



## *News and Highlights*

1st Quarter 2023

[www.co.beltrami.mn.us](http://www.co.beltrami.mn.us)

**Beltrami County Mission and Values:** We will strive to be the catalyst to firmly establish a community that promotes healthy families, environmental quality, expanding economic opportunity and a quality of life second to none.

The screenshot shows the Beltrami County website's navigation menu with options like Home, Government, Departments, Document Center, Employment, Contact, and About. The 'Law Enforcement' section is expanded, listing links for Sheriff, Jail, Warrant List, and Inmate List. A sidebar on the left contains 'Quick Links' such as County Newsletter, Facilities & Locations, Fee Schedule, Law Enforcement, and Online Mapping. The main content area is titled 'Beltrami County Jail Project' and lists contact information for Ben Matson, Senior Project Manager, along with a project overview and various reports and presentations. A seal for the Beltrami County Sheriff's Office is visible on the right side of the page.

### County Website Provides a Window into Jail Project Activities

The County has been working diligently on addressing the many challenges it is facing at the County Jail. The challenges faced include severe housing capacity limitations, an inability for the Jail to meet Department of Corrections jail design standards, an increase in needs for mental health and chemical dependency resources, elevated movement and safety liabilities due to current design limitations, jail staff recruiting and retention impediments due to working conditions, and an outdated and aging building infrastructure. In November of 2022, the Board of County Commissioners, after reviewing several reports and gathering input from community surveys, committed to building a new 242-bed county jail. All along the way, the County has aimed to keep the public informed of the activities associated with the Jail Project.

A special county web page has been developed to house and make accessible information about the County's progress on the Jail Project. The web page serves as a central hub where information on meetings, various reports, survey results, studies, and presentations can be found. Minutes and agendas for each of the Committees working on the jail project can also be found on the page. The County's goal is to provide as much information to the public as it can to help keep citizens apprised of the progress and major milestones of the project along the way. You can access the Jail Project Web Page at: [https://www.co.beltrami.mn.us/Departments/Law%20enforcement/Jail Project.html](https://www.co.beltrami.mn.us/Departments/Law%20enforcement/Jail%20Project.html)

### Design and Operations Sub-Committee

One of the sub-committees of the Jail Steering Committee is the Design & Operations Sub-Committee. There are 11 individuals who have been meeting on a bi-weekly basis to develop selection criteria and evaluate suitable sites for the location of the new jail. This work includes, but is not limited to, considering location, size, and overall design aspects in hopes of building a new jail to fit the needs of our community. Additionally, this Committee puts the selection process together, comes to a recommendation, and hands the findings to the Steering Committee which in turn evaluates the results and makes a recommendation to the County Board.

The first order of business is to decide where to build the facility, which is the question of the decade. With so much talk about where the jail is currently located and where the new jail could or should be placed this has become a complicated question. The Committee is looking at over 15 different locations to address the full needs of our community, keeping in mind that safety, security, and accessibility are at the top of the list.

The main evaluation criteria the Building and Design Committee is considering includes: lot size, property valuation, acquisition cost, site preparation cost, impact to

property tax revenue, courthouse access, EMS and new intake access, impact on neighborhoods, land use and zoning, among others. Having many criteria to consider, each with a different community impact, makes it difficult to develop a scoring system to assist in making a recommendation. The Committee is not taking this job lightly with many of our two (2) hour meetings being stretched to three (3) hour meetings because we are so very eager to come up with a thorough answer to present to the Steering Committee.

There are some positive outcomes we have come across while moving through this process. Due to a lot more court hearings being conducted virtually, we are not constrained to build the new jail in the same location. While we have still kept this area under consideration, we have been able to broaden our search and prospective construction sites. This has become a very strenuous yet enlightening process every step of the way. The Building and Design Committee hopes to bring you more information as soon the Steering Committee and Board considers its recommendation.

*~Submitted by: Jail Administrator, Calandra Allen*

**Beltrami County is looking for a citizen volunteer to serve on the Jail Design and Operations Sub-Committee.** This Committee will review information and make recommendations to the Jail Steering Committee and Board of County Commissioners regarding the County's New Jail Project. We would prefer individuals with a background in architecture, building engineering, or experience as a building official/inspector or related field, but those experiences are not required. The term is indefinite and meetings will be held generally twice per month for the next 2 years. Interested citizens can send a letter of interest, including background qualifications or resume to the County Administrator's Office, 701 Minnesota Ave NW, Bemidji, MN 56601 or electronically to: [tom.barry@co.beltrami.mn.us](mailto:tom.barry@co.beltrami.mn.us).

Applications/Letters of interest are due by March 24, 2023.

