



BLUE EARTH COUNTY

# COMMUNICATOR

Effectively & Efficiently Delivering Essential Services

FALL ❄️ WINTER 2015



## New Landfill Facility Takes Shape

Construction is underway for a new Customer Service and Recycling Building at the Ponderosa Landfill. The new facility will increase safety and convenience for Ponderosa Landfill customers while providing greater opportunities to recycle and store accumulated materials coming to the landfill. Once the facility is completed, general public customers and smaller self-hauled business customers will be able to drop off materials at the building eliminating the need to travel into the fill area where large haulers bring commercial loads of waste. The building is expected to be operational in spring 2016. *Staff Pictured L to R: Greg Boe, Executive Intern; Scott Fichtner, Environmental Services Director; Dave Kronlokken, Environmental Services Supervisor.*

## IN THIS ISSUE



### What's New

- Online eMarriage Application Process
- Drainage Blog Launched
- CodeRED FAQ Information



### Public Safety

- Truancy Intervention Program
- Law Enforcement Scholarships
- Correctional Officer of the Year Award



### Taxpayer Services

- Exempt Assessment Process
- Updated Look for Online Property Info
- Passport Application Instructions



### Public Works

- New Williams Nature Center Signage
- Bituminous Stabilized Gravel Roads
- Upcoming Public Meetings



### Library Services

- Rural Library Services
- Book Buzz Event
- Summer Reading Program Re-cap



### Environmental Services

- Wetland Planning Information
- Functions of Wetlands
- Customer Service & Recycling Building



### Human Services

- New Adult Abuse Reporting Center
- Second Step Clubhouse
- Veterans Health Care Eligibility News

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
MADELIA, MN 56062  
PERMIT NO. 4

## POSTAL PATRON

## 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



*Online eMarriage Application Process Now Available: Blue Earth County First in State to Accept eMarriage Applications*

**New Statewide Registry Unites Resources to Streamline Application Process for Marriage Licenses**

Couples applying for a marriage license in Blue Earth County can save time and simplify the process by completing the application form online at [www.moms.mn.gov/application](http://www.moms.mn.gov/application). After completing the online form, couples receive a confirmation e-mail. The couple, including both parties, must appear in person at the Blue Earth County License Center located at 410 S. 5th Street to have their signatures witnessed, pay the license fee and complete the marriage application process. Once the fee is paid, there is a 5-day waiting period before the license is valid and can be used.

**Whether completing the form online or using the paper application, couples will need to supply the following information:**

- Full legal names
- Address and state of residence
- Date of birth
- Information about any previous marriages
- Full name of both the parties after marriage
- Social security numbers
- Information about any felony convictions on or after August 1, 2000
- Mailing address where the marriage certificate will be sent

Applicants may contact the Blue Earth County License Center at 304-4340 for more information.

If either party is a minor, additional documents are required. A computer station will be provided at the Blue Earth County License Center Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for couples wishing to apply for a marriage license in person.

“We are extremely excited about this new online tool that streamlines the process for couples applying for a marriage license,” stated Patty O’Connor, Taxpayer Services Director for Blue Earth county. “It was great to be the first County in the State of Minnesota to process a marriage license purchase with the new system and showcase the improved functionality of having the eMarriage application option in place for citizens.”



Blue Earth County is a participant of the Minnesota Official Marriage System (MOMS) at [www.moms.mn.gov](http://www.moms.mn.gov). MOMS was created in 2008 under the Minnesota Association of County Officials (MACO) umbrella to provide customer service in searching and requesting marriage records statewide. ■

**New drainageBLOG Launched**



The Taxpayer Services Department administers the county’s public drainage system. While commonly referred to as ditches, the public drainage system does not typically run along sides of roads. It runs throughout the countryside and is constructed and maintained to drain land and collect water quickly and efficiently to increase land available for the production of crops. Blue Earth County has over 100 ditches with over 160 miles of open ditches and 500

miles of tile systems (drainage in pipes under the ground). In order to provide current information to parties interested in the public drainage system, the department has created a weekly blog, known as drainageBLOG. Visit [www.blueearthcountymn.gov](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov) and search for “drainageBLOG” to find it, read previous postings and sign up for future posts.

In addition to drainageBLOG, drainage system staff are working to provide historical and current documents on a new resource available on the County website called drainageDB. This tool allows interested parties to search for information on the Blue Earth County drainage system. Historical and new documents are continually being added.

The Blue Earth County Taxpayer Services Department reminds property owners that the second half of real estate taxes is due, **Thursday, October 15, 2015**. Property owners with land classified as agricultural or manufactured home owners have until **November 16, 2015** to pay their second half taxes. Please make sure to check statements for the appropriate due date. The Taxpayer Services office is located in the Historic Courthouse, 204 S. Fifth Street, Mankato. Payments can be made online at [www.blueearthcountymn.gov](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov) or by mail to Blue Earth County Taxpayer Services, PO Box 3567, Mankato, MN 56002-3567.

