 (H) / 382-1374 (C)
drew.campbell@blueearthcountymn.gov



**Vance Stuehnenberg,
Vice Chair**
District 2 Commissioner
2316 East Main St.
Mankato, MN 56001
388-8129 (H) / 317-3942 (C)
vances@blueearthcountymn.gov



Mark Piepho
District 3 Commissioner
8 Skyline Drive
Mankato, MN 56001
345-4380 (H) / 327-4161 (C)
mark.piepho@blueearthcountymn.gov



Will Purvis, 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



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

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Knowledge of employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Timeliness of service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value of service provided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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!**

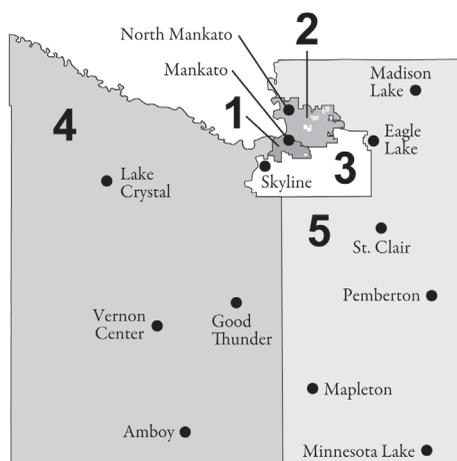
Board Information

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.

Blue Earth County COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS



SERVICE DIRECTORY



Blue Earth County Justice Center
401 Carver Rd., Mankato



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



County Government Center
410 S. Fifth St., 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

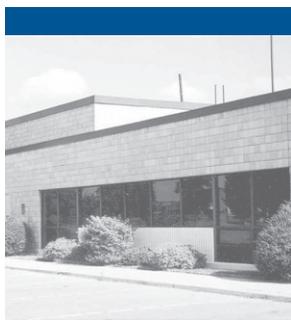
5th Judicial District Court

2nd Floor 304-4650

Traffic Tickets
Small Claims Court
Civil and Criminal Court

County Attorney

2nd Floor 304-4600



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

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

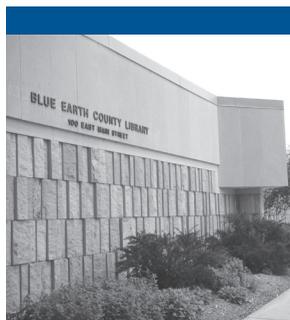
2nd Floor 304-4150

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



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
Administration 304-4002
Mapleton Public Library 524-3513
Lake Crystal Public Library 726-2726

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

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