# New Faces at Beltrami County

## Beltrami County Sheriff

First of all, let me start out by saying hello. My name is Jason Riggs and I was elected as your Sheriff in November of 2022 and took Office January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. I am a husband of 25 years and my wife; Kathleen and I have raised our 6 children in Beltrami County. I have served the citizens of Beltrami County for some time now. I have been employed in a Law Enforcement capacity by the Leech Lake Police Dept., the City of Blackduck Police Dept. and the Beltrami County Sheriff's Office all serving Beltrami County. I am a firm believer in servant leadership and I look forward to serving Beltrami County as the Chief Law Enforcement Officer in the county. From my office I have the ability over time to effect change. I hope to mold our area Peace Officers by leading from example and mentoring our future. I am a strong advocate that the community needs to invest more in our area youth and that starts with me.

I look forward to seeking a better relationships with our Tribal Nations and our area partners who are willing to invest in our communities within Beltrami County. Public Safety is my primary job and ensuring you as Beltrami County residents are protected to the very best of our abilities and capabilities. Beltrami County is a large county and we need your help to be vigilant to help combat crime.

One of the quotes I think on often is from George Orwell, "Courage is not absent of fear. Courage is absent of self." Live a selfless life and be courageous to make a difference. Mentoring tomorrows leaders is the task of current leaders. Our job is to equip those around us to carry on when we are gone.

~Submitted by:  
Sheriff Jason Riggs 8101



## Commissioner Joe Gould

### District 2



Joe Gould is a high school social studies teacher at Cass Lake-Bena Public Schools. Joe graduated from Greenway High School and Bemidji State University. He holds multiple degrees including a master's in public administration. Before teaching full-time, Joe was a legislative staff person at the Minnesota House of Representatives for the Education Finance Committee, lobbied for rural school districts, afterschool programs, and worked on several issues facing greater Minnesota. Joe was previously a City Council member in La Prairie, MN and has volunteered on several political campaigns.

He currently serves on the Bemidji Area Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors and has previously served on the Greater Bemidji Area Joint Planning Commission. He is a Bemidji resident of 10 years. Joe is married to his wife, Gwenia, and enjoys hunting, fishing, supporting BSU hockey, and spending time with their cocker-spaniel named Coya.

## Commissioner John Carlson

### District 5



I came to Bemidji in 1971 to attend Bemidji State University. I graduated from BSU with a degree in Business Finance and have lived here ever since. My wife is a life-long resident of Bemidji and we have two grown children that both work and raise their families in Bemidji. I spent many years coaching youth baseball and hockey.

I was a Certified Management Accountant and owned an insurance agency until 2017. I am currently semi-retired and do the accounting for my son's business.

I served two years in the Minnesota State Senate from 2011 to 2012. In my short time at the Capitol and with a lot of hard work and consensus building I was able to get 28 pieces of legislation passed to help my constituents with a variety of issues.



## Health & Human Services Director Anne Lindseth

Anne Lindseth is the new Director of Beltrami County Health and Human Services following the retirement of Becky Secore. Anne has worked for Beltrami County HHS for the past 12 years in a variety of positions, most recently as the Economic Assistance Division Director. Prior to her tenure at Beltrami County she worked for Rural MN CEP for 11 years. Anne brings a passion for helping others and creating large-scale systemic change that benefits the residents of Beltrami County. Anne is a Bemidji State University alumna with degrees in Psychology and Public Health. She has resided in Bemidji for the past 25 years. As Director of Beltrami County Health and Human Services Anne is responsible for the overall program and financial administration of all health and human services programs which include Public Health, Social Services and Economic Assistance programs. Anne is excited to take on this new role and expressed that she values transparency, open communication, collaboration and service to the community.



# Clip and Mail

Your opinion and feedback is important to us... tell us how you feel and return this clip to:

Beltrami County Administration

701 Minnesota Ave NW

Bemidji, MN 56601

OR e-mail to: [webmaster@co.beltrami.mn.us](mailto:webmaster@co.beltrami.mn.us)

1. Did you find the information in this Newsletter helpful?

2. What would you like to see in future issues of the Beltrami County News and Highlights?

3. A question I have of the County Board is:

4. A suggestion I have for the County Board is:



**Clip and Send**

## ATV 101

Beltrami County has roughly 347 miles of approved all-terrain vehicle trails ranging from the far southern to northern areas of the county. ATV clubs throughout the county have been permitted by the Beltrami County Board of Commissioners to allow these trail systems for your enjoyment. These permitted trails include portions of roads or road right-of-ways which a person would otherwise not be allowed to operate all-terrain vehicles. To access these specific trail maps please see the Minnesota DNR website under the off-highway vehicle riding tab or contact the local ATV clubs.

The Beltrami County Sheriff's Office would like to take a minute to discuss a few common questions regarding where ATV/UTV/OHM usage is legal. These laws differ depending on the machine you are operating or you are operating within a municipality of which commonly have their own ordinances on permitted operation.

### Class 1 ATV –



Minnesota classifies an ATV with a total tire width of 50 inches or less a Class 1 ATV. Minnesota law generally restricts Class 1 all-terrain vehicles from operating on the roadway, shoulder, and inside ditch bank of a paved county state-aid or county highway. The only locations within Beltrami County a Class 1 ATV is allowed to operate on a paved roadway, shoulder or inside ditch bank is along the Scenic Hwy. between Hines Rd. to Rabideau Lake Rd. then again from Birchmont Beach Rd. to Power Dam Rd. The ATV must be operated on the extreme right side of the roadway within these locations. Permitted under Beltrami County Ordinance #41.