There will be penalty if full payment is not received on or before the due date, or for mailed payments that are postmarked after the due date. Those making payments online should note that there is a fee of \$1.49 for e-checks and a 2.49% transaction fee applied to credit card transactions. Taxpayers can use any of the following drop sites to make payments: Cub Foods (1800 Madison Avenue, Mankato), Hy-Vee Downtown (410 Riverfront Drive, Mankato) or outside of the Historic Courthouse (on the Fourth Street side of the building). Payments may also be made at the following banks in Blue Earth County: Community Bank in Vernon Center, MinnStar Bank in Lake Crystal, Peoples State Bank in Madison Lake and St. Clair State Bank in St. Clair. If taxes are paid at any of the bank locations, payments must be made during operating hours for that specific bank. Tax statements should be brought into locations to confirm correct tax amounts and better assist property owners.

For more information visit [www.blueearthcountymn.gov](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov) or call 304-4251.

**Taxpayers are invited to take advantage of automated payment service which is free, dependable and convenient. Enrollment forms, along with more information is available at [www.blueearthcountymn.gov/achform](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/achform)**

**Save the Date  
Tuesday, December 1 at 6 p.m.**

Property owners should watch the mail in late November for their annual Truth-in-Taxation Notices. Notices inform of upcoming public meetings to discuss proposed property taxes and budgets for 2016 taxes. Blue Earth County’s meeting will be held at **6 p.m. on Tuesday, December 1** at the Historic Courthouse 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.



**Blue Earth County and Mankato Economic Development Authorities Receive Highest Rankings from Federal Government**

The Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has issued the Public Housing Assessment System (PHAS) and the Section Eight Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) evaluations of the management of the Mankato and Blue Earth EDAs and have scored them both to be “High Performers”.

- This score measures performance of:
- Condition of the public housing units
  - Financial health of the EDA
  - Administration of grant funds used to maintain the units
  - Ability to move program participants to self-sufficiency
  - Help offered to participants purchasing a first-time home
  - Overall management of the federal rental assistance programs



**CODERED Emergency Notification System FAQ's**

**In December 2014 the Blue Earth County Sheriff's Office went live with the CodeRED public notification system.**

In the months since the system was activated there have been seven public alerts sent to Blue Earth County as a whole or to various communities within the County. View the FAQ's listed below to learn more about the CodeRED system and how it works.

**What is CodeRED and why is it important to me?**

CodeRED is an emergency notification service that allows emergency officials to notify residents and businesses by telephone, cell phone, text message and e-mail regarding time-sensitive general and emergency notifications. Notification information will also be sent out to those who follow Blue Earth County on social media via Twitter and Facebook. Only authorized officials have access to the CodeRED system.

**When will CodeRED be used?**

Messages regarding the safety, property or welfare of the community will be disseminated using the CodeRED system. The system will be used to send critical communications such as missing child alerts and evacuation notices.

**Does the CodeRED system replace other systems that have been used to provide time-sensitive information to residents?**

This system is an enhancement to existing means of communication and is meant to supplement current or past systems used for mass notification.

**Does the CodeRED system already have my telephone number, or do I need to sign up to receive CodeRED notifications?**

The CodeRED database currently contains limited information. No resident should assume that their information is in the system. Residents and businesses are encouraged to register for emergency notification alerts on the Blue Earth County website at [www.blueearthcountymn.gov](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov) by clicking on the CodeRED button. 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 calling 304-4920 for assistance. All



contact information provided remains private and is only used for emergency notification purposes.

**I have a business located in Blue Earth County. Can I arrange to have CodeRED contact my business?**

Yes. Fill out the CodeRED registration form, but be sure to select the “This address is business” option.

**How will I recognize a CodeRED message?**

A CodeRED Emergency message will have a caller ID of 866-419-5000. A CodeRED General message will have a caller ID 855-969-4636. If you need to replay the emergency notification message again, simply dial the number and you will be able to hear the message again.

**What should I do if I receive a CodeRED message?**

Listen carefully to the entire message. You will have the option to repeat the message by pressing any key. Do not call 911 for further information unless directed to do so or if you need immediate aid from the police or fire department.

**Will the CodeRED system leave a message on an answering machine?**

Yes, the CodeRED system will attempt to leave a message on a machine or voice mail. However, due to variations in the telephone systems receiving the call, CodeRED may sometimes fail to leave a message.

**What happens if the line is busy?**

If the line is busy, CodeRED will try at least two more times to connect.

**What circumstances might prevent a message from being delivered to me?**

- If your contact information has changed and you have not registered your new information.
- If you have only cordless phones in your residence, the power is out and you did not register an alternate phone number.
- If your line is busy for an extended time and your calls do not forward to voice mail or an answering machine.
- If you have a privacy manager on your main phone and you did not register an alternate phone number.

Blue Earth County will receive a report of undelivered calls and can instruct the CodeRED system to begin another round of calls to busy numbers. It is best to have an alternate phone number in the calling database for these situations.

