



BLUE EARTH COUNTY

# COMMUNICATOR

Effectively & Efficiently Delivering Essential Services

SPRING & SUMMER 2017



## Groundbreaking Jail Diversion Program

Blue Earth County is in the initial stages of developing a new groundbreaking jail diversion pilot program known as the "Yellow Line Project". The project focuses on helping legally involved individuals who also have mental health or chemical health problems. The hope is to maintain a high level of personal accountability while at the same time encourage healthy choices to reduce future consequences. A \$500,000 state Department of Human Services grant was obtained to further develop the program throughout 2017 and to provide measurements in how the program is helping people as well as how it sustains itself through savings with detox costs as well as general jail expenses for those diverted. Pictured above are leadership and operations team members representing Blue Earth County Human Services and Sheriff's Office in addition to partner organizations within the community.

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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



**First Half Property Taxes  
are Due May 15, 2017**

**PAYMENTS CAN BE MADE IN THE  
FOLLOWING WAYS:**

**By Mail.** Payments must be postmarked on or before May 15 to avoid penalty and can be sent to PO Box 3567, Mankato, MN 56002-3567.

**In-person.** Visit Taxpayer Services located on first floor of the Historic Courthouse (204 S. 5th Street) from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

**Online.** Credit cards (2.49% fee) and eChecks (\$1.49 per transaction) can be made on the County's website at [www.blueearthcountymn.gov](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov)

**Automated Payments.** Sign-up for the automatic payment program at [www.blueearthcountymn.gov/achform](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/achform). Program sign-up must occur three weeks prior to a payment date.

**Drop Box Locations.** Drop boxes are located at the Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse (204 S. 5th Street, outside the fourth street entrance), Downtown Hy-Vee (410 Riverfront Drive, Mankato) and Cub Foods (1800 Madison Avenue, Mankato).

**Bank Locations.** Bring your tax statement to any of the following locations for bank personnel to assist you; Community Bank in Vernon Center, MinnStar Bank in Lake Crystal and St. Clair State Bank in St. Clair.

**Fifth Street  
Construction Planned**

South Fifth Street between Main Street and Cherry Street along the campuses of the Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse and Government Center will be under construction from approximately late May until mid-October. Construction work will include water and sewer utility replacement, road resurfacing and the addition of angled parking from Hickory to Cherry Street



by the City of Mankato. Detours will be posted for alternative access to County buildings and parking areas.

**Rural County-wide Public Transportation Buses will be Hitting the Pavement This Year**

By Paige Schuette, Marketing Specialist with VINE Faith in Action

Public transportation is a crucial piece to our regional growth—helping to bring a better quality of life, economic vitality and reduction of our carbon footprint. In increasing numbers, people are using public transportation and local governments are expanding public transit services, including Blue Earth County.

Rural county-wide public transportation buses will be hitting the pavement this year. After years of research through a Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) funded transit study and discussions with local leaders, VINE Faith in Action has partnered with MnDOT, Blue Earth, Nicollet and Le Sueur counties to create the rural public transportation system. VINE was selected to operate the transit system because of its ongoing relationship with MnDOT and 20 years of transportation service in the region.

A Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) made up of local elected officials and other area stakeholders, formed to help structure the system using survey results that have been collected since November 2016 from individuals within the tri-county area.

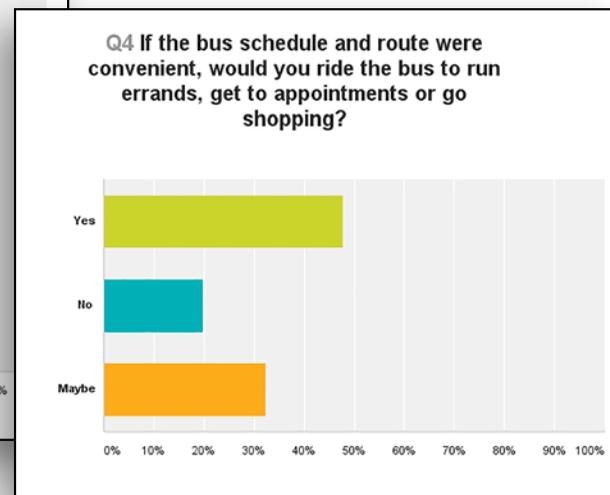
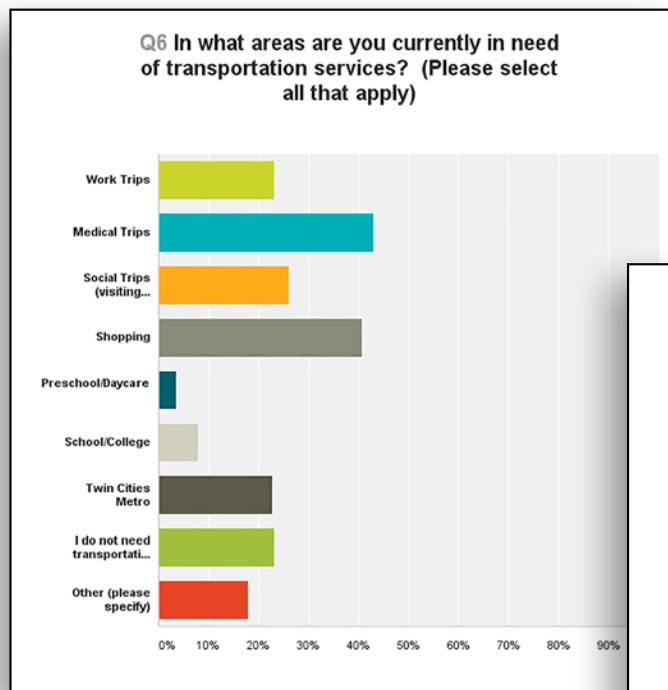


Carol Clark, VINE Transportation Manager

More than 700 surveys were completed and the results show residents want public transportation. Even though the majority currently drive themselves, they are interested in utilizing public transportation to travel to their medical appointments, go shopping, visit friends and get to work.