Also permitted by Beltrami County Ordinance is Class 1 ATV operation on the extreme right hand side of all gravel surfaced county highways. All other Class 1 ATV

operating must occur in the ditch bottom or the permitted trail system. For further information please review the MN DNR regulations handbook and Beltrami County Ordinance #41 located on the Beltrami County website.

### Class 2 ATV –



Minnesota classifies an ATV with a total width greater than 50 inches, but not more than 65 inches, as a Class 2 ATV. Class 2 all-terrain vehicles may be operated within the public road right-of-way of a county state-aid or county highway on the extreme right side of the road and left turns may be made from any part of the road if safe to do so. Minnesota law generally restricts Class 2 all-terrain vehicles from operating within a road ditch unless as part of a designated trail system or to access a business. For further information please review the MN DNR regulations handbook and Beltrami County Ordinance #41 located on the Beltrami County website.

### Off-Highway Motorcycle (OHM) –

Off-highway motorcycle operation is very restrictive as OHM's are not allowed to operate on road surfaces or in a ditch unless the ditch is a trail designated for OHM use. OHM's cannot be operated on a public trail system unless that trail is specifically designated for its use. For further information please review the MN DNR regulations handbook which can be found the DNR website.

Should you have questions about these laws or any other recreational activity please contact the Beltrami County Sheriff's Office at any time.

*~Submitted by: Deputy Josh Arhart*

### Beltrami County Parks Restrictions

**A reminder that Movil Maze and Three Island Park trail systems do not allow any ATV travel except from the Friday a week before the firearm deer season opens to the Monday after the season closes. Also, per County Ordinance No. 37, ATV use is only allowed on the Soo Line Railroad Grade from April 1 through November 30 and the ATVs must have a total dry weight of less than 900 pounds.**

# Beltrami County Economic Assistance

## **Extra COVID Emergency SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Benefits to End**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Minnesota received a waiver from the federal government to temporarily provide extra Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits known as Emergency SNAP, or E-SNAP. Federal officials have declared that the extra COVID Emergency SNAP benefits will end after February 2023.

Most households will get their last E-SNAP payment in March 2023. Starting in April, most households will get only one SNAP payment. That amount will be the household's standard monthly benefit. A household's standard monthly benefit considers income, expenses, and deductions a recipient may have.

Who is impacted by the end of emergency allotments? County residents who receive SNAP or food benefits under the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) will see the extra allotment end with the last Emergency SNAP payment in March.

There are local resources available to assist residents in stretching their food benefits when the Emergency SNAP allotment ends. These resources include the Beltrami County WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Program, The Bemidji Community Food Shelf and Ruby's Pantry.

WIC provides nutritious food to low-income pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants and children up to age 5. They can be contacted by calling 1-218-333-8140 or visiting the office at 616 America Ave NW #130, Bemidji, MN.

The Bemidji Community Food Shelf is located at 1260 Exchange Ave SE Bemidji, MN and is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. For additional information please check out their website at <https://www.bcfsmn.org/>.

Ruby's Pantry operates locally every third Wednesday of the month with registration beginning at 4:00 P.M. and food bundles are available from 4:00 – 5:30 P.M. For a \$25 donation, participants receive an abundance of groceries. For additional information please check out the Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/RubysPantryBemidjiMN/>.

*~Submitted by: Economic Assistance Division Director, Curt Anderson*

# Beltrami County Economic Assistance

## **The ending of COVID related program policy waivers**

The Beltrami County Economic Assistance Division supports county residents with child support services, employment service programs and by determining eligibility for public benefit programs.

Federal and State COVID program policy waivers, implemented in March of 2020, are unwinding as a result of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 and the end of the National State of Emergency set for 5/11/2023.

Medical Assistance enrollees can expect their renewal to take place in the next 1-1/2 years. The process starts a couple months before the anniversary date of when they first became enrolled. MinnesotaCare enrollees can expect their eligibility renewal in October 2023.

In preparation for the unwinding, it is important for those residents who have Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare to keep their contact information updated so Beltrami County staff can contact you to renew your healthcare insurance. If you have moved or had a change in persons residing with you in the past three years, or will be soon, please update your address, phone number, household

members, and email with Beltrami County.

For our residents accessing programs and services it is important to carefully read mail from Beltrami County or the State of MN. They will be mailed a renewal packet when it's time to renew their Medical Assistance. Inside the renewal packet they'll find a cover letter with instructions and a due date. The renewal form must be completed and returned with the needed proofs by that due date in order to retain coverage and avoid closure.