**Is there an app for CodeRED?**

Yes. The CodeRED Mobile Alert app can be downloaded for free on Google Play and iTunes. It provides advanced, real-time, hyperlocal alerts to subscribers within the reach of a given location generated by public safety officials across the United States and Canada. ■

For additional information visit [www.blueearthcountymn.gov/CodeRED](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/CodeRED) or call 304-4920.





**Blue Earth County Sheriff Brad Peterson is accepting local applications for the 2015 Minnesota Sheriff's Association (MSA) Scholarship Program now through Oct. 15, 2015.**

Across the state, 15 - \$600 scholarships will be awarded in 2015 due to coordinated efforts by the 87 Sheriffs of Minnesota.

"The Minnesota Sheriff's Association Board of Directors feel peace officers in our democratic society have complex duties to perform," said Sheriff Brad Peterson. "The association recognizes the importance of pre-entry training for people considering law enforcement as their career choice and that some students need outside help in meeting the costs of such training, even though they excel academically."

Scholarships are only available to students currently enrolled in one of the following three categories:

- Mandated POST skills program
- In the second year of a two-year law enforcement program
- In the third or fourth year of a four-year college criminal justice course

In order to qualify, students must have completed at least one year of a two year program and two years of a four year program. The scholarship committee, in making its selection of awards, intends on achieving representation from all geographic areas of the state. Scholarship award recipients will be announced by December 31, 2015.

More information about the 2015 MSA Scholarship Program and application materials can be found at [www.mnsheriffs.org](http://www.mnsheriffs.org). Information and applications may also be obtained locally at the Blue Earth County Sheriff's Office on first floor of the Justice Center at 401 Carver Road, Mankato.

**Applications may be sent to:**

Blue Earth County Sheriff's Office  
ATTN: Sheriff Brad Peterson  
MSA Scholarship Application  
401 Carver Road  
PO Box 228  
Mankato, MN 56002-0228

**Blue Earth County Truancy Intervention Program**

By Pat McDermott, Blue Earth County Attorney

We all want our children to have the best education they can get to become successful, productive adults. Regular attendance at school is the best way to ensure that goal. That is why school attendance is mandatory in the state of Minnesota. Studies have shown that children who are truant from school are more likely to engage in delinquent or criminal activity and abuse alcohol or other drugs. This problem needs to be actively addressed in order to prevent today's truant from becoming tomorrow's delinquent or chemically dependent.

The Truancy Intervention Program helps parents to become actively involved to ensure their children regularly attend school. This process has proven to be effective, as long as everyone follows through on their obligations. If truancy continues, the matter will be petitioned into Juvenile Court to step up the level and intensity of intervention.

A number of issues can play a role in students' attendance. The Truancy Intervention Program tries to address these concerns.

The program is a partnership with school officials and educators in Blue Earth County. We are fortunate to have a dedicated group of educators and administrators that strive to keep our kids in school. The program is designed to be an additional resource to help our School officials to make sure that our students graduate.

**HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS**

**STEP ONE:**

An Assistant County Attorney meets with the parents/guardians of the child with attendance issues. The attorney will discuss why parents/guardians should



send the child to school, the necessity of education and the legal consequences if attendance does not improve.

**STEP TWO:**

The school will monitor attendance of students in the program. If attendance is still an issue, the student and parents are invited to participate in a Student Attendance Review Team (SART) hearing. The team will create a contract addressing the causes of the child's attendance problems and possible solutions.

**STEP THREE:**

If school attendance does not improve after the implementation of the SART contract, the County Attorney will take legal action against the student, parents/guardians, or both.

Education is the foundation for a successful future. It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to make sure that a child attends school regularly. Regular attendance improves academic success and graduation rates. Collaboration with the school and county is key to solving a student's attendance issues.



**Custody Officer  
Receives  
Correctional Officer  
of the Year Award**

Blue Earth County Custody Officer Stacy Nelson, pictured with Sheriff Brad Peterson, was honored as the Correctional Officer of the Year at the State Jail Administrators Conference in September.



**Online Property Information System Gets Updated Look**



The Taxpayer Services Department maintains a property information system known as Beacon. The vendor of this product recently provided a significant upgrade with a design that is more modern and responsive - meaning Beacon will adapt to users on computers, tablets and mobile devices with different screen sizes.

Other enhancements include:

- More powerful searches - search fields will now suggest possible entries.
- Columns of data in the reports on properties can be selected and added.
- The maps better fill the screen and allow more information to be displayed.

Visit [www.blueearthcountymn.gov](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov), select property and taxes, or search "Beacon".

**MN Property Tax Refunds**

Minnesota provides property tax refunds for both renters and property owners. For property owners, if your income is less than \$107,150, you may qualify for a refund based on the amount of property taxes paid. The property also must be your homestead. There is a special refund not restricted by income if your property taxes increased more than 12 percent and \$100 between 2014 and 2015.