Currently, VINE staff and the TAC are working to name the system, develop marketing strategies, create routes and schedules and purchase four buses to service the tri-county area. Although the system is not yet fully operational, VINE has begun taking ride requests on a limited basis, utilizing its own bus and volunteer drivers.

The cost of the program will be subsidized by MnDOT with the local match coming from rider fares and county support.



For more information, contact VINE's transportation department at 387-1666.

**RURAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SURVEY**

Please visit: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/tricitytransit](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/tricitytransit) and take a short online survey to help with the planning process. Have questions? Need a paper copy of the survey? Contact Paige at VINE at 386-5573 or [paiges@vinevolunteers.com](mailto:paiges@vinevolunteers.com).



## Are You Planning Building Projects or Alterations to Your Property?

By Scott Fichtner, Environmental Services Director

Before you start any construction or land alteration projects on your property be sure to check with your local zoning authority for any applicable permit requirements. Here are some Frequently Asked Questions regarding construction projects:



### Who should I contact about any permits my project would require?

The Blue Earth County Environmental Services Department is responsible for issuing permits for construction and land alteration projects in the rural areas of the county. Please Note: If you live within city limits, contact your city for information on permit requirements. Two townships also have zoning authority. If you live in Mankato Township, contact the township offices and the City of Mankato issues land use permits for Lime Township residents.

### What types of projects would require permits?

In general, for areas under Blue Earth County zoning rules project types include: proposed construction projects for structures, decks, pre-fabricated structures or additions with a footprint greater than or equal to 120 square feet require a construction permit. Although smaller projects may not require a construction permit, the setback requirements of the County still apply. Modifications within an existing home that involve

replacing a basement or converting existing living space into a bedroom also require a permit. Projects such as shoreland alterations, grading and filling generally require permits as well. Simple projects such as replacing siding, shingles, windows and doors do not require a permit in areas under County jurisdiction, but other jurisdictions may require permits.

Applying for the proper permits helps ensure that your project will meet the zoning requirements in your area. These requirements include items such as setbacks from property lines, roads, utilities, septic systems and distance from natural features like bluffs and shoreline.

### What happens if I start a project without a permit?

In situations where construction is begun without proper permits, a minimum double permit fee is usually assessed. Some after-the-fact permit requests may involve activities that are prohibited within the zoning district involved and must be discontinued. Structures that violate setback requirements will require an after-the-fact variance request which is a double fee and has the possibility of being denied by the County Board of Adjustment. If denied, the owner may be required to disassemble or move the structure.

In all cases it is best to contact the Environmental Services Department during the initial planning phase of your project to see what permits and setback requirements may be involved with your proposal. ■

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

## Blue Earth County Working with Minnesota Housing to Provide Affordable First-time Homebuyer Loans

Minnesota Housing announced that \$56.6 million is available to provide affordable mortgages to first-time homebuyers through a collaboration with Minnesota cities and counties, including \$1,039,419.99 for Blue Earth County. Homebuyers can take advantage of these resources through the Minnesota Housing Start Up loan program, which offers fixed interest rates and down payment and closing cost loans up to \$10,000 for eligible first-time homebuyers. Buyers can purchase homes in Blue Earth County that cost up to \$255,500. Income limits vary by location and household size, going up to \$89,000.

"We're excited to partner with Minnesota Housing and to raise awareness that these type of first-time homebuyer loans are available in Blue Earth County," stated Patti Ziegler, Housing Coordinator. Minnesota Housing is a state agency that provides access to safe and affordable housing and builds stronger communities across the state. Minnesota Housing offers purchase, refinance, and home improvement loans, as well as financing for affordable rental housing throughout the state.

"Minnesota Housing's affordable loans, combined with the support of the Blue Earth County and local lenders, will help more families achieve home ownership," said Minnesota Housing Commissioner Mary Tingerthal.

First-time buyers can get started by contacting participating lenders in the Blue Earth County area. Visit [www.mnhousing.gov](http://www.mnhousing.gov) for a full list of approved lenders, current interest rates, and program eligibility. Minnesota Housing collaborates with individuals, communities, and partners to create, preserve, and finance affordable housing.



Find out more at  
[www.mnhousing.gov](http://www.mnhousing.gov).  
Follow us at  
[www.facebook.com/minnesotahousing](https://www.facebook.com/minnesotahousing)  
and on Twitter @mnhousing.



Governor Mark Dayton's landmark buffer initiative was signed into law in June of 2015, designating an estimated 110,000 acres of land for buffer strips statewide. Buffer strips along waterways help protect our water resources from erosion and runoff pollution.

### What is required by Blue Earth County residents?

On public waters, a 50-foot average buffer width. And on public ditches, a 16.5-foot buffer width.

### Important Dates:

On public waters, buffers need to be installed by November 1, 2017. And on public ditches, buffers need to be installed by November 1, 2018.

### DNR Maps

The Minnesota DNR released the map of public waters and public ditches requiring permanent vegetative buffers or alternative water quality practices.

View the Minnesota Buffer Map at [blueearthswcd.org/buffers](http://blueearthswcd.org/buffers)

### Establishing your Buffer: Program Availability

The 2015 Buffer Initiative relies on long-standing federal, state, and local programs to provide financial and technical support to landowners. Local governments such as the Blue Earth County SWCD and Blue Earth County are able to provide technical assistance and provide conservation planning to identify options.



Buffer in Blue Earth County



Aerial View of a Buffered Stream

For more information contact the Blue Earth County Soil and Water Conservation District at 345-4744.