Beltrami County offers multiple ways for our customers to report their changes and information. Besides stopping by our 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Lobby within the Community Service Center at 616 America Ave NW, you can also call 218-333-8300, use our County Web Upload form which can be found on-line at: <https://www.co.beltrami.mn.us/Departments/HHS/Economic%20Assistance/Economic%20Assistance.html> or you can go to the MNbenefits page at <https://mnbenefits.mn.gov/> and upload your information there as well.

*~Submitted by: Economic Assistance Division Director, Curt Anderson*

# Homeless Prevention Aid

Homelessness in Beltrami County is at a historically high rate. The housing inventory at most levels is challenged, and lower income housing is at best, difficult to locate. Recently the Legislature authorized a bill intended to address some of these issues.

The Homeless Prevention Aid (MN statute 477A.30) is intended to ensure local governments ensure no child is homeless within a local jurisdiction by keeping families from losing housing, and helping those experiencing homelessness find housing. The state allocated \$20,000,000 annually for the next five years and starting in July of this year Beltrami County's allocation will be \$710,746 (the amount will change from year to year based upon County population and youth homeless numbers). While this is a significant amount, without an increase in housing inventory we will be challenged to effectively use these funds.

At least one of two things must be incorporated into a plan, the first is using the money for rental assistance, and the second is using the money to support housing case management. We hope to incorporate both of these into an overall plan to address the need for housing in our community. Even with these two services,

it will be challenging to effectively address housing needs without first addressing the lack of affordable housing for families in our community.

It is our hope to address housing availability while also increasing our opportunity to provide rental assistance and housing case management services. Currently we are researching the idea of creating a Housing Trust Fund that's primary purpose would be to spur development of housing stock in our County. These funds might be used for new development, upgrades to current housing or possibly even low interest loans for down payments on homes that would allow people to purchase their own homes.

We are still in the planning phase but it is our hope to begin moving forward in the coming months to create at least a partial solution to this daunting problem.

*~Submitted by: Social Services Division Director, Jeffrey Lind*



# County Legislative Priorities

The Minnesota Legislature began its 2023 session on January 3, 2023. There is a lot of unfinished business the Legislature will be tackling as the 2022 session was unable to finish many important priorities and initiatives. What happens at the Legislature will affect almost every citizen of the State. Beltrami County residents are among those who will be impacted by what happens at the State House.

Each year the Legislature makes important decisions that directly impact our County and our residents. Whether it be new State mandates, changes to tax structures and rates, county funding formula changes, infrastructure improvements or any number of other policies, projects, programs, or services, the impacts of what happens in St. Paul can have profound effects on County government and services.

For these reasons, the County has developed a list of legislative priorities and we have shared that list in a special meeting with local area legislators. Staff and County Commissioners developed thirteen priorities that we believe are important in promoting Beltrami County improvements and mitigating current challenges. While the list is long, we wanted to share a few highlights with you.

We have communicated for a long time now the need for a new County Jail and last November the County Board committed to construct a new 242 bed facility. This new jail is estimated to cost about \$80 million to design and construct; money we don't currently have. The County is working with Legislators to develop four bills to identify funding for the new jail. These bills include requesting a direct appropriation for the new jail facility by tapping into the massive State surplus, requesting inclusion of the project in the state bonding package, seeking permission to ask voters to finance the project using a local option sales tax, and limiting the County's tax exposure during construction of the new facility. All of these approaches attempt to limit the financial burden to our local citizens.

Another set of priorities includes promoting changes to State funding formulas designed to reimburse Counties for State mandates, but that have fallen very short in financing the State's full impact. Among these priorities includes changes to County Program Aid (CPA) and Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT). CPA and PILT have been longstanding priorities for Beltrami County and many other northern Minnesota Counties. Modifying these formulas to be fairer and more equitable could bring as much as a million dollars of new revenue into the County.

Then there are the many social and public health priorities that also need addressing. These include things like requesting the Minnesota State Department of Human Services improve Minnesota's mental health and developmental disabilities continuum of care; requesting improvements in long-term, sustainable, and equitable funding, particularly regarding the Family First Prevention Services Act; requesting support and funding to offset the County's cost of implementation of new State-provided technologies; requesting the sunset of the State's Diversionary Work Program; requesting modifications to simplify and modernize the Minnesota Family Investment Program reporting requirements and encourage earned income and employment modifications to help improve equity across the program. Then there is much needed updating and overhauling of the Mentally Ill and Dangerous (MI & D) commitment program which disadvantages and heavily burdens counties. In fact, our County pays upwards of a million dollars for what should otherwise be a State responsibility.

As you can see, there is much at stake in this year's Legislature. We will continue to monitor and pursue changes that promote needed infrastructure projects, improve program effectiveness, and reduce the financial burden of State programs on County residents. The State Constitution limits the Legislature to meeting 120 legislative days during each biennium. It is scheduled to adjourn on May 22, 2023.

*~Submitted by: County Administrator, Tom Barry*

## Beltrami County Solid Waste Educational Update

Beltrami County Solid Waste is participating in two group EPA Grant Applications that could help out this county's solid waste management system, but also the north-western part of Minnesota.