To apply for the refund, check with your tax preparer or gather your property tax statements for 2014 and 2015 and your income tax filing. Visit the Department of Revenue website for more information and to apply online for free: go to [www.revenue.state.mn.us](http://www.revenue.state.mn.us) and click on "Property Tax Refund" under the "Individuals" tax information column. The refunds were increased due to recent law changes, so you should check with your tax preparer or apply for yourself. You still have time to complete your 2014 filing for 2015 taxes. There is also a refund for renters in Minnesota.



**Taxpayer Services Department Appraisers  
Completing the Exempt Assessment**

At least once every six years, counties in Minnesota must complete an exempt assessment. This process is a review of every property in the county that is exempt from property taxes. Many types of property, such as churches, schools, buildings owned and used by the government and institutions of purely public charity, qualify for exemption from property taxes based on state laws. Blue Earth County has about 1,800 exempt parcels out of our nearly 35,900 parcels. Currently, approximately \$171.5 million in land value and \$779.4 million in building value is exempt for a total of over \$950.9 million. In comparison, Blue Earth County's total taxable market value for the 2015 assessment was \$7.8 billion.

As part of the exempt assessment, county appraisers thoroughly review properties to ensure they continue to meet the use and ownership requirements to qualify for exemption. Part of the process also results in most exempt property owners completing updated applications for exemption. Those applications mail in the fall and must be returned to complete the assessment.

Property owners with questions about exemption may call Taxpayer Services at 304-4251 or email [taxhelp@blueearthcountymn.gov](mailto:taxhelp@blueearthcountymn.gov).



Passport applications must be completed in black ink only and cannot be accepted unless they are signed in front of a passport agent. It is important to read and follow all instructions to ensure the application can be accepted and processed. Please call 304-4251 for assistance.

Often, applicants fail to note these important instructions:

Often, applicants fail to note these important instructions:

- All applicants must appear in person before a passport agent to sign and submit a completed passport application.
- Bring proper proof of U.S. citizenship, a valid driver's license or state issued identification card (more information may be needed for state issued identification cards and out of state cards) and Social Security number.
- Have sufficient payment for each application. The U.S. State Department requires a check or money order, while the additional fees for the processing or passport photo can be paid with cash, check or credit card.
- Be aware of specific instructions for passports for children.
- Applications must include one passport-specific photo that meets the U.S. State Department's standards. While you may bring your own photograph, if it does not meet standards, your application will be rejected. Photographs can be taken on-site at Blue Earth County for \$15.

More information is available at [www.blueearthcountymn.gov/passports](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/passports) or when you search for "Passports."

**PROPERTY FRAUD  
ALERT**

Property fraud is when someone illegally uses your property for financial gain. It occurs when someone records a fraudulent document in the Taxpayer Services/County Recorder's office, making it look like they own your home or property. Blue Earth County Taxpayer Services has partnered with our recording program vendor to offer a free service to residents. Visit [www.blueearthcountymn.gov](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov) and enter a search for "Property Fraud Alert" to sign up for notification whenever any document is recorded against your property.





# PUBLIC WORKS

## Public Input Requested on Water Programs

Blue Earth County is seeking input through surveys to obtain public feedback on two water-related programs including the Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid Program and the Blue Earth County Water Management Plan.

The County is in the process of developing a plan for Aquatic Invasive Species prevention and guidelines for prevention use of State aid funding. To help develop its plan, Blue Earth County is seeking public input to complete a 16-question survey. The results of the survey will help prioritize the County's actions related to aquatic invasive species prevention. Each County in Minnesota receives aid under the Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Aid Program and are tasked with aiding in the prevention of aquatic invasive species through activities that "may include, but are not limited to providing for site-level management, countywide awareness and other procedures that the county finds necessary to achieve compliance."

The Blue Earth County Aquatic Invasive Species Survey can be found at [www.blueearthcountymn.gov/AIS](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/AIS). Public feedback will be accepted now through October 18, 2015.

Blue Earth County is working to obtain feedback from the public regarding water-related issues in preparation for updating its Water Management Plan through an 11-question survey aimed at helping prioritize water management activities. The purpose of the Water Management Plan is to identify and assess priority water resource concerns, develop goals and objectives to address priority concerns and provide direction for the County and the Blue Earth County Soil and Water Conservation District's programs and projects.

The Blue Earth County Water Management Plan Survey can be found at [www.blueearthcountymn.gov/waterplan](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/waterplan). Public feedback will be accepted now through October 18.

For more information, please contact the Blue Earth County Environmental Services Department at 304-4381 or visit [www.blueearthcountymn.gov](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov).

## Bituminous Stabilized Gravel: An Alternative Surface for High Traffic Gravel Roads

By Chad Wilde, Assistant Public Works Director

Blue Earth County Highways include about 320 miles of gravel roads. Although they provide reliable, all weather access for our citizens, they can be bumpy and dusty. They are also costly for the County to maintain requiring regular addition of gravel surfacing and blading to smooth bumps. Grading and paving with a traditional high quality pavement is costly and not feasible with current resources.