Applicants are encouraged to first visit [www.blueearthcountymn.gov/passports](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/passports) to review instructions and fill out necessary forms before arriving in person to complete the application process. The routine processing time estimate for passport applications is generally up to eight weeks. Please note that processing time may increase up to ten weeks, so it's important to apply early and check the Blue Earth County website for updates.

**The Blue Earth County Passport Office is located within Taxpayer Services on first floor of the Historic Courthouse at 204 S. 5th street in Mankato and accepts passport applications Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

Passport photo services are also available.



## Public Records Maintained by Taxpayer Services

By Michael Stalberger, Taxpayer Services Director

The Blue Earth County Taxpayer Services Department provides many services to the public, including valuation and taxation of property, public drainage management, passport services, driver's licenses and registrations and elections administration. Additionally, the department serves the important role of County Recorder and Registrar of Titles.

When someone buys or sells real estate in Blue Earth County, it is important to keep track of the individuals involved with that property. Legal documents are created for real estate transactions. These documents are recorded with the county so that we can maintain a comprehensive record of those transactions over time. The most commonly recorded documents are mortgages, deeds, assignments, releases and satisfactions. In addition to the real estate documents, other documents such as military separations and tax liens are recorded here.

Once the document is presented to our recording team, it is reviewed to ensure it meets the legal requirements for recording. The recording team cannot provide legal assistance about what should be on the documents or how to fill them out, but we do have many laws to follow before accepting a document for recording.

The recording process itself has changed with technology. Once the document meets the requirements that make it able to be recorded, the document is scanned into our county's computer program and important information is collected and entered to help the public better search our records. A new program we have begun using digitally captures information directly from the scanned copy and our recording team can actually

touch and drag that information on the screen into the appropriate data fields. The original document is returned and the county maintains a copy.



More and more professionals are using eRecording technologies that allow them to send the documents to us electronically for recording. No paper or people actually come to our offices to record documents in those instances.

Because the Taxpayer Services Department keeps copies of all these transactions, our office is visited regularly by professionals who are researching new transactions for property, as well as by the public completing research for their own personal use. Many other county departments also use the information from recorded documents in their work.

Documents are available for inspection, and copies are available for purchase. Our public research area has computers to help find documents and many cabinets full of historical books with records going back to the mid-1800's. The county also provides online access to many of our records so they can be reviewed at anytime from anywhere for a fee.

The department's License Center provides similar assistance to the public in accessing marriage and birth and death records. Some of this information is available online and other documents are available in the License Center. Requests need to be formally made on an application to get a copy of marriage and birth and death records. ■

Contact our Taxpayer Service Specialists at 304-4251 for more information about the department's work with property records and our License Center Specialists at 304-4340 for information about marriage, birth and death records.

## 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.

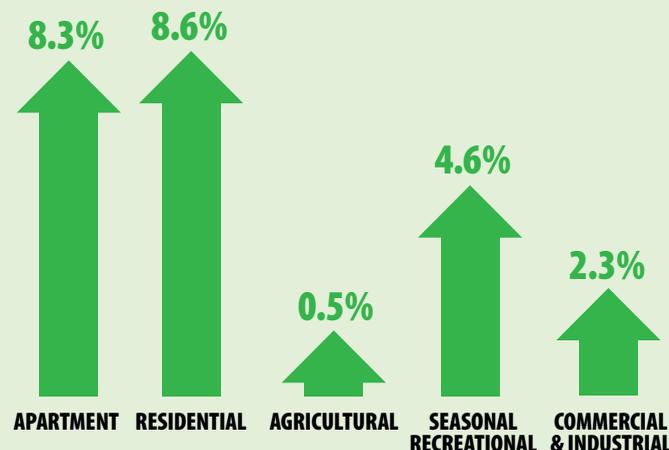
Visit [www.blueearthcountymn.gov](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov) and enter a search for "Property Fraud Alert" to sign up for notification whenever any document is recorded against your property.



## MARKET VALUATION TRENDS

Each year, based on local sales data, the Taxpayer Services Department estimates market values for parcels in Blue Earth County. Blue Earth County's various types of property saw various valuation changes. We then add in new construction such as improvements to existing buildings and new buildings to report overall valuation trends. Property values are an important component of the property tax process for taxes to be paid next year, in 2018.

Here are the changes for major property types compared to the 2016 assessment. Please note these are county averages and each local market may be different.





### The Blue Earth County Land Use Plan Update is Underway!

By Aaron Stubbs, Land Use Planner

Blue Earth County's current Land Use Plan was adopted in 1998. This document has helped to shape the County into what we see today and the purpose of the update is to ensure the County continues to grow in a responsible manner. The Land Use Plan is the overall guiding document that helps the County develop in a manner that meets the needs of the County and its residents. The plan will serve as a basis for making decisions on future land use regulations and development. A Land Use Plan helps to guide residential and economic growth within the County while also accommodating environmental and agricultural needs. The Blue Earth County Land Use Plan is a county-wide effort that engages residents, business leaders, and other important community partners to help establish a common vision, develop priorities and identify the necessary steps that will help ensure the County reaches its full potential in years to come.



One of the most exciting things about a Land Use Plan is the opportunity for public input and involvement in the process. Blue Earth County is working with SRF Consulting to conduct public meetings, collect input from the public and then develop a plan that incorporates the feedback that was received. Over the next seven months, SRF will be conducting two public input meetings, four regional focus group meetings, and collecting information from a community survey that was created by the Land Use Plan Study Review Committee. The Study Review Committee is made up of 11 individuals who represent different interests within Blue Earth County. The purpose of this group is to work with SRF and help shape the plan into a document that reflects the ideals of the residents in Blue Earth County.