Beltrami County has a long history working with Polk County, and the Solid Waste Advisory Board which consists of Commissioners and Solid Waste Director's from: Beltrami, Polk, Hubbard, Clearwater, Norman, and Mahnomen Counties. Polk County is applying for an EPA Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) grant that could bring in \$4 Millions funds to help out improving infrastructure at both the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) Located in Fosston, Mn as well as the Source Separated Organics Material (SSOM) Composting facility.

The MRF located in Fosston is very unique. It is one of a few Waste-to-Energy facilities in the US to process MSW to remove recyclable materials from the waste stream before waste disposal. It may be the only one in the US that removes Plastic #1, #2 and #5 from the waste stream and may also be the only one that processes Single Stream Recyclables on the same equipment.

The proposed SWIFR project related to robots would result in the staffing of vacant recycling stations that were unable to be filled due to the labor shortage. Due to the inability to fill those positions, recycling equipment has been turned-off and those recycling stations closed for significant amounts of time. The proposed SWIFR project related to the compost facility- compost pad and ASP technology- would result in maximizing the existing facility's compostable material storage and processing capacity. Each ton of material that is diverted from disposal at a Landfill to either reuse, recycling or composting results in a significant reduction in GHG emissions and PFAS generation.

The second SWIFR grant application is in partnership with Cass, Clearwater, Hubbard, Marshall, Mahnomen, Norman, Polk and Red Lake Counties. We have been working together for the past year looking at what we are going to do when our current un-lined landfill becomes full with-in the next few years. This group has anywhere between 5 to 10 years left before the landfill is at capacity, and the State has already said they are not going to permit anymore unlined landfills.

This group is looking at all the options that are available and we are proposing to implement a "Hub and Spoke System" for Construction and Demolition Debris. This system would replace un-lined landfills that are in our Counties.

Creating a regional solid waste management "Hub and Spoke" system would provide new or expand upon existing access to reuse, recycling, composting and responsible disposal of materials within our nine counties. This system would reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions by facilitating the hauling of large loads in lieu of hauling many small loads to the Hub and promote beneficial reuse at each Spoke.

This SWIFR Grant opportunity would help provide infrastructure in each of the counties listed so we are prepared to deal with Construction and Demolition Debris in our Counties when our Un-lined landfill closes.

*~Submitted by: Waste Director, Brian Olson*



## County Seeks Federal Assistance for Jail

The Beltrami County Jail has experienced many challenges over the years and the County has been working with community leaders, tribal representatives, local government officials, the MN Department of Corrections, and State legislators on solutions moving forward. Most recently, several County Commissioners as well as County Administrator Tom Barry, Sheriff Jason Riggs and a variety of staff met with U.S. Representative Pete Stauber on February 16th to discuss the County Jail Project and request assistance from the Federal Government. Rep. Stauber took a tour of the current jail and spent an hour with County representatives discussing the issues and challenges with the Jail as well as opportunities for support from the Federal Government. Among the issues discussed were jail demographics and trends, DOC rule changes, staffing limitations, federal rules and legislative approaches, and possible federal participation in the design and construction of a new County jail.

“We are very grateful for the time Congressman Stauber spent touring our jail facility and meeting with staff and commissioners. His prior service as a 20-year veteran police officer and St. Louis County Commissioner was very beneficial in helping us develop a strategy for moving forward” said County Administrator Tom Barry. “Representative Stauber’s commitment to law enforcement and his empathy and support for our staff and our challenges was very much appreciated” said Sheriff Jason Riggs. The County shared updates on the current jail project and the progress made to date indicating that financing a new facility would be a big lift for the County. “Rep. Stauber was very receptive to learning about the County’s struggles and acknowledged the concerns and indicated his support for the County going forward” said Barry. Rep. Stauber will be working with his team on ways that his office and the Federal Government can support the County and its jail project moving forward.

*~Submitted by: County Administrator, Tom Barry*



From left to right: Sheriff Jason Riggs, U.S. Rep. Pete Stauber, Jail Administrator Calandra Allen, Commissioner Craig Gaasvig (center), Chief Deputy Jarrett Walton, John Eloranta, Louis Crombie

Commissioners can be contacted by phone or e-mail:

**District 1 Commissioner Craig Gaasvig**

218-766-9699

cgaasvig@paulbunyan.net

**District 2 Commissioner Joe Gould**

218-259-4342

Joe.gould@co.beltrami.mn.us

**District 3 Commissioner Richard Anderson**

218-467-3275

richard@paulbunyan.net

**District 4 Commissioner Tim Sumner**

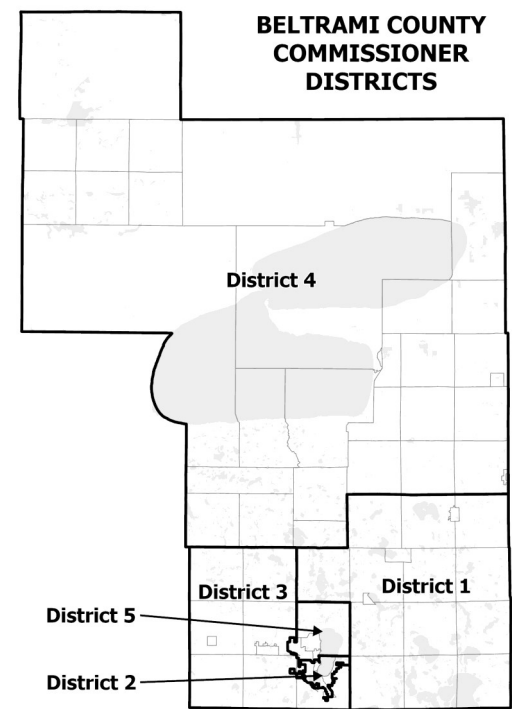
218-407-7589

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**District 5 Commissioner John Carlson**

218-766-5010

John.carlson@co.beltrami.mn.us



For additional information and detail, visit the County Board of Commissioners at [www.co.beltrami.mn.us/Government/Board\\_of\\_Commissioners.html](http://www.co.beltrami.mn.us/Government/Board_of_Commissioners.html)

## Sheriffs’ Association Scholarship

The Minnesota Sheriffs’ Association has announced the awardees of their Scholarship Program for 2022. The Association awards scholarships each year to individuals planning to become Minnesota Peace Officers. The applicants apply through their local Sheriffs’ Offices. This year, the scholarship committee chose 22 awardees. The Minnesota Sheriffs’ Association Scholarship Program, is promoted by the 87 Sheriffs of Minnesota.

The members of the MSA offer their congratulations to each of the scholarship awardees. The qualifications and academic excellence shown by these recipients reflect the dedication and pride of the young people in the State of Minnesota who will enter the difficult but rewarding profession of Law Enforcement and Public Service. For additional information about the Minnesota Sheriffs’ Association, visit: [www.mnsheriffs.org](http://www.mnsheriffs.org).

Sheriff Jason Riggs and Bemidji Scholarship recipient, Nathaniel Golden



# Short Term Rentals in Beltrami County

This past year has brought some clarity to what is required of short-term rentals (AirBnB, VRBO, etc.) in Beltrami County. On July 1, 2022, the Beltrami County Short-Term Rental Ordinance went into effect. This Ordinance regulates short-term rentals in most areas of Beltrami County. Several townships such as Ten Lake, Frohn, Sugar Bush, and Turtle River have additional regulations regarding short-term rentals. The City of Bemidji and Northern Township have different regulations that are administered through the Greater Bemidji Area Joint Planning Board. An annual lodging license from the Minnesota Department of Health is also required for any short-term rental in Minnesota. If you are unsure about who to contact, please feel free to ask us and we will assist you to the best of our ability.

There are many different reasons why a County or City would want to regulate short-term rentals in their jurisdiction. There are complaints about peace and quiet in predominantly residential neighborhoods when a short-term rental begins operation if the number of occupants is large enough to create a nuisance. That is what really kick-started the conversation in Beltrami County. There are many pros and cons regarding regulating this type of activity but after several months of discussion and input, it was decided that the current Short-Term Rental Ordinance would be adopted and implemented. As we get closer to our summer tourist season it seems timely to remind everyone regarding this new ordinance.

What is a short-term rental? A short-term rental is basically any home or similar building that is rented out for less than 30 days at a time and is not already a licensed resort, bed & breakfast, or motel. Most short-term rentals require a use permit and some require a conditional use permit. As of mid-February, approximately 30 short-term rentals have been permitted in Beltrami County (not including other jurisdictions). The maximum occupancy of a short-term rental is limited by the size of the septic system in most cases. There are requirements for parking, local property managers, and providing information to the renters such as property line boundaries. There are also limitations on noise, signs, gatherings such as reunions or weddings, pets, and camping.

We mailed an information packet to all of the short-term rental unit owners in Beltrami County that we were made aware of at the time of adopting the ordinance. If you are operating a short-term rental and have not yet done so, please make sure you reach out to us or the appropriate City or Township to ensure you are operating within the requirements of the Ordinance or applicable rules where your property is located. If you are interested in learning more about permitting requirements or have questions regarding short-term rentals please contact the Environmental Services Department at [esd@co.beltrami.mn.us](mailto:esd@co.beltrami.mn.us) or call 218-333-4158.

*~Submitted by: Environmental Services Director, Brent Rud*

## Spring Road Load Restrictions

In the spring of each year limits on vehicle weights are put in place by road authorities to protect the significant investment that has been made in the road system.

As the ground begins to thaw the materials under the road surface become saturated and soft. In this saturated state the road is significantly weakened to a point that damage and deterioration can result. As heavy vehicles travel down the road the surfaces will slightly bend and move. With the reduced support from the underlying material the road surface will crack. On gravel surfaced roads these cracks can turn into soft spots or even impassable roads. On paved roads, the freezing and thawing of moisture in the cracks can deteriorate into potholes or additional cracking.