The County has been demonstrating an alternative for higher traffic gravel roads, stabilizing the upper several inches of gravel with asphalt. The year prior to stabilizing, the road is shaped, ditches cleaned and

culverts replaced. The existing gravel is supplemented with about 5 inches of crushed, recycled asphalt. A large "roto tiller" type machine then incorporates about 2 percent asphalt by weight into the top 5 inches. This mixture is bladed smooth and thoroughly compacted. A double seal coat is then applied. It is an efficient operation using County staff and equipment supplemented with rental equipment.

The County currently has about 15 miles of stabilized gravel roads in place. They are performing well and with additional funding we hope to expand this program to additional rural gravel miles.

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



The County currently has about 15 miles of stabilized gravel roads in place. They are performing well and with additional funding we hope to expand this program.

## WINTER ACTIVITIES AT BLUE EARTH COUNTY PARKS

### ACTIVITIES

### PARKS



	BRAY (102.3 ACRES)	DAILY (73.81 ACRES)	DUCK LAKE (1.66 ACRES)	LAKE GEORGE (4.2 ACRES)	RED JACKET TRAIL PARK (4 ACRES)	WILLIAMS NATURE CENTER (65.3 ACRES)	INDIAN LAKE (112.44 ACRES)	SCHIMEK (29.75 ACRES)	WILDWOOD (28.3 ACRES)	LONE PINE (2.3 ACRES)	RAPIDAN (38.69 ACRES)
<b>SNOWSHOEING</b>	•	•			•	•	•	•	•		•
<b>ICE FISHING</b>	•	•	•	•						•	
<b>CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING</b>	•	•			•	•	•	•	•		

## Experience New Park Signage at Williams Nature Center

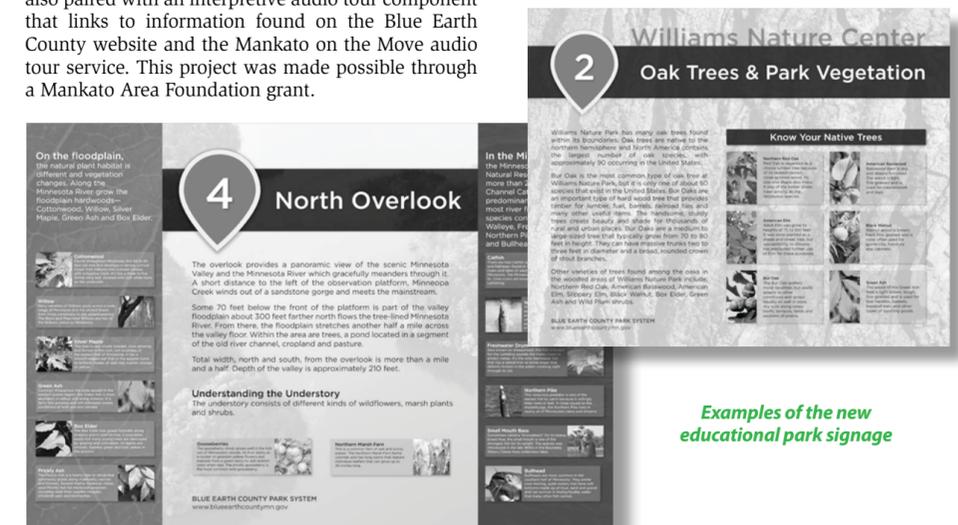
By Dean Ehlers, Parks Supervisor & Jessica Beyer, Communications Manager & Business Analyst

New park signage is being installed this fall as part of ongoing efforts to revitalize Williams Nature Park located off State Highway 68 and the Minneopa Trail near Minneopa State Park west of Mankato.

The signage features six educational stations focusing on different aspects of the park, native animals, plants, trees, species of fish and more. Each sign is also paired with an interpretive audio tour component that links to information found on the Blue Earth County website and the Mankato on the Move audio tour service. This project was made possible through a Mankato Area Foundation grant.

Several other park improvements have been made in recent years including improvements of the ADA trails and parking lot, the installation of security cameras and new fencing continues to be installed.

Be sure to visit Williams Nature Center to enjoy its beauty throughout all four seasons.



Examples of the new educational park signage

For more information visit [www.blueearthcountymn.gov](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov) or contact the Blue Earth County Parks Department at (507) 304-4025.

## Local Transportation Sales Tax Option Public Meetings

Blue Earth County has scheduled a series of public meetings to bring forward information and discuss the potential for implementing a local sales tax option for transportation.

**LAKE CRYSTAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
October 19, 7:30 p.m.  
City Hall  
100 E. Robinson Street, Lake Crystal

**MAPLETON CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
October 20, 7 p.m.  
Fire Station  
103 3rd Avenue NE, Mapleton

**BLUE EARTH COUNTY HISTORIC COURTHOUSE**  
October 26, 7 p.m.  
Third Floor Conference Room  
204 S. 5th Street, Mankato

At the meetings, Blue Earth County officials will provide information regarding the county's transportation infrastructure needs, along with possible funding strategies that are currently being discussed by the County Board. Two years ago, the Minnesota Legislature passed legislation authorizing individual counties to enact two new revenue sources to specifically finance transportation projects: A wheelage tax of \$10 on vehicles kept in their county as well as up to a 1/2 percent local sales tax. Since that time, many surrounding counties have implemented one or both options.