If you are interested in being a part of the public input process or if you are interested in receiving more information on the process, please contact staff at 304-4381 or visit our website at [www.blueearth-countymn.gov/landuseplanupdate](http://www.blueearth-countymn.gov/landuseplanupdate) to complete the community survey and/or leave your comments. Blue Earth County and SRF are asking the residents of Blue Earth County for their involvement. **Be sure to also watch for information on upcoming meetings in the media, and on the County's website.** Your valuable feedback is vital for this update to reflect the needs of our residents. ■

It's Free and as Easy as



651 Summit Avenue, Mankato

April - October  
TUESDAYS, Noon to 6 p.m. &  
2nd SATURDAY of Each Month  
8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

24-hour Waste & Recycling Hotline  
304-4242

Since the first full season, in 1994, a total of 71,560 households have been served by the HHW Facility, which also accepts waste from Nicollet, Sibley and LeSueur Counties.

A total of 3,348,024 pounds of products that otherwise would have gone down the drain or into a landfill have been collected for proper disposal, recycling and re-use. Of the millions of pounds, almost a third of that has gone into the Product Reuse Center, where good, usable products are available for free to people who can use them.

For more information about what is accepted at the HHW Facility, visit the Blue Earth County website, or call the 24-hour Waste and Recycling Hotline at 304-4242.

## SPECIAL DOCUMENT SHREDDING EVENT SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 8

### Free for Residents and Small Businesses

Blue Earth County is hosting a special Document Shredding Event for Blue Earth County residents and small businesses. The event will take place on **Sat., April 8 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** at the **Blue Earth County Recycling Center** located at 725 Waseca Avenue, Mankato.

At the event, residents and businesses will be allowed to shred up to two bankers boxes of documents in addition to small amounts of CDs that contain private information and credit cards. Paper that has already been shredded will be accepted, because shredded paper does not belong in the recycling bin. Shredded paper contaminates other products in the sorting process and should be thrown away with regular trash. At the November collection event, 2,120 pounds of paper was recycled.



**DON'T MISS YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO PROPERLY DISPOSE OF UNWANTED DOCUMENTS AT NO COST.**

For more information, call the 24 Hour Waste and Recycling Hotline at 304-4242, or visit the Blue Earth County website at [www.blueearthcountymn.gov](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov).

### New Video Visitation Options Available at the Blue Earth County Jail

Those wishing to visit a family member or friend in the Blue Earth County jail now have more convenient options which include video visitation services either from home or on-site.

Learn more about visitation schedules and the new video visitation system at [www.blueearthcountymn.gov/jail](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/jail)





Blue Earth County has acquired the former Guaranteed Sand and Gravel pit adjacent to the Red Jacket Park off of County Road 1 (Old MN Hwy 66), to develop the property into a natural resource based outdoor recreational area. County work crews have been busy over the winter cleaning up the site, removing old gravel pit scales and debris in preparation of opening the park to the public.

**The park will be open to the public for outdoor recreational uses during daylight hours beginning May 1, 2017.**

The County will continue work on site cleanup, repairs, and improvements over the course of the summer. For public safety, the County will close off portions of the park while work is underway. Continued development of the park will include the addition of gravel walking trails, parking areas as well as other amenities from the development plan in future years.

The park was purchased through a collaborative effort between Blue Earth County and the City of Mankato. The City of Mankato had secured an option to purchase the properties from Southern Minnesota Construction for \$225,000 which was much less than the previously appraised value. In 2016 the County applied for and was later awarded a \$100,000 MnDNR Outdoor Recreation Grant to be used toward the purchase of the Guaranteed Sand and Gravel and Sanger gravel pit properties. The County and City then entered into a cooperative agreement where the County purchased the properties agreeing to evenly share the remaining purchase costs between the County and City. The County retained ownership of the Guaranteed Sand and Gravel property and the City took ownership of the Sanger property. Both agencies agreed to developing and operating both properties as natural resource based parks. These park lands will be a valuable asset for future generations thanks to Blue Earth County, the City of Mankato, Southern Minnesota Construction and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

## 2017 Major Construction Projects

By Ryan Thilges, P.E., County Engineer

### County Road 12 from MN Highway 83 to County Road 17

This new road segment from MN Highway 83 to County Road 17 is the fifth stage of the County Road 12 Extension Project on the east side of Mankato. The new road will serve as an east bypass of MN Highway 22 providing an efficient connection between the planned land uses of County Road 17 and industrial uses north of US 14 and the Mankato Regional Airport.

The road will provide transportation infrastructure needed to meet planned land use and future development in the eastern Mankato growth areas in addition to providing a connection to Prairie Winds Middle School. The need for an additional north/south route to Highway 22 has been identified in several long-range transportation planning studies focusing on future traffic volumes and area growth. It's projected that County Road 12 including the new segment will have a volume of 12,000 to 20,000 vehicles per day upon continued development.

The new road will feature four lanes (2 lanes in each direction) from County Road 17 to Hoffman Road, a three lane road from Hoffman Road to MN Highway 83 (one lane each direction with a dedicated turn lanes). The road will also include roundabout intersections at Hoffman Road and MN Highway 83 along with a connection to the roundabout at County Road 17 & 12.

Additionally, the project will entail reconstruction of Hoffman Road from Prairie Winds Drive to County Road 12 as a two lane road. Along with the new road, the project will add a bituminous trail on the east side of County Road 12 from Hoffman Road to County Road 17 with the trail segment from Hoffman Road to MN Highway 83 to be constructed in the future.

Construction is expected to begin in early summer and be completed prior to winter 2017. This fifth stage of the County Road 12 extension project is funded through a combination of Federal State Transportation Improvement Program, local option transportation sales tax, MNDOT, City of Mankato, and County funds.