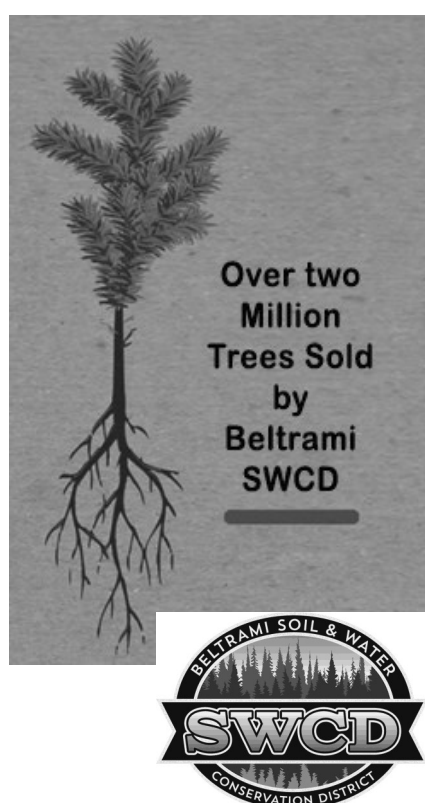
Spring load restrictions have proven to be essential in protecting the roadways. Limiting the weight reduces the damage, the cracking and further deterioration. The timing and length of the restrictions vary but usually start in Beltrami County around mid-March and last for approximately eight weeks. Unless posted otherwise, gravel roads are restricted to 5 tons per axle and paved roads are restricted to 10 tons per axle. Specific road restrictions in Beltrami County can be found on Beltrami County's website at: <http://www.co.beltrami.mn.us/Departments/Highway/Road%20Restrictions.html>

Thank you for your cooperation in abiding by spring load restrictions. If you have any questions regarding road restrictions please contact the Beltrami County Highway Department at (218)333-8173.

*~Submitted by: Highway Engineer, Bruce Hasbargen*

## SWCD 2023 Tree Program

The Beltrami Soil & Water Conservation District is currently holding its annual tree and plant sale. The SWCD offers over 30 species of bareroot trees at low cost. There are also seed mixes and plant plug kits specifically designed for pollinator, lakeshore, and woodland settings. Trees, plants, seeds, and tree accessories can be ordered now and picked up in the spring. Stock is running low on a number of species, so be sure to place your order soon! Tree order forms are available in the SWCD office and online at the Beltrami County website. For more information or to check availability please call 218-333-4158.



## Road Right of Way Obstructions

Beltrami County Highway Department strives to provide public right-of-ways that are safe, efficient, and free of unnecessary hazards. At times objects are erroneously placed in the right-of-way. Those objects are a safety hazard for errant drivers and for operators of ATV's and snowmobiles. As per Minnesota Statute 160.2715 it is illegal to place objects in the road right-of-way. Examples of illegal objects are buildings, fences, signs, billboards, political signs, retaining walls, or any other items that may hinder the passage over the right of way.

The County is addressing any objects that are found to be within the road right of way. No new obstructions will be allowed and any older existing obstructions will be required to be removed by the owner. A reasonable timeframe for removal may be given.

If you have any questions regarding objects in the right-of-way please contact the Beltrami County Highway Department at (218)333-8173.

*~Submitted by: Highway Engineer, Bruce Hasbargen*



# The Bottom Line on Tax-Forfeited Lands

Recently, there have been questions raised asking why the County doesn't sell some or all of the 145,560 acres of tax-forfeited lands to generate sale revenues and by putting the land back on the tax rolls. Tax-forfeited lands are managed by the County but owned by the State of Minnesota, in trust for the local taxing districts, which includes the County, cities/townships, and the school districts. Here are some considerations when it comes to keeping or selling these lands.

As part of the process to sell tax-forfeited parcels, approval must be sought and granted by the Minnesota DNR and the townships/cities. If approval is obtained, the parcels move through many steps and ultimately are offered at a public oral auction. At these auctions - which are open to everyone - bidders from outside the area may have the wherewithal to out-bid nearby neighbors and residents to acquire land in this part of the State.

When tax-forfeited parcels are purchased by private parties, "No Trespassing" signs can be posted, limiting access to the public for hunting, recreating, and logging. Hunters would need to travel farther on public land. Snowmobile and ski clubs that manage trails across tax-forfeited may have to reroute trails or abandon privately owned segments. The positive economic impact to the local communities by hunters and recreationalists would be diminished due to the reduced opportunities on these lands.

Another consideration, should these purchased lands be developed, would be an increased need for services such as law enforcement and emergency response, school busses, mail delivery, and road maintenance.

Each year, the County offers for sale some forfeited city lots, small odd shaped lots, and isolated parcels. The DNR would likely resist approving a wide spread offering of tax-forfeited land for sale. The County looks strategically at tax-forfeited parcels as to whether it makes more sense to keep or to sell to private parties.

Currently, the County receives \$2.00 per acre (\$291,120 annually) from the State in Lieu of Property Taxes for these lands. Beltrami County generates, mostly through timber sales, about \$750,000 net revenue annually on these lands. Combining these two revenue sources equal about \$1,041,000 per year or \$7.15 per tax-forfeited acre. This is slightly higher than the tax rate for a privately owned rural forested acre, meaning the County generates more income by keeping forested tax-forfeited lands.

*~Submitted by: Natural Resource Management Director, Richard Moore*



## How a Timber Sale is Selected & Setup

The Beltrami County Natural Resource Management (NRM) Department manages approximately 147,500 acres of tax-forfeited land. A common question we hear is, "How do you select and set up areas for a timber sale?"

The entire Beltrami County Forest has a forest inventory with a continual updating process as forests grow and change over time. The forest inventory is GIS based and consists of polygons for each forest stand and its associated attributes. The NRM Department has a staff of four foresters, each responsible for a district in the forest.

The first step for foresters to determine where to set up a timber sale is to query the forest inventory database for forest cover type, stand age, and other variables to identify potential stands for management. Natural events like blowdown, fire and insect infestations are also considered. Foresters will then make a field visit to the identified forest stands to determine if management is indeed warranted at the present time, considering our Forest Management Plan, the characteristics of each tree species, and the native plant community of the site.

If forest management is warranted, timber sale preparation often begins with identifying the location of nearby property lines. Harvest or thinning boundaries will be painted, giving consideration to forest conditions, wildlife habitat, wetlands, access, terrain limitations, etc. A Project Plan including aspects of a silvicultural prescription designating trees for reserve and for harvest will be made. Generally, trees will be either marked for cutting or marked for retention. The same Project Plan will identify reserve areas, wildlife issues, cultural, and visual aesthetic resources.

The harvest blocks will then be cruised to determine timber volumes and a sale package will be prepared with maps of the area, species volumes, stumpage prices, logging requirements, special considerations, and so on. The timber sale is offered at public auction, sealed or oral bid, and is awarded to the highest responsible bidder.

When a logger is ready to harvest, a pre-operations meeting is held on-site to review the sale contract requirements. The forester administers the harvest activities to ensure all conditions are being met from start to finish. In most cases, the management prescription will favor natural regeneration for the new forest. In some cases, to ensure prompt establishment of a new forest stand, replanting will be used. The forest regeneration will be monitored and the inventory updated, the new forest growing to provide benefits for our future generations.

*~Submitted by: Natural Resource Management Director, Richard Moore*



[www.co.beltrami.mn.us](http://www.co.beltrami.mn.us)

### Board of Commissioners

District 1—Craig Gaasvig .....218-766-9699  
District 2—Joe Gould .....218-259-4342  
District 3—Richard Anderson .....218-467-3275  
District 4—Tim Sumner .....218-407-7589  
District 5—John Carlson .....218-766-5010

### Administration Building

701 Minnesota Ave NW, Bemidji MN 56601

Administrator—Thomas Barry ..... 218- 333-4109  
Assessor—Joe Skerik .....218-333-4116  
Auditor/Treasurer—JoDee Treat.....218-333-4175  
Environmental Services—Brent Rud .....218-333-4158  
Facilities Manager—Steve Shadrick .....218-333-8475  
Geographic Info Systems (GIS).Kevin T. 218-333-8457  
Human Resources—Linda Tran .....218-333-4155  
License Center .....218-333-4148  
Mgmt Info Systems (MIS)—Kevin W. ... 218-333-4151  
Natural Resource Mgmt—Dick Moore ..218-333-4210  
Real Estate & Tax Services.....218-333-4138  
Recorder—Charlene Sturk.....218-333-4170

### Community Service Center

616 America Ave NW, Bemidji MN 56601

Health & Human Services—Director Anne Lindseth  
Social Services - Director Jeff Lind .....218-333-4196  
Economic Assistance  
Director—Curt Anderson.....218-333-2242  
Public Health - Director Megan Heuer 218-333-8140  
Veterans Services Shane Gustafson 218-333-4177

### Law Enforcement Center

613 Minnesota Ave NW, Bemidji MN 56601

Sheriff Jason Riggs .....218-333-9111  
Bemidji Police Chief Mike Mastin.....218-333-9111

### Judicial Center

600 Minnesota Ave NW, Bemidji MN 56601

Attorney—David Hanson.....218-333-4219  
Court Administration.....218-333-4120

### County Jail

626 Minnesota Ave NW, Bemidji MN 56601

Main phone number.....218-333-4189

### Public Works Department

2491 Adams Ave NW, Bemidji MN 56601

Highway Engineer—Bruce Hasbargen...218-333-8173

751 industrial Park Dr SE

Solid Waste Director—Brian Olson .....218-333-8187

### County Extension

7223 Fairgrounds Rd NW, Bemidji MN 56601

Extension Secretary .....218-444-5722