## NATIONAL COMMITTEE AND LEADERSHIP ROLES NAMED

National Association of Counties (NACo) recently named special appointments to policy committees and leadership positions for the association to Blue Earth County elected officials:



Vance Stuehrenberg Will Purvis Drew Campbell

Blue Earth County Commissioner and Board Chair, Vance Stuehrenberg was re-appointed to his fourth term on the NACo Transportation Steering Committee and is the newly named Chair of the Airport Subcommittee.

Blue Earth County Commissioner, Will Purvis was re-named to the Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee for 2015.

Blue Earth County Commissioner, Drew Campbell was newly named to the NACo Health Steering Committee and the Rural Action Caucus (RAC).

Collectively, both Commissioners Vance Stuehrenberg and Drew Campbell serve on the Rural Action Caucus (RAC).

Blue Earth County staff members, Patty O'Connor, Director of Taxpayer Services and Jessica Beyer, Communications Manager & Business Analyst are also engaged on national committees with NACo. O'Connor recently completed a long tenure on the NACo Board of Directors related to her representation with the National Association of County Recorders, Election Officials and Clerks (NACREC) and was reappointed in 2015 to the NACo Information and Technology Standing Committee and the Finance, Pensions and Intergovernmental Affairs Steering Committee. Beyer was recently named President of the National Association of County Information Officers (NACIO) an affiliate organization of NACo. With her two-year presidency, she will serve as a member of the NACo Board of Directors. Beyer was also renamed to her eighth year on the NACo Resilient Counties Initiative Committee and will embark on her first year serving the Information and Technology Standing Committee.





# LIBRARY SERVICES

## Thank You

PARTICIPANTS & SPONSORS  
OF THE 2015 SUMMER  
READING PROGRAM

The Blue Earth County Library System had over 2,700 participants in its 2015 Summer Reading Program, "Read to the Rhythm." In addition to reading incentives in four age categories, the Summer Reading Program included 59 events that were attended by nearly 5,800 patrons in Mankato, Lake Crystal, Mapleton, Amboy, Garden City, Good Thunder and St. Clair. The library system is able to offer quality reading incentives and fun educational programs through the support of generous community sponsors including:

Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of MN  
Friends of the Deep Valley Libraries  
Minnesota New Country Radio 93  
Noodles & Company  
Chipotle Mexican Grill  
Mankato MoonDogs  
Jersey Mike's  
Papa Murphy's Pizza  
Insomnia Cookies  
Mankato's Experimental Aircraft Assn.

2015 Key Sponsor:

Taylor

## Blue Earth County Library System Rural Library Services

**Residents living in Rural Blue Earth County can have library materials sent directly to their mail boxes free of charge.**

Rural Library Services, online services and mini-library sites throughout the county allow county residents living outside the city limits of Mankato, Lake Crystal and Mapleton access to library services expediently and conveniently 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Residents of rural Blue Earth County, including the communities of Madison Lake, St. Clair, Eagle Lake, Good Thunder, Garden City, Vernon Center, Amboy and Pemberton have access to direct library services through the US Mail. Patrons can go directly online or call the library to order library materials (books, magazine, books on CD, DVDs, etc.). The materials will be mailed directly to them with an enclosed postage-paid return envelope. Rural library users

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 System website ([www.beclibrary.org](http://www.beclibrary.org)) to their personal reading/listening devices. In addition, residents of these communities will have access to mini-library sites in their communities.

### Who can use Rural Library Services?

If you are a resident of Madison Lake, St. Clair, Eagle Lake, Good Thunder, Garden City, Vernon Center, Amboy, or Pemberton, you qualify for Rural Library Services.

### How do I apply for Rural Library Services?

It is as easy as getting a library card. You can fill out the online form for a Rural Library Card, or call Kathy at 304-4021.

### How do I get materials sent to me?

There are two ways you can get materials mailed to you. Call Kathy at 304-4021 and let her know what materials you are looking for and she will mail them out. Or simply complete the online Library Materials by Mail form.

### Is there a fee for Rural Library Services?

There is no cost to use this service. You will be billed the replacement cost for any materials not returned to the library, or materials that are damaged while in your possession.

### How do I return materials?

Returning materials is easy. Simply place the item in the prepaid envelope that was mailed out to you and send it back in the mail. ■



For more information contact Kathy at 304-4021 or visit [www.beclibrary.org](http://www.beclibrary.org).

## Book Buzz with Robert Haddock

NOVEMBER 17, 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM  
BLUE EARTH COUNTY LIBRARY, 100 EAST MAIN STREET, MANKATO

Attention book lovers! Want to learn about future best-sellers before they become best-sellers? Our library is hosting Robert Haddock from Penguin Random House who will buzz about forthcoming books and give you the inside scoop on 2016 titles. Excerpt samplers, book catalogs and "Keep Calm and Read On" canvas tote bags will be available for attendees! Please call 304-4020 for more information.



# ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



## Planning Efforts to Maintain and Improve Wetlands Throughout County

Blue Earth County is coordinating development of a local plan to maintain and improve the quality, quantity and biological diversity of wetlands throughout the County. The Comprehensive Wetland Protection and Management Plan for Blue Earth County will use locally-determined, scientifically-based methods to:

1. Identify and protect high priority wetlands.
2. Identify opportunities for and prioritize strategic selection of wetland replacement sites based on local public values.

Please help determine the public value of wetlands for the Wetland Plan by going to this link on the Blue Earth County Website and completing a survey by October 31, 2015: [www.blueearthcountymn.gov/WetlandPlan](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/WetlandPlan)

Wetlands are considered valuable because they clean the water, recharge water supplies, reduce flood risks and provide fish and wildlife habitat. In addition, wetlands provide recreational opportunities, aesthetic benefits, sites for research and education and commercial benefits. ■

**PUBLIC INPUT ON WETLANDS IS REQUESTED**  
**Please Complete the Survey**  
**by October 31, 2015**  
[www.blueearthcountymn.gov/WetlandPlan](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/WetlandPlan)



## WETLAND FUNCTIONS

**Hydrologic Flux and Storage** includes water storage; groundwater recharge and discharge; stream discharge and recharge; and evapotranspiration export.

**Biological Productivity** includes primary productivity; secondary productivity; carbon storage; and carbon fixation.

**Biogeochemical Cycling and Storage** includes wetlands as a nutrient source or sink, an area for oxidation and reduction chemical transformations, an area for denitrification and reservoirs for sediment and organic matter.

**Decomposition** involves carbon release; mineralization; detritus output for aquatic organisms; and release of chemical compounds.

**Community Wildlife Habitat** provides habitat for algae, bacteria, fungi, insects, invertebrates, wetland plants, fish, shellfish, amphibians, reptiles, shorebirds, waterfowl and other wildlife. Wetlands are critical habitat for rare and unique species and enhance the resilience and diversity of plant and animal communities.

Source: Minnesota Wetlands Conservation Plan, 1997, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

## PUBLIC VALUES OF WETLAND FUNCTIONS

**Water Quality** includes filtering of pollutants to surface and groundwater, utilization of nutrients that would otherwise pollute public waters, trapping of sediments, shoreline protection and utilization of the wetland as a recharge area for groundwater.

**Flood Water and Storm Water Retention** (Water Storage) includes the potential for flooding in the watershed, the value of property subject to flooding and the reduction in potential flooding by the wetland.

**Wildlife Habitat** including fish, wildlife, native plant habitats

**Public Recreation and Education** includes hunting and fishing areas, wildlife viewing areas and nature areas.

**Low-flow Augmentation**

**Carbon Sequestration**

**Commercial Uses** includes wild rice and cranberry growing and aquaculture

Source: Minnesota Statutes, 103B.3355 Wetland Functions For Determining Public Values.



## Work Begins on New Customer Service and Recycling Building

Over the past three years, the Environmental Services Department has worked with the Blue Earth County Board to develop and finalize plans for a new public service and recycling building at the Ponderosa Landfill. The Board approved a construction contract for the building in April and earth work for construction began in August. The overall purpose of the project has been to increase safety and convenience for Ponderosa customers while providing greater opportunities to recycle waste materials and to enhance environmental protections by providing indoor storage of some accumulated materials at the landfill.

Once the project is complete, general public customers and small self-hauled business customers will be able to drive across the scale at the landfill and proceed directly into the new building, where their waste can be unloaded onto a designated section of the facility floor. After unloading they will be able to exit the building and drive back over the scale without needing to drive down the gravel road into the fill area. Commercial haulers and large loads of waste will be directed to proceed down to the hill to the fill area, as they are currently doing. This arrangement will increase safety and convenience for both commercial haulers and self-haulers, since large vehicles will no longer compete with small vehicle traffic on the landfill haul roads. Smaller vehicles will no longer need to drive into the fill area and unloading will be done indoors on a concrete floor.

The new facility is expected to be operational in spring 2016 and will include a large 16,000 square foot building with space to accommodate waste management activities and a small 1,800 square foot attached office area for staff and conference room space for meetings. Watch for more information about upcoming open house plans on the Blue Earth County website at [www.blueearthcountymn.gov](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov).





**If you served in the active military service and were separated under any condition other than dishonorable, you may qualify for VA health care benefits.**

Current and former members of the Reserves or National Guard who were called to active duty by a federal order and completed the full period for which they were called or ordered to active duty may be eligible for VA health benefits as well. Other factors which can impact eligibility include; income, service connected disabilities, Vietnam service or Purple Heart Award. Most Veterans who enlisted after September 7, 1980, or entered active duty after October 16, 1981, must have served 24 continuous months or the full period for which they were called to active duty in order to be eligible. This minimum duty requirement may not apply to Veterans who were discharged for a disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, for a hardship or "early out," or those who served prior to September 7, 1980. Since there are a number of other exceptions to the minimum duty requirements, veterans are encouraged to determine their enrollment eligibility.