Previous County Road 12 extension projects include the bridge over the CP railroad, the connection between County Road 26 and County Road 3, the US Highway 14



County Road 109

interchange, and the connection between County Road 3 and County Road 17.

### County Road 109 from County Road 6 to County Road 11 north of Lake Crystal

County Road 109 is currently a gravel road with very heavy farm to market traffic volumes creating significant maintenance issues and detrimental impacts to users and residents alike. This rural reconstruction project includes re-shaping and strengthening the road to a modern 10 ton design and widening with a 12' lane in each direction with a 6' shoulder to better facilitate vital farm to market traffic. The project will also include re-shaping the rural ditches and replacing most drainage pipes under the road and adjacent driveway approaches. Construction is anticipated to begin in summer 2017 and be returned to gravel surfacing by winter 2017. The remaining work including bituminous paving and aggregate shoulders will be completed in 2018 under a separate contract. The project is funded by the local option transportation sales tax and County funds.

### County Road 14 from County Road 10 to County Road 4

This rural reconstruction project of County Road 14 southeast of Saint Clair will include safety improvements of softening sharp horizontal curves and flatten steep vertical curves in order to improve sight distances and increase driver reaction time. Overall, the project will include strengthening the road to a modern 10-ton design and widening the road with a 12' lane in each direction with an 6' shoulder to better facilitate vital farm to market traffic. Additionally, rural ditches will be re-shaped and drainage pipes under the road and adjacent driveway approaches will be replaced. Construction is anticipated to begin in May 2017 and be completed prior to winter 2017. The project is funded by the local option transportation sales tax and state funds. ■



County Road 14

## Rapidan Dam Repairs Update

By Ryan Thilges, P.E., County Engineer

Blue Earth County's contractor Kraemer North America began working on the Rapidan Dam project in November 2016 with the intent of completing the contract prior to spring 2017, however, due to uncharacteristic winter temperatures and precipitation, the river levels significantly fluctuated which impeded progress by the contractor. Efforts by the County and contractors remained diligent and together they were able to complete the necessary work items on top of the dam including:



- Revising the pulley locations for the five steel tainter gates allowing for a higher volume of water to pass through therefore meeting the IDF flood flow rate requirements.
- Removing the two east timber needle gates and filling the void with reinforced concrete in order to eliminate the concern for failure of the timber gates that could lead to erosion of the erodible sandstone bedrock below and adjacent to the dam.

Due to February temperatures being higher than normal and the high potential for early spring flood events the County and contractor decided to postpone the remaining work items until drier weather and low river flows make accessing the downstream side of the dam and completing the remaining work items more feasible and safe. Once adequate dry conditions are encountered to safely proceed the County and Kraemer intend to resume the remaining stabilization work items of:

- Filling the four sluice gates (originally intended to remove sediment from upstream of the dam) with concrete in order to prevent piping under the dam and also enhancing stability.
- Repair the joint where the two downstream energy dissipation concrete aprons meet as well as repairing two scour holes that have developed in the aprons. 📌



## Dust Control Notice

The Blue Earth County Highway Department will be applying calcium chloride to gravel roads within the County for dust control this summer. The cost for two applications is \$125 per a 100-foot length by 20-foot width. Weather permitting, the first application will be applied by the end of May and the second application starting the first week of August. Areas for dust control will be graded prior to the first application and again in the fall for reshaping to allow for proper surface water drainage. Grading after the first application will be done for repair work only. No guarantee is made for the performance of the material, but it has been used in previous years with positive results. Call 304-4025 for more information.

**Dust control application will not be made unless payment is received by May 8, 2017. Please mail your request for calcium chloride with a check made to: Blue Earth County Highway Department, PO Box 3083, Mankato, MN 56002-3083.** Please flag the starting point for your dust control application. State the number of feet requested, direction for Chloride Application from the flag (North, South, East, West), location (County road number, Section and Township), and your telephone number.



To obtain further details on pricing or to request the service, please contact the Blue Earth County Highway Department at 304-4025.

## BLUE EARTH COUNTY Community FARM



### Volunteers Needed

*Individuals and groups are invited to help volunteer throughout the 2017 growing season.*

#### OPEN VOLUNTEER HOURS:

**Wednesdays, 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.**

**Beginning June 7**

**Groups of six or more can set-up special volunteer hours by request.** Volunteers help grow and harvest fresh produce that is donated to local hunger assistance programs such as Echo Food Shelf and the Salvation Army.

 Please like the Blue Earth County Community Farm on Facebook and watch for additional volunteer opportunities and information.

For more information contact Ryan Idso-Weisz, Community Farm Manager at 382-1521. The farm is located in Weagel Park, at the intersection of State Highway 66 and Indian Lake Road near Mount Kato.

## Upcoming Park Improvements

The Blue Earth County Parks Department has many improvements & repairs planned for this spring & summer. A new fish cleaning shack will be added at Bray Park which is expected to be in use by early summer. County staff will also be replacing the wooden deck on the large pier and trimming the north tree line at Daly Park. County crews will continue making repairs and clearing downed or damaged trees at the County Road 8 canoe landing, Wildwood Park, and Red Jacket Trail from the severe storms that occurred in September 2016.

Campground reservations for Bray and Daly Park went online on March 1, 2017 and will remain open throughout the camping season. With the upcoming camping season our parks staff and caretakers are busy preparing facilities and grounds for another fun and memorable season.



[blueearthcountymn.gov/parks](http://blueearthcountymn.gov/parks)



The US Department of Veterans Affairs recently announced new benefit eligibility for Camp Lejeune Veterans. Disability benefits will be granted for eight diseases for any Active Duty, Reserve or National Guard personnel who served at least 30 days (cumulative) at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina between August 1, 1953 and December 31, 1987. Widow/widowers of the service personnel who died as a result of being afflicted with the associated diseases will also be eligible for death benefits including a monthly stipend and possible free health insurance for life.

Eligible Conditions/Diseases include:

- Adult leukemia
- Aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes
- Bladder cancer
- Kidney cancer
- Liver cancer
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease

In the early 1980s, volatile organic compounds, trichloroethylene (TCE), a metal degreaser, and perchloroethylene (PCE), a dry cleaning agent, as well as benzene and vinyl chloride, were discovered in two on-base water supply systems at Camp Lejeune. The contaminated wells supplying the water systems were shut down in February 1985. The area included in this presumption is all of Camp Lejeune and MCAS New River, including satellite camps and housing areas.

Service personnel and widows/widowers who meet the 30-day at Camp Lejeune requirement and have been diagnosed with a listed condition are encouraged to contact their County Veterans Service Officer immediately for application information. Minnesota Services Officers can be found by visiting [www.macvso.org](http://www.macvso.org). Blue Earth County Veteran Services can be contacted directly by calling (507) 304-4246 or visiting [www.blueearthcountymn.gov/veterans](http://www.blueearthcountymn.gov/veterans).



## Blue Earth County Received MDH Pediatric Immunization Award



Blue Earth County was recently named a 2016 Immunization Award Winner by the Minnesota Department of Health. Awards were presented at the Got Your Shots? Immunization Conference to recognize counties and clinics with the highest immunization rates for their pediatric and adolescent patients.

Public Health Staff within Blue Earth County Human Services were presented with the Pediatric Category Award in the population division from 350 to 999 pediatric patients. Other area organizations that were recognized included Mankato Clinic at Wickersham Family Practice (20 to 90 pediatric patients) and Mayo Clinic Health System in Mankato Northridge (91 to 350 pediatric patients).

"We are extremely proud to be recognized for our successful pediatric immunization rates and considered a leader among other counties," stated Phil Claussen, Human Services Director. "Our employees and area medical providers do an excellent job immunizing our community. Their hard work and collaboration allowed Blue Earth County to receive this important recognition from the Minnesota Department of Health." ■

A listing of all award categories, winners and further details regarding objectives of the conference can be found at [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/immunize/conference/awards.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/immunize/conference/awards.html).



**BE WELL @ WORK is a program offered through Blue Earth County Public Health with the goal of making healthy living easier for local employees. We partner with local employers to help establish or enhance and maintain wellness programs through technical assistance, networking opportunities, and grant funding.**

Supported by the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership, MN Dept of Health.

### WORKSITE WELLNESS Education & Networking Meeting

Thursday, April 20  
11 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Blue Earth County Historic Courthouse  
Third Floor Conference Room  
204 S.5th Street, Mankato

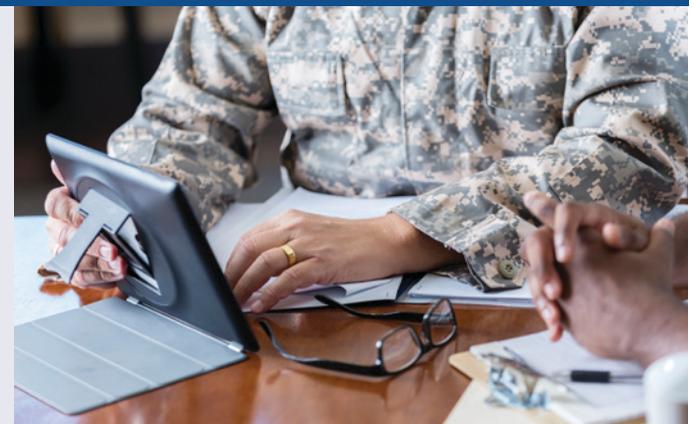
Lunch provided for registered attendees.

RSVP by April 10 to Kristen at 507-304-4411

For more information, visit:  
[www.BlueEarthCountyMN.gov/BeWellatWork](http://www.BlueEarthCountyMN.gov/BeWellatWork)

## MILITARY DISCHARGE RECORDS IN STATEWIDE SYSTEM

Blue Earth County military discharge records are now in the Discharge Access Database System (DADS). This is a statewide effort with recorders, the Minnesota Department of Veteran's Affairs, and County Veteran's Service Officers. Recorders upload the records so that VSOs across the state can search a statewide system and then request that record from the appropriate office rather than having to look for information piecemeal county-by-county.





### Blue Earth County Attorney's Office and Mayo Clinic Health System receive grant for Child Advocacy Center



The Blue Earth County Attorney's Office and Mayo Clinic Health System, along with a number of additional supporting agencies, were recently awarded a \$165,000 grant from the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs (OJP) in support of a Child Advocacy Center (CAC) that will serve abused children and their families throughout southern Minnesota.

A CAC offers a neutral, child-safe place for children, teens and at-risk adults who may have experienced sexual abuse, physical abuse, sexual exploitation or witnessed a violent crime. A CAC is a person-centered facility in which an interdisciplinary team of law enforcement, child protection, prosecution, mental health, health care and victim advocacy professionals work together to investigate allegations of abuse, help children heal from abuse and collaborate to provide everything a child needs in one location. CACs provide culturally sensitive services that include: forensic interviews; medical evaluations; mental health services; victim support and advocacy; and case reviews.

"The children's advocacy center provides a place where community agencies can work together to assure safety for our children, identify family needs and to offer the needed services, to help children grow up in a nurturing and safe environment," says Arne Graff, M.D., Mayo Clinic Health System Chair of the Division of Child Abuse.

The goal of establishing a CAC in our region began over two years ago. The Blue Earth County Attorney's Office collaborated with numerous community partners

and the Minnesota Children's Alliance. The Minnesota Children's Alliance is about putting the needs of children first. The Alliance is a membership organization dedicated to empowering local communities to effectively and efficiently respond to allegations of child abuse. The Alliance helps communities start their own CAC and helps existing centers grow and expand through top-tier training, research, and advocacy in state and national legislatures.

A part of the CAC, Mayo Clinic Health System provides children and their families throughout our region direct access to the expertise of physicians and advanced practice providers and the many unique services they provide locally to address these issues.

"Mayo Clinic Health System is happy to work together with other local experts to provide this service to children and families in the region," says Victoria Hanson, Mayo Clinic Health System regional vice chair of administration. "We continue to seek out opportunities to invest in the communities we serve and provide care to those in need."

In Blue Earth County, case review is held monthly with multidisciplinary team members. Case review encourages mutual accountability and helps assure children's needs are met sensitively, effectively and in a timely manner. Multidisciplinary team members share knowledge, experience and expertise so that informed decisions can be made, collaborative efforts are nurtured, formal and informal communication is promoted, mutual support is provided, and protocols/procedures are reviewed and evaluated.

The grant dollars will help develop local expertise to increase access to medical care plus coordinate immediate support services to children and families in crisis, including mental health, counseling interventions and advocacy services. ■



### Outstanding Agency Award received by Sheriff's Office



Pictured: Scott McConkey (MN Office of Traffic Safety), Chief Deputy Mike Maurer (Blue Earth County), Sheriff Brad Peterson (Blue Earth County), Kammy Huneke (MN Office of Traffic Safety), Deputy Tom Coulter (Blue Earth County).

The Blue Earth County Sheriff's Office recently received the Outstanding Agency Award for its performance during the April 2016 Distracted Driving Campaign and the May/June 2016 'Click It or Ticket' Seat Belt Campaign. "We are dedicated to keeping Blue Earth County roads safe and working toward fewer traffic-related deaths and injuries," said Sheriff Brad Peterson. "We're looking out for the safety of those that call Blue Earth County 'home', and for those that are visiting or traveling through to other places. Each life matters and it's an honor to be recognized for the protection of people on the roads that we all share." Staff from the MN Department of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety presented the Sheriff's Office with four portable alcohol breath testing devices as recognition for the award.



MN Sheriff's Association Supervisor of the Year award received by Chief Deputy Mike Maurer

### SHERIFF'S OFFICE AWARDED \$5,000 FROM MCHS MANKATO HEALTH CARE FOUNDATION TO PURCHASE AEDS



Mayo Clinic Health System Mankato Health Care Foundation awarded \$5,000 to the Blue Earth County Sheriff's Office to enhance the number of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) available to patrol deputies. The funding is a significant step in providing all patrol deputies with equipment capable of saving lives and delivering patients to hospitals in a condition more conducive to a positive outcome. Brian Bartlett, M.D., Mayo Clinic Health System Emergency Medicine lead: "AEDs are an easy-to-use and crucial tool for patients suffering from cardiac arrest. It's often the difference between surviving a cardiac event and death. By having AEDs available in a public setting, we increase the chances of timely and lifesaving response. Making AEDs available to law enforcement and first responders increases the chance of survival."

### MSCIC Meritorious Service Award received by Lieutenant Jeff Wersal





All ages are welcome to learn about keeping the earth clean while having fun!

Activities, craft projects, informational displays and refreshments. Plus a special live reptile presentation by Reptile & Amphibian Discovery Zoo.

**Blue Earth County Library, Auditorium  
Mankato  
Saturday, April 8 from 10 am to noon**

For more information on Earth Day, please contact the Blue Earth County Library Children's Wing at 304-4020 or visit [www.beclibrary.org](http://www.beclibrary.org).



## Take Advantage of Resources Beyond Books at the Library

**Did you know that the Blue Earth County Library features two In-Library Databases for patrons to use completely free?**

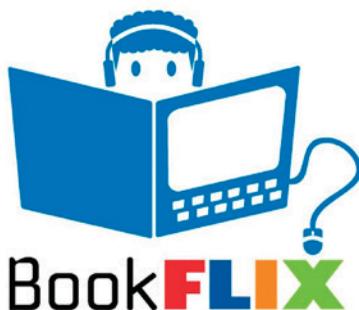
**Ancestry.com** - A free database that helps people explore family history and family tree information.

**Westlaw Database** - Information resources on Westlaw include databases of case law, state and federal statutes, public records, and other information resources.

*Please note that the two databases are available for use in the library only.*



## Help Strengthen Literacy Skills with Bookflix!



**BookFlix®** is a digital literacy resource that pairs more than 120 animated stories from Weston Woods with a best-selling nonfiction eBook from Scholastic on a similar subject. The fiction and nonfiction pairings are designed to strengthen early literacy skills for children PreK – 3rd grade while exposing them to real world concepts. Our BookFlix account can be accessed on the computers in the library or from home through our website: [www.beclibrary.org](http://www.beclibrary.org)



## What is 4-H? What can it offer my family?

4-H is a **learn-by-doing** youth development program delivered throughout Minnesota. It's open to any youth in Blue Earth County, ages Kindergarten through one year past high school! If you are a youth, 4-H has something for you! This unique, learn-by-doing model teaches children essential, life-long learning skills that they'll use throughout their lives! Some of these skills include:

- **Problem Solving Skills**
- **Decision Making Skills**
- **Communication Skills**



Programs are not just for youth who live on a farm! 4-H has something to offer ALL youth in Blue Earth County! Participants can build rockets, take photos, create wood projects, have science experiments, and so much more! If you are interested in learning more about 4-H, please check out our website:

[www.extension.umn.edu/youth/mn4-H/](http://www.extension.umn.edu/youth/mn4-H/) for more information!

To learn more contact Amanda Sommers, 4-H Program Coordinator at [eppe0018@umn.edu](mailto:eppe0018@umn.edu) or 304-4325.

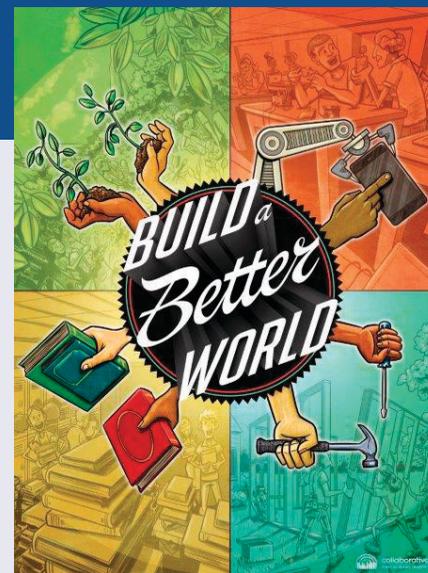
## 2017 SUMMER READING PROGRAM KICKS OFF ON JUNE 1ST!

**Kids ages 0 to 17 can earn prizes for time spent reading in three age categories and enjoy fun, educational events twice weekly in June and July.**

### BRAND-NEW PERFORMERS

Tony KID Klauenberg, The Lower Sioux Agency, The Everett Smithson Band, The Oz Brothers and The Wonderful World of Woody.

**PAST FAVORITES** will also return with new programs, like the U of M Raptor Center, Peter Bloedel, The Reptile and Amphibian Discovery Zoo, airplane rides and many more.



*Summer Reading is made possible by the generosity of the Glen A. Taylor Foundation (primary sponsor), The Friends of the Deep Valley Libraries and the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund of Minnesota.*

For further details contact the Blue Earth County Library at 304-4020 or visit [www.beclibrary.org](http://www.beclibrary.org) for online registration information.

# SERVING YOU



**Drew Campbell, Vice-chair**  
 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)



**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)



**Vance Stuehrenberg**  
 District 2 Commissioner  
 2316 East Main St.  
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[vances@blueearthcountymn.gov](mailto:vances@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)



**Mark Piepho, Chair**  
 District 3 Commissioner  
 8 Skyline Drive  
 Mankato, MN 56001  
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[mark.piepho@blueearthcountymn.gov](mailto:mark.piepho@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)

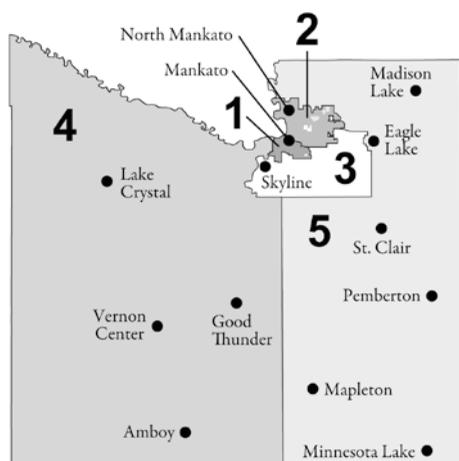


**Will Purvis**  
 District 4 Commissioner  
 13798 534th Avenue  
 Vernon Center, MN 56090  
 549-3420 (H) / 317-5465 (C)  
[will.purvis@blueearthcountymn.gov](mailto:will.purvis@blueearthcountymn.gov)



**Kip Bruender**  
 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)

## Blue Earth County COMMISSIONER DISTRICTS



## 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.

*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	<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:

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I have a suggestion:

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If you want us to respond to your comments:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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



# SERVICE DIRECTORY



**Blue Earth County Justice Center**  
401 Carver Rd., Mankato

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



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

**Facilities and Management**  
**Lower Level, 304-4249**

**Finance**  
**Lower Level, 304-4182**

**Taxpayer Services – Property Information/Passports**  
**1st Floor, 304-4251**

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



**County Government Center**  
410 S. Fifth St., Mankato

**Taxpayer Services – License Center/Elections**  
**Lower Level, 304-4340**

Driver's Licenses  
Motor Vehicle/Boat Registration  
Fishing/Hunting Licenses  
Birth/Death Certificates  
Marriage Licenses  
Voter Registration/Absentee Ballots  
Filing of Notaries

**Veterans Services**  
**Lower Level, 304-4246**

Federal & State Benefits  
Transportation to VA Hospital

**Information Technology**  
**Lower Level, 304-4204**

**Human Services**  
**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

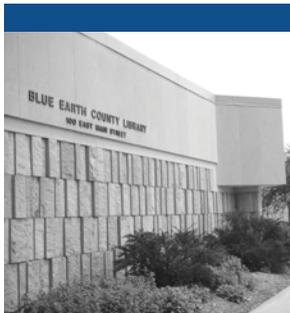
**Environmental Services**  
**3rd Floor, 304-4381**

Planning & Zoning  
Building & Feedlot Permits  
Shorelands/Flood Plains  
Water Wells/Septic Systems/Wetlands  
Recycling Center/Landfill  
Household Hazardous Waste Center  
911/Rural Addressing



**Public Works Department**  
35 Map Dr., Mankato

Roads & Bridges, 304-4025  
Road/Bridge Construction & Inspection  
Permits: Driveway, Overweight/Size Loads, Utility  
Culvert Sales  
Swing-away Mailbox Mounts  
Calcium Chloride for Dust Control  
Park & Trail System, 304-4025  
Camping & Shelter Reservations  
Firewood Sales & Boat Rental  
Agricultural Inspection, 304-4025  
Weed Control & Seed Testing



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

General Services, 304-4001  
Children's & Young Adult Services, 304-4020  
Adult & Reference Services, 304-4022  
Fines & Renewals, 304-4010  
Meeting Room Reservations, 304-4002  
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)