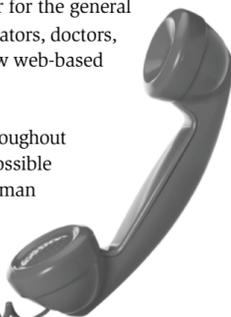
The State of Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs offers a dental and optical assistance program. Veterans, spouses and widows may qualify for this assistance. Eligibility requires qualifying military service of the veteran. Income and asset limitations are also factors for eligibility.

For more information on benefits for veterans, please contact Blue Earth County Veterans Services at 304-4246.

## New Adult Abuse Reporting Center Now Available

Minnesota Department of Human Services recently launched a new central system for reporting the suspected maltreatment of vulnerable adults. The Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center offers a single, state-wide common entry point that is available 24/7 with a toll-free number for the general public at **(844) 880-1574**. Mandated reporters, including law enforcement, educators, doctors, nurses, social workers and other licensed professionals, will also have access to a new web-based reporting system.

"We are excited to have this resource available for residents in Blue Earth County and throughout the State of Minnesota that will offer a new platform for the public in reporting possible maltreatment of vulnerable adults," stated Lanette Ayers, Blue Earth County Human Services Supervisor. "Our hope is to share information with as many organizations and individuals as possible throughout the County so that the public is informed about this new state-wide system." ■



More information and access for reporting can also be found on the Minnesota Department of Human Services website at [www.mn.gov/dhs/adult-protection/](http://www.mn.gov/dhs/adult-protection/).

## Second Step Clubhouse

Sixty-seven years ago former patients of a New York psychiatric hospital began meeting together as a kind of "club" to support people living in the community with mental illness. Fountain House, the first "Clubhouse," opened in New York City in 1948. Twenty-six years ago, Blue Earth County started its own version of "Clubhouse" after visiting Vail Place in Minneapolis. Second Step opened its Clubhouse program in January of 1989.

**Second Step's mission is to assist individuals with mental illness to reach their full potential and to have fulfilling and productive lives in the community.**

Second Step is a restorative environment in which members can work on recovery, gain skills, develop meaningful relationships and seek employment or educational opportunities. The Clubhouse also provides opportunities for members to increase community involvement and participate in social and recreational activities. Members work with Clubhouse staff to manage daily Clubhouse operations.

Second Step Clubhouse is located on the 4th floor of the VINE Adult Community Center. Its new location provides expanded opportunities for community integration. Second Step Clubhouse is open seven days a week.



To learn more, please visit <http://secondstep.sccbi.info/>.

*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](mailto: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!**



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



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



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



**Will Purvis**  
District 4 Commissioner  
13798 534th Avenue  
Vernon Center, MN 56090  
549-3420 (H) / 317-5465 (C)  
[will.purvis@blueearthcountymn.gov](mailto:will.purvis@blueearthcountymn.gov)



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



**Brad Peterson, Sheriff**  
Blue Earth County Justice Center  
401 Carver Rd.  
Mankato, MN 56001  
304-4800  
[brad.peterson@blueearthcountymn.gov](mailto:brad.peterson@blueearthcountymn.gov)



**Patrick R. McDermott, County Attorney**  
Blue Earth County Justice Center  
401 Carver Rd.  
Mankato, MN 56001  
304-4600  
[pat.mcdermott@blueearthcountymn.gov](mailto:pat.mcdermott@blueearthcountymn.gov)



**Bob Meyer, County Administrator**  
Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse  
204 S. Fifth St.  
Mankato, MN 56001  
304-4235  
[bob.meyer@blueearthcountymn.gov](mailto: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](http://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
- Victim Restitution
- Community Work Service Programs
- Services to Drug and Truancy Specialty Courts

**County Sheriff /Emergency Services**

**1st Floor, 304-4800**

- Jail
- Patrol
- Emergency Management
- Dispatch
- Civil Process
- Permits: ATV, Burn, Gun
- Records

**5th Judicial District Court**

**2nd Floor, 304-4650**

- Traffic Tickets
- Small Claims Court
- Civil and Criminal Court

**County Attorney**

**2nd Floor, 304-4600**

**Facilities and Management**

**Lower Level, 304-4249**

**Finance**

**Lower Level, 304-4182**

**Taxpayer Services – Property Information/Passports**

**1st Floor, 304-4251**

- Assessing
- Taxation
- Recording
- Ditch Management
- Passports

**Administration**

**2nd Floor, 304-4150**

Public Information, 304-4491

**Human Resources**

**2nd Floor, 387-8664**

**U of M Extension**

**3rd Floor, 304-4325**

- Agriculture & Horticulture
- 4-H/Youth Development
- Nutrition Education Program
- Misc. Program Areas

**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**

**Lower Level/1st/2nd/3rd Floors, 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



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

**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

*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](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov)